



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Raised Bill No. 7231

LCO No. 5753



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT CONCERNING SUNDAY HUNTING.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 26-3 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

3 The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall
4 enforce all of the laws relating to fish and wildlife of the state and shall
5 possess all powers necessary to fulfill the duties prescribed by law with
6 respect thereto and to bring actions in the proper courts of this state for
7 the enforcement of such laws and the orders and regulations adopted
8 and promulgated by said commissioner. Said commissioner shall have
9 the supervision of hatcheries and retaining ponds and of the
10 introduction, propagation, securing and distribution of such fish and
11 wildlife as are adapted to the waters or lands of this state, and may
12 designate, as closed to fishing, areas of inland waters to provide for
13 spawning beds. The commissioner may take at any time or place, [other
14 than Sundays,] using any method consistent with professional wildlife
15 management principles, any fish, crustacean, bird or animal for
16 scientific and educational purposes, public health and safety,

17 propagation and dissemination, or protection of natural or agricultural
18 ecosystems. Such taking shall not include the use of a snare. In the case
19 of an imminent threat to public health or public safety, notwithstanding
20 any provision of the general statutes, the commissioner may take at any
21 time or place, using any method consistent with professional wildlife
22 management principles, any fish, crustacean, bird or animal. Said
23 commissioner shall have jurisdiction of all matters relating to fish and
24 wildlife on any land belonging to the state and the regulation of hunting,
25 fishing and trapping and the use of the waters of any lake, pond or
26 stream on such land. The commissioner shall not grant to any
27 conservation officer, appointee or other person any special privileges
28 with respect to hunting, fishing, trapping or the use of the waters of any
29 lake, pond or stream on such land. Said commissioner may erect
30 buildings upon any such land, subject to the permission of the
31 authorities of any institution or commission controlling such land and
32 the approval of the Commissioner of Administrative Services and the
33 State Properties Review Board. The Commissioner of Energy and
34 Environmental Protection may employ such special assistants as
35 necessary. Said commissioner shall cooperate with the United States
36 Fish and Wildlife Service and the fish and wildlife commissioners of
37 other states. Said commissioner may acquire, by gift or lease and, with
38 the approval of the Governor alone, by purchase, lands for the
39 establishment of fish hatcheries or game preserves and fisheries or
40 wildlife management areas. Said commissioner may, with the approval
41 of the Attorney General, grant rights-of-way or other easements or
42 leases for public purposes to the United States government, any
43 subdivision of the state or any public utility within the state on or with
44 respect to any lands under jurisdiction of said commissioner if said
45 commissioner finds that such purposes are not in conflict with the
46 public interest, provided any such public utility shall pay for any right-
47 of-way, easement or lease so granted such compensation as said
48 commissioner considers reasonable. Said commissioner shall have
49 authority to establish the boundaries of any properties under the
50 jurisdiction of said commissioner by agreement with owners of

51 adjoining property and may, with the approval of the Attorney General
52 alone, exchange land with such property owners and execute deeds in
53 the name of the state for the purpose of establishing such boundaries.
54 The commissioner may provide for the importation of fish and wildlife,
55 and provide for the protection, propagation and distribution of such
56 imported or native fish and wildlife. The commissioner may locate, lay
57 out, construct and maintain nurseries and rearing ponds where fish may
58 be planted, propagated and reared and liberate and distribute such fish
59 in the waters of this state. Said commissioner may acquire by gift,
60 purchase, capture or otherwise any fish or wildlife for propagation,
61 experimental or scientific purposes. Notwithstanding any provisions of
62 the general statutes, said commissioner may destroy and dispose of any
63 undesirable or diseased wildlife in the interest of wildlife management
64 at any time or place and using any method consistent with professional
65 wildlife management principles if said commissioner determines that
66 such wildlife (1) aggressively invades, or is likely to be detrimental to,
67 agricultural crops, native plants, livestock or wildlife, (2) is likely to be
68 a carrier of insects, disease or parasites detrimental to such crops, plants
69 or wildlife, (3) is likely to have a detrimental effect on natural or
70 agricultural ecosystems, (4) is likely to be detrimental to endangered or
71 threatened species or species of special concern, as listed in the
72 regulations adopted by the commissioner under this chapter, or such
73 species' essential habitats, or (5) causes severe property damage. The
74 commissioner may enter into cooperative agreements with educational
75 institutions and state, federal or other agencies to promote wildlife
76 research and to train personnel for wildlife management, information,
77 distribution and education projects, and may enter into cooperative
78 agreements with federal agencies, municipalities, corporations,
79 organized groups or landowners, associations and individuals for the
80 development of fish or wildlife management and demonstration
81 projects. The commissioner may allocate and expend for the protection,
82 restoration, preservation and propagation of fish and wildlife all funds
83 of the state collected, appropriated and acquired for the purpose.

