

2020 Michigan Elk Digest



Reminders: New elk license quotas increased, new elk management units and boundaries and mentored youth hunters can now apply for a license or chance. The application period is May 1 through June 1 and drawing results will be posted on July 6.

RAP (Report All Poaching): 800-292-7800

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The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the State's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) is a seven-member public body whose members are appointed by the governor and subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. The NRC has exclusive authority to regulate the taking of game and sportfish.

The commission conducts monthly, public meetings in locations throughout Michigan. Citizens are encouraged to become actively involved in these public forums. For more information visit Michigan.gov/NRC.

NOTICE: This brochure is not a legal notice or a complete collection of hunting regulations and laws. It is a condensed digest issued for hunter's convenience. Copies of Wildlife Conservation Orders, which contain complete listings of regulations and legal descriptions, are available on our website: Michigan.gov/DNRLaws.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunities for employment and access to Michigan's natural resources. Both state and federal laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sex, height, weight or marital status under the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 as amended (MI PA 453 and MI PA 220, Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you desire additional information, please write: Human Resources, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, MI 48909-7528 or the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Cadillac Place, Suite 3-600, 3054 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202 or the Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

Elk Management

History and Status

Michigan's elk herd is a wildlife management success story made possible by many individuals and organizations who work to maintain a place for this species. Historically, elk were found in southern Michigan but had disappeared by the late 1800's due to unregulated harvest and market hunting. Today's elk herd is a result of seven elk brought from the western United States and relocated to Wolverine, Michigan in 1918. 2018 marked the 100-year celebration of elk in Michigan!

The first elk hunts were held in 1964 and 1965 in response to the growing elk population and a desire to control elk numbers. The hunts were a success but were not immediately continued. The first elk management plan, written soon after in 1975, was a formal acknowledgment that elk were an important resource to the people of the state and set the stage for increasing elk numbers. Elk hunts were cautiously implemented in the 1980s, testing and refining hunting as a tool to control elk numbers and distribution. The update of the elk management plan in 1984 recognized the importance of elk viewing and made hunting the preferred method for controlling elk numbers and distribution. The most recent management plan, approved in 2012, has a population goal of 500-900 animals and set a continued focus on:

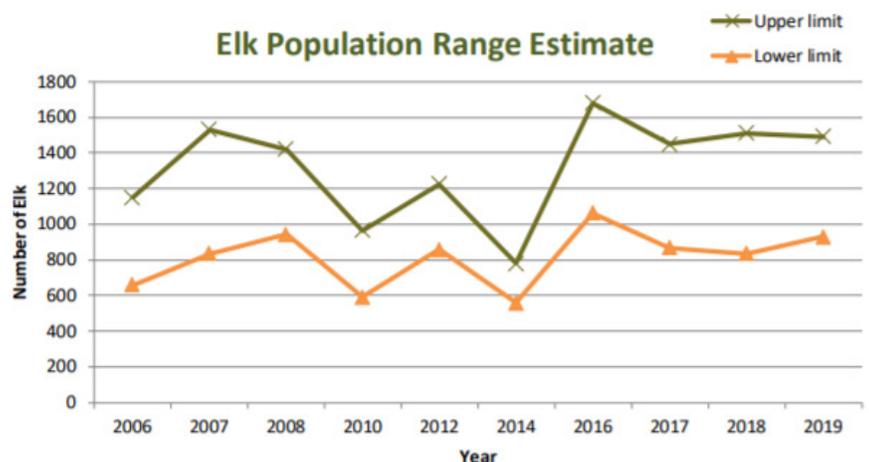
- Managing a sustainable elk population in balance with habitat.
- Use hunting to control elk numbers, herd composition, and distribution.
- Enhance the understanding of elk management.

Estimating Elk Populations

Monitoring the elk population has changed significantly through time. From the initial release of seven elk in 1918 until the 1960s, estimates were based on track counts, personal observations of elk groups, and information gathered from hunters and local residents. In the 1960s, elk pellet group surveys were used to determine the size and distribution of the herd. While this technique was useful for determining trends, it wasn't a reliable method for estimating population. From 1975 to 2001, the DNR used a combination of air and snowmobile survey methods. These surveys provided a minimum count. Since 2006, elk populations have been estimated by surveying the entire elk range using a fixed-wing airplane. The results are corrected using a sightability model and provides population estimates to guide management. The current aerial survey covers over 1,000 square miles and shows the distribution of elk in January.

