

Act No. 145 (H.570). Fish and wildlife; endangered species; hunting; fishing

An act relating to hunting, fishing, and trapping

This act amends multiple provisions related to fish and wildlife, including requirements related to hunting, fishing, and trapping; requirements related to the protection and conservation of threatened and endangered species; and requirements related to the operation of sport shooting ranges.

With regard to provisions related to hunting, fishing, and trapping, the act: authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Board to regulate the sale of fish caught in Vermont; provides that a permit is required from the Department of Fish and Wildlife to stock any fish in State waters; amends what constitutes aiding in the commission of a fish and wildlife violation; clarifies what constitutes a big game violation and what constitutes interference with hunting, fishing, or trapping; amends the points assessed against a person's licenses to specify which hunting, fishing, or trapping violations are 10 or 20 point violations; provides that violation of a biological collection requirement is a judicial bureau offense and not a fish and wildlife violation subject to assessment of points; specifies the fish and game violations that are subject to forfeiture of equipment; and clarifies the restitution requirements for fish and game violations. In addition, the act repeals the ban on the use of felt soled waders.

With regard to the provisions related to threatened and endangered (T&E) species, the act clarifies the process for listing a species threatened or endangered. The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) is authorized to designate by rule critical habitat for T&E species. The act also clarifies how ANR issues a permit to take a T&E species, including specifying the criteria for an incidental taking permit. The act also establishes the fees for an incidental taking permit.

In addition, the act exempts from Act 250 changes to a sport shooting range when the range has an ANR-approved lead management plan, and the change is for the purpose of improving safety, abating noise, or remediating impact to air or water quality. The act also repeals the sunset on the use of gun suppressors at sport shooting ranges.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on July 1, 2016