

# **Natural Resources Commission Meeting**

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife  
and Fisheries

August 8, 2019

# Proposed Orders

- For Information
  - Establish Hunting and Trapping at Watkins Lake State Park & County Preserve  
(Wildlife Conservation Order No. 8 of 2019)
  - Spawning Closures  
(Fisheries Order 204.20)
  - Designated Trout Streams in Michigan  
(Fisheries Order 210.20)
  - Sturgeon Regulations  
(Fisheries Order 240.19)

# **NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries**

- Fisheries Chief Update
  - Fisheries Regulations 204/210/240
- Wildlife Chief Update
  - Establish Hunting and Trapping at Watkins Lake State Park & County Preserve
  - West Nile Virus in Grouse

# **Department of Natural Resources**

Fisheries Division

Chief's Update

Jim Dexter, Chief

August 8, 2019

# **Legislative Sportsmen Caucus Event**

- Hosted by Michigan Steelheaders
- July 15, Ludington
- Great Lakes fishing
- Educational excursion
- 5 Senators, 7 Representatives, 6 staff
- Casual setting for Great Lakes discussions

# UV System, Oden State Fish Hatchery

- Construction project complete
- Protect Michigan waters from unintentional pathogens
- Arctic grayling transported on August 1
- Project completed through private donations & grants



# Brook Trout Bag Limits

- Fisheries Order 200.19A
- Sunset provision on 33 existing streams with a 10 brook trout bag limit
- October presentations on issue
  - Michigan Trout Unlimited
  - Michigan State University
- Inviting public comment over next 2 months
- DNR awaits any NRC requests



**Thank you!**



# **2019**

# **Fisheries Orders**

Natural Resources Commission  
Meeting

August 8, 2019

# **Fisheries Orders For Information Only**

- 204: Spawning Closures
- 210: Designated Trout Streams
- 240: Statewide Lake Sturgeon Regulations

# Fisheries Order 204

## For Information Only

- Otsego Lake Pike Marsh:
  - Change closure from “Whenever marsh is in operation” to “March 16 – June 15”.



# Fisheries Order 204

## For Information Only

- Cheboygan River from Mullett Lake downstream to Cheboygan Dam, and Black River downstream of Alverno Dam.
  - Remove spawning closure.
  - Protection for spawning walleye will be addressed with FO-206.



Credit: Wawwang Lake Resort

# **Fisheries Order 210**

## **For Information Only**

- Upper South Branch Thunder Bay River (Montmorency County):
  - Change downstream boundary from “Section 14” to “upstream of Fletcher Floodwaters” for definitive boundary.
- East Branch of the South Branch of the Waiska River (Chippewa County):
  - Insert “(Hutton Creek)” to be comprehensive with naming.

# Fisheries Order 240

## For Information Only

- Add catch-and-immediate-release season for lake sturgeon from July 16 through March 15, inclusive.
  - Portage and Torch Lakes, including Portage River and Canal
  - St. Marys River



# **Thank you!**

Seth Herbst, Ph.D.

ASRA Unit Manager

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# **Wildlife Chief Update**

Russ Mason



# **Wildlife Chief Update**

- Wildlife Services Meeting
- Wildlife Division Meeting
- Mississippi Flyway Meeting
- Land Donation from Sylvia Taylor
- Citizen's Waterfowl Advisory Committee (CWAC) Meeting

