

# **Natural Resources Commission Meeting**

Policy Committee on  
Wildlife and Fisheries

February 14, 2019

# Proposed Orders

- For Information – NRC
  - Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons (Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 3 of 2019)
  - Bear Regulations and License Quotas (Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 4 of 2019)
  - Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring, and Smelt Regulations (Fisheries Order 200.19A)

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

- Fisheries Chief Update
  - Northern Lake Huron Trout Regulations
- Wildlife Chief Update
  - Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons
  - Bear Regulations and License Quotas



# **Department of Natural Resources**

## **Fisheries Division**

### **Chief's Update**

Jim Dexter, Chief

February 14, 2019

# 2019 Black Lake sturgeon season

- Saturday, Feb. 2
- 403 registered anglers (down from 422 in 2018)
- 6 fish harvested
  - 4 males (52-60", 25-47 lb)
  - 2 females (61-72", 54-80 lb)
  - 3 fish previously captured by researchers
- Season closed after just 78 minutes of fishing
- New this year: successfully used text alerts to notify anglers on ice when season closed!



# Fisheries Order 200.19

- Information-Only, Oct. 2018
- Multiple regulatory proposals
- Focus on recommendation of 7 additional new U.P. stream segments for 10 brook trout limit
- NRC discussion on declining new stream segment proposal
- Commissioner Walters requested removal of 7 new U.P. stream segments

# Fisheries Order 200.19

- Information-Only, Nov. 2018
- Proposed stream segments still included
- Commission Klarr requested removal of additional 7 new U.P. stream segments
- NRC supported that specific request

# Fisheries Order 200.19

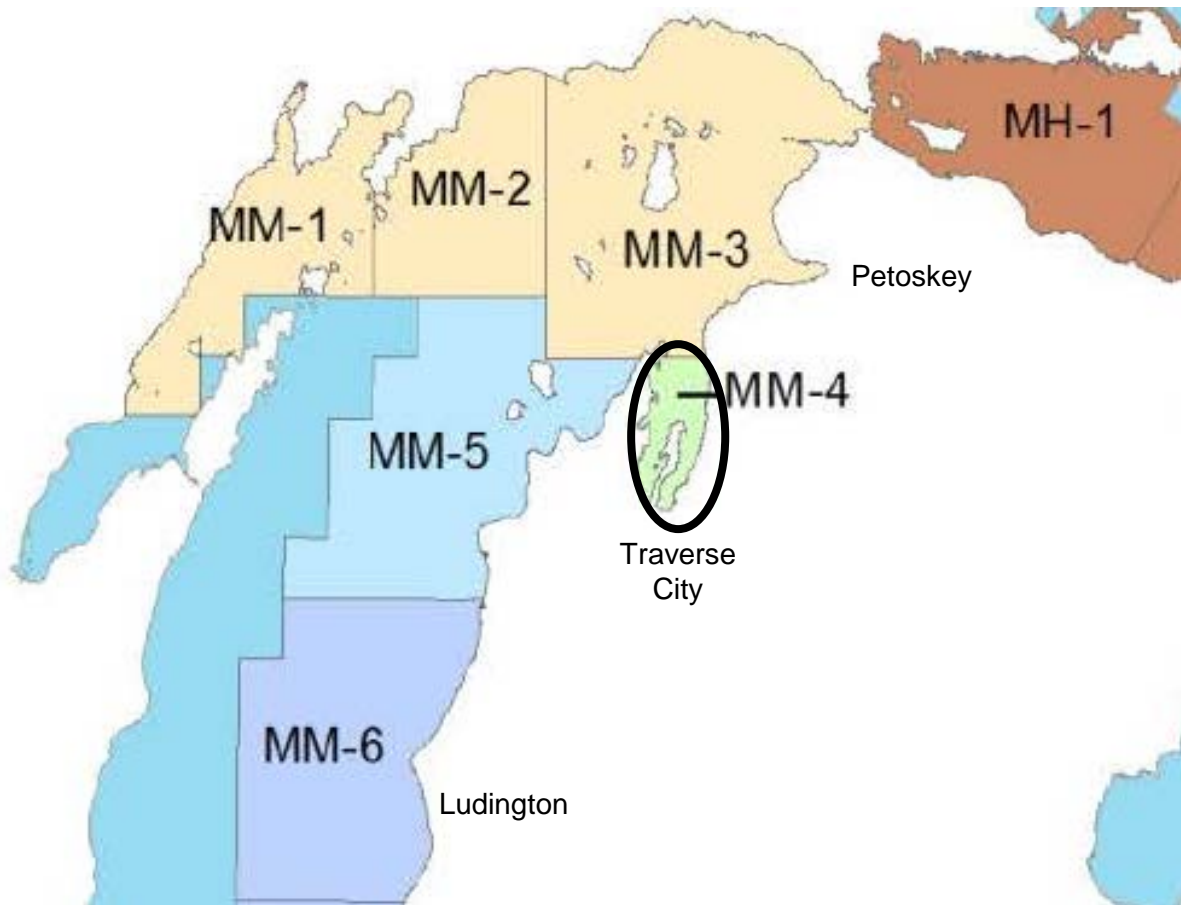
- Action-Item, Dec. 2018
- 7 additional new U.P. stream segments removed, but a clerical error also removed all existing 33 stream segments
- This went unnoticed by DNR staff
- MH1 regulation passed
- 200.19 passed with MH2 regulation also added






# Fisheries Order 200.19

- Populations are highly variable
- Higher bag limit may have potential to reduce populations
- Higher bag limit may lead to less angler activity
- Hard to quantify potential risks with a 10 fish limit
- Environmental variables impossible to control
- No biological benefits of a 10 fish bag limit
- Following one control/treatment stream

# 2019 Lake Trout Regulations in MM-4 (Grand Traverse Bay)



# 2000 Consent Decree - Management

- Federal court document outlining co-management of fishery resources in 1836 Treaty waters
  - Expires in Aug. 2020
- Lake trout harvest limits for each Party in each unit
  - Exceeding a harvest limit by  $>15\%$  = penalty in next year
  - Must take management action to bring harvest in line with limit
- Total State Harvest =  
Creel Estimate  Charter Reports   Release Mortality

# Present Issue in MM-4

- 2018 Harvest Limit = 77,200 lb (stipulated by CD Parties)
- 2018 Harvest = 93,146 lb (+20.7%)
- Penalty = 15,949 lb
- 2019 Harvest Limit = 61,254 lb  
(Stipulated limit minus penalty)
- Target reduction from 2018 harvest = 31,892 lb

# Additional Information

- Fishery is presently open – ice conditions will dictate effort
- Printed fishing guide: Jan. 1 – Sept. 30 open season, 2 fish bag limit, 15” minimum size
- Mortality of released fish contribute highly to overall yield
  - 18,000 lb in 2018
- Public information campaign to encourage anglers NOT to catch-and-release lake trout
  - Successful in 2016

# Regulation Options

1. Fishery open **June 15 – Sept. 2**; 15" minimum size; 2-fish bag limit
  - Estimated reduction = 30,900 lb
2. Fishery open **July 1 – Sept. 30**; 15" minimum size limit; 2-fish bag limit
  - Estimated reduction = 31,400 lb
3. Fishery open **May 25 – Sept. 2**; 15" minimum size; **1-fish bag limit from May 25 – June 30** and **2-fish bag limit from July 1 – Sept. 2**
  - Estimated reduction = 27,400 lb

# Alternatives Considered

- Length Limits
  - Not selected; Department is not supportive of mandating anglers release fish, given 41% hooking mortality
- Expanded 1-fish bag limit
  - Broader impacts to charter industry & suppresses recreational effort “not worth it for 1 fish”
  - Insufficient reduction in total harvest
- Other combinations of monthly closures
  - Could not meet target reduction without closing July and/or August

# Process

- Public meeting in Traverse City (late Feb.)
- Discussion of options with Lake Michigan Citizen Fishery Advisory Committee
- Recommendation for Information at March NRC Meeting
- Recommendation for Action at April NRC Meeting



# Lake Trout Harvest & Management in MH-1 & MH-2

- Lake Huron Lake Trout – 2000 Consent Decree

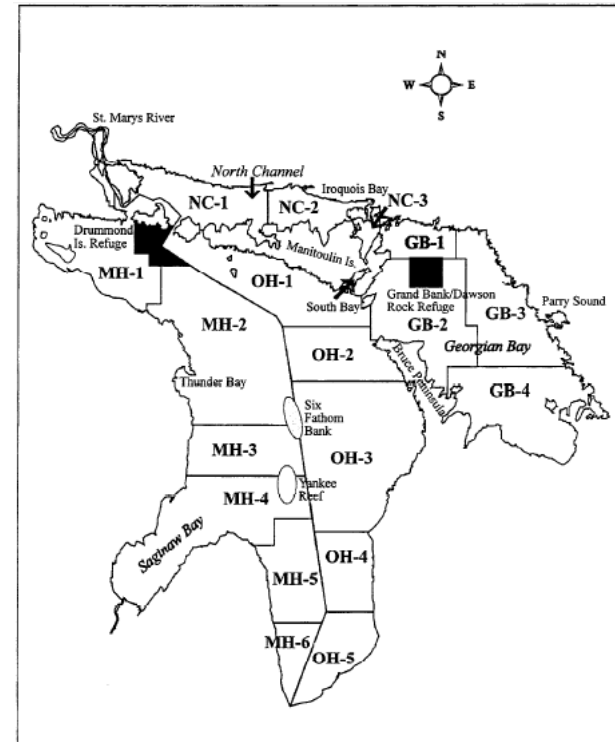
- Dramatic changes in:

- Sea lamprey mortality
- Survival of wild and stocking fish
- Salmon fisheries

- Model for TACs originally based on stocking only

- Transitions to incorporate wild fish
- Questions about scaling

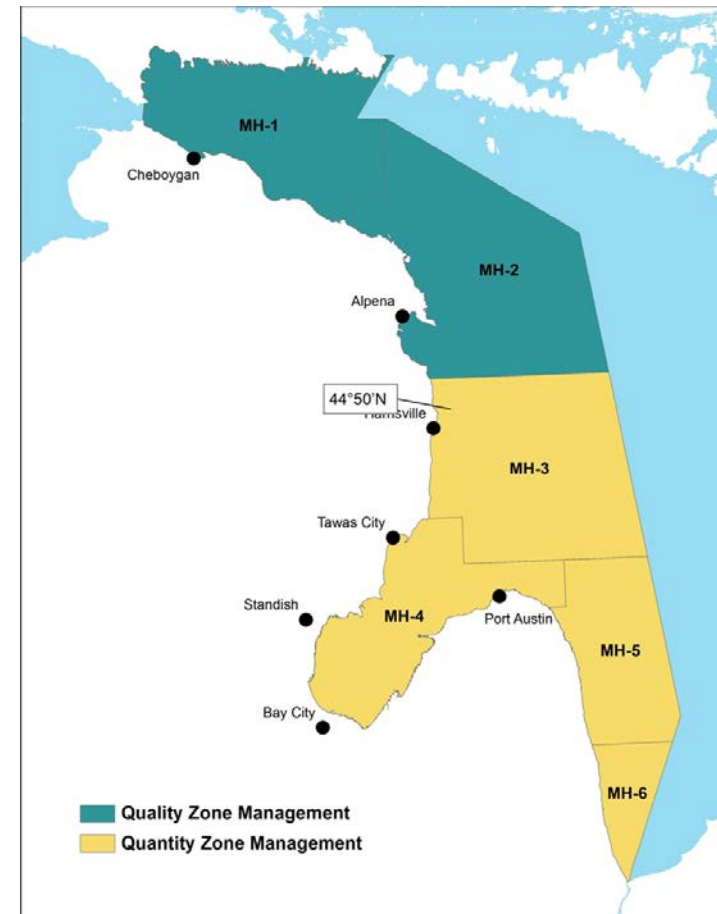
- State harvest issues isolated to MH-1 based on allocation rules



