

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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MATTERS OF OPINION



Terry Steinwand
Director

North Dakota Outdoors, the Game and Fish Department's video news program, aired a walleye fishing preview in mid-April on Lake Sakakawea, Devils Lake and Lake Oahe/Missouri River.

The timing of the program, hosted by Mike Anderson, Game and Fish Department video project supervisor, was appropriate as anglers, visible from the bridges separating Bismarck and Mandan, fished the ever-changing Missouri River for some of the first open-water walleyes of the season.

In that news segment, Greg Power, Department fisheries chief, touted the quality fishing these three waters have produced of late and what is expected this year. It's rarely a year that these waters don't attract the lion's share of anglers traveling from near and far.

"Those three fisheries are our largest fisheries by far, and they represent over half of the fishing effort in the state ... resident anglers that fish in North Dakota will fish one of those three water bodies every year," Power said.

The powerful lure of Lake Sakakawea, Devils Lake and Lake Oahe/Missouri River to anglers is certainly understandable.

Yet, while these waters garner much of the attention, there are others that provide plenty of fishing opportunities, but don't earn much of the ink.

In this issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, those waters, fisheries that we refer to as community fisheries, are featured at length.

The timing of this story is also appropriate as Game and Fish Department fisheries personnel started the process of replenishing many of these waters with trout, with other game fish species to follow as the season moves along.

These community fisheries – roughly 33 scattered around the state – are important for a number of reasons. For one, they provide places to fish in parts of North Dakota where the opportunities may not be as many as in other parts of the state.

Two, they are also close to home for many folks, making it not that big of a deal to load up the kids to go and catch some fish.

Three, these community fisheries are wonderful recruiting tools for a next generation of anglers. With shore-fishing opportunities at a premium at many North Dakota waters, these community fisheries offer easy access for people of all ages wanting to cast bait and bobber.

No matter where you decide to fish this open water season, I encourage you to take a kid, round up a neighbor or two, and enjoy some of the wonderful fishing opportunities found in North Dakota's great outdoors.

Terry Steinwand

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NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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Front Cover

The black-crowned night heron, as its name denotes, begins to forage at dusk and is mostly nocturnal. *Photo by Craig Bihrlé.*



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TY STOCKTON

Legislative REVIEW | 2019

By Scott Peterson, Game and Fish Department Deputy Director

If you're a visitor to the North Dakota Game and Department's website (gf.nd.gov), you're probably aware of some of the bills agency staff tracked during the 2019 legislative session.

Even though the North Dakota legislature, which meets every two years, is limited to 80 legislative days, it is sometimes fast-paced. It is not uncommon for bills to go through several major changes during a session and become almost unrecognizable from the bill's original language or intent. Such was the case with some of the bills Game and Fish tracked in 2019.

While some bills are several pages long and others just a paragraph, it was demonstrated several times during the session that changing one word in a bill changed the very meaning in dramatic ways. That is why we place a high value on being diligent in tracking bills and providing open dialogue with key legislators on bills that could have a major influence on how the Department serves its customers.

Throughout the year, especially during our many district advisory board meetings, the Game and Fish Department typically receives suggestions and ideas from the public on how to improve the way we deliver services. Often, implementing those ideas takes legislative approval. Affecting positive change for our customers is critical and just one reason why we put as much importance on tracking bills as we do.

Now that the curtain has dropped on the 66th legislative assembly, we can take some time to assess what level of influence new laws will have on our agency and ultimately the people we serve.

A common theme heard in the halls of the capitol this past session was one of private property rights. Many of the more contentious bills had a strong correlation to that issue. Moving forward, Game and Fish personnel will be engaged in at least two interim studies, one to discuss

the current status of the various gratis laws in North Dakota, and the other to study access to public and private lands for hunting, fishing, trapping and related issues. The results of these studies will be reported to the 67th legislative assembly.

Changes to state laws pertaining to posting private land have long been debated over the years. The issue stirs emotions from people on both sides. The dialogue that ensues has not necessarily fostered better landowner/hunter relations. From that standpoint alone, it would be good to reach a point where we could begin mending those relationships.

What follows is a look at the 40 outdoors-related bills tracked by Game and Fish Department officials that passed and failed:

BILLS THAT PASSED



HB 1021 – Included in the Information Technology Department's appropriation, during the 2019-21 interim, a 14-member land access committee (with nine voting members) will study access to public and private lands for hunting, trapping, fishing and related issues, including trespass violations and penalties, and provide recommendations regarding a land access database with capabilities of electronic posting. The study committee may establish a trial electronic posting and hunter access information system in up to three counties prior to August 1, 2020, and report findings and recommendations to the 67th legislative assembly. Passed House 85-7. Passed Senate 46-0.

HB 1066 – Returns funding limit to the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund to \$20 million per fiscal year. Passed House 80-12. Passed Senate 46-0.

HB 1209 – Allows the use of dogs in the recovery of big game animals. Passed House 92-0. Passed Senate 33-13.

HB 1246 – Defines eligibility requirements relating to gratis licenses for hunting big game and to provide a legislative study. Passed House 83-2. Passed Senate 45-2.

HB 1286 – Amends the century code relating to law enforcement agencies reporting seizures and forfeitures. Passed House 55-37. Passed Senate 43-4.

HB 1366 – Allows use of a telescopic sight on a crossbow with a maximum power of 8x32. Passed House 89-0. Passed Senate 46-0.

HB 1383 – Alters the Public Service Commission's century code relating to mitigating environmental impacts associated with energy development. Passed House 72-19. Passed Senate 41-6.

HB 1412 – Allows the use of night vision, thermal vision or infrared light with a power source of not more than six volts while hunting coyote, fox, raccoon or beaver during the open season, and on a predatory animal attacking and attempting to destroy poultry, livestock or other property. Passed House 88-1. Passed Senate 45-1.

HB 1462 – Changes the seven white-tailed deer licenses that are provided to the Outdoor Adventure Foundation to four any-whitetail and three any-antlered deer licenses, to be used by youth with life-threatening illnesses. Passed House 91-0. Passed Senate 44-1.

HB 1503 – Requires an individual who enters private property and installs a device for observing, recording or photographing wildlife to either receive written permission from the landowner, or identify the device with a permanently affixed metal or plastic tag with a registration number issued by the Game and Fish Department, or the individual's name,

address and telephone number. Passed House 74-16. Passed Senate 43-0.

SB 2017 – Appropriates \$83,803,632 to the Game and Fish Department for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2021. Passed House 85-8. Passed Senate 46-1.

SB 2034 – Defines the terms “firearm” or “weapon” and clarifies who can carry, including a minor under age 15 carrying a muzzleloader under direct supervision. Passed House 82-6. Passed Senate 45-1.

eligible to be forwarded to the North Dakota Industrial Commission must receive favorable recommendation from a majority of the outdoor heritage advisory board members. Passed House 85-6. Passed Senate 43-4.

SB 2138 – Allows advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants, in addition to a physician, to verify the physical condition necessary for individuals to qualify for a permit to shoot from a stationary motor vehicle. Passed House 90-0. Passed Senate 47-0.

watercraft. Passed House 86-0. Passed Senate 45-0.

SB 2239 – Defines open records laws/exemptions of animal tracking databases for animal health purposes, including state and federal agencies would be able to collect information to assist in animal disease control or tracking an animal disease. Declared an emergency measure. Passed House 87-0. Passed Senate 47-0.

SB 2261 – Amends the energy and conversion and transmission facilities section of the century code, relating to conditions imposed on designation of sites, corridors and routes. Passed House 81-12. Passed Senate 41-6.

SB 2293 – Creates an aquatic nuisance species program fund in the state treasury. Effective Jan. 1, 2020, establishes an ANS fee of \$15 for each motorized watercraft registered in North Dakota to run concurrent with the three-year watercraft registration period. For motorized watercraft operated on waters in North Dakota but not licensed in North Dakota, an ANS fee of \$15 to be paid for each calendar year and to display an ANS sticker on their watercraft. Effective April 1, 2020, establishes a \$2 surcharge on each resident fishing license and combination license, with the exception of the resident 65 and older fishing license, permanently or totally disabled fishing license, or a disabled veteran fishing license. In addition, includes a \$3 surcharge on each nonresident fishing license and each nonresident waterfowl license. Passed House 67-22. Passed Senate 41-6.

SB 2342 – Any boat operated between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. may not produce a noise in excess of 88 decibels for more than 10 minutes. Passed House 60-25. Passed Senate 29-17.

