



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 7231

January Session, 2025



**AN ACT CONCERNING SUNDAY HUNTING ON PRIVATE LANDS OF
TEN ACRES OR MORE.**

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 Section 26-3 of the general statutes is repealed and the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 on public lands or private lands of less than ten acres,
15 using any method consistent with professional wildlife management
16 principles, any fish, crustacean, bird or animal for scientific and
17 educational purposes, public health and safety, propagation and
18 dissemination, or protection of natural or agricultural ecosystems. Such
19 taking shall not include the use of a snare. In the case of an imminent

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

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

85 Sec. 2. Section 26-73 of the general statutes is repealed and the
 86 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

87 Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, Sunday shall be a
 88 closed season except for hunting on private lands of ten acres or more

89 or hunting deer with bow and arrow on private property and for the
90 purpose of trapping under the provisions of this chapter. The possession
91 in the open air on Sunday of any implement for hunting, except for bow
92 and arrow, shall be prima facie evidence of hunting in violation of the
93 provisions of this section. No provision of this section shall be construed
94 so as to affect any provision of section 26-31, 26-48, 26-52 or 27-35.
95 Artificially propagated birds designated by the commissioner may be
96 shot on Sundays on licensed private shooting preserves subject to such
97 regulations of the commissioner as may apply to such private shooting
98 preserves, provided permission so to shoot has been obtained from the
99 town or towns within which such licensed private shooting preserves
100 are located. Any person who hunts deer on Sunday with bow and arrow
101 on private property pursuant to this section shall: (1) Have the written
102 permission of the private property owner where such hunting is
103 conducted, and (2) carry such written permission upon his or her person
104 during the hunting. No person shall hunt with bow and arrow on
105 Sunday on private property pursuant to this section within forty yards
106 of a blazed hiking trail.

107 Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 26-82 of the general statutes is
108 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
109 *1, 2025*):

110 (a) No person shall hunt, pursue, wound or kill any deer or sell or
111 offer for sale or have in possession the flesh of any deer captured or
112 killed in this state, or have in possession the flesh of any deer from any
113 other state or country unless it is properly tagged as required by such
114 state or country except as provided by the terms of this chapter or
115 regulations adopted pursuant thereto, and except that any landowner
116 or primary lessee of land owned by such landowner or the husband or
117 wife or any lineal descendant of such landowner or lessee or any
118 designated agent of such landowner or lessee may kill deer with a
119 shotgun, rifle or bow and arrow provided a damage permit has first
120 been obtained from the commissioner and such person has not been
121 convicted for any violation of this section, section 26-85, 26-86a, as
122 amended by this act, 26-86b or 26-90 or subsection (b) of section 26-86a-

123 2 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies within three years
124 preceding the date of application. Upon the receipt of an application, on
125 forms provided by the commissioner and containing such information
126 as said commissioner may require, from any landowner who has or
127 whose primary lessee has an actual or potential gross annual income of
128 twenty-five hundred dollars or more from the commercial cultivated
129 production of grain, forage, fruit, vegetables, flowers, ornamental plants
130 or Christmas trees and who is experiencing an actual or potential loss of
131 income because of severe damage by deer, the commissioner shall issue
132 not more than six damage permits without fee to such landowner or the
133 primary lessee of such landowner, or the wife, husband, lineal
134 descendant or designated agent of such landowner or lessee. The
135 application shall be notarized and signed by all landowners or by the
136 landowner or a lessee to whom a farmer tax exemption permit has been
137 issued pursuant to subdivision (63) of section 12-412. Such damage
138 permit shall be valid through October thirty-first of the year in which it
139 is issued and may specify the hunting implement or shot size or both
140 which shall be used to take such deer. The commissioner may at any
141 time revoke such permit for violation of any provision of this section or
142 for violation of any regulation pursuant thereto or upon the request of
143 the applicant. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 26-85, the
144 commissioner may issue a permit to any landowner or primary lessee
145 of land owned by such landowner or the husband or wife or any lineal
146 descendant of such landowner or lessee and to not more than three
147 designated agents of such landowner or lessee to use a jacklight for the
148 purpose of taking deer when it is shown, to the satisfaction of the
149 commissioner, that such deer are causing damage which cannot be
150 reduced during the daylight hours between sunrise and one-half hour
151 after sunset on the land of such landowner. The commissioner may
152 require notification as specified on such permit prior to its use. Any deer
153 killed in accordance with the provisions of this section shall be the
154 property of the owner of the land upon which the same has been killed,
155 but shall not be sold, bartered, traded or offered for sale, and the person
156 who kills any such deer shall tag and report each deer killed, as
157 provided in section 26-86b. Upon receipt of the report required by

158 section 26-86b, the commissioner shall issue an additional damage
159 permit to the person making such report. Any deer killed otherwise than
160 under the conditions provided for in this chapter or regulations adopted
161 pursuant thereto shall remain the property of the state and may be
162 disposed of by the commissioner at the commissioner's discretion to any
163 state institution or may be sold and the proceeds of such sale shall be
164 remitted to the State Treasurer, who shall apply the same to the General
165 Fund, and no person, except the commissioner, shall retail, sell or offer
166 for sale the whole or any part of any such deer. No person shall be a
167 designated agent of more than one landowner or primary lessee in any
168 calendar year. No person shall make, set or use any trap, snare, salt lick,
169 bait or other device for the purpose of taking, injuring or killing any
170 deer, except that deer may be taken over an attractant in areas
171 designated by the commissioner. For the purposes of this section, an
172 attractant means any natural or artificial substance placed, exposed,
173 deposited, distributed or scattered that is used to attract, entice or lure
174 deer to a specific location including, but not limited to, salt, chemicals
175 or minerals, including their residues or any natural or artificial food,
176 hay, grain, fruit or nuts. The commissioner may authorize any
177 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding
178 organization approved by the commissioner under the provisions of
179 this section to take deer at any time [, other than Sundays,] or place using
180 any method consistent with professional wildlife management
181 principles when a severe nuisance or ecological damage can be
182 demonstrated to the satisfaction of the commissioner. Any such
183 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding
184 organization shall submit to the commissioner, for the commissioner's
185 review and approval, a plan that describes the extent and degree of the
186 nuisance or ecological damage and the proposed methods of taking.
187 Prior to the implementation of any such approved plan, the
188 municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding
189 organization shall provide notice of such plan to any abutting
190 landowners of such place where the plan will be implemented. Such
191 plan shall not authorize the use of a snare. No person shall hunt, pursue
192 or kill deer being pursued by any dog, whether or not such dog is owned

