

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA

GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

\$2.00 FEBRUARY 2022



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Game and Fish

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Official publication of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (ISSN 0029-2761)
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Periodical Postage Paid at Bismarck, ND 58501 and additional entry offices. Printed in the United States

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
North Dakota OUTDOORS
100 North Bismarck Expressway
Bismarck, ND 58501-5095

Report All Poachers (RAP) 701-328-9921
In cooperation with North Dakota Wildlife Federation and North Dakota State Radio.



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NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

PUBLISHED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

The mission of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is to protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive use.

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FEBRUARY 2022 • NUMBER 7 • VOLUME LXXXIV

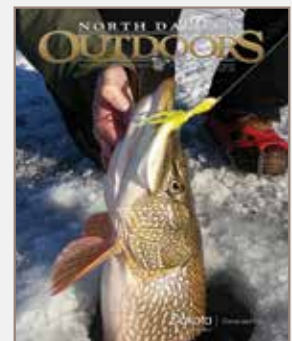
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North Dakota OUTDOORS is published 10 times a year, monthly except for the months of April and September. Subscription rates are \$10 for one year or \$20 for three years. Group rates of \$7 a year are available to organizations presenting 25 or more subscriptions. Remittance should be by check or money order payable to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. Indicate if subscription is new or renewal. The numbers on the upper right corner of the mailing label indicate the date of the last issue a subscriber will receive unless the subscription is renewed.

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Front Cover

*A trophy northern pike from the Missouri River System.
Photo by Paul Bailey.*



Just drawing a mule deer buck tag can make a hunter's season.

DEER DRAWING 2021

By Ron Wilson

Once again, all hunters who applied for a deer gun license in 2021 did so electronically.

The format used to present the results of the deer drawing – plus drawings for pronghorn and spring and fall turkey – is consistent with the last two years.

The tables provided show the first-choice results in the first lottery. Using deer hunting unit 2B for any antlered deer as an example, the numbers read like this: 1,049 hunters with zero bonus points applied for an any antlered deer license and 28 were successful in drawing a license (28/1,049); 772 hunters with one bonus point applied and 65 were successful (65/772); 548 hunters with two bonus points applied and 76 were successful (76/548); and on it goes.

In short, the tables show the results for those hunters with the same number of bonus points applying for a particular license in a particular hunting unit.

It's important to note that the deer lottery results do not include the 1% of licenses state law requires the Game and Fish Department to make available for nonresident applicants every year.

Those nonresidents who do apply for a deer gun license in North Dakota compete only against other nonresident hunters for that 1%.

Also of note, the results in the 2021 deer gun lottery show only those hunters who were in the drawing, not those hunters who bought bonus points and had no intention of hunting deer last fall.

RON WILSON is editor of North Dakota OUTDOORS.

