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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



DR. WILLIAM E. MORITZ
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: April 18, 2016

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Furbearer Regulations
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2016
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

Furbearer regulation changes were moved to a two-year cycle in 2009 in an effort to provide consistency in regulations for better understanding by hunters and trappers, as well as to facilitate monitoring of the impacts of regulation changes. Beginning with the 2014 cycle, furbearer regulations are now reviewed on even years. This change was made to switch years with bear regulations to help resolve some timing issues with bear information and the bear management process.

For 2016, there are several changes proposed resulting from discussions with stakeholder groups and Department staff beginning in 2015 or earlier. The proposed issues reviewed were selected from a running list of issues developed at the Furtaker User group meeting, from input internally, and from other stakeholders. The primary purpose of the proposed changes are to increase recreational opportunities and provide clarity and consistency in regulations.

Cable Restraints

Cable restraint regulations for the take of coyote and fox have long been a controversial topic between trapping organizations and hound hunting organizations. Issues center on the desire for an effective live-restraining capture tool that also poses minimal risk to hunting dogs. This issue has been contentious for many years and efforts to resolve the conflict have had little success. Over the course of the past several years, trapping and hound organizations have had discussions with the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) about possible solutions. During that time, the NRC agreed to try to work on potential changes to regulations that would satisfy both perspectives.

A small group comprised of two hound hunting representatives, two trapping representatives, and two Natural Resources Commissioners, with Department staff present, met in 2015 to discuss cable restraint regulations. After multiple meetings, there was no compromise solution to

issues regarding cable restraint regulations. There is no recommendation on cable restraint regulations being brought forward for consideration.

Badger Regulations

The Department discussed expanding the badger harvest opportunities either by increasing the bag limit or increasing the season length. During discussions, trapping organizations did not feel strongly about expanding opportunities primarily since badgers are seldom target animals in Michigan. Department staff felt more opportunity was possible but requested the use of kill tags and registration to collect more data on badgers if harvest were increased. Stakeholders were not supportive of registration.

Given the low level of harvest and the lack of interest in expanded badger harvest opportunities, the Department is not recommending a change to badger regulations. Current data is sufficient to monitor harvest without requiring registration.

Floating Colony Traps

The Department was requested to review the legalization of floating colony traps for the take of muskrats. Stakeholders were generally ambivalent about this potential new tool, indicating they might try them if they were legal, but were unlikely to use them extensively. The Department does not see a management need for floating colony traps and defining a floating colony trap in law would result in regulations difficult to understand and enforce. There is no recommendation on muskrat harvest regulations being brought forward for consideration.

Raccoon Regulations

All raccoon regulations in the Wildlife Conservation Order were reviewed for 2016. The primary objective was to simplify and update regulations and consider all potential raccoon harvest changes requested by stakeholders or internal staff simultaneously. In general, raccoon regulations were considered appropriate. However, some simplification and expansion of opportunities are recommended.

Currently, the raccoon trapping season differs from other trapping seasons, such as bobcat, fox, coyote, mink, and muskrat, and differs by zone. To provide consistency between trapping seasons and to expand harvest opportunities, the Department recommends the raccoon trapping season run from October 15 to March 31 in all three zones. This regulation change will allow trappers targeting bobcat, coyote, fox, mink and muskrat to keep raccoons taken during the open trapping season for these species. The Department also recommends that the resident and nonresident raccoon hunting seasons coincide, October 1 to January 31, to provide consistency in regulations.

Stakeholders asked the Department to clarify trap check requirements. Current language states that "restraining type traps and cable restraints designed to hold an animal alive" have either a daily trap check requirement for the Lower Peninsula (LP) or a 48-hour trap check requirement in the Upper Peninsula (UP). The intent is that traps set in a non-lethal manner must be checked regularly while those set in a lethal manner (i.e. conibears or footholds set on a submerging wire) would not have a trap check requirement. The Department recommends changing language to avoid confusion about which types of traps and trap sets have to have a trap check requirement.

The Department also recommends a technical change to allow “or smaller” rimfires in the exemption from magazine capacity restriction.

There were also some administrative changes made throughout the order for consistency and clarification.

