

NDG&F June 29th Newsletter

Game Warden, Warden Pilot Exams Set July 17

Individuals interested in taking the district game warden or warden pilot exams scheduled for July 17 are reminded to register no later than July 13, by submitting an [online application](#) through the North Dakota State Job Openings website.

The tests are scheduled for 10 a.m. at the department's main office in Bismarck.

Applicants must be at least 21 years of age and have a bachelor's degree, have a valid driver's license and a current North Dakota peace officer license, or be eligible to be licensed. Candidates must have excellent interpersonal skills in communications and writing, and must not have a record of any felony convictions.

In addition, game warden pilot applicants must have a commercial pilot's license for a single engine land with an instrument rating, and hold an FAA Class II medical certificate. Candidates also must have a minimum of 500 hours total flying time and have a clean record without any felony convictions. Job duties include day and night flights, involving enforcement and administrative flight activities.

Responsibilities also include enforcing game and fish laws and other related regulations.

District game wardens enforce game and fish laws and related regulations in an assigned district and other locations as determined by the department. Wardens normally work alone under varied conditions, at all hours of the day, night and weekends. In addition to law enforcement duties, wardens assist in the areas of public relations, education programs, and hunter and boat safety education.

Salary through training for a district game warden is \$3,600 per month, while the warden pilot position is \$3,800 per month. Upon successful completion of training, the monthly salary ranges are \$4,136 - \$6,894. Wardens also receive the state benefits package, including travel allowance. Uniforms and other equipment are provided.

Spring Sharptails Look Good

Statistics from the 2015 spring sharp-tailed grouse census indicate a 22 percent increase in the number of male grouse counted compared to last year.

Statewide, 4,346 sharptails were observed on spring dancing grounds this year compared to 3,551 in 2014. Male grouse recorded per square mile increased from 3.4 to 4.2. More than 1,000 square miles were covered.

Aaron Robinson, upland game biologist for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department in Dickinson, said the outlook for the 2015 hunting season is still premature as lek counts are a metric of population trends and not a reliable predictor of hunter success.

"Preliminary observations indicate good residual cover for a favorable hatch, but this is heavily influenced by timing, duration, location of severe precipitation and low temperatures," Robinson said. An indication of the fall season won't be known until completion of brood surveys in late summer.

Spring Pheasant Count Tops Last Year

North Dakota's spring pheasant population index is up 10 percent from last year, according to the State Game and Fish Department's 2015 spring crowing count survey.

Stan Kohn, upland game management supervisor, said the number of roosters heard crowing this spring was up statewide, with increases ranging from about 2 to 12 percent in the primary regions holding pheasants.

"A much improved production year for pheasants in spring 2014, coupled with the mild winter, produced a healthy breeding population this spring," Kohn said.

While the spring number is a positive indicator, Kohn said it does not predict what the fall population will look like. Brood surveys, which begin in mid-July and are completed by September, provide a much better estimate of summer pheasant production and what hunters might expect for a fall pheasant population.

Kohn mentioned a higher breeding population is good for production if the weather cooperates and nesting habitat is available. "This spring's weather hasn't been ideal, but I don't think it has been a cause for major concern yet either," he said.

Of concern, according to Kohn, is the continued loss of Conservation Reserve Program acres, variable commodity prices and native grassland conversion. "All of this affects the amount of nesting and brood rearing habitat on the landscape, and as we lose grassland habitat we lose ground nesting bird populations," Kohn said.

Pheasant crowing counts are conducted each spring throughout North Dakota. Observers drive specified 20-mile routes, stopping at predetermined intervals, and counting the number of pheasant roosters heard crowing over a two-minute period during the stop.

The number of pheasant crows heard is compared to previous years' data, providing a trend summary.