ELIGIBILITY

Hunter education requirement – Hunters born after December 31, 1961 must complete a certified state or provincial hunter education course to purchase a North Dakota hunting license. Exceptions: Persons who hunt only on land they own or operate, youth under age 12 if they have appropriate licenses and are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Minimum age – There is no minimum age for hunting furbearers, but anyone under age 15 afield with firearms must be under direct supervision (must be able to have unaided verbal contact) of a parent, guardian, or adult authorized by their parent or guardian.

LICENSES

Licenses are valid in either paper or electronic format. Printed licenses must be signed in ink. No person may give away, barter or sell an issued license. Licenses are nontransferable. Except for residents under 16 years of age, a furbearer license is required to hunt or trap furbearers. Nonresidents may not take furbearers, except they may hunt fox and coyote if they possess a furbearer and nongame license. Exceptions: Residents of a state that allows North Dakota residents to trap within that state, may purchase a nonresident reciprocal trapping license to trap in this state. Nonresidents having this license may not take bobcats, mountain lions, fishers or river otters.

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*See specific information inside for each species.
Hunters and trappers are required to purchase licenses, except any resident, or member of his or her family permanently residing with him or her, may hunt furbearers, trap or use cable devices during the open season without a license upon land owned or leased by him or her, but otherwise is governed by seasons, limits and all other regulations.

Residents do not need a license to take unprotected species of wildlife (prairie dogs, rabbits, skunks, ground squirrels). Nonresidents hunting only unprotected species of wildlife need only a nongame license.

A combination license, which consists of fishing, small game, general game and habitat, and furbearer license, is available for residents.

A resident who is on leave and on active duty with the United States military may hunt small game or trap furbearers during the season without a license. Contact the Department for details.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Body gripping trap** – trap designed to allow the animal's head, neck or torso to enter the trap opening and be held by compression of the jaws when sprung (example, Conibear). See TRAP SET RESTRICTIONS section.

**Cable device** – noose used for restraining furbearers by the neck or body (example, snare). See CABLE DEVICES RESTRICTIONS section.

**Colony trap** – enclosure device designed to allow the capture of one or more furbearers in a single setting with one or more one-way entrances; cannot exceed 12 inches high, wide or in diameter by 36 inches long. See MINK AND MUSKRAT section.

**Foothold trap** – steel-jawed trap used for restraining furbearers by the foot (examples, long-spring or coll-spring foothold trap).

**Protective covering** – trap set covering of structural material (wire mesh, wood, plastic, metal) limiting access to the trap through an opening not to exceed 8 inches high by 8 inches wide.

**Sight exposed bait** – any bait weighing in excess of 1 pound, composed of animal flesh, fur, hide, entrails or feathers placed in such a manner that it can be seen by any soaring raptor.

**Water Set** – trap or cable device which is set or staked in a manner to permit the trap, cable device or trapped animal to reach water. See TRAP SET RESTRICTIONS section.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- Hunting hours are from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. See exceptions for fox (red and gray), coyote, beaver and raccoon in species sections.

- The opening hour on the first day of all furbearer seasons is 30 minutes before sunrise. After the first day of the season, trapping or using cable devices is legal at any hour.

- Written permission must be secured from landowners or operators before placing or setting any traps or cable devices on private land, including PLOTS lands. The owner or operator may determine the length of time permission is granted.

- The season for Canada lynx, gray wolf, swift/kit fox, black bear, wolverine and American marten shall remain closed.

- Any furbearer taken for which the season is closed, or other protected species incidentally taken, must be reported within 12 hours and turned over to the Department.

- Furbearers may be taken statewide, except for bobcats and fishers. See BOBCAT and FISHER sections.

- It is illegal to drive off established roads or trails during the deer gun season while attempting to take furbearers with firearms, archery equipment and dogs.

- It is illegal to place traps or cable devices within 25 feet of any sight exposed bait.

- It is illegal to intentionally destroy, molest, disturb or tamper with any trap or cable device, the set, or with any furbearer restrained therein.

- No furbearer may be taken and possessed alive.

- No person, while operating a snowmobile in this state, may kill, chase, flush, or harass any wild animal or wild bird, protected or unprotected.

- Aircraft may not be used to take coyote, fox or other furbearers without a special permit.

- All traps or cable devices left unattended on wildlife management areas must have a metal or plastic tag displaying the trapper's name, address and telephone number, or equipment registration number.

