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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



DR. WILLIAM E. MORITZ
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 16, 2016
RESUBMITTED: March 14, 2016

A P P R O V E D
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MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
(ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Coyote and Nighttime Predator Hunting Regulations
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 4 of 2016

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:

At the September 2015 Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting, Wildlife Division (WLD) presented different options for liberalizing harvest of coyotes, as well as a summary of coyote harvest regulations for surrounding states. At the January 2016 NRC meeting, the NRC requested that WLD move forward to extend the length of the coyote hunting season and expand the nighttime harvest methods based on information the NRC received over the past year regarding coyote management.

Following the NRC's request to expand the coyote hunting season, the Department held discussions with internal staff and external stakeholders to develop a recommendation to amend the Wildlife Conservation Order to expand the coyote season to statewide, year around, as well as clarifying nighttime hunting of furbearers by expanding the timeframe in which nighttime hunting with artificial lights may occur. The Department is also recommending expanding allowable ammunition for taking all furbearers which may be hunted at night to include number 3 and number 4 buckshot.

Coyote Regulations

Michigan's current daytime coyote hunting season is statewide from July 15 to April 15. It is a liberal season with limited restrictions on methods of take, devices, and ammunition. The current nighttime coyote hunting season is statewide, from October 15 to March 31. The nighttime coyote hunting season is a restricted season with limited methods of take, devices, and ammunition. An individual must possess a furharvester or resident base license. All year, an individual may take a coyote on private property when coyotes are doing or about to do damage; a license is not required and the individual is considered to be taking under a permit.

Following the NRC's request, the Department developed the recommendation to expand the daytime coyote hunting season statewide, year around. The recommendation will provide an

Coyote and Nighttime Predator Hunting Regulations
 Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 4 of 2016

Page 2

March 14, 2016

additional 3 months of daytime coyote hunting from current regulations. Currently, an individual may not train dogs on game (including coyote) from April 16 to July 7. The Department recommends maintaining this limitation to prohibit the use of dogs to hunt or train on coyotes during this time period.

Biological

Both the expansion of the daytime coyote hunting season and expansion and clarification of nighttime furbearer seasons are unlikely to have significant biological impact. In some localized areas, some temporary reductions in coyote densities may occur. These reductions would be based on the level of increase in harvest and are likely to be short-lived.

Social

Coyotes are found throughout Michigan and in both rural and urban areas. The Department has received increased complaints from the public regarding coyotes in both urban and suburban areas. An expansion of the opportunity to take coyotes may help reduce concerns by offering additional methods for hunters and landowners to use to address concerns about the impacts of local coyote populations.

Economic

The Department does not expect a significant increase in coyote hunters, and therefore, does not expect a significant economic impact.

Other States

	Hunting Season	License	Nighttime Coyote Hunting Device/load
Minnesota	Year around/no limit	None required	Any firearm, except from January 1 to March 15: a shotgun with an artificial light when on foot and using a calling device and more than 200 yards from a motor vehicle
Indiana	October 15 to March 15	Small game	No restrictions
Wisconsin	Year-round/no limit	Small game (for some individuals)	Shotshells loaded with a single slug or ball; Cannot use shot or shotshells loaded with shot larger than BB (including buckshot) from June 1 to December 13. An individual may use a muzzleloading handgun with barrel length of 4 inches

Ohio	Year around/no limit	Small game	Longbow or bow, crossbow, handgun (any caliber), rifle (any caliber), shotgun (10 gauge or smaller) and airgun
Ontario	Yes-variable	Small game plus tag in some areas	Does not allow nighttime coyote hunting

Nighttime Species Regulations

Currently, Michigan allows for the nighttime take of raccoon, opossum, fox and coyote. The nighttime season for raccoon is currently from October 1 to January 31, with the aid of dogs or game call or predator call. The nighttime season for opossum is currently September 15 to March 31 with the aid of dogs and from October 15 to March 31 with a game or predator call. Fox and coyote may be taken at night with dogs. Artificial lights may be used during the timeframe for take if the season for the species of interest is open and all device regulations are followed. The licensed individual must meet specific conditions to hunt specific nighttime species with a hunting device.

The Department recommends allowing the use of artificial lights for the take of raccoon, opossum, fox and coyote during the open season for take by the species being hunted. The Department also recommends allowing the take of raccoon, opossum, fox, and coyote at night with the aid of a light in their respective open season. Nighttime hunters would be required to hunt with the aid of game call or predator call or with the aid of dogs only. Hunters using the aid of dogs may only have a firearm, crossbow or bow and arrow loaded at the point of kill. This will allow for consistency between all nighttime species regulations.

With the NRC's recommendation to expand the coyote hunting season, the nighttime use of artificial lights for the take of coyote would add an additional five and a half months from current regulations. This change significantly expands coyote hunting opportunities, allowing individuals interested in taking coyotes more opportunity than just the daytime hunting expansion recommendation.

The Department recommends expanding the allowable nighttime ammunition for taking all furbearers which may be hunted at night to include number 3 and number 4 buckshot.

Biological

The use of number 3 and number 4 buckshot at night for take of coyotes, raccoons, opossum, and fox is unlikely to have a significant biological impact. Also, the expansion and clarification of nighttime furbearer seasons are unlikely to have significant biological impact. In some localized areas, some temporary reductions in coyote densities may occur. These reductions would be based on the level of increase in harvest and are likely to be short-lived.

Social

The Michigan Trappers and Predator Caller Association is in support of the use of number 3 and number 4 buckshot for taking coyotes at night. Most stakeholders that contacted WLD about the use of number 3 and number 4 buckshot were supportive. Michigan United Conservation Clubs supports both the use of number 3 and number 4 buckshot for nighttime harvest of coyotes and the year around hunting of coyotes.

