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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



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DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: March 31, 2026

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: 2026-2028 Deer Regulations
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 6 of 2026
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:

In preparation for the 2026-28 deer regulations cycle, the Department, under guidance from the Natural Resources Commission, established two deer advisory committees: the Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team and the Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team. The goal of these advisory teams was to build a long-term process for reviewing deer regulations on the established three-year cycle and to continue stakeholder engagement. The Department actively engaged with these advisory teams as well as tribal partners to work towards improving deer management across the state. In addition, at the February 11, 2026, Natural Resources Commission meeting, the Natural Resources Commission Wildlife Committee Chair stated the following goals to achieve when considering regulatory decisions for deer management in Michigan:

- Improve the buck structure in Michigan
- Manage antlerless deer according to sustainability and habitat by deer management unit
- Improve the buck-to-doe ratio
- Facilitate collaboration with the Department to improve winter habitat and include partnerships like the Upper Peninsula winter habitat workgroup to improve habitat where needed
- Improve hunter satisfaction

The items explained in this memorandum are regulations the Department is describing based on discussions with commissioners, advisory teams, tribal partners, stakeholder groups and/or Department field staff and experts for potential implementation in the 2026 and 2027 deer hunting seasons.

Upper Peninsula Recommendations

Item 1: Muzzleloader Season

Currently, the muzzleloader season is a total of 10 days from the first Friday in December to 9 days thereafter. There have been several potential muzzleloader season options discussed with the Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team, stakeholder groups, commissioners and Department experts. Some of those discussions resulted in a desire to shorten the time that deer are vulnerable to harvest during migration.

The Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team did not recommend changes to the muzzleloader season in Zone 1. However, some commissioners and the Department recommend shortening the muzzleloader season to the first Friday in December and continuing for 2 days thereafter. In 2026, the season would occur on December 4, 5, and 6. This muzzleloader season is recommended to run concurrently with the proposed Lower Peninsula December firearm deer season, as described in Item 4.

Issues Pros and Cons

Shortening the muzzleloader season from 10 days to 3 days would reduce harvest pressure on deer later in the year, including dates in some years when deer can be migrating to deer wintering complexes. However, this change would also reduce the overall number of hunting days available, limiting recreational opportunity.

Biological

No significant harvest or biological impacts would be expected from this change. The muzzleloader season success rate is the lowest of all seasons in the Upper Peninsula (about 6% in 2023 and 9% in 2024), and Upper Peninsula hunters harvested an average of fewer than 900 antlerless deer and fewer than 1,000 antlered deer across the entire region during recent muzzleloader seasons.

Social

This recommendation was not discussed with the Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team or other stakeholder groups. Public input included a request to consider reducing the number of days migrating deer are vulnerable to harvest by firearms, which would be addressed by shortening the muzzleloader season to 3 days. Upper Peninsula hunters spent an average of just over 4 days hunting deer during the 2023 and 2024 muzzleloader seasons, so this change would reduce the number of days available to hunt with a muzzleloader to fewer than the average hunters have made use of in recent years.

Economic

Less than 8% of all days that deer hunters spent afield in the Upper Peninsula in 2023 and 2024 occurred during the muzzleloader season. A reduction in the season length would not be expected to significantly reduce the overall economic impact of hunting in the region.

Item 2: Antlerless Deer Hunting Access Permits

Antlerless deer hunting with a universal antlerless deer license in deer management units 351 and 352 requires an antlerless deer hunting access permit. Currently, antlerless deer hunting access permits are not available for deer management unit 351 (includes deer management units 017, 021, 117, 149, 249, and 349); therefore, antlerless harvest with a universal antlerless license in that unit is closed. In deer management unit 352 (includes deer management units 027, 036, 152, and 252), there is currently a total of 500 access permits available. The Department is authorized to establish deer hunting access permit quotas and does so outside the Wildlife Conservation Order. The Department will maintain the current deer hunting access permit quota of 0 in deer management unit 351 and adjust the deer hunting access permit quota for deer management unit 352 to 0 for the 2026 hunting season.

Issues Pros and Cons

In 2025, there were 500 successful applicants drawn for a deer hunting access permit in deer management unit 352, however, only 305 successful applicants obtained their antlerless deer

hunting access permits (61% of the quota sold). Just under 250 antlerless deer were reported harvested in deer management unit 352 in 2025. Antlerless harvest is already very restricted through this limited-permit system. Zeroing out the quota in deer management unit 352 will further decrease harvest pressure on antlerless deer and simplify regulations across the mid-snowfall area where deer densities fluctuate across years due to snowfall trends.

Biological

Zeroing out the antlerless deer hunting access permit quota in deer management unit 352 provides full protections and reduces harvest pressure on antlerless deer. The winter of 2025-2026 is one of the more severe winters experienced in recent years, culminating in a blizzard event in March that likely impacted deer in many areas. Reduced deer numbers are expected in 2026 due to this severe winter.

Social

Local landowners in deer management unit 352 who observe high deer activity and want to alleviate damage or control local populations may express concerns about removing opportunities to take antlerless deer.

Economic

There is a \$5 application fee to apply for an antlerless deer hunting access permit. In 2025, 1,234 eligible applicants were in the drawing for 500 antlerless deer hunting access permits. While there were 500 successful applicants in the drawing, 195 of those applicants did not obtain their antlerless deer hunting access permit.

Lower Peninsula Recommendations

Item 3: Limited Firearms Deer Zone

Michigan is divided into a northern zone and a southern limited firearms deer zone, where shotguns, certain firearms, and certain handguns can be used for deer hunting. Current regulations restrict deer hunters to the following firearms in the limited firearms deer zone on public and private lands:

- A shotgun with a smooth or rifled barrel of any gauge.
- A muzzleloading rifle or black powder handgun loaded with black powder or a commercially manufactured black powder substitute.
- A conventional (smokeless powder) handgun .35-caliber or larger and loaded with straight-walled cartridges. It may be single- or multiple-shot but cannot exceed a maximum capacity of nine rounds in the barrel and magazine combined.
- A .35-caliber or larger rifle loaded with straight-walled cartridges with a minimum case length of 1.16 inches and a maximum case length of 1.80 inches. Examples include, but are not limited to, .350 legend, .360 Buckhammer and .450 Bushmaster.
- A .35-caliber or larger air rifle or pistol charged only from an external, high-compression power source.

At the request of the Natural Resources Commission, the Law Enforcement Division reviewed potentially removing the limited firearms deer zone at the January 14, 2026, Natural Resources Commission meeting. The Department neither supports nor opposes a change to firearm restrictions, but if changes are made, the Department recommends the same regulations be applied on both private and public lands in order to limit complexity in enforcement.

This Wildlife Conservation Order amendment leaves the current regulations in place. An amendment will need to be made to the Wildlife Conservation Order to enact any changes to the limited firearms deer zone.

Issues Pros and Cons

There has been an increase in opportunities over the years for expanded equipment use, such as the legalization of crossbows in 2009, certain straight-walled cartridges in 2014, regular legal firearms expanded for use in the muzzleloader season, and special deer hunts added along with early, late, and extended firearm seasons.

Restrictions in the limited firearms deer zone are intended to prevent the use of rifles in an area with high human population densities based on concern for public safety during the firearm seasons. It is unknown if a change will affect deer harvest, hunter numbers, or hunter safety incidents.

A change to remove the firearm restrictions will also expand the types of firearms that may be taken afield by those hunting furbearers and small game from November 15 to November 30 within the limited firearms deer zone.

Biological

No notable changes to deer harvest occurred when the use of straight-walled cartridges during the firearm season was introduced in 2014, expanding the firearms allowed for deer hunting in this region. No significant changes to deer harvest or subsequent biological impacts would be expected from further expanding firearms that are able to be used by deer hunters by eliminating the limited firearms deer zone.

Social

The Department discussed the history, trends, and unknowns of removing the limited firearms deer zone boundary line at the January 14, 2026, Natural Resources Commission meeting. If changes are made, the Department recommends removing the zone boundary completely so that the same regulations apply to both private and public land. Ensuring regulations are consistent across land-ownership types should reduce challenges for enforcement and confusion among hunters.

Economic

More than 200,000 hunters participate annually in the firearm deer season in the southern Lower Peninsula. Further expanding firearms able to be used by deer hunters by eliminating the limited firearms deer zone may increase the economic impact of firearm and ammunition purchases by these hunters.

Item 4: Muzzleloader Season

Currently, the muzzleloader season is a total of 10 days from the first Friday in December to 9 days thereafter. In 2020, the muzzleloader season in the limited firearms deer zone was opened to the use of all legal firearms for taking deer in the region. After that change was favorably received, all legal firearms for taking deer above the limited firearms deer zone were allowed in the muzzleloader season in the northern Lower Peninsula beginning in 2024.

There have been several potential muzzleloader season changes discussed with the Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team, stakeholder groups, commissioners and Department experts.

The Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team recommends the Department work with the Natural Resources Commission to return the muzzleloader season in zones 2 and 3 to only allow the use of muzzleloading firearms.

After further discussions, the Department and some commissioners recommend maintaining the use of all legal firearms but shortening the season from 10 days to 3 days. Additionally, the Department's recommendation is to begin the season on the first Friday in December and continue for 2 days thereafter. In 2026, the season would occur on December 4, 5, and 6.

It is also recommended to change the name of this hunt in the Lower Peninsula to the "December firearm deer season." There is no recommendation to change the name of this season in the Upper Peninsula. The December firearm deer season is recommended to run concurrently with the proposed Upper Peninsula muzzleloader season, as described in Item 1.

Issues Pros and Cons

Allowing additional firearm use during the muzzleloader season has been an attempt to facilitate increased participation and increased success. This was also viewed as an opportunity to not restrict hunter participation during this season for those who may not have the means to own a separate muzzleloading firearm.

Returning to the use of muzzleloading firearms only would reduce confusion about the "statewide" muzzleloader season allowing the use of all legal firearms in the Lower Peninsula.

Shortening the muzzleloader season may reduce hunting pressure on antlered deer and condense that pressure earlier in the year, because only later opportunities to hunt antlered deer are within the late portion of the archery season. However, this recommendation would also reduce the overall number of hunting days available, limiting recreational opportunity. In addition, in some years, the regular firearm season will conclude on a Thursday with the recommended December firearm deer season commencing immediately on Friday. The next year that would happen would be Friday, December 1, 2028.

The Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team and Wildlife Division field staff shared a concern that the current name of the season creates confusion since equipment is no longer restricted to the use of muzzleloaders. Changing the name to the December firearm deer season will reduce the confusion regarding legal equipment; however, it will create inconsistency with the Upper Peninsula, where the season name would remain the same.

Biological

The muzzleloader season was opened to the use of all legal firearms for taking deer in the limited firearms deer zone beginning in 2020, and the length of the season was reduced from 17 days to 10 days. Hunter participation in the region increased despite the reduced number of days, but deer harvest did not increase.

In 2024, the muzzleloader season in the northern Lower Peninsula was also opened to allow all legal firearms for taking deer north of the limited firearms deer zone. However, muzzleloader season participation in the region did not increase. Harvest in the region increased significantly, growing from 2,125 to 5,948 antlerless deer and from 1,379 to 2,655 antlered deer from 2023 to 2024.

Overall, there has been little to no biological impact from allowing the use of all legal firearms during the muzzleloader season in the Lower Peninsula, although the season continued to be biased towards antlerless harvest. Reducing the season length would address the concerns expressed by some deer hunters about late season harvest pressure on antlered deer by hunters with a firearm, and keeping expanded firearm options will retain some management capacity in the only late firearm season open to antlered deer harvest but with higher harvest of antlerless deer.

Social

The Department's recommendation differs from the Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team recommendation to revert the season back to muzzleloaders-only. The recommendation to modify the season length was not discussed with the Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team or other stakeholder groups. The Department would like to ensure that hunters do not lose overall recreational opportunity and days in the field. If this season is shortened, then the Department recommends opening the late antlerless firearm season earlier as described in Item 5.

In 2023, a Department opinion survey indicated 61% of hunters who preferred to hunt in the southern Lower Peninsula supported continuing to allow all legal firearms to be used in the muzzleloader season within the region.

Economic

Given the modest level of participation and harvest in this season compared to others, little economic impact is expected from the proposed recommendation.

Item 5: Late Antlerless Firearm Deer Season

The late antlerless firearm deer season is a firearm deer season that takes place on public and private lands in the Lower Peninsula starting the Monday following the conclusion of the muzzleloader season through January 1. With the recommendation to shorten the muzzleloader season (potentially to be renamed the December firearm deer season), the Department proposes that the late antlerless firearm deer season continue to begin on the Monday following the conclusion of the muzzleloader season (potentially to be renamed the December firearm deer season). In 2026, the season would begin on December 7.

Issues Pros and Cons

Moving up the start of the late antlerless firearm deer season, so no days of firearm hunting are lost, will retain recreational opportunity and increase management capacity in the Lower Peninsula.

Biological

The late antlerless firearm deer season accounts for a similar level of antlerless deer harvest as the archery and muzzleloader seasons, but far less than the regular firearm deer season. Historically, hunters utilizing deer management assistance permits, which are issued to landowners seeking to expand antlerless harvest, make greater use of the late antlerless firearm deer season than other hunters. This suggests any biological impact of the season is more likely at a more local scale than at the level of the full extent of Michigan lands open to the season. In combination with the proposed reduction of dates in the muzzleloader season (potentially to be renamed the December firearm deer season), reduced antlered deer harvest opportunities and increased antlerless harvest opportunities would help in balancing the buck-to-doe ratio of Michigan's overall hunter harvest.