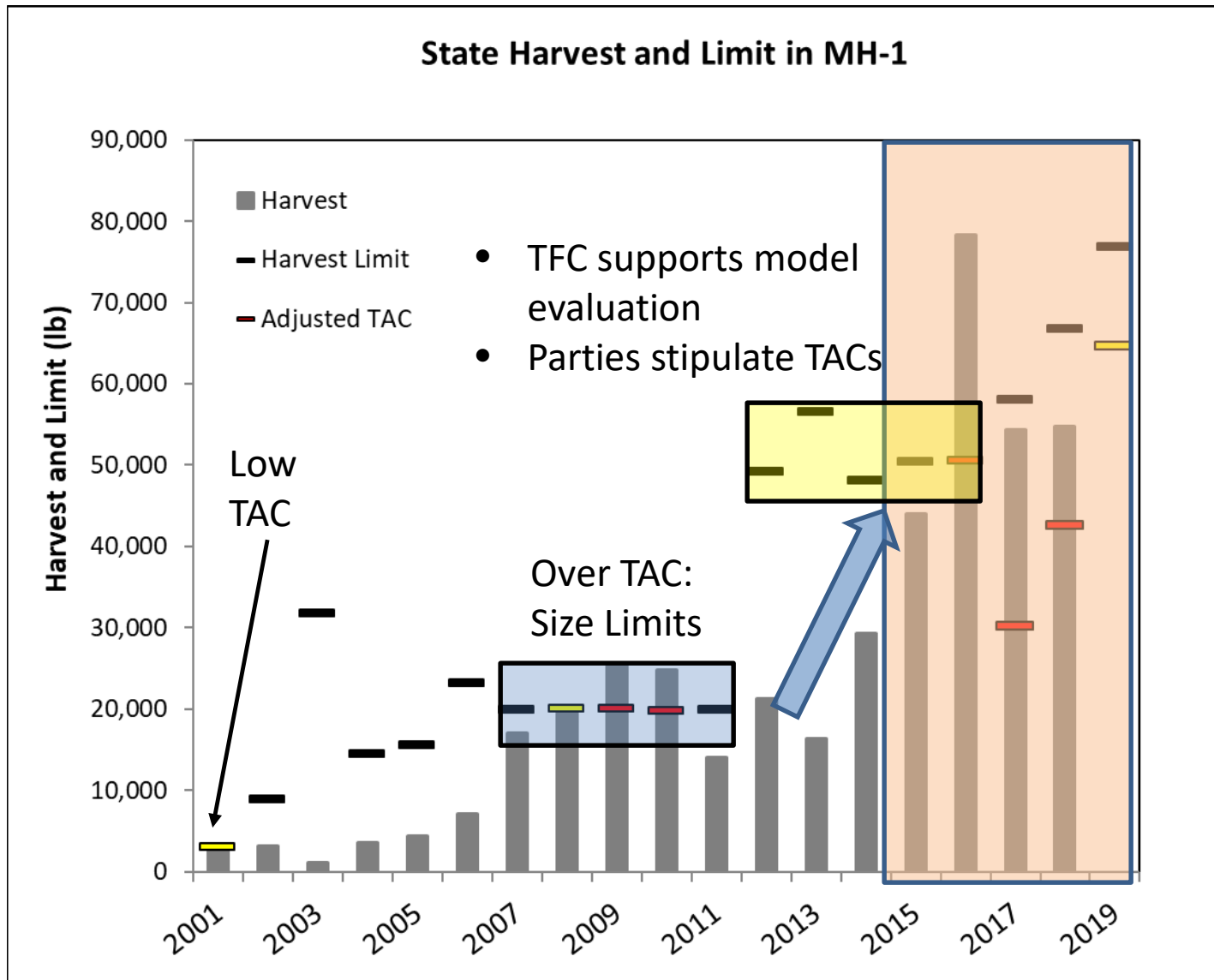
Management Unit	Tribal Share	State Share
MH-1	88%	12%
MH-2	5%	95%

# State Harvest Issue - Timeline

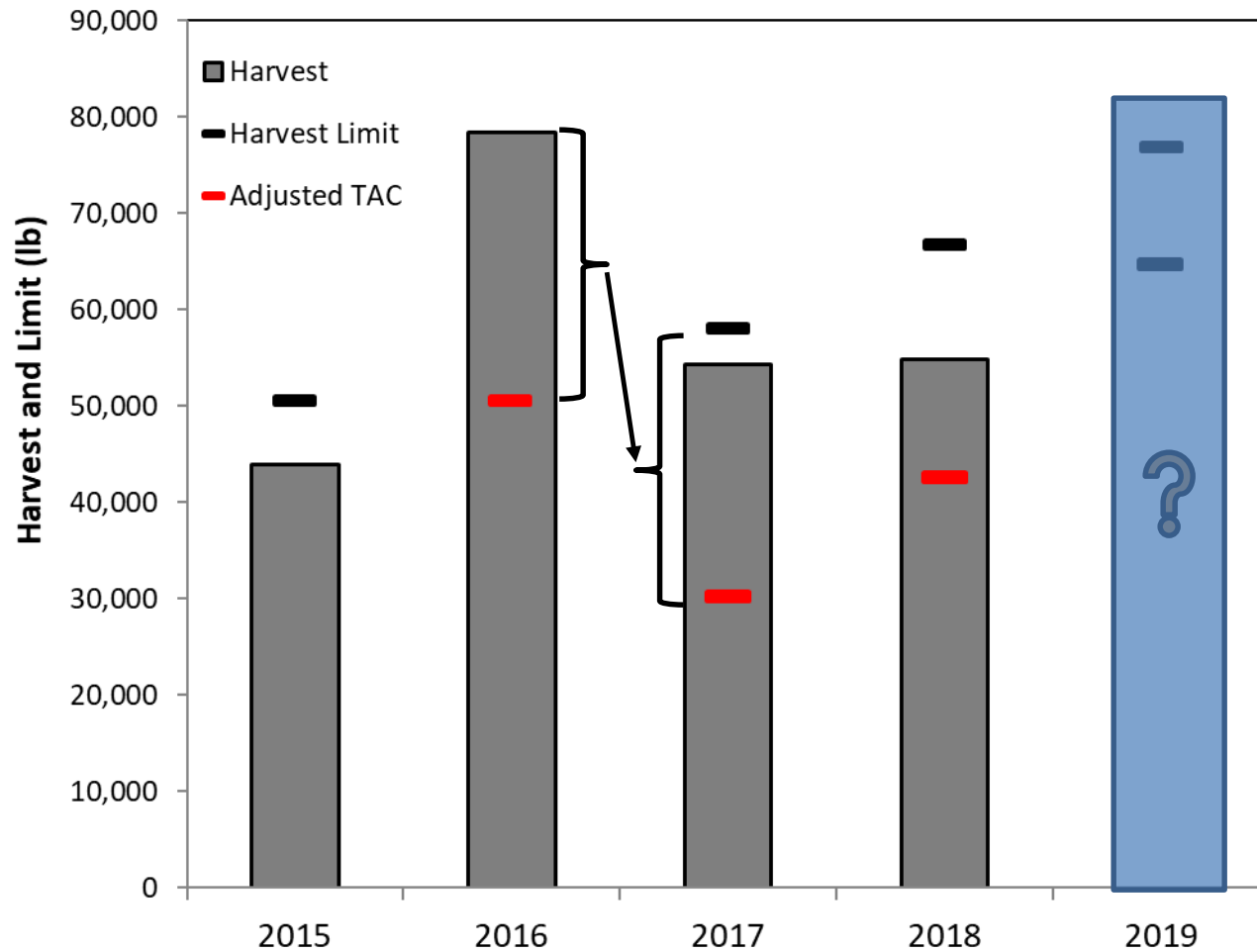
- After exceeding harvest limit in 2016, the State proposed to manage MH-1 & MH-2 as one unit & reduce bag limit from 3 fish to 2 fish/day for 2017
  - Stakeholder pushback on bag limits
  - Tribal pushback on combining units
  - No resolution at Executive Council
- State worked with stakeholders
  - LHCFAC
  - Spring Sea Grant Workshops
  - Salmon/Trout Subcommittee
- Recommendation
  - Reduce MH-1 to 2 fish
  - Consider impacts on 2020



# Lake Huron Lake Trout – 2000 Consent Decree



## State Harvest and Limit in MH-1



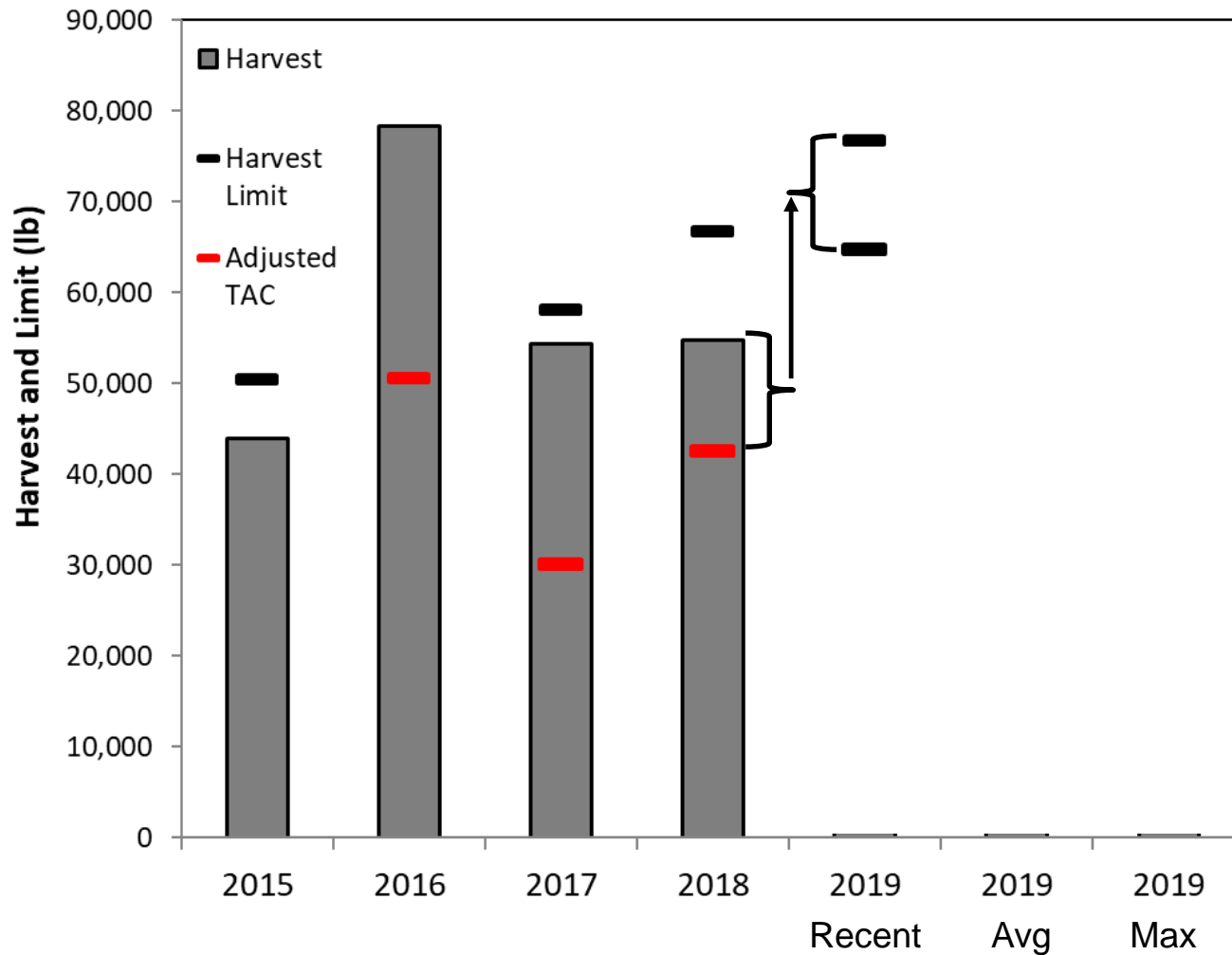
Factors for  
MH-1:

- 15% Rule

- Penalty

- Predictions  
for 2019

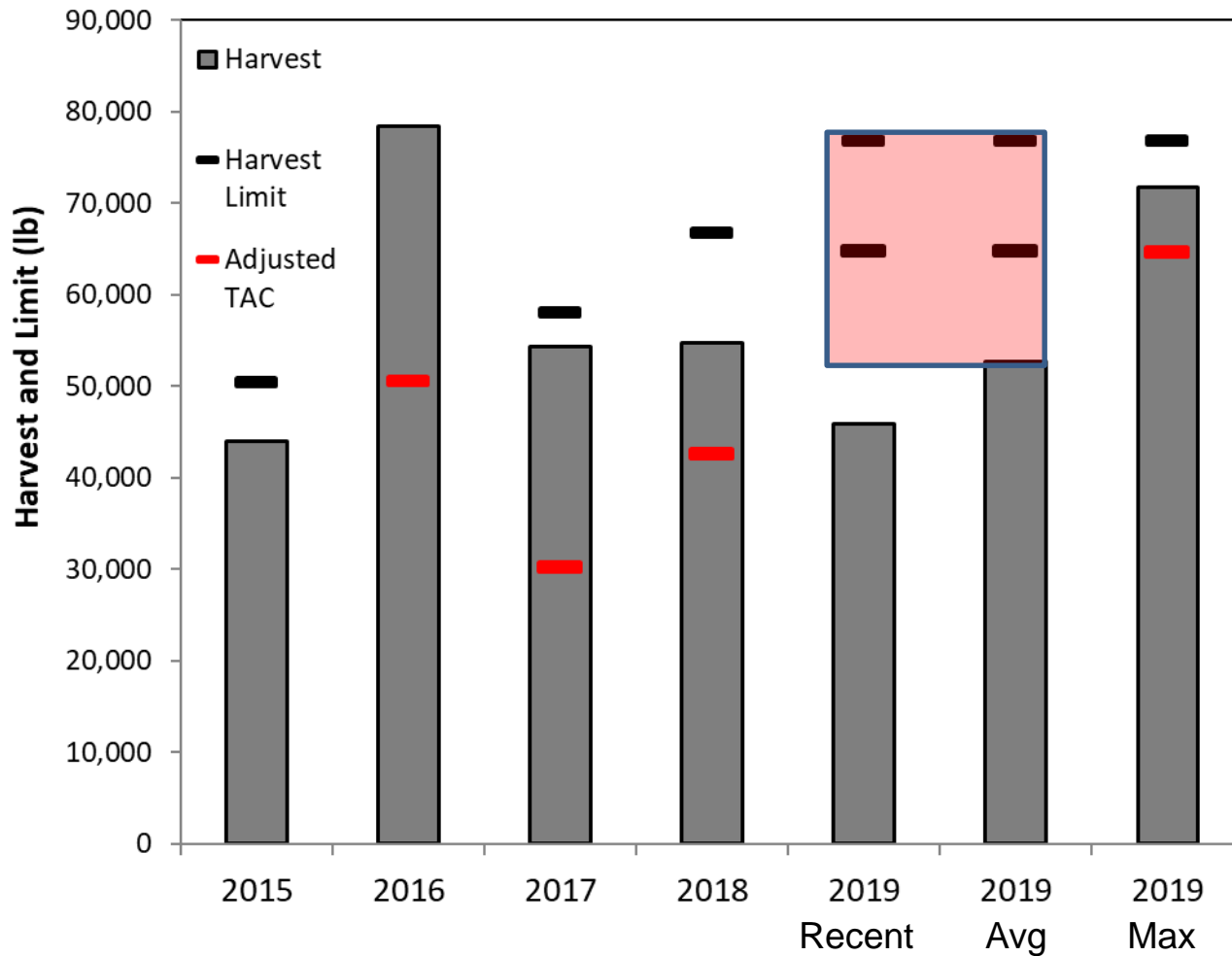
## State Harvest and Limit in MH-1



How can we predict the harvest for MH-1?

- Recent
- Average
- Maximum

## State Harvest and Limit in MH-1

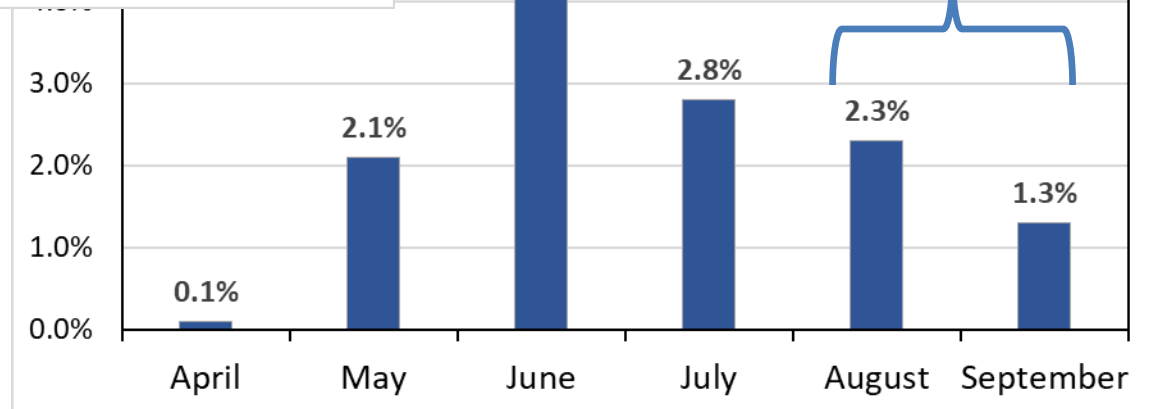
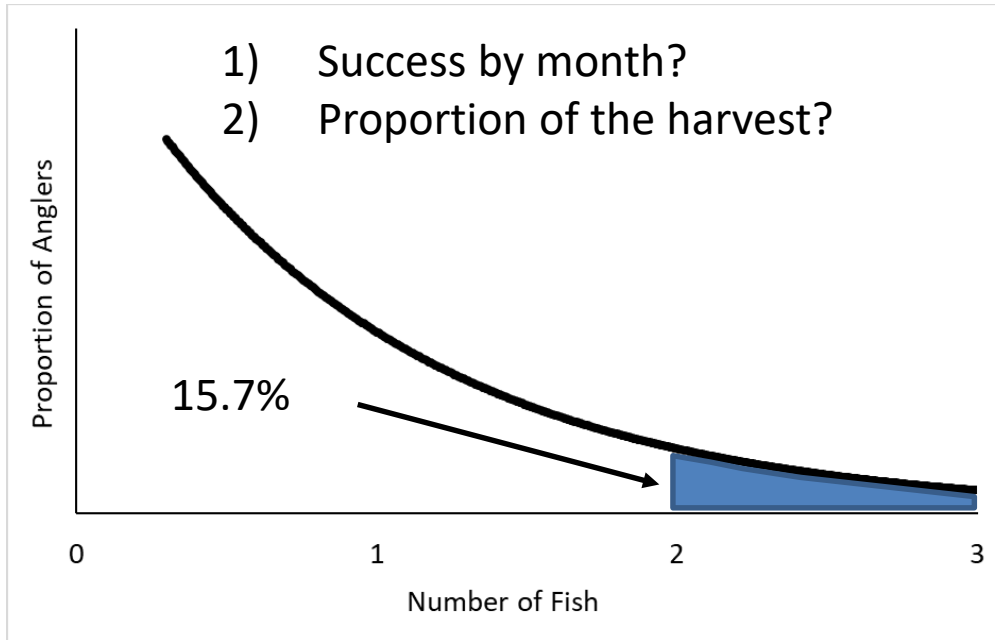


How will harvest be reduced if the bag limit is decreased from 3 to 2 fish in MH-1 all season?

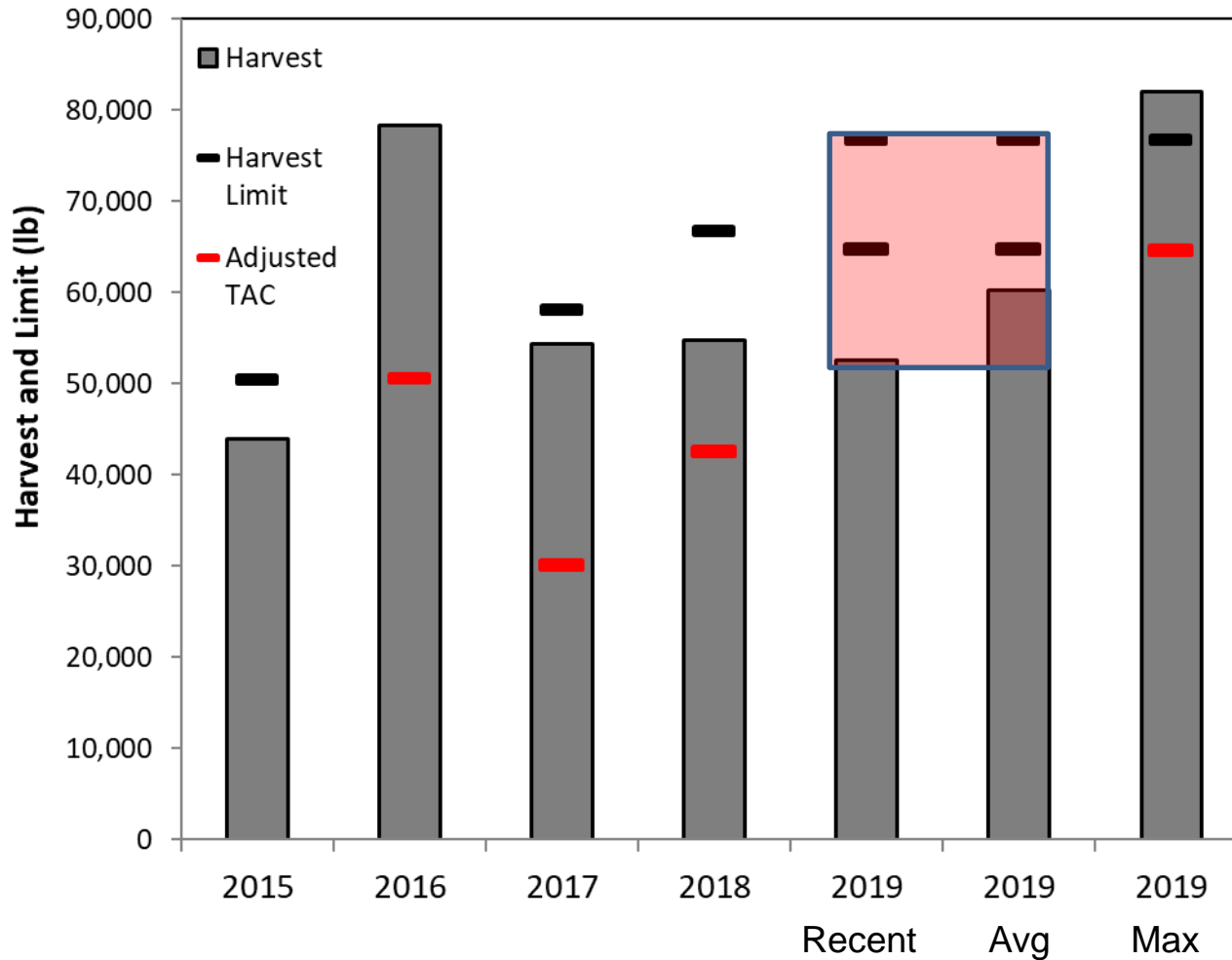
- Predict a 15.7% reduction

# What if the bag limit was reduced for a part of the year?

## Aug-Sept only



## State Harvest and Limit in MH-1



What if the reduction in the bag limit from 3 to 2 fish in MH-1 is only during Aug – Sept?

