



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



RODNEY A. STOKES
DIRECTOR

A P P R O V E D
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MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
(ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)

SUBMITTED: May 21, 2012
RESUBMITTED: June 18, 2012

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Antlerless Deer License Quotas
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 11 of 2012

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 2011 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 these 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 2012 would provide a statewide total of 70,750 public land antlerless deer licenses, a slight decrease from 2011, when 72,500 were offered. The recommended total of 637,900 private land antlerless deer licenses is a decrease from the 684,700 private land licenses which were available in 2011. The combined public and private land quota of 708,650 would be a decrease of 47,550 licenses from the quotas available in 2011. The most substantial difference is due to a recommended decrease of 42,100 private land antlerless licenses in DMU 487, the multi-county DMU in the northeast Lower Peninsula.

Upper Peninsula Region (UP)

Deer populations continue a short-term slowly increasing trend throughout much of the UP. Snow accumulation has been substantially below average for 3 straight winters, leading to high overwinter survival of deer and recruitment of new fawns. Trends in buck harvest and deer-vehicle collisions indicate numbers remain below the 20-year average, but conditions in 11 out of 22 DMUs indicate antlerless licenses may be issued to provide additional recreational opportunity, assist in balancing buck and doe harvests, and aid in addressing expected increased concerns over agricultural damage and forest regeneration.

An overall conservative increase of 450 private land and 1,900 public land antlerless licenses across the UP is recommended. The recommendations for 2012 include:

- Opening Drummond Island (DMU 117) and Bay de Noc (DMU 121) to both public and private land antlerless licenses;
- Opening the Nissula (DMU 031) and Amasa/Michigamme (DMU 036) units to private land antlerless harvest;
- Increasing the private land antlerless quota for the Gwinn unit (DMU 152); and
- Increasing the public land antlerless quota for the Menominee (DMU 055), Gladstone (DMU 155) and LaBranche (DMU 255) units.

The private land antlerless quota for the Norway unit (DMU 122) is recommended to decrease to 1,500 (down from 2,500 in 2011). This decrease will more closely align the quota with the demand for private land licenses in the unit. In total, these recommendations would increase the private land quota for the region to 21,250 (up from 20,800 in 2011) and the public land quota to 5,900 (up from 4,000 in 2011).

Northern Lower Peninsula Region (NLP)

Recent trends in deer populations vary across the 36 DMUs in the NLP. A third mild winter in a row has allowed deer populations to increase steadily across much of the region, and increased antlerless license quotas are being recommended in some cases to begin regulating this population growth. Recommended changes to address this include establishing modest antlerless quotas for:

- Public and private land in Cheboygan (DMU 016), Otsego (DMU 069) and Roscommon (DMU 072) counties;
- Public land in Mason (DMU 053), Missaukee (DMU 057) and Wexford (DMU 083) counties; and
- Private land in Kalkaska County (DMU 040).

To align more closely with the expected population growth, increases in antlerless quotas are also recommended for:

- Public and private land in Crawford County (DMU 020) and Beaver Island (DMU 115); and
- Private land antlerless quotas for Leelanau County (DMU 045).

In a number of units, crop damage complaints and observations of deer by both field staff and the public have recently been declining. These observations prompted recommendations for reduced antlerless quotas for:

- Public land in Presque Isle (071) and DMU 452 (the TB core area, which includes portions of Montmorency, Alpena, Oscoda and Alcona counties); and

- Private land in Arenac (DMU 006), Clare (DMU 018) and Gladwin (DMU 026) Counties; and DMU 487 (the multi-county unit through which private land licenses are allocated for Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alpena, Oscoda, Alcona, and Iosco counties).

These reductions in the multi-county units will more closely align quotas with demand for antlerless licenses. In total, these recommendations would reduce the public land quota for the region to 30,900 (down from 32,200 in 2011) and reduce the private land quota to 115,500 (down from 139,100 in 2011).

Southern Lower Peninsula Regions (SLP)

Deer populations throughout most of the SLP remain above goal, though numbers do appear to be approaching desired levels in a number of areas. No changes were recommended regarding counties to be incorporated within DMU 486 (the large multi-county unit through which private land antlerless licenses are allocated for most of the region), and no change is recommended for the quota in this DMU.

For the last several years, the southwest corner of the region has experienced repeated outbreaks of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD), with deer numbers in Berrien and Cass Counties the hardest hit. Many years of experience with EHD in other states has indicated deer numbers should recover in a few years and hunters are likely to reduce their take of antlerless deer to offset these losses to EHD. However, increased efforts will be made to communicate with the public regarding how to best report future EHD outbreaks for confirmation by the Department, and if another outbreak occurs in the area this summer regulatory action may be necessary in 2013.

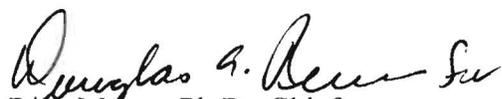
Outside of DMU 486, a number of quota reductions are recommended based on noted decreases in deer/vehicle collisions, crop damage complaints and decreases in observations of deer by the hunting community and field staff. These recommendations include reducing:

- Public and private antlerless licenses in Monroe (DMU 058) and St. Clair (DMU 074) Counties;
- Public land antlerless licenses in Allegan (DMU 003), Muskegon (061), Ottawa (070), and south Newaygo (DMU 162) Counties and the Shiawassee Unit (DMU 273); and
- Private land antlerless licenses in North Newaygo (DMU 262) County.

