

## **NDG&F March 12th Newsletter**

### **New Town Anglers Breaks Long-Standing Fish Record**

Royce Johnston's catch March 6 broke a state record that hadn't been touched in 30 years. The New Town angler reeled in a 16-pound, 6-ounce lake trout from the Garrison Dam Tailrace. The 33.5-inch fish broke the old record by more than two pounds. The previous record of 14 pounds, 4 ounces was taken from the Tailrace in 1982.

### **Moose, Elk and Bighorn Sheep Seasons Set**

North Dakota's 2012 moose, elk and bighorn sheep proclamation has been finalized and applications are available at the State Game and Fish Department's website. The deadline for applying is March 28.

A total of 301 elk licenses are available to hunters this fall, 200 fewer than last year.

The number of elk licenses in units E3 and E4 is reduced by 200 due to the successful population reduction effort by the National Park Service in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Jeb Williams, North Dakota Game and Fish Department assistant wildlife chief, said 100 any-elk licenses will be available in units E3 and E4.

"A total of 868 elk – 642 adult cows – were taken out of the park by the reduction effort, and an additional 299 elk were taken by licensed hunters in E3 and E4 during the last two hunting seasons," Williams said. "Based on a recent elk survey, the estimated number of elk in the park is 200."

Williams said the successful elk reduction effort in TRNP during the past two years, and the possibility of similar results this year, will continue to significantly reduce elk numbers in units E3 and E4. Therefore, elk licenses in the future will be limited.

The October and extended seasons have been eliminated in units E3 and E4.

Certain private lands in units E1 and E2 could open to hunting of antlerless elk from Aug. 10 – Sept. 30 if depredation problems occur and other measures are proven ineffective.

A total of 143 moose licenses are available in 2012, a decrease of 20 from last year.

Moose hunting unit M11 has been merged with hunting unit M10. "Moose have dispersed from the Missouri River bottoms in M11 due to flooded habitat conditions caused by the increased water level in Lake Sakakawea," Williams said, while mentioning that a recent aerial survey revealed only 25 moose in the Missouri River bottom survey area, down from a high of 78 in 2009.

A downward population trend in the northeastern portion of the state, which includes hunting units M4 and M8, as well as closed hunting unit M1C, is a continuing concern, Williams said. "No antlerless licenses will be issued for M8, while licenses in M4 will remain the same," he added. "We will continue to closely monitor moose numbers in M4 and consider a unit closure in 2013 if the trend continues."

The bighorn sheep season will have four licenses available, down from six last year. Two licenses are available in unit B4, one license in unit B1/B2, and one license auctioned through the Midwest Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation is restricted to unit B3. The bighorn sheep hunter drawing the license in units B1/B2 is eligible to hunt both units.

To [apply online](#), access the Game and Fish Department's website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Paper applications will be

available on the website (for printing) and at license vendors the week of March 12.

Bighorn sheep, moose and elk lottery licenses are issued as once-in-a-lifetime licenses in North Dakota. Hunters who have received a license through the lottery in the past are not eligible to apply for that species again.

### **Deer Harvest Down in 2011**

As expected, North Dakota deer hunters took fewer deer last fall than in previous years, according to harvest statistics recently finalized by the State Game and Fish Department.

Slightly more than 95,000 hunters took more than 49,000 deer during the 2011 deer gun season. Hunter success was 51 percent, down from 64 percent in 2010 and well below the annual average of 70 percent during the past decade.

Randy Kreil, wildlife chief, said the final numbers were somewhat expected due to low deer numbers in many parts of the state following three consecutive difficult winters, and a past aggressive harvest approach on antlerless deer in units with deer numbers above management goals.

“There is no question our deer population has been reduced because of these factors,” Kreil said. “This mild winter is exactly what is needed for the population to start rebounding. However, hunters should expect a lot fewer licenses this fall.”

The Game and Fish Department is in the process of determining recommendations for licenses in the 2012 deer proclamation. These recommendations will be discussed at the upcoming Game and Fish advisory board meetings, scheduled for the week of April 9-13. The proclamation will be sent to the governor’s office for approval in late April.

A number of population indices determine license numbers, including harvest rates, aerial surveys, deer-vehicle collision reports, depredation reports, hunter observations, input at advisory board meetings, and comments from the public, landowners and department field staff.

Game and Fish made available 109,900 deer gun licenses in 2011, with more than 97 percent issued to hunters.

Hunter success for antlered white-tailed deer was 53 percent, and antlerless whitetail was 53 percent. Mule deer buck success was 54 percent, while mule deer doe hunters had a success rate of 59 percent. Hunters with any-antlered or any-antlerless licenses almost exclusively harvest white-tailed deer. These buck hunters had a success rate of 50 percent, while doe hunters had a success rate of 54 percent. Hunters drawing a muzzleloader license had a success rate of 35 percent, while young hunters during the youth season had a success rate of 48 percent.

