



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

BY GREG FREEMAN, DEPARTMENT NEWS EDITOR

Tentative 2007 Season Opening Dates

To help North Dakota hunters prepare for 2007 hunting seasons, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department annually provides its best estimate for opening dates for the coming year.

Dates become official when approved by governor's proclamation. Tentative opening dates for 2007 include:

Opening	Season Dates
<i>OFFICIAL</i>	
Spring Crow	March 17
Spring Turkey	April 14
Paddlefish Snagging	May 1
<i>TENTATIVE</i>	
Fall Crow	August 11
Deer and Pronghorn Bow	August 31
Mourning Dove, Early Canada Goose	September 1
Sharptail, Hun, Ruffed Grouse, Squirrel	September 8
Youth Deer	September 14
Sandhill Crane	September 15
Ducks, Goose, Swan	September 29
Pronghorn Gun	October 5
Pheasant, Fall Turkey	October 13
Mink, Muskrat, Weasel Trapping	October 20
Deer Gun	November 9
Deer Muzzleloader	November 30

Spring Turkey License Deadline

The application deadline for a 2007 spring turkey license is February 14. Prospective gobbler hunters can apply online at the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, or by phone at 800-406-6409. Online or phone applications must be logged before midnight that day.

Application forms are also available at most license vendors, county auditors and Game and Fish offices. Spring turkey licenses are available only to North Dakota residents. An \$8 fee must accompany the application. The season opens April 14.

Wildlife Wednesdays Schedule

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will host wildlife and conservation-related talks on selected Wednesdays through April.

The presentations, held at the Department's Bismarck headquarters, will begin at 7 p.m. The schedule looks like this:

- February 14 – Farming and Wildlife.
- February 21 – Predator Calling.
- February 28 – Reading Maps to Find Places to Hunt or Fish.
- March 28 – Mountain Lions in North Dakota.
- April 4 – Trapping From Historical and Biological Perspectives
- April 11 – Making Spinners for Fishing.



RON WILSON

Spring Light Goose Season Nears

North Dakota's spring light goose season opens February 17.

The spring season is part of an effort to reduce the Mid-Continent Light Goose Population, which has more than tripled in three decades.

Snow geese tend to move through the state fairly quickly in spring, with arrival and departure depending on weather. Snow geese typically migrate through the state the last two weeks in March and the first week in April.

Species identification is important because white-fronted and Canada geese travel with light geese. The season is closed to white-fronts, Canada geese, swans and all other migratory birds.

Licensing information and regulations are available on the Department website at gf.nd.gov, or by calling 701-328-6300. The 2006-07 hunting license is still valid for residents, but new Harvest Information Program certification is required. Call 888-634-4798 to register, or visit the Game and Fish website.

BOW Winter Workshop

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program has scheduled one-day winter workshops February 23-25 at Lake Metigoshe State Park, Bottineau.

Basic snowshoeing and winter tracking, winter ecology and cross country skiing, and darkhouse spearfishing and ice fishing are available, with each class limited to 12-15 students. Darkhouse spearfishing will occur on an area lake.

Women interested in the workshops should register immediately due to limited space available. The cost is \$40 for one class or \$60 for two classes. Pre-registration with payment is required. Equipment and snacks will be provided.

Information and registration forms can be obtained by contacting Nancy Boldt, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095; 701-328-6312; or email ndgf@nd.gov.

Registration forms are also available on the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, by accessing the education tab, and clicking on "formal and informal education."



CRAIG BIHRLE

Special Big Game Application Deadline

Applications for this fall's bighorn sheep, elk and moose hunting seasons must be in the mail and postmarked before midnight March 21.

In early March, prospective hunters can submit a lottery application online at the Game and Fish website at gf.nd.gov. Applications will also be available at Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors.

Those mailing applications to the Department are advised to mail early because some post offices use the following day's postmark for mail received after regular hours.

Legislation on Game and Fish Website

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is tracking hunting and fishing issues during the 2007 legislative session.