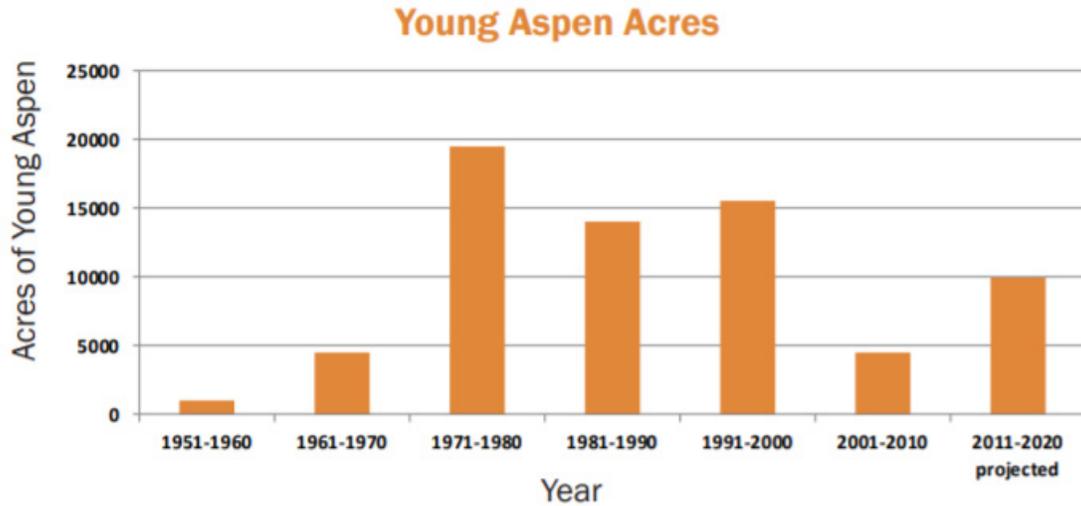
Distribution is also measured in the fall and early winter using location reports from hunters who have seen and harvested elk. Biologists compile and assess this information to recommend hunting regulations to the Natural Resources Commission.

It is nearly impossible to count every elk in the aerial survey. Therefore, we calculate the highest (upper limit) and



lowest (lower limit) potential population numbers based on the collected data. We are 95% certain that the elk population is within the range created by the upper and lower limits.

In general, elk seasons during August, September and October target elk outside of the core elk management area. December hunt periods are used to manage overall elk numbers including those in the core elk management area. The January hunt is used if the two earlier season harvests did not meet the management goals. The zone and quota system was designed to focus the harvest in specific areas to address crop damage or forest regeneration issues and also to limit the spread of elk from the elk management area. Elk hunts have occurred annually since 1984.



Elk distribution is affected by food availability and changing land use. Young aspen stands are a preferred habitat. Elk browse aspen twigs in the fall and winter, eat aspen leaves through the spring and early summer and browse herbaceous ground cover found in aspen stands from spring through fall. Land use changes also can affect distribution, such as large single owner blocks of private land being divided into smaller ownerships, and public land can see changing recreational use.



Elk Hunting

Hunting Hours

Time zones A & B: Hunting Hours for Elk Only

One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset (adjusted for daylight saving time). For hunt dates not listed in the table, please consult your local newspaper.

Zone A Counties: Alpena, Presque Isle

Zone B Counties: Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego

Hunt Periods	Date	Time Zone A	Time Zone A	Time Zone B	Time Zone B
		a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 1	6:28	8:40	6:31	8:43
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 2	6:29	8:38	6:32	8:41
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 3	6:30	8:36	6:33	8:40
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 4	6:31	8:34	6:34	8:38
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 18	6:48	8:08	6:51	8:11
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 19	6:49	8:06	6:52	8:09
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 20	6:51	8:04	6:54	8:07
Hunt Period 1	Sept. 21	6:52	8:02	6:55	8:05
Hunt Period 1	Oct. 2	7:05	7:41	7:09	7:44
Hunt Period 1	Oct. 3	7:06	7:39	7:10	7:42
Hunt Period 1	Oct. 4	7:08	7:37	7:11	7:40
Hunt Period 1	Oct. 5	7:09	7:35	7:12	7:38
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 12	7:34	5:23	7:39	5:24
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 13	7:35	5:23	7:40	5:25
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 14	7:36	5:23	7:41	5:25
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 15	7:36	5:23	7:41	5:25
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 16	7:37	5:24	7:42	5:25
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 17	7:38	5:24	7:43	5:26
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 18	7:38	5:25	7:43	5:26
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 19	7:39	5:25	7:44	5:27
Hunt Period 2	Dec. 20	7:39	5:25	7:44	5:27
Hunt Period 3 (if needed)	Jan. 13	7:39	5:47	7:44	5:49
Hunt Period 3 (if needed)	Jan. 14	7:39	5:49	7:43	5:51
Hunt Period 3 (if needed)	Jan. 15	7:38	5:50	7:43	5:52
Hunt Period 3 (if needed)	Jan. 16	7:37	5:51	7:42	5:53
Hunt Period 3 (if needed)	Jan. 17	7:37	5:53	7:41	5:55