Social

The late antlerless firearm deer season is more relevant to hunters and landowners who are seeking to address local management issues than it is to the statewide population of deer hunters. Since the recommended shortening of the muzzleloader season (potentially to be renamed the December firearm deer season) was not discussed with the Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team, altering the dates and length of the late antlerless firearm deer season also was not discussed with the Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team or other stakeholder groups.

Economic

Economic impacts like crop damage and suppressed forest regeneration are among the reasons that deer management assistance permits are issued. The popularity of the late antlerless firearm deer season to deer management assistance permit holders and landowners suggests it may provide greater benefits for alleviating these economic impacts than the modest size of its overall participation and harvest.

Item 6: Deer Management Unit 115 – Beaver Island and Garden Island

The current deer management unit 115 deer hunting seasons on Beaver Island and Garden Island are the Liberty Hunt, archery season, Independence Hunt, and the regular firearm and muzzleloader seasons. The Department recommends opening deer management unit 115 for both the early and late antlerless firearm deer seasons.

Issues Pros and Cons

Adding the early and late antlerless firearm deer seasons would add an additional 20 days of antlerless-only hunting and create consistency with regulations across deer management unit 115 and mainland Charlevoix County.

Biological

This recommendation addresses concerns about elevated deer densities on Beaver Island, which is impacting sensitive vegetation and limiting forest regeneration.

Social

This recommendation was brought forward by Wildlife Division's northern management region field staff. A public comment period was opened in the fall of 2025 which indicated overall support for the recommended changes. Among 42 comments provided by email, 19 were supportive, 7 were opposed (with one comment objecting to all deer hunting), 8 were indifferent (e.g., sharing the opinion that recommended changes are unlikely to make a significant impact), and 8 included comments unrelated to the recommendation. The Beaver Island Wildlife Club communicated their support for the recommendation.

Economic

Deer management unit 115 consists of two islands, Beaver Island and Garden Island. It includes approximately 27 square miles (17,056 acres) of public land, a little more than 33% of the total acreage in the deer management unit, primarily in the south part of Beaver Island. The only town within this deer management unit is in the northeastern part of Beaver Island in St. James Township. Access to Beaver Island is by commercial ferry, personal watercraft, or airplane (there are two airports on the island). Deer hunting on this island provides economic benefits to the local economy through transportation, lodging, and supply purchases. Minimal hunting occurs on Garden Island, where access is more limited.

Item 7: Extended Late Antlerless Firearm Deer Season

The extended late antlerless firearm deer season takes place in certain counties on public and private lands in the Lower Peninsula from January 2 through the second Sunday in January. The season will sunset on the second Sunday in January 2027. The Department recommends adding Mason, Oceana, and Osceola counties and eliminating the sunset.

Issues Pros and Cons

In 2024, the Natural Resources Commission authorized this season in certain southern Lower Peninsula counties to provide additional opportunities for the take of antlerless deer. The recommendations would help focus effort where deer numbers are typically higher, address local antlerless harvest needs, and provide for continuity and long-term evaluation of the season.

Biological

Deer populations in Mason, Oceana, and Osceola counties all appear to be stable to increasing, and agricultural damage complaints and observations of substantial deer browse to forest regeneration are increasing.

Social

This recommendation was brought forward by Wildlife Division's northern management region field staff, largely to help address increasing damage complaints and provide more opportunity for antlerless deer harvest in counties that have seen declining antlerless deer harvest and hunter numbers.

Economic

Crop damage complaints have been increasing in these areas. In Oceana County, many orchard owners and specialty crop producers are fencing their agricultural acreage to exclude deer, leaving remaining unfenced agricultural lands bearing an increasing level of crop damage. The extended late antlerless firearm deer season provides a relatively low level of overall antlerless deer harvest but increases management capacity at a local level where hunters can assist landowners with addressing agricultural damage.

Item 8: Early Antlerless Firearm Deer Season

The early antlerless firearm deer season is a 2-day firearm deer season that takes place on public and private lands within certain deer management units in the Lower Peninsula starting the Saturday following September 15. The Department has received complaints about the overlap between the early antlerless firearm deer season and when dogs can be used to hunt bears in the northern Lower Peninsula. In order to reduce potential conflict, the Department recommends moving the early antlerless firearm deer season to the second weekend in September, so it runs concurrently with the Liberty Hunt.

Issues Pros and Cons

With numerous seasons concurrently open with the early antlerless firearm deer season, overlap with other hunting activities is inevitable, regardless of timing.

Biological

No significant biological impacts are expected from this recommendation. Fewer than 2,000 antlerless deer and 6,000 antlered deer are harvested annually during the Liberty Hunt, and approximately 4,000 deer are taken in the early antlerless firearm deer season.

Social

The early antlerless firearm deer season was previously only open on private land. The season was expanded to include public land in 2024, which may have increased the potential for conflicts that have triggered complaints about the overlap between the early antlerless firearm deer season and when dogs can be used to hunt bears in the northern Lower Peninsula. This recommendation may eliminate those potential conflicts as well as the overlap between the early antlerless firearm deer season and the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend.

Economic

No significant economic impacts are expected from this recommendation.

Statewide Recommendations

Item 9: Universal Antlerless Deer License Purchase Limit

An individual may purchase up to 10 universal antlerless deer licenses statewide. There have been several potential purchase limit options discussed with commissioners and Department experts. Some commissioners would like to see the purchase limit reduced to 5 universal antlerless deer licenses statewide. The Department is not recommending a change.

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians opposes any reductions or restrictions on antlerless harvest in any part of the Ceded Territory. They also do not support restricted antlerless harvest in the northern Lower Peninsula, the Upper Peninsula, and on public lands in southern Michigan if it would result in decreased antlerless harvest. The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians supports an increase in antlerless harvest opportunities throughout the state.

This Wildlife Conservation Order amendment leaves the current universal antlerless license purchase limit in place. An amendment would need to be made to the Wildlife Conservation Order to enact any changes to universal antlerless license purchase limits.

Issues Pros and Cons

Reducing the statewide purchase limit for universal antlerless deer licenses may address the public perception of there being localized overharvest of antlerless deer in some areas. However, it also restricts flexibility for hunters and landowners in regions with high deer densities, where hunter harvest of antlerless deer is an important management tool. It also limits efforts to reduce deer-related agricultural damage and may be an unnecessary change given that few hunters currently approach the existing 10 universal antlerless deer license purchase limit.

A reduction may lead to an increased need for deer management assistance permits during the season and deer damage shooting permits outside of the season, potentially creating challenges for staff capacity and timely responsiveness as permit demand increases.

Biological

Data indicate close to 80% of hunters do not harvest any antlerless deer in a given year and fewer than 1% of hunters harvest 5 or more antlerless deer. Reducing the statewide purchase limit on universal antlerless deer licenses from 10 to 5 would thus have little biological impact on overall deer management. This change might reduce instances where local concentrations of hunters have been exceeding average rates of purchasing and using universal antlerless deer licenses. There could be negative biological impacts where these concentrations of higher

harvest occur around areas of bovine tuberculosis or chronic wasting disease outbreaks, or where deer populations are near carrying capacity.

Social

Some hunters will have already purchased more than 5 universal antlerless deer licenses due to 2026 license sales commencing on March 1. The universal antlerless deer license purchase limit could be reduced while still meeting typical hunter demand for universal antlerless deer licenses.

Economic

The universal antlerless deer license purchase limit could be reduced without substantially impacting overall sales of universal antlerless deer licenses. Landowners experiencing economic loss from deer damage could be negatively affected and require the Department to administer alternative permits (deer management assistance permits or deer damage shooting permits) to address their concerns.

Item 10: Universal Antlerless Deer License Use Limit

The Deer Advisory Teams considered a recommendation for the Department to work with the Natural Resources Commission to establish limits on the number of universal antlerless deer licenses that hunters could use for each deer management unit in the Upper Peninsula and each county in the Lower Peninsula. A separate overall purchase limit on universal antlerless deer licenses (currently 10) could continue to be set, but the limit in each deer management unit/county would cap the number of deer that could be harvested using the universal antlerless deer licenses in each individual area. The recommendation was passed by the Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team but not the Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team. The Department is not recommending a change.

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians opposes any reductions or restrictions on antlerless harvest in any part of the Ceded Territory. They also do not support restricted antlerless harvest in the northern Lower Peninsula, the Upper Peninsula, and on public lands in southern Michigan if it would result in decreased antlerless harvest. The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians supports an increase in antlerless harvest opportunities throughout the state.

This Wildlife Conservation Order amendment does not enact a change. The Department requests that if a change is made, the amendment provide the flexibility needed for adaptive management by authorizing the Department to establish universal antlerless deer license use limits. These limits would be reviewed and published annually in the Deer Hunting Regulations Summary.

If this change is implemented, the following use limits are the preliminary suggestions of the Department:

Upper Peninsula

Deer Management Unit	Universal Antlerless Deer License Use Limit
007	0
017	0
021	0
022	1

027	1
031	0
036	1
042	0
048	0
055	5
066	0
117	0
121	2
122	2
127	0
131	0
152	1
155	2
249	0
252	1
255	2
349	0

Lower Peninsula

County	Universal Antlerless Deer License Use Limit
Alcona	10
Allegan	5
Alpena	10
Antrim	3
Arenac	5
Barry	5
Bay	5
Benzie	3
Berrien	5
Branch	5
Calhoun	5
Cass	5
Charlevoix	3
Cheboygan	3
Clare	4
Clinton	5
Crawford	3
Eaton	5
Emmet	3
Genesee	5
Gladwin	4

Grand Traverse	3
Gratiot	5
Hillsdale	5
Huron	5
Ingham	5
Ionia	10
Iosco	5
Isabella	5
Jackson	5
Kalamazoo	5
Kalkaska	3
Kent	10
Lake	3
Lapeer	5
Leelanau	3
Lenawee	5
Livingston	5
Macomb	5
Manistee	5
Mason	5
Mecosta	10
Midland	5
Missaukee	5
Monroe	3
Montcalm	10
Montmorency	10
Muskegon	5
Newaygo	10
Oakland	5
Oceana	4
Ogemaw	5
Osceola	5
Oscoda	10
Otsego	3
Ottawa	5
Presque Isle	10
Roscommon	3
Saginaw	5
Sanilac	5
Shiawassee	5
St. Clair	5
St. Joseph	5

Tuscola	5
Van Buren	5
Washtenaw	5
Wayne	5
Wexford	3

Issues Pros and Cons

Enacting this change may address the perception of some hunters that there is localized overharvest of deer in some areas. This could also positively convey to the hunting public that localized conditions were considered and additional use limits have been placed on harvest levels compared to more liberal regulations that were in place in recent years. Enacting this change would likely provide little constraint on overall antlerless deer harvest compared to typical hunter harvest of antlerless deer but would represent a substantially new and potentially confusing component of deer regulations that could frustrate hunters or discourage antlerless deer harvest. It would also restrict flexibility for hunters and landowners in regions with high deer densities where hunter harvest of antlerless deer is an important management tool and could limit efforts to reduce deer-related agricultural damage. These use limits may lead to an increased need for deer management assistance permits during the season and deer damage shooting permits outside of the season, potentially creating challenges for staff capacity and timely responsiveness as permit demand increases. The Department also has concerns regarding the ability to enforce universal antlerless deer license use restrictions.

Biological

Data indicate close to 80% of hunters do not harvest any antlerless deer in a given year, fewer than 10% harvest 2 or more antlerless deer, and fewer than 1% of hunters harvest 5 or more antlerless deer. Universal antlerless deer license use limits between 2 and the current antlerless deer license purchase limit of 10 are likely to result in similar antlerless harvest outputs for each county. Few hunters take more than 2 antlerless deer, so any limit greater than that is likely to influence perception of harvest more than actual deer harvest.

Social

Due to 2026 license sales commencing on March 1, some hunters will have already purchased universal antlerless deer licenses. The recommended universal antlerless deer license use limits would still accommodate typical hunter demand for antlerless harvest but could create confusion for hunters who might have legally purchased more licenses than they are allowed to use in their intended hunting areas.

Reduced antlerless use also offers limits to hunters' ability to respond to local overabundance of deer unless going through a deer management assistance application, which causes additional time and response from staff to evaluate and fill requests.

Economic

The suggested universal antlerless deer license use limits could be established without substantially impacting overall sales of universal antlerless deer licenses. Landowners experiencing economic loss from deer damage could be negatively affected and require the Department to administer alternative permits (deer management assistance permits or deer damage shooting permits) to address their concerns.

Item 11: Antlered Deer Harvest Restrictions

There have been ongoing discussions over the last several years regarding various approaches to restricting antlered deer harvest in Michigan. Options explored have included limiting individuals to harvesting a single antlered deer per year, also known as a “one buck rule”, separation of existing antlered deer harvest by season (e.g., a one buck limit in archery season and a one buck limit in the regular firearm deer season or muzzleloader season), also known as a “seasonal buck bag limit,” and regionally applied antler point restrictions.

A. One Buck Rule

A one buck rule was considered by the Deer Management Initiative in 2024; however, more discussion was needed regarding regulatory authority. The Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team and the Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team also considered a one buck rule and ultimately recommended a regulatory change to allow harvest of one antlered deer and one antlerless deer with a deer combination license and suspend the sale of the single deer license. After further regulatory and legal review, it was determined that the Department is obligated to offer the single deer license as described in Michigan Statute under MCL 324.43527a. That license cannot be eliminated without a legislative change. Therefore, the Department cannot bring forward the one buck rule proposal as recommended by the Deer Advisory Teams.

