

Senator Pavlov offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 180.

A resolution to encourage the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to eliminate the wild turkey hunting license application and drawing system and allow for wild turkey licenses to be sold over-the-counter, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Whereas, During the late 1800s, wild turkeys were disappearing in Michigan and the rest of North America due to overhunting and destruction of habitat. Conservationists, concerned with the loss of wild turkey as well as many other species, encouraged wildlife restoration and habitat management nationwide in the late 1930s; and

Whereas, The effort to re-establish turkeys in Michigan began in earnest in the 1950s with the introduction of birds from Pennsylvania into Allegan County. In the 1980s, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) repopulated additional areas of the state with turkeys from Iowa and Missouri and transplanted birds from southern Michigan to northern Michigan. Special attention was also paid to restoring wild turkey habitat; and

Whereas, Today, Michigan's wild turkey population is at historic high levels with an estimated population of 200,000 with more than 30,000 wild turkeys harvested each spring. Wild turkeys can be found in every county in Michigan's Lower Peninsula and many areas of the Upper Peninsula; and

Whereas, Hunting is an important tool used by the MDNR to manage the wild turkey population. The MDNR instituted a lottery system allowing hunters to apply to hunt wild turkey in a specific hunting area on specific dates. MDNR limits the number of wild turkeys that may be harvested in any particular hunting area; and

Whereas, In the early years of the reinstated hunting season, not every hunter who participated in the wild turkey drawing was successful. However, the wild turkey population, the number of licenses made available by the MDNR, and the number of hunting areas have increased over the years. Now the MDNR regularly has leftover licenses when the wild turkey drawing is complete. These licenses are available over-the-counter to hunters on a first-come, first-served basis; and

Whereas, Over-the-counter sales eliminate the red tape involved in having to submit an application to participate in a drawing for a permit. One less step is required of the hunter in obtaining a wild turkey hunting license, providing a more convenient and efficient purchase process. With more licenses available than drawing applications, the MDNR should allow hunters to purchase one license which is good for a specific hunting unit over-the-counter until the quota of licenses for that unit is met; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we encourage the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to eliminate the wild turkey hunting license application and drawing system and allow for wild turkey licenses to be sold over-the-counter, on a first-come, first-served basis; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the chief of the Wildlife Division, the Director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the members of the Natural Resources Commission.