**CLOSED OR RESTRICTED AREAS**

Wildlife management areas so posted, refuges, sanctuaries, national parks and historic sites shall be closed to the hunting and trapping of all furbearers. Exceptions: Hunting and trapping furbearers may be permitted at times and on those areas of federally owned refuges designated by the refuge manager. A permit from the refuge manager is required for those wishing to trap on federal refuges. For additional regulations on federal refuges, contact refuge headquarters. A permit from the Department director is required to take furbearers on those state wildlife management areas and state easement refuges posted closed to hunting.

Trapping on school trust lands is allowed, if the current surface lessee gives written permission. By giving permission, the lessee is made aware that legal traps and snares could be in the area. The state does not guarantee that school trust lands are legally accessible; in some cases, terrain and other natural obstructions may make access difficult. Access to school trust lands is strictly nonvehicular. Trails are used only for management purposes and may not be used by the public for vehicular travel. Contact the ND Department of Trust Lands at 701-328-1919, or email jsaude@nd.gov, for the name and address of the current surface lessee.

**CABLE DEVICE RESTRICTIONS**

- Cable devices are permitted on state wildlife management areas and federal waterfowl production areas after the close of small game seasons, starting January 8, 2018.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department, along with the North Dakota Fur Takers Association, recommends that all traps be visually inspected and all captured animals be removed at no greater than 48-hour intervals, and that rubber gloves be worn for skinning and handling of all furbearers.
• A metal or plastic tag must be attached to each cable device. This tag must display the trapper’s name, address and telephone number, or equipment registration number.

• Relaxing cable devices are permitted. One stop must be affixed to each cable device on land to prevent the loop from opening to a diameter greater than 12 inches.

• Cable devices cannot be placed or set in the field prior to the opening date and cannot remain in the field after the closing date of the cable device season for respective species.

• All other lands
  September 1 – October 27: Body gripping traps with greater than 8 inches inside jaw spread and all water sets must –
  • Be in 4 inches or more of water; or
  • Be used in an upland set and recessed at least 10 inches in a plastic, wood or metal cubby with a maximum 80 square inch opening.
  October 28 – January 7: Body gripping traps greater than 8 inches inside jaw spread must –
  • Be in 4 inches or more of water; or
  • Be used in an upland set and recessed at least 10 inches in a plastic, wood or metal cubby with a maximum 80 square inch opening.

• All other lands
  January 8 – March 15: No restrictions on placement.

  March 16 – May 10: Foothold and body-gripping traps placed in or on water, but not used on float sets, must –
  • Have a protective covering; or
  • Foothold traps not being used on a float set must be submerged under water; or
  • Body-gripping traps less than 8 inches inside jaw spread must have no more than 2 inches of the trap above the water surface.
  • Foothold and body-gripping traps used on float sets must have a protective covering May 1 through May 10.

  May 11 – August 31: No restrictions on placement.

BADGER, COYOTE, FOX (RED AND GRAY)
Firearms, traps, archery equipment, pursue with dogs – Open year-round (officially from April 1 – March 31)
Badger, coyote, and fox (red and gray) may be hunted statewide using legal firearms, archery equipment or pursued with dogs during regular hunting hours. Badger, coyote and fox (red and gray) may be trapped statewide using legal traps (including footholds and body-gripping traps).

Cable devices – Opens: November 27 – Closes: March 15
Badger, coyote, and fox (red and gray) may be captured statewide using legal cable devices.

Firearms at night – Opens: November 27 – Closes: March 15
Coyote and fox (red and gray) may be hunted at any hour. Any person who engages in coyote or fox hunting from 30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise must hunt exclusively on foot. Use of spotlights or any other artificial light is prohibited. Use of night vision or thermal imaging equipment is allowed.

BEAVER AND RACCOON
Beaver dams may be dismantled when their presence causes property damage.

Firearms, traps, underwater cable devices, archery equipment, pursue with dogs (raccoon only) – Open year-round (officially from April 1 – March 31)
Beaver and raccoon may be hunted statewide using legal firearms and archery equipment during regular hunting hours. Beaver and raccoon may be trapped statewide using legal traps (including footholds and body-gripping traps) and underwater cable devices. Raccoon may be pursued statewide with dogs. Beaver and raccoon may also be taken at any hour of the day, while hunting on foot, with the aid of a flashlight with a power source of not more than 6 volts. A red or amber filter must be placed over the light except when taking a raccoon treed or at bay. The use of auto headlights, spotlights and lights other than a flashlight with a power source of over 6 volts as an aid in taking beavers and raccoons is prohibited. Legal firearms for flashlight hunting of beaver and raccoon are rifles or handguns firing a rimfire cartridge no larger than .22 caliber, or shotguns no larger than .410 gauge. Rifled slugs are not legal.
Cable devices on land – Opens:
November 27 – Closes: March 15
Beaver and raccoon may be captured statewide using legal cable devices. There are no placement restrictions for cable devices during this time.

