

## **NDG&F May 16th Newsletter**

### **Paddlefish Snagging Season Closed to Additional Harvest**

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department announced today that the state's 2011 paddlefish snagging harvest season has been closed to protect the paddlefish population level.

The 2010-12 fishing proclamation allows for the Game and Fish Department director to close the snagging season early if it appears more than 1,000 paddlefish will be harvested. If the season had remained open through the intended closing date of May 31, the harvest cap of 1,000 fish would have been exceeded substantially, putting additional pressure on the existing population.

An additional snag-and-release season will run for a seven-day period from Wednesday, May 18 through Tuesday, May 24. Effective Wednesday, May 18 snag-and-release is legal only in that area of the Missouri River starting on the north shore from the Confluence boat ramp then east (downstream) one-half mile, and that area of the Missouri River starting on the south shore from the Confluence with the Yellowstone River then east (downstream) one-half mile. Both areas have boundary signs.

Paddlefish snaggers with an unused paddlefish tag can continue snagging, but must release all fish immediately. Snaggers who already used their tag on a harvested paddlefish are not allowed to participate in the additional snag-and-release period. For potential new snaggers, existing paddlefish tag vendors still have tags available for sale during this additional snag-and-release season.

Paddlefish snagging is allowed only from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. (CDT) during each day of the additional seven-day season. No gaffs may be used.

### **Safe Boating Week Emphasizes Need for Life Jackets**

A public awareness campaign held annually in May emphasizes the need for boaters to wear life jackets.

Nancy Boldt, boat and water safety coordinator for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said this year's National Safe Boating Week is May 21-27. "This annual week-long event reinforces the importance of personal flotation devices," Boldt said. "Facts prove there is no safety substitute for wearing a life jacket while recreating on public waters."

Failure to wear a PFD is the main reason people lose their lives in boating accidents. Boldt said each year, about 700 people nationwide die in boating-related accidents. Nearly 70 percent are caused by drowning, and eight of 10 victims were not wearing a life jacket.

North Dakota law requires Coast Guard approved PFDs in the following circumstances:

- On watercraft less than 16 feet in length, one wearable PFD must be on board for each person.
- Anyone being towed on water-skis, surfboard, or a similar device must wear a PFD.
- No person may operate or permit the operation of a personal watercraft without each person on board wearing a PFD.
- Watercraft of 16 feet or longer must have one wearable PFD for each person on board, and one throwable flotation device.
- On any vessel less than 27 feet in length, all persons 10 years of age or younger must wear a properly fastened, Coast Guard approved PFD.

Boaters are reminded to test life jackets for serviceability and fit. All straps and buckles must be intact and there should be no rips or tears in the fabric.

### **Boats Need 2011-13 Registration**

Boat owners are reminded that 2011 is the first year of the new three-year registration period. All boat registrations with an orange decal expired Dec. 31, 2010.

The new registration cycle runs through Dec. 31, 2013. New blue and white boat validation stickers have the expiration year of 13 prominently readable in the middle of the sticker.

For information on how to attach the number and validation sticker to a boat, refer to page 10 of the [2011-13 North Dakota Boat and Water Safety Guide](#).

Renewal notices for the current three-year period were mailed in December. Boat owners who have not received a renewal notice, or have misplaced it, should contact the department by email at [ndgf@nd.gov](mailto:ndgf@nd.gov), or call (701) 328-6335.

[Boat registrations](#) can be renewed online at the department's website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), by accessing the online services link, and "watercraft registration and renewals" under the watercraft heading.

Also, anyone buying a new or used watercraft can register online and generate a 10-day temporary permit that is valid until the registration is processed.

### **Lake Sakakawea Navigation Beacons Scheduled for Removal**

About a dozen navigation light structures in place along Lake Sakakawea's shoreline for decades are scheduled for removal over the next 12-18 months as they become inoperable.

Designed to serve as navigational aids, these beacons no longer serve their original purpose. Wave and ice action have greatly eroded many of the foundations of the light beacons, and proper operation and

maintenance is difficult to justify, given the electronic aids that most boaters have in cellular phones and global positioning systems.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department, local U.S. Army Corp of Engineers officials and the U.S. Coast Guard agree the time has come for their eventual removal.

Over the next two summers Game and Fish staff will remove the lights and their bolted concrete bases at Mallard Island, Fort Stevenson State Park, Sakakawea Bay, Beulah Bay, Nishu Bay, Red Butte Bay, Little Missouri, Independence Point, Bear Den Bay, Little Knife Bay, Tobacco Garden Bay and Lewis and Clark State Park.