Bobcat Harvest Regulations in Bobcat Management Units (BMU) C and D

Over the past 5-10 years, trappers have requested a review of harvest opportunities in BMUs C and D. The desire has been to have more harvest opportunity, especially when compared to current hunting opportunity that exists in those BMUs. Bobcat trapping is allowed in all BMUs, but is restricted to private land only in BMUs C and D. All bobcat trapping in the LP is restricted to foothold traps only. Trapping seasons are 11 days in all four LP BMUs. Hunting in BMUs C and D may occur on all land ownerships and the seasons are two months long (BMU C) and one month long (BMU D). The Department reviewed the potential for increasing opportunity for trappers in BMUs C and D. After the biological and social review, as described below, the Department recommends opening trapping harvest on public lands in BMUs C and D, in addition to the current private land trapping opportunity. The Department also recommends residents who intend to harvest a bobcat acquire their kill tags before the start of the bobcat season.

Biological

The Department evaluated available biological information to determine the current status of bobcat populations in the LP. Over the past decade, the average effort per bobcat harvested (a general index of population trends) suggests that bobcat populations are stable to increasing in the northern Lower Peninsula (NLP). In the 2014 bobcat harvest survey, the Department asked both hunters and trappers if they feel the population is increasing/decreasing or declining. For both hunters and trappers, a majority of respondents indicated that the population is stable or increasing rather than declining. Both the effort/bobcat index and stakeholders in the 2014 bobcat harvest survey suggest a stable to increasing population in the LP.

In 2011 and 2012, the Department ran scent post stations in what is now BMUs E and F and in a portion of BMU D, with the objective of evaluating bobcat occupancy trends and comparing them to earlier sent post station surveys in some of the same areas. The analysis showed that occupancy increased in all of the studied areas. This information suggests that in the surveyed portions of the NLP bobcat populations have been increasing. This information further supports that the bobcat populations are stable to increasing in the NLP.

The bobcat harvest trend over the past decade in the NLP shows a slight increase over the last 12 years, but a relatively stable trend in the last five years. These NLP harvest trends occur despite additional trapping opportunities in BMUs C and D and the addition of hunting and trapping in the new BMUs E and F. Expansions in harvest opportunities in the NLP in recent years appear to have distributed harvest rather than adding to harvest.

Harvest trends in BMUs C and D have been fairly stable. Under current harvest regulations, hunters take more bobcat than trappers in BMUs C and D. Harvest was lower than average in 2013 and 2015.

Bobcat Management Units E and F have the same season length for both hunting and trapping, with both methods available on public and private land. Data shows that when the same opportunities are offered, trappers take more bobcats than hunters. By expanding both the season length and land ownership access in BMUs C and D, it may increase the overall take by trappers.

Harvest trends in BMUs E and F indicate that trappers tend to harvest bobcat on public and private lands in proportion to availability. This data indicates distributed trapping harvest, rather than a concentration of effort on public lands when trapping is legal on both land ownerships. It is likely that allowing trapping in BMUs C and D will distribute existing harvest rather than add additional harvest or concentrate it on public lands, as well as the likelihood of the same trends for the proposed recommendation to allow trapping on BMUs C and D.

Social

The trapping community has asked for “equal opportunity” in BMUs C and D for many years. Historically, those units offered only hunting opportunity. A limited trapping season was opened in 2004 and 2005, and closed in 2006 due to legal challenges. The trapping season in BMUs C and D re-opened in 2008. Since that time, trappers have asked for more opportunity, often requesting season lengths and land access to be the same as the hunting season. All major trapping organizations support expanded opportunity, with the most support being for public land access.

The hound hunting community has been opposed or conservative in its approach to expanded trapping opportunity in BMUs C and D. Trapping organizations are supportive of the proposed change but are likely to ask for additional length of their harvest season. Hound hunting organizations are likely to oppose the recommendation. A review of the requested additional changes requested by hound hunting groups is below. Most trappers in the NLP reside in the Unit that they trap or are successful in trapping. There are very few trappers that come from other BMUs or from the southern Lower Peninsula (SLP) to trap. Data suggest a decline in successful trappers who do not reside in BMU D, as trappers are likely staying in BMUs E and F. Adding public land trapping in BMUs C and D is unlikely to increase trapper participation and bobcat harvest, but will distribute trappers and harvest.

Some hound stakeholder groups requested the Department to implement a statewide bobcat limit of one bobcat per person and kill tag acquisition restrictions as conditions for support of adding the ability to trap bobcats on public lands in BMUs C and D. Both ideas were offered as a way to potentially reduce illegal harvest, (i.e., two bobcats taken in the NLP but either one or both of them registered as having come from the UP or bobcat hunters acquiring a kill tag after harvest occurred). The Department reviewed both topic components of the original issue.