2021 DEER LICENSE LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
1	Any Antlered Deer	87 / 429	132 / 281	56 / 105	31 / 47	14 / 15	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	877
1	Any Antlerless Deer	138 / 138	12 / 14	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	155
2A	Any Antlered Deer	148 / 492	170 / 264	89 / 107	48 / 59	24 / 25	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	949
2A	Any Antlerless Deer	210 / 212	16 / 16	3 / 3	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	235
2B	Any Antlered Deer	28 / 1,049	65 / 772	76 / 548	58 / 425	329 / 406	96 / 115	23 / 25	1 / 4	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	3,350
2B	Any Antlerless Deer	378 / 505	182 / 204	39 / 46	13 / 17	11 / 11	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	790
2C	Any Antlered Deer	51 / 742	88 / 452	95 / 311	80 / 252	222 / 233	52 / 58	14 / 16	3 / 3	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,069
2C	Any Antlerless Deer	235 / 256	25 / 27	12 / 14	9 / 10	5 / 6	1 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	316
2D	Any Antlered Deer	152 / 607	154 / 276	104 / 135	61 / 73	34 / 34	4 / 4	5 / 5	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,136
2D	Any Antlerless Deer	100 / 102	6 / 6	4 / 4	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	114
2E	Any Antlered Deer	65 / 744	101 / 370	77 / 220	86 / 181	109 / 113	15 / 18	7 / 8	0 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,656
2E	Any Antlerless Deer	223 / 234	24 / 27	5 / 7	5 / 9	1 / 1	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	280
2F1	Any Antlered Deer	344 / 946	373 / 511	117 / 138	23 / 28	9 / 10	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,634
2F1	Any Antlerless Deer	264 / 264	24 / 24	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	292
2F2	Any Antlered Deer	117 / 793	206 / 532	153 / 283	106 / 151	66 / 68	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,832
2F2	Any Antlerless Deer	398 / 417	31 / 40	14 / 15	4 / 4	2 / 2	1 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	480
2G	Any Antlered Deer	253 / 546	197 / 242	36 / 44	10 / 10	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	844
2G	Any Antlerless Deer	132 / 133	14 / 14	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	148
2G1	Any Antlered Deer	112 / 875	223 / 662	178 / 368	158 / 254	164 / 168	9 / 10	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,341
2G1	Any Antlerless Deer	526 / 539	56 / 64	17 / 22	7 / 8	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	638
2G2	Any Antlered Deer	259 / 912	343 / 568	124 / 161	48 / 51	8 / 9	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,704
2G2	Any Antlerless Deer	346 / 354	31 / 31	7 / 7	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	395
2H	Any Antlered Deer	479 / 927	368 / 438	63 / 66	7 / 10	1 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,443
2H	Any Antlerless Deer	126 / 128	14 / 14	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	147
2I	Any Antlered Deer	228 / 1,070	357 / 688	186 / 272	81 / 99	32 / 37	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,169
2I	Any Antlerless Deer	247 / 254	25 / 29	9 / 9	4 / 4	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	298
2J1	Any Antlered Deer	231 / 760	283 / 413	99 / 117	23 / 26	3 / 3	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,321
2J1	Any Antlerless Deer	155 / 157	12 / 12	1 / 1	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	171
2J2	Any Antlered Deer	263 / 924	349 / 545	191 / 222	50 / 58	11 / 12	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,761
2J2	Any Antlerless Deer	290 / 294	21 / 22	6 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	324
2K1	Any Antlered Deer	96 / 741	188 / 518	141 / 274	81 / 134	50 / 51	3 / 4	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,723
2K1	Any Antlerless Deer	211 / 225	18 / 20	8 / 8	4 / 4	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	258
2K2	Any Antlered Deer	136 / 1,116	243 / 811	213 / 459	155 / 271	116 / 122	4 / 7	1 / 1	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,788
2K2	Any Antlerless Deer	342 / 348	35 / 40	13 / 14	7 / 7	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	409
2L	Any Antlered Deer	96 / 316	99 / 144	20 / 23	3 / 4	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	488
2L	Any Antlerless Deer	66 / 66	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	68
3A1	Any Antlered Deer	827 / 1,935	745 / 941	170 / 185	40 / 42	18 / 19	3 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	3,127
3A1	Any Antlerless Deer	147 / 149	17 / 17	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	168
3A2	Any Antlered Deer	427 / 901	451 / 551	123 / 140	32 / 34	6 / 6	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,634
3A2	Any Antlerless Deer	232 / 234	15 / 15	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	255
3A3	Any Antlered Deer	363 / 1,258	454 / 719	201 / 259	108 / 127	53 / 55	6 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,426
3A3	Any Antlerless Deer	361 / 363	36 / 36	14 / 14	3 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	417
3A4	Any Antlered Deer	155 / 988	292 / 739	240 / 429	155 / 246	78 / 80	6 / 6	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,494
3A4	Any Antlerless Deer	461 / 476	43 / 46	15 / 19	3 / 3	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	547
3B1	Antlered Mule Deer	130 / 580	204 / 359	92 / 134	36 / 43	19 / 20	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,139
3B1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	123 / 513	160 / 312	66 / 102	39 / 44	18 / 18	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	989
3B1	Antlerless Mule Deer	40 / 41	9 / 9	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	53
3B1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	27 / 28	4 / 4	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	34
3B2	Antlered Mule Deer	151 / 253	74 / 79	4 / 4	6 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	344
3B2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	165 / 212	73 / 74	7 / 7	1 / 1	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	295
3B2	Antlerless Mule Deer	49 / 49	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	52
3B2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	26 / 26	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	28
3B3	Any Antlered Deer	88 / 282	99 / 161	49 / 60	11 / 15	9 / 9	0 / 0	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	528
3B3	Any Antlerless Deer	116 / 116	2 / 3	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	122
3B3	Antlered Whitetail Deer	577 / 580	47 / 47	8 / 8	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	641
3B3	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	81 / 81	2 / 2	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	84