SB 2358 – Relates to Red River Valley water supply project contract terms, elimination of voter approval requirements and notice of proposed water



A bill was passed to create an aquatic nuisance species program fund for ANS education, inspections and monitoring in North Dakota.

SB 2055 – Allows Game and Fish to get approval from either the legislative assembly or budget section for each land acquisition of at least 10 acres or \$10,000 value. Passed House 91-1. Passed Senate 47-0.

SB 2058 – Amends the century code relating to the Outdoor Heritage Fund, whereas grant applications that are

SB 2165 – Amends the North Dakota Tax Department’s section of the century code relating to gross receipts, specifically that gross receipts do not include the amount of compensation received from an insurance company for the loss of a stolen or destroyed watercraft that had been previously taxed if that compensation is used as a trade-in credit on the purchase of a replacement

management systems. Passed House 76-16. Passed Senate 46-1.



BILLS THAT FAILED

HB 1232 – Would have allow taxidermists or meat processors to receive certification for handling, sterilization and processing of big game animals from areas with documented cases of chronic wasting disease; and an individual may transport from within or into the state for taxidermy or meat processing purposes the carcass of big game animals from an area documented with CWD. Failed House 26-67.

HB 1257 – Would have allow an individual over age 65 to hunt deer with a muzzleloader with a telescopic sight of up to four-power magnification. Failed House 35-58.

HB 1290 – Would have set guidelines for law enforcement officers entering and searching buildings or private land. Passed House 64-29. Senate amended to make it a legislative study. Failed Senate 4-43.

HB 1294 – Would have required traps or snares for furbearers to be checked at least every 48 hours. Failed House 0-92.

HB 1323 – Would have defined a dangerous and concealed weapon. Failed House 17-75.

HB 1331 – Would have allowed anglers to purchase a lifetime fishing license. Failed House 16-73.

HB 1357 – Would have defined who is eligible for a gratis tag for hunting moose, and allowed applicants to apply annually regardless if already issued a license. Failed House 27-66.

HB 1413 – Would have required public notice of a wildlife survey in the official county newspaper, and on the website and social media accounts of the

person/agency conducting the survey, at least 30 days prior to the start of the survey. Failed House 8-84.

HB 1423 – Legislative management, during the 2019-20 interim, would have studied the eligibility for gratis licenses authorizing residents to hunt elk or moose, and report findings to the 67th legislative assembly. Failed House 0-91.

HB 1427 – Would have allowed the use of air guns for hunting. Withdrawn from consideration.

HB 1428 – Would have established a Missouri River council to provide for the acquisition and management of the Missouri River shoreline. Failed House 38-54.

HB 1430 – Related to big game gratis license eligibility. Failed House 0-93.

HB 1451 – Would have required a mandatory waiting period of three days between the purchase and delivery of a firearm. Failed House 11-82.

SB 2054 – Grants provided by the Outdoor Heritage Fund would no longer give preference to those that enhanced conservation practices, and adds a requirement that ensures geographical balance of members is maintained. Failed Senate 14-33.

SB 2183 – Would have allowed a live bait wholesaler or vendor to transport into the state and sell live white suckers to be used as bait in the Red River. Failed Senate 0-46.

SB 2201 – Would have allowed a nonresident to purchase a waterfowl license that was valid for three four-day periods for \$200. Passed Senate 35-10. Failed House 18-72.

SB 2260 – Would have allowed a nonresident who owns land in North Dakota, or any member of the family residing with the nonresident, to purchase a nonresident landowner

trapping license for \$100 to trap on the land. Passed Senate 43-3. Failed House 30-60.

SB 2285 – Would have allowed a nonresident to purchase a statewide waterfowl license for \$500 that was valid for the remainder of the season after the first week. Failed Senate 19-26.

SB 2315 – Would have changed the century code relating to trespassing and posting of land, and provide a study. An individual may hunt on private property without obtaining permission unless the land is legally posted or the individual is asked to leave by the landowner; a landowner may submit electronic information designating “posted” or closed to hunters if the state develops an online database or an electronic application which identifies if land is available for hunting; a person may not act as a hunting guide or outfitter on private land without obtaining permission from the landowner; an individual is guilty of a class B misdemeanor for a first offense and a class A misdemeanor for a second or subsequent offense for criminal trespass; and repeals a section of the century code pertaining to prima facie evidence of intent to hunt game. In addition, during the 2019-21 interim, a 14-member land access committee (with nine voting members) will study access to public and private lands for hunting, trapping, fishing and related issues, including trespass violations and penalties, and provide recommendations regarding a land access database with capabilities of electronic posting. The study committee may establish a trial electronic posting and hunter access information system in up to three counties prior to August 1, 2020, and report findings and recommendations to the 67th legislative assembly. Passed Senate 29-17. Failed House 44-48.

Scott Peterson is the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's deputy director.

A **LINE** TO THE **PAST**, A **BRIDGE** TO THE **FUTURE**

CONNECTING THROUGH COMMUNITY FISHERIES



A family fishing event
at Ryan Park Pond in
Grand Forks.

by Alicia Underlee Nelson

The image of a lone figure standing on shore as a bobber bobs peacefully in the water is instantly iconic. It's almost impossible not to smile at a pair of teenagers loping off with fishing rods slung over their shoulders, experiencing that first taste of independence. The patter of little feet on a fishing pier and the squeal of delight at that first wiggly fish is a perfect snapshot of the sweetness of childhood.

Whiling away the hours at a local fishing hole is a slice of classic Americana, the kind of pure, simple, gloriously slow-paced recreation that today's high-speed world seems determined to leave in the dust. But North Dakota anglers are a stubborn bunch. From Williston to Wahpeton, they still carve out time to fish in the state's lakes, ponds and rivers. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department maintains more than 400 waters with some form of public

access. Of these waters, community fisheries offer some of the most cherished – and often overlooked – fishing spots in the state.

A community fishery is a pond, lake or creek that's designed to provide easy access for anglers of all ages and abilities. They're stocked annually, almost always with rainbow trout, but often with other species as well, to provide plenty of chances to catch a fish. They're often located in urban, suburban or near well-traveled roads in rural areas to allow people who live far from larger lakes to go fishing without a lot of extra effort, gear or travel time.

"One of the biggest things is accessibility," said Jerry Weigel, Game and Fish Department fisheries production/development section supervisor, who coordinates the stocking of these ponds each year. "Typically, a community fishery is going to be within biking distance. It's in town. The kids can just literally bike to those little fishing ponds and go fishing."

While the next generation of anglers and their parents or caretakers are typically enthusiastic users of these fishing ponds, they're certainly not the only ones baiting their hooks. New Americans from around the world are some of the newest and most enthusiastic urban anglers in Fargo and West Fargo, pleased to find easy access to nature close to home and happy to continue a cherished pastime in their new cities. Teachers regularly schedule fishing events for elementary school kids at ponds across the state. Folks who put a line in the water at Triangle Y Pond near Garrison might share the pier with kids at summer camp, some of whom are fishing for the very first time.

Community fisheries like the OWLS Pond in Bismarck make it simple and convenient for individuals of all physical abilities to go fishing. Anglers can simply pull into the Game and Fish Department main office parking lot and take the wheelchair accessible ramp right to the fishing pier to fish for bluegill, perch, catfish, white bass and rainbow trout.

"It makes it easier for the elderly or the handicapped to have easy access to fishing, versus the big challenge to gear all up and go to Brewer Lake or Devils Lake or the bigger lakes," Weigel said. He adds that care centers and group homes can

apply for free fishing event permits, which waives the fishing license requirement for participants and introduces (or reintroduces) residents to fishing in a safe and supportive environment with little to no investment required.

Williston's Spring Lake ponds are in a popular city park, making them accessible to groups and individuals from many walks of life. The ponds' many fishing piers and promises of trout, northern pike and catfish are just some of the amenities that entice residents and visitors to take a quick break outside or dedicate an entire day to outdoor recreation.

"It is a perfect spot to catch a sunset or sunrise over the water, but also convenient enough to go out and walk the main path over your lunch break for some fresh air," said Sabrina Ramey, Visit Williston event and communications coordinator. "There are picnic shelters, playgrounds, swimming beach, bathrooms and a lot of shade trees, so it is easy to plan a whole afternoon there. There are several youth organizations that use Spring Lake Park to fulfill learning requirements like water safety and fishing, too, and church groups that use the park."

Rick Ziegelmann, Grand Forks Parks park operations manager, said that Ryan Park Pond's location, which features plenty of vehicle parking and bicycle access, regularly attracts both anglers and curious passersby.

