

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill contains a number of provisions related to the state's game and fish laws, including many provisions proposed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

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- 1 **Report.** Adds § 3.7371, subd. 8. Requires the commissioner of agriculture to submit an annual report to the legislature on the amount of damages paid to crop and pasture owners for damage to crops or fences caused by elk. The report is due December 15 and must include information for the prior two fiscal years separated by elk herd.
- 2 **Certain vehicles and equipment.** Adds § 16C.135. States that the DNR is not required to purchase or use ethanol-blended fuel for off-road vehicles (ORVs), boats, snowmobiles, or small engines.
- 3 **Exemptions.** Amends § 84.798. Exempts an ORV with a valid state trail pass under the next section from ORV registration requirements.
- 4 **Off-road vehicle state trail pass.** Modifies ORV state trail pass sticker requirements so that a resident may purchase a temporary (30 day) pass for \$20 similar to the pass available to nonresidents and expands the trail pass requirement to apply to use areas in addition to state and grant-in-aid ORV trails. The pass would then exempt the person from ORV registration requirements.
- 5 **Arrowhead Region Trails, Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Pine, Carlton, Koochiching, and Itasca Counties.** Amends § 85.015, subd. 13. Renames portions of the Arrowhead, Taconite, and Tomahawk State Trails as the David Dill Trail.

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- 6** **Duty to encourage stamp design and purchase.** Amends § 97A.045, subd. 7. Removes the requirement of the commissioner of natural resources to encourage the purchase of the turkey stamp (which is eliminated in this bill).
- 7** **Game and fish annual reports.** Amends § 97A.055, subd. 4. Removes a report requirement related to the wild turkey management account (the account is funded by revenues related to the turkey stamp which is eliminated in this bill).
- 8** **Deer, bear, and lifetime licenses.** Amends § 97A.075, subd. 1. Removes a provision requiring 50 cents from each deer license to be deposited in the wolf management and monitoring account.
- 9** **Duty of peace officers.** Amends § 97A.201, subd. 2. Removes county attorneys from a provision requiring them to enforce all game and fish laws (the next section clarifies their role).
- 10** **Prosecuting authority.** Adds § 97A.201, subd. 3. States that county attorneys are the primary prosecuting authority for violations of game and fish laws and other laws under the purview of the DNR and states that prosecution includes civil forfeiture actions.
- 11** **Misdemeanor.** Amends § 97A.301, subd. 1. Clarifies when misdemeanor penalties for violations of the state's game and fish laws apply.
- 12** **Gross overlimits of wild animals; penalty.** Amends § 97A.338. States that the gross misdemeanor penalty applicable for certain game and fish law violations when the restitution value of the wild animals involved is over \$1,000 does not apply to threatened or endangered wild animals unless more than one animal is taken, possessed, or transported in violation of the game and fish laws.
- 13** **Personal possession.** Amends § 97A.405, subd. 2. Allows a person with a lifetime hunting/fishing license to use their driver's license or Minnesota identification card (ID) with a lifetime license designation as proof of having the proper hunting/fishing license (a provision requiring the issuance of driver's licenses or IDs with the designation is established later on in the bill). Removes a provision allowing a person to purchase a pictorial turkey stamp which is eliminated in this bill.
- 14** **Seizure.** Amends § 97A.420, subd. 1. Lowers the threshold (from \$5,000 to \$1,000) when a person's game and fish license may be seized.
- 15** **License revocation after conviction.** Amends § 97A.421, subd. 2a. Prohibits a person from obtaining a game or fish license or taking a wild animal for ten years following a game and fish law violation when the restitution value of the wild animals involved is \$2,000 or more. States that violations of game and fish laws involving a threatened or endangered wild animal do not result in license revocations unless more than one animal is taken.
- 16** **Nonresidents under age 16 attending camps; fishing.** Amends § 97A.451, subd. 6. Modifies the documentation requirements of nonresidents under 16 fishing at a camp who are exempt from fishing license requirements.
- 17** **Lifetime small game hunting license; fee.** Amends § 97A.473, subd. 3. Technical.
- 18** **Lifetime sporting license; fee.** Amends § 97A.473, subd. 5. Technical.

