



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



SHANNON LOTT
ACTING DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 14, 2023
RESUBMITTED: March 13, 2023
RESUBMITTED: April 17, 2023
RESUBMITTED: May 15, 2023



MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Tracking Legally Shot Game Animals
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 5 of 2023

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

Current regulations allow an individual to track wounded deer, elk, or bear with a dog if the:

- Dog is kept on a leash.
- Tracking is done at night, artificial lights ordinarily carried in the hand or on the person.
- Dog barks, it may not be used on public lands.
- Use of a dog to recover legally taken game does not authorize trespass.

The Law Enforcement Division (LED) has reviewed the request to allow the use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) to allow the dog off leash when the tracker can demonstrate knowledge of the dog's GPS coordinates and a method to control the dog.

Issues Pros and Cons

GPS dog tracking devices allow for the tracker to maintain position and control of the dog off leash. Such remote technologies will aid in finding wounded game more quickly.

GPS dog tracking devices may have systematic issues, such as signal strength, battery power, and inaccurate readings.

Other States

The Department reviewed regulations in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin to determine if they allow the use of a GPS tracking system with a dog off leash when a tracker can demonstrate knowledge of a dog's GPS coordinates and a method to control the dog. Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin require the dog to be on a leash.

Biological

The Department does not expect a biological impact to wildlife populations.

Social

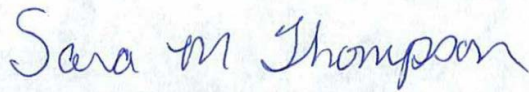
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The Department does not expect any social impacts.

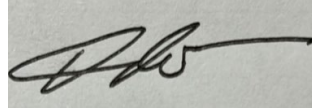
Economic

The Department does not expect any significant economic impacts.

Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order was submitted for information on March 9, 2023, at the Natural Resources Commission meeting. This item appeared on the Department's February 28, 2023 calendar and was eligible for approval on April 13, 2023.



Sara Thompson, Acting Chief
Wildlife Division



David Shaw, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



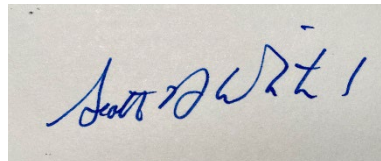
Jeffery J. Stampfly, Chief
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



Randy Claramunt, Chief
Fisheries Division



Scott Whitcomb
Acting Natural Resources Deputy

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

Shannon Lott, Acting Director

Date

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 5 of 2023

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 8, 2023, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

2.1a Tracking by dogs; requirements.

Sec. 2.1a (1) A dog may be used to locate a wounded deer, elk **or bear** if the dog is kept on a leash **or the tracker can demonstrate control of the dog under (5)(e)** and, subject to section 43510, subsections (2) and (3), of part 435, hunting and fishing licensing, natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.43510, none of the persons in attendance possess a firearm, crossbow or bow and arrow, except as noted in 2.1a (2) and (3). If the tracking is done at night, artificial lights ordinarily carried in the hand, or on the person, may be used. A dog that barks while tracking shall not be used on public lands. The use of dogs to recover legally taken game does not authorize trespass.

(2) A licensed deer or elk hunter accompanying a dog tracker shall not have a live round in the chamber, a cocked crossbow, or bow with nocked arrow, except at the time and point of kill.

(3) A licensed bear hunter accompanying a dog tracker outside of legal hunting hours shall not have a loaded firearm, a cocked crossbow, or bow with nocked arrow except at the time and point of kill.

(4) Only a licensed hunter may dispatch and tag the wounded deer, elk, or bear.

(5) A dog tracker, when accompanying a licensed hunter, must comply with all the following:

~~(a) Tracker must successfully complete a basic tracking test as administered by a department approved organization and shall furnish such proof upon the request of a peace officer.~~

~~(b) Tracker has in his or her possession a license to carry a concealed pistol or is authorized to carry without obtaining a license to carry a concealed pistol under 1927 PA 372, MCL 28.421 to 28.435.~~

~~(c) (a) Tracker must register to receive a bi-annual permit from the department's law enforcement division authorizing the individual to track with a dog. Tracker shall submit an application for a permit on a form or through a web-based application system furnished by the department. A permit application shall be considered only if the applicant is at least 18 years of age or older and has provided all documentation required by the department: Tracker must receive annual written authorization from the department's law enforcement division prior to participation in activities involving the tracking of wounded animals.~~

~~(d) (b) Tracker's name, address, telephone number, and accompanying hunter's license information must be provided to the department's report all poaching telephone number prior to initiating each tracking activity.~~

~~(c) Tracker has control of the dog off leash when the tracker can demonstrate knowledge of the dog's location and a method to control the dog, which may include voice command.~~

~~(e) (d) Tracker must contact the department's report all poaching telephone number within 12 hours of a mortally wounded animal being dispatched or ending each tracking activity.~~

Issued on this 8th day of June, 2023.

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

Thomas Baird, Chair
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Shannon Lott
Acting Director