

**ASSEMBLY, No. 1142**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

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PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY**

**District 7 (Burlington)**

**Assemblyman REGINALD W. ATKINS**

**District 20 (Union)**

**Assemblyman BENJIE E. WIMBERLY**

**District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman Clifton, Assemblywoman Swain, Assemblyman Stanley,**

**Assemblywomen Park, Haider and Matsikoudis**

**SYNOPSIS**

Prohibits harassing or taking of certain wildlife at competitive event; establishes penalties.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 4/4/2024)**

1    **AN ACT** concerning the harassing or taking of certain wildlife at  
2       competitive events, and supplementing Title 23 of the Revised  
3       Statutes.

4  
5       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6       *of New Jersey:*

7  
8       1. As used in this act:

9       "Competitive event" means any activity, competition, contest,  
10      derby, tournament, or other organized activity where participants are  
11      encouraged to take wildlife and are rewarded by the receipt of a prize  
12      or any kind of inducement or reward.

13      "Covered wildlife" means a bobcat, coyote, crow, fox, mink,  
14      opossum, rabbit, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, weasel, woodchuck, or the  
15      dead body or parts thereof.

16      "Division" means the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the  
17      Department of Environmental Protection.

18      "Harass" means to annoy, attack, disrupt normal behavior patterns  
19      of, or otherwise disturb wildlife without taking it.

20      "Person" means any individual, association, estate, firm, joint  
21      venture, limited liability corporation, organization, partnership,  
22      receiver, syndicate, trust, or other legal entity.

23      "Take" means to hunt, capture, kill, trap, catch, net, possess, or  
24      collect, or to attempt to hunt, capture, kill, trap, catch, net, possess, or  
25      collect, wildlife.

26  
27      2. a. Except in conjunction with a field trial or field day  
28      authorized by a license issued pursuant to R.S.23:4-26, it shall be  
29      unlawful:

30          (1) to harass or take covered wildlife at a competitive event; or

31          (2) for any person to organize, sponsor, promote, conduct, or  
32          participate in a competitive event at which the participants harass or  
33          take covered wildlife.

34      b. A person who violates this section shall be guilty of a  
35      disorderly persons offense and, in addition to the applicable penalties  
36      pursuant to Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes, shall be subject to a  
37      five-year suspension of:

38          (1) any license or permit issued to the person by the Division of  
39          Fish and Wildlife; and

40          (2) all privileges to take or possess wildlife.

41      c. Any covered wildlife injured as a result of a competitive event  
42      held in violation of this section shall be transported to a licensed  
43      wildlife rehabilitator or State licensed veterinarian for proper treatment  
44      or, if necessary, the administration of humane euthanasia. Euthanasia  
45      shall only be administered after the best efforts to rehabilitate and  
46      release the animal have failed.

47      d. The Division of Fish and Wildlife shall forfeit the remains of  
48      any covered wildlife killed at a competitive event held in violation of

1 this section, or euthanized pursuant to subsection c. of this section,  
2 from the organizer, participant, or promotor in possession thereof, as  
3 applicable. It shall become the property of the division.

4 e. The provisions of this section may be enforced by municipal  
5 police officers, the State Police, and law enforcement officers in the  
6 Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Forestry in  
7 the Department of Environmental Protection.

8  
9 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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12 STATEMENT

13  
14 This bill prohibits the harassing or taking of certain wildlife  
15 (defined as "covered wildlife" in the bill) at a competitive event,  
16 except in conjunction with a field trial or field day authorized by a  
17 license issued pursuant to R.S.23:4-26. The bill also prohibits any  
18 person from organizing, sponsoring, promoting, conducting, or  
19 participating in a competitive event at which the participants harass  
20 or take covered wildlife except in conjunction with such an  
21 authorized field trial or field day. "Covered wildlife" is defined as a  
22 bobcat, coyote, crow, fox, mink, opossum, rabbit, raccoon, skunk,  
23 squirrel, weasel, woodchuck, or the dead body or parts thereof.

24 The bill provides that a person who violates the prohibitions in  
25 the bill would be guilty of a disorderly persons offense and, in  
26 addition to the applicable penalties pursuant to Title 2C of the New  
27 Jersey Statutes, would also have suspended for five years:

28 1) any license or permit issued to the person by the Division of  
29 Fish and Wildlife; and

30 2) all privileges to take or possess wildlife.

31 A disorderly persons offense is subject to a penalty of up to six  
32 months of imprisonment, a fine up to \$1,000, or both.

33 This bill requires any covered wildlife injured as a result of a  
34 competitive event to be transported to a licensed wildlife  
35 rehabilitator or State licensed veterinarian for proper treatment or to  
36 be euthanized if necessary. The bill authorizes the Division of Fish  
37 and Wildlife to forfeit the remains of any covered wildlife killed at  
38 a competitive event held in violation of this bill or euthanized as a  
39 result of the competitive event. Forfeited remains would become  
40 property of the Division of Fish and Wildlife. The bill directs  
41 municipal police officers, the State Police, and law enforcement  
42 officers in the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of  
43 Parks and Forestry in the Department of Environmental Protection  
44 to enforce the bill's provisions.