

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2025 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 2594**

By Delegates McGeehan and Anders

[Introduced February 18, 2025; referred to the  
Committee on Government Organization]

A BILL to amend and reenact §20-2-5 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to the hunting of coyotes; permitting year-round hunting of coyotes using artificial light or night vision technology and permitting hunting of coyotes at any hour.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

## ARTICLE 2. WILDLIFE RESOURCES.

**§20-2-5. Unlawful methods of hunting and fishing and other unlawful acts; Sunday hunting.**

(a) Except as authorized by the director or by law, it is unlawful at any time for any person to:

(1) Shoot at any wild bird or wild animal unless it is plainly visible;

(2) Dig out, cut out, smoke out, or in any manner take or attempt to take any live wild animal or wild bird out of its den or place of refuge;

(3) Use or attempt to use any artificial light or any night vision technology, including image intensification, thermal imaging, or active illumination while hunting, locating, attracting, taking, trapping, or killing any wild bird or wild animal: *Provided*, That it is lawful to hunt or take coyote, fox, raccoon, opossum, or skunk by the use of artificial light or night vision technology, including image intensification, thermal imaging, or active illumination: *Provided, however, That notwithstanding any provision of this code or agency rule to the contrary, it is lawful to hunt or take coyote by the use of artificial light or night vision technology at any hour and at all times throughout the year.* Any person violating this subdivision is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall for each offense be fined not less than \$100 nor more than \$500, and shall be confined in jail for not less than 10 days nor more than 100 days;

(4) Hunt, take, kill, wound, harass, or shoot at wild animals or wild birds from an airplane or other airborne conveyance, a drone or other unmanned aircraft, an automobile, or other land conveyance, or from a motor-driven water conveyance;

5) Use a drone or other unmanned aircraft to hunt, take, wound, harass, transport, or kill (a wild bird or wild animal, or to use a drone or other unmanned aircraft to drive or herd any wild bird

or wild animal for the purposes of hunting, trapping, or killing;

(6) Take any beaver or muskrat by any means other than a trap;

(7) Catch, capture, take, hunt, or kill by seine, net, bait, trap, or snare or like device a wild turkey, ruffed grouse, pheasant, or quail;

(8) Intentionally destroy or attempt to destroy the nest or eggs of any wild bird or have in his or her possession the nest or eggs;

(9) Carry an uncased or loaded firearm in the woods of this state or in state parks, state forests, state wildlife management areas, or state rail trails with the following permissible exceptions:

(A) A person in possession of a valid license or permit during open firearms hunting season for wild animals and nonmigratory wild birds where hunting is lawful;

(B) A person hunting or taking unprotected species of wild animals, wild birds, and migratory wild birds during the open season, in the open fields, open water, and open marshes of the state where hunting is lawful;

(C) A person carrying a firearm pursuant to §20-2-6 of this code;

(D) A person carrying a firearm for self-defense who is not prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law; or

(E) A person carrying a rifle or shotgun for self-defense who is not prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law: *Provided*, That this exception does not apply to an uncased rifle or shotgun carried specifically in state park or state forest recreational facilities and marked trails within state park or state forest borders.

(10) Hunt, catch, take, kill, injure, or pursue a wild animal or wild bird with the use of a ferret;

(11) Buy raw furs, pelts, or skins of fur-bearing animals unless licensed to do so;

(12) Catch, take, kill, or attempt to catch, take, or kill any fish by any means other than by rod, line, and hooks with natural or artificial lures, unless otherwise authorized by the director:

47 *Provided*, That snaring of any species of sucker, carp, fallfish, and creek chub and catching catfish  
48 by hand are lawful if done by a holder of a valid license issued pursuant to §20-2-1 et seq. of this  
49 code or is exempted from licensure pursuant to §20-2-27 or §20-2-28 of this code;

