

NDG&F May 25th Newsletter

Deer Application Deadline is June 6

North Dakota deer hunters are reminded the deadline for submitting applications for the 2012 gun season is June 6. Hunters are encouraged to apply online at the State Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

The deadline applies to muzzleloader, regular gun, gratis and nonresident landowner, and youth antlered mule deer applications (specifically for antlered mule deer in units 3B1, 3B2, and 4A-4F). The deadline for regular statewide youth licenses is Sept. 1. In addition, the deadline for submitting an antlerless white-tailed deer gun application for ages 12 and 13 is Sept. 1. Hunters are reminded that completion of a hunter education course is required before applying.

Hunters who choose not to apply online can print out an application to mail at the Game and Fish Department website. Applications are also accepted by calling (800) 406-6409, and paper forms are available at county auditors, license vendors and Game and Fish offices.

Anyone mailing applications to the Game and Fish Department is advised to mail early because some post offices use the following day's postmark for mail received after regular hours. The department's online application feature will be deactivated June 6 at midnight.

First Fish Certificate

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is reminding parents to capture their little angler's first catch on a specially designed First Fish certificate.

First Fish has no qualifying weights or measurements. The only requirement is the successful landing of a North Dakota fish. Certificates are available to all who request them, and have ample room for all the important information, such as name, age, lake and a short fish story, plus a blank space for a photograph big enough to contain the smile of the happiest little angler.

Free certificates are available by contacting the Game and Fish Department at (701) 328-6300, or send an email to ndgf@nd.gov

Free Fishing June 2-3

North Dakota anglers are reminded they can fish for free June 2-3.

That is the weekend North Dakota residents may fish without a license. All other fishing regulations apply.

Refer to the 2012-14 North Dakota Fishing Guide for season information.

Biologists Hope Shad Boost Oahe Forage Base

Game and Fish Department biologists stocked roughly 225 adult gizzard shad in Lake Oahe's Beaver Bay in May to help jumpstart a limited forage base.

A good share of Oahe's young-of-the-year rainbow smelt were flushed through the dam during flooding

in 2011, drastically thinning what game fish have to eat. In addition, high flows and sediment-laden water reduced production of other forage fish.

“When we did our fall reproduction survey in 2011, we saw very few young-of-the-year fish in all of the forage species,” said Scott Gangl, North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries management section leader. “We knew going into 2012 that there was going to be a forage problem, at least for the short-term.”

Stocking prespawn adult shad was a collaborative effort with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks fisheries biologists who stocked additional sites on Lake Oahe. “The plan is to give Oahe a little shot in the arm to help boost the forage base,” Gangl said.

If the adults spawn successfully, young-of-the-year shad will be on the game-fish menu by late June or early July.

Gangl said biologists on both sides of the border are trying to mimic the shad boom seen in the mid-2000s when smelt numbers were down. “We watched the shad slowly build over time and they eventually provided a good forage base for game fish,” he said. “We don’t have anything to lose by trying this. It’s certainly worth a shot.”

Gangl said Lake Oahe has a lot of hungry game fish, but the forage shortage is more pronounced on the North Dakota end of the reservoir. “The fish aren’t starving to death, but they are hungry,” he said.