84 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 26-31 of the general statutes is
85 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
86 *1, 2025*):

87 (d) Any certified conservation education-firearms safety instructor
88 while giving such instruction and any person scheduled to receive such
89 instruction may possess and transport shotguns and rifles on [Sunday]
90 any day of the week and [on said day] may discharge such firearms on
91 any state-owned property with prior approval of the agency controlling
92 such property and on any privately owned property with the
93 permission of the owner. [the provisions of section 26-73 to the contrary
94 notwithstanding.]

95 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 26-49 of the general statutes is
96 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
97 *1, 2025*):

98 (b) Said commissioner may authorize the establishment and
99 operation of regulated hunting dog-training areas and may issue to any
100 person holding a private shooting preserve permit, as provided for
101 under section 26-48, or to any established game breeder holding a game
102 breeder's license, as provided for under section 26-40, or to any person
103 holding a commercial kennel license, as provided for under section 22-
104 342, a permit, which shall expire on June thirtieth next after issuance and
105 for which a fee of eighteen dollars shall be charged, authorizing the
106 liberation of artificially propagated game birds and pigeons, legally
107 possessed and suitably tagged with tags furnished by the commissioner,
108 for which a reasonable fee may be charged, and the subsequent shooting
109 of such game birds and pigeons by persons authorized by any such
110 permittee, in connection with the training of hunting dogs only, at any
111 time, [including Sunday;] provided permission to shoot [on Sunday] on
112 the area specified in the permit shall have the approval of the proper
113 authorities of the town or towns in which such dog-training area is
114 located and shall apply only to the period from sunrise to sunset.

115 Sec. 4. Section 26-52 of the general statutes is repealed and the
116 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

117 The commissioner may issue to any responsible person or authorized
118 field trial group a permit to hold field dog trials, on land approved by
119 the commissioner as suitable for the purpose, at any time [, including
120 Sunday,] during daylight hours, at which liberated game birds,
121 waterfowl and pigeons legally possessed may be shot. All such game
122 birds shall, immediately after being shot, be tagged with tags furnished
123 by the commissioner, for which a reasonable fee may be charged. Such
124 game birds so tagged may be possessed, transported, bought and sold
125 at any time. Tags shall not be removed from such game birds until such
126 time as such birds are finally prepared for consumption. The
127 commissioner may, by regulation, govern and prescribe the minimum
128 number of such birds that shall be released, the method of liberating and
129 the method of taking such birds, the species and sex of such birds that
130 may be shot, locations where such field dog trials may be held, periods
131 of the year when such field dog trials may be held, the maximum
132 number of such field dog trials that shall be sponsored or conducted by
133 an individual or group during the period from July first to June thirtieth
134 and the method of reporting all such activities. Notwithstanding the
135 provision of any regulation to the contrary, the fee for a permit to hold
136 a field dog trial on state-owned land shall be thirty-five dollars and the
137 fee for a permit to hold a field dog trial on private land shall be eighteen
138 dollars.

139 Sec. 5. Subsection (a) of section 26-82 of the general statutes is
140 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
141 *1, 2025*):

142 (a) No person shall hunt, pursue, wound or kill any deer or sell or
143 offer for sale or have in possession the flesh of any deer captured or
144 killed in this state, or have in possession the flesh of any deer from any
145 other state or country unless it is properly tagged as required by such
146 state or country except as provided by the terms of this chapter or

