

NDG&F February 17th Newsletter

Midwinter Waterfowl Survey

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated 26,360 Canada geese in the state, down from a record 222,890 in 2016.

Andy Dinges, migratory game bird biologist, said above average snow fall and below average temperatures that began in late November continued up until the survey, which created poor wintering conditions for Canada geese and mallards.

"We saw a significant drop in the number of birds that wintered in the state, but that's because wintering conditions were excellent last year, as little snow accumulation and moderate temperatures allowed birds to remain," Dinges said.

An estimated 23,100 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River, and another 700 were scattered on Nelson Lake in Oliver County. Lake Sakakawea had nearly 500 on the lake itself. Dinges said after summarizing the numbers, an additional 3,160 mallards were tallied statewide.

The 10-year average (2008-17) for the midwinter survey in North Dakota is 95,410 Canada geese and 27,310 mallards.

Spring Light Goose Migration Updates

North Dakota spring light goose hunters can track general locations of geese as birds make their way through the state.

Hunters are now able to call 701-328-3697 to hear recorded information 24 hours a day. [Migration reports](#) are also posted on the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

Updates will be provided as migration events occur, until the season ends or geese have left the state.

North Dakota's spring light goose season opened Feb. 18 and continues through May 14.

Residents must have a 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.

Other season information, including [regulations](#), is available by accessing the Game and Fish website.