



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

BY GREG FREEMAN, DEPARTMENT NEWS EDITOR



Partners in a marsh bird study in central North Dakota include (from left) Ellis Hickel and Brad Roberts, both Alliance Pipeline; Patrick Isakson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department; Scott Stevens, Ducks Unlimited, and Leighton Smith, Alliance Pipeline.

Company Partners Again in Bird Study

A marsh bird study in central North Dakota again received a generous boost in funding from a pipeline company that transports natural gas across the state.

This is the second year Alliance Pipeline will contribute \$10,000 to a study designed to evaluate distribution of wetland bird species and the influence that surrounding landscapes, such as grasslands and crop fields, have on them.

Alliance is partnered in the study with the state Game and Fish Department, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center and Ducks Unlimited.

"The collaboration with Alliance is an important milestone. It is the first industrial company to partner with the Department on a State Wildlife Grants project," said Steve Dyke, Game and Fish Department conservation coordinator. "We hope this is the first of many such projects and partnerships with private industry."

The study, which is in its third year, will provide wildlife managers valuable information to better manage wetland bird populations in the future.

Game Warden Exam Scheduled

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has scheduled an examination to select candidates for the position of district game warden. The test will be given November 28 at 10 a.m. at the Department's main office in Bismarck.

Applicants must register by submitting a letter of intent to Robert Timian, chief game warden, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095. Letters of intent must be submitted before 5 p.m. November 24.

Game warden applicants must be at least 21 and in good physical condition. Work requires the ability to perform physically demanding tasks involving lifting and carrying large heavy objects, walking and running over uneven terrain, and tolerating adverse weather and other environmental conditions.

Game wardens enforce game and fish laws and related regulations in an assigned district and other locations as determined by the Department. Wardens normally work alone under varied conditions, at all hours of the day, night, and weekends. In addition to law enforcement duties, wardens assist with hunter and boater safety education, as well as other Department programs.

The position requires a bachelor's degree. Applicants must be a licensed North Dakota peace officer, or be eligible to be licensed, and must possess a valid driver's license.

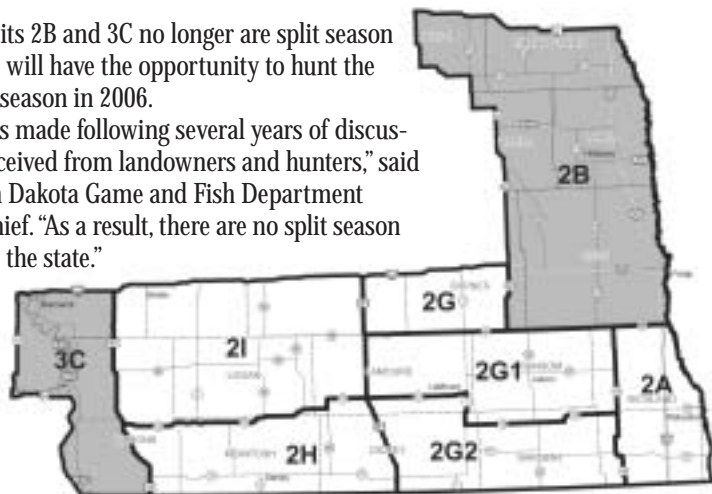
Selection procedures include an evaluation of the application, a structured oral interview, background and reference checks, and psychological and medical examinations.

The salary for beginning game wardens through training and probation is \$2,400 per month. Upon completion of training and probation, the salary range is \$2,837-4,728 per month. Wardens also receive the state benefits package, including travel allowance. Uniforms and other equipment are provided.

Split Season Units Eliminated

Deer hunting units 2B and 3C no longer are split season units, thus hunters will have the opportunity to hunt the entire regular gun season in 2006.

"This change was made following several years of discussion, with input received from landowners and hunters," said Randy Kreil, North Dakota Game and Fish Department wildlife division chief. "As a result, there are no split season units remaining in the state."



BRIAN HOSEK

Doe Licenses Remain

Deer hunters can purchase unissued doe licenses throughout the hunting season.

These licenses can be used during the bow, deer gun, and muzzle-loader seasons as long as the unit, sex and species printed on the license are followed.

Additionally, doe licenses that have already been issued and are printed with second, third or additional concurrent season designations can be used during any open season: bow season with a bow; the deer gun season with a bow, rifle, or muzzle-loader; or during the muzzle-loader season with a muzzle-loader. Hunters must stay in the unit to which the license is assigned.

Refer to the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, or call 701-328-6300 for information on remaining licenses. Licenses are available to residents and nonresidents.

