



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

By GREG FREEMAN, DEPARTMENT NEWS EDITOR

Greenwings Day

Audubon National Wildlife Refuge will host a Greenwings Day August 26 from 1-5 p.m. Participants are asked to meet at the visitor center. Preregistration is not required.

Parents will accompany kids to field demonstrations to learn about hunting and wildlife conservation. Field demonstrations may include duck identification, birds of prey/falconry, and turkey hunting. Other demonstrations are planned.

Kids receive door prizes, educational materials, and a picnic lunch.

For more information, contact Audubon NWR at 701-442-5474.



RON WILSON

Pronghorn Application Deadline

Pronghorn applications will be available in mid-July, and the deadline for applying is August 8.

Hunters are encouraged to apply on the Game and Fish Department's website at gf.nd.gov. The website also contains application forms that can be printed and mailed. Regular license fees apply and no service charge is added.

Applications will be available at Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors.

Applications are also accepted at the Department's toll-free licensing line, 800-406-6409. A service fee is added for license applications made over the phone.

Only North Dakota residents are eligible for pronghorn gun licenses.

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.

Swan Hunt Applications Coming

Applications for North Dakota's 2007 tundra swan licenses will be available the end of July, followed by an August 15 application deadline.

Residents and nonresidents are eligible to apply. Interested hunters can print out an application for mailing, or submit a lottery application online on the Game and Fish Department's website at gf.nd.gov. Regular license fees apply and no service charge is added.

Applications will also be available from Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors, or by calling 800-406-6409. A service fee is added for license applications made over the phone.

Successful applicants will be issued a tag to take one swan during the season. Since swans are classified as waterfowl, nonresidents may hunt them only during the period their nonresident waterfowl licenses are valid.



RON WILSON

August Prairie Chicken Deadline

Hunters interested in chasing prairie chickens in October must have their applications in the mail and postmarked no later than August 8.

The prairie grouse hunting season – good for either sharp-tailed grouse or prairie chickens – is October 13-21 in two hunting units, one in Grand Forks County (north unit) and the other in southeastern North Dakota (south unit). Each unit has 50 licenses available to resident hunters.

To apply, hunters must send a postcard containing their name, address, phone number and choice of hunting unit (north or south) to Prairie Chicken Application, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, N.D. 58501.

Only one application per postcard and one application per hunter are permitted. Game and Fish will notify successful applicants through the mail.

Game and Fish Pays Property Taxes

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department recently paid \$491,985 in taxes to counties in which the Department owns or leases land. The 2006 in-lieu-of-tax payments are the same as property taxes paid by private landowners.

The Game and Fish Department manages more than 185,000 acres for wildlife habitat and public hunting in 50 counties. The Department does not own or manage any land in Billings, Trail or Renville counties.

Following is a list of counties and the tax payments they received.

County	Tax Due	County	Tax Due	County	Tax Due
Adams	166.79	Grant	532.25	Ramsey	1,707.91
Barnes	5,301.12	Griggs	374.52	Ransom	1,508.69
Benson	2,991.51	Hettinger	3,002.80	Richland	15,753.34
Bottineau	4,711.33	Kidder	10,828.41	Rolette	18,893.90
Bowman	1,933.03	LaMoure	5,963.92	Sargent	13,713.89
Burke	804.64	Logan	1,224.40	Sheridan	67,542.41
Burleigh	32,936.92	McHenry	1,408.64	Sioux	412.64
Cass	6,737.68	McIntosh	6,088.69	Slope	1,759.36
Cavalier	24,767.22	McKenzie	27,952.06	Stark	240.20
Dickey	10,708.19	McLean	49,958.89	Steele	9,119.56
Divide	3,316.60	Mercer	14,250.69	Stutsman	6,275.27
Dunn	8,137.07	Morton	18,093.34	Towner	1,822.98
Eddy	3,732.69	Mountrail	11,881.93	Walsh	9,681.33
Emmons	2,606.70	Nelson	5,317.19	Ward	95.05
Foster	2,647.60	Oliver	1,828.34	Wells	39,590.48
Golden Valley	223.43	Pembina	13,801.02	Williams	6,407.46
Grand Forks	11,185.22	Pierce	2,046.68		

Positive Mule Deer Trend Continues

The mule deer population in western North Dakota remains healthy. Based on observations during the state Game and Fish Department's annual spring mule deer survey, the population index in the badlands is higher than the long-term average for the ninth consecutive year.

