

## NDG&F May 5th Newsletter

### Legal Live Baitfish Reminder

There are a number of reasons why fishing in North Dakota has been pretty good in recent years, including the cooperative efforts of anglers and bait vendors to ensure that those wetting a line are using legal and clean bait.

Fathead minnows, sticklebacks, and creek chubs are the only legal live baitfish species that can be used in most North Dakota waters. The exceptions are the Red and Bois de Sioux rivers where white suckers can be used and 23 state waters where it is illegal to use any live baitfish.

According to North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries chief Greg Power, legal bait regulations have become more restrictive in the last 25 years in an effort to eliminate bait-bucket transfer of unwanted fish species into state waters. Through the 1990s, the Game and Fish Department routinely chemically renovated numerous lakes annually due to introduction of various unwanted species, including bullheads, suckers and/or carp. Oftentimes, these undesirable species were a result of anglers simply discarding bait. It is illegal to release baitfish into any North Dakota waters.

For the past couple of decades, the department has worked with the wholesale and retail bait industry to help ensure that anglers are buying clean and legal minnows at their local bait shops.

While today's bait is much cleaner than what may have been purchased 20 years ago, Power said it remains the angler's responsibility to possess only legal live baitfish when fishing in North Dakota.

For specific regulations regarding bait use and all other fishing regulations, refer to the [2014-16 North Dakota Fishing Guide](#).

### Boat North Dakota Course

Children ages 12-15 who want to operate a boat or personal watercraft this summer 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](http://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](mailto:ndgf@nd.gov); or call (701) 328-6300.

### **First Fish Certificate**

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is reminding parents to capture their little angler's first catch on a specially designed First Fish certificate.

First Fish has no qualifying weights or measurements. The only requirement is the successful landing of a North Dakota fish. Certificates are available to all who request them, and have ample room for all the important information, such as name, age, lake and a short fish story, plus a blank space for a photograph big enough to contain the smile of the happiest little angler.

Free certificates are available by contacting the Game and Fish Department at (701) 328-6300, or send an email to [ndgf@nd.gov](mailto:ndgf@nd.gov).

### **Walleye Restriction in Southeast**

Anglers fishing in southeastern North Dakota are reminded of a length requirement when fishing for walleye.

The 2014-16 fishing proclamation includes a 14-inch minimum walleye length restriction on six lakes in southeastern North Dakota – Alkali Lake, Buffalo Lake and Tosse Slough in Sargent County; and Lake Elsie, Lueck Lake and West Moran Lake in Richland County.

Anglers should refer to the [2014-16 North Dakota Fishing Guide](#) for all fishing regulations.