2021 DEER LICENSE LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+		
3C	Any Antlered Deer	126 / 474	112 / 208	40 / 66	31 / 39	17 / 18	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	805
3C	Any Antlerless Deer	116 / 116	11 / 12	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	131
3C	Antlered Whitetail Deer	617 / 696	161 / 162	16 / 16	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	879
3C	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	102 / 102	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	106
3D1	Any Antlered Deer	94 / 358	130 / 213	57 / 69	15 / 20	1 / 1	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	662
3D1	Any Antlerless Deer	64 / 64	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	67
3D1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	116 / 117	9 / 9	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	127
3D1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	6
3D2	Any Antlered Deer	149 / 487	152 / 260	77 / 100	21 / 23	8 / 9	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	879
3D2	Any Antlerless Deer	125 / 126	7 / 8	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	136
3D2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	148 / 169	30 / 30	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	202
3D2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	12 / 12	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	12
3E1	Any Antlered Deer	101 / 500	154 / 297	85 / 127	27 / 41	7 / 7	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	975
3E1	Any Antlerless Deer	99 / 102	9 / 11	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	114
3E1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	340 / 342	22 / 22	6 / 6	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	374
3E1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	6
3E2	Any Antlered Deer	245 / 615	240 / 320	60 / 70	11 / 12	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,020
3E2	Any Antlerless Deer	168 / 170	15 / 15	2 / 2	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	189
3E2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	307 / 307	17 / 17	4 / 4	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	329
3E2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	12 / 12	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	14
3F1	Any Antlered Deer	138 / 388	150 / 206	51 / 62	7 / 8	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	665
3F1	Any Antlerless Deer	56 / 56	4 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	64
3F1	Antlered Whitetail Deer	147 / 147	6 / 6	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	154
3F1	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	8 / 8	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	10
3F2	Any Antlered Deer	720 / 938	255 / 261	24 / 24	7 / 7	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,234
3F2	Any Antlerless Deer	107 / 108	12 / 12	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	120
3F2	Antlered Whitetail Deer	204 / 204	9 / 9	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	214
3F2	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	3
4A	Antlered Mule Deer	3 / 321	26 / 288	29 / 172	23 / 124	100 / 119	16 / 18	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,044
4A	Antlered Whitetail Deer	103 / 256	112 / 142	27 / 31	5 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	437
4A	Antlerless Mule Deer	13 / 13	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	18
4A	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	24 / 24	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	26
4B	Antlered Mule Deer	8 / 783	24 / 686	33 / 548	35 / 443	198 / 368	128 / 172	41 / 50	8 / 9	0 / 0	2 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	3,062
4B	Antlered Whitetail Deer	137 / 163	50 / 51	13 / 14	1 / 1	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	231
4B	Antlerless Mule Deer	46 / 49	8 / 9	3 / 4	1 / 2	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	66
4B	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	9 / 9	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	9
4C	Antlered Mule Deer	8 / 633	9 / 511	11 / 456	18 / 412	133 / 381	114 / 209	62 / 84	28 / 32	4 / 5	2 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,727
4C	Antlered Whitetail Deer	143 / 209	58 / 58	11 / 11	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	280
4C	Antlerless Mule Deer	73 / 74	4 / 6	2 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	83
4C	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	5
4D	Antlered Mule Deer	9 / 602	11 / 495	21 / 438	23 / 374	146 / 336	103 / 155	29 / 31	0 / 0	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2,432
4D	Antlered Whitetail Deer	158 / 171	37 / 37	5 / 5	1 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	216
4D	Antlerless Mule Deer	66 / 68	7 / 7	3 / 5	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	82
4D	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	6
4E	Antlered Mule Deer	32 / 355	67 / 312	60 / 197	59 / 126	55 / 55	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,046
4E	Antlered Whitetail Deer	119 / 120	15 / 16	1 / 1	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	139
4E	Antlerless Mule Deer	32 / 32	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	36
4E	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1
4F	Antlered Mule Deer	63 / 187	65 / 94	39 / 46	7 / 8	5 / 5	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	342
4F	Antlered Whitetail Deer	108 / 108	9 / 9	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	118
4F	Antlerless Mule Deer	18 / 20	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	20
4F	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	10 / 10	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	12
MUZ	Antlered Whitetail Deer	1 / 2,560	0 / 1,834	0 / 1,388	0 / 1,422	19 / 1,547	25 / 1,278	43 / 959	58 / 890	82 / 796	91 / 700	301 / 1,281	14,655	
MUZ	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	332 / 676	242 / 275	35 / 35	15 / 15	14 / 14	2 / 2	1 / 1	2 / 2	2 / 2	1 / 1	1 / 1	1,024	