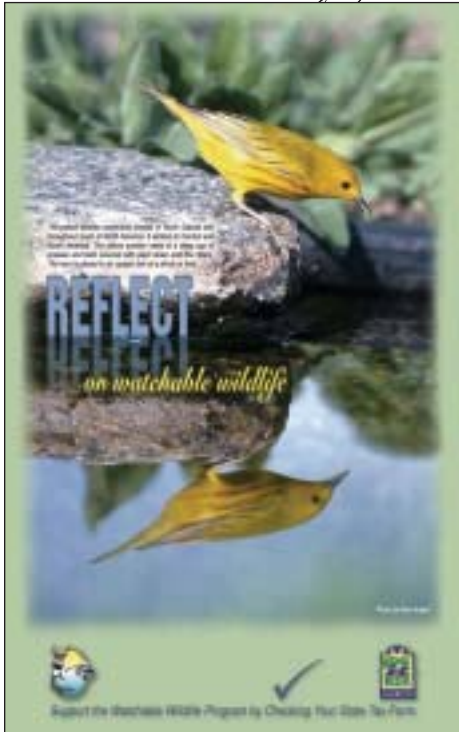
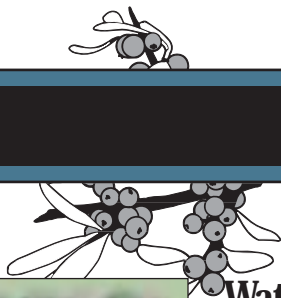
Bruce Stillings, Department big game biologist, Dickinson, said biologists counted 2,797 mule deer in 291 square miles. Mule deer density per square mile was 9.6, a slight increase from 8.8 in 2006, and significantly higher than the long-term average of 6.4 mule deer per square mile.

Biologists have completed aerial surveys of the same 24 study areas since the 1950s. The survey helps the Department maintain solid mule deer population data for the badlands, such as demographic trends and production ratios (buck-to-doe and fawn-to-doe).

Stillings said good production in 2006, a conservative and responsible harvest strategy and recent mild winters, have provided above-average mule deer density in the badlands.



RON WILSON



Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest Accepting Entries

The Game and Fish Department's Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest is ready for entries. The rules have been changed slightly this year to allow a greater range of entries to qualify for the poster.

The contest encompasses all North Dakota wildlife in a variety of categories – nongame species, game species, insects and plants. The winning photograph will appear on the Department's 2008 Watchable Wildlife program promotional poster.

The photographer submitting the poster winner, and all place winners in each category, receive prizes. Each of the prize-winning photographs will also appear in *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.

The image selected for the poster will be selected from entries that are original, vertical-composition transparencies (slides) or a minimum 8.0 megapixel digital image. Prints, slides and digital photos are all acceptable formats for entries in each category.

PHOTO CONTEST RULES:

Eligibility

The contest is open to both amateur and professional photographers. North Dakota Game and Fish Department employees and immediate family members are not eligible. Photographs must be taken in North Dakota.

How and where to enter

The contest is limited to 35mm slides or larger format transparencies, or five-by-seven-inch or larger color prints in either vertical or horizontal composition. Prints made from unaltered digital files are accepted. Photographers are limited to no more than five entries each. The overall winner must be in vertical format, or be able to be cropped or manipulated into a vertical format for the promotional poster.

The Game and Fish Department reserves the right to copy and print winners to promote the Watchable Wildlife program. By submitting an entry, photographers grant permission to Game and Fish to publish winning photographs in *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, and also as part of the magazine on the Department's web page, gf.nd.gov. Appropriate credit will be given in any publication where photos are used.

All entries should be sent to: Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095.

Nonwinning entries will be returned following contest judging.

Photo requirements

Slides, transparencies or prints must be accompanied by the photographer's name, address and phone number. Other information such as photo site location and month taken, equipment used, film speed and type, and lens/aperture settings would be useful.

Although care will be taken with submitted material, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department assumes no financial responsibility for lost or damaged materials.

Deadline

Entries will be accepted through September 30. Judging will take place in October, with winners notified by November 30. Receipt of entries will not be acknowledged.

Judging

Photos are judged on quality, composition, content and general appeal. Preference will be given to nongame for the poster.

Please respect private lands by obtaining permission and use proper wildlife-watching ethics while photographing.



WARDEN STORIES



Alan Howard

Tangled Bucks

By Alan Howard

Whitetail bucks, when sparring to determine who's the dominant stag in an area, sometimes get antlers locked together in the process of aggressive head-to-head jostling.

It doesn't happen all that often, but occasionally hunters, game wardens or farmers encounter tangled bucks – sometimes alive, sometimes dead, sometimes one of each.

I hadn't witnessed this natural phenomenon until one fall morning a couple of years ago. During a morning meant for checking duck hunters in McHenry County, I stopped to look at two deer standing in a stubble field.

Something didn't look right, so I pulled up my spotting scope to get a better look, and noticed that their antlers were locked together. Since it was the first time I had seen two deer locked together, my initial thought was how to get them apart.

I called the wardens in neighboring districts, but none were anywhere nearby, so I had to get a closer look to see if it was even possible to get the two deer apart.

