

NDG&F October 13th Newsletter

Verify Deer License

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department urges deer hunters to find their license and check it for accuracy.

Every year the Game and Fish Department's licensing section receives last-minute inquiries from hunters who can't find their license. When that happens, it's difficult to try to get a replacement license in time for the season opener.

Another reason to check the license now is to make sure the unit and species is what was intended.

Deer hunters in need of a replacement license can print out a [duplicate \(replacement\) license application](#) from the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, or can call 701-328-6300 to have an application mailed or faxed.

The form must be completely filled out and notarized, and sent back in to the department with a fee.

Fisheries Biologists Wrapping Up Fall Surveys

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries biologists are assessing how the cooler-than-normal summer may have impacted fish spawning and stocking success across the state.

Fisheries management section leader Scott Gangl said it looks like catches varied this year, depending on the lake or fish species. "On a lot of our smaller lakes, we had extremely high catch rates of young-of-the-year fish in some, but disappointing catches in others," Gangl said. "Overall, though, I'd say we experienced average reproduction and stocking success."

With good water levels and abundant spawning habitat, Gangl said Lake Sakakawea produced good catches of virtually all young-of-year fish. Walleye were most abundant in the upper and middle sections of the reservoir, he said, with good numbers of perch and pike throughout. "Forage fish are plentiful on Lake Sakakawea this year, and both sonar surveys and anecdotal observations suggest rainbow smelt production was really good in 2014," Gangl added.

Devils Lake and Stump Lake reported fair to good numbers of young-of-the-year walleye, while yellow perch reproduction was much lower than the strong reproduction year of 2013. "Although walleye natural reproduction was down in 2014, good reproduction in recent years has resulted in an abundance of young walleye in Devils Lake," Gangl said. "Strong numbers of yearling perch will provide a good source of forage for walleye and other predators."

According to Gangl, Lake Oahe is starting to show signs of recovery from the flood of 2011. "Although smelt numbers are still very low, reproduction of other forage fish, mostly white bass and crappie, was very good in 2014," he added. "Young-of-year walleye displayed their highest catch rate since the dominant year class in 2009."

However, Gangl said the Missouri River isn't showing such signs of recovery, as catch rates of forage fish and young-of-year game fish remain low upstream from Lake Oahe. Biologists attribute poor production on the river to the massive habitat changes during the 2011 flood. "The flood scoured and changed the river channel so dramatically, it's going to take a much longer time to recover," Gangl said. "The productive capacity was taken away. It's like scraping the topsoil from a field."