

North Dakota Wildlife Federation

Flickertales

Summer 2024



Advocating for the conservation of wildlife, habitat, and access for North Dakota's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users.

North Dakota Wildlife Federation

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF) is North Dakota's oldest, largest, and most effective conservation organization. NDWF was founded in 1935 by hunters, anglers, landowners, and other conservationists : who advocated for the conservation of wildlife, habitat, and access for North Dakota's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users. Our dedicated affiliates, volunteers, and staff maintain this legacy.

Affiliates

Barnes County Wildlife Federation
Beach Firearms & Trap Club
Cass County Wildlife Club
Central Morton Sportsmen's Club
Eddy County Rod & Gun Club
Garrison Wildlife Club
Hannaford Conservation & Wildlife Club
Hiddenwoods Sportsmen's Club
Kindred Wildlife Club
Lewis and Clark Wildlife Club
Missouri Valley Shooting Sports Association
North Dakota Hunters Education Association
North Dakota Houndsmen Association
North Dakota Fur Hunters & Trappers Association
Red River Area Sportsmen's Club
Richland County Wildlife
Stutsman County Wildlife Federation
Tri-County Trap & Wildlife Club

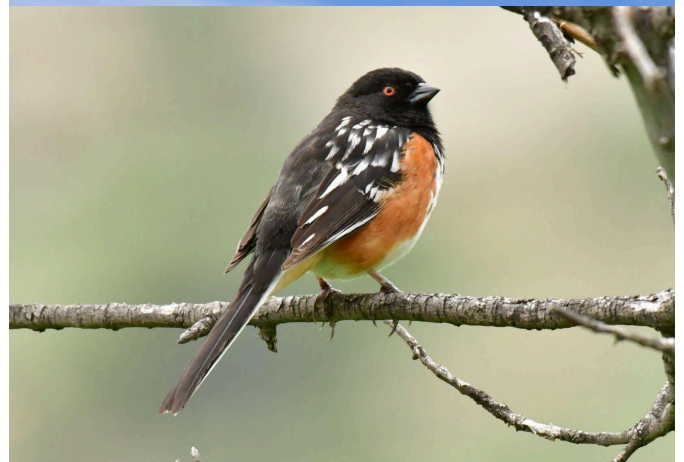
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Photos: Mike LaLonde, Matt Patrias, Nick Simonson, John Bradley



From the Executive Director

As North Dakota braces for the 2025 legislative session, the role of sportsmen and women in shaping our state's policies cannot be overstated. The upcoming session offers a unique opportunity for legislators to align more closely with the interests and concerns of our outdoor enthusiasts, whose voices have been growing louder and more insistent. The '25 session presents a critical juncture for addressing issues that directly impact sportsmen and women, ranging from wildlife management and public land access to conservation funding and safety regulations.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift in the priorities of our state government, with increased focus on privatization and non-resident opportunities in regards to our wildlife resources.

While the all mighty dollar is important, it is essential that the legislature also prioritize the needs of the resident hunter and angler. Their concerns deserve a prominent place on the legislative agenda to ensure that North Dakota remains a haven for those who live, work, and recreate here.

Sportsmen and women have long been at the forefront of advocating for sustainable practices that balance wildlife populations and habitat conservation with profitable agriculture. Legislative support for programs that work with the landowner to provide quality habitat will be vital to our state's outdoor activities. As North Dakota experiences more attention from non-resident hunters, maintaining and improving access to public lands and incentivizing private land access to the general public becomes increasingly important. North Dakota's sportsmen and women rely on these lands for hunting, and ensuring that they remain accessible and well-managed is essential for preserving the heritage that define our state.

Additionally, the need for increased funding for conservation programs cannot be ignored. These programs, like the Outdoor Heritage Fund, are the backbone of our efforts to protect and restore habitats, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the same outdoor experiences that we do today.

