

## **NDG&F March 11th Newsletter**

### **Tracking Snow Geese**

North Dakota spring light goose hunters can track general locations of geese as birds make their way through the state.

Hunters are able to call (701) 328-3697 to hear recorded information 24 hours a day. [Migration reports](#) are also posted on the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Updates will be provided periodically during the week as migration events occur, until the season ends or geese have left the state.

North Dakota's spring light goose season continues through May 5. Season information, including licensing requirements and regulations, are also available by accessing the Game and Fish website.

### **Moose, Elk and Bighorn Sheep Seasons Set**

North Dakota's 2013 moose, elk and bighorn sheep proclamation is finalized and applications are available at the State Game and Fish Department's website. The deadline for applying is March 27.

A total of 111 moose licenses are available in 2013, 32 fewer than last year.

Randy Kreil, Game and Fish Department wildlife chief, said a downward population trend in the northeastern portion of the state is of great concern. "Unit M1C will remain closed," Kreil said, "and in addition, unit M4, which encompasses the Turtle Mountains, is also closed this year."

In 2012, unit M4 had only seven moose licenses, Kreil added, with only two moose harvested.

Game and Fish is also making a couple of other changes designed to bolster the moose population. All licenses this year are for "any moose," while in previous years some were specific to antlerless moose. "We think that the 'any' tags will protect the cow segment of the population," Kreil said, "as records indicate most hunters choose to fill their 'any' tags with a bull rather than a cow."

The moose season in units M8, M9 and M10 will open a week later than in previous years to avoid the peak of the rut. Data collected over the last year indicates a number of unbred cows were documented in those units, Kreil said, and opening the season a week later in October may improve breeding success by reducing disturbance during the peak of the mating season.

A total of 261 elk licenses are available to hunters this fall, 40 fewer than last year.

The number of elk licenses in units E3 and E4 is reduced by 40 due to the successful population reduction effort by the National Park Service in Theodore Roosevelt National Park's south unit. A total of

937 elk – 701 adult cows – were taken out of the park by the reduction effort, and an additional 363 elk were taken by licensed hunters in E3 and E4 during the last three hunting seasons. Based on a recent elk survey, the estimated number of elk in the park is below 200, Kreil said.

On the positive side, elk unit E1 has been expanded to include parts of the Turtle Mountains, due to a growing elk population largely attributed to animals migrating in from Canada.

The bighorn sheep season will have four licenses available, the same as last year. One license is available in units B1/B2, B3 and B4. In addition, one license is auctioned through the Midwest Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation. The bighorn sheep hunter drawing the license in units B1/B2 is eligible to hunt both units.

To [apply online](#), access the Game and Fish Department's website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Paper applications will be available on the website (for printing) and at license vendors the week of March 11.

Bighorn sheep, moose and elk lottery licenses are issued as once-in-a-lifetime licenses in North Dakota. Hunters who have received a license through the lottery in the past are not eligible to apply for that species again.

### **Deer Samples Negative for CWD**

Samples taken from North Dakota deer during the 2012 hunting season have all tested negative for chronic wasting disease, according to Dr. Dan Grove, wildlife veterinarian for the State Game and Fish Department.

Last fall, samples for CWD testing were taken from more than 1,300 deer harvested by hunters in the western third of the state.

“As always, the success of our surveillance program could not be accomplished without the cooperative efforts of hunters, meat processors and taxidermists,” Grove said.

Since the Game and Fish Department's sampling efforts began in 2002, more than 23,000 deer, elk and moose have tested negative for CWD. Three mule deer, one each in 2009, 2010 and 2011, taken from unit 3F2 in southwestern North Dakota tested positive. All three were within 15 miles of each other.

The hunter-harvested surveillance program annually collects samples taken from hunter-harvested deer in specific regions of the state. The Game and Fish Department also has a targeted surveillance program that is an ongoing, year-round effort to test animals found dead or sick.

CWD affects the nervous system of members of the deer family and is always fatal. Scientists have found no evidence that CWD can be transmitted naturally to humans or livestock.