

MARYLAND FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES, PERMITS, AND STAMPS



DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES 2025

Maryland Fishing and Hunting Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

**Department of Legislative Services
Office of Policy Analysis
Annapolis, Maryland**

January 2025

Primary Staff for This Report

Duane Bond Jr.
Dominic Gilani
T. Patrick Tracy

Reviewers

Crystal L. Lemieux
April M. Morton

Other Staff Who Contributed to This Report

Scott Kennedy

For further information concerning this document contact:

Library and Information Services
Office of Policy Analysis
Department of Legislative Services
90 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Baltimore Area: 410-946-5400 • Washington Area: 301-970-5400

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Maryland Fishing and Hunting Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Background

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is to secure a sustainable future for the environment, society, and the economy by preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing the State's natural resources. As part of this mission, DNR's Fishing and Boating Service manages Maryland's fisheries for the conservation and equitable use of fisheries resources for present and future generations. Similarly, DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service strives to conserve Maryland's diverse native wildlife, manage game species, regulate hunting and trapping activity, and conserve wildlife habitat.

This report describes the various recreational and commercial fishing licenses, permits, and stamps available in the State and the activities authorized under the licenses, permits, and stamps, as well as fishing activities that are authorized without a license. This report further describes various hunting licenses, permits, and stamps available in the State and the activities authorized under the licenses, permits, and stamps, as well as hunting activities that are authorized without a license. It also includes an appendix that summarizes Sunday hunting in Maryland.

Chapter 1. Fishing Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Background

The Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Fishing and Boating Service is responsible for the conservation and management of fish, fisheries, fish resources, and aquatic life in the State. DNR issues the licenses for fishing in nontidal (fresh) waters, tidal (salt or brackish) waters, and both nontidal and tidal waters. DNR determines whether waters of the State are tidal or nontidal by regulation. Both nontidal and tidal fishing licenses are further categorized as recreational (sport) or commercial fishing licenses.

DNR is tasked with (1) protecting, conserving, and enhancing fisheries resources; (2) providing and enhancing fishing opportunities, including access to the waters of the State; (3) providing sustainable economic opportunities in fisheries; and (4) promoting and protecting fisheries resources through public outreach and education. To support these tasks, DNR charges various annual fees, usually set by State statute, for fishing licenses and permits and a trout stamp. In general, DNR collects the fees for nontidal licenses and the trout stamp and deposits the proceeds into the State Fisheries Management and Protection Fund for the scientific investigation, protection, propagation, and management of nontidal fish. Similarly, DNR collects the fees for tidal recreational and commercial licenses and permits and deposits the proceeds into the Fisheries Research and Development Fund to be used for the replenishment of tidal fisheries resources and related research and for matching federal funds available for research and development of fisheries resources. DNR, however, is required to use certain proceeds from commercial license fees specific to the striped bass and oyster fisheries for the management of the respective fisheries and to use the seafood marketing surcharge only for seafood marketing programs.

Recreational Fishing Licenses and Trout Stamp

A person is considered to be engaging in recreational fishing (also known as sport fishing) if the person is fishing for pleasure or competition. In the context of Maryland law, subsistence fishing also requires a recreational fishing license. Recreational fishing licenses remain effective for one year after purchase. In addition, a trout stamp is necessary to fish for or possess trout in nontidal areas. DNR is required to issue, on request, nontidal fishing licenses, trout stamps, and most Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses in a digital or electronic format.

Recreational Nontidal Fishing Licenses and Trout Stamp

A nontidal fishing license holder may fish only during open season for the species targeted. DNR sets open seasons for a wide variety of nontidal finfish, including walleye, trout, catfish,

suckers, carp, eel, gudgeon, sunfish, rock bass, fallfish, crappie, perch, largemouth and smallmouth bass, pickerel, northern pike, and muskellunge.

Nontidal Fishing License (General)

In general, a person who is 16 years of age or older must obtain a nontidal (freshwater) fishing license (also known as an angler's license) before fishing in the nontidal waters of the State. The annual license fee for a Maryland resident is \$20.50, while the fee for a resident seven-day short-term nontidal fishing license is \$7.50. In general, for nonresidents, the annual license fee is \$30.50, the seven-day short-term license fee is \$7.50, and the fee for a three-day short-term license is \$5.00. However, these fees increase to the amount charged by the home state of the nonresident for a substantially similar license if those amounts are greater than the general Maryland nonresident fees. Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award are eligible for a 50% discount on nontidal fishing licenses, and DNR does not charge a fee to resident or nonresident blind persons for a nontidal fishing license. There is also a Recreational License Incentive Discount Program that authorizes DNR to incentivize individuals to obtain angler's licenses and other licenses by offering a discount of no more than 50% to certain individuals, though the program has not yet been implemented.¹

Reciprocal Nontidal Fishing License

DNR may grant resident holders of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia fishing licenses reciprocal fishing privileges in specified Maryland nontidal waters without holding a Maryland nontidal fishing license. These reciprocal fishing privileges may be exercised for (1) Pennsylvania residents, in the waters of the Conowingo and Youghiogheny reservoirs; (2) Virginia residents, in the nontidal portion of the Potomac River opposite of the Virginia shore; and (3) West Virginia residents, in the nontidal portion of the Potomac River opposite of the West Virginia shore, including the North Branch of the river and the Jennings Randolph Reservoir. These reciprocal fishing privileges are only effective if the other states grant the same reciprocal privileges to Maryland recreational fishing license holders.

Complimentary Nontidal Fishing Licenses

A complimentary nontidal fishing license provides the license holder with the same privileges as a standard nontidal fishing license. DNR may issue an *annual* complimentary nontidal fishing license to (1) the President of the United States; (2) the governor of any state; and (3) any out-of-state fish and game official.

DNR may also issue a *lifetime* complimentary nontidal fishing license to Maryland residents and out-of-state individuals who meet certain conditions. A Maryland resident may receive a lifetime complimentary nontidal fishing license if the resident is certified as (1) a former

¹ Chapter 62 of 2018 established the Recreational License Incentive Discount Program and authorized DNR to adopt regulations to implement the program.

prisoner of war; (2) an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable;² or (3) a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran. An out-of-state individual may receive a lifetime complimentary nontidal fishing license if (1) the individual certifies that the individual is a former prisoner of war, an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable, or a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran and (2) the individual's state of residence extends similar, reciprocal privileges to Maryland residents. There are no fees for the complimentary nontidal fishing licenses, and the licenses are not transferable. No more than 20 complimentary nontidal fishing licenses for each state other than Maryland may be outstanding at any one time.

Nontidal Fishing License Exemptions

State law establishes exemptions from the nontidal fishing licensure requirement for certain nontidal fishing activities undertaken by certain persons or under certain circumstances. Specifically, a person is exempt from the requirement to obtain a nontidal fishing license if the person is:

- the owner or tenant of land and is fishing on nontidal water bordering the land (this exemption extends to the owner's or tenant's spouse, child, or child's spouse who resides on the land);
- a Maryland resident serving in the U.S. Armed Forces while on leave in the State and possessing a copy of the person's official leave orders;
- fishing on free fishing days established by DNR (the first two Saturdays in June and July 4);
- fishing in free fishing areas established by DNR;
- fishing under a one-day license exemption issued to a nonprofit organization benefitting persons with disabilities;
- fishing under an annual license exemption issued to a government entity or nonprofit organization benefitting current or former service members with disabilities;
- fishing under an annual license exemption issued to a government entity or nonprofit organization to provide fishing clinics or instruction to individuals who are (1) serving or have served in the U.S. Armed Forces; (2) participating in a physical or mental wellness outdoor event; (3) participating in a special needs outdoor event; (4) acting under the

² Chapters 489 and 490 of 2024 authorized DNR to issue lifetime complimentary recreational nontidal fishing licenses to American veterans determined to be unemployable.

authority of a scientific collection permit; or (5) State residents who are underserved with respect to fishing opportunities;

- fishing under an exemption for patients under treatment at a mental health facility; or
- fishing under an exemption for persons who attend or reside at a State-approved program for persons with a developmental disability.

Trout Stamp

A person who is 16 years of age or older may not fish for or possess trout in nontidal areas designated by DNR without first obtaining a trout stamp. A trout stamp is required in addition to a nontidal fishing license and allows DNR to more closely manage the trout stock in the State. The annual fee for a trout stamp is \$5 for a resident and \$10 for a nonresident. Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award are eligible for a 50% discount on the annual fee for a trout stamp.

State law also establishes exemptions from the trout stamp requirement for certain nontidal fishing activities undertaken by certain persons or under certain circumstances. Specifically, a person is exempt from the requirement to obtain a trout stamp if the person:

- holds a *lifetime* complimentary nontidal fishing license for a former prisoner of war, an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable,³ or a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran;
- is a Maryland resident serving in the U.S. Armed Forces while on leave in the State and possesses a copy of the person's official leave orders while fishing;
- is fishing under a one-day license exemption issued to a nonprofit organization benefitting persons with disabilities;
- is fishing under an annual license exemption issued to a government entity or nonprofit organization benefitting current or former service members with disabilities;
- is fishing under an annual license exemption issued to a government entity or nonprofit organization to provide fishing clinics or instruction to individuals who are (1) serving or have served in the U.S. Armed Forces; (2) participating in a physical or mental wellness outdoor event; (3) participating in a special needs outdoor event; (4) acting under the

³ Chapters 489 and 490 of 2024 established that a person is not required to obtain a trout stamp if the person holds a lifetime complimentary nontidal fishing license due to the person's status as an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable.

authority of a scientific collection permit; or (5) State residents who are underserved with respect to fishing opportunities;

- is fishing under an exemption for patients under treatment at a mental health facility; or
- is fishing under an exemption for persons who attend or reside at a State-approved program for persons with a developmental disability.

Recreational Tidal Fishing Licenses

A recreational tidal fishing license holder may fish only during open season for the species targeted. DNR sets recreational open seasons for a wide variety of tidal finfish, including striped bass (rockfish), summer flounder, bluefish, Spanish mackerel, and yellow perch.

Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License

In general, a person who is 16 years of age or older must obtain a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport (recreational tidal) fishing license before fishing for finfish in the tidal waters of the State, including the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the State waters of the Atlantic Ocean, and the Atlantic coastal bays. The annual license fee for a Maryland resident is \$15.00, while the fee for a resident seven-day short-term recreational tidal fishing license is \$6.00. The annual license fee for a nonresident is \$22.50, while the fee for a nonresident seven-day short-term recreational tidal fishing license is \$12.00. Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award are eligible for a 50% discount on recreational tidal fishing licenses, and DNR does not charge a fee to resident or nonresident blind persons for a recreational tidal fishing license. There is also a Recreational License Incentive Discount Program that authorizes DNR to incentivize individuals to obtain Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses and other licenses by offering a discount of no more than 50% to certain individuals, though the program has yet to be implemented.⁴

Reciprocal Recreational Tidal Fishing License

DNR may grant reciprocal recreational tidal fishing privileges to a holder of a valid tidal sport fishing license issued by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia, or Washington, DC. These reciprocal privileges take effect when DNR determines that the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia, or Washington, DC requirements for a tidal sport fishing license are substantially similar to and reciprocal with Maryland's recreational tidal fishing license.

