

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1312 Session of  
2024

INTRODUCED BY COLEMAN AND HUTCHINSON, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

REFERRED TO GAME AND FISHERIES, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated  
2 Statutes, in preliminary provisions, further providing for  
3 definitions; in hunting and furtaking, further providing for  
4 unlawful devices and methods and for restrictions on  
5 recreational spotlighting; providing for game or wildlife  
6 recovery permits; and imposing penalties.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Section 102 of Title 34 of the Pennsylvania  
10 Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding definitions to read:

11 § 102. Definitions.

12 Subject to additional definitions contained in subsequent  
13 provisions of this title which are applicable to specific  
14 provisions of this title, the following words and phrases when  
15 used in this title shall have the meanings given to them in this  
16 section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

17 \* \* \*

18 "Small unmanned aircraft." An unmanned aircraft weighing  
19 less than 55 pounds, including the weight of anything attached  
20 to or carried by the aircraft.

1 "Small unmanned aircraft system." A small unmanned aircraft  
2 and the equipment necessary for the safe and efficient operation  
3 of the aircraft.

4 \* \* \*

5 "Unmanned aircraft." An aircraft or aerial vehicle that is  
6 operated without the possibility of direct human intervention  
7 from within or on the aircraft or vehicle.

8 \* \* \*

9 Section 2. Section 2308(a)(7) of Title 34 is amended by  
10 adding a subparagraph to read:

11 § 2308. Unlawful devices and methods.

12 (a) General rule.--Except as otherwise provided in this  
13 title, it is unlawful for any person to hunt or aid, abet,  
14 assist or conspire to hunt any game or wildlife through the use  
15 of:

16 \* \* \*

17 (7) A vehicle or conveyance of any kind or its  
18 attachment propelled by other than manpower. Nothing in this  
19 subsection shall pertain to any of the following:

20 \* \* \*

21 (iii) A small unmanned aircraft system if the  
22 operator has been issued a wildlife recovery permit  
23 granted by the commission and the small unmanned aircraft  
24 system is used solely by the permittee for the recovery  
25 of harvested wildlife when no firearm or implement of  
26 taking is possessed by any participant involved in the  
27 recovery. This subparagraph shall not be construed to  
28 authorize the hunting of any live game or wildlife  
29 observed or located through the use of an unmanned  
30 aircraft system if a period of less than 24 hours has

1 elapsed since the most recent observation or location  
2 event through the use of a small unmanned aircraft.

3 \* \* \*

4 Section 3. Section 2311(a) of Title 34 is amended and the  
5 section is amended by adding a subsection to read:

6 § 2311. Restrictions on recreational spotlighting.

7 (a) Unlawful acts.--It is unlawful for any person to cast or  
8 to assist any other person in casting the rays of a spotlight,  
9 vehicle headlight or any other artificial light of any kind from  
10 any vehicle, watercraft, airborne craft or any attachment to  
11 such vehicles or crafts:

12 (1) Upon any building at any time.

13 (2) In any manner which frightens, excites or harasses  
14 any livestock, poultry or other farm animal.

15 (3) To search for or locate for any purpose any game or  
16 wildlife anywhere within this Commonwealth, other than  
17 specified in paragraph (4), daily between the hours of 11  
18 p.m. and sunrise on the following day.

19 (4) To search for or locate for any purpose any game or  
20 wildlife anywhere within this Commonwealth at any time during  
21 the antlered deer rifle season and during the antlerless deer  
22 rifle season.

23 (5) Upon photoelectric cell lights.

24 [The provisions of this subsection shall not apply if it is  
25 proven that the headlights of a vehicle or conveyance were being  
26 used while traveling on a roadway in the usual way.]

27 (a.1) Exceptions.--The provisions of this section shall not  
28 apply to the use of:

29 (1) The headlights of a vehicle or conveyance traveling  
30 on a roadway in the normal manner associated with traveling

1 at night or during inclement weather.

2 (2) A spotlight mounted to a small unmanned aircraft  
3 system if the operator has been granted a wildlife recovery  
4 permit issued by the commission and the vehicle is used  
5 solely for the recovery of harvested wildlife when no firearm  
6 or implement of taking is possessed by any participant  
7 involved in the recovery. This paragraph shall not be  
8 construed to authorize the hunting of any live game or  
9 wildlife observed or located through the use of an unmanned  
10 aircraft if a period of less than 24 hours has elapsed since  
11 the most recent observation or location event through the use  
12 of a small unmanned aircraft.

13 \* \* \*

14 Section 4. Chapter 29 of Title 34 is amended by adding a  
15 subchapter to read:

16 SUBCHAPTER E

17 GAME OR WILDLIFE RECOVERY PERMITS

18 Sec.

19 2971. Purpose of subchapter.

20 2972. Definitions.

21 2973. Application process.

22 2974. Permits.

23 2975. Small unmanned aircraft operation.

24 2976. Field records.

25 2977. Enforcement.

26 § 2971. Purpose of subchapter.

27 The purpose of this subchapter is to provide for the issuance  
28 of game and wildlife recovery permits to authorize eligible  
29 applicants to assist in the recovery of game and wildlife  
30 lawfully harvested by other individuals using small unmanned

1 aircraft systems.

2 § 2972. Definitions.

3 The following words and phrases when used in this subchapter  
4 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
5 context clearly indicates otherwise:

6 "Game or wildlife recovery activity." The act of aiding,  
7 abetting, assisting or conspiring with another person, in any  
8 manner, to recover previously harvested game or wildlife using a  
9 small unmanned aircraft system.