193 or controlled by such person, except that no person shall be guilty of a
194 violation under this section when such a deer is struck by a motor
195 vehicle operated by such person. No person shall use or allow any dog
196 in such person's charge to hunt, pursue or kill deer. No permit shall be
197 issued when in the opinion of the commissioner the public safety may
198 be jeopardized.

199 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 26-86a of the general statutes is
200 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
201 *1, 2025*):

202 (a) The commissioner shall establish by regulation adopted in
203 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 standards for deer
204 management, and methods, regulated areas, bag limits, seasons and
205 permit eligibility for hunting deer with bow and arrow, muzzleloader
206 and shotgun, except that no such hunting shall be permitted on Sunday
207 unless it is conducted on private lands of ten acres or more or is by any
208 means other than with bow and arrow on private property pursuant to
209 section 26-73, as amended by this act. No person shall hunt, pursue,
210 wound or kill deer with a firearm without first obtaining a deer permit
211 from the commissioner in addition to the license required by section 26-
212 27. Application for such permit shall be made on forms furnished by the
213 commissioner and containing such information as he may require. Such
214 permit shall be of a design prescribed by the commissioner, shall contain
215 such information and conditions as the commissioner may require, and
216 may be revoked for violation of any provision of this chapter or
217 regulations adopted pursuant thereto. As used in this section,
218 "muzzleloader" means a rifle or shotgun of at least forty-five caliber,
219 incapable of firing a self-contained cartridge, which uses powder, a
220 projectile, including, but not limited to, a standard round ball, mini-
221 balls, maxi-balls and Sabot bullets, and wadding loaded separately at
222 the muzzle end, and "rifle" means a long gun the projectile of which is
223 six millimeters or larger in diameter. The fee for a firearms permit shall
224 be nineteen dollars for residents of the state and sixty-eight dollars for
225 nonresidents, except that any nonresident who is an active full-time
226 member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, may purchase

227 a firearms permit for the same fee as is charged a resident of the state.
228 The commissioner shall issue, without fee, a private land deer permit to
229 the owner of ten or more acres of private land and the husband or wife,
230 parent, grandparent, sibling and any lineal descendant of such owner,
231 provided no such owner, husband or wife, parent, grandparent, sibling
232 or lineal descendant shall be issued more than one such permit per
233 season. Such permit shall allow the use of a rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader
234 or bow and arrow on such land from November first to December thirty-
235 first, inclusive. Deer may be so hunted at such times and in such areas
236 of such state-owned land as are designated by the Commissioner of
237 Energy and Environmental Protection and on privately owned land
238 with the signed consent of the landowner, on forms furnished by the
239 department, and such signed consent shall be carried by any person
240 when so hunting on private land. The owner of ten acres or more of
241 private land may allow the use of a rifle to hunt deer on such land
242 during the shotgun season. The commissioner shall determine, by
243 regulation, the number of consent forms issued for any regulated area
244 established by said commissioner. The commissioner shall provide for
245 a fair and equitable random method for the selection of successful
246 applicants who may obtain shotgun and muzzleloader permits for
247 hunting deer on state lands. Any person whose name appears on more
248 than one application for a shotgun permit or more than one application
249 for a muzzleloader permit shall be disqualified from the selection
250 process for such permit. No person shall hunt, pursue, wound or kill
251 deer with a bow and arrow without first obtaining a bow and arrow
252 permit pursuant to section 26-86c. "Bow and arrow", as used in this
253 section and in section 26-86c, means a bow with a draw weight of not
254 less than forty pounds. The arrowhead shall have two or more blades
255 and may not be less than seven-eighths of an inch at the widest point.
256 No person shall carry firearms of any kind while hunting with a bow
257 and arrow under this section and section 26-86c.

258 Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 26-91 of the general statutes is
259 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
260 *1, 2025*):

261 (b) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may
 262 authorize any municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-
 263 holding organization approved by the commissioner under the
 264 provisions of this section to take resident Canada geese at any time [,
 265 other than Sundays,] or place using any method consistent with
 266 professional wildlife management principles. Any such municipality,
 267 homeowner association or nonprofit land-holding organization shall
 268 submit to the commissioner, for the commissioner's review and
 269 approval, a plan that describes the extent and degree of the nuisance or
 270 ecological damage and the proposed method of taking. Such plan shall
 271 include prohibitions against feeding of such geese and requirements
 272 that landscaping in the area is managed in a way to be less hospitable to
 273 geese, utilizing native plantings. Prior to the implementation of such
 274 plan, the municipality, homeowner association or nonprofit land-
 275 holding organization shall provide notice of such plan to abutting
 276 landowners of such place where the plan will be implemented. Such
 277 plan shall not authorize the use of a snare.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-3
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-73
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-82(a)
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-86a(a)
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-91(b)

ENV *Joint Favorable Subst.*