

Celebrating 1 Million Acres of PLOTS

Governor John Hoeven and state Game and Fish Director Terry Steinwand announced in late August that North Dakota reached its goal of 1 million acres of public hunting access through the Private Land Open To Sportsmen program.

Since spring 2003, when Hoeven set the goal of 1 million acres by 2009, the Game and Fish Department has added more than 700,000 acres to the PLOTS program.

"Four years ago we set an ambitious goal to make 1 million acres of public hunting land available to sportsmen and women by the year 2009," Hoeven said during a dedication at a PLOTS area north of Sterling.

"Reaching our goal two years early is a real credit to the great partnership between our Game and Fish Department, landowners, farmers, sportsmen and all who worked to expand public access to North Dakota's rich outdoor heritage. I want to thank Game and Fish staff and the thousands of cooperating landowners who helped to make access to this valuable resource possible."

The PLOTS program, identified in the field by inverted triangular yellow signs, is a Game and Fish initiative to secure public hunting access to private land. It was originally designed to develop more public access on Conservation Reserve Program land in the state's primary pheasant range, but since



CRAIG BIRHLE

the first yellow sign went in the ground in 1998 with 42,000 acres, the program has expanded statewide and provides opportunities not only for pheasants, but deer, waterfowl and other game species.

"At a time when hunters in many parts of the country are quitting because of loss of access, the number of North Dakota hunters has actually increased over the past few

North Dakota Governor John Hoeven thanked landowners and Game and Fish staff for their efforts in reaching 1 million PLOTS acres. Also pictured are Dean Hildebrand (far left), former Game and Fish director, and Richard Aberle, LaMoure County landowner and PLOTS cooperater.

years," Hoeven said. "North Dakota's PLOTS program is an example of hunter dollars at work, providing not only more access, but better habitat as well."

"I've heard many different perspectives on this program, but the one thing that has always been a constant is how important the PLOTS program is to the future of hunting in this state," said Shawn McKenna, North Dakota Wildlife Federation executive director. "Without landowners willing to open their property up to sportsmen and women, many hunters simply wouldn't have anywhere to go."

While hunters benefit because of more access and ability to locate open areas, landowners also benefit. "It's wonderful habitat for wildlife and it brings in people from outside the area," said Richard Aberle, a LaMoure area landowner whose family has 1,200 acres enrolled in the program. "And the landowners benefit because they're getting a little extra income off their land."

Steinwand emphasized that PLOTS is an important tool in hunting access issues in North Dakota, providing opportunity for people to get out and enjoy what North Dakota private land has to offer. "Hunters should still work hard to establish relationships with private landowners and treat PLOTS and other private land with respect," he said.

Game and Fish will continue to balance the interests of hunters and landowners by trying to maintain, and even increase, public access acres by providing a diversity of programs and options for landowners to choose from, according to Steinwand.

"We know from Game and Fish surveys that a lot of hunters use these areas," Steinwand said. "One North Dakotan even remarked that he started hunting again because of the PLOTS program. That's a measure of success that our state can be proud of."

Location	Station	Day	Time
WILLISTON	KUMV	Tuesday	10 pm
WILLISTON	KXMD	Monday	noon
DICKINSON	KOCD	Tuesday	9 pm (MT)
DICKINSON	KXMA	Sunday	9 pm (MT)
MINOT	KMOT	Tuesday	10 pm
MINOT	KXMC	Monday	noon
BISMARCK	KFYR	Tuesday	10 pm
BISMARCK	KXMB	Sunday	10 pm
BISMARCK	CATV	Saturday	9:30 am
GRAND FORKS	WDAZ	Wednesday	5 pm
FARGO	KVRR	Sunday	9 pm

Devils Lake Carp Advance Halted; Permanent Barrier Planned

In early August, Game and Fish biologists discovered young carp on the wrong side of a divide between the Red River and Devils Lake watersheds.

Since then, preventive action has apparently contained the immediate threat, and a plan to eliminate the potential for further carp movement between the two watersheds is moving forward.

Fisheries biologists have not verified carp in the Devils Lake basin since the lake itself became a managed fishery in the 1970s. This lack of carp is a significant factor in Devils Lake's current standing as the second most popular fishery in North Dakota, and one of the top destinations for walleye, northern pike, white bass and yellow perch angling in the Midwest.

Since early 1993, Devils Lake's water level has increased more than 25 feet. Its surface area has expanded from around 30,000 acres to about 100,000 acres. All this flooding from years of above-average rain and snowfall has allowed the fishery to expand exponentially.

Two summers ago, Game and Fish biologists discovered young-of-the-year carp from the Red River watershed less than two miles from a Cavalier County road that acts as a dividing line between the two watersheds. The carp were in a meandering, narrow waterway called Snowflake Creek. The only thing that prevented them from moving farther upstream to the road, and then through a culvert into the Devils Lake watershed, was a thick growth of cattails in the shallow, wide upper end of the creek.

