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An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Deer Hunting and To Extend the Coyote Hunting Season

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

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §11401, sub-§1, ¶A, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 and affected by c. 614, §9, is amended to read:

A. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and sections 10952, 11152, 11403 and 11404 or by rule adopted by the commissioner pursuant to section 11402, subsection 4, there is an open season for deer in each calendar year in all counties of the State between September 15th and December ~~15th~~20th annually. In a year that the regular season extends beyond November 30th, the regular season must start no later than the 4th Monday preceding Thanksgiving.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §11401, sub-§1, ¶B, as affected by PL 2003, c. 614, §9 and amended by c. 655, Pt. B, §168 and affected by §422, is further amended to read:

B. The commissioner may shorten the open season on deer in any part of the State, as long as:

(1) The demarcation of the areas with the shortened season follows recognizable physical boundaries, such as rivers and railroad rights-of-way; and

(3) The Saturday preceding the first day of open season on deer is an open day only for residents of the State ~~only~~and nonresidents who own 25 or more acres of land in this State and keep that land open to hunting.

Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §12001, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2007, c. 242, §1, is further amended to read:

1. Open night hunting season. Notwithstanding the night hunting prohibitions in section 11206-A, there is an open season for hunting coyotes at night in all counties of the State from ~~January 1st~~December 20th to June 1st~~August 15th~~.

SUMMARY

This bill allows the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to set December 20th as the ending date for the open season for deer. Current law allows the commissioner to set December 15th as the ending date. The bill allows nonresidents who own 25 or more acres of land in this State and keep that land open to hunting to hunt deer on the Saturday preceding the first day of open season on deer, which is currently reserved for hunting by residents only. The bill expands the open season for hunting coyotes at night from December 20th to August 15th. Current law provides a season that runs from January 1st to June 1st.