

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
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NORTH
Dakota | Game and Fish
Be Legendary.™



MATTERS OF OPINION



Terry Steinwand
Director

For years, I've often ended this column in one way or another with the words "North Dakota's great outdoors."

This is certainly not by accident.

I fully believe that North Dakota is a special place for many reasons, including the opportunities afforded those who enjoy venturing outdoors. Without mistake, the animals that inhabit the state's diverse landscapes and the hunting and fishing opportunities available year-round play a significant role in why many people are proud to call North Dakota home.

"North Dakota's great outdoors" is often on display in this magazine, no matter the month. The Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest winners, published in the January issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, is a good example.

With a record number of entrants in the nearly 30-year-old contest, photographers did a wonderful job of providing slices of "North Dakota's great outdoors" with images of animals commonly seen – ring-necked pheasant, coyote, whitetail fawn and a red fox pup – to a secretive bird, the Virginia rail, that seldom shows itself to passersby.

The overall winner of the contest was a photograph of three bighorn sheep near Fairfield, north of Interstate 94 in western North Dakota.

Publication of this bighorn sheep photograph was timely because in this issue of NDO, Game and Fish

Department wildlife managers discuss options in removing about 20 bighorns south of I-94.

Readers will learn the bighorn sheep population south of I-94 has long dealt with disease and to rebuild a healthy population in that area, all the infected animals must be harvested first.

While the state's bighorn sheep population in western North Dakota provides limited hunting opportunities for those lucky enough to draw a once-in-a-lifetime license, simply knowing that these magnificent, surefooted animals exist in the rugged badlands is important to many people. They are certainly a significant component of "North Dakota's great outdoors."

Also, in this issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, readers will find the results of the deer, turkey and pronghorn lottery from 2019.

Knowing how seriously many people who live in North Dakota take their deer hunting, I suspect the lottery results will be read with great interest. Of note, the number of deer gun licenses made available to hunters in 2019 was up for the fourth year running, which is a trend we hope to see continue.

While it's likely premature to start thinking about the transition from winter to spring, I encourage you to get outside and experience what North Dakota's great outdoors has to offer this time of year.

Terry Steinwand

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NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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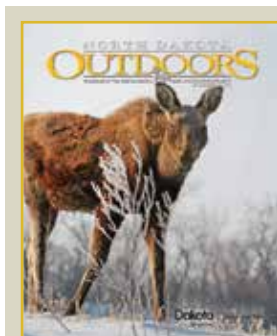
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Front Cover

Moose calf photographed on a frosty morning in central North Dakota's McLean County. Once considered a novelty outside of the state's northern forested region, these days it's not unusual to see moose just about anywhere in the state. *Photo by Craig Bihrlé.*



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DRAWING A DEER LICENSE IN 2019

By Ron Wilson

Any antlered deer licenses increased by 3,150 in 2019 compared to 2018.



ASHLEY SALWEY

All hunters who applied for a deer gun license in 2019 did so electronically for the second year in a row.

The way the results of the deer drawing – plus drawings for pronghorn and spring and fall turkey – were presented to readers of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* was new last year and that same format will, for the second year running, be used again.

The tables provided show the first-choice results in the first lottery. Using deer hunting unit 2B for any antlered deer as an example, the numbers read like this: 977 hunters with zero bonus points applied for

an any antlered deer license and 20 were successful in drawing a license (20/977); 755 hunters with one bonus point applied and 30 were successful (30/755); 688 hunters with two bonus points applied and 49 were successful (49/688); and on it goes.

In short, the tables show the results for those hunters with the same number of bonus points applying for a particular license in a particular hunting unit.

It's important to note that the deer lottery results do not include the 1% of licenses state law requires the Game and Fish Department to make

available for nonresident applicants every year.

Those nonresidents who do apply for a deer gun license in North Dakota compete only against other nonresident hunters for that 1%.

Also of note, the results in the 2019 deer gun lottery show only those hunters who were actually in the drawing, not those hunters who bought bonus points and had no intention of hunting deer last fall.

RON WILSON is editor of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.



2019 Deer Lottery NOTES

For the fourth year in a row, the number of deer gun licenses made available to hunters increased in 2019.

Here's a quick look:

- 2016 – 49,000 deer gun licenses.
- 2017 – 54,500 deer gun licenses.
- 2018 – 55,150 deer gun licenses.
- 2019 – 65,500 deer gun licenses.

Drawing a buck license in 2019 was, like most years, not easy. Randy Meissner, Game and Fish Department licensing manager, said after 11,981 resident gratis licenses and 655 nonresident licenses were subtracted from the overall license allocation, just 27,130 buck licenses were available for the 66,150 hunters who applied for them as their first choice in the lottery.

For the sixth year in a row, following hard winters that significantly impacted the state's population, Game and Fish made available 1,335 pronghorn licenses in 2019, or 255 more than 2018.

Twelve pronghorn hunting units were open in 2019, two more than 2018.

