

NDG&F March 18th Newsletter

New Fishing, Furbearer Licenses Needed

Hunters, trappers and anglers are reminded that new fishing and furbearer licenses are required April 1.

The dates for the furbearer license coincide with fishing season. The 2013-14 licenses are effective April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

[Licenses can be purchased online](#) by accessing the online services link at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

2012 Deer Gun Season Summarized

North Dakota deer hunters took approximately 34,500 deer during the 2012 deer gun hunting season.

The State Game and Fish Department made available 65,150 deer gun licenses in 2012, and more than 95 percent were issued. Overall hunter success was 63 percent, and each hunter spent an average of 4.4 days in the field.

Randy Kreil, wildlife chief, said this past season's hunter success rate bounced back from an all-time low of 51 percent in 2011. "The 63 percent clip is fairly good, but still below the long-term average of around 70 percent," he added. "In addition, the number of days spent hunting is still higher than usual, which is expected with lower deer populations."

Hunter success for antlered white-tailed deer was 76 percent, and antlerless whitetail was 62 percent.

Mule deer buck success was 81 percent. No mule deer doe licenses were issued in 2012.

Hunters with any-antlered or any-antlerless licenses almost exclusively harvest white-tailed deer. These buck and doe hunters each had a success rate of 64 percent.

The department is in the process of determining recommendations for licenses in the 2013 deer proclamation. These recommendations will be discussed at the upcoming Game and Fish public advisory board meetings, scheduled for the week of April 15-18. The proclamation will be sent to the governor's office for approval in late April.

In addition to harvest rates and winter aerial surveys, the department monitors a number of other population indices to determine license numbers, including deer-vehicle collision reports, depredation reports, hunter observations, input at advisory board meetings, and comments from the public, landowners and department field staff.

Youth Grant Program Application Deadline

Wildlife, shooting, civic and fraternal organizations are urged to submit an application for the Encouraging Tomorrow's Hunters program, a State Game and Fish Department grant program developed to assist in recruitment of the next generation of hunters and shooters.

Grant funds will help cover event expenses, including promotional printing; event memorabilia such as shirts, caps or vests; ammunition and targets, and eye and ear protection.

Past funding has enabled several groups to conduct youth pheasant and waterfowl hunts, while others have sponsored trap and other shooting events, including archery and rifle shooting.

Any club or organization interested in conducting a youth hunting or shooting event can get [more information, including a grant application](#), from the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov, or by contacting outreach biologist Pat Lothspeich at (701) 328-6332.

The deadline to apply for a 2013 grant is April 19.

Report Bald Eagle Nest Sightings

Even though bald eagle nests in North Dakota are more common today than in the past, the State Game and Fish Department is asking for help in documenting locations.

Sandra Johnson, Game and Fish Department conservation biologist, emphasizes the department is looking for locations of nests with eagles present, not individual eagle sightings. "March and April is the best time to see an eagle nest, as eagles are actively incubating eggs," Johnson said. "It may become difficult later in spring to see the nest because of leaves beginning to grow on trees."

Johnson said it is easy to distinguish an eagle nest because of its enormous size. "They stand out because of the large tree and the size of the nest," she said.

Historically, Johnson said eagle nests were found along the Missouri River. "Now they have been observed in more than half of the counties in the state, mostly near streams and mid- to large-sized lakes, but also in unique areas such as shelterbelts surrounded by cropland or pasture," she added.

Johnson estimates the state has around 100 active bald eagle nests, possibly more.

Nest observations should be reported to Johnson at (701) 328-6382, or by email at ndgf@nd.gov. Johnson asks observers not to disturb the nest, and to stay away at a safe distance. "It is important not to approach the nest as foot traffic may disturb the bird, likely causing the eagle to leave her eggs unattended," she said.