

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
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NORTH
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R3 and North Dakota's Outdoor Heritage Page 2



Drawing a Deer License in 2020 Page 6



Decades Between Deer Page 12



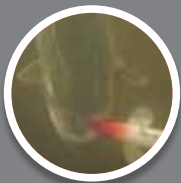
2020 Enforcement Division Review Page 16



Y Bone Remake Page 18



Buffaloberry Patch Page 20



Back Cast Page 25

Matters of Opinion

By Terry Steinwand, Director



While we strive here at the Game and Fish Department to, among other things, manage wildlife and wildlife habitat to provide quality hunting, fishing and other outdoor experiences for all, the safety of those out recreating is also a priority.

This attention to safety, of spending quality time in the field and returning home at the end of the day, is certainly magnified in the Department's hunter education program, which has successfully certified thousands of students of all ages over the years.

As I write this with 10 days remaining in January, historically one of our leanest months here on the Northern Plains, there have been times I had to remind myself, thanks to some unseasonably mild weather, that it is in fact January.

While the mild temperatures and lack of snow so far this winter is welcome to many, safety for the state's ice anglers and dark-house spearkers is of great concern.

Greg Power, Department fisheries chief, said the other day that ice conditions on many North Dakota waters is probably the poorest for mid- to late January on record.

I think he's correct.

Last week's record warmth for two days, coupled with a record day-long wind event, opened some lakes. According to some reports, 15-plus units (ice houses, vehicles, four-wheelers and so on) have reportedly

gone through the ice on a number of waters, which is something we've maybe never heard of for mid-January in North Dakota.

The good news for ice anglers, who certainly can't complain about access to most lakes this winter, is that most lakes are now creating ice.

Even so, we continue to urge ice anglers and others to be extra cautious as pressure ridges are likely more dangerous this winter than in years past.

Because of the lack of snow cover, the ice pack is strong for its given depth, but ice depths certainly aren't what anglers are accustomed to at this time of year.

Of course, how the rest of winter will play out is only a guess, we can argue that while ice conditions have not been the best at times, forcing ice anglers to modify their plans, the mild weather so far has certainly been a plus for the state's wildlife.

In winters when temperatures are certainly colder than what we've experienced thus far, and there is a lot of snow on the landscape, deer, pheasants and other animals are really taxing what little reserves they have.

While spring is simply a thought at this time, I encourage you to get outside and experience what North Dakota's great outdoors has to offer during the winter months. But certainly, given questionable ice conditions at times on many waters, be extra cautious.

Terry Steinwand

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NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

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Front Cover

A unique underwater view of darkhouse spearfishing for northern pike on a lake in western North Dakota. *Photo by Jesse Kolar, Dickinson.*



Game and Fish





CAYLA BENDEL



CAYLA BENDEL

R3 AND NORTH OUTDOOR

By Cayla Bendel

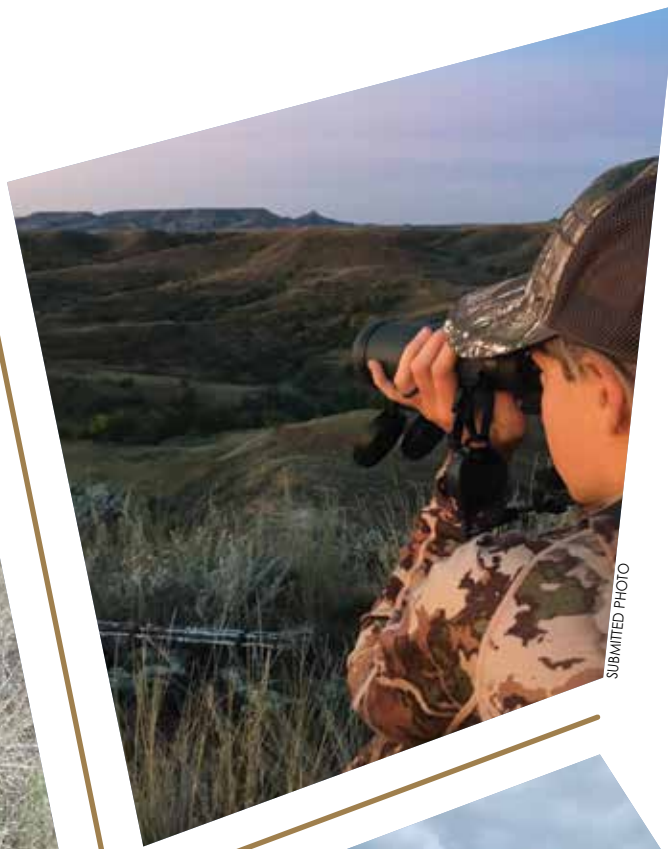
Hey, readers. It's nice to meet you. Since I'm going to be asking a lot of you, I figure it's best we start off with some honesty. I'm a born and raised Minnesota "blue-plater," and from "the cities" at that.

My greatest childhood memories were those spent on Dad's Alumacraft, tucked away in a quiet bay on a lake near Brainerd, Minn., paddling the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and spending nights around the fire with family and friends.

Today, I proudly call North Dakota home. The way the waning sun pierces through blades of grass



BILL HAASE



SUBMITTED PHOTO

TH DAKOTA'S HERITAGE



BRIAN SCHAFER

and lights up the pure bliss in my Pudelpointer's eyes on a golden hour pheasant hunt has stolen my heart. The sound of endless whistling duck wings soaring above as birds head to the fields long before first light fills me with the best kind of anticipation. The rugged badlands testing my physical and mental fitness and providing a seemingly endless wilderness to literally and figuratively get lost in has become my favorite place. And pulling prairie walleyes through an auger hole or from the net on a summer night keeps my frequent cravings for fish tacos secure.



Recruit | Retain | Reactivate



CAYLA BENDEL

As you know, North Dakota is a beautiful and bountiful state, a hidden gem for the mixed-bag outdoor enthusiast, and we are so incredibly fortunate to have the opportunities we do.

But all of this – our strong hunting, fishing and outdoor heritage – is not by accident. Hunting in this country was built upon the principle that wildlife is a public resource owned by all, regulated by law, managed by science, and funded by those who hold the resource dearest – hunters and anglers, me and you.

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 – known as the Pittman-Robertson Act – placed an 11% excise tax on firearms and ammunition and allocated those funds to wildlife habitat restoration, improvements and research. The act was shortly followed by a mirrored effort for fisheries management – the Dingell-Johnson Act.

Around the same time, state wildlife agencies were formed to carry out these tasks, primarily funded through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, including our very own North Dakota Game and Fish Department founded in 1930.