**Thank You!**

**Order to Establish Hunting and  
Trapping at Watkins Lake State  
Park and County Preserve  
WCO No. 8 of 2019**

Nicole Toman

Regulatory Unit Manager

Parks and Recreation Division

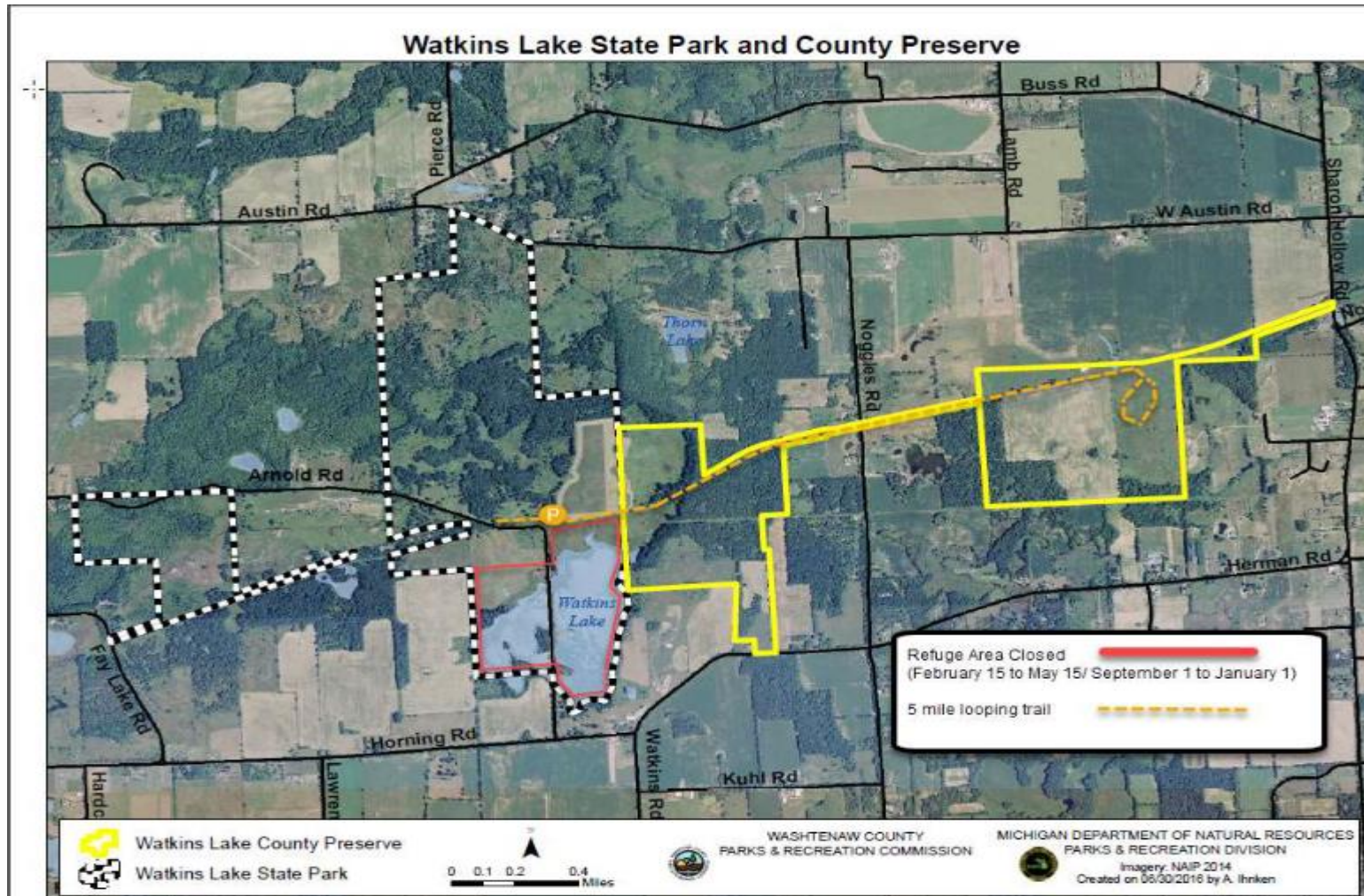
# Background

- In 2016, Watkins Lake SP and County Preserve became Michigan's 103<sup>rd</sup> State Park.
- It consists of 1,122 acres in Southern Michigan.
- When purchased, it was intended that hunting and trapping would be available recreational opportunities.
- However, until the Management Plan was completed and approved for the state park, the areas open to hunting and trapping were unknown.