How the Lottery Works

There are always questions concerning the Game and Fish Department's lottery.

Using deer as the example, though turkey works the same way, this is how it works.

If you fail to draw your first license choice in any given year, you receive a bonus point. You do not have to apply in the same unit, or for the same deer type each year, to qualify. You get an additional bonus point each year you apply and do not receive your first license choice. You maintain your accumulated bonus points as long as you apply in the first drawing at least once every two years.

You receive additional chances in the drawing for each bonus point accumulated. For points one through three, you are entered in the drawing two times the number of points you have. So, if you have two points you would get four additional chances to be drawn, compared to a person who got his or her first choice the previous year. If you're both competing for the same license, you have five chances, he or she has one.

When you accumulate four or more points, the number of additional chances is determined by cubing your bonus points. So, when you have four points, you will be in the drawing 64 additional times, 125 times if you have five points, and so on. Bonus points are accumulated if you do not draw your first license choice and apply in the first drawing at least every other year. You do not receive bonus points in years you do not apply.

Each drawing is still random, but the more bonus points you have, the better your odds. When you receive your first license choice, you lose your bonus points and start over. Bonus points can only be earned, or used, in the first drawing for each species in each year.

The license lottery consists of four separate drawings, one for each choice on the application. First, we hold a drawing for the first unit/first deer choice. When those are issued, we draw for the first unit/second deer choice, then the second unit/first deer choice, and finally the second unit/second deer choice.

2021 SPRING TURKEY LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
02	145 / 366	99 / 133	14 / 14	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	513
03	81 / 81	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	82
04	74 / 127	42 / 43	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	176
06	18 / 18	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	18
13	399 / 399	16 / 16	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	415
17	197 / 349	81 / 91	10 / 10	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	450
19	214 / 214	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	216
25	809 / 809	15 / 15	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	825
27	495 / 802	171 / 186	11 / 11	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,000
30	710 / 742	37 / 37	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	779
31	19 / 19	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	19
37	375 / 761	231 / 272	15 / 16	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1,049
40	27 / 59	17 / 21	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	80
44	105 / 105	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	111
45	61 / 61	6 / 6	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	69
47	36 / 41	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	43
50	229 / 585	101 / 138	7 / 7	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	730
51	337 / 337	3 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	340
53	47 / 146	33 / 48	10 / 11	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	206
98	321 / 576	145 / 166	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	747
99	230 / 247	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	253

2021 FALL TURKEY LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
02	8 / 171	6 / 53	2 / 20	1 / 5	5 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	255
03	24 / 45	9 / 9	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	55
04	174 / 174	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	179
06	12 / 12	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	12
13	282 / 282	7 / 7	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	289
17	89 / 209	38 / 54	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	269
19	144 / 144	3 / 3	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	148
25	333 / 333	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	335
27	198 / 442	79 / 100	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	544
30	347 / 347	6 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	353
31	23 / 23	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	24
37	185 / 386	79 / 93	6 / 7	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	488
40	11 / 24	5 / 5	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	30
44	52 / 52	5 / 5	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	57
45	59 / 59	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	59
47	22 / 22	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	23
50	87 / 272	50 / 79	4 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	355
51	185 / 185	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	187
53	29 / 99	17 / 21	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	120
98	123 / 330	52 / 72	4 / 6	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	408
99	38 / 111	14 / 24	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	135

