





# FIREWOOD ALERT!

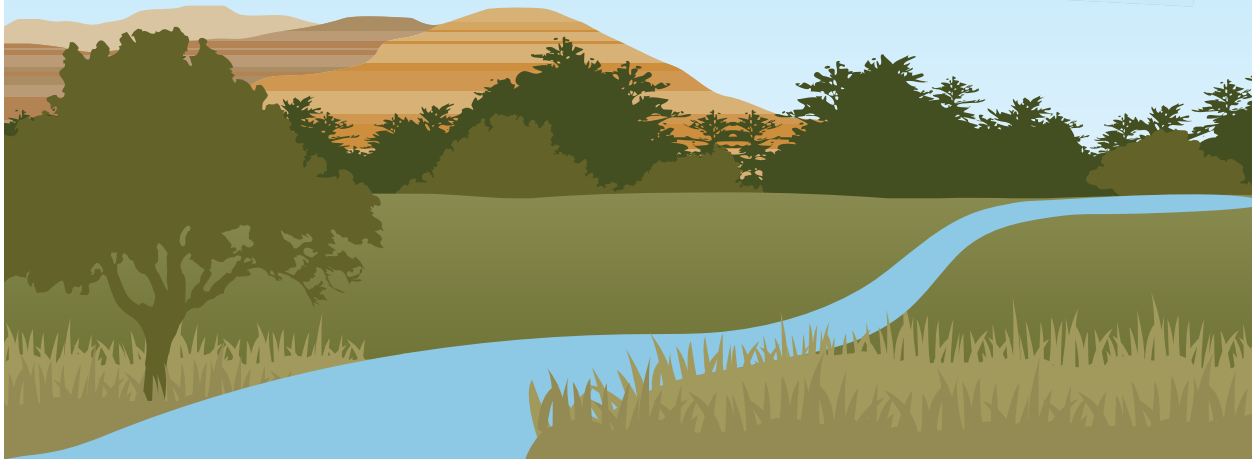
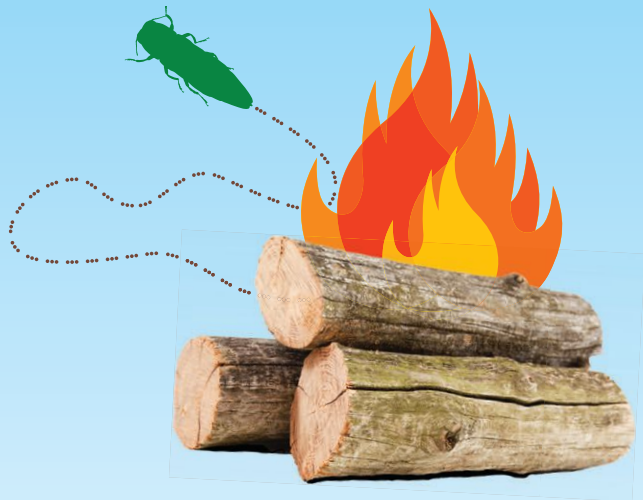
Pests like the invasive emerald ash borer can hitchhike in your firewood. Help slow the spread of pests — don't move firewood.

## BUY IT WHERE YOU BURN IT.

Protect North Dakota's trees!

- ▶ Leave firewood at home — buy local firewood at or near your destination, or collect firewood on site when permitted.
- ▶ Buy or collect only what you'll need, and use it all up by the end of your stay.
- ▶ If you have already moved firewood, use it immediately. Do not take it home with you and do not leave excess firewood on site.

You have the power to protect our trees and forests.



**DON'T MOVE  
FIREWOOD.org**



Doug Goehring,  
Agriculture Commissioner

[www.NDInvasives.org](http://www.NDInvasives.org)

[www.nd.gov/ndda](http://www.nd.gov/ndda)

# NORTH Dakota

Be Legendary.™

## OFFICIAL 2020 HUNTING & FISHING GUIDE



**Information:** Detailed hunting and fishing information can be found at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department: 701-328-6300 or [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

**Accommodations/Guide Services:** Visit [NDtourism.com](http://NDtourism.com) for more information on accommodations, guides and outfitters.

**Official 2020 Hunting and Fishing Guide:** Produced by the North Dakota Department of Commerce Tourism Division, North Dakota Living and Odney. For more information, contact ND Tourism at 1-800-435-5663.

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**Writing Credit:** Scooter Pursley



North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum

## HELLO HUNTERS & ANGLERS

Welcome to North Dakota, your destination for some of the country's best hunting and fishing.

North Dakota's wetlands are home to incredible numbers of waterfowl, and our vast, grassy plains are loaded with upland birds, trophy deer and other big game. Here, your hunting and fishing adventures will become not only stories to tell but an annual tradition. The duck factory, as our prairie pothole region is called, offers some of the best duck hunting in the country, and wild North Dakota pheasants will test you and your dog.

Fishing season never closes, and our lakes and rivers are teeming with healthy populations of fish that can be targeted from boat, shore or icehouse, year-round. With a wide variety of species, from jumbo perch in Devils Lake to trophy walleye in enormous Lake Sakakawea, to giant channel catfish in the Red River and hard-fighting northern pike in prairie lakes and streams, there are game fish to suit your appetite in North Dakota.

While many of our visitors schedule multiple trips to enjoy our wide variety of adventures, October trips can provide the opportunity to bag your limit of waterfowl, pheasants and fish in one memory-packed weekend.

This guide will provide you the details needed to book your next hunting or fishing trip. The state travel guide is an additional resource for excellent accommodations and activities in North Dakota. During your adventure, our healthy, vibrant communities will welcome you with incredible hospitality!

North Dakota is a place to make a great life and a big difference. Enjoy your stay and see for yourself why North Dakota is a state where you can BE LEGENDARY.

Safe travels,


Doug Burgum  
Governor





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Lake Sakakawea

## LAKES, RIVERS AND FISH.

Your new favorite fishing hole could be hundreds of square miles.

### LAKE SAKAKAWEA

Lake Sakakawea is named after the Native American woman who was part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The lake is filled by the Missouri River and has 1,600 miles of shoreline. It's famous for its walleye and northern pike.

### MISSOURI RIVER AND LAKE OAHE

The Missouri River and Lake Oahe form a magnificent stretch of waterway in the south and central parts of the state. This is the landscape that Lewis and Clark traveled on their expedition to the Pacific. And it's a top walleye fishing destination.

### DEVILS LAKE

North Dakota's largest natural body of water is a destination walleye spot that hosts tournaments with America's top professional walleye anglers. Easy boat access and 250 square miles of walleye, northern pike and perch habitat will keep your line busy.



Missouri River



Ice fishing on Devils Lake



Lake Oahe

## THE DETAILS



North Dakota has 450 waters that are managed by the Game and Fish Department. Visit [gf.nd.gov/fishing/where-to-fish](http://gf.nd.gov/fishing/where-to-fish) to learn more about these managed waters, contour maps, stocking reports and species information.

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AND NORTHERN PIKE  
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TROLL, SHORE FISH, JIG  
OR ICE FISH, THERE ARE  
PLENTY OF OPTIONS TO  
CATCH FISH.**



### LICENSE INFORMATION

Copies of the current North Dakota fishing regulations are available at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov) or by calling the Game and Fish Department at 701-328-6300.

### NONRESIDENT FISHING

|                                        |         |
|----------------------------------------|---------|
| Individual Season                      | \$50    |
| Husband-Wife Season                    | \$65    |
| Individual 10-day                      | \$40    |
| Individual 3-day                       | \$30    |
| Paddlefish Tag<br>(limit 1 — all ages) | \$25.50 |

### RESIDENT FISHING

|                                        |      |
|----------------------------------------|------|
| Individual<br>(age 16 or older)        | \$19 |
| Husband and Wife                       | \$25 |
| Senior Citizen<br>(age 65 and older)   | \$8  |
| Paddlefish Tag<br>(limit 1 — all ages) | \$10 |

Fees shown above include certificate and ANS surcharge fees.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Fishing season never closes in North Dakota. The official season date is April 1-March 31. Anglers must remember to renew their licenses each year starting April 1.

Children under age 16 do not need a fishing license if accompanied by a licensed adult.

### KEEP IN MIND

State law now requires that all water is drained from boats and other watercraft when leaving a water body. Plugs must also remain pulled when transporting boats and other watercraft. Further special regulations are in place on the Red River. Visit [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov) for details.

Darkhouse spearfishing is allowed from ice-up through March 15 of each fishing year on all waters statewide, with a few exceptions. Northern pike and nongame fish are the only legal species. Daily and possession limits are the same as for hook-and-line angling. Darkhouse spearfishing is open to residents and nonresidents whose home states allow North Dakotans to spearfish. Darkhouse spearfishing requires registration with Game and Fish.