"It's off of the city bike path, too, so you'll get people biking and walking and stopping by," Ziegelmann said. "It attracts

"Traditional angling is to escape the noise and one-upmanship of modern angling in favor of something simple and beautiful."
– Fennel Hudson

A cutthroat trout before being stocked into the OWLS Pond in Bismarck.



CRAIG BIRLE

Jerry Weigel, Game and Fish Department production/development supervisor, stocks trout in April in Woodhaven Pond in Cass County.



ALICIA UNDERLEE NELSON



ALICIA UNDERLEE NELSON

all ages, all abilities ... it reaches out to just about everybody.”

Obviously, placing a fishing pond in a high traffic area like a park or along a popular road or trail makes it easy for anglers to reach. But increased visibility also means that people with no interest or experience with fishing can see anglers in action, up close and personal, which is quite a different experience than peering at people in a fishing boat across the lake.

This proximity to fishing access and a basic familiarity with the process can help increase confidence in new and potential anglers who don’t have a friend or family member to learn from. And when fishing seems less mysterious, less like a secret club and more like something ordinary folks do on a summer afternoon, it’s probable that a few more people might give it a try.

That’s basically how it worked for Andy Kasel of Oriska. He regularly fishes community waters, often with his kids, who are 18, 11 and 6.

“I’m originally from Minneapolis-St. Paul, land of 10,000 lakes, and had no idea you could go walleye fishing from standing on the shore of a river until I moved here,” he said. “(It’s a) little more of a challenge, river fishing

... with the current, logs, rocks and such. But with little equipment and the ease of standing on a riverbank, it’s a lot easier to want to go. You grab your rod, tacklebox and a quick stop for minnows, and 15 minutes later you are fishing.”

Getting out on the water quickly matters to Horace resident Josh Lewis and his family, too. He’s spent many happy hours catching trout with KeerieAnne Bruce and their kids, Rhiannon Lewis, 3 and Easton Lewis, 2, on North and South Woodhaven ponds in Fargo.

“Normally, I wouldn’t take the kids out to a bigger lake. They would stay at home. At that point, it’s a hassle,” he said. “It’s a lot easier to have these ponds in Fargo, West Fargo and around the area than to have to drive an hour or an hour and a half with the kids and to keep them occupied. On these little ponds, you have to walk maybe 500 yards, tops. It’s a lot easier and a lot more family friendly.”

Even while keeping two toddlers occupied, which is often a challenge, even at home, Lewis and Bruce have still managed to catch dozens of trout over several trips. He hopes that these family fishing trips will make his kids more curious about and comfortable in nature.

“I don’t want my kids sitting inside being on phones and tablets and turning into a

stereotypical kid,” said Lewis. “I want my kids outside.”

Community fisheries are excellent places to learn to love the outdoors. Ponds are small, shallow and aesthetically pleasing, which can also minimize the fears of parents and guardians who may not be entirely comfortable with nature.

“There’s no big weeds or drop offs, so they’re not scary,” Weigel said. “Here in Bismarck (at the OWLS Pond) you can walk and get on the fishing pier and never step on dirt or grass, so if you have really little kids, it’s very safe. And if the kids get bored, you can just pack up and leave. You have very little invested.”

The Game and Fish Department hosts regular fishing education events to introduce kids to fishing, with no financial investment required. Department staff and volunteers show little anglers how to catch trout and panfish at the State Fair Pond in Minot every year when the fair is in session. (The fish remain even after the gates close.) And OWLS Pond outreach events in Bismarck encourage families to try fishing for free.

That was enough to entice Bismarck’s Laura Taylor. She brought her daughters, ages 8, 6 and 3, to an event at the pond.

“We were looking for a free, family activity to do that everyone would enjoy,” Taylor said. “It’s very low-key and comes equipped with a fishing pole and bait on family days, so you can literally show up with just your kids in tow. It’s a great way to connect with nature and show your kids different activities that we wouldn’t normally have access to.”

For families who just want to test the waters, a community fishery is a convenient, affordable, low-risk option. There’s just one caveat.

Weigel said it’s important that young anglers catch fish before their interests turn elsewhere.

The ponds are stocked with many fish each season, so bites are plentiful. But reeling one in requires the little ones to be patient and forces experienced anglers to rethink their old habits.

“In North Dakota, we’re so used to putting on a big old bait, no matter what we’re fishing for,” Weigel said. “These little trout are really dialed in on little bugs in the water, so the simple thing to use is corn, which takes a really small hook. Just use a little piece of worm and tiny hooks, tiny pieces of bait and you’re gonna get action for sure. Keep it simple.”

Kids and teens under the age of 16 can fish without a fishing license, which helps foster independence, and encourages time outdoors, away from screens. Younger kids can fish with a licensed parent or guardian.

“If your kids are too young to fish by themselves, get a license,” Weigel said. “You can get a license right on the Internet (gf.nd.gov/licensing) and it’s good for 365 days.”

The fishing is good at North Dakota’s community fisheries 365 days a year, too. You just have to know where to look. Weigel stocks the fish in spring, as soon as the ice melts, which is often sooner than anglers think. Anglers in the know head to the smallest ponds first.

“These are the first waters in the state to get fish,” Weigel said. “Their urban setting warms them up a little more quickly. If the parks have everything ready to go, we target those in April.”

The trout are most active in spring, with other species biting all the way through the end of the open water season. And once the ice freezes, some of the larger ponds become convenient spots for ice fishing.

Joshua Lewis swears by North Woodhaven Pond for scoring trout. (It was there that his little ones popped their heads out of the portable icehouse to say hello on a bright February day.) Over on the south pond, dozens of young anglers were competing in the annual Woodhaven Pond Youth Fishing Derby, sipping hot chocolate and waiting for a bite.

Typically, a community fishery is going to be within biking distance. It’s in town. The kids can just literally bike to those little fishing ponds and go fishing.

Woodhaven Pond in Cass County attracts people of all ages.





Fargo resident Akira Olp sat calmly in a chair next to her fishing hole, her boots in the slush, patient as a sage. She's already a veteran angler at the ripe old age of 12.

"It's her day, so I'll let her use my best pole," said Akira's mom, Kat Olp, with a smile. The family fishes together often and she's gratified to see her daughter confidently take the lead on this particular outing.

"It's important to include them in passions that we love, so they can develop their own love for the sport and appreciate nature," Olp said. "We use these community fishing ponds quite a few times a year. There are many areas of town that we enjoy stopping at after work and

school to just get our lines in for a little bit and relax."

Not much was biting for Akira on that February day, but she took it in stride. Like passionate anglers of any age, for her the catch is only part of the fun.