10 "Game or wildlife recovery permit." A game or wildlife  
11 recovery permit issued in accordance with this subchapter.

12 "Permittee." An individual issued a game or wildlife  
13 recovery permit under this subchapter.

14 § 2973. Application process.

15 (a) Form.--The commission shall develop and make available  
16 an application form for a game or wildlife recovery permit in  
17 accordance with this subchapter.

18 (b) Application.--An individual may apply to the appropriate  
19 regional office of the commission for a game or wildlife  
20 recovery permit in the form and manner prescribed by the  
21 commission.

22 (c) Contents.--An application for a game or wildlife  
23 recovery permit shall include:

24 (1) The name, address, telephone number, customer  
25 identification number and date of birth of the applicant.

26 (2) A copy of the applicant's remote pilot certificate  
27 issued under 14 CFR Pt. 107 (relating to small unmanned  
28 aircraft systems).

29 (3) A copy of the financial liability insurance policy  
30 for the small unmanned aircraft system of the applicant.

1           (4) The remote identification number associated with  
2 each small unmanned aircraft system to be covered by the  
3 permit.

4           (d) Fee.--The fee for a game or wildlife recovery permit  
5 shall be:

6           (1) \$100 for residents and nonresidents when used for  
7 commercial game or wildlife recovery activity.

8           (2) \$5 for individuals utilizing a small unmanned  
9 aircraft system for personal game or wildlife recovery  
10 activity.

11 § 2974. Permits.

12           (a) Permit required.--An individual must first obtain a game  
13 or wildlife recovery permit before engaging in any game or  
14 wildlife recovery activity.

15           (b) Additional permits.--The issuance of a game or wildlife  
16 recovery permit to an individual does not diminish the  
17 obligation of the individual to obtain other applicable Federal,  
18 State or local permits.

19           (c) State game lands.--Notwithstanding 58 Pa. Code § 135.41  
20 (relating to State game lands), a game or wildlife recovery  
21 permit authorizes its holder to engage in game or wildlife  
22 recovery activities on lands designated as State game lands  
23 using a small unmanned aircraft system.

24           (d) Conditions.--The initial and continued validity of a  
25 game or wildlife recovery permit is conditioned upon the  
26 permittee's:

27           (1) Maintenance of a valid remote pilot certificate  
28 issued under 14 CFR Pt. 107 (relating to small unmanned  
29 aircraft systems).

30           (2) Maintenance of financial liability insurance

1 covering the operation of each unmanned aircraft system  
2 associated with the permit.

3 (3) Maintenance and update of the remote identification  
4 number associated with each unmanned aircraft system  
5 associated with the permit.

6 § 2975. Small unmanned aircraft operation.

7 (a) Compliance with law.--A permittee shall operate a small  
8 unmanned aircraft system used for a game or wildlife recovery  
9 activity in compliance with all applicable Federal, State and  
10 local law governing operation.

11 (b) Remote identification broadcast.--A permittee shall  
12 cause a small unmanned aircraft system used in a game or  
13 wildlife recovery activity conducted under the permittee's game  
14 or wildlife recovery permit to continuously broadcast the  
15 equipment identification number during the game or wildlife  
16 recovery activity.

17 (c) Firearms and implements capable of harvest.--A permittee  
18 shall ensure that the individuals participating in a game or  
19 wildlife recovery activity conducted under the permittee's game  
20 or wildlife recovery permit are not in possession of a firearm,  
21 bow, crossbow or other implement capable of harvesting game or  
22 wildlife during the game or wildlife recovery activity.

23 Enforcement of this subsection shall be based on the standard of  
24 whether the permittee knew or should have known about the  
25 possession of the firearm, bow, crossbow or other implement.

26 § 2976. Field records.

27 (a) Maintenance and inspection.--

28 (1) A permittee shall maintain and provide to the  
29 commission legible, accurate and complete field records of  
30 all game or wildlife recovery activities conducted under the

1 authority of the game or wildlife recovery permit of the  
2 permittee.

3 (2) The field records shall be maintained and made  
4 available for inspection in accordance with section 2906  
5 (relating to records).

6 (b) Form and contents.--The commission shall develop and  
7 make available a form to be used for the submittal or the field  
8 records described under paragraph (1), which shall include the  
9 following information for each commercial guiding activity:

10 (1) The name, address and customer identification number  
11 for each client.

12 (2) The date of each game or wildlife recovery activity.

13 (3) The quantity and species of game or wildlife  
14 recovered for each client. If the species recovered is an  
15 antlered white-tailed deer or elk, the field records must  
16 also provide the number of points for each antler.

17 (4) The name and permit number of any additional game or  
18 wildlife recovery permittee that participates in the game or  
19 wildlife recovery activity.

20 (c) Reports.--Field records shall be submitted to the  
21 commission annually in accordance with section 2907 (relating to  
22 reports).

23 § 2977. Enforcement.

24 (a) Prosecution.--A violation of this subchapter shall be  
25 prosecuted in accordance with section 2908 (relating to  
26 violations).

27 (b) Permit.--The director may deny, revoke or suspend a game  
28 or wildlife recovery permit of a permittee for a violation of  
29 this subchapter or this title by the permittee or any  
30 subpermittee, upon written notice to the permittee.



1 Section 5. This act shall take effect in 60 days.