In engaging with the 2025 legislature, it is imperative that sportsmen and women continue to voice their concerns clearly and constructively. Effective communication with wildlife groups, lawmakers, coupled with well-reasoned advocacy, will be key in shaping policies that support and enhance our outdoor heritage. As we move towards the 2025 session, let us remain vigilant and proactive, ensuring that the values and needs of North Dakota's sportsmen and women are reflected in our state's legislative priorities. The future of our outdoor heritage and natural resources depends on it. *-John Bradley, Executive Director*



Message from Our President

THIS DOES NOT PASS THE SMELL TEST

I came to North Dakota in 1999, and honestly did not plan to stay. But it only took a moment for my heart and mind to become enamored with all the opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation that ND offered. I knew I could make more money and have more career opportunities in other parts of the country, but those ambitions took a back seat to the happiness and satisfaction I could gain here in North Dakota. I have since made a personal pledge to do everything I can to protect the resources I have come to cherish and make them the centerpiece of my life. But there are others with more influence than I have that are deliberately stripping away at what North Dakota has described as its legacy – Majestic Landscapes and Wildlife.



What is more discouraging, these people of power and influence are native born North Dakotans that we elected to office. I cannot decide if they have lost sight of what treasures God has given them, or if they have become so entrenched with corporate greed that they just do not care anymore. Whatever the case may be, their intentions do not pass the smell test.

In March of 2023, Senator John Hoeven introduced S.1088 – North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act. Cosponsors included Senator Kevin Cramer and Senator Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico. This bill authorized the Department of the Interior to exchange, at the election of North Dakota, certain federal land for certain state land of substantially equal value. Essentially, State School Land located within the boundaries of any Indian reservation could be forfeited to the tribe. The State of North Dakota would then have the authorization to select one or more parcels of federal land of equivalent value within the state as compensation.

Subsequently, Representative Kelly Armstrong introduced H.R.2405 – North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act to the House Natural Resources committee. It is the same exact bill as what Senator Hoeven introduced to the Senate. More recently, ND State Lands Commissioner

Joe Herringer traveled to Washington, DC to testify before the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee in favor of this bill.

On the surface the language of these bills seems harmless, and there has not been the slightest communication with the public. In fact, when I questioned Rep. Armstrong about the bill during a State Radio interview, at first, he was caught off guard and claimed he was not familiar with the bill. But when pressed, he dismissively said this bill was "a harmless land swap." This bill restores land and mineral rights to Indian Tribes within the State. It is a feel-good bill.



This bill is far from harmless, and certainly does not feel good if you have any interest in public land access and recreation. I was unable to acquire an exact number, but ND State School lands located on ND Tribal Lands exceed 30,000 acres. In contrast, the federal government owns 3.9 percent, or 1,735,756 acres in North Dakota. The other 93% of ND is privately owned.

So, in the eyes of a politician, a measly 30,000 acres may seem like "a harmless land swap". But to those of us that like to hunt, camp, hike, and recreate - 30,000 acres is a huge chunk of real estate. Especially when you consider that the federal land (BLM) that could presumably be swapped falls within the western one-third of the state. That is prime wildlife habitat. If those acres are redesignated as ND State School Land (owned by the State), the management criteria completely changes. Also consider, these acres fall within big oil country.

Consider further, there are rumblings, and pressure from the National Mining Association, to explore western ND for metals like lithium, graphite, copper, and other rare metals that are critical to the advancement of energy technology. Are you seeing the connection? Does not smell so good does it?

So not only would 30,000 acres of YOUR PUBLIC LANDS be susceptible to additional oil and mineral exploration, but it also opens the door for more roads, surface development, posted

land, and increased pressure on wildlife habitat and populations. Also consider, State owned land can be sold for private ownership.

So far, the Trust Lands Department is keeping quiet. They refuse to share specific details about what lands could be exchanged, or how they would be managed. It is all very hush, hush. What is worse, if these bills move forward, there is no language that provides for public input. The only recourse we have is to get out in front of this before it grows roots.