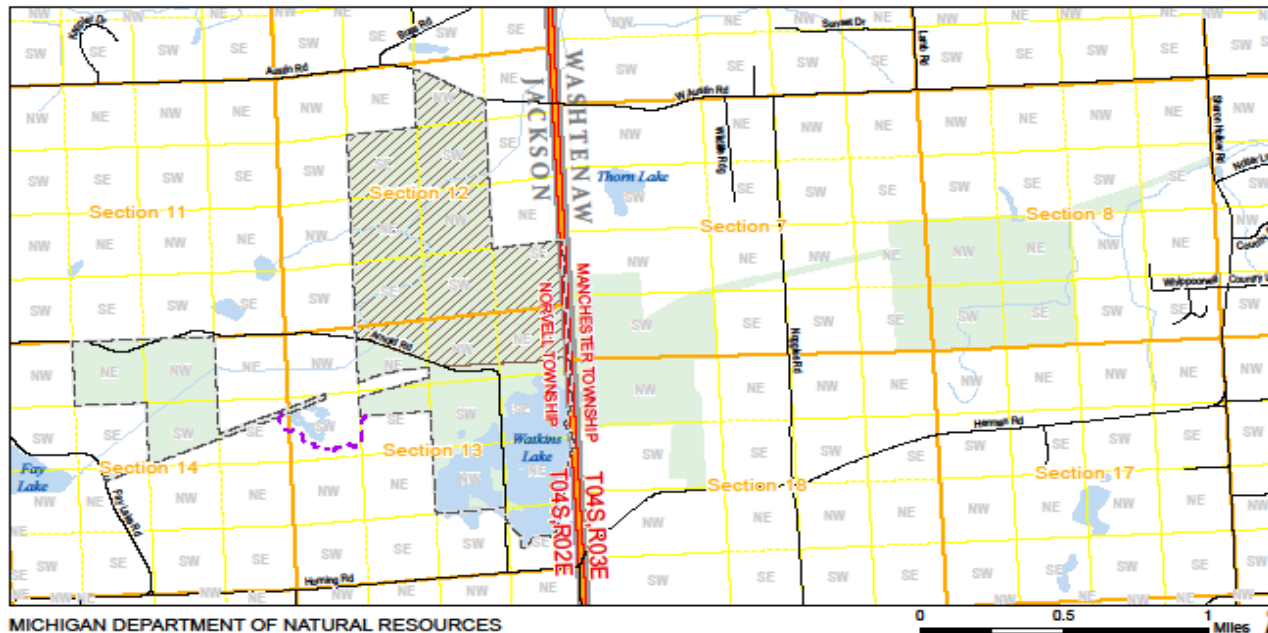
# Management Plan

- The general management plan was approved on October 10, 2018 and included several opportunities for public input.
- The area open to hunting and trapping are consistent with the approved management plan.
- Consists of approximately 400 acres.

# Watkins Lake SP and County Preserve



# Proposed Hunting and Trapping Area



- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| State-owned lands                           | County Boundary          |
| Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve | Town Range               |
| Open to Hunting                             | Sections                 |
| Trail Easement                              | Quarter Quarter Sections |