- Predict a 3.6% reduction in harvest



# Where are we now?

1. We made a recommendation to lower the limit in MH-1 from 3 to 2 fish & NRC approved effective April 1, 2019 but...
2. NRC also added an amendment for MH-2 to increase bag limit from 3 to 4 fish effective May 1, 2019 so...
3. We have evaluated the MH-2 amendment & asked the LHCFAC for input. Managers & stakeholders unanimously agreed to a reduced bag limit (2 fish) in MH-1 for entire season & remain at 3 fish in MH-2.

**Thank you**

# **Wildlife Chief Update**

**Russ Mason**

# Wildlife Chief Update

- Michigan Pheasant Hunters' Initiative
  - Legislature passed PA 618 of 2018 Section 656
  - Purpose: Release pheasants on State Game Areas to:
    1. Improve hunting opportunity
    2. Recruit, retain, and reactivate small game hunters
- Appropriated \$260,000 from General Fund
  - \$180,000 for purchase of game farm pheasants (~5,900 male birds/yr for 2 yrs)
- DNR responsible for survey metrics to determine:
  1. Participation in small game hunting on state game areas
  2. Hunter satisfaction with program
  3. Expansion of the number of hunters pursuing small game
  4. Limited hunter conflicts resulting from release of pheasants



**Thank You**

# 2019-20 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons



Barbara Avers, Waterfowl and Wetland Specialist

# Schedule

- \*Dec. 10, 2018 = Proposed Frameworks
- Dec. 12, 2018 = Waterfowl Workgroup
- Jan. 5, 2019 = CWAC
- February 14, 2019 = NRC for Information
- \*Feb. 25, 2019 = Final Frameworks
- March 14, 2019 = NRC for Action
- April 30, 2019 = Season Selections Due

# Canada Goose Population Status

- Mississippi Flyway temperate-breeding geese long-term increase
- Subarctic-nesting geese stable but variable
- Michigan Canada geese stable the last several years

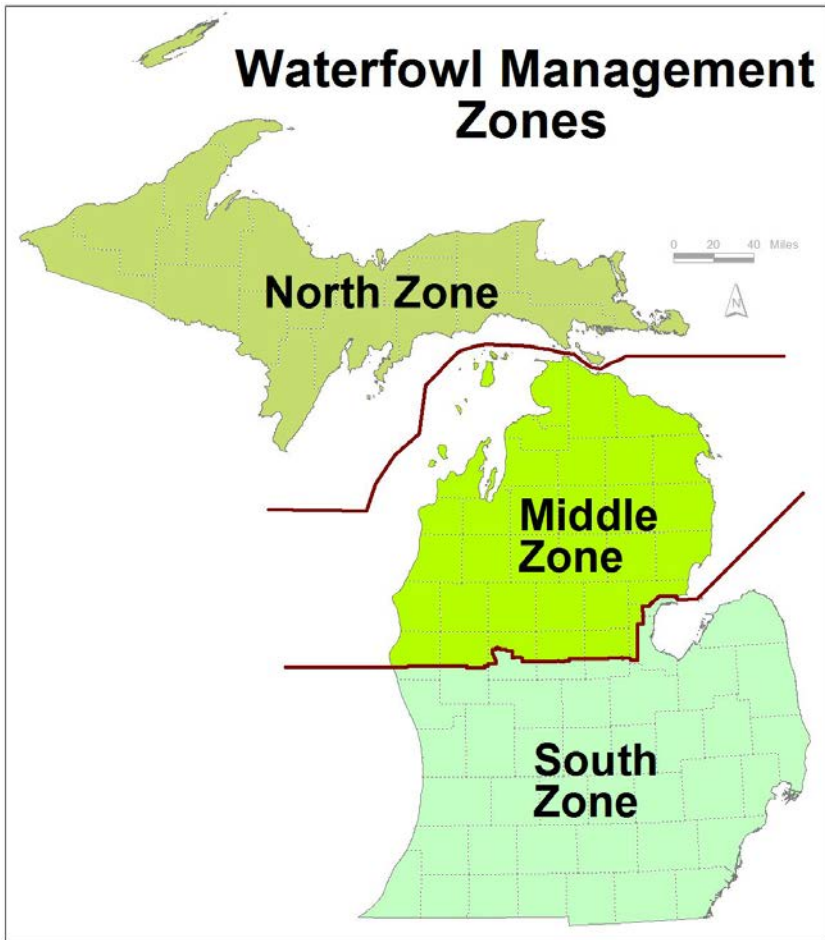




# 2019 Goose Season Federal Framework



# 2019 Goose Season Federal Framework



- Season length and outside dates
  - Maximum 107 days
  - Between Sept. 1 - Feb. 15
- 4 segments allowed

# 2019 Goose Federal Frameworks – Bag Limits

- Canada daily limits:
  - Maximum 5 birds Sept. 1-30
  - Maximum 3 birds remainder of season
- White-fronted daily limits:
  - Maximum 5 birds in aggregate with dark geese
- Brant daily limits:
  - Maximum 1 bird in aggregate with dark geese
- Snow, blue, Ross' daily limits:
  - Maximum 20 birds

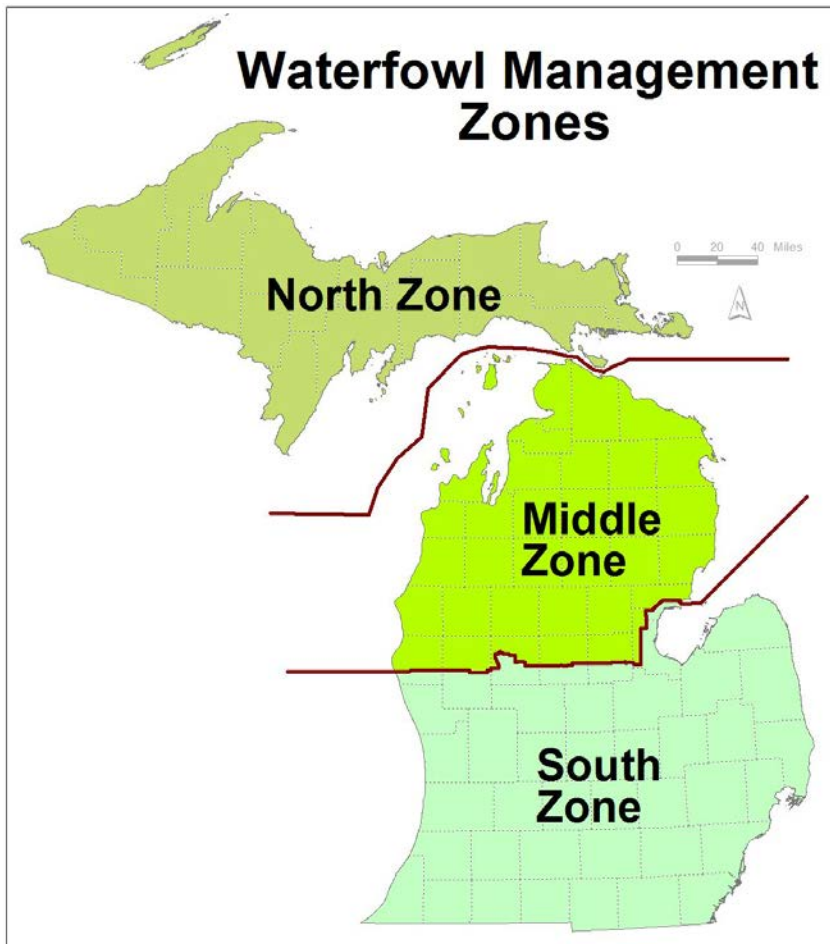
Possession limits 3X daily limit

# 2019-2020 Michigan Goose Season Recommendations



# 2019-20 Goose Season

## Recommendations Season Dates and Bag Limits – North Zone



- Sept. 1-30
  - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 1 of which can be a brant
  - Light goose daily limit = 20
- Oct. 1 – Dec. 16
  - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 3 of which can be Canada geese and 1 of which can be a brant
  - Light goose daily limit = 20



# 2019-2020 Goose Season

## Recommendations Season Dates and Bag Limits – Middle Zone



- Sept. 1-30
  - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 1 of which can be a brant
  - Light goose daily limit = 20
- Oct. 5 – Dec. 20
  - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 3 of which can be Canada geese and 1 of which can be a brant
  - Light goose daily limit = 20

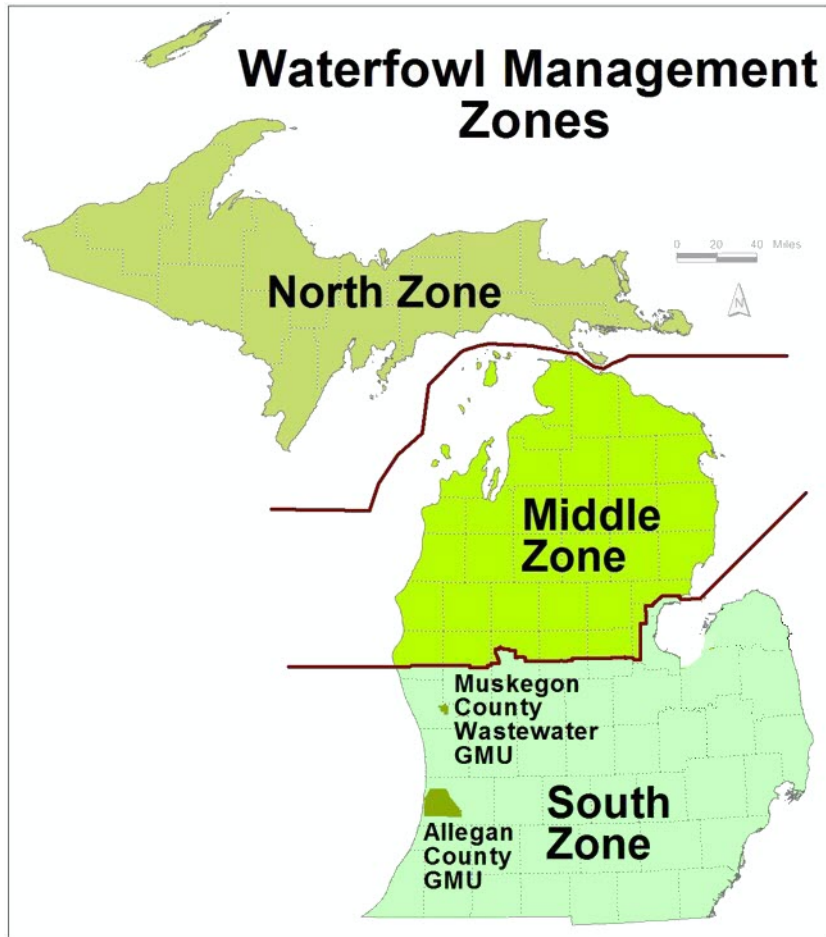
# 2019-20 Goose Season

## Recommendations Season Dates and Bag Limits – South Zone



- Sept. 1-30
  - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 1 of which can be a brant
  - Light goose daily limit = 20
- Oct. 12 – Dec. 8, Dec. 28-29, and Jan. 25-Feb. 10, 2020
  - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 3 of which can be Canada geese and 1 of which can be a brant
  - Light goose daily limit = 20

