

NDG&F February 22nd Newsletter

Game and Fish Urges Early Fish House Removal

While the deadline for removing permanent fish houses from North Dakota lakes is March 15, the State Game and Fish Department is urging anglers to consider removing their houses early in areas of the state where ice conditions are deteriorating, especially in the southern and western portions.

Given the current long range weather forecast predicting temperatures well above normal, coupled with a thin icepack in much of the state, department education coordinator Brian Schaffer says mild weather can quickly result in unstable ice conditions that can make removing a fish house with a vehicle difficult or dangerous.

Even on lakes where ice remains solid away from shore, specifically in the northeast where ice conditions are much better than the rest of the state, Schaffer said anglers should watch the weather and adjust activities accordingly. "It is always important to check ice thickness, especially this time of year," Schaffer said. "We have heard recent reports of several vehicles breaking through the ice, and anyone going on the ice should be extra careful."

Ice conditions can vary from region to region, between lakes in the same region, and even on the same lake, Schaffer added. "We know people want to keep fishing," he said, "but given the current conditions it's good for anglers to keep safety in mind."

Boats Need Current Registration

Boat owners purchasing watercraft from private individuals this winter are reminded to register it in their name with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

[Registering a used watercraft](#) purchased from an individual must include proof of transfer of ownership, such as a photocopy of the previous owner's registration card, a canceled check or a signed note from the previous owner stating transfer of ownership.

The prorated price to register motorboats under 16 feet in length, and all canoes, is \$6; motorboats from 16 feet to less than 20 feet in length, \$12; and motorboats at least 20 feet in length, \$15.

The current three-year boat registration cycle runs through Dec. 31, 2016.

In addition, boat owners who need to [renew their registration](#) can renew online at the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov, by clicking the online services link, and "watercraft registration and renewals" under the watercraft heading.

Also, anyone buying a new or used watercraft can register online and generate a 10-day temporary permit that is valid until the registration is processed

Regulations require the boat number to be in contrasting color to the hull in plain vertical block letters at least 3 inches in height, excluding any border, trim, outlining or shading, and must be maintained in a legible condition so the number is clearly visible in daylight hours. The number must read from left to

right, and groups of numbers and letters must be separated by a space or hyphen equivalent in width to the letter "M."

In addition, a validation sticker issued by the Game and Fish Department must be displayed on the boat within 6 inches of the number toward the rear of the boat. No other numbers should be displayed in this area.

Youth Grant Application Deadline

Wildlife, shooting, fraternal and nonprofit civil organizations are urged to submit an application for the Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunters program, a State Game and Fish Department grant program developed to assist recruitment of the next generation of hunters and shooters.

The maximum grant allowed is \$3,000. The program currently helps fund approximately 40 club and organizational events and projects, with an average grant of \$1,250.

Grant funds help cover event expenses, including promotional printing; event memorabilia such as shirts, caps or vests; ammunition and targets, and eye and ear protection.

Past funding has enabled several groups to conduct youth pheasant and waterfowl hunts, while others have sponsored trap and other shooting events, including archery and rifle shooting.

Any club or organization interested in conducting a [youth hunting or shooting event](#) can get more information, including a grant application, from the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov, or by contacting outreach biologist Pat Lothspeich at 701-328-6332.

The deadline to apply for a 2016 grant is April 20.