

# NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA



GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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# MATTERS OF OPINION



**Terry Steinwand**  
*Director*

**W**e're finally at the point in the calendar where choices for outside activities are sometimes too numerous. But like anything else in life, we have to make choices.

I've said many times over the years that, as North Dakotans, we're fortunate to have four very distinct seasons, yet we seem to wish for the next one to come along quicker than it should. We wait for the snow to disappear so we can see migrating waterfowl, hear the songs of our grassland birds and get off the "hard water" and out into boats in search of the next fishing hotspot.

Then around midsummer, we can't wait until fall when it seems like a new hunting season opens every weekend. And even then, we can't seem to wait until the water turns hard once again so we can try our hand at ice fishing. The point here is that for every season we have in our great state, there's something to do and always something to look forward to not so far down the road.

One of the many fall adventures North Dakota is known for is the waterfowl migration and, of course, the concurrent hunting season for ducks and geese. The article in this issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act highlights the collaborative international work that has gone into protecting this magnificent resource. While this is considered the 100th anniversary of the treaty between the United States and Great Britain (at that time on behalf of Canada), it actually stretches to include Mexico in the future. This was the beginning of some groundbreaking ideas between nations and we've been working on that concept in some form or fashion ever since.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan is a collaborative effort between three countries as a strategic plan to preserve and enhance waterfowl across

the continent. In the late 1980s, the North American Wetland Conservation Act was passed by Congress and a council created to put NAWMP into operational status. I'm blessed to be one of four game and fish directors nationwide to sit on this council, and even more blessed to be elected chairman of the council in 2015. I take this responsibility very seriously and have worked to bring responsible waterfowl conservation projects into North Dakota and the Central Flyway. While it always takes the cooperation of many individuals to accomplish something so massive and important, there needs to be a starting point and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council provides that "seed."

This issue of *OUTDOORS* also contains an article on feral pigs, which can be very damaging to wildlife habitat and crops, as well as being potential vectors for diseases that can affect humans. While it might seem the right thing to just shoot them, there are laws that require individuals to report sightings of feral pigs to the proper authorities so efforts to remove them can take place.

We're also happy to have an article on the return of bighorn sheep hunting to North Dakota. As early as this spring we weren't sure we'd be able to have a hunting season on this once-in-a-lifetime animal since previous outbreaks of pneumonia in bighorn sheep herds nearly decimated them in other areas. We thank everyone for their patience in waiting to hear if they were successful drawing a bighorn license, and congratulate those who were successful in drawing through the lottery.

I could go on for quite a while on all the outdoor opportunities this time of the year and the reports I receive on almost a daily basis, but I'll end this with my usual exhortation to get out and enjoy all that North Dakota has to offer outdoors.

*Terry Steinwand*



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# NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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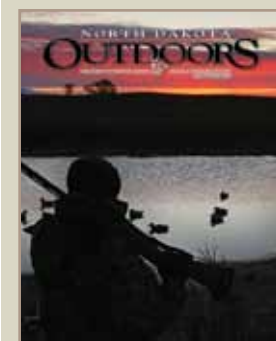
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### FEATURES

Migratory Bird Treaty Turns 100 .....	2
Avoiding Problems With Feral Pigs.....	6
Assessment of Bighorn Population Ongoing .....	8
Moss-back Makeover – Snapping Turtles in North Dakota.....	10
Old Burt – A Tribute to the Art of Burt Calkins .....	14

### DEPARTMENTS

Buffaloberry Patch.....	20
Back Cast .....	25



### Front Cover

Waterfowl hunting on a North Dakota wetland.

(Photo by Craig Bihrl, Bismarck.)



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Snow geese, and other migratory birds, depend on suitable breeding and wintering grounds and stopover sites where they can rest and feed along their migratory routes.

# Migratory Bird Treaty Turns 100

*By Ron Wilson*

On August 16, 1916, a century ago, the United States and Canada signed the first Migratory Bird Treaty.





CRAIG BIRLIE

Today, tomorrow and the next day, as the days become shorter and the leaves turn and fall, the fruit of that

significant agreement can be seen and heard, as many species of birds migrate overhead to wintering grounds.



"It's hard to imagine the North American continent without egrets, ducks, hawks or songbirds, but at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that's the way things were looking," said Dan Ashe, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a news release announcing the centennial of the significant accord. "This treaty marked a turning point in the fate of our shared bird life, and it continues to this day to unite efforts in the United States and Canada to protect birds across our international boundaries."

At the time, the United States was about a year away from entering World War I, Great Britain signed on behalf of Canada to protect these shared natural resources. The treaty was the first international agreement to protect wild birds and among the first to protect any wildlife species.

"The U.S. and Canada are really important to migratory birds because they provide core breeding areas for birds, especially waterfowl that hunters enjoy, which migrate throughout the continent," said Mike Szymanski, North Dakota Game and Fish Department migratory game bird management supervisor. "When the treaty was signed, it really was an extraordinary thing. There are not many compacts like it in the world."

According to the USFWS, the Migratory Bird Treaty is the foundation for significant achievements in bird conservation that followed, with both nations enacting statutes to implement its provisions. In 1917, the Canadian Parliament passed the Migratory Bird Convention Act. In 1918, the U.S. Congress followed suit, passing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In succeeding years, the United States signed treaties with Mexico, Japan and Russia.

Ratification of the treaty 100 years ago was significant, Szymanski said, because many species of birds were in trouble, and



CRAIG BIRNLE

*Great egrets, and other migratory birds, were nearly driven to extinction a century ago because of unregulated harvest for feathers for the millinery trade.*

the agreement between countries initiated a movement to help in the recovery of struggling populations.

"Many species had declined because of dramatic habitat losses," he said. "There was also unregulated take happening on many species of birds for feathers through the millinery trade, meat for restaurants, and total unregulated take on nests."

Sandra Johnson, Game and Fish Department conservation biologist, said because birds don't know political or geographical borders, the Migratory Bird Treaty provides a consistent commitment from the nations involved, to protect all birds that migrate through them.

"One of the success stories as a result of the treaty is the recovery of the great egret," she said. "This large, all-white bird, with a yellow bill and black legs, was hunted to near extinction for its feathers. Now, because of the Migratory Bird Treaty, this egret was saved from extinction and even breeds in North Dakota."

Johnson said there are about 375 species of birds that are possible to see in North Dakota. While a smaller number of those are quite rare in the state, about two-thirds breed in our wetlands, grasslands and

woodlands. The other third, she noted, rely on those same habitats to rest and replenish during seasonal migrations.

"While some birds are highly visible and captivating to watch during their migrations, or provide abundant hunting opportunities, such as snow geese, others that are not so well-known are just as amazing," Johnson said. "Many shorebirds, such as black-bellied plovers and buff-breasted sandpipers, migrate from their arctic breeding grounds through the Central Flyway, to their wintering grounds in southern South America, tallying upwards of 20,000-25,000 miles of flight time per year."

After the treaty was



N.....



signed, Szymanski said hunting seasons on groups of birds were closed for a number of years. Also, as a result, carefully guided frameworks for some migratory birds, such as waterfowl, were established.

“That probably has the most impact for hunters” he said. “It really sets the sideboards for what we can do with our hunting seasons, as far as only being able to be open for migratory birds between September 1 and March 10.”

According to the frameworks established in the treaty, Szymanski said hunting seasons are closed until the Secretary of the Interior opens them.

“So, every year after our hunting season ends for ducks, geese or whatever, it’s done and not opened by our hand until it’s opened by a federal register

process each year,” he said.

While this historic treaty is applauded a

century later as a conservation coup, likely saving some migratory bird species from going extinct, Szymanski said it could also be celebrated as the catalyst for establishing other conservation.

“Having habitat for these migratory species is what drives everything,” he said. “I think the treaty really set things in motion because (18 years) later, the Duck Stamp Act came into play.”

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, or Duck Stamp Act, in an effort to stop the destruction of wetlands vital to the survival of migratory waterfowl. Under the act, all waterfowl hunters 16 and older must annually purchase and carry a stamp.

Since 1934, more than \$800 million dollars has gone into that fund to protect millions of acres of habitat.

“Without these landmark pieces of legislation, we’d probably be in tough shape with some of these migratory birds,” Szymanski said.

