

NDG&F August 22nd Newsletter

Flooding Affects Shooting Ranges, Moffit to Hold Public Sight-in Days

High water and the after-effects of flooding along the Missouri River will likely keep some public shooting ranges closed throughout the fall.

MacLean Bottoms range south of Bismarck, Wilton Mine range near Wilton, and Lewis and Clark range south of Williston are all closed until further notice.

Schmidt Bottoms range south of Mandan and Riverdale Wildlife Management Area range near Riverdale remain open.

To alleviate congestion in the Bismarck-Mandan area, the Bismarck-Mandan Rifle and Pistol Association, in cooperation with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, will host several public sight-in days over the next two months at their club shooting range near Moffit.

Jon Hanson, Game and Fish Department hunter education and range grant coordinator, said area residents are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity, especially with MacLean Bottoms and Wilton ranges closed due to flooding.

“The only public range available in the area is at Schmidt Bottoms south of Mandan,” Hanson said. “It is relatively small, and will most likely be crowded as hunting season approaches.”

To help minimize traffic at Schmidt Bottoms, Hanson said BMRPA has agreed to provide opportunities for the general public. In addition to a public sight-in weekend already scheduled for Oct. 1-2 (9 a.m. – 4 p.m.), public shooters are invited to BMRPA Sept. 9, 4-7 p.m.; Sept. 23, 4-7 p.m.; Sept. 24, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Oct. 14, 4-7 p.m.; Oct. 22, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.; and Oct. 29, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Shooters must abide by club rules, Hanson said, which are listed on the BMRPA website, bmrpa.org. “All participants are asked to respect the property, in addition to other shooters,” Hanson said.

The BMRPA club range is located near Moffit at 13839 262 St. SE. GPS coordinates are N 46°39'5.4" W - 100°22'30.7". A printable map with directions is available on the BMRPA website.

Shooters sighting in firearms should always wear hearing and eye protection, keep their gun pointed in a safe direction, keep fingers off the trigger until ready to shoot, keep guns unloaded until ready to use, and identify the target and know what is beyond.

PLOTS Guide Available Online, at Vendors in Early September

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Private Land Open To Sportsmen Guide for 2011 is now available online at the Department's website, gf.nd.gov. In addition, PLOTS Guides will be available at most license vendors throughout the state in early September.

The guide will feature about 1 million PLOTS acres, a level reached in 2007 and maintained each year since.

Because the guide is printed in mid-August, some PLOTS tracts highlighted in the guide may have been removed from the program since the time of printing. There will also be some PLOTS tracts where the habitat and condition of the tract will have changed significantly. Conversely, Game and Fish may have added new tracts to the program after the guide went to press.

To minimize possible confusion, Game and Fish will update PLOTS map sheets weekly on its website. Hunters can also view the guide, and find a list of vendors where guides are available, on the website. The PLOTS Guide features maps highlighting these walk-in areas, identified in the field by inverted triangular yellow signs, as well as other public lands.

The guides are free, and available at county auditor offices and license vendors in the state; by walk-in at the Game and Fish Department's Bismarck office; and at district offices in Riverdale, Harvey (Lonetree), Williston, Dickinson, Jamestown and Devils Lake.

The guides are not available to mail, so hunters will have to pick one up at a local vendor, or print individual maps from the website.

Dove Season Opens Sept. 1, Hunters Reminded of HIP

North Dakota's dove season opens statewide Sept. 1, and hunters are reminded to register with the Harvest Information Program prior to hunting.

The daily limit is 15 and possession limit is 30. Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset. The season is open through Oct. 30.

All dove hunters must possess a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate and a general game and habitat license, regardless of age. In addition, hunters ages 16 and older need a small game license. Hunters who purchase a hunting license through the state 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.

Deer Archery Season Opens Sept. 2

North Dakota's deer archery season opens Friday, Sept. 2 at noon, and bowhunters are reminded that additional concurrent season antlerless deer gun licenses can be used with a bow during the archery season in the designated hunting unit.

Bowhunters must follow all regulations of the managing agency when using tree stands on public hunting areas, including displaying the owner's name, address and telephone number on tree stands left unattended on North Dakota Game and Fish Department wildlife management areas.

The Game and Fish Department annually receives inquiries from bowhunters regarding tree stands that are stolen, moved or tampered with. Tree stands are private property and theft constitutes a criminal violation that should be reported to the local sheriff's department.

Bowhunters are also reminded that hunting big game over bait is prohibited on both public and private land in deer unit 3F2.

The archery season is open through Jan. 8, 2012. Hunters should refer to the 2011 deer hunting guide

for season information and regulations.

Landowner-Sportsman Council to Meet Aug. 30

The North Dakota Landowner-Sportsman Council has scheduled a meeting for Tuesday, Aug. 30. The meeting will be held at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, in Bismarck. Meeting time is 7:30 p.m.

Any person who requires an auxiliary aid or service must notify Doug Howie, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, at (701) 328-6333 prior to the scheduled meeting date.