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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Unit</th>
<th>Tribal Share</th>
<th>State Share</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MH-1</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH-2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
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</table>
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

• TFC supports model evaluation
• Parties stipulate TACs

State Harvest and Limit in MH-1

- Harvest
- Harvest Limit
- Adjusted TAC

Low TAC

Over TAC: Size Limits
Factors for MH-1:

- 15% Rule
- Penalty
-Predictions for 2019
How can we predict the harvest for MH-1?

- Recent
- Average
- Maximum
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?

1) Success by month?
2) Proportion of the harvest?

Aug-Sept only

- Aug-Sept only
- 15.7%
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
2019-20 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
  - 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 3rd 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 – 1st Saturday in Oct.:
  – 2019 = Oct. 5
  – 2020 = Oct. 3
  – 2021 = Oct. 2

• South Zone – 2nd Saturday in Oct.:
  – 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
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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Bear Management Unit</th>
<th>Proposed Quota</th>
<th>Change from 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amasa</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baraga</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>-60</td>
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<td>Bergland</td>
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<td>-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carney</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwinn</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>-145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newberry</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drummond</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th># of Complaints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of nuisance reports (2016-2018)

- 1
- 2
- 3+
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
### 2016-18 Bear Activity Reports

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**Number of nuisance reports (2016-2018)**

- 1
- 2
- 3+

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**Scale:**
- 0
- 10
- 20
- 30
- 40
- 50
- 60
- 70
- 80
- 90
- 100

**Miles:**
Concurrent Season Openers in the UP

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

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