## Great fishing abounds in ND

### ANYWHERE. ANYTIME. THAT'S WHERE AND WHEN YOU WILL FIND GREAT FISHING IN NORTH DAKOTA.

Anglers have choices in every season, from snagging paddlefish northwest on the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers in the spring, to drilling a hole in the ice at Devils Lake in a winter search for jumbo yellow perch. The Missouri River system (including lakes Sakakawea and Oahe), Devils Lake and the Red River are some of the major fisheries. Like other lakes and rivers in North Dakota, each offers unique experiences.

According to North Dakota Game and Fish Department Fisheries Division Chief Greg Power, North Dakota's fishing lakes have grown from about 168 in 1988 to about 450 today. With that increase has come growth in the number of anglers testing the waters.

"In 1988, farmers were haying that land, it was that dry," Power recalls. "It's been extraordinarily wet the last 25 or 30 years. We used to

call these lakes opportunistic lakes because they come and go, but we don't do that anymore because they haven't gone away."

Power points out Dry Lake near Ashley. "It's a couple thousand acres. It's big," Power notes. "In 1988, they hunted deer there and hayed the land. Now it's 30 feet deep and a couple thousand acres. It's a destination fishery. That's one example."

More and more people are making North Dakota a fishing destination. Power said the number of resident anglers is around 150,000 and nonresidents at 62,000.

"We're seeing an evolution," Power said. "Apparently the fishing is good enough for the nonresidents that they've gone from the short-term to the annual license. Whatever is out there is good enough that they're coming back multiple times."



Why? Mainly two reasons: success and access.

"Crowding is relative to expectations. You have quality fisheries without a lot of people. The fish grow fast and our regulations are straightforward."

The Big Three (Lake Sakakawea, Oahe/Missouri River and Devils Lake) and the Red River are the most active areas in the state. "Those waters are comparable to the big 10 or 11 in Minnesota," Power said.

The Missouri River system cuts through western and central North Dakota and features four distinct areas that provide their own characteristics and fishing qualities: upper Missouri River, Lake Sakakawea, central Missouri River and Lake Oahe.

#### The Upper Missouri River

The Missouri River enters North Dakota from Montana just west of Williston. The river offers a good

setting for sauger and walleye in the spring and fall. The western reaches of the river in North Dakota offer one of the better spots in the country to snag a giant paddlefish in late spring. Anglers also can come across northern pike and catfish in this area.

#### Lake Sakakawea

The lake named for the Native American woman who joined the Lewis and Clark Expedition more than 200 years ago is the third-largest manmade lake in the United States. This huge lake with more shoreline than the Pacific Coast of California is home to numerous species. Walleye is the most popular catch, but anglers can reel in northern pike weighing more than 20 pounds, Chinook salmon, smallmouth bass, white bass, yellow perch, crappie and sauger.

"Sakakawea's walleye population is near its record high," Power says.

"Its walleye population is really, really healthy."

Power points out that smallmouth bass and channel catfish also are abundant. "If the population base was 500 miles farther north, we'd have great use of our smallmouth and catfish fisheries."

#### Central Missouri River

Water leaving Garrison Dam flows south in the Missouri River until it reaches Lake Oahe beyond Bismarck. This stretch of river is home to nationally renowned walleye fishing. The Tailrace at Garrison Dam offers excellent open-water fishing year-round and is home to state records for Chinook salmon, brown trout, rainbow trout, lake trout and cutthroat trout, all caught within 20 miles downstream of the dam.

#### Lake Oahe

This lake stretches from south of Bismarck to Pierre, South Dakota. Anglers find walleye and northern pike in this area, but there's also crappie, catfish and white bass.



#### ANS SURCHARGE FEES

Starting in 2020, a surcharge will be added to certain game and watercraft licenses to support the Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Fund. All boats licensed in North Dakota will include this surcharge when renewing the license. Boats not licensed in North Dakota are required to pay an annual fee and display ANS sticker to legally operate watercraft on state waters.

|                                                      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Resident Fishing and Combination                     | \$2  |
| Nonresident Fishing and Waterfowl                    | \$3  |
| 3 Year registration for boats licensed in ND         | \$15 |
| Annual ANS registration for boats not licensed in ND | \$15 |

## North Dakota's Wild West

*\*Pork 'n Beans Optional*



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#### Your Adventure Awaits on the New Frontier

Cast a line and hook a walleye in the waters of Lake Sakakawea. Or, if you prefer your fish on ice, drill a hole and net a pike. Once you've caught your limit, kick back with fine dining, cocktail bars, and all the amenities you'll need to relax.

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**1. SUNDHEIM PARK** – Security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, no courtesy docks.

**2. CONFLUENCE AREA** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacle.

**3. LEWIS AND CLARK BRIDGE** – Security lights, picnic shelter, no courtesy docks.

**4. LEWIS AND CLARK STATE PARK** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, access fee, RV dump station.

**5. WHITETAIL BAY (LUND'S LANDING)** – Developed camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, boat rental.

**6. TOBACCO GARDEN CREEK BAY** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, RV dump station.

**7. LITTLE BEAVER BAY** – Gravel access road, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles.

**8. WHITE EARTH BAY** – Gravel access road, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, RV dump station.

**9. SANISH BAY (AFTERM)** – Gravel access road, no restrooms.

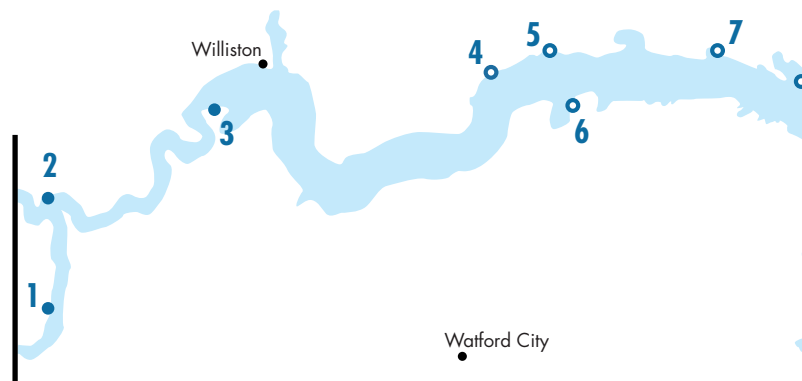
**10. NEW TOWN MARINA** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, RV dump station.

**11. FOUR BEARS** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, RV dump station.

**12. POUCH POINT** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession.

**13. LITTLEFIELD BAY** – Gravel access road, no restrooms, no courtesy docks.

**14. VAN HOOK** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, RV dump station.



**15. PARSHALL BAY** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, boat rental, RV dump station.

**16. SKUNK BAY** – Gravel access road, developed and primitive camping, concession, lodging.

**17. DEEP WATER CREEK BAY** – Gravel access road, primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles.

**18. HALE MARINA** – Gravel access road, no restrooms, no courtesy docks.

**19. MCKENZIE BAY** – Gravel access road, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, RV dump station.

**20. LITTLE MISSOURI BAY** – Gravel access road, security lights.

**21. CHARGING EAGLE BAY** – Gravel access road, no restrooms, primitive camping, trash receptacles.

**22. INDIAN HILLS RESORT** – Gravel access road, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, boat rental, RV dump station.

**23. BEAVER CREEK BAY** – Primitive camping, picnic shelter, trash receptacles.

**24. DAKOTA WATERS RESORT** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, boat rental, RV dump station.

**25. BEULAH BAY** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, lodging, RV dump station.

**26. DOUGLAS CREEK BAY** – Gravel

access road, primitive camping, trash receptacles.

**27. CAMP OF THE CROSS** – Gravel access road, no restrooms.

**28. HAZEN BAY** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, RV dump station.

**29. LAKE SAKAKAWEA STATE PARK** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, boat rental, access fee, RV dump station.

**30. GARRISON CREEK** – Gravel access road, no restrooms.

**31. FORT STEVENSON STATE PARK** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, concession, lodging, boat rental, access fee, RV dump station.

**32. STEINKE BAY** – Gravel access road, primitive camping.

**33. SPORTSMENS CENTENNIAL PARK** – Gravel access road, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles.

**34. WEST TOTTEN TRAIL** – Gravel access road.

**35. WOLF CREEK** – Gravel access road, primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, trash receptacles, RV dump station.

