



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



DANIEL EICHINGER
DIRECTOR

November 12, 2019

TO: Daniel Eichinger, Director

INFORMATION: Natural Resources Commission

SUBJECT: Private-Land Disease Management Firearm Deer Hunt for Certain Lands
in Alpena County

Authority:

The Department may issue orders under Part 401 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of 1994 designating the kind of deer that may be taken and the geographic area in which a license is valid, when advisable in managing deer. A disease management deer hunt may be established in accordance with Section 3.101 of the Wildlife Conservation Order. The Director is authorized to establish a disease management deer hunt lasting no longer than nine days between January 2 and March 31 where additional harvest is deemed necessary to meet disease management objectives.

Background:

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that is close to being eradicated in the United States, but still poses a significant risk to domestic livestock, wildlife, companion animals, and humans throughout the world. Michigan has become world-renowned for its research and expertise on managing this disease and overtime, the Department has learned a great deal, including that continued assistance from hunters and others remains vitally necessary to make significant gains in battling TB into the future.

To date, nearly 900 of over 300,000 deer tested in Michigan have been positive for TB. Seventy-eight percent of these TB-positive deer have been from DMU 452, where the counties of Montmorency, Alpena, Oscoda, and Alcona meet. However, TB is endemic across all four of those counties, and in Presque Isle. Ninety-seven percent of all the TB-positive deer ever found have come from that five-county endemic area. In addition, Antrim, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Iosco, Mecosta, Osceola, Otsego, Roscommon and Shiawassee counties also have had deer test positive for TB.

The Department uses hunting as the primary tool for managing TB in Michigan. The majority (93 percent) of land in DMU 452 is private. The Department works with many local landowners on all aspects of deer herd management. Hunters in this area have been responsible for reducing the disease prevalence by over 50 percent.

The Department is part of the Michigan Bovine TB Eradication Project involving a multi-agency team of experts from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Michigan State

November 12, 2019

University (MSU), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to work collaboratively on new approaches to combat the disease. As part of the multi-agency team, the Department has authorized additional hunts in Alpena county in and around the area that contains the highest concentration of cattle herds in order to continue work to eradicate TB. In 2018 and 2019, the Department authorized a disease management firearm antlerless deer hunt on private land south of M-32 in Alpena County during the first two weekends in January in order to help eradicate the disease and to help reach surveillance goals to reduce the risk of disease spread to new areas. Approximately 200 hunters participated over the two years and took 133 antlerless deer.

Despite many efforts over the years, TB has not gone away. In 2018, 26 deer and 1 cattle herd tested positive for the disease. In 2019, three cattle herds tested positive for the disease.

The Department has a surveillance goal to test 2,800 deer in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda counties for TB. From January 1 to October 25, over 569 deer have been tested for TB in the four-county area. Of that, 347 deer were tested from Alpena County with one confirmed as positive for the disease.

Disease Management Firearm Deer Hunt for Certain Lands in Alpena County:

Accordingly, the Department recommends establishing a disease management firearm antlerless deer hunt on private land only in a certain area of Alpena County from January 2 through January 5, 2020 and from January 9 through January 12, 2020 in order to help manage the free-ranging deer population. The disease management firearm deer hunt is recommended to take place in the area of Alpena County south of M-32. This will be the third consecutive year with a disease management hunt in the area. The Department recommends having three years' worth of data in order to see whether it effectively helps the Department reach TB management objectives and goals. Following this additional harvest season, the Department, in cooperation with MDARD and livestock and wildlife cooperators, will conduct an evaluation of the season and develop recommendations for increasing the use of additional hunting opportunities in this area.

The following measures are recommended to be established:

- Licenses, including a deer license, deer combination license, or a private-land antlerless deer license for DMU 487 are valid.
 - Only antlerless deer may be tagged.
- All rules and regulations for the firearm deer season apply.
- Disease Control Permits issued for 2020 are eligible to be used during this time period.

Administrative:

The Department recommends extending the purchase date for licenses valid in DMU 487 to January 12, 2020.

November 12, 2019

Recommendation:

We recommend the disease management firearm deer hunt be established as described above.

Rex Ainslie, Acting Chief
Wildlife Division

Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Deb Begalle, Chief
Forest Resources Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

Kristin Phillips, Chief
Marketing and Outreach Division

Sharon Schafer, Chief
Finance and Operations Division

Mark Hoffman
Chief Administrative Officer

Shannon Hanna
Natural Resources Deputy

I approve the staff recommendation with an effective date of November 12, 2019.

Daniel Eichinger, Director

Date