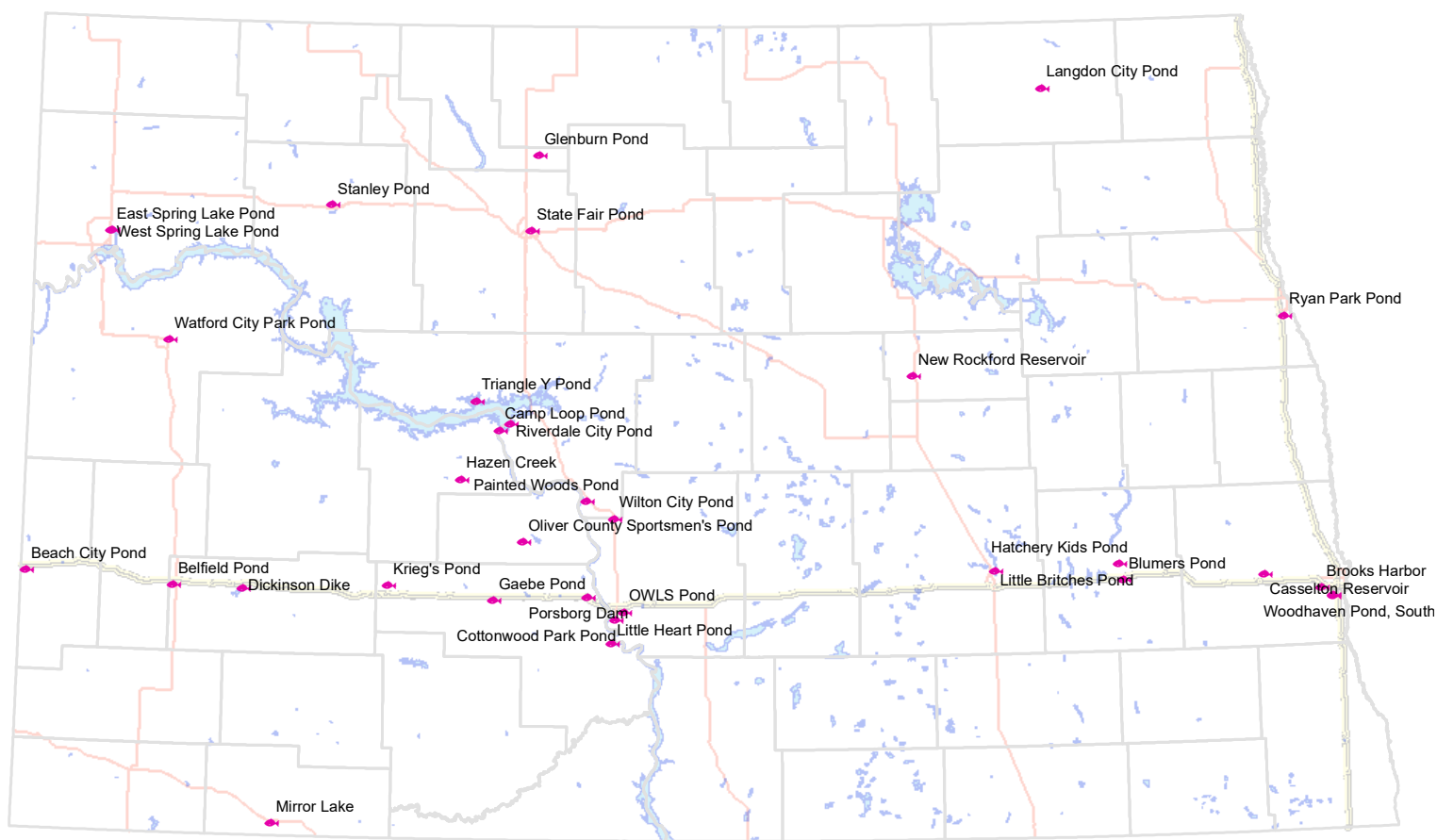
"I love fishing for the element of surprise – you never know what you'll catch," she said. "I think it's important to keep a millennia-old tradition alive."

If even a few of Akira Olp's peers share her sentiments, the future of fishing in North Dakota looks bright.

ALICIA UNDERLEE NELSON, West Fargo, is a freelance writer who also blogs about outdoor recreation, travel and food in North Dakota and beyond at prairiestylefile.com.

Many of North Dakota's community fisheries also attract anglers during the winter months.

2019 COMMUNITY FISHERIES



COMMUNITY FISHERIES LAKES/PONDS

Spring Lake Park Ponds – This pair of ponds offers scenic fishing on the northern edge of Williston. Find abundant rainbow trout and adult catfish on the west pond or fish for northern pike from numerous fishing piers on the east pond.

Stanley Pond – Look for adult channel catfish and catchable-sized rainbow trout (stocked each spring) on the north-east side of Stanley. There's a boat ramp and fishing pier as well.

Watford City Park Pond – With picnic tables and a long fishing pier, this southeast Watford City spot is a great place to spend the afternoon. Adult channel catfish and catchable-sized rainbow trout are stocked in spring.

Beach City Pond – The fishing pier offers easy access to annually stocked rainbow trout on the southwest side of the city of Beach.

Belfield Pond – This quiet little pond is full of bluegill, adult catfish, perch and annually stocked rainbow trout. Find it, and a fishing pier, in southwest Belfield.

Dickinson Dike – The waters near Dickinson's Turtle Park are stocked with rainbow trout annually and adult catfish most years and also contain cutthroat trout, largemouth bass and bluegill. A pier, boat launch and vault toilet are available.

Gaebe Pond – Located 1.5 miles west of New Salem, this secluded spot offers annually stocked rainbow trout, adult catfish up to 5 pounds (stocked most years) and small perch and bluegill. There's a fishing pier, too.

Krieg's Pond – Fish for adult perch, adult catfish and annually stocked rainbow trout from five rocky outcroppings on this pond .5 miles east of Hebron.

Mirror Lake – This easy-to-reach lake features a boat ramp, fishing pier, vault toilet and plenty of roadside parking on Hettinger's south side. Look for walleye and pike.

Camp Loop Pond – Find a fishing pier and annually stocked rainbow trout 3 miles southwest of Riverdale on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers downstream campground.

Glenburn Pond – This tiny pond on Glenburn's north side is stocked with

trout annually and occasionally stocked with bluegill and perch. The T-shaped pier provides easy access to the water.

Hazen Creek – Fish the shores of this quiet creek tucked right into the western end of Hazen. Just pull off the road to catch rainbow trout stocked each spring.

Oliver County Sportsman's Pond – Head 4 miles south and a half-mile west of Center to try for annually stocked rainbow trout.

Painted Woods Pond – One of the newest ponds in the state is located near Painted Woods Creek outside of Washburn, just south of where U.S. Highway 83 meets ND Highway 1806. It's stocked with trout, bluegill, perch and catfish.

Riverdale City Pond – Families love fishing for bluegill and rainbow trout at this north Riverdale spot. The fishing pier makes it easy for little anglers to try their luck.

State Fair Pond – Try this family favorite spot on the north end of the state fairgrounds in Minot. (Staff and volunteers assist new anglers when the fair is in town.) The small pond is stocked with trout and panfish annually and it's open year-round.

Triangle Y Pond – This pond and fishing pier outside Garrison is most frequently used by campers at the Triangle Y Camp, but open to all. Plenty of perch await those willing to make the trip.

Cottonwood Park Pond – Escape to this urban fishing pond near the playgrounds, jogging path and Cottonwood soccer complex in south Bismarck. Step onto the pier to fish for adult northern pike and more.

Little Heart Pond – Drive 11 miles south of Mandan on ND Highway 1806 to score catchable-sized rainbow trout, scenic views and solitude. The pond is stocked each spring.

OWLS Pond – Fish for rainbow trout, bluegill, perch, catfish and white bass near the North Dakota Game and Fish Department headquarters in Bismarck. Wheelchair accessible pier, porta potties, benches and a picnic shelter are available.

Porsborg Dam – Pop over to northwest

Mandan to enjoy a little fishing right in town. Rainbow trout and several other species are stocked each spring.

Wilton City Pond – Wilton boasts a quiet pond on its south side. Rainbow trout are stocked every spring.

Langdon City Pond – This put-and-take trout lake on Langdon's south side offers a boat ramp, fishing pier and vault toilet. It's average depth of about 11 feet makes it deeper throughout than many ponds of its size.

New Rockford Reservoir – This spot on the north side of New Rockford is primarily a pike fishery, but anglers will also find walleye and smaller perch off the fishing pier.

Ryan Park Pond – Hidden in plain sight by King's Walk Golf Course, this pond offers bluegill and trout fishing in the heart of south Grand Forks. The fishing pier is near a walking trail, picnic shelter, porta potties and playgrounds, so it's a hit with all ages.

Blumer's Pond – This 4-acre pond 1 mile south of Valley City offers perch and bluegill. Lucky anglers might also catch the occasional trout.

Brooks Harbor Pond – Long and narrow, this spot just off Exit 346 in West Fargo boasts shore-fishing and plenty of perch.

Casselton Reservoir – Look for pike, bluegill and the occasional perch in these low-key waters just west of Casselton. A fishing pier, boat launch and vault toilet are available.

Hatchery Kids Pond – Located 2 miles northwest of Valley City, near Valley City National Fish Hatchery (one of two federal fish hatcheries in the state) this shore-fishing spot is a solid option for early season trout.

Little Britches Pond – Just across the road from Jamestown Reservoir Marina, this cozy pond is bursting with rainbow trout. Look for crappie, perch and the odd walleye and pike.

Woodhaven Ponds – Residential south Fargo offers two options for all-season fishing. Head to the north pond for rainbow trout and bluegill and the south pond for perch. Both ponds have a fishing pier for easy access.



A young whitetail buck.

C W D

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has been concerned about chronic wasting disease for a long time.

The invariably fatal disease can cause long-term population declines and the effort to test for it in North Dakota began in 1998 with roadkilled, sick and suspect animals. In the early 2000s, the Department increased CWD surveillance efforts by annually collecting samples from hunter-harvested deer, elk and moose.

During that time, 15 deer have tested positive for CWD in the state – 13 from Grant and Sioux counties in the southwest, and one from Divide County in the northwest – starting in 2009.

The 15th animal, a severely emaciated white-tailed deer found dead just south of Williston in late February, was the first documented case of mortality due to CWD in North Dakota.

