

## **NDF&G February 8th Newsletter**

### **Spring Light Goose Season Opens Feb. 20**

North Dakota's spring light goose season officially opens Feb. 20, but hunters shouldn't expect to see geese migrate through anytime soon.

North Dakota's annual spring season opens in February in case weather conditions allow for an early arrival. 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 through the state largely depend on available roosting areas and the extent of the snow line.

Residents can hunt during the spring season by having last fall's 2009-10 bird licenses. Otherwise, hunters will need to purchase either a 2010-11 combination license; or a small game, and general game and habitat license. Licenses are available from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Bismarck office, the department's website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), or by calling (800) 406-6409.

Hunters must obtain a new Harvest Information Program registration number before venturing out into the field. Those purchasing a license are able to register with the HIP at that time. Otherwise, hunters should call (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.

Nonresidents need a 2010 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 hunting season regulation.

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

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.

The statewide season is open through May 9. 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 the 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.

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. Sprouted winter wheat is considered an unharvested crop. Therefore, hunting or off-road travel in winter wheat is not legal without landowner permission.

All regular hunting season regulations not addressed above apply to the spring season. For more information on regulations refer to the 2010 Spring Light Goose Hunting Regulations and the 2009 North Dakota Waterfowl Hunting Guide.