

**§11222. Target identification while hunting**

**1. Findings.** Due to the large numbers of Maine citizens and visitors engaged in hunting in the State's woods during hunting season, the continued decline of unpopulated areas through the State, the widespread use of powerful weapons in the pursuit of wild animals and wild birds and the growing presence of nonhunters engaged in nonhunting activities in the State's woods during hunting season, the Legislature finds that a sufficient risk of serious bodily injury or death to human beings is posed to make it necessary and prudent to provide guidance to those in pursuit of wild animals and wild birds on the matter of proper target identification.

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**2. Target identification.** While hunting, a hunter may not shoot at a target without, at that point in time, being certain that it is the wild animal or wild bird sought.

A. The target-determining process to be utilized is that which a reasonable and prudent hunter would observe in the same situation. A reasonable and prudent hunter always bears the risk of loss of legitimate prey to avoid the risk of the destruction of human life. A reasonable and prudent hunter neither disregards the risk of causing the death of another human being nor fails to be aware of that risk as a consequence of misidentification. A reasonable and prudent hunter never bases identification upon sound alone or even upon sound in combination with what appears to be an appendage of the wild animal or wild bird sought. A reasonable and prudent hunter, independent of these target-determining factors, bases identification upon obtaining an essentially unobstructed view of the head and torso of the potential target. This visual sighting is the most critical target-determining factor. Visual sighting of the head and torso may present itself intermittently or continuously. If presented intermittently, a reasonable and prudent hunter does not make a target-identification decision until this visual sighting exists at the point in time the hunter takes aim and is making final preparation to shoot. A reasonable and prudent hunter additionally recognizes that these sound and sight target-determining factors are affected by a number of other considerations, including, but not limited to, the distance to the target, surrounding or intervening terrain and cover, lighting and weather conditions, the hunter's own ability to hear and see, the hunter's own experience and the proximity of other persons in the hunter's immediate vicinity. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**3. Penalty.**

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §153 (RP); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B153 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF).

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