⁴ Chapter 62 of 2018 established the Recreational License Incentive Discount Program and authorized DNR to adopt regulations to implement the program.

Complimentary Recreational Tidal Fishing Licenses

A complimentary recreational tidal fishing license provides the license holder with the same privileges as a standard recreational tidal fishing license. DNR may issue an *annual* complimentary recreational tidal fishing license to (1) the President of the United States; (2) the governor of any state; and (3) any out-of-state fish and game official.

DNR may also issue a *lifetime* complimentary recreational tidal fishing license to Maryland residents and out-of-state individuals who meet certain conditions. A Maryland resident may receive a lifetime complimentary recreational tidal fishing license if the resident is certified as (1) a former prisoner of war; (2) an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable;⁵ or (3) a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran. An out-of-state individual may receive a lifetime complimentary recreational tidal fishing license if (1) the individual certifies that the individual is a former prisoner of war, an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable, or a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran and (2) the individual's state of residence extends similar, reciprocal privileges to Maryland residents. There are no fees for the complimentary recreational tidal fishing licenses, and the licenses are not transferable. No more than 20 complimentary recreational tidal fishing licenses for each state other than Maryland may be outstanding at any one time.

Recreational Tidal Fishing License Exemptions

State law establishes exemptions from the recreational tidal fishing license requirement for certain tidal fishing activities undertaken by certain persons or under certain circumstances. Specifically, a person is exempt from the requirement to obtain a recreational tidal fishing license if the person:

- possesses a valid commercial fishing license;
- is fishing on a charter boat commercially licensed by DNR;
- is a Maryland resident serving in the U.S. Armed Forces while on leave in the State and possesses a copy of the person's official leave orders while fishing;
- is fishing on free fishing days established by DNR (the first two Saturdays in June and July 4);
- is fishing in free fishing areas established by DNR;⁶

⁵ Chapters 489 and 490 authorized DNR to issue lifetime complementary recreational tidal fishing licenses to American veterans determined to be unemployable.

⁶ A person who does not hold a recreational tidal fishing license and fishes in a free fishing area is required to register with DNR. There is no fee for registration.

- is the owner or tenant of private real property and is fishing in tidal water bordering the property (this exemption extends to the owner's or tenant's spouse and immediate family members who reside on the land with the owner or tenant);⁷
- is fishing under a special recreational boat license issued by DNR;⁸
- is fishing from a fishing pier commercially licensed by DNR;
- is fishing under a one-day license exemption issued to a nonprofit organization benefitting persons with disabilities;
- is fishing under an annual license exemption issued to a government entity or nonprofit organization benefitting current or former service members with disabilities; or
- is fishing under an annual license exemption issued to a government entity or nonprofit organization to provide fishing clinics or instruction to individuals who are (1) serving or have served in the U.S. Armed Forces; (2) participating in a physical or mental wellness outdoor event; (3) participating in a special needs outdoor event; (4) acting under the authority of a scientific collection permit; or (5) State residents who are underserved with respect to fishing opportunities.

Special Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License

DNR may issue a special Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport (recreational boat) fishing license that authorizes any person in a licensed boat to fish for finfish in the tidal waters of the State without possessing any other fishing license.⁹ A special recreational boat license is in the form of a decal that is attached to a boat and may be used on a boat registered in any state but may not be used on a for-hire boat. The annual license fee is \$50 for a resident and \$100 for a nonresident.^{10, 11}

⁷ A person who does not hold a recreational tidal fishing license and fishes under the private riparian property exemption is required to register with DNR. There is no fee for registration.

⁸ A person who does not hold a recreational tidal fishing license and fishes under a special recreational boat license is required to register with DNR. There is no fee for registration.

⁹ A person who does not hold a recreational tidal fish license and fishes under a special recreational boat license is required to register with DNR. There is no fee for registration.

¹⁰ To maintain eligibility to purchase a special recreational boat license, the license holder must provide to DNR all information requested under the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License Pilot Program established under Chapters 409 and 410 of 2022. The Pilot Program terminates after June 30, 2027.

¹¹ Chapters 593 and 594 of 2024 increased the annual license fee for the nonresident special recreational boat license from \$50 to \$100.

Individual and Boat Crabbing Licenses

In general, a person who catches crabs recreationally in the Chesapeake Bay or its tidal tributaries using trotlines, collapsible traps, net rings, seines, or eel pots (for catching bait) is required to obtain a recreational crabbing individual license. The annual fees are \$5 for a Maryland resident (\$2 if the resident holds a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license or a resident senior consolidated sport fishing license) and \$10 for a nonresident. A recreational crabbing individual license is not required to catch crabs using handlines or dip nets, or for a child under the age of 16 years to catch crabs using handlines, dip nets, collapsible traps, or net rings.

DNR will issue a complimentary recreational crabbing individual license to a person who purchases a recreational crabbing boat license or a special recreational boat license. A recreational crabbing individual license is not required to catch crabs in the Atlantic Ocean or the Atlantic coastal bays.

A recreational crabbing boat license authorizes a person on the applicable boat to catch crabs in the Chesapeake Bay or its tidal tributaries using trotlines, collapsible traps, or net rings. The annual fee is \$15 for Maryland residents and nonresidents. A recreational crabbing boat license is not required to catch crabs in a boat in the Atlantic Ocean or the Atlantic coastal bays.

Recreational Oyster License

A person who is 16 years of age or older must obtain a recreational oyster license before recreationally harvesting oysters in the tidal waters of the State.¹² The annual application fee for the initial issuance and renewal of the license is \$10 for a Maryland resident,¹³ although a recipient of the Purple Heart award is eligible for a 50% discount. The license remains effective for one year after issuance.

An owner or lessee of real property bordering on tidal waters of the State is exempt from the requirement to obtain a recreational oyster license (this exemption extends to the owner's or tenant's spouse and immediate family members who reside on the property).¹⁴ DNR is required to issue a complimentary recreational oyster license to a Maryland resident who certifies that the resident is (1) a former prisoner of war; (2) an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; (3) a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran; or (4) blind.

¹² Chapter 518 of 2024 established the recreational oyster license.

¹³ A nonresident may not recreationally harvest oysters in the State.

¹⁴ An individual who recreationally harvests oysters under this riparian exemption is required to register with DNR. There is no fee for registration.

Consolidated Senior Sport Fishing License

DNR may issue a resident consolidated senior sport fishing license to a Maryland resident beginning in the calendar year in which the resident turns 65 years of age. The license authorizes the holder to (1) fish in nontidal waters of the State without holding a recreational nontidal fishing license; (2) fish in tidal waters of the State without holding a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license; and (3) fish for trout without holding a trout stamp in nontidal areas specified by DNR as otherwise requiring possession of a trout stamp. The annual fee is \$5.

Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund

The Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund, which is administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, provides grants to eligible sponsor organizations to fund recreational hunting or fishing opportunities, including providing specified licenses and stamps at no cost, along with other listed outdoor recreational activities and opportunities, for specified beneficiaries. Beneficiaries may include Gold Star recipients, disabled veterans or other veterans who could benefit from one of the opportunities provided, disabled members of the U.S. Armed Forces or other members of the U.S. Armed Forces who could benefit from the opportunities provided, and permanently disabled persons who require the use of a wheelchair. A person may make an electronic donation to the fund when purchasing specified recreational hunting and fishing licenses (or corresponding stamps) through DNR's electronic licensing system.

Commercial Fishing Licenses and Permits

A person is considered to be engaging in commercial fishing if the person is fishing for profit. The license year for commercial tidal fishing licenses is from September 1 of each year through August 31 of the following year. A commercial tidal fishing license holder may fish only during open season for the species targeted. DNR sets commercial open seasons for a wide variety of tidal finfish and shellfish, including striped bass (also known as rockfish), blue crabs, oysters, hard- and soft-shell clams, yellow perch, and sharks. DNR is required to issue, on request, most commercial fishing licenses and permits in a digital or electronic format.¹⁵

¹⁵ As of October 2024, DNR is in the process of adopting a new electronic licensing system. DNR plans to begin issuing digital/electronic commercial fishing licenses and permits once the new system is operational.

Tidal Fish License

In general, DNR issues a single commercial fishing license known as the tidal fish license. A tidal fish license authorizes the holder to engage in each authorization indicated on the license. The fee for a license depends on the authorizations obtained by the license holder for that license year. DNR sets targets for the number of each tidal fish authorization to be issued annually and maintains a waiting list of qualified applicants. **Exhibit 1.1** lists available tidal fish license authorizations and the corresponding annual fees.

Exhibit 1.1 Tidal Fish License Authorizations and Fees

<u>Authorization</u>	<u>Annual Fee</u>
Finfish (hook and line only)	\$100
Finfish (all other equipment)	150
Blue Crabs (up to 50 pots and other specified gear)	100
Blue Crabs (over 50 pots and other specified gear)	150
Clams	100
Oysters (other than dredge boat)	100
Oysters (dredge boat)	250
Conch, Turtle, Lobster, and All Crabs of the Genus Cancer	100
Tidal Fishing Guide (Maryland resident)	100
Tidal Fishing Guide (nonresident)	200
Unlimited Tidal Fish (all authorizations)	300

Source: Annotated Code of Maryland, § 4-701(d) of the Natural Resources Article

In addition to the annual fees charged for the tidal fish license authorizations, DNR charges additional fees and surcharges for specified activities, as shown in **Exhibit 1.2**.

Exhibit 1.2
Additional Tidal Fish License Fees and Surcharges

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Additional Fee/Surcharge</u>
Use of Between 301 and 600 Blue Crab Pots, Inclusive	\$100
Use of Between 601 and 900 Blue Crab Pots, Inclusive	\$150
Master Fishing Guide	\$100 Per Vessel (in addition to the annual fishing guide license authorization fee)
Annual Harvester Registration Fee (for Those Catching Fish for Sale under an Authorization)	\$215
Oyster Surcharge	\$300
Seafood Marketing Surcharge (Tidal fish, Northern Snakehead or Chesapeake Channa*, or Blue or Flathead Catfish License Holder)	\$50
Seafood Marketing Surcharge (No Tidal Fish License Held)	\$250
Nonresident Surcharge	Greater of \$450 or the Difference Between the Amount Charged in Maryland vs. the Amount Charged in State of Residence for Like Fishing Activity
Assessment for Fish Tags/Hailing System on Persons Authorized to Catch Fish for Sale	Assessment Authorized

*Note: Chapters 571 and 572 of 2024 established the common name of the northern snakehead as “Chesapeake Channa.”

