



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
LANSING



M. SCOTT BOWEN  
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 12, 2024  
RESUBMITTED: March 18, 2024



MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons  
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 2 of 2024

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:

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) annually prescribes migratory bird hunting season frameworks, or outer limits, for dates and times when hunting may occur and the maximum number of birds that may be taken and possessed. Federal frameworks are negotiated with states via the Flyway Councils. The approach to set annual migratory bird hunting seasons and bag limits relies on biological data from the previous year to set hunting season dates and project appropriate harvest limits for each game species. This is possible because the USFWS and the Department have decades of data from population surveys, banding, and harvest surveys for many migratory game bird species that is used to develop models and harvest strategies to predict population change and inform harvest management decisions. These frameworks are adjusted to influence harvest regulations based on the previous year's monitoring information and regulatory decisions. This process gives biologists time to analyze survey data from the USFWS's regulatory decisions and allows time for public comment.

The Department's recommendations for the 2024-25 migratory game bird hunting seasons are based on the 2023 State and Federal assessments of waterfowl population status and habitat conditions, and public input including discussion with the Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee (CWAC) at their January 13, 2024, meeting.

*Biological*

Since 1991, Michigan has collaborated with other states, the USFWS, and Canadian agencies in conducting aerial surveys of breeding ducks and geese. Spring mallard population estimates from Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are included in estimates of mid-continent mallard abundance. These population estimates are included in the models for establishing annual waterfowl hunting season frameworks for the Mississippi and Central Flyways. Michigan conducted the 2023 Breeding Waterfowl Survey in late April to mid-May. The 2023 statewide

wetland abundance estimate of 461,348 wetlands was six percent below the 2022 estimate and five percent below the long-term average. May 2023 Great Lakes water levels remained above the long-term average and very near May 2022 levels. Based on wetland abundance, Great Lakes water levels, and drought indices, wetland conditions were considered “excellent” for breeding waterfowl statewide except for “good” conditions in portions of southeast Michigan and the central Lower Peninsula. However, very little rainfall throughout June resulted in moderate and severe drought conditions and dry wetland basins throughout much of the Lower Peninsula.

The 2023 estimate of total ducks was 136,420, which was 32 percent below the 2022 estimate and 78 percent below the long-term average. The 2023 estimate for mallards was 82,731, which was 40 percent below the 2022 estimate, 75 percent below the long-term average, and the lowest estimate ever recorded. Poor survey conditions (e.g., rain and storms delayed the recommended survey start date and observers reported poorer visibility due to leaf out conditions on some transects in the Lower Peninsula) and modifying several survey transects due to interference from airport traffic and wind turbines may account for fewer birds detected.

The 2023 estimate for Canada geese was 218,574, which was 11 percent above the 2022 estimate, six percent below the long-term average, and 20 percent below the 10-year average. For the second year in a row, the Canada goose population estimates are within the Department’s long-term desired abundance range (175,000-225,000 birds).

Flyway Councils are advised by flyway technical committees consisting of state and provincial biologists. These technical committees evaluate species and population status, harvest, and hunter-participation data during the development of the Flyway Council recommendations. The USFWS then evaluates the Flyway Councils’ recommendations, considering species status and biology, cumulative effects of regulations, and existing regulatory policy. Likewise, the Department’s Waterfowl Workgroup and the CWAC review information on species status and habitat conditions when developing recommendations for waterfowl hunting seasons.

#### *Social*

The Department develops recommendations based on Waterfowl Workgroup discussions with the CWAC. The CWAC met on January 13, 2024, to make recommendations for the 2024-25 waterfowl seasons. The Department’s recommendations are the same as those made by the CWAC.

The Department’s Waterfowl Workgroup established goals for duck hunting seasons that include maintaining Michigan’s waterfowl hunting heritage by increasing hunter recruitment and retention, simplifying regulations with maximum hunting opportunity, and ensuring that seasons encompass maximum duck numbers and abundant species.

