

# NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA

GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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# MATTERS OF OPINION



**Terry Steinwand**  
*Director*

In this issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, we take a look back at deer gun hunting seasons past in North Dakota.

While some of the black and white photographs and written clips predate myself and many of our readers, the images and words ring as true today as they did back in the day.

The deer gun season remains one of the most anticipated and celebrated times of year for many in North Dakota.

Other than some of our major holidays, it's hard to imagine any other event or season that lures as many family members and friends from across borders, or from around the state, to gather in camps and elsewhere to hunt deer.

The number of deer gun licenses made available to hunters this year (55,150) was more than 2017 (54,500). While that is not a big increase, we are heading in the right direction.

Here at Game and Fish, our deer management plan, which is reevaluated every five years, calls for making available 75,000 deer licenses to hunters.

Meeting this goal is no easy task because it depends greatly on how winter treats North Dakota's animals and the amount of wildlife habitat on the landscape.

With the deer season in mind, and the hope that those who go into the field this month have their rifles properly sighted in, readers will also find in this issue of *OUTDOORS* a list of shooting ranges/facilities around the state.

We believe this list will positively serve our readers, especially those who are looking for a convenient and safe place to shoot.

Yet, as the editor's note in the article points out, it's possible that the list is not as comprehensive as it could be. Things might be missing. Some shooting facilities might not be on the list altogether, or there might be some on the list that should not be there.

Whatever the case, we want to make this list as complete as possible and updates and corrections will be made on the Game and Fish Department's website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

As Marty Egeland, Game and Fish Department education supervisor, points out early in the article, we understand here at the Department that "people need places to shoot, to hone their skills and become proficient marksmen and hunters."

Here's to shooting straight this deer gun season, correctly identifying your target before pulling the trigger and respecting landowners and fellow hunters while in the field.

While the deer gun season will eventually pass, much remains in terms of activities, such as ice fishing on the state's record number of lakes.

Game and Fish Department fisheries biologists have also provided some suggestions in these pages on where to wet a line this winter in your neck of the woods.

Let's hope for a winter that allows easy access on all our waters out in North Dakota's great outdoors.

*Terry Steinwand*



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# NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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### Front Cover

A mature whitetail buck on a frosty morning in western North Dakota. *Photo by Robert Fenstermacher, Bismarck.*



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# DECADES *of* DEER H



*Deer hunters near Oakes in 1948. That year the deer season in North Dakota was just three days.*



# HUNTING

*By Ron Wilson*



NDGFD PHOTO

## 1931.

Game and Fish Department officials have long held that was the year of the state's first official deer season because a specific deer license was required. That was also the year the first issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* was published.

Eighty-seven years later, both are, in many ways, unrecognizable.

If you randomly thumb through *OUTDOORS* from, say, the early 1930s to sometime in the 1970s, you'll see, for instance:

- That while the first official deer season was held in 1931, it wasn't until the early 1950s that hunters could count on the deer season to be an annual event.
- That the season was shorter than a week for many years, and it wasn't until 1983 that today's 16.5-day season was trotted out to deer hunters.
- While the statewide deer population remained relatively stable through the 1960s and early 1970s, Department biologists noted a marked increase in the number of buck-only licenses sold. Changes were necessary because biologists felt whitetail bucks were being overharvested in parts of the state.
- The Game and Fish Department first began issuing buck-only licenses via lottery in 1975. Prior to that, hunters could buy a buck license straight from license vendors up until noon on opening day of the deer season. These buck licenses were not limited in number.
- In 1931, law required deer hunters to wear red caps for safety reasons. This provision stayed in place for big game hunting with firearms until 1959. In that year, lawmakers passed a law that permitted big game hunters to choose from red, yellow or orange safety colors.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that deer hunters in the 1960s and 1970s, given the choice between red, yellow and orange, tended to stick with red because that's what most hunters owned, and blaze orange was not readily available, especially in rural areas.
- It wasn't until 1981 that the state legislature mandated fluorescent orange as the only color option for deer hunting with a firearm, including a hat or cap and at least 400 square inches total.

What seemingly remains the same, has endured nearly nine decades, is not season structure and what hunters must wear, but that the deer season remains a pretty big deal to a lot of people in North Dakota.

What follows is an unsystematic look at the deer season over time, from the pages of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.

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



## First Season Recap

In 1931 some two thousand big game licenses were sold to deer hunters and it is a conservative statement to estimate the number of deer killed at one thousand as based on the report cards received by this Department. There is no evidence that the number of deer in North Dakota were seriously menaced by the open season of last year, but it is questionable if an open season two years in succession would be justified. Acting on this assumption the game and fish commissioner recommended to the governor the closing of the season for 1932.

**October 1932 NDO**



## Deer Camp 1937

There was no thought of who would get one next, but everyone just hoped that someone would get a deer. We combed the brush until 5 o'clock without another scare, but a couple of our boys did fire their rifles, but no deer.

After another of those well-earned suppers, we were all gathered in our cabin for one of those evenings that only deer hunters can fully understand and appreciate ... Desperately we went at our task the fourth and closing day of the 1937 season. The morning was a strenuous one of walk, walk, walk. By now I could barely drag my feet through the snow. I never suffered more than I did this morning. After a summer spent in an office, this hunting trip was now becoming an abuse to my tender body ... At 3 p.m. I got the best news of the whole trip; my hunting partner Jim brought down a beautiful doe.

**December 1937 NDO**

*There was a time (top) in North Dakota, certainly, when hunting and harvesting deer meant survival, meat for the table. This photo of five hunters was taken in 1902. An undated (right), but successful mule deer hunt in the badlands in western North Dakota.*





## “ Safety First

The motto of the Junior Game Warden is true sportsman-ship protects, and this might well be adopted by all who go into the fields and woods this year. Be courteous in your dealings with landowners and fellow hunters, let safety be the watchword.

November 1945 NDO

## Mary Gets Her Buck

Mary Buchler is a high school student at Buchanan. She and her mother make their home with the Wm. Lees family. Mr. Lees spurned hunting for deer around Buchanan and went to the Turtle Mountains for his deer, which he was successful in obtaining. While he was preparing for his hunt, Mary made the remark, “If you will buy me a license and provide me with a big game rifle, I will get you a buck.” The gun and license were secured and Mary proceeded to get her buck, which surpassed the one Mr. Lees brought home from the Turtle Mountains by three prongs and 70 pounds in weight. (Mary played hooky from school to bag her trophy.)

January 1946 NDO

## “ How to Dress a Deer Hunter

If hunters intend to carry their shells in their pockets, they should wear suspenders as they hold the trousers up much better than belts.

November 1939 NDO



*The success of less than two days of hunting – 16 hunters and 13 bucks – along the Missouri River bottoms north of Mandan in 1939.*





## “ North Dakota Deer Herd

It is unlikely that the state will ever have a large deer herd such as exists in many other states, but we can carry a reasonable number provided the surplus is harvested through sport hunting in somewhat the same manner as occurred in the past. The entire deer herd of North Dakota probably does not exceed 10,000 animals.

**November 1945 NDO**



NDGFD PHOTO

*Con Short (top), just a teenager at the time, shot this big nontypical mule deer buck on the Short Ranch in Billings County in 1953. Two hunters (right) navigate the Missouri River bottoms with a young whitetail buck.*



NDGFD PHOTO

## Notes From 1950 Season

Although the greatest success percentage went to the driving technique of deer hunting, still-hunters with enough patience got their deer. One of the most patient was a youngster of about 70 summers who sat on the railroad trestle, waiting for deer to run under him. When others pointed out that his chances were pretty slim, the old boy just answered, "I got my deer here every open season ... I think I will this year also."

Screened by the driving snow, three canny old bucks decided to head for the safety of the open hills. Their path lay under the trestle. The old boy sized them up, passed up the big antlered buck that led the parade, drew a bead on the younger and fatter buck in the middle. His twelve gauge roared, and patience was rewarded.

**December 1950 NDO**



## A Beginner's First Hunt

I had been a North Dakota duck hunter and upland game hunter for some 20 years. All I knew about deer hunting was what the magazines and my deer hunting friends had told me. The successful hunters related how they had been out a few hours and then came home with a nice trophy and a lot of meat for the table. It sounded real good.