**RON WILSON** is editor of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.



CRAIG BIRRIE

*While North Dakota is host to many migrating birds big and small, the American avocet is one of the more recognizable species.*



*The pectoral sandpiper is just one shorebird species that nests in the arctic tundra and migrates through North Dakota, crossing the international borders.*

CRAIG BIRRIE



# Avoiding Problems

with

# FERAL PIGS



*This feral pig was one of a group that was first documented in western North Dakota nearly a decade ago.*

*Story by Greg Freeman*

*Photos by Pat Lothspeich*

Landowners or hunters who encounter feral pigs in North Dakota must notify the State Board of Animal Health immediately.

While the state doesn't want established populations of wild pigs to develop, it also doesn't want individuals to try to eliminate suspected problem animals. Therefore, shooting of feral pigs is illegal in North Dakota unless a person is protecting property or livestock.

Casey Anderson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department assistant wildlife division chief, said seeing an apparent wild or feral pig is not as uncommon as you might think, as feral swine have been

detected in North Dakota on numerous occasions since 2007. One of those occurred last fall.

"With people out in the field hunting upland game and other animals, we want to let hunters know they cannot shoot them, but instead they need to report immediately if they see feral pigs or observe signs such as rooting," Anderson said.

State law requires reporting feral pigs so the BOAH and other agencies are aware of them and can then quickly set up a plan to eliminate these nuisance animals. The reporting rule also prevents hunters in the field from shooting what

they may think is a feral pig, and finding out later it was a domestic pig that had simply wandered off from a nearby farm.

A task force consisting of several state and federal agencies have taken aggressive action to eliminate suspected feral pigs due to the threat to domestic livestock, agricultural crops, public safety, natural habitat and wildlife because of their destructive nature and potential to transmit diseases.

Anderson said wild pigs often become nocturnal if pressured, which makes removal efforts more difficult.

"They are very hardy," he said, "that's why immediate action is essential."



A landowner may eliminate wild pigs on his or her land if they pose an immediate threat, but must contact the BOAH within 24 hours. The landowner must follow any instructions given by the board regarding the handling, preservation and disposal of the carcass.

"We've had a few situations in which individuals saw wild pigs on their property, or on property they were hunting, yet did not report it to the North Dakota State Board of Animal Health," Anderson said. "There will be serious consequences if feral pigs establish a permanent population in the state."

Aside from their potential to transmit diseases, Anderson said rooting and

wallowing behaviors lead to soil erosion and degradation of water quality, they compete with native wildlife for food, destroy wildlife habitat, reduce species diversity, and prey on ground-nesting birds and small and young mammals.

Feral pigs, by definition, can be stray domestic pigs that have adapted to living in the wild, introduced Eurasian wild boars, or varied hybrids of each.

"They often split into separate groups once their numbers reach a certain threshold," Anderson said. "That is why it is imperative immediate action is taken."

The first documented report of feral pigs in North Dakota was confirmed in summer 2007, when state and federal

agencies became aware of two separate bands: one in the western badlands southwest of Grassy Butte, and another in the Turtle Mountains.

Since then, feral pigs have been reported in several other areas of the state.

In each case, the pigs were captured and/or killed, and at this time North Dakota does not have any known established local feral pig populations.

"We'd like to keep it that way," Anderson said.

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**GREG FREEMAN** is the Game and Fish Department's news editor.



Once feral pigs get established and start having young, they are difficult to eliminate from the landscape.

### Make the Call

Anyone who observes or suspects the presence of feral pigs should call local law enforcement, the North Dakota Board of Animal Health at 701-328-2655, Game and Fish Department at 701-328-6300, or United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services at 701-250-4405.



A trap used in western North Dakota to catch feral pigs near Grassy Butte.

### Feral Hogs Elsewhere

According to scientists, 30-plus states have feral hog populations. These animals were introduced to the United States in the 1500s by Spanish explorers.

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates more than 5 million wild hogs in the U.S. These animals are said to cause \$1.5 billion in damages each year.

According to a recent article in the Missouri Conservationist Magazine, feral hogs became a problem in that state in the late 1990s.

Eradicating established feral hog populations is difficult, no matter the state. Missouri wildlife managers, for instance, have tried many methods, but found that trapping worked best. In 2015, Missouri Department of Conservation staff and partners removed nearly 3,700 feral hogs from the state.

In Missouri, like North Dakota and other states, wildlife officials ask people to report feral hog sightings immediately. Hunters who shoot at the animals scatter them, complicating trapping and other eradication efforts.



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# ASSESSMENT OF BIGHORN POPULATION ONGOING

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*By Ron Wilson*

North Dakota Game and Fish Department officials cancelled the 2015 bighorn sheep hunting season in order to better understand the severity of a bacterial pneumonia outbreak on the population.

Up until that point, the state's bighorn sheep hunting season in

western North Dakota had run without pause for many years.

After continued review of the population, including data collected from this summer's population survey, Game and Fish allocated eight bighorn sheep licenses for 2016. More than 10,300 people applied for a

bighorn sheep license this year.

Game and Fish announced in February that the status of the bighorn sheep hunting season would be determined after completion of the summer population survey. Typically, the license drawing is held in spring, but with the chance of even more


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*A mature bighorn sheep ram  
photographed in the badlands of  
western North Dakota.*

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sheep dying in summer, the drawing was held in September.

Brett Wiedmann, Department big game management biologist in Dickinson, said there is a lot of uncertainty when bacterial pneumonia invades a bighorn population.

"The common theme when you have these pneumonia-related die-offs is that you don't know exactly what is going to happen," Wiedmann said. "Are you going to lose 90 percent of the population? Are you going to lose 50 percent? Are you going to lose 20 percent? You just don't know."

In 2014, Wiedmann said sheep were dying at such a significant rate that having a hunting season in 2015 wasn't an option.

"So, we had to take a year and step back to really assess the status of the population," he said. "Fortunately, in 2015 our counts came in better than what we were expecting."

License numbers are determined by assessing the age structure and total number of rams in the population. The July-August survey in 2016 showed a minimum of 103 rams in the badlands, an increase of 18 percent from 2015.

Wiedmann said that, overall, Department wildlife officials are encouraged by the results of the summer survey. "In fact, the ram count was the highest on record," he said.

Jeb Williams, Game and Fish wildlife division chief, said the last time the Department made eight bighorn licenses available to hunters was in 1998.

"There are currently good numbers of mature rams on the landscape, and we are going to take advantage of providing as much hunter opportunity as possible with the situation that we have," Williams said. "We feel good that we are able to provide this opportunity as impacts from the die-off have lessened substantially since 2014, but it is also very unpredictable."

Knowing that pathogens are in the population, and the number of males on the landscape is good, Wiedmann said now is not the time to restrict harvest of males.

"Use them or lose them," Wiedmann said. "We have big, healthy rams out there that are in wonderful shape and we don't want them to die of pneumonia."

And secondly, considering there are few bighorn populations northeast of the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park that have yet to be influenced by pneumonia, it's good to trim the number of rams.

"Rams wander during the rut and they can potentially spread these pathogens into unaffected herds," Wiedmann said. "What you want to do is bring the male to female ratio to a more manageable level where rams kind of stay home during the rut as much as possible. While you can't prevent this totally, you don't want rams, typically young rams, running all over the place looking for females."

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.

Wiedmann said bighorns continue to die of pneumonia in western North Dakota, but at a much slower rate. He said there are examples in other states where bighorn populations recovered nicely after being hit with pneumonia.

"You see these populations recover and then they crash again," he said. "It's just that you don't know when that is going to happen."

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**RON WILSON** is editor of North Dakota **OUTDOORS**.



# Moss-ba Ma



## SNAPPING TURTLES IN NORTH DAKOTA

*By Christopher Dekker, Dennis Scarnecchia, Patrick Isakson and Fred Ryckman*

The snapping turtle, an ancient survivor and widespread inhabitant of North Dakota waters, could use an image makeover.

This shy, reclusive turtle, with its algae-covered shell and large claws, is always a surprise to those fortunate to see one. Native American tribal mythology and lore are replete with references to turtles,

symbolizing wisdom, benevolence, emotional strength, persistence and determination. To the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the snapping turtle is also an important species for which more information is needed for their sustainable management.

Turtles appeared on the earth more than 200 million years ago; and are

the oldest living groups of reptiles on earth. Today, the snapping turtle found in North Dakota is widely distributed in the United States east of the Continental Divide, with similar subspecies found down into Mexico and parts of central and South America.

North Dakota is near the northwestern edge of their natural range, although



# ck keeper

Patrick Isakson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department conservation biologist, with a snapping turtle netted from a creek for study purposes south of Bismarck.

