

HOUSE BILL NO. 588

INTRODUCED BY B. HARRIS

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO UNLAWFUL USE OF AIRCRAFT FOR HUNTING-RELATED PURPOSES; PROHIBITING USE OF AN AIRCRAFT TO LOCATE A GAME ANIMAL ON THE SAME DAY IT WILL BE HUNTED; PROHIBITING COMMUNICATION OF THE LOCATION OF A GAME ANIMAL TO ANOTHER PERSON ON THE SAME DAY IT WILL BE HUNTED; REVISING PENALTIES; AND AMENDING SECTION 87-6-207, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Unlawful use of aircraft.** (1) Except as provided in 87-3-126, a person may

not:

(a) kill, take, or shoot at any game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal from an aircraft, including a helicopter;

(b) use an aircraft, including a helicopter:

(i) to locate any game animal for the purpose of hunting that animal during the same hunting day after the person has been airborne; or

(ii) for the purpose of concentrating, pursuing, driving, rallying, or stirring up any game bird, migratory bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal; or

(c) if in an aircraft, including a helicopter, spot or locate any game animal or fur-bearing animal and communicate the location of the game animal or fur-bearing animal to any person:

(i) on the ground by means of any air-to-ground communication signal or other device as an aid to hunting or pursuing wildlife; or

(ii) within the same hunting day after being airborne.

(2) Unless permitted by the department, a person may not use an aircraft, including a helicopter, for hunting purposes within the boundaries of a national forest except when cargo or persons are loaded and unloaded at federal aviation agency approved airports, aircraft landing fields, or heliports that have been established on private property or that have been established by any federal, state, county, or municipal governmental body. Hunting purposes include the transportation of hunters or wildlife and hunting equipment and



1 supplies. The provisions of this subsection do not apply:

- 2 (a) during emergency situations;
 3 (b) when search and rescue operations are being conducted; or
 4 (c) for predator control as permitted by the department of livestock.

5 (3) The following penalties apply for a violation of this section:

6 (a) Unless otherwise provided in this subsection (3), a person convicted of a violation of this section shall
 7 be fined not less than \$300 or more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county detention center for not more than
 8 6 months, or both. In addition, the person, upon conviction or forfeiture of bond or bail, may be subject to forfeiture
 9 of any current hunting, fishing, or trapping license issued by this state and the privilege to hunt, fish, or trap in this
 10 state or to use state lands, as defined in 77-1-101, for recreational purposes for a period of time set by the court.

11 (b) If a person is convicted or forfeits bond or bail after being charged with unlawful use of an aircraft to
 12 kill or take a deer, elk, antelope, mountain lion, mountain sheep, moose, wild buffalo, caribou, mountain goat,
 13 black bear, or grizzly bear, the person shall be fined not less than \$500 or more than \$2,000 or be imprisoned
 14 in the county detention center for not more than 6 months, or both. In addition, the person shall forfeit any current
 15 hunting, fishing, recreational use, or trapping license issued by this state and the privilege to hunt, fish, or trap
 16 in this state for 30 months from the date of conviction or forfeiture unless the court imposes a longer period.

17 (c) If a person is convicted or forfeits bond or bail after being charged with unlawful use of an aircraft to
 18 kill or take a fur-bearing animal, the person shall be fined not less than \$100 or more than \$1,000 or be
 19 imprisoned in the county detention center for not more than 6 months, or both. In addition, the person shall forfeit
 20 any current hunting, fishing, recreational use, or trapping license issued by this state and the privilege to hunt,
 21 fish, or trap in this state for 24 months from the date of conviction or forfeiture unless the court imposes a longer
 22 period, and any pelts possessed unlawfully must be confiscated.

