

NDG&F May 13th Newsletter

Camping Restrictions on Some WMAs

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will continue to implement camping restrictions established last year on some wildlife management areas in western North Dakota and along Lake Sakakawea.

Effective immediately, overnight camping is prohibited on the following WMAs: Antelope Creek, Lewis and Clark, Big Oxbow, Ochs Point, Neu's Point, Overlook, Sullivan and Tobacco Garden in McKenzie County; Van Hook in Mountrail County; and Hofflund and Trenton in Williams County.

In addition, the following WMAs are closed to camping on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but open to camping Thursday-Monday: North Lemmon Lake in Adams County; Bull Creek in Billings County; Alkali Creek and Spring Creek in Bowman County; Smishek Lake and Short Creek Dam in Burke County; Harris M. Baukol in Divide County; Killdeer Mountains in Dunn County; Camels Hump Lake in Golden Valley County; Indian Creek in Hettinger County; Audubon, Custer Mine, Deepwater Creek, deTrobriand, Douglas Creek and Wolf Creek in McLean County; Beaver Creek and Hille in Mercer County; Storm Creek in Morton County; Cedar Lake and Speck Davis Pond in Slope County; and McGregor Dam in Williams County.

On those WMAs where camping is allowed Thursday through Monday, all equipment must be removed on Tuesday and Wednesdays when camping is not allowed.

The rules ensure these areas are available for hunters and anglers. Camping restrictions at all WMAs are posted at entry points.

Sage Grouse Counts Remain Low

Results from North Dakota's spring sage grouse survey indicate the number of strutting males observed remains well below management objectives. Therefore, the sage grouse hunting season will remain closed in 2013.

Aaron Robinson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department upland game bird biologist, said biologists counted a record low 50 males on 11 active strutting grounds earlier in May. Last year, 72 males were counted on 12 active leks in the southwest.

"The most plausible reason why the population declined so dramatically this year was the severe drought the southwest experienced last summer," Robinson said. "Sage grouse live in very arid dry areas, and in severe drought and heat, chicks are not able to find insects, which account for almost 100 percent of their diet while they are growing. This vital source of protein is necessary for development of young chicks and drought typically reduces the availability of insects."

Due to the abnormal rainfall and dry conditions from last summer, Robinson said the potential for a successful nesting season this year is slim due to limited residual grass cover.

"We have learned from our recent research conducted in North Dakota that sage grouse rely heavily on residual grass cover for concealment during nesting season," he added. "Without grass cover, mortality

of females on nests increases and the probability that the nest will be depredated also increases. The outlook for a favorable hatch this year does not look optimistic.”

Sage grouse management in North Dakota has followed a specific plan developed by a diverse group of participants. The plan outlines hunting harvest objectives for the species, with a recommendation that the hunting season close if the spring census indicates fewer than 100 males in the population. If the spring breeding population increases above 100 males, Game and Fish Department biologists will evaluate if a hunting season is plausible given the threats facing the species in North Dakota. Sage grouse are North Dakota’s largest native upland game bird. They are found in extreme southwestern North Dakota, primarily in Bowman and Slope counties.

Summer BOW Set Aug. 9-11

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department’s Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program is accepting registrations for the annual summer workshop Aug. 9-11 at Lake Metigoshe State Park, Bottineau. Enrollment is limited to participants age 18 or older. Workshop fees of \$135 cover instruction, program materials, use of equipment, all meals and lodging.

Participants can choose from more than 30 programs, including archery, canoeing, introduction to firearms, fly-fishing, kayaking, global positioning system, plant identification, and tracking and trapping. BOW workshops are designed primarily for women with an interest in learning skills associated with hunting, fishing and outdoor endeavors. Although open to anyone age 18 or older, the workshops are tailored primarily to women who have never tried these activities or who are beginners hoping to improve their skills.

Women interested in attending a workshop should print and mail an [information brochure and enrollment form](#) at the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov. More information is available by contacting Nancy Boldt at (701) 328-6312, or email ndgf@nd.gov.

Big Trout Stocked in Six Lakes

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries personnel recently stocked six lakes with 2-to-5 pound trout from Wyoming.

Jerry Weigel, fisheries production and development section leader, said each year Wyoming Game and Fish provides trout as part of a trade for walleye fingerlings. This year, Wyoming provided surplus brood stock.

A total of 800 rainbows with a combined weight of 2,100 pounds were stocked in Camels Hump Lake (Golden Valley County), Dickinson Dike (Stark County), North Woodhaven Pond (Cass County) and Mooreton Pond (Richland County).

In addition, nearly 400 cutthroats weighing 750 pounds were split between Northgate Dam (Burke County) and Kettle Lake (Williams County).

The normal rainbow trout stockings from Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery have been delayed due to the late spring. However, with the ice now coming off most lakes, nearly 50,000 10-inch rainbow trout will be stocked into 50 waters statewide by May 23.

Anglers should refer to the fishing tab at the Game and Fish Department’s website, gf.nd.gov, for a

[complete stocking report.](#)

Danzig Dam Gets Makeover

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Save Our Lakes program is renovating 800 feet of shoreline along Danzig Dam in Morton County.

The SOL project includes lowering the water level to remove 15,000 cubic yards of sediment, which will deepen the shoreline and create better access for shore anglers. Additionally, a water control structure is being installed to enhance opportunities to address ongoing water quality issues.

Completion of the project is expected by June. However, it is anticipated the water level within the reservoir will remain low until next spring.

A fish eradication is planned for later this summer to remove undesirable species.