



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING



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GOVERNOR

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DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: May 12, 2008
RESUBMITTED: June 9, 2008
RESUBMITTED: June 24, 2008

<u>A P P R O V E D</u>
_____, 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. 12 of 2008

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.

Following the 2005 deer season when 413,000 deer were taken, the harvest for both the 2006 (450,000) and 2007 (485,000) seasons indicate an increasing statewide deer herd. Results from the 2007 Michigan deer harvest survey indicate that fewer hunters and less hunting effort was required to achieve the increased harvest, another indication of an increasing deer herd. Additional information available to Wildlife Division staff supports the increasing deer herd trend. The one exception to this trend is the western Upper Peninsula. The winter of 2007-2008 has had a negative impact on the deer herd in that area.

The Michigan State Police provide an independent index of deer herd changes with the annual reporting of vehicle-deer accidents. In 2007, the number of vehicle-deer accidents statewide increased by 1.7 percent. While this is a relatively small increase, it is the second year in a row of increased reported vehicle-deer accidents.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
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The recommended antlerless deer license quotas would provide a statewide total of 66,375 public land antlerless deer licenses and 573,200 private land antlerless deer licenses. This is an increase from 2007, in which 56,900 public land and 547,300 private land antlerless deer licenses were available, and an increase of 7.5 percent from 2006. The projected statewide deer population for 2008 of 1,841,000 remains similar to the 2007 population, of 1,821,800. This is primarily the result of an increase in the Northern Lower Peninsula (NLP) projected population offsetting a decrease in the Upper Peninsula (UP) projected population.

Upper Peninsula

In the UP, the recommendation is for 8,000 public land and 31,000 private land antlerless deer licenses to be available. In 2007, there were 10,200 public land and 35,500 private land antlerless deer licenses available. This decrease in antlerless licenses is the result of the winter of 2007-2008. The winter of 2007-2008 in the UP resulted in some winter deer mortality, and is expected to have a negative impact on fawn survival this spring. The projected deer population in the UP for 2008 is 323,600 deer, down from the 358,400 projected deer population for 2007. This decrease in the projected population resulted in the closing of two deer management units (DMUs) to private land licenses, one DMU to public land licenses, and a general decrease in antlerless licenses throughout the UP.

Nine DMUs in the UP will not have antlerless licenses available in 2008. However, archery hunters will be able to harvest an antlerless deer using a bow and arrow license or a combination license during the archery season. Five DMUs in the UP will have only private land antlerless licenses available and eight DMUs will have both private land and public land antlerless licenses available. The areas with antlerless licenses have agricultural crop damage, range damage to forest regeneration, and/or excessive vehicle-deer accidents. Antlerless deer hunting license availability in the UP has been designed to target the deer herd in specific DMUs. In DMUs with no antlerless licenses, the goal is to allow an increase in the population. In DMUs with only private land antlerless licenses, the goal is to permit an increase in the population on public land while maintaining or reducing deer on private land. In DMUs with both public and private land antlerless licenses, the goal is to maintain or reduce deer populations to better balance deer numbers with habitat.

Northern Lower Peninsula

In the NLP, the recommendation is for 22,500 public land and 135,400 private land antlerless deer licenses to be available. In 2007, there were 11,800 public land and 110,000 private land antlerless deer licenses available. This increase in recommended antlerless licenses reflects an increase in the projected deer population for 2008 of 31,800 deer, for a projected population of 613,300. This increase in the projected population resulted in opening two additional DMUs to private land licenses, four additional DMUs to public land licenses, and a general increase in antlerless licenses throughout the NLP.

Three of the 32 DMUs in the NLP will have no antlerless licenses available. However, archery hunters will be able to harvest an antlerless deer using a bow and arrow license or a combination license during the archery season. Twelve DMUs will not have public land antlerless licenses available. Many of the DMUs in the northwest are at goal; antlerless license availability in the northwest is designed to maintain the deer population. The remaining seventeen DMUs will offer

both public land and private land antlerless deer licenses. Antlerless license availability in the northeast has been designed to maintain or reduce the deer population.

Southern Lower Peninsula (SLP)

In the SLP the recommendation is for 35,900 public land and 406,800 private land antlerless deer licenses to be available. In 2007, there were 34,900 public land and 401,800 private land antlerless deer licenses available. This recommended small increase in antlerless licenses reflects a small increase in the projected deer population for 2008 to 908,000 deer, up from 904,000 in 2007. Historically, in most of the SLP DMUs, private land antlerless license sales are less than the quota. This is the primary reason the recommended private land antlerless license quota did not increase by more than 5,000 from 2007.

The deer herd in the SLP has remained higher than desired in recent years. Liberal antlerless licenses have been available to help reduce the deer population. Vehicle-deer accidents and crop depredation concerns remain high in many counties in the SLP. The antlerless license quotas are designed to reduce the current deer population in the SLP.

This late memo is being submitted to modify the number of antlerless licenses recommended for deer management unit (DMU) 072 (Roscommon County). Considerations for this recommended change include: a buck harvest, in 2007, less than would be expected from the projected population for 2007; the fawn/doe ratios are among the lowest in the state; the archery harvest of antlerless deer remains high relative to other areas; the hunting success rate is one of the lowest in the NLP, and comments from hunters and landowners reflecting fewer deer than anticipated.

This amendment recommends the antlerless license quota for DMU 072 be 500 licenses for public land and 1,000 licenses for private land. The previous recommendation was for 1,000 public land and 2,000 private land antlerless licenses for DMU 072. The recommended antlerless license quotas for all other DMUs remain unchanged.

