STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: September 12, 2016
RESUBMITTED: October 17, 2016

APPROVED
_____, 20____
MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
_____
(ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Spring Turkey Regulations
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 10 of 2016

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:

Current spring turkey regulations have been in place since 2013 as part of a three-year stabilized regulation process that originated in 2008. The spring wild turkey season is designed to maximize hunter opportunity for a satisfactory hunting experience while sustaining a viable wild turkey population. When turkeys were a species of scarcity, traditional spring turkey hunting seasons had restrictive regulations for both public and private land in order to widely disperse hunters to provide a quality recreational experience. As wild turkey populations have flourished, turkey hunters and private landowners have requested greater flexibility in areas where they can hunt. The proposed recommendations are the result of discussions with stakeholder groups and Department staff and mark the beginning of the fourth cycle of three-year stabilized regulations for turkey management. The recommendations are similar to the last three-year regulatory cycle and are an effort to provide additional recreational opportunity without negatively impacting the quality of spring turkey hunting. In keeping with efforts to stabilize regulations by using multi-year cycles, these regulations are proposed to remain constant for three years.

License Quotas
License quotas are developed to harvest the desired number of turkeys to meet the management goal. For the 2017, 2018, and 2019 spring turkey season, the Department recommends that a total of 84,140 licenses (49,140 General, 35,000 Private) be made available through a lottery during the hunter limited hunt periods and that approximately 58,114 square miles of area be open to spring turkey hunting. A person may purchase only one license for the spring turkey hunting season. Most quotas will remain the same.

The Department recommends maintaining the spring wild turkey general license seasons and quotas for turkey management units (TMU): A, B, E, F, J, K, M, ZA, ZB, ZC, ZD, ZE, and ZF.

The recommended license quota for TMU ZZ (Hunt 301) in the Lower Peninsula is 35,000. This is a decrease by almost half from the last cycle. This recommended adjustment is expected to more closely match demand and actual license sales.

Biological
The 2015 Michigan Spring Turkey Hunter survey concluded that approximately 71,902 hunters harvested about 30,039 turkeys. Of the 30,039 turkeys harvested in 2015, approximately 91 percent of these birds were taken on private land. About 18 percent of the harvested birds were juvenile males; 81 percent were adult males, and about 1 percent were bearded females.

Department experts and turkey management partners do not expect a biological impact to the reduced quota for TMU ZZ.

Social
During the last three years, the Department has sought feedback about spring wild turkey regulations from conservation organizations, turkey hunters, and others. The 2015 Michigan Spring Turkey Hunter survey concluded that nearly 70% of hunters rated their hunting experience as excellent, very good, or good. Also, statewide hunter satisfaction has increased significantly (from 67% in 2014 to 70% in 2015). Generally, most hunters are satisfied with the current regulations

The National Wild Turkey Federation, Wildlife Unlimited of Delta and Dickinson Counties, Superior Turkey Trackers, Menominee National Wild Turkey Federation, Menominee Strutting Toms, Bays De Noc Gobblers, Eastern Dickinson County Sportsman Club, and Michigan Wild Turkey Hunters Association support the proposed recommendations.

Economic
Turkey hunting opportunities provide economic benefits by increasing recreation and hunting-related expenditures, e.g., costs of ammunition, food, travel, and lodging.

Future Regulation Discussions
Currently, the Department is partnering with Michigan State University using structured decision-making approaches to evaluate wild turkey management options in Michigan. An important component of this approach involves input from stakeholders through a series of workshops to gather input about goals, objectives, and management options for turkey management. This process has involved a series of collaborative workshops carried out over the last two years. A diversity of stakeholder groups, Natural Resources Commission Chair, and Department field representatives are involved with this structured decision-making process. During the development and evaluation of the next cycle of stabilized regulations, a number of topics will emanate from this process for discussion between the Department, stakeholders, and constituents. Some topics of discussion will include boundary changes, season date structure changes, youth hunting opportunities, and hunt unit structure changes.

