

NDG&F August 9th Newsletter

HIP Certification Required for Migratory Bird Hunters

With the opening day of early Canada goose season set for Aug. 15, migratory game bird hunters are reminded to register with the Harvest Information Program prior to hunting in North Dakota.

HIP certification is required for all migratory bird hunters, regardless of age, before hunting ducks, geese, swans, mergansers, coots, cranes, snipe, doves or woodcock.

Hunter compliance is essential in order to obtain reliable national and regional estimates of annual harvest of all migratory game bird species. These estimates provide information biologists need to make sound decisions concerning hunting seasons, bag limits and population management.

Hunters who purchase a license through the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's electronic licensing system (gf.nd.gov) or instant licensing telephone number at (800) 406-6409 can easily get HIP certified.

Otherwise, hunters can access the department's website, or call (888) 634-4798 and record the HIP number on their fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate.

Those who registered to hunt the spring light goose season in North Dakota do not have to register with HIP again, as it is required only once per year. However, hunters must HIP register in each state for which they are licensed before hunting migratory game birds.

2009 Sharp-tailed Grouse and Hungarian Partridge Seasons Summarized

Not as many sharp-tailed grouse and Hungarian partridge hunters in the field meant fewer birds in the bag in 2009.

Last fall's sharptail harvest was 85,700, down 29 percent from 121,100 in 2008. Total number of hunters decreased 25 percent to 26,600 (18,600 residents, 8,000 nonresidents), compared to 35,400 in 2008.

Birds per hunter decreased from 3.4 to 3.2, and each hunter spent an average of 4.6 days in the field.

Counties with the highest percentage of sharptails bagged by resident hunters were Bottineau, Ward and Williams. Top counties for nonresident hunters were Divide, Stutsman and Kidder.

Last season's partridge harvest was 64,000, down 35 percent from 98,500 in 2008. Number of hunters was down 26 percent to 21,200 (15,200 residents, 6,000 nonresidents), compared to 28,800 in 2008.

Birds per hunter decreased from 3.4 to 3, and each hunter spent an average of 5 days afield.

Counties with highest percentage of partridge taken by resident hunters in 2009 were Ward, Bottineau and Williams. Top counties for nonresident hunters were Mountrail, Divide and Burke.

Statistics are based on a survey of resident and nonresident hunters.

Duck Brood Index Up from Last Year

North Dakota's 2010 fall duck flight is expected to be up 20 percent from last year.

Mike Johnson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department game management section leader, said the fall flight estimate is a combination of the breeding duck survey and the brood survey.

Results from the May breeding duck survey indicated the duck index was up 12 percent from 2009 and exceeded the long-term average by 107 percent.

Water conditions in May were up 5 percent from 2009 and 76 percent from the long-term average.

The mid-July waterfowl production survey revealed the duck brood index was up 14 percent from 2009 and 63 percent above the long-term average. Average brood size was 6.7 ducklings, down 0.4 from last year. The long-term average is 7.1 ducklings per brood.

The water index in mid-July was down 14 percent from last year, but still 28 percent above the long-term average.

The index does not count every water body or duckling in the state. Instead, representative transects across the state are sampled each year. Over time, survey results provide biologists with trend information that allows annual comparisons of waterfowl production in the state.

Producers Have Opportunities with Conservation Reserve Program

Producers interested in submitting bids to enroll land in Conservation Reserve Program acres can receive assistance from private land biologists with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever.

Kevin Kading, Game and Fish Department private land section leader, said applications received during the current signup period will be ranked against others according to the Environmental Benefit Index. The deadline to submit applications is Aug. 27.

“There are things that producers can do to increase their chances of being accepted into CRP, and they can get some help from conservation partners such as Game and Fish, Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited,” Kading said.

Private land biologists can help producers find the best possible combination of factors that will positively influence their EBI score, which will increase their likelihood of being accepted into the program. Kading said some things producers can do to improve their EBI score include planting optimum cover types, offering fields or areas of land that are most environmentally sensitive, conversion of 51 percent or more of an existing monoculture stand to a mixture of native grass species, establishing pollinator habitat, establishing wildlife food plots, or offering land below the maximum rental rate that Farm Service Agency is willing to pay.

In addition, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department offers incentives and cost share if producers enroll their CRP into the department’s Private Land Open To Sportsmen program to allow walk-in access for hunting. “This is an option producers should keep in mind when applying for CRP,” Kading said.

Land currently enrolled in CRP with an expiration date of Sept. 30 is eligible. In addition, new acreage may also be offered into this sign-up if cropping history and other eligibility requirements are met.

Producers should contact the following biologists to schedule appointments:

NDGF Private Land Biologists

Ty Dressler, Dickinson – 227-7431 (Stark, Hettinger, Adams, Slope, Bowman)

Terry Oswald, Jr., Bismarck – 328-6647 (Burleigh, Emmons, Kidder, Oliver)

Nate Harling, Devils Lake – 662-3617 (Bottineau, Rolette, Towner, Cavalier, Ramsey, Pembina, Walsh, Grand Forks, Nelson)

Ryan Huber, Williston – 774-4320 (Divide, Burke, Williams, Mountrail, McKenzie)

Caroline Littlefield, Lonetree – 324-2211 (Sheridan, Wells, Eddy, Foster, Benson, Pierce)

Renaë Martinson, Jamestown – 253-6480 (Stutsman, Barnes, Lamoure, Dickey, Sargent, Griggs, Cass, Richland, Ransom, Steele, Traill, McIntosh, Logan)

John Bauer, Riverdale – 654-7475 (McLean, Mercer, McHenry, Ward, Renville)

Kory Richardson, Lake Ilo NWR – 548-8110 (Dunn, Billings, Golden Valley)

Jon Roaldson, Bismarck – 328-6308 (Grant, Morton and Sioux)

PF Farm Bill Biologists

Steve Stensgard, Jamestown – 252-2521 ext. 129 (Stutsman, Barnes, Lamoure)

Jeff Potts, Dickinson – 225-3811 ext. 118 (Stark, Hettinger, Adams and other western counties)

Matt Olson, Forman – 724-3247 ext. 101 (Sargent, Richland, Ransom, Dickey)

DU Conservation Program Biologists

Heather Shaw, Napoleon – 754-2234 ext. 121 (Emmons, McIntosh, Dickey, Logan, Kidder)

Krista Reiser, Turtle Lake – 448-2377 (McLean, Burleigh, Sheridan)