Economic

The Department does not expect an economic impact.

Other States

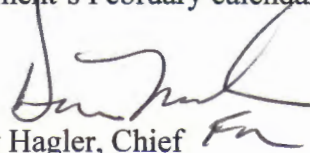
Other states nighttime species regulations are very complex. For example, in Wisconsin an individual may hunt coyote, raccoon, opossum, and fox year-around with a small game license, but have limited device options. In Indiana, each nighttime species has a different season, but there are no hunting device restrictions. Michigan's nighttime species regulations are complex, but with the recommended changes, the nighttime species regulations will become more liberalized and will eliminate confusion.

Recommendation:

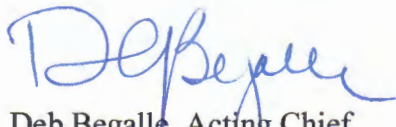
This order was submitted for information on March 10, 2016, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's February calendar and may be eligible for approval on April 14, 2016.



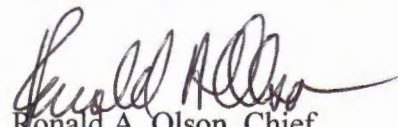
Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division



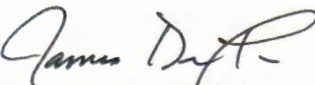
Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



Deb Begalle, Acting Chief
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division



Bill O'Neill
Natural Resources Deputy

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

William E. Moritz, Ph.D., Director

Date

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 4 of 2016

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by sections 40107 and 40113a of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40107 and 324.40113a, it is ordered that effective April 15, 2016, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

2.4 Permissible use of artificial lights.

Sec. 2.4 (1) Artificial lights, similar to the type ordinarily held in the hand or on the person, may be used by a person traveling afoot with a bow and arrow, crossbow, a rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller or shotgun with loads other than buckshot larger than number 3, slug or cut shell. However, subject to MCL 324.43510, (2) and (3), the person shall not possess a loaded firearm, a cocked crossbow, or bow with a nocked arrow, except as provided in section 2.1a of this order unless one or more of the following conditions apply:

(a) The individual is hunting with the aid of dogs and is at the point of kill.

(b) The individual is hunting with the aid of game call or predator call.

(2) Persons not possessing a bow, crossbow, or firearm while traveling afoot may use lights as defined in subsection (1) during dog training or field dog trials to follow dogs chasing raccoon, opossum, or fox.

2.5 Hunting hours, exceptions; prohibited activities.

Sec. 2.5 (1) Except for the trapping of animals and as otherwise specified in this section, the hunting hours shall substantially conform to one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset and shall be those starting times and ending times published in the Michigan hunting and trapping guide or in the respective state hunting guide for that animal.

(2) In addition to the daylight hunting hours specified in subsection (1) and 3.605, a person traveling afoot at night and in possession of only a bow and arrow, a crossbow, a rimfire firearm .22 caliber or smaller or shotgun with loads other than buckshot larger than number 3, slug or cut shell may take within their specified open seasons raccoon, opossum, coyote, and fox. However, subject to MCL 324.43510, (2) and (3), a person hunting these species during the nighttime hunting hours shall not possess a loaded firearm, a cocked crossbow, or bow with a nocked arrow unless one or more of the following conditions apply:

(a) The individual is hunting with the aid of dogs and is at the point of kill.

(b) The individual is hunting with the aid of game call or predator call.

(3) Except for woodcock and crow, the hunting and hawking hours for all waterfowl and migratory birds shall be as listed in the state waterfowl hunting guide. The hunting hours for woodcock shall substantially conform to sunrise to sunset and shall be as published in the Michigan hunting and trapping guide. The hunting hours for crow shall be as specified in subsection (1).

(4) The hunting hours for wild turkey during the spring season shall substantially conform to one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, and shall be those starting times and ending times published in the state hunting guide for wild turkey.

(5) The hunting hours for teal during the early season shall substantially conform to sunrise to sunset, and shall be those starting times and ending times as published in the waterfowl hunting digest.

(6) Subject to MCL 324.43510, (2) and (3), except during the hunting hours specified in this section and as

otherwise provided by subsection (2), a person shall not possess afield a firearm unless it is unloaded in the barrel, or crossbow or a bow and arrow unless all arrows and bolts are placed in a quiver. A person may, to comply with section 4.1(2), kill a down and mortally wounded deer, bear, or elk using an otherwise legal means and may possess a loaded firearm, a cocked crossbow, or bow with nocked arrow only at the time and at the point of kill. Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, a person hunting under the authority of a wild turkey license during the spring wild turkey season may load and carry a loaded firearm afield while going to their hunting stand up to one hour prior to the spring wild turkey hunting hours.

3.610 Coyote, open season; exceptions; person taking considered permittee; fur harvester's license not required to hunt.

Sec. 3.610 (1) The statewide open season for taking coyote by hunting shall be all year except:

(a) Coyotes shall not be taken in state park and recreation areas from April 1 to September 14.

(2) A resident possessing a base license may hunt coyote without securing a fur harvester's license.

(3) Coyotes may be taken all year on private property by the property owner or their designee when coyotes are doing or about to do damage to their property. A written permit is not required, and the person shall be authorized to take coyote all year by otherwise lawful hunting and trapping methods.

6.4 Hunting with dogs, unlawful acts.

Sec. 6.4 (1) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt bear with dogs in zone 1 from September 5 through September 14.

(2) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt bear with dogs in zones 2 and 3 on the first Sunday following September 15, except in the Baldwin north area where it shall be unlawful for any persons to hunt bear with dogs the Friday preceding September 15.

(3) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt coyote with the aid of dogs from April 16 through July 7.

Issued on this 14th day of April 2016.

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

John Matonich, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Director