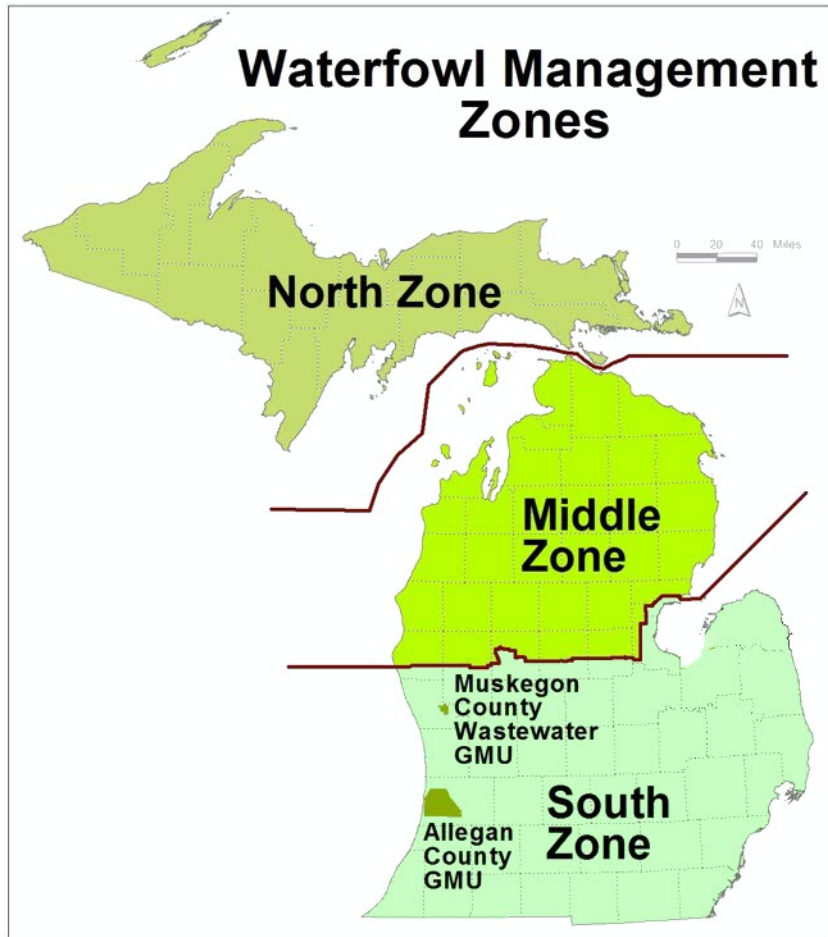
# 2019-20 Goose Season Recommendations – GMUs



- Allegan County
  - Sept. 1-30
    - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 1 of which can be a brant
    - Light goose daily limit = 20
  - Nov. 2-12; Nov. 21-Dec. 8; and Dec. 14 – Jan. 30, 2020
    - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 3 of which can be Canada geese and 1 of which can be a brant
    - Light goose daily limit = 20



# 2019-20 Goose Season Recommendations – GMUs



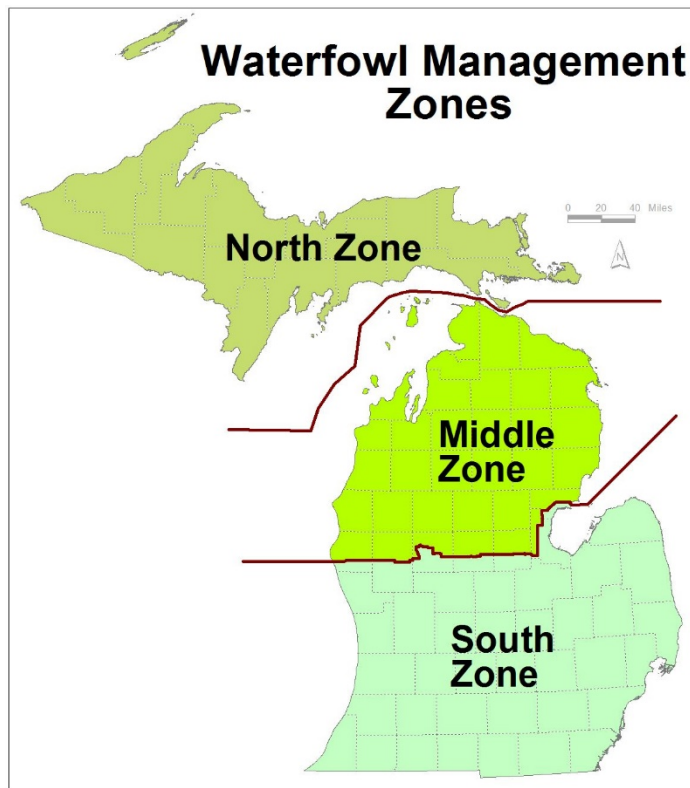
- Muskegon County Wastewater
  - Oct. 19 – Dec. 21
    - Dark goose aggregate daily limit = 5, only 3 of which can be Canada geese and 1 of which can be a brant
    - Light goose daily limit = 20

# 2018 Duck Population Status

- Continental duck populations down or stable from 2017
- Michigan total duck and mallard estimates similar to 2017



# 2019 Duck Season Federal Framework

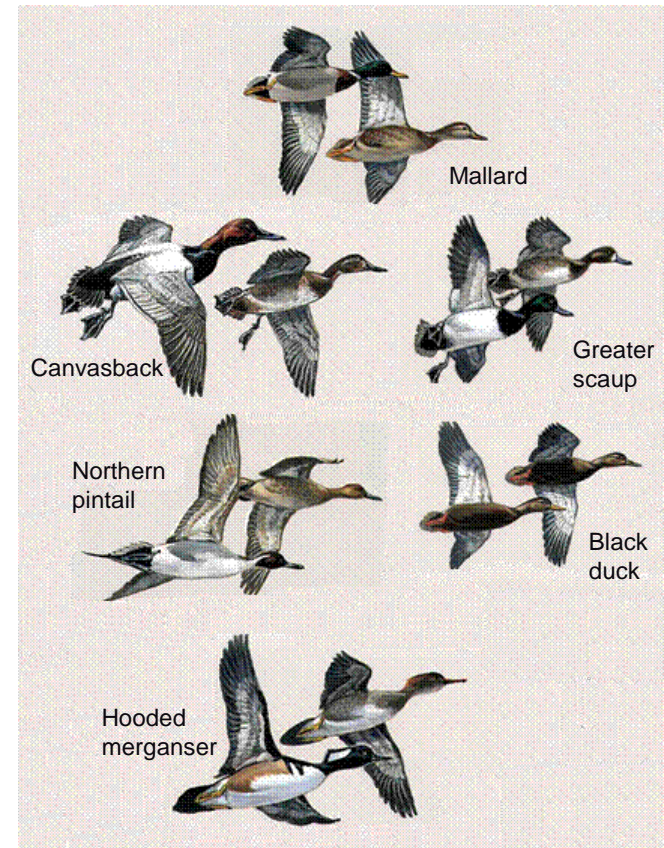


- Liberal season
  - Maximum 60 days
  - Between Saturday nearest Sept. 24 and January 31
  - Maximum 6 birds per day
- Possession limit 3X daily limit
- Seasons set by Zone
- One split per Zone

# 2019 Duck Season

## Federal Framework – Daily Limits

- 6 ducks combined
  - Mallard
    - Maximum 4 birds
    - Maximum 2 hens
  - Wood duck & Scaup
    - Maximum 3 birds
  - Redhead, Canvasback, & American black duck
    - Maximum 2 birds
  - Northern pintail
    - Maximum 1 bird
  - All other ducks
    - 6 birds
- 5 mergansers combined
  - Maximum 2 hooded mergansers



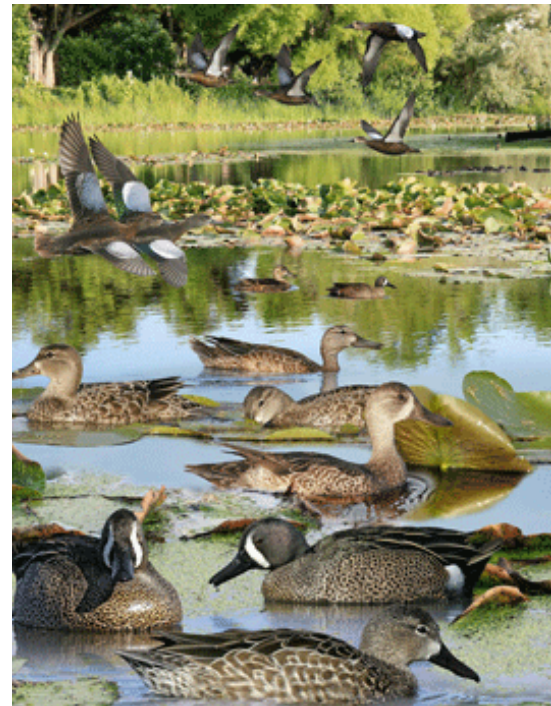
# 2019 Michigan Duck Season Recommendations





# 2019 Early Teal Season Recommendation

- Sept. 1 – 16 Statewide
- Daily limit 6 teal
- Possession 3X
- Hunting hours begin at sunrise



# 2019 Youth Season Recommendations

- Remain 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in September (Sept. 21-22)
- Daily and possession limits same as regular waterfowl seasons

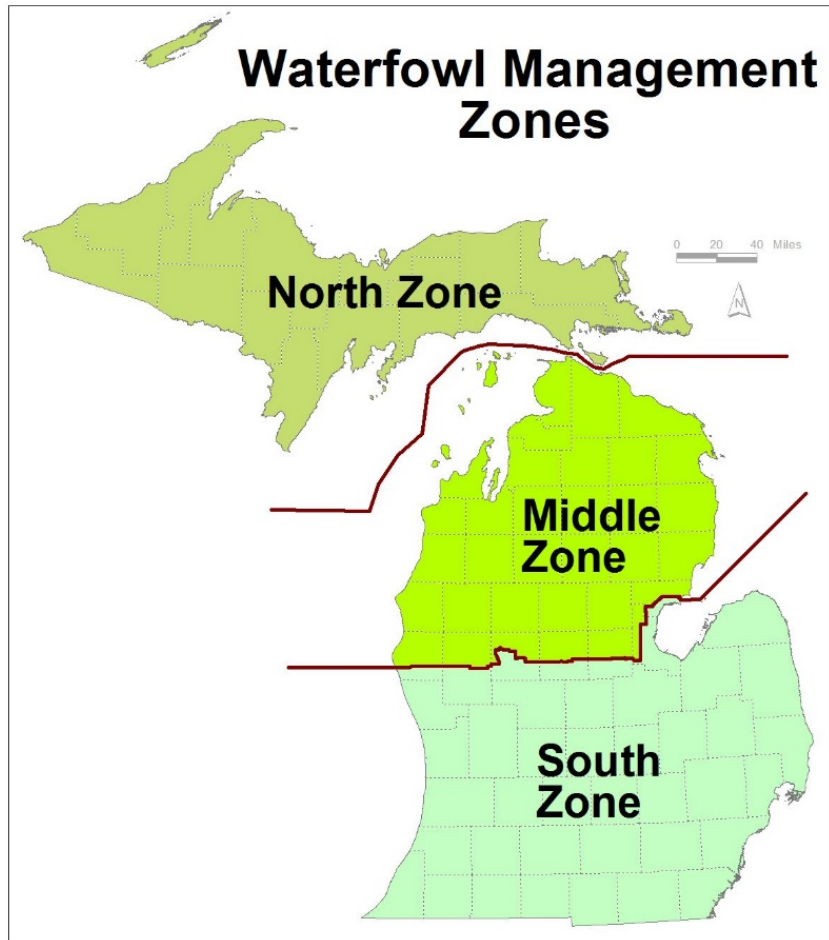


# 3-Year Stable Opening Dates

- North Zone – last Saturday in Sept.:
  - 2019 = Sept. 28
  - 2020 = Sept. 26
  - 2021 = Sept. 25
- Middle Zone – 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in Oct.:
  - 2019 = Oct. 5
  - 2020 = Oct. 3
  - 2021 = Oct. 2
- South Zone – 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in Oct.:
  - 2019 = Oct. 12
  - 2020 = Oct. 10
  - 2021 = Oct. 9