Zones are hunting hour time zones **NOT** elk hunting areas.

See [Elk Management Units](#) for the counties within your assigned elk management unit.

Hunt times are only for elk hunting and not to be used for other species.

Elk Drawing and Weighted Lottery System

Elk licenses are issued to Michigan residents only. Hunters are selected using a weighted drawing system that began in 2003. Drawing applicants who are not selected for a license receive one additional chance for future drawings. In each drawing, an applicant's total number of entries is equal to the number of chances earned in past drawings plus one chance for his or her current application. For example, a person who applies with three chances from past drawings will have a total of four entries in the current drawing.

Applicants may apply for a license or chance only. Only one chance will be awarded in a given year. Chances are reset to zero for all successful applicants, including those who choose not to purchase their license. Those who purchase an elk license are subject to an ineligibility period for future drawings (see [Ineligibility Periods for Elk License Recipients](#)).

The number of elk licenses available each year is very small compared to the number of license applicants; it is not possible to guarantee that every applicant will eventually receive a license regardless of the number of chances earned. However, the weighted drawing system provides some advantage to hunters who apply consistently year after year while still offering an opportunity to all applicants, including those applying for the first time. Elk drawing statistics may be viewed at [Michigan.gov/Elk](#).

The elk drawing system also ensures that the percentage of hunters selected from a given region (Upper Peninsula, Northern Lower Peninsula (NLP), and Southern Lower Peninsula) equals the percentage of individuals who applied from that region. For example, if 30 percent of all applicants reside in the NLP, 30 percent of selected hunters will be NLP residents.

Applicants may apply for an elk license, or for a chance only.

- **Chances are tracked by customer ID.** To ensure that all of your chances are considered in the drawing, you should apply with the same ID used to apply in previous years. If your ID changes, call 517-284-9453 (WILD) before the application deadline to ensure your chances are combined under your current ID.
- **You must apply at least once every five years to retain your chances.** Elk chances are reset to zero for applicants who do not apply for five consecutive years. Chances reset under the previous three-year rule will not be restored.
- **Check your total chances at [Michigan.gov/Elk](#).**

How to Apply for a Limited-License Hunt

Eligibility

You must meet all of the following qualifications to be eligible to apply for an elk license or chance:

1. Be a Michigan resident - this includes qualified military personnel and full-time students attending a Michigan college or university who reside in the state during the school year.
2. Hunters who are 9 years of age or younger must be licensed under the Mentored Youth Hunting Program prior to applying for an elk license or chance. (*Note, hunters age 10+ do not need to have hunter safety or be an apprentice before they apply.*)

3. Have one of the following forms of customer identification:
 - Valid Michigan driver’s license.
 - State of Michigan ID card (issued by the Secretary of State.)
 - DNR Sportcard (issued through license agents or at Michigan.gov/DNRLicenses).

Applying for a Hunt

The DNR issues two types of elk hunting licenses:

- (1) Any-elk — valid for taking either a bull or an antlerless elk;
- (2) Antlerless-only — valid for taking an antlerless elk only.

1. From table below, select your desired application type.

Application Type	Application eligible for an any-elk license	Applicant eligible for an antlerless-only elk license (if not selected in the any-elk license drawing)
Bull or Antlerless Applicant is willing to harvest a bull or antlerless elk.	Yes	Yes
Bull-Only Applicant is only willing to harvest a bull elk.	Yes	No
Chance Only Applicant does not want a 2020 elk license but would like to earn an additional chance for future drawings.	No	No

2. Purchase your elk application type at any license agent, DNR Customer Service Center, or online at Michigan.gov/DNRLicenses. (It is unlawful to apply more than once.) It costs \$5 to apply. **A base license is not required for purchase of an elk application. Mentored youths must be licensed under the Mentored Youth Hunting Program to apply.**

IMPORTANT: You are responsible for submitting a valid application and obtaining an application receipt that states your correct customer ID and application type. Do not accept a receipt that is not legible. Check the receipt for accuracy and retain as proof that you applied. **Ensure any application errors are corrected prior to the application deadline.** Applicants who submit an invalid application will be ineligible for the drawing.

