**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 50‑11‑544, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO WILD TURKEY HUNTING AND TRANSPORTATION TAGS, SO AS TO DELETE THE TERM “WILD TURKEY TRANSPORTATION TAGS” AND REPLACE IT WITH THE TERM “WILD TURKEY TAGS” AND TO PROVIDE THE TAGS WILL NO LONGER BE ISSUED AT NO COST; TO AMEND SECTION 50‑11‑580, RELATING TO THE SEASON FOR THE HUNTING AND TAKING OF MALE WILD TURKEY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUTH TURKEY HUNTING WEEKEND, BAG LIMITS, AND AN ANNUAL REPORT, SO AS TO REVISE THE SEASON FOR HUNTING AND TAKING A MALE WILD TURKEY, TO REVISE THE BAG LIMITS, TO DELETE THE PROVISION ESTABLISHING YOUTH TURKEY HUNTING WEEKEND, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE TAKING OF FEMALE WILD TURKEYS; BY ADDING SECTION 50‑11‑590 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR YOUTH TURKEY DAY; TO AMEND SECTION 50‑9‑920, RELATING TO REVENUES FROM THE SALE OF PRIVILEGES, LICENSES, PERMITS, AND TAGS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT REVENUE GENERATED FROM RESIDENT AND NONRESIDENT WILD TURKEY TRANSPORTATION TAG SETS SHALL BE USED FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES; BY ADDING SECTION 50‑9‑640 SO AS TO PROVIDE FEES FOR WILD TURKEY TAGS; TO REPEAL SECTION 50‑11‑520 RELATING TO WILD TURKEY SEASON AND THE DECLARATION OF OPEN OR CLOSED SEASONS; TO REPEAL SECTION 7 OF ACT 41 OF 2015 RELATING TO THE HUNTING AND TAKING OF WILD TURKEY; AND BY ADDING SECTION 50‑11‑546 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR AN ELECTRONIC HARVEST REPORTING SYSTEM, REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING THE HARVEST OF A WILD TURKEY, AND PENALTIES FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS PROVISION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 50‑11‑544 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 50‑11‑544. (A) A person who hunts wild turkeys is required to possess a set of wild turkey ~~transportation~~ tags issued by the department ~~at no cost~~.

(B) All turkeys taken must be tagged before being moved from the point of kill. All tags must be validated as prescribed by the department before a turkey is moved from the point of kill. No person may obtain or possess more than one set of turkey tags.”

SECTION 2. Section 50‑11‑580 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 50‑11‑580. (A) ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 50‑11‑520 or any other provision of law or regulation,~~ The season for hunting and taking a male wild turkey ~~is~~:

(1) in Game Zones 1 and 2, ~~March 20~~ is April 1 through May ~~5~~ 12; and

(2) in Game Zones 3 and 4, is March 20 through April 30.

(B) ~~The Saturday and Sunday preceding March 20 of each year is declared to be ‘Youth Turkey Hunting Weekend’. A person less than eighteen years of age shall be considered a youth hunter. The license and permit requirements for hunting turkey are waived for youth hunters during Youth Turkey Hunting Weekend; however, youth hunters must still possess a set of turkey tags while hunting during Youth Turkey Hunting Weekend. A licensed hunter at least twenty‑one years of age must accompany a youth hunter in the field and may not harvest or attempt to harvest turkey during Youth Turkey Hunting Weekend, but is permitted to call turkeys for the youth hunter. The licensed hunter that accompanies the youth hunter must have a valid South Carolina hunting license, big game permit, and wildlife management area permit if applicable~~ The season bag limit for male wild turkeys is three statewide. The daily bag limit is one, provided that:

(1) only one male wild turkey may be taken from April 1 through April 10 within Game Zones 1 and 2; or

(2) only one male wild turkey may be taken from March 20 through March 29 within Game Zones 3 and 4.

(C) ~~The season bag limit for male wild turkeys is three, which may be taken by any lawful means. The season bag limit contained in this section is statewide~~ It is unlawful for a person to take a female wild turkey unless authorized by the department pursuant to Section 50‑11‑500(3).

