

Hunters can now use array of electronic devices previously banned in Pa.

Bob Marchio For The Evening Sun-November30, 2017

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is catching up with the electronic age as it will now allow the use of four devices for hunting.

“Within established seasons, hunters now may use electronic decoys in hunting waterfowl; electronic dove decoys solely for hunting doves; electronically heated scent or lure dispensers; and electronic devices that distribute ozone gas for scent-control purposes.”

The Game Commission approved the changes in September. The use of the devices became legal after they were recently published in the Nov. 18 issue of “The Pennsylvania Bulletin.”

After an appropriate review, the Game Commission could see no negative impact from their use. Other electronic devices that are permitted for use while hunting or trapping in Pennsylvania are:

- Firearms that use an electronic impulse to initiate discharge of their ammunition
- Electronic sound-amplification devices incorporated into hearing protection devices and completely contained in or on a hunter’s ear
- Electronic devices used for locating dogs while training and hunting
- Electronic illuminating devices affixed to the aft end of a bolt or arrow and used solely for locating or tracking a bolt or arrow after it is launched
- Electronic crow decoys used solely for hunting crows
- Electronic rangefinders, including handheld devices and those contained within a scope or archery sight, so long that it does not emit a beam

An agency news release states: “The Nov. 18 Pennsylvania Bulletin also contains regulatory changes that make it lawful to use semiautomatic rifles and air guns for hunting small game and furbearers within the state’s Special Regulations Areas.”

“Air guns need to be between .177 and .22 caliber when used within Special Regulations Areas to hunt small game, woodchucks or furbearers.”

“Semiautomatic rifles need to be .22 caliber rimfire or less to hunt small game, woodchucks or furbearers within Special Regulations Areas.”

“These requirements vary slightly from those applying elsewhere in the state, where air guns used for small game must be between .177 and .22 caliber; and .22 caliber or larger when hunting woodchucks and furbearers.”

“Outside of Special Regulations Areas, semiautomatic rifles must be .22 caliber rimfire or less when used for small game, and there is no caliber restriction for woodchucks or furbearers. Only single-projectile ammunition may be used. Special Regulations Areas include all of Allegheny, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, and Ridley Creek and Tyler state parks during special controlled hunts.”

<https://www.ydr.com/story/news/2017/11/30/hunters-can-now-use-array-electronic-devices-previously-banned-pa/892933001/>

New Pa. hunting rules would allow electronic duck decoys and Ozonics

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The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners on Monday gave preliminary approval to a measure which would legalize the use of three popular electronic hunting devices – one of which could be extremely attractive to Lancaster County active waterfowling community.

The devices given preliminary approval are electronic waterfowl decoys; electronically heated scent or lure dispensers; and electronic devices that distribute ozone gas for scent-control purposes.

In Pennsylvania, all electronic devices are considered to be illegal, unless they are specifically excluded from that rule.

Currently, the list of legal electronic devices includes:

1. Electronic callers used for bobcats, coyotes, foxes, raccoons and crows, and for snow geese during the spring conservation season.
2. Lighted sight pins on archery tackle, so long as the pins don't cast a beam.
3. Illuminated nocks on arrows and crossbow bolts.
4. Sound amplification devices contained in or on a hunters ear.
5. Electronic crow decoys.
6. Guns that use an electronic impulse to fire the charge.
7. Rangefinders.

Many Pennsylvania waterfowl hunters have been clamoring for the right to use motorized decoys for years.

For the uneducated, the most common e-decoy used in waterfowling is the spinning-wing decoy. It's a duck decoy with wings that spin under battery power. They look like real ducks settling down on the water; they can be seen by ducks from a long way off; and they are very effective.

If these decoys are legalized, count on seeing them scattered up and down Lancaster County wildly popular duck-hunting spots on the Susquehanna River, such as Washington Boro, Columbia, Bainbridge and Holtwood.

Pennsylvania has long avoided legalizing electronic waterfowl decoys, due to fears of an explosion in the states annual duck kill.

But it's surrounded by states where those decoys have been used by hunters for years.

When there's talk about electronic devices that distribute ozone gas for scent-control purposes, hunters are mainly talking about Ozonics. That's the best-known device on the market.

The theory behind it is that the device generates ozone, which then mixes in the air stream with a hunters scent and effectively kills that scent, allowing the hunter to beat a deer's nose.

There never has been a controversy over the use of Ozonics in Pennsylvania. It has just never come up before for consideration by the Game Commission to be added to the list of legal devices.

Same goes for electronic scent dispensers, which would primarily be used by deer hunters using odors to try to lure deer to their hunting positions. They already can do that with products that are dispensed manually or by aerosol spray.

By giving all these devices preliminary approval last week, the Game Commission has opened the door for public comment on the measure. A second favorable vote in September would be required to make these devices legal for the 2017-18 hunting season.

[New Pa. hunting rules would allow electronic duck decoys and Ozonics | Outdoors | lancasteronline.com](#)