I located a nice cozy spot in the woods along the river about 30 miles south of Valley City and decided to do my waiting there until I might spot a deer. I was well dressed in red, had a big lunch and some good sports magazines, as well as the Sunday paper. I parked myself on my pillow with my back to a large tree, feeling more safe in that position. Some five hours later, after reading many interesting stories and most of the Sunday paper, as I looked up to give my eyes a rest I was startled to see a large buck deer standing in an opening along a fence line about 50 yards straight ahead of me. The shot probably shook the tree behind me, but the buck left in a hurry and I didn't get another shot ... He was so close and the shot looked so easy that I figured all I would have to do is to shoot him and walk over and put the tag on his large antlers. I spent the next couple of hours looking over the spot to try to find out why I had missed.

**November 1959 NDO**

*Game and Fish Department biologists weigh a buck shot sometime in the 1960s in western North Dakota. Deer were weighed, and other measurements were taken, to gather biological information on deer harvested by hunters.*



NDGFD PHOTO

## The Two That Got Away

Later that day a huge buck escaped me through the trees without a shot fired at it. The next morning another big buck crashed out of tall cattails almost at my feet – about all I could do was trail it to another cattail swamp, and then again to a willow thicket where I got a quick glimpse of it. Why I suddenly shot a rather puny buck that came to me while I was still trailing the big one is hard to explain, except, over the years I've always had a policy in my mind to take the first legal deer I have a good chance at. Trophies are fine, but I believe deer other than trophy animals must be taken. Anyway, I remember the two that got away without a shot fired as well or better than the one I felled with a shot through the heart.


**September 1979 NDO**

*Ed Bry, editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS for 24 years, transports a whitetail buck in a wheelbarrow back to his vehicle.*



NDGFD PHOTO





*Ice anglers will have more holes to drill in the future as the list of prairie walleye lakes continues to grow.*

# ICE FISHING TODAY, LOOKING AT TOMORROW

*By Ron Wilson*

**In the past 25 years, North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries biologists have stocked millions of walleyes into 55 prairie fisheries that cover more than 61,000 acres.**

In a state where both open-water and ice anglers place the greatest value on walleye over other fish species, this is good news.

But it gets better.

Scott Gangl, Game and Fish Department fisheries management section leader, said that list of prairie walleye lakes will get significantly longer in

a year or two.

“Right now, we have about 15-20 new lakes that have been stocked in the last two years,” he said. “The walleyes in those waters aren’t big enough to advertise to anglers just yet, but they’ll get there.”

Many of the fish in those waters deemed inactive (not publicly adver-

tised) at this time by fisheries managers have yet to reach catchable-size, about 14 inches, desired by anglers.

“Anglers are pretty good about prospecting and the word on some of these lakes will likely get out before we deem them active,” Gangl said. “We just don’t want to send people to lakes where they are just going to catch 8-inch walleyes.”





TY STOCKTON

also have a lot of forage. Combine abundant forage and the habitat and these fish are growing quickly. Sometimes they surprise us in how fast they grow.”

Because many of these prairie lakes are loaded with fathead minnows, fisheries biologists have learned that the best option for creating a fishery in a short amount of time is by stocking walleyes.

“If there were no other fish to compete with, we may stock yellow perch, which thrive on aquatic insects and scuds,” Gangl said. “If a lake is full of fatheads, then walleyes, a better predator, are the better choice.”

Pike are also a stocking choice in these fathead-rich environments. “But in North Dakota, the demand

is for walleye,” Gangl said. “That’s what the majority of anglers prefer.”

While anglers wait for the newest of the new prairie walleye fisheries to become active, there are many ice fishing opportunities across the state for a number of species of fish.

“When it comes to ice fishing, we start out every season with so much potential, but what it typically boils down to is access,” Gangl said. “If we have a fairly open winter and anglers are able to get on the lakes, the fish are certainly out there to be caught. But we’ll have to wait and see what kind of role Mother Nature plays in all of this.”

*RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS.*

## FISHING ON ICE

Game and Fish Department fisheries supervisors and biologists have provided in the following pages some suggestions for good ice fishing opportunities for walleye, northern pike and other species around the state. In these quick looks at dozens of waters, fish populations are provided to help frame angler expectations.

### SOUTH CENTRAL FISHERIES DISTRICT

*Paul Bailey, district fisheries supervisor, Bismarck*

**Alkaline Lake (Kidder County)** – Walleye abundant. Excellent pike numbers, with fish occasionally surpassing 10 pounds. Large perch in low numbers.

**Beaver Lake (Logan County)** – Pike abundant, with fish occasionally surpassing 10 pounds.

**Cherry Lake (Kidder County)** –

Northern pike abundant. Low number of perch.

**Clear Lake (McIntosh County)** – Pike abundant and perch present.

**Crimmins WPA (Burleigh County)** – Walleye up to 22 inches abundant. Perch present.

**Crown Butte Dam (Morton County)** – Largemouth bass and bluegill abundant. Crappie present.

**Dry Lake (McIntosh County)** – Excellent walleye and pike fishery. Low number of large perch.

**Froelich Dam (Sioux County)** – Walleye and pike abundant. Perch, crappie, bluegill and largemouth bass present.

**Green Lake (McIntosh County)** – Quality walleye and perch fishery, with a low number of pike.

**Harmon Lake (Morton County)** – Bluegill, crappie and largemouth bass abundant. Rainbow trout and

Gangl said walleye stocked in these prairie lakes do well because of a combination of forage and habitat. In some waters, fish reach harvestable size in just two years when three to four years is typically the norm.

“A lot of these lakes are pretty shallow, warm up quickly in spring and have a longer growing season in comparison to North Dakota’s much deeper and larger waters,” Gangl said. “They



pike present in low numbers.

**Harr Lake (McIntosh County)** – Abundant walleye up to 18 inches and a fair number of large perch.

**Helen Lake (Kidder County)** – Excellent pike fishery, with fish occasionally topping 8 pounds. Perch present.

**Horsehead Lake (Kidder County)** – Pike abundant.

**Jasper Lake (Kidder County)** – Walleye abundant and fish occasionally top 25 inches. Perch also present.

**Lake Geneva (Kidder County)** – Walleye up to 20 inches and perch up to 11 inches are abundant.

**Lake Harriet (Arena Lake) (Burleigh County)** – Pike abundant and occasionally surpass 10 pounds. Perch present in low numbers.

**Lake Hoskins (McIntosh County)** – Fair numbers of walleye and pike, perch present.

**Lake Josephine (Kidder County)** – Walleye abundant, with fish occasionally topping 25 inches. Fair number of perch and low number of pike.

**Lehr WMA (McIntosh County)** – Excellent walleye fishery that also holds a low number of large perch.

**Leno Lake (Kidder County)** – Small pike abundant.

**Logan Lake (Logan County)** – Walleye up to 18 inches abundant. Fair number of small perch.

**Logan (Mueller) WMA (Logan County)** – Walleye abundant and a low number of perch up to 13 inches present.

**Long Alkaline Lake**

**(Kidder County)** – Small pike abundant and perch present.

**Marvin Miller Lake (Logan County)** – Excellent walleye fishery, with fish occasionally topping 25 inches. Fair number of perch and a low number of pike.

**Nygren Dam (Morton County)** – Catchable-sized trout, small bluegill and 10- to 14-inch largemouth bass abundant.

**Rice Lake (Emmons County)** – Walleye abundant and occasionally top 25 inches. Pike and perch present in fair numbers.

**Sibley Lake (Kidder County)** – Small walleye abundant, but fish over 20 inches present. Multiple year-classes of perch in good numbers.

**Trautmann Lake (Kidder County)** – Walleye up to 21 inches abundant and perch present in low numbers.

**West Lake Napoleon (Logan County)** – Pike abundant and a fair number of perch present.

**Wetzel Lake (Logan County)** – Small pike abundant.

**Woodhouse Lake (Kidder County)** – Walleye up to 28 inches are abundant. Fair number of small perch present.

## NORTHEAST FISHERIES DISTRICT

*Randy Hiltner, district fisheries supervisor, Devils Lake*

**Carpenter Lake (Rolette County)** – Consistent pike population, with most fish about 24 inches, with some larger fish.

**Goose Lake (Wells County)** – Still supporting a good walleye population, with fish averaging 17 inches and larger fish are present.

**Heaton Slough Complex (Wells County)** – Two different water bodies, with some nice perch and pike from 3-10 pounds.

**Homme Dam (Walsh County)** – High density perch population, with a decent number of fish longer than 8 inches. Should provide lots of action.





**Hurdsfield-Tuffy (Wells County) –**

Good walleye population, with lot of fish ranging from 14-18 inches.

**Island Lake (Rolette Lake) –** Moderate winterkill in 2018, but pike numbers still high, with fish averaging 27 inches.

**Lake Laretta (Nelson County) –** Good walleye population, with decent number of 20-inch fish. Some smaller, younger walleye coming up as well.

