

NDF&G November 25th Newsletter

Fish Removed from Patterson Lake

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries personnel have applied a chemical to eradicate fish from Patterson Lake and will begin stocking efforts with preferred species next year, according to Jeff Hendrickson, southwest district fisheries supervisor. More than 5,000 pounds of fish, mostly carp, were cleaned up by volunteers Nov. 14. Since then, many more continue to surface and drift toward shore. Rotenone, the chemical used to eradicate the fish, remains active in the water for several days before it breaks down naturally.

Hendrickson said the plan is to manage the lake as a walleye-crappie fishery. "Our hope is that a decent sport fishery could be established in just a few years," he said. The extreme winter of 2008-09 resulted in a significant fish kill at Patterson Lake, located two miles west of Dickinson in Stark County. Spring and summer netting assessments indicated that virtually all of the game fish were killed. "The final outcome of the eradication project will not be known for sure until next spring, but it appears successful," Hendrickson said. Hendrickson said Patterson Lake is the biggest eradication project attempted by the Game and Fish Department. "However, a project of this magnitude couldn't have been completed without the cooperation of many government and private entities," he said. The Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, cities of Dickinson, Belfield and South Heart, Pheasant Country Golf Club, Southwest Anglers and Patterson Lake Cabin Owners provided support. In addition, more than 100 landowners allowed access for Game and Fish personnel to treat the streams and tributaries of the Heart River in the Patterson Lake watershed.

Anglers Must Register to Darkhouse Spearfish

All individuals who participate in darkhouse spearfishing must register with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department prior to participating. Registration is available at the department's website, gf.nd.gov, or through any Game and Fish Department office. North Dakota's darkhouse spearfishing season opens on most state waters Dec. 1, with the exception of Spiritwood Lake which opens Jan. 1. The season extends through March 15. Legal fish are northern pike and nongame species.

Darkhouse spearing is allowed for all residents with a valid fishing license and for residents under the age of 16. Nonresidents may darkhouse spearfish in North Dakota if they are from states that offer the same privilege for North Dakota residents. Minnesota was recently added to the list of states that allow nonresidents to darkhouse spearfish.

Last year, nearly 1,400 anglers registered to darkhouse spearfish. More than 700 participated, spearing more than 5,000 northern pike. Island Lake (Rolette County), Devils Lake (Ramsey/Benson County) and Morrison Lake (Ramsey County) were the top three lakes for harvest. Anglers should take note that some darkhouse spearfishing lakes suffered winterkill in 2008-09. These lakes may not have a viable pike population this winter, and will take two to three years before they produce catchable pike.

Lakes open to darkhouse spearing are:

Barnes County – Eckelson Lake Complex

Benson County – Devils Lake; Silver Lake

Bowman County – Gascoyne Lake (winterkill); Kalina Dam; Spring Lake
Burke County – Powers Lake
Emmons County – Rice Lake
Foster County – Juanita Lake
Grant County – Heart Butte Reservoir (Lake Tschida)
Griggs County – Sibley Lake
Hettinger County – Blickensderfer Dam
Kidder County – Alkaline Lake; Cherry Lake (winterkill); Etta/Alkaline Complex; Helen Lake; Horsehead Lake; Lake Josephine; Lake Williams; Round Lake
LaMoure County – Diamond Lake; Flood Lake
Logan County – Beaver Lake (winterkill)
McHenry County – Buffalo Lodge Lake
McIntosh County – Clear Lake; Coldwater Lake; Dry/Goose Lake
McLean County – Crooked Lake (winterkill); Long Lake
Mountrail County – Stanley Reservoir (winterkill)
Nelson County – Lake Laretta; Stump Lake
Ramsey County – Cavanaugh Lake; Devils Lake; Lake Irvine; Morrison Lake; Sweetwater Lake
Renville County – Lake Darling
Richland County – Grass Lake
Rolette County – Carpenter Lake; Island Lake (winterkill); School Section Lake (winterkill)
Sargent County – Buffalo Lake
Stark County – Patterson Lake (Dickinson Reservoir) (winterkill)
Steele County – North Tobiasson Lake
Sheridan County – Coal Mine Lake (winterkill)
Stutsman County – Mallard Marsh; Spiritwood Lake; Sunday Lake
Williams County – Cottonwood Lake; Tioga Reservoir (winterkill); Lake Sakakawea from Garrison Dam to U.S. Highway 85 bridge at Williston and all tributaries upstream to the first vehicular crossing; Lake Oahe from the South Dakota border to MacLean Bottoms boat ramp and all tributaries upstream to the first vehicular crossing.