If Sen. Hoeven and Sen. Kramer and Rep. Armstrong want to feel good about something, then by all means transfer the 30,000 acres of State School Land over to the tribes. But do not turn around and take Federal Public Land away from the American People. Besides, it is not like North Dakota is hurting for money with over \$10 billion sitting in the Legacy Fund. I encourage you to contact Senator Hoeven and Senator Kramer, and Representative Armstrong to ask questions and voice your concerns about these bills.

Senator John Hoeven: (701)250-4618

Senator Kevin Kramer: (701)204-0500

Representative Kelly Armstrong: (701)354-6700

- *Kerry Whipp, NDWF President*



Farm Bill Conservation in North Dakota



Protect conservation funding for farmers, ranchers, and private landowners.

The Farm Bill provides **\$6 billion of annual funding** to voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs which help producers and private landowners understand and adopt conservation practices that improve wildlife habitat, soil health, water quality and quantity, resilience to climate change, and empower communities nationwide.

Learn more at ProtectAgConservation.com/

- In 2023, North Dakota received \$10 million in IRA funding for 123,000 acres
- IRA funding will increase multifold by 2026
- 70% of North Dakota's IRA applications were rejected due to insufficient federal funding (2023)
- Only 32% of North Dakota's applications to EQIP and CSP were successful (2023)
- Less than 27% of applications were accepted nationwide (2023)



The Inflation Reduction Act Funds In-Demand Practices

The \$20 billion of climate-oriented funds provided by IRA will continue to fund practices in high demand in North Dakota and across the nation.

- IRA funds 9 of North Dakota's top 15 practices used in 2022
- In North Dakota, 863,000 acres are eligible for 2024 IRA funding (2022)

Top IRA Eligible Practices	2022 Acres
Nutrient Management	219,826
Cover Crop	108,922
Residue & Tillage	103,587
Utilizing Precision Ag Technology	101,789
Prescribed Grazing	92,869

74% of farmers agree: there should be more conservation funding, not less

- Nationally, NRCS received over **\$2.8 billion in applications for the available \$850 million in 2023.**
- NRCS rejected over 6,000 eligible applications to IRA funding, awarding 5,350 contracts.
- **Over 39 million acres are eligible for IRA funding in 2024,** based on 2022 practice funding
- Nationwide the top 5 practices, based on acreage, eligible for IRA funding are (1) prescribed grazing, (2) brush management, (3) forest stand improvement, (4) cover crops, and (5) prescribed burning.

NRCS Programs have provided \$519 million to North Dakota (2019-2023)

North Dakota	2019-2023 Funds	Contracts	Acres
Total	\$ 518,556,632	3,215	3,825,500
ACEP-ALE	-	-	-
CRP	\$ 332,679,902	-	1,244,240
CSP	\$ 88,104,995	882	1,438,071
EQIP	\$ 97,771,735	2,333	1,143,189