### **New CRP General Sign-up, Initiatives Provide Opportunities**

Producers interested in submitting bids to enroll land in Conservation Reserve Program acres have a deadline of April 6.

Kevin Kading, North Dakota Game and Fish Department private land section leader, said applications received during the current sign-up period are ranked against others according to the Environmental Benefit Index.

“Producers can receive assistance from private land biologists with the Game and Fish Department, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever,” Kading said. “Private land biologists can help producers find

the best possible combination of factors that will positively influence their EBI score, and increase their likelihood of being accepted into the program.”

The Game and Fish Department also offers additional incentives and cost-share if producers enroll their CRP acres into the department’s Private Land Open To Sportsmen program to allow walk-in access for hunting. “This is an option producers should keep in mind when applying for the CRP,” Kading said. Expired CRP acres, and land currently enrolled in CRP with an expiration date of Sept. 30, 2012 are eligible. In addition, landowners may also offer new acreage into this sign-up if cropping history and other eligibility requirements are met.

In addition, U.S. Department of Agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack announced on March 2 a new CRP initiative that allows producers nationwide to enroll up to 1 million acres of land in a new CRP initiative to restore grasslands, wetlands and wildlife. This new allocation of acres will be available through a continuous sign-up rather than a general sign-up. North Dakota has not yet received its allocation of acres for this initiative, but information will soon be available through local county USDA Farm Service Agency offices.

Producers can contact any of the following biologists for more information about the general sign-up or the new CRP initiative, or attend a local workshop listed below. Information on how producers can maximize their EBI score is also available on the Game and Fish website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

#### NDGF Private Land Biologists

Ty Dressler, Dickinson – 227-7431 (Stark, Hettinger, Adams, Slope, Bowman)

Levi Jacobson, Bismarck – 328-6647 (Burleigh, Emmons, Kidder, Oliver)

Nate Harling, Devils Lake – 662-3617 (Bottineau, Rolette, Towner, Cavalier, Ramsey, Pembina, Walsh, Grand Forks, Nelson)

Todd Buckley, Williston – 774-4320 (Divide, Burke, Williams, Mountrail, McKenzie)

Terry Oswald, Jr., Lonetree – 324-2211 (Sheridan, Wells, Eddy, Foster, Benson, Pierce)

Renaë Heinle, Jamestown – 253-6480 (Stutsman, Barnes, Lamoure, Dickey, Sargent, Griggs, Cass, Richland, Ransom, Steele, Traill, McIntosh, Logan)

Ryan Huber, Riverdale – 654-7475 (McLean, Mercer, McHenry, Ward, Renville)

Kory Richardson, Lake Ilo NWR – 548-8110 (Dunn, Billings, Golden Valley)

Jon Roaldson, Bismarck – 328-6308 (Grant, Morton and Sioux)

#### Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists

Rachel Bush, Jamestown – 252-2521 ext. 129 (Stutsman, Barnes, LaMoure)

Matthew Flintrop, Dickinson – 225-3811 ext. 118 (Stark, Hettinger, Billings and other western counties)

Matt Olson, Forman –724-3247 ext. 114 (Sargent, Richland, Ransom, Dickey)

Jaden Honeyman, Hettinger – 567-2661 ext. 113 (Adams, Bowman, Slope and other western counties)

Andrew Ahrens, Devils Lake - 701-662-7967 (Ramsey, Benson, Nelson)

#### Ducks Unlimited Conservation Program Biologists

Matthew Shappell, Napoleon – 754-2234 ext. 3 (McIntosh, Logan, Kidder)

Vacant, Turtle Lake – 448-2377 (McLean, Burleigh, Sheridan)

#### Pheasants Forever CRP Landowner Workshops

March 14 – Streeter, Friends Bar and Grill, 2 p.m.

March 15 – Spiritwood, Spiritwood Bar, 2 p.m.

March 15 – Pingree, Pingree Café, 10 a.m.

March 19 – Dickinson, Elks Lodge, 11:30 a.m.

March 20 – Mott, Pheasant Café and Lodge, 11:30 a.m.

March 26 – Dickinson, Elks Lodge, 11:30 a.m.

March 26 – Hettinger, Hettinger Research Extension Center, 1 p.m.

March 27 – Mott, Pheasant Café and Lodge, 11:30 a.m.

#### **Youth Grant Program Recruits Young Hunters**

Wildlife, shooting, civic and fraternal organizations are encouraged to submit an application for the Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunters program, a grant program developed to assist in recruitment of the next generation of hunters and shooters.

Grant funds will 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 North Dakota Game and Fish Department outreach biologist Pat Lothspeich at (701) 328-6332.

The deadline to apply for a 2012 grant is April 21.

 [Tomorrows Hunters Grant Application](#)