Source: Annotated Code of Maryland, § 4-701 of the Natural Resources Article

Seafood Dealer License

DNR issues a seafood dealer license for persons who buy, process, pack, resell, market, and otherwise deal in fish caught in Maryland tidal waters. The annual fees are (1) \$50 for a person who has an authorization to catch fish for sale and (2) \$250 for a person who does not have any of these authorizations.

Seafood Landing License

DNR issues a seafood landing license that authorizes an unlicensed person to sell fish that were caught in out-of-state tidal waters to buyers on shore in Maryland. The annual license fee is \$350.

Shrimp Fishery License

A person may not catch shrimp for commercial purposes in Maryland without obtaining a license from DNR. A participant in the commercial shrimp fishery must also obtain a Maryland shrimp permit to facilitate shrimp fishery data collection.¹⁶

Permits for Certain Commercial Species

DNR also issues permits for catching specified commercial species for sale. For striped bass, the annual permit fees are (1) \$200 for a license holder operating under a finfish authorization and (2) \$150 for a licensee operating under an unlimited tidal fish authorization. The annual permit fees for yellow perch, horseshoe crab, black sea bass, summer flounder, and snapping turtle are \$25. In addition, DNR is authorized to establish permits and an annual permit fee not exceeding \$25 for other commercial species and has exercised this authority by establishing a permit and an annual permit fee of \$25 for spiny dogfish.

Permits for Commercial Use of Finfish Trotline

DNR may issue a finfish trotline permit to the holder of a commercial tidal fish license who has met specified reporting requirements. This free permit authorizes the commercial use of finfish trotlines.

¹⁶ Chapter 407 of 2022 clarified that DNR's authority to regulate the shrimp fishery and to establish and implement the pilot program authorized under Chapter 119 of 2021 gives DNR the flexibility to test and use certain gear in the nascent shrimp fishery that may be restricted or prohibited by other provisions of law.

Fishing Guide Licenses

Freshwater Fishing Guide Licenses

A person who accepts payment for providing services as a fishing guide must obtain a license from DNR. There are three types of freshwater fishing guide licenses available: (1) the limited fishing guide license, Type L (limited); (2) the freshwater fishing guide, Type NT (nontidal); and (3) the freshwater fishing guide, Type NTT (nontidal/tidal). Each type of fishing guide license authorizes fishing in different areas and provides different authority. A fishing guide license holder must hold the appropriate underlying fishing licenses and trout stamp. Specific authorizations and prohibitions on the catch and possession of striped bass apply to anglers under the guidance of each type of fishing guide.

A Type L fishing guide license authorizes guide services in all waters of the State. A license holder may guide (1) anglers in up to three vessels that have no more than two occupants and are propelled by human power, including oars, paddles, and pedals; (2) up to 10 anglers on shore or on foot in the water; or (3) any number of anglers on shore or on foot in the water while participating in an educational or recreational program sponsored by a State or local governmental entity. The annual license fees are \$50 for a Maryland resident and \$100 for a nonresident.

A Type NT fishing guide license authorizes guide services only in nontidal waters of the State. Except in Deep Creek Lake, a vessel operated by a Type NT license holder may hold a maximum of four persons, including the license holder. The annual license fees are \$20 for a Maryland resident and \$50 for a nonresident.

A Type NTT fishing guide license authorizes guide services in all nontidal waters and specified tidal waters of the State. Except in Deep Creek Lake, a vessel operated by a Type NTT license holder may hold a maximum of four persons, including the license holder. The annual license fees are \$50 for a Maryland resident and \$100 for a nonresident. The number of Type NTT licenses issued annually is limited to 120 for residents and 30 for nonresidents.

Tidal Fishing Guide License

DNR issues the commercial fishing guide license authorizing fishing guide services in tidal waters of the State as an authorization under the tidal fish license. The annual fees for tidal fishing guide authorizations are \$100 for a Maryland resident and \$200 for a nonresident.

Master Fishing Guide License

DNR may issue an annual master fishing guide license to a person who on April 1, 1997, held a valid fishing guide license and either (1) owned two or more vessels used to carry passengers for fishing; (2) owned or operated a federally licensed vessel of 50 tons or more that was used to carry passengers for fishing; or (3) owned or operated a marina from which 10 or more vessels operated to carry passengers for fishing. A master fishing guide license holder may employ other

persons to guide fishing parties on vessels owned by the license holder. In addition, a master fishing guide who holds the license through ownership or operation of a marina may allow persons who do not have a fishing guide license but do hold a U.S. Coast Guard captain's license to operate a vessel to carry persons for fishing from the marina; in this situation, the number of persons who may be hired depends on the number of vessels operating out of the marina. The annual license fee for a master fishing guide license is \$100 per vessel (in addition to the annual fishing guide license authorization fee).

Special Charter Boat License

DNR may issue a special charter boat license (in the form of a decal that is attached to the boat) that allows individuals on either a single vessel operated by a fishing guide with a freshwater or tidal fishing guide license or on a vessel under the guidance of a fishing guide with a commercial fishing guide license to fish in tidal waters of the State without possessing any other fishing license. The annual fees for the special charter boat license are (1) \$240 for six-passenger capacity or less and (2) \$290 for a capacity of seven or more passengers.

Specialty Commercial Licenses and Permit

Commercial Northern Snakehead or Chesapeake Channa License

DNR may issue a commercial northern snakehead or Chesapeake Channa license that authorizes the holder to catch for sale northern snakehead or Chesapeake Channa in the tidal waters of the State using a bow and arrow attached to a retrieval line or a hook and line.¹⁷ The annual license fee is \$15, and the license is valid between September 1 of each year and August 31 of the following year, inclusive. An applicant for the license does not need to hold a tidal fish license.

Commercial Blue and Flathead Catfish Finfish Trotline License

DNR may issue the commercial blue and flathead catfish finfish trotline license. The license authorizes the holder to catch for sale blue and flathead catfish in the tidal waters of the State using a finfish trotline. The annual license fee is \$15. The license is valid between September 1 of each year and August 31 of the following year, inclusive. Neither an applicant for the license nor a license holder must hold a tidal fish license.

Special Commercial Fishing Pier License

DNR may issue a special commercial fishing pier license for use on a commercial pier in the tidal waters of the State. Any person on a licensed pier may fish from the pier without possessing any other fishing license. The annual license fee for the special commercial fishing pier license is \$290.

¹⁷ Chapters 571 and 572 of 2024 established the common name of the northern snakehead as "Chesapeake Channa."

Maryland Provisional Chesapeake Bay Charter Boat Permit

DNR may issue a Maryland Provisional Chesapeake Bay Charter Boat Permit to a person who (1) is licensed to operate a charter boat in Virginia and (2) provides documentation of fishing activity in Virginia in 2001 and 2002. The permit authorizes the holder to operate charter fishing trips in Maryland out of Virginia. The permit is not transferable. Unlike the holder of a special charter boat license, a permit holder is not required to hold a Maryland fishing guide license.

Chapter 2. Hunting Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Background

The Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS), in cooperation with DNR's Natural Resources Police (NRP), is responsible for administering and enforcing the State's hunting laws and programs. These responsibilities include setting harvest limits (also known as bag limits); establishing seasons; and managing the sale of hunting licenses, permits, and stamps.

Land management divisions within DNR, including WHS, the Maryland Park Service, and the Maryland Forest Service, have certain authority over access to hunting on public lands within their jurisdiction. For example, WHS oversees the management of Wildlife Management Areas in the State. The Park Service is responsible for setting hunting restrictions for Natural Resource Management Areas and Natural Environment Areas. Similarly, the Forest Service has authority over access to hunting in State forests.

DNR also oversees the State Wildlife Management and Protection Fund. Proceeds generated from license, permit, stamp, and application fees under State laws governing wildlife must be credited to the fund and used for the scientific investigation, protection, propagation, and management of wildlife. DNR also receives federal funds for the management and protection of wildlife based on the number of hunting licenses purchased in the State. During fiscal 2024, DNR received approximately \$28 in federal funds for every hunting license purchased, accounting for approximately \$9.2 million in revenues.

Hunting Licenses

General Hunting Licenses

With certain exceptions, a person must have a Maryland resident or nonresident hunting license to hunt or attempt to hunt all legal game birds and mammals during the appropriate season in the State.¹⁸ In general, a person must obtain a certificate of competency in firearms and hunter safety before obtaining a hunting license by successfully completing the Maryland hunter

¹⁸ Subject to certain specifications, the following individuals do not need a hunting license or any deer-related stamps to hunt in the State: (1) a farmland owner or tenant and the owner's or tenant's specified kindred when hunting on the owner's or tenant's farmland; (2) a Maryland resident serving in the U.S. Armed Forces while on leave and possessing a copy of the person's leave orders; (3) a person serving in the U.S. Armed Forces who has a service-connected disability; (4) a retired former member of the U.S. Armed Forces when hunting on active farmland owned by specified kindred of the member; (5) specified nonresident owners of farmland in the State under specified circumstances; and (6) any unarmed person participating in an organized foxhunt (§ 10-301(c) of the Natural Resources Article).

education course. Additionally, a person must obtain written permission from a landowner (or the landowner's agent) before hunting on the landowner's property.

Resident and Nonresident Hunting Licenses – Standard

Resident and nonresident hunting licenses enable a holder to hunt game birds and mammals during any appropriate season without the purchase of additional stamps, unless the holder is hunting migratory game birds, wild waterfowl, sika deer, or any deer during bow and arrow season or muzzle loader season (in which cases specified stamps are required). The purchase of a resident or nonresident hunting license does not authorize the purchaser to hunt furbearers or black bears. Each hunting license is valid from the date of issuance through July 31 the following year. The annual fee for a resident hunting license is \$35, while the annual fee for a nonresident hunting license is \$160. A nonresident who attends a college or university in the State may obtain a resident hunting license if the nonresident provides DNR with proof of enrollment.

Resident and Nonresident Hunting Licenses – Junior

Resident and nonresident junior hunting licenses enable a holder younger than age 16 to hunt all legal game birds and mammals during any appropriate season without the purchase of additional stamps, unless the purchaser is hunting migratory game birds, wild waterfowl, sika deer, or any deer during bow and arrow season or muzzle loader season (in which cases specified stamps are required). The purchase of a resident or nonresident junior hunting license does not authorize the purchaser to hunt furbearers or black bears. Each hunting license is valid from the date of issuance through July 31 the following year. The annual fee for a resident junior hunting license is \$15, but a resident junior hunter may receive a one-time free annual hunting license on successful completion of a hunter education course and submission of a specified application. The annual fee for a nonresident junior hunting license is \$80.