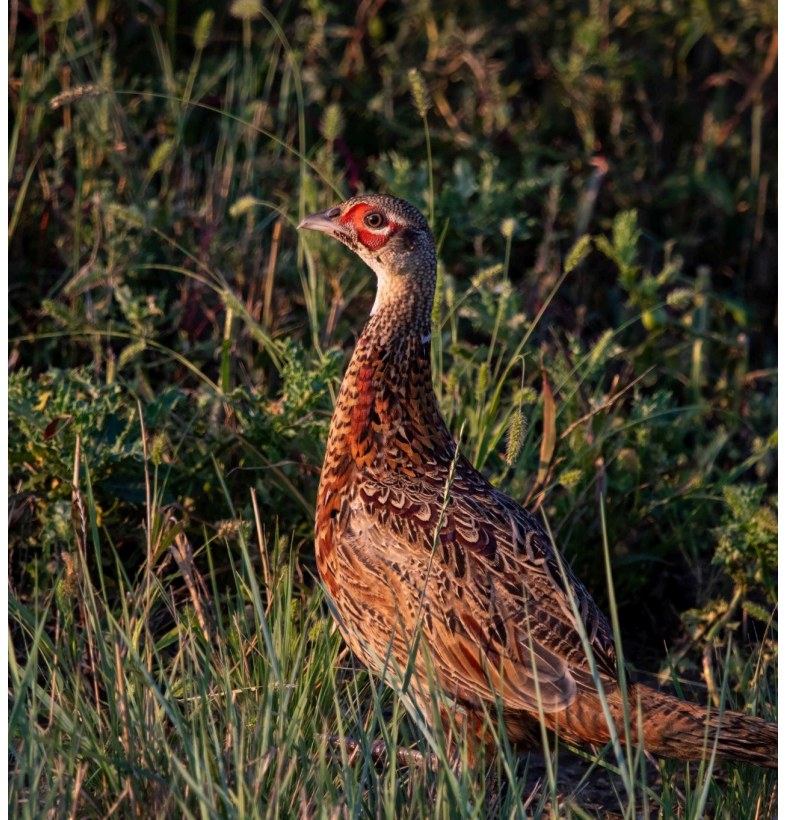
In North Dakota, NRCS has funded 3,200 contracts to implement practices on **3.8 million acres** (2019-2023). Over that time, NRCS obligated **over \$17.3 billion through 215,543 contracts,** implementing practices on **over 117 million acres, nationally.**

Behind the Scenes Seasons

By: Seth Owens

For many of us, pheasants only exist in the fall, when we can chase them behind our four-legged companions. We often see a rooster crow from a gravel road, or a pair strutting through a stubble field in May, but the birds pretty much drop off our radar. Though our minds turn toward hunting in the fall, we all must consider the spring and summer months for the birds, as these seasons are the most influential on populations.

Those post-thaw months are crucial for pheasants. The severity of winter and the availability of thermal cover and winter forage all directly influence the body condition of birds as they come into springtime. Throughout the spring, the diets of hen pheasants make a substantial shift towards consuming more insect and animal proteins to rebuild fat reserves and prepare themselves for egg production. Hen body mass often peaks in April. Roosters and one or more hens are a somewhat common sight on roadsides or in pastures and wheat stubble. Pairs and harems begin to form around April, but conditions and weather can delay or advance this timing by a small amount.



After pairing, hens begin to build their nests and incubate. May and June is the peak season for nesting, and broods begin to hatch shortly afterwards. Pheasants and many grassland birds are ground nesters. Nests are commonly made in areas with residual cover from the last growth year.

Areas of tall grasses and forbs, dry wetland edges, and grassy ditches and right-of-ways, and even some cover crop fields are utilized. Nesting and brood rearing habitat is sensitive, and intensive grassland disturbance should be avoided during the incubation and brood rearing season. This is why there are many recommendations to delay haying until August 1. By that point, most hens have been successful at one of their nesting attempts.

Hens will lay egg clutches until they are successful. Each nesting attempt is physically taxing for a hen, and subsequent nesting attempts tend to have smaller clutch sizes. This means that successful early nesting attempts are crucial for us to see those larger upticks in populations. Chicks depend on habitats with overhead cover and navigable understories. Excessive thatch on the ground can make it difficult for chicks to travel across habitats. If a hen is successful with incubation, but loses her chicks due to predation, disturbance, or starvation, she will likely not make another attempt to nest and all of her reproductive potential is gone for that year.

Throughout the summer, hens will tend tightly to their chicks, leading them to areas with ample food resources and teaching them to be wary of potential dangers. Chicks heavily rely on insects during their first stages of growth. Insect protein is necessary for the growth of muscles, bones, feathers, and more. Animal and insect-based foods compose approximately 75 to 100 percent of all food consumed in this timeframe, but chicks are not picky and the type of insects and animals consumed depends on availability. In the northern Great Plains, grasshoppers and caterpillars are often some of the primary food sources. After about four to six weeks, chicks will begin to consume more plant matter, with wild seeds and waste grains being a large component of their diets. The chicks remain with their hens for 70 to 80 days before becoming independent enough to go off alone.

