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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 3903

02/19/2024 Authored by Lislegard, Skraba and Johnson

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to game and fish; requiring an open season for wolves; requiring
1.3 establishment of a Northeast Deer Management Task Force; requiring a report;
1.4 amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 97B.645, subdivision 9.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 97B.645, subdivision 9, is amended to read:

1.7 Subd. 9. **Open season.** ~~There shall be no~~ (a) The commissioner must prescribe an annual
1.8 open season for wolves until after unless the wolf is delisted currently listed under the federal
1.9 Endangered Species Act of 1973. After that time, the commissioner may prescribe open
1.10 seasons and restrictions for taking wolves but must provide opportunity for public comment.
1.11 The season, restrictions, and any other requirements must be consistent with the goals
1.12 identified in the wolf management plan adopted under section 97B.646.

1.13 (b) The commissioner must annually consult with the commissioner of agriculture and
1.14 the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service,
1.15 before determining the season, restrictions, and other requirements of the open season
1.16 required under this section. The consultation must include a review of available data on
1.17 wolf depredation on livestock and pets and other incidents of human conflict.

1.18 Sec. 2. **NORTHEAST DEER MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE.**

1.19 Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** By October 1, 2024, the commissioner of natural resources
1.20 must establish a Northeast Deer Management Task Force to make recommendations to the
1.21 commissioner and the legislature for policy and law changes to increase deer populations
1.22 in the northeastern part of the state.

2.1 Subd. 2. **Membership.** Members of the task force must primarily reside or operate in
2.2 northeast Minnesota and must include hunters, wildlife managers, Tribal members, a
2.3 representative of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, and other interested parties as
2.4 determined by the commissioner.

2.5 Subd. 3. **Duties; report.** The commissioner must work in collaboration with the task
2.6 force to develop effective and timely policies to increase deer populations in the northeastern
2.7 part of the state. The commissioner must meet at least three times per year with the task
2.8 force. The task force may at any time make recommendations to the commissioner and the
2.9 legislature for policy and law changes designed to increase deer populations in the
2.10 northeastern part of the state and must submit a final report to the commissioner and to the
2.11 chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over
2.12 environment and natural resources no later than August 1, 2026.

2.13 Subd. 4. **Administration.** The task force expires upon submission of the final report or
2.14 on August 1, 2026, whichever is earlier. The terms, compensation, and removal of members
2.15 are as provided in Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059.

2.16 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.