

## Opinions of North Carolina Hunters Regarding Hunting on Sunday

**M.K. Hooper**, *Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061*

**S.L. McMullin**, *Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061*

**J.A. Parkhurst**, *Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061*

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*Abstract:* In 2005, the North Carolina General Assembly and the governor requested that the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) study issues related to hunting on Sunday in North Carolina. Of particular interest were the views held by stakeholders on the issue and the potential impact Sunday hunting might have on hunter recruitment and retention. A questionnaire was developed and sent to 2,400 randomly-selected licensed resident hunters to assess their views and opinions and to estimate potential impacts on hunting participation. The response rate was 41.6%. The issue decidedly was polarized; 38% of respondents strongly supported hunting on Sunday, whereas 39% strongly opposed it. Older hunters and those who frequently attended church or another place of worship were most opposed to hunting on Sunday. Although many respondents originally voiced support, many of these same individuals opposed hunting on Sunday if limitations were imposed. Hunters who previously had taken an adult friend, family member, or youth hunting in North Carolina indicated they would do so again if afforded an opportunity to hunt on Sunday. However, the opportunity to hunt on Sunday would do little to persuade hunters who had not previously taken an adult friend, family member, or youth hunting to do so. Most respondents indicated they would hunt at least the same number of days (60%) or more days (37%) if hunting on Sunday was legalized. Specifically, respondents indicated that if Sunday hunting was legalized, they would hunt an average of 7 additional days that did not involve an overnight stay and take an average of 1.9 additional overnight hunting trips. Although legalization of hunting on Sunday may increase hunting participation, its effects on hunter recruitment and retention remain unknown.

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