

NDG&F September 23rd Newsletter

Youth Pheasant Weekend Oct. 5-6

North Dakota's two-day youth pheasant season is Oct. 5-6. Legally licensed residents and nonresidents ages 15 and younger may hunt roosters statewide.

Resident youth hunters, regardless of age, must possess a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate and general game and habitat license. Nonresident youth hunters from states that provide a reciprocal licensing agreement for North Dakota residents qualify for North Dakota resident licenses. Otherwise, nonresident youth hunters must purchase a nonresident small game license.

Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Youth ages 12 and older need to have passed a certified hunter education course. The daily bag limit and all other regulations for the regular pheasant season apply.

An adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter in the field. The adult may not carry a firearm.

See the [2013 North Dakota Small Game Hunting Guide](#) for additional information.

NASP Workshop Oct. 17-18 in Bismarck

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department and North Dakota Bowhunters Association are sponsoring a National Archery in the Schools Program workshop in Bismarck for educators interested in teaching archery to students in grades 4-12.

The NASP workshop is scheduled Oct. 17-18 at the NISHU Archery Complex, 1409 Riverwood Drive. Participants will complete the workshop with basic or improved archery skills, and will possess the fundamentals to teach students.

NASP teaches international style archery, and can be taught indoors or outdoors. NASP has spread into 47 states, and schools involved in the program have documented an increase in attendance, heightened self-esteem and improved academic performance.

Game and Fish workshop instructors are education coordinator Jeff Long and curriculum specialist Sherry Niesar. To register, contact Long mail [by email](#) or call (701) 328-6322. A \$10 registration fee covers supplies and refreshments.

Information on graduate credit through the University of North Dakota is available at <http://educators.und.edu/workshop/?id=TL.NATL.ARCHRY.SCHL.PRGM>.

Check for ANS When Removing Structures

While the fall fishing bite will eventually fade, efforts to monitor the presence of aquatic nuisance species in North Dakota waters continue.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department urges local entities and water recreationists to check for new aquatic nuisance species infestations when pulling and storing fishing piers, boat docks and lifts prior to ice up.

Fred Ryckman, Game and Fish ANS coordinator, said it is especially important to look for zebra mussels during this winter prep work. Zebra mussels will attach to hard surfaces, such as fishing piers, boat dock

and lifts. Inspecting these structures when pulled from the water is important to determine if mussels are present.

To date, adult zebra mussels have not been found in any North Dakota waters.

If mussels are found, citizens are requested to leave the suspicious mussel attached, take a digital picture, and report findings immediately to a local Game and Fish Department district office. Pictures of zebra mussels are available on the [100th Meridian Initiative](http://100thmeridian.org) website at 100thmeridian.org.

Bighorn Sheep Survey Shows Mixed Results

Even though results from this summer's survey indicated the bighorn sheep population in western North Dakota remains steady, State Game and Fish Department biologists are concerned about a significant decline in the number of adult rams.

Brett Wiedmann, big game biologist in Dickinson, said the July-August survey showed a minimum of 299 bighorn sheep, unchanged from last year and only 17 percent below 2008's record summer survey.

"Although the female segment of the population remained stable, we are concerned about another substantial decline in the number of rams, which was 11 percent below last year and 21 percent below the record observed in 2009," Wiedmann said. "Annual survival of adult rams is typically very high, so we need to figure out why our ram population is continuing to decline despite reductions in hunting licenses."

Survey results revealed 79 rams, 155 ewes and 65 lambs – a record 258 in the northern badlands (an increase of seven from last year's record) and 41 in the southern badlands (down seven). "Bighorn sheep numbers increased again in the northern badlands but continue to struggle south of the Interstate," Wiedmann said, while noting that a record 64 lambs were observed in the north, but only one in the south. "However, despite poor results in the southern badlands, the total number of lambs observed this summer surpassed the previous record of 60 in 2008."

The department's survey does not include approximately 30 bighorn sheep that inhabit the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Annual bighorn sheep survey statistics are not recorded using a calendar year, but instead are done over a 12-month period beginning each April and ending the following March. Each summer, Game and Fish Department biologists count and classify all bighorn sheep, a process that takes nearly six weeks to complete as biologists locate each bighorn herd in the badlands by tracking radio-marked animals from an airplane, and then hike into each group to record demographic data using a spotting scope and binoculars. Biologists then complete the annual survey by recounting lambs in March to determine lamb recruitment, or lambs that survive the first winter.

North Dakota's bighorn sheep hunting season opens Oct. 25 and continues through Nov. 7. Game and Fish issued four licenses this year, the same as in 2012.