

## NDG&F September 19th Newsletter

### Large Duck Flight Expected

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's May and July waterfowl surveys indicate hunters can expect a large fall flight similar to recent years. Opening day for North Dakota residents is Sept. 24 for ducks, coots, mergansers and geese. Nonresidents may begin hunting waterfowl in North Dakota Oct. 1.

Mike Johnson, game management section leader, said North Dakota's fall flight – breeding ducks and the young they produce in the state – is based on data from the May breeding duck survey and the July brood survey. "This year's production was down from last year, however, there are strong indications of an exceptional late hatch of ducks this year," Johnson said. "Since our surveys have been completed, observers have been seeing large numbers of newly hatched ducks throughout the state."

The brood index from the Game and Fish Department's annual mid-July survey was down 26 percent from 2010, but was 19 percent above the long-term average. Average brood size was 7.7 ducklings, up 1.0 from last year. The long-term average is 7.1 ducklings per brood. The water index observed during the survey was up 52 percent from last year and 105 percent above long-term.

Results from the May breeding duck survey indicated the duck index was down 9 percent from 2010, but exceeded the long-term average by 85 percent. Water conditions in May were up 31 percent from 2010 and 128 percent from the long-term average.

Resident hunters must possess a general game and habitat license and a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate. In addition, hunters age 16 and older must have a small game license and federal duck stamp.

Nonresidents must purchase a nonresident waterfowl license, including the general game and habitat license, and certificate. Hunters age 16 and older must possess a federal duck stamp. Nonresident youth hunters from states that provide a reciprocal licensing agreement for North Dakota residents, qualify for North Dakota resident licenses. See the [2011 North Dakota Waterfowl Hunting Guide](#) for details.

All migratory bird hunters are reminded to register with the [Harvest Information Program](#) prior to hunting. Hunters who [purchase a license](#) through the state Game and Fish Department website ([gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov)) or instant licensing telephone number (800-406-6409) can easily get HIP certified.

Otherwise, hunters must call (888) 634-4798, or access the department's website, and record the HIP number on their fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate. Those who registered to hunt the spring light goose season or the early Canada goose season in North Dakota do not have to register with HIP again, as it is required only once per year in each state hunted.

Hunters should refer to the waterfowl hunting guide for season regulations including licensing requirements, dates, bag limits, season zones and nonresident hunting zones.

## **Youth Pheasant Weekend Oct. 1-2**

North Dakota's two-day youth pheasant season is Oct. 1-2. Legally licensed residents and nonresidents ages 15 and younger may hunt roosters statewide.

Resident youth hunters, regardless of age, must possess a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate and general game and habitat license. Nonresident youth hunters from states that provide a reciprocal licensing agreement for North Dakota residents qualify for North Dakota resident licenses. Otherwise, nonresident youth hunters must purchase a nonresident small game license.

Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Youth ages 12 and older need to have passed a certified hunter education course. The daily bag limit and all other regulations for the regular pheasant season apply.

An adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter in the field. The adult may not carry a firearm.

See the [2011 North Dakota Small Game Hunting Guide](#) for additional information.

## **Game and Fish Encourages Hunters to Donate Deer**

With the special antlerless deer season in southwestern North Dakota opening Sept. 23, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is encouraging deer hunters to consider donating a deer to the Sportsman Against Hunger program.

SAH is a charitable program that raises money for processing of donated deer, and coordinates distribution of ground venison to food pantries in North Dakota. It is administered by the North Dakota Community Action Partnership, a nonprofit agency that serves low-income families across the state.

This year, in addition to archery season opening Sept. 2, an early antlerless deer gun season runs Sept. 23 - Oct. 7 in units 3E1, 3E2, 3F1, 3F2 and 4F. "We strongly support the donation program and hope that deer hunters will do the same, not only during the early seasons, but the regular deer gun, archery and muzzleloader seasons," Game and Fish Director Terry Steinwand said.

"We have enough funding for the program to grow this year," said Ann Pollert, NDCAP executive director, "and our food pantries tell us they have a demand for all the venison we can provide them."

A current statewide list of participating SAH venison donation processing sites is available by accessing the NDCAP website, [capnd.org](http://capnd.org).

As of Sept. 19, all units open during the early season, except 3E2, still had antlerless licenses available.

## **Hunting from Duck Boats Requires Safety**

Waterfowlers hunting from boats are encouraged to wear properly-fitted life jackets while on the water.

Nancy Boldt, boat and water safety coordinator for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said there are comfortable jackets available with life jackets already built in.

“They are no longer too bulky to wear, you can’t even tell you have one on,” Boldt said.

Eight people have drowned in state waters since 1998 while hunting from a boat, and none were wearing life jackets. Boldt wants to make sure a duck hunter doesn’t become another statistic.

“Capsizing and falling overboard from small boats are the most common types of fatal boating accidents for hunters,” Boldt added. “With all the gear in the boat, including dogs, it can quickly become unbalanced.”

In addition, wearing a life jacket will not only keep the overboard hunter afloat, but also help him or her to slow the loss of critical body heat caused by exposure to cold water.

### **Waterfowl Hunters Reminded of ANS Regulations**

Waterfowl hunters are reminded to do their part in preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species into or within North Dakota.

Waterfowl hunters must clean boats, decoys, waders and other hunting equipment before leaving a water body. Hunters must also drain water from all hunting equipment prior to leaving the water, and are encouraged to brush their hunting dogs free of mud and seeds.

Cattails, phragmites, bulrushes and terrestrial plants may be transported as camouflage on boats. All other aquatic vegetation must be cleaned from boats prior to transportation into or within North Dakota.

Detailed [ANS information and prevention regulations](#) can be found by accessing the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).