

NDF&G May 18th, 2009 newsletter

Water Enthusiasts Reminded of ANS Regulations

Anglers, boaters and personal watercraft users are reminded to abide by regulations that prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species into and within North Dakota.

Robert Timian, chief of enforcement for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said game wardens and fisheries personnel will conduct check stations this summer in an effort to ensure compliance. "It has been more than a year since prevention guidelines became law, so water recreationists shouldn't be surprised by this," Timian said. "Just be prepared and abide by the rules."

ANS include nonnative aquatic animals, plants and diseases that have the likelihood to become well-established if introduced. A good example of an aquatic nuisance species found in a number of North Dakota waters is the common carp, which have caused tremendous damage to the state's aquatic resources over the years.

To comply with regulations, water enthusiasts must:

- Inspect and remove all aquatic vegetation from boats, personal watercraft, trailers, and associated equipment such as fishing poles and lures before leaving a body of water.
- Remove all aquatic vegetation from bait containers when leaving the water.
- Drain all water from boats and other watercraft, including bilges, livewells and motors, at the ramp site before leaving a water body. The only exception is livewells used to transport game fish or baitfish, and potable water and sewage water which must be disposed of properly.
- Not transport live aquatic bait or aquatic vegetation into North Dakota. All water must be drained from watercraft upon entering the state.
- Not dump bait into any North Dakota water.
- Not introduce any fish into North Dakota water.
- Not transport nongame fish (other than legal live baitfish) in water away from the water body in which they were taken.

Anyone witnessing an ANS infraction can report the violation by calling a local game warden, or the Report All Poachers hotline at (800) 472-2121.

More ANS information can be found in the 2008-10 North Dakota Fishing Guide and by accessing the Game and Fish Department website at gf.nd.gov.

Safe Boating Week Emphasizes Need for Life Jackets

National Safe Boating Week is a good time to remind water recreationists to wear a life jacket.

Nancy Boldt, boat and water safety coordinator for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said there's no safety substitute for wearing a personal flotation device while recreating on public waters.

"The facts prove that failure to wear a PFD is the main reason people lose their lives in boating accidents," Boldt said. "Consider that each year, about 700 people nationwide die in boating-related accidents. Nearly 70 percent are caused by drowning, and eight of 10 victims were not wearing a life jacket."

Safe Boating Week, a public awareness campaign held annually in May, emphasizes the need for boaters to wear life jackets. North Dakota law requires Coast Guard approved PFDs in the following circumstances:

- On watercraft less than 16 feet in length, one wearable PFD must be on board for each person.
- Anyone being towed on water-skis, surfboard, or a similar device must wear a PFD.
- No person may operate or permit the operation of a personal watercraft without each person on board wearing a PFD.
- Watercraft of 16 feet or longer must have one wearable PFD for each person on board, and one throwable flotation device.
- On any vessel less than 27 feet in length, all persons 10 years of age or younger must wear a properly fastened, Coast Guard approved PFD.

Boaters are reminded to test life jackets for serviceability and fit. All straps and buckles must be intact and there should be no rips or tears in the fabric.

Missouri River System Boat Ramp Status

Rising water within the Missouri River System means more boat ramps are accessible now than at any time in the past decade.

Bob Frohlich, fisheries development supervisor for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said all of the main recreation areas on Lake Sakakawea will have a usable ramp this summer, and every site but one is usable from the Garrison Dam to the South Dakota state line.

"Lake Oahe is back and anglers will again be able to enjoy many areas that have been high and dry for the past 10 or more years," Frohlich said.

Of the boating access sites south of Garrison Dam, only the Sibley Park ramp south of Bismarck is unusable. However, depending on which way the wind is blowing, some ramps may become temporarily unavailable.

"Lake Oahe boaters need to exercise caution because of floating debris and logs," Frohlich said. "Also, with the high water level boaters need to be aware of the hazards their watercraft can create."

With all of the access sites on Lake Sakakawea usable, fisheries personnel can shift their attention to other locations, Frohlich said. “We are able to redirect our efforts and resources to other lakes and projects that need help,” he added.

Boat ramp status for the entire Missouri River System is available throughout the summer by accessing the fishing link at the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

Trout Stocked in State Waters

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries personnel recently stocked roughly 54,000 rainbow and 7,000 brown trout in more than 50 waters throughout the state.

The catchable trout measure 10-14 inches long, according to Jerry Weigel, fisheries production and development supervisor. Included in the total were 3,500 one-pound rainbows from a state hatchery in Wyoming.

“After the tough winter it is nice to get catchable fish back into many of the state’s proven fisheries,” Weigel said. “Trout lakes across the state were full with water, resulting in very good stocking conditions.”

In addition to the Turtle River, counties with fishing waters receiving trout were:

- Adams – North Lemmon
- Barnes – Blumers Pond, Moon Lake
- Bottineau – Strawberry Lake
- Bowman – Lutz Dam, Holocek Dam
- Burke – Northgate Dam
- Burleigh – McDowell Dam, Owls Pond, Wilton City Pond
- Cass – North Woodhaven Pond
- Cavalier – Langdon City Pond
- Divide – Baukol-Noonan Dam, Baukol-Noonan East Mine Pond
- Golden Valley – Beach City Pond, Camels Hump Lake
- Grant – Raleigh Reservoir, Sheep Creek Dam
- Hettinger – Castle Rock Dam
- McIntosh – Blumhardt Dam
- McKenzie – Sather Dam, Watford City Park Pond
- McLean – Custer Mine, Lightning Lake, Riverdale City Pond, Riverdale Spillway Lake
- Mercer – Harmony Lake
- Morton – Crown Butte Dam, Fish Creek Dam, Gaebe Pond, Harmon Lake, Nygren Dam, Porsborg Dam
- Mountrail – Stanley Pond
- Oliver – Sportsmen’s Pond

- Renville – Glenburn Pond
- Richland – Mooreton Pond
- Rolette – Hooker Lake
- Slope – Davis Dam
- Stark – Dickinson Dike, Belfield Pond, Slater Pond
- Ward – Pathways Pond, Velva Sportsmen’s Pond
- Williams – Iverson Dam, Kettle Lake, Kota-Ray Dam, McGregor Dam

To find out more about North Dakota trout lakes, contact your local Game and Fish office, or visit the fishing link at the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

Creel Survey on Missouri River System, Lake Audubon

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is currently conducting creel surveys on the Missouri River System and Lake Audubon.

Missouri River/Lake Oahe and Lake Sakakawea creel surveys will continue through September, while the Lake Audubon survey will run through ice fishing season. Clerks will be at various places at different times throughout the season.

Creel survey information is useful in assessing angler demographics, harvest and catch rates, catch-and-release information, and angling effort. Anglers are asked to cooperate with creel clerks, and answer questions honestly, as interviews take only a few minutes.

Information obtained is kept confidential.

Boaters Reminded to Report Accidents

Regardless of how safe and cautious boaters are on the water, sometimes an accident does happen. If a boating accident involves injury, death, or disappearance of a person, or if property damage exceeds \$2,000, an accident report must be filled out and sent to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

An accident report involving injury, death or disappearance of a person must be submitted to the department within 48 hours of the occurrence. A boat operator has five days to file a report in cases where damage to property exceeds \$2,000.