



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



DANIEL EICHINGER
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: September 16, 2019

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Spring Turkey Regulations
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 9 of 2019
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:

Current spring turkey regulations have been in place since 2016 as part of a three-year stabilized regulation process that originated in 2008. The spring wild turkey season is designed to maximize hunter opportunity for a satisfactory hunting experience while sustaining a viable wild turkey population. When turkeys were a species of scarcity, traditional spring turkey hunting seasons had restrictive regulations for both public and private land in order to widely disperse hunters to provide a quality recreational experience. As wild turkey populations have flourished, turkey hunters and private landowners have requested greater flexibility in areas where they can hunt. The proposed recommendations are the result of discussions with stakeholder groups and Department staff. They also mark the beginning of the fifth cycle of three-year stabilized regulations for turkey management. The recommendations are an effort to provide additional recreational opportunity without negatively impacting the quality of spring turkey hunting. In keeping with efforts to stabilize regulations by using multi-year cycles, these regulations are proposed to remain constant for three years.

License Quotas and Season Dates

License quotas are developed to harvest the desired number of turkeys to meet the management goal. For the 2020, 2021, and 2022 spring turkey season, the Department recommends that a total of 84,140 licenses (49,140 General, 35,000 Private) be made available through a lottery during the hunter limited hunt periods. The Department also recommends keeping 58,114 square miles open to turkey hunting and that an individual may only purchase one license for the spring turkey season.

The Department recommends maintaining the spring wild turkey general license quotas for turkey management units (TMUs) A, B, E, F, J, K, and M.

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The Department recommends adjusting the license quotas for TMUs F, ZA, ZB, ZC, ZD, ZE, ZF, and ZZ to reflect the proposed changes made in aligning and extending the hunt periods within the season schedule, as recommended below.

The Department recommends restructuring the public land hunts in TMUs ZA, ZB, ZC, ZD, ZE, and ZF to be:

- Hunt 1: Begins on the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days and June 1 through June 7.
 - Example: The 2020 season will be April 20 through April 26 and June 1 through June 7.
- Hunt 2: Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days.
 - Example: The 2020 season will be April 27 through May 10.
- Hunt 3: Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31.
 - Example: The 2020 season will be May 11 through May 31.

The Department recommends this structure to reduce the number of hunts that are just one weeklong. Since weather or other situations can easily ruin a singular week of hunting, this would allow hunters more time and flexibility in their hunts. Additionally, moving away from one-week hunts later in the season would move some of the pressure from Hunt one to later hunts, since hunters are more likely to choose the longer seasons. This would potentially help increase participation in Hunts two and three, which are traditionally much more under participated than Hunt one.

The Department recommends making the private land only (ZZ) hunt good for the entire ~42-day season instead of just 14 days (Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31). This will provide more hunting opportunities to private landowners who manage their lands for turkey hunting.

The Department also recommends aligning TMU F season dates with TMUs A, B, and J (Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days). Aligning these dates will reduce complexity, enhance hunter recreational opportunity, and are not expected to negatively impact hunter satisfaction or hunter interference rates significantly.

Biological

The 2017 Michigan Spring Turkey Hunter Survey concluded that approximately 74,450 hunters harvested about 33,433 turkeys. Of the 33,433 turkeys harvested, approximately 81% of these birds were taken on private land. About 22% of the of the harvested birds were juvenile males; about 77% were adult males, and about 1% were bearded females.

Social

During the last three years, the Department has sought feedback about wild turkey from conservation organizations, turkey hunters, and others. The 2017 Michigan Spring Turkey Hunter Survey concluded that nearly 73% of hunters rated their hunting experience as excellent, very good, or good in 2017, which marks a significant increase in hunter satisfaction.

Additionally, hunter success increased significantly (41% in 2016 versus 45% in 2017). The National Wild Turkey Federation support these recommendations.

Economic

Turkey hunting opportunities provide economic benefits by increasing recreation and hunting-related expenditures, e.g., costs of ammunition, food, travel, and lodging.

Allow Hunting of Turkey with Firearms from a Scaffold, Raised Platform, or Tree

Current regulations allow the taking of turkey from a scaffold, raised platform, or tree with a crossbow or a bow and arrow. The Department recommends adding turkeys to the list of species that can be taken with a firearm from a scaffold, raised platform, or tree.

Issue Pros and Cons

Allowing turkeys to be taken by firearm from scaffold, raised platform, or tree will expand hunters' choice for their method of take and expand hunting opportunity. It will also encourage participation in the fall turkey season where individuals hunting deer from scaffold or other raised platforms will be able to utilize those same stands for turkey hunting.

Biological

The Department does not expect any biological impacts.

Social

Hunters have expressed support for allowing firearms in hunting turkey from scaffolds, raised platforms, or trees.

Economic

The Department does not expect an economic impact.

Other States

The Department researched Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin and found that all states allow the use of firearms in hunting turkey from scaffolds, raised platforms, or trees.

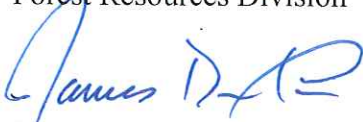
Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appeared on the Department's September calendar and may be eligible for approval on November 7, 2019.



Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division



Deb Begalle, Chief
Forest Resources Division



James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division



Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Steven B. Burton
for



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



Shannon Hanna
Natural Resources Deputy

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 9 of 2019

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 November 8, 2019, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

2.8 Hunt with bow and arrow from scaffold, raised platform, or tree allowed; taking certain species with a firearm from scaffold, raised platform or tree allowed; use of scaffold, platform, ladder, steps or certain other devices in taking an animal on publicly owned lands, exception.

