

NDG&F February 13th Newsletter

Spring Light Goose Season

North Dakota's [spring light goose season](#) opens Feb. 18 and continues through May 14.

Residents must have a valid current season 2016-17 (valid through March 31) or 2017-18 (required April 1) combination license; or a small game, and general game and habitat license. The 2017-18 license is available for purchase beginning March 15.

Nonresidents need a 2017 spring light goose season license. The cost is \$50 and the license is good statewide. Nonresidents who hunt the spring season remain eligible to buy a fall season license. The spring season does not count against the 14-day fall waterfowl hunting season regulation. In addition, nonresident youth under age 16 can purchase a license at the resident fee if their state has youth reciprocity licensing with North Dakota.

A federal duck stamp is not required for either residents or nonresidents.

[Resident and nonresident licenses are available](#) online at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov, by calling 800-406-6409, and at license vendors.

Availability of food and open water dictate when snow geese arrive in the state. Early migrants generally start showing up in the southeast part of the state in mid-to-late March, but huntable numbers usually aren't around until the end of March or early April. Movements into and through the state will depend on available roosting areas and the extent of the snow line.

Hunters must obtain a new Harvest Information Program registration number before hunting. The HIP number can be obtained online or by calling 888-634-4798. The HIP number is good for the fall season as well, so spring hunters should save it to record on their fall license.

The Game and Fish Department will provide hunters with migration updates once geese have entered the state. Hunters can access the department's website, or call 701-328-3697, to receive generalized locations of bird sightings in North Dakota until the season ends or geese have left the state. Migration reports will be updated periodically during the week.

The spring season is only open to light geese – snows, blues, and Ross's. Species identification is important because white-fronted and Canada geese travel with light geese. The season is closed to whitefronts, Canada geese, swans and all other migratory birds.

Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. There is no daily bag limit or possession limit. Electronic and recorded calls, as well as shotguns capable of holding more than three shells, may be used to take light geese during this season.

There are no waterfowl rest areas designated for the spring season. Hunters should note that private land within waterfowl rest areas closed last fall may be posted closed to hunting. Nontoxic shot is required for hunting all light geese statewide. Driving off established roads and trails is strongly discouraged during this hunt because of the likelihood of soft, muddy conditions, and winter wheat that is planted across the state. Sprouted winter wheat is considered an unharvested crop. Therefore, hunting or off-road travel in winter wheat is not legal without landowner permission.

To maintain good landowner relations, hunters are advised to seek permission before hunting on private lands or attempting any off-road travel during this season.

All regular hunting season regulations not addressed above apply to the spring season. For more information on regulations refer to the [2017 Spring Light Goose Hunting Regulations](#) and the [2016 North Dakota Waterfowl Hunting Guide](#).

Youth Grant Application Deadline

Wildlife, shooting, fraternal and nonprofit civic 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 each year, with an average grant of \$1,550.

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 2017 grant is April 20.