The archery season is open through January 7, 2007; the regular deer gun season opens at noon November 10 and continues through November 26; and the muzzle-loader season opens at noon December 1 and continues through December 17.



CRAIG BIRNLE

Permit Required to Possess Protected Wildlife

A black bear observed in numerous locations in Morton, Mercer and Oliver counties in early September was found dead along Interstate 94 in western North Dakota by a passing motorist. The motorist loaded up the bear and brought it to the Game and Fish Department's district office in Dickinson.

While a well-intended action, Game and Fish Department enforcement chief Bob Timian reminds citizens that a permit is required to possess any protected wildlife. One type of permit is a hunting or fishing license that allows legal take of fish and game. Outside of that, Timian said, people need to contact the Game and Fish Department before taking possession of a dead animal they run across.

Since black bears are classified as a protected furbearer in North Dakota, that rule applies in this instance, but it also applies to deer or any other roadkill, or dead animals found away from roadways. "The first thing to do is to contact a game warden or Department office," Timian stressed. "Just picking an animal up and hauling it away is not legal."

In many cases, Timian said, by following the proper procedure an individual may be

able to keep the animals they find. The Game and Fish Department's first interest, as was the case with the bear, is whether the animal might be needed for scientific or educational purposes, Timian said.

Secondly, he added, Game and Fish officials might want to investigate the scene of a dead animal, especially away from roadways, to determine if there was any illegal activity or disease involved. "It's not that people can't have anything," Timian said, "in most cases we just want to verify what killed the animal before it's moved. That information may be of value to us."

For the bear incident, the state did not issue a citation to the individual involved, Timian said, and allowed him to keep the bear hide. The remainder of the bear was used for scientific and educational purposes.

"He didn't know he wasn't supposed to move the animal, but he did the right thing by bringing it in to us," Timian stated. "It's a good opportunity for us to remind people that there is a process for obtaining a permit to possess protected animals, even if it's obviously a roadkill."

Status of Lake Sakakawea Fishery

Low water levels on Lake Sakakawea have resulted in a reduced rainbow smelt population, but other coldwater forage fish, including cisco (lake herring), are filling in some of the gap, according to fall surveys conducted by North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists.

The annual surveys assess reproduction and status of both game and forage fish species. A hydroacoustic smelt survey was completed in August, and standard netting surveys were completed in September.

"Even though smelt abundance remains at record low levels, cisco were caught in increasing numbers throughout the reservoir in 2006," said Jeff Hendrickson, Department north central fisheries district supervisor, Riverdale.

Research has shown that smelt will prey heavily on young cisco when the two species are abundant, Hendrickson said. "Prior to this year, cisco numbers have been kept in check by abundant smelt," he added. "In the short term, cisco and other fish, like goldeye, will fill part of the forage void left by a declining smelt population."

Regarding other species, survey results indicated reproduction was good for sauger, white bass, crappie and perch, and fair for walleye.

Biologists have been monitoring harvest and mortality of walleye in Lake Sakakawea for many years. "Fishing was excellent in 2006, and harvest through August was estimated near the record harvest seen in 2000," Hendrickson said. Biologists will continue to monitor the walleye population for changes in mortality rates, either due to harvest or natural causes due to low forage levels.

In Lake Sakakawea, the quantity and quality of recreational fish (primarily walleye and salmon) depends on forage in the reservoir, and forage abundance depends on water levels (habitat). "Until water returns to the system, growth and condition of recreational fish populations will be below management objectives," Hendrickson said. "However, a respectable walleye fishery is expected again next year."



CWD Surveillance Efforts Continue

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will continue its chronic wasting disease Hunter-Harvested Surveillance program during the 2006 deer season with samples from animals in all deer hunting units.

Hunters are encouraged to provide samples from their deer by stopping at any of the Department's district offices. Heads can be dropped off through November at Game and Fish offices in Williston, Dickinson, Bismarck, Riverdale, Devils Lake, Harvey (Lonetree) and Jamestown.

Department personnel will also operate two collection sites opening weekend in Belfield, at the Tesoro truck stop and Conoco convenience store, both at the intersection of Interstate 94 and U.S. Highway 85. In addition, Game and Fish is relying on cooperating meat processors, fur buyers, taxidermists and wildlife clubs.

