3B8 - WWF
George Meyer

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Proposals outlined to modify captured wildlife laws and policies

News Release Published: August 29, 2013 by the Central Office

Contact(s): Bill Cosh, DNR communications director, 608-267-2773
Jim Dick, DATCP communications director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – A proposal to modify Wisconsin's captured wildlife laws and policy is ready for review. It comes after Gov. Scott Walker called on the secretaries of the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to examine the current laws and policy.

The proposed changes that will go before the Natural Resources Board in September include:

- **Immediate reintroduction of wild animals into the wild**
  After voluntarily collecting an illegally captured wild animal, DNR staff would reintroduce the animal to the wild if it does not pose a threat to public health, the health of wildlife, or to the animal itself. In the case of deer, if a deer originates in a Chronic Wasting Disease zone, it could only be reintroduced in a CWD zone.
- **Ability of a licensed rehabilitator to rehabilitate wild animals for reintroduction to the wild**
  If a wild animal cannot be immediately released into the wild, but could be safely released after rehabilitation, it would be taken to a licensed rehabilitator. In the case of deer, following rehabilitation, a deer which originated in a CWD zone could only be reintroduced into a CWD zone.
- **Restricted use of euthanasia**
  DNR staff would only euthanize a wild animal if it is sick, highly likely to be diseased, or a threat to public health or the health of other wildlife. Additionally, the proposal calls for the following change which would require action by the state legislature to change state law:
- **Ability of an individual to care for a captured deer with proper health and disease protections**
  Individuals who illegally hold a captured wild deer would still face citations and penalties for illegally possessing the deer. They may be able to keep the deer if they meet a series of regulations to ensure the health of the deer and the state's deer population as a whole. These include, but are not limited to, specific size and space requirements for an enclosure, health tests administered by a licensed veterinarian, and a notification process to both DNR and DATCP.

"Removing illegally-held wildlife takes an emotional toll on those holding the animal as well as those whose job it is to enforce the law," said DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. "Ideas and opinions from citizens of this state, along with sound science, shape our natural resource laws and policies. I look forward to working with policy makers to improve the way Wisconsin manages wildlife."

"We at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection believe these policy changes, with respect to the capture of wild deer, will not only help difuse future situations but will protect the state's $35-billion dollar livestock industry from diseases such as TB and the spread of CWD,