

## NDG&F February 2nd Newsletter

### Register to Darkhouse Spearfish

All individuals who participate in [darkhouse spearfishing are reminded to register](#) with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department prior to participating.

Fisheries chief Greg Power said perfect conditions have led to record participation this winter. “Our pike population is at levels never seen before, and mild weather conditions coupled with very little snow have led to unlimited lake access,” Power said.

With interest at an all-time high, Power said the department is receiving inquiries on who needs to register. “The simple answer is everyone,” he added. “It doesn’t matter what age you are, if you participate you need to register.”

Free registration is available at the department’s website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), or through any Game and Fish Department office.

North Dakota’s darkhouse spearfishing season closes March 15. Legal fish are northern pike and nongame species.

Darkhouse spearing is allowed for all residents with a valid fishing license and for residents under age 16. Nonresidents may darkhouse spearfish in North Dakota if they are from states that offer the same privilege for North Dakota residents.

All waters open to hook-and-line fishing are open to darkhouse spearing except:

Braun Lake – Logan County

East Park Lake, West Park Lake, Lake Audubon – McLean County

Heckers Lake – Sheridan County

McClusky Canal

New Johns Lake – Burleigh County

Red Willow Lake – Griggs County

Sweet Briar Dam – Morton County

Anglers should refer to the [2014-16 North Dakota Fishing Guide](#) for more information.

### Midwinter Waterfowl Survey

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department’s annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated 145,200 birds were in the state.

Mike Szymanski, migratory game bird biologist, said an estimated 87,700 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River, and another 30,600 were scattered on Nelson Lake. Lake Sakakawea, declared iced-over on Jan. 6, had no geese on the lake itself. Szymanski said after summarizing the numbers, 118,500 Canada geese and 26,500 mallards were tallied statewide.

“Conditions leading up to this year’s survey were highly variable, but lower than average snow conditions resulted in more birds in the state compared to the past couple winters,” Szymanski said. Harsh conditions in mid-November pushed many geese through the Missouri River System, Szymanski

said, and essentially all other waters in the state, with the exception of a few places with fast-moving or warm water, were frozen at the time.

“However, moderate conditions in much of December allowed for ideal wintering conditions along the Missouri River,” Szymanski added. “The lack of snow cover was important for allowing birds to feed without too much trouble. Aside from a few brief periods of inclement weather, wintering conditions in areas with open water have been ideal for waterfowl.”