

## NDG&F November 16th Newsletter

### Salmon Spawn Completed

Fisheries crews have completed their annual salmon spawning operation on the Missouri River System after collecting roughly 500,000 eggs.

Dave Fryda, North Dakota Game and Fish Department Missouri River System supervisor, said the salmon spawning season was a challenge, with almost all of the eggs taken from Lake Sakakawea. Only a few were collected from the Missouri River below Garrison Dam.

“Dropping water temperature combined with declining daylight are major cues for salmon to spawn, but water temperatures this year were slow to cool and remained among the warmest we have seen through the entire spawn,” Fryda said. “In addition, unlike past years, our staff was unable to access the emergency flood tunnels of Garrison Dam to collect salmon, which annually has been a significant source of eggs.”

Fryda said the average size of Lake Sakakawea females was 11 pounds, the largest documented since the inception of the salmon program. “The average size and condition of females was exceptional, but overall numbers were not what we expected,” he added. “South Dakota and Montana had the same challenges collecting eggs this year.”

However, Fryda said the abundance of young male salmon, also called jacks, was a bright spot. “Jacks are 1-year-old male salmon that become sexually mature, and typically a high abundance of these young males will forecast a good run over the next couple years.”

Fryda said these yearling males are from the stocking of 208,000 salmon in Lake Sakakawea in 2014. The eggs collected this fall should produce 150,000 to 200,000 salmon, and plans are to stock all of those fish in Lake Sakakawea in 2016. None are 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.

### Some Refuges Open to Late-Season Upland Game

Hunters are reminded that several [North Dakota national wildlife refuges](#) open to late-season upland game bird hunting the day after the deer gun season closes.

Arrowwood, Audubon, Des Lacs, J. Clark Salyer, Lake Alice, Lake Zahl, Long Lake, Lostwood, Tewaukon (pheasants only), and Upper Souris NWRs open Nov. 23.

However, portions of each refuge are closed to hunting. Hunters should contact refuge headquarters for information on closed areas and other restrictions: Arrowwood 701-285-3341; Audubon 701-442-5474;

Des Lacs 701-385-4046; J. Clark Salyer 701-768-2548; Lake Alice 701-662-8611; Lake Zahl 701-965-6488; Long Lake 701-387-4397; Lostwood 701-848-2722; Tewaukon 701-724-3598; and Upper Souris 701-468-5467; or visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) and click on "National Wildlife Refuges" for details on each individual refuge.

National wildlife refuges are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Hunters are reminded that use of nontoxic shot is required on all USFWS lands. State regulations found in the [North Dakota 2015-16 Small Game Guide](#) apply. Seasons for pheasant, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge and ruffed grouse close statewide on Jan. 3, 2016.

### **Fishing Tournaments Require 30-Day Notice**

Organizers planning fishing tournaments, including ice fishing contests this winter, are reminded to submit an application along with fishing tournament regulations to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department at least 30 days prior to the start of the event.

The 30-day advance notice allows for review by agency staff to ensure the proposed tournament will not have negative consequences or conflicts with other proposed tournaments for the same location and/or time.

Tournaments may not occur without first obtaining a valid permit from the department.

In addition, the number of open-water tournaments on lakes Sakakawea and Oahe, the Missouri River and Devils Lake are capped each year, depending on the time of the year and location. Sponsors for tournaments on these water bodies must submit their application to the department prior to Jan. 1 to ensure full consideration.

### **Sandhill Crane Season Closes**

North Dakota crane hunters are reminded the season closed statewide Sunday, Nov. 15.

However, the statewide duck and white-fronted goose seasons remain open through Dec. 6, and then duck hunting in the [high plains unit](#) reopens Dec. 12 and continues through Jan. 3, 2016.

In addition, the season for Canada geese closes Dec. 24, except for the [Missouri River Zone](#), which closes Jan. 1, 2016. Light goose hunting closes statewide Jan. 3, 2016.