

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA



GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

\$2.00 FEBRUARY 2015





MATTERS OF OPINION



Terry Steinwand
Director

By mid-January, the Game and Fish Department had already registered more people for darkhouse spearfishing than in any other year since we began offering this opportunity in 2001.

That's a notable benchmark because the previous record was just last year. But it's not necessarily surprising, either, as I believe that if North Dakota had a separate ice fishing license, the numbers this winter would shatter any of those from the past as well.

We're experiencing one of those rare phenomenon this season when all the stars are aligning. We went into winter with a record number of managed fishing lakes in North Dakota, with many of them having adequate to excellent walleye, perch and/or northern pike populations.

Now, that's not much different than what has been the case the last five years or so. While the number of fish or fishing waters may not have been at the same level as this year, we still headed into recent winters with good prospects.

In 2010-11 much of the state had heavy snow and access to many promising lakes was limited or shut off entirely. This year lake access has been about as good as it can get.

In 2011-12 snowfall around the state was well below average and access was good, but freeze-up was slow to arrive and it was close to Christmas or after before people were able to safely venture out onto most lakes with vehicles.

This year, the early cold spell that began during the first week of deer season in November, while not a welcome development for hunters, put down a solid layer of ice that allowed foot travel on most waters before Thanksgiving and vehicle travel shortly

thereafter. And then it warmed up.

So basically what we're experiencing this winter is great fishing prospects, plus ideal lake access conditions, plus several weeks of additional fishing time because of an early, prolonged cold spell in November, plus warmer than normal temperatures in December and January, providing many days when people can be on the ice without the need for shelter.

I wrote last month about the need for a winter just like this, not so much as a catalyst for record ice fishing activity, but as a sort of a breather for our resident wildlife like deer and pheasants.

You can get a pretty good comparison of winter severity by looking at records of deer depredation cases. These are primarily Game and Fish efforts to reduce or prevent deer from eating stored livestock feed supplies. Through the last week of January this winter, Game and Fish wildlife personnel had responded to just nine depredation cases – four for white-tailed deer, three for elk, and one each for turkey and moose.

By the last week of January in 2011, Game and Fish had dealt with 199 deer depredation cases, and by the end of February of that year, the number was more than 300.

So we're catching a break on several fronts this year, at least through the first week in February, and I am thankful. There is a lot more to good fishing and good wildlife populations than just the weather, but it's such an important factor.

And while as always at this time of year we're all looking forward to spring, continuing nice weather will give us more opportunities to enjoy North Dakota's winter outdoor resources.

Terry Steinwand

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY

Governor Jack Dalrymple

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

Game and Fish Director: Terry Steinwand
Deputy Director: Scott Peterson
Chief, Administrative Services: Kim Kary
Business Manager: Corey Wentland
Administrative Assistant: Lynn Timm
Administrative Officer/Building Maint. Supvr.: George Lee
Building Maint. Tech: Dustin Repnow
Chief Accountant: Angie Krueger
Accountants: Kelly Wike, Melissa Long, Ashley Baker
IT Section Supervisor/GIS Specialist: Brian Hosek
IT Coordinators: Sally Sorensen, Alan Reile
Programmer Analyst: Tiffany Quast
Licensing Manager: Randy Meissner
Assistants: Gail Mosset, Katherine Mernitz, Amanda Anstrom, Tracy Price
Administrative Assistant - Dickinson: Janel Kolar, Stephanie Richardson
Administrative Assistant - Devils Lake: Lisa Tofte
Administrative Assistant - Jamestown: Tonya Kukowski
Administrative Assistant - Riverdale: Clare Renner

CONSERVATION AND COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

Division Chief: Greg Link, Bismarck
Communications Supervisor: Craig Bihrl, Bismarck
Editor, North Dakota OUTDOORS: Ron Wilson, Bismarck
Website Editor: Lara Anderson, Bismarck
News Editor: Greg Freeman, Bismarck
Video News Director: Tom Jensen, Bismarck
Videographer: Mike Anderson, Bismarck
Outreach Biologists: Doug Leier, West Fargo; Greg Gullickson, Minot; Marty Egeland, Grand Forks; Pat Lothspeich, Bismarck
Information Specialist: Dawn Jochim, Bismarck
Graphic Artist: Constance Schiff, Bismarck
Education Supervisor: Chris D. Grondahl, Bismarck
Education Coordinator: Jeff Long, Bismarck
Hunter Education Coordinator: John Mazur, Bismarck
Administrative and Water Safety Coordinator: Nancy Boldt, Bismarck
Conservation Supervisor: Steve Dyke, Bismarck
Resource Biologists: Alexis Duxbury, John Schumacher, Bruce Kref, Bismarck
Conservation Biologists: Sandra Johnson, Patrick Isakson, Bismarck

ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Division Chief: Robert Timian, Bismarck
Investigations Supvr: Corey Erck, Bismarck
Warden Pilot: Robb Volack, Bismarck
Investigator: Scott Winkelman, Bismarck
Region No. 1 Warden Supvr: Mark Pollert, Jamestown
District Wardens: Jackie Lundstrom, Bismarck; Jerad Bluem, Steele; Michael Sedlack, Fargo; Tim Phalen, Wyndmere; Andrew Dahlgren, Edgeley; Erik Schmidt, Linton; Greg Hastings, Jamestown
Region No. 2 Warden Supvr: Paul Freeman, Devils Lake
District Wardens: Jonathan Tofteland, Bottineau; Kurt Aufforth, Cando; Jim Job, Devils Lake; James Myhre, New Rockford; Blake Riewer, Grand Forks; Levi Bischof, Walhalla
Region No. 3 Warden Supvr: Doug Olson, Riverdale
District Wardens: Jim Burud, Kenmare; Al Howard, Minot; Tim Larson, Turtle Lake; Ken Skuza, Riverdale; Michael Raasaka, Stanley; Brian Updike, Williston; Keenan Snyder, Alexander; Shawn Sperling, Williston
Region No. 4 Warden Supvr: Dan Hoenke, Dickinson
District Wardens: Ryan Tunge, Hazen; Bill Schaller, Killdeer; Art Cox, Bowman; Courtney Sprenger, Elgin; Jeff Violett, Mandan; Zane Manhart, Gola; Merrill Binnall, Glen Ullin
Administrative Assistant: Lori Kensington, Bismarck

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Division Chief: Jeb Williams, Bismarck
Assistant Division Chief: Casey Anderson, Bismarck
Game Mgt. Section Leader: Michael A. Johnson, Bismarck
Pilot: Jeff Faught, Bismarck
Upland Game Mgt. Supvr: Stan Kohn, Bismarck
Upland Game Mgt. Biologist: Aaron Robinson, Dickinson
Migratory Game Bird Biologist: Mike Szymanski, Bismarck
Big Game Mgt. Supvr: Bruce Stilling, Dickinson
Big Game Mgt. Biologists: Bill Jensen, Bismarck; Brett Wiedmann, Dickinson, Jason Smith, Jamestown
Survey Coordinator: Jerry Gulke, Bismarck
Wildlife Veterinarian: Dr. Daniel Grove, Bismarck
Furbearer Biologist: Stephanie Tucker, Bismarck
Game Management Technician: Rodney Gross, Devils Lake
Wildlife Resource Management Section Leader: Kent Luttschwager, Williston
Wildlife Resource Mgt. Supvrs: Bill Haase, Bismarck; Brian Prince, Devils Lake; Brian Kietzman, Jamestown; Dan Halstead, Riverdale; Blake Schaan, Lonetree
Wildlife Resource Mgt. Biologists: Arvid Anderson, Riverdale; Randy Littlefield, Lonetree; Rodd Compson, Jamestown; Judd Jasmer, Dickinson
Wildlife Techs: Tom Crutchfield, Jim Houston, Bismarck; Dan Morman, Robert Miller, Riverdale; Ernest Dawson, Jamestown; Morgan Johnson, Cordell Schmitz, Lonetree; Alan Roller, Williston; Scott Olson, Devils Lake
Private Land Section Leader: Kevin Kading, Bismarck
Asst. Private Land Coordinator: Doug Howie, Bismarck
Private Land Field Operation Coordinator: Nathan Harling, Bismarck
Private Land Biologists: Colin Penner, Levi Jacobson, Bismarck; Ty Dressler, Dickinson; Ryan Huber, Riverdale; Renae Heinle, Jamestown; Terry Oswald, Jr., Lonetree; Todd Buckley, Williston; Andrew Ahrens, Devils Lake
Procurement Officer: Raymond Parsons, Bismarck
Administrative Assistant: Dale Repnow, Bismarck
Lonetree Administrative Assistant: Diana Raugust, Harvey

FISHERIES DIVISION

Division Chief: Greg Power, Bismarck
Fisheries Mgt. Section Leader: Scott Gangel, Bismarck
Fisheries Supvrs: Fred Ryckman, Riverdale; Jeff Hendrickson, Dickinson; Jason Lee, Riverdale; Paul Bailey, Bismarck; Randy Hiltner, Devils Lake; Dave Fryda, Riverdale; Brandon Kratz, Jamestown
Fisheries Biologists: Russ Kinzler, Riverdale; Todd Caspers, Devils Lake; Aaron Slominski, Williston; Mike Johnson, Jamestown
Fisheries Techs: Phil Miller, Devils Lake; Pat John, Jamestown; Justen Barstad, Bismarck; Brian Frohlich, Riverdale; Jeff Merchant, Dickinson
Production/Development Section Supvr: Jerry Weigel, Bismarck
Aquatic Habitat Supvr: Scott Elstad, Bismarck
Fisheries Development Supvr: Bob Frohlich, Bismarck
Fisheries Dev. Proj. Mgr: Wesley Erdle, Bismarck
Fisheries Development Technician: Kyle Hoge, Bismarck
Administrative Assistant: Janice Vetter, Bismarck

ADVISORY BOARD

District 1 Jason Leiseth, Arnegard
District 2 Robert Gjellstad, Voltaire
District 3 Thomas Rost, Devils Lake
District 4 Vacant
District 5 Duane Hanson, West Fargo
District 6 Joel Christoferson, Litchville
District 7 David Nehring, Bismarck
District 8 Dwight Hecker, Fairfield

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

The mission of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is to protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive use.

