

NDG&F August 29nd Newsletter

Second, Third Deer License Drawing Delayed

Hunters waiting for their second and third deer lottery results shouldn't have to wait much longer. State Game and Fish Department staff worked well into the night on Friday to hold the second lottery drawing and print those licenses, according to Kim Molesworth, administrative services division chief for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

The third lottery for concurrent season antlerless deer licenses is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, Aug. 30, with licenses likely mailed on Wednesday, Aug. 31.

"We apologize for the delay," Molesworth stated. "We know that some bowhunters are anxious to get their concurrent season licenses to use when archery season opens Sept. 2. We're trying to get those out as soon as possible."

Bowhunters who are travelling through Bismarck prior to the opener, and don't want to risk not receiving their license before they leave, can call or email the department's Bismarck office by noon on Wednesday, Aug. 31 to request us to hold their license, Molesworth said. Game and Fish would then hold the license at its Bismarck office until the hunter picked it up.

Contact the Bismarck Game and Fish licensing section office at (701) 328-6335, or email ndgf@nd.gov and write "Hold concurrent season license" in the subject line.

Game and Fish will mail gratis licenses after the third lottery drawing is held.

The second and subsequent lottery drawings were later than usual this year because of the one-week extension of the deer application deadline, and an initial shipment of special license paper that didn't meet specifications, Molesworth said. The second shipment of paper arrived in early August, Molesworth added, and the first lottery licenses were printed and mailed first.

After the third lottery drawing is held, Game and Fish will issue any remaining licenses on a first-come, first-served basis.

Hunters can use additional concurrent season doe licenses during the archery season with a bow; the deer gun season with a bow, rifle, or muzzleloader; or during the muzzleloader season with a muzzleloader. These licenses are for antlerless deer only, and hunters must stay in the unit to which the license is assigned.

In addition, youth deer license hunters ages 14 and 15 may purchase additional concurrent season doe licenses to use during the youth season.

Popular Hunting Areas Affected by Flood

More than half of 72,000 wildlife management area acres along the Missouri River that were once a haven for wildlife and a destination for hunters will likely be devoid of each this fall.

North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists say nearly 40,000 acres – some of the most pristine public hunting lands in the state – have suffered from months of flooding.

Jeb Williams, wildlife resource management supervisor in Bismarck, said 15,000 acres of the Oahe Wildlife Management Area have been inundated with water, essentially making it swampland that is at

least temporarily unattractive to wildlife.

“This area south of Bismarck-Mandan has been extremely popular with deer and pheasant hunters, because it provides some of the best wildlife habitat in the state,” Williams said. “But this year’s flood has changed the dynamics dramatically.”

There are 20-plus WMAs from Williston to south of Bismarck on the Missouri River System, and many were entirely or partially flooded through spring and summer.

Kent Luttschwager, wildlife resource management supervisor in Williston, said hunters will have to adapt this fall, as wildlife populations that have called the Missouri River bottoms home are now displaced because of high water.

“Lewis and Clark WMA is popular with hunters because it offers some of the most prolific wildlife habitat in the region,” Luttschwager said. “But exceptional wildlife habitat has been covered in water for several months.”

Dan Halstead, wildlife resource management supervisor in Riverdale, said the spillway channel running through Riverdale WMA near Garrison Dam was originally 30 yards wide, but is nearly 200 yards wide today.

“But this area was only covered in water for maybe a week as the water quickly made its way back into the channel,” Halstead said. Because of this, he said access is gradually coming around, and will continue to improve through September.

“We are going to have some vegetation issues, but the river bottoms in this area is in better condition than Bismarck and Williston, just because of the prolonged effects of overland flooding in those areas,” Halstead said.

While no one can predict how much property will be lost to this year’s record flood, Luttschwager said it will take time to recover.

Upland Bird Numbers Down

North Dakota hunters should expect to see fewer upland game birds this hunting season, according to Aaron Robinson, State Game and Fish Department upland game management biologist. The season for sharp-tailed grouse, ruffed grouse and Hungarian partridge opens Sept. 10.

“Excessive water has affected reproduction in areas, but there will be some areas good for sharptails,” Robinson said. “But no doubt birds will be harder to find.”

The spring sharptail breeding population was down 30 percent from last year, with numbers falling from west to east. Losses of native prairie and acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program are negatively affecting the sharp-tailed grouse population in North Dakota, Robinson said. In addition, three consecutive harsh winters and a wet, cold spring this year delayed nesting across the state.

Hungarian partridge numbers are also down, and more localized, than last year, Robinson said.

“Scouting areas will be critical to success,” he added. “At this time there is not one area that stands out from the rest. The cover is high, so hunters will need to scout and be willing to move to other areas to find localized pockets of birds.”

This spring’s statewide ruffed grouse drumming counts took a dip of 15 percent from 2010. The number of drumming males increased almost 13 percent in the Pembina Hills, but the Turtle Mountains showed a 28 percent decrease from last year.

The sage grouse and prairie chicken seasons will remain closed in 2011 due to low populations. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Sharptails, ruffed grouse and Huns each have a daily limit of three and a possession limit of 12. Hunters, regardless of age, must have a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate and general game and habitat license. In addition, hunters age 16 and older need a small game license. For further season information and regulations, hunters should consult the [North Dakota 2011-12 Small Game Hunting Guide](#).

Agencies Prohibit Hunting over Bait

Hunters are reminded that hunting big game over bait is prohibited on all state owned or managed wildlife management areas, all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service national wildlife refuges and waterfowl production areas, U.S. Forest Service national grasslands, and all North Dakota state school, state park and state forest service lands.

In addition, the governor's proclamation relating to chronic wasting disease includes a provision that prohibits hunting big game over bait on both public and private land in deer unit 3F2.

Hunting over bait is defined as the placement and/or use of baits for attracting big game and other wildlife to a specific location for the purpose of hunting.

Baits include but are not limited to grains, minerals, salts, fruits, vegetables, hay or any other natural or manufactured foods. It does not apply to the use of scents and lures, water, food plots, standing crops or livestock feeds being used in standard practices.