

## **NDG&F January 28th Newsletter**

### **Midwinter Waterfowl Survey**

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated 159,000 birds were still hanging around the state.

Mike Szymanski, migratory game bird biologist, said an estimated 123,000 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River, and another 2,100 were scattered on Nelson Lake. Lake Sakakawea, declared frozen over on Dec. 26, had only about 100 geese near the Garrison Dam intake structure. Szymanski said after summarizing the numbers, a total of 127,000 Canada geese and 31,700 mallards were tallied statewide.

"Conditions for this year's survey were much more normal and starkly contrasted last year's extremely mild conditions that resulted in a record count of 279,000 birds," he said. "A strong winter storm that occurred on Veteran's Day weekend pushed most waterfowl from North Dakota. In addition, essentially all water in the state was frozen at the time of this year's survey, with the exception of a few places with fast moving, or warm water."

Overall, Szymanski said the numbers of birds are somewhat surprising given some harsh weather conditions experienced thus far. "However, relatively shallow snow cover has allowed birds to feed without too much trouble," he added. "If heavy snow had fallen in the western part of the state, this year's count would have been much lower."

### **Spring Turkey Apps Available**

The state Game and Fish Department is offering 5,930 wild turkey licenses for the spring hunting season, an increase of 135 from last year. The increase is a result of better production and chick recruitment. Seven of the 22 hunting units have more spring licenses than in 2012, while 12 remain the same. Unit 21 (most of Hettinger and Adams counties) is again closed in 2013 due to lack of turkeys in the unit. Successful spring turkey applicants must purchase a 2013-14 hunting license, as last year's 2012-13 licenses expire March 31. In addition to the spring turkey license, hunters must have a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate, and a general game and habitat license. Also, hunters ages 16 and older must possess a small game license, or combination license.

First-time spring turkey hunters ages 15 or younger are eligible to receive one spring license valid for the regular hunting season in a specific unit. To be eligible, the youth hunter must be 15 or younger on opening day of spring turkey season, and have never received a spring turkey license in North Dakota.

Spring turkey applicants can [apply online](#) at the Game and Fish Department website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

Applications can also be submitted by calling (800) 406-6409.

Application forms will also be available by Feb. 1 at most license vendors, county auditors and Game and

Fish offices. The deadline for applying is Feb. 13. Online or phone applications must be logged before midnight that day.

Spring turkey licenses are available only to North Dakota residents. The spring turkey season opens April 13 and continues through May 19.