Economic

The Department does not expect an economic impact.

Discussion

In 2014, 42% of bobcat kill tags were acquired after November 30 (the day before the first bobcat season opener), and 2,107 people acquired both their fur harvester license and bobcat kill tags after November 30. The purchase of the fur harvester license and the acquisition of kill

tags is distributed over the course of the license year. There is no biological data or license data that shows how much illegal harvest and illegal registration occurs or the nature of illegal harvest (i.e. harvesting bobcats before obtaining a license, or using another person's kill tag).

Changing the kill tag acquisition timeframe may potentially reduce some illegal activity, especially in the first year of implementation. The Department cannot assess how much the change would reduce illegal activity. This change would also reduce opportunity for those that may have decided late in the year that they wished to hunt or trap bobcat. Since the Department knows a large number of people acquire bobcat kill tags after the season is open, it is likely that a number of individuals will be impacted, potentially impacting bobcat hunter and trapper participation and recruitment. However, all of the major hound hunting and trapping organizations supported this change.

From 2004 to 2014, an average of six people registered one bobcat in both the NLP and the UP, which is 1.7% of the total harvest per year. Also an average of 9 LP residents per year registered two bobcats in the UP. Of residents who harvested two bobcats, 76% are trappers, 16% are hunters and 8% both trap and hunt. This data strongly suggests that the two bobcat limit has very little impact on harvest in the NLP, even if illegal activity is occurring relative to the two bobcat limit.

While houndsmen desired a one bobcat statewide limit, trappers do not. Since the statewide limit does not have bearing on the issue of trapping opportunity in the NLP, there is no recommendation being brought forward for consideration.

Other States

The Department polled natural resources professionals in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin to determine if a hunter must purchase their fur harvester license before the start of the bobcat season. The results were:

Illinois: A law authorizing a bobcat season was recently signed and regulations have not been set for the 2016-2017 bobcat season.

Indiana: Bobcats are a protected species in Indiana; there is not a bobcat hunting or trapping season.

Minnesota: The bobcat hunting and trapping season for 2015-16 was from November 28 to January 3, with a bag limit of five bobcats. Fur harvester licenses are valid from March 1 through February 28 of the following year and residents must have a small game license to hunt or trap furbearers. An individual may purchase a small game license year round and an individual does not have to tag the bobcat, they must keep the registration tag on the pelt until mounted or tanned.

Missouri: The bobcat hunting and trapping season for 2015-16 was from November 15, 2015 to January 3, 2016 and there is no bag limit. The hunting permits are valid from date of purchase through the last day of February. The trapping permit is valid from date of purchase until June

30. An individual must take the bobcat for registration or tagging before selling, transferring, tanning, or mounting by April 10.

Ohio: Bobcats are a protected species in Ohio.

Wisconsin: The first period of the hunting and trapping 2015-16 season was from October 17 to December 25, and the second period was from December 26 to January 31, with a bag limit of one. Wisconsin bobcat hunting and trapping season requires a permit application through a preference point system. Licenses expire March 31 of each year and an individual must have a carcass tag for the appropriate bobcat management zone.

Fur harvester License

The Department recommends the fur harvester license be available from May 1 to April 30 of the following year.

The recommended change to the fur harvester licenses dates will provide clarity and resolve some confusion with the otter season, license, and kill tag end dates. Currently, otter kill tags are available from September 15, 2015 to April 30, 2016 and in order to acquire kill tags after March 31, 2016, a trapper must have purchased a 2015 fur harvester license prior to March 1, 2016. However, after March 31, 2016, the trapper will also need a 2016 fur harvester license to continue trapping through the end of April 2016. All kill tags printed during this time are for the 2015-2016 season; otters taken in April 2016 count toward the 2015-2016 otter bag limit. This recommended regulation change will allow a trapper to trap otter until the end of the otter season with the same year fur harvester license. There are no recommended changes to the otter bag limit.

Recommendation:

This order is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appeared on the Departments April calendar and may be eligible for approval on June 9, 2016.