Cable devices on land within 50 feet of water – Opens: March 16 – Closes: May 10
Beaver and raccoon may be captured statewide using legal cable devices. Cable devices must be placed within 50 feet of water and be no greater than 4 inches off the ground and have a stop restricting loop size to 12 inches or less in diameter.

BOBCAT
Bobcat may only be harvested by North Dakota residents. Bobcat may only be harvested south and west of the Missouri River. The pelt and carcass of each bobcat must be presented to Department personnel for inspection and tagging no later than 14 days after the close of season, or prior to sale or transfer of possession, whichever comes first. No bobcat pelt will be tagged until the animal is skinned and presented with the intact carcass. The carcass shall remain the property of the Department. No person, taxidermist or fur dealer shall possess or purchase an untagged bobcat. When any part of the animal is mounted, if the tag is removed from the pelt, the tag must be restored to the back or bottom of mount.

Firearms, traps, archery equipment – Opens: November 11 – Closes: March 15
Bobcat may be hunted with legal firearms and archery equipment or trapped using legal traps (including footholds and body-gripping traps).

Cable devices, pursue with dogs – Opens: November 27 – Closes: March 15
Bobcat may be captured using legal cable devices. Bobcats may also be pursued with dogs.

FISHER
Traps, cable devices – Opens: November 27 – Closes: December 3
Fisher may only be harvested by North Dakota residents. Fisher may only be harvested east of U.S. Highway 281 and ND Highway 4. The limit for fishers is one animal per trapper per season. Any fisher that is harvested must be reported to the Department within 12 hours to make arrangements to have the fisher tagged. The pelt must be removed from the carcass prior to presenting the fisher to Department personnel for tagging. No fisher pelt will be tagged until the animal is skinned and presented with the intact carcass. The carcass shall remain the property of the Department. No person, taxidermist or fur dealer shall possess or purchase an untagged fisher. When any part of the animal is mounted, if the tag is removed from the pelt, the tag must be securely fastened to the back or bottom of mount. Fishers incidentally trapped after the close of the season must be reported to the Department within 12 hours and turned over to the Department.

MINK AND MUSKRAT
Muskrat huts may be opened to insert traps or cable devices. However, huts must be restored to their approximate original condition to prevent freeze-up.

Traps – Opens: October 28 – Closes: May 10 (See below for additional restrictions)
Beginning March 16, colony traps must be under at least 2 inches of water and trapping on the outside of any muskrat house or structure is prohibited; traps may be placed completely inside a muskrat house or structure of any size; except when used on float sets, foothold traps must be submerged under water at all times or have a protective covering; body-gripping traps used in a water set can have no more than 2 inches of the trap above water or a protective covering.

Beginning May 1, float sets must have a protective covering.

Cable devices – Opens: November 27 – Closes: May 10 (See below for additional restrictions)
Mink and muskrat may be captured statewide using legal cable devices.

Beginning March 16, using cable devices on the outside of any muskrat house or structure of any size is prohibited.
MOUNTAIN LION

Mountain lions may only be hunted by North Dakota residents. The limit for mountain lions is one animal per hunter. Any mountain lion, other than kittens (kitten is defined as a mountain lion with visible spots) or females accompanied by kittens, may be harvested during the season. Any mountain lion that is harvested must be reported to the Department within twelve hours and the entire intact animal must be submitted for analysis and tagging. Legally taken animals will be returned to the hunter following analysis so that the pelt may be removed but the carcass shall remain the property of the Department. The use of traps or cable devices (snares) to take mountain lions is prohibited.

The state will be split into two management zones: Zone 1 and Zone 2. Zone 1 includes land south of ND Highway 1804 from the Montana border to the point where ND Highway 1804 lies directly across Lake Sakakawea from ND Highway 8, crossing Lake Sakakawea then south along ND Highway 8 to ND Highway 200, then west on ND Highway 200 to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to the South Dakota border. Zone 2 is the remainder of the state not described as Zone 1. Each Zone 1 season will have harvest limits. Once these harvest limits are reached, each respective season will close immediately. The Department will inform the public through press releases, public service announcements, and media contacts of each closure. Mountain lions taken by USDA Wildlife Services, the Department, private landowners in defense of livestock, road killed animals, mountain lions incidentally taken by traps or cable devices, animals taken for human safety issues and those taken on Indian land will not count against any harvest limit.