MANDY THOMAS



An adult snapping turtle (left) depositing eggs in a nest dug near a sidewalk at the Game and Fish Department headquarters in Bismarck. A young and tiny (bottom) snapping turtle photographed near the Red River.

CHARLIE MATTHEIS



CRAIG BIRLE

they are also found up the Yellowstone and Missouri River drainages into eastern Montana.

Snapping turtles are the largest of the five turtle species found in the state. Western painted turtles are the most common, while the false map, smooth softshell, and spiny softshell turtles are found only in a fairly restricted range in south central

North Dakota, in Lake Oahe and a few of its main tributaries.

The snapping turtle has a life history that has served it well across geologic time. They are long-lived, reaching 40 years old in the wild, and perhaps older. Females may not mature for 10-17 years, depending on the population and latitude (older in northern states such as North Dakota).

Even after this long pre-maturation period, they may nest only every other year or every third year. Over the ages, they have survived with this slow reproduction cycle because of a high survival rate once the turtles have passed their first few years of life.

Snapping turtles migrate out of water to a suitable nesting site in spring or early



summer. Nest sites can include gravel bars, lake shores, muskrat huts and beaver lodges. In a world increasingly occupied by humans, their nesting areas have expanded to include some less-than-optimal areas for avoiding disturbance, including gravel roads, road shoulders and railroad grades.

Once a suitable site is found, turtles dig a hole, deposit their eggs and pack the dirt tightly back on top. Then the female migrates back to water and the eggs are left to develop and hatch. After hatching, young turtles dig their way out of the nest and seek water.

Snappers have what is called temperature-dependent sex determination, which means nest temperature determines the sex of the young turtles. If the nest is below 82 degrees Fahrenheit, it will produce only males. Both males and females come from nests at 82 degrees Fahrenheit, and females alone are produced at temperatures above 82 degrees Fahrenheit.

The result is that a different ratio of males and females are produced from nests that are close to each other; even a nest that is in the same spot as it was in a

previous year.

At a few times throughout a snapper's life, they become vulnerable to mortality. Most of these times revolve around nesting, whether it is the adult female migrating to lay eggs or the hatchlings migrating back to water.

Females traveling to and from nesting sites are exposed to threats not found in the water, such as vehicles on roads. Snappers can rise up on their surprisingly long legs and move fairly well on land, but are no match for moving cars. They are particularly vulnerable when they select a nest site on dirt/gravel roads or on the shoulders of paved roads. They also like to build their nests around dawn and dusk, when they are hard to see by passing motorists.

After the female lays her eggs, she abandons the nest. This lack of parental care leaves the eggs vulnerable to predation by many furbearers, snakes, birds and humans. In some areas, 100 percent of the nests are destroyed by predators.

Incubation may take 70-100 days, sometimes longer, depending on the temperature. Once the turtles hatch they still

aren't in the clear, as they first need to make it to water, and even then they are still prey to many of the same egg-eating predators, plus frogs, other turtles and fish.

When young, snapping turtles are not good swimmers and can drown in shallow water. They remain quite vulnerable until about age 2, when they are big enough that many predators can no longer eat them and they are more effective swimmers. Unlike the more common painted turtle, which has a large underside to its shell called a plastron, the snapper has only a small plastron, and it affords little protection when attacked.

In North Dakota, the other time that snappers are vulnerable to predators is in winter as they hibernate under the ice. During

this time they become sluggish, show little or no movement for long periods, and slow their metabolism.

This ancient species is perhaps not fully appreciated. Some of the bad reputation comes from their surly disposition when poked and prodded by humans. One thing that distinguishes snappers from painted turtles is they cannot simply pull their neck, legs or tail all the way inside their shell, which leaves them vulnerable to predation, and has led to their evolving a strong response when disturbed.

When they are in the water they will simply swim away from a perceived threat. But on land, they often display an aggressive behavior characterized by hissing and snapping at anything within neck's reach. And their necks can extend a long way.

Snappers have no teeth, but their upper and lower jaws are designed to hold and tear. While they have a strong bite, tales about them biting through broom handles and pliers are false. Even so, a 40-pound turtle on the end of your finger can break it, or even sever it, making for a bad day outdoors.

The species simply needs to be respected, left alone and only handled when absolutely necessary.

Another myth contributing to the snapping turtle's bad reputation is that they eat exclusively fish and ducks, leading to population declines of desirable sport fish and game species.

The snappers' diet may occasionally consist of game fish and ducks, but it is made up of many different things. Snappers are opportunistic and will eat fish, turtles, birds, snakes, vegetation and insects, and they will often scavenge dead animals.

Snapping turtles have an excellent sense of smell both in and out of the water, so decaying flesh leaves an odor easily followed to its source.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has long viewed the state's snapping turtles as a valuable resource that warrants conservation and management. Accordingly, the agency recently sponsored a study through its State Wildlife Grants program to obtain more information on this special species.

Researchers used a variety of sources to determine distribution, including the Game and Fish Department's fisher-



MANDY THOMAS

*Some snapping turtles live up to 40 years in the wild.*



The Game and Fish views the state's snapping turtles as a valuable resource that deserves conservation and management.



CRAIG BIRLE

ies sampling database, state and federal agency personnel knowledge, and field sampling in counties where records were lacking or suspect.

At least 41 of the 53 counties in the state have snapping turtles, according to the study, but researchers were not able to verify their presence in the other 12 counties, perhaps as a result of sampling limitations.

*(Editor's note: See sidebar story concerning the 12 counties, and who to contact to provide documented evidence of snappers in any of those counties.)*

The goal of the study was to learn as much about snapping turtles as possible. Data collected included weight, length and sex of each turtle. A photograph was taken of the top shell, or carapace, and its scutes, which are the pentagonal shapes that make up the shell. These scutes develop a ring for each year the turtle is alive, much like tree rings. Once the images are enlarged on a computer screen, the rings are counted to estimate the turtle's age.

For three specific river-reservoir systems (Lake LaMoure, Nelson Lake and Patterson Lake), researchers sought information on age and growth, population size, overwintering locations and nesting areas. Sampling adequate numbers of turtles was a challenge, as for every snapping turtle captured, three or more painted turtles were sampled, indicating that the snappers, although widely distributed, are not abundant in most locations.

Researchers also did not find many small snapping turtles, suggesting that reproductive success is usually low. Even at

Lake LaMoure, where turtles were most easily caught, the population estimate was only 40 snapping turtles. In future studies, more information is needed on actual population sizes of turtles in key waters.

The maximum age of turtles was estimated at 25 years, although it was not possible to validate those ages and older turtles may have been present. Among all lakes, a 44-pound turtle would be 16 years old; for Lake LaMoure, where growth was faster, it would only be 10 years old.

Turtles in Lake LaMoure were found overwintering in tight groups, a characteristic reported in other states and provinces. Using an underwater camera lowered through a hole in the ice, researchers were able to observe both tagged and untagged turtles in these groups.

Such areas within lakes may need monitoring and protection, as group overwintering sites leave turtles vulnerable to mass harvest. Although they can hibernate for some months under water without oxygen, changes in water levels could affect the turtles by exposing them to the risk of freezing. For turtle conservation in North Dakota, more studies are needed on factors affecting nesting success and specific ways to improve survival so that more adult turtles survive.

Some other outcomes of the study included recognition of the need to develop a formal management plan for the species, incorporate turtle reporting into Game and Fish's statewide fisheries sampling, as turtles are incidentally caught (thereby improving monitoring), and the need to develop more scientifically sound management regulations and reporting.

Evidence from the study suggested that snapping turtles were not abundant in many localities. Current Game and Fish harvest regulations reflect this reality: only one turtle per person per year is allowed, and only between July 1 and November 15. This regulation is designed to protect the turtles when they are most vulnerable, during nesting and when overwintering.

Snapping turtles are an important component of North Dakota's rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs and deserve careful management. They are also a good biological indicator on the health of systems where they are found.

Their reputation as surly when handled is deserved, but their reputation as a dangerous species is not. Adults and children alike enjoy seeing one of the state's truly ancient survivors.

Increasingly focused turtle management efforts by the Game and Fish Department is an indication that it is time for recognition of snapping turtles as one of the state's special species.