**Long Lake (Rolette County) –** Large, shallow lake with falling water levels that could winterkill. Oxygen levels did hold up in 2018. Last netting survey in 2016 indicated lots of pike averaging about 5 pounds.

**Sibley Lake (Griggs County) –** Shallow lake, with declining water levels. Pike numbers and size are good, with fish averaging more than 5 pounds.

**Silver Lake WMA (Wells County) –** Good walleye population, with lots of fish ranging from 14-18 inches.

**Devils Lake**

**Walleye –** Anglers can probably expect slower than normal walleye fishing this



*North Dakota offers many ice fishing opportunities, but the coming season, as always, will boil down to access.*

TY STOCKTON

winter. The number of 15- to 20-inch walleye is below average, so anglers will likely have to fish harder to catch these fish. However, there should be good numbers of smaller walleye biting this winter, but many of them will probably be a little too small to keep.

**Northern pike –** Should provide anglers with excellent ice fishing opportunities. Pike are still abundant, and most are between 23-30 inches. Pike are underutilized at Devils Lake, so anglers should not be shy about keeping a limit.

**Yellow perch –** Perch fishing this winter will likely be on the slower side. The number of perch from 8-12 inches is a little below average, and many will likely be on the smaller end of that range this winter. The number of jumbo perch measuring more than 12 inches will likely be below average.

**White bass –** White bass may provide some angler opportunities this winter. White bass typically do not bite that well in winter, but there are large numbers of them between 12-14 inches.

**Stump Lake**

**Walleye –** Walleye fishing this winter should be good. There are good numbers of 15- to 20-inch fish available and good numbers of larger fish as well.

**Northern pike –** Fishing should be good because these fish are relatively abundant and tend to be good-sized.

**Yellow perch –** Winter fishing should be similar to the past few years, as the number of keeper-sized perch is a little above average.



*The list of ice fishing opportunities for northern pike in North Dakota is long.*

CRAIG BIRLE



When a lake, off the fishing radar or not, starts to produce big yellow perch through the ice, word spreads quickly.



### Lake Irvine

**Walleye** – Walleye are abundant, with most fish between 15-20 inches, but larger fish are present in good numbers. Ice fishing should be good.

**Northern pike** – Pike are abundant, so winter fishing should be good. Most pike are medium-sized, but there are some larger fish present. Pike in Lake Irvine are underutilized, so anglers should not be shy about keeping their limit. In fact, the pike seem to be too abundant, as their body condition, or plumpness, is declining. Keeping pike would be beneficial to the population as it may help reduce competition for food.

**Yellow perch** – Winter perch fishing is typically slow. Perch are not abundant, but fish caught tend to be large.

### SOUTHWEST FISHERIES DISTRICT

*Jeff Hendrickson, district fisheries supervisor, Dickinson*

**Dickinson Reservoir (Stark County)** – Good number of walleyes up to 6 pounds, good number of bluegill up to 1.5 pounds, good number of pike up to 14 pounds, good number of perch up to 1 pound and some crappie.

**Heart Butte Reservoir (Grant County)** –

An abundance of mostly small walleye, with some fish up to 5 pounds, pike up to 9 pounds, white bass up to 2 pounds, crappie up to 1 pound, good number of perch up to 1 pound and some bluegill up to a half-pound.

**Indian Creek Dam (Hettinger County)** – Abundant walleye up to 10 pounds, abundant small perch, with some up to a half-pound, and a good number of bluegill up to 1 pound.

**Odland Dam (Golden Valley County)** – Abundant perch up to three-quarters of a pound, bluegill up to a half-pound and abundant walleye, with some up to 2 pounds.

**North Lemmon (Adams County)** – Good number of walleyes, mostly 3-10 pounds. Abundant small perch, fair number of bluegill, with some up to a half-pound. Rainbow trout stocked annually. Some brown trout up to 2 pounds.

### NORTHWEST FISHERIES DISTRICT

*Aaron Slominski, fisheries biologist, Williston*

**Blacktail Dam (Williams County)** – Good walleye population, along with the opportunity to catch bluegill, perch and pike.

**Cottonwood Lake (Williams County)** – Good northern pike fishery, with a variety of sizes. Abundant small yellow perch and some eater-sized walleye.

**Northgate Dam (Adams County)** – Good bluegill and walleye populations. Fair number of black crappie and rainbow trout stocked annually.

**Trenton Lake (Williams County)** – Good numbers of crappie and northern pike.

### SOUTHEAST FISHERIES DISTRICT

*Brandon Kratz, district fisheries supervisor, Jamestown*

**Grass Lake (Sargent County)** – Great crappie numbers, with fish averaging about 12 inches. Some large walleye consistently



sampled during recent netting surveys.

**Island Lake (Barnes County)** – Contains a high-density walleye population, with fish averaging nearly 2.5 pounds. Fish exceeding 25 inches have become increasingly common.

**Mosher WPA (Barnes County)** – Walleye were first stocked in 2014. Currently contains an excellent population of 13- to 18-inch fish. Anglers experienced great success in winter 2017.

**R and M Lake (Stutsman County)** – Contains a high-density walleye population. Though walleye average around 14 inches, fish longer than 18 inches are common. Fair number of perch also present, averaging over 10 inches.

**Trautman Slough (Stutsman County)** – Walleye first stocked in 2015. Currently contains an excellent population of 14- to 18-inch fish. Anglers experienced great

success in winter 2017.

**West Moran (Richland County)** – Robust walleye numbers, with a wide variety of sizes available to anglers. Walleye exceeding 27 inches present.

**Zimmerman Lake (Stutsman County)** – A small lake with big perch numbers. Average size is nearly 10 inches, with fish longer than 13 inches present.

## **NORTH CENTRAL FISHERIES DISTRICT**

*Jason Lee, district fisheries supervisor, Riverdale*

**Antelope Lake (Pierce County)** – Abundant yellow perch, with a wide range of sizes, along with a high abundance of walleye ranging from 14-26 inches.

**Clear Lake (Pierce County)** – Abundant walleye, with fish from 14-26 inches.

**Coal Lake (McLean County)** – Decent number of 13- to 16-inch walleye.

**Cottonwood Lake (McHenry County)** – Good number of 14- to 24-inch walleye.

**Hinsz Lake (Sheridan County)** – Good number of walleyes from 14-20 inches.

**Lake Gertie (McLean County)** – Decent number of pike from 19-28 inches.

**Lake Richard (Sheridan County)** – Decent number of 14- to 21-inch walleye.

**Long Lake (McLean County)** – Good number of 14- to 28-inch northern pike.

**Makoti Lake (Ward County)** – Abundant northern pike from 24-33 inches.

**Rice Lake (Ward County)** – High abundance of northern pike from 21-37 inches.

**Scooby Lake (McLean County)** – Good number of 13- to 14-inch walleye.



**FREE ICE FISHING WEEKEND**

North Dakota's free ice fishing weekend is December 29-30.

Resident anglers may fish that weekend without a license. All other ice fishing regulations apply.

Those interested in darkhouse spearfishing that weekend must register with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department prior to participating. Registration is available on the Department's website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), or through any Game and Fish office. Legal fish are northern pike and nongame species.



A person wearing a dark jacket, a camouflage visor, and earplugs is lying prone on a concrete shooting bench, aiming a green camouflaged rifle with a large scope. In the background, another person is also aiming a rifle. The background is a sandy, hilly landscape.

# SHOOTING RANGES IN NORTH DAKOTA

While the Game and Fish Department manages five public shooting ranges on wildlife management areas, there are other shooting facilities located around the state.



*By Ron Wilson*

**G**ame and Fish Department officials understand the importance of safe places for people to practice with their firearms.

Properly sighted rifles and shot placement are, for example, important elements to safe, ethical and proficient hunting.

"People need places shoot, to hone their skills and become proficient marksmen and hunters," said Marty Egeland, Department education supervisor. "It's our interest at Game and Fish to do what we can to make sure people have somewhere to shoot."

Greg Link, Department conservation and communications division chief, said locally accessible shooting ranges not only play an important role in recruiting new target shooters, but help fund the Department's wildlife management, research and habitat improvement efforts through collection of Pittman-Robertson dollars derived from firearms and ammunition sales.

"It's for these reasons the Department has persistently facilitated and funded the development of shooting ranges across the state," Link said. "Although somewhat of a lofty and daunting goal, the Department would like to see a public shooting range within 45 minutes of every community in the state. Achieving an even distribution of ranges across our state, in communities large and small, is a formidable task, but one that the Department and cooperating organizations will continue to pursue."