Biannually, the Department mails Waterfowl Harvest Surveys to a sample of waterfowl hunters to estimate hunting activity and determine opinions and satisfaction with hunting regulations. The Department last conducted the Waterfowl Harvest Survey after the 2022 waterfowl hunting season.

#### *Economic*

Businesses located in communities near well-known waterfowl hunting areas receive economic benefits from waterfowl hunting trips.

### Youth Waterfowl Season and Veterans and Active-Duty U.S. Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days

The Department recommends that the Federal youth waterfowl hunting season remain the third weekend in September (September 21 and 22, 2024). These dates are consistent with 2023, avoid overlap with the Liberty Hunt, and ensures duck abundance during the youth hunting days.

The Department recommends continuing to hold the Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days concurrently with the Youth Waterfowl Season (September 21 and 22, 2024). These dates are consistent with 2023. States may designate two days as “Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days” in addition to regular duck seasons. Waterfowl regulations and bag limits set for the Youth Waterfowl Season apply to the Veterans and Active-Duty U.S. Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days. Participating veterans and active-duty U.S. military personnel are required to possess documentation of verification afield and must present upon request of a Michigan conservation officer, tribal conservation officer, or any law enforcement officer.

Holding this hunt concurrently with the Youth Waterfowl Season provides simplified regulations and better enforcement.

### Early Teal Season

The Department recommends:

- September 1-16 statewide
- Daily bag limit of six teal and a possession limit of 18, which is three times the daily limit
- Hunting hours begin at sunrise

The Department and the CWAC recommend opening the early teal season as early as possible due to the greatest abundance of teal in Michigan during that time. Blue-winged teal are some of the earliest duck species to migrate each fall. Available information on teal migration in Michigan indicates that the peak of fall blue-winged teal migration is late August through early September. The Department and CWAC recommend utilizing the entire 16 days allowed under Federal Frameworks.

To improve waterfowl identification, the Department recommends no change to hunting hours (i.e., early teal season begin at sunrise rather than the usual half hour before sunrise for migratory bird hunting hours). Identifying duck species is difficult under low light conditions. The Canada goose season dates overlap the proposed teal season and goose hunting hours begin one half hour before sunrise. Very few (if any) enforcement issues have occurred related to these different opening hours, yet the Wildlife Division and Law Enforcement Division will continue to work together to mitigate hunter confusion through public education and communication with hunters while in the field, while providing maximum recreational opportunity.

### Duck Seasons

The USFWS offered a 60-day season and six-duck daily limit framework for 2024-25. The Department developed the following duck season dates for 2024 based on feedback from CWAC, analysis of data on waterfowl populations, hunter opinions, migration timing, and hunter success.

The recommended dates for the 2024 duck season are:

- North Zone: September 28 to November 24 and November 30 to December 1
- Middle Zone: October 5 to December 1 and December 14 to December 15
- South Zone: October 12 to December 8 and December 28 to December 29

### Duck Bag Limits

The daily bag limit for ducks will be six ducks with the following species-specific restrictions: four mallards (no more than two hens), three wood ducks, two black ducks, two redheads, two canvasbacks, two scaup for 45-days and one scaup for 15-days, and one northern pintail. In addition to the duck limit, hunters may take five mergansers, only two of which may be a hooded merganser. The possession limit is three times the daily limit for ducks, coots, and mergansers.

Similar to 2023, there is a split scaup bag limit. Scaup harvest restrictions are implemented under a Scaup Harvest Strategy which is based on the current scaup population model and an objective to achieve 95 percent of the maximum, long-term cumulative harvest. Based on a restrictive regulatory alternative selected for the 2023 hunting season and a 2023 survey result of 3.52 million scaup, the optimal regulatory choice for the 2024 hunting season for all four Flyways is the restrictive regulatory alternative. This restrictive framework allows for a 60-day season with a limit of two birds for 45 days and one bird for 15 days. The 45 and 15-day segments must be consecutive hunting days.