# 2019 Duck Season Recommendations – Dates

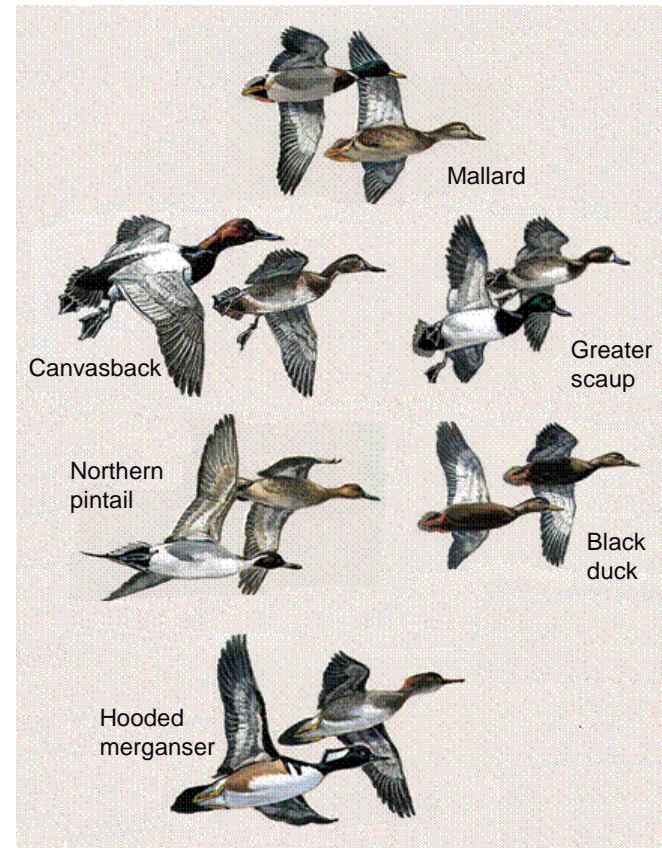


- North Zone
  - Sept. 28 – Nov. 24
  - Nov. 30 – Dec. 1
- Middle Zone
  - Oct. 5 – Dec. 1
  - Dec. 14 – 15
- South Zone
  - Oct. 12 – Dec. 8
  - Dec. 28 – Dec. 29

# 2019 Duck Season

## Recommendations – Daily Limits

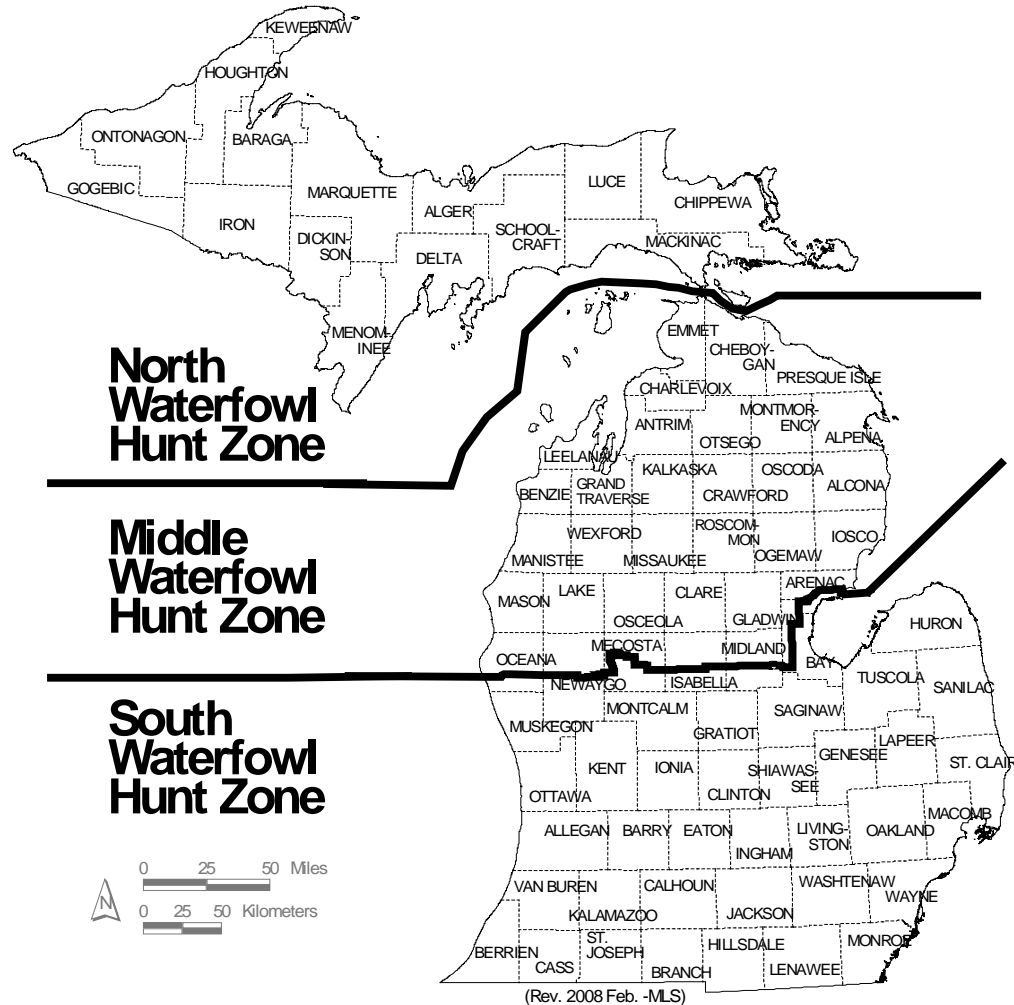
- Maximum allowed under Federal Frameworks



# 2019-20 Falconry Season Recommendations

- Same dates as gun hunting
- Additional days for ducks, mergansers, coots, and moorhens:
  - Dec. 30 – Jan. 12, 2020
  - Feb. 25 – Mar. 10, 2020
- No change to daily bag limits
- Possession limits 3X daily limit

# Duck Hunting Zones and Splits for 2021-25 Seasons



# Timeline

- Federal:
  - Next open season 2021 (for 2021-25)
  - Propose changes at February 2019 MFC Tech Section
  - Reaffirm criteria and announce open season during 2020-21 process
  - Deadline for zone/split changes is May 1, 2020
- State:
  - Jan. 5, 2019 CWAC (outline process, begin discussion)
  - Jan. 11, 2020 CWAC (final recommendation)
  - Feb. 2020 NRC (Information)
  - Mar. 2020 NRC (Action)
  - Implement 2021-22 hunting season (for 21-25 seasons)

# Process

- January – July 1, 2019: proposals submitted
- June, 2019: Zone/Split options published in Federal Register
- July 2019: Waterfowl Workgroup meeting to review proposals
- August 10, 2019: CWAC meeting to discuss proposals
- August – December, 2019: solicit input on submitted proposals
- January 2020: CWAC meeting for recommendation

**Thank You**

# Bear Regulations Cycle 2019-2020



Ashley Autenrieth  
Wildlife Division  
February 14, 2019



# Bear Management Goals for MI

1. Maintain a sustainable population within biological carrying capacity
2. Facilitate bear-related benefits
3. Minimize bear-related conflicts
4. Conduct science-based and socially acceptable management



# Map of Bear Units



# Desired Harvest & Bear License Quotas

- The Process
  - WLD field staff
  - Tribal consultation
  - Internal Bear Workgroup & LED
  - Bear Forum
  - Natural Resources Commission



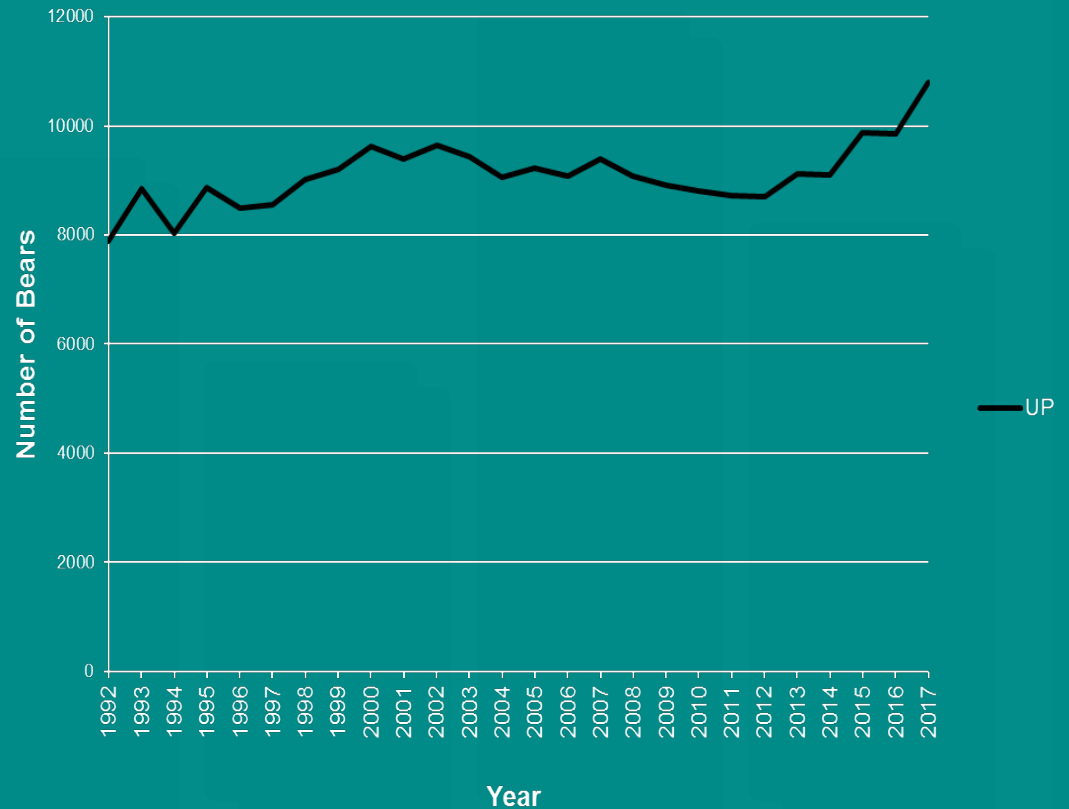
# Upper Peninsula Population Goal

- To increase the UP bear population slightly through the 2019-2020 regulation cycle



# Population Trajectory for UP

- 10,799 bears in 2017
- Up 24% since 2012
- Relatively stable population



# Other Indices Used

- Use of bait by hunters
  - >80% bear hunters use bait
- Hunter effort
  - 22.8 days/harvested bear in 2017, average is 26.8 days since 2008
- Hunter success rates
  - 34%=2017, average is 29% since 2008
- Square miles/bear harvested
- Bear/Vehicle Reported Collisions
- Nuisance bear complaints
- Habitat and mast- 2018 and acorns