As the Department seeks opportunities to develop and upgrade ranges across the state, Link said Game and Fish officials often must consider the benefit to the highest number of the shooting public.

"This is a case of truly identifying the most bang for our buck," he said. "Therefore, developing shooting ranges near our major urban areas is a definite priority."

While all ranges come with obvious challenges, ranges in or around urban settings come with many more, including land in a safe location, amenable neighbors, and cooperating partnerships to help fund, manage and maintain the sites.

"Upkeep, safety, and security are significant hurdles that come with range operation," Link said.

One such urban range is the Red River Regional Marksmanship Center in West Fargo, a complete indoor facility for handgun, rimfire rifle and air rifle target shooting. It also includes the state's only 100-meter underground range to accommodate centerfire rifles. "We could not have done anything close to this without the Game and Fish shooting range grants,"

said Ward Gillett, president of the RRRMC board.

Gillett agreed with Link's assessment about the hurdles of range operation, noting that RRRMC has a little over 100 volunteers on its roster, with 60 to 70 who put in time in any given month.

Both Bismarck and Minot also have indoor ranges that were supported by Game and Fish grant dollars.

The Game and Fish Department manages five public shooting ranges on wildlife management areas. But if you look at the bigger picture, there are dozens of shooting facilities – some are public, some are members only – found around the state.

Egeland said Game and Fish has for years provided grant funds to wildlife clubs and others to make improvements at their shooting facilities. These federal funds, which require a 25 percent match, total \$80,000 annually.

"Every year we have more requests than we do money," he said. "Clubs are using the grants for new shooting benches, berms, concrete sidewalks, building improvements, those sorts of things."

Egeland said those clubs that accept funding to make improvements are required to offer access to the public.

Egeland said the shooting facilities found around the state help to satisfy a growing interest in recreational shooting.

"Not everyone who goes to their local range and works through a box of ammunition hunts wild game and that's OK," he said. "Even so, shooting at your local range is complementary to hunting ... it's a recreational event that has ties to the outdoors."

While it's difficult to assess the overall growth in shooting sports in North Dakota, Egeland said an example of increased interest is seen in the North Dakota State High School Clay Target League.

In 2017, about 900 students from 38 teams participated in the league. In 2018, those numbers grew to 49 schools and about 1,400 students.

Lawmakers in the 2017 legislative session gave the Game and Fish Department authorization to spend up to \$250,000 on youth shooting sports, and currently those funds are being used for infrastructure needs at trap clubs affiliated with the clay target league.

"Some of the kids who participate are hunters and some aren't," Egeland said. "What's important is that they are outdoors and participating."

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

*Editor's note: It's been 16 years since the Game and Fish Department compiled a comprehensive listing of shooting facilities in North Dakota. Through many phone calls, inquiries, internet searches, personal contacts and so on, we now are able to provide an updated list of facilities, their location, what they offer, and current contact information. Understanding this, it's certainly possible that the list is not complete. If your local shooting facility is not on the list, we'd like to include it in our online listing. Or, if any contact information or the location is incorrect, we'd like to know that, too. To make this list as inclusive as possible, contact the Game and Fish Department's education section at 701-328-6615 or email the Department at [ndgf@nd.gov](mailto:ndgf@nd.gov).*

## ▲ ADAMS COUNTY

### Hettinger Rod and Gun Club

- Hettinger – (Located in South Dakota about .5 miles over the border off ND Highway 8).
- Trap range, 200-yard rifle range and pistol range.
- 701-567-3022

## ▲ BARNES COUNTY

### Valley City Rifle and Pistol Club

- Valley City
- Rifle and pistol.
- 701-845-0151

### Valley City Trap Club

- Valley City
- Trap
- Facebook, 701-646-6322

### Oh Shoot Sporting Clays

- Sibley
- Sporting clays
- 701-733-2366

### Tri-County Trap and Wildlife Club

- Wimbledon (9831 18th St. SE)
- 2 trap ranges and skeet open to the public. Rifle range up to 200 yards for members only.
- Facebook, 701-435-2968 or 701-269-2968 or email at [agoehri@daktel.com](mailto:agoehri@daktel.com)

## ▲ BENSON COUNTY

### Leeds/York Wildlife Club

- Leeds (1 mile west of Leeds, off U.S. Highway 2)
- Trap range

## ▲ BILLINGS COUNTY

### Belfield Sportsman Club

- Belfield
- Rifle and pistol ranges.
- [belfieldsportsmanclub.com](http://belfieldsportsmanclub.com)

## ▲ BURLEIGH COUNTY

### Bismarck-Mandan Rifle and Pistol Association

- Moffit
- Rifle and pistol ranges.

- [bmrpa.org](http://bmrpa.org), Facebook, 701-223-8176

### MacLean Bottoms

- Southeast of Bismarck (106th St. SE)
- Game and Fish Department public rifle, pistol and shotgun ranges.
- [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), 701-328-6300

### Wilton Mine WMA

- 2 miles east of Wilton
- Game and Fish Department public rifle, pistol and shotgun ranges.
- [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), 701-328-6300

### Capital City Gun Club

- 4 miles north of Bismarck on U.S. Highway 83
- Trap open to public, but members shoot at reduced rate.
- [bis.midco.net/ccgc/ccgc](http://bis.midco.net/ccgc/ccgc), 701-223-9542, [CCGC@bis.midco.net](mailto:CCGC@bis.midco.net)

### Capital City Sporting Clays

- East of Bismarck (12951 71st Ave. NE)
- Sporting clays, 5-stand and skeet ranges.
- [ccsclays.com](http://ccsclays.com), Facebook page, 701-484-2272

### Nishu Bowmen

- Bismarck (1409 Riverwood Dr.)

- Indoor and outdoor ranges.
- [nishubowmen.com](http://nishubowmen.com), Facebook, 701-222-3499

## ▲ CASS COUNTY

### Red River Regional Marksmanship Center

- West Fargo (640 16th St. NE)
- Indoor handgun range, air gun range, 6-line underground 100-meter rifle range (3 with monitors for sighting in).
- [rrrmc.com](http://rrrmc.com), Facebook, 701-356-0677 or [rrrmc@rrrmc.com](mailto:rrrmc@rrrmc.com)

### Bill's Gun Shop and Range

- Fargo (1040 35th St. N)
- Pistol, rifle and shotgun ranges.
- [billsgrs.com](http://billsgrs.com), Facebook, 701-353-8748

### Cass County Wildlife Club

- Casselton (3512 154th Ave. SE)
- Rifle range – public range, Tuesdays are members only. Trap range – only open Monday evenings during summer.
- [casscountywildlife.com](http://casscountywildlife.com), Facebook, Instagram, 701-238-7405

### Shooting Park of Horace

- Horace (4333 167th Ave. SE)



Greg Grove, certified range officer at Red River Regional Marksmanship Center in West Fargo.

CRAIG BIRKLE



- 13 trap lanes, 2 skeet ranges, 5-stand, 3-lane 25-yard pistol range, 200-yard rifle range.
- Facebook, 701-282-3805 or theshootingpark@aol.com

#### **Enderlin/Sheldon Wildlife Club**

- Enderlin
- Trap and rifle ranges.
- Facebook, 701-730-0334

#### **Lake Agassiz Bowmen**

- Fargo (3110 Main Ave.)
- Indoor range – open to the public December-March, otherwise members only.
- labarchery.com, Facebook, lakeagassizbowmen@gmail.com, 701-282-0131

#### **Sandhills Archery Club**

- West Fargo (3001 Charyl Ave. NW)
- Indoor and outdoor ranges – 3D targets and broadhead pit.
- sandhillsarchers.org, Facebook, 701-277-1442

#### **CAVALIER COUNTY**

##### **Cavalier County Gun Club**

- Langdon
- Trap and 5-stand.
- 701-370-9988

#### **DIVIDE COUNTY**

##### **Northwest Sportsman's Club**

- Fortuna
- Indoor pistol, rifle and archery ranges (6 lanes separate archery range). Open every Tuesday night in winter, once a month during summer.
- 701-834-2232

#### **DICKEY COUNTY**

##### **Ludden Sportsmen's Club**

- Oakes
- Trap and archery (2 miles south on corner of ND highways 1 and 11) rifle range (7 miles south and 4 miles east).
- Facebook, 701-710-0059

#### **DUNN COUNTY**

##### **Slope Area Rifle and Pistol Club**

- Manning
- Rifle and pistol ranges.