Following the positive results of the Williston whitetail, the Game and Fish Department collected additional samples from 52 deer in the same area through targeted removal. All samples tested negative for CWD.

Deer hunting in North Dakota is a big deal. Hunters, no matter if they are packing archery equipment, high-powered rifles, or both, take their hunting seriously, and show great interest in the health and management of the state's whitetail and mule deer populations.

With the deer gun and muzzleloader application deadline set for June 5, *North Dakota OUTDOORS* staff visited with Dr. Charlie Bahnson, Game and Fish Department wildlife veterinarian, about CWD and the Department's continued efforts to manage North Dakota's big game populations threatened by the unwelcome disease.

Q: Why is the Department concerned about CWD?

A: There are several reasons to be concerned about CWD, but at the top of the list is what more and more studies are starting to find. If the number of animals infected with CWD in a population reaches a certain threshold, it becomes a major cause of decline in the population. At low infection rates, CWD can be dismissed as a curiosity. At high infection rates, it can become a catastrophe. It is the threat of someday reaching that point in areas of North Dakota that keeps me up at night.

Q: After the white-tailed deer was found dead south of Williston in February and tested positive for CWD, Game and Fish decided to collect additional samples

for testing through targeted removal. Why was targeted removal employed in this instance and not when deer tested positive in Grant, Sioux and Divide counties?

A: Our previous positives have all been animals harvested before they became sick, and they were mostly adult bucks, as was the case with all three found during the 2018 hunting season. These animals move across the landscape a lot, making it hard to say exactly where they came from. In contrast, the Williston deer was a mature doe that appeared in a semi-urban environment. The deer may have gone through the whole course of the disease – infection to death – in a relatively small geographical area. Other states have found high rates of infection within female family groups, so there was a strong reason to suspect that we were dealing with a localized hot spot of CWD. But ultimately, we needed more information to know how big of a problem we had on our hands.

Q: Fifty-two deer were taken during targeted surveillance efforts near Williston. Why this number?

A: Thirty adult deer was the minimum amount we



needed to make a reasonably accurate estimate of the prevalence of CWD within that area. This gets at a core concept in epidemiology. You can't say much about how common a disease might be in a population if you only test a few animals. Maybe it is rare, and you just didn't happen to sample the positives. As the number you sample increases, you start to gain more statistical weight. Of the 52 animals, 29 were adults and 23 were yearlings or fawns. That was the minimum we needed to get an estimate in that area.

A brainstem from a hunter-harvested deer to be sent in for CWD testing.



Janel Kolar (left), Department administrative assistant in Dickinson, and Bruce Stillings, Department big game management supervisor in Dickinson, work at a CWD check station in Belfield in 2004.

Q: Fortunately, samples from those deer taken by targeted removal near Williston all tested negative for chronic wasting disease. What do you make of these results?

A: The results were really a best-case scenario. We know that CWD is now in the area, but we aren't dealing with the potential hot spot of disease that we had feared. It does raise more questions in my mind about the initial positive doe. Where did she come from? Was she a local or did she wander in from somewhere else? We are working to develop some laboratory tools to answer questions like this and we collected DNA samples from all the deer we sampled in this area.

Q: Why wasn't the venison salvaged from those animals?

A: We weighed that decision very heavily, but in the end, the cons outweighed the pros. Going into a disease investigation, you must assume that all animals are positive until proven otherwise. As a result, we had to go to great lengths to get all carcass parts off the landscape and contained until results were received 10 days later. And in sampling that many deer in a laboratory setting, we couldn't maintain a level of cleanliness that most people would approve of. I am a hunter who takes wasting meat very seriously, but I am also a veterinarian who swore an oath to protect the health of animals and the public. We didn't

know what we would find, and we had to plan for the worst. In the end, I think we made the right decision.

Q: How does North Dakota compare in terms of prevalence of CWD to other states and provinces where the disease is an issue?

A: If there is any positive note in this issue, it is that North Dakota is still in a position where we can keep this under control. There are populations in other parts of the continent where the prevalence is 30-40 percent, or even higher. That means 30-40 percent of your deer have a terminal disease that cannot be eradicated. That's a tough situation. In hunting unit 3F2 in the southwest, our prevalence is closer to 1 percent. That is a rate we can live with, but we must be proactive.

Q: You've said we need to do everything in our power to ensure that finding sick or dead CWD-infected deer doesn't become common like in other areas of the country where CWD has reached a tipping point. What are some of the things we can do to safeguard North Dakota's deer population?

A: First and foremost, we need hunters to keep hunting. Hunters are the primary tool for managing healthy wildlife populations in North Dakota. But in addition, this really does take a lot of self-reflection about what we as hunters may be doing to increase the risk of spreading CWD from one animal to the next. CWD can be spread directly between animals, but also indirectly through contaminated environments. Deer congregate naturally for a portion of the year and we can't do much to change that. However, we make that worse by increasing the number, duration and intensity of those congregations by baiting throughout late summer and fall. We also know that the movement of infected carcass parts is one way to introduce the disease into new areas. The Department has implemented transportation regulations and bans on hunting over baits and has made other recommendations that are found on our website. Whether these things will help slow the spread of CWD depends heavily on how willing our hunting community is to adopt them. This is a tough battle that requires a long-term commitment, but if you look at the past 10 years in 3F2 where we have maintained a low prevalence of CWD in conjunction with decent hunting opportunities, there is reason to be optimistic moving forward.

CRAIG BIRRE

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LARA ANDERSON



PLANNING FOR SUCCESS:

UPDATING THE ANS | MANAGEMENT PLAN

*Zebra mussels collected
by Game and Fish
Department personnel
from the Red River in
eastern North Dakota.*



By Jessica Howell

W

hen I tell people I work with aquatic nuisance species, I typically get: “You mean, like, zebra mussels?”

Surveys show that more than 95 percent of boaters have heard of zebra mussels and around 80 percent are familiar with other ANS, such as silver carp or curly leaf pondweed.

But is it enough that boaters and anglers have heard about ANS?

Is it enough that more than 90 percent say they take actions to prevent the spread of invasive species at least occasionally?

At the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, we don’t think it is.

Aquatic nuisance species come in many shapes and sizes; some are harder to kill than others. On top of that, there are many, many ways that ANS can spread.

It's true that North Dakota waters receive a lot of fishing pressure, especially from anglers using boats. It's estimated these anglers launch their boats more than 600,000 times in any given year. With many boaters traveling back and forth from infested waters in North Dakota and surrounding states, there is a risk of ANS hitchhiking on equipment or in water.

But putting the entire burden of ANS prevention on anglers and boaters isn't fair. Game and Fish is also concerned that people who own aquatic pets don't know where to get rid of them, or that anyone who orders aquatic plants or animals online can unknowingly actually buy invasive species. Pathways like these and others still need addressing.

That's why the Game and Fish Depart-

beyond boaters and anglers and work to prevent the spread on many different fronts. This includes overseeing inspections of barges and other commercial equipment that are headed to North Dakota waters from areas often infested with ANS.

The Department also focuses on controlling species already in North Dakota to reduce negative impacts on recreation, the economy or ecosystems.

Game and Fish has a set amount of resources to dedicate to preventing the introduction and spread of ANS. To help prioritize how to best use those resources, it has an ANS management plan, which guides efforts in North Dakota that are conducted by state, tribal, local and private interests.

The first plan was finalized and adopted in 2005. At the time, the Game and Fish Department was the primary entity driving plan development. The 2005 plan drew heavily on current knowledge from other states, which was limited. Zebra and quagga mussels were a major driver in decisions, but most of the experience in the U.S. with those species came from the Great Lakes. There was much that was not yet known about the biology of these species or effective ways to stop their spread, and even less known about other aquatic nuisance species of concern.

North Dakota didn't have much first-hand experience with ANS in 2005 outside of common carp, a few records of curly leaf pondweed, and the thought that grass carp were finally dying out of Spiritwood Lake. The state didn't even have a list of aquatic nuisance species of concern.

Some of the first actions called for by the 2005 plan

were to establish a statewide committee on ANS, develop an ANS list for the state, and adopt regulations to protect against new introductions or spread. These basic building blocks took time to accomplish, but set

Jessica Howell, Department aquatic nuisance species coordinator, searches for tiny zebra mussel veligers on her computer monitor. Enlarging water samples with a microscope makes it easier to spy the miniscule veligers.



ment doesn't just focus on boaters and anglers. The agency tries to prevent several types of ANS, from fish to plants, from introduction through an array of pathways. This means there is a need to expand efforts

the foundation for a strong program in North Dakota.