2019 DEER LICENSE LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
1	Any Antlered Deer	48/315	101/240	85/143	53/74	41/42	4/4	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	819
1	Any Antlerless Deer	122/124	19/20	5/7	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	153
2A	Any Antlered Deer	38/311	66/253	69/186	51/102	72/74	10/11	3/3	2/2	0/0	1/1	0/0	943
2A	Any Antlerless Deer	163/166	23/26	7/8	4/5	3/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	209
2B	Any Antlered Deer	20/977	30/755	49/688	58/547	301/480	146/179	27/35	2/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	3,664
2B	Any Antlerless Deer	201/430	219/276	82/104	28/41	22/27	2/3	2/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	884
2C	Any Antlered Deer	9/511	9/414	15/405	10/227	89/271	131/246	77/98	12/18	0/1	0/0	0/0	2,191
2C	Any Antlerless Deer	4/123	6/75	8/61	5/28	20/34	5/10	2/5	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	337
2D	Any Antlered Deer	12/351	47/287	54/222	36/99	126/132	42/43	3/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,138
2D	Any Antlerless Deer	97/103	5/6	1/3	3/3	3/3	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	119
2E	Any Antlered Deer	1/434	7/363	7/256	6/151	78/156	83/116	64/83	15/18	5/5	1/2	0/0	1,584
2E	Any Antlerless Deer	29/67	62/78	37/45	19/23	14/15	8/8	0/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	238
2F1	Any Antlered Deer	317/894	365/522	149/173	25/26	6/6	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,623
2F1	Any Antlerless Deer	271/273	28/28	5/5	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	308
2F2	Any Antlered Deer	90/671	166/564	186/410	119/212	85/87	7/8	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/1	1,955
2F2	Any Antlerless Deer	346/359	47/51	26/27	12/14	5/5	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	456
2G	Any Antlered Deer	173/413	223/281	75/85	10/10	11/11	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	801
2G	Any Antlerless Deer	64/65	61/63	16/16	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	145
2G1	Any Antlered Deer	59/776	120/651	131/462	124/319	193/199	10/12	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2,421
2G1	Any Antlerless Deer	456/476	84/88	26/34	9/9	5/6	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	614
2G2	Any Antlered Deer	188/776	301/571	200/269	76/96	33/33	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,746
2G2	Any Antlerless Deer	376/380	42/45	8/8	6/7	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	443
2H	Any Antlered Deer	348/788	410/492	169/179	29/34	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	1,498
2H	Any Antlerless Deer	112/112	15/15	6/7	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	136
2I	Any Antlered Deer	177/989	349/784	272/434	125/168	55/56	5/5	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2,438
2I	Any Antlerless Deer	279/286	40/41	12/14	2/2	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	344
2J1	Any Antlered Deer	170/677	321/511	193/233	66/77	19/19	1/1	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,519
2J1	Any Antlerless Deer	179/180	23/23	5/5	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	209
2J2	Any Antlered Deer	209/918	385/706	205/262	49/59	9/9	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,956
2J2	Any Antlerless Deer	258/263	31/31	6/7	2/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	304
2K1	Any Antlered Deer	72/629	164/475	123/282	105/193	106/111	7/8	1/1	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0	1,700
2K1	Any Antlerless Deer	214/221	27/28	9/10	6/6	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	266
2K2	Any Antlered Deer	118/1,071	250/917	268/628	153/272	97/98	6/8	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2,995
2K2	Any Antlerless Deer	328/338	55/60	11/12	6/6	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	419
2L	Any Antlered Deer	114/241	122/149	70/76	13/14	7/7	2/2	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	490
2L	Any Antlerless Deer	84/84	8/8	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	92
3A1	Any Antlered Deer	330/1,204	486/762	362/469	199/224	104/106	4/4	2/2	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	2,773
3A1	Any Antlerless Deer	149/150	14/14	6/6	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	171
3A2	Any Antlered Deer	237/805	342/527	190/224	66/71	12/13	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,640
3A2	Any Antlerless Deer	269/274	36/37	10/10	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	321
3A3	Any Antlered Deer	119/859	210/644	184/387	135/222	147/151	7/7	2/3	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	2,274
3A3	Any Antlerless Deer	347/355	36/37	13/13	7/8	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	417
3A4	Any Antlered Deer	80/933	187/739	180/437	130/255	157/164	3/6	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2,536
3A4	Any Antlerless Deer	420/440	51/61	14/16	8/9	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	529
3B1	Antlered Mule Deer	97/396	135/247	131/187	79/87	35/36	7/7	1/2	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	963
3B1	Antlered Whitetail	46/359	89/256	82/184	87/135	89/92	9/11	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,038
3B1	Antlerless Mule Deer	24/28	4/4	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	34
3B1	Antlerless Whitetail	33/33	6/6	2/2	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	42
3B2	Antlered Mule Deer	114/139	76/76	36/36	9/9	3/3	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	265
3B2	Antlered Whitetail	79/170	97/112	48/51	11/12	5/5	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	350
3B2	Antlerless Mule Deer	27/29	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	31
3B2	Antlerless Whitetail	54/55	5/5	0/0	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	62
3B3	Antlered Whitetail	555/687	184/187	16/17	3/3	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	895
3B3	Antlerless Whitetail	150/152	8/8	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	163
3B3	Any Antlered Deer	68/274	69/129	42/68	17/21	11/12	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	506

2019 DEER LICENSE LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
3B3	Any Antlerless Deer	122/123	10/12	2/3	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	139
3C	Antlered Whitetail	481/725	332/350	81/84	18/18	3/3	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1181
3C	Antlerless Whitetail	150/154	16/16	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	174
3C	Any Antlered Deer	22/224	41/188	29/101	32/81	36/40	3/3	3/3	0/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	642
3C	Any Antlerless Deer	115/121	24/26	8/9	2/2	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	159
3D1	Antlered Whitetail	160/161	16/16	3/3	1/1	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	183
3D1	Antlerless Whitetail	8/8	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	8
3D1	Any Antlered Deer	73/326	126/213	82/94	25/29	10/10	2/2	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	675
3D1	Any Antlerless Deer	55/55	2/2	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	59
3D2	Antlered Whitetail	138/202	53/56	11/11	4/4	1/1	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	275
3D2	Antlerless Whitetail	23/23	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	25
3D2	Any Antlered Deer	82/393	120/254	87/128	38/47	19/20	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	843
3D2	Any Antlerless Deer	108/113	13/14	5/5	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	134
3E1	Antlered Whitetail	342/365	87/88	10/10	3/3	2/2	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	470
3E1	Antlerless Whitetail	12/12	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	13
3E1	Any Antlered Deer	111/465	157/284	90/138	33/37	11/11	1/1	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	937
3E1	Any Antlerless Deer	72/77	9/9	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	89
3E2	Antlered Whitetail	322/330	32/33	4/4	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	369
3E2	Antlerless Whitetail	22/22	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	22
3E2	Any Antlered Deer	216/600	263/343	72/79	8/10	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,033
3E2	Any Antlerless Deer	168/174	11/11	1/1	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	188
3F1	Antlered Whitetail	177/177	14/14	3/3	2/2	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	197
3F1	Antlerless Whitetail	11/11	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	11
3F1	Any Antlered Deer	127/399	171/226	48/54	10/14	6/6	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	700
3F1	Any Antlerless Deer	71/72	6/6	0/0	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	80
3F2	Antlered Whitetail	296/297	16/17	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	316
3F2	Antlerless Whitetail	6/6	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	8
3F2	Any Antlered Deer	402/751	338/389	118/125	23/23	7/7	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,295
3F2	Any Antlerless Deer	117/118	14/14	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	133
4A	Antlered Mule Deer	6/257	19/223	26/219	25/143	96/117	25/29	2/2	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	991
4A	Antlered Whitetail	55/185	105/164	55/64	13/15	7/7	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	437
4A	Antlerless Mule Deer	12/12	0/0	0/0	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	14
4A	Antlerless Whitetail	19/20	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	23
4B	Antlered Mule Deer	5/742	22/603	34/555	32/470	155/323	117/161	51/58	19/22	5/8	0/0	0/0	2,942
4B	Antlered Whitetail	81/178	68/91	17/18	5/7	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	298
4B	Antlerless Mule Deer	34/37	6/9	0/0	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	48
4B	Antlerless Whitetail	13/15	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	18
4C	Antlered Mule Deer	3/627	7/620	12/578	17/426	141/365	114/216	70/105	32/39	8/10	4/4	0/0	2,990
4C	Antlered Whitetail	139/205	72/74	12/12	3/5	0/0	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	298
4C	Antlerless Mule Deer	52/56	7/8	3/3	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	71
4C	Antlerless Whitetail	7/7	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	7
4D	Antlered Mule Deer	10/554	25/555	46/469	34/374	162/294	92/114	18/28	9/11	0/1	0/0	1/1	2,401
4D	Antlered Whitetail	164/199	35/38	10/12	7/8	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	261
4D	Antlerless Mule Deer	60/66	10/13	5/8	1/1	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	91
4D	Antlerless Whitetail	7/7	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	8
4E	Antlered Mule Deer	38/372	72/306	73/213	51/99	30/33	7/7	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1,032
4E	Antlered Whitetail	150/151	13/15	7/7	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	173
4E	Antlerless Mule Deer	35/36	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	38
4E	Antlerless Whitetail	5/5	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	5
4F	Antlered Mule Deer	57/211	66/110	40/55	11/15	6/6	3/3	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	402
4F	Antlered Whitetail	132/134	10/10	2/2	1/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	148
4F	Antlerless Mule Deer	15/15	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	16
4F	Antlerless Whitetail	22/23	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	25
MUZ	Antlered Whitetail	0/2,205	1/1,899	2/2,015	1/1,591	20/1,146	38/1,077	60/1,023	66/924	108/808	121/661	178/688	14,040
MUZ	Antlerless Whitetail	243/528	235/300	75/80	20/20	7/7	5/5	2/2	5/5	0/0	1/1	1/1	949

