

## **NDG&F October 21st Newsletter**

### **Hunters Report Few Sightings of Dead Deer**

Even with thousands of hunters in the field during the opening week of the pheasant season, the State Game and Fish Department received only a few reports from hunters who found dead deer in southwestern North Dakota.

Game and Fish personnel have been monitoring the deer population in the southwest since late August, when the first reports of dead deer, attributed to epizootic hemorrhagic disease, came in from Bowman, Grant and Burleigh counties.

Isolated deer deaths continued into mid-September, prompting the department to suspend the sale of slightly more than 1,000 antlerless deer licenses that were still available in units 3F1, 3F2 and 4F in the southwestern part of the state.

Dr. Dan Grove, Game and Fish wildlife veterinarian, said information received from pheasant hunters is helpful in evaluating the magnitude of an EHD situation.

“The area of the state where EHD traditionally occurs is covered with hunters,” Grove said. “With only a minimal number of dead deer sightings, combined with recent overnight low temperatures below freezing, it appears the worst of the EHD outbreak may be behind us.”

EHD is a naturally occurring virus that is spread by a biting midge. It is almost always fatal to infected white-tailed deer, and is most noticeable in western North Dakota when high whitetail populations combine with a hot and humid late summer and early fall. Most deer that die from this are infected before the first hard frost, which kills the biting midges that spread the disease. Mule deer do not usually die from the disease.

EHD causes dehydration and a high body temperature, causing deer to seek water prior to death. Other clinical and behavior symptoms may include respiratory distress; swelling of head, neck, and tongue; lesions on tongue and roof of mouth; indifference to humans; and in later stages, hemorrhaging from body orifices.

The transmission cycle of the viruses involved in EHD is complex and involves both domestic and wild animal reservoirs. Although it is rare for cattle to develop the clinical disease from the viruses that kill deer, during a wide scale outbreak such as in 2011, or a localized outbreak like this fall, it is not uncommon for cattle in affected areas to develop clinical disease. Grove said North Dakota is not alone this year, as EHD has been detected in wildlife in Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota and Michigan, and in both domestic and wild ruminants in Wisconsin and Iowa.

EHD is not a danger to humans. Hunters do not have to worry about handling or consuming meat from infected deer. However, hunters should not shoot or consume a deer if it appears sick.

[More information on EHD](#) is available by visiting the Game and Fish website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), and in the department's [North Dakota OUTDOORS October magazine](#).

### **SAH Accepting Deer, Light Goose Meat**

North Dakota's Sportsmen Against Hunger Program is again accepting donations of deer at select processors across the state. In addition, the program is also able to accept light goose breast meat

(snow, blue and Ross's geese) for the first time this fall.

Canada goose meat, while accepted during the early goose season, is not eligible for donation during the regular waterfowl season.

Sportsmen Against Hunger is a program administered by the North Dakota Community Action Partnership, a nonprofit agency that serves low-income families across the state. SAH raises funds to pay for processing of donated deer and geese, and coordinates distribution of ground venison and goose meat to food pantries around the state.

The State Game and Fish Department strongly supports the SAH program and encourages hunters to consider donating deer, according to agency Director Terry Steinwand. The program can accept whole deer only, which must be processed at a participating licensed meat processor.

According to NDCAP Executive Director Andrea Olson, the SAH program has sufficient funding available to process deer and geese this fall. "The meat that is generated is so appreciated by the families who receive it," Olson said. "They are all so grateful for access to a nutritious source of protein; something that is often expensive and otherwise difficult for them to obtain."

A list of participating processors and more information is available on the Community Action website at [capnd.org](http://capnd.org).

Participating processors will not accept deer shot in the hind quarters, and donated deer will be processed individually or only with other donated deer.

Hunters can clean their light geese at home prior to delivery to a processor, but breast meat brought from home without a wing or head attached to the meat, must be accompanied by written information that includes the hunter's name, address, signature, hunting license number, date taken and species and number taken.

Hunters may also deliver light geese directly from the field to a processor, but identification must remain attached to the bird until in possession of the processor.

Hunters interested in donating light geese are encouraged to call processors to have a clear understanding of how goose breasts will be accepted.

### **Fisheries Division Recognizes Wahpeton Park Board**

The State Game and Fish Department recently honored the Wahpeton Park Board for its ongoing efforts to develop and improve public boating and fishing facilities at numerous lakes, rivers and recreation sites in Richland County.

Each year the Department's fisheries division presents a "Certificate of Appreciation" to an organization that has a history of accomplishments as a cooperating partner in local fisheries projects. Fisheries development supervisor Bob Frohlich said the park board is a perfect example of how a willing entity can make a difference for local fisheries.

"The Wahpeton Park Board and its members have helped with construction and installation of boat ramps, courtesy docks, toilets, fishing piers, fishing access roads and parking areas at Mooreton Pond, Brushvale Landing and numerous sites on the Red River in the immediate Wahpeton area," Frohlich added. "They have also assumed primary responsibility for maintaining these facilities after construction, and the park board does an outstanding job in performing this task."