147 regulations adopted pursuant thereto, and except that any landowner
148 or primary lessee of land owned by such landowner or the husband or
149 wife or any lineal descendant of such landowner or lessee or any
150 designated agent of such landowner or lessee may kill deer with a
151 shotgun, rifle or bow and arrow provided a damage permit has first
152 been obtained from the commissioner and such person has not been
153 convicted for any violation of this section, section 26-85, 26-86a, as
154 amended by this act, 26-86b or 26-90 or subsection (b) of section 26-86a-
155 2 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies within three years
156 preceding the date of application. Upon the receipt of an application, on
157 forms provided by the commissioner and containing such information
158 as said commissioner may require, from any landowner who has or
159 whose primary lessee has an actual or potential gross annual income of
160 twenty-five hundred dollars or more from the commercial cultivated
161 production of grain, forage, fruit, vegetables, flowers, ornamental plants
162 or Christmas trees and who is experiencing an actual or potential loss of
163 income because of severe damage by deer, the commissioner shall issue
164 not more than six damage permits without fee to such landowner or the
165 primary lessee of such landowner, or the wife, husband, lineal
166 descendant or designated agent of such landowner or lessee. The
167 application shall be notarized and signed by all landowners or by the
168 landowner or a lessee to whom a farmer tax exemption permit has been
169 issued pursuant to subdivision (63) of section 12-412. Such damage
170 permit shall be valid through October thirty-first of the year in which it
171 is issued and may specify the hunting implement or shot size or both
172 which shall be used to take such deer. The commissioner may at any
173 time revoke such permit for violation of any provision of this section or
174 for violation of any regulation pursuant thereto or upon the request of
175 the applicant. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 26-85, the
176 commissioner may issue a permit to any landowner or primary lessee
177 of land owned by such landowner or the husband or wife or any lineal
178 descendant of such landowner or lessee and to not more than three
179 designated agents of such landowner or lessee to use a jacklight for the
180 purpose of taking deer when it is shown, to the satisfaction of the

181 commissioner, that such deer are causing damage which cannot be
182 reduced during the daylight hours between sunrise and one-half hour
183 after sunset on the land of such landowner. The commissioner may
184 require notification as specified on such permit prior to its use. Any deer
185 killed in accordance with the provisions of this section shall be the
186 property of the owner of the land upon which the same has been killed,
187 but shall not be sold, bartered, traded or offered for sale, and the person
188 who kills any such deer shall tag and report each deer killed, as
189 provided in section 26-86b. Upon receipt of the report required by
190 section 26-86b, the commissioner shall issue an additional damage
191 permit to the person making such report. Any deer killed otherwise than
192 under the conditions provided for in this chapter or regulations adopted
193 pursuant thereto shall remain the property of the state and may be
194 disposed of by the commissioner at the commissioner's discretion to any
195 state institution or may be sold and the proceeds of such sale shall be
196 remitted to the State Treasurer, who shall apply the same to the General
197 Fund, and no person, except the commissioner, shall retail, sell or offer
198 for sale the whole or any part of any such deer. No person shall be a
199 designated agent of more than one landowner or primary lessee in any
200 calendar year. No person shall make, set or use any trap, snare, salt lick,
201 bait or other device for the purpose of taking, injuring or killing any
202 deer, except that deer may be taken over an attractant in areas
203 designated by the commissioner. For the purposes of this section, an
204 attractant means any natural or artificial substance placed, exposed,
205 deposited, distributed or scattered that is used to attract, entice or lure
206 deer to a specific location including, but not limited to, salt, chemicals
207 or minerals, including their residues or any natural or artificial food,
208 hay, grain, fruit or nuts. The commissioner may authorize any
209 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding
210 organization approved by the commissioner under the provisions of
211 this section to take deer at any time [, other than Sundays,] or place using
212 any method consistent with professional wildlife management
213 principles when a severe nuisance or ecological damage can be
214 demonstrated to the satisfaction of the commissioner. Any such

215 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding
216 organization shall submit to the commissioner, for the commissioner's
217 review and approval, a plan that describes the extent and degree of the
218 nuisance or ecological damage and the proposed methods of taking.
219 Prior to the implementation of any such approved plan, the
220 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding
221 organization shall provide notice of such plan to any abutting
222 landowners of such place where the plan will be implemented. Such
223 plan shall not authorize the use of a snare. No person shall hunt, pursue
224 or kill deer being pursued by any dog, whether or not such dog is owned
225 or controlled by such person, except that no person shall be guilty of a
226 violation under this section when such a deer is struck by a motor
227 vehicle operated by such person. No person shall use or allow any dog
228 in such person's charge to hunt, pursue or kill deer. No permit shall be
229 issued when in the opinion of the commissioner the public safety may
230 be jeopardized.

