

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

**ON THE FEASIBILITY OF CHANGING
THE OPENING DAY OF DEER SEASON**

TO

THE GOVERNOR

AND

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 4

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1982**

FRANK F. EVEREST, JR. CHAIRMAN
BOX 188 SPRINGFIELD 22150
WA I LEVERIDGE VICE-CHAIRMAN
P 5511, VIRGINIA BEACH 23455
JL
-BC. .8 BRISTOL 24201
W FRANK CHAPMAN, JR
P.O BOX 350 120 BLVD SALEM 24153
ALLAN A. HOFFMAN, M.D.
1040 MAIN ST. DANVILLE 24541
JAMES R. KNIGHT JR., D.D.S.
BOX 438 WARSAW 22572
I LEE POTTER
3120 N. WAKEFIELD ST., ARLINGTON 22207
GEORGE L. SHEPPARD, JR., M.D.
P.O. BOX 431, WINCHESTER 22601
RICHARD T. SPAIN
BOX 47A, WAVERLY 23890
FRANK T. SUTTON, III
200 SO. THIRD ST., RICHMOND 23219



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

COMMISSION OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

Box 11104

Richmond, 23230-1104

R.H. CROSS, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
4010 WEST BROAD STREET
BOX 11104
RICHMOND, 23230

December 17, 1981

Honorable John N. Dalton
Governor of Virginia
State Capitol
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Dalton:

The report contained herein is pursuant to the House Joint Resolution No. 265 of the 1981 Session of the General Assembly of Virginia.

This report comprises the response by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries to the request that the Commission consider the feasibility of changing the opening day of deer season from a Monday to the preceding Saturday.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. H. Cross, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

R. H. Cross, Jr.
Executive Director

RHC:na

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 265

Offered January 19, 1981

Expressing the sense of the General Assembly that the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries consider changing the opening day of deer season from a Monday to the preceding Saturday.

Patrons--Baliles and Thomas

Referred to the Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources

WHEREAS, the opening day of deer season has traditionally been established by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries to be a Monday; and

WHEREAS, a great majority of individuals who participate in the hunting of deer are employed and thus required to be at their place of employment on Mondays; and

WHEREAS, in some instances a decline in attendance of employees has been noted on those Mondays which coincide with the opening day of deer season thus resulting in a lack of productivity; and

WHEREAS, it would appear to be advantageous to employees, employers, and the general deer-hunting population if the opening day of deer hunting were a Saturday; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that it is the sense of this body that the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries is requested to consider the feasibility of changing the opening day of deer season from a Monday to the preceding Saturday.

PROCEDURES

On February 19, 1981, the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries met in Richmond for a regularly scheduled meeting to consider hunting and trapping season regulations. At that time, Executive Director James F. McInteer, Jr. advised the Commission that the General Assembly had enacted a House Joint Resolution to request the Commission to consider changing the opening day of deer season from a Monday to the preceding Saturday. On February 20, 1981, the Commission voted unanimously to amend the proposals regarding the deer seasons east and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains to include a provision for the Saturday opening day. To avoid potential conflicts with annual leave dates already selected by many sportsmen for the 1981 hunting season, the proposal was made to become effective in 1982.

The proposal regarding the Saturday opening date for deer, along with other regulations proposals, was advertised for public consideration in approximately 125 newspapers statewide.

SUMMARY

Public comments, opposing the proposed Saturday opening day for deer season, were received from the following:

Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors
Bath County Board of Supervisors
Grayson County Board of Supervisors
Forest Supervisor, George Washington National Forest
Evergreen Hunt Club
Goshen Wildlife Rod and Gun Club
Tazewell County Sportsman's Club
Augusta County Izaak Walton League of America

and approximately two dozen individual sportsmen. No comments were received in support of the proposal.

Additionally, a newspaper opinion poll was conducted by a Roanoke outdoor reporter with the Roanoke Times and World News. The poll indicated that an overwhelming majority of sportsmen opposed a Saturday opening for deer.

The proposal and public input regarding the proposal were reviewed at the May 1, 1981 Regulation adoption meeting of the Commission. A summary of the opposition to the proposal to open deer season on a Saturday is as follows:

1. Increased hunting pressure would likely occur as a result of the Saturday opening day for deer. This would increase the percentage of the harvest of deer taken on the first day and is not in harmony with management efforts to increase hunter opportunity by extending the harvest over a period of time.
2. An increased participation and concentration of hunters on a Saturday opening day could create a substantial hunter safety problem as well as creating additional hunter-landowner conflicts. Most landowners indicated that their lands were already at capacity for the number of hunters on the Monday opening and that increased numbers may result in an excess burden.
3. The present deer season is preceded by several other game seasons including small game. A Saturday opening for deer would, without modification to numerous other seasons (i.e., squirrel, quail, rabbit, grouse), effectively curtail small game hunting on a date that has usually provided substantial recreational opportunity for a large number of sportsmen.
4. A Saturday opening was not felt to be the solution to employee or school absenteeism. Most non-local hunters utilize the Saturday and Sunday prior to the Monday opening day to travel to hunting areas, establish camps, scout for deer signs, and choose hunting locations. A Saturday opening could be counter-productive in that more sportsmen may elect to take leave on Thursday and Friday in order to accomplish the above mentioned related activities. The net effect would be the loss of productivity on two weekdays (i.e., Thursday and Friday) instead of the present one day (Monday).

CONCLUSION

After receiving and considering all public comments and recommendations, the Commission unanimously voted to reject the proposal providing for a Saturday opening date for deer hunting.