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- 19 **Lifetime sporting with spearing option license; fee.** Amends § 97A.473, subd. 5a. Technical.
- 20 **Nonresident lifetime small game hunting license; fee.** Amends § 97A.474, subd. 3. Technical.
- 21 **Resident hunting.** Amends § 97A.475, subd. 2. Reduces the resident turkey hunting license fee by \$5 (this was the fee for the turkey stamp prior to it being rolled into the cost of the license).
- 22 **Nonresident hunting.** Amends § 97A.475, subd. 3. Reduces the nonresident turkey hunting license fee by \$5 (this was the fee for the turkey stamp prior to it being rolled into the cost of the license).
- 23 **Rules limiting the use of lead shot prohibited.** Adds § 97B.032. Prohibits the DNR from adopting rules that further restrict the use of lead shot. The DNR has recently proposed, as part of a larger rulemaking effort, rules that would require a person to use nontoxic shot when hunting small game on wildlife management areas (WMAs) in the farmland zone and when hunting rails or common snipe.
- 24 **Hunting with bows released by mechanical devices.** Amends § 97B.035, subd. 1. Clarifies that a person age 60 or over is allowed to use a cross-bow as provided under a law passed in 2014.
- 25 **Possession of firearms and ammunition restricted in deer zones.** Amends § 97B.041. States that the violation of certain firearms and ammunition restrictions applicable just before, during, and after the firearm deer season is punishable only by a warning if the person is shooting at an object for the sole purpose of target shooting.
- 26 **Deer hunter satisfaction survey.** Clarifies that the annual hunter satisfaction requirement conducted by the DNR is for deer hunters.
- 27 **Clothing requirements; blaze orange or blaze pink.** Amends § 97B.071. Allows blaze pink to be worn when hunting deer and certain small game (current law requires blaze orange).
- 28 **Possession of night vision or thermal imaging equipment.** Amends § 97B.086. Provides an exception from the prohibition on possessing night vision or thermal imaging equipment when hunting or possessing a firearm for employees of a firearm or ammunition manufacturer for purposes of testing ammunition or firearms.
- 29 **Commissioner may limit number of deer hunters.** Amends § 97B.305. Provides preference to landowners owning at least 80 acres of agricultural land in an area for deer license lotteries in the area when applicable.
- 30 **Feeding bears.** Adds § 97B.427. Prohibits a person from feeding a bear by hand or other physical contact.
- 31 **Elk management plan.** Amends § 97B.516. Prohibits the DNR from managing an elk herd to increase the size unless the commissioner of agriculture verifies that crop and fence damages paid to crop and pasture owners have not increased for at least two years. Requires

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the DNR and MDA to jointly hold a public meeting at least 60 days prior to implementing a plan to increase an elk herd.

- 32 Crow season.** Amends § 97B.731, subd. 3. Establishes the crow seasons as March 17 through March 31 and July 15 through October 31.
- 33 Restrictions on certain motorized decoys.** Amends § 97B.811, subd. 4a. Removes the restriction on using a motorized decoy during the first portion of the duck season. The restriction will still apply on WMAs.
- 34 Muskellunge in certain waters prohibited.** Adds § 97C.008. Prohibits the DNR from introducing or stocking muskie on six lakes (Big Marine, the Fairmont Chain, the Gull Chain, Franklin, Lizzie, and Loon) currently being considered for muskie stocking by the DNR.
- 35 Walleye.** Amends § 97C.401, subd. 2. Removes the statutory prohibition on having more than one northern pike above 30 inches in possession.
- 36 Resident lifetime game and fish license.** Adds § 171.07. Requires the Department of Public Safety to maintain records it receives from the DNR indicating individuals who have purchased lifetime licenses for purposes of the lifetime hunting/fishing designations. Requires the department to include the designation on licenses/IDs issued to those with lifetime hunting/fishing licenses.
- 37 Rulemaking; northern pike.** Requires the DNR to establish northern pike management zones as follows:
- Northeastern management zone with a daily and possession limit of two, with no more than one over 40 inches and a protected slot limit between 30-40 inches;
 - North central management zone with a daily and possession limit of ten, with anglers limited to two over 26 inches and a protected slot limit of 22-26 inches, and those spear fishing limited to two over 26 inches or one fish between 22-26 inches and one over 26 inches; and
 - Southern management zone with a daily and possession limit of two with a minimum length limit of 24 inches.
- Provides a good cause exemption from the rulemaking process and requires the DNR to submit a report to the legislature on the success of the regulations and recommendations on whether to keep or modify the regulations by January 15, 2027.
- 38 Rulemaking; blaze pink.** Requires the commissioner of natural resources to amend certain rules pertaining to wearing blaze orange while hunting to also allow a person to wear blaze pink.
- 39 2016 Mille Lacs walleye regulations.** Requires the DNR to allow a person to possess one walleye over 28 inches for Lake Mille Lacs during the 2016 angling season until the state's quota has been met.
- 40 David Dill Trail; appropriation.** Appropriates \$20,000 for signage marking the David Dill Trail designated in this bill.

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- 41** **Prospectors ATV trail; appropriation.** Appropriates \$1,000,000 for the Prospectors ATV Trail system.
- 42** **Repealer.** Repeals section 97A.075, subdivision 5 (wild turkey stamp account).