

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

An Act To Expand Turkey Hunting

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

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §11109, sub-§3, as corrected by RR 2011, c. 1, §15, is amended to read:

3. Hunting licenses; combination licenses; fees. Hunting licenses, combination licenses and fees are as follows.

A. A resident junior hunting license, for a person 10 years of age or older and under 16 years of age, is \$7. Notwithstanding the permit fees established in subchapter 3, a resident junior hunting license includes all permits, stamps and other permissions needed to hunt at no additional cost.

B. A resident hunting license, for a person 16 years of age or older, is \$25.

C. A resident small game hunting license, for a person 16 years of age or older, which permits hunting for all legal species except deer, bear, ~~turkey~~, moose, raccoon and bobcat, is \$14.

D. A resident combination hunting and fishing license is \$42.

E. A resident combination archery hunting and fishing license is \$42.

E-1. A resident apprenticeship hunter license, which includes a bear hunting permit ~~and a wild turkey hunting permit~~ under ~~sections~~section 11151 ~~and 11155~~ respectively, is \$25.

F. A nonresident junior hunting license, for a person 10 years of age or older and under 16 years of age, is \$34.

G. A nonresident small game hunting license, which permits hunting of all legal species except deer, bear, ~~turkey~~, moose, raccoon and bobcat, is \$74.

H. A nonresident 3-day small game hunting license, valid for 3 consecutive hunting days, which permits hunting of all legal species except deer, bear, ~~turkey~~, moose, raccoon and bobcat for the 72-hour period specified on the license, is \$49.

I. A nonresident big game hunting license, which permits hunting of turkey and all legal species subject to the permit requirements in subchapter 3, is \$114.

J. A nonresident combination hunting and fishing license is \$149.

K. An alien small game hunting license, which permits hunting of all species except deer, bear, ~~turkey~~, moose, raccoon and bobcat, is \$79.

L. An alien big game hunting license, which permits hunting of turkey and all legal species subject to the permit requirements in subchapter 3, is \$139.

M. An alien combination hunting and fishing license is \$190.

N. A license to use leashed dogs to track wounded animals, which permits a person to use one or more leashed dogs to track a lawfully wounded deer, moose or bear, is \$27.

O. A nonresident small game apprenticeship hunter license, which permits the hunting of all legal species except deer, bear, ~~turkey~~, moose, raccoon and bobcat, is \$74.

P. A nonresident big game apprenticeship hunter license, which permits the hunting of all legal species and includes a bear hunting permit and a wild turkey hunting permit under ~~sections~~section 11151 and ~~11155~~ respectively, is \$114.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §11155, as amended by PL 2009, c. 213, Pt. OO, §8, is repealed.

Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §11701, as amended by PL 2003, c. 552, §9 and affected by §15 and c. 614, §9 and amended by c. 655, Pt. B, §179 and affected by §422 and Pt. C, §§2 and 6, is further amended to read:

§ 11701. Authority of commissioner; wild turkey hunting

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

1. Spring season. Establish a spring open season for hunting turkeys. Unless the commissioner determines by rule that sound management principles require otherwise, during the spring open season:

A. Hunting is permitted from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset; and

B. A person may take up to 2 male turkeys without any additional fee for the taking of the 2nd male turkey; and

2. Fall season. Establish a fall open season for hunting turkeys. Unless the commissioner determines by rule that sound management principles require otherwise, the fall open season must include the month of October. During the fall open season:

A. Hunting is permitted from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset; and

B. A person may take up to 2 turkeys regardless of sex without any additional fee for the taking of a 2nd turkey.

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

Sec. 4. 12 MRSA §12301-A, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §226 and affected by §422, is amended to read:

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

Sec. 5. 12 MRSA §12302-A, sub-§1, ¶¶B and C, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §228 and affected by §422, are amended to read:

B. Present that animal for registration in that person's name at the first open registration station for that animal on the route taken by that person, except that wild turkey may be registered electronically or telephonically in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner under section 12301-A; and

C. Leave the registration seal attached to the animal in accordance with section 12301-A until that animal is processed and packaged for consumption or, in the case of a wild turkey electronically or telephonically registered in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner under section 12301-A, comply with the requirements of those rules.

SUMMARY

This bill expands turkey hunting opportunities by:

1. Eliminating the turkey permit requirements and allowing the hunting of turkey with a big game or small game hunting license;
2. Providing for electronic or telephonic registration of turkeys; and
3. Requiring the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to establish spring and fall hunting seasons in which hunting is allowed during all daylight hours. The fall season must include the month of October, and in both seasons a person may take up to 2 turkeys; in the spring season both must be male.