2021 PRONGHORN LOTTERY RESULTS

UNIT	UNIT / TYPE	POINTS											TOTAL APPS.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	
01A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 432	0 / 394	1 / 380	1 / 301	3 / 272	7 / 212	10 / 180	12 / 158	8 / 66	9 / 45	7 / 23	2,463
01A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	5 / 29	3 / 11	2 / 8	1 / 3	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	52
01D	Any Pronghorn	0 / 457	1 / 432	0 / 338	2 / 209	10 / 193	13 / 149	16 / 130	15 / 109	5 / 42	11 / 21	6 / 8	2,088
02A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 135	1 / 136	1 / 114	1 / 77	7 / 68	15 / 60	8 / 38	7 / 14	3 / 9	0 / 0	1 / 1	652
02A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	32 / 32	6 / 6	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	41
02B	Any Pronghorn	1 / 154	0 / 121	0 / 119	1 / 91	4 / 77	6 / 67	8 / 56	10 / 35	5 / 15	0 / 5	2 / 4	744
03A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 59	0 / 45	1 / 47	0 / 26	3 / 30	4 / 20	1 / 14	6 / 12	0 / 2	1 / 4	1 / 2	261
03B	Any Pronghorn	0 / 160	1 / 140	0 / 156	1 / 106	3 / 116	12 / 85	15 / 90	15 / 65	6 / 27	6 / 14	2 / 8	967
03B	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	7 / 14	2 / 2	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	19
04A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 508	3 / 457	4 / 385	0 / 313	38 / 296	50 / 219	42 / 127	34 / 65	15 / 25	3 / 6	1 / 3	2,404
04A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	67 / 68	11 / 11	3 / 3	1 / 1	2 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	85
04C	Any Pronghorn	0 / 78	2 / 63	2 / 72	2 / 38	2 / 36	6 / 30	10 / 16	8 / 15	1 / 4	1 / 1	0 / 0	353
05A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 109	2 / 91	0 / 73	0 / 67	5 / 50	5 / 32	8 / 20	7 / 14	4 / 7	2 / 2	0 / 0	465
05A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	9 / 15	2 / 2	0 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	19
06A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 219	2 / 206	3 / 147	2 / 133	13 / 94	20 / 64	12 / 30	10 / 27	6 / 13	7 / 9	0 / 1	943
06A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	14 / 14	2 / 2	0 / 0	2 / 2	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	19
07A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 138	1 / 98	0 / 79	1 / 67	7 / 44	6 / 32	5 / 12	6 / 10	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1	482
07A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	7 / 17	2 / 3	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	22
08A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 113	1 / 98	0 / 53	0 / 45	1 / 35	5 / 23	2 / 13	2 / 7	0 / 3	0 / 0	2 / 3	393
10A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 85	1 / 108	0 / 74	1 / 43	7 / 34	7 / 20	3 / 14	4 / 5	2 / 2	2 / 2	0 / 0	387
11A	Any Pronghorn	1 / 221	1 / 180	1 / 115	1 / 94	7 / 67	7 / 51	13 / 35	8 / 19	0 / 5	1 / 2	1 / 2	791
11A	Any Doe/Fawn Pronghorn	0 / 12	1 / 6	0 / 0	1 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	20
13A	Any Pronghorn	0 / 364	1 / 243	2 / 178	2 / 82	6 / 68	9 / 46	10 / 33	10 / 18	2 / 4	3 / 4	0 / 0	1,040

2021 Lottery Notes

The number of deer gun licenses made available to hunters increased again in 2021:

- 2016 – 49,000 deer gun licenses.
- 2017 – 54,500 deer gun licenses.
- 2018 – 55,150 deer gun licenses.
- 2019 – 65,500 deer gun licenses.
- 2020 – 69,050 deer gun licenses.
- 2021 – 72,200 deer gun licenses.