**36. GOVERNMENT BAY** – Developed and primitive camping, security lights, trash receptacles.

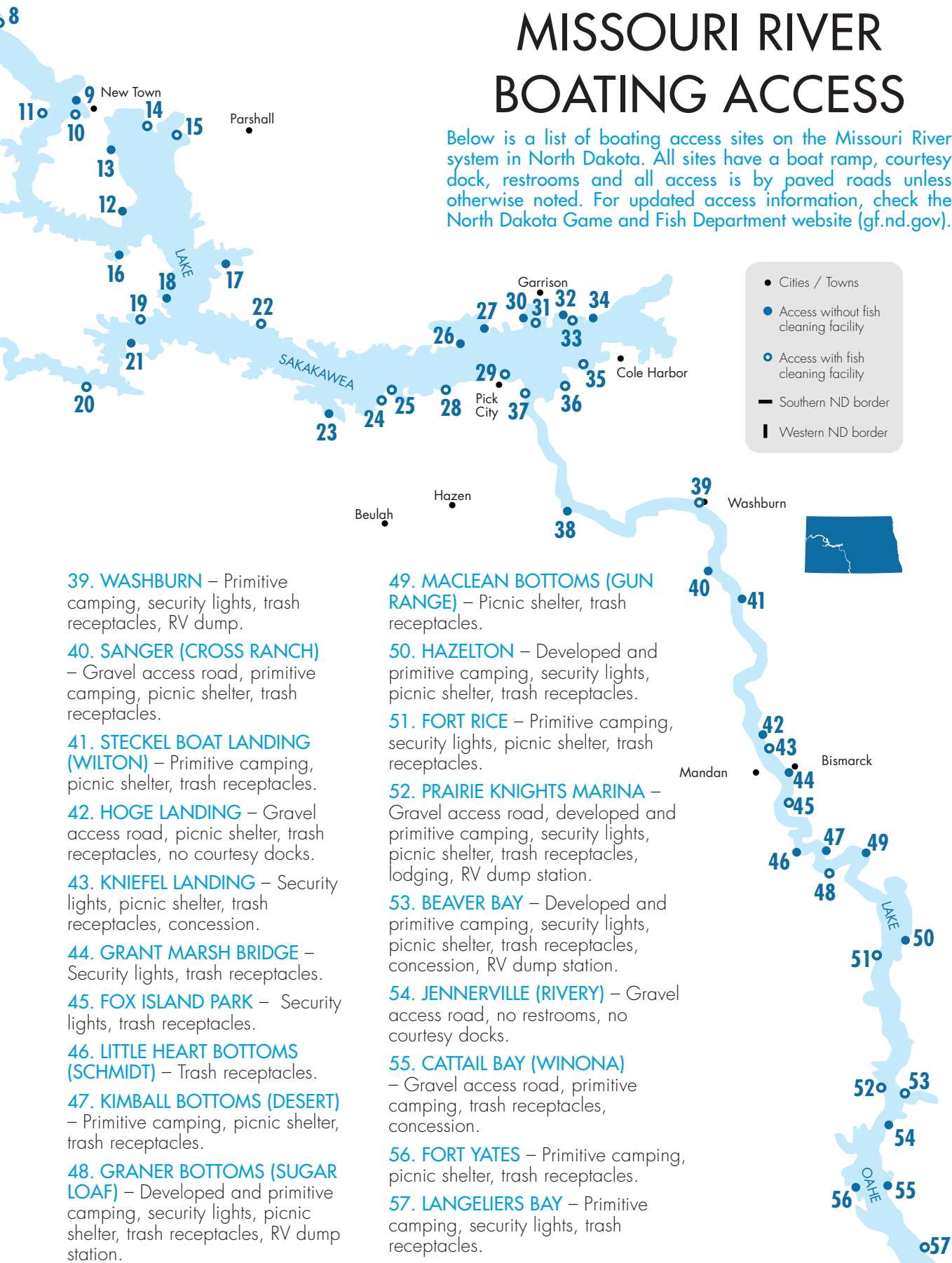
**37. GARRISON DAM TAILRACE** – Developed camping, security lights, trash receptacles.

**38. UPA SITE (STANTON)** – Security lights, trash receptacles.



# MISSOURI RIVER BOATING ACCESS

Below is a list of boating access sites on the Missouri River system in North Dakota. All sites have a boat ramp, courtesy dock, restrooms and all access is by paved roads unless otherwise noted. For updated access information, check the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website ([gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov)).





# Fishing Lake Sakakawea

## FISHING GUIDE MATT LIEBEL TALKS FISHING THE LEGENDARY LAKE SAKAKWEA.

The school year never ends for Williston Middle School teacher and fishing guide Matt Liebel. When nine months of being in a classroom ends, Liebel trades pencils and grade books for rods and reels; the classroom for the big lake where he looks for schools of fish that populate one of the largest lakes in the country.

With more shoreline than the Pacific Coast of the state of California, Lake Sakakawea in North Dakota has plenty of room for schools of fish – lots of different kinds of fish.

"It's a fantastic fishery," Liebel says. "I've fished it my whole life. There are so many good options. You can catch fish shallow and at 45 feet.

And there's big fish."

On a lake as big as Lake Sakakawea, anglers never run out of ways to fish and species to fish for. Techniques and targets vary by location and season. Guides like Liebel know the variations well.

"It's quite a bit different," Liebel says. "The structure up here is flatter and more river-like. You notice current up here and there's not as many islands and big points. We don't have the deep water up by Williston. We have 50 feet, but not the hundred plus."

But they have good fishing starting earlier than the rest of the year due to inflows from the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers.

"Early in the spring, the bite will be good by Williston and by New Town," Liebel says. "With the runoff coming in. That's where fish will spawn first. Water temperature definitely warms up here first so you catch them here and follow the water temperature down the lake

and you can time that between spawn bites."

The structures within the lake vary by location, too, meaning you have to change tactics.

"You have a lot of sand and mud, so you look for some rock to break that up," Liebel explains. "Cover some water trolling crankbaits. Once you find some points, you might stay there but a lot of times they like to scatter. I'm more of a crankbait guy because you can cover water faster than pulling bottom bouncers and spinners. But bottom bouncers and spinners are still a better search technique than jigging."

By late summer, fish have moved down the length of the 180-mile-long lake and fishing has picked up in the deep water at Garrison Dam, the structure that holds back the massive body of water.

There, you can find a smorgasbord of fish, including the cream of the crop – walleye.





Matt Liebel and friends on Lake Sakakawea

“THERE ARE SO MANY GOOD OPTIONS. YOU CAN CATCH FISH SHALLOW AND AT 45 FEET. AND THERE’S BIG FISH.” – MATT LIEBEL

Other species include northern pike, salmon, crappie, smallmouth bass and more.

“I’m a walleye guy, but in early June, I like going after smallmouth, they’re fun,” Liebel said. “We’ve caught a few crappie on this end of the lake and that’s something we’d like to see take off. I know there are guys that are targeting them.”

And where are they being targeted?

Wherever bait fish are found.

“They are just constantly moving because the bait fish are moving,” Liebel said. “They were all over the place. Sometimes you would catch 10 in a half hour. One thing you’re always looking for is bait fish. They’ll be somewhere near the bait fish, whether that’s up shallow in the weeds or out on the deep rock where smelt are running around.”

Liebel has advice for anyone looking to fish the length of the lake. Do your homework to know patterns and trust your locaters.

“For the whole lake, trust your electronics. If you see fish, you’ll catch fish most of the time,” Liebel said.

And be prepared for two different types of fishing. Anglers can usually catch a lot of good-sized fish or a few big ones,” Liebel says.

The upper reaches of the lake near Williston are also the first parts to freeze in winter, Liebel says. The ice gets thicker quicker but, as always, anglers need to be cautious on ice.



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**CODY ROSWICK  
SAYS LAKE OAHE  
PRESENTS ITS OWN  
OPPORTUNITIES.**

## Fishing Lake Oahe

As an avid angler, Cody Roswick enjoys fights on the big lakes – Sakakawea, Oahe and Devils Lake. But he gets just as much pleasure out of seeking, finding and fighting fish on the state's smaller bodies of water.

"I really like Lake Ashtabula," Roswick says. "It's a great example of a great fishery that's totally overlooked."

Lake Ashtabula backs up behind Baldhill Dam north of Valley City, holding the Sheyenne River in check. That's what gives the reservoir an unusual characteristic, Roswick says.

"It has a great location and it fishes much more like a river than a lake. It's long and narrow and has a fair amount of current. It's a healthy multi-species lake. You'll catch everything from walleye to smallmouth bass to bluegills, crappie and perch. All of our rivers have a lot of species,

which makes it fun."

The fact that Ashtabula and other waters like it are relatively unknown – compared to their popular neighbors – is part of their allure.

"There's a lot of traffic on the big three, but all of our smaller lakes are healthy and they include some nice mature walleyes," Roswick said.

Success in a certain body of water depends on a number of things, most notably water temperature, which tends to rise faster on smaller bodies of water.

"Smaller lakes typically get more traffic in May and June. The warmer the lake gets in May and June, the better the fishing," Roswick says.

"You get into late summer and the bigger bodies of water have become more active. There are a lot of young bait fish there, so they are well-fed."

Roswick said strategies have to change with location, body of water and time of year. For instance, in late August and September, Roswick said he hits several spots in a day. "If you have a run-and-gun approach, it works well. You might only catch one, two or three fish off a spot, and you pluck those active ones and just keep moving on and you end up with a good day."

