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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: April 15, 2013

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: DMU Boundaries; Open/Closed DMUs; Antlerless Limits
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2013
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

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:

DMU Boundaries

Beginning with the 2009 deer season, much of southern Michigan was incorporated into a single Deer Management Unit (DMU) for allocation of private land antlerless deer licenses. The DMU is the regulatory unit for issuing antlerless deer licenses. This multi-county DMU 486 extended southward from Oceana, southern Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Midland, and Bay counties, excluding only St. Clair, Macomb, Wayne, and Monroe counties. At that point in time, deer populations throughout DMU 486 were above goal, and had been following a mostly increasing trend dating back to the mid-80s. The multi-county DMU provided hunters with considerable flexibility regarding where antlerless deer could be harvested using any private land antlerless license valid for this area, and facilitated additional antlerless harvest and deer population reduction in these areas.

Since the creation of DMU 486, 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 area have stabilized or declined. Repeated outbreaks of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) have also occurred over this period, with confirmation of the disease in Michigan during 6 out of the past 7 years. The 2013 EHD outbreak was the most widespread ever documented throughout the Midwest with confirmation in 30 Michigan counties and reported in 21 more. Though individual EHD outbreak sites affect deer at the scale of a township or smaller, these outbreaks have likely produced more variability in deer densities within the entire area of DMU 486 than has occurred in many years. At this point, management efforts would best be directed towards distinct areas at a smaller scale than DMU 486. The Department is therefore recommending defining new DMUs for southern Michigan.

Open/Closed DMUs

This order establishes the open/closed status for antlerless deer license availability for each DMU. The availability status of public land antlerless deer licenses and private land antlerless deer licenses must be determined prior to establishing the antlerless deer license quotas. The status of each DMU for both public land and private land antlerless deer licenses will be

published in the 2013 Antlerless Deer Hunting Digest. This provides hunters with the information needed to make decisions regarding antlerless deer hunting opportunities. Antlerless deer license quota recommendations will be presented to the Natural Resources Commission at the June meeting.

There are 66 DMUs recommended to be open for public land antlerless deer licenses, all of which would also be open for private land licenses, except DMU 145 (North Manitou Island) and DMU 273 (Shiawassee Unit). There are 52 DMUs plus nine multi-county units in the Lower Peninsula, including DMU 487 and the newly created DMUs 308, 311, 312, 319, 332, 334, 341, and 361 recommended to be open for private land licenses. All are also open for public land licenses, except DMU 25 (Genesee County) and the multi-county unit DMU 487.

Within the Upper Peninsula, deer populations increased steadily through three mild winters in a row in 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012. Conditions during winter 2012-2013 were initially at or below the long-term average severity, but increased in severity by mid-January. Deer have not likely been substantially impacted by these conditions thus far, but overall impacts of this winter may differ based on whether spring break-up comes late or early. Of the 22 DMUs in the Upper Peninsula region, Wildlife Division biologists have provided recommendations to open 10 of these units to antlerless license issuance during 2013. Four of these units have a proposal for issuance of Private Land licenses only, and six units have a proposal for issuance of both Private Land and Public Land licenses. At this point, the only recommended change in comparison to last year is to close DMU 117 (Drummond Island) to public land antlerless licenses, but conditions will be closely monitored to determine if it may be warranted to close DMU 031 (Nissula Unit) and 036 (Amasa/Michigamme Unit) to private land antlerless licenses. Accordingly, the recommendations made for these DMUs may be revised on May 13, 2013.

Recent deer population trends within the Northern Lower Peninsula have been similar to those in the Upper Peninsula during the previous three mild winters. Although conditions in the later portion of the 2012-2013 winter have been more severe than those during the early portion, even the highest weekly Winter Severity Index (WSI) readings from this winter have not been substantially higher than the recent average WSI. All DMUs within the region are recommended to be open for antlerless licenses on both private and public land this year with the exception of private land licenses for DMU 145 (North Manitou Island) and public land licenses for DMU 487, the multi-county unit through which private land licenses are allocated for Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alpena, Oscoda, Alcona, and Iosco Counties (DMUs 071, 060, 004, 068, 001, and 035).

