

NDG&F June 2nd Newsletter

Family Fishing Days at Bismarck OWLS

Family fishing days return June 7 to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Outdoor Wildlife Learning Site. The catch-and-release only OWLS Pond is stocked with trout, bluegill, largemouth bass, catfish and other species.

Family fishing days will run Saturdays and Wednesdays through the end of August. Fishing equipment can be checked out at the OWLS Pond, located adjacent to the Department's Bismarck office, on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Fishing rods and basic tackle are available for use free of charge.

Trained volunteers or Game and Fish staff will be in the area to answer questions and check out equipment, but there will be little or no direct supervision. Children who aren't old enough to get to the pond on their own should not be left unattended.

The OWLS area is fairly primitive, but includes a picnic shelter and benches upon entering the site, and a portable restroom. The area has no running water. Users should bring water, sunscreen, folding chairs and appropriate clothing.

The Game and Fish Department is seeking volunteer instructors to assist with the program. Individuals at least age 18 with an interest in teaching kids to fish should contact the Game and Fish Department at 701-328-6300.

The OWLS pond is open to fishing year-round during daylight hours. There are no bait restrictions and anglers must practice catch-and-release only. The area is designed for wheel chair accessibility. Pets, glass bottles and alcohol are not permitted on the site.

Summer Safety on the Water

The single most important reminder the North Dakota Game and Fish Department will issue to recreationists this summer is to be alert and safe near water.

Boat and water safety coordinator Nancy Boldt said safety on the water begins with wearing a personal flotation device.

"Failure to wear a personal flotation device is the main reason people lose their lives in water recreation accidents," Boldt said.

North Dakota law requires all children ages 10 and younger to wear a personal flotation device while in boats of less than 27 feet in length. The law also requires all personal watercraft users to wear a life jacket, as well as anyone towed on skis, tubes, boards or other similar devices.

Water users should make sure to wear life jackets that are the appropriate size, and in good condition. It is also important that children wear a PFD while swimming.

Water skiers and tubers should wear a life jacket with four nylon straps rather than one with a zipper, because straps are stronger than zippers upon impact with water. Anglers or persons paddling a canoe should opt for a PFD that is comfortable enough to wear for an entire outing.

Water skiers and tubers are reminded it takes three to ski and tube. When a person is towed on water skis or a similar device, an observer other than the operator is required on the vessel.

"In addition, it is important for swimmers to know water depth, as serious injuries can occur from diving

into water,” Boldt said. “Large objects hidden below the water’s surface can lead to significant injury.” North Dakota boaters also are reminded that marine VHF radios are an important part of boat safety that should not be improperly used by operators. These radios are intended for boat operators who are in distress and facing an emergency situation.

Regulations to help ensure safe boating this summer are found in the [2014-16 North Dakota Fishing Guide](#). A more comprehensive listing is available in the [North Dakota Boat and Water Safety Guide or the Boat North Dakota education book](#). These guides are available online at the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, by email at ndgf@nd.gov, or at a local Game and Fish Department office.

Deer Gun Application Deadline is June 4

North Dakota deer hunters are reminded the deadline for submitting applications for the 2014 gun season is June 4. Hunters are encouraged to [apply online](#) at the State Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

The deadline applies to muzzleloader, regular gun, gratis and nonresident landowner, and youth antlered mule deer applications (specifically for antlered mule deer in units 3B1, 3B2, and 4A-4F). Gratis applications received on or before the regular deer gun lottery application deadline (June 4) will be issued an any-legal-deer license. As per state law, applications received after the deadline will be issued based on licenses remaining after the lottery – generally only antlerless licenses remain.

A new state law requires residents age 18 or older to prove residency on the application by submitting a valid North Dakota driver’s license number or a North Dakota nondriver photo identification number. Applications will not be processed without this information.

The deadline for regular statewide youth deer licenses is Sept. 1.