

## **NDF&G February 1st Newsletter**

### **Website Benefits Hunter Education Students and Graduates**

A website designed to promote the importance of hunter education and gun safety benefits both potential students and graduates, according to Jon Hanson, hunter education coordinator for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

[Hunterexam.com](http://Hunterexam.com) provides a free online hunter education study guide, complete with narration and interactive flash exercises. "This is not an online course and you will not receive your certification, it is only intended for studying the course material and hopefully used as a refresher by all hunters," Hanson said.

Customized with information specific to North Dakota, the study guide offers quizzes with detailed illustrations to help students better understand the question, and uses animations from different hunter education tools. "Interactive features include identifying parts of a rifle or shotgun, adjusting sights and shooting at targets," Hanson said.

Potential hunter education students and graduates are encouraged to establish a free account. "This will allow us to determine its effectiveness by gathering data on demographics and use, and allow the user to take the end-of-chapter quizzes," Hanson said.

To access the website, enter [hunterexam.com](http://hunterexam.com) into the browser, select USA and click on North Dakota.

### **Game and Fish Completes Midwinter Waterfowl Survey**

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey revealed 25,400 Canada geese wintering on the Missouri River in early January.

Waterfowl biologist Mike Szymanski said harsh winter conditions beginning in mid-December pushed most waterfowl out of the state. "A mild fall allowed a significant number of smaller-sized Canada geese and snow geese to move through the state before Thanksgiving, but there was not a pronounced movement of large-sized Canada geese through the area," he said.

Last year's severe winter broke the pattern of more geese staging on the Missouri River in North Dakota, when only 9,700 geese were counted during the midwinter survey. Prior to that, several years of unseasonably mild winter weather allowed numbers of Canada geese using the river through winter to increase.

"Since 2005 a new record was established every year, reaching 175,000 geese in 2008," Szymanski said.

"But geese could not tolerate the severe weather last winter, thus the dramatic drop in numbers."

From 1998 to 2004, the number of Canada geese on the river during the midwinter survey was between 2,000 and 89,000. Prior to 1998, the count was rarely more than 10,000.

Szymanski said it takes years for geese to establish a migratory pattern, and that's why it may take several more years of favorable staging conditions before the record high numbers of the mid-to-late 2000s are reached again. "It's really important for those birds to maintain a positive energy balance," he added. "Otherwise, we may not regain the numbers of geese we had several years ago."

## **Spring Turkey Applications due Feb. 10**

Applications for this spring's turkey season must be in the mail and postmarked before midnight Feb. 10.

Only North Dakota residents are eligible to apply.

Prospective hunters can submit a lottery application online, or print an application, at the Game and Fish Department's website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Applications can also be submitted by calling (800) 406-6409.

Online or phone applications must be logged before midnight Feb. 10.

Application forms are also available at most license vendors, county auditors and Game and Fish offices.

Anyone with an apprentice hunting license in 2009 must pass a certified hunter education course to apply for a 2010 spring turkey license. The apprentice hunting license expires March 31, and the spring turkey season opens April 10