

NDF&G November 2nd Newsletter

Salmon Spawning Efforts Complete

Fisheries crews have completed their annual salmon spawning operation on Lake Sakakawea after surpassing their egg goal of 700,000 eggs. Altogether, crews collected 724,000 eggs from Lake Sakakawea and the Garrison Dam Tailrace. The average size of Lake Sakakawea females was 6 pounds, the same as last year. The Missouri River females averaged 10.5 pounds, 3 pounds larger than last year.

Current plans are to stock 250,000 salmon next spring; 200,000 in Lake Sakakawea and 50,000 in the Missouri River. Chinook salmon begin their spawning run in October. Since salmon cannot naturally reproduce in North Dakota, state Game and Fish Department and Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery personnel collect eggs and transport them to the hatchery. Once the eggs hatch, young salmon spend several months in the hatchery before being stocked in Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River.

Severe Winter Influences Mule Deer Production

Aerial observations during the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's fall mule deer survey confirmed an expected decrease in production after the severe winter and spring of 2008-09.

Bruce Stillings, big game biologist in Dickinson, said observers who accompanied pilots in fixed-wing planes counted 1,528 mule deer in the October demographic survey. While the buck-to-doe ratio of 0.54 was above the long-term average (0.42 bucks per doe), the fawn-to-doe ratio of 0.74 was the second lowest documented since 1975, and well below the long-term average of 0.95 fawns per doe. The only year with lower fawn production was 1997, Stillings said, following one of the worst winters on record when biologists reported 0.72 fawns per doe.

The fall aerial survey, conducted specifically to study demographics, covers 23 study areas and 285 square miles in western North Dakota. Biologists survey the same study areas in the spring of each year to determine a population index.

Permit Required to Possess Road Killed Deer

North Dakota Game and Fish Department enforcement personnel remind motorists that a permit is required to possess all or parts of road-killed deer, including the skull with antlers. Permits to possess road-killed deer are free and available from game wardens and local law enforcement offices.