

# Sunday Hunting!

## “It’s Back!!”

The Sunday hunting issue is back on the front burner here in PA. Senate Bill 147 was passed out of the Senate Subcommittee of Game & Fisheries the 5<sup>th</sup> of February to go on to the Senate floor for a subsequent vote. If passed it would then go to the House.

There has been a lot of conjecture about how Sunday hunting would be handled in various articles, but the bottom line is that this Bill would allow the decision to be left up to the Game Commission to decide how many Sundays would be included in the hunting seasons. There are hunting seasons from the end of September to the end of January and from April 20<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Folks who are pushing for Sunday hunting cite increased license sales as one reason to allow for expansion of Sunday hunting as well as giving a seventh day a week to hunt. Also, it was mentioned that Sunday being open to hunt would give those who only have weekends off work an opportunity to hunt an extra day.

Hunters in PA represent less than 7% of PA’s population. As you can well imagine, there is a lot of opposition to the whole idea of Sunday hunting. PA Farm Bureau still stands opposed to the expansion of Sunday hunting as does the Keystone Trails Association, KTA, which represents the hiking community across the state. In one recent article announcing KTA’s opposition to Sunday hunting, Board President Ernie Werstler noted that the *Power of Outdoor Recreation Spending in Pennsylvania: How hunting, fishing, and outdoor activities help support a healthy state economy of November, 2018* by Southwick Associates and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership showed that trail users outnumbered hunters 3 to 1 and their economic impact was higher than hunters by 2.5 to 1. Trail users spent \$2574 per participant according to the analysis. “Clearly the non-hunting public needs to have significant input into this issue since their economic impact is so substantial,” he said. “Any expansion of Sunday hunting could have a very detrimental economic impact on our economy if trail users discontinue their activities to avoid hunters.”

Twice the Pennsylvania Equine Council has conducted a survey of those who stopped by our booths at the Pennsylvania Horse World Expo, once in 2012 and again in 2015. The results were overwhelmingly opposed to expansion of Sunday hunting. Even those who checked they were hunters showed a much greater percentage of opposition. Keep in mind this move to expand Sunday hunting has no bearing on those equestrians who belong to the Fox Hunting Clubs. Many who wrote comments on the survey shared that they too only had weekends to be out and did not want to be concerned with interrupting hunters or be looking over their shoulders and being uncomfortable on their one day a week they could enjoy the outdoors.

If Sunday Hunting is expanded, passage through Gamelands on those designated trails that were worked for could be completely eliminated from the end of September through most of January and all of May Spring Turkey season. Some of these trails are important connectors that lead to other trails that are open during this beautiful cooler time of year.

Don't wait. This legislation is moving fast!! Contact your PA State Senator first and share your thoughts on how Sunday hunting will affect you, your property, and your time in the outdoors.

If you don't have **your** State Senator or State Representative on speed dial, you can click the link below to find their local office and Harrisburg office phone numbers. It never hurts to call both offices and/or set up a meeting with them when they are in the district.

Note: your State Senator is the far right column after you click county and your State Representative is the first column. If you live in a more densely populated area, you may need to click on the precinct where you vote.

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm>

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