And big ones can be had. Seven of the 19 major recognized records in the state were pulled from someplace other than the big three (Lake Sakakawea, Missouri River/Oahe, Devils Lake). That includes smallmouth bass (6 pounds, 13 ounces) from Lake Darling; channel catfish (42 pounds, 1 ounce) from Moon Lake; bluegill (2 pounds, 12 ounces) from Strawberry Lake; crappie (3 pounds, 4 ounces) from Jamestown Reservoir; largemouth bass (8 pounds, 8 ounces) from



Nelson Lake; and Pure Muskellunge (46 pounds, 8 ounces) from New John's Lake.

"Around Valley City, we have a fair amount of small lakes: Fox, Eckelson, Twin to name a few," Roswick says. "Some require a smaller boat with a prairie trail access to them. But the more remote they are, the less traffic they have and there's better fishing there."

Regardless of where you go, Roswick points out, the fishing here is outstanding and he doesn't see it

changing soon given the current wet cycle.

"Our fishing in North Dakota has never been better as far as size of fish. It follows the water table," Roswick notes. "The fact that we've had about 20 years of high water in North Dakota is the reason we have such outstanding fishing right now. I can tell you without a doubt that it's the high water. The lakes are full and we're having multiple good spawns. Plus North Dakota is unique in this region in that the waters have good food in them."

And when you find a hot spot that produces a lot of big fish, always biting and never getting off the hook; do you share that info?

"The thing with internet these days, people find these places awfully quick," Roswick says with a laugh. "You post a picture and people are smart, they can sniff out where you are pretty easy these days."

"Our fisheries are in great shape and going to continue to be in great shape," Roswick says. "There will be quality fishing for years to come."



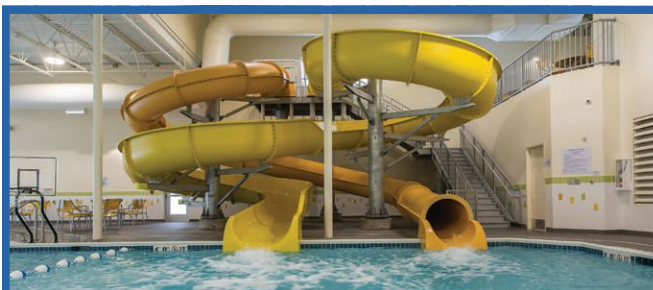
## Fishing the Red River

The winding Red River of the North forms the boundary between Minnesota and North Dakota, but it creates one long recreational playground for citizens of both states. The river provides canoeing, boating and fishing opportunities

year-round, although spring floods sometimes create hazardous conditions before the river returns to its normal, slow, meandering flow into Canada. The river has more than 70 species of fish and has

produced walleye up to 13 pounds and northern pike to 45 inches. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has current online maps at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov) that detail access points along the length of the river.





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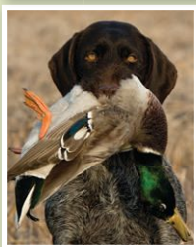
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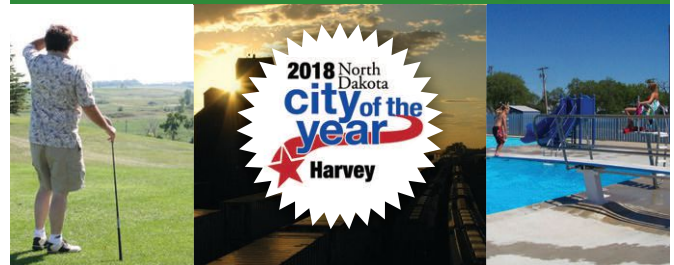


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## Fishing Devils Lake

### JOHNNIE CANDLE CONFIRMS: THERE IS A REASON ANGLERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD DROP A LINE IN DEVILS LAKE.

As a professional angler and guide, Johnnie Candle of Devils Lake has fished some of the best fisheries in the nation. But when he stares out at the vast expanse that is his home lake, he sees a body of water that rivals any lake, anywhere.

"Talking to any professional I fish against in the country, and Devils Lake is one of their top five or top 10 fisheries," Candle said.

Candle fishes the four tournaments

of the National Walleye Tour each year but he always comes back to the lake where 100-fish days (catch and release) are a regular occurrence.

Candle says the never-ending fishing season is a lure other states can't offer.

"North Dakota is unique compared to other places in the Upper Midwest because the season never closes. We can literally fish year-

round," Candle says. "Other than a couple weeks on each end of ice fishing season, we can literally get out there and get after them year-round. And they cooperate year-round. We have enough species of fish here to keep you excited."

Devils Lake has been a lake in transition for years. A long wet cycle drove the lake with no natural outlet to record highs, but in doing so gobbled up a lot of farmland and roads. What was bad for landowners and the Department of Transportation was good for anglers.

"Devils Lake was always a decent fishery. But as the water rose, the water quality got better and as the water got better, the fish got healthier," Candle says. "All the structures and habitat got flooded and new life forms in the water and better living conditions and the fish population exploded and made it one of the best fisheries in North America."

Species and size vary, and even though the lake has begun dropping, it's still large enough to make fishing an experience on every end.

"It's just the perfect storm, the right place at the right time," Candle says. "The fish grow big – or big enough – quickly and they're healthy and strong and plentiful. It's a fun place to go fishing."

What are they fishing for?

"Walleye and perch are what everybody seems to be after," Candle adds. "But the northern pike, crappie and white bass give you something to fish for year-round."

Candle says he can't count the number of days he took anglers out and caught a hundred fish in a day. "I don't want to guess how many hundred-fish days I had last summer," Candle says. "With catch and release you can sort through as many as you can touch. It's absolutely incredible. A client was keeping track and he counted 63



casts in a row that he hooked a pike. It's an absurd number. To me five or six in a row is phenomenal."

Candle says catch-and-release is gaining in popularity. "You can catch-and-release any time you want. Quite a few people are getting more conservation minded and that's good. I get several clients every summer that don't keep a fish. They fish seven or eight hours, shake my hand and head home."

But for those who eat what they catch, the options are numerous.

"Our yellow perch, we're world-famous for that through the ice. And white bass are overlooked. They're ravenous, they feed well and they bite on just about anything," Candle says. Pike, meanwhile, are best sought from late April through June. "I'm not exaggerating, you can catch a hundred pike a day. There are people that will pay a thousand dollars to jump into a plane and catch a hundred northern pike a day and you don't have to go to that effort to get to Devils Lake," Candle says.

On Devils Lake, everything has a season.

Starting with ice-out in the spring (sometime around mid-April), northern pike are the first fish to get active. They spawn first, usually moving in shallow as soon as the ice is gone. "They're usually hungry and we fish shallow water," Candle says. "Walleye fishing is decent but they don't move to shallower water until it warms up a little bit. You're still going to run into perch and white bass because they, too, don't come shallow until the water warms up."

Candle says mid-May to the end of June is everybody's favorite time to fish Devils Lake because the water temperature is such that all the fish are in the same water. "They're all in warmer, shallower water and they eat the same food. You literally don't know what you're going to catch," he says. "You catch a walleye on one, catch a white bass on another



Johnnie Candle

and three pike in a row. All the fish are mixed together and that makes for exciting days."

The species begin separating in the fall.

Candle points out that white bass are mostly overlooked in Devils Lake "They bite even if nothing else will," he said. "I get a fair amount of fly-ins from Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. The bass are really popular in those states because

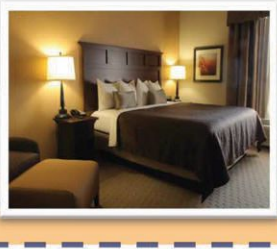
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CANDLE

they don't have populations of walleye or perch. They fight really hard and grow very large in Devils Lake. When you find one you usually find a lot. It depends on how long you want to sit in one place and catch them. Most people think it's fun until they catch 30 or 40 and their arms start hurting.

"As a fishing guide here it's fun because there are a lot of options," Candle says.

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# Ice Fishing

Sibley Lake

Palatial ice house or a simple bucket; there is no right way to fish on frozen water. Some prefer the old-fashioned brave-the-winter style, while others like a place that feels like home. Whatever your preference, give it a shot. There's a whopper out there with your name on it.

When the north wind blows, the temperatures drop and the state's lakes freeze over, small towns of ice houses begin popping up on lakes like Audubon, just across Highway 83 from Lake Sakakawea near Coleharbor.

The fishing doesn't stop mid-winter here, it just switches gears and ice houses become weekend homes away from home for many anglers.

And while most people prefer the relative warmth inside an ice house, many use the pickup as a wind break, drill a hole in the ice and drop a line.

The game fish are much the same as those taken in summer. Frozen prairie lakes and massive Devils Lake churn out an assortment of perch, walleye and northern pike. In other areas — like the Missouri River and Lake Sakakawea — freeze-up comes later and ice conditions get iffy due to the flowing water. Two areas in the state remain ice-free in the winter - the Tailrace at Garrison Dam and Nelson

Lake near Center. Remember to always be cautious on ice and even if you are open-water fishing, dress for the cold conditions.

