



Resolution Regarding the Hunting of Migratory Birds on Sunday in North Carolina

Whereas, North Carolina has a rich and storied history of hunting migratory birds, including numerous species of ducks and geese, swans, mourning doves, woodcock, rails, and other webless species; and

Whereas, these hunting traditions and those who pursue them are as varied from the coast to the mountains as the species and habitats in which they occur; and

Whereas, hunting on Sunday with a firearm was prohibited in North Carolina beginning in 1869; and

Whereas, hunting on Sunday with a firearm on private lands was legalized, with some restrictions, on October 1, 2015, except for hunting of migratory birds; and

Whereas, North Carolina Session Law 2017-182, enacted in 2017, granted the Wildlife Resources Commission authority to promulgate rules legalizing hunting on Sunday for wild animals (including migratory birds) and upland game birds; and

Whereas, the hunting of migratory birds on Sunday remains prohibited unless authorized by proclamation or rules of the Wildlife Resources Commission, subject to the following limitations:

- (1) Hunting on Sunday between 9:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. is prohibited, except on controlled hunting preserves licensed pursuant to G.S. 113-273(g),
- (2) Hunting on Sunday within 500 yards of a place of religious worship, as defined by G.S. 14-54.1(b), or any accessory structure thereof, is prohibited, and

Whereas, Session Law 2017-182 also directed the Commission to “complete a study that includes, but is not limited to, examining biological and resource management impacts, economic impacts, and social impacts associated with hunting migratory birds on Sunday;” and

Whereas, changes in hunting pressure and other human-induced disturbance can affect behavior patterns of ducks during the migration and wintering periods; and

Whereas, associated changes in duck distribution may locally impact hunter success; however, there is no evidence that suggests vital rates of waterfowl populations would be negatively impacted due to hunting migratory birds on Sunday; and

Whereas, based on results from Responsive Management, Inc. there is both substantial support and opposition to hunting migratory birds on Sunday within the hunting community and opinions differ among hunting and non-hunting publics; and

Whereas, issues associated with hunting migratory birds on Sunday are inter-relatedly biological, social, economic, and political; and require evaluation and melding with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rules and policies; and

Whereas, differences among constituents vary between locales and among groups; and

Whereas, further examination would be required to determine specific economic impacts at local scales or to specific hunter groups; and

Whereas, beginning in 1997, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has allowed states to use compensatory days if Sunday hunting for migratory birds was not allowed by state law thereby “compensating” states by not requiring they count Sundays as waterfowl hunting days during the annual season selection process; and

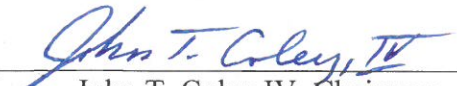
Whereas, the Service has proposed compensatory days for webless species starting with the 2018-19 hunting seasons; and

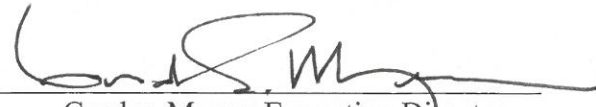
Whereas, in accordance with federal rules, once a state lifts a ban on Sunday hunting of migratory birds, the state loses its eligibility for compensatory days in the future should it reinstitute a ban.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Wildlife Resources Commission is committed to managing our public trust migratory bird resources judiciously, sustainably, and optimally for our citizens, including balancing protection of longstanding cultural values and expansion of hunting opportunities, and therefore directs staff to:

- collaborate with natural resource economists to more fully examine relevant economic aspects associated with hunting migratory birds on Sunday;
- review all available human dimensions survey data from stakeholders in North Carolina to determine if regulatory changes other than legalizing hunting on Sunday are desired;
- evaluate impacts of compensatory days on the attitudes and opinions of migratory bird hunters who pursue webless species;
- evaluate potential season zoning options as possible tradeoffs to conflicting desires of hunters across the state; and
- report all findings back to the Wildlife Resources Commission.

Approved, this the 28th day of February 2018, in an official meeting by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.


John T. Coley IV, Chairman


Gordon Myers, Executive Director