(D) ~~The daily bag limit per person for male wild turkeys is two, which may be taken by any lawful means. The daily bag limit contained in this section is statewide.~~

~~(E)~~ ~~The department shall conduct an analysis of the wild turkey resources in South Carolina and issue a draft report recommending any changes to the wild turkey season and bag limits. This report shall be provided to the General Assembly within one hundred eighty days of the conclusion of the third turkey season following the effective date of this section.~~

~~(F)~~ The department shall provide an annual report ~~of the~~ on wild turkey resources in South Carolina to the Chairman of the Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee and the Chairman of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.”

SECTION 3. Article 3, Chapter 11, Title 50 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 50‑11‑590. (A) The Saturday preceding the start of a game zone turkey season is declared to be ‘Youth Turkey Day’ within the game zone for turkey hunters under eighteen years of age.

(B) A license or tag requirement is waived for a youth turkey hunter on Youth Turkey Day.

(C) The bag limit on Youth Turkey Day is one male wild turkey, which shall count towards the season bag limit of three.

(D) Youth turkey hunters who have not completed the hunter education program pursuant to Section 50‑9‑310, and who hunt on Youth Turkey Day, must be accompanied by an adult who is at least twenty‑one years of age. An adult may not harvest or attempt to harvest turkeys during Youth Turkey Day but is permitted to call turkeys for a youth turkey hunter.”

SECTION 4. Section 50‑9‑920(B)(11) and (12) is amended to read:

“(11) falconry permit shall be used to support the falconry permitting program~~.~~;

(12) resident antler restriction individual antlered deer tag shall be used to administer the Coyote Management Program~~.~~;

(13) resident and nonresident wild turkey tag sets shall be used only for the following purposes:

(a) to fund wild turkey scientific research on public lands and private lands with the consent of landowners;

(b) to improve the wild turkey habitat and hunting opportunities for wild turkeys on public lands;

(c) enforcement of the wild turkey hunting laws and regulations; and

(d) the printing and mailing of wild turkey tag sets.”

SECTION 5. Article 6, Chapter 9, Title 50 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 50‑9‑640. (A) For the privilege of hunting wild turkey, in addition to the required hunting license and big game permit, a person must possess a set of wild turkey tags issued in the person’s name. The fee for a:

(1) resident is five dollars per set of three tags, one dollar of which may be retained by the license sales vendor; and

(2) nonresident is fifty dollars per set of three tags, one dollar of which may be retained by the license sales vendor.

(B) There is no cost for a set of wild turkey tags for persons under the age of sixteen, lifetime licensees, and gratis licensees upon request to the department.”

SECTION 6. Section 50‑11‑520 of the 1976 Code and SECTION 7 of Act 41 of 2015 are repealed.

SECTION 7. Article 3, Chapter 11, Title 50 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 50‑11‑546. (A) In order to document the harvest of wild turkeys and to assist with the enforcement of seasons, methods of harvest, and bag limits, the department shall implement an electronic harvest reporting system.

(B) Any individual who harvests a wild turkey must report the harvest to the electronic harvest reporting system as prescribed by the department. The harvest report must be submitted by midnight of the day the wild turkey is taken and before it is skinned or dismembered.

(C) Upon completion of the harvest reporting process, a harvest report confirmation number will be provided by the department. The hunter must record the harvest report confirmation number before the carcass leaves the hunter’s possession. The harvest report confirmation number must remain with the carcass until final processing.

(D) The department shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this section, including the methods of electronic reporting, contents of the report, and recording and maintenance of the harvest report confirmation number.

(E) There shall be no cost to the hunter for reporting a harvest, and the department may exempt the reporting requirement for individuals who harvest wild turkeys under specific conditions or department programs.

(F) It is unlawful to provide false information while reporting a harvest or recording a harvest report confirmation number.

(G) A person who violates this section or provisions established by the department for electronic harvest reporting is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than two hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than thirty days.”

SECTION 8. SECTION 7 of this act takes effect on January 1, 2021. The remaining SECTIONS of this act take effect July 1, 2019.

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