Following that initial discovery in 2005, for the past two summers Game and Fish used a chemical barrier in Snowflake Creek to keep young carp from moving farther upstream. The cattails and the chemical were sufficient barriers that indeed inhibited fish movement between the two watersheds ... until August 2007.

When severe thunderstorms dropped 3-5 inches of rain in the area, the water came up high enough so the pioneering young carp could apparently swim around the chemicals and cattail barrier and make their way through the culverts and into the Devils Lake basin. The storm also blew over the chemical

drip tank so it was not functioning for a short period of time.

Biologists discovered the first carp on the Devils Lake side on August 5. Several were found in sloughs near the divide, while one was captured downstream of a water body called Billings Lake, which sits in the extreme upper portion of Edmore Coulee. Edmore Coulee is typically an intermittent creek, meaning it doesn't always have flowing water, but under the right conditions it could deliver water containing carp another 40 miles downstream where it connects with Sweetwater Lake, which is connected to Devils Lake itself.

What makes carp so threatening is their destructive and competitive nature. They eat both plants and animals, mostly small invertebrates that would otherwise feed young-of-the-year game fish. Their bottom-feeding habits uproot plants and stir up bottom sediments that cloud the water, blocking sunlight needed for beneficial aquatic plants to grow, and making it difficult for game fish to see their prey.

Biologists say carp would significantly reduce game fish populations in Devils Lake if they became established there.

The chemical barrier, a natural element called rotenone, which is often used to eliminate undesirable fish in water bodies, was a temporary measure designed to impede carp movement until a more permanent solution was put in place. That solution is some type of earthen berm that eliminates potential for water mixing between the two watersheds.

As this issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* went to press, the threat for further carp movement this year has diminished as water



Above: Fisheries technician Phil Miller sets a net in search of young carp.
Below: Young-of-the-year carp found in Devils Lake basin.



was no longer flowing in Snowflake Creek. "I don't think there's going to be any more issues of high water moving carp this year," said Greg Power, Department fisheries division chief.

Power also said that biologists continued their intensive sampling efforts into the first week in September and did not come up with any more young carp below Billings Lake.

Productive discussions between government agencies and area landowners are occurring that could lead to construction of a permanent barrier. However, Power anticipates that Game and Fish will still have to operate the chemical drip station for another field season – spring and summer 2008 – before the berm could be finished.



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Under the Game and Fish Department's new program, grants of up to \$3,000 are available to clubs or groups sponsoring youth hunting or shooting events.

New Grant Program Fosters Youth Hunting, Shooting Experiences

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has developed a new grant program designed to assist private groups with efforts to encourage new hunters and shooters.

Under the new program, grants of up to \$3,000 are available to qualifying wildlife, shooting, civic or fraternal organizations for events or projects that emphasize youth hunting participation or training.

"We're looking for all kinds of ideas and approaches to get more young North Dakotans involved in hunting," said Game and Fish Department deputy director Roger Rostvet. "We're hoping this program can help groups expand on things they already do, or get new initiatives off the ground."

The 2007 state legislature included \$100,000 in the Game and Fish Department's budget to carry out a grant program to encourage youth hunting. Of that, the Department allocated \$45,000 to further develop the National Archery in the Schools program, which provides equipment and training for schools that include archery

within their physical education curriculum.

The remaining grant funds are available for youth-oriented projects that will occur in 2008.

Nonprofit organizations registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State's office to provide public service are eligible to apply. The organization must have officers, a treasury account, liability coverage and private locations to conduct events.

Game and Fish grant funds are available to reimburse a variety of event expenses, including promotional printing; event memorabilia such as shirts, caps or vests; ammunition and targets, and eye and ear protection. Grants can also be used for shooting range improvement or development.

Applications for projects in 2008 must be submitted before December 31, 2007.

Hunting events will receive priority over shooting-only events. For more information or to receive application materials, contact Nathaniel Umphrey, Department outreach biologist in Bismarck at 701-328-6332.

Active Military Residents

A new law allows some active military personnel to hunt small game, fish or trap in North Dakota without a license.

The 2007 North Dakota state legislature passed a bill that allows a resident who is on leave and on active duty with the United States military to hunt small game, fish or trap during the open season without a license. However, a federal duck stamp is required to hunt waterfowl, and HIP certification is also necessary.

Proof of valid leave papers and a North Dakota operator's license are required.

Qualified military personnel are asked to contact the state Game and Fish Department for additional details.

Antlerless Deer Licenses Available

Deer hunters still have time to purchase doe licenses for North Dakota's 2007 deer gun season.

These first-come, first-served licenses are available to resident and nonresident hunters who don't already have a license, or for those who want additional licenses.

