

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Expand Turkey Hunting Opportunities**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §11155, sub-§1-B,** as enacted by PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. III, §11, is amended to read:

**1-B. Issuance; permit fee.** The commissioner, through the commissioner's authorized agent, shall issue a wild turkey hunting permit to an eligible person. ~~The~~Except as provided in subsection 1-C, ~~the annual fee for a wild turkey hunting permit is \$20 for residents and \$47 for nonresidents and aliens~~\$25.

**Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §11155, sub-§1-C** is enacted to read:

**1-C. Junior hunter; complimentary turkey permit.** Upon application by a person who holds a valid junior hunting license, the commissioner shall issue to that person a complimentary wild turkey hunting permit.

**Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §11701,** as amended by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §179 and affected by §422 and Pt. C, §§2 and 6, is further amended to read:

### **§ 11701. Authority of commissioner; wild turkey hunting and seasons**

The commissioner may establish open seasons for hunting wild turkeys, designate areas that are open to the taking of wild turkeys in any part of the State, prescribe the form and regulate the number of permits to be issued, ~~determine the number and sex of the birds to be harvested, establish bag limits,~~ establish permit eligibility requirements, ~~establish legal hunting times,~~ specify the types of weapons to be used during any open wild turkey hunting season and make any other rules that the commissioner considers necessary for the protection of the wild turkey resource.

The commissioner shall establish spring and fall wild turkey hunting seasons and allow the harvest of 2 male wild turkeys per permit holder in the spring season and 2 wild turkeys of either sex per permit holder in the fall season. Except as provided in section 11751-A, subsection 2, a person may not harvest more than 2 wild turkeys during the fall season.

A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime for which the court shall impose a fine of not less than \$500, none of which may be suspended. The court also shall impose a fine of \$500 for each turkey unlawfully possessed, none of which may be suspended.

**Sec. 4. 12 MRSA §11703** is enacted to read:

### **§ 11703. Wild turkey hunting hours**

A person may hunt wild turkey during an open season on wild turkey between 1/2 hour before sunrise and 1/2 hour after sunset.

**Sec. 5. 12 MRSA §11751-A, sub-§2,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 552, §11 and affected by §15 and c. 655, Pt. C, §§2 and 6, is amended to read:

**2. Exceeding bag limit.** A person may not possess more than ~~one~~<sup>2</sup> wild ~~turkey~~<sup>turkeys</sup> during ~~any~~<sup>an</sup> open season, except a person may keep more than ~~one~~<sup>2</sup> legally obtained wild ~~turkey~~<sup>turkeys</sup> in that person's home at any time or as otherwise provided in law ~~or rule~~. A wild turkey harvested by a junior hunting license holder during a youth hunting day for wild turkeys does not count towards the bag limit established under this subsection or the hunting restriction in subsection 3.

**Sec. 6. 12 MRSA §11751-A, sub-§3,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 552, §11 and affected by §15 and c. 655, Pt. C, §§2 and 6, is amended to read:

**3. Hunting wild turkey after having killed two.** ~~A~~Except as provided in subsection 2, a person may not hunt wild turkey after that person has killed or registered ~~one~~<sup>2</sup> during ~~any~~<sup>an</sup> open season ~~of that calendar year~~for the remainder of that season, except as otherwise provided in law ~~or rule~~.

**Sec. 7. 12 MRSA §12301-A,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §226 and affected by §422, is amended to read:

## **§ 12301-A. Registration of harvested animals**

**1. Registration stations established.** The commissioner shall adopt rules governing the establishment and closure of bear, deer,~~and~~ moose ~~and wild turkey~~ registration stations for the purpose of registering harvested bear, deer,~~and~~ moose ~~and wild turkey~~ and to allow for the collection of biological and hunting data. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

**2. Agents designated.** An agent designated by the commissioner must be in charge of each bear, deer,~~or~~ moose ~~or wild turkey~~ registration station.

**3. Agent duties.** Registration agents shall:

A. Register every bear, deer,~~or~~ moose ~~or wild turkey~~ legally presented for registration;

B. Attach a seal to each bear, deer,~~or~~ moose ~~or wild turkey~~ in the manner directed and with the materials furnished by the commissioner; and

C. Collect and retain \$1 for each seal from the person registering a bear, deer,~~and~~ moose ~~or wild turkey~~.

**Sec. 8. 12 MRSA §12302-A, sub-§1,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §228 and affected by §422, is amended to read:

**1. Requirement.** A person who kills a bear, deer,~~or~~ moose ~~or wild turkey~~ shall:

A. Remain with that animal until it is registered, except as provided in section 12303-A;

B. Present that animal for registration in that person's name at the first open registration station for that animal on the route taken by that person; and

C. Leave the registration seal attached to the animal in accordance with section 12301-A until that animal is processed and packaged for consumption.

**Sec. 9. 12 MRSA §12302-A, sub-§1-A** is enacted to read:

**1-A. Turkey registration.** The commissioner shall adopt rules to develop a system to register harvested wild turkeys by telephone or over the Internet. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

**Sec. 10. 12 MRSA §12303-A, sub-§1, ¶B,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §230 and affected by §422, is amended to read:

B. Deer; or

**Sec. 11. 12 MRSA §12303-A, sub-§1, ¶C,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §230 and affected by §422, is amended to read:

C. Moose; ~~or.~~

**Sec. 12. 12 MRSA §12303-A, sub-§1, ¶D,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §230 and affected by §422, is repealed.

## SUMMARY

This bill amends the wild turkey hunting laws as follows.

1. It requires the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to establish and set the bag limit for the fall and spring seasons at 2 wild turkeys per permit holder per season.

2. It requires the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to issue upon application a complimentary wild turkey hunting permit to a person holding a valid junior hunting license.

3. It exempts a wild turkey harvested by a junior hunter during a youth wild turkey hunting day from bag limits.

4. It eliminates the current \$20 resident and \$47 nonresident wild turkey hunting permit fees and creates a single \$25 wild turkey hunting permit fee for both residents and nonresidents.

5. It sets the wild turkey hunting hours between 1/2 hour before sunrise and 1/2 hour after sunset.

6. It directs the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to adopt a registration system that allows a hunter to register a harvested wild turkey by telephone or over the Internet.