Outdoor enthusiasts can follow proposed outdoors-related bills by logging onto the Game and Fish Department website at gf.nd.gov. During the 2005 session, 33 of 58 bills affecting the Department made it through the House and Senate and were signed into law.

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS
PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

On Television

WILLISTON
KUMV - Tuesday - 10 pm
KXMD - Monday - noon

DICKINSON
KQCD - Tuesday - 9 pm (MT)
KXMA - Sunday - 9 pm (MT)

MINOT
KMOT - Tuesday - 10 pm
KXMC - Monday - noon

BISMARCK
KFYR - Tuesday - 10 pm
KXMB - Sunday - 10 pm
CATV - Saturday - noon

GRAND FORKS
WDAZ - Wednesday - 5 pm

FARGO
KVRK - Sunday - 9 pm

Game and Fish Conducts Bald Eagle Survey

More than the average number of birds was counted during the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's 2007 mid-winter bald eagle survey.

Altogether, 43 bald eagles – 30 adults and 13 immature birds – and one golden eagle were counted in January during the 21st annual aerial survey along the Missouri River from Bismarck to the Garrison Dam.

The number of bald eagles wintering in the state depends on the amount of open water and availability of prey – fish and waterfowl. This year's figure is above-average in North Dakota, said Patrick T. Isakson, Department nongame biologist, but down significantly from last year's record 75. "Most were counted in the Washburn area and along the Garrison Dam, where a large number of ducks and geese are using open water," he said.

Each winter biologists nationwide conduct similar surveys to estimate the number of bald eagles wintering in the lower 48 states. "Each state completes the survey as close to the target date as possible to make certain that birds are not counted twice," Isakson said.

Eagles are relatively easy to spot as they prefer to perch in large cottonwood trees along the river. Adult bald eagles have a white head and tail and a dark brown body, while immature bald eagles are brown with irregular white plumage. Golden eagles have a gold cap on their head.

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.



CRAIG BIHRLE

Game and Fish video news director Tom Jensen interviews furbearer biologist Dorothy Fecske on the set of North Dakota Outdoors Online.

Game and Fish Launches Weekly Webcast

North Dakota Outdoors Online is now online at the State Game and Fish Department's website at www.gf.nd.gov.

Outdoors Online is a weekly video news broadcast available exclusively on the Internet. The program is hosted and produced by Tom Jensen and Mike Anderson, the Game and Fish Department's national award-winning video team.

The webcast will focus on current news and issues that appeal to people who hunt, fish, trap and enjoy North Dakota's outdoors. Each week Jensen will host a studio guest, and also keep viewers up-to-date on what they need to know to better enjoy their outdoor activities.

"This is a great way for us to connect with people who use the Internet to get much of their outdoor information," said Craig Bihrlle,

Game and Fish Department communications supervisor. "The content will be relevant and fresh and available when viewers have time to watch."

The Game and Fish Department also produces a weekly video feature called "North Dakota Outdoors," that is broadcast on 11 different television stations in the state. Outdoors Online will complement the broadcast feature, Bihrlle added, because the format allows for more in-depth analysis of events and issues.

A new program will be posted to the Game and Fish Department's website each Thursday. Each weekly webcast will run approximately 10 minutes.

Game Wardens Association to Give Scholarship

The North Dakota Game Wardens Association has two \$300 scholarships available for graduating seniors entering college in fall 2007. The scholarships are for students who enroll in fisheries or wildlife management with an emphasis on law enforcement.

Applicants must be North Dakota residents and have maintained a 3.25 grade point average. The scholarships will be awarded to students upon proof of enrollment in college.

Applications are available by contacting the North Dakota Game and Fish Department at 328-6604; or email ndgf@nd.gov. Applications must be postmarked no later than May 1, 2007.



WARDEN STORIES

Man's Best Friend

By Tim Phalen



Tim Phalen

Many game wardens own dogs as family pets and hunting companions, but sometimes the dogs are also valuable assistants for enforcement work.

