

NDG&F July 15th Newsletter

North Dakota Sees Record Fishing License Sales

Years of rising water, a record number of fishing lakes and aggressive fish management in North Dakota have helped produce record fishing license sales.

State Game and Fish Department fisheries chief Greg Power said in 2012-13 virtually every license category established a record high, or at the least had a substantial increase. "Even more impressive is this was spread throughout the state, and not just in the rapidly growing counties of western North Dakota," Power said.

Statistics compiled by the Game and Fish Department revealed more than 218,000 fishing licenses were sold last year, 20 percent higher than the previous record set in 1982. A total of 159,500 resident fishing licenses were sold last year, also breaking the record set 30 years ago. In addition, nearly 59,000 nonresident fishing licenses were purchased last year, easily surpassing the previous high set two years ago.

"North Dakota remains near the top in the country in terms of per capita residents who fish," Power said.

In terms of actual individuals participating in fishing, the past year was again record-setting with more than 200,000 active anglers and about 2 million days of fishing. Both open water and ice fishing activity experienced substantial increases. Lake Sakakawea, Devils Lake and Lake Oahe/Missouri River remained the top three fisheries in the state.

Pronghorn Population Increases

North Dakota's pronghorn population is finally growing after five years of steady decline. However, Bruce Stillings, big game supervisor for the State Game and Fish Department, said numbers are still below population objectives and not high enough to warrant a hunting season. Therefore, the Game and Fish Department is recommending the pronghorn hunting season remain closed in 2013.

Recent survey results indicate the statewide population is 5,400 pronghorn, 49 percent higher than last year, but still 62 percent below 2008, the last year a hunting season was held. "We expected to see a population increase due to another year without a hunting season and a mild winter across much of our pronghorn range, which led to high adult and fawn survival," Stillings said.

This year, Stillings mentioned, fawn production was average to below average in all management regions. He said another mild to average winter in 2013 should encourage future population growth, but challenges remain with pronghorn habitat in the west.

"Fragmentation of habitat due to energy development and loss of Conservation Reserve Program acres in the secondary range are challenges facing future pronghorn recovery in the state," Stillings said.

The aerial survey is flown in late June/early July after young-of-the-year are born and visible. Five airplanes covered more than 11,000 square miles of aerial transects within pronghorn habitat.

Biologists will continue to monitor pronghorn numbers in the future, and will reopen the season when the population returns to a level capable of withstanding a harvest.

The 2013 pronghorn season will be closed to both gun and archery hunters. Applicants who have

accumulated preference points will maintain their current points.

Boat North Dakota Course

North Dakota boaters are reminded that children ages 12-15 who want to operate a boat or personal watercraft must take the state's boating basics course.

State law requires youngsters ages 12-15 to pass the course before they operate a boat or personal watercraft with at least a 10 horsepower motor. In addition, major insurance companies give adult boat owners who pass the course a premium discount on boat insurance.

The course is available for home-study from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Bismarck office. Two commercial providers also offer the course online, and links to those sites are found on the department's website at gf.nd.gov.

While the home-study course is free, students will be charged a fee to take it online. The online provider charges for the course, not the Game and Fish Department. The fee stays with the online provider.

Upon completion of the online test, and providing a credit card number, students will be able to print out a temporary certification card, and within 10 days a permanent card will be mailed.

The course covers legal requirements, navigation rules, getting underway, accidents and special topics such as weather, rules of the road, laws, life saving and first aid.

For more information contact Nancy Boldt, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, by email at ndgf@nd.gov; or call (701) 328-6300.

Fur Harvester Classes Scheduled

The North Dakota Cooperative Fur Harvester Education Program is sponsoring a fur harvester education classes in Bismarck, Jamestown and Dickinson for anyone interested in trapping or hunting furbearers.

The free 16-hour course in Bismarck and Jamestown is Aug. 13 (5:30-9:30 p.m.), 15 (5:30-9:30 p.m.) and 17 (8 a.m.-5 p.m.). The course in Dickinson is Sept. 7 and 14 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Students will learn about traps, trapping and snaring techniques, furbearer biology and fur care. A field day allows students to make a variety of land, water and snare sets.

Upon completion, graduates are issued a certification card that is recognized by any state requiring trapper education prior to purchasing a license.

Anyone interested in [signing up for the class](#) should access the Game and Fish Department website at gf.nd.gov, click on the online services link, and "online course enrollment" under the hunter education heading.