

## **NDF&G July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 newsletter**

### **Apprentice Hunter Bill Provides an Opportunity for Prospective Hunters**

Individuals at least 16 years of age who have never hunted in North Dakota because they have not taken a hunter education class, now have the opportunity to hunt small game and deer.

State law requires anyone born after 1961 to pass a certified state or provincial hunter education course in order to purchase a North Dakota hunting license. The only exceptions were persons who hunt only on land they own or operate, and youth under age 12 with the appropriate licenses.

However, a new apprentice hunter validation law changes that, according to Paul Schadewald, chief of administrative services for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. "The intent is solely to recruit hunters," Schadewald said. "Other states have done this and have seen positive results."

The 2009 state legislature passed Senate Bill 2165, which in part allows residents and nonresidents who are 16 years of age and older who have not taken the hunter education course to be issued an apprentice hunter validation to hunt small game and deer, but for only one license year.

"If the apprentice hunter enjoys hunting and wants to continue beyond the trial year, he or she must then complete a certified hunter education course," Schadewald said.

An apprentice hunter may purchase the small game license and apply for a deer license, through the Game and Fish Department electronic licensing system.

To purchase an apprentice hunter license online, access the department's website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), click on the online services link and "purchase and print an online license." Follow the regular licensing procedure, and leave the "hunter safety number" field blank as the licensing system is programmed to waive the hunter education requirement.

To apply for a deer license, enter the online services page and click on "apply online." The same procedure applies.

"The system keeps track of the sale and will not issue licenses to the apprentice next year unless they have completed the hunter education course," Schadewald said.

### **Fingerlings Stocked in State Waters**

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries personnel recently stocked a record number of fingerlings in a record number of state waters.

Jerry Weigel, fisheries production and development section leader, said with additional water scattered throughout the state fisheries staff were geared up for a big year.

“The Garrison Dam and Valley City national fish hatcheries came through with more than 11 million walleye, pike and perch fingerlings, and they were stocked in 180 state waters, 50 more lakes than average,” Weigel said.

Considering none of the three species were stocked into Devils Lake or Lake Sakakawea, the numbers are even more impressive. “In years when we have stocked Lake Sakakawea we exceeded 11 million fingerlings, but Sakakawea alone received several million or more fingerlings,” Weigel said. “At the same time, that is when we typically stock 100-120 individual lakes.”

Weigel said the emphasis on this year’s stocking efforts was to get fish into all the new water areas. “In years like this Mother Nature really cranks up fisheries statewide,” he added. “Our thought process is to ensure all lakes, even those with no brood fish, have a chance of producing a very good year-class of fish that is expected in years such as this.”

In addition, this year’s high water mark has allowed biologists to try to create new perch fisheries. “We do this a little different, because we don’t necessarily just capitalize on hatchery production,” Weigel said. “We visit lakes with an overabundance of smaller fish, remove some of the adults that still have eggs that are ready to spawn, and before they lay their eggs stock them into new waters hoping they will reproduce.”

Weigel said it generally takes lakes with stocked pike fingerlings two years, perch 2-3 years and walleye 3-4 years before they become a viable fishery. “These fingerlings are 1.5-2 inches in length,” he added. “They won’t benefit an angler this year or even next, but year three generally bodes well for the angler.”

Updated stocking reports are available on the Game and Fish Department website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). Anglers should access the fishing link.

### **North Dakota Habitats Workshop for Educators**

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department, North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society, and the Bismarck Art and Galleries Association is promoting wildlife conservation and resource management by sponsoring an education workshop for teachers, environmental educators and anyone else who works with youth.

The workshop, “North Dakota Habitats – A Visual Arts Approach,” is scheduled Aug. 19-20 at the Game and Fish Department’s main office in Bismarck. The five North Dakota habitats – wetlands, badlands, prairie, woodlands and riparian – will be studied, with the new North Dakota Studies Habitats curriculum used as textbooks.

The workshop is fast-paced and offers a hands-on approach educators can use in their classrooms and field trips, and in discussing classroom and curriculum integration. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to experiment with different visual arts including clay, water media, pastel and colored pencil. No previous art experience is necessary or required, and all supplies are provided.

Workshop instructors are Sherry Niesar, a volunteer wildlife educator with Game and Fish for more than 20 years, and Paul Noot, a visual arts teacher at Bismarck High School, Sleepy Hollow Summer Arts program and Theo Art School.

A \$30 registration fee is required by Aug. 15. Graduate credit is available through the University of North Dakota. To register, call (701) 223-5986 or e-mail [baga@midconetwork.com](mailto:baga@midconetwork.com)