Based on fall diving duck abundance measures from Lake St. Clair and western Lake Erie as well as an analysis of scaup harvest in Michigan, the Department recommends the following dates for the hybrid scaup bag limits which reflect a two-bird limit for the first 45 days of the season in the North Zone and a one-bird limit for the first 16 days of the season in the Middle and South Zones (an additional day of a one-bird limit is included so that a bag limit change doesn't occur during a weekend). The Department believes that this will maximize scaup harvest opportunity in each zone and is consistent with 2023:

- North Zone: September 28 to November 11 (two-bird limit); November 12 to November 24 and November 30 to December 1 (one-bird limit)
- Middle Zone: October 5 to October 20 (one-bird limit); October 21 to December 1 and December 14 to December 15 (two-bird limit)
- South Zone: October 12 to October 27 (one-bird limit); October 28 to December 8 and December 28 to December 29 (two-bird limit)

### Goose Seasons

The Department recommends goose season dates based on Canada goose population goals, feedback from the CWAC, and surveys of waterfowl hunters. Waterfowl hunters expressed their desire for additional opportunities to hunt ducks and geese on the same days. The recommended season dates provide for overlap of goose and duck seasons.

Federal goose frameworks for the Mississippi Flyway are unchanged from 2023. 2024-25 Canada goose hunting frameworks allow for a 107-day Canada goose season with a daily bag limit of five for the entire season. The possession limit is three times the daily limit for geese.

While few other goose species are harvested in Michigan, the Department makes recommendations that allow goose hunters to take these species if they have the opportunity. The recommended dates for the season for white, blue, and Ross' geese, white-fronted geese,

and brant are the same as the Canada goose seasons in each respective zone and Goose Management Unit (GMU). The daily bag limits for white, blue, and Ross' geese is 20. To maximize opportunity, the Department is again recommending a dark goose aggregate daily bag limit for Canada geese, white-fronted geese, and brant of five, only one of which can be a brant.

While the 2022 and 2023 population estimates were within the Department's long-term desired abundance range (175,000-225,000 birds), the estimates for the previous six years were all above the desired range. Therefore, we continue to make full use of hunting season days and daily limits available within Federal hunting season regulation frameworks and this decision is supported by high goose abundance and productivity over the last several years, as well as numerous human-Canada goose conflicts. Federal frameworks for Canada geese in the Mississippi Flyway are liberal and allow for 107 days of hunting, the maximum allowed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The recommended season dates and bag limits take advantage of the most days and highest bag limits possible. September dates of the Canada goose season are timed so that resident geese are most susceptible to harvest. This is a good tool to help maintain Michigan's Canada goose population at or near the goal range, which will help address human-Canda goose conflicts.


The Department and the CWAC recommend the following dates for goose seasons:

- North Zone: September 1 to December 16
- Middle Zone: September 1 to September 30 and October 5 to December 20
- South Zone: September 1 to September 30; October 12 to December 8; December 28 to January 5, 2025; and February 1 to February 10, 2025
- Allegan Goose Management Unit: September 1 to September 30; November 19 to December 8; December 21 to February 15, 2025
- Muskegon County Wastewater Goose Management Unit: October 15 to December 21

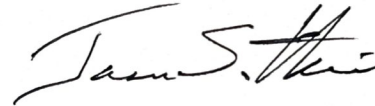
### Falconry

For the falconry season, the recommended dates for the additional days outside the gun hunting seasons for ducks, mergansers, coots, and common gallinule are December 30 to January 12, 2025, and February 22 to March 10, 2025. The daily and possession limits remain unchanged.

Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order was submitted for information on March 14, 2024, at the Natural Resources Commission meeting. This item appeared on the Department's April 2, 2024 calendar and may be eligible for approval on April 11, 2024.