Editor: Ron Wilson Graphic Designer: Constance Schiff Circulation Manager: Dawn Jochim

FEBRUARY 2015 • NUMBER 7 • VOLUME LXXVII

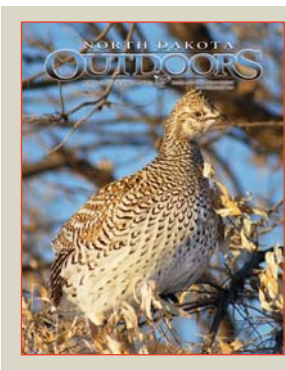
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURES

Drawing for Deer 2
2014 Enforcement Division Review..... 6
Pneumonia Kills Bighorn Hunting Season 10
Devils Lake Walleye Population Changes from 1992-2014 14

DEPARTMENTS

Buffaloberry Patch 18
Back Cast 25



Front Cover

Sharp-tailed grouse are native to North Dakota. In coming days, males will gather on dancing grounds to try to impress female onlookers. Photo by Graham Alchin, Bismarck.



Official Publication of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (ISSN 0029-2761)
100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095
Website: gf.nd.gov • email: ndgf@nd.gov
Information 701-328-6300 • Administration 701-328-6305
Hunter Education 701-328-6615 • Licensing 701-328-6335
24-Hour Licensing by Phone: 800-406-6409
The TTY/TTD (Relay ND) number for the hearing or speech impaired is 800-366-6888

North Dakota OUTDOORS is published 10 times a year, monthly except for the months of April and September. Subscription rates are \$10 for one year or \$20 for three years. Group rates of \$7 a year are available to organizations presenting 25 or more subscriptions. Remittance should be by check or money order payable to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. Indicate if subscription is new or renewal. The numbers on the upper right corner of the mailing label indicate the date of the last issue a subscriber will receive unless the subscription is renewed.

Permission to reprint materials appearing in North Dakota OUTDOORS must be obtained from the author, artist or photographer. We encourage contributions; contact the editor for writer and photography guidelines prior to submission.

The NDGFD receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the NDGFD joins the U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus in prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex (in education programs or activities) and also religion for the NDGFD. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or you desire further information, please write to: N. D. Game and Fish Department, Attn: Chief Administrative Services, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095 or to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

Periodical Postage Paid at Bismarck, ND 58501 and additional entry offices. Printed in the United States
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: North Dakota OUTDOORS 100 North Bismarck Expressway Bismarck, ND 58501-5095

Report All Poachers (RAP) 800-472-2121
In cooperation with North Dakota Wildlife Federation and North Dakota State Radio.



DRAWING

for Deer

While deer populations go up and down in North Dakota, what stays the same is the desire by many hunters to draw a mule deer buck license in the badlands.

By Ron Wilson

ROBERT FEINSTERMACKER

For the third year in a row, hunters in North Dakota were allowed only one license for the 2014 deer gun season.

With deer numbers down in much of the state and wildlife habitat on the decline, collecting just one license in the Game and Fish Department's lottery drawing was an accomplishment.

The Department made available just 48,000 licenses for the regular gun season last year, the lowest total since 1980. All told, 68,241 hunters (2,016 of whom were nonresidents vying for 480 licenses) applied for the 48,000 licenses.

There was considerable debate in 2014, both for and against changing how deer licenses are distributed during these times of low deer numbers and high hunter demand for licenses.

In late 2014, Game and Fish officials announced the Department would not implement a proposal to limit hunters to only one deer license of any type in 2015. The process by which hunters have garnered deer gun, muzzleloader and archery licenses for years did not change.


licensing manager, after 12,579 gratis licenses and 476 nonresident licenses were subtracted from the overall license allocation, only 17,452 buck licenses remained for the 56,815 hunters who applied for them as their first choice in the lottery.

While drawing a mule deer buck license was again a priority for some hunters, for the third year in a row in 2014, the Department did not allow hunting for antlerless mule deer in eight badlands hunting units as the population continues to show signs of recovery.

The spring mule deer index in 2014 was 19 percent higher than 2013, but still 7 percent lower than the long-term average. The fawn-to-doe ratio observed in fall was the highest since 1999, and above the long-term average.

Another highlight in 2014 was a limited pronghorn hunting season, the first since 2009. The season was open in only one unit in the far southwestern corner of the state.

A total of 250 any-pronghorn licenses were available, and the season was split into an early "bow-only" portion, and a later gun/bow season.



There was considerable debate in 2014, both for and against changing how deer licenses are distributed during these times of low deer numbers and high hunter demand for licenses.

With more than 100,000 deer gun licenses made available to hunters from 2001 through 2011, drawing a license in North Dakota has been more difficult the last three years.

And getting a buck license during that stretch certainly hasn't been easy.

According to Randy Meissner, Department

After 73 gratis licenses were subtracted from the 250 total pronghorn licenses, 177 remained. Meissner said nearly 6,000 hunters applied for those remaining licenses.

RON WILSON is editor of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.

2014 Turkey License Lottery Results

Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2014 spring turkey drawing.

Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2014 fall turkey drawing.

LICENSE TYPE	POINTS	POINTS								OVERALL	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
02	S	100	100	100							100
03	S	100	100								100
04	S	47.3	91.7	50							56.4
06	S	100	100								100
13	S	100	100	100							100
17	S	63	81.8								64.5
19	S	100	100								100
25	S	100	100								100
27	S	51	90.1	100	100						59.7
30	S	96.5	100								96.7
31	S	100	100								100
37	S	43.4	81.7	81.3	100						51.4
40	S	100	100								100
44	S	100	100								100
45	S	100	100								100
47	S	100	100								100
50	S	41.4	83.1	100	100						53.8
51	S	100	100								100
53	S	28.1	72.7								35.3
98	S	55.4	83.1	100							59.6
99	S	100	100								100

LICENSE TYPE	POINTS	POINTS								OVERALL	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
02	F	22.5	77.5	60	100						36.3
03	F	100									100
04	F	54.4	68.8	100							57
06	F	52.9	100								61.9
13	F	100	100								100
17	F	67.9	100	100							72.3
19	F	100	100								100
25	F	100	100								100
27	F	44.3	81.6	100							50
30	F	100	100								100
31	F	100									100
37	F	55.6	96	100							62.8
40	F	63.9	100								73.5
44	F	100	100								100
45	F	100									100
47	F	57.4	100								65.5
50	F	49.5	88	100							57.4
51	F	100	100								100
98	F	71.3	100								72.8
99	F	76.3									76.3

2014 Pronghorn License Lottery Results

Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2014 pronghorn drawing.

LICENSE TYPE	POINTS	POINTS										OVERALL
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
04	AA	0.4	80	1	2.4	19.4	29.8	41.7	75	33.3		3.6

How it Works

Despite the lowest number of deer gun licenses in nearly 35 years, the lottery process did not change.

Even so, with new hunters venturing afield every year, there are always questions concerning how the lottery system works. Using deer as the example, though turkey works the same way, here is a reminder.

If you fail to draw your first license choice in any given year, but apply within the next two years, you receive a bonus point. You do not have to apply in the same unit, or for the same deer type, to qualify. You get an additional bonus point each year you apply and do not receive your first license choice, as long as you have applied in the first drawing at least once in the previous two years.

You receive additional chances in the drawing for each bonus point accumulated. For points one through three, you are entered in the drawing two times the number of points you have. So, if you have two points you would get four additional chances to be drawn, compared to a person who got his or her first choice the previous year. If you're both competing for the same license, you have five chances, he or she has one.

When you accumulate four or more points, the number of additional chances is determined by cubing your bonus points. So, when you have four points, you will be in the drawing 64 additional times, 125 times if you have five points, and so on. Bonus points are accumulated as long as you do not draw your first

license choice and apply in the first drawing at least every other year. You do not receive bonus points in years you do not apply.

