

NDG&F September 20th Newsletter

Livewells Must be drained Oct. 1

An administrative rules hearing on Sept. 14 has cleared the way for a regulation that prohibits anglers from transporting fish, including bait, away from a water body in a livewell containing water.

Greg Power, fisheries chief for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said this regulation is intended to help reduce the spread of aquatic nuisance species throughout North Dakota.

“This means beginning Oct. 1, anglers are required to drain water in livewells and baitwells prior to leaving a water body,” Power said.

Anglers have been encouraged to abide by this since April 1, Power said, so it shouldn’t come as any surprise. “We have been stressing this since early spring, and have mentioned several times this will likely be instituted in October,” he said.

One suggestion anglers might want to adopt is to transport fish in or on ice. “Many will clean their fish right at a cleaning station, or will make other arrangements if a station isn’t immediately nearby,” Power said. “Placing fish on ice is the logical way for those who wait to clean their fish at a campsite or until they get home.”

Anglers understand the importance of taking preventive measures to help minimize the presence of ANS in North Dakota, Power said, and have been supportive in the department’s recommendations. “They understand this issue, and the importance of keeping our waters free of any unwanted species,” he said.

Detailed [ANS information and prevention regulations](#) can be found by accessing the Game and Fish Department website.

PLOTS Rules Adopted

[PLOTS Public Use Regulations](#)

New regulations regarding North Dakota’s Private Land Open to Sportsmen acres will go into effect Oct. 1, following a hearing before the state legislature’s administrative rules committee Sept. 14.

The new rules clarify proper use of PLOTS acres, which are private lands open to public access for hunting via agreements between the landowner and North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

The new rules apply to leaving equipment and other materials on a PLOTS area overnight, and also define walk-in access as “an individual travelling by foot,” and specify that walk-in access is allowed only during legal hunting seasons or as otherwise signed.

Activities besides hunting, and public access when a hunting season is not open, have not been provided for in the Game and Fish Department's agreement; thus, they require written permission from the landowner.

This provision means that activities like riding horses for hunting purposes or for pleasure on PLOTS require written permission from the landowner. Permission from the landowner has always been required for motorized vehicle access such as for setting decoys in a field, unless specially designated on the PLOTS sign.

The new rules also address leaving equipment or other provisions in a PLOTS area. Kevin Kading, private lands section leader for the Game and Fish Department, said this means that tree stands or blinds, for example, cannot be left overnight without written permission from the landowner.

Other examples of items that must be removed daily include decoys, firearms and archery equipment, trail cameras, or any type of bait used to attract big game animals.

"Basically, whatever you bring in, you bring out, unless other arrangements have been made with the landowner," Kading emphasized.

Important Reminder for Duck Boat Safety

Properly-fitted life jackets should not be mistaken for comfortable seat cushions. Waterfowlers hunting from boats are implored to wear this important piece of hunting equipment, according to Nancy Boldt, North Dakota Game and Fish Department boat and water safety coordinator.

Fall weather in North Dakota can turn quickly. A gentle, but chilly boat ride before sunrise can turn into a white-knuckle return trip as 40 mile per hour winds toss a small duck boat – loaded with decoys, hunting gear and dogs – around like a toy.

"You get a small boat with a bunch of gear turned sideways and the trouble starts," Boldt said. "Water temperatures in fall are extremely cold and sudden immersion can cause serious problems. Wearing a life jacket reduces the panic and allows a person time to evaluate the situation."

Since 1998, eight hunters have drowned in North Dakota waters while hunting from a boat. None of the victims was wearing a life jacket.

"These accidents are preventable," Boldt said. "We can't urge hunters enough to wear life jackets. You can buy comfortable jackets with life jackets already built in."

Boldt said a life jacket reduces the need to move in the water and insulates its owner. "If you go into the water without one, you're struggling to do what a life jacket is designed to do," she said.

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.

See [ANS information and prevention regulations](#) for additional information.

Youth Pheasant Weekend Oct. 2-3

North Dakota's two-day youth pheasant season is Oct. 2-3. 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 [2010 North Dakota Small Game Hunting Guide](#) for additional information.

Unit 3F2 Bowhunters Reminded of Carcass Regulations

North Dakota bowhunters harvesting a big game animal in deer unit 3F2 are reminded of carcass transportation regulations that are intended to reduce the likelihood of spreading chronic wasting disease within North Dakota.

Because a mule deer taken last fall in unit 3F2 tested positive for CWD, hunters harvesting a big game animal in the unit cannot transport a carcass containing the head and spinal column outside of the unit unless it's taken directly to a state-inspected meat processor. However, the head can be removed from the carcass and transported outside of the unit if it is to be submitted for CWD testing or taken to a licensed taxidermist.

In addition, hunting big game over bait is prohibited within unit 3F2.

Through Nov. 1, successful 3F2 bowhunters from the Bismarck/Mandan area or those traveling through Bismarck, should drop deer heads off at the Game and Fish Department headquarters, or call the department's Wildlife Health Lab at (701) 220-4990 to make arrangements.

Successful 3F2 bowhunters who live outside the Bismarck/Mandan area, or will not travel through Bismarck, should make arrangements by calling the Wildlife Health Lab, or district game warden Jeff Violett, Mandan, (701) 843-7525, or warden supervisor Dan Hoenke in Dickinson at (701) 227-7431.

Additional information regarding carcass transportation and importation regulations can be found in the [2010 Chronic Wasting Disease Proclamation](#).