231 Sec. 6. Subsection (a) of section 26-86a of the general statutes is
232 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
233 *1, 2025*):

234 (a) The commissioner shall establish by regulation adopted in
235 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 standards for deer
236 management, and methods, regulated areas, bag limits, seasons and
237 permit eligibility for hunting deer with bow and arrow, muzzleloader
238 and shotgun. [except that no such hunting shall be permitted on
239 Sunday by any means other than with bow and arrow on private
240 property pursuant to section 26-73.] No person shall hunt, pursue,
241 wound or kill deer with a firearm without first obtaining a deer permit
242 from the commissioner in addition to the license required by section 26-
243 27. Application for such permit shall be made on forms furnished by the
244 commissioner and containing such information as he may require. Such
245 permit shall be of a design prescribed by the commissioner, shall contain
246 such information and conditions as the commissioner may require, and
247 may be revoked for violation of any provision of this chapter or

248 regulations adopted pursuant thereto. As used in this section,
249 "muzzleloader" means a rifle or shotgun of at least forty-five caliber,
250 incapable of firing a self-contained cartridge, which uses powder, a
251 projectile, including, but not limited to, a standard round ball, mini-
252 balls, maxi-balls and Sabot bullets, and wadding loaded separately at
253 the muzzle end, and "rifle" means a long gun the projectile of which is
254 six millimeters or larger in diameter. The fee for a firearms permit shall
255 be nineteen dollars for residents of the state and sixty-eight dollars for
256 nonresidents, except that any nonresident who is an active full-time
257 member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, may purchase
258 a firearms permit for the same fee as is charged a resident of the state.
259 The commissioner shall issue, without fee, a private land deer permit to
260 the owner of ten or more acres of private land and the husband or wife,
261 parent, grandparent, sibling and any lineal descendant of such owner,
262 provided no such owner, husband or wife, parent, grandparent, sibling
263 or lineal descendant shall be issued more than one such permit per
264 season. Such permit shall allow the use of a rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader
265 or bow and arrow on such land from November first to December thirty-
266 first, inclusive. Deer may be so hunted at such times and in such areas
267 of such state-owned land as are designated by the Commissioner of
268 Energy and Environmental Protection and on privately owned land
269 with the signed consent of the landowner, on forms furnished by the
270 department, and such signed consent shall be carried by any person
271 when so hunting on private land. The owner of ten acres or more of
272 private land may allow the use of a rifle to hunt deer on such land
273 during the shotgun season. The commissioner shall determine, by
274 regulation, the number of consent forms issued for any regulated area
275 established by said commissioner. The commissioner shall provide for
276 a fair and equitable random method for the selection of successful
277 applicants who may obtain shotgun and muzzleloader permits for
278 hunting deer on state lands. Any person whose name appears on more
279 than one application for a shotgun permit or more than one application
280 for a muzzleloader permit shall be disqualified from the selection
281 process for such permit. No person shall hunt, pursue, wound or kill

282 deer with a bow and arrow without first obtaining a bow and arrow
 283 permit pursuant to section 26-86c. "Bow and arrow", as used in this
 284 section and in section 26-86c, means a bow with a draw weight of not
 285 less than forty pounds. The arrowhead shall have two or more blades
 286 and may not be less than seven-eighths of an inch at the widest point.
 287 No person shall carry firearms of any kind while hunting with a bow
 288 and arrow under this section and section 26-86c.

289 Sec. 7. Subsection (b) of section 26-91 of the general statutes is
 290 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
 291 *1, 2025*):

292 (b) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may
 293 authorize any municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-
 294 holding organization approved by the commissioner under the
 295 provisions of this section to take resident Canada geese at any time [,
 296 other than Sundays,] or place using any method consistent with
 297 professional wildlife management principles. Any such municipality,
 298 homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding organization shall
 299 submit to the commissioner, for the commissioner's review and
 300 approval, a plan that describes the extent and degree of the nuisance or
 301 ecological damage and the proposed method of taking. Such plan shall
 302 include prohibitions against feeding of such geese and requirements
 303 that landscaping in the area is managed in a way to be less hospitable to
 304 geese, utilizing native plantings. Prior to the implementation of such
 305 plan, the municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-
 306 holding organization shall provide notice of such plan to abutting
 307 landowners of such place where the plan will be implemented. Such
 308 plan shall not authorize the use of a snare.

309 Sec. 8. Section 26-73 of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective*
 310 *October 1, 2025*)

<p>This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:</p>
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Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-3
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-31(d)
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-49(b)
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-52
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-82(a)
Sec. 6	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-86a(a)
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-91(b)
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	Repealer section

Statement of Purpose:

To authorize hunting on Sundays.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]