Each drawing is still random, but the more bonus points you have, the better your odds. When you receive your first license choice, you lose your bonus points and start over. Bonus points can only be earned, or used, in the first drawing for each species in each year.

The license lottery consists of four separate drawings, one for each choice on the application. First, we hold a drawing for the first unit/first deer choice. When those have been issued, we draw for the first unit/second deer choice, then the second unit/first deer choice, and finally the second unit/second deer choice.

2014 Deer License Lottery Results

Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2014 deer drawing.

		POINTS										OVERALL
LICENSE TYPE		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	A Any Buck	13.2	35.2	54.9	83.3							23
1	B Any Doe	93.4	100	100								94.3
2A	A Any Buck	2.8	9.1	18.3	29.4	93.3	100					14.8
2A	B Any Doe	2	3.8	2.7	16.7	0	0					3.3
2B	A Any Buck	7.4	23.9	37.5	32.2	100	100					18.7
2B	B Any Doe	55.4	71.9	87.1	85.7	100	100	100				59.2
2C	A Any Buck	2.6	10.4	15.4	18	100						8.4
2C	B Any Doe	32.3	60.9	85								39.1
2D	A Any Buck	12.1	29.8	51.6	71.4							20.5
2D	B Any Doe	87.6	93.5	100	100							88.8
2E	A Any Buck	1.4	3.3	5.1	4.7	40	0					3.9
2E	B Any Doe	72	87	89.3	100	100						76.8
2F1	A Any Buck	31.1	63.4	86.1	83.3		100					43.8
2F1	B Any Doe	97.8	100	100								98.1
2F2	A Any Buck	14.5	30.6	48.5	62.2	100						27
2F2	B Any Doe	92.2	91.4	92	100							92.1
2G	A Any Buck	4.7	14.4	26	17.9							12.7
2G	B Any Doe	82.2	76.2	100	100							82.4
2G1	A Any Buck	6	17.3	24.3	37.5	100	100					17
2G1	B Any Doe	55.7	82.1	92.6	87.5							62.1
2G2	A Any Buck	14.7	34.8	48.2	60.6	100	100	100				29.8
2G2	B Any Doe	91.1	86	100	100							90.6
2H	A Any Buck	29.7	62.5	78.9	85.3	100		100				45.5
2H	B Any Doe	91.1	100	100	100							92.9
2I	A Any Buck	13.7	40.2	46.7	55.5	100	100					29.5
2I	B Any Doe	94.2	94.3	100	100	100						94.5
2J1	A Any Buck	5.8	18.8	33.2	42.6	97.1	83.3					23.5
2J1	B Any Doe	93.7	86.7	100	100	100						93.2
2J2	A Any Buck	26.7	56.1	79.3	90	100						43.8
2J2	B Any Doe	94.9	96.6	100								95.2
2K1	A Any Buck	6.9	25.7	33.7	42.4	100	100	100	100			23.1
2K1	B Any Doe	89.3	94.1	90.9	75	100						89.8
2K2	A Any Buck	17.2	40.8	61.1	67.5	100			100			34.1
2K2	B Any Doe	96.4	100	100								97
2L	A Any Buck	29.7	64.2	82.6	75							45.2
2L	B Any Doe	98.8	100		100							98.9
3A1	A Any Buck	0.5	1.8	5.7	4.4	32.4	49.1	100				8.8
3A1	B Any Doe*	0	0	0	0	0	0					0
3A2	A Any Buck	34.7	70.6	84.5	87	100	100					48.9
3A2	B Any Doe	98.2	97.7	100		100						98.2
3A3	A Any Buck	3.6	4.9	15	17.8	85.1	100					14.3
3A3	B Any Doe	91.8	79.5	100	70	75						89.6
3A4	A Any Buck	19.2	47.1	67.2	71.1	100		100				34.3
3A4	B Any Doe	91.9	100	100	100							93.1
3B1	C WT Buck	2.3	7.2	14.8	17.7	66	100	100				15
3B1	D WT Doe	0	8.3	4.5	33.3	100						8.8
3B1	E MD Buck	4.9	14.4	30.5	37.2	94.1	100	100				20.7
3B2	C WT Buck	21.1	30.7	60.8	50	100	100					31.5
3B2	D WT Doe	98.1	80		100							96.7
3B2	E MD Buck	11.7	30.5	62.5	50	100	100	100				28.7
3B3	A Any Buck	8.3	28.3	28.9	48.1	100						21.3
3B3	B Any Doe	88.5	83.3	100	100							87.9
3B3	C WT Buck	64.8	96.8	100	100	100	100					74.9
3B3	D WT Doe	99.5	100	100	100	100						99.6

		POINTS										OVERALL
LICENSE TYPE		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
3C	A Any Buck	3.6	11.9	27.5	22.9	90.9	100	100				14.2
3C	B Any Doe	62.2	90.9	100	100							68.5
3C	C WT Buck	50.9	85.1	95.7	100	100	100					61.1
3C	D WT Doe	99.5	100	100	100	100						99.6
3D1	A Any Buck	18	34	61.7	66.7	100	100					35.7
3D1	B Any Doe	100	100	100			100					100
3D1	C WT Buck	84.8	96.2	100	100							88.6
3D1	D WT Doe	100	100									100
3D2	A Any Buck	7	14.6	23	34.2	92	100					20
3D2	B Any Doe	89.4	95.7	83.3	100							90.4
3D2	C WT Buck	28.7	42	67.2	66.7	100	100					45.1
3D2	D WT Doe	96.4	100	100								97
3E1	A Any Buck	18.5	38.3	73	84	100	50					34.2
3E1	B Any Doe	96.8	100	100			100					97.1
3E1	C WT Buck	74.2	99.1	100	100							81.2
3E1	D WT Doe	95.7	100									96.4
3E2	A Any Buck	44.6	80.8	89.7	87.5	100			100			58.3
3E2	B Any Doe	94.4	92.9	100								94.3
3E2	C WT Buck	99.4	100	100	100							99.5
3E2	D WT Doe	100	100									100
3F1	A Any Buck	29.8	65.2	90.5	80	100	100					47.1
3F1	B Any Doe	100	100	100	100							100
3F1	C WT Buck	98.9	97.9	100		100						98.7
3F1	D WT Doe	100	100		100							100
3F2	A Any Buck	30.3	68.9	89.7	82.4	100	100					47.2
3F2	B Any Doe	97.9	100	100								98.3
3F2	C WT Buck	99.3	100	100	100							99.4
3F2	D WT Doe	94.4	100									95
4A	C WT Buck	17.5	32.3	62.7	70.8	100						37.5
4A	D WT Doe	96.3	75	100	100							92.1
4A	E MD Buck	0	2.6	6.5	12.2	61.3	72.2	66.7				15.6
4B	C WT Buck	24.4	70.7	81	100	100						47.8
4B	D WT Doe	100	80	100	100							95.5
4B	E MD Buck	0.5	1.3	2.6	3.4	25.8	55.4	73.3	100	100		10.7
4C	C WT Buck	39.3	69.8	85.7	100	100	100					54.3
4C	D WT Doe	83.3	100									85.7
4C	E MD Buck	0.4	1	2.5	2.7	18.6	28.5	58.8	65			9.5
4D	C WT Buck	76.5	100	100	100	100						83.4
4D	D WT Doe	100	100	100								100
4D	E MD Buck	0.5	0.7	3.4	3.7	24.7	43	39.1	100	100		9.7
4E	C WT Buck	100	92.9	100	66.7	100						98.3
4E	D WT Doe	100	100	100								100
4E	E MD Buck	0.6	9.1	7.6	14.9	73.3	50	100				14.6
4F	C WT Buck	98.4	100	100	100							98.6
4F	D WT Doe	100										100
4F	E MD Buck	14.9	42.1	62.1	60	100	100					34.7
MUZ	C WT Buck	0	0.3	0.4	0.8	5.4	11.1	16.2	26	50		4.2
MUZ	D WT Doe	27.9	67.1	86.1	95	100	100	100	100			47.9

