

NDG&F April 11th Newsletter

Hunting Guide and Outfitter Test Set for May 7

The next guide and outfitter written examination is May 7 at 1 p.m. at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department office in Bismarck. The test is given periodically to anyone interested in becoming a hunting guide or outfitter in the state.

In addition to passing a written exam, qualifications for becoming a guide include a background check for criminal and game and fish violations; certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and standard first aid; and employment by or contract with a licensed hunting outfitter.

Hunting outfitter eligibility requirements include the guide qualifications, as well as an individual must have held a hunting guide license for two years; and must have proof of liability insurance.

Interested individuals are required to preregister by calling the Game and Fish Department's enforcement office at 328-6604.

Bighorn Sheep Population Holding Steady

North Dakota's bighorn sheep population has remained stable despite three consecutive severe winters, according to Brett Wiedmann, big game biologist for the State Game and Fish Department in Dickinson.

The 2010 annual bighorn sheep survey, which covers a period from April 2010 to March 2011, revealed a minimum of 283 bighorn sheep in western North Dakota, a 4 percent reduction from 2009 but still 3 percent higher than the five-year average. The northern badlands' population was down just 1 percent from last year, while the southern badlands' population, which has been struggling for several years, saw a 15 percent decrease.

In total, biologists counted 95 rams, 158 ewes and 30 lambs. There are also approximately 30 bighorn sheep in the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Game and Fish Department biologists count and classify all bighorns in late summer and then recount lambs in March to determine lamb recruitment.

Lamb recruitment was low at only 19 percent, Wiedmann said, which is well below average in North Dakota. Sixty-seven percent of the lambs counted last summer survived the winter. "Due to deep snows that arrived in November, spring survey conditions this year were the most difficult we've had in many years," he added. "Herds were scattered and broken into very small bands, which made getting a complete lamb count nearly impossible. Consequently, we likely missed a few lambs as population modeling predicted 46 lambs instead of the 30 that were actually observed."

While lamb recruitment was low, the adult population remained stable. In addition, the ram-to-ewe ratio remained stable at 60 rams per 100 ewes.

“Although last winter’s frigid conditions arrived early and stayed late, we only lost three radio-marked adult bighorns all winter,” Wiedmann said. “It just goes to show how tough these animals are.”

There were six bighorn sheep licenses issued in 2011, the same number as 2010.

NASP State Tournament Held, Continues to Grow

The number of students participating in North Dakota’s National Archery in the Schools Program has more than doubled in one year, based on the number of student archers who competed in this year’s state tournament.

Jeff Long, NASP coordinator for the State Game and Fish Department, said 295 student archers participated in the 2011 state tournament, compared to 143 in 2010. North Dakota’s first NASP state tournament was held in 2009, when 71 student archers participated.

“All total, 11,800 arrows were released during this year’s state tournament,” Long said. “I couldn’t be happier with how this program has taken off in only a few short years.”

NASP is a national program that helps schools incorporate archery target shooting into physical education curriculums. The Game and Fish Department provides grants to help schools purchase equipment.

The 2011 state tournament was held March 26 at the VFW All Seasons Arena in Bismarck.

The first-place team and top five boys and girls in each division qualify for the national tournament in Louisville, Kentucky. Additionally, teams that achieve minimum scores set by NASP also qualify for the national tournament.

Griggs County Central and Medina claimed top honors in the team competitions. Middle (grades 7-8) and high school (grades 9-12) students from Griggs County Central won their respective divisions, while Medina students finished first in the elementary school (grades 4-6) competition. These teams received a trophy and five dozen arrows, and will receive \$2,500 in travel assistance if the school decides to send the team to nationals. In addition, Long will be travelling to Griggs County Central and Medina later this month for a formal awards presentation.

Overall male and female winners Nathan Hazard and Shaylee Andel of Griggs County Central received a plaque and a special edition bow. In addition, each will receive \$750 in travel assistance if they choose to attend the national tournament.

Top individual honors in the high school male and female divisions went to Hazard, and Amanda Young, Dunseith. Middle school honors went to Andel and fellow Griggs County Central student Ben Halverson. The elementary student winner in the boys division was Cole Nelson, Burke Central, and taking top honors in the elementary girls division was Kayce Saxberg, Griggs County Central.

Also qualifying for the national tournament were:

High school boys – Lucas Nadeau and Mason Blacksmith of Dunseith, and Jacob Langlie and Kody Grandalen of Mayville-Portland-Clifford-Galesburg.

High school girls – Shayla Zaun, Tristin Johnson and Kayla Feiring of Griggs County Central, and Laura Wanzek of Barnes County North.

Middle school boys – Kevin Heine and Jesse Iverson of Griggs County Central, Kesad Schmidt of Devils Lake Central and Chase Conway of Westhope.

Middle school girls – Deena Monson and Holly Salverson of Griggs County Central, Amy Landsiedel of Wing and Lisa Buckhaus of Hankinson.

Elementary boys – Evan Trolstad and Eric Salverson of Griggs County Central, Seth Bentz of Wing and Michael McKenna of North Sargent.

Elementary girls – Ashley Wolf and Samantha Staloch of Medina, Mya Steinwehr of Hankinson and Morgan Ehnert of Devils Lake Central.

Anglers, Boaters Must Follow Aquatic Nuisance Species Rules

Over the past three years, North Dakota has implemented several new rules intended to reduce the risk of aquatic nuisance species transfer throughout the state.

The most recent of those rules, according to State Game and Fish Department fisheries chief Greg Power, is a requirement that anglers in all cases must now drain their boat's livewell when leaving a lake or river. Previously, anglers could maintain water in their livewell if they were transporting fish.

"This new rule went into effect last October," Power said, "but this spring is the first time most anglers will be affected by it."

Pulling plugs and draining water from livewells, baitwells and bilges must be conducted within the access site, which includes parking lots immediately adjacent to the ramp. Anglers should continue to practice proper boat ramp etiquette, Power said, by pulling their boat away from the ramp during busy times to complete all needed draining.

Anglers may use ice in a container to transport fish away from a water body, Power noted.

Also part of the October 2010 rule change is that traditional bait buckets and/or any container of five gallons or less in volume can be used to transport legal live baitfish and other bait in water. All other fish species, including game fish, may not be held in water and/or transported in bait buckets/containers when away from a water body. Game fish cannot be held in water in any container (e.g. cooler) on shore, unless the water is from melting ice only.

Other laws in place since 2008 include:

- All water and aquatic vegetation must be drained or removed from watercraft prior to entering the state. No live aquatic organisms (e.g. fathead minnows, frogs, leeches, etc.) may be imported into the state.
- All aquatic vegetation must be removed from boats, personal watercraft, trailers and associated equipment such as fishing poles/lures before leaving a body of water. Although time out of water needed to remove aquatic vegetation is allowed, all equipment must be free of vegetation when transporting watercraft and equipment away from a boat ramp, access area or shoreline. This includes livewells and other internal compartments, and containers such as bait buckets.

Reference the ANS link on the Department's website at <http://gf.nd.gov/fishing/ans-faqs.html> for additional information.