2019 SPRING TURKEY LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
02	163/272	49/50	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	322
03	53/53	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	56
04	55/101	37/45	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	150
06	6/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	6
13	353/353	10/10	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	364
17	108/190	79/84	9/9	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	283
19	193/193	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	195
25	510/510	9/9	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	519
27	261/451	188/204	34/36	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	693
30	577/577	10/10	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	588
31	12/12	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	14
37	437/668	195/206	15/15	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	889
40	49/49	11/11	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	60
44	76/76	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	78
45	50/50	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	51
47	37/37	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	37
50	242/338	118/122	6/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	466
51	183/183	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	184
53	23/80	13/26	4/5	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	112
98	251/348	124/127	6/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	481
99	121/121	5/5	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	126

2019 FALL TURKEY LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
02	9/114	10/41	6/15	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	171
03	33/49	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	49
04	95/95	6/6	0/0	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	102
06	6/6	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	7
13	264/264	4/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	268
17	80/160	54/58	5/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	224
19	115/115	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	115
25	194/194	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	195
27	227/272	51/51	9/9	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	333
30	234/234	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	237
31	8/8	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	8
37	238/306	39/39	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	348
40	15/21	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	22
44	50/50	3/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	53
45	56/56	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	57
50	113/167	39/40	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	209
51	101/101	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	102
53	48/63	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	65
98	168/236	18/19	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	255
99	39/52	3/3	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	56

2019 PRONGHORN LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
01A	Any Pronghorn	0/533	2/395	0/327	1/264	2/218	17/209	8/95	15/81	5/26	4/15	2/4	2,167
01D	Any Pronghorn	1/625	0/295	0/224	0/178	8/177	15/170	19/94	15/55	8/26	4/7	2/4	1,855
02A	Any Pronghorn	0/151	3/78	1/70	2/70	14/60	27/55	9/20	9/10	0/0	0/0	0/0	514
02B	Any Pronghorn	0/161	2/116	0/99	2/92	7/78	11/63	8/35	7/22	5/7	2/3	1/2	678
03A	Any Pronghorn	0/37	0/24	0/33	2/23	1/13	3/22	6/18	3/4	2/2	0/0	0/0	176
03B	Any Pronghorn	0/187	0/139	0/180	2/148	15/135	10/113	15/68	10/41	12/24	2/10	1/2	1,047
04A	Any Pronghorn	2/643	6/478	8/445	14/424	63/304	102/258	46/114	22/38	17/21	0/1	2/2	2,728
04A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	18/20	4/4	5/5	4/4	1/1	2/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	36
04C	Any Pronghorn	1/83	0/59	3/44	1/42	11/34	5/32	6/17	2/5	3/3	1/1	0/0	320
05A	Any Pronghorn	0/144	0/91	2/73	1/50	5/46	8/35	6/15	6/12	1/2	0/0	0/0	468
06A	Any Pronghorn	1/251	2/233	3/143	1/120	19/81	16/70	17/45	5/18	3/4	0/2	1/1	968
07A	Any Pronghorn	1/132	0/117	1/68	1/57	7/42	13/35	8/11	1/5	0/1	1/1	0/0	469
10A	Any Pronghorn	1/130	0/45	4/47	0/36	3/15	8/11	7/7	1/1	2/2	0/0	1/1	295

HOW THE LOTTERY WORKS

There are always questions concerning the Game and Fish Department's lottery.

Using deer as the example, though turkey works the same way, this is how it works.

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

You receive additional chances in the

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

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

drawing at least every other year. You do not receive bonus points in years you do not apply.

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

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

2019 LOTTERY STATS

DEER

- 78,582 – Number of people – not including about 12,000 gratis applicants – who applied for deer gun lottery licenses, down from 79,406 in 2018.
- 52.66 – Percent of successful applicants, excluding gratis and nonresidents, for deer gun and muzzleloader licenses.
- 17 – Maximum number of bonus points for any applicant (nonresident mule deer buck applicants).
- 13,129 – Applicants with four or more bonus points.
- 13.96 – Percent of applicants with

four or more bonus points.

- 42.39 – Percent of applicants with four or more bonus points who applied for a muzzleloader buck license.

TURKEY

- 6,032 – Number of spring turkey licenses available to hunters, up from 5,662 in 2018.
- 85.4 – Percent of successful applicants for the spring season.
- 82.9 – Percent of applicants who received their first license choice for the spring season.
- 3,660 – Number of fall turkey

licenses available, down from 3,710 in 2018.

- 84.8 – Percent of successful applicants for the fall season.
- 82 – Percent of applicants who received their first license choice for the fall season.

PRONGHORN

- 12 – Number of hunting units open in a limited pronghorn season.
- 1,335 – Number of licenses available to hunters, up 255 from 2018.
- 12,928 – Number of people who applied for available licenses, up 1,759 from 2018.

REBUILDING

Bighorn Sheep

IN THE SOUTHERN BADLANDS

By Ron Wilson



A mature bighorn sheep ram in the badlands.

About 20 bighorn sheep in western North Dakota roam the suitably rugged terrain south of Interstate 94, which runs east and west across the lower half of the state.

This small group of animals that inhabit places called Bullion Butte and Cliffs Plateau is what remains of a population that, in its heyday, numbered upwards of maybe 100 bighorns.

While bighorn sheep were reintroduced to the badlands north of I-94 in 1956, it wasn't until the 1960s that these surefooted animals were captured and then released south of the interstate.

The history of bighorn sheep in the southern badlands is a roller coaster tale. Unfortunately, it's been mostly down of late.

Brett Wiedmann, North Dakota Game and Fish Department big game management biologist, Dickinson, said there are a number of obstacles bighorn sheep must navigate during their lifetimes, and disease is one of the most troubling hurdles.

In the late 1990s, four separate bighorn populations were decimated by disease – two were wiped clean from the map – south of I-94.

"In 1997, there was a pneumonia die-off and the population declined to about 20 animals at that time," Wiedmann said.

It was determined the wild animals were infected by *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*. This bacterium that leads to the death of bighorns is common in healthy domestic sheep and goats.

The southern badlands bighorn population eventually rebounded to about 80 animals, before declining again.

"We just kept getting these pulses of pneumonia and very low lamb recruitment," Wiedmann said.

What big game biologists

LARA ANDERSON



Only 20 or so bighorn sheep found south of Interstate 94 in western North Dakota.

LARA ANDERSON

learned over time is that *Mycoplasma* can't survive without the host. Understanding that, introducing healthy animals into a population of pneumonia survivors is futile when trying to rebuild the herd.

To have a healthy, and eventually growing bighorn sheep population south of the interstate, Wiedmann said all of the infected sheep – about 20 animals – must first be removed from the landscape.

At advisory board meetings around the state last fall, Game and Fish Department officials introduced to those in attendance a plan to depopulate the small southern badlands herd before reintroducing healthy animals from out-of-state.

"If you want to get bighorns back on the landscape, you have to depopulate ... you need to get rid of them all," Wiedmann said. "Hypothetically, because *Mycoplasma* can't survive without the host – and because it's not found in the soil, in the feces, or anything like that – you can kill those bighorns and then reintroduce healthy animals within a few days and they'll be fine."

The first step in the depopulating process was opening the bighorn sheep

hunting unit B1 south of the interstate, which had been closed for years. Last fall, hunters shot three tremendous rams, including a new state record, Wiedmann said.