- For application assistance, call 517-284-9453 (WILD).
- You are responsible for obtaining your drawing results online.
- **Drawings results will be posted at Michigan.gov/Elk on July 6.**



Elk Management Units

September and October Hunts

For detailed descriptions of elk hunt unit boundaries, go online to Michigan.gov/DNRLaws or contact a DNR Customer Service Center.



December Hunt

- Units Open to Hunting
- Closed - including areas not shaded or shown
- Unit Boundary
- Major Roads

0 5 10 15 20 Miles



Successful Applicants

Successful elk drawing applicants will be mailed detailed information about their hunt, including assigned hunt period, elk management unit, type of license (any-elk or antlerless-only), and mandatory elk hunt orientation class details. Be sure your mailing address is kept up to date with the Secretary of State. Hunt assignments cannot be changed. Successful applicants must complete the [mandatory hunt orientation](#) before receiving their elk license.

Elk Seasons and License Quotas

Hunt Period	Season Dates	Elk Management Units (Public and Private Land)	Any-Elk License Quota	Antlerless-Only License Quota
1	Sept. 1 – Sept. 4	X	30	70
1	Sept. 18 – Sept. 21	X	30	70
1	Oct. 2 – Oct. 5	X	30	70
2	Dec. 12 – Dec. 20	H, I, X	50	110
3	Jan. 13 – Jan. 17, 2021	*See below	*See below	*See below

*This hunt period will be held only if additional harvest is needed to achieve population management goals after hunt periods one and two.

Ineligibility Periods for Elk License Recipients

Those who are issued an elk license are subject to an ineligibility period for future elk drawings. This ineligibility period does not apply to Pure Michigan Hunt winners. Individuals who have received an elk license through a prior elk drawing are eligible to apply for the Pure Michigan Hunt.

- **A person issued an antlerless-only elk license is ineligible to apply for, obtain, or purchase an elk license or chance for 10 years.** For example, those issued an antlerless-only license in 2012 are ineligible from 2013 through 2022.
- **A person issued an any-elk license is ineligible to apply for, obtain or purchase a future elk license for the remainder of his or her life.**

License Purchase

If you are selected in the drawing, you may purchase your elk receipt online at Michigan.gov/DNRLicenses or from any license agent.

- **Hunters may purchase their elk receipt only after they have obtained a base license for the year. This does not apply to a hunter with a mentored youth license.**
- Hunters must purchase their elk receipt and complete the elk hunt orientation prior to receiving the elk license. Elk hunting licenses will be issued upon completion of the orientation and elk receipt purchase.
- Make sure the information on your elk receipt is accurate.
- Licenses may not be altered or transferred. However, successful applicants may transfer their drawing success to an unsuccessful youth applicant or any person with

an advanced illness. See [Elk Hunt Transfer Program](#) for more information. When hunting, you must carry your elk license and the identification used to purchase that license and present upon demand of a Michigan conservation officer, a tribal conservation officer, or any law enforcement officer.

Required License	Mentored Youth Age: Up to 9	Junior Age: 10-16	Resident Age: 17+	Senior Age: 65+
Application for License Drawing	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
Base License	N/A Mentored Youth License \$7.50	\$6.00	\$11.00	\$5.00
Elk Receipt	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00

Mandatory Elk Hunt Orientation

It is mandatory for successful applicants to complete the orientation prior to their elk hunt. The orientation will cover hunter safety, elk biology, tuberculosis surveillance, carcass handling, hunting rules and regulations, and recommended hunt locations. Successful applicants will be contacted and sent orientation instructions. Following the orientation, hunters will be mailed their licenses, along with materials and information to help their efforts afield.

Hunting for Michigan elk is challenging. Temperatures range from -20 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Many people walk for long periods over multiple days before having an opportunity to take an elk. Once taken, moving an animal roughly four times the size of a white-tailed deer can be difficult. Preseason scouting is important, as is good marksmanship and knowledge of the animal. Preparation for the hunt will increase the enjoyment of the elk hunting experience.