As of 2020, North Dakota has received over \$182 million from the Pittman-Robertson Act alone, and I benefit from those dollars almost every time I head afield. From state-owned or managed wildlife management areas, to public shooting ranges, to our beloved and strong Private Land Open To Sportsmen program, and to fish stocking and boat ramps from the Dingell-Johnson side, these efforts are a direct result of all my occasional embarrassing whiffs on flushing roosters. (Just trying to fund more conservation, is my excuse!)

Joking aside, we should all be proud of the role we play in the model. When a grassland habitat restoration project is complete, it's not just upland game birds that benefit, so do songbirds, pollinators and the adjacent water and soil to name a few.

So, where am I going with all of this? Well if we boil this mini social studies lesson down; hunters, anglers and shooting sport participants primarily fund wildlife conservation in this country. Unfortunately, all those activities are experiencing declines, resulting in a worrisome future for the places and lifestyle we treasure so much.

From 2011-16, we lost 2.2 million hunters nationwide amidst population increases. Now, here in North Dakota, we were actually one of four states that did not experience per capita hunting license decreases during that time. However, in 1991, 29% of hunters were over the age of 45, but by 2016, 55% were over the age of 45.

The bulk of our hunters are getting older and they're not being replaced. That trend, we're not immune to. Almost all of our hunting and fishing license sales reflect declines in people ages 17-44. Thus, we may not be seeing declines yet, but they're coming if we don't change the tides.

A silver lining in a year that desperately needed one, is that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic people began to turn (or return) to the outdoors. Almost every state saw a generous increase in hunting and fishing license sales in 2020.

The trick is retaining those people. Many new hunters and anglers, and women especially, can be quick to get "recruited," but just as quickly drop the activity. Here at the Game and Fish Department, and other wildlife agencies



CAYLA BENDEL

known for my stubborn independence (just ask my husband), I can't do this alone.

It will require many organizations, partnerships and all of you because I know how you feel about this state and our resources. I know you're passionate about the decisions we make here at Game and Fish because they affect your livelihood and your family's most sacred traditions. If just 30% of existing hunters created a new, self-sustained, license-buying hunter, we'd solve the problem. That's why I need all of you to be advocates for hunting, angling and shooting sports and to help us ensure the future of this lifestyle by passing it on. And not just to your kids, but to your kid's friend down the street who maybe looks a little different than you, or to the adult neighbor you give some of your venison sausage to who hasn't hunted in years.

Teach them about our strong North Dakota heritage and what it means to be a hunter or angler. Share with them what it feels like to watch the sun glisten off the blades of grass on a golden hour pheasant hunt (or to walk up to their first deer), because if we don't, who will?

CAYLA BENDEL is the Game and Fish Department's R3 coordinator.

around the country, we will be participating in nationwide efforts to learn what brought these people to the outdoors this year and how we can keep them here.

Last but not least, humor me for a second. Imagine pulling up to your favorite PLOTS section. You got off work a little early and you're hoping to just walk this one piece for the last hour of the day, but there's a pickup parked at the approach. The hunter gets out and opens the tailgate to release a bird dog and ... Well, what did the hunter look like in your head just now? I'm going to take a wild guess and say you were picturing a mid-50s Caucasian male?

Exactly.

Even if we aren't experiencing concerning declines in hunters in North Dakota (YET), we're also not exempt from a big lack in hunter and angler diversity. If we want secured advocacy for the things we care about - wildlife conservation, public land access, soil health, the list goes on - we need people on our side from all walks of life.

We need natural resource issues to transcend political parties, genders, races and ages. Because at the end of the day, what matters is how all of us feel when we watch the sun slowly drop over the horizon, one last gobble echoes through the woods, your bobber starts to sink or the light bounces off the beam of a spike buck you have no intention of shooting tonight. How these moments make us feel is something we can agree on and want to experience forever.

That's why I'm here. I'm joining the growing number of wildlife positions across the country devoted to R3 - recruiting, retaining and reactivating the next generation of hunters, anglers and conservationists. I am the R3 coordinator for North Dakota Game and Fish Department, and while I'm



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cayla Bendel with a jumbo yellow perch from a lake somewhere in central North Dakota. While Bendel is open about her aim for the Department's R3 program, she keeps her fishing spots close to her vest.

DRAWING A DEER LICENSE IN 2020

By Ron Wilson

All hunters who applied for a deer gun license in 2020 did so electronically.

The format used to present the results of the deer drawing – plus drawings for pronghorn and spring and fall turkey – is consistent with the last two years.

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: 1,052 hunters with zero bonus points applied for an any antlered deer license and 21 were successful in drawing a license (21/1,052); 717 hunters with one bonus point applied and 29 were successful (29/717); 586 hunters with two bonus points applied and 47 were successful (586/47); 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 2020 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.





