

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Chapter NR 1

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD POLICIES

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**NR 1.01 Great Lakes fishery management.** (1) In accordance with the Conservation Act (23.09, Wis. Stats.) and other legislative direction, the policy of the natural resources board is to provide a flexible system for the protection, development and utilization of the waters and fish populations of the Great Lakes for the maximum public benefit.

(a) Since management of the Great Lakes is a matter of intrastate, interstate, federal and international interest, cooperation shall be sought in developing management objectives and measures for stocks of common concern.

(b) The Great Lakes fisheries are to be considered part of a diverse community in the environment of man. It is the policy of the natural resources board to promote efforts which will maintain and enhance the quality of this community and its environment.

(c) Management of the fishery resources shall be based on a sound understanding of the dynamics of interacting fish stocks. To this end, it is the policy of the natural resources board to encourage research, inventories of the resource base, and collection of harvest and utilization statistics on which to base management decisions.

(d) The fishery resources of the Great Lakes, though renewable, experience dynamic changes and are limited. The resources shall be managed in accordance with sound biological principles to attain optimum sustainable utilization. Management measures may include but are not limited to seasons, bag and quota limits, limitations on the type and amount of fishing gear, limitation as to participation in the fisheries and allocation of allowable harvest among various users.

History: Cr. Register, March, 1976, No. 243, eff. 4-1-76.

Register, March, 1978, No. 267

**NR 1.015 The management of wildlife, preamble.** (1) The conservation act (section 23.09 (1), Wis. Stats.) requires the department of natural resources to provide an adequate and flexible system for the protection, development and use of forests, fish and game, lakes, streams, plant life, flowers and other outdoor resources in this state. Specific authorities and missions of the department for wildlife protection and use besides the general authority are:

- (a) Protect and manage nongame species, particularly endangered, threatened and uncommon species;
- (b) Acquire and lease lands;
- (c) Conduct research and surveys;
- (d) Establish long-range resource management plans and priorities;
- (e) Manage wildlife habitat on public land;
- (f) Provide regulations to govern the harvest of game species and furbearing mammals;
- (g) Establish resource management information and education programs; and
- (h) Propagate wildlife.

(2) The primary goal of wildlife management is to provide healthy life systems necessary to sustain Wisconsin's wildlife populations for their biological, recreational, cultural and economic values. Wildlife management is the application of knowledge in the protection, enhancement and regulation of wildlife resources for their contribution toward maintaining the integrity of the environment and for the human benefits they provide.

(a) The department's wildlife program ranges from endangered and threatened species management to the production of huntable game. At its best, wildlife management is a process that requires a considerable degree of harmony between people and land to provide the quality landscapes and diverse habitats necessary to produce and support all types of wildlife.

(b) Public concern for the welfare of wildlife resources can help to instill a land ethic in what has become a predominantly urban population. Public support for the maintenance of native or near-natural plant communities, as necessary wildlife habitat, indirectly assures continued opportunities for a whole range of human interactions with nature that goes well beyond hunting or wildlife-oriented recreation.

(c) The department's wildlife management program is financed in large part by user contributions, particularly license fees and excise taxes on selected equipment purchased by hunters; however, management programs directed at hunted game species provide very significant indirect benefits for a wide range of other wildlife. New sources of funds are needed to supplement the existing financial base and

provide more adequate programs for nongame fish and wildlife, especially threatened and endangered species.

(d) Larger quantities of wildlife habitat are required to meet management objectives for hunting and trapping than for most other uses. The future of hunting, however, depends upon more than wildlife habitat. It depends upon the quality, the behavior and sense of responsibility of today's hunter, the willingness of private landowners to provide access, and the tacit approval of people who don't hunt. Since many hunters do not own the land on which they hunt and because wildlife belongs to all citizens, mutually acceptable relationships between hunters, landowners and the nonhunting public are required for hunting to continue as a socially acceptable form of outdoor recreation.

(3) The natural resources board directs the department to implement its statutory wildlife responsibilities through the execution of the state wildlife policy as set forth herein. For the purposes of this policy, wildlife means all varieties of birds, mammals and terrestrial vertebrates other than man and domestic animals.

**History:** Cr. Register, July, 1977, No. 259, eff. 8-1-77.

**NR 1.10 Deer management.** (1) The Wisconsin deer herd shall be managed according to the following objectives:

(a) Keeping the herd in balance with its range and at densities that are compatible with agriculture, forestry and highway safety; and maintaining current levels of recreational opportunities for hunting and observation of deer in the wild.

(b) A statewide over-winter population goal of about 575,000 deer which is biologically capable of allowing a legal hunting harvest of 90,000 to 130,000 deer annually. Over-winter deer population goals for each management unit or either sex area are prescribed in Wis. Adm. Code section NR 10.24.

(2) Hunting seasons will be designed to harvest the annual surplus of deer with the objective of maintaining the population at the goals established for each unit or either sex area and discouraging abrupt increases in hunter densities.

(a) Basic types of seasons for hunting adult bucks or deer of any age or sex shall be established for designated areas of the state.

(b) When it is necessary to harvest additional deer to maintain unit population goals, deer hunting party permits authorized under section 29.107, Wis. Stats., shall be issued by the department in numbers determined by the natural resources board.

(3) Deer habitat management shall be accomplished under the forest wildlife habitat program.

(a) The objective shall be to conduct a program to maintain quality habitat for deer to achieve the over-winter population goal.

(b) Specific habitat management measures shall be employed on public lands other than designated wilderness areas and wild rivers consistent with long-term forest management plans.

(4) Surveys and research shall be conducted to provide technical information necessary to establish population estimates, harvest recommendations and habitat management needs and guidelines.

**History:** Cr. Register, April, 1975, No. 232, eff. 5-1-75.

**NR 1.11 General.** The natural resources board:

(1) Endorses the concept and principles of professional wildlife management, considers scientific findings to be the primary foundation of sound wildlife management programs, and supports research and surveys necessary to provide the technical information required for effective implementation of this policy.

(2) Recognizes that effective policy implementation requires the input and support of an informed public; endorses an active program to inform people of wildlife resource issues and alternative solutions; and will make every reasonable effort to obtain broad public input during its decision-making process.

(3) Recognizes the need to strengthen the educational efforts of the department relating to hunter competence, standards of ethical hunting behavior and respect for landowners rights; educational efforts must also be directed toward nonhunters to improve their knowledge and understanding of wildlife as a renewable natural resource and of hunting as both a method of controlling wildlife populations and as a form of outdoor recreation.

(4) Endorses the concept of comprehensive wildlife planning whereby actual and potential contributions of all functions of the department toward achievement of common wildlife management goals and objectives are recognized and, where feasible, integrated into operational activities.

(5) Recognizes that regulation of certain human activities is an integral and necessary part of wildlife management; that a sound legal system which combines equitable laws and judicious law enforcement is essential; and that wildlife law enforcement programs which are commensurate with other management efforts and contribute toward the achievement of common goals and objectives are necessary.

(6) Endorses the development and adoption of stronger regulatory measures, including more stringent license requirements, to assure an acceptable, minimum standard of hunting performance.

(7) Supports the maintenance of ecological diversity and health, and will do everything in its power to protect and maintain free-living populations of all species of wildlife currently existing in Wisconsin; extirpated species will be reintroduced whenever feasible ecologically, economically and socially.

(8) Supports the management of game species and habitat with the objective of increasing or maintaining populations to provide hunting opportunities.

(9) Supports the regulated use of wildlife for human benefits, including hunting and trapping where legal harvests do not reduce subsequent population levels of these renewable wildlife resources or where population reduction of certain species is a deliberate objective.