While it's likely that Game and Fish will use hunters who draw once-in-a-lifetime licenses for whatever number of

“Game technicians for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department came up with a mighty big giant step in their development of the state's wildlife resources with the successful release of 12 wild bighorn sheep in the rugged Little Missouri badlands country southwest of Medora,” *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, December 1962.

rams that remain in unit B1, it hasn't been decided what to do about the ewes.

"We want hunters to be the first option in harvesting the ewe population,"

Wiedmann said. "What's important is that we get them all and that's the tricky thing."

Casey Anderson, Department assistant wildlife division chief, said that while Game and Fish could use hunters to harvest the ewes, there are things to consider before issuing licenses. Such as, would the ewe bighorn sheep licenses be considered once-in-a-lifetime or not?

"I've talked to hunters who said they would harvest a ewe, thinking they would never get a ram license because they are so tough to come by," Anderson said. "So, yeah, there are some people who would consider taking a ewe as being a once-in-a-lifetime deal. Of course, there are others who would want to hunt rams and nothing else."

In 2019, a record 15,518 people applied for a bighorn sheep (ram) license in the badlands. The Game and Fish allocated just five licenses last fall, and one of those, authorized under North Dakota Century Code, was auctioned by the Midwest Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation.

Because it's likely that the Game and Fish Department could receive bighorn sheep from out-of-state and release

“

The last bighorn was an old buck that was living at Hells Hole approximately 1907-08. He later moved over to Elk Creek northwest of Medora and was killed by Charlie Will, but I can't remember the exact date. The few mountain sheep still left in the 1880s generally weren't hunted however," *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, December 1973.

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them south of I-94 next winter, a decision needs to be made on how to remove the existing animals.

"If we don't act, we might be putting it off for another year," Anderson said.

Also, Anderson said the threat remains that bighorn sheep south of I-94 may wander away from their accustomed digs and possibly expose the much larger bighorn population north of the interstate to more problems.

While it's true that a bacterial pneumonia outbreak was first detected in the northern badlands in 2014 and remains ongoing, Anderson said biologists aren't certain the strains of pneumonia on either side of the interstate are the same.

"The risk that remains is the strain of pneumonia down south is different than the one up north," Anderson said.

Wiedmann said in his view, because the strain of *Mycoplasma* in the northern population doesn't appear to be as virulent as the strain down south, the priority is to depopulate bighorns in the southern badlands to protect the health of the herd north of I-94.

This proposed depopulation plan isn't new, Wiedmann said, as it's been successfully employed in Colorado, Nevada and other states.

Wiedmann said the bighorn sheep population north of the interstate, which includes approximately 30 animals in the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park, stands at about 330.

"It's a very realistic possibility that we could eventually have 500 bighorn

sheep in the northern badlands where there is a lot more suitable habitat than down south," Wiedmann said. "And, you know, we'd be pretty happy if we ultimately had 75 bighorns south of the interstate."

While the bighorn sheep population in western North Dakota has long provided limited hunting opportunities for more than 30 years, Anderson said Department wildlife managers understand the big picture when it comes to

managing this unique species.

"It's one of those species that people want to see in the wilds, but it's a tall order in places like Montana and Wyoming," Anderson said. "Yet, people have a pretty good chance of seeing one of these animals in the badlands."

RON WILSON is editor of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.



In the late 1990s, four separate bighorn sheep populations were decimated by disease south of Interstate 94 in western North Dakota.

LARA ANDERSON

2019 ENFORCEMENT DIVISION REVIEW



By Robert Timian

“Once a game warden issues a citation, or completes an investigation, it’s the state’s court system that determines innocence or guilt, and if guilty, what the penalty is.”

Over the course of every year, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, and its enforcement division, receive a fair amount of feedback relating to sentences or penalties that result from some hunting and fishing law violations.

A good share of that feedback comes from people who may be somewhat familiar with a case, or they see a news report about a case, and feel the sentence or other result is less than what they expected.

It’s a fairly common misconception that the Game and Fish Department determines the final sentence or penalty, which is why we get the calls, emails and personal discussions out in the field. That’s not true. Once a game warden issues a citation, or completes an investigation, it’s the state’s court system that determines innocence or guilt, and if guilty, what the penalty is, unless (as with a few laws) there is a mandatory sentence established by state law.

Violations have sentences in state law based on the category under which the violation falls, but the eventual sentence to those who plead guilty, or are found guilty, of criminal violations is seldom the maximum allowed by law.

Most Game and Fish investigations are settled via plea agreement before they even get to a trial.

There are several factors that play into the results of a case, as each must be decided on its own merits. Cases generally fall into one of three categories.

First, and most common, are cases where the state’s attorney, within his or her authority to decide how a case is to be prosecuted, or not, makes a motion to the court, with agreement of the defendant (generally referred to as a plea agreement), that a lesser sentence or dismissal is appropriate, and the court concurs.

The ability of the court to determine a sentence within the law is an important and necessary function, as each case has its own set of facts, evidence and circumstances, even when the charge may be the same as another case.

Second, and uncommon, are cases where human error on the side of the state is involved. While game wardens, as do all working within the state court system, strive to adhere to the rules of criminal procedure, based on the constitution, mistakes that benefit defendants occasionally influence cases. The general response to this for

game wardens is continued training to ensure that they are up to date on the latest law changes and court rulings.

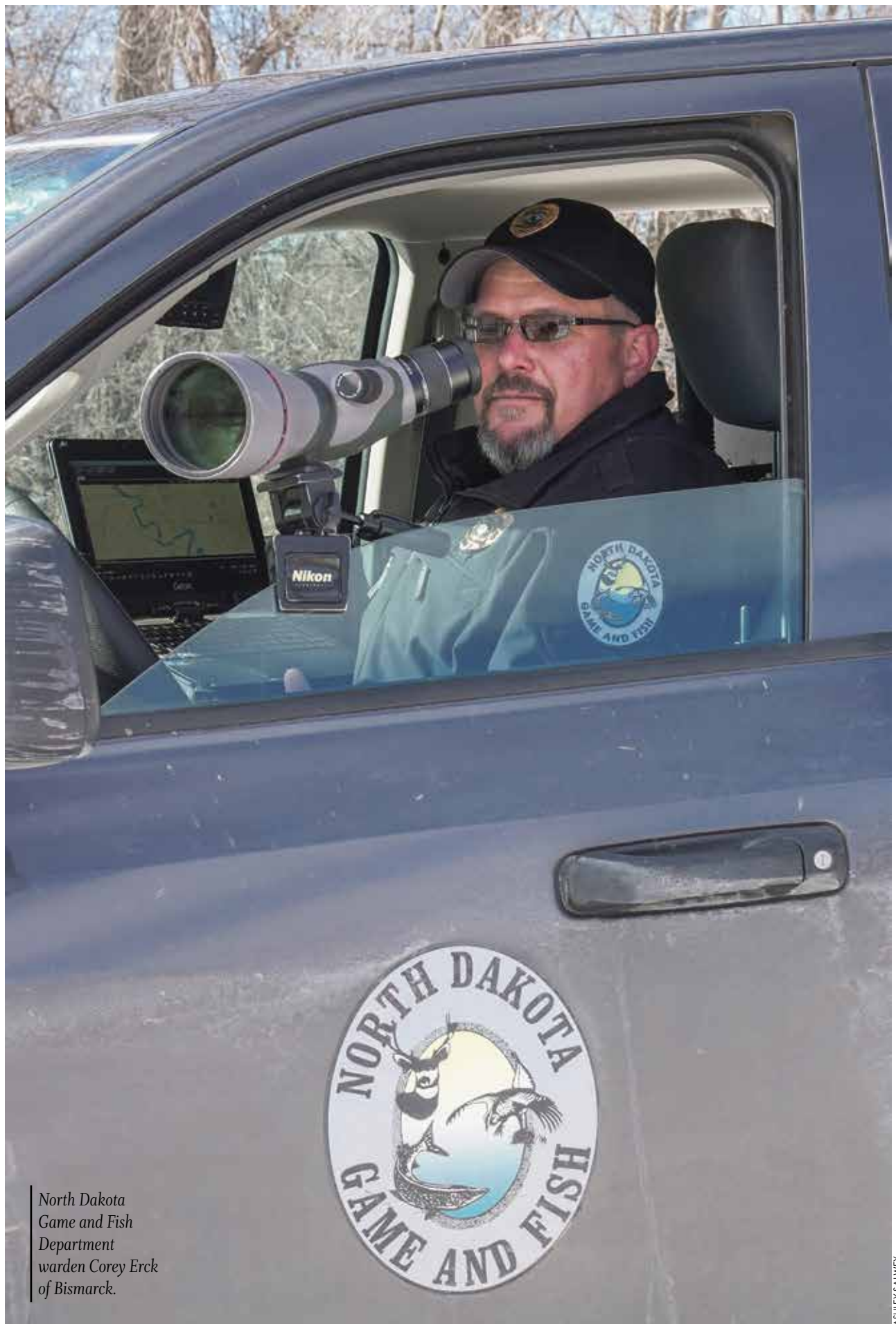
A third scenario is when plea agreements are reached, or cases are dismissed, not based on evidence, facts, or the warden’s investigation, but simply because of time. The state’s attorney is forced to prioritize because he or she does not have time to prosecute all the cases that are pending.