Meat processors participating in surveillance efforts are Aneta Meats, Aneta; M and M Sausage and Meats, and West Dakota Meats, both Bismarck; Bowdon Locker and Grocery, Bowdon; K and E Meats, Cando; Barton Meats, and Barlow Meat, both Carrington; Double R Meats, Carson; Casselton Cold Storage, Casselton; Schmitt's Deer Processing, Davenport; Skybergs Meats, Devils Lake; Dean's Meat Market, Dickinson; Edgeley Meat Processing, Edgeley; Maple Valley Lockers, Enderlin; Garrison Custom Meats, Garrison; Kuntz Butcher Shop, Glen Ullin; Manock Meats, Great Bend; Hazen Meats, Hazen; Dakota Packing, Hettinger; Dakota Country Meats, Jamestown; Leier's Processing, Karlsruhe; Kenmare Locker Jack and Jills, Kenmare; People's Meat Market, Kulm; LaMoure Lockers, LaMoure; Hickory Hut, Langdon; Butcher Block Meats, Mandan; Milnor Lockers, Milnor; S and K Processing, Minot; Engebretson Processing, Mohall; Larry's Meat Processing, Mott; Myers Meats, Parshall; Webers Meats, Reynolds; Wolf's Processing, Scranton; Brenno Meats, Sheyenne; Sagebrush Smokehouse, Watford City; and Wildrose Grocery, Wildrose.

Heads will be removed on site, or hunters may drop off heads at one of the sites. Tags will remain on the ear or antler, and carcass tags will remain with the deer. Hunters will

DARKHOUSE SPEARFISHING OPENER NEARS

North Dakota's darkhouse spearfishing season opens on a number of state waters December 1 – with the exception of Spiritwood Lake, which opens January 1 – and continues through February 28. Legal fish are northern pike and nongame species.

All individuals who participate in darkhouse spearfishing must register with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. Registration is available at the Department's website, gf.nd.gov, or through any Game and Fish Department office.

Darkhouse spearing is allowed for all residents with a valid fishing license, and those under the age of 16. Nonresidents from states that allow North Dakotans to participate in darkhouse spearfishing can do likewise in North Dakota with a valid fishing license. Of neighboring states, only Minnesota does not allow nonresident darkhouse spearfishing.

Other regulations include:

- A spear is counted as a pole (line) while darkhouse spearfishing.
- Pneumatic or rubber band powered spear guns are not allowed.
- When a dark house is moved or a hole larger than 12 inches in diameter is left in the ice, the hole must be adequately marked with a natural object (such as a tree branch or tumbleweed) visible from a minimum of 150 feet.
- No size limit on ice hole in lakes where darkhouse spearing is allowed. However, hook and line fishing is legal only in holes no larger than 12 inches in diameter.

be given a temporary tag for transportation purposes.

To date, CWD has not been diagnosed in wild or farmed deer or elk in North Dakota. Test results for CWD on more than 5,000 wild deer and more than 100 elk harvested during the 2002-05 hunting seasons were negative.

Chronic wasting disease affects the nervous system of white-tailed deer, mule deer and elk and is fatal. Scientists have found no evidence that CWD can be transmitted naturally to humans or livestock.

• Legal live baitfish, with the exception of white sucker, and artificial lures can be used as decoys.

• Daily/possession limits are the same as for hook and line fishing.

• Darkhouse spearing is allowed only in the following areas: South Eckelson, Barnes County; Devils Lake, Benson/Ramsey counties; Silver Lake, Benson County; Powers Lake, Burke County; Rice Lake, Emmons County; Juanita Lake, Foster County; Sibley Lake, Griggs County; Lake Etta/Alkaline Lake complex, Horsehead Lake, and Round Lake, Kidder County; Flood Lake and Diamond Lake, LaMoure County; Beaver Lake and West Napoleon Lake, Logan County; Buffalo Lodge Lake, McHenry County; Coldwater Lake and Dry/Goose Lake, McIntosh County; Stanley Reservoir, Mountrail County; Lake Laretta and Stump Lake, Nelson County; Cavanaugh Lake, Lake Irvine, Morrison Lake, and Sweetwater Lake, Ramsey County; Grass Lake, Richland County; Carpenter Lake, Island Lake and School Section Lake, Rolette County; Buffalo Lake, Sargent County; Coal Mine Lake, Sheridan County; Mallard Marsh, Spiritwood Lake and Sunday Lake, Stutsman County; Cottonwood Lake and Tioga Reservoir, Williams County; Lake Sakakawea from Garrison Dam to Highway 85 bridge at Williston; and Lake Oahe from South Dakota border to McLean Bottoms boat ramp.

INSTANT LICENSING

Online at gf.nd.gov or by phone
800-406-6409

Most types of Game and Fish licenses and applications are available both online at the Department's website, or over the phone. Online license purchases have no surcharge, while instant licensing over the phone carries a service charge of \$4 for transactions of \$70 or less, and \$10 if the cost is more than \$70.