B. Seasonal Buck Bag Limit

From 1965 to 1985, Michigan hunters were allowed to take one antlered deer and could use an archery license to harvest an additional deer of either sex. From 1986 to 1990, hunters who used both firearms and bows could take up to four antlered deer annually. The bag limit was reduced to two antlered deer in 1991, but distinct tags continued to be offered for the archery and firearm seasons. Therefore, there is a past precedent in Michigan for dividing harvest of multiple antlered deer between seasons. In 1998, the deer combination license was created to allow two tags valid for antlered deer and eligible to use in any season. Recent changes have allowed options for both tags of the deer combination license and the single deer license to be used for antlerless deer in the archery season and in the Lower Peninsula during the regular firearm deer season and the muzzleloader season.

C. Regional Antler Point Restrictions

Since 1997, hunters who harvest two antlered deer must ensure at least one of those deer has a minimum of four antler points on one side. Beginning in 1997, mandatory antler point restrictions were applied to all deer harvested within specific deer management units. Shortly after, growing interest and deliberations regarding mandatory antler point restrictions led the Department and the Natural Resources Commission to establish, review, and update guidelines for a systematic process ([Guidelines for Initiation, Evaluation, and Review of Mandatory Antler Point Restrictions](#)) to evaluate antler point restriction proposals. Utilizing this process, some mandatory antler point restriction proposals were implemented, and some were rejected. Separate from this process, the Natural Resources Commission established the current “hunter’s choice” regulations in the Upper Peninsula. Hunters that purchase a single deer license may harvest any antlered deer in the Upper Peninsula. Hunters that choose to purchase a deer combination license must abide by a 3-point antler point restriction on the regular tag in the Upper Peninsula and a 4-point antler point restriction on the restricted tag statewide. The Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team and Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team had some discussion regarding implementing regional mandatory antler point restrictions but ultimately declined to consider or advance a recommendation for statewide antler point restriction implementation.

D. Recommended Option

This Wildlife Conservation Order amendment recommends implementation, effective March 1, 2027, of a one antlered deer bag limit, also known as a “one buck rule”, statewide for hunters, and in the Lower Peninsula, limiting the single deer license to the harvest of an antlerless deer only.

In the Upper Peninsula, no changes would apply to the single deer license. The 3-point antler point restriction that has applied to the regular tag of the deer combination license since 2009 would remain in place, as would the options that have allowed using the deer combination license regular tag or the single deer license for taking an antlerless deer in the archery season. The deer combination license restricted tag would not be eligible for taking an antlered deer and could only be used for taking an antlerless deer in the archery season. The 3-point antler point restriction in deer management unit 117 and 122 would also remain in place.

In the Lower Peninsula, hunters with a deer combination license could use the regular tag with no changes to the options for taking an antlered or antlerless deer, and the restricted tag and single deer license would only be eligible for taking an antlerless deer. Antler point restrictions for individual deer management units would remain in place.

There is growing evidence that the major barrier to increasing antlerless deer harvest in parts of the state where it is most needed is the opportunity hunters have to harvest a second antlered deer. Michigan is unique in the Great Lakes states in that hunters historically and routinely harvest more antlered deer than antlerless deer. Regulatory and legal review following the Upper Peninsula Deer Advisory Team and Lower Peninsula Deer Advisory Team recommendation to establish a one buck rule determined that the sale of the single deer license could not be suspended. However, the review did conclude the Department and Natural Resources Commission have the authority to designate the kind of deer that may be taken and the geographic area where harvest is allowed for any license issued if it is advisable to do so for the purpose of managing deer. A one buck rule is expected to lower the overall harvest of antlered deer and may encourage hunters to be more selective, potentially resulting in the harvest of older, larger-antlered deer while still leaving that decision to each hunter. This recommendation would ensure all deer licenses require or include options for taking antlerless deer, which would shift Michigan’s deer harvest ratio away from the persistent bias towards antlered deer.

Issues Pros and Cons

Each of the options evaluated (a one buck rule, a seasonal buck bag limit, regional antler point restrictions, and the recommended option) have been considered regarding their potential for addressing the following goals that the Natural Resources Commission Wildlife Committee Chair stated a desire to achieve through regulatory decisions:

- Improve the buck structure in Michigan
- Improve the buck-to-doe ratio
- Improve hunter satisfaction

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians opposes a reduction in tags under the deer combination license. They encourage the Department and the Natural Resources Commission to explore all opportunities to increase antlerless harvest, including earn-a-buck and earn-a-second buck.

Biological

A. One Buck Rule

Approximately 4-7% of antlered deer harvested over the past decade, an average of just under 32,000 antlered deer statewide, have been a second antlered deer taken by the same hunter. This proportion has varied regionally, from 1% to 3% in the Upper Peninsula, just under 3% to 5% in the northern Lower Peninsula, and 4% to just under 8% in the southern Lower Peninsula. If a one buck rule was established, it is likely that some of the “second antlered” protected by this rule would be harvested by a different hunter. Although a one buck rule might increase the tendency of some hunters to take antlerless deer, hunters already have the option to take antlerless deer with the single deer license or deer combination license during all seasons in the Lower Peninsula and during the archery season in the Upper Peninsula. Despite this option and the small number of hunters that harvest two antlered deer, nearly 80% of hunters still do not harvest any antlerless deer in a given year.

Michigan’s deer harvest reporting data indicate hunters with a single deer license are more selective towards larger antlered (typically older) deer. In the southern Lower Peninsula, 60% of harvested antlered deer taken on the single deer license over the past 4 years have had 4 or more antler points on one side, compared to just under 43% of harvested antlered deer taken with the deer combination license regular tag. Evaluations of this selectivity are more difficult in the other regions, as the Upper Peninsula has a 3-point antler point restriction on the deer combination regular tag and much of the northwestern portion of the Lower Peninsula has a 3-point antler point restriction for all deer.

Overall, the immediate impacts of a one buck rule on the buck-to-doe ratio and age structure of Michigan’s deer harvest or deer population would be modest. As hunters adapted to the restriction and increased their antlerless harvest, greater changes would be anticipated over time.

B. Seasonal Buck Bag Limit

A seasonal buck bag limit similar to what existed in Michigan in the past was also considered and could be reestablished should a one buck rule not be supported. The Department has explored the following option:

- Establish a bag limit of one antlered deer per hunter using a deer combination license during the early segment of archery season (concluding on November 14).
- Establish a bag limit of one antlered deer total per hunter using a deer combination license during any season taking place after the early segment of archery season concludes. This would include any season beginning on or after November 15.
- The single deer license would remain unchanged.

Department data show that slightly less than half of hunters that report taking two antlered deer in a year harvest them during different seasons. Biological impacts would therefore be even less than a one buck rule. In particular, it would not be mandated that one tag on the deer combination license be used for an antlerless deer, so hunters that harvested an antlered deer in the early segment of the archery season would be more likely to seek a later opportunity to harvest a second antlered deer compared to the potential for hunters under a one buck rule using the second tag for an antlerless deer. Overall impacts of a seasonal buck bag limit on the buck-to-doe ratio and age structure of Michigan’s deer harvest or deer population would likely be negligible. Hunter participation in the early segment of the archery season would be expected to increase, moving up average timing of antlered deer harvest.

C. Regional Antler Point Restrictions

There have been several antler point restriction options discussed with commissioners and Department experts that could potentially impact antlered deer harvest. A 4-point antler point restriction exists statewide on the restricted tag of the deer combination license. Since 2009, Upper Peninsula hunters with a deer combination license have had a 3-point antler point restriction on the regular tag while the single deer license remains unrestricted, and a 3-point antler point restriction is in place in deer management unit 122 on both the single deer license and the regular tag of the deer combination license. A 3-point antler point restriction is also in place in 13 counties of the northwest Lower Peninsula on the single deer license and the regular tag of the deer combination license. Minimum regional antler point restrictions of 3 points for the Upper Peninsula and the northern Lower Peninsula and 4 points for the southern Lower Peninsula would be required to protect a minimum of 50% of yearling antlered deer, the threshold determined to have meaningful impacts on the age structure of Michigan's deer harvest or deer population. Possible exemptions currently exist for mentored hunters and have been discussed for hunters with disabilities and those using senior licenses. Deer harvest reporting data from the last 4 years indicate that 79% of antlered deer harvested in the Upper Peninsula and 84% of antlered deer harvested in the northern Lower Peninsula have had 3 or more antler points on one side, and 70% of antlered deer harvested in the southern Lower Peninsula have had 4 or more antler points on one side. Over the past 5 years, an estimated 52,000 antlered deer were harvested across the state that would not meet these regional antler point restriction thresholds, which closely matches the difference by which antlered deer harvest has exceeded antlerless deer harvest. Regional antler point restrictions would help balance the buck-to-doe ratio in the deer harvest. However, accompanying regional antler point restrictions with an increase in antlerless deer harvest in certain areas would provide greater benefits. Deer harvest reporting data tend to show a slight increase in antlerless deer harvest the first year or two when antler point restrictions are implemented. Several recent evaluations in Michigan have found no evidence that antler point restrictions increase antlerless deer harvest long term or contribute to reducing overall deer abundance. Increasing the antlered deer age structure and the number of older antlered deer on the landscape without reducing deer densities creates concerns regarding disease dynamics where bovine tuberculosis and chronic wasting disease are or may be present. Michigan data indicate the odds of deer being positive for bovine tuberculosis are highest for older males, and in areas with long-term, endemic chronic wasting disease, prevalence is higher in adult males relative to younger males or female deer. It is worth noting that hunter selectivity and existing regulations that provide some level of protection for young antlered deer are already advancing antlered deer age structure in Michigan, so the risks and benefits of more stringent regulatory protections under regional antler point restrictions should be carefully considered.

D. Recommended Option

A one buck rule in conjunction with having a dedicated antlerless deer license available to every hunter in the Lower Peninsula would more effectively close the gap between harvest of antlered and antlerless deer. Harvest of antlered deer has exceeded antlerless deer harvest by an average of over 52,000 deer statewide over the past 5 years. This is considerably more than the average of just under 32,000 antlered deer statewide that have been a second antlered deer taken by the same hunter. Furthermore, no more than 18% of hunters typically harvest 2 or more deer of any type. Given the strong preference of Michigan hunters for antlered deer and limited number of hunters who harvest multiple deer, reducing antlered deer harvest options and increasing antlerless deer harvest options will likely both be needed to balance the buck-to-doe ratio of the harvest and population. This recommended option includes the one-buck rule and may encourage hunters to be more selective in harvesting older and larger antlered deer while still providing hunters with a choice.

Social

Hunter satisfaction is a significant reason that a variety of antlered deer harvest restrictions are receiving consideration. The proportion of Michigan deer hunters over the past 5 years who were satisfied with their overall deer hunting experience has varied from 50-54% statewide, including 31-47% in the Upper Peninsula, 45-49% in the northern Lower Peninsula, and 59-61% in the southern Lower Peninsula. By comparison, the proportion of Michigan hunters over the past 5 years who were satisfied with the number of antlered deer seen has varied from 31-34% statewide, including 15-23% in the Upper Peninsula, 25-29% in the northern Lower Peninsula, and 40-41% in the southern Lower Peninsula. Although hunting satisfaction is influenced by many factors in addition to antlered deer sightings, enhancing that part of the hunting experience may improve overall hunting satisfaction and positively influence hunter retention. However, the options being explored to potentially increase future availability and/or maturity of antlered deer through regulatory approaches involve tradeoffs by establishing regulations that limit antlered deer harvest opportunities over the short or potentially long-term, which could also influence hunter satisfaction. Importantly, prior research in Michigan found no indication that antlered deer harvest outcomes influenced hunter satisfaction among members of deer cooperatives that were formed in order to coordinate goals and collectively influence antlered deer harvest across property boundaries. Caution is warranted to consider that even if regulations are able to influence buck-to-doe ratios and age structure of Michigan deer and deer harvest, hunter satisfaction may not be directly affected as expected.

A. One Buck Rule

A number of vocal advocates for a one buck rule have increasingly communicated their support for this option to the Department and the Natural Resources Commission, likely prompted by the recommendation advanced by the Deer Advisory Teams. Demonstrating responsiveness to hunter input is important, though a 2020 Michigan hunter opinion survey indicated restricting the deer combination license to allow harvest of one antlered deer and one antlerless deer was supported by slightly less than a majority of hunters (48%), and 40% of hunters opposed this change. Support was not statistically different by region.

B. Seasonal Buck Bag Limit

Over half of Michigan hunters participate in the archery season, but those that do not would likely be less supportive of a seasonal buck bag limit. Archery hunters may be less directly affected by a seasonal buck bag limit, but it should be expected this would increase hunter participation in the early segment of the archery season, and added competition with a growing number of archery hunters may not be welcome by existing archery hunters.

C. Regional Antler Point Restrictions

A 2020 Michigan hunter opinion survey indicated 51% of hunters supported statewide antler point restrictions of 2, 3, and 4 points for the Upper Peninsula, northern Lower Peninsula and southern Lower Peninsula, and 35% of hunters opposed antler point restrictions. Support was higher among Upper Peninsula (54%) and northern Lower Peninsula (55%) hunters and lower (48%) among southern Lower Peninsula hunters. Despite the existence of antler point restrictions on the deer combination license regular tag in the Upper Peninsula and in significant portions of the northern Lower Peninsula, the proportion of hunters satisfied with the number of antlered deer seen over the past 5 years has been lower in these regions.