Updated: 03/04/2019

**Thank You**

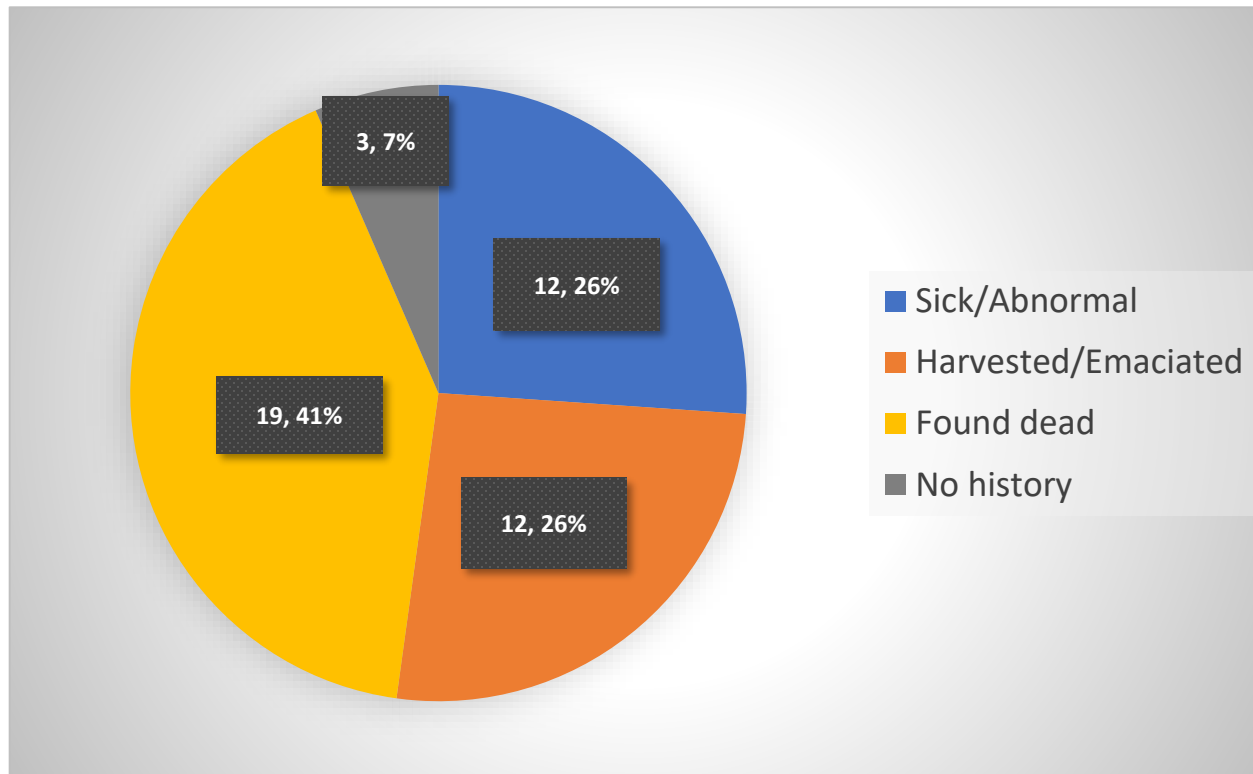


# **West Nile Virus in Grouse: A Surveillance Update**

Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resources Commission – August 2019  
Julie Melott, Al Stewart, and Kelly Straka