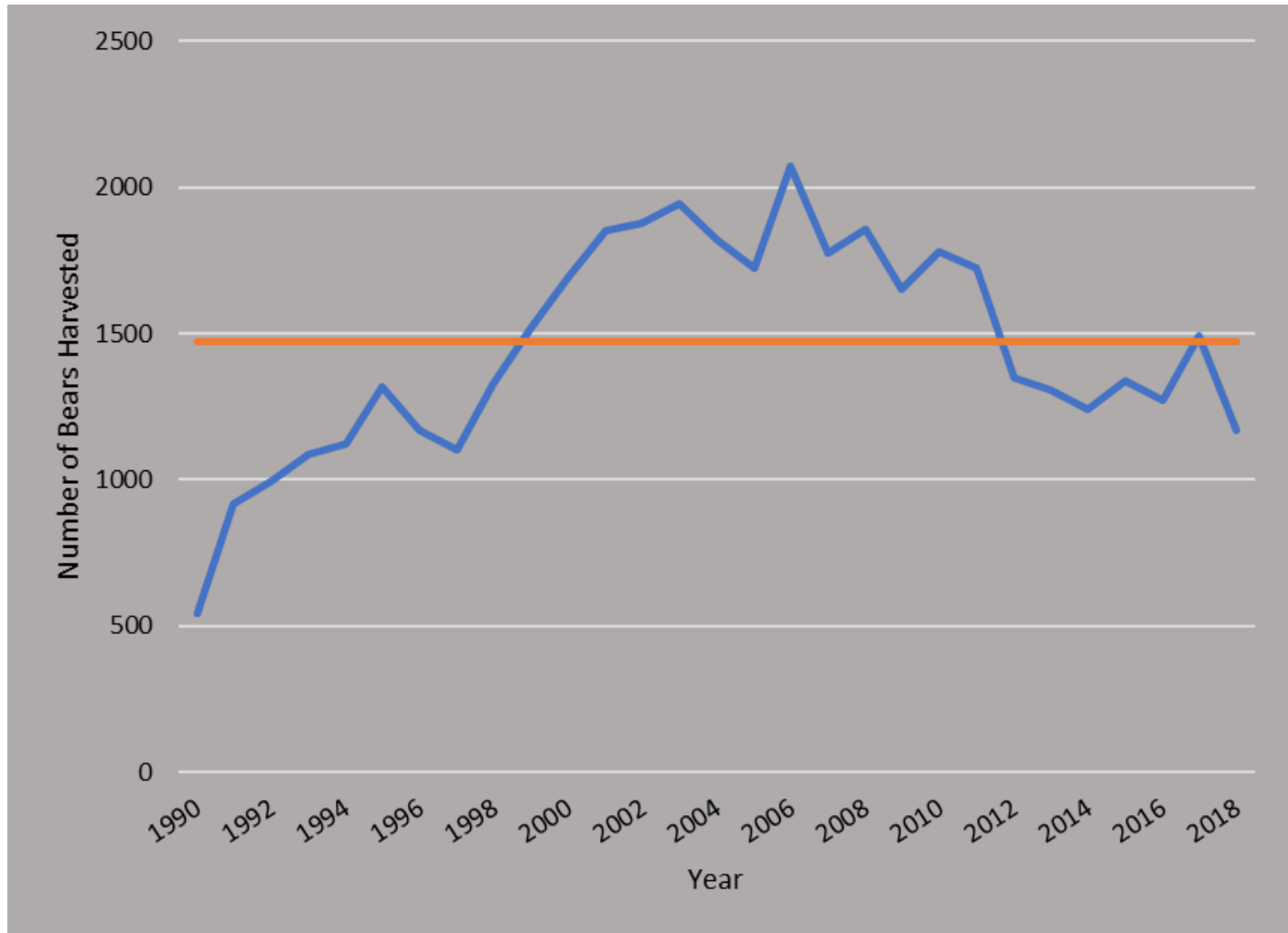


# 2018 UP Harvest

- 1,169 registered bears harvested
- Down 22% from 2017 (1,490)
- Approximately 20% below the 10 year average
- Very good success rates in many BMU's



# 1990-2018 UP Long-Term Harvest





# Summary

- To increase the U.P. bear population slightly through the 2019-2020 regulation cycle
- SCAA model suggests UP bear population is increasing
- Hunter Effort is down
- Hunter Success is up
- Harvest is down



# 2019-2020 Proposed UP Goal Harvest & Quota

- UP Harvest Goal: 1,180 (-20 from 2018)
- UP Quota: 6,010 licenses (-295 from 2018)

Bear Management Unit	Proposed Quota	Change from 2018
Amasa	490	-40
Baraga	1,550	-60
Bergland	1,195	-15
Carney	600	-15
Gwinn	1,060	-145
Newberry	1,110	-20
Drummond	5	0



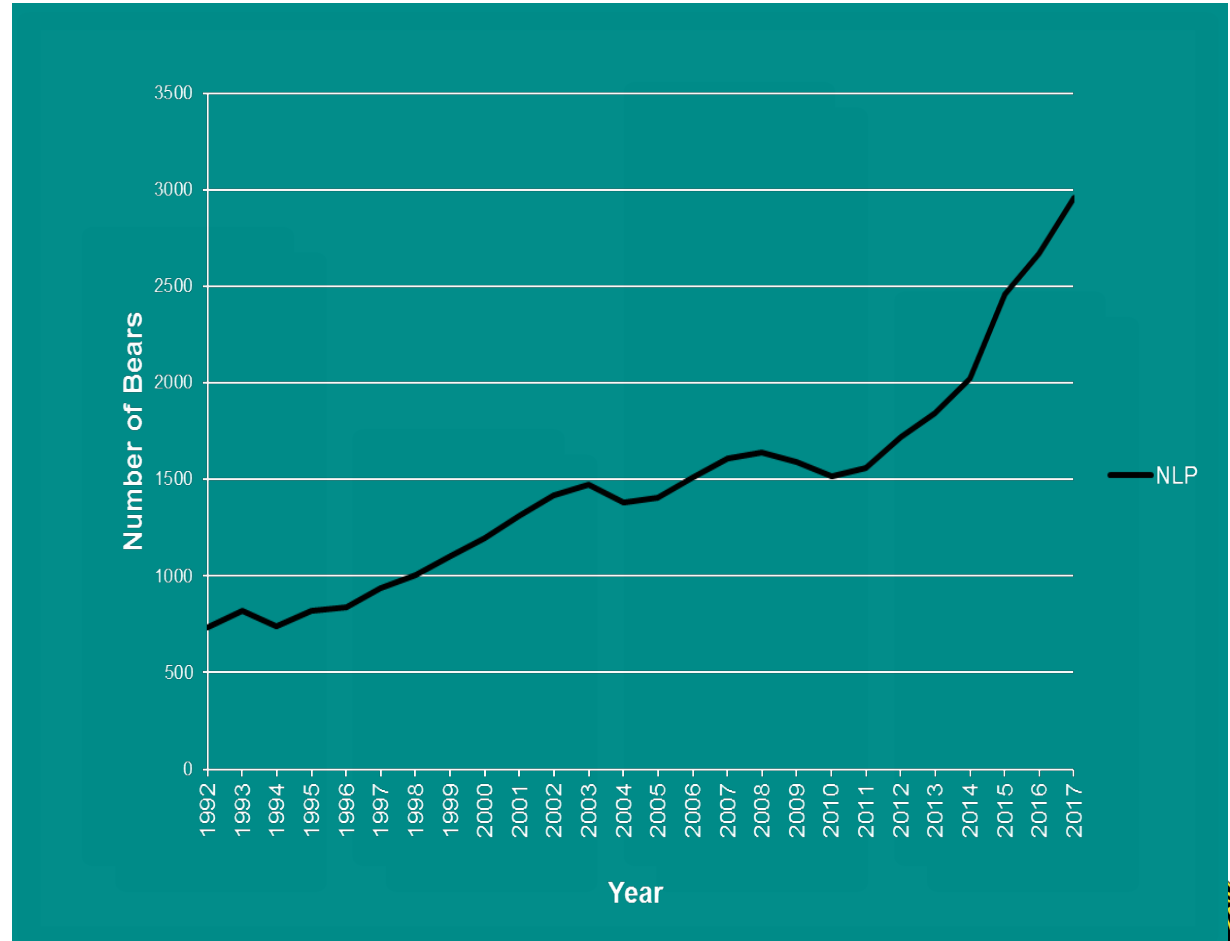
# Northern Lower Peninsula Population Goal

- Slow the annual population growth to achieve a stable population trend within two to four years



# Population Trajectory for NLP

- 2,957 bears in 2017
- Up 72% since 2012
- Increasing population



# Other Indices Used

- Use of bait by hunters
  - >80% bear hunters use bait
- Hunter effort
  - 13.4 days/harvested bear in 2017, average is 16.2 days since 2008
- Hunter success rates
  - 43%=2017, average is 38% since 2008
- Square miles/bear harvested
- Habitat and mast
- Bear/Vehicle Reported Collisions
- Nuisance bear complaints

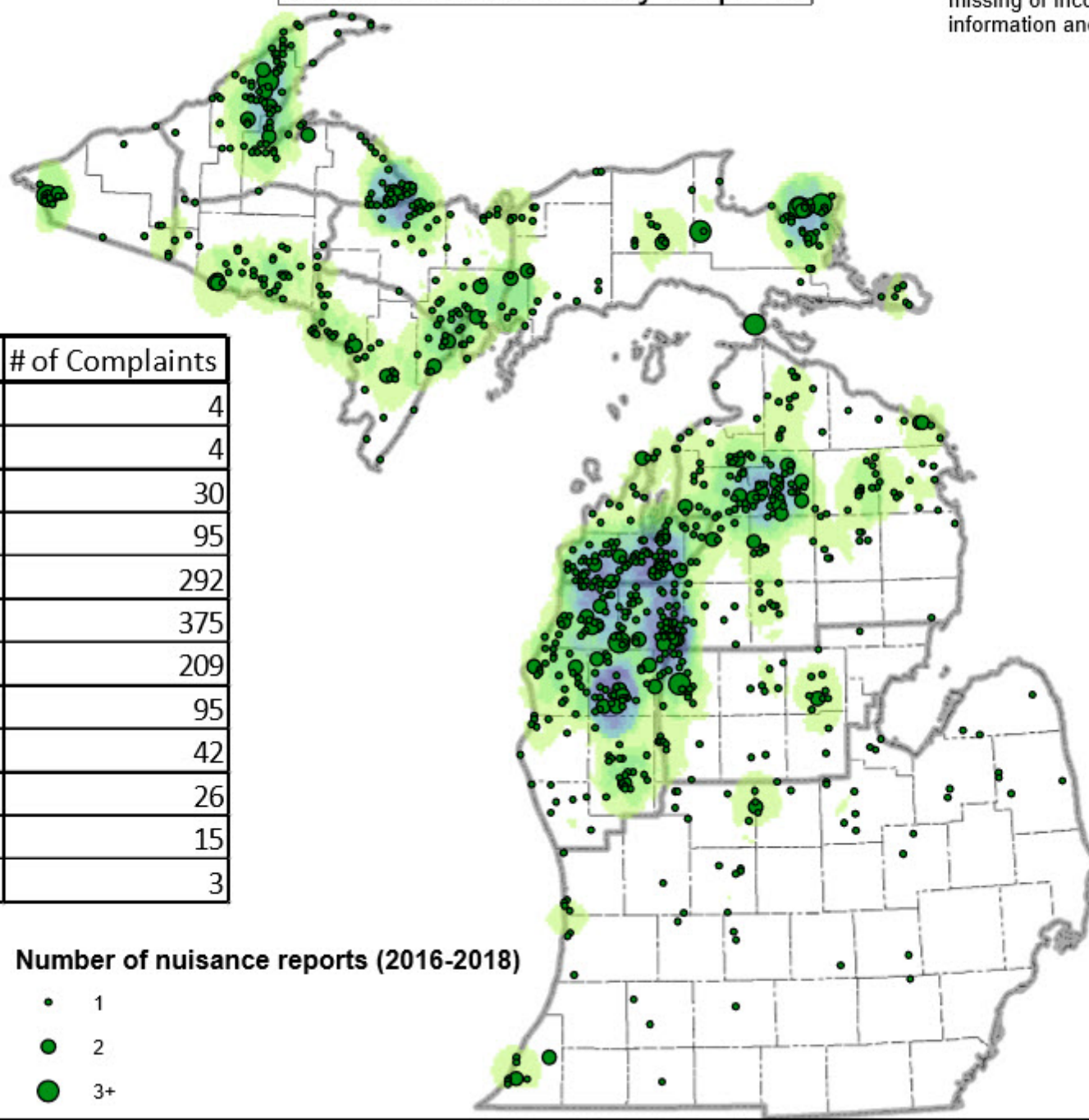
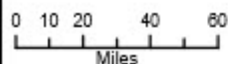
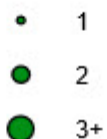


## 2016-18 Bear Activity Reports

Note: 188 activity reports had missing or incomplete location information and are not mapped.

Month	# of Complaints
January	4
February	4
March	30
April	95
May	292
June	375
July	209
August	95
September	42
October	26
November	15
December	3

Number of nuisance reports (2016-2018)



# Management Approach

- Stabilize the bear population
- Partnered with MBHA to purchase more bear traps
- Continue to move problem bears
- Staff on-call during high complaint times (summer)
- Expand HAP for bear hunting in the NW
- May expand abilities to utilize bear damage shooting permits
- Education Campaign



# 2017 Targeted Bear Communication

Katie Keen  
Wildlife Communications Coordinator  
989.385.0336

## BILLBOARD

12 locations  
1,070,152 estimated impressions  
March - May



## RADIO

WJZQ-FM and WTCM-FM  
(74) 30-second spots plus bonus PSA  
placements  
March - May

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Area residents age 25- 65+ who didn't have hunt/fish/trapping or DNR interest  
Estimated reach on Facebook: 11,000–29,700 impressions  
Estimated reach on Instagram: 5,830–15,400 impressions

## INFO CARDS

Cards designed for mass distribution. Camping card for both public and private camping situations. Bird feeder card was for communities, birding events, speaking engagements, etc.