**No matter the year,
drawing a mule deer buck
license in the badlands is
not easy.**

2020 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	81 / 457	104 / 228	73 / 124	49 / 67	17 / 19	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	896
1	Any Antlerless Deer	146 / 150	12 / 14	6 / 6	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	173
2A	Any Antlered Deer	86 / 421	114 / 241	102 / 168	69 / 98	47 / 48	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	978
2A	Any Antlerless Deer	214 / 218	8 / 9	10 / 10	4 / 4	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	244
2B	Any Antlered Deer	21 / 1,052	29 / 717	47 / 586	65 / 535	275 / 416	125 / 153	28 / 34	3 / 8	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	3,503
2B	Any Antlerless Deer	275 / 520	156 / 197	46 / 57	29 / 37	21 / 28	8 / 10	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	849
2C	Any Antlered Deer	13 / 637	23 / 397	30 / 344	49 / 329	123 / 187	144 / 159	102 / 106	19 / 21	6 / 8	1 / 1	0 / 0	2,189
2C	Any Antlerless Deer	107 / 119	73 / 78	46 / 50	37 / 45	12 / 13	15 / 17	4 / 4	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	330
2D	Any Antlered Deer	72 / 415	125 / 273	140 / 203	122 / 151	44 / 46	9 / 10	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,101
2D	Any Antlerless Deer	98 / 100	13 / 14	7 / 7	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	126
2E	Any Antlered Deer	28 / 554	56 / 316	89 / 282	62 / 188	117 / 126	60 / 63	25 / 27	15 / 16	4 / 4	0 / 0	1 / 1	1,577
2E	Any Antlerless Deer	173 / 183	31 / 32	18 / 23	7 / 7	2 / 4	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	251
2F1	Any Antlered Deer	363 / 988	342 / 487	124 / 145	25 / 29	6 / 6	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,657
2F1	Any Antlerless Deer	270 / 274	12 / 12	7 / 7	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	299
2F2	Any Antlered Deer	114 / 853	169 / 485	177 / 365	113 / 192	82 / 85	0 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,983
2F2	Any Antlerless Deer	421 / 436	40 / 48	10 / 11	5 / 5	2 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	503
2G	Any Antlered Deer	253 / 547	179 / 214	58 / 60	8 / 10	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	833
2G	Any Antlerless Deer	123 / 125	10 / 10	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	139
2G1	Any Antlered Deer	72 / 923	120 / 594	149 / 479	118 / 292	161 / 169	5 / 6	1 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,466
2G1	Any Antlerless Deer	534 / 557	48 / 61	19 / 24	8 / 13	4 / 4	3 / 3	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	663
2G2	Any Antlered Deer	263 / 951	288 / 477	170 / 223	54 / 61	20 / 20	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,735
2G2	Any Antlerless Deer	381 / 388	23 / 24	5 / 5	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	419
2H	Any Antlered Deer	485 / 1,027	359 / 417	84 / 87	16 / 16	9 / 9	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,560
2H	Any Antlerless Deer	128 / 130	16 / 16	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	147
2I	Any Antlered Deer	245 / 1,189	323 / 677	270 / 402	103 / 151	32 / 35	2 / 3	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,458
2I	Any Antlerless Deer	313 / 322	21 / 24	8 / 9	4 / 4	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	360
2J1	Any Antlered Deer	253 / 841	288 / 467	153 / 187	35 / 41	18 / 18	5 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,560
2J1	Any Antlerless Deer	212 / 216	17 / 18	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	236
2J2	Any Antlered Deer	246 / 951	344 / 584	201 / 270	53 / 60	11 / 11	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,877
2J2	Any Antlerless Deer	292 / 297	20 / 20	9 / 9	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	328
2K1	Any Antlered Deer	104 / 787	155 / 491	136 / 297	90 / 154	76 / 79	5 / 6	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	1,816
2K1	Any Antlerless Deer	241 / 252	17 / 22	8 / 9	2 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	289
2K2	Any Antlered Deer	126 / 1,143	208 / 770	241 / 575	171 / 323	102 / 108	6 / 6	1 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,927
2K2	Any Antlerless Deer	354 / 367	25 / 31	14 / 15	9 / 9	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	423
2L	Any Antlered Deer	181 / 359	95 / 117	33 / 33	10 / 10	5 / 5	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	526
2L	Any Antlerless Deer	87 / 87	8 / 8	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	97
3A1	Any Antlered Deer	678 / 1,794	558 / 761	255 / 289	122 / 129	29 / 30	8 / 8	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	3,014
3A1	Any Antlerless Deer	164 / 165	15 / 16	6 / 6	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	190
3A2	Any Antlered Deer	316 / 999	350 / 496	128 / 166	34 / 38	6 / 6	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,708
3A2	Any Antlerless Deer	282 / 288	16 / 17	5 / 6	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	312
3A3	Any Antlered Deer	251 / 1,206	284 / 619	254 / 391	122 / 182	73 / 79	5 / 7	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,485
3A3	Any Antlerless Deer	388 / 398	31 / 31	15 / 15	4 / 4	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	450
3A4	Any Antlered Deer	120 / 1,097	177 / 704	193 / 478	129 / 236	111 / 115	4 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,639
3A4	Any Antlerless Deer	454 / 476	56 / 66	17 / 17	6 / 6	5 / 5	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	571
3B1	Antlered Mule Deer	159 / 627	162 / 287	83 / 118	55 / 68	15 / 15	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	2 / 2	0 / 0	1,121
3B1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	73 / 527	120 / 269	93 / 149	54 / 81	55 / 56	2 / 2	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,086
3B1	Antlerless Mule Deer	35 / 37	4 / 4	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	43
3B1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	39 / 40	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	46
3B2	Antlered Mule Deer	180 / 257	43 / 43	8 / 13	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	316
3B2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	145 / 255	66 / 73	17 / 19	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	353
3B2	Antlerless Mule Deer	38 / 38	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	44
3B2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	53 / 53	3 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	57
3B3	Any Antlered Deer	62 / 326	85 / 176	37 / 55	21 / 32	5 / 6	1 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	599
3B3	Any Antlerless Deer	133 / 134	6 / 7	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	143
3B3	Antlered Whitetail Deer	705 / 736	128 / 128	12 / 13	3 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	881
3B3	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	148 / 148	7 / 9	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	159

