

## **NDG&F November 9th Newsletter**

### **Mule Deer Production Remains Low**

Aerial observations during the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's fall mule deer survey indicated production in 2012 was about the same as last year's record low.

Biologists who accompanied pilots in fixed-wing planes counted 1,224 (1,055 in 2011) mule deer in the October survey. The buck-to-doe ratio of 0.37 (0.47 in 2010) was similar to the long-term average of 0.43 bucks per doe, and the fawn-to-doe ratio of 0.59 equaled the lowest fawn-to-doe ratio since the demographic survey began in 1954. The long-term average is 0.92 fawns per doe.

Bruce Stillings, big game supervisor in Dickinson, said mule deer densities in the badlands haven't been this low since 1996. "The three consecutive severe winters from 2008-11 were devastating to our mule deer and pronghorn populations," Stillings said. "These winters not only greatly reduced overall mule deer abundance due to winter-related mortality, but led to poor fawn production. Three years of few young animals entering the population has resulted in an aged population with few prime-aged breeding females."

Winter 2011-12 was one of the mildest on record, but Stillings said it is likely the reproductive condition of the surviving females was still poor after being stressed for as many as three years.

"This summer was extremely dry, leading to reduced vegetative growth needed for fawn concealment and health of the doe," Stillings added. "An aging population and poor fawning habitat conditions resulted in another year of poor fawn production."

According to Stillings, no doe harvest is the first step needed to encourage population growth, and another mild winter is needed to help this year's fawns survive until adulthood.

"A spring and summer with normal precipitation in 2013 would go a long way to promote habitat conditions more favorable for fawn survival leading to population growth," he added.

The fall aerial survey, conducted specifically to study demographics, covers 23 study areas and 293 square miles in western North Dakota. Biologists survey the same study areas in the spring of each year to determine a population index.

### **Muzzleloader Season Opens Nov. 30**

North Dakota's muzzleloader deer season opens at noon Friday, Nov. 30 and continues through Dec. 16. Hunters with a lottery muzzleloader license can hunt white-tailed deer statewide.

Hunters should refer to the 2012 North Dakota Deer Hunting Guide for more information.

### **Advisory Board Meetings Set**

Outdoor enthusiasts are invited to attend a North Dakota Game and Fish Department advisory board meeting in their area.

These public meetings, held each spring and fall, provide citizens with an opportunity to discuss fish and

wildlife issues and ask questions of their district advisors and agency personnel.

The governor appoints eight Game and Fish Department advisors, each representing a multi-county section of the state, to serve as a liaison between the department and public.

Any person who requires an auxiliary aid or service must notify the contact person at least five days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

**District 3** – Counties: Benson, Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, Rolette and Towner

Date: November 26 – 7 p.m.

Location: 110 Main Street, Sheyenne

Host: Wild Things Taxidermy Shop

Contact: Greg Kolstad, 996-2282

Advisory board member: Tom Rost, Devils Lake, 662-8620

**District 7** – Counties: Burleigh, Emmons, Grant, Kidder, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, Sheridan and Sioux

Date: November 26 – 7 p.m.

Location: Game and Fish Headquarters, Bismarck

Host: Lewis and Clark Wildlife Club

Contact: Mike McEnroe, 224-8335

Advisory board member: Frank Kartch, Bismarck, 516-2156

**District 2** – Counties: Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, Mountrail, Pierce, Renville and Ward

Date: November 27 – 7 p.m.

Location: Mountrail County Fair Building, Stanley

Host: Rolling Plains Sportsmen's Club

Contact: Chris Pulver, 628-4242

Advisory board member: Robert Gjellstad, Voltaire, 338-2281

**District 4** – Counties: Grand Forks, Nelson, Pembina and Walsh

Date: November 27 – 7 p.m.

Location: Canad Inn, Grand Forks

Host: Grand Forks County Wildlife Federation

Contact: John French, 218-230-9101

Advisory board member: Ronald Houdek, Tolna, 262-4724

**District 5** – Counties: Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele and Traill

Date: November 28 – 7 p.m.

Location: Community Center, Hankinson

Host: Hankinson Wildlife Club

Contact: Dave Paulson, 640-8391

Advisory board member: Loran Palmer, Wahpeton, 274-8826

**District 8** – Counties: Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Hettinger, Slope and Stark

Date: November 28 – 7 p.m.

Location: 528 21st Street West, Dickinson

Host: Whiting Petroleum Company

Contact and advisory board member: Dwight Hecker, Fairfield, 575-4952

**District 6** – Counties: Barnes, Dickey, Foster, Griggs, Logan, LaMoure, McIntosh, Stutsman and Wells

Date: November 29 – 7 p.m.

Location: Gladstone Inn, Jamestown

Host: Stutsman County Wildlife Club

Contact: Dave Brandt, 320-2055

Advisory board member: Joel Christoferson, Litchville, 973-4981

**District 1** – Counties: Divide, McKenzie and Williams

Date: November 29 – 7 p.m.

Location: J.D. Electric, Crosby

Host: Crosby Area Sportsmen and Landowners

Contact: J.D. Nygaard, 965-6436

Advisory board member: Jason Leiseth, Arnegard, 586-3714