STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 11, 2013

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Elk Regulations and License Quotas
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 1 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:

This amendment establishes the hunt dates, license quotas, and Elk Management Units (EMUs) for the 2013 elk season.

Elk Season Dates and Units

Elk Hunt Period 1 is designed to target elk outside the primary elk range before these elk move for the breeding season. This elk hunt period is recommended to be twelve days long, consisting of a four-day hunt in late August, a four-day hunt in mid-September and a four-day hunt period in late September. The recommended dates for Hunt Period 1 are August 27 through August 30, September 13 through September 16 and September 27 through September 30. This recommendation would retain the same structure for Elk Hunt Period 1 as was used in 2012.

Elk Hunt Period 2 will focus harvest where it is needed within individual EMUs in the core elk range and allow additional harvest outside the core area. The recommended dates for Hunt Period 2 are to start on Saturday, December 7 through Sunday, December 15. This recommendation would retain the same structure for Elk Hunt Period 2 as was used in 2012.

The Department also recommends maintaining the opportunity to hold a January harvest if necessary, because this allows the opportunity to address management issues remaining after the earlier hunts conclude. The January hunt period was not used in 2010, 2011, or 2012. There are no recommended changes to the January 15 through 19, 2014, dates for Hunt Period 3 or for units which could be used for that period.

Elk License Quotas

Results from the 2011 winter survey indicated the elk herd was between 858 and 1,226 animals with a median estimate of 1,042. The median estimate was above the existing goal of 500 to 900 animals. The Department proposed establishing elk license quotas of 200 per year for both the 2012 and 2013 season, with the expectation of accomplishing an approximately five percent

decrease of the elk population over the two-year period to bring numbers to near or within the goal range. The total annual harvest was expected to be around 170 elk. During the 2012 seasons, 167 elk were legally harvested. There have been significant reductions in elk outside of the core elk range in the last five years, but there are still more animals outside the core range than desired. Concerns with elk outside of the core range are agricultural damage and potential crossover of bovine tuberculosis infection from deer. The Department is still proposing an elk quota of 200 for the 2013 season. The number of permits will be equally split between the early hunt period and the December hunt period. The recommended quota of 200 elk licenses is designed to achieve a harvest of approximately 160 elk by state hunters based on past hunter success rates. In addition to animals taken by state hunters drawn in the regular lottery, there will be three Pure Michigan Hunters with elk licenses, and tribal hunting will be allocated accordance with the 2007 Inland Consent Decree. The five 1836 Treaty Tribes are authorized to use elk licenses equal to 10 percent of the state-issued any-elk licenses and 10 percent of state issued antlerless-only licenses, rounded up to the nearest percent.

The recommendation for Hunt Period 1 is 100 elk licenses; 30 any-elk licenses and 70 antlerless-only elk licenses. For Hunt Period 2, the recommendation is 100 licenses; 30 any-elk licenses and 70 antlerless-only elk licenses with 60 of the licenses in area G (20 any-elk and 40 antlerless-only) and 40 licenses in area F (10 any-elk and 30 antlerless-only). The recommended maximum quota for Hunt Period 3 is 40. The Director, in consultation with and concurrence of the Chair or Vice Chair of the Natural Resources Commission, may determine the number and type of licenses available and the Elk Management Units open for Hunt Period 3.

Recommendation:

This order is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appeared on the Department's February 2013 calendar and may be eligible for approval on April 11, 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
Fisheries Division

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

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 1 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 April 12, 2013, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

3.1 Elk open season, hunt periods; season limit.

Sec. 3.1. (1) The open season for taking elk shall be those days as specified below for the following hunt periods:

Hunt Period	Open Season
1	August ~~28~~ **27** to August ~~31~~ **30** and September ~~14~~ **13** to September ~~17~~ **16** and September ~~28~~ **27** through ~~October~~ **September** ~~1~~ **30**, in elk management unit "L."
2	December ~~8~~ **7** to December ~~16~~ **15**, in elk management units "F," "G," and "X."
3	A total of five days beginning on the Wednesday closest to January 15 for four days thereafter, only in elk management unit(s) where additional harvest is deemed necessary to meet elk management objectives.

(2) The season limit shall be one elk per license.

3.4 Elk hunt, application and selection procedures; requirements; unlawful acts; ineligible persons.

Sec. 3.4 (1) Only Michigan residents who will be at least 10 years of age by the first day of the first elk hunt period may apply. A person who is not a resident of Michigan shall not hunt elk in Michigan. A person shall be ineligible to receive a license for more than 1 hunt period.

(2) A person issued an elk license valid for taking a bull elk for the 1994 license year through the 2003 license year shall be ineligible to apply for, obtain, or purchase an elk hunting license for 10 license years subsequent to receiving the license. A person issued an antlerless-only elk license valid for taking an antlerless elk subsequent to the 2003 license year shall be ineligible to apply for, obtain, or purchase an elk license for 10 license years subsequent to receiving the license. A person issued an elk license valid for taking a bull elk on or after February 1, 2004, shall subsequently be ineligible to apply for, obtain, or purchase an elk hunting license.

(3) Eligible residents wishing to participate in the hunting of elk must apply for a license through the retail sales system in accordance with instructions provided by the department. If more applications are received than the number of licenses to be issued, a random weighted lottery will be held for the selection of successful applicants. The director shall establish provisions for the transfer of application success to a youth applicant or an ~~applicant~~ **individual** with an advanced illness. Notwithstanding the successful applicant selection provisions of this subsection, licensees shall be drawn by region of residence in the same proportion as applications were received.

(4) Applicants shall indicate when making application whether they are willing to harvest only a bull elk or whether they are willing to harvest any elk. The drawing will first select the applicants who will be licensed to take a bull elk. Then the antlerless-only elk licenses will be drawn; any applicant drawn who has specified "bull only" on their application will be rejected, and another applicant will be drawn.

(5) All successful applicants must participate in a half-day training session the day before the hunt at a location to be determined in the vicinity of the hunt units. Upon completion of this training, each successful applicant will be issued their elk license along with other pertinent information and materials.

3.8 Elk license quota, hunters restricted to assigned management unit, exception.

Sec. 3.8. (1) The license quotas for elk hunt period 1, as specified in Section 3.1(1), shall be elk management unit L, 30 any elk licenses and 70 antlerless elk licenses.

(2) The license quotas for elk hunt period 2, as specified in section, 3.1(1) shall be:

(a) Elk management unit F, 10 any elk licenses and 30 antlerless elk licenses.

(b) Elk management unit G, 20 any elk licenses and 40 antlerless elk licenses.

(3) The license quota for elk hunt period 3, as specified in section 3.1(1), shall be no more than 40. The director, in consultation with and concurrence of the chair or vice chair of the natural resources commission, may determine the number and type of license available and the elk management units, as described in chapter XII, open during this season.

(4) An elk hunter shall hunt in their assigned season and elk management unit except elk hunters assigned to hunt in elk management units F or G may hunt in elk management unit X.

Issued on this 11th day of April, 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