It is recommended that all DMUs in the Southern Lower Peninsula be open for antlerless deer licenses. The sole exception is to leave DMU 025 (Genesee County) closed for public land antlerless deer licenses, as no public land is contained within that DMU.

Antlerless License Limits

In response to the 2013 EHD outbreak in Michigan, an Interim Order of the Director just prior to opening of the firearm season established a public land antlerless license season purchase limit of

no more than two per hunter for DMUs that had leftover licenses remaining. These included DMU 012 (Branch), 034 (Ionia), 039 (Kalamazoo), 041 (Kent), 044 (Lapeer), 076 (Sanilac), 078 (Shiawassee), 079 (Tuscola), and 080 (Van Buren). As part of an Interim Order of the Director, these purchase limits are set to expire on May 8, 2013. Accordingly, the Department is recommending addressing any needed reduction in antlerless harvest for these areas through establishment of appropriate public land antlerless quotas.

Recommendation:

This order is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appeared on the Department's April 2013 calendar and may be eligible for approval on June 13, 2013.

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

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 8 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 June 14, 2013, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

3.102 Antlerless deer license; validity; authority; types; restrictions; units.

Sec. 3.102. (1) Antlerless deer licenses are only valid in their specified deer management unit when the unit has a season open to the taking of deer. Antlerless deer licenses do not grant permission to hunt on private property without the permission of the owner. A person purchasing an antlerless deer license over the counter shall do so in person.

(2) Antlerless deer licenses shall only be valid for taking an antlerless deer.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the holder of a valid public land antlerless deer license shall only take a deer from publicly owned lands within the deer management unit specified on the antlerless deer license. Public land antlerless deer licenses shall not be valid on any privately owned lands 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.

(4) The holder of a valid private land antlerless deer license shall only take a deer from privately owned lands within the deer management unit specified on the private land antlerless deer license. The private land antlerless deer license shall not be valid on publicly owned 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.

(5) The deer management units, as defined in chapter XII, listed in section 3.105a are open to the taking of antlerless deer by public land antlerless deer license or private land antlerless deer license, or any combination.

(6) The director, in consultation with and concurrence of the chair or vice chair of the natural resources commission, may require an application to obtain an antlerless deer license or may issue antlerless deer licenses through the retail sales system on a first-come, first-served basis for use in designated deer management units.

(7) The director in consultation with and concurrence of the chair or vice chair of the natural resources commission may issue antlerless deer licenses through the retail sales system on a first-come, first-served basis for use in designated deer management units when the director determines that antlerless deer licenses remain unsold after the drawing, provided for in section 3.104, has been held or where such issuance is in the best interest of deer management. An application for the current year is not required to purchase an antlerless deer license that remains after the drawing, provided for in section 3.104, has been held.

(8) Requirements; restrictions for young hunters:

(a) A hunter under the age of 10 must be licensed through the mentored youth hunting program and accompanied by a qualified mentor. A deer kill tag issued under the mentored youth hunting license shall be valid for any deer in any deer management unit, except during antlerless-only seasons.

(b) A hunter 10 to 16 years of age on or before the 4th Saturday in September may purchase 1 private or public land antlerless deer license, over the counter, on a first-come, first-served basis, during the application period for antlerless licenses for any deer management unit with antlerless licenses available.

(9) For deer management units 452, ~~486~~, and 487, a person shall not purchase more than 5 antlerless deer hunting licenses per calendar day until the quota has been met. For all other deer management units a person shall not purchase more than 2 antlerless deer hunting licenses per calendar day until the quota has been met.

(10) For deer management units 452 and 487, a person may purchase up to a season limit of 10 private land antlerless deer hunting licenses until the quota has been met. For all other deer management units a person may purchase up to a season limit of 5 private land antlerless deer hunting licenses until the quota has been met. ~~For deer management units 012, 034, 039, 041, 044, 076, 078, 079, and 080, a person may purchase up to a season limit of 2 public land antlerless deer hunting licenses until the quota has been met.~~

3.105a Deer management units open to antlerless license quotas.

