

6308

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

March 20, 2015

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.