Zone 1 early-season — Opens: September 1 — Closes: November 26

Mountain lions may be harvested using legal firearms, archery equipment, and pursuing with dogs. Harvest may be no more than 8 mountain lions.

Zone 1 late-season — Opens: November 27 — Closes: March 31

Mountain lions may be harvested using legal firearms, archery equipment, and pursuing with dogs. Harvest may be no more than 7 mountain lions or 3 female mountain lions, whichever comes first.

Zone 1 conditional season — If the harvest limit for the early-season is not reached prior to November 26 and after the late-season has been closed (due to quota reached) for 5 consecutive days, the early-season will reopen until the Zone 1 early-season harvest limit is reached or until March 31. If the late-season closes after March 25, there will not be a Zone 1 conditional season.

Zone 2 — Opens: September 1 — Closes: March 31

Mountain lions may be harvested using legal firearms and archery equipment. Beginning November 27, mountain lions may also be harvested by pursuing with dogs. There is no harvest limit for Zone 2.

RIVER OTTER

Traps, cable devices — Opens: November 27 — Closes: March 15

River otter may only be harvested by North Dakota residents. The limit is one river otter per trapper per season. River otters may be harvested statewide. Any river otter that is harvested must be reported to the Department within 12 hours to make arrangements to have the river otter tagged. The pelt must be removed from the carcass prior to presenting the river otter to Department personnel for tagging. No river otter pelt will be tagged until the animal is skinned and presented with the intact carcass. The carcass shall remain property of the Department. No person, taxidermist or fur dealer shall possess or purchase an untagged river otter. When any part of the animal is mounted, if the tag is removed from the pelt, the tag must be securely fastened to the back or bottom of mount. There is a harvest limit of 15 river otters. Once the harvest limit of 15 river otters is reached, the season will close immediately. The Department will inform the public of this closure through the media. The harvest limit will not include river otters accidentally caught outside of established season dates or by Wildlife Services, the Department, private landowners in defense of livestock or personal property, road killed, or those harvested on Indian Lands. River otters incidentally trapped after the close of the season must be reported to the Department within 12 hours and turned over to the Department.

WEASEL

Traps — Opens: October 28 — Closes: March 15

Weasel may be trapped statewide using legal traps.

Firearms, cable devices, archery equipment — Opens: November 27 — Closes: March 15

Weasel may be hunted statewide with rimfire cartridges of .22 caliber or smaller, muzzleloaders of .45 caliber or smaller, or legal archery equipment. Weasel may be captured statewide using legal cable devices.

HUNTING BY NONTRIBAL MEMBERS ON NORTH DAKOTA INDIAN RESERVATIONS

If an individual hunts exclusively on Indian lands within an Indian
residence, a tribal license is required and a state hunting license is not required. Hunting on nontribal lands within an Indian reservation requires a state hunting license. Game taken legally with a tribal license within an Indian reservation may be possessed in any state. Hunting on nontribal lands within an Indian reservation requires a tribal license within an Indian reservation may be possessed in any state.

- **Fort Berthold.** Game and Fish Department, 404 Frontage Road, New Town, ND 58763, 701-627-4760.  
- **Standing Rock.** Game, Fish & Wildlife Department, Box 549, 9418 11th Avenue, Fort Yates, ND 58538, 701-854-7236.

**Sunrise and Sunset Times**

The time of sunrise and sunset at Bismarck is given below. The sun rises and sets one minute later for each 12.5 miles west of Bismarck and one minute earlier for each 12.5 miles east of Bismarck.

**R.A.P. Report All Poachers Program.** This program encourages people to report wildlife violations, remain anonymous if they prefer, and receive monetary rewards for convictions based on their information. Anonymous callers will be given a special code number and are not required to give their name. Rewards range from $100 to $1,000 depending on the nature and seriousness of the crime. Call 800-472-2121. Call this number only to report game and fish violations.

**Spirit Lake.** Fish and Wildlife Department, Box 359, Fort Totten, ND 58335, 701-766-4221.

- Turtle Mountain. Department of Natural Resources, Box 570, Belcourt, ND 58316, 701-477-2604.

**The North Dakota Cooperative Fur Harvester Education Program** offers a 16-hour course covering all aspects of fur harvest in North Dakota. The course includes both classroom and hands on learning activities including trap handling and setting, hound hunting, predator calling, fur handling, fur harvester biology, fur harvester regulations, and ethics. Students can receive a certification card which will satisfy other states’ requirements for mandatory trapper education. The course is free of charge. Check NDGFD’s website (gf.nd.gov/education/fur-harvester) for a list of course dates.