Spring and summer are crucial seasons in the life of grassland birds, especially our pheasants we love to hunt. By understanding a bit more about these 'behind-the-scenes' periods of birds in our offseasons, we can cater our conservation practices, build our habitats, and better preserve our grasslands with them in mind.

Seth Owens is a Dakota Edge Outdoors contributing writer and the Education and Outreach Coordinator for North Dakota Pheasants Forever.

Pronghorn Populations Rebound

By: Nick Simonson

Thanks to a milder winter and good fawning conditions this spring, North Dakota's pronghorn populations have rebounded from a drop evidenced in the tallies of 2023. As a result, the number of tags issued to hunters in the state for the upcoming fall season have tripled, as the herd on the northeastern edge of their range showed improvement, according to Bruce Stillings, Big Game Management Supervisor for the North Dakota Game & Fish Department (NDG&F).



“That mild winter that we had really helps increase adult survival and then also increases the survival of those fawns that were born in 2023 and helps them get recruited into the 2024 population. So those are the reasons we saw a nice population bump range-wide,” Stillings reveals of results collected in early July.

Surveys conducted by NDG&F biologists and agents at the start of summer revealed an uptick across the board in the number of fawns, does and bucks in North Dakota's pronghorn population. The ratio of fawns to does increased to 50-to-100 over 2023's tally of 43-to-100. Buck to doe ratios remained relatively steady, with a count of 31-to- 100 this year, compared to the 30-to-100 observed in the survey results of 2023.

Overall tallies of pronghorn in North Dakota were up 31 percent from the previous year, where populations exhibited a 40 percent slide from counts in 2022, following the challenging winter. As a result, the agency has issued 1,265 tags with opportunities available in all of the historic pronghorn hunting units for fall 2024.

“With better adult survival, better recruitment, and better fawn production this year, we saw the numbers bump up to a level that we could provide a conservative hunting season in all the remaining units, so we added eight units to this year’s hunting season. It’s still very much a conservative harvest strategy - very few doe licenses, conservative on the “any” licenses – and so a nice increase, but certainly we would consider it conservative,” Stillings details of the upcoming season.

North Dakota’s pronghorn reside predominantly in the western third of the state and are one of the easternmost populations in the United States. Once observed as far east as the Red River Valley, the elbow of South Dakota and Minnesota, and even into western Iowa in the late 1800s, as land was developed for agriculture, their range shrunk to the harder-to-till rangeland, scrubland and deserts of the western and southwestern United States. Current populations remain susceptible to extensive fencing, habitat fragmentation, and due to these sensitivities and limited range, extreme weather events can cause the population swings observed in North Dakota over the past several years due to mortality and animal movement.

“Anytime we have one of those extreme winter events, with pronghorn living just right on the edge of having suitable habitat to have a potentially huntable population, those extreme winters can be hard. If the snow comes early and stacks up, through research we did in the early 2000s, those animals will start shifting south and west. Basically anything on this side of the lake [Sakakawea], will move south and west and get bottled up north of Beach or north of Belfield,” Stillings explains, adding that those populations of pronghorn south of I-94 may move across the border into South Dakota when weather forces them.

This year, with the upturn in numbers, NDG&F has opened all 17 historic units to hunting, where only eight were open last year when 420 tags were issued. The 1,265 tags available this season will be issued through the agency’s lottery system online at gf.nd.gov, with a deadline of Aug. 7. The bow-only hunting season for pronghorn opens at noon on Aug. 30 and runs through Sept. 22 and the firearms season runs from noon on Oct. 4 until Oct. 22.