Sara Thompson, Chief  
Wildlife Division



Jason S. Haines, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division



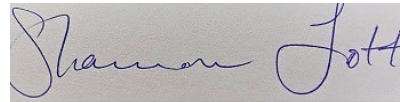
Jeffery J. Stampfly, Chief  
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
Parks and Recreation Division

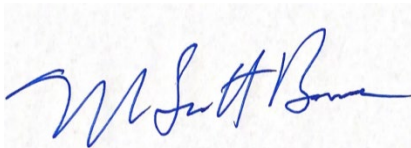


Randall M. Claramunt, Chief  
Fisheries Division



Shannon Lott  
Natural Resources Deputy

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



M. Scott Bowen, Director

Date: April 11, 2024

# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

## Amendment No. 2 of 2024

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 11, 2024, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

### 3.415 Migratory birds open seasons, possession limit defined, exceptions.

Sec. 3.415. The migratory bird possession limit shall be three times the daily limit. The migratory bird hunting open seasons and exceptions are as shown in table 10:

**TABLE 10  
MIGRATORY BIRD OPEN SEASONS**

Season and Species	Zone or Management Unit	Open Season
Ducks (regular season)	North Zone	September 28 to November 24 and November 30 to December 1
	Middle Zone	October 5 to December 1 and December 14 to December 15
	South Zone	October 12 to December 8 and December 28 to December 29
Merganser		Same dates as ducks in the respective zones
Coots		Same dates as ducks in the respective zones
Common Gallinules	Statewide	September 1 to November 9
Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Brant, Snow Goose, and Ross' Goose	North Zone	September 1 to December 16
	Middle Zone	September 1 to September 30 and October 5 to December 20
	South Zone, excluding GMUs listed below in the table	September 1 to September 30, October 12 to December 8, December 28 to January 5, 2025, and February 1 to February 10, 2025
	Allegan County GMU	September 1 to September 30, November 19 to December 8, and December 21 to February 15, 2025
	Muskegon County W.W. GMU	October 15 to December 21

### 3.416 Migratory game birds; daily limit.

Sec. 3.416. The daily limit of migratory game birds for the seasons specified in section 3.415 shall be as follows:

(1) Ducks, daily limit. The daily limit shall be 6 ducks of which no more than 4 may be mallards, no more than 2 may be a hen mallard, no more than 2 may be black ducks, no more than 3 may be wood ducks, no more than 1 may be a pintail, no more than 2 may be redheads, and no more than 2 may be canvasbacks.

(a) As part of the total daily limit for ducks as described in section (1), the daily limit for scaup for the zones and dates specified shall be as follows:

Zone or Management Unit	Dates	Daily Limit
North Zone	September 28 to November 11	No more than 2 scaup
	November 12 to November 24 and November 30 to December 1	No more than 1 scaup
Middle Zone	October 5 to October 20	No more than 1 scaup
	October 21 to December 1 and December 14 to December 15	No more than 2 scaup
South Zone	October 12 to October 27	No more than 1 scaup
	October 28 to December 8 and December 28 to December 29	No more than 2 scaup

(2) Merganser, daily limit. The merganser daily limit shall be 5 mergansers of which no more than 2 may be a hooded merganser.

(3) Dark geese (Canada, white-fronted and Brant), north, middle, and south zones, including GMUs, daily limit. In the north, middle, and south zones as described in sections 1.7, 1.8, and 1.9 of this order, respectively, and all GMUs as described in sections 12.702 and 12.703 the daily limit of dark geese shall be 5, only 1 of which can be a Brant.

(4) Light geese (snow, blue and Ross), daily limit. The daily limit on light geese (snow, blue, and Ross) shall be 20.

(5) Coot, daily limit. The daily limit of coot shall be 15.

(6) Common gallinule, daily limit. The daily limit of common gallinule shall be 1.

**3.422 Migratory birds, falconry, open seasons; daily limit, possession limit.**

Sec. 3.422. (1) The open season for taking Wilson’s snipe, woodcock, and Virginia and Sora rails by falconry shall be the same dates as the firearm seasons in the respective zones for these species as described in sections 3.415 and 3.420.

(2) The open season for taking geese shall be the same dates as the firearm seasons in the respective zones and goose management units.

(3) The open season for taking duck, merganser, coot and common gallinule shall be the same dates as the firearm seasons in the respective zones for these species, plus the season shall be open statewide December 30 to January 12, 2025 and February 22 to March 10, 2025.

(4) The daily limit for migratory game birds taken by falconry shall be 3 birds combined, and the possession limit shall be 9 birds combined.