D. Recommended Option

A 2021 Michigan deer hunter survey evaluated support for a combined package of regulations that would change the deer combination license to include one statewide antlered deer tag and

one statewide antlerless deer tag and eliminate the single deer license, plus allow hunters to transfer an unused antlered deer tag to another hunter. The Department's recommended option is similar to the first two components of the proposed package in the 2021 Michigan deer hunter survey. Overall support was only 38%, but support among different age groups of hunters was also evaluated. A majority of support existed among hunters age 20-29 (54%) and 30-39 (52%), but support was increasingly lower among older hunters.

The recommended option will be effective beginning March 1, 2027, to align with the beginning of the 2027 license year. This timing ensures that hunters have ample opportunity to review the new regulations and consider how the changes may influence their license purchase for the 2027 deer hunting season. By implementing these regulations at the start of the license sales period, hunters can make informed decisions and plan ahead with a full understanding of the license options available to them.

Economic

With the strong emphasis by many hunters on pursuing antlered deer in Michigan, changes to regulations on antlered deer management could result in significant changes, with likely declines in license sales to the Department as restrictions are applied. The loss of hunters who normally purchase a deer combination license (\$40) may change their purchasing habits due to the proposed one buck rule being instituted. If enough hunters drop out of hunting due to the dissatisfaction of no longer being able to take two antlered deer, then the economic impact could be significant. Additionally, hunters purchasing a deer combination license, which would now have a dedicated tag valid for an antlerless deer only under the recommended option, would be less likely to purchase an additional antlerless deer license. Should this option be approved, a decline in antlerless deer license sales is expected. While impact is unknown, it would be surprising if loss did not exceed one million dollars. The Department does not know how license buying behavior will change with this regulation.

A. One Buck Rule

Given that nearly 80% of deer hunters do not take an antlerless deer in any given year, and about 70% of hunters do not purchase an antlerless deer license, a deer combination license that allows the harvest of only one antlered deer and one antlerless deer would have limited appeal over the single deer license that is also eligible for antlered deer. Hunters that did purchase a deer combination license and one or more antlerless deer licenses in the past would likely reduce their future purchase of antlerless deer licenses when buying a deer combination license that includes a tag valid only for an antlerless deer. It should be expected that many other hunters who typically purchased a deer combination license for \$40 would switch to purchase a \$20 single deer license if both licenses allowed the same harvest of a single antlered deer. The Deer Advisory Team recommendation for establishing a one buck rule included suspending sales of the single deer license which would eliminate the opportunity for switching, but further regulatory and legal review determined the Department is obligated to offer the single deer license.

B. Seasonal Buck Bag Limit

Under a seasonal buck bag limit, some hunters who typically purchase a deer combination license would likely switch to purchase a single deer license. Switching may be mostly confined to non-archery hunters, and if hunter participation in the early segment of the archery season increased over time as expected, these sales could recover somewhat. Increased archery participation could also have positive economic impacts through increased sales of archery and crossbow equipment and increased archery hunting-related expenditures.

C. Regional Antler Point Restrictions

Applying regional antler point restrictions to nearly all licenses (with the potential exclusion of senior licenses and hunters with disabilities) would have minimal economic impact on license sales. Despite the ability of deer management assistance permits being available, creating a category of young, smaller antlered deer that are unable to be harvested by a majority of hunters may limit the ability of producers to work with hunters to remove deer that cause agricultural or horticultural damage. This can be particularly problematic for tree farms and nurseries.

D. Recommended Option

The Department's recommended option to implement a one buck rule in conjunction with a regulation in the Lower Peninsula limiting the single deer license to harvest an antlerless deer only is primarily intended to prioritize antlerless deer harvest and close the gap between harvest of antlered and antlerless deer in the region. However, this option would also likely reduce the economic impacts of hunters switching from the purchase of the deer combination license to purchasing the single deer license. Sales of antlerless deer licenses would be expected to decrease.

Administrative Recommendations

In addition to the items below, the Department has made minor changes to the Wildlife Conservation Order for grammar and consistency purposes.

Item 12: Deer Rehabilitation

The Department recommends administrative recommendations to the wildlife rehabilitation language to clarify the rules and regulations regarding deer rehabilitation. A permitted wildlife rehabilitator may rehabilitate fawns, however there are capture and release restrictions in place to prevent the overwintering of deer, habituation, and unintentional spread of disease. Current regulations prohibit the possession of fawns for wildlife rehabilitation from October 1 to March 1. Rehabilitating fawns in the late fall lowers their chance of survival during the winter, however there are certain circumstances in which a fawn may need to be rehabilitated during this time period. The Department recommends granting an exception on a case-by-case basis, which will simplify the process for wildlife rehabilitators seeking approval for the exception.

Item 13: Upper Peninsula Deer Management Unit Boundary Descriptions

The Department recommends an administrative recommendation to the Wildlife Conservation Order boundary descriptions of deer management units DMUs 027 (Watersmeet unit) and 036 (Amasa-Michigamme unit). While preparing deer management unit boundary maps, Department staff found that the language in the Wildlife Conservation Order did not connect a small portion of the shared border near Perch Lake between the deer management units. This recommendation connects the shared border.

Item 14: Deer Management Assistance Permits

The Department recommends expanding the antlered deer limit exception on deer management assistance permits for horticultural damage caused by antlered deer if the Department's recommended option for a one-buck-rule is approved, effective March 1, 2027. The Department recommends, effective March 1, 2027, the total number of deer management assistance permits issued for the taking of antlered deer statewide be authorized on a case-by-case basis by the wildlife supervisor and district law enforcement supervisor if the Department determines

that taking only antlerless deer will not be sufficient to reduce active and acute horticultural damage.

Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order is being submitted for information and consideration on April 8, 2026, at the Natural Resources Commission meeting. This item appeared on the Department's March 30, 2026 calendar and may be eligible for approval on May 13, 2026.



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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 6 of 2026

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 May 13, 2026, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

1.2 Definitions.

Sec. 1.2 (1) Definitions in part 3 of 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.301; part 401, wildlife conservation, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.40101 to 324.40119; and part 435, hunting and fishing licenses, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.43501 to 324.43561, and in this order shall have the same meanings in this order. Additional definitions for terms used in this order are as defined in this section.

(2) "Advanced illness" means a medical or surgical condition with significant functional impairment that is not reversible by curative therapies and that is anticipated to progress toward death despite attempts at curative therapies or modulation, the time course of which may or may not be determinable through medical prognostication.

(3) "Antlered deer" means a deer having at least 1 antler that extends 3 inches or more above the skull. For the purposes of determining if an antler extends 3 or more inches above the skull, the measurement shall be taken on the longest antler beginning at the line where the antler and pedicel join, along the back of the antler, following the curve, if any, to the tip of the longest antler point. For the purposes of this section, "pedicel" means the bone of the skull to which the antler is attached.

(4) "Antlerless deer" means a deer without antlers or a deer with antlers where the longest antler extends less than 3 inches above the skull.

(5) "CWD management zone" means an area defined in chapter XII of this order subject to Michigan's surveillance and response plan for chronic wasting disease.

(6) "Core CWD area" means an area defined in chapter XII for the control and surveillance of chronic wasting disease.

(7) "Deer and elk feeding" shall have the same meaning as defined by section 40102 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40102.

(8) "Feed" shall have the same meaning as defined by section 40102 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40102.

(9) "Game" means any animal designated as game under the authority of section 40110 of 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.40110, and any of the following animals: badger, bear, beaver, bobcat, brant, coot, coyote, crow, deer, duck, elk, fisher, Florida gallinule, fox, geese, hare, Hungarian partridge, marten, mink, moose, muskrat, opossum, otter, pheasant, quail, rabbit, raccoon, ruffed grouse, sharptailed grouse, skunk, snipe, sora rail, squirrel, Virginia rail, weasel, wild turkey, wolf, woodchuck, and woodcock. "Game" does not include privately owned cervidae species located on a cervidae livestock facility registered under 2000 PA 190, MCL 287.951 to 287.969.

(10) "Migratory game bird" means a bird as defined by 50 C.F.R. §20.11 (1988).

(11) "Modified bow" means a bow, other than a crossbow, that has been physically altered so that the bow may be held, aimed, and shot with one arm.

(12) "New world camelids" means animals belonging to the genus llama and vicuna of the family camelidae of the order artiodactyla including, but not limited to, the llama, alpaca, vicuna, and guanaco.

(13) "Physical therapist" means the same as defined in article 15 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.17801.

(14) "Physician" the same as defined in article 15 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.17001.

(15) "Raptor" means any bird species of the orders strigiformes, accipitriformes, and falconiformes.

(16) "Residence" shall have the same meaning as defined by section 40103 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40103.

(17) "Limited firearms deer zone" means that area south of a line beginning at a point on the Wisconsin/Michigan boundary line directly west of the west end of highway M-46; then east to M-46 and east along M46 to its junction with freeway US-131; then south along freeway US-131 to M-57; then east along M-57 to its intersection with Montcalm road on the Kent-Montcalm county line; then south along that county line and the Ionia-Kent county line to its intersection with M-44; then east along M-44 to its intersection with M66; then north along M-66 to its intersection with M-57; then east along M-57 to its intersection with M52; then north along M-52 to its intersection with M-46; then east along M-46 to its intersection with M-47; then north along M-47 to its junction with US-10; then east along US-10 to its junction with I-75; then north along I-75 and US-23 to its junction with beaver road, Kawkawlin township, Bay county; then east along beaver road to Saginaw bay; then north 50 degrees east to the international boundary with Canada.

(18) "Waterfowl hunting north zone" or "north zone" means all of the Upper Peninsula.

(19) "Waterfowl hunting middle zone" or "middle zone" means that area of the Lower Peninsula located north of a line beginning at the Michigan-Wisconsin boundary line in Lake Michigan, directly due west of the mouth of Stoney creek in section 31, T14N R18W, Oceana county, then proceed easterly and southerly along the centerline of Stoney creek to its intersection with Scenic drive, southerly on Scenic drive to Stoney lake road in section 5, T13N R18W, Oceana county, easterly on Stoney lake road then both west and east Garfield roads (name change only; not an intersection) then crossing highway US-31 to state highway M20 (north of the town of New Era; also locally named Hayes road) in section 33, T14N R17W, Oceana county, easterly on M-20 through Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, and Midland counties to highway US-10 business route in the city of Midland, easterly on US-10-BR to highway US-10 at the Bay county line, easterly on US-10 then crossing US-75 to state highway M-25 (west of the town of Bay City), easterly along M-25 into Tuscola county then northeasterly and easterly on M-25 through Tuscola county into Huron county, turning southeasterly on M-25 (near the town of Huron city; also locally named north Shore road) to the centerline of Willow creek in section 4, T18N R14E, Huron county, then northerly along the centerline of Willow creek to the mouth of Willow creek into Lake Huron, then directly due east along a line from the mouth of Willow Creek heading east into Lake Huron to a point due east and on the Michigan/USA/Canadian border.

(20) "Waterfowl hunting south zone" or "south zone" means all of that area of the Lower Peninsula south of the line described in middle zone.

(21) "Zone 1" means all of the Upper Peninsula.

(22) "Zone 2" means all of that part of the Lower Peninsula north of a line beginning at the Michigan/Wisconsin boundary line due west of the Lake Michigan shoreline which is north of Muskegon lake and due west of the western terminus of memorial drive at Scenic drive in Muskegon county, then easterly to said western terminus of memorial drive at Scenic drive, easterly on memorial drive to Ruddiman drive, northeasterly on Ruddiman drive to lake avenue, northeasterly on lake avenue to highway M-120 (also known as Holton road) in North Muskegon, northeasterly and then northerly on highway M-120 to highway M-20, easterly on highway M-20 to highway business route US-10 in the city of Midland, easterly on combined highway M-20 and highway business route US-10 to highway US-10 at the Midland-Bay county line, easterly on highway US-10 to Garfield road in Bay county, northerly on Garfield road to Pinconning road, easterly on Pinconning road to seven mile road, northerly on seven

mile road to the Bay-Arenac county line (where seven mile road changes name to Lincoln school road), northerly on Lincoln school road (also known as county road 25) in Arenac county to highway M-61, easterly on highway M-61 to highway US-23, northeasterly then easterly on highway US-23 to the center line of the Au Gres river, southernly along the center line of the Au Gres river to Saginaw bay of Lake Huron, easterly 90° east for 7 miles into Saginaw bay, then northerly 78° east (dividing Arenac county islands from Huron county islands) to the international boundary line between the United States and the dominion of Canada.

(23) "Zone 3" means all that part of the Lower Peninsula south of the line described in zone 2.

(24) "Skull cap" means any part of the skull that includes the pedicel and the antlers originating from the frontal bones, that has been removed from the rest of the skull of the animal.

(25) "Core CWD surveillance area" means an area defined in chapter XII for the surveillance of chronic wasting disease.

(26) "Fixed shotgun shell" means a self-contained shotgun shell consisting of the case, primer, propellant charge, and projective or projectiles.

(27) "Developmental disability" means that term as defined in section 100a of the mental health code, 16 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1100a.