Improving rangeland health: Juniper control strategies highlighted in Badlands tour

MEDORA, N.D. — The North Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and partners (NDWF, ND Natural Resources Trust, NWTF, MDF, USFS, Northern Great Plains Joint Venture) recently sponsored a tour in the North Dakota Badlands, focusing on innovative strategies to control juniper encroachment and improve rangeland health. The tour, which spanned Medora and the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, showcased various juniper control methods, including mastication, fire, and manual removal.

"We're here to address a significant issue affecting our rangelands," said Cara Greger, Western North Dakota Conservation Coordinator for the North Dakota Wildlife Federation, as she welcomed participants. "Juniper encroachment is a pressing challenge, and today we will explore effective management practices."

Dr. Carissa Wonkka from the University of Florida's West Florida Research and Education Center, who is conducting research on the juniper removal areas, emphasized the impact of juniper on rangelands. "One quarter of all U.S. rangelands are affected by juniper encroachment, costing producers \$5 billion in lost revenues over the last 30 years," Wonkka stated. "Junipers displace biomass, which is your forage. Fire has been assessed as one of the most cost-effective, scale-appropriate means of reducing woody plant encroachment, especially for non-resprouting plants like juniper."

The tour's first stop was the site of the 2021 Medora Wildfire. Forest Service staff and Medora Grazing Association member Ted Tescher spoke about the fire's impact. "The Medora fire of 2021, when it hit those cedar trees, they just exploded like a bomb," Tescher said. "It helped this county quite a bit, and you couldn't have convinced me of that 10 years ago. I think there is a place for it [fire], I sure do."

As the tour continued through Theodore Roosevelt National Park, park service staff discussed the "Donut Hole" prescribed burn in the park's south unit. They shared insights on the goals and outcomes of the burn, noting that fire is a valuable tool in juniper management.

Mike Gerbig, NRCS Conservation Delivery Unit Supervisor at the Dickinson Field Office, highlighted NRCS's role and goals in juniper removal projects. "Out here in the Badlands, there are a lot of junipers that spread out with the branches. You might be 10-12 feet out from the main tree, and if you don't cut them, they will come back," Gerbig explained. "In 2019, NRCS started doing some of this juniper removal. When we first started this project, I was a little skeptical, but I can't say I am skeptical anymore."

Eric Rosenquist from the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust also spoke about the Juniper Removal Cost-Share Program and the Outdoor Heritage Funds for projects, emphasizing the financial support available for these crucial conservation efforts.

The tour concluded with a visit to Mike's Creek, where Forest Service representatives and Medora Grazing Association members discussed ongoing juniper removal projects.

The collaborative effort among various agencies and organizations, including the National Wild Turkey Federation, Mule Deer Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, and Northern Great Plains Joint Venture, underscores the importance of juniper control in maintaining healthy rangelands.

As Gerbig noted, "Juniper removal is not cheap, but ranchers are interested in forage production. We have had the most success here in the Medora area, with about a dozen contracts through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Every year, we have new ranchers coming to talk about juniper control."

The tour provided valuable insights into the challenges and successes of juniper control, highlighting the collective efforts to improve rangeland health in the North Dakota Badlands.

Tour:

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Hike:



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Creeping Juniper:



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North Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service

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July 1, 2024 – Release [#07-01-001](#)

NDWF Applauds New Hunting and Fishing Opportunities on National Wildlife Refuges

North Dakota, August 2024 — The North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF) is thrilled to announce that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is expanding public access to hunting and fishing on twelve national wildlife refuges, including four national wildlife refuges in North Dakota. This move is part of the USFWS’s commitment to increasing access to America's treasured public lands and waters.

“We celebrate this significant step forward in enhancing public access to our national wildlife refuges,” said NDWF Executive Director, John Bradley. “Expanding elk hunting opportunities on these refuges supports our public access goals while strengthening North Dakota’s rich outdoor heritage. It’s a win-win-win for elk hunters, conservation, and local economies.”

