

NDG&F December 6th Newsletter

Late-Season Hunting Opportunities End Soon

Late-season hunters still have time to get out in the field and enjoy North Dakota's deer, waterfowl, upland game, turkey, small game and furbearer opportunities.

The season for Canada geese closes Dec. 23, except for the Missouri River Zone, which closes Dec. 31. High plains duck hunting continues through Jan. 2, 2011.

Archery deer, sharp-tailed and ruffed grouse, partridge, pheasant and tree squirrel hunting seasons continue through Jan. 2, 2011.

The fall wild turkey season closes Jan. 9, 2011.

Bobcat, mink and weasel hunting and trapping, and muskrat trapping are open through March 13, 2011.

The muskrat hunting season closes May 8, 2011.

The mountain lion season in Zone 2 is open through March 31, 2011.

Fox, coyote, raccoon, badger and beaver hunting and trapping are open year-round.

Winter Anglers Reminded of Regulations

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has already received reports of ice fishing activity in several locations across the state. With many more waiting for ice conditions to improve, anglers are reminded to refer to the 2010-12 North Dakota Fishing Guide, or Game and Fish website (gf.nd.gov), for the new two-year winter fishing regulations.

In addition, anglers can access the department website for an extensive list of fishing questions and answers.

Some winter fishing regulations include:

A maximum of four poles is legal for ice fishing. However, when fishing a water body where both open water and ice occur at the same time, an angler is allowed a maximum of four poles, of which no more than two poles can be used in open water.

Tip-ups are legal, and each tip-up is considered a single pole.

There is no restriction on the size of the hole in the ice while fishing. When a hole larger than 10 inches in diameter is left in the ice, the area in the immediate vicinity must be marked with a natural object, such as a tree branch or tumbleweed, or a brightly painted or colored wooden lath. Markers must be visible from a minimum of 150 feet.

It is only legal to release fish back into the water immediately after they are caught. Once a fish is held in a bucket or on a stringer, they can no longer be legally released in any water. In addition, it is illegal to catch fish and transport them to another water body.

It is illegal to leave fish, including bait, behind on the ice.

Depositing or leaving any litter or other waste material on the ice or shore is illegal.

Any dressed fish to be transported, if frozen, must be packaged individually. Anglers are not allowed to freeze fillets together in one large block. Two fillets count as one fish.

The daily limit is a limit of fish taken from midnight to midnight, and no person may possess more than one day's limit of fish while actively engaged in fishing. The possession limit is the maximum number of fish that an angler may have in his or her possession during a fishing trip of more than one day.

Fish House Regulations

Winter anglers are reminded that any fish house left unoccupied on North Dakota waters must be made out of materials that will allow it to float.

Robert Timian, enforcement chief for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said a popular question this time of the year is if campers qualify as legal fish houses.

"The answer is the same for any structure taken on the ice – if it's left unattended, it must be able to float," Timian said. "If it's not able to float, it must be removed when the angler leaves the ice."

Other fish house regulations include:

Fish houses are not required to be licensed.

Fish houses can be constructed of any size.

Occupied structures do not require identification. However, any unoccupied fish house must have the owner's name, and either address or telephone number, displayed on its outside in readily distinguishable characters at least three inches high.

Fish houses may not be placed closer than 50 feet in any direction to another house without consent of the occupant of the other fish house.

Fish houses shall be removed from all waters by midnight, March 15, of each year. They can be used after March 15 if they are removed daily.

Anglers should refer to the 2010-12 North Dakota Fishing Guide for winter fishing regulations.