The Southeast Wildlife Region and the Southwest Wildlife Region proposed extending hunt unit ZZ (Hunt 301) from 14 days to 44 days and eliminating hunt unit 234. These Regions also

proposed restructuring the hunting seasons for the general licenses in Southern Michigan. After further review of hunt unit ZZ hunter satisfaction (77%) in the 2015 Michigan Spring Turkey Hunter Survey and discussions with stakeholders and staff, it is unclear whether there is uniform currently support for these recommendations. These proposals will be reviewed through the structured decision-making process and considered during the next cycle of stabilized regulations.

In June, Michigan United Conservation Clubs passed a resolution seeking to change the season opening date from a Monday to a Saturday in hunt unit ZZ. Since the convention, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Michigan Wild Turkey Hunters Association have clarified that they do not support this change. Therefore, there will be no recommended change during this cycle of stabilized regulations. This topic will be discussed during the next cycle of stabilized regulations.

Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information on October 13, 2016, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's September 2016 calendar and may be eligible for approval on November 10, 2016.

Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division

Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Bill O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Keith Creagh, Director

Date

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 10 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 November 11, 2016, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

3.300a Wild turkey population, harvest quotas.

Sec 3.300a. (1) The spring wild turkey hunt seasons and quotas for general licenses valid on all land within the listed unit shall be as shown in table 6:

TABLE 6

Spring Wild Turkey General License Seasons and Quotas

Hunt Numbers	Open Units	Hunt Seasons	License Quota
101	A	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days.	5,500
102	B	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days.	1,000
103	E	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	850
104	E	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	850
105	F	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	2,500
106	F	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	2,500
107	J	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days.	4,000
108	K	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	4,000
109	K	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	4,500
110	M	Begins on the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.	6,000
111	ZA	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	1,200
112	ZA	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	1,200
113	ZA	Begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	1,200
114	ZA	Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.	1,200
115	ZB	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	650
116	ZB	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	650
117	ZB	Begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	650
118	ZB	Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.	650
119	ZC	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	600
120	ZC	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	600
121	ZC	Begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	600
122	ZC	Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.	600
123	ZD	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	10
124	ZD	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	10
125	ZD	Begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	10
126	ZD	Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.	10
127	ZE	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	500
128	ZE	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	500
129	ZE	Begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	500
130	ZE	Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.	500
131	ZF	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	1,300
132	ZF	Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days.	1,300
133	ZF	Begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.	3,000

(2) The spring wild turkey hunt seasons and quotas for private land only licenses which are not valid on county, state or federal lands, except that they may be used to hunt Fort Custer military lands with permission, shall be as shown in table 7:

TABLE 7

Spring Wild Turkey Private Land License Seasons and Quotas

Hunt Number	Open Unit	Hunt Seasons	License Quota
301	ZZ	Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days.	35,000

(3) Hunt number 234 begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. Licenses for hunt number 234 are valid on private and public land in spring turkey management units, except public lands in southern Lower Peninsula wild turkey management unit (unit ZZ). Individuals who possess a valid license for hunt number 234 may hunt Fort Custer military land with permission.

(4) An individual may purchase a license for hunt number 234 when leftover licenses are made available for purchase through May 31; no application is required.

(5) If any limited quota licenses remain after the drawing, an unsuccessful applicant may purchase one leftover license on a first-come, first-served basis for a one-week period. Any limited-quota licenses that remain after this one-week period will be made available to all hunters on a first-come, first-served basis.

(6) The wildlife division chief may recommend to the director the need for any appropriate significant changes in quotas based on experience with population densities, hunter satisfaction levels, hunter application rates, or survey results. The director, in consultation with the chairman or vice-chairman of the natural resources commission, may make changes in quotas in a turkey management unit to address this new information.

(7) It is unlawful to purchase more than one Michigan spring turkey hunting license.

Issued on this 10th day of November, 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.

Keith Creagh
Director