

## NDG&F March 23rd Newsletter

### Whooping Crane Migration

As snow geese continue to make their way through the state, hunters are advised to properly identify their target as [whooping cranes](#) could potentially be in the same areas.

Whooping cranes are also in the midst of their spring migration and sightings will increase as they make their way through North Dakota over the next several weeks. Anyone seeing these birds as they move through the state is asked to report sightings so the birds can be tracked.

Whoopers stand about five feet tall and have a wingspan of about seven feet from tip to tip. They are bright white with black wing tips, which are visible only when the wings are outspread. In flight they extend their long necks straight forward, while their long, slender legs extend out behind the tail. Whooping cranes typically migrate singly, or in groups of 2-3 birds, and may be associated with sandhill cranes.

Other white birds such as snow geese, swans and egrets are often mistaken for whooping cranes. The most common misidentification is pelicans, because their wingspan is similar and they tuck their pouch in flight, leaving a silhouette similar to a crane when viewed from below.

Anyone sighting whoopers should not disturb them, but record the date, time, location, and the birds' activity. Observers should also look closely for and report colored bands which may occur on one or both legs. Whooping cranes have been marked with colored leg bands to help determine their identity.

Whooping crane sightings should be reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office at Lostwood, 701-848-2466, or Long Lake, 701-387-4397, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department in Bismarck, 701-328-6300, or to local game wardens across the state. Reports help biologists locate important whooping crane habitat areas, monitor marked birds, determine survival and population numbers, and identify times and migration routes.

### Two Deer Test Positive for CWD

Two mule deer taken during the 2014 deer gun season from unit 3F2 in southwestern North Dakota have tested positive for [chronic wasting disease](#), according to Dr. Dan Grove, wildlife veterinarian for the State Game and Fish Department.

The total now stands at seven deer to test positive for CWD since 2009, and all were from the same general area within unit 3F2.

"This isn't surprising, and the number of positives coming out of the area remains low," Grove said, while mentioning both hunters were notified of the positive results.

In addition to unit 3F2, samples for CWD testing were taken last fall from deer harvested by hunters in the central third of the state, and from any moose or elk taken during the hunting season. In all, more than 1,200 samples were tested.

Since the Game and Fish Department's sampling efforts began in 2002, more than 25,000 deer, elk and moose have tested negative for CWD.

The hunter-harvested surveillance program annually collects samples taken from hunter-harvested deer in specific regions of the state. In 2015, deer will be tested from the western third of the state.

The Game and Fish Department also has a targeted surveillance program that is an ongoing, year-round effort to test animals found dead or sick.

CWD affects the nervous system of members of the deer family and is always fatal. Scientists have found no evidence that CWD can be transmitted naturally to humans or livestock.