*Game and Fish Department officials understand that people need safe places to shoot and improve their skills.*

- 701-290-6046, slopeareariflepistol-club.com

#### **EDDY COUNTY**

##### **Eddy County Rod and Gun Club**

- New Rockford
- Rifle, pistol and shotgun ranges.
- Facebook, 701-600-9100

#### **EMMONS COUNTY**

##### **Linton Rifle Range**

- Linton (west of Linton off ND Highway 13)
- Shotgun, rifle and pistol ranges (25,100 and 250 yards). For trap shooting in summer contact Kimble's Gun and Repair.
- 701-254-4267

#### **FOSTER COUNTY**

##### **Carrington Gun Range (Central Dakota Sportsmen take care of the range)**

- Carrington (6400 2<sup>nd</sup> St. NE)
- Pistol, shotgun, skeet, 100-meter rifle range and archery tower.
- 701-652-1989

#### **GRAND FORKS COUNTY**

##### **Forks Rifle Club (WG Coulter Rifle Range) – Members only**

- Emerado (2051 12th Ave. NE)
- 200-, 300-, 600-yard rifle range, 500-meter silhouette range, 100- and 200- yard sighting in range. Indoor 50-foot small bore range.
- forksrifleclub.org, 701-739-1988

##### **Grand Forks Gun Club**

- Grand Forks (6950 Gateway

Drive)

- Trap and skeet.
- Facebook, 701-772-2074

##### **Dakota Hunting Club and Kennels**

- Grand Forks
- 5-stand and sporting clays.
- 701-775-2074

##### **Jensville Firearms Training**

- Northwood (2375 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE)
- Primarily a pistol range, but does have a 100-yard rifle range.
- jensvillefirearmstraining.com.
- Appointment needed to shoot at the range. Call 218-791-4829 or email at jensvillestore@gmail.com.

##### **Red River Archers**

- Grand Forks (2001 N 42<sup>nd</sup> St.)
- Indoor range – members only.
- redriverarchers.org, Facebook

#### **GRANT COUNTY**

##### **Buffalo Chip Shooters**

- Carson
- Pistol and rifle ranges.
- Facebook, 701-622-3827

#### **GRIGGS COUNTY**

##### **Fort Atchison Rifle Club**

- Cooperstown
- Outdoor range at 334-398 112<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE and indoor range on Burrel Ave.

#### **LAMOURE COUNTY**

##### **James River Sportsman's Club**

- Lake LaMoure (5 miles south of LaMoure)
- Trap, skeet, 3D archery range and elevated archery stand.

- Facebook, 701-320-0194

#### **Kulm Rod and Gun Club**

- Kulm
- Trap and rifle ranges.
- Facebook

#### **▲ LOGAN COUNTY**

##### **Napoleon Wildlife Club**

- Napoleon
- Trap, pistol, rifle and archery ranges.
- Facebook, 701-754-2680

#### **▲ MCHENRY COUNTY**

##### **Velva Wildlife Club**

- Velva (2.5 miles west of town on the north side of ND Highway 52)
- Under construction – 23 3D archery and 3 bag targets up to 80 yards, 3 trap houses, 100-yard rifle and pistol range.
- Facebook, Instagram, 701-240-3690 or velvawildlifeclub@gmail.com

#### **▲ MCKENZIE COUNTY**

##### **Lewis and Clark WMA (Williston Shooting Range)**

- Southwest of Williston
- Game and Fish Department public pistol, rifle and shotgun ranges.
- gf.nd.gov, 701-744-4320

#### **▲ MCLEAN COUNTY**

##### **Riverdale WMA**

- Southwest of Riverdale
- Game and Fish Department public pistol, rifle and shotgun ranges.
- gf.nd.gov, 701-654-7475

##### **Turtle Lake Trap Club**

- Turtle Lake
- Trap and rifle ranges.
- Facebook, 701-448-2687

##### **Garrison Sportsmen's Club**

- Garrison
- Shotgun, rifle and pistol ranges. (Outdoor range is 10 miles west and .5 miles south of Garrison. Indoor range is at city hall.)
- Facebook

#### **▲ MERCER COUNTY**

##### **Zap Sportsman's Club**

- Zap
- Pistol, trap and rifle ranges (up to 300 yards).
- Facebook, 701-948-2434

#### **Buffalo Valley Archers**

- Hazen (1122 Expansion Dr.)
- 20-yard indoor range for members only and outdoor range with public donation box.
- Facebook

#### **▲ MORTON COUNTY**

##### **Hebron Wildlife and Gun Club**

- Hebron (2 miles east of town on old ND Highway 10)
- 100-yard rifle range and trap range.
- 701-878-4554

##### **Little Heart (Schmidt) Bottoms (Oahe WMA)**

- South of Mandan
- Game and Fish Department public rifle, pistol and shotgun areas.
- gf.nd.gov, 701-328-6300

#### **▲ MOUNTRAIL COUNTY**

##### **Rolling Plains Sportsman's Club**

- Stanley (10 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. SE – clubhouse)
- 2 trap houses and rifle range.
- Facebook, 701-628-4867

#### **▲ OLIVER COUNTY**

##### **Oliver County Gun Club**

- Center
- Trap and rifle.
- Facebook, 701-794-3111

#### **▲ PEMBINA COUNTY**

##### **Pembina County Sportsman's Club (members only)**

- Cavalier
- Indoor archery range located in town. Outdoor 3D archery, 25-, 50- and 200-yard rifle and pistol range and shotgun area located 11 miles west of town.
- 701-265-4188

#### **▲ PIERCE COUNTY**

##### **Rugby Shooting Club (members only)**

- Rugby
- Trap, rifle and pistol ranges
- Facebook, 701-776-5042

#### **▲ RAMSEY COUNTY**

##### **Lake Region Shooting Sports Association**

- Devils Lake
- Shotgun, rifle and pistol ranges.
- lrssa.org, Facebook, lrshooting-sports@gmail.com

#### **▲ RENVILLE COUNTY**

##### **Renville County Gun Club**

- Sherwood (1.5 miles north and .5 miles west)
- Trap
- Facebook, 701-240-3210 or 701-459-2281

#### **▲ RICHLAND COUNTY**

##### **JT's Sporting Clays**

- Fairmount
- Skeet, 5-stand, sporting clays, rifle and pistol ranges.



*A shooter sights in his rifle at the Lewis and Clark WMA range southwest of Williston.*

TY STOCKTON



- 701-474-5598

### **Mooreton Sportsman's Club (Joe Pikarski Range)**

- Mooreton (7690 County Road 1)
- Trap, pistol and rifle ranges.
- Facebook, 701-640-0188

### **Kindred Sportsman Club Range**

- Walcott
- Gun range and archery range.
- Facebook

## **▲ ROLETTE COUNTY**

### **Turtle Mountain Rifle Club (members only)**

- Rolla
- Outdoor range

## **▲ SARGENT COUNTY**

### **Rutland Sportsmen's Club**

- Rutland (.5 miles north of Silver Lake Recreation Area)
- Trap, archery, pistol and rifle ranges.

### **Cogswell Gun Club**

- Cogswell (1 mile east off County Road 4 on 90<sup>th</sup> St. SE)
- Trap and rifle ranges (and a pistol league).
- 701-680-0860

## **▲ STARK COUNTY**

### **Dickinson Trap Club**

- Dickinson (3820 115<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW)
- Trap (public on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday and Thursday evenings, otherwise members only).
- Facebook, 701-290-2759

### **Dickinson Indoor Ranges (coming soon)**

- Dickinson
- Indoor range – plan to start construction sometime in early 2019.
- www.dickinsonindoorranges.com, 701-761-0141