**3.424 September teal hunt; open season; areas defined.**

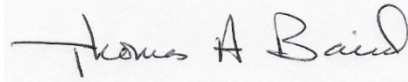
Sec. 3.424 (1) The open season for teal shall be September 1 to September 16 statewide.

(2) All state parks shall be closed.



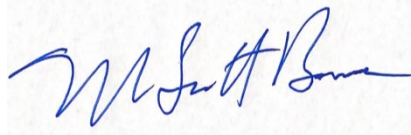
Issued on this 11th day of April, 2024.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas A Baird". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the first name.

Thomas Baird, Chair  
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Scott Bowen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the first name.

M. Scott Bowen  
Director



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
LANSING



M. SCOTT BOWEN  
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 12, 2024  
RESUBMITTED: March 18, 2024

**APPROVED**  
**April 11, 2024**  
MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
*Brooke Parmalie*  
(ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Elk Regulations  
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 3 of 2024

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 elk regulations have been in place since 2022 as part of the two-year regulatory cycle to provide consistency in regulations. Accordingly, the Department recommends that the proposed changes remain in place for the 2024 and 2025 elk seasons.

Elk Season Dates

Elk Hunt Period 1 is designed to target elk outside the core elk range in Elk Management Unit (EMU) X 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 in late September. The recommended dates for Elk Hunt Period 1 in 2024 are August 27 through August 30, September 13 through September 16, and September 27 through September 30. Dates in 2025 would remain similar in structure, with recommended dates for Elk Hunt Period 1 being August 26 through August 29, September 12 through September 15, and September 26 through September 29. This recommendation would retain the same structure for Elk Hunt Period 1 that was established in 2012 and will continue through 2025.

Elk Hunt Period 2 will focus harvest where needed within individual EMUs H and I in the core elk range and will allow for additional harvest outside the core area in EMU X. The recommended dates for Elk Hunt Period 2 in 2024 are December 14 through December 22, while the recommended hunt dates for 2025 are December 13 through December 21. This recommendation would retain the same structure for Elk Hunt Period 2 that was established in 2012 and will continue through 2025.

There have also been some administrative changes made throughout the order that provide consistency and clarification.

*Issues Pros and Cons*

This elk season structure designed in 2012 is intended to increase the number of successful hunters and to increase the effectiveness of hunters taking elk outside of the core range by allowing them more time to harvest an elk. Hunter success numbers increased over the last couple of years due to this regulation change. For the 2022-2023 seasons, hunter success ranged from 60 to 77 percent among the hunt periods. The success rates for the first hunt period were well within the average success rate observed over the past five years of 74 percent. The second hunt period showed lower success rates (60.6 percent and 70.6 percent) relative to the five-year average (85.6 percent). In addition, the average number of days required to harvest an elk in 2022 was 7.3 days, up from 5.0 days in 2019.

The Department does not expect any negative impacts as a result of maintaining the current elk season structure.

*Biological*

The Department does not expect a biological impact as a result of maintaining the current elk season structure.

*Social*

The Department gathered public input through comments and opinion surveys when determining the elk season structure. The Department did not receive any negative feedback on this recommendation.

*Economic*

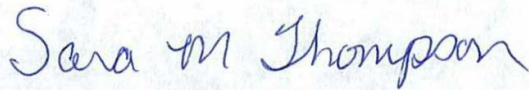
The elk herd range is concentrated in the northeast portion of the Lower Peninsula. The elk season has a positive economic impact on that region, due to the seasonal influx of elk hunters and elk hunt guiding operations. The Department does not expect an economic impact as a result of maintaining the current elk season structure.