Hunters can apply online from the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov. Paper applications are available from Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors.

Hunters are reminded that additional doe licenses can be used during the archery season with a bow; deer gun season with a bow, rifle, or muzzleloader; or during the muzzleloader season with a muzzleloader. Hunters must stay in the unit to which the license is assigned.

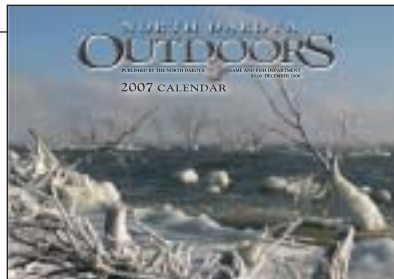
The regular deer gun season begins at noon November 9 and continues through November 25.

Taking Orders for 2008 OUTDOORS Calendars

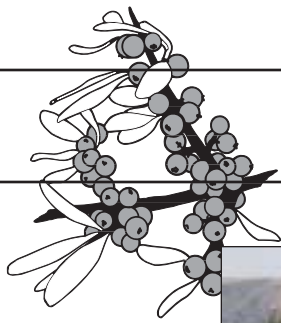
Now is the time to order the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's *North Dakota OUTDOORS* calendar, the official source for all hunting seasons and application dates for 2008. Along with outstanding color photographs of North Dakota wildlife and scenery, it also includes sunrise-sunset times and moon phases.

To order, send \$3 for each, plus \$1 postage, to: Calendar, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095. Be sure to include a three-line return address with your order, or the post office may not deliver our return mailing.

The calendar is *North Dakota OUTDOORS* December issue, so current subscribers will automatically receive it in the mail.



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Missouri River Habitat Improvement Continues

The state Game and Fish Department and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continue with year two of a wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement project for species of concern along the Missouri River System in North Dakota.

In late August, the corps used helicopters to spray herbicides on approximately 85 acres of vegetation, covering portions of three sandbars south of Bismarck on Lake Oahe. The herbicides are EPA approved for spraying in or adjacent to water, and are intended to kill vegetation on sandbars.

The dead vegetation is expected to be removed this fall or next spring.

Last year, vegetation was removed from 150 acres of sandbars south of Bismarck on Lake Oahe, primarily for two shorebird species – endangered least terns and threat-



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Sandbars like this one on the Missouri River south of Bismarck are treated to remove vegetation.

ened piping plovers – that depend on bare sandbars for nesting habitat.

Steve Dyke, Game and Fish Department conservation supervisor, said several of the sandbars treated in 2006 had birds nesting on them this summer. “Most of this year’s spraying is to retreat portions of islands that

were sprayed last year,” Dyke said.

Russ Somsen with the corps office in Pierre, South Dakota indicated his agency will continue to monitor the sites for several years to evaluate effectiveness and see if birds use the treated sandbars.

Where’s Your Deer License?

With deer gun season only a month away, here’s a tip: find your license now.

Every year Game and Fish Department staff receives last-minute inquiries from hunters, including the morning of opening day, who can’t find their licenses. If it happens at that point, it’s difficult to get a replacement license quickly.

Another reason to find your license now is to check its accuracy. Double-check to make sure the unit, species and deer sex is what you thought it should be.

Deer hunters in need of a replacement license can print out a duplicate (replacement) license application from the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, or can call 701-328-6300 to have an application mailed or faxed.

The form must be completely filled out and notarized, and sent back in to the Department with a fee. The application will be processed the day it is received, and the license will be mailed out the next day.

New WMA Dedicated

A quarter section of native forest in Pembina County is the newest addition to the State Game and Fish Department’s system of wildlife management areas.

The Peter and Prescott Holman WMA is located about 10 miles southeast of Walhalla within a key wintering area for elk in northeastern North Dakota.

The land was originally purchased from the Holman family through a cooperative effort involving the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pembina County Area Sportsmen’s Club and Bruce Cameron. RMEF in turn donated the property to the Game and Fish Department.

Over the years the RMEF has purchased and donated several parcels of Pembina River Valley land to Game and Fish, to enhance habitat for elk and other forest wildlife.

“This donation is very important for elk management in northeastern North Dakota,” said Randy Kreil, Game and Fish Department wildlife division chief. “It lies in the heart of the area elk herd’s winter range and is a popular area for deer and turkey hunting. The habitat values and the public use opportunities associated with this tract make it a significant and highly beneficial contribution.”



CRAIG BHIRLE

Rod Gilmore (left), North Dakota field director for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Game and Fish wildlife division chief Randy Kreil helped dedicate the Holman WMA in June.



WARDEN STORIES



Jason Scott

Unplugged Shotgun

By Jason Scott

During my first pheasant season as a district game warden, my home district in the Fargo area didn't

have many pheasants, so for opening weekend I was assigned to the Linton area to help out with extra patrols and get some valuable experience at the same time.