For more information, visit the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website at [gf.nd.gov/fishing/regulations-guide](http://gf.nd.gov/fishing/regulations-guide).



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# DEVILS LAKE BASIN BOATING ACCESS

Below is a list of boating access sites in the Devils Lake Basin (Lake Irvine, Devils Lake and Stump Lake).



**1. PELICAN LAKE BAY** – Paved access road.

**2. MINNEWAUKAN DUMP GROUND** – Paved access road.

**3. ROUND LAKE BAY** – Paved access road.

**4. GRAHAMS ISLAND STATE PARK** – Paved access road, fish cleaning facility, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, concession, lodging, access fee, RV dump station.

**5. SCHWAB LANDING** – Paved access road, fish cleaning facility, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, concession, RV dump station.

**6. CREEL BAY** – Paved access road, fish cleaning facility, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter.

**7. HENEGAR LANDING** – Paved access road, fish cleaning facility, security lights.

**8. SPIRIT LAKE CASINO** – Paved access road, fish cleaning facility, developed and primitive camping, security lights, concession, lodging, boat rental, RV dump station.

**9. EAST BAY** – Paved access road, security lights.

**10. ESTENSON LANDING** – Paved access road.

**11. BLACK TIGER BAY** – Gravel access road, concession.

**12. TOLNA LANDING (STUMP LAKE)** – Gravel access road, fish cleaning facility, security lights, picnic shelter.

**13. STUMP LAKE PARK** – Paved access road, fish cleaning facility, developed and primitive camping, security lights, picnic shelter, concession, lodging, RV dump station.

## STATE RECORDS

Is a record what you're after? North Dakota's oldest standing record fish is a 2 lbs., 12 oz. bluegill caught in 1963 on Strawberry Lake. The most recent record to fall ... a 15 lbs., 13 oz. walleye caught in the spring of 2018 on the Missouri River. Here's a list of game fish records worth chasing. ([gfapps.nd.gov/reports/fisheries/StateRecordFishList.pdf](http://gfapps.nd.gov/reports/fisheries/StateRecordFishList.pdf)):

| Species         | Size and Location                    |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bluegill        | 2 lbs., 12 oz., Strawberry Lake      |
| Brown Trout     | 31 lbs., 11 oz., Missouri River      |
| Channel Catfish | 42 lbs., 1 oz., Moon Lake            |
| Chinook Salmon  | 31 lbs., 2 oz., Missouri River (Tie) |
| Chinook Salmon  | 31 lbs., 2 oz., Lake Oahe (Tie)      |
| Crappie         | 3 lbs, 4 oz., Jamestown Reservoir    |
| Cutthroat Trout | 10 lbs., 1 oz., Missouri River       |
| Lake Trout      | 16 lbs., 6 oz., Missouri River       |
| Largemouth Bass | 8 lbs., 8 oz., Nelson Lake           |
| Northern Pike   | 37 lbs., 8 oz., Lake Sakakawea       |

| Species         | Size and Location                 |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Paddlefish      | 131 lbs., 0 oz., Missouri River   |
| Pure Muskie     | 46 lbs., 8 oz., New Johns Lake    |
| Rainbow Trout   | 21 lbs., 4 oz., Missouri River    |
| Sauger          | 8 lbs., 12 oz., Lake Sakakawea    |
| Saugeye         | 12 lbs., 0 oz., Yellowstone River |
| Smallmouth Bass | 6 lbs., 13 oz., Lake Darling      |
| Tiger Muskie    | 40 lbs., 0 oz., Gravel Lake       |
| Walleye         | 15 lbs., 13 oz., Missouri River   |
| White Bass      | 4 lbs., 10 oz., Devils Lake       |
| Yellow Perch    | 2 lbs., 15 oz., Devils Lake       |





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Pheasant hunting

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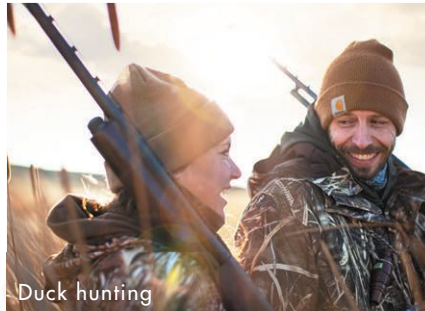


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## ACCESS INFO



North Dakota has more than 700,000 acres of private land open to public walk-in hunting. The Game and Fish Department administers the PLOTS program (Private Land Open to Sportsmen) which includes private land, wildlife management and waterfowl production areas. Visit [gf.nd.gov/plots/guide](http://gf.nd.gov/plots/guide) to learn more.



Mule deer

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Bow hunting



## THE DETAILS

### LICENSE INFORMATION

Copies of the current North Dakota hunting regulations are available at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov) or by calling the North Dakota Game and Fish Department at 701-328-6300.

### LICENSE AVAILABILITY

Nonresident waterfowl and small game hunting licenses are available through the Game and Fish Department website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov), by phone at 800-406-6409 or at the Game and Fish Department's headquarters, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway in Bismarck. They also may be purchased from license vendors. All persons born after Dec. 31, 1961, must have passed a certified hunter education course to legally hunt in North Dakota.

### HUNTING ON TRIBAL LANDS

Tribal access permits are required for hunting or fishing on land owned by Native Americans or Indian tribes. For more information about hunting on tribal lands, contact the following offices:

Three Affiliated Tribes Fish and Wildlife Division, New Town, 701-627-4760

Standing Rock Game, Fish and Wildlife Department, Fort Yates, 701-854-7236

Spirit Lake Nation Fish and Wildlife Department, Fort Totten, 701-766-1243

Turtle Mountain Natural Resources, Belcourt, 701-477-2604

# North Dakota: A hunter's paradise

## TROPHY DEER, PLUMP PHEASANTS AND MILLIONS OF WATERFOWL ARE ONLY A START.

One word sums up what fall hunting is like in North Dakota: Exciting.

It's the feeling one gets when a pheasant — or two or three — sitting tight finally bursts out of the thick grass with an unmistakable racket and heads straight downrange as you shoulder your shotgun and draw a bead.

It's lying along the river waiting for sunrise as the sound of thousands of geese leaving the refuge fills the air.

It's watching that trophy mule deer or whitetail buck cautiously make its way through the woods or down the butte toward your tree stand, giving you a chance to treat your buck fever before taking a shot.

That's why North Dakota hunters,

and thousands from other states, show such passion for getting out in the field in the fall.

Hunting opportunities across the state range from upland game birds to an array of big-game species to abundant waterfowl. In the heart of the Central Flyway, North Dakota is known as the duck factory in the lower 48 states and has some of the best hunting for birds migrating to and from nesting grounds in Canada.

Upland game hunters come for a shot at ring-necked pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse and Hungarian partridge.

Big-game hunts might include mule deer in the drop-dead gorgeous

Badlands. Hunters go home not only with game, but wonderful stories to share for years to come.

### Notes for Nonresidents

To hunt small game such as pheasant, grouse, partridge and mourning dove, nonresidents need the following licenses: certificate, general game and habitat and small game.

Small game licenses are good for



14 consecutive days or two seven-day periods. Nonresidents may hunt sandhill cranes with either a small game or waterfowl license and a sandhill crane permit. Hunters can purchase more than one small game license.

To hunt ducks, geese and swan, a waterfowl license is needed, plus the general game and habitat stamp. In addition, hunters age 16 and older need a federal waterfowl stamp. Waterfowl licenses are good for 14 days or two seven-day periods. Nonresidents are limited to one regular waterfowl license per season. Nonresident migratory bird hunters must register with the Harvest Information Program in North Dakota, even if they are HIP certified at home. Nonresidents may only purchase one waterfowl license per season.

Nonresidents need a special license to hunt in the early Canada goose season. This license is good for the entire early goose season, and doesn't count against the 14-day regular season license. A certificate is needed for early goose season. Deer hunters need a certificate and general game and habitat stamp in addition to their bow or gun license. Nonresident elk, pronghorn and moose licenses are not available.

To hunt prairie dogs, rabbits and ground squirrels, nonresidents need only a nongame license. Nonresident fall turkey licenses are available if licenses remain after the initial lottery drawing.

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Elk



Pheasant



Mule deer



Midway between Gladstone and Regent in southwest North Dakota stands a sculpture. "Pheasants on the Prairie" is a tribute to the area's tremendous pheasant hunting.

When hunters think of pheasants, they think about the country south of Interstate 94 and west of the Missouri River. But Tanner Cherney, an avid outdoorsman who lives in the Devils Lake area, said pheasant hunters are missing out on some great action by limiting themselves to just one part of North Dakota.