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Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information on June 5, 2008, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's May 27, 2008 calendar and may be eligible for approval on July 10, 2008.

Douglas A. Reeves, Acting Chief
Wildlife Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

Lynne M. Boyd, Chief
Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division

Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Arminda S. Koch
Resource Management Deputy

Rodney Stokes
Chief of Staff

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

Rebecca A. Humphries
Director

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 12 of 2008

Under the authority of sections 40107 and 40113a, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, being sections 324.40107 and 324.40113a of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources orders that, effective July 11, 2008 Commission meeting, the following sections 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 follows:

DMU	DMU Name	Public licenses	Private licenses	Total Licenses
1	Alcona County	3,000	7,000	10,000
3	Allegan County	3,000	12,000	15,000
4	Alpena County	2,000	5,000	7,000
5	Antrim County	0	5,000	5,000
6	Arenac County	700	7,500	8,200
7	Big Bay Unit	0	0	0
8	Barry County	1,800	17,000	18,800
9	Bay County	100	3,000	3,100
10	Benzie County	0	0	0
11	Berrien County	200	8,000	8,200
12	Branch County	100	12,000	12,100
13	Calhoun County	100	16,000	16,100
14	Cass County	500	8,000	8,500
15	Charlevoix County	0	3,400	3,400
16	Cheboygan County	400	600	1,000
17	Sault Ste. Marie Unit	0	2,000	2,000
18	Clare County	900	8,500	9,400
19	Clinton County	1,200	14,000	15,200
20	Crawford County	1,200	1,500	2,700
21	Manistique Unit	0	0	0

DMU	DMU Name	Public licenses	Private licenses	Total Licenses
22	Iron Mountain Unit	2,000	4,500	6,500
23	Eaton County	100	12,800	12,900
24	Emmet County	200	1,500	1,700
25	Genesee County	0	8,500	8,500
26	Gladwin County	1,400	7,800	9,200
27	Watersmeet Unit	0	0	0
28	Grand Traverse County	0	0	0
29	Gratiot County	1,600	10,000	11,600
30	Hillsdale County	400	15,000	15,400
31	Nisula Unit	0	600	600
32	Huron County	1,000	10,000	11,000
33	Ingham County	600	11,000	11,600
34	Ionia County	1,200	14,300	15,500
35	Iosco County	1,000	5,500	6,500
36	Amasa/Michigamme Unit	0	0	0
37	Isabella County	100	11,000	11,100
38	Jackson County	1,600	20,000	21,600
39	Kalamazoo County	900	9,000	9,900
40	Kalkaska County	0	0	0
41	Kent County	1,100	14,000	15,100
42	Keweenaw Unit	0	0	0
43	Lake County	0	3,000	3,000
44	Lapeer County	2,000	15,000	17,000
45	Leelanau County	0	400	400
46	Lenawee County	400	9,000	9,400
47	Livingston County	1,400	15,000	16,400
48	Newberry Unit	0	0	0
49	Trout Lake Unit	0	1,500	1,500
50	Macomb County	200	3,000	3,200
51	Manistee County	0	2,500	2,500
53	Mason County	0	5,000	5,000
54	Mecosta County	0	14,000	14,000
55	Menominee Unit	3,000	12,000	15,000
56	Midland County	2,000	7,000	9,000
57	Missaukee County	0	3,200	3,200

DMU	DMU Name	Public licenses	Private licenses	Total Licenses
58	Monroe County	200	1,800	2,000
59	Montcalm County	1,400	19,000	20,400
60	Montmorency County	3,200	7,800	11,000
61	Muskegon County	800	6,500	7,300
62	Newaygo County	0	6,000	6,000
63	Oakland County	2,500	7,000	9,500
64	Oceana County	0	4,500	4,500
65	Ogemaw County	1,000	6,000	7,000
66	Ontonagon County	0	0	0
67	Osceola County	0	5,000	5,000
68	Oscoda County	3,000	3,500	6,500
69	Otsego County	500	1,000	1,500
70	Ottawa County	400	9,000	9,400
71	Presque Isle County	2,000	5,500	7,500
72	Roscommon County	500	1,000	1,500
73	Saginaw County	200	5,000	5,200
74	St. Clair County	600	8,000	8,600
75	St. Joseph County	300	8,000	8,300
76	Sanilac County	1,500	14,000	15,500
78	Shiawassee County	200	14,000	14,200
79	Tuscola County	2,700	14,000	16,700
80	Van Buren County	200	10,000	10,200
81	Washtenaw County	1,500	14,000	15,500
82	Wayne County	100	1,200	1,300
83	Wexford County	0	3,400	3,400
115	Beaver Island	300	700	1,000
117	Drummond Island	300	200	500
121	Bay De Noc	600	1,200	1,800
122	Norway Unit	200	2,500	2,700
127	Ironwood Unit	0	300	300
131	Twin Lakes Unit	0	0	0
135	Tawas Unit	200	600	800
145	North Manitou Island	0	0	0
149	Round/Bois Blanc Island	100	100	200
152	Gwinn Unit	0	0	0

DMU	DMU Name	Public licenses	Private licenses	Total Licenses
155	Gladstone Unit	800	3,600	4,400
173	Shiawassee Flats	1,400	400	1,800
174	St. Clair Flats	275	300	575
245	South Fox Island	0	0	0
252	Rock Unit	0	1,000	1,000
255	LaBranche Unit	1,000	1,500	2,500
273	Shiawassee Unit	0	0	0
452	Core Area	1,000	9,000	10,000
	Total	66,375	573,200	639,575

Issued this 10th day of July, 2008.

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

Keith J. Charters, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries
Director