Shortly after the original plan was signed in February 2005, the Game and Fish Department dedicated

Game and Fish has a set amount of resources to dedicate to preventing the introduction and spread of ANS. To help prioritize how to best use those resources, it has an ANS management plan, which guides efforts in North Dakota that are conducted by state, tribal, local and private interests.

resources to an ANS program to follow through with the actions identified in the plan. This included a half-time ANS coordinator and shifting a small amount of fisheries money to do ANS work as needed. A small annual grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that was tied to the adopted plan also assisted ANS efforts in North Dakota.

Legislation and administrative rules followed shortly thereafter, one of which established the statewide ANS committee. This committee is comprised of state, tribal, nonprofit and private interests to advise on ANS efforts. It was this committee that helped establish the ANS list for North Dakota and guide regulation development in the beginning of the ANS program.

Since 2005, populations of Eurasian water milfoil, silver carp and zebra mussels have showed up after the original plan was approved. Neighboring states learned valuable lessons they were able to share about other ANS that North Dakota does not have, including what worked and didn't work after years of managing species relatively new to North Dakota.

Today, ANS knowledge has

advanced, including biology and how species can spread, as well as more complex matters, such as how to inform users more effectively or implement useful regulations without being overbearing. This information has slowly transformed how North Dakota prioritizes ANS efforts and has encouraged more collaboration among various agencies and entities in the state.

Annual planning is conducted by the ANS committee, which meets twice a year. In spring, members talk about their plans for the year and potential changes. Spring is also a good time to review results from the previous year that took time to analyze, especially lab results. In fall, any changes to the ANS list can be discussed as members report on how the season went and what work was completed.

In 2018, Game and Fish decided to update its management plan to reflect this slow evolution of ANS management efforts. The statewide ANS committee was instrumental in this effort, building on experience and knowledge gained in the 13 years since the original plan was developed.

After several rounds of edits and input from stakeholders, a final plan was approved first by the state ANS committee in November and then by Governor Doug Burgum in December 2018. A copy of the plan is posted on the North Dakota Game and Fish website at gf.nd.gov/ans.

The recent update streamlined the original plan, cutting total pages from 205 to 29 and halving the objectives, strategies and actions by eliminating redundancies. It also updated information on ANS currently found in North Dakota and incorporated advances in management techniques learned over the years.

The simplified and updated plan increases effectiveness because the committee can now easily read through the entire plan, or find relevant sections. This allows for more discussion of priorities based on what's identified in the plan. The update also included the addition of a table that



Highlights from 2018

- No new ANS or populations found in 2018.
- 180 waters sampled for ANS.
- 27 waters specifically sampled for zebra mussels (182 samples).
- No significant changes in existing ANS populations. The exception was sighting more young zebra mussels in the Red River.
- 1,167 boat surveys and inspections conducted at 24 waters, no ANS found.
- 95 percent heard of zebra mussels, 80 percent heard of other ANS species.
- 93 percent clean boat at least occasionally.
- Hearing Game and Fish messaging and from local agencies if nonresidents.
- Partnered with Jason Mitchell Outdoors for first year on outreach.
- Developed new artwork and a positive message.
- Reached regional audiences, not just North Dakota.
- Law enforcement keying in on ANS.
- 86 violations reported in 2018.
- Seeing more anglers importing live aquatic bait, which is illegal.



CRAIG BIRRE

Jessica Howell, Department aquatic nuisance species coordinator, inspects a dock on the Red River for zebra mussels.



NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT PHOTO

Game and Fish Department personnel net invasive silver carp on the James River.

lists potential actions, ranks them by priority, and recommends how often they should be completed. If more resources become available, new efforts can be quickly identified using this table and the supporting text.

Perhaps most importantly, though, periodic evaluations were included in the actions, and established that the plan will need updating every five years. This will help agencies adjust as research and experience advances the understanding of current and future ANS threats.

The overall goal is still to prevent introductions of new ANS, prevent spread of existing populations, eradicate populations when feasible, and to mitigate effects of populations on the ecosystem, economy and recreation when possible. That's a hefty charge, and one that the Game and Fish Department takes seriously.

But Game and Fish can't do it alone. The Department works with partners like the state ANS committee, federal partners, and even other states and Canadian provinces that are battling similar issues.

It's important to remember that ANS exist in the wild and some, such as fish swimming upstream or plants drifting downstream, have ways of moving on their own. But most of the pathways that could bring ANS into North Dakota, or spread what is already here, involves people moving these harmful plants and animals. Understanding this, Game and Fish works with its regional partners to get the word out, monitor connected waters outside of North Dakota, and share experiences so everyone benefits from the knowledge gained.

One of the greatest lessons learned through shared experience is that there is always room to learn and improve. In this constantly changing world, efforts will continue in evaluating and adapting strategies to fight ANS.

JESSICA HOWELL is the Game and Fish Department's aquatic nuisance species coordinator.

TIPS FOR FOLLOWING NORTH DAKOTA'S ANS LAWS

North Dakota's ANS laws are designed for easy understanding, compliance and enforcement, and they are similar to those of neighboring states.

Although Game and Fish personnel often talk about these in terms of boating or angling, the laws apply to everyone. In fact, since these laws also apply to commercial and industrial equipment, the Department collaborates with permitting agencies such as North Dakota Department of Transportation, State Water Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure contractors comply. Similarly, waterfowl hunters, aquatic pet owners, teachers, water gardeners, and others should be aware of regulations that may affect them.

Plants and animals

All aquatic vegetation must be removed from all equipment before leaving a body of water.

Remove as many visible pieces of vegetation as feasible before leaving the boat ramp, landing area, or shoreline.

If there is a lot of algae, remove as much as possible before leaving and rinse down with clean water at a car wash or at home to remove remaining algae.

Live aquatic vegetation may not be transported into North Dakota.

Many states have aquatic plants that could harm North Dakota's ecosystems or recreational opportunities. State waters have a lot of nutrients that could allow for a lot of growth in a short amount of time.

Stocking of any live fish, live fish eggs, live amphibians, or other live aquatic organism into any North Dakota water is illegal unless a license or permit is issued.

Dumping aquatic organisms in the water, on ice, or on shore is not permitted.

If you have an unwanted aquatic pet, find alternatives to illegal releases. This includes finding a new home, turning it in to a pet store, or humanely euthanizing. Most dumped pets suffer before succumbing to a wild environment, and those that survive can cause damage to the ecosystem, economy or recreation.

For unwanted or leftover aquatic bait, dispose of these at a fish cleaning station, in a garbage wrapped in plastic, or by burying at home.

Water

Water must be drained from all equipment when out of the water or upon entering the state.

Potable water and sewage are exempt from this regulation.

The biggest violation Department game wardens see is water transported in livewells on fishing boats. Instead, take a cooler with ice to transport catches home or to a fish cleaning station.

All drain plugs that may hold back water must be removed, and water draining devices must be open on all equipment during any out-of-water transport.

Remove drain plugs and standpipes and keep them out or open during transport. This means keeping them out at home, too, so you don't accidentally transport them back to a lake or river with the drain plugs in. Don't forget to put them back in once you're ready to launch or use the equipment.

This applies to any equipment that holds water and has some way of draining it.

Bait

Live aquatic bait may be transported in water containers of five gallons or less in volume in most parts of North Dakota.

In Class I ANS waters (currently just the Red River), all water must be drained from bait containers before leaving the shore or as boats are removed from the water.

This regulates what might be spread in bait water, where the small volume in most bait buckets is a lesser concern unless it was exposed to a Class I ANS water.

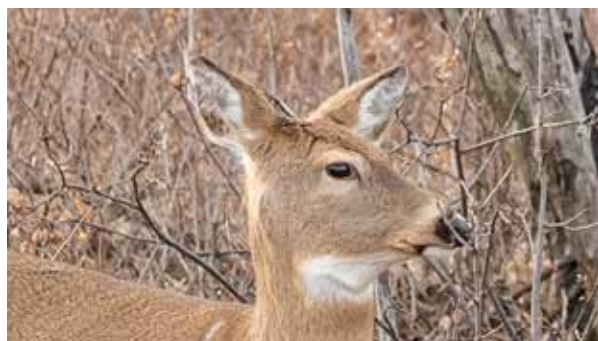
Live aquatic bait may not be imported into the state.

Purchase from North Dakota bait vendors to ensure that the bait and water is not harboring ANS or fish diseases.