# 2017-2018 Ruffed Grouse Morbidity/Mortality Investigations

August 2017 – November 2018: 46 grouse examined



# Objectives of Surveillance

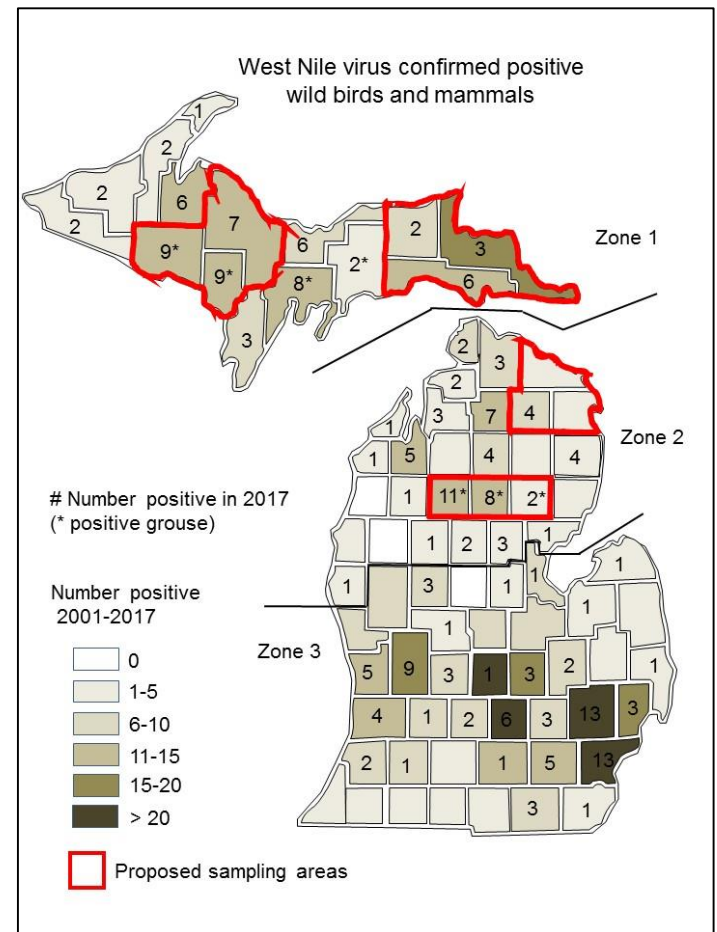


- Three states: Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin
- Assess feasibility of working with grouse hunters to obtain samples and data (age class, sex, location, date)
- Estimate exposure of grouse to WNV
- Evaluate how many exposed birds, if any, actually developed the disease and survived (by pairing serology and heart samples)
- Understand the potential impact of WNV on grouse populations



# Sampling Distribution

- Goal: 400 samples
  - 4 three county areas
- Upper Peninsula
  - West End (Dickinson, Iron, Marquette)
  - East End (Chippewa, Mackinaw, Luce)
- Northern Lower Peninsula
  - Central (Missaukee, Ogemaw, Roscommon)
  - Northeast (Alpena, Montmorency, Presque Isle)



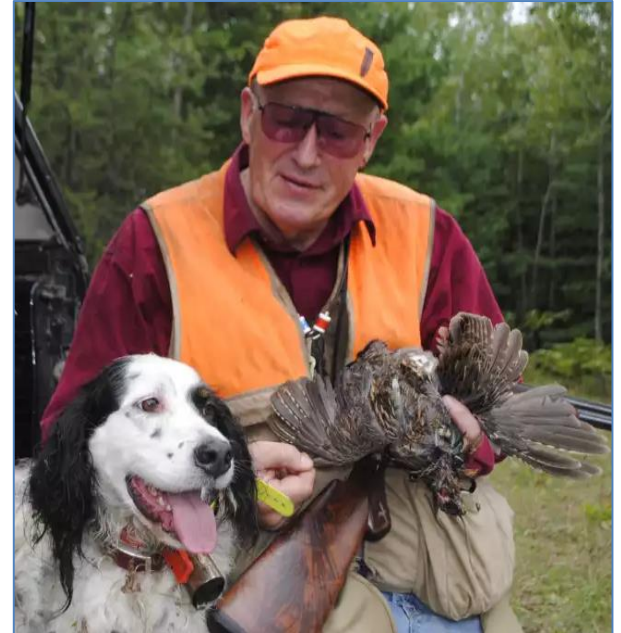
# Sample Collection

- 500 assembled and distributed
- Requested full carcass
  - + Easier for hunters
  - + Age/sex obtained by lab staff
- Requested periodic updates from hunters
- Maintained regular contact with group