While this third scenario is not something new, it does seem to be a growing issue, based on reports and comments from game wardens.

I’m not sure what the solution to the time/resources dilemma might be, but I do know that even though the system may be overloaded at times, those who work within it will continue to do their jobs to serve the citizens of North Dakota.

Personally, I wish to express thanks and appreciation to the Game and Fish Department wardens who provide an important service to the state. And last, but certainly not least, I am most grateful to the people of this great state, who have given, and continue to give us, their support.

ROBERT TIMIAN is the Game and Fish Department’s chief warden.



North Dakota
Game and Fish
Department
warden Corey Erck
of Bismarck.

ASHLEY SALWEY

2019 SUMMARY OF VIOLATIONS

BIG GAME	
Exceeding limit	5
Failure to wear fluorescent orange	17
Tagging violations	27
CWD violations	19
Killing wrong species or sex	9
Other big game violations	14
Total Big Game	91

SMALL GAME	
Using gun able to hold more than 3 shells	74
Hunting in closed season	5
Illegal possession/taking	5
Exceeding limit	13
Failure to leave identification or sex of game	33
Killing wrong sex or species	5
Nontoxic shot violation	6
Failure to carry federal waterfowl stamp	19
Wanton waste	17
Hunting in unharvested field	28
Other small game violations	75
Total Small Game	280

BOATING	
Use of unlicensed or unnumbered boat	49
Failure to display boat registration	49
Operating without lights at night	42
Inadequate number of PFDs	206
Water skiing violations	10
Reckless or negligent operation	1
Operating vessel under influence/intoxicated	5
Other boating violations	60
Total Boating	422

FISHING	
Fishing with excessive lines	48
Exceeding limit	158
Fishing in closed/restricted area	2
Failure to attend lines	14
Use of illegal live baitfish	9
ANS violation	153
Paddlefish violations	7
Other fishing violations	84
Total Fishing	475

FURBEARER	
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Untagged snares	4
Shining (using artificial light)	1
Hunting/trapping in a closed season	5
Harassing furbearers with motor vehicle	5
Other furbearer violations	10
Total Furbearer	25

GENERAL	
Use of motor vehicle off established trail	9
Use of motor vehicle in restricted area	37
Hunting on posted land without permission	67
Hunting before/after legal hours	26
Wanton waste	10
Aid in concealment of unlawful game	6
Hunting in wrong unit/closed area	9
Loaded firearm in motor vehicle	54
440 yard violation	6
Littering	37
Other general violations	28
Total General	289

LICENSING	
Failure to sign/affix stamp	7
Hunting/fishing/trapping without proper license	213
Failure to carry license on person	240
Misrepresentation on license or application	24
Other licensing violations	12
Total Licensing	496

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS/REFUGE	
Failure to obey posted regulations	31
Tree stand violations	17
Possession of glass beverage containers	14
Baiting on WMA	3
Prohibited uses of motor vehicles	6
Other WMA/refuge violations	5
Total Wildlife Management Areas/Refuge	76

MISCELLANEOUS	
Possession of controlled substance	28
Possession of drug paraphernalia	25
Open container	23
Minor in possession	40
Criminal trespass	35
Other miscellaneous	9
Total Miscellaneous	160

COMMERCIAL	
Commercial violations	8
Total Commercial	8
Grand Total	2,322

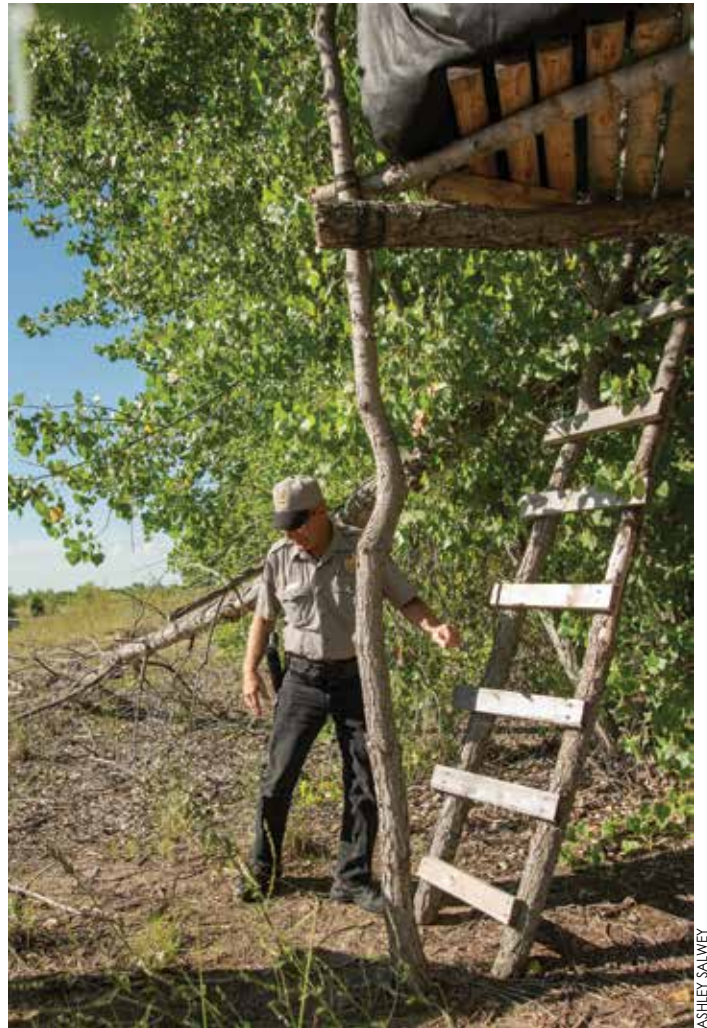
INCIDENTS 2019 – TOP 10 COUNTIES

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

- McKenzie – 243
- Burleigh – 193
- Williams – 191
- Ward – 155
- Cass – 140
- Mountrail – 136
- Ramsey – 134
- Richland – 133
- Stutsman – 124
- McLean – 120