Drawing a buck license in 2021 was, like most years, not easy. Randy Meissner, Game and Fish Department licensing manager, said after 11,811 resident gratis licenses and 722 nonresident licenses were subtracted from the overall license allocation, just 31,160 buck licenses were available for the 66,591 hunters who applied for them as their first choice in the lottery.

2021 LOTTERY STATS

DEER

- 79,857 – Number of people – not including 12,113 gratis applicants – who applied for deer gun lottery licenses, down from 79,999 in 2020.
- 52.98 – Percent of successful applicants, excluding gratis and nonresidents, for deer gun and muzzleloader licenses.
- 19 – Maximum number of bonus points for any applicant (nonresident mule deer buck applicants).
- 12,636 – Applicants with four or more bonus points.
- 13.59 – Percent of applicants with four or more bonus points.
- 50.83 – Percent of applicants with four or more bonus points who applied for a muzzleloader buck license.

TURKEY

- 7,012 – Number of spring turkey licenses available to hunters, up from 6,237 in 2020.
- 76.5 – Percent of successful applicants for the spring season.
- 74.2 – Percent of applicants who received their first license choice for the spring season.
- 3,825 – Number of fall turkey licenses available, up from 3,785 in 2020.
- 69.8 – Percent of successful applicants for the fall season.
- 65.7 – Percent of applicants who received their first license choice for the fall season.

PRONGHORN

- 15 – Number of hunting units open in a limited pronghorn season.
- 1,720 – Number of licenses available to hunters, down 75 from 2020.
- 15,405 – Number of people who applied for available licenses, up 86 from 2020.

2021 Enforcement Division Review



By Scott Winkelman

It was another fantastic year for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's enforcement division in 2021. There were numerous challenges encountered by the men and women game wardens, but they continued to do what they do best, face those challenges and find ways to succeed. Staffing issues and open districts creating an increased workload, supply shortages, and learning and enforcing new laws and regulations were all met head on by some of the best, most professional law enforcement officers in the state. I cannot thank the game wardens and staff enough for all their hard work and exceptional service to those who enjoy North Dakota's fish and wildlife.

One of the highlights of 2021 for the enforcement division included all the positive, impactful contacts game wardens and staff made throughout the year. Daily, face to face contact and communication is so important for the Game and Fish Department, hunters, anglers, trappers, recreational boaters and landowners.

Game Wardens made 51,110 field contacts in 2021. This

number does not include all the people met and visited with at sport shows, state fair, local wildlife club meetings, school programs, hunter safety classes, trunk or treats, or Christmas toy drives. Sure, issuing citations to protect our resources and make sure everyone stays safe is an important part of the job, but so are building relationships, answering questions and promoting North Dakota and its tremendous outdoor opportunities.

Hopefully, many of you have enjoyed the excellent articles written by Department game wardens starting in 2021. The Behind the Badge stories are found on the Department's website (gf.nd.gov) and Facebook page, providing a glimpse into the life of a game warden and things they are doing in their communities. If not, I encourage you to take a look and learn more about things being done in the enforcement division, both now and into the future.

SCOTT WINKELMAN is the Game and Fish Department's chief warden.

Andrew Dahlgren Named Wildlife, Boating Officer of the Year

Andrew Dahlgren, North Dakota Game and Fish Department district game warden stationed in Edgeley, is the state's 2021 Wildlife Officer of the Year and Boating Officer of the Year.

Dahlgren was honored recently by Shikar-Safari Club International, a private conservation organization that annually recognizes outstanding wildlife officers in each state. In a nomination letter sent to Shikar-Safari, chief warden Scott Winkelman said Dahlgren's district is one of the busier outdoor recreation use areas in southeastern North Dakota.

"Warden Dahlgren's district includes numerous lakes and public use areas that provide hunting, fishing and boating opportunities. The varied opportunities attract a plethora of outdoor enthusiasts to the area," Winkelman said. "He is an accomplished investigator who thoroughly follows up on complaints and reports of possible illegal activities within his district."

While Dahlgren spends a considerable amount of time

in summer patrolling waters within his own district, Winkelman said he is often found assisting other wardens with boat patrols and ramp checks on neighboring lakes and reservoirs.