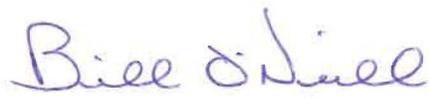
These recommendations would reduce the private land quota for the region to 519,650 (down from 523,800 in 2011) and the public land quota to 33,950 (down from 36,300 in 2011).

Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information on June 14, 2012, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's May 2012 calendar and may be eligible for approval on July 12, 2012.


Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
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Gary Hagler, Chief
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Bill O'Neill, Acting 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.

Rodney A. Stokes, Director

Date

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 11 of 2012

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 13, 2012, 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
1	Alcona County	4,000	0	4,000
3	Allegan County	2,000	0	2,000
4	Alpena County	2,000	0	2,000
5	Antrim County	0	5,000	5,000
6	Arenac County	500	7,000	7,500
7	Big Bay Unit	0	0	0
8	Barry County	1,800	0	1,800
9	Bay County	200	0	200
10	Benzie County	0	300	300
11	Berrien County	200	0	200
12	Branch County	100	0	100
13	Calhoun County	100	0	100
14	Cass County	400	0	400
15	Charlevoix County	0	3,400	3,400
16	Cheboygan County	300	600	900
17	Sault Ste. Marie Unit	0	0	0
18	Clare County	900	8,000	8,900
19	Clinton County	1,200	0	1,200
20	Crawford County	800	1,000	1,800
21	Manistique Unit	0	0	0
22	Crystal Falls Unit	1,000	4,000	5,000
23	Eaton County	100	0	100
24	Emmet County	0	1,500	1,500
25	Genesee County	0	0	0
26	Gladwin County	1,200	8,000	9,200
27	Watersmeet Unit	0	0	0
28	Grand Traverse County	0	300	300
29	Gratiot County	1,600	0	1,600
30	Hillsdale County	400	0	400
31	Nisula Unit	0	400	400
32	Huron County	1,500	0	1,500
33	Ingham County	600	0	600
34	Ionia County	1,200	0	1,200
35	Iosco County	1,000	0	1,000
36	Amasa/Michigamme Unit	0	100	100
37	Isabella County	100	0	100

38	Jackson County	1,600	0	1,600
39	Kalamazoo County	900	0	900
40	Kalkaska County	0	100	100
41	Kent County	1,100	0	1,100
42	Keweenaw Unit	0	0	0
43	Lake County	0	3,000	3,000
44	Lapeer County	2,000	0	2,000
45	Leelanau County	0	300	300
46	Lenawee County	400	0	400
47	Livingston County	1,400	0	1,400
48	Newberry Unit	0	0	0
50	Macomb County	200	4,000	4,200
51	Manistee County	0	3,000	3,000
53	Mason County	200	5,000	5,200
54	Mecosta County	200	0	200
55	Menominee County	3,000	9,000	12,000
56	Midland County	1,500	0	1,500
57	Missaukee County	600	3,200	3,800
58	Monroe County	100	1,000	1,100
59	Montcalm County	1,500	0	1,500
60	Montmorency County	5,000	0	5,000
61	Muskegon County	500	0	500
63	Oakland County	2,500	0	2,500
64	Oceana County	500	4,500	5,000
65	Ogemaw County	1,000	7,000	8,000
66	Ontonagon County	0	0	0
67	Osceola County	0	5,000	5,000
68	Oscoda County	5,000	0	5,000
69	Otsego County	0 200	500	700
70	Ottawa County	300	0	300
71	Presque Isle County	3,000	0	3,000
72	Roscommon County	500	1,000	1,500
73	Saginaw County	200	0	200
74	St. Clair County	500	7,000	7,500
75	St. Joseph County	300	0	300
76	Sanilac County	2,000	0	2,000
78	Shiawassee County	200	0	200
79	Tuscola County	2,700	0	2,700
80	Van Buren County	200	0	200
81	Washtenaw County	1,500	0	1,500
82	Wayne County	100	1,200	1,300
83	Wexford County	600	3,400	4,000
115	Beaver Island	300	400	700
117	Drummond Island	100	100	200
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	0	0	0
152	Gwinn Unit	0	550	550
155	Gladstone Unit	600	3,000	3,600
162	South Newaygo County	250	0	250
173	Shiawassee Flats	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	500	500
255	LaBranche Unit	600	1,300	1,900
262	North Newaygo County	0	1,650	1,650
273	Shiawassee Unit	1,000	0	1,000
349	Engadine Unit	0	0	0
452	TB Core Area	2,000	0	2,000
486	Southern Multi-County	0	500,000	500,000
487	Northern Multi-County	0	30,000	30,000
	Total	70,750	637,900	708,650

Issued on this 12th day of July 2012.

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

Timothy L. Nichols, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Rodney A. Stokes
Director