

NDG&F January 9th Newsletter

Habitats Workshop Feb. 9-10 in Bismarck

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department and Missouri River Educational Cooperative are sponsoring a wildlife conservation and resource management workshop for teachers, environmental educators and anyone else who works with youth.

“Habitats of North Dakota” is scheduled Feb. 9-10 at the Game and Fish Department’s main office in Bismarck. The five North Dakota habitats – wetlands, badlands, prairie, woodlands and riparian – will be studied, with the North Dakota Studies Habitats curriculum used as textbooks.

The fast-paced workshop offers a hands-on approach educators can use in their classrooms and on field trips, and in discussing classroom and curriculum integration. All supplies are provided. Preregistration is required.

Curriculum materials are suitable for both elementary and secondary teachers. Workshop instructor Sherry Niesar has a master’s degree in wildlife science and teaches many educator workshops in the region.

To register for the workshop, contact Carrie Ziegler, MREC, at 701-751-4041, or email carrie.ziegler@mrecnd.org. A \$100 registration fee for materials, lunch and refreshments is required.

To register for graduate credit, visit UND’s website at <http://educators.und.edu/workshop/?id=TL.HABITATS.ND>. The cost for graduate credit is \$50.

Nonresident Any-Deer Bow Licenses

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will have 382 any-deer bow licenses available to nonresidents in 2017.

The deadline for applying is March 1. A lottery will be held if more applications are received than licenses available. Any remaining licenses after March 1 will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants can apply together as a party. A separate check is required for each application. The [nonresident any-deer bow application](#) is available at the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov. The application must be printed and sent in to the department.

The number of nonresident any-deer bow licenses available is 15 percent of the previous year’s mule deer gun license allocation. The Game and Fish Department issued 2,550 mule deer licenses in the 2016 deer gun license lottery.

Wildlife Feeding Concerns

North Dakota is experiencing winter conditions that have many citizens concerned about stress on wildlife.

Kevin Kading, private land section leader for the State Game and Fish Department, said harsh winters often generate conversations and questions about feeding wildlife, particularly deer and pheasants.

“The Department does not promote winter feeding and does not have a winter feeding program,” Kading said. “We recognize that many people care deeply about wildlife and it can be difficult to watch nature play out, but feeding operations, good intentions and all, can actually do more harm for wildlife than good.”

Supplemental winter feeding does not benefit entire populations, Kading said. Individual and smaller groups of animals may receive some benefit from feeding, but feeding can also result in negative consequences such as congregating animals, drawing animals in from long distances and away from good winter cover, increased predation, disease concerns, spreading of noxious weeds and feeding costs.

“Poorly conducted feeding operations can actually kill more animals than what they are intended to help,” Kading said. “For example, feeding animals on or near roadways can lead to wildlife-vehicle collisions. Providing feed such as corn, which is high in sugar and starch, can lead to acidosis, ruminantis and ultimately death. And even individuals with the best of intentions, who start feeding wildlife early in winter, often end up quitting due to the amount of time and expense required, which can result in the loss of animals that become dependent on the feed.”

Wildlife rarely die from starvation in severe winters, Kading said, but it’s not uncommon for animals to die in these extreme conditions from exposure to cold weather. Therefore, Game and Fish promotes habitat development that can provide critical winter thermal cover, and food plots should be considered and planted near adequate winter cover.

“One alternative to feeding wildlife is for individuals, landowners or wildlife clubs to plow open areas of harvested grain or row crop fields to allow animals to gain access to waste grains,” Kading said. “These areas are also the first areas to melt off when we get a break in the weather.”