Resident Hunting Licenses – Senior

Resident senior hunting licenses enable a holder who is at least age 65 to hunt all legal game birds and mammals during any appropriate season without the purchase of additional stamps unless the purchaser is hunting migratory game birds, wild waterfowl, sika deer, or any deer during bow and arrow season or muzzle loader season (in which cases specified stamps are required). The purchase of a resident senior hunting license does not authorize the purchaser to hunt furbearers or black bears. Each hunting license is valid from the date of issuance through July 31 the following year. A resident senior hunting license may be purchased beginning in the calendar year in which the purchaser reaches age 65. The annual fee for a resident senior hunting license is \$5.

Nonresident Three-day Hunting License

Nonresident three-day hunting licenses (also known as nonresident three-day waterfowl and small game licenses) enable a holder to hunt all legal game during the appropriate season except deer, black bear, and turkey. Additional stamps are needed to hunt migratory game birds and wild waterfowl, and a specific permit is needed to hunt furbearers. The license is valid for three consecutive legal hunting days in a single season that are specified on the license. The fee for a nonresident three-day waterfowl and small game license is \$65.

Apprentice Hunting License

An apprentice hunting license allows the holder to hunt all legal game birds and mammals during the appropriate season without the purchase of additional stamps unless the purchaser is hunting migratory game birds, wild waterfowl, sika deer, or any deer during bow and arrow season or muzzle loader season (in which cases specified stamps are required). In general, DNR may not issue this license to a person who has previously been issued any hunting license in Maryland. However, DNR may reissue this license to a previous holder who is under the age of 17 years and who retakes a DNR approved online or electronic course of instruction in competency in firearms and hunter safety. Generally, a person hunting under an apprentice hunting license must be accompanied and directly supervised by an adult with a valid Maryland resident (nonapprentice) hunting license. The fee for an apprentice hunting license is \$15 for residents and \$40 for nonresidents.

Waterfowl Licenses

A person must have a waterfowl hunting guide license or waterfowl outfitter license to receive monetary compensation for outfitting or guiding a hunter to hunt wild waterfowl in the State.

Waterfowl Hunting Guide License

A waterfowl hunting guide is a person who is an employee of a waterfowl outfitter and furnishes personal guiding services, including accompanying hunters while in the field, calling wild waterfowl, directing the times and zones of shooting by hunters, directing the species and number of wild waterfowl taken by hunters, dispatching wounded wild waterfowl, and retrieving downed wild waterfowl. Waterfowl hunting guide licenses enable an employee of a waterfowl outfitter to provide personal guiding services that assist a person to hunt wild waterfowl in the State in exchange for the waterfowl outfitter receiving monetary compensation. The license is valid from the date of issuance through July 31 the following year. The annual fee for a waterfowl hunting guide license is \$50. A nonresident may provide waterfowl hunting guide services for hunting snow geese in Maryland without obtaining a waterfowl hunting guide license if the nonresident has a waterfowl hunting guide license in the nonresident's home state, that state has a law allowing a Maryland resident with a Maryland waterfowl hunting guide license to provide

services for hunting snow geese in that state, and the nonresident purchases a Maryland migratory game bird stamp.

Waterfowl Outfitter License

A waterfowl outfitter license enables the holder to outfit or guide a hunter to hunt wild waterfowl in the State in exchange for receiving monetary compensation. The license is valid from the date of issuance through July 31 the following year. The annual fee for a waterfowl outfitter license is \$300.

Waterfowl Processing Operation License

A person operating a waterfowl processing operation charges a fee or receives other consideration in exchange for picking or plucking feathers from waterfowl that are killed by a hunter. A person must have a waterfowl processing operation license to operate a waterfowl processing operation in the State. A waterfowl processing operation license is valid from the date of issuance through June 30 the following year. DNR is prohibited from charging a fee for the license.¹⁹

Stationary Offshore Blind Site License

A stationary offshore blind site is an offshore structure built on pilings or stakes that is used for hunting wild waterfowl. A stationary offshore blind site must be licensed for a person to hunt wild waterfowl from the site. A stationary offshore blind site license enables any person, regardless of their state of residence, who owns riparian property in the State to license their shoreline to (1) establish offshore stationary blinds or blind sites or (2) prevent the shoreline from being licensed at a later date by another person. When a portion of shoreline is licensed, no other person may receive a license for the same portion of shoreline, regardless of whether the original license holder establishes a stationary blind or blind site. A stationary offshore blind site license is valid for a period of one or three years and expires on June 30 one or three years after the date of issuance. The fee is \$20 for a one-year license and \$60 for a three-year license.

Offshore Blind Site License

An offshore blind site is a specific location in the water where a person may hunt wild waterfowl from a boat that is tied to or anchored at a stake. An offshore blind site must be licensed for a person to hunt wild waterfowl from the site. Subject to certain exceptions, an offshore blind site license enables any Maryland resident who possesses a current or prior year hunting license to

¹⁹ Section 10-425(a)(2) of the Natural Resources Article.

license riparian shoreline for the purpose of establishing an offshore blind site.²⁰ Stationary offshore blind site licenses have priority over offshore blind site licenses, and a person who does not own riparian property may license up to two offshore blind sites per day.²¹ An offshore blind site license is valid from the date of issuance through June 30 the following year. The fee is \$20 for a one-year offshore blind site license and \$60 for a three-year license.

Specialty Hunting Licenses

Patron's Hunting License

A patron's hunting license enables the holder to hunt any game birds or mammals during any open season and in any manner authorized in the State without obtaining any other license or stamp, except the federal migratory wild waterfowl stamp and the Maryland migratory game bird stamp. A patron's license is valid for one year, and the annual fee is \$500.²²

Senior Consolidated Hunting License

Before August 1, 2002, DNR made available the senior consolidated hunting license (or senior lifetime consolidated license) to residents beginning in the year that the resident attains the age of 65 years. The senior consolidated license enables the holder to hunt any game birds or mammals during any open season and in any manner authorized in the State without obtaining any other license or stamp, except the federal migratory wild waterfowl stamp and the Maryland migratory game bird stamp. Although Chapter 177 of 2002 repealed DNR's authority to issue the senior consolidated hunting license, licenses issued before August 1, 2002, were grandfathered and remain in effect until the death of the license holder. The fee for a senior consolidated lifetime hunting license was \$12.50.

Regulated Shooting Ground Special Hunting License

A regulated shooting ground is a State-licensed tract of land or water on which an operator may raise, release, and hunt certain captive-raised game birds in accordance with specified conditions.²³ Generally, a person may not hunt these game birds on a regulated shooting ground without a regulated shooting ground special hunting license or a Maryland resident or nonresident

²⁰ Generally, any Maryland resident may apply for a stationary offshore blind site or an offshore blind site license, regardless of whether the person owns riparian property in the State. However, in Kent and Queen Anne's counties and on the nontidal waters of the Potomac River and the tributaries to the nontidal portion of the Potomac River, only riparian property owners may license a stationary offshore blind site or an offshore blind site (§ 10-608(g) of the Natural Resources Article).

²¹ A riparian property owner who is licensing their own property does not have a limit on the number of blind sites that may be licensed in a single day (§ 10-608(e) of the Natural Resources Article).

²² Although §10-301.2 of the Natural Resources Article establishes a patron's hunting license, DNR advises that, in practice, there is no "patron's license" sold in the State.

²³ A person hunting from a shoreline located within the regulated shooting area may place decoys, retrieve downed birds, and shoot crippled birds on adjacent waters and must follow the bag and possession limit for properly marked captive-raised mallard ducks (COMAR 08.03.13.05).

hunting license.²⁴ A regulated shooting ground special hunting license enables a person who does not have a resident or nonresident hunting license to hunt certain game birds on a regulated shooting ground. A regulated shooting ground special hunting license is valid from the date of issuance through June 30 the following year. The annual fee for a regulated shooting ground special hunting license is \$6.

Commemorative, Complimentary, and Discounted Hunting Licenses

Commemorative Lifetime Hunting License

From June 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011, DNR was required to issue a limited number of commemorative lifetime hunting licenses to certain nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations that received commemorative lifetime hunting licenses were authorized, in cooperation with DNR, to market and sell the licenses. Proceeds from commemorative lifetime hunting licenses were allocated to NRP for conservation law enforcement purposes.

Complimentary Hunting Licenses

A complimentary hunting license provides the license holder with the same privileges as a standard hunting license. DNR may issue an *annual* complimentary hunting license to (1) the President of the United States; (2) the governor of any state; or (3) an official or an enforcement officer of the game and fish management agency of another state that reciprocally offers complimentary hunting licenses to Maryland counterparts.

DNR may also issue a *lifetime* complimentary hunting license to Maryland residents and out-of-state individuals who meet certain conditions. A Maryland resident may receive a lifetime complimentary hunting license if the resident is certified as (1) a former prisoner of war; (2) an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs determines is unemployable;²⁵ or (3) a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran. An out-of-state individual may receive a lifetime complimentary hunting license if (1) the individual certifies that the individual is a former prisoner of war, an American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable, or a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran and (2) the individual's state of residence extends similar privileges similar, reciprocal privileges to Maryland residents. A recipient of a lifetime complimentary hunting license is subject to statutory competency in firearms and hunter safety requirements.

Discounted Hunting Licenses

Maryland residents who are Purple Heart award recipients are entitled to a 50% discount on hunting licenses, stamps, and permits. There is also a Recreational License Incentive

²⁴ A person holding a resident or nonresident hunting license is not required to obtain a regulated shooting ground special hunting license to hunt on the regulated shooting ground (§ 10-906(d) of the Natural Resources Article).

²⁵ Chapters 489 and 490 of 2024 authorized DNR to issue lifetime complimentary hunting licenses to American veterans determined to be unemployable.

Discount Program that authorizes DNR to incentivize individuals to obtain hunting licenses and other licenses by offering a discount of no more than 50% to certain individuals, though the program has yet to be implemented.

Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund

The Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund, which is administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, provides grants to eligible sponsor organizations to fund recreational hunting or fishing opportunities, including providing specified licenses and stamps at no cost, along with other listed outdoor recreational activities and opportunities for specified beneficiaries. Beneficiaries may include Gold Star recipients, disabled veterans or other veterans who could benefit from one of the opportunities provided, disabled members of the U.S. Armed Forces or other members of the U.S. Armed Forces who could benefit from the opportunities provided, and permanently disabled persons who require the use of a wheelchair. A person may make an electronic donation to the fund when purchasing specified recreational hunting and fishing licenses (or corresponding stamps) through DNR's electronic licensing system.