2020 DEER LICENSE LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
3C	Any Antlered Deer	82 / 373	84 / 182	74 / 117	46 / 64	45 / 45	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	789
3C	Any Antlerless Deer	147 / 150	23 / 25	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	179
3C	Antlered Whitetail Deer	671 / 906	207 / 214	37 / 38	7 / 9	6 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,176
3C	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	150 / 150	8 / 8	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	161
3D1	Any Antlered Deer	106 / 422	130 / 207	55 / 79	14 / 18	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	730
3D1	Any Antlerless Deer	61 / 62	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	65
3D1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	175 / 176	11 / 11	5 / 5	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	194
3D1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	9 / 9	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	9
3D2	Any Antlered Deer	122 / 466	173 / 292	83 / 108	42 / 47	9 / 9	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	924
3D2	Any Antlerless Deer	130 / 132	13 / 14	4 / 4	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	151
3D2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	149 / 193	55 / 57	7 / 7	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	260
3D2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	25 / 25	3 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	29
3E1	Any Antlered Deer	113 / 533	159 / 306	72 / 114	34 / 43	6 / 6	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,004
3E1	Any Antlerless Deer	94 / 100	5 / 5	2 / 3	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	109
3E1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	410 / 416	30 / 30	6 / 6	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	455
3E1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	14 / 14	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	15
3E2	Any Antlered Deer	249 / 682	241 / 327	65 / 73	7 / 7	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,095
3E2	Any Antlerless Deer	215 / 216	14 / 15	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	233
3E2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	326 / 330	29 / 29	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	365
3E2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	21 / 21	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	21
3F1	Any Antlered Deer	143 / 423	154 / 219	46 / 52	8 / 9	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	707
3F1	Any Antlerless Deer	74 / 77	10 / 10	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	87
3F1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	159 / 159	10 / 10	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	173
3F1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	9 / 9	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	9
3F2	Any Antlered Deer	628 / 931	258 / 278	64 / 67	14 / 15	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,293
3F2	Any Antlerless Deer	121 / 122	15 / 15	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	138
3F2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	238 / 238	14 / 14	2 / 2	0 / 0	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	256
3F2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	5
4A	Antlered Mule Deer	8 / 346	17 / 227	21 / 167	40 / 176	85 / 108	17 / 21	6 / 6	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,053
4A	Antlered Whitetail Deer	86 / 265	72 / 103	58 / 63	15 / 16	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	450
4A	Antlerless Mule Deer	11 / 12	5 / 5	2 / 2	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	22
4A	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	28 / 28	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	29
4B	Antlered Mule Deer	10 / 747	24 / 649	24 / 547	40 / 482	207 / 398	113 / 165	42 / 53	13 / 13	1 / 3	3 / 3	0 / 0	3,060
4B	Antlered Whitetail Deer	107 / 178	82 / 84	17 / 19	3 / 3	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	286
4B	Antlerless Mule Deer	56 / 59	4 / 6	2 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	69
4B	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	15 / 15	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	16
4C	Antlered Mule Deer	3 / 632	14 / 553	23 / 527	17 / 499	137 / 369	118 / 214	62 / 90	27 / 31	5 / 8	1 / 1	0 / 0	2,924
4C	Antlered Whitetail Deer	148 / 226	57 / 60	7 / 8	0 / 0	3 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	298
4C	Antlerless Mule Deer	76 / 78	7 / 8	4 / 4	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	92
4C	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	8 / 10	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	11
4D	Antlered Mule Deer	10 / 609	17 / 505	35 / 478	24 / 386	142 / 305	86 / 122	21 / 22	12 / 15	1 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	2,445
4D	Antlered Whitetail Deer	154 / 186	42 / 42	9 / 10	5 / 6	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	245
4D	Antlerless Mule Deer	70 / 71	5 / 6	2 / 3	0 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	82
4D	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	8 / 9	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	11
4E	Antlered Mule Deer	25 / 379	61 / 308	73 / 220	62 / 127	49 / 49	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,086
4E	Antlered Whitetail Deer	137 / 140	12 / 12	7 / 7	1 / 1	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	162
4E	Antlerless Mule Deer	35 / 35	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	36
4E	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	3
4F	Antlered Mule Deer	64 / 169	71 / 115	33 / 39	11 / 11	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	339
4F	Antlered Whitetail Deer	124 / 125	9 / 9	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	137
4F	Antlerless Mule Deer	16 / 17	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	19
4F	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	12 / 12	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	14
MUZ	Antlered Whitetail Deer	0 / 2,530	0 / 1,645	4 / 1,649	1 / 1,745	18 / 1,413	36 / 1,066	50 / 967	87 / 916	83 / 822	112 / 680	235 / 1,016	14,449
MUZ	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	308 / 680	200 / 229	66 / 68	17 / 17	12 / 12	8 / 8	6 / 6	5 / 5	2 / 2	1 / 1	4 / 4	1,032

2020 SPRING TURKEY LOTTERY RESULTS

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.

UNIT	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
02	134 / 367	55 / 76	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	443
03	72 / 72	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	72
04	65 / 138	23 / 33	8 / 8	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	179
06	11 / 11	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	11
13	431 / 431	21 / 21	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	453
17	193 / 321	46 / 55	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	381
19	202 / 202	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	202
25	669 / 669	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	674
27	421 / 728	139 / 149	18 / 19	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	898
30	667 / 691	14 / 14	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	705
31	32 / 32	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	34
37	424 / 837	131 / 156	14 / 14	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,007
40	36 / 95	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	98
44	83 / 83	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	84
45	62 / 62	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	63
47	38 / 42	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	42
50	274 / 478	80 / 90	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	573
51	272 / 272	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	273
53	37 / 122	21 / 37	9 / 10	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	170
98	287 / 593	77 / 83	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	680
99	168 / 168	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	171

2020 FALL TURKEY LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
02	10 / 154	11 / 46	2 / 16	0 / 7	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	223
03	25 / 40	8 / 9	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	49
04	144 / 144	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	148
06	11 / 11	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	13
13	271 / 271	6 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	279
17	108 / 238	33 / 39	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	279
19	130 / 130	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	133
25	285 / 285	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	286
27	252 / 430	33 / 36	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	469
30	329 / 329	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	331
31	14 / 14	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	15
37	237 / 422	35 / 39	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	464
40	15 / 42	2 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	45
44	68 / 86	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	90
45	53 / 53	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	53
47	20 / 20	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	22
50	112 / 260	35 / 45	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	307
51	143 / 143	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	144
53	43 / 106	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	112
98	137 / 281	34 / 40	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	321
99	43 / 102	9 / 10	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	112

2020 PRONGHORN LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
01A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 488	1 / 436	0 / 328	0 / 300	7 / 241	10 / 189	11 / 175	15 / 85	7 / 51	7 / 19	5 / 12	2,324
01A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	6 / 27	2 / 6	3 / 4	2 / 2	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	41
01D	Any Pronghorn	0 / 541	1 / 385	4 / 227	3 / 188	8 / 154	20 / 155	30 / 147	25 / 66	12 / 33	10 / 20	2 / 3	1,919
02A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 168	0 / 130	3 / 79	3 / 72	18 / 73	19 / 52	13 / 22	6 / 14	1 / 3	3 / 3	0 / 2	618
02A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	10 / 10	1 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	13
02B	Any Pronghorn	0 / 164	1 / 160	0 / 106	1 / 99	11 / 79	15 / 70	14 / 55	8 / 25	6 / 10	0 / 1	1 / 2	771
03A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 49	1 / 34	0 / 29	2 / 44	2 / 24	5 / 15	4 / 15	6 / 10	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	223
03B	Any Pronghorn	0 / 209	1 / 154	0 / 103	0 / 143	2 / 124	7 / 118	10 / 85	5 / 38	12 / 27	4 / 9	7 / 12	1,022
04A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 686	2 / 560	2 / 401	14 / 394	70 / 338	62 / 211	80 / 144	43 / 60	10 / 18	3 / 4	0 / 1	2,817
04A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	58 / 58	8 / 9	4 / 4	6 / 7	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	80
04C	Any Pronghorn	0 / 88	0 / 73	2 / 44	1 / 30	3 / 36	7 / 24	10 / 27	6 / 10	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	333
05A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 124	1 / 109	4 / 77	1 / 59	7 / 44	12 / 38	11 / 27	8 / 17	6 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	503
05A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	6
06A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 298	1 / 189	1 / 165	2 / 113	17 / 98	19 / 47	14 / 44	7 / 18	5 / 11	0 / 1	1 / 1	985
06A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	0 / 9	0 / 1	0 / 2	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	13
07A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 133	0 / 99	1 / 87	0 / 49	9 / 50	14 / 29	11 / 17	4 / 5	3 / 3	0 / 1	0 / 0	473
07A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	8 / 8	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	10
08A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 166	0 / 59	0 / 52	0 / 36	1 / 31	1 / 19	0 / 17	0 / 6	0 / 3	0 / 3	0 / 0	392
10A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 176	0 / 89	0 / 36	0 / 44	5 / 32	4 / 16	5 / 13	0 / 1	1 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	410
11A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 255	1 / 132	1 / 96	1 / 71	2 / 60	5 / 44	18 / 35	9 / 14	3 / 10	0 / 0	2 / 2	719
11A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	3 / 5	0 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	8
13A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 455	3 / 202	0 / 99	2 / 69	11 / 44	9 / 40	11 / 34	5 / 11	5 / 7	1 / 1	1 / 1	963

