

6308

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N   A S S E M B L Y

March 20, 2015

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Introduced by M. of A. ENGLEBRIGHT -- read once and referred to the  
Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to impose a moratorium upon the taking of horseshoe crabs and the  
eggs thereof; to direct the department of environmental conservation  
to study and report on the populations of shorebirds and horseshoe  
crabs; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration  
thereof

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-  
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature hereby finds that  
2     each spring more than one million shorebirds of six species, including  
3     the red knot, stop at Long Island beaches and feed upon horseshoe crab  
4     eggs. The red knot was once considered one of the state's most abundant  
5     shorebirds. Horseshoe crab eggs is a critical source of food for red  
6     knots which they consume during their stopover in New York. Such food  
7     source is necessary for the red knots to gain sufficient weight to  
8     continue their migration north to breeding grounds in the Canadian  
9     Arctic. Surveys have shown that red knots migrating through the state  
10    declined by 65 percent since 2000. Thus, both state and international  
11    biologists fear that the red knot will become extinct in as few as five  
12    years.

13    The legislature therefore declares that a moratorium on the harvest,  
14    landing, taking and possession of horseshoe crabs would help ensure that  
15    more horseshoe crab eggs will be available as a food source, thus help-  
16    ing to ensure the survival of these shorebirds.

17    S 2. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 13-0331 of the  
18    environmental conservation law or any other provision of law, no person  
19    shall take any horseshoe crab (*Limulus* sp.) or the eggs of any horseshoe  
20    crab from the waters or land of the state, nor possess any horseshoe  
21    crab or the eggs of a horseshoe crab, regardless of the origin thereof.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

LBD10018-01-5

1 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (a) of this section,  
2 the department of environmental conservation may issue a permit:

3 (i) for the taking and possession of horseshoe crabs or the eggs of  
4 horseshoe crabs for scientific, biomedical or educational purposes only,  
5 provided that such department determines that the collection of the  
6 horseshoe crabs or the eggs of horseshoe crabs for such purposes will  
7 not cause harm to the red knot, other shorebirds or the horseshoe crab  
8 population; or

9 (ii) the collection of blood from horseshoe crabs for biomedical  
10 purposes, provided that the horseshoe crabs are released otherwise  
11 unharmed to the same waters from which they were taken.

12 S 3. (a) On or after October 1, 2020, the department of environmental  
13 conservation shall examine and evaluate the populations of red knots,  
14 other shorebirds and horseshoe crabs in the state to determine whether:

15 (i) the population of red knots has reached 240,000 as established in  
16 the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan of May 2001 and

17 (ii) a fisheries management plan, based on scientific study and  
18 evidence, demonstrates that a more than adequate supply of horseshoe  
19 crab eggs exists to ensure population viability for both shorebirds and  
20 horseshoe crabs.

21 (b) On or before December 31, 2020, the department of environmental  
22 conservation shall submit its findings, conclusions and recommendations  
23 to the governor and the legislature with regard to the study conducted  
24 pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section.

25 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire and be  
26 deemed repealed January 1, 2021.