"When people think of pheasant hunting in North Dakota, that's the first thing that comes to mind," Cherney says. "You're getting into ag fields and you're still into prairie fields. But that's not the only spot."

Cherney said the best thing about chasing upland game like pheasants is the different ways to hunt in different locations.

"You're going to start out in morning and work in transition areas," Cherney explains. "You'll see them picking stones on the road and going into the cut fields or other grain fields."

"What I love about pheasant hunting is you don't have to be out at the crack of dawn, you can get out there at 9 or 10 and give those birds time to get back in their loafing areas and sheltered up for the morning. Get in there and work different fence lines, cattails and shelterbelts."

"There are all kinds of places in the state," Cherney says. He gives a shout out to the PLOTS (Private Lands Open to Sportsmen) guides that go into great detail about lands open to all hunters. "If you go into that book, you can see tons of areas in North Dakota."

"One of the secret areas that people don't do is the northwest corner of the state, up north of Williston and northwest of Minot," Cherney adds. "They haven't had as hard of winters as other places and the population

## Upland Game Hunting

### MORE THAN ONE WAY TO BAG A BIRD.

Pheasant hunting isn't limited to a single hotspot in North Dakota.



Tanner's trusty sidekick surveys the scene



is rebounding and there's not a lot of pressure."

Hunters in the west-central part of the state also walk tree rows when they have permission of landowners. It helps to foster a good relationship with landowners in order to secure annual hunting privileges unless you choose to stay on PLOTS lands.

Cherney says he has enjoyed hunting pheasants in areas better known for waterfowl. It just takes a little more planning as the best spots are usually some distance apart.

"In the central part of the state – the Devils Lake area – you're probably going to have to work a little harder. The distance is more between spots, so doing your homework is important to pinpoint three or four spots to cover in a day to maximize daylight hours," Cherney said.

Cherney says cattail sloughs or other dense areas are where birds will hunker down. "In the morning or evening, but mainly morning, they'll pick some stones and pick up food, then go into huge covers," Cherney says. "But a lot will go to the perimeter area, the shorter stuff before they go back out and feed, then go into thick cover."

Another good area is the southeast and south-central parts of the state. Long known mostly for being part of the Central Flyway for waterfowl migration, the area can provide good pheasant hunting as well.

"That part of the state around Linton, Edgeley, Ashley, Napoleon can rival the southwest for numbers and hunting areas," Cherney says. "There you're in the prairie pothole region. You want to find bean fields and corn fields and places for cover, but the thing is, you can't have birds without water. If you can find areas with food, shelter and water together, you'll find pheasants."

Perhaps the most overlooked area in terms of pheasants is the Turtle Mountains along the North Dakota-Manitoba, Canada, border. "There

are niche areas," Cherney says. "Just because you're not in prime habitat doesn't mean there's not birds."

Cherney said in some locations, tracks are the dead giveaway that birds are in the area. "When you see tracks, you know there are birds in there and it's worthwhile to hunt it," he says. "We found a cornfield next to a bean field with a grassy slough next to it. We (kicked) up 15 to 20 roosters in 45 minutes."

It might be a little more difficult hunting thick cover without a dog, but that can be successful if you stick to smaller areas where there is cover. "When you find those tree rows, fence lines and shelterbelts, make sure you post it," Cherney says. "You're going to push birds out, but if you post someone those

birds are going to sense danger and fly."

Even though they prefer to run – and leave tracks.

"What I love about winter hunting and fresh snow is you can walk up to a cattail patch and know within a couple of minutes if you need to work it. Nine times out of 10 if there are no tracks, there are no birds. Pheasants love to run. If they can run, they'll run."

Upland game numbers continue to climb throughout the state. North Dakota Game and Fish Department roadside counts taken in July and August of 2019 indicated a 10% increase in pheasant populations statewide. And many upland game hunters will be glad to know that sharptails were up 113% and Hungarian partridge were up 58%.

## THE DETAILS

### ON THE WEB

Looking for more information to plan your next hunting trip to North Dakota? Follow the link for more waterfowl hunting information.  
[gf.nd.gov/hunting](http://gf.nd.gov/hunting)

### RESIDENT FEES

**\$31**

Needed: general game and habitat license (\$20), small game license (\$10) and hunting, fishing and furbearer certificate (\$1). For additional fees on specific game, go to [gf.nd.gov/licensing/resident](http://gf.nd.gov/licensing/resident)

### NONRESIDENT FEES

**\$122**

Needed: general game and habitat license (\$20), small game license (\$100) and hunting, fishing and furbearer certificate (\$2). For additional fees and dates on specific game, go to [gf.nd.gov/licensing/nonresident](http://gf.nd.gov/licensing/nonresident)

## UPLAND GAME SEASONS

| Species             | Open Season (Probable)      |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hungarian Partridge | Sept. 12, 2020-Jan. 3, 2021 |
| Sharp-tailed Grouse | Sept. 12, 2020-Jan. 3, 2021 |
| Ruffed Grouse       | Sept. 12, 2020-Jan. 3, 2021 |
| Pheasant            | Oct. 10, 2020-Jan. 3, 2021  |
| Squirrels           | Sept. 12, 2020-Jan. 3, 2021 |



# Hunting Waterfowl

## GUIDE MATT PIEHL SAYS WATERFOWL HUNTING IN NORTH DAKOTA IS A SIGHT TO SEE.

Matthew Piehl grew up in North Dakota and has been guiding waterfowl hunts for several years. He started out sending hunters out of state but has realized there are great hunting opportunities to be had without leaving the state.

"In a lot of southern states, they hunt ducks over the water and there are smaller numbers of birds," Piehl says. "Most hunting up here is over dry fields and there are large numbers of birds. It's a sight to see compared to elsewhere, really it is."

Like the fall migration that brings millions of game birds down through North Dakota along the Central Flyway, Piehl's hunts lead to different areas of the state to take advantage of the species being hunted, the

weather and other influences.

"You're hunting different crops and different kinds of fields," Piehl explains. "Early season, you might be hunting different species, too. In late season, you're going to be hunting big Canada geese more than anything. That's the majority of what sets on the river. When we're out east (early season), we pretty much just chase ducks. That prairie pothole region just produces so many ducks we have them everywhere."

The current wet cycle has provided abundant habitat for ducks, especially in the prairie pothole region east of Highway 83.

In 2020, duck season opens Sept.

26 for residents and Oct. 3 for nonresidents. All duck seasons end Dec. 5. Goose season has an early resident opener on Sept. 26 and the nonresident starting Oct. 3. Goose hunters enjoy a longer season with resident and nonresident seasons closing Jan. 2, 2021.

Piehl says it's best to stagger hunts, starting with ducks in the east and working your way west to the

Mallard duck





Missouri River, which is a wintering area for many giant Canada geese.

"October is so good out east," Piehl says. "We produce so many ducks. It's home for them. Every pothole has numerous ducks.

"Our duck hunting is by far better than (farther south). We start out with ducks already here, we don't have to wait for ducks. All season long we have birds."

That didn't change in 2019 as the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's spring breeding duck survey showed an increase of 20%. The index of 3.4 million birds was 40% above the long-term average.

As winter approaches, waters start to freeze up and vast flocks of geese head south through North Dakota on the Central Flyway.

Goose hunting then ticks up a notch farther west. Eventually, some Canada geese will find refuge on the open Missouri River.

"I've hunted the Missouri River for years but that's late in the year," Piehl says. "When the birds are on the river, it's some of the best (hunting) in the country really."

But it comes with a caveat: Birds on the Missouri River cannot be hunted between Garrison Dam south past Washburn to Turtle Creek as that area has been deemed a waterfowl rest area by the Game and Fish Department.

However, geese leaving the river to feed in nearby fields can be taken.

"A lot of geese will winter on the river and you can hunt them in the fields, obviously," Piehl says. "Any time come late November, if you drive up from Underwood and Washburn to Garrison, when geese

come off that river, you're going to be amazed by the sheer numbers of birds.

"Find a field that the birds are using and talk to the landowners," Piehl says.

## THE DETAILS

### ON THE WEB

Looking for more information to plan your next hunting trip to North Dakota? Follow the link for more waterfowl hunting information. [gf.nd.gov/hunting](http://gf.nd.gov/hunting)

### RESIDENT FEES

**\$56**

General game and habitat license (\$20), small game license (\$10), federal waterfowl stamp (\$25) and hunting, fishing and furbearer certificate (\$1). For additional fees on specific game, go to [gf.nd.gov/licensing/resident](http://gf.nd.gov/licensing/resident).