WARDEN STORIES

Deer Season Diversity

By *Tim Larson*



Tim Larson

Game wardens encounter a lot of different situations during the course of a deer season. Add a

bunch of them together over the course of a career and you start to think you've seen just about everything.

And then ...

... you receive a call about two subjects hunting deer in a closed area below Garrison Dam. Nothing unusual there. I drove to the area, south and east of the Tailrace boat ramp, which is sometimes known to harbor big bucks when deer gun season is open elsewhere.

I met game warden Doug Olson – then at Hazen, now the district supervisor at Dickinson – and we easily found the alleged offenders. Each subject had shot a deer and admitted to hunting in the refuge.

We started on the citations and asked the subjects to retrieve their deer. One of them dragged his deer up to our vehicles, but at the same time we could see the other subject jumping up and down behind a screen of brush.

Neither of us could figure out what was going on. Finally, he brought the carcass to the bottom of the ditch below our vehicles. We told him to bring it up the grade. He came up by himself, rather sheepishly, to tell us there was a problem. It seems the deer he shot was a spike buck, and his license was for an antlerless deer. The jumping up and down in the brush was his attempt to break off the antlers. He was successful on one side and not the other. It was not his finest hour.

And then ...

The last day of deer season 2003 was a strange day. Around 10 in the morning at the Lonetree Wildlife Management Area, the 32,000-acre tract of public land in Sheridan and Wells counties, I watched two nice bull moose in a tree planting. Around noon I got a call from Scott Peterson, manager at Lonetree WMA, about a bull elk that was reported shot on Lonetree.

Sure enough, we found a 5x5 bull elk that was shot and left. This is still an unsolved case.

Then I got a call from a farmer south of Turtle Lake. He said he had not been drinking, but had sighted a bull elk with fluorescent orange antlers. He described the location and told me to look for what would appear to be two orange fence posts sticking out of the grass in a tree planting.

A bit skeptical, I went to the location and sure enough, I saw the "fence posts." The Game and Fish Department's aircraft just happened to be in the area, so I had the pilot do a low flight over the "posts" and out came a bull elk with orange antlers.

The funny thing is, no escapee elk with orange antlers was ever reported, and it had no ear tags or other markings to suggest it came from a game farm. Strange day. At that point, I really did think I'd seen everything.

TIM LARSON is the Game and Fish Department's district warden at Turtle Lake.

Salmon Spawning Operations Deemed Successful

Fisheries crews have concluded another successful salmon spawning effort, reports Jeff Hendrickson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries biologist, Riverdale.

More than 700,000 eggs were collected from Lake Sakakawea and the Garrison Dam Tailrace. "This will be enough for stocking in North Dakota, with some extra eggs for Montana," Hendrickson said.

Because of the reduced forage abundance and low water projections for 2007, the Game and Fish Department will be stocking fewer salmon than normal next year. "Current plans are to stock approximately 100,000 salmon," Hendrickson said. "Under normal water level and forage conditions, as many as 500,000 salmon are stocked annually in Lake Sakakawea."

Chinook salmon begin their spawning run in October. Since salmon cannot naturally reproduce in North Dakota, state Game and Fish Department and Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery personnel collect and fertilize eggs and transport them to the hatchery.

Once the eggs hatch, young salmon spend several months in the hatchery before they are stocked in Lake Sakakawea. Any surplus eggs will go to Montana.



GAME & FISH STAFF NOTES

Williams Named Wildlife Resource Supervisor

Jeb Williams has been named wildlife resource management supervisor for the Department's south central district in Bismarck. The Beach, North Dakota native had been the Department's outreach biologist covering southwestern North Dakota.

Williams, who replaced Bruce Renhowe after his retirement in August, is responsible for management of 25,000 acres on Department wildlife management areas in a nine-county district.

Williams has a bachelor's degree in biology from Dickinson State University.



Jeb Williams

Leier Recognized

Game and Fish outreach biologist Doug Leier, West Fargo, was recognized as a Media Outreach Trees Award recipient by North Dakota State University and the North Dakota Forest Service.

Trees Award winners are recognized for their efforts in tree planting and care, preservation or maintenance, community forestry efforts, forest management practices, forest recreation, environmental education, or fire mitigation, protection and suppression activities.



Doug Leier

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A PART OF THE NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISHERIES

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 DICKINSON KQCD - Tuesday - 9 pm (MT) KXMA - Sunday - 9 pm (MT)	 BISMARCK KFYZ - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMB - Sunday - 10 pm CATV - Saturday - noon	 FARGO KVRV - Sunday - 9 pm

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