Hunting Permits

General Hunting Permits

Furbearer Permit – Individual and Group

A furbearer means any coyote, raccoon, bobcat, opossum, beaver, mink, muskrat, otter, fox, skunk, fisher, and long-tailed weasel. With certain exceptions, a Maryland resident or nonresident must have a furbearer permit to hunt, chase, or trap any furbearer in the State or participate in the unarmed chasing of foxes and raccoons in the State.²⁶ Generally, any person who traps or attempts to trap furbearers in the State under the authority of a furbearer permit must first obtain a certificate of trapper education.²⁷

An individual furbearer permit enables the purchaser to hunt, chase, or trap any furbearer in the State or participate in the unarmed chasing of foxes and raccoons. An individual furbearer permit is valid from the date of issuance through July 31 the following year, and the annual fee

²⁶ A furbearer permit is not required to hunt or trap a furbearing animal if (1) a person possesses a valid wildlife control cooperator permit and is engaging in the control of furbearing mammals in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit; (2) a landowner possesses a landowner wildlife damage control permit; (3) a landowner is destroying a muskrat that is damaging an embankment or impoundment; (4) a landowner is hunting or trapping a coyote, fox, or skunk that is damaging or destroying the personal or real property of the landowner on their land; (5) an owner of a marsh or the owner's employees are hunting a raccoon that destroys a muskrat or its home in a marsh area of the State; or (6) a landowner or the landowner's agent is setting or using traps or similar devices at any time to trap raccoons or opossums that are damaging property (COMAR 08.03.06.06). A furbearer permit is also not required for a person hunting under an apprentice hunting license.

²⁷ A trapper education certificate is not required for a person hunting under an apprentice hunting license or if the person held a furbearer permit before August 1, 2007.

is \$5. Nonresidents must also obtain a nonresident trapping license to trap furbearers in Maryland. The fee for a nonresident trapping license is \$50.²⁸

A group furbearer permit enables an association or group established for the purpose of chasing or hunting furbearers to organize and offer hunting or chasing of furbearers to the association or group's members or guests. A group furbearer permit is valid for the period from August 1 of each year through July 31 the following year, and the annual fee is \$50. The group hunting or chasing must occur within the open season for the species being pursued. A group furbearer permit is only available to a group that is hunting or chasing a furbearer (including foxes), not trapping. Any unarmed participant in a chase is exempt from the requirement to obtain a hunting license.

Management and Control Permits

Deer Management Permit

DNR establishes the open season to hunt forest and upland game birds and mammals by regulation each year. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. Currently, there are three seasons to hunt deer in Maryland: (1) deer bow hunting season; (2) deer firearms season; and (3) deer muzzle loader season.²⁹

Maryland landowners or agricultural lessees who are experiencing severe economic loss to commercially grown crops (including row crops, truck crops, pasture, nursery stock, orchards, and certain tree plantings) or significant ecological damage to certain native plant communities due to deer may apply to receive a deer management permit.³⁰ Deer management permits are issued by WHS. The permit allows permit holders or their agents, known as "designated shooters," to remove deer from the designated property outside the established deer hunting seasons and deer bag limits, subject to permit conditions imposed by DNR, including on any Sunday throughout the year.³¹ Both a permit holder and all designated shooters are required to carry a copy of the permit signed

²⁸ Section 10-502 of the Natural Resources Article sets the nonresident trapping license annual fee at the higher of \$25.50 or the fee charged by the nonresident's home state for a similar license. Chapters 543 and 544 of 2023, however, set the annual fee at \$50. This report references the later-enacted \$50 annual fee established under Chapters 543 and 544 and reflected in the 2024–2025 *Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping* published by DNR.

²⁹ DNR established a 3-day primitive deer hunt beginning in the 2020-2021 deer bow hunting and muzzle loader seasons, during which a deer hunter may only use a primitive weapon to hunt deer. A primitive weapon is defined as (1) a vertical bow that does not use any mechanical devices that aid in drawing the bow or holding a drawn bow or (2) a flintlock or percussion cap sidelock muzzle loading firearm (COMAR 08.03.01.01).

³⁰ COMAR 08.03.04.02.

³¹ Subject to certain exceptions, during the deer hunting season, permit holders and their agents shooting deer under the authority of a deer management permit must possess a current, valid Maryland hunting license. Outside of deer hunting season, permit holders and their agents must be eligible to hold a hunting license (*see* Maryland Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Heritage Service's *Deer Management Permit General Conditions*).

by both the permit holder and designated shooter while attempting to take a deer under the terms of the permit.³² A deer management permit is valid for a period not to exceed one year and is free.

DNR may authorize an individual who hunts deer under a deer management permit to use specified firearms to hunt deer on (1) private property in Baltimore, Calvert, Charles, Harford, and St. Mary's counties in the locations and under the conditions set forth in the permit and (2) on State agricultural crop land leased by a permit holder in the locations and under the conditions set forth in the permit.

Deer Cooperator Permit

Deer cooperators are businesses that provide deer control assistance through nonlethal and lethal deer management techniques in areas where hunting is limited or prohibited. A deer cooperator permit enables the holder to conduct deer removal handling operations. A deer cooperator permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance and the annual fee is \$100.

Wildlife Damage Control Permit

The primary obligation of a wildlife damage control operator when performing wildlife damage control services is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and conserve the State's diverse wildlife populations. A wildlife damage control permit enables the holder to reduce, eliminate, or prevent damage caused by wildlife to persons or property in accordance with the regulations for the species or species groups authorized on the permit. A wildlife damage control permit also enables the purchaser to provide care and treatment of sick or injured wildlife for rehabilitation and release back into the wild. There are four classes of wildlife damage control permits: (1) landowner; (2) commercial operator – business; (3) commercial operator – assistant; and (4) public agency operator. The landowner permit is issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).³³ The commercial permits and public agency operator permit are issued by WHS.³⁴

³² The permit prohibits wanton waste, and an individual who intentionally wounds or kills a deer under the authority of a deer management permit is required to make a reasonable effort to take possession of the wounded or dead deer (COMAR 08.03.04.02).

³³ A landowner wildlife damage control permit is not required to control (1) game mammals or birds during legal hunting seasons with legal devices; (2) deer under the authority of a deer management permit; (3) Canada geese under the authority of a Canada goose depredation permit; (4) blackbirds and crows under certain circumstances; (5) nutria; (6) woodchucks; (7) feral pigeons; (8) European starlings; (9) house sparrows; or (10) mice, moles, rats, or voles if the species or species group causes damage or destroys the personal or real property of the landowner (COMAR 08.03.15.03).

³⁴ A commercial or public agency wildlife damage control permit is not required to (1) control deer under the authority of a deer cooperator permit; (2) control mice, moles, rats, or voles if the species is not listed as a threatened or endangered species; (3) transport sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife to specified locations; (4) remove dead animals from areas within the State if the person is under contract with a governmental agency to provide removal services; (5) respond to rabid animal complaints or other public health emergencies; or (6) control European starlings, feral pigeons, and house sparrows under certain circumstances (COMAR 08.03.15.04).

Landowner: In general, a landowner who wants to control specified wildlife on the landowner's property must obtain a landowner wildlife damage control permit from USDA. Based on its evaluation of whether a permit will resolve the problem, USDA may issue a permit specifying (1) the species to be controlled; (2) the procedures for controlling the wildlife; (3) how the wildlife is to be disposed; and (4) the effective dates for the permit. Landowner permits expire after two months but, if necessary, may be extended for an additional two months.

Commercial Operator – Business: A commercial-business wildlife damage control permit enables the holder to charge a fee or receive compensation for providing wildlife damage control services in the State. The permit is valid for up to one year and expires on December 31 of the year that it is issued. The annual fee for a commercial-business wildlife damage control permit is \$50.

Commercial Operator – Assistant: A commercial-assistant wildlife damage control permit enables an employee or assistant of a commercial-business wildlife damage control operator to provide wildlife damage control services when the employee or assistant is working without the direct supervision of the commercial-business wildlife damage control operator.³⁵ The permit is valid for up to one year and expires on December 31 of the year that it is issued. The annual fee for a commercial-assistant wildlife damage control permit is \$25.

Public Agency Operator: A public agency wildlife damage control permit enables a government agency to provide wildlife damage control services in the State. The permit is valid for one year and expires on December 31 of the year that it is issued. There is no cost for a public agency wildlife damage control permit if the applicant (1) is a governmental agency or a verified government contractor and (2) provides wildlife damage control services at no cost to the complainant.

Resident Canada Goose Depredation Permit

A resident Canada goose is a Canada goose that either nests within Maryland or resides in the State during the months of April, May, June, July, and August. An agricultural producer must have a resident Canada goose depredation permit to use lethal means to control resident Canada geese outside of the Canada goose hunting season that is established annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.³⁶ A resident Canada goose depredation permit, which is managed by DNR in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, enables an agricultural producer to control resident Canada geese at agricultural facilities through harassment and lethal means depending on the time of the year.³⁷ An agricultural producer can use egg oiling, destruction of

³⁵ In emergency situations, employees or assistants of a commercial-business wildlife damage control operator who do not have commercial-assistant wildlife damage control permits may work without the direct supervision of the commercial-business wildlife damage control operator.

³⁶ An "agricultural producer" means an agricultural lease holder, farm manager, landowner, or sharecropper who is actively engaged in commercial agriculture (COMAR 08.03.07.10).

³⁷ An "agricultural facility" means any parcel or parcels of land from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been produced and sold, during the last 12-month period (COMAR 08.03.07.10).

nests, and harassment to discourage Canada geese from an agricultural property throughout the year. From April 1 through August 31, an agricultural producer and their employees and agents may hunt the birds under the permit. There are recording and reporting requirements associated with the permit, and a permit holder must meet all reporting requirements in a timely manner to qualify for a new permit.³⁸ Further, all management actions must occur on the premises of the depredation area. The permit is valid from the date of issuance through August 31 the following year and is free.

Regulated Shooting Ground Permits

A regulated shooting ground (also known as a regulated shooting area) is a tract of land, including any waters, on which a permit holder may raise, release, hunt, and allow other persons to hunt for a fee, certain animals as specified in the permit. A person must have a regulated shooting ground permit to operate a regulated shooting ground. A regulated shooting ground permit enables the holder to raise, release, hunt, and allow other persons to hunt for a fee, captive-raised pheasant, bobwhite quail, chukar partridge, Hungarian partridge, turkeys, and mallard ducks on the permitted regulated shooting ground as specified on the permit and in regulation. The permit is valid from the date of issuance through June 30 each year. The annual fee for a regulated shooting ground permit is \$150.

