

## **NDG&F October 31st Newsletter**

### **Mountain Lion Take Nears Early-Season Quota**

A mountain lion harvested Oct. 27 near the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is the seventh cat taken in zone 1. If three more are taken from zone 1 before Nov. 20, the early season quota of 10 will be reached and mountain lion hunting in zone 1 will close immediately.

Deer hunters travelling to western North Dakota are encouraged to keep track of the quota's status in zone 1. If the final lion is taken before Nov. 20, the state Game and Fish Department will notify media outlets announcing the close of the early season in zone 1. Hunters can also check the number of lions taken in zone 1 by accessing the Game and Fish Department website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

The late season in zone 1, with a quota of four, opens Nov. 21. There is no carry-over if the early season quota is not filled.

Zone 1 includes land south of ND Highway 1804 from the Montana border to the point where ND Highway 1804 lies directly across Lake Sakakawea from ND Highway 8, crossing Lake Sakakawea then south along ND Highway 8 to ND Highway 200, then west on ND Highway 200 to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to the South Dakota border.

The mountain lion season in zone 2, which is the rest of the state outside zone 1, has no quota and is open through March 31, 2012.

### **Mule Deer Production Lowest on Record**

Aerial observations during the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's fall mule deer survey indicated production was the lowest since the demographic survey began in 1954.

Bruce Stillings, big game supervisor in Dickinson, said observers who accompanied pilots in fixed-wing planes counted 1,055 (1,613 in 2010) mule deer in the October survey. While the buck-to-doe ratio of 0.47 (0.45 in 2010) was similar to the long-term average of 0.43 bucks per doe, the fawn-to-doe ratio of 0.59 (0.72 in 2010) was the lowest on record, and was well below the long-term average of 0.93 fawns per doe.

"Three straight years of record low production and another severe winter in the forecast makes additional license cuts likely in 2012," Stillings said.

The fall aerial survey, conducted specifically to study demographics, covers 24 study areas and 306 square miles in western North Dakota. Biologists survey the same study areas in the spring of each year to determine a population index.

## **Salmon Spawn Goal Reached**

Fisheries crews have completed their annual salmon spawning operation on Lake Sakakawea after surpassing their goal of 750,000 eggs.

Dave Fryda, North Dakota Game and Fish Department Missouri River System supervisor, said crews collected more than 1 million eggs, the majority from Lake Sakakawea and the remainder from the Missouri River below Garrison Dam. The average size of Lake Sakakawea females was less than 7 pounds, more than a pound lighter than in 2010. The Missouri River females, which are typically larger than the lake fish, were similar in size this year.

“The 2011 salmon spawning run was a success, largely due to the presence of good numbers of salmon throughout the spawning run,” Fryda said. “Even though smaller females meant fewer eggs per fish, we were able to capture enough fish to easily obtain our eggs goal.”

Plans for 2012 are to increase the Lake Sakakawea stocking to 250,000 salmon, with none scheduled for the river below Garrison Dam, Fryda said.

Chinook salmon begin their spawning run in October. Since salmon cannot naturally reproduce in North Dakota, Game and Fish Department and Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery personnel collect eggs and transport them to the hatchery.

Once the eggs hatch, young salmon spend several months in the hatchery before being stocked in Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River.