*Christopher Dekker worked on this study as part of a Master of Science degree in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Sciences at the University of Idaho. He is now a conservation officer with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, in Winner, South Dakota. Dennis Scarnecchia is professor of fisheries at the University of Idaho. Patrick Isakson is a conservation biologist, and Fred Ryckman a recently-retired fisheries supervisor, both with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.*

## DOCUMENTING SNAPPERS

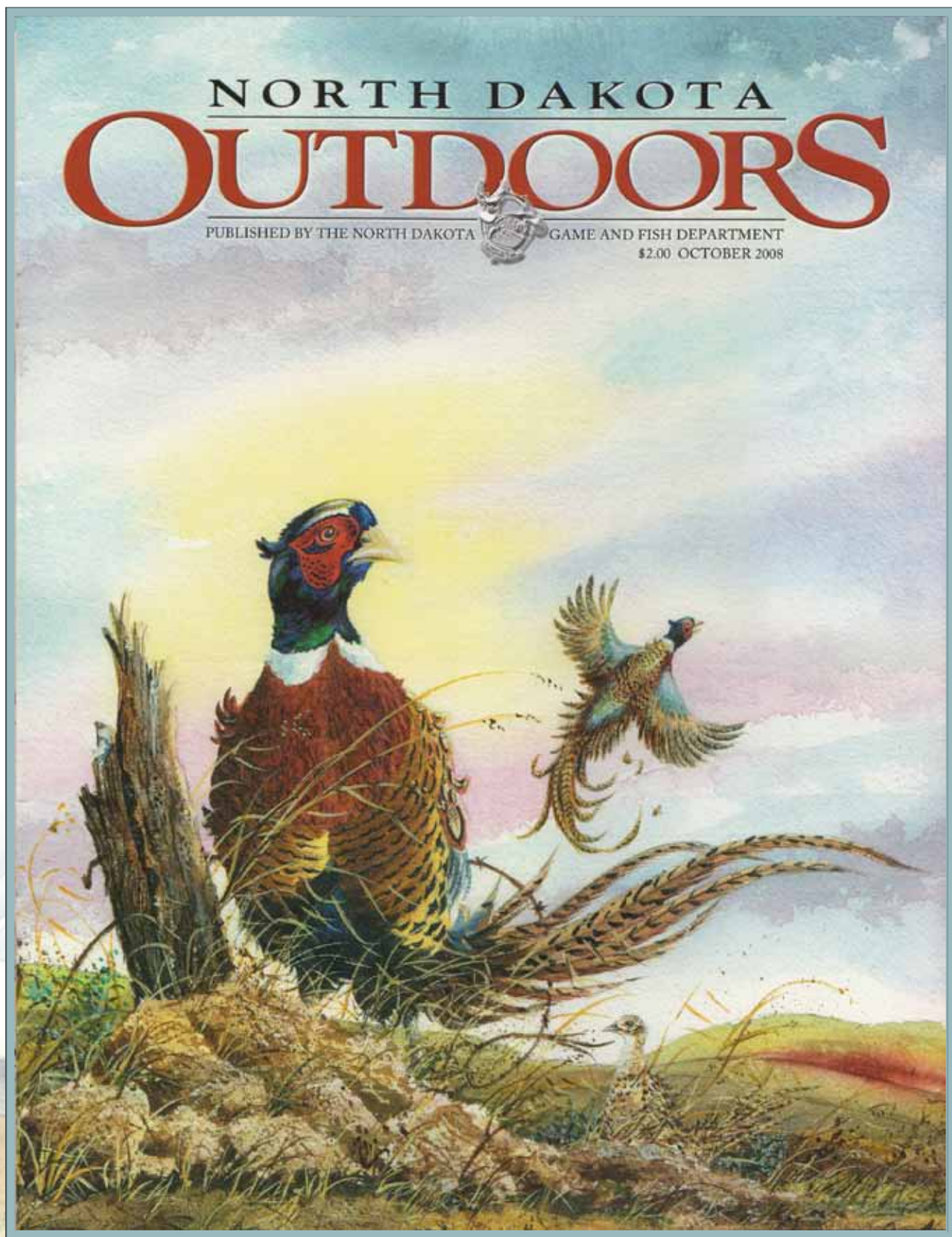
Researchers were unable to verify the presence of snapping turtles in the following counties: Benson, Billings, Cavalier, Divide, Grand Forks, McIntosh, Nelson, Pembina, Ramsey, Rolette, Towner and Walsh.

Researchers ask that if anyone has documented evidence of snapping turtles in any of the 12 counties to contact Patrick T. Isakson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department conservation biologist, 701-328-6338.





Working in watercolors most of the time, Burt Calkins created many covers for North Dakota OUTDOORS magazine, including this inviting prairie pheasant scene for October 2008.





# Old Burt

## A Tribute to the Art of Burt Calkins

*By Harold Umber*

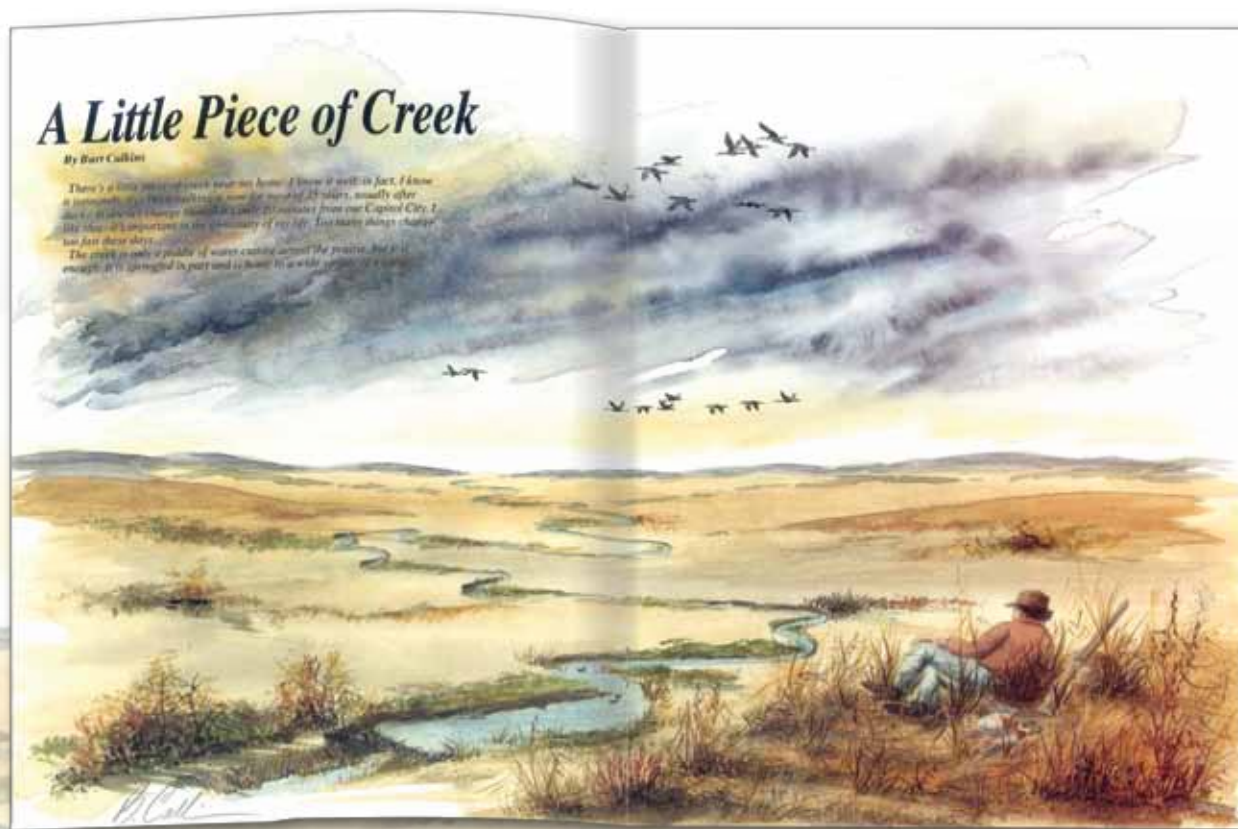


**Editor's note:** Burt Calkins, a prolific contributor of artwork and stories to this magazine over the years, passed away last February due to complications from lung cancer.

We asked Harold Umber, a longtime friend and also editor of North

Dakota OUTDOORS for more than 16 years before retiring in 2003, to share some insight into Burt's life to go along with some of our favorite illustrations that he contributed to the magazine.

In addition, many of Burt's original paintings and limited edition prints of North Dakota's scenery and wildlife grace living room and office walls around the state. Longtime readers will recognize his work, and we're sure that recent subscribers will enjoy it.