As I drove out into the field, I could see the two bucks were locked at a 90-degree angle, and were not at all out of energy. Both deer decided to run into a shelter-belt, then continued across a road and down an abandon railroad line along a pasture fence.

As I drove down the abandoned railroad line I could see a bridge ahead that I was not going to cross with my vehicle. I noticed that the pasture fence came right up to the bridge, and I couldn't see how the deer were going to get out of the corner.

Somehow, they stumbled over the fence, but then couldn't get up. Both deer were upside down and still locked together. I remembered that I had some rope and a saw along and decided to attempt to separate them.

I managed to tie up three legs of one deer without getting kicked. I determined which antler was keeping them locked together and cut it off without much trouble.

When the antler fell to the ground, neither deer moved. Perhaps they thought they were still connected. I grabbed the untied leg of the one buck, and pulled him away from the other. The smaller of the two deer, which was no slouch, realized they were apart and immediately ran underneath the bridge and out of sight.

That left one antlered buck with seven points on one side, with three of his legs still tied up. I didn't realize that when I pulled him away from the other buck, the rope slid under his body. Every time I reached for the end of the rope he leaned his head toward me. Not a good feeling.

Eventually, I managed to hold his head back with the saw so I could grab the rope and gave it a pull. The knot came untied, the deer jumped to its feet and ran under the bridge as well.

Lying on the ground was his other antler, which also had seven points, sort of a souvenir for my efforts.

The funny thing is, after many years in the field without seeing any bucks locked together, within that same month I saw two other sets.

ALAN HOWARD is the Game and Fish Department's district warden in Minot.

Stocked Trout Larger than Average

During the first two weeks of May, North Dakota Game and Fish Department personnel stocked roughly 60,000 rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout in waters throughout the state. Thanks to the cooperative effort of Game and Fish and Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery biologists, some 42 lakes received catchable trout measuring 11-12 inches long.

The trout averaged 1-2 inches longer than in previous years because of more available growing space at the hatchery, according to Scott Gangl, Game and Fish Department fisheries management section leader.

Typically, fish in the hatchery are raised in long narrow concrete ponds called raceways. Due to low water levels and the reduced need for salmon in Lake Sakakawea, fewer salmon were raised this year. As a result, more space was available in the raceways. "This year the trout grew really well in the hatchery and as a result anglers are going to see some really nice, fat, healthy fish," Gangl said.

Trout anglers can make the big catch at a number of different locations this summer. Gangl recommends trout fishing in waters such as Sheep Creek Dam, Grant County; Lightning Lake, McLean County; Strawberry Lake, Bottineau County; Moon Lake, Barnes County; Northgate Dam, Burke County; Turtle River, Grand Forks County; and Fish Creek, Morton County. These lakes contain the stocked trout, plus larger trout that carried over from last year.

In response to public input, Game and Fish biologists also decided to stock cutthroat trout in Lightning Lake. "This year we went with a little something different to provide more diversity. Anglers at Lightning Lake wanted something new, so we planted a few cutthroats into the lake to meet their requests," Gangl said.

While cutthroat trout are similar to rainbow trout in size and life habits, cutthroats are differentiated by red marks found underneath their gills.

To further diversify local lakes, Game and Fish personnel introduced brown trout to Kettle Lake in Williams County and Riverdale Spillway Lake in McLean County. "With the diverse, large and newly-stocked population of trout, anglers will have many great opportunities to fish for trout this summer," Gangl said.

To find out more about North Dakota trout lakes visit the Department's website at gf.nd.gov.



GAME & FISH STAFF NOTES

Maier Retires, Schmidt Fills Post

Longtime district game warden Ron Maier, Linton, retired after serving 37 years with the agency.

Maier began his career with the Department in 1970, and spent his entire career as a game warden in Linton.

West Fargo native Erik Schmidt has filled the district game warden post in Linton. Schmidt is a graduate of North Dakota State University with a degree in zoology.

"Over the course of his career, Ron has taught many younger wardens lessons about being a game warden," said Robert Timian, Game and Fish Department chief of law enforcement. "Both Ron and his knowledge will be missed, but we hope on occasion he will pass on his knowledge to the next generation of wardens."



Ron Maier



Erik Schmidt

NORTH DAKOTA
OUTDOORS
On Television

 WILLISTON KLMV - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMD - Monday - noon	 MINOT KMOT - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMC - Monday - noon	 GRAND FORKS WDAZ - Wednesday - 5 pm
 DICKINSON KOCD - Tuesday - 9 pm (MT) KXMA - Sunday - 9 pm (MT)	 BISMARCK KFYP - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMB - Sunday - 10 pm CATV - Saturday - 9:30 am	 FARGO KVRR - Sunday - 9 pm