



SPONSOR: Rep. Spiegelman & Rep. Carson & Sen. Ennis &  
Sen. Pettyjohn  
Reps. Dukes, D. Short, Wilson

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
149th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 156

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 7 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO CONSERVATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend § 704, Title 7 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and  
2 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

3 § 704. Prohibited hunting and trapping devices and methods; confiscation of devices; primitive weapon season.

4 (a) No person shall make use of any pitfall, deadfall, scaffold, cage, snare, trap, net, pen, baited hook, lure, urine or  
5 baited field or any other similar device for the purpose of injuring, capturing or killing birds or animals protected by the  
6 laws of this State, except red foxes, muskrats, raccoon, opossum, minks, otters, beavers and rabbits may be trapped and  
7 snapping turtles may be trapped or taken with a net in accordance with the regulations of the Department of Natural  
8 Resources and Environmental Control, and except as otherwise expressly provided. Landlords and tenants and their  
9 respective children may take rabbits in traps and snares during the open season for same on their freeholds and leaseholds  
10 respectively. For purposes of this section, the term "lure" means any mixture of ingredients intended to be placed at the trap  
11 location for the purpose of masking human odor or attracting wildlife. The term "lure" does not include any tangible objects  
12 such as duck or goose decoys or similar tangible devices used while hunting nor does the term include any mixture of  
13 ingredients intended for the purpose of masking human odor or attracting deer while deer hunting.

14 (b) No person shall make use of any drug, poison, chemical or explosive for the purpose of injuring, capturing or  
15 killing birds or animals protected by the laws of this State.

16 (c) The unlawful setting or placing of any of the devices or contrivances named in subsection (a) or (b) of this  
17 section is an offense against this section, and such devices and contrivances, when found unlawfully set or placed, shall be  
18 confiscated by the Department and disposed of as the Department sees fit.

19 (d) No person shall shoot at, or kill any bird or animal protected by the laws of this State with any device, swivel  
20 or punt gun, or with any gun other than such as is habitually raised at arm's length and fired from the shoulder. Possession  
21 of such illegal device or gun while hunting shall be prima facie evidence of an offense under this subsection.

22 (e) No person shall use for hunting or have in their possession while hunting any shotgun shells loaded with lead  
23 or lead alloy missiles larger than No. 2 shot, except ammunition permitted for hunting deer during the lawful open season  
24 for deer.

25 (f) A muzzle-loading rifle, meaning a single-barrel gun which is loaded with black powder and projectile through  
26 the muzzle, having distinct rifling the full length of the bore, shooting a spherical or conical projectile, ignited by a flint  
27 striking a frizzen or by a percussion cap, having a minimum bore of 0.42 inches (10.67 mm), minimum powder charge of  
28 62 grains (4 grams), may be used in the pursuit, taking or attempted taking ("hunting") of protected wildlife, provided:

29 (1) Such hunting takes place during the primitive weapon season established by the Department of Natural  
30 Resources and Environmental Control and is done pursuant to the requirements of law applicable to other means of  
31 hunting protected wildlife.

32 (2) No person engaged in such hunting shall possess or use any multi-projected loads (buck and ball),  
33 explosive bullets or any balls smaller than .42 caliber.

34 No weapon may be used for hunting deer during the primitive weapon season other than a muzzle-loading rifle or  
35 bow. The Department may permit the use of a single shot muzzle-loading pistol being a minimum .42 caliber with a  
36 minimum powder charge of 40 grains during the primitive weapons season for deer, when using a muzzle-loading rifle to  
37 provide the coup-de-grace, if required.

38 (g) Except as set forth herein, no person may use a handgun or rifle in the pursuit, taking or attempted taking  
39 (hunting) of protected wildlife. A handgun or rifle as described herein may be used for the pursuit, taking and attempted  
40 taking (hunting) of deer on privately owned lands situated south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and those lands  
41 within the State owned by the State of Delaware so designated for this purpose by the Department of Natural Resources and  
42 Environmental Control, at its discretion, under the following conditions:

43 (1) The handgun shall be limited to revolvers and single shot pistols with a minimum barrel length of 5.75  
44 inches and not exceeding 12.5 inches and chambered for and using straight-wall handgun ammunition in ~~.357 magnum,~~  
45 ~~.41 caliber, .41 magnum, .44 caliber, 44 magnum, .45 caliber, .454 caliber, .480 caliber or .50 caliber~~ and using open  
46 ~~sights, metallic/mechanical, optical or telescopic sights~~ .38 caliber with a cartridge case length of no less than 1.25  
47 inches or in .41 caliber to a maximum of .50 caliber and a maximum case length of 1.82 inches;

48 (2) The handgun must be carried openly on a sling or in a holster and not concealed;

49 (3) The rifle shall be limited to rifles:

50 a. Using open, metallic/mechanical, optical, or telescopic sights;

51 b. Chambered for and using straight-walled ammunition as defined in (g)(1) above; and

- 52                           c. Loaded with no more than 3 cartridges in the chamber and magazine combined.
- 53                           ~~(3)~~(4) To be used as follows:
- 54                           a. ~~During~~ A pistol or rifle may be used during a separate 7-day season to begin on the first Saturday in
- 55                           January through the second Saturday in January; and
- 56                           b. ~~In~~ A pistol or rifle may be used in place of a shotgun during the shotgun deer season(s).
- 57                           (h) No person shall operate, provide, sell, use, or offer to operate, provide, sell, or use any computer software or
- 58                           service that allows a person not physically present at a hunt site to remotely control a weapon that could be used to take a
- 59                           live animal or bird by remote operation, including, but not limited to, weapons or devices set up to fire through the use of
- 60                           the Internet or through a remote control device.

#### SYNOPSIS

This bill updates requirements for handguns used for deer hunting by adding a range and limit to allowable handgun calibers to accommodate changing handgun availability while maintaining public safety and handgun hunting efficacy. This bill also allows for pistol caliber rifle hunting for deer. This bill also makes a technical adjustment to clarify that a handgun or a pistol caliber rifle can be used for deer hunting during any shotgun deer season.