Elk License Quotas and Elk Management Unit Boundaries

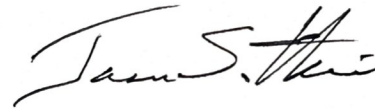
The Department is not recommending any changes to elk license quotas or EMU boundaries. Elk license quotas have been in place for four years. During that time, the Department has conducted two aerial surveys in 2022 and 2024 to estimate the impacts on the increase of license quotas in 2020. The aerial result surveys from 2022 and 2024 showed a survey midpoint of 1,227 elk (95 percent Confidence Interval = 870-1,684) in 2022 and 1,146 elk (95 percent Confidence Interval = 884-1,407) in 2024. The 2024 aerial survey is approximately 10 percent lesser than the 2022-point estimate; however, the confidence intervals are completely contained within the 2022 estimate, and this is the first year we subsampled the low-density plots. Only approximately 50 percent of the elk range was able to be surveyed in 2024, with essentially all of the high and medium density plots completed while only a subsample of the low-density plots was completed. The survey was not able to be completed due to poor flying/observing conditions. The 2024 estimate should be viewed with caution because this assumes that we were successful in identifying all low-density plots which may not be true. With the confidence intervals overlapping our elk management goal defined in our Management Plan, and the inability to complete this year's survey, maintaining existing quota numbers and continuing discussions with stakeholders and partners is the desired approach for the next two years.

The Department has not received any negative feedback on the current EMU boundaries, and the standardization of boundaries between the early hunt and the late hunt back in 2022 has proven to be more easily communicated.

Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order was submitted for information on March 14, 2024, at the Natural Resources Commission meeting. This item appeared on the Department's April 2, 2024 calendar and may be eligible for approval on April 11, 2024.



Sara Thompson, Chief  
Wildlife Division



Jason S. Haines, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division



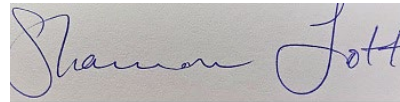
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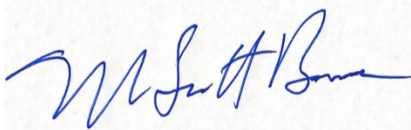


Randall M. Claramunt, Chief  
Fisheries Division



Shannon Lott  
Natural Resources Deputy

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



M. Scott Bowen, Director

Date: April 11, 2024

# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

## Amendment No. 3 of 2024

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 11, 2024, 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 and hunt periods for taking elk shall be as shown in table 1:

Hunt Period	Open Season 2024	Open Season 2025
1	August 27 to August 30 and September 13 to September 16 and September 27 to September 30, in elk management unit "X."	August 26 to August 29 and September 12 to September 15 and September 26 to September 29, in elk management unit "X."
2	December 14 to December 22, in elk management units "H," "I," and "X."	December 13 to December 21, in elk management units "H," "I," and "X."

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

### 3.6 Elk hunting, tagging, sealing, reporting, requirements; unlawful acts.

Sec. 3.6 (1) The department shall issue a kill tag as part of the elk hunting license. An individual shall not kill or attempt to kill an elk unless the individual has a valid elk kill tag issued in the individual's name for the elk management units in which the individual is hunting. The licensee must provide the kill tag and elk license to a conservation officer upon request.

(2) The licensee shall complete the elk hunt information sheet, as directed by the department, prior to participating in any elk hunting activity.

(3) (a) A person who kills an elk shall immediately validate the kill tag by notching out the appropriate areas of the kill tag and shall immediately attach the kill tag to the antler, lower jaw, or calcaneal (Achilles) tendon of the elk in a secure and permanent manner. The kill tag shall remain attached to the elk until the animal is registered and sealed by the department.

(b) A person who attempts to kill or kills an elk may be required to clearly mark the kill site and other locations as instructed in the training session. Any elk that are wounded or killed with an improper tag and not recovered must be reported to a department employee as instructed in the training session.

(4) Within 24 hours of killing an elk and before removing any elk from the area open to elk hunting, the carcass shall be presented, by the licensee that killed the elk, to the department for examination, sealing, and registration. The licensee shall validate, register, and report their elk harvest as instructed by the department. An examination will be made for such biological or other information as may be desired. The carcass need not be entire, but all parts must be readily identifiable and presented for sealing.

(5) Within 2 weeks of killing an elk, a licensee shall take the head of the animal to a department management unit or field office for submission to the department.