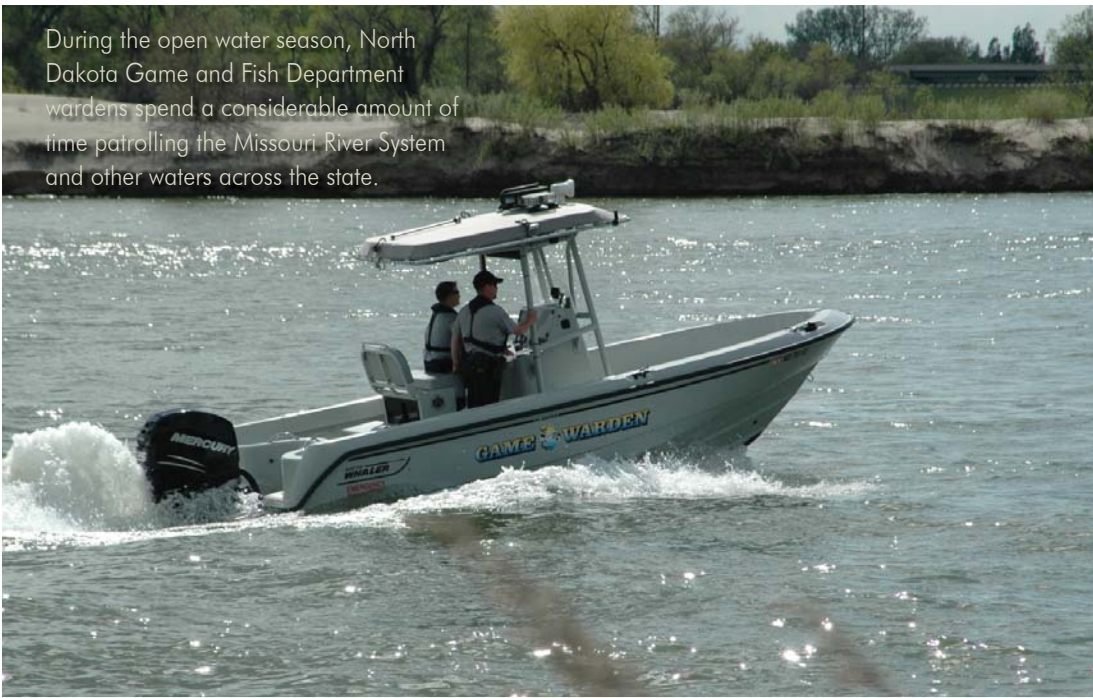
*All available doe licenses were issued to gratis applicants prior to the lottery drawing.

2014

ENFORCEMENT DIVISION REVIEW

By Robert Timian
Photos by Mike Anderson

During the open water season, North Dakota Game and Fish Department wardens spend a considerable amount of time patrolling the Missouri River System and other waters across the state.



FOR MORE THAN 45 YEARS *NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS*

has carried an annual account of game and fish violations handled by state game wardens.

For all the years from the late 1960s up through 2009, those reports were compiled based on the state's fiscal year, which runs from July through the following June. As such, when the report was eventually published in the annual report issue in January or February, the information was six or seven months old.

Starting in 2010 we switched our reporting to cover a calendar year, and for the past four years we've

published the enforcement annual review in the May magazine, but still, the information on citations was a few months old by then.

This year, due to advances in the system we use to log violations and track citations, we're now able to provide that information much sooner.

What the numbers tell us is that North Dakota game wardens cited anglers, hunters and others with a record number of violations in 2014. The grand total of 2,712, is up nearly 300 from the number of violations in 2013.

Game and Fish Department warden Ryan Tunge, Hazen, checks the fishing license of an angler at the Garrison Dam Tailrace in January 2015.



The number one violation for the past few years has been fishing or hunting without a license, and closely related, fishing or hunting without having the license “on your person.”

Until a few years ago, boats not having enough personal flotation devices on board was more often than not the most prevalent violation each year. With 176 of those violations in 2014 that’s still in third place, but it’s a distant third compared to more than 300 for each of the licensing violations.

We have been trying to determine why those

licensing violations have increased so much in recent years. We don’t think it is the price, because a North Dakota fishing license is relatively inexpensive. Where else can you for a few dollars get a license that you can use 12 months out of the year?

And of course, North Dakota has more people than it had 10 years ago, but most of our new residents, plus nonresidents who fish here, come from places where licenses are required, so there shouldn’t be any confusion about whether an adult would need a fishing license.

Warden Jeff Violett, Mandan, patrols his district during the always busy deer gun season in North Dakota. (Below) Warden Tim Larson, Turtle Lake, checks an ice angler's license earlier this winter.



What the numbers also show us is, as you can see in the accompanying sidebar, that McKenzie County again led the state in the number of citations. That isn't necessarily surprising, but what did surprise us is how large an increase it had from last year. It was the number one county by almost double the second place county.

Of the nearly 400 violations in McKenzie County in 2014, nearly 300 of those occurred within the Lewis and Clark Wildlife Management Area. Those ran the gamut from typical Game and Fish violations or WMA violations to arrests for drug violations and outstanding felony warrants.

By law, North Dakota game wardens enforce all state laws on property that the Department owns or manages like our WMAs, and also on state sovereign land. Game wardens are licensed peace officers and they are also often called upon to assist other law enforcement agencies as well.

Not all of the increase in violations can be attributed to McKenzie County. We also noted increases in the area around Devils Lake. Part of that is because Devils Lake is a popular fishing lake year in and year out, and part of it is because we put some additional effort into that area, trying to increase our presence and visibility.

Every year we make those same decisions on where to periodically concentrate our staff time, with hopes that it will lead to more compliance and fewer violations in the future.

ROBERT TIMLIAN is the Game and Fish Department's enforcement division chief.



The Missouri River is always a busy place during the open water months, especially when the fish are biting. Warden Jackie Lundstrom, Bismarck, checks an angler's catch as he leaves the river in Bismarck.

What the numbers tell us is that North Dakota game wardens cited anglers, hunters and others with a record number of violations in 2014. The grand total of 2,712, is up nearly 300 from the number of violations in 2013.

Incidents 2014 – Top 10 Counties

- McKenzie – 293 (up 46 from 2013)
- Burleigh – 266 (up 73)
- Williams – 211 (down 20)
- Cass – 211 (up 102)
- Morton – 203 (up 11)
- Stark – 193
- Ward – 171
- McLean - 160
- Richland – 136
- Stutsman – 134

Citations 2014 – Top 10 Counties

- McKenzie – 399 (up 123 from 2013)
- Williams – 190 (down 4)
- Stark – 140 (down 5)
- Ramsey – 140 (up 7)
- Burleigh – 110 (up 7)
- Stutsman – 108
- McIntosh – 93
- Morton – 92
- Barnes – 88
- McLean – 86

Citations Statewide

- 2009 – 1,675
- 2010 – 2,097
- 2011 – 2,165
- 2012 – 2,568
- 2013 – 2,430
- 2014 – 2,712

(An incident is defined as any situation that requires a response from a game warden. It does not have to be a crime, the situation could be, for example, a stranded boater.)

When pneumonia hits a bighorn sheep population, it doesn't play any favorites. It was determined during an intensive inventory last fall during the rut, just weeks after the first reported pneumonia death in July, that the majority of the mature rams targeted by hunters had died.



DARCY KRAMLICH

PNEUMONIA

KILLS BIGHORN HUNTING SEASON

By Ron Wilson

While it's uncertain exactly how many bighorn sheep have died of pneumonia in the northern badlands since the middle of last summer, Game and Fish Department officials believe the die-off is significant enough to close the hunting season in 2015.

The hunting season for bighorn sheep, an animal that was reintroduced in western North Dakota after considerable effort more than a half-century ago, has run uninterrupted for 30 years.

Jeb Williams, Department wildlife division chief, said it would be irresponsible on the Department's part to issue once-in-a-lifetime bighorn licenses without further investigating the status of the population.

"The main thing is that we know pneumonia is in the northern bighorn population and that we've lost a large number of sheep," Williams said. "It's going to take time for Department biologists to see what's out there on the landscape."

Furthermore, nearly all, if not all, of the mature rams targeted by hunters are gone.

Brett Wiedmann, Department big game biologist in Dickinson, did an intensive inventory of adult rams during the rut last fall. What he found, weeks after the first reported pneumonia death in July, was discouraging.

"Mature rams typically live in the rough backcountry and you don't see much of them until the rut," he said. "What I found is that we lost virtually all of our mature rams. I saw one, and that's it."

Wiedmann said based on the number of bighorns with radio-collars, which emit a mortality signal no matter the cause of death, anywhere from 30 to 40 percent of the population north of Interstate 94 is dead.

"That's 100 sheep or more, and the outbreak is ongoing," he said. "Groups of ewes

and lambs that I spotted before, now consist of some ewes with snotty noses. Most of the lambs are gone."

Western North Dakota is home to two bighorn sheep populations, located south and north of the interstate. The animals to the north make up about 85 percent of the state's population.

Wiedmann said there were about 350 bighorns before the pneumonia outbreak, and the population was set to take off, set to shatter the state's record count. That, unfortunately, is not going to happen.

The state's bighorn sheep program, Wiedmann said, went from champion to something considerably less than that in just a few months.

"Our bighorn sheep population today is a long way from what it was," he said.

It's difficult to assess at this stage how North Dakota's bighorn population will respond to the outbreak, but similar pneumonia eruptions across the West suggest anywhere from 30 to 90 percent of the wild sheep population could be lost.

"It's discouraging because we know that pneumonia has spread through the entire northern population," Wiedmann said.

Williams said identifying the exact source of the pneumonia outbreak is difficult. Based on nationwide research, pneumonia outbreaks in wild bighorn sheep populations are most often the result of contact with domestic sheep.

Postmortem examinations determined the dead bighorns in the northern badlands were infected with *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M-ovi*). This bacteria that leads to the death of bighorns is common in healthy domestic sheep and goats.

Williams said the Game and Fish Department has no control over what people have on their land, yet it's the agency's responsibility to

Bighorns Radio-collared

In early February, the Game and Fish Department deployed radio-collars on 21 bighorn sheep throughout the badlands.