2.1 Taking of animals; prohibited methods, devices, and weapons; exceptions.

Sec. 2.1 Unless otherwise specified in this order, a person shall not do any of the following:

(1) Make use of a pit, pitfall, deadfall, scaffold, raised platform, tree, cage, snare, trap, net, baited hook, or similar device, or a drug, poison, anti-coagulant, stupefying substance, smoke, gas, explosive, weasel, ferret, fitchew, arbalest, spear, or mechanical device, for the purpose of taking an animal or driving an animal out of their hole or home. For the purpose of this order, a mechanical device shall not be construed to mean a firearm, crossbow, slingshot, or bow and arrow. When used in this order, "raised platform" means a horizontal surface constructed or manufactured by a person that increases the field of vision of a person using the horizontal surface beyond the field of vision that would normally be attained by that person standing on the ground.

(2) Use in taking an animal, or have in the persons possession in an area frequented by animals, a semiautomatic shotgun or rifle other than .22 caliber or smaller rimfire, capable of holding more than six shells at one time in the magazine and barrel combined, or use a cartridge containing a tracer bullet, or a cartridge containing an explosive bullet, or a firearm capable of firing more than one shot with a single pull or activation of the trigger.

(3) During the five days immediately preceding November 15, transport or possess in an area frequented by deer a rifle or shotgun with buckshot, slug load, ball load, or cut shell. A person may transport a rifle or shotgun to or from a hunting camp if the rifle or shotgun is unloaded and securely encased or carried in the trunk of a vehicle. This section shall not prohibit a resident who holds a fur harvesters license from carrying a rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller while hunting or checking a trap line during the open season for hunting or trapping fur-bearing animals.

(4) Use in hunting, or, subject to section 43510, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.43510, possess afield in an area inhabited by wild birds and animals within the "limited firearms deer zone" from November 15 to November 30, or use to take a deer during any firearm deer season in the "limited firearms deer zone," a firearm other than:

(a) A shotgun with a smooth or rifled barrel.

(b) A .35 caliber or larger pistol capable of holding no more than nine shells at one time in the barrel and magazine combined and loaded with straight-walled cartridges.

- (c) A muzzle-loading rifle or black-powder pistol loaded with black-powder or a commercially manufactured black powder substitute.
- (d) A .35 caliber or larger rifle loaded with straight-walled cartridges with a minimum case length of 1.16 inches and a maximum case length of 1.80 inches.
- (e) A .35 caliber or larger air rifle or pistol charged only from an external high-compression power source such as an external hand pump, air tank, or air compressor.
- (5) Injure, destroy, or rob the eggs of birds protected by the laws of this state or this order, or molest, harass, or annoy those birds upon their nests.
- (6) Make use of a sink box or battery as these devices are defined by the United States fish and wildlife service.
- (7) Set afire or assist in setting afire a marshland or other lands for the purpose of driving out wild birds or wild animals or take or attempt to take a wild bird or wild animal so driven out of a marshland or other land.
- (8) Take any animal at any time other than during the hunting hours and open seasons established in this order, except as may otherwise be provided in chapter VI.
- (9) Take in one day more than the daily limit, possess at one time more than the possession limit, possess on the first day of the open season more than the daily limit, or possess more than the season limit of any animal.
- (10) Destroy, disturb, or molest at any time any bear, beaver, muskrat, raccoon, squirrel, mink, badger, or rabbit house, hole, burrow, nest, dam, or den which may be used by such animals.
- (11) Make use of a dog in hunting deer, except as noted in section 2.1a of this order.
- (12) Affix any device to a bow, which aids in the cocking or holding of a bow string in a drawn position. This subsection shall not prohibit the use of a hand-held device to release the bow string. This subsection shall not apply to a permanently or temporarily disabled person who holds a special permit provided for in section 40101 to 40119 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40101 to 324.40119, or section 5.95 of this order.
- (13) Use aircraft to aid in the taking of a wild bird or wild animal.
- (14) Take game with a crossbow unless the hunter possesses a valid license to take game and uses only arrows, bolts, and quarrels for taking deer, bear, elk, wolf, and turkey with a broadhead hunting type of point not less than 7/8 of an inch wide with a minimum of 14 inches in length.
- (15) Take deer with a crossbow or a modified bow in zone 1 from December 1 to March 31. This subsection shall not apply to a person who holds a special permit provided for in part 401, wildlife conservation, natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.40101 to 324.40119, or section 5.95 of this order.
- (16) Subject to section 40116, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40116, take game during the established daylight shooting hours from August 15 through April 30 unless the individual wears a cap, hat, vest, jacket, or rain gear of hunter orange. Hunter orange includes camouflage that is not less than 50 percent hunter orange. The garments that are hunter orange must be the hunter's outermost garment and be visible from all sides of the hunter. This does not apply to an individual engaged in the taking of deer with a bow or crossbow during archery deer season, an individual taking bear with a bow or crossbow, an individual engaged in the taking of turkey or migratory birds other than woodcock, an individual engaged in the sport of falconry, or an individual who is stationary and in the act of hunting bobcat, coyote, or fox.
- (17) Possess or use lures or attractants in an area frequented by game that contain or claim to contain cervid urine or other bodily fluids originating from cervids, except for products produced by manufacturers

that are actively enrolled and participating in either the official Responsible Hunting Scent Association or Archery Trade Association Deer Protection Program, which has been tested for the presence of chronic wasting disease by a qualified laboratory and certified that no detectable levels of chronic wasting disease are present and is clearly labeled as such.

3.100 Take of deer; prohibited firearms, legal weapons, “bait” and “baiting” defined, conditions for baiting established in certain area(s); unlawful acts.

Sec. 3.100 (1) “Take” means the same as defined in section 40104, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40104.

(2) An individual must possess while hunting deer the unused kill tag issued with the deer license, pursuant to section 3.103, and provide it to a conservation officer, a law enforcement officer, or a tribal conservation officer upon request.

(3) Unless otherwise specified in this order, an individual shall not do any of the following:

(a) Take a deer without possessing a valid license with kill tag.

(b) Take a deer other than during the open seasons established in this order.

(c) Take a deer outside of lawful hunting hours.

(d) Take a deer by any method other than by firearm, bow and arrow, or crossbow.

(e) Take a deer with a rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller.

(f) Take a deer during any firearm deer season in the “limited firearms deer zone,” with a firearm other than a shotgun with a smooth or rifled barrel, a .35 caliber or larger pistol capable of holding no more than nine shells at one time in the barrel and magazine combined and loaded with straight-walled cartridges, a .35 caliber or larger rifle loaded with straight-walled cartridges with a minimum case length of 1.16 inches and a maximum case length of 1.80 inches, a .35 caliber or larger air rifle or pistol charged only from an external high-compression power source, or a muzzleloading rifle or black powder pistol loaded with black powder or a commercially manufactured black powder substitute.

(g) Take a deer, or have in possession while hunting deer, a semiautomatic shotgun or rifle, capable of holding more than six shells in the magazine and barrel combined, or use a cartridge containing a tracer or explosive bullet, or a firearm capable of firing more than one shot with a single pull or activation of the trigger.

(h) Take a deer using an arrow, bolt, or quarrel with a broadhead hunting type of point less than 7/8 of an inch wide and/or a length less than 14 inches.

(i) Take a deer with a crossbow or a modified bow in zone 1 from December 1 to March 31.

(j) Take a deer while the deer is swimming in a pond, lake, stream, or other body of water.

(k) Make use of a dog in hunting a deer, except as noted in section 2.1a of this order.

(l) Use aircraft to aid in the taking of a deer.

(m) Set afire or assist in setting afire any land for the purpose of driving out a deer or take or attempt to take a deer so driven out of any land.

(n) Purchase a deer license unless the individual holds a current base license.

(o) Possess or use lures or attractants in an area frequented by game that contain or claim to contain cervid urine or other bodily fluids originating from cervids, except for products produced by manufacturers that are actively enrolled and participating in either the official Responsible Hunting Scent Association or

Archery Trade Association Deer Protection Program, which has been tested for the presence of chronic wasting disease by a qualified laboratory and certified that no detectable levels of chronic wasting disease are present and is clearly labeled as such.

(4) For the purposes of this section and sections 3.100a, and 3.205, "bait" means a substance intended for consumption by deer composed of grains, minerals, salt, fruits, vegetables, hay, or any other food materials, whether natural or manufactured. "Bait" does not include scents – whether composed of natural or synthetic materials – made inaccessible for consumption by deer and placed in such a manner to prohibit any physical contact with deer, the establishment and maintenance of plantings for wildlife, foods found scattered solely as the result of normal agricultural planting or harvesting practices, foods available to deer through normal agricultural practices of livestock feeding if the area is occupied by livestock actively consuming the feed on a daily basis, or standing farm crops under normal agricultural practices. For the purposes of this section, "baiting" means to place, deposit, tend, distribute, or scatter bait to aid in the taking of a deer.

(5) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, it shall be unlawful for a person to make use of bait to aid in the taking of a deer within zone 2 and zone 3, exceptions:

(a) Eligible individuals participating in the liberty hunt described in section 3.101e, may make use of bait to aid in the taking of a deer if the baiting occurs only from five days prior to the second Saturday in September to the last day of the season and the provisions of subsection (6b), (6c), and (6d) are met. All bait shall be removed prior to any additional hunting during this season. This does not apply to hunters participating in the liberty hunt who only meet the eligibility requirements of section 3.101e subsection (2)(a) or (2)(b).

(b) Eligible individuals participating in the independence hunt as described in section 3.101g, may make use of bait to aid in the taking of a deer if the baiting occurs only from five days prior to the first day of the season through the last day of the season and the provisions of subsection (6b), (6c), and (6d) are met. All bait shall be removed prior to any additional hunting during this season.

(6) In remaining portions of Michigan not described in subsection (5), a person may engage in baiting only if all of the following conditions apply:

(a) The baiting occurs only from September 15 to January 1, except that eligible participants participating in the liberty hunt may use bait five days prior to the second Saturday in September.

(b) The bait material may be of any food type.

(c) The bait is scattered directly on the ground by any means, including mechanical spin-cast feeders, provided that the spin-cast feeder does not distribute on the ground more than the maximum volume allowed as described in subdivision (d) of this subsection. "Scattered" means that the bait is dispersed or thrown over a minimum of a 10- foot by 10-foot or equivalent area so that individual pieces of bait are separated and not placed in piles. The purpose of scattering is to mimic natural feeding conditions.

(d) The volume of bait used at any one point in time shall not exceed two gallons at any one hunting site.

(e) Subsection (6) is subject to Section 3.100a (2) of this order.

(7) Except as otherwise provided by subsection 5, it shall be unlawful for a person to make use of bait to aid in the taking of a deer if the bait and baiting do not meet all of the conditions specified in subsection (6) unless specifically authorized.

3.101 Deer hunting open seasons; ~~type of deer that may be taken~~; carrying of firearms, season limit.

Sec. 3.101. (1) The open firearm deer season shall be from November 15 to November 30.

(2) The open muzzleloading and black powder firearms deer season in zone 1 **shall be a total of three days from the first Friday in December to two days thereafter. The open December firearm deer season in zones 2, and zone 3 shall be a total of 40 three days from the first Friday in December to nine two days thereafter.**

(3) **Subject to section 43510(2) and (3), 1994 PA 451 MCL 324.43510, an individual hunting deer:**

(a) **During the open muzzleloading and black powder firearms deer season in zone 1 shall only possess or carry afield, or take a deer with a muzzleloading rifle, muzzleloading shotgun, or black-powder pistol, loaded with black powder or a commercially manufactured black powder substitute or a bow and arrow. This subsection shall not apply to a person who holds a special permit provided for in part 401, wildlife conservation, natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.40101 to 324.40119, or section 5.95 of this order.**

(b) **During the December firearm deer season in zones 2 and 3 shall only possess or carry afield or take a deer with a firearm that is legal to possess or carry afield during the open firearm deer season, or a crossbow or a bow and arrow.**

~~(3) Subject to section 43510(2) and (3), 1994 PA 451 MCL 324.43510, except as provided in subsection (5), an individual hunting deer with a muzzleloading firearm during the muzzle-loading and black powder firearms season shall only possess or carry afield, or take a deer with a muzzle-loading rifle, muzzleloading shotgun, or black powder pistol, loaded with black powder or a commercially manufactured black powder substitute, or a crossbow.~~

~~(a) Subject to section 43510(2) and (3), 1994 PA 451 MCL 324.43510, except as provided in subsection (5), an individual hunting deer in the Lower Peninsula north of the limited firearms deer zone during the muzzle-loading and black powder firearms season shall only possess or carry afield, or take a deer with a weapon that is legal to possess or carry afield during the open firearm deer season.~~

~~(b) Subject to section 43510(2) and (3), 1994 PA 451 MCL 324.43510, except as provided in subsection (5), an individual hunting deer in the Lower Peninsula south of the limited firearms deer zone during the muzzle-loading and black powder firearms season shall only possess or carry afield, or take a deer with a weapon that is legal to possess or carry afield during the open firearm deer season.~~

(4) The open bow and arrow season shall be from October 1 through November 14 and from December 1 through January 1.

(a) Subject to all other provisions of this order, in the January archery deer management zone, as defined in chapter XII of this order, the open bow and arrow season shall be from October 1 through November 14 and from December 1 through January 31.

(5) Subject to section 43510(2) and (3), 1994 PA 451 MCL 324.43510, during the open bow and arrow season, as described in subsection (4), an individual hunting deer with a bow and arrow or a crossbow shall not possess or carry afield a pistol, revolver, or any other firearm unless:

(a) The individual is properly licensed to hunt deer with a firearm and is hunting in an area open to firearm deer hunting.

(b) The individual is properly licensed to hunt deer with a firearm and is hunting in an area open to the ~~muzzleloading and black powder~~ **December** firearms deer season in zone 2 and zone 3.

