

## NDG&F May 3rd Newsletter

### Deer Season Set, Online Apps Available May 4

North Dakota's 2016 deer season is set with 49,000 licenses available to hunters this fall, 5,725 more than last year.

Jeb Williams, wildlife chief for the State Game and Fish Department, said population and harvest data indicate the state's deer population is stable to increasing, primarily due to seven years of reduced gun licenses combined with mild winters.

"Consequently, a small increase in deer licenses will provide increased hunting opportunities while continuing to encourage population growth," Williams said. "Most of the additional licenses are for antlered deer."

The mule deer population in the badlands increased for the fourth consecutive year, with numbers showing the spring mule deer index is up 21 percent from last year.

Williams said a conservative management approach will remain in the badlands, and for the fifth consecutive year, Game and Fish will not issue any antlerless mule deer licenses in units 4A, 4B and 4C. However, for the first time since 2011 mule deer doe licenses are available in units 3B1, 3B2, 4D, 4E and 4F.

"Mule deer numbers are above the population objective and long-term average in certain areas, therefore a limited number of antlerless mule deer licenses are available in these units," Williams said.

The number of licenses available for 2016 includes 2,550 for antlered mule deer, an increase of 675 from last year; 928 for muzzleloader, an increase of 100 from last year; and 225 restricted youth antlered mule deer, an increase of 38 from last year.

North Dakota's 2016 deer gun season opens Nov. 4 at noon and continues through Nov. 20. [Online applications](#) for regular deer gun, youth, muzzleloader, and resident gratis and nonresident landowner licenses will be available May 4 through the Game and Fish Department's website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Also, paper applications will be at vendors throughout the state by mid-May. The deadline for applying is June 1.

New this year is an option that allows unsuccessful applicants to donate their refund to the Game and Fish Department Private Land Open to Sportsmen or PLOTS program. The donation is not tax deductible. Proceeds from this donation fund would be focused on deer habitat and hunting access to deer habitat. The North Dakota State Legislature created this option in 2015 with nearly unanimous support.

State law requires residents age 18 or older to prove residency on the application by submitting a valid North Dakota driver's license number or a North Dakota nondriver photo identification number. Applications cannot be processed without this information.

Gratis applications received on or before the regular deer gun lottery application deadline (June 1) will be issued an any-legal-deer license. As per state law, gratis applications received after the deadline will be processed based on licenses remaining after the lottery – generally only antlerless licenses remain.

Total deer licenses are determined by harvest rates, aerial surveys, depredation reports, hunter observations, input at advisory board meetings, and comments from the public, landowners and department field staff.