

NDG&F November 7th Newsletter

Salmon Spawn Completed

Fisheries crews have completed their annual salmon spawning operation on the Missouri River System after collecting roughly 2 million eggs.

Dave Fryda, North Dakota Game and Fish Department Missouri River System supervisor, said the salmon spawning season was extremely productive and crews easily collected enough eggs to stock the 400,000 smolts planned for Lake Sakakawea in 2017.

“The majority of eggs were collected from Lake Sakakawea, but the Missouri River below Garrison Dam also contributed,” Fryda said. “In addition to meeting North Dakota’s own egg goals, additional surplus eggs were provided to South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks to help with their Lake Oahe salmon program.”

Fryda said the average size of Lake Sakakawea female salmon was 7.6 pounds, about 3 pounds smaller than 2015. “The average size was smaller than the record we saw in 2015, but the overall number of salmon in the spawning run was exceptional,” he added. “Montana also had a very strong spawning run and a good egg take, but South Dakota had challenges collecting eggs this year.”

Fryda said the abundance of young male salmon, also called jacks, was again high in 2016. “Jacks are 1-year-old male salmon that become sexually mature, and typically a high abundance of these young males will forecast a good run over the next couple years,” he said.

Chinook salmon begin their spawning run in October. Since salmon cannot naturally reproduce in North Dakota, Game and Fish Department and Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery personnel collect eggs and transport them to the hatchery.

Once the eggs hatch, young salmon spend several months in the hatchery before being stocked in Lake Sakakawea.

Some Refuges Open to Late-Season Upland Game

Hunters are reminded that several North Dakota national wildlife refuges open to late-season upland game bird hunting the day after the deer gun season closes.

Arrowwood, Audubon, Des Lacs, J. Clark Salyer, Lake Alice, Lake Zahl, Long Lake, Lostwood, Tewaukon (pheasants only), and Upper Souris NWRs open Nov. 21.

However, portions of each refuge are closed to hunting. Hunters should contact refuge headquarters for information on closed areas and other restrictions: Arrowwood 701-285-3341; Audubon 701-442-5474; Des Lacs 701-385-4046; J. Clark Salyer 701-768-2548; Lake Alice 701-662-8611; Lake Zahl 701-965-6488; Long Lake 701-387-4397; Lostwood 701-848-2722; Tewaukon 701-724-3598; and Upper Souris 701-468-5467; or visit www.fws.gov and click on “National Wildlife Refuges” for details on each individual refuge.

National wildlife refuges are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Hunters are reminded that use of nontoxic shot is required on all USFWS lands. State regulations found in the [North Dakota 2016-17 Small Game Guide](#) apply. Seasons for pheasant, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge and ruffed grouse close statewide on Jan. 8, 2017.