
Wisconsin Legislative Council

AMENDMENT MEMO



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2021 Assembly Bill 598

Assembly Amendment 1

BACKGROUND

In general, title to wild animals¹ belongs to the state, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has significant authority to regulate hunting of such animals. [ss. 29.011 (1) and 29.014 (1), Stats.] However, current law specifies certain categories of captive wildlife, including farm-raised deer, for which the state does not have title. Current law provides exemptions from hunting-related restrictions and requirements to facilitate commercial hunting of those categories of game. [See, e.g., ss. 29.005 and 29.057, Stats.] However, current law requires owners of such game to comply with certain other requirements, including registration with the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and certain fencing requirements. [See, e.g., ss. 90.20 and 95.55 and ch. 169, Stats.]

2021 ASSEMBLY BILL 598

2021 Assembly Bill 598 adds farm-raised game bovids to the categories of captive wildlife for which owners are generally exempt from hunting-related requirements but subject to fencing requirements and regulation by DATCP. As introduced, the bill defines “farm-raised game bovid” to mean an animal that is: (1) not currently native to Wisconsin; (2) kept in captivity to be hunted; and (3) a member of the taxonomic family bovidae, and, more specifically, a member of the subfamily aepycerotinae, alcelaphinae, antilopinae, boviniae, caprinae, or hippotraginae. Relevant to the amendment, the subfamily boviniae includes, for example, bison, oxen, cattle, eland, zebu, nyala, and various types of water buffalo.²

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1

Assembly Amendment 1 amends the bill’s definition of “farm-raised game bovid” to exempt any animal that is a member of the tribe bovini.³ That change has the effect of making the bill inapplicable to species that fall within that taxonomic classification. In other words, current law, rather than the exemptions and requirements under the bill, would continue to apply to owners of such species. The bovini tribe includes certain species of cattle, bison, and buffalo, including the domestic cow, banteng,

¹ In this context, “wild animal” is broadly defined to mean “any mammal, bird, fish, or other creature of a wild nature endowed with sensation and the power of voluntary motion.” [s. 29.001 (90), Stats.]

² *Schoch CL, et al. NCBI Taxonomy: a comprehensive update on curation, resources and tools.* Database (Oxford). 2020: baaa062. PubMed: 32761142 PMC: PMC7408187.

³ A “tribe” is a taxonomic subcategory of subfamily. As mentioned, along with several other subfamilies of the taxonomic family “bovidae,” the bill applies to species within the subfamily boviniae. Although subclassifications of the boviniae subfamily are not uniformly described in the scientific literature, there appears to be consensus that species within the subfamily can be subdivided into several tribes, including a tribe “bovini,” which includes the subtribes of cattle-bovini and buffalo-bovini.

American bison, Asian wild water buffalo, lowland anoa, tamaraw, mountain anoa, and American buffalo.⁴

BILL HISTORY

Representative Mursau offered Assembly Amendment 1 on October 26, 2021. On January 18, 2022, the Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage recommended adoption of the amendment on a vote of Ayes, 7; Noes, 3, and recommended passage of the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes 6; Noes, 3.

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⁴ See Alexandre Hassanin and Emmanuel J. P. Douzery, *The Tribal Radiation of the Family Bovidae (Artiodactyla) and the Evolution of the Mitochondrial Cytochrome b Gene*, *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Nov. 1999).