CITATIONS 2019 – TOP 10 COUNTIES

- Ramsey – 227
- Williams – 215
- McKenzie – 188
- Burleigh – 99
- McIntosh – 98
- Mountrail – 75
- Stark – 78
- Stutsman – 69
- Bottineau – 68
- Mercer – 65



ASHLEY SALWEY



ASHLEY SALWEY

Department warden Jeff Violett of Mandan (top) inspects an illegal elevated deer blind built on sovereign land along the Missouri River. Department warden Erik Schmidt of Linton patrols the Missouri River.

STORY BY CRAIG BIHRLE

The species name for the North American “moose” is said to have its roots in Algonquin language, and depending on the source, can mean anything from “stripper of bark” to “twig eater.”

Either of those generally sum up what moose typically eat, as they easily extend their head and neck up to 8 feet off the ground, to reach leaves and tender branches that pretty much no other North American land mammal can get at.

While they may appear a bit clumsy, with their long legs supporting an upper body that can weigh more than half a ton, adult moose exhibit almost a nonchalant agility as they easily munch off branch after

branch on their way to consuming sometimes 50 pounds of food a day.

When the best food available is on the ground, however, that’s a different story. Unlike other wild North Dakota ungulates like deer, elk and pronghorn that simply lower their heads to nibble at grass or other plant material on the ground, it takes a little extra effort for moose to do the same thing.

If whatever is down there seems worth the effort, they’ll gingerly bend one knobby front knee, and then the other, to establish support on the ground so they can lower their head within striking range. When they want to move on, the process is reversed as they slowly push up one

leg and then the other to return to a standing position.

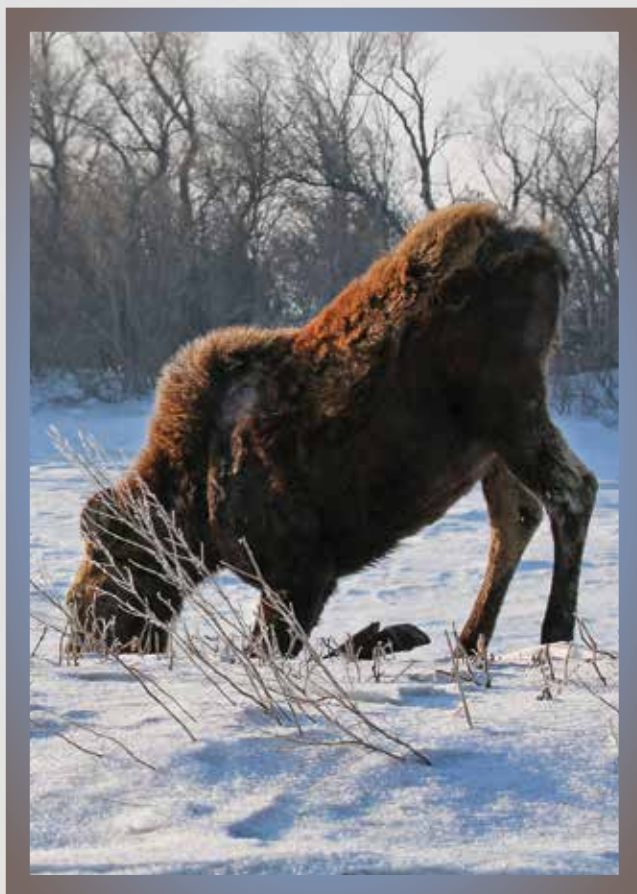
In northern forested areas where moose normally live, they don’t typically have to resort to feeding on their knees, but here in North Dakota where moose are now fairly common in the prairie/agricultural landscape in the northern half of the state, they often eat other things besides leaves and twigs.

In the winter, moose, like those in these photos, are often visible in crop stubble fields, putting in a hard day’s work to keep their bellies full.

CRAIG BIHRLE is the Game and Fish Department’s communications supervisor.



Kneeling



CRAIG BIRLE

Moose

CRAIG BIRLE



The bare patch on the shoulder of the cow moose in the photos to the right and left, and also visible in other photos in this essay, is the start of hair loss due to winter ticks, according to North Dakota Game and Fish Department big game biologist Jason Smith. Typically, Smith says, the damage to the hair is done while the moose is grooming, in an attempt to rid itself of those parasites, and you generally see a pattern of hair loss or damage as the winter progresses.

The amount of hair loss can somewhat depend on the load of ticks that a moose might pick up in the fall and how aggressive the moose is in grooming itself. Hair loss is generally fairly minimal from October to January, but can really pick up from February to April, Smith added.

Eastern states like New Hampshire and Maine have experienced significant moose mortality from winter ticks in some years. Smith says the ticks have not been a significant mortality factor in North Dakota, but Game and Fish does see a handful of cases each year where a moose death could be linked to the ticks.