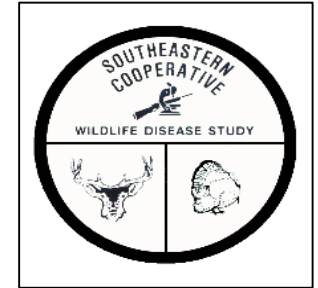


# Hunter Recruitment

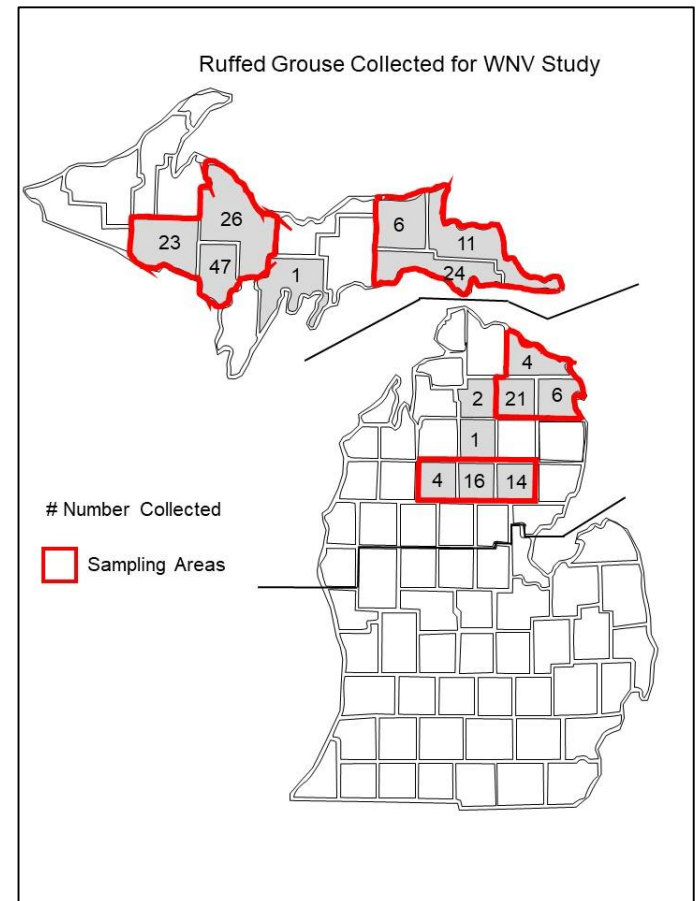
- Focus on “key” grouse hunters
  - RGS members
  - DNR field staff referrals
  - Upland Game Bird Specialist list
- Emailed invitation to participate
- Kits mailed late August/early September



# Results of Efforts



- 209 samples returned
- Most samples = very good condition
  - 10 = no hearts
  - Kidneys and brain saved if available
- Datasheets
  - All had location to County
  - 16 = no name/contact info



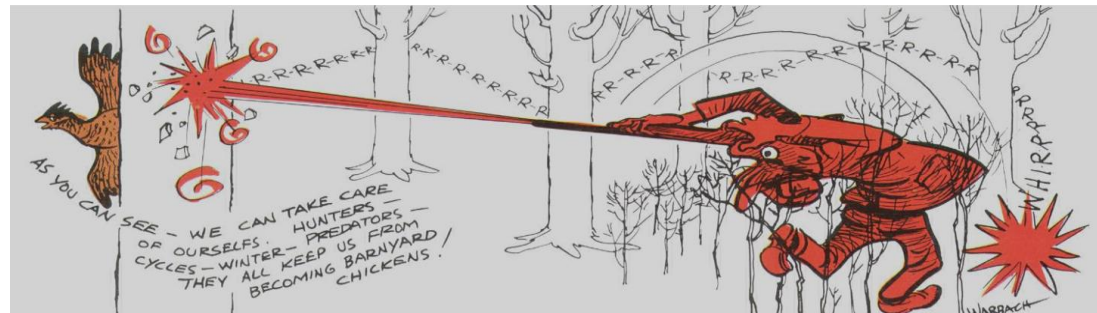
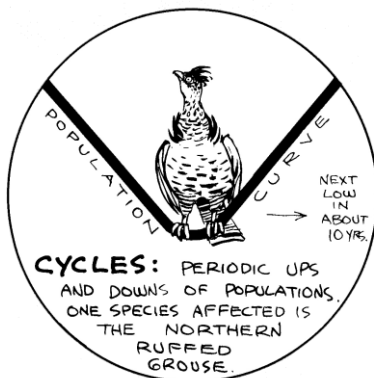
# Surveillance Changes for 2019

- Overall hunters very passionate and excited to help
- Start making contacts earlier
- Increase number of available kits
- Have kits available at DNR field offices



# 2019 Grouse Season Prospect:

- Hunters should anticipate to find more birds than last year
- Population in Michigan is on the rise in the ten-year cycle
  - Peak populations occur in years ending in 9, 0, or 1 (2019, 2020, 2021)
  - Populations peak west to east, beginning in Minnesota, then Wisconsin, then ending in Michigan
  - Michigan is projected to have a population peak in between 2020 and 2021



# Any Questions?