Elk Hunt Transfer Program

Successful elk drawing applicants may transfer their drawing success to an eligible person they know or donate anonymously to individuals on the DNR transfer waiting list. Eligible individuals include:

- Youth hunters, age 16 and younger, who applied for an elk license and were unsuccessful in the current-year license drawing.
- Any person who has been diagnosed with an advanced illness*. An application for a license in the current-year drawing is not required. Individuals with an advanced illness must complete the Physician Certification of Advanced Illness form to certify their eligibility for a transfer. The form is available at Michigan.gov/HuntTransfers.

Eligible individuals also can register for the DNR transfer waiting list to receive a donated elk hunt. Visit Michigan.gov/HuntTransfers for details and registration. Those interested must register online by **July 10**.

Elk chances are reset to zero for transfer recipients. Recipients are also ineligible for a future elk license per the time frames noted in [Ineligibility Periods for Elk License Recipients](#).

How to Request a Hunt Transfer

Successful applicants who wish to transfer their drawing success must submit a transfer request form. Forms are available at [Michigan.gov/HuntTransfers](https://www.michigan.gov/HuntTransfers). If a hunt recipient is not named on the form, the hunt will be offered to the next person on the DNR hunt waiting list. Elk chances are reset to zero for all successful applicants, but those who transfer their drawing success remain eligible for a future elk license.

It is unlawful for an individual to receive a fee, other consideration, or service of value, either directly or indirectly, for transferring drawing success to another person, or assisting and/or guiding that person in the hunt that has been transferred.

* Advanced Illness is a medical condition that must be diagnosed and certified by a physician. Advanced Illness is defined by the Public Health Code, Act 368 of 1978 [MCL - 333.5653]. See www.Legislature.Michigan.gov.

Mentored Youth Hunting Program

The Mentored Youth Hunting Program allows youth hunters 9 years of age and younger to hunt with a mentor who is at least 21 years of age, has hunting experience and possesses a valid Michigan license to hunt other than an apprentice license. The mentored youth license is a "package" license to hunt small game including waterfowl, turkey (spring and fall) deer, trap furbearers and fish for all species. It also allows the ability to apply for or purchase additional licenses including antlerless deer, bear, elk and fall turkey. Additional restrictions apply; complete program details can be found in the Michigan Hunting Digest, or online at Michigan.gov/MentoredHunting.

Apprentice Hunting License

A person who does not have a hunter safety certificate and is 10 years of age or older may purchase a base apprentice hunting license. An apprentice hunter may purchase this license for two license years before he or she must successfully complete a hunter safety course. The base apprentice hunting license is available to residents and nonresidents.

When afield, an apprentice hunter must be accompanied by someone 21 years of age or older who possesses a regular current-year hunting license for the same game as the apprentice. For apprentices 10–16 years of age, the accompanying hunter must be the apprentice's parent, guardian, or someone designated by the parent or guardian.

"Accompanied by" requires the accompanying hunter to be able to come to the immediate aid of the apprentice and stay within a distance that permits uninterrupted, unaided visual and verbal contact. For hunting elk, the accompanying hunter needs a 2020 elk hunting license, but it does not have to be for the same management unit or season dates as the apprentice. A person may accompany no more than two apprentice hunters while hunting.

Elevated Platforms

Elk hunters may use elevated platforms, tree stands or ground blinds on public lands in the elk management unit for which they are licensed. Elevated platforms, tree stands, or ground blinds may be placed from Aug. 15 through five days after the close of the elk season, or if successful, five days after harvesting an elk. The hunter's name and address or Michigan driver's license or DNR sportcard number must be affixed to the elevated platform, tree stand or ground blind in legible English that can be easily read from the ground. Hunting platforms cannot be affixed or attached to any tree by nails, screws or bolts; however, a "T" bolt or

similar device supplied by a tree stand manufacturer can be used.

Screw-in tree steps are illegal on public lands. It is illegal to use any item that penetrates the bark of a tree in the construction or affixing of any device to assist in climbing a tree.

Equipment Used to Take Elk

All firearms, crossbows and bows that are legal for hunting deer in Michigan are also legal for elk hunting, except the use of buckshot is not allowed. Please refer to the current year's Hunting Digest for specifications. It is unlawful to assist a tribal member engaged in treaty-authorized hunting unless the non-tribal member assisting: A person accompanying a hunter lawfully engaged in treaty-authorized hunting may not harvest a game animal unless also lawfully licensed as a treaty-authorized hunter or as a state-licensed hunter for the applicable species and season.