CRAIG BIRHLE

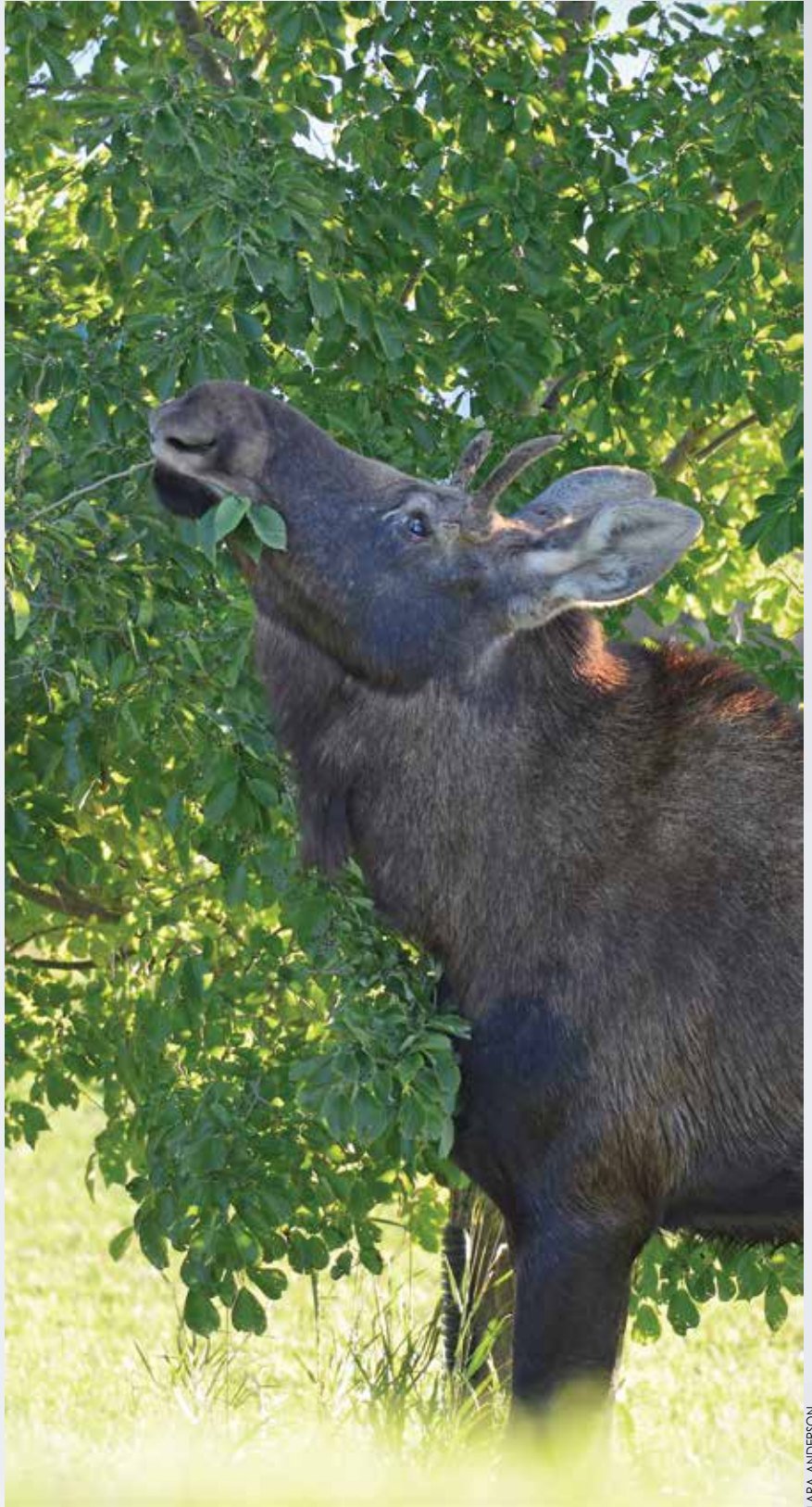


CRAIG BIRHLE





CRAIG BHRLE



LARA ANDERSON

Often measuring 6 feet or more at the shoulder, with a large head and neck on top of that, moose are at ease feeding on leaves and twigs that are out of reach of other North American land mammals.



CRAIG BHRLE



By Greg Freeman, Department News Editor

Deer Test Positive for CWD

Eight deer taken during the 2019 North Dakota deer gun season tested positive for chronic wasting disease, according to Dr. Charlie Bahnson, wildlife veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

All were antlered deer taken from areas previously known to have CWD – six from unit 3F2 and two from 3A1. Bahnson said

six of the eight were mule deer, with two whitetails from unit 3F2. CWD was not detected in any deer harvested in the eastern portion of the state where hunter-harvested surveillance

was conducted last fall. In addition, no elk or moose tested positive.

“Only about 15% of hunters submit heads for testing in units where CWD has been found, so the infection rate is more meaningful than the raw number of positive animals found,” Bahnson said. “Approximately 3% of harvested mule deer were infected with CWD in unit 3F2, and roughly 2% in unit 3A1. Our infection rate in whitetails in 3F2 was about 1%.

“Overall,” he continued, “we could probably live with these

current infection rates long-term, but they suggest an upward trend and we’ve certainly seen an expansion in the known distribution of the disease. We need to continue to try to limit the spread within our herds as best as we can.”

CWD is a fatal disease of deer, moose and elk that can cause long-term population declines if left unchecked.

Bahnson said the eight positive deer put the total at 11 detected since September 1. As previously reported, two mule deer taken in September tested positive for CWD

– one was harvested during the archery season from deer gun unit 4B, and one during the youth season in unit 3A1. CWD was also detected in a white-tailed deer from unit 3F2 that was euthanized in December following a report from the public that it appeared sick and was displaying erratic behavior.

Game and Fish will use its 2019 surveillance data to guide its CWD management strategy moving forward. More information about CWD is available on the Game and Fish Department’s website, gf.nd.gov/cwd.



Chronic wasting disease samples collected at the Game and Fish Department lab in Bismarck in 2019.

ASHLEY SALWEY

Spring Light Goose Conservation Order

North Dakota’s spring light goose conservation order opens February 22 and continues through May 10.

Residents must have a valid current season 2019-20 (valid through March 31) or 2020-21 (required April 1) combination license; or a small game, and general game and habitat license. The 2020-21 license is available for purchase beginning March 15.

Nonresidents need a 2020 spring light goose conservation order license. The cost is \$50 and the license is valid statewide. Nonresidents who hunt in the spring remain eligible to buy a fall season license. The spring license does not count against the 14-day fall waterfowl hunting season regulation.

In addition, nonresident youth under age 16 can purchase a license at the resident fee if their state has youth reciprocity licensing with North Dakota.

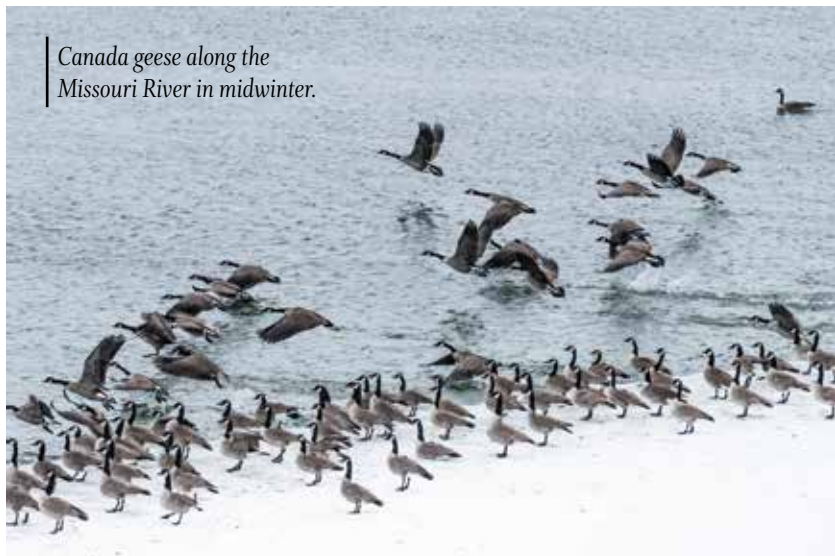
A federal duck stamp is not required for either residents or nonresidents.

Resident and nonresident licenses are available online at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov, by calling 800-406-6409, and at license vendor locations around the state.

Hunters must register annually with the Harvest Information Program prior to hunting in each state. The HIP number can be obtained online, or by calling 888-634-4798. The HIP number obtained for North Dakota’s spring conservation order is also valid for North Dakota’s fall hunting season.

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

Canada geese along the Missouri River in midwinter.



TY STOCKTON

Midwinter Waterfowl Survey

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual mid-winter waterfowl survey in early January indicated about 90,000 Canada geese still in the state.

Andy Dinges, Department migratory game bird biologist, said North Dakota experienced relatively mild weather in fall and early winter, but a few harsh cold fronts in early November and mid-December pushed some birds south for winter.

"Particularly, the cold snap we experienced during the first and second weeks of November moved a lot of birds south of us earlier than normal and we struggled to build up great numbers after this," Dinges said.

During the survey, an estimated 50,000 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River, and another 17,500 were

observed on Lake Sakakawea, which still had substantial open water on the lower portion of the lake. In addition, about 22,500 Canada geese were observed on Nelson Lake in Oliver County.

Dinges said after summarizing the numbers, an additional 4,200 mallards were tallied statewide, most of which were recorded on Nelson Lake.