Considering a number of collared sheep have died from pneumonia since July, Department wildlife officials said it was necessary to add new collars to the population to continue to track the bighorns and monitor the influence of the disease outbreak.

Brett Wiedmann, Department big game biologist, said blood and swab samples were collected from each captured and collared animal for disease testing.

Wiedmann said the capture crew noted that none of the sheep they handled had nasal discharge and all seemed to be in good health.

"So, we remain hopeful, but not optimistic," Wiedmann said.



CRAIG BIRLIE

educate landowners on the risks of contact between wild and domestic animals.

“We’ve been doing this for years,” Williams said. “In the majority of situations it has worked out well. The vast majority of landowners in bighorn sheep country are supportive of the bighorn program and want them around.”

Department protocol calls for a 10-mile buffer between domestic and wild sheep, as the latter, mostly notably males, will wander some distance during the breeding season.

Williams said protocol also calls for killing any bighorn suspected of commingling with domestic sheep.

“We have done this a number of times over the years,” he said. “We had to lethally remove one just last spring.”

Dr. Dan Grove, Department wildlife veterinarian, said pneumonia can kill some wild sheep in as little as a few weeks, or it might take months to kill others. Animals have difficulty breathing, suffer nasal discharge and literally drown in their own fluids.

Every animal is a little bit different and some infected sheep do survive. However, these sheep still harbor the bacteria, which can be shed, or expelled into the environment, during times of stress, such as inclement weather and the rut.

This is just the second pneumonia outbreak in North Dakota’s bighorn sheep population, the first coming in 1997 when about 100 sheep died south of Interstate 94. That die-off was severe, but today’s ongoing pneumonia eruption to the north will likely be worse.

Wiedmann said the population south of the interstate, which was initially exposed to domestic goats, has struggled for years and never bounced back.

“It’s basically a sedentary, stagnant population,” he said.

While it will take months to fully evaluate the status of the northern badlands bighorn population, Wiedmann said looking ahead, options for rebuilding the herd are few.

In bigger states with more sheep, Wiedmann said wildlife officials have gone in and depopulated affected areas and then reintroduced healthy sheep from elsewhere in the state.

“That’s not an option for us because we don’t have a source of healthy bighorns in our state,” he said. “And we can’t bring in sheep from out-of-state because we don’t want to introduce healthy sheep to sick sheep.”

Wiedmann said there are some cases in other states where bighorn sheep populations have

These bighorn sheep (top) were trapped in Montana and released in the badlands in 2006. Today, moving bighorns in from elsewhere with an ongoing pneumonia outbreak isn’t an option.

This bighorn ewe (bottom) was one of 20-plus sheep trapped in Alberta and released in the badlands in winter 2014. The animal died on August 26, 2014 in the badlands of pneumonia.



BRETT WIEDMANN

rebounded quicker than expected from pneumonia outbreaks. Yet, considering the expected severity of the disease event in the badlands, he's not holding his breath for a quick turnaround.

What he hopes to see someday is 25 percent lamb recruitment for three consecutive years.

"When we have that many lambs surviving for three years in a row, it's a good indicator that the disease has worked its way through the population," Wiedmann said.

Based on the number of rams lost and the likelihood of poor lamb recruitment for some time,

however, Wiedmann said reopening the hunting season in the badlands likely won't happen anytime soon.

Even so, Williams said the Department is still committed to the state's bighorn sheep program that has been around for nearly 60 years.

"Bighorn sheep are a symbol of the badlands," Williams said. "Like the rugged land in which these animals inhabit, bighorn sheep belong in western North Dakota."

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS.

A BRIEF HISTORY

There are gaps, milestones, setbacks and triumphs in the saga of bighorn sheep in North Dakota.

Bighorn sheep, historians tell us, were extirpated from the state in 1905, a century after a member of the Lewis and Clark party was credited for being the first white man to identify one of these animals negotiating the rugged badland's terrain high above the Missouri River.

After an absence of nearly a half-century, 18 bighorns were trapped in British Columbia and transported to Magpie Creek in western North Dakota in November 1956.

"On or about April 24, 1957, a blessed event took place deep in the heart of the badlands west of Grassy Butte, North Dakota ... the first lamb to be born in the wild in this state since the early 1900s arrived on schedule," wrote Arthur Brazda, North Dakota Game and Fish Department big game biologist, in *North Dakota OUTDOORS* in 1957.

According to "Big Game in North Dakota," a Game and Fish Department publication, the

last of the original sheep from British Columbia was found dead, tangled in a barbed wire fence in the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park in 1969. An ear tag in the old ram confirmed his identification.

To create a healthy, sustainable bighorn sheep population in the badlands,

Department biologists and others have moved sheep instate from here to there dozens of times in more than 50 years. In that same time period, bighorns have been trapped outside our borders and relocated to North Dakota roughly 10 times.

The first modern-day bighorn sheep hunting season in North Dakota was held in 1975. The main objective of the season, while at the same time providing coveted, once-in-a-lifetime hunting opportunities, was to lower the sex ratio by harvesting surplus rams, according to text in "Big Game in North Dakota."

That first year, 12 licenses were made available to hunters. License numbers have varied over the years and have certainly gotten more conservative of late. In 2014, the Game and Fish Department allotted five licenses to hunters, one more than 2013.



GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT PHOTO

A dozen once-in-a-lifetime bighorn sheep licenses were made available to hunters during the state's first modern day bighorn hunting season in 1975. Scott Wilcox (far left) of Fargo was just 15 when he shot this mature ram on the fourth day of the season.

Devils Lake



WALLEYE POPULATION CHANGES

from 1992-2014

Devils Lake has long been a favorite of walleye anglers across North Dakota and beyond.

By Todd Caspers and Randy Hiltner

Devis Lake is one of the top walleye fishing destinations in North America. In the past decade or more, creel surveys have routinely documented more than 1 million hours of fishing use per year on the big lake.

It wasn't always this way, as significant environmental changes have occurred since the North Dakota Game and Fish Department began conducting fish population surveys on the lake in 1992. Devils Lake has dramatically increased in size and depth in 23 years. Rising water levels created changes in fish habitat quality as well. These physical changes have helped to mold the walleye population into what it is today, a "walleye factory."

Changes Over Time

In the early 1990s, low lake and high salinity levels contributed to poor walleye reproduction. With fewer adult and young-of-the-year walleye (Figure 1), stocking was necessary to keep the population going.

However, as water levels increased, creating favorable spawning conditions, the walleye population

still an option, especially if natural reproduction is low for several years.

While some year-classes fail to reach expectations, which is typical for walleye populations, most year-classes since about 2000 have been relatively good. The exceptions were the 2003-05 year-classes, which were all fairly small.

As spawning conditions improved over time, the overall walleye population began to increase starting in 1997 and has been on a general upward trend. The population is still relatively high, but has declined a bit in the past few years.

Walleyes of 10 to 14.9 inches show a similar trend as their numbers began increasing in 1997 as well, although catches of fish this size tend to be more variable. The number of 15-inch-plus walleyes declined in 1994 and have been relatively lower since, except for an increase from 2006-09 when their numbers rose substantially.

The changes in the walleye population are a mixed bag. For example, even though there are more walleye today, the fish tended to be larger in the past. During

In 2008, walleye were growing at about the same rate as the North American average, but growth has slowed the past few years.



CRAIG BIRLIE

increased with it. The first large walleye year-class occurred in 1997 and a number of good year-classes followed.

Some of the year-classes were wholly the product of natural reproduction. The 2009 year-class, the largest ever recorded at Devils Lake, is a good example.

Stocking, while not as important as it once was, is

the early 1990s, the adult walleye population consisted mainly of 15-inch-plus fish. Walleye measuring less than 15 inches were uncommon, which was a concern for future recruitment.

As time passed and water levels increased, the adult population gradually included a larger percentage of smaller, younger fish. The walleye were also more

robust in the past. Body condition values have shown a decline over the years. Generally, a body condition value for a walleye that is more than 100 is very good, whereas values from 85-95 are more typical.

The declining body condition values are likely due, in part, to the increasing numbers of walleye in the lake. Each fish simply has less available food when more individuals are present, almost like having too

survey on Devils Lake, about 84 percent of the harvested walleye were 12-16 inches, with the average harvested fish about 15 inches. The winter period was similar, with about 80 percent of harvested fish measuring 12-16 inches, with an average length of 14 inches.

Devils lake anglers seem to prefer these eater-sized fish, as about 84 percent of all anglers throughout the

In the last 10 years or more, creel surveys at Devils Lake have routinely revealed more than 1 million hours of fishing use per year. This collection of empty boat trailers was photographed at Graham's Island State Park.



CRAIG BHRLE

many cows in a small pasture.

Devils Lake walleye have also shown a growth decline (Figure 2). In 2008, walleye were growing at about the same rate as the North American average, but growth has slowed the past few years. This is likely the result of a more abundant walleye population, as well as competition from other fish species. Despite the decreases in body condition and growth, the walleye population is still in pretty good shape. Fish are not going hungry and are still growing, just at a slower pace.

