**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 50‑11‑544 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO WILD TURKEY HUNTING AND TRANSPORTATION TAGS, TO PROVIDE COSTS FOR WILD TURKEY TRANSPORTATION TAGS; TO AMEND SECTION 50‑11‑580 OF THE 1976 CODE, 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, TO PROVIDE THE SEASON FOR HUNTING AND TAKING A MALE WILD TURKEY, TO PROVIDE BAG LIMITS, TO DELETE THE PROVISION ESTABLISHING YOUTH TURKEY HUNTING WEEKEND, AND TO DELETE A REPORTING REQUIREMENT; TO AMEND ARTICLE 3, CHAPTER 11, TITLE 50 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO BIG GAME, BY ADDING SECTION 50‑11‑590, TO PROVIDE FOR YOUTH TURKEY DAY; TO AMEND SECTION 50‑9‑920(B) OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO REVENUES FROM THE SALE OF PRIVILEGES, LICENSES, PERMITS, AND TAGS, TO PROVIDE THAT REVENUE GENERATED FROM RESIDENT AND NONRESIDENT WILD TURKEY TRANSPORTATION TAG SETS SHALL BE USED FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES; TO REPEAL SECTION 50‑11‑520 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO WILD TURKEY SEASON AND THE DECLARATION OF OPEN OR CLOSED SEASONS; AND TO REPEAL SECTION 7 OF ACT 41 OF 2015, RELATING TO THE HUNTING AND TAKING OF WILD TURKEY.

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~~ the following costs:

(1) ten dollars for residents;

(2) fifty dollars for nonresidents; and

(3) no cost for persons under the age of sixteen, lifetime licensees, and gratis licensees upon request to the department.

(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~~ The season for hunting and taking a male wild turkey is:

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

(2) in Game Zones 3 and 4, 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 from within Game Zones 1 and 2; and

(2) only one male wild turkey may be taken from March 20 through March 29 from 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.

(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) of the 1976 Code is amended by adding a new item to read:

“(13) resident and nonresident wild turkey transportation tag set 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) wild turkey predator control; and

(d) enforcement of the wild turkey hunting laws and regulations.”

SECTION 5. Section 50‑11‑520 of the 1976 Code is repealed.

SECTION 6. SECTION 7 of Act 41 of 2015 is repealed.

SECTION 7. This act takes effect on July 1, 2019.

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