STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED:	May 13, 2013
RESUBMITTED:	June 17, 2013

APPROVED
_____, 20____
MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

_____
(ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Antlerless Deer License Quotas
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 11 of 2013

Authority:

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

Discussion and Background:

This amendment establishes the public land antlerless deer license quota and private land antlerless deer license quota for each Deer Management Unit (DMU) in the state.

Preliminary harvest estimates from the 2012 season became available just prior to submission of antlerless license quota recommendations by field staff. These estimates and a variety of other indicators provided perspective on status of regional deer populations to support generation of antlerless quota recommendations. Data consulted included multiple year trends in biological data collected at check stations, local deer population indices and estimates, deer-vehicle collision reports, crop damage complaints, public comments, Upper Peninsula (UP) camp surveys, and observations by Conservation Officers, foresters, and wildlife habitat biologists.

The recommended antlerless deer license quotas for 2013 would provide a statewide total of 70,550 public land antlerless deer licenses, a slight decrease from 2012, when 70,750 were offered. The recommended total of 483,400 private land antlerless deer licenses is a decrease from the 637,900 private land licenses which were available in 2012. The combined public and private land quota of 553,950 would be a decrease of 154,800 licenses from the quotas available in 2012. The most substantial difference is due to a recommendation for a decrease in private land licenses in specific areas formerly encompassed within the southern Michigan multi-county DMU 486. Recommendations for southern Michigan include a decrease of 170,550 private land antlerless licenses in order to adjust management efforts to deer densities that are no longer substantially above goal throughout this region.

Upper Peninsula Region (UP)

For three straight winters from 2009-2010 to 2011-2012, deer populations continued a short-term slowly increasing trend throughout much of the UP. Conditions during winter 2012-2013 were

initially at or below the long-term average severity, but increased in severity by mid-January and continued through late April. An overall decrease in antlerless licenses was recommended in many DMUs in anticipation of increased adult deer mortality and low fawn recruitment due to the prolonged winter. However, conditions in 6 out of 22 DMUs indicate antlerless licenses may be issued to provide additional recreational opportunity and aid in addressing expected increased concerns over agricultural damage and forest regeneration.

An overall decrease of 2,450 private land and 1,400 public land antlerless licenses across the UP is recommended. The recommendations for 2013 include:

- Closing the Nissula (DMU 031), Amasa/Michigamme (DMU 036), Drummond Island (DMU 117), Gwinn (DMU 152) and Rock (DMU 252) units to private/public land antlerless harvest;
- Decreasing the public land antlerless quota for Menominee County (DMU 055) and the Gladstone Unit (DMU 155);
- Decreasing the private land antlerless quota for the Crystal Falls Unit (DMU 022)
- Decreasing the private/public land antlerless quota for the LaBranche Unit (DMU 255)

In total, these recommendations would decrease the private land quota for the region to 18,800 (down from 21,250 in 2012) and the public land quota to 4,500 (down from 5,900 in 2012).

Northern Lower Peninsula Region (NLP)

Recent deer population trends within the Northern Lower Peninsula have been increasing steadily due to the three previous mild winters. Although this winter had a number of severe storms the overall impact of winter appears to be mild with the majority of the deer observed by staff appearing to be healthy and fit. Increased harvest rates, crop damage complaints and staff sightings over the last three years have led staff to recommend increased antlerless quotas throughout much of the NLP but specifically in the Northwest where quotas have remained conservative for a number of years. Also, the large private land DMU that makes up most of Southern Michigan (DMU 486) will be dissolved this year. Therefore, Isabella (DMU 037) and Midland (DMU 056) Counties, which were previously included in DMU 486, will now each have individual private land antlerless quotas. Of the 36 DMUs in the NLP, 19 have recommended increases in antlerless quotas while the remaining 17 have recommended quotas to remain the same as last year.