Specialty Hunting Permits and Passes

Universal Disability Pass

A person with a hunting license who has a disability that impairs mobility may obtain a universal disability pass that allows the person to hunt from a stopped vehicle in designated areas. The universal disability pass is a free lifetime pass that does not require renewal.

Snow Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season Permit

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service establishes the light goose conservation season each year. “Light goose” includes the greater snow goose, lesser snow goose, and Ross’s goose. A person must have a snow goose conservation order hunting season permit to hunt light geese during the light goose conservation season, in addition to any other required licenses or stamps.³⁹ The annual fee for the permit is \$5, and the permit is valid for one year.

³⁸ Each permit holder must keep a log of the activity taken under the permit and the corresponding date. The log must be kept for three years and be made available to wildlife enforcement officers on request. Additionally, each permit holder must submit an annual report to WHS.

³⁹ A person who is exempt from purchasing a hunting license is still required to obtain a snow goose conservation order hunting season permit before hunting light geese during the light goose conservation season.

Black Bear Hunting Permit

A black bear hunting permit enables the purchaser to hunt black bears in the State, subject to certain restrictions and requirements.⁴⁰ Only one black bear may be harvested by a permit holder for the season. The black bear hunting permit is only available through the Maryland Black Bear Lottery process, and each applicant must pay a \$15 nonrefundable application fee. The permit is valid for the black bear hunting season.⁴¹

Retriever Dog Training Permit

A retriever dog training permit enables the holder to possess and release captive-raised quail, chukar partridge, pheasant, and mallard ducks to train a retriever dog during closed seasons.⁴² The annual fee for the permit is \$5, and the permit is valid from the date of issuance through July 31 the following year.

Falconry Permit

Falconry is the sport of hunting game birds and mammals or other wildlife by using a trained raptor. A person must have a falconry permit to take, possess, or transport raptors for falconry or hunting.⁴³ A falconry permit enables the purchaser to take, possess, train, fly, and hunt with falcons, hawks, or owls. There are three classes of permits: (1) apprentice; (2) general; and (3) master. The annual fee for each class of permit is \$10, and each class of permit is valid for one year.

Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program Permit

The Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) is used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and DNR to generate reliable estimates of hunting activity and the number of all migratory game birds harvested throughout the country. A person must have a HIP permit to hunt all migratory game birds in the State. A HIP permit, in addition to certain stamp requirements, enables the purchaser to hunt wetland game birds, dove, or woodcock in Maryland during hunting seasons established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.⁴⁴ The HIP permit is free and is issued with the Maryland migratory game bird stamp.

⁴⁰ Restrictions and requirements for hunting black bears include prohibiting the use of hunting dogs, scent attractants, and electronic calls; field dressing requirements; and reporting requirements (COMAR 08.03.04.20).

⁴¹ The 2024 black bear season is from October 21 through October 26. Black bear hunting season is open in Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington counties.

⁴² A retriever dog training permit is not required to shoot game birds during an open season or on a licensed shooting preserve.

⁴³ A nonresident falconry permit will be recognized as valid in the State if the falconer's resident state is recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a participating state, and the falconer's resident state allows reciprocity for Maryland falconers (COMAR 08.03.09.07B.(7)).

⁴⁴ A person who is exempt from purchasing a hunting license is still required to obtain a HIP permit before hunting any wetland game birds, dove, or woodcock (COMAR 08.03.10.12).

Hunting Stamps

In addition to a hunting license, a stamp is required for a hunter to use certain types of equipment or hunt certain kinds of game. The stamp allows DNR to more closely manage the equipment used or game hunted under the stamp.

Bow and Arrow (Archery) and Muzzle Loader Stamps – Resident and Nonresident

In addition to a hunting license, deer archery hunters must purchase an archery stamp to hunt deer with archery equipment, which includes crossbows during deer archery season and long bows or recurve bows during the primitive deer hunt days. Muzzle loader hunters must purchase a muzzle loader stamp to hunt during deer muzzle loader season (also known as deer black powder season) or during primitive deer hunt days when using a flintlock or sidelock percussion muzzleloader. Further, archery hunters must also purchase a muzzle loader stamp to hunt deer with archery equipment during deer muzzle loader season. When archery and muzzleloader seasons overlap, a license holder may not possess archery equipment and muzzleloaders at the same time.

The cost for an archery stamp is \$6 for a Maryland resident and \$25 for a nonresident. A resident junior hunter may receive a one-time free archery stamp on successful completion of a hunter education course and submission of a specified application. Similarly, the cost for a muzzle loader stamp is \$6 for a resident and \$25 for a nonresident. A resident junior hunter may also receive a one-time free muzzle loader stamp on successful completion of a hunter education course and submission of a specified application.

Bonus Antlered Deer Stamp – Resident and Nonresident

DNR establishes bag limits (the number and type of deer that a hunter may take) by season and region. For all regions and seasons (archery, muzzle loader, and firearms), the bag limit is two antlered white-tailed deer total for all seasons combined (any combination of archery, muzzle loader, and firearms), with no more than one antlered white-tailed deer in any season. A bonus antlered deer stamp, or bonus deer stamp, is required for any license holder to take a third antlered white-tailed deer during one season of their choice (archery, muzzle loader, or firearms), except during the October muzzle loader season. Hunting license holders may purchase the bonus antlered deer stamp to take an additional antlered white-tailed deer in Region B (generally the eastern portion of the State) or take an antlered white-tailed deer in Region A if the license holder has already harvested an antlered white-tailed deer in Region B during the same weapon season. In no case may a license holder take more than two antlered white-tailed deer or more than three antlered white-tailed deer with the use of a bonus antlered deer stamp, for the license year. For a Maryland resident, the stamp costs \$10; for a nonresident, the cost is \$25.

Migratory Game Bird Stamp

A Maryland migratory game bird stamp, in addition to a hunting license, is required to hunt all migratory game birds (coots, doves, rails, snipe, waterfowl, and woodcock). The HIP permit, discussed under the Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program Permit section of this report, is issued in conjunction with this stamp. The fee is \$15.⁴⁵ Additionally, a federal migratory bird hunting and conservation stamp, also referred to as a “Federal Duck Stamp,” is required to hunt waterfowl and coots. The fee for the federal stamp is either \$25 or \$27, depending on where the stamp is purchased.

Sika Deer Stamp – Resident and Nonresident

A sika deer stamp, in addition to a hunting license and any weapon specific stamp, is required to hunt sika deer. For a Maryland resident, the stamp costs \$10; for a nonresident, the cost is \$200.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ DNR may sell expired migratory game bird stamps below face value to the general public for a period of three years, after which time the department must shred any unsold expired stamps.

⁴⁶ Chapter 592 of 2024 increased the nonresident sika deer stamp fee from \$25 to \$200.

Appendix 1. Aquaculture in Maryland

Background

In General

Aquaculture is the rearing of finfish, shellfish, and aquatic plants, often for sale, trade, barter, or shipment. Aquaculture is more prevalent in the rest of the world, particularly in East Asia, than in the United States. However, the practice began to receive more focused attention in the United States during the 1970s when many domestic fisheries reached maximum sustainable yields due to harvest pressure, pollution, disease, and habitat loss. That attention resulted in the passage of the National Aquaculture Act in 1980. The National Aquaculture Act was designed to promote aquaculture in the United States by encouraging aquaculture activities and programs in both the public and private sectors, establishing and implementing a national aquaculture plan, providing for the coordination and dissemination of relevant data and best practices among various federal agencies, and, to the extent feasible, facilitating financing for aquaculture activities.

Maryland

Aquaculture is still a nascent industry in Maryland, though shellfish aquaculture (specifically oyster aquaculture) has rapidly expanded in recent years. State requirements for aquaculture operations vary depending on the type of aquatic species a person intends to raise, the type of aquaculture activities a person wants to engage in, and the location where those activities will take place. All aquaculture activities require some sort of permit or other authorization issued by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Additionally, because the State owns the waters of the State and the land beneath it, aquaculture activities occurring in Maryland waters necessitate some form of lease.⁴⁷ These and other requirements are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

DNR is the lead agency for coordinating and streamlining the process of applying for State aquaculture authorizations and enforcing laws governing aquaculture. DNR also employs an Aquaculture Coordinator to assist persons in obtaining the authorizations necessary to conduct aquaculture activities in the State.

⁴⁷ State regulations define “Maryland waters” to mean “tidal and nontidal waters located within the boundaries of the State, including that portion of the Atlantic Ocean within the boundaries of the State, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and all ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, public ditches, and public drainage systems within the State.” *See* COMAR 08.02.14.03 and 08.02.23.02.

Shellfish Aquaculture in Maryland Waters

Overview

The most common type of aquaculture in Maryland is shellfish aquaculture. While the State's interest in aquaculture lies largely in the production and restoration of oyster resources in State waters, there were also reported aquaculture harvests of hard clams⁴⁸ and bay scallops⁴⁹ in 2023. A person who wants to engage in commercial shellfish aquaculture in Maryland waters must obtain, at a minimum, (1) a shellfish aquaculture lease; (2) a federal permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps); and (3) a shellfish aquaculture harvester permit. Additional authorizations are required for nursery operations and individuals other than a permit-holder who harvest shellfish from a lease area.

Lease Requirements

In 2009 the General Assembly made several changes to the State's shellfish leasing program in an attempt to incentivize shellfish aquaculture in Maryland, particularly with respect to oysters.⁵⁰ The legislation and subsequent amendments required DNR to identify and establish by regulation public shellfish fishery areas, which are reserved for wild oyster harvests and off limits to aquaculture. The rest of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Coastal Bays were made available for commercial shellfish aquaculture leases, both on the bottom and within the water column, subject to certain restrictions.

In general, a person may not import or possess within the State shellfish taken from waters outside of the State for planting in the waters of the State without the approval of DNR. A shellfish aquaculture leaseholder must comply with (1) any standards for planting, harvesting, and use of the leased area established by DNR; and (2) the regulations established by the Maryland Department of Health in consultation with the Department of the Environment (MDE) to carry out the mandate of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. Shellfish planted or harvested in accordance with a lease are subject to inspection by DNR.

Commercial Shellfish Aquaculture Leases

State law define an "aquaculture lease" as a lease of any submerged land or the water column in State waters for cultivating oysters or other shellfish for commercial purposes. In general, DNR may only issue an aquaculture lease in waters of the Chesapeake Bay or the Atlantic Coastal Bays after MDE classifies the waters as approved, conditionally approved, or restricted for harvest. However, an aquaculture lease may be authorized in waters where harvest is otherwise prohibited by MDE provided that the lease is used exclusively for the planting and gathering of

⁴⁸ The aquaculture harvest of hard clams was first reported in 2017.