Many of Calkins' illustrations accompanied his stories that captured the need for conservation and the enjoyment of hunting and fishing in North Dakota.



Burdette (Burt) Bond Calkins was a wildlife artist, wood carver, writer, father, hunter and one of the original “Old Guys.”

Over the years he did a lot to make *North Dakota OUTDOORS* a better and more interesting magazine. His paintings, drawings and writings graced these pages frequently for more than 20 years.

While he saw some benefit in the exposure it gave him as an artist, that was not his primary purpose. He did it because he wanted to share the beauty of the state, its wildlife and the value of conservation. He had stories to tell and he wanted readers to understand what it meant to grow up and live here, and he did it because he thought it worthwhile to share an appreciation for special places with a wider audience.

One of my favorite articles was *A Little Piece of Creek* published in September-October of 1989. In it he shared what it meant to have access to a place that provided a connection to his youthful wanderings, a place where the landowner’s wise use had maintained the qualities he so much appreciated. He wrote, “...it’s important to the continuity of my life. Too many things change too fast these days.”

Implicit in the story was the importance of trust between landowners and those who would seek access to their property. He never overextended his welcome and was careful to limit his visits to outings with his son or a friend. He liked to invite me because he said I was really easy on game and the barrel on my shotgun was bent to the left.

We enjoyed our time on his little piece of creek. It was his in the sense that he didn’t have to own it to enjoy it, and that is what was important to him. He valued it for what it provided for wildlife, and for the landowner’s wisdom in preserving the integrity of this free-flowing prairie stream that was so much a part of him.

## REFLECTION

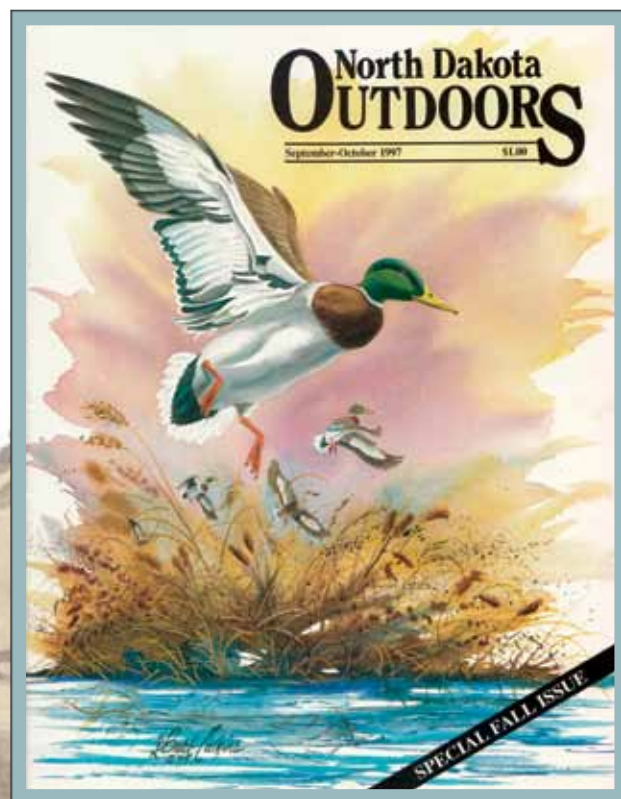
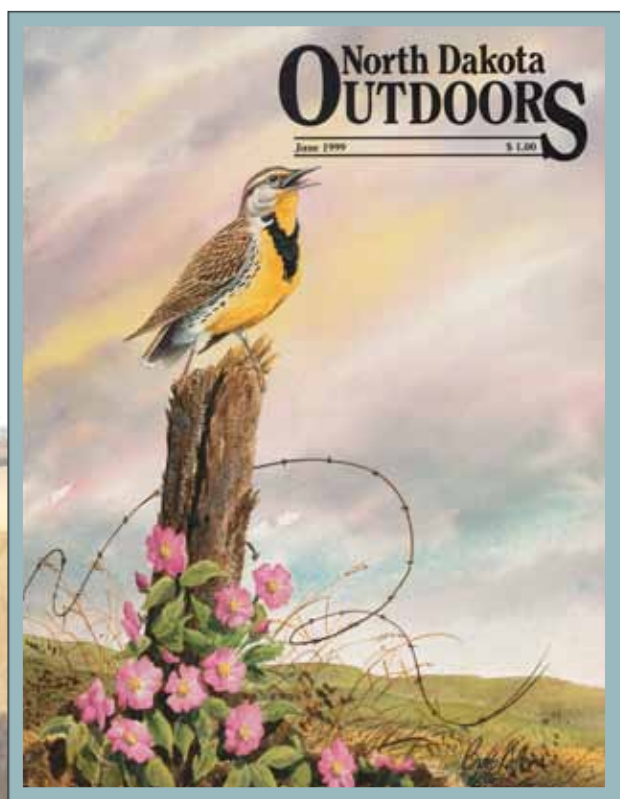
Burt and I were friends for more than 55 years.

He lived and worked in many places in the United States, from the East Coast to Alaska. He visited China and taught art classes to Chinese kids. He talked of Austria and Wales as places he would like to visit. His successes overshadowed what most of us have experienced, but he

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*In these covers, Calkins highlighted two icons of the North Dakota prairies – the state bird, the Western meadowlark, on the left, and a drake mallard on the right.*

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always wanted more and lamented not traveling more, doing more.

His sense of place though, was North Dakota, and he would always come back home. Many of his childhood friends and family members live here. He was a North Dakotan through and through and he had the prairie in his blood, and that carried over into hundreds of pieces of art he generated in his lifetime.

Burt worked mostly in watercolors and he loved painting birds. Whooping cranes and sandhill cranes often were subjects of his paintings. He spent some winters in south Texas near Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, famous as a winter home for the endangered whooping crane.

He later moved to Socorro, New Mexico, lured by nearby Bosque del

Apache National Wildlife Refuge, a prime wintering area for cranes and waterfowl. He settled into the community and made friends who opened up a wider world to him.

In addition to his success as a painter, Burt was also a graphic artist whose skills were put on display with his design of the 1989 North Dakota Centennial Logo and the North Dakota license plate that followed in 1993. The new plate became known to some as the buffalo plate and carried forward the theme *Discover the Spirit* until it was replaced in 2015.

The inspiration was provided by "Two Sentinels," his watercolor depicting western North Dakota's Sentinel Butte, and a bison bull that was evocative of North Dakota's western heritage. He added some stalks of wheat and adapted the

watercolor to fit the blue and gold color scheme that was carried over from the old to the new license plate.

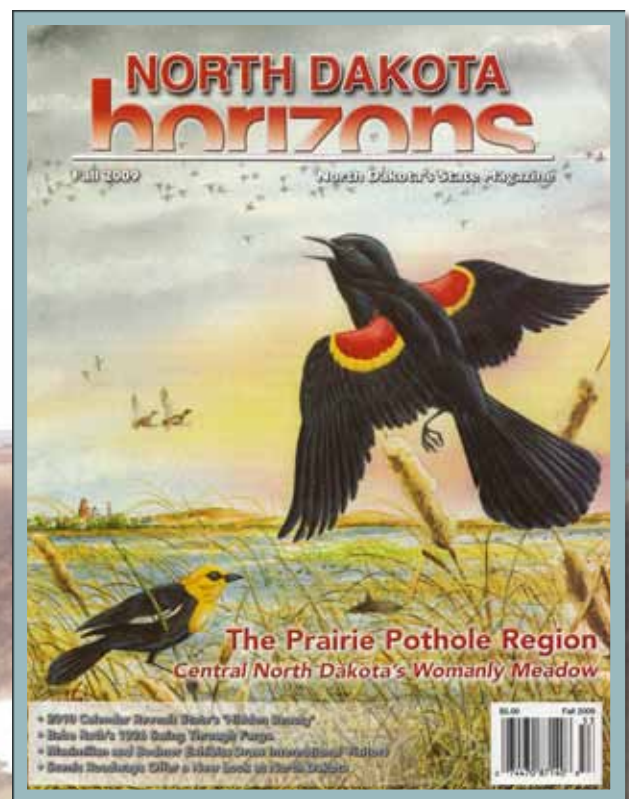
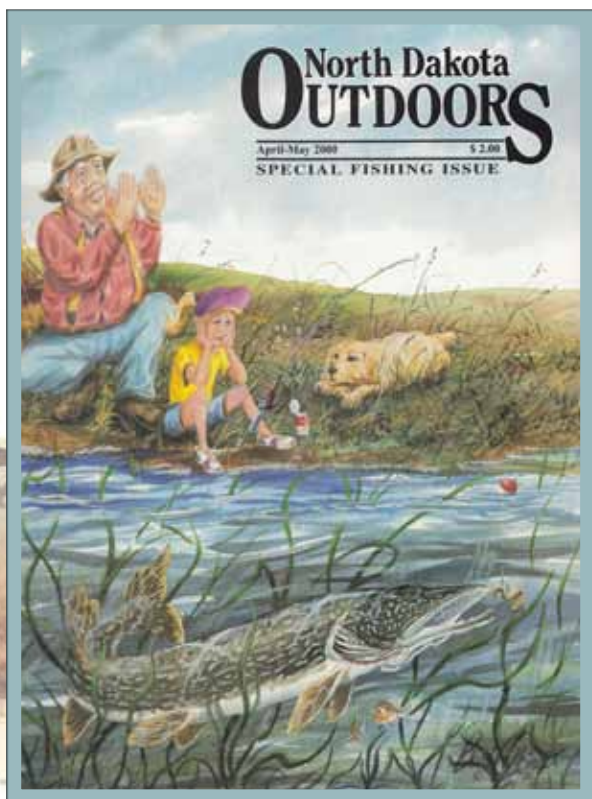
The new plate was awarded the best license plate design in 1993 by the Automobile License Plate Collectors Association.