50 (13) Employ, hire, induce, or persuade, with money, things of value, or by any means, any  
51 person to hunt, take, catch, or kill any wild animal or wild bird except those species in which there  
52 is no closed season; or to fish for, catch, take, or kill any fish, amphibian, or aquatic life that is  
53 protected by rule, or the sale of which is otherwise prohibited;

54 (14) Hunt, catch, take, kill, capture, pursue, transport, possess, or use any migratory game  
55 or nongame birds except as permitted by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. §703 et seq.,  
56 and its regulations;

57 (15) Kill, take, catch, sell, transport, or have in his or her possession, living or dead, any  
58 wild bird other than a game bird, including the plumage, skin, or body of any protected bird,  
59 irrespective of whether the bird was captured in or out of this state, except the English or European  
60 sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), and cowbird (*Molothrus ater*), which  
61 may be killed at any time;

62 (16) Use dynamite, explosives, or any poison in any waters of the state for the purpose of  
63 killing or taking fish. Any person violating this subdivision is guilty of a felony, and upon conviction  
64 thereof, shall be fined not more than \$500 or confined for not less than six months nor more than  
65 three years, or both fined and confined;

66 (17) Have a bow and gun, or have a gun and any arrow, in the fields or woods at the same  
67 time;

68 (18) Have a crossbow in the woods or fields, or use a crossbow to hunt, take, or attempt to  
69 take any wildlife except as otherwise provided in §20-2-5g and §20-2-42w of this code;

70 (19) Take or attempt to take turkey, bear, elk, or deer with any arrow unless the arrow is  
71 equipped with a point having at least two sharp cutting edges measuring in excess of three-fourths  
72 of an inch wide;

(20) Take or attempt to take any wildlife with an arrow having an explosive head or shaft, a poisoned arrow, or an arrow which would affect wildlife by any chemical action;

(21) Shoot an arrow across any public highway;

(22) Permit any dog owned or under his or her control to chase, pursue, or follow the tracks of any wild animal or wild bird, day or night, between May 1 and August 15: Provided, That dogs may be trained on wild animals and wild birds, except deer and wild turkeys, and field trials may be held or conducted on the grounds or lands of the owner, or by his or her bona fide tenant, or upon the grounds or lands of another person with his or her written permission, or on public lands at any time. Nonresidents may not train dogs in this state at any time except during the legal small game hunting season. A person training dogs may not have firearms or other implements for taking wildlife in his or her possession during the closed season on wild animals and wild birds, except a person carrying a firearm for self-defense who is not prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law;

(23) Conduct or participate in a trial, including a field trial, shoot-to-retrieve field trial, water race, or wild hunt: *Provided*, That any person, group of persons, club, or organization may hold a trial upon obtaining a permit pursuant to §20-2-56 of this code. The person responsible for obtaining the permit shall prepare and keep an accurate record of the names and addresses of all persons participating in the trial and make the records readily available for inspection by any natural resources police officer upon request;

(24) Hunt, catch, take, kill, or attempt to hunt, catch, take, or kill any wild animal, wild bird, or wild fowl except during open seasons;

(25) Hunt or conduct hunts for a fee when the person is not physically present in the same location as the wildlife being hunted within West Virginia; and

(26) Catch, take, kill, or attempt to catch, take, or kill any fish by any means within 200 feet of division personnel engaged in stocking fish in public waters.

(b) Notwithstanding any ballot measure relating to Sunday hunting, it is lawful to hunt

99 throughout the State of West Virginia on private lands on Sundays with the written consent of the  
100 private landowner pursuant to §20-2-7 of this code, and it is lawful to hunt throughout the State of  
101 West Virginia on federal land where hunting is permitted, in state forests, on land owned or leased  
102 by the state for wildlife purposes, and on land managed by the state for wildlife purposes pursuant  
103 to a cooperative agreement.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to permit year-round hunting of coyotes using artificial light or night vision technology and to permit hunting of coyotes at any hour.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.