⁴⁹ The first aquaculture harvest of bay scallops was reported in 2021. The number and value of bay scallops harvested is not publicly reported for business privacy reasons since there are fewer than three growers in Maryland.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 174 of 2009.

seed for aquaculture and the leaseholder complies with the requirements of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. Any lease located within a sanctuary must be compatible with oyster restoration and must satisfy DNR criteria for permissible leasing within a sanctuary.

An applicant for an aquaculture lease must pay a nonrefundable fee of \$300 to DNR. Aquaculture leases are transferrable, subject to DNR approval.

Submerged Land Leases

A submerged land lease is the lease by the State of any land lying beneath the waters of the State to any person for cultivating oysters and other shellfish, generally for commercial purposes. In general, the holder of a submerged land lease may cultivate shellfish on the submerged land only and may not use cages or floats. However, DNR may approve the use of temporary protective enclosures on the surface of the submerged land or other manners for cultivating shellfish on the submerged land.

A submerged land lease may be of any size provided the leaseholder actively uses the leased area. The rental rate for a submerged land lease is \$3.50 per acre per year. The term of a submerged land lease is 20 years.

Water Column Leases

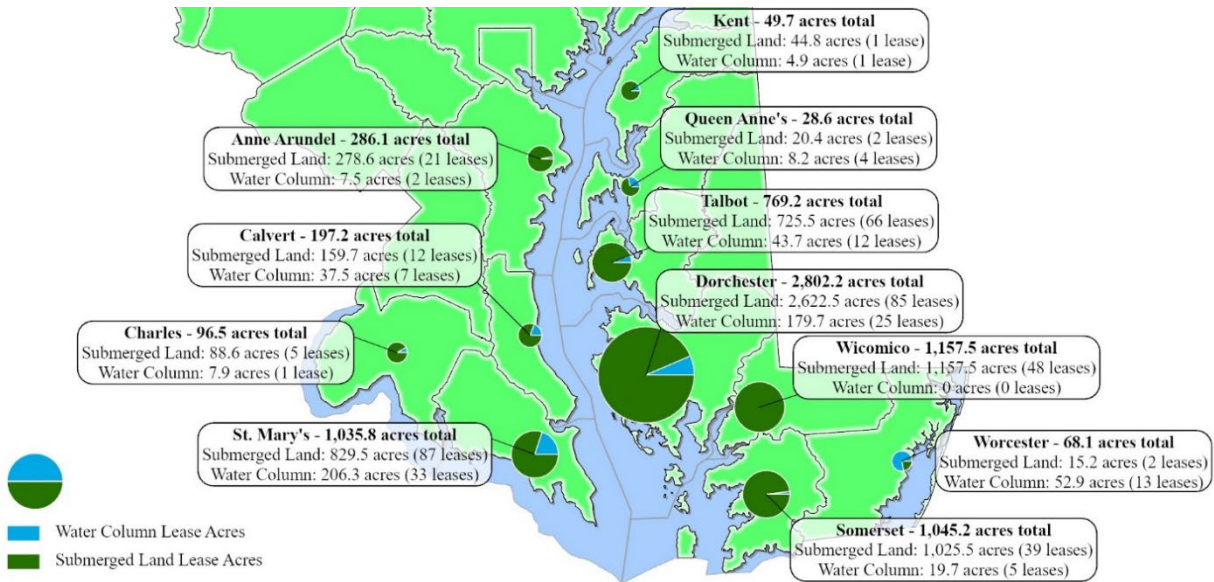
A water column lease is a lease of the column of water on or under the surface of the water and above the surface of the submerged land. A person with a water column lease in the waters of the State may cultivate shellfish (1) subject to approval by the Corps, on or under the surface of the water in a floating structure or (2) in any other manner authorized by DNR.

A water column lease may be of any size provided the leaseholder actively uses the leased area. The rental rate for a water column lease is \$25 per acre per year. The term of a water column lease is 20 years. Additionally, DNR requires water column lease holders to maintain at their expense, throughout the term of the lease, insurance against loss or liability in connection with bodily injury, death, or property damage or destruction occurring within the leased area or arising out of the use of the lease by the leaseholder or its agents, employees, officers, and visitors.

Commercial Leasing by County

Exhibit 1 shows a summary of submerged land and water column leasing by county as of July 2023.

Exhibit 1
Oyster Aquaculture: Submerged Land and Water Column Leasing Summary
(as of July 2023)



Source: University of Maryland Extension; Department of Legislative Services

Demonstration Leases

In addition to the commercial aquaculture leases previously described, DNR may issue demonstration leases for certain noncommercial activities. A demonstration lease is a lease of submerged land to demonstrate the ecological benefits of growing shellfish or for research or educational purposes. DNR may issue a demonstration lease to a public high school, an incorporated college or university in the State, a 4-H club, or a nonstock, nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State exclusively for educational, conservation, or ecological purposes. An application for a demonstration lease must include a declaration that the applicant intends to actively use the leased area for demonstration purposes and a proposed plan for active use of the lease. A demonstration lease may not be assigned or transferred, and a demonstration leaseholder must actively use the lease for the required purposes. A person may not harvest shellfish for commercial or consumption purposes from an area that is subject to a demonstration lease.

The size of a demonstration lease may not exceed 5 acres. There is no rental charge for a demonstration lease. The term of a demonstration lease is 20 years.

Federal Permit Requirements

A Corps general permit is required for (1) any activity in the waters of the United States that involves a discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters that are determined to cause only minimal adverse environmental effects or (2) structures or work in navigable waters that are determined to cause only minimal adverse environmental effects.⁵¹ Placement of shellfish seed, placement of suitable substrate that is used in aquaculture, and transplanting and harvesting activities are considered a discharge of fill and trigger a requirement to obtain a Corps permit. Likewise, the installation, operation, and maintenance in navigable waters of buoys, floats, racks, trays, bags, nets, lines, tubes, containers, anchors, stakes, and other structures used in aquaculture operations requires a Corps permit.

In Maryland, the Corps has implemented Nationwide Permit 48 for use by commercial shellfish aquaculture operations in the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic coastal bays, and their tidal tributaries. To facilitate the federal permit application process, DNR utilizes a single Joint State/Federal application, which includes the application for both a Corps permit and a State aquaculture lease. A completed application for a Corps permit must include, among other information (1) contact information for the applicant and any person acting as an agent for the applicant; (2) the location of the proposed aquaculture operation; (3) a description of the proposed aquaculture operation, including size, proposed culture and harvesting methods and equipment to be used, and species to be cultivated; (4) a description of any other facilities to be used to support the aquaculture operation, including storage and staging areas and access points; (5) a description of any recreational or commercial uses of the proposed project area; and (6) a project vicinity map, project site plan, and cross-sectional view plan. The policy of the Corps is to attempt to approve or deny a permit within 60 days after receipt of a properly completed application.

While Nationwide Permit 48 is sufficient for most shellfish aquaculture operations, more complex, larger, or ecologically impactful projects may require individual permits. Individual permits have enhanced public notice requirements and require a longer timeframe for review and approval.

Harvester Permits and Registrations

Commercial fishing license requirements do not apply to the harvesting of shellfish from aquaculture leases. Instead, individuals working on a lease site must generally hold either a shellfish aquaculture harvester permit or a shellfish harvester registration card.

Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit

With the exception of demonstration leaseholders, all leaseholders must possess a shellfish aquaculture harvester permit before engaging in aquaculture activities. A shellfish aquaculture

⁵¹ 33 CFR Part 39, which describes the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers, defines “navigable waters of the United States” to mean “those waters that are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and/or are presently used, or have been used in the past, or may be susceptible for use to transport interstate or foreign commerce.”

harvester permit (1) is valid for a 1-year term beginning on January 1 and expiring on December 31 each year; (2) is automatically renewed for a new term on receipt of all required reports; (3) is not transferable; and (4) is an operator card for the purposes of authorization and identification.

Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Registration

Except for an individual working under the supervision of a shellfish aquaculture harvester permit holder who is present on the leased area, an individual engaged in aquaculture activities within the leased area must be (1) named as a permit holder or permit registrant under the shellfish aquaculture harvester permit and (2) in possession of the applicable shellfish aquaculture harvester registration card issued by DNR. A shellfish aquaculture harvester permit holder must immediately notify DNR of any changes regarding named permit registrants. DNR must issue a shellfish aquaculture harvester registration card to each shellfish aquaculture harvester permit holder and permit registrant. A shellfish aquaculture harvester permit holder is responsible for all work and acts performed on the leased area under the permit holder's supervision.

Other Permits

Depending on the type of shellfish aquaculture activity a person intends to engage in, other permits may be required in addition to or alternative to the permits previously discussed.

Shellfish Nursery Permit

A person must obtain a shellfish nursery permit from DNR to commercially rear shellfish seed in areas that are not under a lease. For a shellfish nursery to be located in the waters of the State, DNR may issue a permit only (1) to the owner of a wharf or other structure constructed on or about the water and approved by the Corps or to a person with the owner's permission and (2) for the cultivation of shellfish seed within 20 feet of the wharf or other structure in an area of water that does not exceed 200 square feet. A permitted shellfish nursery operation located in State waters is not required to obtain a water column or submerged land lease. For a shellfish nursery to be located on land, DNR may issue a permit only to the owner or legal tenant of the property or to a person with the permission of the property owner.

Shellfish nursery products are exempt from water quality classifications and restrictions established by MDE under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. A permit holder must allow DNR to inspect at reasonable hours any facilities, equipment, or shellfish that are part of the permit holder's shellfish nursery operations. The application fee for a shellfish nursery permit is \$100. The term of a shellfish nursery permit is 5 years.

Shellfish Import Permit

A person must obtain a shellfish import permit before importing live shellfish or shell, seed, or larvae from out-of-State for placement in Maryland waters, including placement on an aquaculture lease. A shellfish import permit application must be submitted to DNR at least 30 days

before the anticipated shipping date of the out-of-State product. DNR may issue a shellfish import permit if the applicant presents proof satisfactory to DNR that the shellfish product will not harm native shellfish.