The new opportunities will introduce or expand hunting and fishing on approximately 211,000 acres nationwide within the National Wildlife Refuge System. In North Dakota, we are excited to see the expansion of hunting opportunities for elk, which is crucial for conservation and sportsmen’s access .

“National wildlife refuges are unique in the amount of wildlife habitat and access to the outdoors they provide to urban communities and rural communities that may lack access to other public or recreational outdoor lands. This expansion will provide access and opportunities to more hunters and anglers while keeping the needs of wildlife and fish at each refuge at the forefront,” said Mike Leahy, senior director of wildlife, hunting and fishing policy at the National Wildlife Federation. “These new opportunities not only provide additional access but will require the use of non-toxic ammunition and fishing tackle, ensuring the health of wildlife for generations to come. We welcome the expansion of experiences like these that allow people to engage with wildlife and the natural world, and contribute to the conservation and funding of both.”

North Dakota Highlights of the Expansion:

- Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge: Open elk hunting on 14,145 acres, and require non-lead ammunition for elk hunting.
- J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge: Open elk hunting on 58,939 acres, and require non-lead ammunition for elk hunting.
- Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge: Open elk hunting on 27,331 acres, and require non-lead ammunition for elk hunting.
- Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge: Open elk hunting on 32,026 acres, and require non-lead ammunition for elk hunting.

Public Engagement and Feedback

The USFWS is seeking public comments on the proposed rulemaking through August 31, 2024. The proposed rule details can be accessed at <http://www.regulations.gov>, Docket Number: FWS-HQ-NWRS-2024-0034. The NDWF encourages all interested parties to review the proposals and provide feedback to help shape the future of hunting and fishing on our national refuges.

Working Weedlines



By Nick Simonson

While midsummer brings its share of weeds to front lawns and gardens requiring some time on the hands and knees cleaning things up, or at least a quick buzz of the tiller in a skillful weaving around those tomato plants, there's other weed work that can be much more enjoyable. This time of the season also brings well-established weedlines into play for fish that utilize them for protection from the stronger and longer-lasting rays of the sun and find the bountiful food web that is developing along with the underwater foliage. Anglers are wise to explore these areas to increase their summer success, and target the various edges created by summer weeds to get the most out of their efforts.

Sidewinder

The most obvious edge created by an established summer weedline is the deepwater edge. Where the green wall ends and open water begins is where many fish seek out their prey. Minnows, aquatic insects and other food items congregate along this edge where predators of all sizes can most easily patrol. Thus, the outer edge is often the best place to start the exploration of a weedline and can be done with relative ease through the use of offerings both fast and slow.

Spinnerbaits and crankbaits can be ripped along the open water immediately adjacent to the weedline to cover water and trigger reaction strikes of those fish positioned along the structure. Bends and turns in the edge can be explored with jigs, plastics and other precision baits that can be worked slowly in these pockets which often hold fish. Think of the weeds as an edge which schooling fish like white bass and crappies can pin schools of minnows up against.

Pocket Power

While the expanse of a weedline or a heavily vegetated area may seem uniform, there are often pockets and openings created by varied lake bottoms that don't facilitate growth in certain areas, or structures such as rocks and boulders prohibit weed growth.

As a result, these are prime areas for anglers to target for those fishing lying in wait for an easy meal. Dropping a Texas-rigged tube into those openings for bass is a classic summer tactic, while working a baited jig in these spaces can pay off on walleye lakes where the wary fish lurks in the shadows cast by the vegetation. Certainly, panfish like bluegills and perch use these openings as well, and a simple jig-and-crawler offering will connect anglers with fast fun when such a space is identified.

Looking Up

Places where weeds mat up on the surface can make angling difficult, but where they allow for some space to retrieve a lure over their tops – whether it's just a shorter stand of sand grass in the shallows,

or thicker cabbage in the depths – anglers can burn a bait over the top of them to trigger a reaction strike. As the stand of weeds tapers and angles out toward the depths, the retrieve rate can be slowed and the lure worked a bit deeper to find fish in the decreasing cover. Many predator species like pike and bass, and even walleyes will dart up from their resting spots and smash an offering moving quickly over their position.

