

NDG&F June 4th Newsletter

Family Fishing Days at Bismarck OWLS

Family fishing days return this month to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Outdoor Wildlife Learning Site.

The catch-and-release only fishery is stocked with trout, bluegill, largemouth bass, catfish and other fish species.

Family fishing days are Saturdays and Wednesdays through the end of August. Fishing equipment can be checked out at the OWLS Pond, located adjacent to the Department's Bismarck office, on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Fishing rods and basic tackle are available for use free of charge.

Trained volunteers of Game and Fish staff will be in the area to answer questions and check out equipment, but there will be little or no direct supervision. Children who aren't old enough to get to the pond on their own should not be left unattended.

The OWLS area is fairly primitive, but includes a picnic shelter and benches upon entering the site, and a portable restroom. The area has no running water. Users should bring water, sunscreen, folding chairs and appropriate clothing.

The Game and Fish Department is seeking volunteer instructors to assist with the program. Individuals at least age 18 with an interest in teaching kids to fish should contact the Game and Fish Department at (701) 328-6300.

The OWLS pond is open to fishing year-round during daylight hours. There are no bait restrictions and anglers must practice catch-and-release only. The area is designed for wheel chair accessibility. Pets, glass bottles and alcohol are not permitted on the site.

Anglers Need Current License

North Dakota anglers are reminded to have a current license in possession while fishing state waters.

The 2012-13 fishing license is effective April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013. Anglers fishing without a current license are subject to a fine.

In addition, anglers are reminded this is the first year of a new two-year fishing proclamation. Refer to the [2012-14 North Dakota Fishing Guide](#) for regulations.

Resident and nonresident fishing [licenses can be purchased online](#) by accessing the online services link at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

Pike Stocked, Opportunities Plentiful

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries personnel, along with staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fish hatcheries, recently stocked 2.3 million pike fingerlings in 69 lakes and rivers across the state.

Jerry Weigel, fisheries production and development section leader for the Game and Fish Department, said this year's goal was to stock 2 million fingerlings, not as many as in recent years due to the incredible success pike have had the last several years.

"These were some of the largest pike fingerlings we have ever shipped, given they were only 30 days old," Weigel said. "Stocking conditions were great, with lots of cool water and their favorite food with the large midge hatch that was present all spring."

In addition to these stocking efforts, Weigel said there is good potential for natural reproduction of pike in many of the shallow lakes across the state.

The daily limit of northern pike has increased from three to five in most of North Dakota's water bodies. The increase is due to the record number of pike fishing lakes in the state, Weigel said, and many with record pike populations.

"Wet conditions during the last 10-15 years, and an aggressive stocking program, is the main reason for the many pike fishing opportunities in the state," Weigel added. "We encourage anglers to give pike fishing a try before waters warm and fishing slows."