General Information

Precaution About Lead in Wild Game

Elk that are shot with rifle bullets containing lead, particularly copper-jacketed and hollow-point bullets, can have particles of lead remaining in the meat, some too small to be seen or felt. Lead can be harmful to humans and wildlife, even in very low amounts. If you have questions about the health effects of lead exposure from lead fragments, call the DNR Wildlife Disease Lab at 517-336-5030 and/or look through the information on the DNR website at Michigan.gov/WDM. You may also contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-648-6942 or visit Michigan.gov/MDHHS.

Commercial Hunting Guides on State Land

All commercial hunting guides using state-owned lands must receive written authorization. Guides are required to meet the conditions of the written authorization. If you are a guide who utilizes state-owned lands, visit the DNR website at Michigan.gov/WildlifePermits or contact Casey Reitz at ReitzC@Michigan.gov or 517-284-6210 for more information. Commercial guiding on National Forest (NF) lands requires a federal special use permit. Applications can be obtained through any NF office or by calling - Hiawatha NF: 906-428-5800; Huron-Manistee NF: 877-444-6777; or Ottawa NF: 906-932-1330.

Support Sportsmen Against Hunger

The Department of Natural Resources encourages hunters to support the effort to provide processed wild game meat to local families in need. You can help in one of two simple ways. First, tell your license agent that you would like to make a cash donation when you purchase your hunting license. Second, consider donating a portion of your processed game (donations can be accepted only if the processing is done by a licensed processor). For more information, call 517-853-3663 or go online to SportsmenAgainstHunger.org.

The Safari Club International-Michigan Involvement Committee is offering a \$1,000 reward to anyone providing information leading to the arrest and conviction of an individual or individuals illegally killing elk or moose in Michigan. To report information on the illegal killing of elk or moose in Michigan, please call or text the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Report All Poaching hotline at 800-292-7800.

Contact Information

Contact a DNR office listed below or visit us online.

Customer Service Centers (CSC) are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Baraga CSC

427 US-41 North
Baraga, MI 49908
906-353-6651

Bay City CSC

3580 State Park Dr.
Bay City, MI 48706
989-684-9141

Cadillac CSC

8015 Mackinaw Trail
Cadillac, MI 49601
231-775-9727

Crystal Falls Field Office

1420 W. US-2
Crystal Falls, MI 49920
906-875-6622

Detroit Metro CSC

1801 Atwater St.
Detroit, MI 48207
313-396-6890

Escanaba CSC

6833 US-2 41 & M-35
Gladstone, MI 49837
906-786-2351

Gaylord CSC

1732 W. M-32
Gaylord, MI 49735
989-732-3541

Lansing CSC

4166 Legacy Parkway
Lansing, MI 48911
517-284-4720

Marquette CSC

1990 US-41 South
Marquette, MI 49855
906-228-6561

Naubinway Field Office

PO Box 287
W11569 US 2E.
Naubinway, MI 49762
906-477-6048

Newberry CSC

5100 M-123
Newberry, MI 49868
906-293-5131

Norway Field Office

520 W. U.S. Highway 2
Norway, MI 49870
906-563-9247

Plainwell CSC

621 N. 10th St.
Plainwell, MI 49080
269-685-6851

Roscommon CSC

I-75 & M-18 South,
8717 N. Roscommon Rd.
Roscommon, MI 48653
989-275-5151

Sault Ste. Marie CSC

P.O. Box 798
4131 S. M-129 Highway
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783
906-635-5281

Traverse City CSC

2122 South M-37
Traverse City, MI 49685
231-922-5280

Helpful URLs:

Find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/MichiganDNR](https://www.facebook.com/MichiganDNR)

Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/MDNR_Wildlife](https://twitter.com/MDNR_Wildlife)

Follow us on Instagram at [Instagram.com/MichiganDNR](https://www.instagram.com/MichiganDNR)

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife Division

525 West Allegan St.

P.O. Box 30444

Lansing, MI 48933

517-284-9453 (WILD)

Contact hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



YOU HELP PROTECT MICHIGAN'S WILD PLACES.

Your licenses provide nearly \$61 million a year to conserve wildlife, public lands and waters. Because of you, habitats have been restored and populations of deer, elk, waterfowl, turkey and other game species have been preserved for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

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[HereForMiOutdoors.org](https://www.HereForMiOutdoors.org)