## SECRETARY OF STATE

Branch offices with video terminals aired this silent video about living with bear March - May.



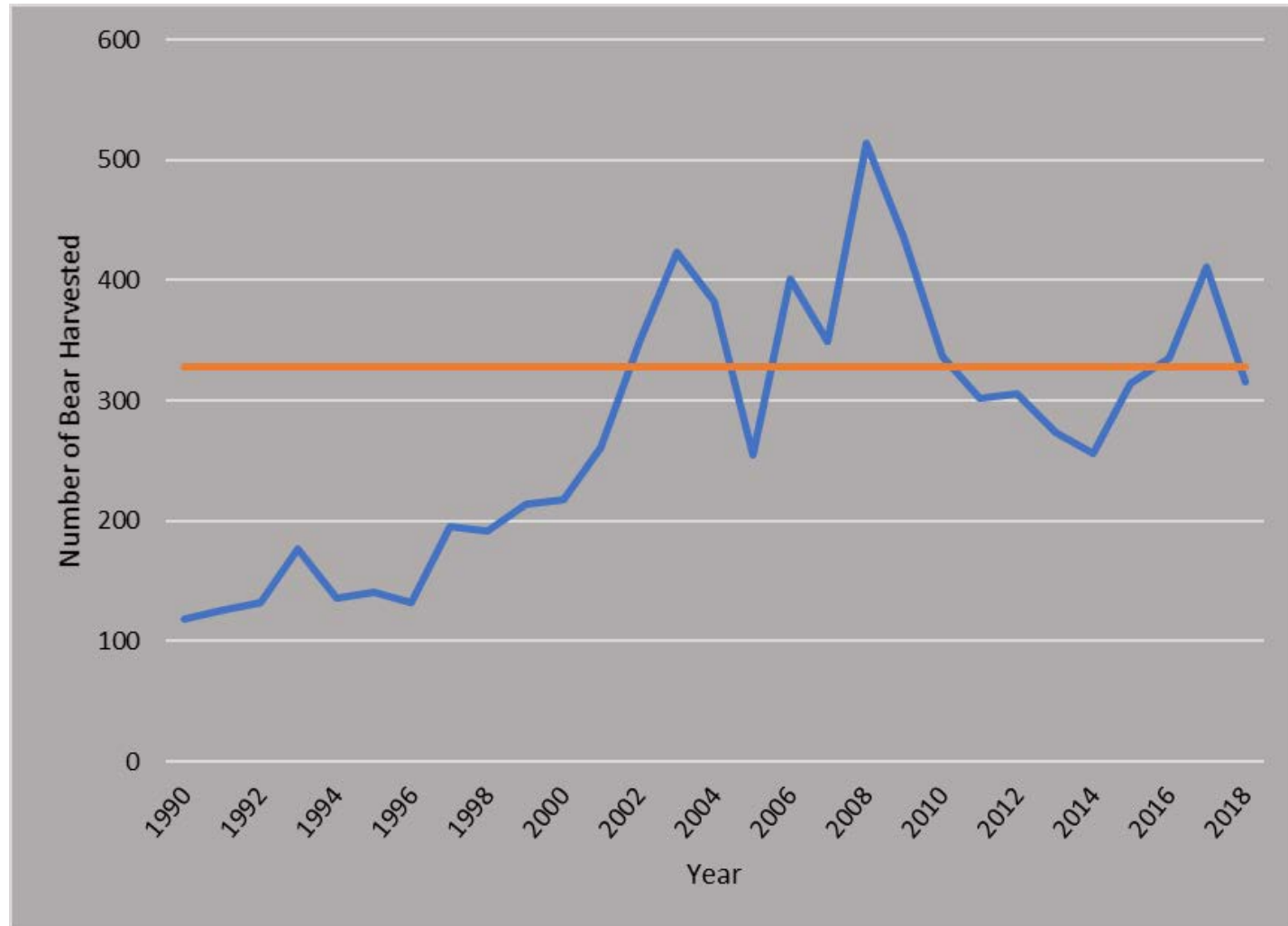


# 2018 NLP Harvest

- 316 registered bears harvested
- Down 23% from 2017 (411)
- Approximately 3.8% below the 10 year average
- Very good success rates in many BMU's



# 1990-2018 NLP Long-Term Harvest



# Summary

- Slow the annual population growth to achieve a stable population trend within two to four years.
- SCAA model suggests NLP bear population is increasing
- Hunter Effort is down
- Hunter Success is up
- Harvest is down



# 2019-2020 Proposed NLP Goal Harvest & Quota

- NLP Harvest Goal: 400 (+45 from 2018)
- NLP Quota: 1,070 licenses (+115 from 2018)
  - Baldwin Unit: 260 (+105 licenses from 2018)
  - Red Oak Unit: 700 (no change from 2018)
  - Gladwin Unit: 110 (+10 licenses from 2018)



# Proposed Quota Summary

- UP Quota: 6,010 (-1% from 2018)
- NLP Quota: 1,070 (+12% from 2018)
- Statewide Quota: 7,080 (+0.6% from 2018)



# Other Regulatory Proposed Changes



# Eliminate Baldwin North BMU

- Currently the Baldwin North Unit encompasses and begins:
  - Benzie and Leelanau counties and the portions of Kalkaska and Grand Traverse Counties west of US 131
  - 7 days prior to the rest of the NLP bear season and continues through the end of the NLP bear season (16 day season as opposed to 9)
  - Created to manage ongoing bear conflicts
- Proposed Change: Dissolve the unit to focus on ongoing bear conflicts across the entire Baldwin Unit

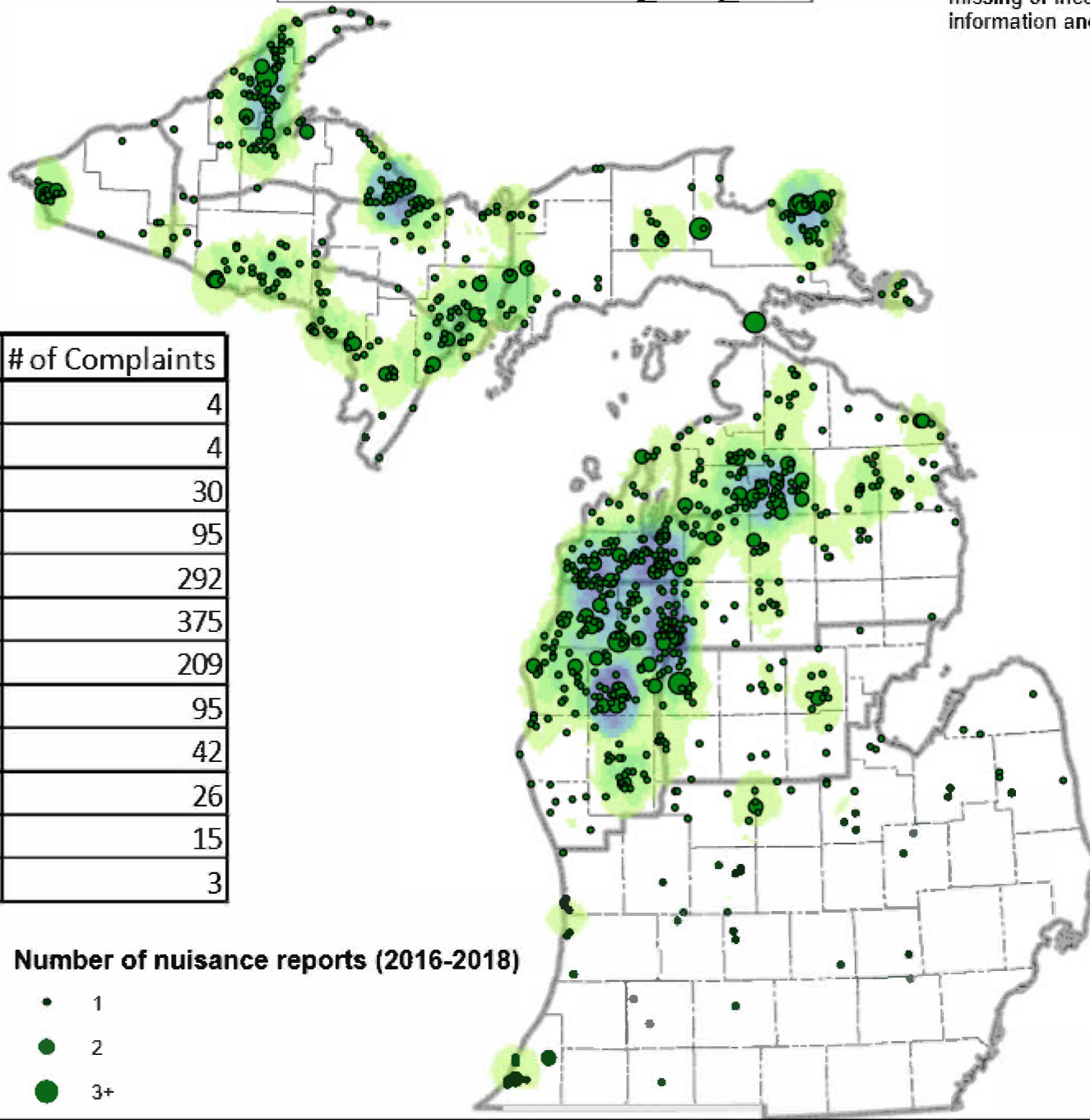
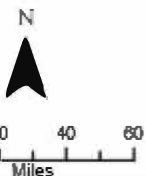
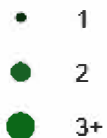


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Number of nuisance reports (2016-2018)





# Concurrent Season Openers in the UP

- Current UP bear season begins September 10
- Proposed Change: open all UP bear seasons the Wednesday before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in September
  - First 5 days would still be for bait-only hunting
  - Hunting with dogs would begin the Monday following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in September



# Concurrent Season Openers in the NLP

- Current NLP bear season begins the first Sunday following September 15<sup>th</sup>
- Proposed Change: open all NLP bear season the Sunday following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in September
  - First day of the season would remain open for bait only hunters
  - Hunting with dogs would start the Monday following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in September



# Concurrent Season Openers

- Goal is to reduce conflict between the Liberty Hunt and when dogs can be used
  - Need to move the Liberty Hunt to the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in September during the 2019 deer regulations cycle in order to achieve this



# Limit Maximum Hole Diameter for Barrels Used on Private Land to One Inch

- Currently there are no restrictions on the size of a hole in a barrel used for the purpose of baiting bears on private land
- Proposed regulation: Limit the maximum hole diameter to 1 inch
  - Lessens the chance for injuries or death of bear from being caught in the barrel
  - Limits the amount of bait that can be dispersed/released



# Allow Nonresidents to Dog Train in Amasa, Bergland and Carney BMUs

- Currently only residents of MI may train their hunting dogs on bears
- Proposed Change: Allow nonresidents to train their dogs in the Amasa, Bergland, Carney
  - Provides additional recreational opportunity for nonresidents
  - Potential for increased user conflict
  - Will re-evaluate after two years



For NRC Consideration



# Allow Use of Barrels for Baiting on Public Land

- Currently barrels intended to bait bear during the bear hunting season are only allowed on private land
- >80% bear hunters rely primarily on bait to locate and attract bears, likely won't bring new hunters into baiting but may bring more hunters onto state land to hunt
- Potential Concerns:
  - Increased litter and damage to trees may be reduced if hunters are required to have their name and contact information on each barrel
  - Increased illegal off-road vehicle use may be deterred if barrels are only allowed a set distance away from maintained roads
  - Public and Private Landowners- proposal has not been discussed with the US Forest Service, Commercial Forest Act Landowners or County landowners
  - Bear Forum Vote- the majority of the bear forum was against this proposal (9 members opposed, 6 members supported, 2 abstained)



Thank You