Lake Sakakawea officially iced-over January 11, just days after the aerial survey was completed.

The 10-year average (2010-19) for the midwinter survey in North Dakota is 100,500 Canada geese and 22,000 mallards.

All states participate in the midwinter survey during the same time frame, to reduce the possibility of counting birds more than once.

Nonresident Any-Deer Bow Licenses

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will have 780 any-deer bow licenses available to nonresidents in 2020.

Applicants can apply beginning March 15 on the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov. The deadline for applying is April 15.

Up to five hunters can apply together as a party. A lottery will be held if more applications are received than licenses available. A total of 1,209 people applied in 2019.

The number of nonresident any-deer bow licenses available is 15 percent of the previous year's mule deer gun license allocation.

Ice Anglers Reminded to Clean Up

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department reminds winter anglers to clean up the ice after fishing. This not only applies to trash, but fish as well.

It is not only unsightly, but it is illegal to leave fish, including minnows used for bait, behind on the ice. According to state fishing regulations, when a fish is caught, anglers must either immediately release the fish back into the water unharmed or reduce them to their daily possession.

It is common practice for some anglers to fillet fish on the ice, which is allowed, as long as fish entrails and other parts are removed from the ice and properly disposed of at home.



In addition, all trash, including aluminum cans, cigarette butts and Styrofoam containers, must be packed out and taken home.

ASHLEY SALWEY



Elk, Moose, Bighorn Sheep Deadline

Elk, moose and bighorn sheep applications must be submitted online before midnight March 25.

To apply online, visit the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov. Paper

applications are not available.

Hunters who have received a license through the lottery in the past are not eligible to apply for that species again.



NASP competitors take aim at the State Fair Center in Minot.

TV STOCKTON

NASP State Tournament Scheduled

The North Dakota National Archery in the Schools Program state tournament is scheduled for March 20-21 at the State Fair Center in Minot. The tournament will feature competition in Bullseye or Olympic style, 3-D and Varsity Archery.

The tournament consists of team and individual competition in elementary, middle school and high school divisions, including awards and prizes, and up to \$20,000 in college scholarships available to

the top 10 boys and girls in each grade division.

Additionally, the top 10 boys and girls qualify for NASP nationals in Louisville, Kentucky. The top prize in the 3-D competition is an all-inclusive pronghorn hunt in Wyoming.

The state tournament and all other local and regional NASP tournaments are open to any student in grades 4-12 who attend a school that offers NASP lessons during the school day.

A complete listing of tournaments in North Dakota is available on the official NASP tournament website at <http://www.nasptournaments.org/>. A certified NASP archery instructor must preregister participants for all NASP tournaments.

For more information, or to find out if your child's school participates in NASP, contact Jeff Long, North Dakota state coordinator, at jrlong@nd.gov, or call 701-328-6322.



The state Game and Fish Department's annual Earth Day awareness campaign is accepting entries for design of a 2020 Earth Day patch. North Dakota students ages 6-18 are eligible to participate. The deadline for submitting entries is March 15.

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

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

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

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



CRAIG BIRRE

Virus the Cause of Eurasian Collared Dove Mortalities

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has received numerous reports of dead and dying Eurasian collared doves in the Bismarck-Mandan area since December. Pigeon paramyxovirus-1 has been confirmed as the cause of death.

PPMV-1 primarily affects Eurasian collared doves and pigeons and is believed to spread by direct contact between birds. Mourning doves are also susceptible, although no deaths have been reported. There is no treatment or vaccine for PPMV-1, but impacts of the disease can be reduced through limiting congregation of birds by removing bird feeders and baths, and by disposing of carcasses.

Game and Fish is working to document the extent of the disease outbreak. Anyone who has observed three or more dead birds in North Dakota over the last two months is asked to email the Game and Fish wildlife health lab at ndgflab@nd.gov. Be sure to include your name, address and number of birds observed.

Watchable Wildlife Checkoff on State Tax Form

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

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

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

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



Ice houses on Lake Audubon in McLean County.

TY STOCKTON

STAFF NOTES

Bierman Hired in Riverdale

Mattea Bierman has been hired as the wildlife technician/administrative assistant in Riverdale. She has a bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife science from Valley City State University.



Mattea Bierman

Permanent Fish House Deadline

State law requires removal of permanent fish houses from North Dakota waters by midnight March 15.

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

Fish houses may be used after March 15 if they are removed from the ice daily. In addition, it is illegal to leave fish houses on any federal refuge land or on any state-owned or managed land after March 15.



Order 2020 OUTDOORS Calendars

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is still taking orders for its *North Dakota OUTDOORS* calendar, the source of all hunting season and application dates for 2020.

The 2020 calendar is available for ordering online at the state Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

Calendars are also available via mail order. Send \$3 for each, plus \$1 postage, to: Calendar, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095.

BACKCAST



By Ron Wilson

We did it pretty much the same way for years. Little changed.

Sometime in early January, following the final gun of the state's upland game season, we'd unenthusiastically sort and store shotgun shells the color of fallen autumn leaves; clean game vest pockets of candy wrappers and the occasional oddity from the trail, like a rock or bone, that was picked up and carried around for whatever reason that mostly escaped us later; and take a final look under and between the seats in the pickup for the whereabouts of say, a lost pocket-knife or dog whistle.

2020 is different.

For the first time in 30 years, North Dakota's tree squirrel season didn't close on a Sunday in early January with ring-necked pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse and other upland birds. The season, and its daily four-squirrel bag limit, was extended to the end of February.

This adjustment, I'm guessing, was lost on most hunters, and those who did register the change sometime in fall, scarcely batted an eye.

I get why most people don't get squirrel hunting, especially in a state with headier outdoor activities in play. But that's one of the reasons, but not the main reason, we are lured so often to woodlots and river bottoms.

We've long marched to odd internal music that most hunters don't hear, and that's Ok. We don't adhere to this unconventional beat to be different or fashionably unruly, but rather because it's so darn appealing for a number of reasons, including the fact that we so very often — if not nearly always — have the woods to ourselves.

According to Game and Fish

Department survey results, roughly 2,000 people hunt squirrels in North Dakota each season. (Note: the last survey was done more than a decade ago, but the numbers have likely not changed much.) By comparison, nearly 60,000 people went pheasant hunting in the state in 2018, which was a down year.

In all the years of tiptoeing through river bottoms and tree plantings, we've bumped into just one other squirrel hunter, in a multi-row shelterbelt in Wells County, who was as surprised to see us as we were to see him.

Like wild turkeys and pheasants, fox squirrels are not native to the places we hunt, where the cottonwood trees are towering and old, and the oak trees drop acorns in abundance some years.

Biologists tell us that fox squirrels were first reported in the state about a century ago, but not in the Bismarck area until about 25 years later.

Hitting one in a good spot, so as not to ruin the meat, from 30 yards with a .22 caliber rifle is challenging. Stripping the animals of their hard-to-remove hide can sometimes be a chore, especially this time of year when harvested squirrels cool and stiffen in a hurry.

A big fox squirrel weighs about 2 pounds, and a daily limit of quartered and cleaned animals is perfect for a stew slow cooked in a cast iron Dutch oven on a winter day.

We'd argue that eating squirrel is not acquired taste. We'd also contend that no matter what others think of our pursuit, we have it figured out.

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

North Dakota Outdoors Magazine
North Dakota Game and Fish Department
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