Some folks thought of Burt as a loner but a loner is one who for whatever reason retreats into himself and for all practical purposes rejects many aspects of the immediate world around him. That was not Burt. His curiosity and love of learning led him to develop long-lasting relationships with individuals from all walks of life; people who sparked his interest and were willing to share their time and knowledge. He was outgoing, smart, funny, compassionate and comfortable in his own skin. He liked to stay in contact.

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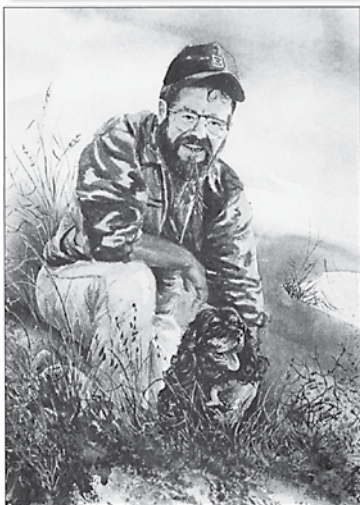
*It wasn't always birds and hunting, or just North Dakota OUTDOORS. Calkins produced a classic grandparent-grandchild fishing scene for April-May 2000, and wrote and illustrated a tribute to the state's valuable Prairie Pothole Region for North Dakota Horizons magazine in fall 2009.*

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# AFTER



# THOUGHTS

By Harold Umber, Editor

Scenes that portrayed the vastness and value of North Dakota's prairies were trademarks of Burt Calkins' artwork.

When he was back home we always tried to find time to do something outdoors even if for only a few hours. It didn't happen last fall and when he headed south for the last time I knew in my heart of hearts that our story was about to end and we had gone on our last hunt.

Burt's contributions made the world a better place and for those of us who knew him, his absence creates a void that will not be filled. There will be fewer laughs, fewer stories and less beauty in the world.

At the end of some cool October afternoon when thousands of ducks and geese begin their push through the north hole in the sky,

I will sit alone and remember a warm day when mallards and pintails came in so close you could almost touch them: I will remember a cold day at the edge of an open hole in ice-covered Salt Lake waiting for ducks and geese to return from feeding.

And I will remember the old taped up 12 gauge side-by-side that served him so well on so many bird hunts for so many years.

Those hunts will live on in my heart and mind as special memories. That will have to be enough.

**HAROLD UMBER** served as editor of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* from 1986 to 2003.





# WATERFOWL HUNTERS

Aquatic Nuisance Species can severely degrade  
waterfowl habitat and reduce  
hunting opportunity.

Follow North Dakota regulations to protect waterfowl hunting for the future.

**BEFORE** leaving a water area or access:

**DRAIN ALL WATER • REMOVE VEGETATION • PULL DRAIN PLUGS**

**ALL EQUIPMENT. EVERY TIME.**

For complete regulations visit [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov)







# BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

By Greg Freeman, Department News Editor

## CWD Surveillance Continues

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will continue its Hunter-Harvested Surveillance program during the 2016 hunting season, by sampling deer for chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis from 13 units. In addition, all moose and elk harvested in the state are eligible for testing.

**Samples from hunter-harvested deer taken in the eastern portion of the state will be tested from units 1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F1, 2F2, 2G, 2G1, 2G2 and 2L. In addition, deer will be tested from unit 3F2 in the southwest.**

Every head sampled must have either the deer tag attached, or a new tag can be filled out with the license number, deer hunting unit and date harvested.

Hunters are encouraged to drop off deer heads at the following locations:

- Aneta – Aneta Meats Service
- Bismarck – Game and Fish Department, Call of the Wild Taxidermy
- Bottineau – Mattern Family Meats
- Cando – K&E Meats
- Carrington – Barton Meats
- Casselton – Casselton Cold Storage
- Devils Lake – Game and Fish Department
- Dunseith – Wayne's Food Pride
- Edgeley – Cenex
- Enderlin – Maple Valley Lockers

- Fargo – J&K Taxidermy, Jer's Wildlife Taxidermy
- Fordville – Dakota Prairie Wildlife Club
- Grand Forks – Bob's Oil, Ted's Taxidermy
- Great Bend – Manock Meats
- Gwinner – Stopplesworth Taxidermy
- Jamestown – Game and Fish Department
- LaMoure – LaMoure Lockers
- Langdon – Hickory Hut
- Larimore – Glenn's EZ Stop
- Milnor – Milnor Locker
- Oakes – Butcher Block
- Park River – Jim's Super Value Inc.
- Rolette – The Meat Shack
- Sheyenne – Brenno Meats, Wild Things Taxidermy
- Valley City – Valley Meat Supply
- Wahpeton – J&R Taxidermy, Auto Value
- Walhalla – Walhalla Co-op
- Reynolds – Weber's Meats

## **Drop off locations for deer taken from unit 3F2:**

- Bismarck – West Dakota Meats
- Carson – Hertz Hardware
- Elgin – Gunny's Bait and Tackle, Melvin's Taxidermy
- Glen Ullin – Kuntz's Butcher Shop
- Hettinger – Dakota Packing
- Mandan – Butcher Block Meats
- New Leipzig – Hertz Hardware

Moose and elk heads should be taken to a Game and Fish office.

## **Pheasants Numbers Down Statewide**

North Dakota's roadside pheasant survey conducted in late summer indicated total birds and number of broods are down statewide from 2015.

Aaron Robinson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department upland game bird management supervisor, said the survey showed total pheasants are down 10 percent from last year. In addition, brood observations were down 7 percent, while the average brood size was down 8 percent.

"Compared to last year, our late summer roadside counts indicate pheasant hunters are going to have to work harder to find more pheasants in most parts of the state, with fewer young roosters showing up in the fall population," Robinson said. "As always, there will be local areas within all four pheasant districts where pheasant numbers will be both better and below what is predicted for the district."

Statistics from southwestern North Dakota indicated total pheasants were down 21 percent and broods observed down 19 percent from 2015. Observers counted 21 broods and 168 birds per 100 survey miles. The average brood size was 5.5.

Results from the southeast showed birds are down 4 percent from last year, and the number of broods up 1 percent. Observers counted eight broods and 62 birds per 100 miles. The average brood size was 5.0.

Statistics from the northwest indicated pheasants are up 129 percent from last year, with broods up 161 percent. Observers recorded 12 broods and 93 birds per 100 miles. Average brood size was 6.1.

The northeast district, generally containing secondary pheasant habitat, with much of it lacking good winter cover, showed two broods and 14 birds per 100 miles. Average brood size was 3.9. Number of birds observed remained the same, and the number of broods recorded was up 5 percent.





LARA ANDERSON

## Find Your Deer License

Now is the time to locate your deer license and check it for accuracy.