The Flip Side

Many anglers overlook the shallow stretch located behind a well established stand of summer weeds, but especially in low light conditions, it's worth a look. In areas with shoreline rip-rap leading down to the weedline through the shallows, it's common to find summer smallmouth bass snapping up crayfish and small minnows. Work tubes, jigs and weedless plastic options for bronzebacks. Additionally, these shallows are often home to big bluegills, and exploring the inside edge often results in continuous action and a chance at some real bulls lurking along it.

Mixed Veggies

Weed types can vary from lake to lake, and even across different sections of a single water body. Each variety provides unique cover for fish and fishing options for anglers.

Make it a point to identify those different stands of vegetation on the lakes and those places where the right cover, food web and travel lanes come together for fish through the establishment of solid summer stands of weeds, and explore them with a variety of lure and bait options for the best success, noting that composition can change from season-to-season based on water conditions such as clarity and temperature. Make a note in a fishing journal, and drop a marker on a GPS of those places where it all comes together for great fishing, with a little bit of weed work in the heart of summer.

Nick Simonson is the lead writer and editor of Dakota Edge Outdoors.



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Conservation Notes

North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund-Update

Issue #99, June 2024

The North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund, authorized in 2013, has proven to be a vital resource for preserving and enhancing the natural beauty and ecological diversity of our state. The Fund plays a crucial role in conserving our wildlife habitat, supporting farmers and ranchers, and promoting outdoor recreation opportunities. It has funded numerous projects aimed at restoring wetlands, protecting wildlife habitats, enhancing native prairies, and providing recreational opportunities across North Dakota. These efforts not only contribute to the well-being of our landscape but are an investment that stimulates local economies through tourism and outdoor recreation industries.

BUT inadequate funding restricted by an artificial cap, set at \$15 million per biennium limits the scope of the Fund's effectiveness. In the last grant round, there was over \$8.5 million in requests, with only \$4.5 million available in the Fund. Without sufficient financial support, many quality conservation projects are denied, reduced or delayed jeopardizing the legislative mandate of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Therefore, it is imperative that we remove the artificial cap on the Fund to allocate more resources to the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund. By increasing funding, we can ensure that conservation efforts continue to thrive, wildlife habitats are restored, farm and ranching systems improved, and outdoor recreation opportunities are accessible to all. By removing the artificial cap and allowing increased funding, we can ensure that the Fund continues to protect our natural heritage and enrich the lives of all North Dakotans.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com), Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation(memcenroe@midco.net) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, (bluebill@bis.midco.net). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit (ndctws.org)-library

Events

NDWF and our affiliates host educational and social events throughout the year. Check out our Facebook events page for details. Visit www.northdakotawildlife.org for upcoming board meetings information.

October 26 – NDWF Board Meeting, Dickinson

September 10 - Wild Game Cooking Demonstration, Bismarck

January 11, 2025 – NDWF Annual Convention, Bismarck

Make an Impact

For over 80 years, the North Dakota Wildlife Federation has depended on donations from conservationists like you to support our work to protect North Dakota's abundant wildlife, our natural lands and waters, and our unmatched public access to the outdoors for future generations to enjoy. We are able to do so much to protect North Dakota's outdoor heritage because people like you decide to support our work. Your financial support is crucial to our ability to stand up to well-funded special interest groups at the North Dakota Capitol and in Congress. We need everyone who values North Dakota's outdoor heritage to get involved.



NDWF Membership Form

Individual Membership: \$15 - Associate/Business Membership: \$25 - Educational Organization: Free

Name _____

Address _____

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Make Checks Payable To:

North Dakota Wildlife Federation
PO Box 1091
Bismarck, ND 58502-1091