The high walleye abundance and lower body condition has made for high angler catches and harvests, while not hurting the population as a whole. Anglers who like eater-sized fish are benefiting from the current walleye size structure.

During the summer portion of the 2013-14 creel

The walleyes in Devils Lake have dramatically increased in size and depth in 23 years.

year indicated that they would prefer to keep five 15-inch walleye instead of two 20-inch fish, assuming that total weights were similar. While larger walleye currently make up a smaller proportion of the angler's catch,

they are still present and offer the occasional nice surprise.

Possible Future Changes

Game and Fish Department biologists have investigated the feasibility of using various length-based regulations to perhaps increase the number of large walleye in the lake.

Currently, there are no length-limit regulations that would substantially increase the number of large walleye in the lake. Also, there isn't a biological need to implement a regulation, as natural reproduction is

good and most anglers are satisfied with the average-sized walleye in the lake.

However, conditions could change and Department biologists will continue to monitor the walleye population and make any necessary regulation changes to protect the fishery if conditions warrant it.

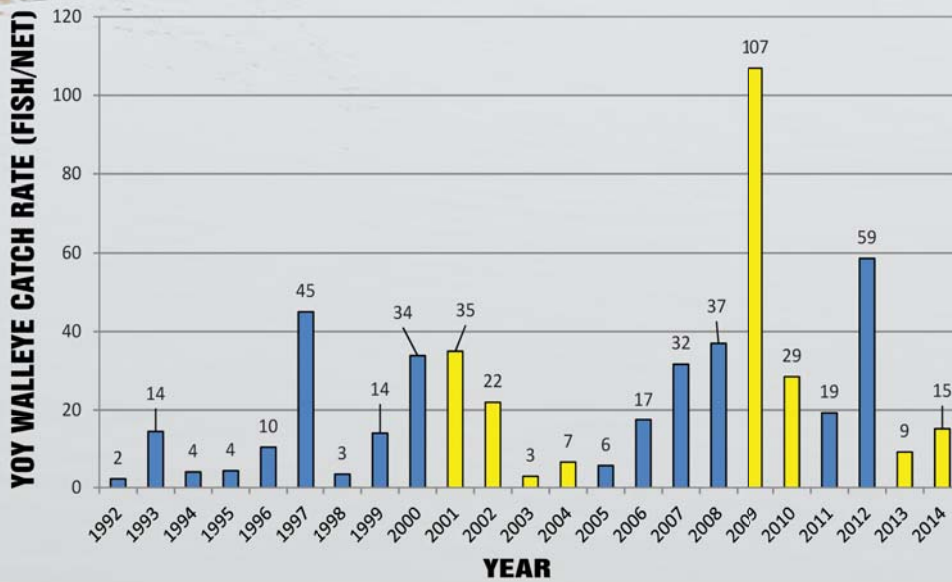
Future water levels will probably play a major role in structuring the walleye population. If water levels remain relatively high, then the population will probably remain similar to what it is now. That is, consistent recruitment will

produce high numbers of eater-sized walleye.

However, a steady, prolonged decline in water levels would probably result in a lower walleye population but with fish of a larger average size. Only time will tell what the future has in store for water levels and walleyes of Devils Lake.

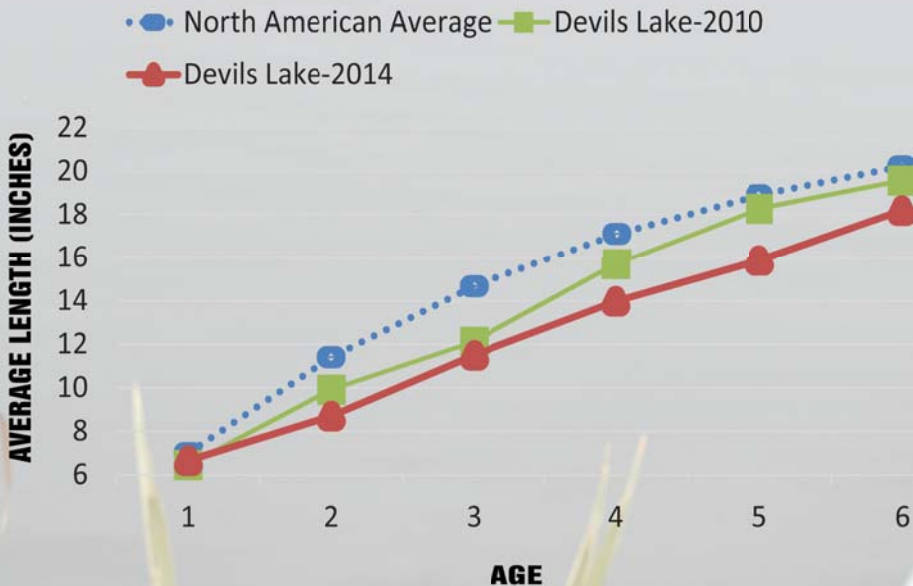
TODD CASPERS is a Game and Fish Department fisheries biologist and **RANDY HILTNER** is a fisheries supervisor, both in Devils Lake.

FIGURE 1



Yearly net catch rates for young-of-the-year walleye in Devils Lake from 1992-2014. (Yellow bars indicate years when no walleye were stocked, so all of the fish in those years were produced naturally. Blue bars indicate years when walleye were stocked, however, natural reproduction likely also contributed to the year-classes after 1995).

FIGURE 2



Average length at age of Devils Lake walleye in 2010 and 2014, compared to the North American average.



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

By Greg Freeman, Department News Editor



CRAIG BIRRE

SNOW GOOSE MIGRATION

North Dakota spring light goose hunters can track general locations of geese as birds make their way through the state.

Hunters are able to call 701-328-3697 to hear recorded information 24 hours a day. Migration reports are also posted on the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov. Updates are provided periodically during the week as migration events occur, until the season ends or geese have left the state.

Spring Light Goose Season

North Dakota's spring light goose season opened earlier this month and continues through May 17.

Residents can hunt during the spring season through March 31 with either a 2014-15 or 2015-16 license. However, the 2014-15 hunting license expires March 31. Residents will need the 2015-16 license beginning April 1.

Nonresidents need a 2015 spring light goose season license. The cost is \$50 and the license is good statewide. Nonresident youth under age 16 can purchase a license at the resident fee if they reside in a state that has a reciprocity licensing agreement with North Dakota.

A federal duck stamp is not required for either residents or nonresidents.

Licenses are available only from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Bismarck office, the Department's website at gf.nd.gov, or by calling 800-406-6409.

Availability of food and open water determine when snow geese arrive in the state. Early migrants generally start showing up in the southeast part of the state in mid- to late March, but huntable

numbers usually aren't around until the end of March or early April. Movements into and through the state depend on available roosting areas and the extent of the snow line.

Hunters must obtain a new Harvest Information Program registration number before hunting. The HIP number can be obtained online or by calling 888-634-4798. The HIP number is good for the fall season as well, so spring hunters should save it to record on their fall license.

The spring season is only open to light geese – snows, blues, and Ross's. Species identification is important because white-fronted and Canada geese travel with light geese. The season is closed to whitefronts, Canada geese, swans and all other migratory birds.

Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. There is no daily bag limit or possession limit. Electronic and recorded calls, as well as shotguns capable of holding more than three shells, may be used to take light geese during this season.

There are no waterfowl rest areas

designated for the spring season. Hunters should note that private land within waterfowl rest areas closed last fall may be posted closed to hunting.

Nontoxic shot is required for hunting all light geese statewide. Driving off established roads and trails is strongly discouraged during this hunt because of the likelihood of soft, muddy conditions, and winter wheat that is planted across the state.

To maintain good landowner relations, hunters are advised to seek permission before hunting on private lands or attempting any off-road travel during this season.

Sprouted winter wheat is considered an unharvested crop. Therefore, hunting or off-road travel in winter wheat is not legal without landowner permission.

All regular hunting season regulations not already addressed apply to the spring season. For more information on regulations refer to the 2015 Spring Light Goose Hunting Regulations and the 2014 North Dakota Waterfowl Hunting Guide.

MIDWINTER WATERFOWL SURVEY

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated 145,200 birds were in the state.

Mike Szymanski, Department migratory game bird biologist, said an estimated 87,700 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River, and another 30,600 were scattered on Nelson Lake. Lake Sakakawea, declared iced-over on January 6, had no geese on the lake itself. Szymanski said after summarizing the numbers, 118,500 Canada geese and 26,500 mallards were tallied statewide.

"Conditions leading up to this year's survey were highly variable, but lower than average snow conditions resulted in more birds in the state compared to the past couple winters," Szymanski said.

Harsh conditions in mid-November pushed many geese through the Missouri River System, Szymanski



LARA ANDERSON

said, and essentially all other waters in the state, with the exception of a few places with fast-moving or warm water, were frozen at the time.

"However, moderate conditions in much of December allowed for ideal wintering conditions along the

Missouri River," Szymanski said. "The lack of snow cover was important for allowing birds to feed without too much trouble. Aside from a few brief periods of inclement weather, wintering conditions in areas with open water have been ideal for waterfowl."