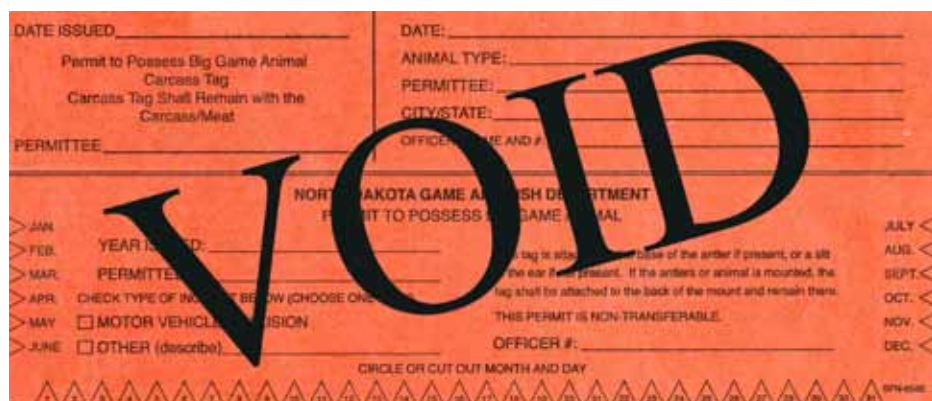
Every year the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's licensing section receives last-minute inquiries from hunters who can't find their license. When that happens, it's difficult to try to get a replacement license in time for the season opener.

Another reason to check the license now is to make sure the unit and

species is what was intended.

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

The form must be completely filled out and notarized, and sent back in to the Department with a fee.



## Permit Required to Possess Dead Deer

North Dakota Game and Fish Department enforcement personnel are issuing a reminder that a permit is required before taking possession of a dead deer, or any part of a dead deer such as a skull and antlers, found near a road or in a field. Only shed antlers can be possessed without a permit.

Permits to possess are free and available from game wardens and local law enforcement offices.

In addition, hunters are reminded to properly dispose of dead deer. Harvested deer cannot be left on the side of a roadway or in a ditch, and deer parts cannot be discarded in commercial dumpsters.

## Report Migrating Cranes

Whooping cranes are in the midst of their fall migration and sightings will increase as they make their way through North Dakota this month. Anyone seeing these birds as they move through the state is asked to report sightings so the birds can be tracked.

Whoopers stand about 5 feet tall and have a wingspan of about 7 feet from tip to tip. They are bright white with black wing tips, which are visible only when the wings are outspread. In flight they extend their long necks forward, while their long, slender legs extend out behind the tail. Whooping cranes typically migrate singly, or in groups of two to three birds, and may be associated with sandhill cranes.

Other white birds such as snow geese, swans and egrets are often mistaken for whooping cranes. The most common misidentification is pelicans, because their wingspan is similar and they tuck their pouch in flight, leaving a silhouette similar to a crane when viewed from below.

Anyone sighting whoopers should not disturb them, but record the date, time, location and the birds' activity. Observers should also look closely for and report colored bands which may occur on one or both legs. Whooping cranes have been marked with colored leg bands to help determine their identity.

Whooping crane sightings should be reported to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices at Lostwood, 701-848-2466, or Long Lake, 701-387-4397, national wildlife refuges; the North Dakota Game and Fish Department in Bismarck, 701-328-6300, or to local game wardens across the state. Reports help biologists locate important whooping crane habitat areas, monitor marked birds, determine survival and population numbers, and identify times and migration routes.





## Motorists Warned to Watch for Deer

Motorists are reminded to watch for deer along roadways this time of year because juvenile animals are dispersing from their home ranges.

October through early December is the peak period for deer-vehicle accidents. Motorists are advised to slow down and exercise caution after dark to reduce the likelihood of encounters with deer along roadways. Most deer-vehicle accidents occur primarily at dawn and dusk when deer are most often moving around.

Motorists should be aware of warning signs signaling deer are in the area. When you see one deer cross the road, look for a second or third deer to follow. Also, pay attention on roadways posted with Deer Crossing Area caution signs.

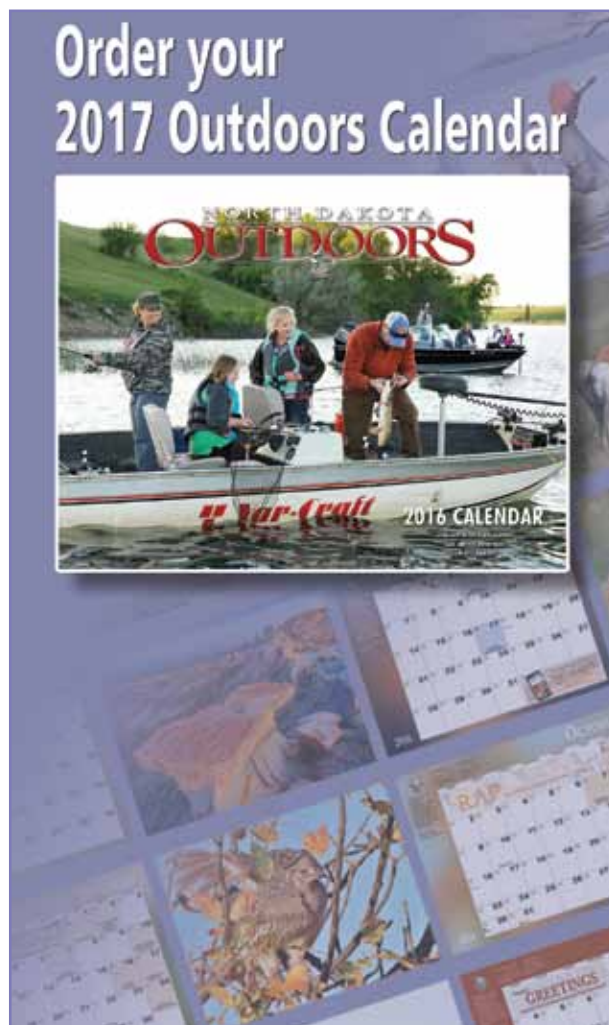
Deer-vehicle accidents are at times unavoidable. If an accident does happen, motorists are reminded that a law passed by the 2013 state legislature eliminates the need for the driver involved

in an accident to notify law enforcement authorities, if only the vehicle is damaged. Deer-vehicle accidents that involve personal injury or other property damage still must be reported.

In addition, a permit is still required to take parts or the whole carcass of a road-killed deer. Permits are free and available from game wardens and local law enforcement offices.

A few precautions can minimize chances of injury or property damage in a deer-vehicle crash.

- Always wear your seat belt.
- Don't swerve or take the ditch to avoid hitting a deer. Try to brake as much as possible and stay on the roadway. Don't lose control of your vehicle or slam into something else to miss the deer. You risk less injury by hitting the deer.
- If you spot deer ahead, slow down immediately and honk your horn.



### ORDER 2017 OUTDOORS CALENDARS

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is taking orders for its North Dakota OUTDOORS calendar, the source for all hunting season and application dates for 2017. Along with outstanding color photographs of North Dakota wildlife and scenery, it also includes sunrise-sunset times and moon phases.

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

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



## Game and Fish Volunteers Recognized

The following volunteer instructors for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department were recognized in August at the annual training conference in Bismarck:

- Instructors of the Year – Lynn Baier, Fordville, and Chuck Vasicek, Bismarck.
- Team of the Year – Dave Urlacher and Troy Anderson, both Dickinson.
- Lifetime Achievement Award – Harold Randall, Grand Forks, Lorne Sterner, Casselton, and Gerdonna Toepke, New Salem.
- 30-year awards – David Colby, Kenmare; Wayne Evans, Stanley; Bruce Fairbrother, Towner; Allen Giese, Wahpeton; David Just, Beulah; Gary Leslie, Burlington; Allen Martin, Drake; Mark Walsh, Williston; Terry Week, Beach; and Walter Zimbelman, Fullerton.
- 25-year awards – Ray Aamold, Hatton; Rene Arnold, Cavalier; Douglas Benson, Fargo; Dale Bren, Elgin; Neil Dockter, Horace; Mark Frost, Carrington; Thomas Kelsh, Minot; Arvid Knutson, Park River; Bruce Messmer, Dickinson; Daris Olson, Bowbells; Paul Sinner, Wahpeton; Larry Thompson, Watford City; and Merle Weatherly, Jamestown.
- 20-year awards – Wayne Anderson, Bismarck; Lynn Baier, Fordville; Thomas Balsdon, Osnabrock; Beth Darr, Williston; Glen Fuhrman, Enderlin; Theodore Hoberg, Grand Forks; Mark Hunt, Minot; Dan Imdieke, Linton; Larry Johnson, Belfield; Larry Leier, Hague; Bradley Moser, Medina; Larry Nagel,

Shields; Pam Podoll, Velva; Paul Roeder, Milnor; Douglas Sommerfeld, Lisbon; Larry Viall, Epping; Mark Volk, Bismarck; and Linda Weigum, Zap.