Recommended changes for the 2013 season include:

- Opening both public and private land antlerless quotas on Bois Blanc Island (DMU 149)
- Opening public land antlerless quotas for Lake (DMU 043) and Manistee (DMU 051) counties;
- Opening public land and increasing private land antlerless quotas in Antrim (DMU 005), Benzie (DMU 010), Charlevoix (DMU 015), Emmet (DMU 024), Grand Traverse (DMU 028), Kalkaska (DMU 040), Leelanau (DMU 045) and Osceola (DMU 067) counties;

- Increasing public and private land quotas in Cheboygan (016), Mason (DMU 053), Otsego (069) and Wexford (DMU 083) counties;
- Increasing the private land antlerless quota in Roscommon County (DMU 072);
- Increasing the public land antlerless quota in Alcona County (DMU 001);
- With the elimination of DMU 486, new private land antlerless quotas will be 11,000 for Isabella County (DMU 037) and 7,500 for Midland County (DMU 056)

In total, these recommendations would increase the public land quota for the region to 35,900 (up from 30,900 in 2012) and increase the private land quota to 119,100 (up from 115,500 in 2012).

Southern Lower Peninsula Regions (SLP)

For approximately the past decade, deer population estimates and indices (including deer/vehicle collisions, crop damage complaints, and observations of deer by the hunting community and field staff) in the SLP have stabilized or declined. Department management efforts were intended to reduce deer densities throughout most of the region over this period. Deer populations in many areas are now near goal levels or at least much closer to goals than they have been for some time. This is particularly the case in some areas that have experienced repeated outbreaks of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) over the latter portion of this period. Therefore, in addition to previously recommending creation of new DMU boundaries for the SLP to direct management efforts towards distinct areas at a smaller scale than the former multi-county DMU 486, Department recommendations would reduce the private land quota for the region to 345,500 (down from 519,650 in 2012) and the public land quota to 30,150 (down from 33,950 in 2012).

Based on comparison to antlerless license sales in years prior to creation of DMU 486, most recommended private land antlerless quotas are still expected to exceed hunter demand. However, recommended quotas in several units are close to or slightly below past license sales figures, and so private land antlerless licenses could sell out in some areas before the end of the 2013 season at these recommended quota levels. Where local deer abundance may warrant additional antlerless harvest within DMUs otherwise constrained by antlerless quotas, field staff intends to work with property owners to provide Deer Management Assistance Permits as necessary.

Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information on June 13, 2013, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's May 2013 calendar and may be eligible for approval on July 11, 2013.

Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division

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Law Enforcement Division

Scott Heather for
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Forest Resources Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

James Dexter, Chief
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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. 11 of 2013

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 July 12, 2013, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

3.105 Antlerless-only license quotas.

Sec. 3.105 (1) The director, in consultation with and concurrence of the chair or vice chair of the natural resources commission, may make appropriate minor changes to antlerless deer quotas established in 3.105(2) to meet disease control, population goal, or other management objectives.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the antlerless deer license quotas are as shown in table 3:

TABLE 3

Deer Management Unit (DMU) License Quotas

DMU	DMU Name	Public licenses	Private licenses	Total licenses
001	Alcona County	5,000	0	5,000
003	Allegan County	900	8,000	8,900
004	Alpena County	2,000	0	2,000
005	Antrim County	200	5,200	5,400
006	Arenac County	500	7,000	7,500
007	Big Bay Unit	0	0	0
008	Barry County*	0	0	0
009	Bay County	200	3,000	3,200
010	Benzie County	600	400	1,000
011	Berrien County*	0	0	0
012	Branch County	100	6,000	6,100
013	Calhoun County*	0	0	0
014	Cass County*	0	0	0
015	Charlevoix County	200	3,600	3,800
016	Cheboygan County	400	700	1,100
017	Sault Ste. Marie Unit	0	0	0
018	Clare County	900	8,000	8,900
019	Clinton County*	0	0	0
020	Crawford County	800	1,000	1,800
021	Manistique Unit	0	0	0
022	Crystal Falls Unit	1,000	3,500	4,500
023	Eaton County*	0	0	0
024	Emmet County	200	1,700	1,900
025	Genesee County	0	8,500	8,500
026	Gladwin County	1,200	8,000	9,200
027	Watersmeet Unit	0	0	0
028	Grand Traverse County	500	400	900
029	Gratiot County*	0	0	0
030	Hillsdale County	400	12,000	12,400
031	Nissula Unit	0	0	0
032	Huron County*	0	0	0
033	Ingham County*	0	0	0
034	Ionia County	400	11,000	11,400
035	Iosco County	1,000	0	1,000
036	Amasa/Michigamme Unit	0	0	0
037	Isabella County	100	11,000	11,100