Shellfish Aquaculture Pilot Program Permit

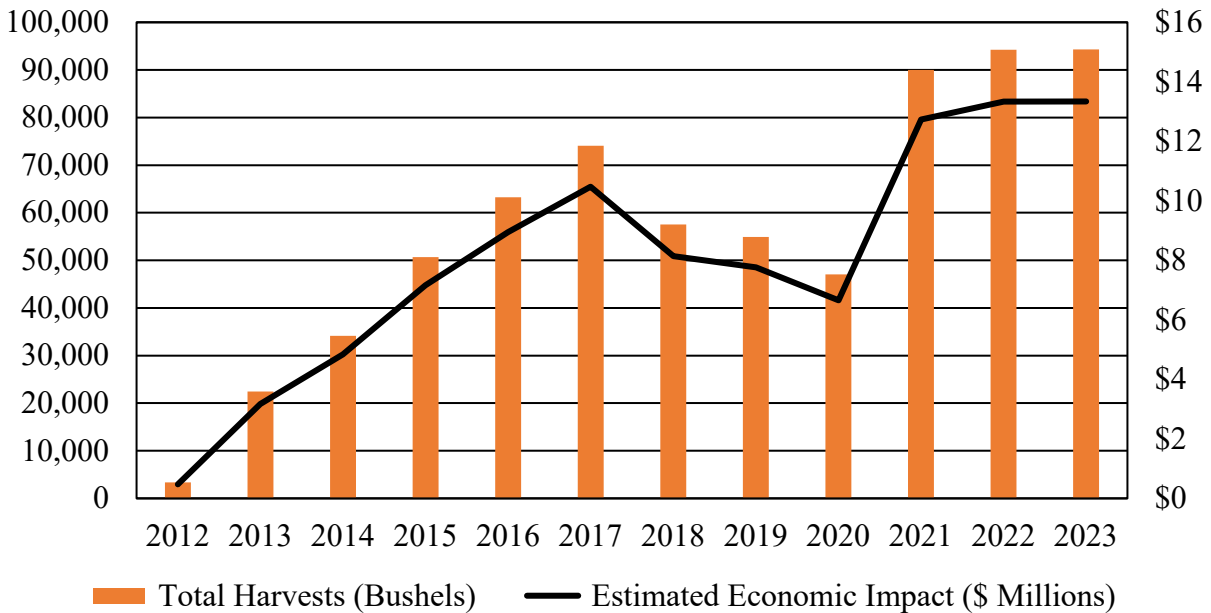
DNR, in cooperation with the aquaculture industry, is authorized to develop pilot programs to demonstrate and evaluate new approaches to managing shellfish aquaculture in Maryland. To participate in a shellfish aquaculture pilot program a person must apply to DNR for and obtain a shellfish aquaculture pilot program permit. To be eligible for a pilot program permit, the applicant must be named on a shellfish aquaculture harvester permit or registration card. A permit holder must comply with any permit conditions required by DNR, and DNR may cancel participation of a permit holder in a pilot program at its discretion.

Oyster Aquaculture Industry Growth

A significant part of the General Assembly's intent for the 2009 aquaculture legislation⁵² and subsequent amendments was to incentivize oyster aquaculture in Maryland as one part of a broader effort to increase the oyster population and production and improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. The 2023 Maryland oyster aquaculture harvest of 94,286 was the largest aquaculture harvest since the modern leasing program started recording harvests in 2012. Additionally, in 2023 DNR received 16 new oyster aquaculture lease applications and issued 14 new leases, indicating continued growth in the State's aquaculture industry. **Exhibit 2** shows the trajectory of the oyster aquaculture harvest beginning in 2012.

⁵² See Chapter 174 of 2009.

Exhibit 2
Oyster Aquaculture Harvest Data



Note: Estimated economic impact includes direct effects, indirect effects, and induced effects of the oyster aquaculture industry.

Source: University of Maryland Extension

Other Forms of Aquaculture

Overview

While the majority of aquacultural activity in the State is in the form of raising oysters (and, to a much lesser extent, other shellfish) in State waters, other aquacultural activities are authorized. These activities include the rearing of nonshellfish species in recirculating tank or pond systems and may be undertaken for commercial, research, or personal enjoyment reasons. Species produced have included various native fish, hybrid striped bass, channel catfish, tilapia, shrimp, turtles, koi, marine corals, ornamental fish, and aquatic plants. In 2023, DNR received reports on the production in the State of bog plants, tilapia, largemouth bass, red- and yellow-bellied turtles, red-eared sliders, widgeon grass, and miscellaneous corals.

Aquaculture Permits for Nonshellfish Operations

All aquacultural activities, with the exception of shellfish aquaculture on a leased or licensed area, require an aquaculture permit. DNR may issue an aquaculture permit to engage in the following aquacultural activities: (1) the aquaculture of specified native and naturalized species of fish or aquatic plants listed in DNR regulations; (2) the aquaculture of any native or naturalized species of fish or aquatic plants not expressly listed by DNR or any nonnative species of fish or aquatic plants, provided the permit application satisfies the enhanced criteria established by DNR; (3) the aquaculture of species listed as threatened or endangered under Maryland's Endangered Species of Fish Conservation Act; (4) the capture of brood stock; (5) the aquaculture of shellfish in confined, on-shore facilities; or (6) demonstration and experimental aquaculture of native or naturalized finfish in the tidal waters of the State.

A person who intends to engage in aquaculture activities in Maryland must apply for a permit on a form provided by DNR, provide DNR with specified information, and allow DNR to inspect at reasonable hours the site of any proposed aquaculture facility. DNR may deny a permit application to possess species of fish or aquatic plants that may have an adverse impact on fish populations or ecosystems.

Aquaculture permits are free of charge and are not transferrable. Each permit is valid for a five-year period and expires on December 31 of the fifth year after issuance.

Enterprise Leases

An enterprise lease is the lease of a water column to a person by DNR to research or test the feasibility of cultivating native or naturalized species of aquatic plants for commercial purposes. DNR may not issue an enterprise lease for the cultivation of a nonnative species. A holder of an enterprise lease may cultivate aquatic plants in any manner approved by DNR.⁵³

A person who wants to obtain an enterprise lease must complete and submit an application to DNR on a form DNR requires and pay a nonrefundable application fee established by DNR in consultation with the Aquaculture Coordinating Council. DNR may deny an enterprise lease application for reasonable cause or include any conditions in the lease. DNR must establish, in consultation with the Aquaculture Coordinating Council, an annual amount of rent for an enterprise lease and the size of the lease may not exceed two acres. The term of an enterprise lease may not exceed five years. An enterprise lease may not be assigned, transferred, or renewed; any transfer or assignment of or attempt to transfer or assign an enterprise lease voids the lease and the interest in the water column reverts to the State without the necessity of any action by the State.

⁵³ Although DNR has yet to implement the enterprise lease program, there are some aquatic plant aquaculture operations in Maryland that are authorized under general aquaculture permits. According to DNR, species currently produced include (1) water lily; (2) various bog plants; (3) sago pondweed; (4) redhead grass; and (5) widgeon grass.

Appendix 2. Sunday Hunting in Maryland

Sunday Hunting Generally

Hunting game birds or mammals on Sundays is generally prohibited in the State, with specified exceptions.

Game Birds and Mammals on Private Property or Public Land

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may allow Sunday hunting for any game bird or mammal, except migratory game birds, in Allegany, Cecil, Garrett, St. Mary's, and Washington counties during the open season for these animals on private property and public land designated for Sunday hunting by DNR.

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting in Frederick County from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January of the following year on private property and public land designated for Sunday hunting by DNR.

DNR may allow Sunday hunting for any game bird or mammal, except migratory game birds, in Dorchester County during the open season for these animals on private property. DNR also may allow Sunday turkey hunting in Dorchester County during the spring turkey hunting season on public land designated for hunting by DNR. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) on each Sunday of the deer hunting seasons from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January, inclusive or (2) on each Sunday of the spring turkey hunting season.

DNR may allow Sunday hunting for any game bird or mammal, except migratory game birds, in Calvert, Caroline, Charles, and Queen Anne's counties during the open season for these animals on private property. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) on each Sunday of the deer firearms season; (2) on the last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November during the deer bow hunting season; and (3) on each Sunday of the spring turkey hunting season.

DNR may allow Sunday hunting for any game bird or mammal, except migratory game birds, in Somerset County during the open season for these animals on private property and public land leased to a hunt club. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) on each Sunday of the deer firearms season and (2) on the last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November during the deer bow hunting season.

DNR may allow Sunday hunting for any game bird or mammal, except migratory game birds, in Wicomico County during the open season for these animals on private property and public land designated for hunting by DNR. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) on the first Sunday of the deer firearms season and (2) on the last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November during the deer bow hunting season.

DNR may allow Sunday hunting for any game bird or mammal, except migratory game birds, in Worcester County during the open season for these animals on private property and public land designated for hunting by DNR. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) on each Sunday of the deer firearms season and (2) on the last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November during the deer bow hunting season.

Deer on Private Property

All Seasons

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Carroll County in all deer hunting seasons from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January of the following year.

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Kent County on each Sunday in all deer hunting seasons. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) to a participant in the junior deer hunt; (2) on one Sunday in the deer firearms season as designated by DNR; and (3) on each Sunday during the deer bow hunting season and the deer muzzle loader season.

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Montgomery County on each Sunday in all deer hunting seasons. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) to a participant in the junior deer hunt and (2) on one Sunday in the deer firearms season and the deer bow hunting season as designated by DNR.

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Talbot County on each Sunday in all deer hunting seasons. In general, Sunday hunting may only occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. However, the time restriction does not apply (1) to a participant in the junior deer hunt; (2) on one Sunday in the deer firearms season as designated by DNR; and (3) on the last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November during the deer bow hunting season.

Firearms Season

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Harford County on each Sunday of the deer firearms season.

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Anne Arundel County on the first Sunday of the deer firearms season.

Bow Season

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Harford County on the last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November of the deer bow season.

DNR may allow Sunday deer hunting on private property in Anne Arundel County on the first Sunday in November of the deer bow season.

Turkey on Private Property

DNR may allow Sunday turkey hunting on private property in Carroll, Kent, and, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m., Talbot counties on Sundays during the spring turkey hunting season.

Miscellaneous

Junior Hunt

DNR may allow a person who is age 16 or younger and is participating in a junior hunt to hunt on a Sunday.

Traditional Sunday Hunting

DNR may allow the following persons to hunt game birds and mammals on a Sunday: (1) a person using State-certified raptors to hunt game birds or mammals during open season for these animals; (2) an unarmed person participating in an organized fox chase; and (3) a person using a regulated shooting ground to hunt pen-reared game birds or tower-released flighted mallard ducks.

Deer Management Permit Holders

DNR may allow a person with a deer management permit to shoot deer on any Sunday throughout the year in accordance with the terms of the permit.

Express Prohibitions

In general, a person may not hunt on a Sunday in Baltimore City or Baltimore, Howard, or Prince George's counties. This prohibition in these counties does not apply to the previously described acts of traditional Sunday hunting. In addition, a person with a deer management permit may shoot deer under the permit on a Sunday in these counties.

A person may not hunt migratory game birds on a Sunday.

A person may not hunt on public land within the State Park system on a Sunday.