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 (for chief Hagler)

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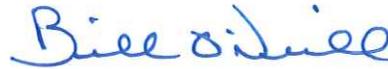
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 (ON BEHALF OF KRISTIN PHILLIPS)

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 8 of 2016

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by sections 40107 and 40113a of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40107 and 324.40113a, it is ordered that effective June 10, 2016, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

2.1 Taking of animals; prohibited methods, devices, and weapons; exceptions.

Sec. 2.1 Unless otherwise specified in this order, a person shall not do any of the following:

(1) Make use of a pit, pitfall, deadfall, scaffold, raised platform, tree, cage, snare, trap, net, baited hook, or similar device, or a drug, poison, anti-coagulant, smoke, gas, explosive, weasel, ferret, fitchew, arbalest, spear, or mechanical device, for the purpose of taking an animal or driving an animal out of their hole or home. For the purpose of this order, a mechanical device shall not be construed to mean a firearm, crossbow, slingshot, or bow and arrow. When used in this order, "raised platform" means a horizontal surface constructed or manufactured by a person that increases the field of vision of a person using the horizontal surface beyond the field of vision that would normally be attained by that person standing on the ground.

(2) Use in taking an animal, or have in the persons possession in an area frequented by animals, a semiautomatic shotgun or rifle other than .22 caliber or smaller rimfire, capable of holding more than six shells at one time in the magazine and barrel combined, or use a cartridge containing a tracer bullet, or a cartridge containing an explosive bullet, or a firearm capable of firing more than one shot with a single pull or activation of the trigger.

(3) During the five days immediately preceding November 15, transport or possess in an area frequented by deer a rifle or shotgun with buckshot, slug load, ball load, or cut shell. A person may transport a rifle or shotgun to or from a hunting camp if the rifle or shotgun is unloaded and securely encased or carried in the trunk of a vehicle. This section shall not prohibit a resident who holds a fur harvesters license from carrying a rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller while hunting or checking a trap line during the open season for hunting or trapping fur-bearing animals.

(4) Use in hunting, or, subject to section 43510, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.43510, possess afield in an area inhabited by wild birds and animals within the "limited firearms deer zone" from November 15 to November 30, or use to take a deer during any firearm deer season in the "limited firearms deer zone," a firearm other than:

(a) A shotgun with a smooth or rifled barrel.

(b) A .35 caliber or larger pistol capable of holding no more than nine shells at one time in the barrel and magazine combined and loaded with straight-walled cartridges.

(c) A muzzle-loading rifle or black-powder pistol loaded with black-powder or a commercially manufactured black-powder substitute.

(d) A .35 caliber or larger rifle loaded with straight-walled cartridges with a minimum case length of 1.16 inches and a maximum case length of 1.80 inches.

(e) A .35 caliber or larger air rifle or pistol charged only from an external high-compression power source such as an external hand pump, air tank, or air compressor.

(5) Injure, destroy, or rob the eggs of birds protected by the laws of this state or this order, or molest, harass, or annoy those birds upon their nests.

(6) Make use of a sink box or battery as these devices are defined by the United States fish and wildlife service.

(7) Set afire or assist in setting afire a marshland or other lands for the purpose of driving out wild birds or wild animals, or take or attempt to take a wild bird or wild animal so driven out of a marshland or other land.

(8) Take any animal at any time other than during the hunting hours and open seasons established in this order, except as may otherwise be provided in chapter VI.

(9) Take in 1 day more than the daily limit, or possess at one time more than the possession limit, or possess on the first day of the open season more than the daily limit, or possess more than the season limit of any animal.

(10) Destroy, disturb, or molest at any time any bear, beaver, muskrat, raccoon, squirrel, mink, badger, or rabbit house, hole, burrow, nest, dam, or den which may be used by such animals.

(11) Make use of a dog in hunting deer, except as noted in section 2.1a of this order.

(12) Affix any device to a bow, which aids in the cocking or holding of a bow string in a drawn position. This subsection shall not prohibit the use of a hand-held device to release the bow string. This subsection shall not apply to a permanently or temporarily disabled person who holds a special permit provided for in section 40101 to 40119 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40101 to 324.40119, or section 5.95 of this order.

(13) Use aircraft to aid in the taking of a wild bird or wild animal.

(14) Take game with a crossbow unless the hunter possesses a valid license to take game and uses only arrows, bolts, and quarrels for taking deer, bear, elk, wolf, and turkey with a broadhead hunting type of point not less than 7/8 of an inch wide with a minimum of 14 inches in length.