Sec. 3.105a (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section the status of each deer management unit for antlerless deer licenses shall be as shown in table 4:

**TABLE 4
Open and Closed DMU Status**

| DMU Number | DMU Name | Private Land License | Public Land License |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Alcona County | Open | Open |
| 3 | Allegan County | Open | Open |
| 4 | Alpena County | Open | Open |
| 5 | Antrim County | Open | Closed Open |
| 6 | Arenac County | Open | Open |
| 7 | Big Bay Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 8 | Barry County | Open | Open |
| 9 | Bay County | Open | Open |
| 10 | Benzie County | Open | Closed Open |
| 11 | Berrien County | Open | Open |
| 12 | Branch County | Open | Open |
| 13 | Calhoun County | Open | Open |
| 14 | Cass County | Open | Open |
| 15 | Charlevoix County | Open | Closed Open |
| 16 | Cheboygan County | Open | Open |
| 17 | Sault Ste. Marie Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 18 | Clare County | Open | Open |
| 19 | Clinton County | Open | Open |
| 20 | Crawford County | Open | Open |
| 21 | Manistique Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 22 | Crystal Falls Unit | Open | Open |
| 23 | Eaton County | Open | Open |
| 24 | Emmet County | Open | Closed Open |
| 25 | Genesee County | Open | Closed |
| 26 | Gladwin County | Open | Open |
| 27 | Watersmeet Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 28 | Grand Traverse County | Open | Closed Open |
| 29 | Graiot County | Open | Open |
| 30 | Hillsdale County | Open | Open |
| 31 | Nissula Unit | Open | Closed |
| 32 | Huron County | Open | Open |
| 33 | Ingham County | Open | Open |
| 34 | Ionia County | Open | Open |
| 35 | Iosco County | Open | Open |
| 36 | Amasa/Michigamme Unit | Open | Closed |
| 37 | Isabella County | Open | Open |
| 38 | Jackson County | Open | Open |
| 39 | Kalamazoo County | Open | Open |
| 40 | Kalkaska County | Open | Closed Open |
| 41 | Kent County | Open | Open |
| 42 | Keweenaw Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 43 | Lake County | Open | Closed Open |
| 44 | Lapeer County | Open | Open |

| DMU Number | DMU Name | Private Land License | Public Land License |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 45 | Leelanau County | Open | Closed Open |
| 46 | Lenawee County | Open | Open |
| 47 | Livingston County | Open | Open |
| 48 | Newberry Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 50 | Macomb County | Open | Open |
| 51 | Manistee County | Open | Closed Open |
| 53 | Mason County | Open | Open |
| 54 | Mecosta County | Open | Open |
| 55 | Menominee Unit | Open | Open |
| 56 | Midland County | Open | Open |
| 57 | Missaukee County | Open | Open |
| 58 | Monroe County | Open | Open |
| 59 | Montcalm County | Open | Open |
| 60 | Montmorency County | Open | Open |
| 61 | Muskegon County | Open | Open |
| 63 | Oakland County | Open | Open |
| 64 | Oceana County | Open | Open |
| 65 | Ogemaw County | Open | Open |
| 66 | Ontonagon County | Closed | Closed |
| 67 | Osceola County | Open | Closed Open |
| 68 | Oscoda County | Open | Open |
| 69 | Otsego County | Open | Open |
| 70 | Ottawa County | Open | Open |
| 71 | Presque Isle County | Open | Open |
| 72 | Roscommon County | Open | Open |
| 73 | Saginaw County | Open | Open |
| 74 | St. Clair County | Open | Open |
| 75 | St. Joseph County | Open | Open |
| 76 | Sanilac County | Open | Open |
| 78 | Shiawassee County | Open | Open |
| 79 | Tuscola County | Open | Open |
| 80 | Van Buren County | Open | Open |
| 81 | Washtenaw County | Open | Open |
| 82 | Wayne County | Open | Open |
| 83 | Wexford County | Open | Open |
| 115 | Beaver Island | Open | Open |
| 117 | Drummond Island | Open | Open Closed |
| 121 | Bay De Noc | Open | Open |
| 122 | Norway Unit | Open | Open |
| 127 | Ironwood Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 131 | Twin Lakes Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 135 | Tawas Unit | Open | Open |
| 145 | North Manitou Island | Closed | Open |
| 149 | Round/Bois Blanc Island | Closed Open | Closed Open |
| 152 | Gwinn Unit | Open | Closed |
| 155 | Gladstone Unit | Open | Open |
| 162 | South Newaygo Unit | Open | Open |
| 173 | Shiawassee Flats | Open | Open |
| 174 | St. Clair Flats | Open | Open |
| 245 | South Fox Island | Open | Open |
| 249 | Trout Lake Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 252 | Rock Unit | Open | Closed |
| 255 | La Branche Unit | Open | Open |
| 262 | North Newaygo Unit | Open | Closed |
| 273 | Shiawassee Unit | Closed | Open |

