

## **NDG&F January 27th Newsletter**

### **Spring Turkey Season Set, Online Apps Available**

The state Game and Fish Department is offering 5,880 wild turkey licenses for the spring hunting season, a decrease of 50 from last year. The decrease is a result of poor production and chick recruitment. Two of the 22 hunting units have slightly more spring licenses than in 2013, while 16 remain the same. Unit 21 (most of Hettinger and Adams counties) is again closed in 2014 due to lack of turkeys in the unit. Successful spring turkey applicants must purchase a 2014-15 hunting license, as last year's 2013-14 licenses expire March 31. In addition to the spring turkey license, hunters must have a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate, and a general game and habitat license. Also, hunters ages 16 and older must possess a small game license, or combination license.

Hunters may notice an increase in license fees required to hunt spring turkey, which were established and set by the 2013 state legislature. The spring turkey license increased from \$8 to \$15, and the general game and habitat license increased from \$13 to \$20. In addition, the small game license – required for hunters ages 16 and older – increased from \$6 to \$10. The combination license, which includes general game and habitat, small game, furbearer and fishing, increased from \$32 to \$50. First-time spring turkey hunters ages 15 or younger are eligible to receive one spring license valid for the regular hunting season in a specific unit. To be eligible, the youth hunter must be 15 or younger on opening day of spring turkey season, and have never received a spring turkey license in North Dakota. Spring turkey applicants can [apply online](#) or [print out an application](#) at the Game and Fish Department website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Applications can also be submitted by calling (800) 406-6409.

Application forms will also be available by Feb. 1 at most license vendors, county auditors and Game and Fish offices. The deadline for applying is Feb. 12. Online or phone applications must be logged before midnight that day.

Spring turkey licenses are available only to North Dakota residents. The spring turkey season opens April 12 and continues through May 18.

### **Midwinter Waterfowl Survey**

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated 71,500 birds were in the state.

Mike Szymanski, migratory game bird biologist, said an estimated 40,700 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River, and another 12,000 were scattered on Nelson Lake. Lake Sakakawea, declared iced-over on Dec. 14, had no geese on the lake itself. Szymanski said after summarizing the numbers, a total of 52,700 Canada geese and 18,700 mallards were tallied statewide.

"Conditions leading up to this year's survey were colder than normal, resulting in fewer birds in the state compared to the past couple winters," Szymanski said. "Most waterfowl were pushed from North Dakota just prior to Thanksgiving, with the exception of those using the Missouri River System." According to Szymanski, early December cold temperatures and strong winds pushed most Missouri River birds from the state. Conditions remained the same through most of January, essentially causing all waters in the state to freeze by the time of the survey, with the exception of a few places with fast

moving, or warm water.

Overall, Szymanski said although the counts are lower than those observed during the past couple years, numbers of birds remaining in the state are surprisingly large given the harsh weather conditions experienced thus far.

“Snow cover was probably borderline for allowing birds to feed without too much trouble,” he added.

“If more snow had fallen in December, this year’s count would have been even lower.”