(15) Take deer with a crossbow or a modified bow in zone 1 from December 1 to March 31. This subsection shall not apply to a person who holds a special permit provided for in part 401, wildlife conservation, natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.40101 to 324.40119, or section 5.95 of this order.

2.3 Permitted acts; trapping; use of rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller; American Indians on reservations.

Sec. 2.3 This order shall not be construed to prohibit any of the following:

(1) The trapping of fur-bearing animals as provided in this order.

(2) **Subject to section 2.5 of this order,** ~~The carrying and using of~~ **an individual may use** a rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller to kill raccoon while hunting with dogs between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. during the firearm deer season.

(3) The carrying and using of a rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller to kill legally trapped furbearers, as permitted in section 3.600 (1), during the firearm deer season if the firearm is loaded only at the point of kill.

(4) The enjoyment by American Indians living on a reservation of the privileges bestowed upon them by federal law or treaties.

2.7 Permissible use of dogs.

Sec. 2.7 A person may hunt with dogs, or break, train, or practice a dog upon, or permit a dog to chase or take an animal only as provided in ~~chapter VI, chapter XIV, chapter XV,~~ **this order** or as otherwise permitted by law.

3.600 Fur-bearing animals; use of firearms; traps and catching devices; use of bait; unlawful acts.

Sec. 3.600 It shall be unlawful for any person:

(1) To use a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow to take marten, muskrat, beaver, otter, mink, fisher, or badger, except as permitted by authority of a nuisance control permit issued by the department. Rimfire firearms .22 caliber or smaller may be used to kill coyote, fox, raccoon, bobcat, and badger in traps except if the trapper is an individual that cannot lawfully hunt with a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow.

(2) Except as provided by subsection (3), to use or have in possession in areas frequented by animals, a catching device of any kind for the taking of animals unless the name and address in legible English or the complete Michigan driver license number or DNR sportcard number of the user or individual possessing the device is

permanently etched in the catching device, or there shall be securely fastened to each catching device a metallic plate or tag bearing the name and address in legible English or the complete Michigan driver license number of the user or individual possessing the catching device.

(3) To use, carry afield, or have in possession 1 or more snares or 1 or more cable restraints unless they have attached a metallic tag or plate securely fastened which bears the name and address in legible English or the complete Michigan drivers license number of the user or individual possessing the catching device.

(4) To use or have in possession 1 or more snares or 1 or more cable restraints securely attached to a pole unless the uppermost end of the pole has a metallic plate or tag securely fastened which bears the name and address in legible English or the complete Michigan driver license number of the user or individual possessing the catching device.

(5) To use a multiple catch or colony trap except for the taking of muskrat and provided that the trap is completely submerged below the water. Colony traps must be constructed of steel and shall be no larger than 8 inches in height, 8 inches in width, and 36 inches in depth. This order shall not be construed to prohibit use of colony or multiple catch traps used by nuisance control operators for species other than muskrat.

(6) To stake, put out, or set a catching device of any kind for the taking of a fur-bearing animal at any time preceding the day on which the open season for the taking of such fur-bearing animal begins.

(7) To use a foothold trap with a jaw spread exceeding a number 2 foothold trap for the taking of mink or muskrat except as may be provided by this order for the incidental take of muskrat during the beaver and otter season. It shall also be unlawful to use any kind of a trap other than a foothold or body gripping or conibear type trap to take furbearing animals except as permitted under the provisions of subsection (4).

(8) To use any portion of any protected animal or protected bird as bait for the purpose of trapping any animal in this state. This subsection shall not be construed to prohibit an individual from using the carcasses and parts thereof of game animals or game birds, lawfully taken and possessed during their open season, as bait, except as stated in Section 5.31 of this order.

(9) To set a trap or snare on a beaver dam or lodge unless it meets at least one of the following provisions:

(a) The trap is totally submerged below the water.

(b) The trap is a duffer-type, egg-type, or similarly designed foothold trap which by construction will selectively capture raccoon. This trap may be set above the water.

(c) The trap is a body gripping or conibear type trap 5 inches or less in width as measured inside the jaw hinges. This trap may be set above the water.

(d) The trap is a body gripping or conibear type trap less than 8 inches above the ground at the highest point, and set in a way that does not use bait, lure, or attractant to entice an animal, and the trap is between 5 inches and 6 and one half inches as measured inside the jaw hinges. This trap may be set above the water.