| DMU Number | DMU Name | Private Land License | Public Land License |
|------------|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| 308 | Bellevue Unit (Barry - Calhoun - Eaton) | Open | Open |
| 311 | Keeler Unit (Berrien - Cass - Van Buren) | Open | Open |
| 312 | Sherwood Unit (Branch - Kalamazoo - St. Joseph) | Open | Open |
| 319 | Laingsburg Unit (Clinton - Gratiot - Ingham - Shiawassee) | Open | Open |
| 332 | Greenleaf Unit (Huron - Sanilac - Tuscola) | Open | Open |
| 334 | Stanton Unit (Ionia - Mecosta - Montcalm) | Open | Open |
| 341 | Sparta Unit (Kent - Muskegon south - Ottawa) | Open | Open |
| 349 | Engadine Unit | Closed | Closed |
| 361 | Fremont Unit (Muskegon north - Newaygo - Oceana) | Open | Open |
| 452 | Core Area | Open | Open |
| 486 | SLP Multi-County Unit | Open | Closed |
| 487 | NLP Multi-County Unit | Open | Closed |

12.8a “Deer management unit 308 (Bellevue Unit; Barry - Calhoun - Eaton)” defined.

Sec. 12.8a “Deer management unit 308 (Bellevue Unit ; Barry - Calhoun - Eaton)” means all of Barry, Calhoun and Eaton counties.

12.11a “Deer management unit 311 (Keeler Unit; Berrien - Cass - Van Buren)” defined.

Sec. 12.11a “Deer management unit 311 (Keeler Unit ; Berrien - Cass - Van Buren)” means all of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties.

12.12a “Deer management unit 312 (Sherwood Unit; Branch - Kalamazoo - St. Joseph)” defined.

Sec. 12.12a “Deer management unit 312 (Sherwood Unit ; Branch - Kalamazoo - St. Joseph)” means all of Branch, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph counties.

12.19a “Deer management unit 319 (Laingsburg Unit; Clinton - Gratiot - Ingham - Shiawassee)” defined.

Sec. 12.19a “Deer management unit 319 (Laingsburg Unit ; Clinton - Gratiot - Ingham - Shiawassee)” means all of Clinton, Gratiot, Ingham, and Shiawassee counties.

12.32a “Deer management unit 332 (Greenleaf Unit; Huron - Sanilac - Tuscola)” defined.

Sec. 12.32a “Deer management unit 332 (Greenleaf Unit ; Huron - Sanilac - Tuscola)” means all of Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola counties.

12.34a “Deer management unit 334 (Stanton Unit; Ionia - Mecosta - Montcalm)” defined.

Sec. 12.34a “Deer management unit 334 (Stanton Unit ; Ionia - Mecosta - Montcalm)” means all of Ionia, Mecosta, and Montcalm counties.

12.41a “Deer management unit 341 (Sparta Unit; Kent - Muskegon south - Ottawa)” defined.

Sec. 12.41a “Deer management unit 341 (Sparta Unit ; Kent - Muskegon south - Ottawa)” means all of Kent and Ottawa counties, and those portions of Muskegon county within Zone 3 (south of the Zone 2-3 divider line, defined in Section 1.4).

12.61a “Deer management unit 361 (Fremont Unit; Muskegon north - Newaygo - Oceana)” defined.

Sec. 12.61a “Deer management unit 361 (Fremont Unit ; Muskegon north - Newaygo - Oceana)” means all of Oceana and Newaygo counties, and those portions of Muskegon county within Zone 2 (north of the Zone 2-3 divider line, defined in Section 1.4).

Issued on this 13th day of June, 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