One such experience I'll always remember took place in 2002 during the spring snow goose season (which opens later this month), at the Wild Rice Wildlife Management Area just northwest of Lidgerwood. I patrolled the area in the morning and noted one vehicle and a field decoy spread.

When I returned several hours later I found the hunter digging a hole in the snow in the ditch. "Best refrigerator-freezer to be found," he said as I checked about 30 geese and looked at his nonresident hunting license.

I also noticed several empty lead shotgun hulls in the bottom of a sled. I questioned him about the lead hulls. He responded by saying "I'm going to make a long story short," and he showed me a copy of a citation issued to him three days earlier by game wardens Mark Pollert and Ken Skuza. He explained that he and a friend had been cited and had learned their lesson.

Knowing he had more geese to clean and cool down, I decided to take my black Lab Triton for a walk. I often have him along with me on patrols during hunting seasons.

The hunter's decoys and blind were in a worked bean field about a quarter mile

off the road.

I reached the blind and, not surprisingly, found about 50 shotgun shell hulls from lead ammunition. Then I noticed Triton digging. In a short time he unearthed a drake pintail about 25 yards from the blind. The duck was still warm to the touch.

Back at the road the hunter was just finishing up with his birds when I confronted him about lead shot. He quickly lowered his head and admitted to the violation.

Then I asked him about the duck, which of course, during the spring, was illegal. He denied shooting it even though he was the only person to hunt the field that morning and the evening before. I asked him if I would find anything else if I returned to the decoys.

He replied "Go ahead, there is nothing out there."

Once back in the field, I observed the hunter's tracks leading from the blind to the spot where Triton uncovered the duck. Shortly thereafter, he flipped a decoy and unearthed pintail number two, which eventually elicited a confession from the hunter, who got a citation and had his Benelli shotgun seized.

In the end, he apologized to me and the state of North Dakota for his behavior, and Triton, he got an extra pat on the head and is still a companion to this day.

TIM PHALEN is the Game and Fish Department's district warden at Wyndmere.



GAME & FISH STAFF NOTES

PLI Biologists Hired

Renae Heinle and Terry Oswald Jr. were hired in January as biologists with the Department's private land section.

Heinle, who has an associate's degree in wildlife management and parks from MSU-Bottineau and a bachelor's degree in biology from Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, Tennessee, has been a Game and Fish wildlife technician for seven years. Renae is stationed in Jamestown.

Oswald, a Department wildlife technician for 12 years, has a bachelor's degree in zoology from North Dakota State University. Terry is stationed in Bismarck.



Renae Heinle



Terry Oswald Jr

Harling Transfers to Devils Lake

Nate Harling, a Game and Fish private land biologist at Dickinson since 2003, has transferred to the regional office in Devils Lake.

Harling will be responsible for assisting in development, implementation and maintenance of the Department's Private Land Initiative program for northeast North Dakota.



Nate Harling



Roger Collins, left, representing the National Wild Turkey Federation in North Dakota, presents warden Kurt Aufforth with his award.

NWTF Honors Aufforth

Kurt Aufforth, Game and Fish Department district game warden at Cando, was named Outstanding Game Enforcement Officer of the Year for North Dakota by the National Wild Turkey Federation.

His career as a game warden started in 1985 in Gackle. In 1991, Aufforth relocated to Watford City, and then to Cando in 1997. He graduated from the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho with a double major in wildlife and fisheries resources.

As part of receiving this recognition, Aufforth will attend the National Wild Turkey Federation annual convention in February in Nashville, Tennessee where NWTF will announce the National Wildlife Officer of the Year.

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Game and Fish Outreach Biologist**
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on the following radio stations:
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 •KCJB-AM 910, Minot
 •KLTC-AM 1460, Dickinson •KFJR-AM 550, Bismarck
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 (Tape delay from previous week)

Join Doug and guests for news and conversation that embraces everyone with an interest in North Dakota's Outdoors.