Sec. 2.8 An individual may hunt with a crossbow or a bow and arrow from a scaffold, raised platform, or tree. An individual taking deer, elk, **turkey**, or bear with a firearm may use a scaffold, raised platform, or tree pursuant to all other hunting regulations. An individual taking fox or coyote with a firearm one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset may use a scaffold, raised platform, or tree, pursuant to all other hunting regulations. An individual taking small game that are not migratory game birds with a shotgun may use a scaffold, raised platform, or tree pursuant to all other hunting regulations. In taking an animal, an individual shall not do any of the following on publicly owned lands:

1) Permanently construct or affix to a tree or other natural feature a scaffold, platform, ladder, steps or any other device to assist in climbing a tree, or use any item that penetrates the cambium of a tree in the construction or affixing of any device to assist in climbing a tree.

(2) Use or occupy a scaffold, raised platform, ladder, or step that has been permanently affixed or attached to any tree or other natural feature.

(3) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a scaffold or platform temporarily affixed to a tree by use of a T-bolt or similar device supplied by the manufacturer at the time the scaffold or platform was purchased.

(4) Use or occupy a scaffold or raised platform without having first etched, engraved, implanted, burned, printed, or painted on the scaffold or raised platform, the name and address, complete Michigan driver's license number, or DNR sportcard number of the user in legible English easily read from the ground.

(5) Use, occupy, or place a scaffold, raised platform, ladder, steps, or any other device to assist in climbing a tree if the scaffold, raised platform, ladder, steps, or other device is on public lands earlier than September 1 of each year or is not removed by March 1, exception:

(a) The scaffold, raised platform, ladder, steps, or any other device to assist in climbing a tree for elk hunting purposes may be placed on public lands from August 15 through five days after the close of the elk season for which the individual is licensed, or if successful, five days after harvesting an elk

3.300a Wild turkey population, harvest quotas.

Sec 3.300a. (1) The spring wild turkey hunt seasons and quotas for general licenses valid on all land within the listed unit shall be as shown in table 6:

TABLE 6
Spring Wild Turkey General License Seasons and Quotas

| Hunt Numbers | Open Units | Hunt Seasons | License Quota |
|--------------|------------|--|---------------|
| 101 | A | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days. | 5,500 |
| 102 | B | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days. | 1,000 |
| 103 | E | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days. | 850 |
| 104 | E | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days. | 850 |

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|-----|----|---|-------------|
| 105 | F | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 14 days. | 2,500 5,000 |
| 106 | F | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days. | 2,500 |
| 107 | J | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days. | 4,000 |
| 108 | K | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days. | 4,000 |
| 109 | K | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days. | 4,500 |
| 110 | M | Begins on the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. | 6,000 |
| 111 | ZA | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days and June 1 through June 7. | 1,200 |
| 112 | ZA | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 14 days. | 1,200 1,800 |
| 113 | ZA | Begins 14 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days through May 31. | 1,200 1,800 |
| 114 | ZA | Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. | 1,200 |
| 115 | ZB | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days and June 1 through June 7. | 650 |
| 116 | ZB | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 14 days. | 650 975 |
| 117 | ZB | Begins 14 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days through May 31. | 650 975 |
| 118 | ZB | Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. | 650 |
| 119 | ZC | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days and June 1 through June 7. | 600 |
| 120 | ZC | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 14 days. | 600 975 |
| 121 | ZC | Begins 14 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days through May 31. | 600 975 |
| 122 | ZC | Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. | 600 |
| 123 | ZD | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days and June 1 through June 7. | 10 |
| 124 | ZD | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 14 days. | 10 15 |
| 125 | ZD | Begins 14 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days through May 31. | 10 15 |
| 126 | ZD | Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. | 10 |
| 127 | ZE | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days and June 1 through June 7. | 500 |
| 128 | ZE | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 14 days. | 500 750 |
| 129 | ZE | Begins 14 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days through May 31. | 500 750 |
| 130 | ZE | Begins 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. | 500 |
| 131 | ZF | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 days and June 1 through June 7. | 1,300 |
| 132 | ZF | Begins 7 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 7 14 days. | 1,300 |
| 133 | ZF | Begins 14 21 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. | 3,000 |

(2) The spring wild turkey hunt seasons and quotas for private land only licenses which are not valid on county, state or federal lands, except that they may be used to hunt Fort Custer military lands with permission, shall be as shown in table 7:

TABLE 7
Spring Wild Turkey Private Land License Seasons and Quotas

| Hunt Numbers | Open Unit | Hunt Seasons | License Quota |
|--------------|-----------|--|------------------|
| 301 | ZZ | Begins on Monday closest to April 20 and continues for 14 days through May 31. | 35,000 50,000 |

(3) Hunt number 234 begins 14 days after the Monday closest to April 20 and continues through May 31. Licenses for hunt number 234 are valid on private and public land in spring turkey management units, except public lands in

southern Lower Peninsula wild turkey management unit (unit ZZ). Individuals who possess a valid license for hunt number 234 may hunt Fort Custer military land with permission.

(4) An individual may purchase a license for hunt number 234 when leftover licenses are made available for purchase through May 31; no application is required.

(5) If any limited quota licenses remain after the drawing, an unsuccessful applicant may purchase one leftover license on a first-come, first-served basis for a one-week period. Any limited-quota licenses that remain after this one-week period will be made available to all hunters on a first-come, first-served basis.

(6) The wildlife division chief may recommend to the director the need for any appropriate significant changes in quotas based on experience with population densities, hunter satisfaction levels, hunter application rates, or survey results. The director, in consultation with the chairman or vice-chairman of the natural resources commission, may make changes in quotas in a turkey management unit to address this new information.

(7) It is unlawful to purchase more than one Michigan spring turkey hunting license

Issued on this 7th day of November 2019.

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

Vicki J. Pontz, Chair
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Daniel Eichinger
Director