(c) An individual taking a deer under the terms and conditions of a disease control permit authorized under section 5.77 of this order may possess or carry a bow and arrow or crossbow, and a firearm, if applicable.

(6) An early antlerless firearm deer season shall be a two-day hunt starting the **second Saturday in following** ~~September 15~~ upon public and privately owned lands within Alcona, Allegan, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Bay, Barry, Benzie, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, **Charlevoix**, Cheboygan, Clare, Clinton, Crawford, Eaton, Emmet, Genesee, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Ionia,

Iosco, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Midland, Missaukee, Monroe, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, Oceana, Ogemaw, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Ottawa, Presque Isle, Roscommon, St. Clair, St. Joseph, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola, Van Buren, Washtenaw, Wayne, Wexford counties, upon public and privately owned lands within that portion of Charlevoix county within deer management unit 045, and upon public and privately owned lands within that portion of Leelanau county within deer management unit 045. Only an individual possessing a valid antlerless deer license, a mentored youth hunting license, a deer license, or a deer combination license may take a deer during this season. A deer kill tag issued under the mentored youth hunting license, deer license, or deer combination license shall be used to harvest an antlerless deer only.

(7) A late antlerless firearm deer season shall be from the Monday following the conclusion of the ~~muzzle-loading and black powder~~ **December** firearms deer season through January 1 upon public and privately owned lands within Alcona, Allegan, Antrim, Alpena, Arenac, Barry, Bay, Benzie, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, **Charlevoix**, Cheboygan, Clare, Clinton, Crawford, Eaton, Emmet, Genesee, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Ionia, Iosco, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Midland, Missaukee, Monroe, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, Oceana, Ogemaw, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Ottawa, Presque Isle, Roscommon, St. Clair, St. Joseph, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola, Van Buren, Washtenaw, Wayne, Wexford counties, upon public and privately owned lands within that portion of Charlevoix county within deer management unit 045, and upon public and privately owned lands within that portion of Leelanau county within deer management unit 045. Only an individual possessing a valid antlerless deer license, a mentored youth hunting license, **an inclusive mentored license**, a deer license, or a deer combination license may take a deer during this season. A deer kill tag issued under the mentored ~~youth hunting license~~ **program**, deer license, or deer combination license shall be used to harvest an antlerless deer only.

(8) The deer management assistance firearm hunt period shall be from the first Monday following the third Saturday in December through January 1 upon lands owned by federal, state, county, or local units of government, non-profit organizations, and other urban or suburban properties in zone 3. Only those areas with a wildlife division approved deer population management plan will be considered for issuance of these special deer management assistance permits. Only an individual possessing a valid deer management assistance permit issued for this hunt period may take a deer with a firearm or a crossbow during this season.

(9) The season limit shall be one deer per deer license.

~~(10) Except as provided by subsection (12) and sections 3.101a, 3.101c, 3.101e, 3.101g, 3.101i, and 3.101k, the kind of deer which may be taken during the respective open seasons and zones for each combination of season and deer license, except antlerless deer license, shall be as shown in table 2:~~

**TABLE 2
License, Season, Zone, Deer to be Taken**

Type of license	Season in which used	Zone in which used	Kind of deer that may be taken
Deer license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.
Deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	Antlerless or an antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in sections 3.101a, 3.101c, and 3.101k.
Deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following:

			(a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in section 3.101i.
Deer license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and blackpowder firearms only season	Zone 1	Antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in sections 3.101a, 3.101c, and 3.101k.
Deer license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and blackpowder firearms only season	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in section 3.101i.
Deer combination regular license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.
Deer combination regular license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	Antlerless or an antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in sections 3.101a, 3.101c, and 3.101k.
Deer combination regular license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in section 3.101i.
Deer combination regular license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and blackpowder firearms only season	Zone 1	Antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in sections 3.101a and 3.101c.
Deer combination regular license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and blackpowder firearms only season	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in section 3.101i.
Deer combination restricted license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.
Deer combination restricted license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	Antlerless or an antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in sections 3.101a, 3.101c, and 3.101k.
Deer combination restricted license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless deer or a deer which has at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Deer combination restricted license	Firearm deer season, or muzzleloading and blackpowder	Zone 1	Antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antlered deer must have at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.

	firearms only season		
Deer combination restricted license	Firearm deer season, or muzzleloading and blackpowder firearms only season	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless deer or a deer which has at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Mentored youth deer license	Liberty hunt	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to section 3.101e.
Mentored youth deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons, firearm deer season, muzzleloading and blackpowder firearms only season	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer. Antler point restrictions do not apply.

(14) (10) The director may authorize a disease management hunt lasting no longer than nine days between January 2 and March 31 where additional harvest is deemed necessary to meet disease management objectives.

(12) Individuals possessing a deer license, deer combination regular license, or deer combination restricted license are exempt from antler point restrictions during all deer seasons as listed in table 2 if one of the following applies:

(a) The individual is a youth 16 years of age and younger. Individuals under the age of 10 must be licensed through the mentored youth hunting program.

(b) The individual is licensed under a base apprentice license.

(13) (11) An extended late antlerless firearm deer season shall be from January 2 through the second Sunday in January upon public and privately owned lands within Allegan, Barry, Bay, Calhoun, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Isabella, Jackson, Kent, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, **Mason**, Mecosta, Midland, Monroe, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, **Oceana**, **Osceola**, Ottawa, Saginaw, Shiawassee, St. Clair (excluding deer management unit 174), Washtenaw, and Wayne counties, and deer management units 311, 312, and 332. Only an individual possessing a valid antlerless deer license, a mentored youth hunting license, a deer license, or a deer combination license may take a deer during this season. A deer kill tag issued under the mentored youth hunting license, deer license, or deer combination license shall be used to harvest an antlerless deer only. An individual may purchase up to a limit of 10 antlerless deer licenses for this season in addition to the season purchase limit described in section 3.102(8), however the bag limit for this season is 10 antlerless deer. An individual shall only possess or carry afield or take a deer with a weapon that is legal to possess or carry afield, or to take a deer with during the open firearm deer season for that respective county or deer management unit. This subsection shall sunset on the second Sunday in January of 2027.

3.1011 Type of deer that may be taken, exceptions; deer hunting in certain deer management units, antler point restrictions.

3.1011 Except as provided by subsections (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6), and sections 3.101e and 3.101g, the kind of deer which may be taken during the respective open seasons and zones for each combination of season and deer license, except an antlerless deer license, shall be as shown in table 2:

TABLE 2
License, Season, Zone, Deer to be Taken

Type of license	Season in which used	Zone in which used	Kind of deer that may be taken
Deer license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g. Antler point restrictions do not apply.
Deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	Antlerless or an antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsections (3), (4), and (6).
Deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsection (5).
Deer license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season	Zone 1	Antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsections (3), (4), and (6).
Deer license	Firearm deer season, December firearm deer season	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsection (5).
Deer combination regular license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.
Deer combination regular license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	Antlerless or an antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsections (3), (4), and (6).
Deer combination regular license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsection (5).
Deer combination regular license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season	Zone 1	Antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsections (3) and (4).
Deer combination regular license	Firearm deer season, December firearm deer season	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsection (5).
Deer combination restricted license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.

Deer combination restricted license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	Antlerless or an antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsections (3), (4), and (6).
Deer combination restricted license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless deer or a deer which has at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Deer combination restricted license	Firearm deer season, or muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season	Zone 1	Antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antlered deer must have at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Deer combination restricted license	Firearm deer season, December firearm deer season	Zones 2 and 3	Antlerless deer or a deer which has at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Inclusive mentored deer license	Liberty hunt, independence hunt, bow and arrow only seasons, firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season, December firearm deer season	Zones 1, 2, and 3	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g. Antler point restrictions do not apply.
Mentored youth deer license	Liberty hunt, independence hunt, bow and arrow only seasons, firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season, December firearm deer season	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to section 3.101e and 3.101g. Antler point restrictions do not apply.

(2) Individuals possessing a mentored youth deer license, inclusive mentored deer license, deer license, deer combination regular license, or deer combination restricted license are exempt from antler point restrictions during all deer seasons as listed in table 2 if one of the following applies:

(a) The individual is a youth 16 years of age and younger. ~~Individuals under the age of 10 must be licensed through the mentored youth hunting program.~~

(b) The individual is licensed under a base apprentice license.

(c) The individual is licensed under the mentored hunting program.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, an individual possessing a deer combination regular license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length in zone 1.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management unit 117 an individual possessing a deer license or deer combination regular license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length. An individual shall not take more than one antlered deer in deer management unit 117 in a deer hunting season.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management units 005, 010, 015, 024, 028, 040, 043, 045, 051, 053, 057, 067, 083, 115, 145, and 245, an individual possessing a deer license or deer combination regular license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length.

(6) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management unit 122 an individual possessing a deer license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length.

(7) This section will be replaced with section 3.101I that will be effective March 1, 2027.

Section 3.101I below is effective March 1, 2027.

3.101I Type of deer that may be taken, exceptions; deer hunting in certain management units, antler point restrictions.

3.101I Except as provided by subsections (2), (3), (4), and (5), and sections 3.101e and , 3.101g, the kind of deer which may be taken during the respective open seasons and zones for each combination of season and deer license, except an antlerless deer license, shall be as shown in table 2:

**TABLE 2
License, Season, Zone, Deer to be Taken**

Type of license	Season in which used	Zone in which used	Kind of deer that may be taken
Deer license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g. Antler point restrictions do not apply.
Deer License	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.
Deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsections (3) and (5).
Deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless deer.
Deer license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black	Zone 1	An antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsections (3) and (5).

	powder firearms only season		
Deer license	Firearm deer season, December firearm deer season.	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless deer.
Deer combination regular license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g. Antler point restrictions do not apply.
Deer combination regular license	Liberty and independence hunt	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g. Antler point restrictions do not apply.
Deer combination regular license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	An antlerless or antlered deer which has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Deer combination regular license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsection (4).
Deer combination regular license	Firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season	Zone 1	An antlered deer which has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Deer combination regular license	Firearm deer season, December firearm deer season	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to the following: (a) Antler point restrictions apply as provided in subsection (4).
Deer combination restricted license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 1	An antlerless deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.
Deer combination restricted license	Liberty hunt and independence hunt	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g.
Deer combination restricted license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zone 1	An antlerless deer.
Deer combination restricted license	Bow and arrow only seasons	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless deer.
Deer combination restricted license	Firearm deer season, December firearm deer season	Zones 2 and 3	An antlerless deer.

Inclusive mentored deer license	Liberty hunt, independence hunt, bow and arrow only seasons, firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season, December firearm deer season	Zones 1, 2, and 3	An antlerless or antlered deer, subject to sections 3.101e and 3.101g. Antler point restrictions do not apply.
Mentored youth deer license	Liberty hunt, independence hunt, bow and arrow only seasons, firearm deer season, muzzleloading and black powder firearms only season, December firearm deer season	Zones 1, 2, and 3	Antlerless or antlered deer, subject to section 3.101e. Antler point restrictions do not apply.

(2) Individuals possessing a mentored youth deer license, inclusive mentored deer license, a deer license, deer combination regular license, or deer combination restricted license are exempt from antler point restrictions during all deer seasons as listed in table 2 if one of the following applies:

- (a) The individual is a youth 16 years of age and younger.
- (b) The individual is licensed under a base apprentice license.
- (c) The individual is licensed under the mentored hunting program.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management unit 117 an individual possessing a deer license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management units 005, 010, 015, 024, 028, 040, 043, 045, 051, 053, 057, 067, 083, 115, 145, and 245, an individual possessing a deer combination regular license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management unit 122 an individual possessing a deer license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length.

3.101a Repealed; Am. 6 of 2026, Eff. May 13, 2026. Deer hunting in zone 1 season limit and, antler restriction.

Sec. 3.101a (1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, an individual possessing a deer combination regular license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length in zone 1. **Publisher's note: The repealed section pertained to "Deer hunting in zone 1 season limit and, antler restriction."**

3.101c Repealed; Am. 6, 2026, Eff. May 13, 2026. Deer hunting in deer management unit 117 antler restriction, one antlered deer limit.

~~Sec. 3.101c (1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management unit 117 an individual possessing a deer license or deer combination regular license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length. An individual shall not take more than one antlered deer in deer management unit 117 in a deer hunting season. **Publisher's note: The repealed section pertained to "Deer hunting in deer management unit 117 antler restriction, one antlered deer limit."**~~

3.101e Liberty hunt, season established, limits defined, adult requirements, hunting hours.

Sec. 3.101e (1) The liberty hunt shall be a 2-day hunt starting the second Saturday in September.

(2) Individuals wishing to participate in the liberty hunt shall be eligible if one of the following applies:

(a) A youth 16 years of age or less may participate in the liberty hunt. Hunters under the age of 10 must be licensed through the mentored youth hunting program and accompanied by a qualified mentor.

(b) A veteran with 100 percent disability as defined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs may participate in the liberty hunt. Documentation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs indicating 100 percent disability shall be in the possession of a veteran participating in this hunt.

(c) A resident rated by the United States department of veterans affairs as individually unemployable may participate in the liberty hunt. Documentation from the United States department of veterans affairs indicating this rating shall be in the possession of a veteran participating in this hunt.

(d) An individual is in possession of a permit issued by the department to hunt from a standing vehicle.

(e) An individual is in possession of a permit issued by the department to hunt using a laser sighting device.