2020 Lottery Stats

Deer

- 79,999 – Number of people – not including 12,130 gratis applicants – who applied for deer gun lottery licenses, up from 78,582 in 2019.
- 53.11 – Percent of successful applicants, excluding gratis and nonresidents, for deer gun and muzzleloader licenses.
- 18 – Maximum number of bonus points for any applicant (nonresident mule deer buck applicants).
- 12,446 – Applicants with four or more bonus points.
- 13 – Percent of applicants with four or more bonus points.
- 44.66 – Percent of applicants with four or more bonus points who applied for a muzzleloader buck license.

Turkey

- 6,237 – Number of spring turkey licenses available to hunters, up from 5,662 in 2019.
- 76.2 – Percent of successful applicants for the spring season.
- 73 – Percent of applicants who received their first license choice for the spring season.
- 3,785 – Number of fall turkey licenses available, up from 3,660 in 2019.
- 73.8 – Percent of successful applicants for the fall season.
- 68.8 – Percent of applicants who received their first license choice for the fall season.

Pronghorn

- 15 – Number of hunting units open in a limited pronghorn season.
- 1,795 – Number of licenses available to hunters, up 460 from 2019.
- 15,319 – Number of people who applied for available licenses, up 2,391 from 2019.

2020 Lottery Notes

For the fifth year in a row, the number of deer gun licenses made available to hunters increased in 2020.

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.
- 2020 – 69,050 deer gun licenses.

Drawing a buck license in 2020 was, like most years, not easy. Randy Meissner, Game and Fish Department licensing manager, said after 11,845 resident gratis licenses and 690 nonresident licenses were subtracted from the overall license allocation, just 28,598 buck licenses were available for the 67,665 hunters who applied for them as their first choice in the lottery.

For the seventh year in a row, following hard winters that significantly impacted the state's population, Game and Fish made available 1,795 pronghorn licenses in 2020, or 460 more than 2019.

Fifteen pronghorn hunting units were open in 2020, three more than 2019.

DECADES

BETWEEN

DEER

By Ron Wilson



FIRST, THE FINALE. THE BIG BANG.

RANDY MEISSNER PULLED THE TRIGGER JUST ONCE DURING NORTH DAKOTA'S 2020 DEER GUN SEASON, HARVESTING AN ANIMAL - A MULE DEER DOE - THAT HE HADN'T HUNTED SINCE THE EARLY 1980S.



BRIAN SCHAFFER



BRIAN SCHAFFER

RANDY MEISSNER (LEFT) WITH THE MULE DEER DOE HE SHOT DURING THE 2020 DEER GUN SEASON. AFTER YEARS OF NOT HUNTING, MEISSNER (TOP) PRACTICES SHOOTING AT 100 YARDS PRIOR TO THE OPENER AT A FRIEND'S RANGE.

That's a long time, 36 years, between dressing in fluorescent orange and centering the crosshairs on a deer. This lengthy pause between now and then wasn't a planned retreat from something he didn't enjoy as a teenager. It wasn't anything like that.

Let's just say that life got in the way.

"About that time, my parents got a divorce and my dad eventually got a job out of state. He was the one who

was always taking us hunting and fishing with him, so when he moved, those hunting trips got to be few and far between," Meissner, 52, said. "I graduated high school, went off to college and then other priorities just came into play."

Marriage. Children. Career.

Despite his hiatus from deer hunting, Meissner has been connected to the activity, in a backseat-sort-of-way, during his 26 years as an employee at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, nearly the last 10 of those as licensing

manager. He's watched an untold number of deer licenses go out the door over the years to those lucky enough to draw a license.

"I was hired originally at Game and Fish as a computer specialist, so much of my job was making sure the computers were running. Eventually, I moved to the licensing section and it became my job to sell licenses and make opportunities available for other people to go hunting," he said. "And it just never dawned on me that maybe I should start participating myself."



BRIAN SCHAFER



RON WILSON

THE LAST TIME MEISSNER (TOP LEFT) DRESSED IN FLUORESCENT ORANGE AND CARRIED A RIFLE OVER HIS SHOULDER HE WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL. BRIAN SCHAFER AND MEISSNER (TOP RIGHT) LOOK FOR DEER MOVING IN THE DISTANCE OPENING WEEKEND OF THE 2020 SEASON. SCHAFER'S ROLE (LEFT) IN GETTING MEISSNER INTO THE FIELD AND HELPING HIM SHOOT A DEER WAS CRITICAL IN REINTRODUCING MEISSNER TO AN ACTIVITY HE ONCE SHARED WITH HIS DAD.

Enter Brian Schaffer, Game and Fish Department hunter education coordinator, who works down the hall a short walk from Meissner.

Schaffer is one of those people who enjoys sharing the spoils of his hunting and fishing trips – some venison

sausage here, some walleye fillets there – with those folks who don't hunt or fish much, or at all. Meissner was one of the benefactors of his giving.

Eventually, the two went fishing together a couple of times and Schaffer told Meissner that he should

tag along in fall, get back to deer hunting.

"Before picking up a leftover doe license after the lottery, Randy asked if he could go hunting with me and it just kind of stemmed from there," Schaffer said. "We went to the range a few



BRIAN SCHAFFER

recognized how lucky I was to have so many mentors in my dad and his close friends growing up ... It just kind of hit me one day and when I went home for the holidays and thanked each of them individually for all the time they invested in me," he said. "And each one of them asked that I do the same, to take somebody else out and share my knowledge with them, spend time with them in the field.

