

NDG&F August 30th Newsletter

Wardens Conduct Operation on Devils Lake

North Dakota Game and Fish Department game wardens seized 136 walleye during a recent two-day operation targeting over-limits of fish on Devils Lake.

Chief game warden Robert Timian said the main emphasis of the Aug. 23-24 operation was to identify and apprehend anglers taking more than a daily limit of walleye. "Fishing has been good, and we were hearing complaints of some people double-dipping," Timian said.

Three wardens worked an average of 14-18 hours each day at Six Mile Bay and Graham's Island. "Over the course of the two days, a number of boats were observed going back on the water one or more times during the day," Timian said.

A total of 29 citations, with 24 written for over-limits, were issued. Both resident and nonresident anglers were cited.

"We are somewhat surprised and disappointed in the high rate of violations," Timian said. "Double-dipping, as it is commonly called, is an intentional disregard of the law, and we consider it a theft of resources from the people of North Dakota."

Successful operations like this, according to Timian, involve multiple game wardens working 12-18 hours a day. "Manpower limits the scope and frequency of these operations, but we will continue to conduct this type of surveillance in the future because catching those who do not comply with the limits is a priority," he said.

Anyone witnessing game and fish violations are asked to call Report All Poachers at (800) 472-2121. Callers can remain anonymous.

Sandhill Crane Season Opens Sept. 14

North Dakota's sandhill crane season opens Sept. 14 and continues through Nov. 10.

Limits are three daily and nine in possession in unit 1 (west of U.S. Highway 281), and two daily and six in possession in unit 2 (east of U.S. Highway 281). Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to 1 p.m. each day through Nov. 2. Beginning Nov. 3, shooting hours are extended until 2 p.m. each day. Hunters are urged to use caution and identify birds to prevent shooting at whooping cranes as they begin their fall migration.

In addition to other licenses required, prospective hunters need a \$5 crane permit. Hunters can apply online, or print out a resident or nonresident application for mailing, at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov. Harvest Information Program certification is required. To get HIP certified, access the department's website, or call (888) 634-4798.

Hunters can also send the permit fee, along with personal information, including height, weight, social security number, date of birth, color of hair and eyes, and hunter education number and state issued, to Crane Permit, NDGF, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501.

Swan Hunt Lottery Held, Licenses Remain

North Dakota's swan lottery has been held and more than 300 licenses remain. Only hunters who do not have a swan license for the 2013 season can apply, as regulations limit hunters to one license per year. Beginning Sept. 4, all remaining licenses will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Resident and nonresident hunters will be able to [apply online](#), or [print out an application](#) to mail, at the State Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov. Hunters may also request an application by calling the department's Bismarck office at (701) 328-6300. The license fee is \$5 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents.

The statewide tundra swan hunting season is Sep. 28 – Dec. 29.

Brood Numbers Indicate Sharptails, Huns Down

Data recently tallied from July and August roadside counts indicate sharp-tailed grouse and Hungarian partridge populations are down significantly from last year.

As of Aug. 28, brood results suggest sharp-tailed grouse numbers are down 51 percent statewide from last year, with the number of broods observed down 50 percent. The average brood size is about the same as in 2012, and the age ratio is up 19 percent.

The statewide Hungarian partridge population is down 34 percent from last year, and the number of broods observed is down 31 percent.

Aaron Robinson, upland game biologist for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department in Dickinson, said even though spring survey numbers indicated a population comparable to last year, the telling factor is always late-summer counts.

"Fall hunting season success is directly correlated to the current year's reproductive success – if there is a good hatch than logically there will be more birds on the landscape come fall hunting season," Robinson said. "Spring census allows us to monitor the breeding population, which is used to track the base population trend over time."

The season for sharp-tailed grouse, ruffed grouse and Hungarian partridge opens Sept. 14. Hunters should refer to the [North Dakota 2013-14 Small Game Hunting Guide](#) for further season information and regulations.

Youth Waterfowl is Sept. 14-15

North Dakota's two-day youth waterfowl season is Sept. 14-15. Legally licensed resident and nonresident youth waterfowl hunters age 15 and younger may hunt ducks, geese, coots and mergansers statewide.

The daily bag limit and species restrictions for the youth season are the same as for regular duck and goose seasons.

Resident and qualifying nonresident youth waterfowl hunters must possess a general game and habitat license and a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate. Nonresidents from states that do not provide a reciprocal licensing agreement for North Dakota residents must purchase the entire nonresident waterfowl license package.

In addition, all youth hunters must be Harvest Information Program certified, and youth ages 12 and older need to have passed a certified hunter education course. Hunters age 15 and younger do not need a federal duck stamp.

Hunters who purchase a license through the [North Dakota Game and Fish Department](#) can easily get HIP

certified. Otherwise, hunters must call (888) 634-4798, or log on to the Game and Fish website at gf.nd.gov, and record the HIP number on their fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate.

Shooting hours for the youth waterfowl season are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. An adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the resident youth hunter into the field, and a licensed adult is required to accompany a nonresident youth hunter. The two-day weekend hunt does not count against a nonresident adult hunter's 14-day regular season waterfowl dates.

An adult may not hunt ducks, coots or mergansers, but can hunt Canada geese outside the Missouri River Zone. An early Canada goose season license is required.