(f) An individual is blind as defined by section 1 of 260 PA 1978, MCL 393.351.

(g) An individual is deaf as defined by section 2 of 72 PA 1978, MCL 408.202.

(3) The following rules shall apply to an individual taking deer on the liberty hunt:

(a) A parent or legal guardian shall not allow a youth hunter to go afield to hunt deer unless the youth hunter is accompanied by an adult subject to section 43517 of 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.43517. Subject to section 43510(2) and (3) of 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.43510 and section 43517 of 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.43517, an adult accompanying a youth firearm deer hunter shall not possess or carry a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow, except as a qualified mentored youth hunting program mentor or a veteran with 100 percent disability may possess a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow if hunting under the authority of section 3.101e(2b).

(b) The hunting hours shall be one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, local time.

(c) Except as otherwise specifically provided in this section, all regulations of state law and this order regarding the taking, possession, transportation, and storage of deer during a firearm deer season shall apply to an individual participating in the liberty hunt.

(4) During the liberty hunt, an individual ~~may take antlerless or antlered deer, except an individual shall not take more than one antlered deer, provided they possess a deer license, deer combination license, an antlerless deer license valid for the unit in which they are hunting, or a deer license issued under the mentored youth license. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, licenses are valid for either an antlered or an antlerless deer during the liberty hunt, **The kind of deer and the zone which that deer may**~~

be taken for each deer license during the liberty hunt is shown section 3.101I, except that an antlerless deer license is valid only for an antlerless deer.

3.101f Permitted tagging of male antlerless deer.

Sec. 3.101f Notwithstanding the provisions of ~~subsection 3.101(10)~~ **3.101I** regarding the kind of deer that may be taken, a person with **an** unused kill tags valid for both an antlered and antlerless deer for the deer management unit in which they are hunting, and killing **an male** antlerless deer, may tag the ~~male~~ antlerless deer with a kill tag designated in ~~subsection 3.101(10)~~ **3.101I** for the taking of an antlered deer.

3.101g Independence hunt, season established, eligibility requirements, limits defined.

Sec. 3.101g (1) The independence hunt shall be a total of 4 days starting the Thursday prior to the third Saturday in October and for 3 days thereafter upon privately owned land, or public land requiring an access permit and open to the independence hunt by lottery.

(2) An individual wishing to participate in the independence hunt shall be eligible if one of the following applies:

(a) An individual is in possession of a permit issued by the department to hunt from a standing vehicle.

(b) A veteran with 100 percent disability as defined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Documentation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs indicating 100 percent disability shall be in the possession of a veteran participating in this hunt.

(c) A resident rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as individually unemployable. Documentation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs indicating this rating shall be in the possession of a veteran participating in this hunt.

(d) An individual is blind, as defined by section 1 of 1978 PA 260, MCL 393.351.

(e) An individual is in possession of a permit issued by the department to hunt using a laser sighting device. (f) An individual is deaf as defined by section 2 of 72 PA 1978, MCL 408.202.

(3) An eligible individual wishing to participate in the independence hunt on public land must apply for a permit through a lottery system in accordance with instructions provided by the land manager.

(4) Except as otherwise specifically provided in this section, all regulations of state law and this order regarding the taking, possession, transportation, and storage of deer during a firearm deer season shall apply to an individual participating in this hunt.

(5) During the independence hunt, a qualifying hunter may take one deer. **The kind of deer and the zone which that deer may be taken for each deer license during the independence hunt is shown in section 3.101I, except an antlerless deer license is valid only for an antlerless deer.** ~~provided they possess a deer license, deer combination license, or an antlerless deer license valid for the unit in which they are hunting. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, during the independence hunt, a deer license or deer combination license is valid for either an antlered or an antlerless deer.~~

3.101i Repealed; Am. 6, 2026, Eff. May 13, 2026. Deer hunting in the northwest Lower Peninsula, deer license, deer combination regular license, antler restriction.

Sec. 3.101i (1) ~~Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management units 005, 010, 015, 024, 028, 040, 043, 045, 051, 053, 057, 067, 083, 115, 145, and 245, an individual possessing a deer license or deer combination regular license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length.~~ **Publisher's note: The repealed section pertained to "Deer hunting in the northwest Lower Peninsula, deer license, deer combination regular license, antler restriction."**

3.101k Repealed; Am. 6, 2026, Eff. May 13, 2026. Deer hunting in deer management unit 122 antler restriction.

~~Sec. 3.101f (1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this order, except sections 3.101e and 3.101g, in deer management unit 122 an individual possessing a deer license shall not take an antlered deer unless the deer has at least 1 antler with 3 or more antler points each 1 or more inches in length. **Publisher's note: The repealed section pertained to "Deer hunting in deer management unit 122 antler restriction."**~~

3.102 Antlerless deer license; validity; authority; types; restrictions; units.

Sec. 3.102. (1) Antlerless deer licenses are valid on public and private lands in all open deer management units when those units have a season open to the taking of deer, unless otherwise specified. Antlerless deer licenses do not grant permission to hunt on private property without the permission of the landowner.

(2) It shall be unlawful for an individual to purchase an antlerless deer license unless the individual holds a current base license or mentored youth license.

(3) Antlerless deer licenses shall only be valid for taking an antlerless deer.

(4) The deer management units, as defined in chapter XII, listed in section 3.105a are open to the taking of antlerless deer by a valid antlerless deer license.

(5) The Director, in consultation with and concurrence of the Natural Resources Commission, may require an application to obtain an antlerless deer license or may issue antlerless deer licenses through the retail sales system on a first-come, first-served basis for use in designated deer management units.

(6) The Director in consultation with and concurrence of the Natural Resources Commission may issue antlerless deer licenses through the retail sales system on a first-come, first-served basis for use in designated deer management units when the director determines that antlerless deer licenses remain unsold after the drawing, provided for in section 3.104, has been held or where such issuance is in the best interest of deer management. An application for the current year is not required to purchase an antlerless deer license that remains after the drawing, provided for in section 3.104, has been held.

(7) Requirements; restrictions for mentored hunters:

(a) Individuals holding a mentored youth license or an inclusive mentored license must be accompanied by a qualified mentor. Mentored individuals may hunt antlerless deer subject to the mentored youth hunting program as described in section 2.14 of this order. A deer kill tag issued under the mentored youth hunting license or inclusive mentored license shall be valid for any deer in any open deer management unit, except during antlerless-only seasons when only an antlerless deer may be taken. When used to harvest an antlered deer, antler point restrictions do not apply.

(b) A hunter 16 years of age or younger on or before the 4th Saturday in September may purchase one antlerless deer license, over the counter, on a first-come, first-served basis, during the application period for antlerless licenses for any deer management unit with antlerless licenses available, if applicable.

(8) An individual may purchase up to a season limit of 10 antlerless deer licenses statewide until the quota has been met.

3.105a Deer management units open to antlerless license quotas.

Sec. 3.105a (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section the status of each deer management unit for antlerless deer licenses shall be as shown in table 4:

**TABLE 4
Open and Closed DMU Status**

DMU Number	DMU Name	Antlerless Deer License
003	Allegan County	Open
005	Antrim County	Open
006	Arenac County	Open

007	Big Bay Unit	Closed
008	Barry County	Open
009	Bay County	Open
010	Benzie County	Open
011	Berrien County	Open
012	Branch County	Open
013	Calhoun County	Open
014	Cass County	Open
015	Charlevoix County	Open
016	Cheboygan County	Open
017	Sault Ste. Marie Unit	Open
018	Clare County	Open
019	Clinton County	Open
020	Crawford County	Open
021	Manistique Unit	Open
022	Crystal Falls Unit	Open
023	Eaton County	Open
024	Emmet County	Open
025	Genessee County	Open
026	Gladwin County	Open
027	Watersmeet Unit	Open
028	Grand Traverse County	Open
029	Gratiot County	Open
030	Hillsdale County	Open
031	Nissula Unit	Closed
032	Huron County	Open
033	Ingham County	Open
034	Ionia County	Open
036	Amasa/Michigamme Unit	Open
037	Isabella County	Open
038	Jackson County	Open
039	Kalamazoo County	Open
040	Kalkaska County	Open
041	Kent County	Open
042	Keweenaw Unit	Closed
043	Lake County	Open
044	Lapeer County	Open
045	Leelanau County	Open
046	Lenawee County	Open
047	Livingston County	Open
048	Newberry Unit	Closed
050	Macomb County	Open
051	Manistee County	Open
053	Mason County	Open
054	Mecosta County	Open
055	Menominee Unit	Open
056	Midland County	Open
057	Missaukee County	Open
058	Monroe County	Open
059	Montcalm County	Open
061	Muskegon County	Open
062	Newaygo County	Open
063	Oakland County	Open
064	Oceana County	Open
065	Ogemaw County	Open
066	Ontonagon County	Closed
067	Osceola County	Open
069	Otsego County	Open
070	Ottawa County	Open
072	Roscommon County	Open
073	Saginaw County	Open

074	St. Clair County	Open
075	St. Joseph County	Open
076	Sanilac County	Open
078	Shiawassee County	Open
079	Tuscola County	Open
080	Van Buren Buren County	Open
081	Washtenaw County	Open
082	Wayne County	Open
083	Wexford County	Open
115	Beaver Island	Open
117	Drummond Island	Open
121	Bay De Noc	Open
122	Norway Unit	Open
127	Ironwood Unit	Closed
131	Twin Lakes Unit	Closed
145	North Manitou Island	Open
149	Round/Bois Blanc Island	Open
152	Gwinn Unit	Open
155	Gladstone Unit	Open
174	St. Clair Flats	Open
245	South Fox Island	Open
249	Trout Lake Unit	Open
252	Rock Unit	Open
255	La Branche Unit	Open
273	Shiawassee Unit	Open
311	Keeler Unit (Berrien – Cass – Van Buren)	Open
312	Sherwood Unit (Branch – Kalamazoo – St. Joseph)	Open
332	Greenleaf Unit (Huron – Sanilac – Tuscola)	Open
349	Engadine Unit	Open
452	TB Core Area	Open
487	NLP Multi-County Unit	Open
351	Midwest Upper Peninsula	Open
352	Midwest Upper Peninsula	Open

3.109 North Manitou island deer management unit, season limit, exemption.

Sec. 3.109 (1) An individual shall not be limited on the number of deer taken from the North Manitou island deer management unit during the designated special open firearms season for North Manitou island. Deer taken from the North Manitou island deer management unit during the designated special open firearms season shall not be included in the season limit as defined in section 3.101(~~8~~) **(9)** of this order. Deer taken on North Manitou island shall not be tagged using a deer license during the special open firearms season on North Manitou island as designated in section 3.110 of this order.

(2) Deer taken from the North Manitou island deer management unit during the designated archery only deer hunting season, the regular state designated firearms season, and the state muzzleloader seasons, shall be included in the season limit as defined in section 3.101 (~~8~~) **(9)** of this order and shall be tagged using a valid deer license.

5.74a Wild animals of special concern, possession, transportation, and disposal.

Sec. 5.74a Wild animals of special concern are as follows:

(1) Deer of special concern, all wild free-ranging deer. Live wild deer shall not be possessed without a permit from the department, subject to the following:

(a) All wild deer, positively confirmed to be from Alcona, Alpena, Iosco, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, and Montcalm counties shall not be possessed unless:

(i) euthanized and sent or taken at the earliest possible time to the wildlife disease laboratory by direct arrangement with the wildlife disease laboratory or by arrangement with a local conservation officer.

(ii) obtained by a permittee located inside Alcona, Alpena, Iosco, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, and Montcalm counties who humanely euthanizes the deer within 24 hours of receipt.

(b) All wild deer, except fawns, positively confirmed to be from inside a county with a confirmed case of CWD, except for Montcalm county, shall not be possessed unless:

(i) euthanized and sent or taken at the earliest possible time to the wildlife disease laboratory by direct arrangement with the wildlife disease laboratory or by arrangement with a local conservation officer.

(ii) obtained by a permittee located in a county with a confirmed case of CWD who humanely euthanizes the deer within 24 hours of receipt.

(c) A licensed permittee located within a county with a confirmed case of CWD, except for Montcalm county, shall only possess a wild fawn from inside that same county if the capture point of the wild fawn is within a 10-mile radius of the licensed permittee's facility. The licensed permittee shall release that same fawn within a 10-mile radius of their facility.

(d) All wild deer, except fawns, positively confirmed to be from outside of a county with a confirmed case of CWD shall not be possessed unless:

(i) euthanized and sent or taken at the earliest possible time to the wildlife disease laboratory by direct arrangement with the wildlife disease laboratory or by arrangement with a local conservation officer.

(ii) obtained by a permittee located outside of a county with a confirmed case of CWD who humanely euthanizes the deer within 24 hours of receipt.

(e) All wild fawns positively confirmed to be from outside of a county with a confirmed case of CWD shall:

(i) not be moved to a county with a confirmed case of CWD.

(ii) be released only in the county of origin. Each cage shall be tagged by the permittee with the county of origin and date of capture for each deer.

(f) If the capture point of a wild deer cannot be positively confirmed to be from a particular county, the deer shall be isolated in a manner to prevent direct, physical contact with other deer and humanely euthanized within 24 hours of receipt. If a deer has come into direct, physical contact with a deer originating from another or unknown county of origin, both deer shall be isolated in a manner to prevent physical contact with other deer and humanely euthanized within 24 hours of receipt.

(g) The permittee shall permanently mark all deer in possession with a clearly visible unique identification mark prior to release as required by the department.