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

By Greg Freeman, Department News Editor



2018 Deer Season Summarized

A total of 48,717 North Dakota deer hunters took approximately 31,350 deer during the 2018 gun hunting season, according to a post-season survey conducted by the state Game and Fish Department.

Game and Fish made available 55,150 deer gun licenses last year. Overall hunter success was 64 percent, with each hunter spending an average of 4.4 days in the field.

Hunter success for both antlered and antlerless white-tailed deer was 64 percent.

Mule deer buck success was 81 percent, and antlerless mule deer was 83 percent.

Hunters with any-antlered or any-antlerless licenses generally harvest white-tailed deer, as these licenses are predominantly in units with mostly whitetails. Buck hunters had a success rate of 69 percent, while doe hunters had a success rate of 65 percent.

Game and Fish issued 13,098 gratis licenses in 2018, and 10,785 hunters harvested 5,832 deer, for a success rate of 54 percent.

A total of 1,022 muzzleloader licenses were issued in 2018, and 900 hunters harvested 349 white-tailed deer (176 antlered, 173 antlerless). Hunter success was 39 percent.

A record 28,824 archery licenses (26,318 resident, 2,506 nonresident) were issued in 2018. In total, 22,666 bow hunters harvested 8,914 deer (7,927 whitetails, 987 mule deer), for a success rate of 39 percent.

The Department is in the process of determining recommendations for licenses in 2019. In addition to harvest rates and winter aerial surveys, Game and Fish staff monitor other population indices to determine license numbers, including depredation reports, hunter observations, input at advisory board meetings, and comments from the public, landowners and Department field staff.

LINTON YOUTH WINS BEST OF SHOW

A mallard in flight was chosen as the Best of Show in the 2019 North Dakota Junior Duck Stamp Contest.

Daniel Schumacher, 16, of Linton, used acrylic paints for his presentation. His artwork was selected from



•BEST OF SHOW•

more than 1,000 entries from across North Dakota. It's the second consecutive year Schumacher has captured the first-place honor.

Schumacher's painting will represent North Dakota at the National Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Scholarships are awarded to the top three artists.

Other first place winners in the four age categories were:

- Grades K-3 – Archer Ackerson, Sherwood; Cassia Coleman, Baldwin; and Gabriel Coleman, Baldwin.
- Grades 4-6 – Emily Green, Devils Lake; Grace Harkness, Devils Lake; and Savannah McKay, Devils Lake.
- Grades 7-9 – McKenzie Balzer, Bismarck; McKenzie Davies, West Fargo; and Emily Klein, Valley City.
- Grades 10-12 – Sydney Nelson, Valley City; and Monisha Terry, Valley City.

Brylee Stuberg, 8, of Leeds was the winner of the North Dakota Conservation Message. Her message, "Teal are green, teal are blue, ducks need a home just like you" will also compete at the national contest.

Spring Mule Deer Survey Complete

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department completed its annual spring mule deer survey in April, and results indicate western North Dakota's mule deer population is down from last year, but still 14 percent above the long-term average.

Department biologists counted 2,454 mule deer in 298.8 square miles during the survey. Overall mule deer density in the badlands was 8.2 deer per square mile, compared to 10.3 in 2018.

Although mule deer density was lower than 2018, Bruce Stillings, Department big game management supervisor, said the population is above objective and remains at a level able to support more hunting opportunities this fall.

"The 2019 spring results show that mule deer have recovered nicely following winters of 2009-11, which led to record low fawn production and a population index low of 4.6 mule deer per square mile in 2012," Stillings said. "The population recovery is due to no antlerless harvest for five years, combined with milder winter conditions during 2012-16, which led to good fawn production since 2013. However, the long-term health of the population will depend on maintaining high quality habitat."

Game and Fish Pays Property Taxes

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department recently paid more than \$658,000 in taxes to counties in which the Department owns or leases land. The 2018 in-lieu-of-tax payments are

the same as property taxes paid by private landowners.

The Game and Fish Department manages more than 200,000 acres for wildlife habitat and public hunting

in 51 counties. The Department does not own or manage any land in Traill or Renville counties.

Following is a list of counties and the tax payments they received.

| COUNTY | TAX DUE | COUNTY | TAX DUE | COUNTY | TAX DUE |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Adams | 178.44 | Grand Forks | 14,355.40 | Pierce | 2,857.53 |
| Barnes | 5,878.21 | Grant | 1,103.95 | Ramsey | 16,593.69 |
| Benson | 4,501.38 | Griggs | 85.60 | Ransom | 1,392.42 |
| Billings | 258.51 | Hettinger | 5,014.69 | Richland | 18,519.97 |
| Bottineau | 5,480.08 | Kidder | 11,178.51 | Rolette | 48,460.05 |
| Bowman | 2,092.51 | LaMoure | 10,483.71 | Sargent | 18,211.59 |
| Burke | 1,267.72 | Logan | 345.95 | Sheridan | 76,852.67 |
| Burleigh | 26,261.42 | McHenry | 1,676.30 | Sioux | 181.50 |
| Cass | 7,603.73 | McIntosh | 10,086.01 | Slope | 1,719.83 |
| Cavalier | 28,619.90 | McKenzie | 34,213.95 | Stark | 5,595.65 |
| Dickey | 12,214.33 | McLean | 103,699.23 | Steele | 9,239.31 |
| Divide | 2,314.19 | Mercer | 18,279.60 | Stutsman | 4,816.01 |
| Dunn | 6,172.04 | Morton | 23,952.53 | Towner | 2,267.82 |
| Eddy | 6,185.56 | Mountrail | 8,502.80 | Walsh | 11,109.74 |
| Emmons | 4,010.89 | Nelson | 5,450.39 | Ward | 129.24 |
| Foster | 985.63 | Oliver | 2,334.75 | Wells | 51,028.18 |
| Golden Valley | 145.96 | Pembina | 18,234.67 | Williams | 6,225.92 |

Boat North Dakota Course

Boat owners are reminded that children ages 12-15 who want to operate a boat or personal watercraft alone this summer must first take the state's boating basics course.

State law requires youngsters ages 12-15 to pass the course before they operate a boat or personal watercraft with at least a 10-horsepower motor. In addition, some insurance companies give adult boat owners who pass the course a discount on boat insurance.

The course is available for home-study from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Bismarck office. Two commercial providers also offer the course online, and links to those sites are found on the Department's website at gf.nd.gov.

While the home-study course is free, there is a fee for the online course. The online provider charges for the course, not the Game and Fish Department.

Upon completion of the online test, students can print out a temporary certification card, and within 10 days a permanent card will be mailed.

For more information contact Brian Schaffer, Department education coordinator, at ndgf@nd.gov; or call 701-328-6300.

Free Fishing Weekend

JUNE 1-2, 2019

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

Scholarships Available

The North Dakota Game Wardens Association, Ray Goetz Memorial Fund and Kupper Chevrolet are together sponsoring scholarships for graduating high school seniors or current higher education students, majoring in law enforcement, wildlife management, fisheries or a related field.

Applicants must be North Dakota residents, be in good academic standing, and have an interest in wildlife law enforcement or a related field. Scholarships will be awarded this fall upon proof of enrollment.

Applications are available by contacting the North Dakota Game Warden's Association, NDGAMEWARDENS@gmail.com. Applications must be received no later than May 31, 2019.



NASP State Tournament Results

A record 820 archers competed in the North Dakota National Archery in the Schools Program state bull's-eye tournament March 22-23 in Minot.

Oakes students claimed top honors in the elementary (grades 4-6) and middle school (grades 7-8) divisions, while Hankinson received the top prize in the high school (grades 9-12) division.

The overall male winner was Barnes County North archer Casey Everson, while Hankinson student Kirstan Loewen claimed the top spot in the female division.

Winning teams and the top 10 individuals qualify for the national tournaments, scheduled for May in Louisville, Ky and June in Salt Lake City, UT. The Game and Fish Department and North Dakota Youth Archery Advisory Council contribute a total of \$3,000 in travel assistance to the first-place team in each division, and \$1,000 to the overall male and female individual winners. In addition, a total of \$20,000 in college scholarships was awarded by the NDYAAC to the top five overall scorers in both boys and girls divisions.

