



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



DANIEL EICHINGER
DIRECTOR

December 21, 2020

TO: Daniel Eichinger, Director

INFORMATION: Natural Resources Commission

SUBJECT: Antlerless Private-Land Disease Management Firearm Deer Hunt for Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, Oscoda, and Presque Isle Counties

Authority:

The Department may issue orders under Part 401 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of 1994 designating the kind of deer that may be taken and the geographic area in which a license is valid, when advisable in managing deer. A disease management deer hunt may be established in accordance with Section 3.101 of the Wildlife Conservation Order. The Director is authorized to establish a disease management deer hunt lasting no longer than nine days between January 2 and March 31 where additional harvest is deemed necessary to meet disease management objectives.

Background:

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that is close to being eradicated in the United States, but still poses a significant risk to domestic livestock, wildlife, companion animals, and humans throughout the world. Michigan has become world-renowned for its research and expertise on managing this disease and overtime, the Department has learned a great deal, including that continued assistance from hunters and others remains vitally necessary to make significant gains in battling TB into the future.

To date, more than 900 of over 300,000 deer tested in Michigan have been positive for TB. Seventy-eight percent of these TB-positive deer have been from DMU 452, where the counties of Montmorency, Alpena, Oscoda, and Alcona meet. However, TB is endemic across all four of those counties, and in Presque Isle. Ninety-seven percent of all the TB-positive deer ever found have come from that five-county endemic area. In addition, Antrim, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Iosco, Mecosta, Osceola, Otsego, Roscommon and Shiawassee counties also have had deer test positive for TB.

The Department uses hunting as the primary tool for managing TB in Michigan. The majority (93 percent) of land in DMU 452 is private. The Department works with many local landowners on all aspects of deer herd management. Hunters in this area have been responsible for reducing the disease prevalence by over 50 percent.

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The Department is part of the Michigan Bovine TB Eradication Project involving a multi-agency team of experts from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Michigan State University (MSU), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to work collaboratively on new approaches to combat the disease.

The Department is committed to continue work to eradicate TB. In 2018, 2019, and 2020, the Department authorized a disease management firearm antlerless deer hunt on private land south of M-32 in Alpena County during the first two weekends in January to help reach surveillance goals to reduce the risk of disease spread to new areas. Approximately 300 hunters participated over the three years and took an estimated 221 antlerless deer.

The Department has a surveillance goal of 2,800 deer in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda counties. The Department has a surveillance goal of 700 deer in Presque Isle County. From January 1 to December 18, over 2,233 deer have been tested for TB in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda counties, and 478 deer have been tested for TB in Presque Isle County. Of that, three deer confirmed as positive for the disease in Alpena county, and one deer confirmed as positive for the disease in Montmorency County, with confirmatory tests pending on several additional deer.

Accordingly, the Department recommends establishing a disease management firearm antlerless deer hunt on private land only in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, Oscoda, and Presque Isle counties from January 7 through January 10, 2021 and from January 14 through January 17, 2021 in order to help manage the free-ranging deer population. The disease management firearm deer hunt is recommended to take place on private lands in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, Oscoda, and Presque Isle counties to help jump start surveillance efforts for 2021 and continue to apply hunting efforts to areas most likely to have disease impacts to agricultural producers.

The following measures are recommended to be established:

- Licenses, including a deer license, deer combination license, or a private-land antlerless deer license for DMU 487 are valid.
- Commercial forest lands are open and licenses, including a deer license, deer combination license, and a public land antlerless deer license for DMU 452 or DMU 487 are valid on these lands.
- Only antlerless deer may be tagged.
- All rules and regulations for the firearm deer season apply.
- Disease Control Permits issued for the 2020 license year are eligible to be used during this time period.

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Administrative:

The Department recommends extending the purchase date for licenses valid in DMU 487 and DMU 452 to January 17, 2021.

Recommendation:

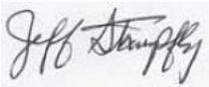
We recommend the disease management firearm deer hunt be established as described above.



Jared Duquette, Chief
Wildlife Division



Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



Jeff Stampfly, Acting Chief
Forest Resources Division



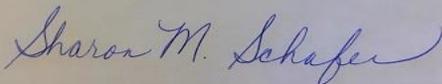
Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division



Kristin Phillips, Chief
Marketing and Outreach Division



Sharon Schafer, Chief
Finance and Operations Division



Mark Hoffman
Chief Administrative Officer



Shannon Lott
Natural Resources Deputy

I approve the staff recommendation with an effective date of December 21, 2020.



Daniel Eichinger, Director

December 21, 2020
Date