Boats Need Current Registration

Boat owners purchasing watercraft from private individuals this winter are reminded to register it in their name with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

Registering a used watercraft purchased from an individual must include proof of transfer of ownership, such as a photocopy of the previous owner's registration card, a canceled check or a signed note from the previous owner stating transfer of ownership.

The prorated price to register motorboats under 16 feet in length, and all canoes, is \$12, motorboats from 16 feet to less than 20 feet in length, \$24, and motorboats at least 20 feet in length, \$30.

The current three-year boat registration cycle runs through Dec. 31, 2016.

In addition, boat owners who need to renew their registration can renew online at the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, by clicking the online services link, and "watercraft registration and renewals" under the watercraft heading.

Also, anyone buying a new or used watercraft can register online and generate a 10-day temporary permit that is valid until the registration is processed.

Regulations require the boat number to be in contrasting color to the hull in plain vertical block letters at least 3 inches in height, excluding any border, trim, outlining or shading, and must be maintained in a legible condition so the number is clearly visible in daylight hours. The number must read from left to right, and groups of numbers and letters must be separated by a space or hyphen equivalent in width to the letter "M."

In addition, a validation sticker issued by the Game and Fish Department must be displayed on the boat within 6 inches of the number toward the rear of the boat. No other numbers should be displayed in this area.



NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT									
Licensing Hunting/Trapping Fishing Boating Wildlife Education									
Legislation									
Below is a listing of outdoor-related legislation. This information will be updated regularly during the legislative session. For more information on the North Dakota 2015 legislative session go to the http://www.nd.gov/legis									
Listing									
Legislation Session	Bill	Author	Hearing Date	Committee	Bill Summary/Notes	House Floor	Senate Floor	Effective Date	Remarks
2015-2016	2015-2016	Adrian		Appropriations Committee	Credit increases in the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund would increase from \$10 million to \$20 million in a state fiscal year and from \$10 million to \$20 million per biennium. House Appropriations heard 1/22. In addition:				
2015-2016	2015-2016	Adrian		Appropriations Committee	Should require the Industrial Commission to notify the Office of Management and Enterprise Services and be obligated to a state agency from the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund. House Appropriations Committee heard. In addition later:				
2015-2016	2015-2016	Adrian		Rep's Nelson, Daryl Bergquist, Gary Balesworth, Shirley	Should have authority to the Outdoor Adventure Foundation to be best spring fishing and to provide state-owned water use and to prohibit changes to public use and to be managed with water in a collaborative system. Passed House			3/4/15	
2015-2016	2015-2016	Parish		Rep's Loring, Ryan Rasmussen	Should require an applicant to be a resident of North Dakota for the permanent structure before applying in the high-rise areas. All and House Interior. Passed House			3/4/15	
2015-2016	2015-2016	Adrian		Rep's Palfrey, Robert Belmont, Gary Koenig, D. Lee	Should allow an environmental application in the state for a permit to be related to the Department's Private Land Clear to the Department program. Passed House			3/4/15	
2015-2016	2015-2016	Adrian		Rep's Belmont, Bob Strain, Mitchell Palfrey, Christopher, Gary Koenig, D. Lee	Should allow a state-owned public land owned in all hunting and fishing habitat on a temporary basis. Effective April 1, 2015. House Energy and Natural Resources Committee heard 1/22. Refer to Appropriations Committee				

Hunting and Fishing Legislation on Web

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is tracking hunting and fishing issues during the 2015 legislative session.

Interested outdoor enthusiasts can follow proposed outdoors-related bills by logging onto the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

A brief description of each bill is included, along with the bill sponsor and hearing schedule. To view each bill in its entirety, click on the hot-linked bill number.

DARKHOUSE SPEARFISHING CLOSES

Anglers are reminded that North Dakota's darkhouse spearfishing season closes March 15.

Individuals who would still like to get out for the first time this year must register with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. Registration is available through the Department's website, gf.nd.gov, or through any Game and Fish Department office.



RON WILSON

Remove Permanent Fish Houses

State law requires permanent fish houses to be removed from North Dakota waters by midnight March 15.

Anglers are advised to use caution because mild weather conditions can quickly result in unstable ice conditions.

Fish houses may be used after March 15 if they are removed daily.

In addition, it is illegal to leave fish houses on any federal refuge land or on any state-owned or managed land after March 15.



CRAIG BIRRE



Moose and Elk Apps

Hunters interested in applying for a 2015 moose and elk license should watch the Game and Fish website in early March for applications. The deadline for applying is March 25.

Hunters can apply online at gf.nd.gov. Application forms will also be available at license vendors, county auditors and Game and Fish offices.

Moose and elk lottery licenses are issued as once-in-a-lifetime licenses in North Dakota. Hunters who have received a license through the lottery in the past are not eligible to apply for that species again.

There is no bighorn sheep hunting season in 2015 due to a low population.



**2014 Earth Day Patch Winner
Emily Ehlert, Williston**

North Dakota Earth Day Patch Contest

The state Game and Fish Department's annual Earth Day awareness campaign is accepting entries for design of a 2015 Earth Day patch.

North Dakota students ages 6-18 are eligible to participate. The deadline to submit entries is March 15.

The Game and Fish Department will announce a winner in three age categories – 6-9, 10-13, and 14-18. Each winner will receive a pair of binoculars. The final patch design will be chosen from the three winners.

The winning design will be used on a patch given to members of Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H clubs and any school participating in Earth Day cleanup projects on state-owned or managed lands in North Dakota in April and May.

The patch should incorporate some aspect of Earth Day – celebrated April 22 – or keeping North Dakota clean. It must be round and three inches in diameter. There is a limit of five colors on the patch, and lettering must be printed. Name, address, age and phone number of the contestant must be clearly printed on the entry form. Only one entry per person is allowed.

Earth Day contest rules and entry forms are available on the Department's website, gf.nd.gov. For more information, contact Pat Lothspeich by email at ndgfi@nd.gov, or call 701-328-6332.



Purple martin
Sharon Watson, Buxton

WATCHABLE WILDLIFE CHECKOFF

North Dakota citizens with an interest in supporting wildlife conservation programs are reminded to look for the Watchable Wildlife checkoff on the state tax form.

The state income tax form gives wildlife enthusiasts an opportunity to support nongame wildlife like songbirds and birds of prey, while at the same time contributing to programs that help everyone enjoy all wildlife.

The checkoff – whether you are receiving a refund or having to pay in – is an easy way to voluntarily contribute to sustain this long standing program. In addition, direct donations to the program are accepted any time of year.

To learn more about Watchable Wildlife program activities, visit the Game and Fish Department website at gf.nd.gov.



Blister beetles on purple coneflower
Nancy Secrest, Hettinger



ASHLEY SALWEY

NASP State Tournament Moves

North Dakota's National Archery in the Schools Program state tournament is moving to a new venue in 2015.

Jeff Long, NASP state coordinator, said he expects more than 500 students to participate in this year's state tournament, scheduled for March 21-22 at the All Seasons Arena in Minot.

"This event continues to grow each year," Long said. "The All Seasons Arena in Minot is an ideal location to host the tourney."

Long said only schools offering NASP lessons during school hours as part of their standard curriculum are eligible to participate in the state tournament. Schools that don't meet this requirement are encouraged to contact Long to get the program started.

Schools enter teams and individuals in the following grade level divisions: elementary (4-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12). Teams must have 12-24 members, with a minimum of four from

each gender. If smaller schools wish to form a team, archers may participate up one grade division for team competition, but they would compete individually in their appropriate age category.

Recognition is given to the top placing team in each division, the top five males and females in each division, and the top scoring male and female regardless of division. Top scoring individuals are given early registration and receive priority in flights for the national tournament held in Louisville, Kentucky.

For more information regarding the tournament, schools should contact Long by email at ndgf@nd.gov, or call 701-328-6615. To learn more, visit the Game and Fish website at gf.nd.gov.

STAFF NOTES



Casey Anderson

Anderson, Harling Promoted

Casey Anderson, longtime Game and Fish Department private land field operations coordinator, was selected in November to fill the Department's assistant chief of wildlife position.

Nate Harling, private land biologist in Bismarck, has replaced Anderson as the private land field coordinator. Harling has more than 12 years of experience with the Department, and has delivered private land programs in more than 30 counties.



Nate Harling

Schmitz to Lonetree

Cordell Schmitz has filled a wildlife technician vacancy at the Lonetree District office near Harvey. Schmitz graduated from Dickinson State University with degrees in range science and natural resource management.



Cordell Schmitz

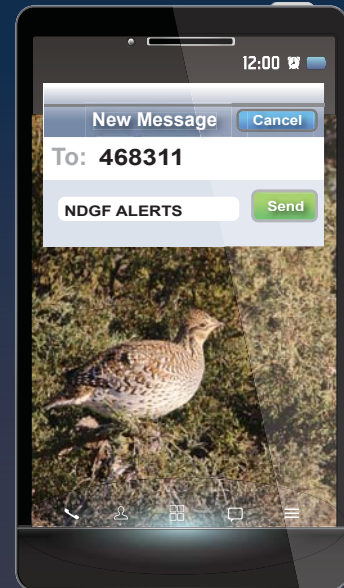
Johnson Named Fisheries Biologist

Mike Johnson has filled the vacant southeast district fisheries biologist position in Jamestown. Johnson has worked as a seasonal employee for the Department for several years, in both Williston and Jamestown.



