

NDG&F June 6th Newsletter

White-tailed Deer Study Helps Biologists

A study of white-tailed deer in the Wing-Tuttle area has provided North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists with invaluable information.

Bill Jensen, Department big game biologist, said research focuses on seasonal movements, mortality factors, habitat use, population biology and other management questions.

The study involved radio-collaring 62 adult females. In addition, four adult males, eight female fawns and six male fawns were ear-tagged. "We contacted area landowners in the fall of 2009 to let them know what we would be doing," Jensen said.

In mid-February 2010, 48 deer were fitted with collars and tagged, and another 14 were collared this past winter. As of April 1, South Dakota State University graduate student Brian Schaffer has made more than 3,700 relocations of these radio-collared deer.

Some of the information biologists have obtained centers on general movement, and Jensen said the average distance deer move from summer to winter habitat is 3.8 miles. "The farthest a deer traveled was 17 miles, and the flip side of that is some didn't move much as they stayed in the immediate vicinity of where they were collared," he said.

A total of 16 radio-collared deer have died; one from starvation, four were harvested by hunters, three from vehicles, two from predation and six from undetermined causes. "The two confirmed deaths by coyote predation had been observed on deer with prior physical problems," Jensen said. "Both of these deer were in very poor physical condition, one with an injured front leg and one with a fractured hind leg. These two were observed in progressively declining physical condition for four to six weeks prior to their death. This shows the value of having someone visually monitor the condition of deer."

Schaffer was able to monitor the reproductive performance of 36 radio-collared adult females during the summer and fall of 2010; 26 were observed with one fawn and 10 had two fawns. Visual observations were not made on the remaining 12 does and their reproductive performance is unknown. The study will continue through December, with a final report expected next summer.

Idle-Speed-Only Zone Established on Missouri River

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has established an idle-speed-only restriction for boaters on the Missouri and Heart rivers in the Bismarck-Mandan area.

At a special meeting Tuesday morning, both Burleigh and Morton county commissions voted to recommend that Game and Fish establish the idle-speed zones, for safety reasons and to protect private property.

Game and Fish Director Terry Steinwand approved the official proclamation Tuesday afternoon, putting the idle-speed restriction in effect immediately. Because of much higher flows expected to come down

the river from Garrison Dam for an extended time, the idle-speed zone will be in place until further notice, according to Game and Fish enforcement chief Robert Timian.

On the Missouri River, the north boundary of the idle-speed-only zone is the power lines approximately 1,000 feet south of the Steckel (Wilton) boat ramp, about 23 river miles north of Bismarck. The southern boundary is the MacLean Bottoms Wildlife Management Area boat ramp about 19 miles south of Bismarck.

The idle-speed-only zone on the Heart River starts at the confluence of the Heart and Missouri south of Mandan, and extends upstream to the ND Highway 6 bridge.

Idle-speed-only is defined as operating a boat or other watercraft at the slowest possible speed necessary to maintain steerage.

Complete text of the Emergency Special Boating Rule is noted below:

Under authority of North Dakota Century Code 20:1-13-12(3) the undersigned Director of the North Dakota Game & Fish Department, makes the following emergency idle speed only rule to be effective immediately and until rescinded for all vessels operating on the Missouri River between a point north of Bismarck where power lines cross the Missouri River approximately 1000 feet south of Steckel boat ramp North of Bismarck at latitude -100.939813 longitude 47.126875 then south to the McLean Bottoms Wildlife Management Area boat ramp at latitude -100.635125 longitude 46.673215; and for all vessels operating on the Heart River from the mouth of the Heart River south of Mandan, ND at latitude -100.842332 longitude 46.767616 then north and west to the highway 6 bridge west of Mandan, ND at latitude -100.904960 longitude 46.814404. Idle speed is defined as the slowest possible speed necessary to maintain steerage.