On Sunday, as I was patrolling from Strasburg to Lidgerwood and back toward home, I saw a hunter walking in a sunflower field, so I waited for him to return to his vehicle.

I asked how hunting had been. He said he got some birds while hunting with his sons the day before, but hadn't had any luck yet on that day, but thought that might change when he met up with his sons later on.

I checked the hunter's license, then asked if I could check his shotgun for the plug. He looked at me and said, "You need a plug?"

When he unloaded his gun, five shells came out.

I informed him that he needed a plug in the magazine so the gun was not capable of holding more than three shells.

He said he read the proclamation and thought the three-shell regulation was for waterfowl only. Game wardens rarely encounter waterfowl hunters who aren't aware of the federal three-shell limit during regular waterfowl seasons. Sometimes we find hunters who are aware of the rule and violate it anyway, or someone who forgot to put their plug back in after the spring snow goose season, when

unplugged shotguns are allowed.

North Dakota has had a three-shell rule for upland game hunting for a long time as well. Occasionally we run into hunters who honestly don't know about the rule. Usually they are from other states where upland game hunters can use shotguns holding more than three shells. For instance, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin all allow pheasant hunters to use unplugged shotguns. This particular hunter was from Michigan.

Familiarity with regulations is, of course, the hunter's responsibility. The Game and Fish Department works hard to keep people informed about changes, but all hunters, resident or nonresidents, should read the regulations every year.

I showed the hunter the section of the small game regulations guide that stated you can only use a shotgun with the capacity of holding up to three shells. Then I told him I would have to cite him for not having a plug.

I wrote the citation, explained it to him, and told him how he could take care of the ticket.

When I finished he said, "Now that you have written me the ticket, I can tell you this: the three roosters I got yesterday were all on the fourth shot."

We had a good laugh and a good conversation thereafter. Even though I had to write a citation, the end result was a positive encounter.

JASON SCOTT is the Game and Fish Department's district game warden at Fargo.

Game Warden Exam Set for Nov. 1

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has scheduled an examination to select candidates for the position of district game warden. The test is November 1 at 10 a.m. at the Department's Bismarck office.

Applicants must register to take the exam by submitting a letter of intent to chief game warden Robert Timian, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095. Letters of intent must be submitted before 5 p.m. October 30.

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree, be at least 21 years of age, have a current North Dakota peace officer license or be eligible to be licensed, and must possess a valid driver's license. Candidates must have excellent interpersonal skills in communications and writing, and must not have a record of any felony convictions.

Game wardens enforce game and fish laws and related regulations in an assigned district and other locations as determined by the Department. In addition to law enforcement duties, wardens assist with public relations, education programs, and hunter and boat safety education.

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 \$2,992 to \$4,986 per month. Wardens also receive the state benefits package, including travel allowance. Uniforms and other equipment are provided.

Precaution Against Spread of CWD

The 2007 proclamation establishing guidelines for transporting deer, elk and moose carcasses and carcass parts into North Dakota is now in effect as a precaution against the possible spread of chronic wasting disease into the state. To date, CWD has not been diagnosed in North Dakota, but has been found in a growing number of locations across North America in recent years.

Hunters are not allowed to transport into North Dakota the whole carcass, or certain carcass parts, of deer, elk or moose from areas within states or provinces with documented occurrences of CWD in wild populations, or from farmed cervid operations within states and provinces that have had farmed cervids diagnosed with CWD.

Hunters taking white-tailed deer, mule deer, moose or elk from areas documented with CWD are allowed to transport the following portions of the carcass:

- Meat cut and wrapped either commercially or privately.
- Quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached.

- Meat that has been boned out.
- Hides with no heads attached.
- Clean (no meat or tissue attached) skull plates with antlers attached.
- Antlers with no meat or tissue attached.
- Upper canine teeth, also known as buglers, whistlers or ivories.
- Finished taxidermy heads.

A complete list of states and provinces with documented cases of CWD is available on the Department's website, gf.nd.gov.

Because each state and province has its own set of regulations, hunters should contact the state or province they intend to hunt to obtain more information.



GAME & FISH STAFF NOTES

Poland Fills Warden Post in Elgin

Courtney Poland has been named Game and Fish Department district game warden at Elgin.

Poland, a native of Kansas with a degree in biology from Fort Hays State University, fills the position of retired warden Rick Witkowski.



Courtney Poland

Game and Fish Recognized with GIS Award

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department received a Special Achievement in Geographic Information Systems Award for web applications, map services and development of GIS tools.

Each year the SAG Award honors an elite group of organizations that have embraced GIS technology. These organizations have been honored for making extraordinary contributions to the global society, and for establishing new precedents throughout the GIS community.

The SAG award ceremony is held annually at the Environmental Systems Research Institute International User Conference in San Diego.



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