Mike Johnson

SUBSCRIBE TO GAME AND FISH TEXT ALERTS



JUST TEXT: **NDGF Alerts**
TO: **468311**

RECEIVE:

- Application Deadlines
- Season Opening Dates
- Maximum Harvest Quotas
- Other Timely Updates

For more options to receive Game and Fish news and information, visit the Game and Fish website at gf.nd.gov.





Heinle Receives Pheasants Forever Award

Renae Heinle, Department private land biologist, Jamestown, has received the Wildlife Professional of the Year award from North Dakota Pheasants Forever.



Renae Heinle

Kevin Kading, Department private land section leader, said Heinle has built an effective network of professionals in her district, including Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other conservation partners.

“She has developed numerous positive working relationships with private landowners, represents the Department at multiple agriculture and sport shows, landowner workshops and other meetings,” Kading said.

Rachel Bush, Pheasant Forever’s senior farm bill biologist, said she is fortunate to have the opportunity to work with great individuals such as Heinle.

“Speaking as someone who gets to work with Renae regularly, it is such a benefit to landowners and to conservation in North Dakota to be able to pick up the phone and share project ideas, explore additional options, find alternatives, and work together to get a project done and on the ground.” Bush added. “I know that whenever I call her with a landowner name or potential project she’s going to give it 100 percent and do what she can through Game and Fish programs to help the landowner.”

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

WILLISTON KUMV - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMD - Monday - noon	MINOT KMOT - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMC - Saturday - 6 & 10 pm; Monday - Noon	GRAND FORKS WDAZ - Wednesday - 5 pm
DICKINSON KOCD - Tuesday - 9 pm (MT) KXMA - Sunday - 9 pm (MT)	BISMARCK KFYZ - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMB - Sunday - 10 pm CATV - Saturday - 9:30 am	FARGO KVRN - Sunday - 9 pm

on Television

NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH ONLINE

visit <http://gf.nd.gov>

PURCHASE

and Print Licenses and Apply for Lottery Licenses

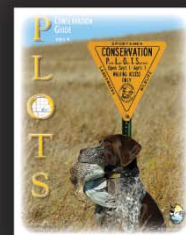


VIEW

North Dakota OUTDOORS Magazines

EXPLORE

North Dakota PLOTS Guide



WATCH

Outdoors Online Weekly Webcasts and TV Features

MORE FEATURES

- Current wildlife and fishing news
- GIS map creation
- Review important season dates and regulations
- Register for hunter education classes

NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

100 North Bismarck Expressway
Bismarck, ND 58501-5095
701-328-6300
Email: ndgf@nd.gov



back cast



By Ron Wilson

There's some debate before we get to the lake if we'll have company.

With unlimited access, better than decent weather and a remarkable number of northern pike swimming in North Dakota waters, participation in darkhouse spearfishing has taken a record leap this winter.

Nonetheless, save for an empty, padlocked ice house, the northeast end of the lake, which shoulders up against ND Highway 3, is deserted. Whether this has to do with the temperature (12 below zero), our timing (Super Bowl Sunday) or a combination of the two, makes no difference.

With the door to the portable ice house zippered and windows covered, it takes some time for our eyes to adjust to the dim, not dark, interior.

The fish decoy hanging from a swivel and braided line is white, with a red head. Its tail is permanently cocked to the left, so the decoy swims counterclockwise when we jig it.

At first glance, it looks like we're spearing in about 3 feet of water, but it's really deeper than that. We can easily see the bottom of the lake, which is mostly without feature. No rocks, sticks, just mud bottom.

There are four of us, three sitting on buckets and one on a cooler. I'm holding the spear for my 11-year-old, Jack, who is noisily attacking a bag of party mix. If we were deer hunting, every animal in the township would know our whereabouts.

Hand-sized yellow perch, with some no bigger

than my thumb, are the first in the hole. While we can count the dark, vertical stripes on the bigger fish swimming lazily off the bottom, it's impossible to count the perch. There's just too many of them.

The perch aren't a good sign, someone in the darkhouse says, because these bite-sized fish wouldn't be hanging around if pike were in the neighborhood. No matter, they provide some entertainment, a look into a world that is mostly inaccessible.

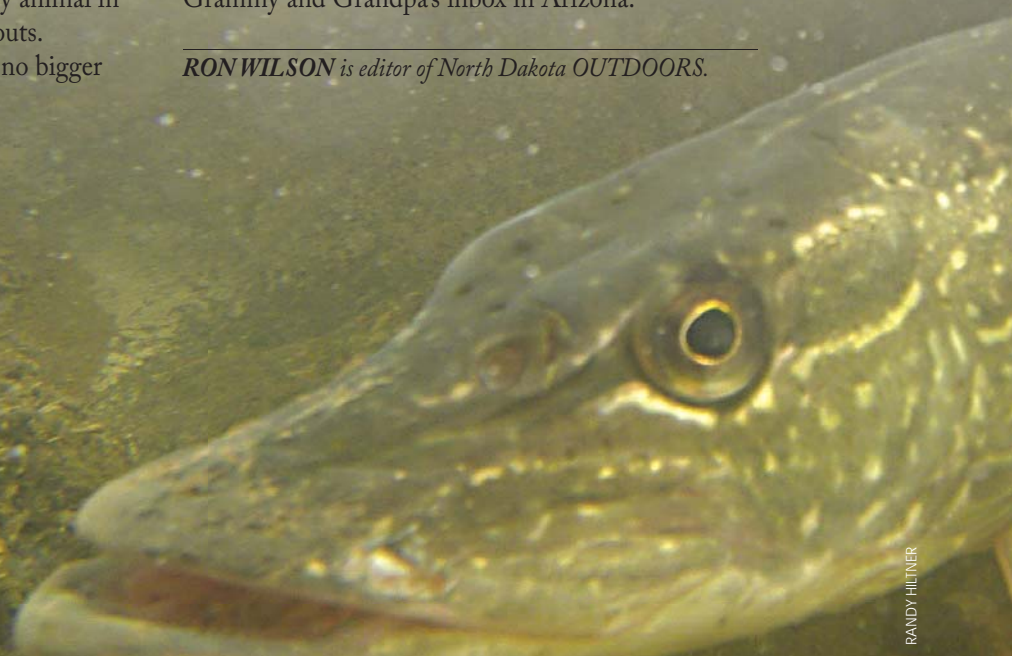
It's difficult to explain to a newcomer how to properly spear a pike. It's not something you practice at home. The tendency, when a northern swims into the hole, looking bigger than it really is, is to get excited and rear back and throw.

With one wild miss out of the way on a decent pike that didn't wholly commit to the red and white bait, but rather hung on the margins of the hole, Jack is ready for another try. The bag of party mix is sitting on the ice between his feet, his hand is holding the spear.

The next pike isn't as lucky.

We're out of the portable house now, taking iPhone photos of a kid's first pike. It seems odd to be participating in what could pass as such an antiquated way to collect dinner, yet before we can zipper the darkhouse closed, the photos have already hit Grammy and Grandpa's inbox in Arizona.

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS.





A Look Back

By Ron Wilson

The snowshoe hare, dressed all in white, except for black-tipped ears, can disappear into its snow-covered surroundings in winter.

Beset by disease, these animals literally vanished from the Killdeer Mountains in western North Dakota sometime in the 1940s.

Found today mainly in the Turtle Mountains and Pembina Hills, the disappearance of snowshoe hares in the Killdeer Mountains didn't go unnoticed.

"A die-off occurred ... and since that time no snowshoe rabbits have been observed in the Killdeer Mountains. Hunters in this area enjoyed the sporting and food values of the snowshoe rabbits and missed them after they disappeared. The Killdeer Town Criers Activities Committee contacted the Game and Fish Department during the summer of

1961 requesting assistance in re-establishing snowshoe rabbits in the Killdeer Mountains," according to a Department report.

The report continued, stating that hares were live-trapped in the Turtle Mountains, using lettuce and cabbage for bait. The black and white photo provided shows Department biologists weighing one of the 20-plus hares captured over three days in April 1961.

According to the release data, 11 female and nine male snowshoe hares were released in the Killdeer Mountains on April 20, 1961.

"A brief check of the release site on July 20, 1961 showed some droppings and cuttings. One young snowshoe rabbit was seen, which would represent a second litter. From this evidence, it would appear that the transplant was apparently

successful," the report continued.

A second effort to move hares from the Turtle Mountains to the Killdeer Mountains took place in 1962. Fewer hares were released that time around.

It's difficult to determine how long snowshoe hares transplanted from the Turtle Mountains made a go of it in western North Dakota. Apparently, no reports were written following the live-trapping efforts more than a half-century ago.

According to biologists today, except for the heavily wooded Turtle Mountains and Pembina Hills, snowshoe hares are uncommon elsewhere in North Dakota.

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota *OUTDOORS*.