(10) To set a body gripping or conibear type trap larger than 5 and one half inches in width as measured inside the jaw hinges on dry land or over frozen submerged bottomlands, unless the trap is placed as follows:

(a) On private land, except lands open to hunting by the general public under the provisions of Part 511, commercial forests, of the natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.51101 to 324.51120, and less than 7 and one half inches as measured inside the jaw hinges.

(b) On public or private lands 4 feet or more above dry ground or the frozen surface of ice, as applicable.

(c) On public lands and lands open to hunting by the general public under the provisions of Part 511, commercial forests, of the natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.51101 to 324.51120, and is:

(i) Less than 8 inches above the ground at the highest point, and in a way that does not use bait, lure, or attractant to entice an animal and the trap is between 5 and one half and 6 and one half inches as measured inside the jaw hinges.

(ii) In a box or similar container that is placed vertically on a tree or other structure so that the trap trigger is at least 4 inches from the container opening and the opening of the container is no more than 6 inches from the ground.

(iii) In a box or similar container with a maximum fixed opening of 6 inches measured from the inside bottom of the container opening to the lower edge of the top of the container opening with 8 inch slots to allow trap placement so that no part of the trap trigger is closer than 6 inches to the opening edge of the container and the trap is between 5 and one half inches and 7 and one half inches as measured inside the jaw hinges.

(11) To set a trap within 50 feet of any water in zone 1 before October 25, or within 50 feet of any water in zone 2 before November 1, or within 50 feet of any water in zone 3 before November 10, except for the following catching devices:

(a) A duffer-type, egg-type, or similarly designed foothold trap which by construction will selectively capture raccoon.

(b) A body gripping or conibear trap placed 4 feet or more above the ground.

(12) To set a catching device designed to hold an animal alive unless:

(a) Any catch is released or removed upon checking the catching device. Restraining type traps ~~and cable restraints designed~~ set in a manner to hold an animal alive shall be checked at least once daily in zones 2 and 3 and within a 48 hour period in zone 1, except as noted in Section 5.52 (8) or in (ii) below.

(b) Using a live-restraining cage trap, other than a trap designed to catch more than 1 animal at 1 time, for the taking of furbearing animals, in season, by a licensed trapper, or person permitted by the Department.

(i) A person using a live-restraining cage trap, other than a trap designed to catch more than 1 animal at 1 time, shall release or kill an animal captured in a live-restraining cage trap immediately upon finding that animal in a trap.

(ii) A person using a live-restraining cage trap, other than a trap designed to catch more than 1 animal at 1 time, shall tend the trap daily statewide.

(13) To use, carry afield, or set a trap with teeth or serrations.

3.600a Fur harvester license; validity

(1) The fur harvester license shall be valid from May 1 through April 30 of the following year.

3.605 Raccoon hunting and trapping, seasons; taking raccoons doing or about to do damage, person taking considered permittee.

Sec. 3.605 (1) The open season for taking raccoon by hunting shall be October 1 to January 31, ~~except that the open season for nonresidents taking raccoon by hunting shall be November 15 to January 31.~~ **The trapping season for raccoon shall be October 15 to March 31.**

(2) A property owner or their designee may take raccoon all year on property owned by the person when raccoons are doing or are about to do damage to the persons property. A person taking a raccoon under the authority of this subsection shall be considered a permittee as defined by section 5.50 of this order. A written permit is not required, and the person shall be authorized to take raccoon all year by otherwise lawful hunting and trapping methods.

3.606 Muskrat, mink, and raccoon trapping, open seasons; closed areas.

Sec. 3.606 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the open season for taking muskrat and mink by trapping shall be October 25 to March 1 in zone 1, November 1 to March 1 in zone 2, and November 10 to March 1 in zone 3. ~~The trapping season for raccoon shall be October 15 to January 31 in zones 1 and 2, and November 1 to January 31 in zone 3.~~

(2) Except as provided in subsections 3 and 4, and **subject to section 13.2(6) of this order**, the open seasons for taking muskrat and mink by trapping, and raccoon by trapping and hunting on the following managed wetlands are as shown in table 11:

TABLE 11		
Muskrat, Mink, and Raccoon Seasons with Valid Permit in Managed Wetlands		
Area	Muskrat and Mink Season	Raccoon Season
Allegan state game area (Fennville farm unit)	November 10 to March 31 except during the Allegan county GMU season as provided in 3.415	Open year round
Crow island state game area	Day after waterfowl season closes to March 31	Open year round
Fish point wildlife area	Day after waterfowl season closes to March 31	Open year round
Nayanquing point wildlife area	Day after waterfowl season closes to March 31	Open year round
Pointe Mouillee state game area	Day after waterfowl season closes to March 31	Open year round
Shiawassee river state game area	Day after waterfowl season closes to March 31, except A units shall have the same season dates as provided in subsection (1) for zone 3	Open year round
St. Clair flats wildlife area (Harsens island unit)	November 10 to March 31	Open year round

(3) Managed wetlands or portions of managed wetlands shall be closed when posted unless otherwise specified in this order.