### NONRESIDENT FEES

**\$150/\$200**

Also needed: general game and habitat license (\$20), zone-restricted license (\$100) or statewide license (\$150), federal waterfowl stamp (\$25) and hunting, fishing and furbearer certificate (\$2). An additional \$3 surcharge will be added to all nonresident waterfowl licenses. For additional fees and dates on specific game, go to [gf.nd.gov/licensing/nonresident](http://gf.nd.gov/licensing/nonresident)

## WATERFOWL/MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASONS

| Species                           | Open Season (Probable)        |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| * Canada Geese (Early)            | See website for zone dates    |
| * Canada Geese (Regular)          | See website for zone dates    |
| White-fronted Geese (Resident)    | Sept. 26, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020   |
| White-fronted Geese (Nonresident) | Oct. 03, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020    |
| Light Geese (Spring)              | Feb. 22, 2020-May 12, 2020    |
| Light Geese (Resident)            | Sept. 26, 2020-Jan. 2, 2021   |
| Light Geese (Nonresident)         | Oct. 3, 2020-Jan. 2, 2021     |
| Ducks (Resident)                  | Sept. 26, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020   |
| Ducks (Nonresident)               | Oct. 3, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020     |
| Mergansers (Resident)             | Sept. 26, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020   |
| Mergansers (Nonresident)          | Oct. 3, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020     |
| Coots (Resident)                  | Sept. 26, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020   |
| Coots (Nonresident)               | Oct. 3, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020     |
| Tundra Swans                      | Oct. 3, 2020-Dec. 29, 2020    |
| Snipe                             | Sept. 19, 2020-Dec. 5, 2020   |
| Crows (Spring)                    | March 14, 2020-April 26, 2020 |
| Crows (Regular)                   | Aug. 15, 2020-Nov. 7, 2020    |
| Doves                             | Sept. 1, 2020-Nov. 29, 2020   |
| Woodcock                          | Sept. 26, 2020-Nov. 8, 2020   |

\*Go to [gf.nd.gov/hunting/canada-geese](http://gf.nd.gov/hunting/canada-geese) for more information about zone hunting for Canada geese.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE MORE THAN 10 MILLION MALLARD DUCKS IN NORTH AMERICA, MORE THAN ANY OTHER CONTINENT.



## Hunting Big Game

### TANNER CHERNEY SOLOS THE BADLANDS FOR AN EPIC 5-DAY HUNT.

A lot of things go through the mind of a hunter who is all alone in the middle of “nowhere” with only a book, a million twinkling stars and something rustling in the woods near the tent to occupy their mind.

Tanner Cherney of Devils Lake experienced all that and more on his first solo hunt deep into the Badlands of western North Dakota. Packing a bow and arrows, some camo, a spotting scope and a vivid imagination, Cherney had the hunt of a lifetime despite going home without bagging a deer.

“It was probably one of the favorite hunts I’ve done because you never know if something is going to happen,” Cherney says. “It built a lot of confidence in my hunting

ability. The fact I was able to find deer, survive and get through five days out there and still have a smile meant the world to me. It won’t be my last solo hunt.”

Three weeks after a scouting trip with friends to the Medora area, Cherney returned from Devils Lake to spend the next five days alone in the wilderness; close enough to drive into Medora mid-hunt to “see people and eat a real meal,” yet far enough away to be all alone with antelope, deer, the wind and his imagination.

Cherney made the four-and-a-half-hour drive from Devils Lake to the site of his camp the first day.

“I got there right at sunset and got the tent secured and had a nice meal,” Cherney recalls. “The next morning, I got up about an hour and a half before sunrise and hiked in about a mile or so. Didn’t want to walk too far in the dark so not to spook any deer but I wanted to go far enough to get a vantage point.”

That became the daily ritual, but not before stumbling upon another tent. “There’s not really room for two guys and I ended up deciding to break down camp and move. On the way back, I stumbled on four deer coming down the trail at me at about 120 yards away. I tried to get ahead of them. But they got down in a draw and there’s 20 escape routes.”

Cherney moved farther away from civilization and set up a new camp.

“You go out five days with buddies and you can bounce ideas back and forth at one another, but when you’re out there by yourself you have no one (to consult with). The only person you have to talk to is yourself, so you have to put a lot of trust in your own decisions,” Cherney said, admitting that being alone can add to your anxiety. “The first night I brought a book with to occupy my mind because every little sound you hear outside the tent you think ‘is that a snake?’ or ‘is that a



**"IT WAS PROBABLY  
ONE OF THE  
FAVORITE HUNTS  
I'VE DONE BECAUSE  
YOU NEVER KNOW  
IF SOMETHING'S  
GOING TO HAPPEN."  
– TANNER CHERNEY**

mountain lion?' You hear every little noise and it puts you a little off ease because you never know what's going to be out there."

Cherney rose at first light the first two days to scout for nearby deer. "If you haven't spotted one and watched it bed down for the day, it's best to head back to camp and regroup for the late afternoon."

From his new location, Cherney could hunt three to four miles in any direction. He went different directions each day depending on the wind.

"Spot stalking mule deer is very meticulous," Cherney notes. "If you spotted them in the evening and bedded them down, hopefully that's where they would be the next morning."

After spotting the area in the morning, Cherney found a random butte to have a little lunch when a thought came over him: "Of all the people to ever walk the earth, I might be the only person to ever sit at this spot," he says.

With deep thoughts running through his mind, Cherney said sleep was minimal most nights "because you're anxious about getting up and getting going."

A couple days into the hunt, Cherney came across some elk signs and a lot of antelope (pronghorns). "They're not very scared of stuff. The antelope came across me and I wanted to see how close I could get. I got to about 15 yards before



Tanner's camp site

he spooked. It got my heart racing. That's what I love out there. Around every corner there is something new. You come across all sorts of things."

Late in the evening, Cherney would sit and take in his surroundings. "It's some of the darkest skies you've ever seen," he says. "I would sit on my chair and look up at the stars and hear coyotes in the distance howling. It takes you back in time to when the first settlers or (Theodore) Roosevelt came through."

On the last day of his hunt, Cherney

hiked to his glassing point and saw a big buck nearly 500 yards away. "There was no way to get to him before dark, so I sat there and just watched him. I went back in the morning and couldn't find him."

Nevertheless, he found something perhaps as valuable.

"It's a great experience if you can shoot a deer, but it's ultimately about getting out there and turning your phone off for three or four days and getting away from the distractions of the world. To me it's a reset button."



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# Archery Hunting

## JAMI AND SHELBY KRUCKENBERG ENJOY THE ADDED CHALLENGES AND REWARDS.

Hunters have great stories to tell. They can recall most details of their favorite hunts – the one that got away, the record-setter, the nights in deer camp.

But how many consider an “unsuccessful” hunt among their favorites? The bowhunting husband and wife team of Jami and Shelby Kruckenberg, for one.

Shelby’s fondest memory did not result in a kill shot.

“It wasn’t even a successful shot for me,” Shelby recalls. “We did a successful stalk in the Badlands. We stalked up on four muleys laying down. I remember crawling on hands and knees up the hill – a clay butte. It was hard to get up without a lot of noise. I remember thinking this is crazy. It was a successful

stalk. Unfortunately, I missed by a hair, but I was so happy we could stalk up on them in the Badlands. It was such a good team effort.”

Lasting memories don’t always result in a bagged deer. But the odds are good experienced hunters like the Beulah couple will get their deer – the hard way.

“I like the challenge of it all because you have to get a lot closer,” Jami said. “It’s just the challenge and the success behind it. You get some work behind it. You put your time in it and you’re sitting in tree stands. It’s just rewarding.”

Bowhunters can stalk or sit in tree stands along game trails. They have to get a lot closer to their targets than hunters using rifles.

Most new hunters opt for rifles.

“I was more into rifles when I was old enough to get my own tag,” Shelby says. “My dad got me into hunting and I loved the bonding time and having my own gun and being with my family. I had a bow before I met my husband because my father wanted to get me into it, I’d say eight or nine years ago. After me and Jami got together is when it really took off for me. I’d much rather take my bow out than my rifle now. I look forward to archery season over rifle season.”

The archery season is much longer than the deer gun season. In 2020, bow season opens Aug. 28 and closes Jan. 3, 2021. In contrast, the deer gun season will be open Nov. 6-22.

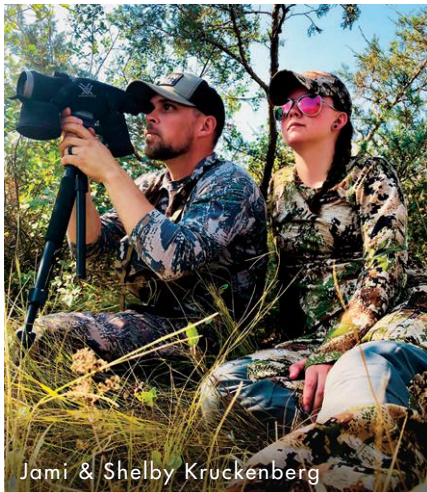
Jami actually began hunting deer with bows and arrows. “I actually started with archery,” he says. “I started hunting when I was a kid. When I first started, we had a bunch of river bottom so there was a lot of tree stand hunting. Now we do a lot of hunting out west in the Badlands out by Medora.”