"Warden Dahlgren is very skilled in the detection, apprehension and prosecution of boaters who are operating while under the influence of drugs or alcohol," Winkelman said. "He has made numerous arrests for operating a vessel while intoxicated using techniques he has developed from his own patrol experiences. He serves the Department and citizens of North Dakota in an outstanding manner."



Scott Winkelman (left), Game and Fish Department chief warden, and warden Andrew Dahlgren.

MIKE ANDERSON

2021 Summary of Violations

GAME	
Illegal taking/possession of big game	10
Failure to wear fluorescent orange	17
Tagging violations	18
CWD violations	20
Killing wrong species or sex	12
Shining big game	7
Other big game violations	63
Total	147

SMALL GAME	
Using gun able to hold more than 3 shells	70
Hunting before/after legal hours	3
Illegal possession/taking	3
Exceeding limit	16
Failure to leave identification or sex of game	62
Killing wrong sex or species	4
Wanton waste	10
Other small game violations	75
Total	243

BOATING	
Use of unlicensed or unnumbered boat	63
Failure to display boat registration	92
Operating without lights at night	62
Inadequate number of PFDs	247
Water skiing violations	21
Reckless or negligent operation	20
Operating vessel under influence/intoxicated	8
Other boating violations	333
Total	846

FISHING	
Exceeding limit	81
Fishing in closed/restricted area	24
Fishing with illegal bait	29
Paddlefish violations	3
ANS violations	137
Other fishing violations	132
Total	406

FURBEARER	
Use/possession of illegal snares	1
Shining (using artificial light)	7
Harassing furbearers with motor vehicle	2
Other furbearer violations	8
Total	18

GENERAL	
Use of motor vehicle off established trail	55
Hunting on posted land without permission	58
Aid in concealment of unlawful game	1
Loaded firearm in motor vehicle	48
440-yard violation	5
Littering	20
Hunting in unharvested field	16
Other general violations	6
Total	209

LICENSING	
Hunting/fishing/trapping without proper license	213
Failure to carry license on person	256
Misrepresentation on license or application	15
Other licensing violations	9
Total	493

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS/REFUGE	
Failure to obey posted regulations	50
Tree stand violations	7
Possession of glass beverage containers	4
Camping violations	1
Prohibited use of motor vehicles	8
PLOTS access violations	8
Other WMA/refuge violations	4
Total	82

MISCELLANEOUS	
Possession of controlled substance	30
Possession of drug paraphernalia	24
Open container	12
Minor in possession	30
Criminal trespass	71
Other miscellaneous	15
Total	182

COMMERCIAL	
Commercial violations	6
Total	6
Grand Total	2,632

INCIDENTS 2021 - TOP 10 COUNTIES

(An incident is defined as any situation that requires a response from a game warden. It does not have to be a crime. The situation could be, for example, a stranded angler.)

- Ramsey – 325
- McLean – 222
- McKenzie – 206
- Burleigh – 182
- Williams – 181
- Richland – 165
- Cass – 158
- Morton – 148
- Mountrail – 139
- Mercer – 122

CITATIONS 2021 - TOP 10 COUNTIES

- Ramsey – 399
- Williams – 132
- Benson – 125
- McLean – 107
- Bottineau – 92
- LaMoure – 92
- Mercer – 91
- McKenzie – 89
- Pembina – 88
- Stark – 78



Warden Erik Schmidt of Linton checks an ice angler's fishing license.

TY STOCKTON



WALKING IN WINTER: *The Power of Attention*

By Alicia Underlee Nelson

The snow is falling
up. And down.
And sideways.



A brisk, northerly wind sends snow streaming toward my living room window. Fat, glittering flakes hang suspended in the air. Suddenly, a southerly crosswind whistles between the neat rows of houses and sends snow soaring off my neighbor's roof. The snowflakes bob and weave, then shoot skyward as the two air streams collide. Caught in a swirling vortex, the sparkling snow flutters down, pauses, then wobbles upward again, the cycle repeating over and over, as if it's on a timer. The gleaming ice crystals churn and roll, catching the midday light like a thousand fireflies. It's like being inside a snow globe.

