



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 1350 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Tom Casperson
Committee: Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes

CONTENT

The bill would amend Parts 401 (Wildlife Conservation) and 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to do the following:

- Include wolf in the definition of "game".
- Authorize the establishment of the first open season for wolf, and allow the Natural Resources Commission to establish annual wolf hunting seasons.
- Prohibit an individual from hunting wolf without a wolf hunting license, and establish a license fee of \$100 for a resident and \$500 for a nonresident.
- Allow the DNR to establish a nonrefundable application fee of up to \$4 for each person who applied for a wolf hunting license.
- Make it a misdemeanor to illegally possess or take wolf.
- Specify legislative findings regarding wildlife management.

A person who violates a provision of Part 401 or an order or interim order regarding the possession or taking of deer, bear, or wild turkey is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for at least five days but not more than 90 days and a fine of at least \$200 but not more than \$1,000, plus the cost of prosecution. Under the bill, these penalties also would apply to the illegal possession or taking of wolf.

The bill provides that a person could not be punished for lawfully removing, capturing, or destroying a wolf under Public Act 290 of 2008. (That Act governs the control of gray wolves, and allows a livestock owner to remove, capture, or, if deemed necessary, kill a gray wolf that is in the act of preying upon the owner's livestock.)

MCL 324.40103 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill by itself would have no fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as it would merely authorize the Natural Resources Commission and the DNR to establish a wolf hunting season; it would not require such a season to be established. The bill would establish a \$100 wolf hunting license fee for residents, and a \$500 license fee for nonresidents, as well as a \$4 maximum application fee. In practice, the DNR could charge an applicant this fee to enter a wolf license lottery.

If a wolf hunting season were established, it is unknown how many of these licenses would be sold, but according to figures from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) website, approximately 700 wolves live in Michigan. Minnesota currently has a wolf hunting season, and based on information from the Minnesota DNR and the USFWS, it appears that the

target harvest for 2012 is approximately 400 of the state's 2,900 wolves, or about 13.8% of the population. Minnesota offered 6,000 licenses through its lottery system in 2012, or about 15 licenses for every wolf targeted for harvest. If Michigan were to adopt a similar approach with a similar percentage of the wolf population targeted for harvesting, approximately 1,450 licenses would be sold, yielding between \$145,000 and \$725,000, depending on the number of resident versus nonresident licenses sold. An amount of additional revenue would be realized from application fees as well. In 2012, 51,710 hunters paid \$4 to enter the lottery to receive black bear licenses. If a similar number of hunters entered a wolf lottery, approximately \$200,000 would be received. All revenue raised under the bill would be credited to the Game and Fish Protection Fund.

The establishment of a wolf hunting season would result in new, but indeterminate costs that would likely be offset to some extent by additional revenue from license sales. These costs would be related to the establishment of a wolf hunting season, law enforcement, and administration of the season. It is unknown whether these costs would be greater or less than the amount of new revenue received, so the fiscal impact is indeterminate.

Date Completed: 11-8-12

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.