(4) The director, in consultation with and concurrence of the chair or vice chair of the natural resources commission, may make appropriate changes to muskrat, mink, and raccoon trapping season closing dates for the state game areas and state wildlife areas listed in subsection (2), in order to meet disease, damage control, or other management objectives for those areas.

3.608 Bobcat open seasons, season limit, closed areas, restrictions; kill tags and tagging requirements; registration requirements; unlawful acts.

Sec. 3.608 (1) The open season for taking bobcat by trapping in bobcat management units A and B shall be December 1 to February 1. The open season for taking bobcat by hunting in bobcat management units A and B shall be from January 1 to March 1.

(2) The open season for taking bobcat by trapping in bobcat management units C and D shall be from December 10 to December 20, ~~on private lands only~~, using foothold traps only. The open season for taking bobcat by hunting in management unit C shall be from January 1 to March 1. The open season for taking bobcat by hunting in management unit D shall be from January 1 to February 1.

(3) The open season for taking bobcat by trapping in bobcat management units E and F shall be from December 10 to December 20, using foothold traps only. The open season for taking bobcat by hunting in management units E and F shall be from January 1 to January 11.

(4) The season limit shall be 2 bobcats per licensed resident fur harvester except a individual shall take not more than 1 bobcat from bobcat management unit B, and not more than 1 bobcat in bobcat management units C, and D, E, and F combined.

(5) Through the last day of ~~before~~ the open bobcat season, a resident issued a fur harvesters license may obtain a free bobcat kill tag. A resident who intends to hunt or trap bobcat shall request and be issued up to 2 free bobcat kill tags. A resident shall not sell, loan, or permit in any manner another individual to use the bobcat kill tag or use or least 8 years old, subject to section 2.14. An individual who kills a bobcat shall immediately validate the kill tag by

notching out the appropriate information on the tag and attach the kill tag to the hide of the bobcat from the upper jaw to the eye socket or through the lower jaw of the bobcat in a secure and permanent manner. An individual shall not tag a bobcat with a kill tag that is not valid for the unit in which the bobcat is taken. This kill tag shall remain attached to the bobcat until the animal is registered and sealed by the department. An individual shall not possess a bobcat or bobcat hide that is not tagged with a validated kill tag unless a department seal is attached as provided by subsection (6).

(6) An individual that kills a bobcat shall present the pelt and skull of the bobcat to the department to be registered and sealed no later than 10 days following the close of the season in which it was taken. The pelt and skull shall be presented for sealing in person by the resident fur harvester that killed the animal and shall not be presented for sealing or registration by another individual. The individual presenting the bobcat pelt and skull shall display their fur harvester license, including identification used to acquire the license, and shall provide harvest information as requested by the department. The department shall retain at least one tooth or the skull, at the discretion of the department, and attach an official seal to the pelt of each bobcat presented for examination. The seal shall be locked upon the hide in such a manner that it cannot be removed without cutting or ripping the bobcat pelt or damaging the seal. An official seal attached by the department shall not be removed from the bobcat pelt until the bobcat pelt is processed or tanned. Subsequent to 10 days following March 1, it shall be unlawful to possess a bobcat pelt without an official department seal attached unless the pelt has been processed or tanned or the bobcat season is open.

6.2 Legal game, open seasons, defined.

Sec. 6.2 Unless otherwise prohibited or specified in Chapter XIV of this order, the following game may be hunted with dogs during their respective open seasons as defined in chapter III: bear, bobcat, raccoon, opossum, mink, fox, coyote, rabbit, hare, squirrel, duck, geese, coot, Florida gallinule, pheasant, quail, Hungarian partridge, ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, wild turkey, snipe, woodcock, sora rail, and Virginia rail.

Issued on this 9th day of June, 2016.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

John Matonich, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Director