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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



M. SCOTT BOWEN
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: May 13, 2024

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Voluntary Use of Electronic Kill Tags for the Fall and Spring Turkey Seasons
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 5 of 2024
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

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 Department's licensing system, called MiConnect Outdoors, provides enhanced capabilities for the Department to interact with its customers via online (www.mdnr-elicence.com) or mobile application (Michigan DNR Hunt Fish app) regarding hunting and fishing opportunities in Michigan. The MiConnect system currently provides tools and resources such as purchasing and displaying electronic hunting licenses, reporting harvest, reviewing hunting regulations, and auto-renewing licenses. In addition, MiConnect has the capability for hunters to use electronic kill tags, however, this feature has not been utilized. Electronic-kill tag use has been implemented successfully in other states and can offer a quick and easy way for customers to purchase and use kill tags. The Department has reviewed this option and is recommending the voluntary use of electronic kill tags for the fall and spring turkey hunting seasons. There will be two options for tagging a harvested turkey, either with a traditional paper kill tag acquired from a point of sale (POS) terminal or online, or an electronic kill tag purchased through the mobile application. If a hunter chooses to purchase their turkey license via the mobile application, then they will be required to use an electronic kill tag. If a hunter chooses to purchase their turkey license at a POS terminal or online, then they will be required to use a paper kill tag.

When an electronic kill tag is purchased, hunters must be able to show their turkey license and electronic kill tag validation number on their mobile device. Upon harvesting a turkey and before the carcass is transported, hunters must immediately validate the electronic kill tag by electronically selecting the appropriate information on their mobile device. This will automatically validate the harvest and the hunter will receive an electronic kill tag validation number. Once that process is complete, the hunter must legibly write, in permanent ink, information required by the Department that may include electronic kill tag validation number, harvest date, and/or turkey license number on any durable material (e.g., duct tape flagging ribbon, or piece of paper in a plastic bag) and must affix it to the leg of the turkey like a traditional paper tag. The tag must remain attached until the turkey is processed or butchered for consumption, or until the turkey is accepted for processing and recorded by a commercial processor or taxidermist.

Issues Pros and Cons

Allowing the option for the use of an electronic kill tag modernizes and streamlines the tagging process for hunters and provides them with a convenient alternative option to paper tags which require travel time to purchase in person or wait times to receive in the mail before going

hunting. This change gives the opportunity for the Department to launch a new technology option in a controlled manner to ensure its success. It also allows the Department to provide better customer service, reduce operating costs, and modernizes the licensing system.

Electronic kill tags eliminate the need for hunters to carry paper kill tags, however the Department will still require a physical marker to ensure the proper enforcement and verification of harvest in the field.

Other States

The voluntary use of electronic kill tags brings Michigan further into the digital age of hunting licenses because electronic options have become more common around the country, and several states have developed electronic tagging systems for turkeys such as Alabama, Arizona, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Biological

This change will not have any biological impact and will not impact license quotas.

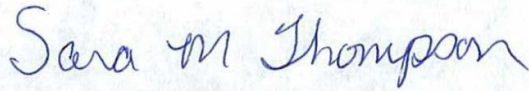
Social

Allowing the voluntary choice to use an electronic kill tag may increase participation and remove barriers to participation. Hunters interested in adopting electronic kill tags will likely be happy with the change. Those desiring traditional paper tags will be able to choose those options. Organizations interested in the conservation and harvest of turkeys seem generally supportive, with some potential concerns raised as well as recognizing some benefits. Primary concerns are associated with regulation enforcement capability and continued paper options.

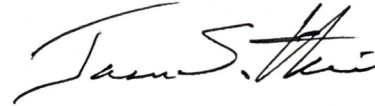
Economic

The Department's mobile application provides better access for residents and tourists to enjoy Michigan's hunting and fishing opportunities. For example, it offers a convenient way to always have hunting and fishing licenses without having to carry a physical copy. It also helps customers more easily and efficiently buy licenses, access hunting and fishing regulations and, in some instances, may reduce costs for programs administered by the Department.

Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appeared on the Department's June 4, 2024 calendar and may be eligible for approval on July 11, 2024.



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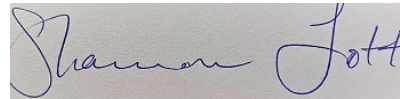
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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 5 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 July 11, 2024, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

3.302 Wild turkey; lawful possession; validation of license kill tag; unlawful acts.

Sec. 3.302 (1) **The department shall issue a kill tag as part of the turkey hunting license. Immediately upon killing a turkey, a person shall validate their license kill tag by one of the following:**

(a) Paper kill tag validation: An individual shall notching out the required information as instructed on the license kill tag and shall securely attach the license kill tag around a leg of the turkey. It shall be unlawful to possess or transport a turkey unless the kill tag is securely attached to a leg of the turkey and the required information is notched on the kill tag.

(b) Electronic kill tag validation: An individual shall electronically select the required information as instructed on the department's mobile application and shall securely attach a tag made of a durable material with information required by the department legibly written in permanent ink. It shall be unlawful to possess or transport a turkey unless the completed tag is securely attached to the leg of the turkey.

(2) It shall be unlawful to possess or transport a turkey unless the turkey license is securely attached to a leg of the turkey and the required information is notched on the turkey license. The kill tag or tag described in (1)(a) or 1(b) shall remain attached to the carcass until any 1 of the following conditions are met:

(a) ~~The turkey license attached to the leg of the turkey may be cut and removed from the specimen by a licensed taxidermist at the location of their taxidermy business at any time following the recording of the license number and completion of the taxidermy tag.~~ The carcass is processed and butchered for consumption by an individual for their personal use.

(b) The carcass is accepted for processing and recorded by a commercial processor.

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

(3) The holder of a private land wild turkey license shall only take a turkey on privately owned land within the management unit and during the hunting period specified on the private land wild turkey license.

(a) A private land wild turkey license is not valid on county, state, or federal lands except with permission on enclosed controlled-access military lands.

Issued on this 11th day of July, 2024.

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.

M. Scott Bowen
Director