(h) All wild deer, except fawns, cannot be possessed for wildlife rehabilitation.

(i) All wild fawns shall be released by October 1 of the year it was taken into possession for wildlife rehabilitation unless recommended, in a written request, by a Michigan licensed veterinarian and authorized by the department. The written request must be submitted to the department no later than 15 days prior to October 1.

(j) All wild fawns shall not be taken into possession for wildlife rehabilitation October 1 through March 1 **unless authorized by the department.**

(2) Skunks and bats of special concern, all wild skunks and bats. Live skunks and bats shall not be possessed.

(3) Raccoons of special concern, all wild raccoons. Live raccoons may be possessed and released only as follows:

(a) Raccoons shall be released only in the same county where captured and shall be isolated in a manner to prevent direct, physical contact with wild animals not originating from the same county. Each cage shall be tagged by the permittee with the county of origin and date of capture.

(b) Cages and areas used to hold raccoons for release shall be constructed of materials that can be effectively disinfected.

(c) If the capture point of a raccoon cannot be positively confirmed to be from a particular county, the raccoon shall be isolated from direct, physical contact with other raccoons and humanely euthanized within 24 hours of receipt. If a raccoon has come into direct, physical contact with a raccoon originating from another or unknown county of origin, both raccoons shall be isolated from direct, physical contact with other raccoons and humanely euthanized within 24 hours of exposure.

(4) Elk of special concern, all wild free-ranging elk. Live wild elk shall not be possessed.

(5) Moose of special concern, all wild free-ranging moose. Live wild moose shall not be possessed.

(6) Mute swans of special concern, all wild mute swans. Live wild mute swans shall not be possessed.

(7) Subject to the provisions of this order, in the event a wild deer is humanely euthanized or dies as the result of disease symptoms consistent with chronic wasting disease, the carcass shall be sent or taken at the earliest possible time to the wildlife disease laboratory by direct arrangement with the wildlife disease laboratory or by arrangement with a local conservation officer or a department employee.

5.80 Deer management assistance (DMA) hunting permits; definitions, criteria for issuance, validity of permits, application procedures, restrictions and requirements; exception; unlawful acts.

Sec. 5.80 (1) The terms in this section shall have the meaning described to them in this section.

(a) Permit means a deer management assistance (DMA) permit.

(b) Permittee means an individual who has applied for and been authorized to purchase deer management assistance permits by the department.

(c) Authorized designee means one individual who has been designated by the landowner and approved by the department, to act on behalf of the landowner to apply for and implement the provisions of deer management assistance permits. The department reserves the right to deny an individual, including the permittee, the authority to personally implement the provisions of a permit if such authority would conflict with a court order, administrative rule, or law.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this section, permits may be issued statewide to owners of land, or their authorized designee, located in areas where current antlerless or antlered harvest methods are insufficient to achieve department deer management objectives or where one or more of the following conditions exist:

(a) The department has documented that the property owner has significant agricultural or horticultural crop damage caused by deer.

(b) The department has documented that a serious disease outbreak is a threat to the deer herd, livestock, or human health.

(c) The department has documented a significant safety hazard caused by deer.

(d) Current antlerless regulations are insufficient to achieve landowner deer management objectives.

(3) DMA permits are valid only during an open season for the taking of deer as established by this order and only upon the land for which issued and adjacent private property with permission of the landowner.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in this section, DMA permits are valid only for the taking of an antlerless deer. An individual hunting under the authority of a DMA permit shall carry the unused permit and shall exhibit the unused permit upon the request of a law enforcement officer.

(5) An individual owning land within a qualifying area as determined by the department, or their authorized designee, may apply for a DMA permit with the wildlife supervisor on a form provided by the department. This application shall include an estimate of desired antlerless or antlered harvest and the numbers of hunters needed to meet the desired harvest objective. A DMA permit shall be signed by both the permittee and wildlife supervisor. The number of DMA permits will be determined by the wildlife supervisor. A minimum of 5 DMA permits shall be issued per permittee.

(6) The permittee shall not purchase more DMA permits than approved by the department.

(7) DMA permits may be subsequently issued to hunters by the permittee or authorized designee. An individual shall not accept, carry afield, use or attempt to use a DMA permit unless in possession of a current base license and deer license. A permittee or authorized designee shall not sell, lend, barter, or trade a DMA permit. Permittees or authorized designees shall inform hunters about rules pertaining to the use of DMA permits.

(8) A hunter issued a DMA permit by a permittee or authorized designee shall not sell, lend, barter, trade, or allow another individual to use the DMA permit. Unused permits may be reissued to hunters only by the permittee or authorized designee.

(9) The provisions of section 3.103 shall apply to a permit and kill tag issued under this section. In addition, unless otherwise provided in this section, an individual issued a DMA permit shall comply with lawful hunting hours and all regulatory requirements for the taking of deer for the season in which they are hunting.

(a) A firearm shall not be used with a DMA permit during archery season except with permission. This exception may be authorized on a case-by-case basis by the wildlife supervisor and district law enforcement supervisor consistent with the exception criteria published in the DMA permit decision tree.

(i) A permittee shall observe a quiet period during the last three full weekends being Friday, Saturday, and Sunday prior to November 10, including the provisions of section 2.1(3) and shall not use firearms during this time.

(b) DMA permits may be valid for the taking of deer with antlers extending 3 inches or more above the skull with permission when active and acute horticultural damage is being caused by an antlered deer. The total number of DMA permits issued for the taking of antlered deer statewide shall be one DMA permit per permittee, except that the total number of DMA permits issued for the taking of antlered deer in the deer management units listed in section ~~3.104~~ **3.1011 (5)** shall be a minimum of one DMA permit per permittee but shall not exceed three DMA permits per permittee. This exception may be authorized on a case-by-case basis by the wildlife supervisor and district law enforcement supervisor if the department determines that taking only antlerless deer will not be sufficient to reduce active and acute horticultural damage.

(b) DMA permits may be valid for the taking of deer with antlers extending 3 inches or more above the skull with permission when active and acute horticultural damage is being caused by an antlered deer. Effective March 1, 2027, the Department may authorize the total number of DMA permits issued for the taking of antlered deer statewide on a case-by-case basis by the wildlife supervisor and district law enforcement supervisor if the department determines that taking only antlerless deer will not be sufficient to reduce active and acute horticultural damage.

(i) After attaching the kill tag, a permittee or permittee's agent shall transport any antlered deer head and antlers in an open manner to the nearest department office and surrender the head and antlers to the department within 72 hours of harvest.

(10) A permittee or authorized designee 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, if applicable. 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.

(11) A permittee's first failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the permit will make the permittee ineligible to receive a DMA permit for one year. Any subsequent failure to comply with the terms and conditions of a permit will make the permittee ineligible to receive a DMA permit for up to three years as determined by the department.

(12) Deer taken under the authority of a DMA permit shall not be included in the season limit as defined in section 3.101~~(8)~~ **(9)** of this order. The daily limit and season limit shall be one deer per DMA permit.

12.27 "Deer management unit 027 (Watersmeet unit)" defined.

Sec. 12.27 "Deer management unit 027 (Watersmeet unit)" means that area of Iron, Baraga, Houghton, Ontonagon, and Gogebic counties bounded by a line beginning in Iron county at the junction of the Michigan- Wisconsin state line (about 5½ miles northwest of the end of the Brule river, near center of section 33, T43N R37W) and USFS highway 16 (section 33, T43N R37W, also known as Iron county road 436 or federal forest highway 16), then northerly, crossing highway US-2, to USFS road 3270 (also known as USFS road 149, section 14, T44N R37W), easterly on USFS road 3270 to county road 657 (section 8, T44N R35W, also known as Gibbs city road when near Gibbs city), southeasterly on county road 657 through Gibbs city to Ponozzo road (center western side of section 9, T44N R35W, also known as USFS 2130, or the stretch of USFS road 137 to USFS road 144 to USFS road 145), northerly on Ponozzo road to **Federal Forest Road 2130 (section 15, T45N, R35W)**, northerly on **Federal Forest Road 2130 to Nolenchec Creek (section 23, T46N R35W, northeast shore of Perch Lake, creek could be unnamed on some maps)**, northerly along **Nolenchec Creek to Dead Stream (Section 14, T46N, R35W)**, northerly along **Dead Stream to the Perch river (section 23, T46N R35W)**, northerly along the Perch river into Baraga county to highway M-28 (section 34, T48N R35W), westerly on highway M-28 through Houghton county into Ontonagon county to highway M-64 (near Merriweather, section 11, T48N R43W), southerly on highway M-64 past the western shore of lake Gogebic into Gogebic county to highway US-2, westerly on highway US-2 into the city of Wakefield to the Sunday lake street (section 16, T47N R45W), southerly on Sunday lake street to county road 519 (also known as Chaney lake road south of Wakefield, section 28, T47N R45W), southerly on county road 519 to the Michigan-Wisconsin state line (Sec 15, T45N R45W, Gogebic county), southeasterly along the Michigan- Wisconsin state line into Iron county to the point of beginning.

12.36 "Deer management unit 036 (Amasa-Michigamme unit)" defined.

Sec. 12.36 "Deer management unit 036 (Amasa-Michigamme unit)" means that area of Iron, Baraga, Marquette, and Dickinson counties bounded by a line beginning in Iron county in the village of Amasa, at the intersection of the Hemlock river to the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific railroad line, southwesterly/upstream then westerly/upstream along the center of the Hemlock river to the confluence of the Paint river (section 8, T44N R34W), westerly/upstream along the center of the Paint river to Ponozzo road (center western side of section 9, T44N R35W, also known as USFS 2130, or the stretch of USFS road 137 to USFS road 144 to USFS road 145), northerly on Ponozzo road to **Federal Forest Road 2130 (section 15, T45N, R35W)**, northerly on **Federal Forest Road 2130 to Nolenchec Creek (section 23, T46N R35W, northeast shore of Perch Lake, creek could be unnamed on some maps)**, northerly

along Nolenchec Creek to Dead Stream (Section 14, T46N, R35W), northerly along Dead Stream to the Perch river (section 23, T46N R35W), northerly along the Perch river into Baraga county to highway M-28 (section 34, T48N R35W), easterly on highway M-28 to highway US-41 (section 6, T48N R33W), easterly on highway US-41/M-28 into Marquette county to highway M-95 near the city of Champion (section 3, T47N R29W), southerly on highway M-95 into Dickinson county to Floodwood road (section 1, T44N R30W, near the Marquette-Dickinson county line), easterly on Floodwood road to Schwartz creek road (also known as McGregor creek road, section 31, T45N R28W, just over the Marquette-Dickinson county line into Marquette county), southeasterly on Schwartz creek road to Cleveland Homestead road (also known as Aimone road, section 10, T44N R28W), easterly on Cleveland Homestead road to county road 581 (section 25, T44N R27W), easterly on county road 581 to county road 438 in Marquette county, easterly on county road 438 to Ross grade road (section 28, T44N R26W), southerly on Ross grade road to county road SH near the city of Ross, southwesterly on county road SH to county road SG, southerly on county road SG to county road 426 near the city of Northland, westerly on county road 426 into Dickinson county past the city of Ralph to highway M-95 near the city of Channing, northerly on highway M-95 to the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific railroad line (section 8, T43N R30W), easterly on said railroad line into the village of Amasa to the point of beginning.

13.17 St. Clair flats state wildlife area, Harsens island unit; additional rules.

Sec. 13.17 The following rules are established on those portions of the St. Clair flats state wildlife area, Harsens island unit, St. Clair county, posted "state wildlife game area - hunting by permit only" being all or portions of sections 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 30, and 31 of T02N, R16E; sections 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 35 and 36 of T02N, R15E:

(1) During the firearm deer seasons, a person hunting deer under a valid permit may only use single projectile loads.

(2) It is prohibited to possess or use more than 25 shells during any hunting period.

(3) A current hunting license and appropriate stamps shall constitute a valid permit to hunt in the non-refuge areas, except as specified in subsection (4).

(4) Hunting permits are required for all deer and waterfowl hunting and permits shall be returned to the check station immediately upon completion of the hunting period for which it was valid or upon termination of hunting, whichever occurs first.

(5) It is unlawful to use motion-winged decoys.

(6) It is prohibited to hunt deer with firearms during any open waterfowl hunting season, except as follows:

(a) Firearm managed deer hunting may be allowed from September 1 to January 1 of the following year, including areas posted as "wildlife refuge – do not enter," by the wildlife supervisor or department designee if the department determines that conditions exist that significantly reduce waterfowl habitat. Participants must possess a valid deer hunting permit and current hunting licenses.

(b) Firearm antlerless deer hunting may be allowed, including areas posted as "wildlife refuge – do not enter," by the wildlife supervisor or department designee from the first Monday following **the conclusion of the December firearm season** ~~the third Saturday in December~~ through January 1 of the following year. Participants must possess a valid deer hunting permit and current hunting licenses.

(7) Deer hunting may be allowed during the appropriate hunting season on dates designated by the management unit supervisor or representative, within the areas posted "wildlife refuge-do not enter," through a random drawing of validated daily party registration hunting permit or by obtaining a self-registered hunting permit.

(8) Refuge deer hunting permits and non-refuge deer hunting permits may be issued to persons chosen in random drawings from applicants for different hunting periods for days designated by the management unit supervisor or representative or by obtaining a self-registered hunting permit. Permits shall not be transferred or altered.

Issued on this 13th day of May, 2026.

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

Rebecca Humphries, Chair
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

M. Scott Bowen
Director