038	Jackson County	1,600	17,000	18,600
039	Kalamazoo County*	0	0	0
040	Kalkaska County	400	200	600
041	Kent County*	0	0	0
042	Keweenaw Unit	0	0	0
043	Lake County	200	3,000	3,200
044	Lapeer County	2,000	15,000	17,000
045	Leelanau County	200	1,400	1,600
046	Lenawee County	400	9,000	9,400
047	Livingston County	2,000	15,000	17,000
048	Newberry Unit	0	0	0
050	Macomb County	200	4,000	4,200
051	Manistee County	500	3,000	3,500
053	Mason County	400	5,200	5,600
054	Mecosta County*	0	0	0
055	Menominee County	2,000	9,000	11,000
056	Midland County	1,500	7,500	9,000
057	Missaukee County	600	3,200	3,800
058	Monroe County	100	1,000	1,100
059	Montcalm County*	0	0	0
060	Montmorency County	5,000	0	5,000
061	Muskegon County*	0	0	0
063	Oakland County	2,500	7,000	9,500
064	Oceana County*	0	0	0
065	Ogemaw County	1,000	7,000	8,000
066	Ontonagon County	0	0	0
067	Osceola County	100	5,300	5,400
068	Oscoda County	5,000	0	5,000
069	Otsego County	300	600	900
070	Ottawa County*	0	0	0
071	Presque Isle County	3,000	0	3,000
072	Roscommon County	500	1,500	2,000
073	Saginaw County	200	6,500	6,700
074	St. Clair County	700	9,500	10,200
075	St. Joseph County*	0	0	0
076	Sanilac County*	0	0	0
078	Shiawassee County*	0	0	0
079	Tuscola County*	0	0	0
080	Van Buren County*	0	0	0
081	Washtenaw County	1,500	15,000	16,500
082	Wayne County	100	1,200	1,300
083	Wexford County	1,000	3,700	4,700
115	Beaver Island	300	400	700
117	Drummond Island	0	0	0
121	Bay De Noc	400	800	1,200
122	Norway Unit	200	1,500	1,700
127	Ironwood Unit	0	0	0
131	Twin Lakes Unit	0	0	0
135	Tawas Unit	200	0	200
145	North Manitou Island	0	0	0
149	Round/Bois Blanc Island	100	100	200
152	Gwinn Unit	0	0	0
155	Gladstone Unit	400	3,000	3,400
162	South Newaygo County*	0	0	0
174	St. Clair Flats	400	300	700
245	South Fox Island	0	0	0
249	Trout Lake Unit	0	0	0
252	Rock Unit	0	0	0

255	LaBranche Unit	500	1,000	1,500
262	North Newaygo County*	0	0	0
273	Shiawassee Unit	300	0	300
308	Bellevue Unit (Barry - Calhoun - Eaton)	2,000	32,000	34,000
311	Keeler Unit (Berrien - Cass - Van Buren)	700	14,000	14,700
319	Laingsburg Unit (Clinton - Gratiot - Ingham - Shiawassee)	3,400	40,000	43,400
332	Greenleaf Unit (Huron - Sanilac - Tuscola)	6,200	42,000	48,200
339	Vicksburg Unit (Kalamazoo - St. Joseph)	900	11,000	11,900
341	Sparta Unit (Kent - Muskegon south - Ottawa)	1,350	22,500	23,850
349	Engadine Unit	0	0	0
354	Lakeview Unit (Mecosta - Montcalm)	1,200	26,000	27,200
361	Fremont Unit (Muskegon north - Newaygo - Oceana)	400	9,000	9,400
452	TB Core Area	2,000	0	2,000
486	Southern Multi-County	0	0	0
487	Northern Multi-County	0	30,000	30,000
	Total	70,550	483,400	553,950

**License quotas for these individual units are reflected as part of multi-county units.*

Issued on this 11th day of July, 2013.

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

J. R. Richardson, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Keith Creagh
Director