(6) It shall be unlawful to possess or transport an elk or parts of an elk without a kill tag or confirming seal attached. A confirming seal shall remain attached to the elk until the conditions in section 3.103(2) are met.

(7) It shall be unlawful to take an elk over bait. For the purposes of this section, "bait" means a substance composed of grain, fruit, vegetables, or other food placed to lure or entice elk. This does not apply to standing farm crops under normal agricultural practices or other natural growing grains, fruits, or vegetables.

(8) It shall be unlawful for a hunter with an antlerless-only license to take or possess an elk with antlers. It shall be unlawful for an individual to take more than 1 elk per valid kill tag.

(9) It shall be unlawful for an individual to pursue, capture, shoot, kill, chase, follow, harass, or harm an elk while the elk is swimming in a pond, lake, stream, or other body of water.

(10) It shall be unlawful for an individual to hunt an elk with a dog.

(11) It shall be unlawful to take an elk by any method other than by firearm, bow and arrow, or crossbow.

### **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 X, 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 H, 20 any elk licenses and 40 antlerless elk licenses.

(b) Elk management unit I, 30 any elk licenses and 70 antlerless elk licenses.

(3) An elk hunter shall hunt in their assigned season and elk management unit except elk hunters assigned to hunt in elk management units H or I may hunt in elk management unit X.

### **3.103 Issuance of deer or elk kill tags; validation elk kill tag; reporting deer harvest; validation of deer kill tag; unlawful acts.**

Sec. 3.103 (1) The director shall issue a kill tag as part of each deer or elk hunting license. A person who kills a deer or elk shall immediately validate the kill tag by notching out the appropriate information on the tag and attach the kill tag to the antler, lower jaw, or gambrel of the deer or elk in a secure and permanent manner.

(2) Except as provided in this subsection for the removal of a kill tag, it shall be unlawful to possess or transport an elk without a validated kill tag attached. The kill tag shall remain attached to the carcass until the animal is sealed and registered by the department. The seal must remain attached until any 1 of the following conditions are met:

(a) The carcass is processed or butchered for consumption by an individual for their personal use.

(b) The carcass is accepted for processing and recorded by a commercial processor. If the antlers or head is returned to the person submitting the animal to the commercial processor, the seal shall accompany the head or antlers.

(c) The carcass is accepted for processing and recorded by a taxidermist.

(3) A person shall report their deer harvest as instructed by the department within 72 hours after retrieval of a deer or before transfer of possession of a deer, whichever comes first. All persons reporting their deer harvest must retain the associated harvest confirmation number. A person who kills a deer may designate another person to report their deer harvest. "Transfer of possession" means 1 of the following:

(a) The entire deer carcass is transferred to another individual for consumption.

(b) The entire deer carcass, or head, has been accepted by a processor or taxidermist.

(c) The entire deer carcass, or head, has been submitted to the department.

(4) Except as provided in this subsection, it shall be unlawful to possess or transport a deer carcass without a validated kill tag attached. The kill tag shall remain attached to the carcass until any 1 of the following conditions are met:

(a) The carcass is processed and butchered for consumption by an individual for their personal use.

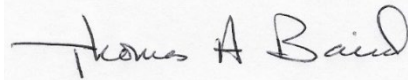
(b) The head is transferred to or transported by someone other than a processor or taxidermist. If the head is not attached to the carcass, the kill tag shall remain with the head.

(c) The carcass, including the head, has been accepted for processing and recorded by a commercial processor or taxidermist. The kill tag shall remain with the head.

(d) The carcass, not including the head, has been accepted for processing and recorded by a commercial processor or taxidermist. The kill tag shall remain with the head.

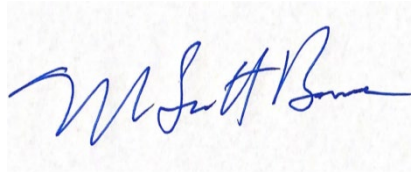
Issued on this 11th day of April, 2024.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas A Baird". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the first name.

Thomas Baird, Chair  
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Scott Bowen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the first name.

M. Scott Bowen  
Director