### **Roughrider Archers**

- Dickinson (103 E. Villard St.)
- Indoor and outdoor ranges.
- Facebook

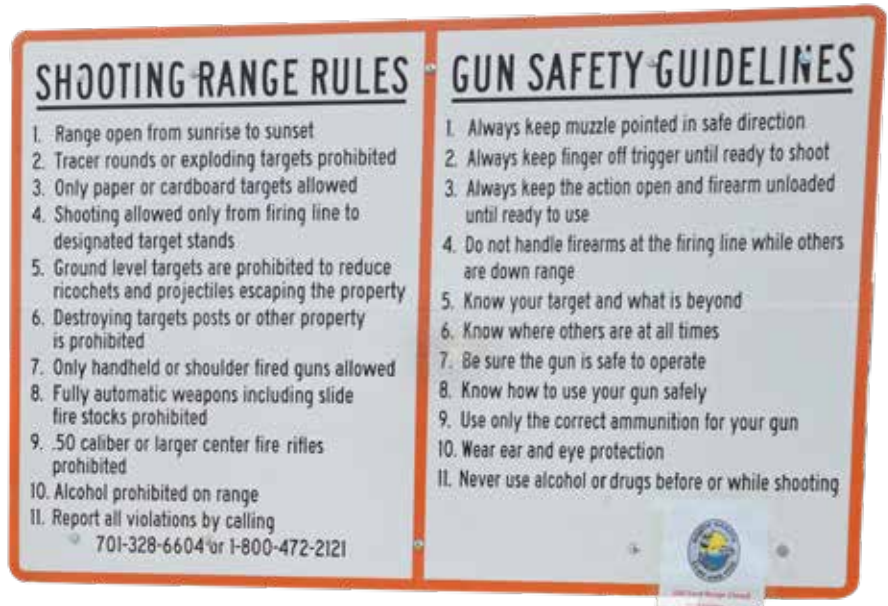
## **▲ STEELE COUNTY**

### **Finley Wildlife Club**

- Finley
- Trap
- Facebook

### **Buffalo City Gun Club**

- Jamestown



- Trap
- Facebook

## **▲ TRAILL COUNTY**

### **Valley Sportsman's Club Gun Range**

- Buxton
- Facebook

### **Norsemen Archers**

- Portland
- Indoor and outdoor ranges (outdoor range is under construction).
- norsemenarchers.com, Facebook, 701-740-5114

## **▲ WALSH COUNTY**

### **Walsh County Gun Club**

- Park River
- Trap, rifle and pistol ranges.

### **Northern Lites Archery Club**

- Grafton
- Indoor and outdoor ranges.
- Facebook

## **▲ WARD COUNTY**

### **Minot Gun Club**

- Minot
- Trap and skeet.
- Facebook

### **Minot Rifle and Pistol Club**

- Minot
- Indoor and outdoor ranges.
- minotrifleandpistol.com, Facebook, 701-838-7882

### **Souris Valley Bowmen**

- Minot

- Indoor and outdoor ranges.
- sourisvalleybowmen.com, Facebook, 701-240-6892

## **▲ WELLS COUNTY**

### **James Revet Gun Club (James River Gun Club) (members only)**

- Cathay
- Indoor pistol and rifle ranges.
- 701-984-2379

## **▲ WILLIAMS COUNTY**

### **Williston Rifle and Pistol Club (members only)**

- Williston (Spring Lake Park)
- Indoor rifle and pistol ranges.
- Facebook

### **Painted Woods Sporting Range**

- Williston
- Sporting clays, 5-stand, variety of gun and archery ranges.
- paintedwoodssportingrange.com, Facebook, 701-572-4867 or jimmy@paintedwoodssportingrange.com

### **Missouri Basin Bowmen**

- Williston
- Indoor range (located at Upper Missouri Valley Fairgrounds) and outdoor range (located at Cedar Coulee) including 28 animal targets.
- missouribasinbowmen.com, Facebook, 701-570-1158 or 701-770-5448 after 6 p.m.



# BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

By Greg Freeman, Department News Editor

## CWD Surveillance Moves West

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will continue its Hunter-Harvested Surveillance program during the 2018 hunting season, by sampling deer for chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis from 17 units in the western portion of the state.

In addition, all moose and elk harvested in the state are eligible for testing.

Samples from hunter-harvested deer will be tested from units 3A1, 3A2, 3A3, 3B1, 3B2, 3D1, 3D2, 3E1, 3E2, 3F1, 3F2, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E and 4F.

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:

- Beach – Interstate Cenex
- Belfield – Superpumper
- Bismarck – Game and Fish Department headquarters, West Dakota Meats, 3Be Meats
- Bowman – Frontier Travel Center
- Carson – Hertz Hardware
- Crosby – Crosby Water Plant, Jason's Super Foods
- Devils Lake – Game and Fish district office
- Dickinson – Game and Fish district office
- Dunn Center – Lake Ilo National Wildlife Refuge
- Elgin – Gunny's Bait and Tackle, Melvin's Taxidermy
- Glen Ullin – Kuntz's

Butcher Shop

- Grenora – Farmer's Union
- Harvey – Lonetree Game and Fish district office
- Hazen – Hazen Meats
- Hettinger – Dakota Packing
- Jamestown – Game and Fish district office
- Kenmare – Des Lacs NWR, Lostwood NWR
- Killdeer – Grab N Go, Hettich Salvage
- Mandan – Butcher Block Meats
- Minot – Johnson's Taxidermy
- Mohall – Engebretson Processing, Farmer's Union
- New Leipzig – Hertz Hardware
- Parshall – Myers Custom Meats
- Portal – Gastrak
- Ray – Horizon Cenex
- Riverdale – Game and Fish district office
- Roseglen – Giffey Taxidermy
- Scranton – Wolf's Processing
- Selfridge – Cenex
- Stanley – Ace Hardware
- Washburn – Enerbase
- Williston – Williston Game and Fish district office, Mertin Kirschbaum, Scenic Sports, Bickler Taxidermy, Zerr's Taxidermy
- Wilton – Cenex.

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



CRAIG BHRLE

## Deer Season Questions and Answers

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department receives questions every year from deer hunters who want to clarify rules and regulations. Some common questions are listed below. Hunters with further questions are encouraged to call the Department at 701-328-6300, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, or access the hunting link at the Department's website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

**Q: What licenses do I need for deer gun season?** A general game and habitat stamp or a combination license, and the deer license. Gratis license holders need only the gratis license. The deer license is mailed after the general game and habitat license is purchased.

**Q: Can I use my gratis license to take a mule deer doe?** Not in unit 4A.

**Q: I shot a deer in Unit 3F2. What field dressing restrictions must I follow?** Hunters cannot



transport the whole carcass containing the head and spinal column outside of the unit. Exceptions: meat that has been boned out; quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached; meat that is cut and wrapped either commercially or privately; hides with no heads attached; clean (no meat or tissue attached) skull plates with antlers attached; antlers with no meat or tissue attached; upper canine teeth, also known as buglers, whistlers or ivories; and finished taxidermy heads.

**Q: I received a lottery license, and I own land in another unit. Can I hunt on my land in the other unit with my lottery license?** A person who holds a valid license to hunt deer may hunt the same species and sex of deer on land in an adjoining unit for which that person would be eligible for a gratis deer license.

**Q: I can't find my deer license. What should I do?** You must obtain an application for a duplicate license from the Game and Fish Department by calling 701-328-6300 or printing it off the website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Fill out the form, have it notarized and return it to the Department along with a fee. You may not hunt without the deer license in your possession. If you find the original license after receiving a replacement, you must return the original to a local game warden or Game and Fish office.

**Q: Can hunters age 14 or 15 (and qualifying 13-year-olds) with a youth season license who did not harvest a deer during the youth season, hunt the regular deer gun season with this license?** Yes, but you are subject to the restrictions listed on the license.

**Q: I was unsuccessful in filling my mule deer buck license in a restricted unit during the youth season. Can I hunt the remainder of the state during the regular gun season?** No. You are restricted to the same unit as during the youth season.

**Q: I shot a deer, but it is rotten. What can I do?** You must take possession of

the animal by tagging it. A license only allows you the opportunity to hunt. It is not a guarantee to harvest a deer, or to the quality of the animal.

**Q: What should I do if I find a wounded deer?** Contact a game warden. Do not shoot the deer unless you want to tag it or are instructed by the warden to do so.

**Q: Is camouflage blaze orange acceptable for the deer gun season?** No. You must wear both a hat and outer garment above the waistline totaling at least 400 square inches of solid daylight fluorescent orange.

**Q: I hunt with a bow. When do I have to wear orange?** Only during the regular deer gun season.

**Q: Can I hunt road rights-of-way?** Do not hunt on road rights-of-way unless you are certain they are open to public use. Most road rights-of-way are easements under control of the adjacent landowner and are closed to hunting when the adjacent land is posted closed to hunting.

**Q: Can I hunt on a section line if it is posted on both sides?** No. If the land is posted on both sides, the section line is closed to hunting, but is still open for travel.

**Q: Can I retrieve a wounded deer from posted land?** If the deer was shot on land where you had a legal right to be and it ran onto posted land, you may retrieve it. However, you may not take a firearm or bow with you. The Department suggests contacting the landowner as a courtesy prior to entering.

**Q: What if the landowner says I cannot retrieve a deer from posted land that was shot on land where I had a right to be?** Contact a game warden.

**Q: Can I drive off a trail on private land to retrieve a deer?** Unless prohibited by a landowner or operator, you may drive off-trail on private land once a deer has been killed and properly tagged. You must proceed to the carcass by the shortest accessible route and return to the road or trail by the same route.

