

NDG&F November 30th Newsletter

Late-Season Hunting Opportunities End Soon

North Dakota waterfowl hunters are reminded the statewide duck and white-fronted goose seasons close Dec. 6. However, duck hunting in the [high plains unit](#) reopens Dec. 12 and continues through Jan. 3, 2016.

In addition, the season for Canada geese closes Dec. 24, except for the [Missouri River Zone](#), which closes Jan. 1, 2016. Light goose hunting closes statewide Jan. 3, 2016.

Archery deer, fall turkey, sharp-tailed and ruffed grouse, partridge, pheasant and tree squirrel hunting seasons continue through Jan. 3, 2016.

Ice Awareness for Winter Anglers

North Dakota continues to produce a record number of anglers, and many are anxious to get on the ice and enjoy a favorite pastime. With that in mind, winter anglers are reminded to consider ice conditions before traveling onto and across North Dakota waters.

State Game and Fish Department enforcement chief Robert Timian said this winter should provide plenty of opportunities for anglers, as long as Mother Nature cooperates.

“Access to area lakes shouldn’t be an issue with the lack of snow, but that can change in a hurry,” Timian said. “As of right now, it is just a matter of waiting for the ice to become thick enough.”

Timian said ice conditions shouldn’t be judged by appearance alone, especially this time of year as ice thickness can vary significantly rather quickly.

“The edges become solid before the center, so anglers should drill test holes as they make their way out on the lake,” Timian said. “And then, an ice chisel should be used to check thickness while moving around.”

In addition, snow insulates ice, which in turn inhibits solid ice formation, and hides cracks, weak and open water areas. Anglers should avoid cracks, pressure ridges, slushy or dark areas, and areas around partially submerged trees.

“All of this signals thinner ice,” Timian said.

The following minimums are recommended for travel on clear-blue lake ice formed under ideal conditions. However, Timian said early in winter it’s a good idea to double these figures to be safe: 4 inches for a group walking single file; 6 inches for a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle; 8-12 inches for an automobile; and 12-15 inches for a pickup/truck.

“While we can and do provide information to assist in assessing if the ice is reasonably safe, it is still up to the individual to decide when to go out on the ice,” Timian said.

Winter anglers should wear a personal flotation device, and carry ice picks or a set of screwdrivers to pull yourself back on the ice if you fall through.

If someone breaks through the ice, Timian said 911 should be called immediately, with rescue attempts used by employing a long item such as a pole, board or rope. If that's not possible, throw the victim a life jacket, empty water jug or other buoyant object.

"Going to the victim should be used as a last resort, but only by forming a human chain where rescuers lie on the ice with each person holding the feet of the person in front," Timian said.

To treat hypothermia, Timian said to replace wet clothing with dry clothing and immediately transport the victim to a hospital.

Hunter Education Classes in 2016

Students interested in taking a [hunter education class in 2016](#) should visit the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website at gf.nd.gov for a statewide list of courses. Many classes will be added over the next several weeks, and the rest will be added throughout the year as they are finalized.

[To register](#), click on the online services tab, and "online course enrollment" under the hunter education heading. Classes are listed by city, and can also be sorted by start date. To register for a class, click on "enroll" next to the specific class, and follow the simple instructions. Personal information is required.

Those who do not have access to the Internet and want to sign up for a class can call the hunter education program in Bismarck at 701-328-6615.

Individuals interested in receiving a notice by email when each hunter education class is added can click on the "[subscribe to news alerts](#)" link found below the news section on the department's home page. Check the box labeled "hunter education class notification" under the education program updates.

State law requires anyone born after December 31, 1961 to pass a certified hunter education course to hunt in the state. Hunter education is mandatory for youth who are turning 12 years old, and children can take the class at age 11.