- 15-year awards – George Babcock, Garrison; Lynn Baltrusch, Fessenden; Janice Bishop, Kathryn; Diane Dockter, Horace; Craig Ener-vold, Moorhead, Minn.; Corinne

Center; Wayne Stanley, Minot; and Jodie Woroniecki, Hebron.

- 10-year awards – Richard Bell, Wyndmere; Jim Bennett, Minot; Roger Decker, Belfield; Gary Green, Granville; Todd Greenmyer, Oakes; Kari Helland, Kathryn; Justin Hughes, Minot; John Jacobson, Hatton; Sean Jalbert, Grandin; Perry Johnson, Northwood; Ruth

Johnson, Belfield; Curtis Kaseman, Jamestown; Suzanne Kersting, Kindred; Kristi Kilde, Glen Ullin; Todd Lerol, Grafton; Calvin Ley-endecker, Marion; Dale Miller, Grandin; Michael Myers, Dickinson; Robert Olstad, Galesburg; Ross Reimche, Bottineau; Gary Schaner, Bismarck; Gerald Schmidt, Devils Lake; Steve Schrader, West Fargo; John Schwalk, Milnor; Renae Selensky, Rugby; Dan Spellerberg, Oakes; Rich Truesdell, Wahpeton; Joe Tuchscherer, Rugby; Lavern Vance, Ray; Lamar Wells, Wyndmere; and Gary Wilz, Killdeer.

- 5-year awards – Joshua Barringer, Mooreton; Lena Anna Marie Bohm, Mohall; Damon Bosche, Medina; Jamey Boutilier, Hazen; Rodd Compson, Jamestown;

Matthew Deal, Grace City; Jeremy Duckwitz, Moffit; Shari Fisher, Bismarck; Albert Frisinger, Harwood; David Kraft, Bismarck; Jacob Miedema, Jamestown; Scott Norton, Mandan; Tom Nowatzki, Bottineau; Quentin Obrigewitsch, Belfield; Daniel Olson, Medina; Jeffrey Sorum, Grand Forks; and Matt Webster, Jamestown.



*The MacLean Shooting Range was recently dedicated to Skip Balzer and given the name Skip Balzer Public Shooting Range. Skip evolved into the Game and Fish volunteer manager and caretaker of the range, and his hard work has resulted in a safe and family friendly range. Recently, an NRA inspector said the range was, "one of the nicest and cleanest outdoor public ranges" he had visited across the nation.*

Engen, Anamoose; John Gorman, Larimore; Jeremy Haugen, Minot; Rodney Howatt, Langdon; Brent Jacobson, Garrison; Grant Johnson, Almont; Mitchell Kallias, Minot; Darrell Kersting, Kindred; Richard Michels, Elgin; Tony Poupa, Sand Coulee, Mont., Chris Pulver, Stanley; Scott Rehak, Williston; Randel Sand, Tuttle; Elizabeth Schaner,



## STAFF NOTES



*Kevin Kading*

### KADING RECEIVES TREES AWARD

Kevin Kading, North Dakota Game and Fish Department private land section leader, was recognized by the North Dakota Forest Service and North Dakota State University with the 2016 Natural Resource Professional Trees Award. Kading received his award at the Trees Bowl and Awards Ceremony in Fargo.

Kading was recognized for his work with the Department's PLI program, which has a primary focus of developing habitat and hunting access through the Private Land Open To Sportsmen program.

## NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH ONLINE

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

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# back cast



By Ron Wilson

It's not often we fall into the camp of hunters who, by happenstance or not, really get into the birds.

When wildlife biologists announce in late summer, like they did this year, that sharp-tailed grouse numbers are down and hunting opportunities should be "fair," we celebrate what birds we do flush, and the few that we shoot, and decide this is what "fair" looks and feels like.

And we're OK with that.

Yet we know, hear about it no matter the year from people we work with and don't, that regardless of the hunting forecast, we really haven't done that well. Not like them. Not nearly.

An obligation, a can't-miss, wouldn't-miss commitment with family and friends, kept us in town, off the prairie, on the opening day of grouse season, the first Saturday opener I've missed since moving to North Dakota. What's that, 29-30 years ago?

On Sunday, we're driving slowly down a two-track bordering state school land, and we're bumping grouse. They flush from the short grass to the right. A half-dozen, standing on the top rung of a barbed wire fence, fly when we stop, open doors and let the dogs loose.

All good signs.

We take turns crossing the fence, passing unloaded shotguns from one side to the other. Then we pull up on the bottom wire and let the dogs pass under.

Nearly hidden in grass bent heavy with dew is a cow skull the color of dirty clouds and picked clean by nature. Some kind of critter – bird or small mammal? – has constructed a nest inside the weather-bleached cavity. We take more time than our dogs would like guessing the species of the nest-builder, while nosing the skull with the toe of our boots.

We're typically distracted by this kind of stuff, things you don't see in your back yard. Carcasses in varying states of decay, animal beds, deer rubs, buffaloberry tangles heavy with fruit the color of red lipstick ....

Finally, we move on.

We don't bother with a plan. Without talking, it's understood that we'll hunt from prairie hilltop to prairie hilltop, trying to keep what little breeze there is this morning in our faces. We skirt wetlands and veer from taller, heavier cover better suited for pheasants and not native prairie grouse.

Partway up the side of a hill, our old pointer stops cold, lifts his head and works his nose, vacuuming in whatever scent that drifts invisibly, mysteriously downhill. While old age and a lot of miles have robbed him of a step or three, we still put great trust in his nose.

We hustle to the top of the hill, which is mostly flat and covered in short grass as green as what we've been watering at home. Unknowingly, we've wandered on a lek, a meeting ground where birds have been gathering, no matter the time of year, for decades, likely longer.

Early season sharp-tailed grouse are hard not to like. With young birds mixed in the coveys, you get grouse that have never been flushed by hunters and dogs. Often they are considerate in their departure, flushing as singles, doubles, not all at once.

Not this bunch.

Before we can catch a breath, two dozen birds, maybe more, flush in a choreographed confusion of wings and clucks. This is not what "fair" looks like at all.

At the end of the day, long after the ringing of shotgun blasts have left our ears, what we take home is simply a story. A story that could have been told the same if we had been carrying walking sticks instead of shotguns.

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS.

LARA ANDERSON







# A Look Back

By Ron Wilson

Ring-necked pheasant roosters are as gaudy as a circus clown. To add color to these nonnative birds seems altogether unnecessary.

Yet, in the 1950s, that's exactly what North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists did to a number of pheasants, including the much more drab hens, for research purposes.

*"Any person wandering across a brood of red, green, blue or purple baby pheasants might very well stop and try to remember just what he had been doing the night before ... Yet a visitor to the Spiritwood game farm near Jamestown could have witnessed such a bizarre sight last summer for our Department biologists were experimenting with dyes on both adult and baby pheasants," from North Dakota OUTDOORS, November 1950.*

Department personnel injected green,

blue, scarlet and purple dyes into 227 pheasant eggs from a hatchery when the birds were in the embryo stage of development.

"It was necessary to experiment to determine the best dose for each dye, taking into consideration depth of color and mortality," from *OUTDOORS*, November 1950.

Nearly 100 of the eggs hatched. The colored birds, which would look noticeably different from other ring-necked pheasants, would allow biologists to study movements of broods, mortality of young birds and feeding habits.

The colors, biologists reported in *OUTDOORS*, were visible on the birds for about 42 days. At that age, the birds were colored only about the head, but the colors were still bright enough to be viewed with binoculars from about 50 yards.

Biologists also studied the effect of dyes on adult birds. Ten roosters and 100 hens were dyed with red, blue, green and yellow colors. The

dyes were applied with scrub brushes and sponges.

It was reported that red was the most resistant to fading, followed by blue, green and yellow.

*"For all practical purposes it is believed that birds colored by the methods used in this experiment could be identified for at least a six-week period in the field under normal conditions," from OUTDOORS, November 1950. "Such colored birds on their natural range will help biologists study the movement of pheasants during winter months and in the breeding season and learn other important information about this valuable game bird."*

Back in the day, wildlife biologists tried different research techniques to see what would work, what would aid in the management of North Dakota's wildlife. Dyeing pheasants, both young and old, was one of them.

**RON WILSON** is editor of North Dakota *OUTDOORS*.