Shelby says the couple prefers spotting and stalking in the Badlands to tree stands during bowhunting. They each also apply for deer gun tags. “We’re usually running around like chickens with our heads cut off to find the deer during rifle season,” she says. “With archery, it’s harder but we have a lot more time and energy invested into it.”

Sometimes they end up bagging a deer with a bow during gun season as they overlap.

Jami said he looks for mule deer early in the season, then switches to white-tails if he still has a tag to fill late in the year. Why? They’re easier to hunt, he says. “They are easier to pattern. A mule deer will go straight up a hill for no reason. Whitetail have their own route every day at certain times. Mule deer get in bigger groups late in





Jami & Shelby Kruckenberg

the season and it's harder to stalk up on them."

And what's the best way?

"We like to get out and walk and look for deer," Shelby says. "You have to do a lot of early morning glassing and get on the sunny side of the slopes. In the evenings, be on sunny sides as well. A lot of times we don't like to sit there very long and glass. We walk for miles and miles."

"Sometimes you watch them for several hours. If you spot one you want to throw a stalk on," Jami adds.

Sometimes, hunting stories have a twist. Such was almost the case with the first buck Jami ever harvested with a bow. "It was the most stressful night I ever had," Jami recalled. "I ended up getting a one-lung shot and trailed him for four hours in the night down to sand grains of blood. All night I was sick to my stomach. We went back the next morning and found him 50 yards from where we stopped."

Deer hunting is more than just a past time to the Kruckenbergs. "We are trophy hunters, but we are also meat hunters," Shelby explains. "We live off our venison. We take a lot of pride in that. We process it all ourselves and package it up and make sausage. When I say we have a lot of time and energy invested in our hunting, I mean it."

## THE DETAILS

### ON THE WEB

Looking for more information to plan your next hunting trip to North Dakota? Follow the link for more big game hunting information. [gf.nd.gov/hunting](http://gf.nd.gov/hunting)

### RESIDENT FEES

Needed: general game and habitat license (\$20) and a fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate (\$1).

|                                             |      |
|---------------------------------------------|------|
| Deer Gun .....                              | \$30 |
| Deer Bow .....                              | \$30 |
| Bighorn Sheep .....                         | \$30 |
| Pronghorn .....                             | \$30 |
| Moose.....                                  | \$30 |
| Elk.....                                    | \$30 |
| Nonrefundable lottery application fee ..... | \$5  |

### NONRESIDENT FEES

Needed: General game and habitat license (\$20) and hunting, fishing and furbearer certificate (\$2). For additional fees and dates on specific game, go to [gf.nd.gov/licensing/nonresident](http://gf.nd.gov/licensing/nonresident)

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Deer Gun License ..... | \$255 |
|------------------------|-------|

Needed: application fee (\$5). All but application fee is refunded if application is unsuccessful. After second lottery is held, a nonresident deer gun license is \$50, if available.

|                       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Deer Bow License..... | \$250 |
| Bighorn Sheep .....   | \$500 |

Successful bighorn sheep applicants must purchase a nonresident general game and habitat license (\$20) and a nonresident hunting, fishing and furbearer certificate (\$2) in addition to license, if selected.

|                                                       |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Additional nonrefundable lottery application fee..... | \$100 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|

### 2020 Big Game Seasons

| Species       | Open Season (Probable)       |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Bighorn Sheep | Oct. 30, 2020-Dec. 31, 2020  |
| Deer Bow      | Aug. 8, 2020-Jan. 3, 2021    |
| Deer Gun      | Nov. 6, 2020-Nov. 22, 2020   |
| Elk Gun       | Dates vary by units          |
| Moose Gun     | Oct. 9, 2020-Nov. 1, 2020    |
| Pronghorn Gun | Oct. 2, 2020-Oct. 18, 2020   |
| Pronghorn Bow | Aug. 28, 2020-Sept. 20, 2020 |

### 2020 Application Deadlines

| Species       | Deadline       |
|---------------|----------------|
| Bighorn Sheep | March 25, 2020 |
| Deer Gun      | June 3, 2020   |
| Elk           | March 25, 2020 |
| Moose         | March 25, 2020 |





## PRAIRIE DOGS AND COYOTES OFFER UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN NORTH DAKOTA.

Hunters find both nongame species in great numbers.

# Prairie Dogs and Furbearers

Prairie dogs are found primarily west of the Missouri River in North Dakota. More specifically, black-tailed prairie dogs occur in two distinct population complexes in the state: Little Missouri National Grasslands complex and Standing Rock complex, which includes Sioux County and portions of Grant and Morton counties. Maps of locations of prairie dog towns on the Little Missouri National Grasslands can be found on the US Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands website ([www.fs.usda.gov/dpg](http://www.fs.usda.gov/dpg)). Finding places to hunt prairie dogs on private lands is like hunting anything else on private land, by contacting landowners and obtaining permission.

Black-tailed prairie dogs are the most common nongame species targeted in North Dakota. The nongame hunting license is free for residents and \$15 for nonresidents. Other species included with a

nongame license include skunk, porcupine, rabbits and ground squirrels.

Coyotes are found statewide and numbers are abundant. Because of the higher value over other furbearers, popularity of coyote hunting in North Dakota has remained high. Night hunting of coyotes has grown in popularity with a night season running from the Monday after Thanksgiving to mid-March. Recent years have seen better technology, including night vision and thermal imaging that have improved night hunting.

The Coyote Catalogue is a joint effort between the North Dakota Department of Agriculture and North Dakota Game and Fish to connect property owners and hunters. The Game and Fish website ([www.gf.nd.gov](http://www.gf.nd.gov)) can be filtered by county to connect hunters with landowners willing to open their property for recreational coyote hunting to

reduce predator populations.

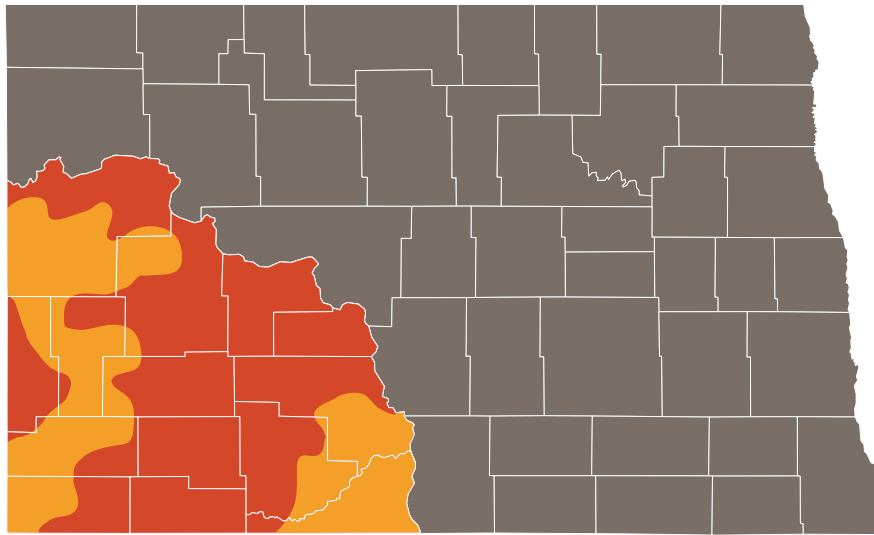
While coyotes are the most popular furbearers, North Dakota also has seasons for badger, beaver, bobcat, fisher, fox, mink, mountain lion, muskrat, racoon, river otter and weasel. Visit North Dakota Game and Fish's website for more information on varmint hunting and fur harvesting.

**DOGS RUN WITH  
THEIR TAILS UP;  
COYOTES RUN WITH  
THEIR TAILS DOWN.  
COYOTES CAN RUN  
ABOUT 40 MILES AN  
HOUR.**



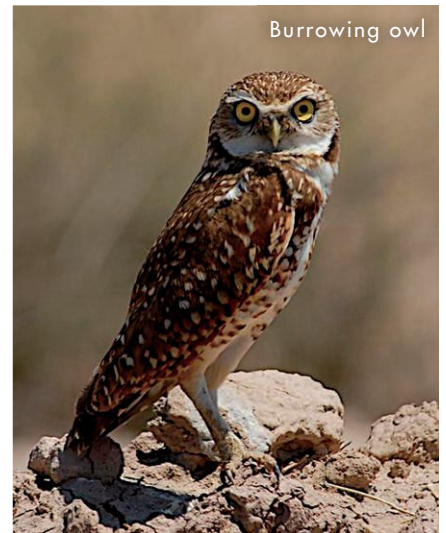


# BLACK-TAILED PRAIRIE DOG HUNTING MAP



Primary Range Secondary Range

Hunting is NOT allowed within US national parks and hunting on tribal land may require an additional license.  
Go to [www.fs.usda.gov/dpg](http://www.fs.usda.gov/dpg) for more information.



Burrowing owl



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