"That's when I started teaching hunter education and it's really when I started taking the time

every year to try and introduce a few new people to hunting and making that commitment to them," Schaffer added. "I've learned that it's critical when working with new hunters that you make that commitment to take them for a couple of years to build their confidence and teach them some skills so they can be successful on their own."

More than one season under a mentor's watch sounded good to Meissner.

"Well, I don't think it would be as much fun by myself ... I mean, experiences like this are just a lot better when you can share them with somebody," he said.

It was during their second day in the field, not long after sunrise, when Meissner got a good shot opportunity on a doe and pulled the trigger.

"We spent several minutes watching these deer and since I had an antlerless tag, that was the deer that was in my sights," Meissner said. "It was just one of those perfect opportunities because the deer stood still and made

a really good sight picture."

Schaffer said it was one of the highlights of his fall.

"I think as hunters we go through different stages and seeing fresh eyes take in the sights, sounds and smells that maybe we sometimes take for granted is an incredible experience," he said.

Meissner offers this piece of advice for people reactivating their hunting interest as he did in 2020 or starting new: Keep an open mind and ask a lot of questions.

"Being an older person, you kind of get a little intimidated like you're expected to know all these things because of your age," he said. "And in 36 years, there's a lot of things that I forgot, like the whole process of taking the hide off, quartering the deer ... I hadn't been involved in that process in a long time. It was definitely a lot more work than taking the shot."



Meissner will certainly be better prepared next fall in all aspects of the hunt.

"Well, he could have brought some better snacks ... his snack game was a little weak," joked Schaffer. "But, you know, he did all right."

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS.

times together just to get back to the basics on the fundamentals of shooting a rifle, firearm safety ... a refresher course."

After nearly four decades, Meissner was snugging a rifle stock neat to his shoulder and pulling the trigger with purpose.

"I wanted to make sure I could hit what I was shooting at ... it had been so long since I'd fired any kind of firearm," Meissner said. "We did some target shooting and I did better than I thought I would, which helped with my confidence and I realized, given the right opportunity, it wasn't going to be as difficult as I thought it was going to be."

Maybe the hardest part for Meissner was reaching out to Schaffer, asking for a hand, a mentor who was willing to give up part of his season to reintroduce a onetime deer hunter back into North Dakota's storied hunting fold.

Schaffer knew it was a difficult ask, but he was ready for it.

"When I was in graduate school, I

2020 ENFORCEMENT DIVISION REVIEW



By Scott Winkelman

Another year has come and gone, and what a year it was for all walks of life, including the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's enforcement division. From dealing with daily COVID-19 challenges, increased numbers of hunters and anglers and changes in technology, game wardens continued to do what they always do without pause, providing exceptional service to North Dakotans.

I sincerely appreciate the effort and contributions of the officers and staff. The men and women who choose to sacrifice their weekends, holidays, season openers and family time to safeguard North Dakota's natural resources and ensure the safety of those who recreate outdoors certainly

deserve a huge thank you.

One of the new pieces of technology implemented and finalized in 2020 was a new records management system. This new system was built specifically for the needs of the enforcement division and is providing new and interesting data that will assist in developing and improving enforcement operations.

While we have always been able to report the number of citations issued in a year, that number pales in comparison to the number of people contacted by a game warden where no citation was issued. These license checks, bag inspections, boating safety inspections, public safety calls, wildlife issues, permits, the list goes

on, are as important as the number of citations and are now tracked.

For instance, between September 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, there were 11,937 contacts made by game wardens, and 1,061 citations written. This information shows more accurately the impact game wardens have instead of looking at citation numbers alone.

With this information now readily available, we will continue to develop and implement enforcement strategies and operations for the benefit of North Dakota's wildlife and those who enjoy the outdoors.

SCOTT WINKELMAN is the Game and Fish Department's chief warden.



ASHLEY PETERON

Kylor Johnston (left), 2020 Wildlife Officer of the Year recipient, along with Terry Steinwand, director.

Johnston Named Wildlife Officer of the Year

Kylor Johnston, North Dakota Game and Fish Department district game warden stationed in Hazen, is the state's 2020 Wildlife Officer of the Year. Johnston was honored recently by Shikar-Safari Club International, a private conservation organization that annually recognizes outstanding wildlife officers in each state.

In a nomination letter sent to Shikar-Safari, chief warden Scott Winkelman said Johnston's district contains a variety of wildlife and recreational areas including the state's largest reservoir, Lake Sakakawea.

"Warden Johnston's district includes some of the busiest and best open water fishing in North Dakota, as anglers from across the state and country travel to fish the Garrison Dam Tailrace and Lake Sakakawea," Winkelman said. "Late-season ducks and geese are also highly sought, along with pheasant, grouse and deer. He excels at finding evidence on violations and pushing until the case is complete."

2020 SUMMARY OF VIOLATIONS

BIG GAME	
Illegal taking/possession of big game	72
Failure to wear fluorescent orange	15
Tagging violations	17
CWD violations	9
Killing wrong species or sex	9
Shining big game	11
Other big game violations	37
TOTAL BIG GAME	170

SMALL GAME	
Using gun able to hold more than 3 shells	96
Hunting in closed season	28
Illegal possession/taking	4
Exceeding limit	68
Failure to leave identification or sex of game	33
Killing wrong sex or species	8
Wanton waste	4
Hunting in unharvested field	11
Other small game violations	125
TOTAL SMALL GAME	377

BOATING	
Use of unlicensed or unnumbered boat	138
Failure to display boat registration	108
Operating without lights at night	64
Inadequate number of PFDs	261
Water skiing violations	20
Reckless or negligent operation	5
Operating vessel under influence/intoxicated	10
Other boating violations	53
TOTAL BOATING	659

FISHING	
Exceeding limit	65
Fishing in closed/restricted area	22
Fishing with illegal bait	14
Paddlefish violations	3
ANS violations	84
Other fishing violations	127
TOTAL FISHING	315

FURBEARER	
Use/possession of illegal snares	8
Shining (using artificial light)	4
Harassing furbearers with motor vehicle	6
Other furbearer violations	3
TOTAL FURBEARER	21

GENERAL	
Use of motor vehicle off established trail	47
Hunting on posted land without permission	72
Aid in concealment of unlawful game	8
Loaded firearm in motor vehicle	59

440 yard violation	2
Littering	28
Other general violations	10
TOTAL GENERAL	226

LICENSING	
Hunting/fishing/trapping without proper license	182
Failure to carry license on person	306
Misrepresentation on license or application	12
Other licensing violations	15
TOTAL LICENSING	515

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS/REFUGE	
Failure to obey posted regulations	57
Tree stand violations	4
Possession of glass beverage containers	16
Camping violations	8
Prohibited uses of motor vehicles	8
PLOTS access violations	60
Other WMA/refuge violations	12
TOTAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS/REFUGE	165

MISCELLANEOUS	
Possession of controlled substance	33
Possession of drug paraphernalia	25
Open container	7
Minor in possession	46
Criminal trespass	76
Other miscellaneous	40
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	227

COMMERCIAL	
Commercial violations	12
TOTAL COMMERCIAL	12
GRAND TOTAL	2,668

Incidents 2020 - 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.)