23

24 **Section 2.** Section 87-6-207, MCA, is amended to read:

25 **"87-6-207. Unlawful use of aircraft or boat.** ~~(1) Except as provided in 87-3-126, a person may not:~~

26 ~~———— (a) kill, take, or shoot at any game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal from an aircraft, including~~
 27 ~~a helicopter;~~

28 ~~———— (b) use an aircraft or helicopter for the purpose of concentrating, pursuing, driving, rallying, or stirring~~
 29 ~~up any game bird, migratory bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal; or~~

30 ~~———— (c) if in an aircraft, including a helicopter, spot or locate any game animal or fur-bearing animal and~~

1 communicate the location of the game animal or fur-bearing animal to any person on the ground by means of any
2 air-to-ground communication signal or other device as an aid to hunting or pursuing wildlife:

3 ~~——— (2) Unless permitted by the department, a person may not use an aircraft, including a helicopter, for~~
4 ~~hunting purposes within the boundaries of a national forest except when persons or cargo are loaded and~~
5 ~~unloaded at federal aviation agency approved airports, aircraft landing fields, or heliports that have been~~
6 ~~established on private property or that have been established by any federal, state, county, or municipal~~
7 ~~governmental body. Hunting purposes include the transportation of hunters or wildlife and hunting equipment and~~
8 ~~supplies. The provisions of this subsection do not apply:~~

9 ~~——— (a) during emergency situations;~~

10 ~~——— (b) when search and rescue operations are being conducted; or~~

11 ~~——— (c) for predator control as permitted by the department of livestock.~~

12 ~~(3)(1)~~ A person may not use a powerboat, sailboat, or any boat under sail or any floating device towed
13 by a powerboat, sailboat, or any boat under sail for the purpose of killing, capturing, taking, pursuing,
14 concentrating, driving, or stirring up any upland game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal.

15 ~~(4)(2)~~ The following penalties apply for a violation of this section:

16 (a) Unless otherwise provided in this subsection ~~(4) (2)~~, a person convicted of a violation of this section
17 shall be fined not less than \$50 or more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county detention center for not more
18 than 6 months, or both. In addition, the person, upon conviction or forfeiture of bond or bail, may be subject to
19 forfeiture of any current hunting, fishing, or trapping license issued by this state and the privilege to hunt, fish, or
20 trap in this state or to use state lands, as defined in 77-1-101, for recreational purposes for a period of time set
21 by the court.

22 (b) If a person is convicted or forfeits bond or bail after being charged with unlawful use of ~~aircraft or a~~
23 boat to kill or take a mountain sheep, moose, wild buffalo, caribou, mountain goat, black bear, or grizzly bear, the
24 person shall be fined not less than \$500 or more than \$2,000 or be imprisoned in the county detention center for
25 not more than 6 months, or both. In addition, the person shall forfeit any current hunting, fishing, recreational use,
26 or trapping license issued by this state and the privilege to hunt, fish, or trap in this state for 30 months from the
27 date of conviction or forfeiture unless the court imposes a longer period.

28 (c) If a person is convicted or forfeits bond or bail after being charged with unlawful use of ~~aircraft or a~~
29 boat to kill or take a deer, antelope, elk, or mountain lion, the person shall be fined not less than \$300 or more
30 than \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county detention center for not more than 6 months, or both. In addition, the

1 person shall forfeit any current hunting, fishing, recreational use, or trapping license issued by this state and the
2 privilege to hunt, fish, or trap in this state for 24 months from the date of conviction or forfeiture unless the court
3 imposes a longer period.

4 (d) If a person is convicted or forfeits bond or bail after being charged with unlawful use of ~~aircraft~~ or a
5 boat to kill or take a fur-bearing animal, the person shall be fined not less than \$100 or more than \$1,000 or be
6 imprisoned in the county detention center for not more than 6 months, or both. In addition, the person shall forfeit
7 any current hunting, fishing, recreational use, or trapping license issued by this state and the privilege to hunt,
8 fish, or trap in this state for 24 months from the date of conviction or forfeiture unless the court imposes a longer
9 period, and any pelts possessed unlawfully must be confiscated."

10
11 NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
12 integral part of Title 87, chapter 6, part 2, and the provisions of Title 87, chapter 6, part 2, apply to [section 1].

13 - END -