

AN ACT concerning wildlife.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Illinois Hunting Heritage Protection Act.

Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds the following:

(1) Recreational hunting is an important and traditional recreational activity in which 14,000,000 Americans 16 years of age and older participate.

(2) Hunters have been and continue to be among the foremost supporters of sound wildlife management and conservation practices in the United States.

(3) Persons who hunt and organizations related to hunting provide direct assistance to wildlife managers and enforcement officers of federal, state, and local governments.

(4) Purchases of hunting licenses, permits, and stamps and payment of excise taxes on goods used by hunters have generated billions of dollars for wildlife conservation, research, and management.

(5) Recreational hunting is an essential component of effective wildlife management, in that it is an important tool for reducing conflicts between people and wildlife and provides incentives for the conservation of wildlife, habitats, and ecosystems on which wildlife depend.

(6) Recreational hunting is an environmentally acceptable activity that occurs and can be provided for on State public lands without adverse effects on other uses of that land.

Section 10. Definitions. For the purposes of this Act:

"Department" means the Department of Natural Resources.

"Department-managed lands" means those lands that the Department owns or those lands of which the Department holds management authority.

"Director" means the Director of Natural Resources.

"Hunting" means the lawful pursuit, trapping, shooting, capture, collection, or killing of wildlife or the attempt to pursue, trap, shoot, capture, collect, or kill wildlife.

Section 15. Recreational hunting.

(a) Subject to valid existing rights, Department-managed lands shall be open to access and use for recreational hunting except as limited by the Department for reasons of public safety, fish or wildlife management, or homeland security or as otherwise limited by law.

(b) The Department shall exercise its authority, consistent with subsection (a), in a manner to support, promote, and enhance recreational hunting opportunities, to the extent authorized by State law. The Department is not required to give preference to hunting over other uses of Department-managed lands or over land or water management priorities established by Department regulations or State law.

(c) Department land management decisions and actions may not, to the greatest practical extent, result in any net loss of land acreage available for hunting opportunities on Department-managed lands that exists on the effective date of this Act.

(d) By October 1 of each year, the Director shall submit to the General Assembly a written report describing:

(1) the acreage administered by the Department that has been closed during the previous year to recreational hunting and the reasons for the closures; and

(2) the acreage administered by the Department that, in order to comply with subsection (c), was opened to recreational hunting to compensate for those acreage closed under paragraph (1).