- Ramsey – 200
- McKenzie – 197
- Burleigh – 190
- McLean – 173
- Williams – 168
- Morton – 154
- Richland – 152
- Stark – 133
- Cass – 119
- Bottineau – 113

Citations 2020 - Top 10 Counties

- Ramsey – 320
- Williams – 163
- McKenzie – 128
- Stutsman – 108
- Burleigh – 106
- Benson – 92
- Bottineau – 88
- McLean – 88
- Mercer – 83
- Dickey – 78



Bone Remake

By Ron Wilson

Northern pike are ambush predators that feed about any time of the day, providing quality fishing opportunities for anglers in many waters across North Dakota.

A Game and Fish Department video makes the process of removing the Y bones from northern pike much easier.

"Pike fishing opportunities in North Dakota are less than what they were 10 years ago, but way more than what they were 30 years ago," said Greg Power, North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries chief. "We are still on solid ground today when it comes to fishing for pike. The beauty of these fish is that they are found in waters pretty much statewide."

Yet, while pike are fun to catch and provide quality table fare, especially when caught in the cold waters of winter and spring, they can be intimidating to clean for some due to the Y bones unique to this fish.

About 10 years ago, the Game and Fish Department produced a how-to video on removing Y bones from northern pike. Quickly, it became must-watch TV, so to speak, for anglers wanting to properly prepare pike for the table.

"That was the most watched video we ever put on our YouTube channel," said Mike Anderson, Department video project supervisor. "It got about 175,000 views."

While the old Y bone video was "really good and relevant," Power said, it was time for an update because Game and Fish wanted to show a technique where anglers could clean a pike and leave as one fillet as needed for transportation under new regulations.

The regulation reads: Fish may be filleted for transport, unless size limits apply, under the following conditions. Each individual portion of the meat removed from a fish is considered a fillet (fish cheeks and pectoral girdles (wings) are not considered as fillets and are legal to transport); two fillets are counted as one fish; and the packaging of fish must be done in a manner so that the fillets can be readily separated and counted. If fillets are frozen, they must be packaged so that the fillets are separated and thus can be easily counted without thawing.

"You can clean your fish anyway you want to at home, and away from home, for that matter, just as long as you don't exceed the number of fillets for transport," Power said. "If you are out fishing and cleaning your limit of five pike away from home, this video shows you how to come home with 10 fillets without the Y bones."

Jeff Merchant, Department fisheries technician, Dickinson, narrates and demonstrates the process for removing the Y bones in the updated video.

"Jeff does a great job and makes the entire process look pretty easy," Anderson said.

The new video, which can be found on the Game and Fish Department's website at gf.nd.gov, was released on Jan. 7 and had attracted more than 50,000 views on the Department's social media sites in a little more than two weeks.



An up close look at a pike's Y bone.

ASHLEY PETERSON



RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota *OUTDOORS*.



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH



ASHLEY PETERSON

CWD Test Results

With most chronic wasting disease testing completed, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department reports 18 deer tested positive during the 2020 hunting season.

Fourteen were from hunting unit 3F2, two were from unit 3A1 and one was from unit 4B. A white-tailed deer harvested in unit 3A2 also tested positive and was the first detection in the unit.

CWD is a fatal disease of deer, moose and elk that can cause long-term population declines as infection rates climb.

The estimated infection rates in unit 3F2 were 5.1% in mule deer and 2.2% in whitetail deer. It was less than 2% in other positive units. Approximately 7% of hunters turned in heads for testing in units where the Department was focusing surveillance efforts.

Game and Fish will use its 2020 surveillance data to guide its CWD management strategy moving forward. More information about CWD can be found at gf.nd.gov/cwd.



ASHLEY PETERSON

Spring Light Goose Conservation Order

North Dakota's spring light goose conservation order opens February 20 and continues through May 9.

Residents must have a valid current season 2020-21 (valid through March 31) or 2021-22 (required April 1) combination license; or a small game, and general game and habitat license. The 2021-22 license is available for purchase beginning March 15.

Nonresidents need a 2021 spring light goose conservation order license. The cost is \$50 and 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, or by calling 800-406-6409.

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.



ASHLEY PETERSON

Big Three Lottery

Elk, moose and bighorn sheep applications must be submitted online before midnight March 24.

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.

In 2020, more than 24,000 people applied for the 470 moose licenses; 21,069 applied for the 523 elk licenses; and 16,935 applied for the 5 bighorn sheep licenses.

Legislation on Game and Fish Website

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department continues to track hunting and fishing issues during the 2021 legislative session.

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

A brief description of each bill will be included. To view each bill in its entirety, click on the linked bill number.

Midwinter Waterfowl Survey

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated about 165,000 Canada geese in the state.

Andy Dinges, Department migratory game bird biologist, said an estimated 67,200 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River from MacLean Bottoms WMA south of Bismarck to Garrison Dam. An additional 65,100 Canada geese were observed on the lower portion of Lake Sakakawea, which still had substantial open water during this year's survey. Nelson Lake in Oliver County was also holding 13,600 Canada geese and the remainder were scattered throughout the state in areas with open water.

Dinges said after summarizing the numbers, an additional 34,200 mallards were tallied statewide. Most were observed on Lake Sakakawea and on Nelson Lake.

"We've had an unusually mild winter with little snow accumulation. Availability of food should have been good and overall wintering conditions were excellent," he said.

The first large waves of migrating waterfowl, according to Dinges, occurred during the last two weeks in October.

"After that short cold spell, above average temperatures, with little snow accumulation, allowed birds to remain in the state on the Missouri River System up until the survey date," he said. "In addition, several reservoirs in the state that are typically frozen by late November had small pockets of open water and were still holding some birds."

The 10-year average (2011-20) for the midwinter survey in North Dakota is 107,400 Canada geese and 21,800 mallards.