Qualifying for nationals in each division are:

- High school boys – 1) Casey Everson, Barnes County North; 2) Joshua Wiebusch, Wahpeton; 3) Chase Bladow, Hankinson; 4) Mason Kamlitz, Oakes; 5) Andrew Hill, Oakes; 6) Jaden Payne, Glenburn; 7) Cheyne Meyer, Hankinson; 8) Austin Bladow, Hankinson; 9) Erich Scheffert, Oakes; 10) and Dalton Gartner, Edgeley.
- High school girls – 1) Gracie Gunderson, Medina; 2) Ainsley Helgersen, Oakes; 3) Sydni Berg, Edgeley; 4) Josephine Nelson, North Sargent; 5) Avery Trittin, Lidgerwood; 6) Grace Neameyer, Mt. Pleasant; 7) Chase McFarland, North Sargent; 8) Mary Goroski, Wahpeton; 9) Octavia Ralph-Martin, Griggs County Central; 10) and Jaden Gilje, North Sargent.
- Middle school boys – 1) Jake Hennings, Bottineau; 2) Colin Olson, North Sargent; 3) Clancy Zimbelman, Oakes; 4) Hunter Genre, New Rockford-Sheyenne; 5) Brady Sand, Mayville-Portland-Clifford-Galesburg; 6) Hunter Kamlitz, Oakes; 7) Brady Haugen, Griggs County Central; 8) Nick Hansen, North Sargent; 9) Samuel Abel, South Prairie; 10) and Calvin Satrom, Hope-Page.
- Middle school girls – 1) Kirstan Loewen, Hankinson; 2) Kaitlyn Folkman, Oakes; 3) Rylee Suhr, Griggs County Central; 4) Eve Thompson, Hope-Page; 5) Ariana Onchuck, Hankinson; 6) Allison Thomas, Pingree-Buchanan; 7) Zoey Bohnenstingl, Lidgerwood; 8) Jewels Hamling, Hankinson; 9) Kyria Dockter, New Rockford-Sheyenne; 10) and Bethany Schafer, Lidgerwood.
- Elementary boys – 1) Brady Hanson, Edgeley; 2) Braysen Sagert, Oakes; 3) Alex Weisenburger, New Rockford-Sheyenne; 4) Parker Deering, Oakes; 5) William Bergquist, Wilton; 6) Adam Ryun, Medina; 7) Hayden Risty, Wilton; 8) Ryan Roeder, Hankinson; 9) Jayson Schlenker, Barnes County North; 10) and Tucker Deering, Oakes.
- Elementary girls – 1) Danica Onchuck, Hankinson; 2) Shayle Zimbelman, Oakes; 3) Braylyn McKown, Wyndmere; 4) Claire

Wehseler, North Sargent; 5) Matilda Moch, Edgeley; 6) Mackenzie Nogowski, North Sargent; 7) Jourdyn Buchholz, Griggs County Central; 8) Kiara Frederick, Wilton; 9) Claire Leidy, Wilton; 10) and Logan Cudworth, New Rockford-Sheyenne.

In addition, 570 archers competed in a NASP 3-D Challenge, run simultaneously with the bull's-eye tournament.

Overall male and female winners were Clancy Zimbelman, Oakes, and Josephine Nelson, North Sargent.

Austin Bladow of Hankinson was the winner of a pronghorn hunt in Wyoming, determined by a shoot-out after placing among the top three boys and girls final score.

Top performers in the 3-D challenge:

- 3-D high school boys – 1) Cheyne Meyer, Hankinson; 2) Austin Bladow, Hankinson; 3) and Mason Kamlitz, Oakes.
- 3-D high school girls – 1) Josephine Nelson, North Sargent; 2) Avery Trittin, Lidgerwood; 3) and Ainsley Helgersen, Oakes.
- 3-D middle school boys – 1) Clancy Zimbelman, Oakes; 2) Hunter Genre, New Rockford-Sheyenne; 3) and Tommy Baldwin, Lidgerwood.
- 3-D middle school girls – 1) Mackenzie Motter, Hope-Page; 2) Ariana Onchuck, Hankinson; 3) and Kirstan Loewen, Hankinson.
- 3-D elementary boys – 1) Braysen Sagert, Oakes; 2) Wayland Sabinash, Kensal; 3) and Parker Deering, Oakes.
- 3-D elementary girls – 1) Danica Onchuck, Hankinson; 2) Shayle Zimbelman, Oakes; 3) and Braylyn McKown, Wyndmere.

back cast



By Ron Wilson



CRAIG BIRKLE

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The toughest part of the hike isn't the distance – just a couple miles round-trip – it's the beginning.

A barbed wire fence, and a nearly unmanageable gate, blocks the two-track path but lends a low spot that you can sort of crawl and roll under if you don't mind getting dirty, or a little wet, depending on the day.

The little-used two-track runs the straight-shot divide between private land to the north and public land to the south, marked by the Game and Fish Department's yellow PLOTS signs.

Woody vegetation hugs the shoulders of the path in places and grows randomly in the two-track itself, signaling that passersby do so mostly on foot and not in vehicles.

Hiking without talking, just eyeing the prairie and occasionally watching our step, we've more than once flushed sharp-tailed grouse from skinny cover that seemingly couldn't hide a bird that's only slightly smaller than a hen pheasant.

Sometime back, less than a half-mile from here, we pulled off the blacktop to watch a dozen or so sharptails coo, strut and spar on a prairie flat spot that has likely hosted this springtime communal display for years.

While we hike with intention, to eventually cast colorful lures to northern pike in the first-to-warm shallow bays of a decent-sized lake, we know we'll always have the birds.

This distraction of long-legged shorebirds, skittish ducks, dog-sized pelicans and the conventional disturbance of red-winged blackbirds is typically the only thing certain about these day trips.

Or so we thought.

Someone once said that timing is everything. It's unlikely they were referring to the seasonal coming and going of migrant birds, or hitting the pre- or post-spawn northern pike bite dead solid, but it applies.

When we locked the pickup and negotiated the barbed wire fence, we were 10 days, give or take a day or two, earlier than the last three springs.

On the hike in we talked about the squadron of pelicans we flushed the year prior, and the left-behind whitish egg, bigger than a fist, that rested unmolested just off the side of the trail. We talked about the conspicuous avocets, one of the few shorebirds we can readily identify because they are so obvious, that sweep their long bills back and forth in the shallow water in search of food maybe 50 yards from

where we fish. We talked about the speculation of winterkill and how many pike we'd spot in the skinny water near shore.

Just two, it turned out.

Winter was tough on fish in a number of North Dakota fisheries, and the lake that feeds the backwater we frequently fish appeared to be one of them.

While low oxygen under ice in late winter likely accounts for the lack of pike, it doesn't figure in to the absence of those migrant birds that often provide such good company in spring.

That is simply bad timing, something you'll rub up against now and again if you spend enough time outdoors.

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota *OUTDOORS*.



1983 WILD TURKEY STAMP PRINT

A Look Back

By Ron Wilson

North Dakota's spring wild turkey season ends this month. More than 6,000 licenses were made available to hunters in 20-plus hunting units that blanket the state from Williston to Wahpeton.

When the Missouri Slope Chapter of the Izaak Walton League initiated efforts in the early 1950s to establish a wild turkey population by releasing birds in river bottom habitat, the idea that birds could one day be hunted in those areas was only a guess. The notion that turkeys could someday be hunted statewide was crazy talk.

"While it's quite possible that the turkey will live in the areas stocked by the Missouri Slope Chapter, the Department feels that the amount of suitable habitat in our state is far too small to allow the turkey to increase to the point where an open season would be possible," according to the April 1952 issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.

While the Game and Fish Department did not take an active role in the turkey stocking program at the time, Department officials watched the effort with interest.

"Such an experimental planting can only be undertaken by a large and active organization, such as the Missouri Slope Ikes. Considerable planning has gone into this program, spearheaded by transplanted southerners among the membership, who know and admire the game qualities of the wild turkey in their native states," according to the April 1952 issue of NDO. "Common belief is that the turkey will not find the winter snows and available winter food to their liking. However, the Ikes are not going to let it go at guessing. They are going to find out."

The first North Dakota wild turkey season was held in November 1958.

"The Izaak Walton League, the

group most responsible for the turkey's introduction, recommended that turkey permits be issued by means of a lottery with the cost of the permit set at \$6, the same as for big game," according to "Feathers From the Prairie," a Game and Fish Department publication.

It was reported in "Feathers" that 475 licenses were made available to hunters, but only 376 hunters bought them. It was believed that the high price of the licenses was one of the reasons for many not being sold.

That first season, just 88 turkeys were bagged.

While an experimental spring gobbler season was held in North Dakota in 1976, what many consider the state's "first" spring season was held in 1982 in Slope and Dunn counties.

RON WILSON is editor of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.