However, off-trail driving is prohibited in all circumstances on state wildlife management areas, Bureau of Land Management lands, national wildlife refuges, national grasslands, federal waterfowl production areas and state school land.

**Q: Do I need to pay attention to the fire danger index in November?** In a year with a lack of moisture it can be of concern. When these conditions are present, hunters should keep track of the daily fire danger index, which restricts off-trail vehicle use and recreational fires when the index is in the Very High, Extreme and Red Flag Warning categories. Some counties may also still have localized restrictions in place.

**Q: Can I transport someone else's deer?** Yes, but you will need a transportation permit from a game warden. The license holder, person transporting the animal, and the carcass must be presented to the game warden before the permit is issued.

**Q: What if I am going to take my deer head to a taxidermist and meat to a butcher shop? How do I keep the tag with it all?** The tag should remain with the head and the carcass tag should remain with the meat.

**Q: May I carry a pistol when I am hunting with a deer rifle?** Yes, but the handgun must meet minimum requirements listed in the deer hunting regulations to be legal for taking deer.

**Q: Can I use a bow to fill my regular deer gun license?** Yes. You may use any legal firearm or bow during the regular deer gun season.

**Q: Can I carry both bow and gun afield during deer gun season if I have both licenses?** Yes, but only if you are going to fill your gun license. No firearms, except handguns, may be in the hunter's possession while hunting with a deer bow license. However, handguns may not be used in any manner to assist in the harvest of a deer with an archery license.



Fall reproduction surveys on smaller North Dakota waters typically varied from lake to lake.

JOSH KNUTSON

## FALL FISH SURVEY SUMMARY

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries biologists completed fall reproduction surveys and most waters fared as good as or better than expected.

Scott Gangl, Department fisheries management section leader, said Lake Sakakawea had the eighth highest catch of young-of-the-year walleye on record.

"There was good reproduction of most game species in the big lake, as we saw healthy numbers of pike, perch, smallmouth bass, white bass, crappies and walleye," Gangl said. "And it's the second year in a row of good walleye reproduction, which isn't a surprise considering the high water is resulting in an abundance of food and habitat for the young fish."

Lake Oahe showed good reproduction of walleye this year, which Gangl said is not necessarily a good thing.

"This is the fourth good year-class out of the last five years, leaving a lot of small fish out there right now," he said. "Lake Oahe is lacking forage, which causes fish to grow slower than they should."

Gangl said while there was some indication of gizzard shad reproduction in Lake Oahe in 2017, there wasn't much this year.

"The cold winter didn't allow for much survival of this forage fish," he said.

Devils Lake saw fair to good numbers of walleye, with the catch close to average even though Game and Fish didn't stock any walleye in the fishery this year.

"The end result was all from natural reproduction," Gangl said.

Sampling results on smaller lakes generally vary from lake to lake. The common theme mentioned this year from fisheries personnel across the state is that the young-of-the-year fish were larger than normal.

"This is significant because bigger fish generally have a better chance of surviving through the first winter," Gangl said, "and that's an important step in getting to a catchable size in the future."

Reproduction surveys evaluate natural reproduction, stocking success and forage abundance.

## Winter Fishing Regulations

Anglers are encouraged to refer to the 2018-20 North Dakota Fishing Guide or the Game and Fish Department's website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov) for winter fishing regulations.

Some winter fishing regulations include:

- A maximum of four poles is legal for ice fishing. However, when fishing a water body where both open water and ice occur at the same time, an angler is allowed a maximum of four poles, of which no more than two poles can be used in open water.
- Tip-ups are legal, and each tip-up is considered a single pole.
- There is no restriction on the size of the hole in the ice while fishing. When a hole larger than 10 inches in diameter is left in the ice, the area in the immediate vicinity must be marked with a natural object.
- It is only legal to release fish back into the water immediately after they are caught. Once a fish is held in a bucket or on a stringer, they can no longer be legally released in any water.
- It is illegal to catch fish and transport them in water.
- It is illegal to leave fish, including bait, behind on the ice.
- Depositing or leaving any litter or other waste material on the ice or shore is illegal.
- Any dressed fish to be transported, if frozen, must be packaged individually. Anglers are not allowed to freeze fillets together in one large block. Two fillets count as one fish.
- The daily limit is a limit of fish taken from midnight to midnight, and no person may possess more than one day's limit of fish while actively engaged in fishing. The possession limit is the maximum number of fish that an angler may have in his or her possession during a fishing trip of more than one day.
- Anglers are reminded that three North Dakota lakes are closed to ice fishing. The State Fair Pond in Ward County, McDowell Dam in Burleigh County and Lightning Lake in McLean County are closed when the lakes ice over.



## Darkhouse Spearfishing Registration

North Dakota's darkhouse spearfishing season opens whenever ice-up occurs. The season extends through March 15. Legal fish are northern pike and nongame species.

Darkhouse spearing is allowed for all residents with a valid fishing license and for residents under age 16. Nonresidents may darkhouse spearfish in North Dakota if they are from states that offer the same privilege for North Dakota residents.

All individuals who participate in darkhouse spearfishing must register with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department prior to participating. Registration is available at the Department's website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), or through any Game and Fish Department office.

All waters open to hook and line fishing are open to darkhouse spearing except: Lake Audubon, East Park Lake and West Park Lake, all McLean County; Heckers Lake, Sheridan County; Larimore Dam, Grand Forks County; McClusky Canal; New Johns Lake, Burleigh County; Red Willow Lake, Griggs County; and Wood Lake, Benson County.

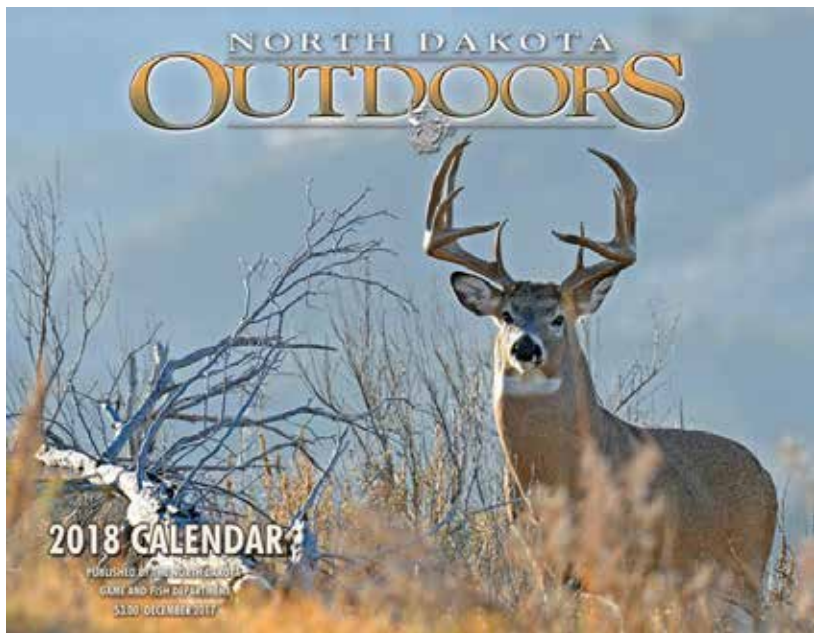
Anglers should refer to the 2018-20 North Dakota Fishing Guide for more information.

## 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. Deer carcasses cannot be left on the side of a roadway or in a ditch, and deer parts cannot be discarded in commercial dumpsters.



## Order 2019 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 2019. Along with outstanding color photographs of North Dakota wildlife and scenery, it also includes sunrise-sunset times and moon phases.

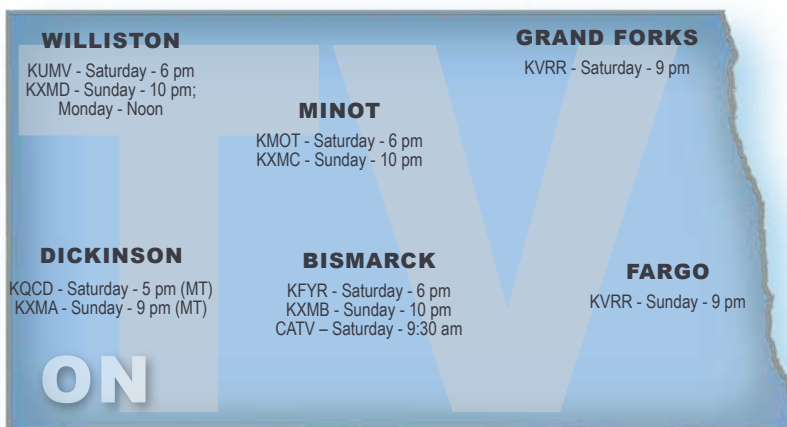
To order online, visit "buy and apply" at the Game and Fish website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), or send \$3 for each, plus \$1 postage, to: Calendar, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095. Be sure to include a three-line return address with your 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.

## NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

### WEEKLY VIDEO NEWS BROADCAST





## Advisory Board Meetings Set

Outdoor enthusiasts are invited to attend a North Dakota Game and Fish Department fall advisory board meeting in their area.

These public meetings, held each spring and fall, provide citizens with an opportunity to discuss fish and wildlife issues and ask questions of their district advisors and agency personnel.

The governor appoints eight Game and Fish Department advisors, each representing a multi-county section of the state, to serve as a liaison between the Department and public.

Any person who requires an auxiliary aid or service must notify the contact person at least five days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

### ▲DISTRICT 1 – DIVIDE, MCKENZIE AND WILLIAMS COUNTIES

- **Date:** December 4 – 7 p.m.
- **Location:** Crosby Community Center (1002 2nd St. SE)
- **Host:** Pheasants Forever Northern Ringnecks
- **Contact:** Austin Dimmick 701-339-3535
- **Advisory board member:** Beau Wisness, Keene

### ▲DISTRICT 2 – BOTTINEAU, BURKE, MCHENRY, MOUNTRAIL, PIERCE, RENVILLE AND WARD COUNTIES

- **Date:** December 3 – 7 p.m.
- **Location:** Mountrail County South Complex (8103 61st St. NW – Stanley)
- **Host:** Mountrail County Fowlers
- **Contact:** Nick Gustafson 701-629-1622
- **Advisory board member:** Robert Gjellstad, Velva

### ▲DISTRICT 3 – BENSON, CAVALIER, EDDY AND RAMSEY COUNTIES

- **Date:** November 27 – 7 p.m.
- **Location:** Esmond Rural Fire District (215 1st St. SE)
- **Host:** Buffalo Lake Wildlife Club
- **Contact:** Julie Groves 701-214-0059
- **Advisory Board Member:** Thomas Rost, Devils Lake

### ▲DISTRICT 4 – GRAND FORKS, NELSON, PEMBINA AND WALSH COUNTIES

- **Date:** November 27 – 7 p.m.
- **Location:** Fordville American Legion (208 Main St. N)
- **Host:** Dakota Prairie Wildlife Club
- **Contact:** Lynn Beyer 701-331-1074
- **Advisory board member:** Joe Solseng, Grand Forks

### ▲DISTRICT 5 – CASS, RANSOM, RICHLAND, SARGENT, STEELE AND TRAILL COUNTIES

- **Date:** December 3 – 7 p.m.
- **Location:** Hughes Shelter, Chahinkapa Park (820 RJ Hughes Dr. – Wahpeton)
- **Host:** North Dakota Wildlife Federation
- **Contact:** Wayne Beyer 701-642-2811
- **Advisory board member:** Duane Hanson, West Fargo

### ▲DISTRICT 6 – BARNES, DICKY, FOSTER, GRIGGS, LOGAN, LAMOURE, MCINTOSH, STUTSMAN AND WELLS COUNTIES

- **Date:** November 26 – 7 p.m.
- **Location:** LaMoure Civic Center (33 Center Ave. E)
- **Host:** James River Sportsman's Club
- **Contact:** Bob Flath 701-320-0194
- **Advisory board member:** Cody Sand, Forbes

### ▲DISTRICT 7 – BURLEIGH, EMMONS, GRANT, KIDDER, MCLEAN, MERCER, MORTON, OLIVER, SHERIDAN AND SIOUX COUNTIES

- **Date:** December 4 – 7 p.m.
- **Location:** Steele Veterans Club (114 1st St. NW)
- **Host:** Kidder County Sportsman's Association
- **Contact:** Jim Simmers 701-220-3251
- **Advisory board member:** Dave Nehring, Bismarck

### ▲DISTRICT 8 – ADAMS, BILLINGS, BOWMAN, DUNN, GOLDEN VALLEY, HETTINGER, SLOPE AND STARK COUNTIES

- **Date:** November 26 – 7 p.m. MT
- **Location:** Buffalo Gap Guest Ranch (3100 Buffalo Gap Road – Sentinel Butte)
- **Host:** Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- **Contact:** Shawn Kelley 402-705-2298
- **Advisory board member:** Dwight Hecker, Fairfield



# back cast



By Ron Wilson

Consider the whitetail. This animal, with its distinctive white flag for a tail and its want when bumped from concealment to run over hill and dale and then some, is North Dakota's most popular big game animal in terms of numbers on the landscape and annual overall harvest.

Yet, roughly 100 years ago, a legislative-appointed five-member Game and Fish Board of Control sounded the alarm that if something wasn't done, elimination of the state's diminishing white-tailed deer population was a real possibility. Years of both legal and illegal shooting, the difficulty of an appointed few to enforce game laws and the continued expansion of people, was pushing whitetails to the edge.

From the Board of Control's first biennial report in 1911, found today in "Big Game in North Dakota," a Game and Fish Department publication:

"The deer in the state are threatened with extinction at an early date unless something is done to remedy conditions rapidly growing worse ... It seems to be a unanimous opinion of the sportsmen through the state that a closed deer season of a least three years should be declared ... They are becoming much less numerous each season and with the number of hunters that now congregate for the deer season, it is only a matter of a few years when they will likely be exterminated."

This threat of extinction to an animal that today inhabits every county, roams urban back yards, dallies on the fringes of golf courses and city parks, are as common over the entirety of North Dakota's landscape as the wind, is difficult to wrap your head around.

If not for the beginning of scientific game management nearly 80 years ago, improved habitat conditions, increased enforcement and a host of other factors over time, where

would we find ourselves today, at this time of year when we gather to hunt whitetails and, maybe more so, simply celebrate the opportunity to do so?

I don't have an answer for that.

If you follow the history of this animal in North Dakota, an up and down course that was seemingly without resolve as often as not, credit must be given to the animal's resilience.

For years, whitetails were, for the most part, considered creatures of wooded draws, riparian corridors, places where you found trees and similar habitat. While that belief is accurate, it's not wholly true, which was something of a surprise to wildlife managers back in the day.

In the early 1940s, any whitetails counted during winter aerial surveys away from timbered habitat were considered "strays," animals displaced for whatever reason, but would certainly return to the seemingly more suitable wooded habitat in time.

Didn't happen. Winter aerial surveys in the following years showed that "it was clear that these deer were not strays ... they were a significant part of the population and their range was not predictable."

While the number of whitetail deer gun licenses made available to hunters differs annually, what is predictable, at least for the last six-plus decades, is that we've had a deer gun season over that stretch without interruption.

Consider us fortunate.

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS.



## NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE STATE GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT,  
BISMARCK, N. D. NOVEMBER 1941



NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT PHOTO

## A LOOK BACK By Ron Wilson

A controlled deer hunt in 1941 on portions of J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge, called Lower Souris Federal Refuge back then, was considered unique at the time.

It was unique because opening a refuge to hunting was unusual, yet it offered Game and Fish Department biologists the opportunity to collect information about hunters and test some game management techniques under controlled conditions.

"Due to the large concentration of deer on the Lower Souris Refuge, the Fish and Wildlife Service contemplates taking 400 animals off that area during the open season," from November 1941 *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.

The controlled hunt in the northern part of the state ran November 22-26, mirroring the general season across North Dakota. In the end, the more

than 700 hunters who participated shot 393 deer.

The hunting area on the refuge was divided into three units and each had a checking station that hunters were required to stop at. There was some apprehension that hunters might be anxious to leave and get home and not want to cooperate.

"Hunter appreciation was practically unanimous ... Some idea of hunter appreciation might be gleaned from the fact that all three checkers were compelled to graciously refuse more than one proffered cash tip," from "Big Game in North Dakota," a Game and Fish Department publication.

A Game and Fish Department crew flew over the hunting units in an airplane during the hunt, and much was learned.

"Viewing such a hunting scene from a plane at an altitude of one hundred feet or so might be decidedly surprising

to anyone who had not had the privilege ... The possibilities of such an air crew helping those on the ground are almost unlimited. Hunter groups can be directed where to stand and where to make drives," from "Big Game."

The crew in the plane were able to clearly see what hunters on the ground were missing.

"In at least one instance, the air crew was able, by dropping a note, to direct a hunter's attention to a large buck lying not far away. The crew learned a good deal about the abilities of hunters to spot game, and a whitetail's ability to hide ... It was clear to all concerned that the airplane, in the very near future, would be one of the most important adjuncts to game management practices," from "Big Game."

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