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



TY STOCKTON



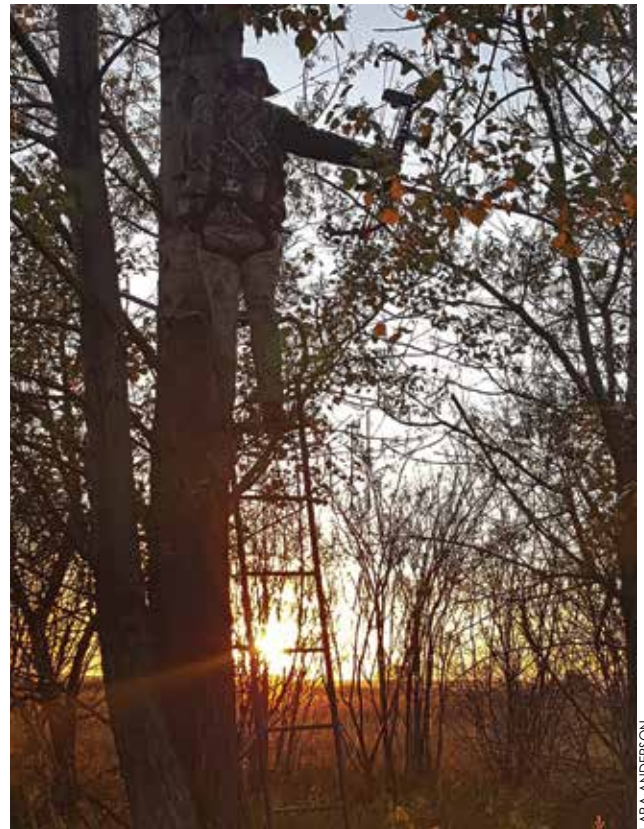
2021 North Dakota OUTDOORS Calendar Available

The 2021 *North Dakota OUTDOORS* calendar is available for ordering online at the state Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

The calendar features outstanding color photographs of North Dakota wildlife and scenery, and includes season opening and application deadline dates, sunrise-sunset times and moon phases.

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.

The calendar is the *North Dakota OUTDOORS* magazine's December issue, so current subscribers should have already received it in the mail.



LARA ANDERSON

Gear on WMAs

Hunters are reminded that tree stands, blinds, steps and other personal items such as cameras, must be removed from all wildlife management areas by Jan. 31.

Items not removed by Jan. 31 are considered abandoned property and are subject to removal and confiscation by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

Nonresident Any-deer Bow Licenses

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will have 780 any-deer bow licenses available to nonresidents in 2021.

Applicants can apply online 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 1,486 people applied in 2020.

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



ASHLEY PETERSON



ASHLEY PETERSON

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.



The state Game and Fish Department's annual Earth Day awareness campaign is accepting entries for design of a 2021 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.

Winter Anglers Need to Clean Up Ice

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 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.



Watchable Wildlife Checkoff

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

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

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

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

2020 Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest
Plants and Insects Runner-up
Horned spanworm larva
SHARON WATSON, BUXTON
Photo taken in rural Buxton

STAFF NOTES



Grant Kapaun

Kapaun Hired as ANS Biologist

Grant Kapaun was hired this winter as the aquatic nuisance species biologist in Jamestown. Kapaun, who has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of North Dakota, spent the last year working with the Game and Fish Department's fisheries development program.



Amber Bowers

Bowers Named Administrative Assistant

Amber Bowers of Mandan was hired as the conservation and communications division administrative assistant in December.

Bowers graduated from Dakota College at Bottineau with a degree in business and marketing.

BACKCAST



By Ron Wilson

Weaving its way north and south on the east side of N.D. Highway 41 in McLean County, Crooked Lake is aptly named.

It's also long, about 5 miles from the north end to the south end, or vice versa, depending on how you look at things.

What's interesting, and likely means nothing, is that Crooked Lake is about twice as long as Long Lake, a neighboring fishery located just a short hike north.

On this day, nearly the middle of January, it's quiet, there's no one around. The summer places are shuttered, blinds are closed, and boat lifts and docks are pulled up on shore.

Yet, even from where we've parked and are unloading gear, there's evidence of recent activity. Abandoned darkhouse spearfishing holes are properly and legally marked for safety reasons with brush and other vegetation that stick out of the ice about waist-high and higher. Scattered here and there, these marked holes look

like the fallout of a bad haircut.

This winter marks 20 years of darkhouse spearfishing in North Dakota. This is not something I know offhand. I had someone more in the know look it up before we left town.

No matter, it doesn't seem like we've been doing this off and on for 20 winters. Then again, there are lot of things that I've been doing for years but feels like I've just gotten started.

I don't know what seems more improbable. Cutting a roughly 3-foot hole in the ice on a 5-mile-long lake in hopes that a northern pike swims by our little window and hangs around long enough to give us a shot. Or the fact that we're spearing in nearly mid-January on the Northern Plains with the temperature in the upper 40s. Gloves are off. Insulated bibs aren't needed. Jalapeno and cheddar brats are sizzling on the gas-fired grill outside the darkhouse for lunch.

Both seem so unlikely.

Watching pike, big or small, slowly glide in, or scream by our illuminated

window as if they were shot from a cannon, never gets old. And today, it's happened just enough to stall our conversations and send the closest fumbling for the homemade spear.

Although darkhouse spearfishing offers some rubbernecking into a world mostly unknown to many of us, there's a finality, a celebrated conclusion when you stick a nice pike that showed too much interest in the red and white fish decoy 5 feet under the ice.

There isn't any catch-and-release. Like shooting a flushed rooster pheasant, it's field to table.

While we're not here today specifically to celebrate darkhouse spearfishing's 20th anniversary in a state that has strong pike populations and ample spearing opportunities if the conditions allow, you'd be hard-pressed to find a nicer winter day to do it.

RON WILSON is editor of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.

North Dakota Outdoors Magazine
North Dakota Game and Fish Department
100 N. Bismarck Expressway
Bismarck, ND 58501

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your address, call 701-328-6300 or
go to gf.nd.gov/buy-apply.

While shed hunting for deer antlers is popular this time of year, wildlife managers urge shed hunters to use some caution where animals gather in winter on Game and Fish Department owned or managed wildlife management areas. Department WMAs are open year-round and people are encouraged to use them. Yet, there are times shed hunters and others must be willing to avoid high use areas where deer and other wildlife gather so as not to further stress animals that are forced to endure North Dakota during its leanest months.

ASHLEY PETERSON

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