I've lived in the northland my entire life, and I've never seen snow like this. This is TV movie snow, cheesy car commercial snow, the too-pretty-to-be-real kind of snow that makes Midwesterners roll their eyes because we know snow and it's not this. This is the snow of a thousand clichés. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it.

But I did see it. And while it's possible that this kind of winter precipitation never occurred in my presence, I think it's more likely that I never saw snow like this because I simply wasn't paying attention.

Attention is powerful. And humans aren't always very good at using our attention effectively. Thankfully, this skill gets stronger with practice. If I hadn't been staring up at snowflakes, trekking through the woods and traversing frozen prairie for two winters in a row, I might have missed the wonder in my own back yard.

LEARNING TO SEE

The first step in paying attention is overcoming our basic biology. It turns out that we tune out most visual stimuli. It's an evolutionary adaptation to help us spot predators, find food and monitor potentially dangerous changes in the environment.

"Rather than try to process everything we see, our eyes stop spending time taking in information from those parts of the environment that hold steady," explains Barnard College and Columbia University professor Alexandra Horowitz in her book "On Looking: Eleven Walks With Expert Eyes." "Staring at your computer screen, or the book in your hand, your eyes quickly stop processing all the details of the monitor or the corners of the pages in depth. If something changes, sure, the eye darts to it and neurons fire away. If nothing changes, those neurons can go quiet."

Winter is quiet. There isn't much darting around to capture our attention. There are no buzzing bees or fluttering butterflies, no rushing water or rustling leaves to make us stop and listen. Most of the birds have migrated south. Beavers snack under the frozen surface of the ponds and snapping turtles tuck themselves into the mud for a long winter's nap.

Winter isn't showy. Its color palette is muted. Summer's vibrant shades fade into tundra tones of bleached grass, frozen earth and snowy white. The blazing fall leaves are gone, replaced with only the skeletal outlines of branches against flat gray skies. There's less contrast and movement to grab our attention.

Changes are subtle in winter, the movements smaller. But that doesn't mean they're not there.

SENSING SUBTLE SHIFTS

A single cattail contains up to 268,000 seeds. I think at least half of them are stuck to my coat. A lazy wind sends the rest floating over the reeds. The ice is thick on Lake Metigoshe, so I'm pondering the novelty of standing in the middle of a marshland as I watch the fuzzy particles lift gently into the air.

The Red River in Fargo is frozen too. But not in

the same way. The ice in Lions Conservancy Park is mushy and multi-colored — charcoal dark, snow white, a pale bluish gray that mimics the dusky light. The twists and turns of the oxbows haven't fully iced over. Tiny whirlpools churn the clay tinted water just visible beneath their slushy edges.

In the nearby river bottom, clusters of polypora-ceae mushrooms perch on a decaying log. Thirsty little mosses sip the water from the snow. Wild cucumber pods rustle on the vine. In summer, I wouldn't notice them. But against this sparse landscape, the fruit's dried husks are as spiky and conspicuous as a school of blowfish. A lonely bird calls. Life endures.

The word "frozen" indicates stillness. But nature moves. It often happens while we sleep.

TRACKS AND TRACES

The trails through Lake Metigoshe State Park are covered in a thick blanket of snow. We haven't seen a single creature, other than the park rangers, but we can tell we're not alone. Yesterday's boot prints are crisscrossed by a half dozen tracks.

Identifying the cloven-hoofed deer and bounding rabbit was easy. Squirrel tracks look an awful lot like rabbit tracks in deep snow, until you follow the squirrels' prints to the base of oak trees.

But there is one set of tracks that has us stumped. They amble along next to my son's foot prints, each four-toed paw placed neatly inside the imprint of the step before in a perfectly straight line, as if the animal was walking on a balance



beam. There were no claw marks, even on the hard-packed snow, so we ruled out a canine. I consulted my field guide (which helpfully included life-sized tracks for comparison) and found a perfect match – bobcat.

The hair on the back of my neck prickled. Suddenly, the ranger's warning didn't seem quite so abstract. We walk on, looking up every now and then, just in case.

WHEN IN DOUBT, LOOK UP

I'm straddling the border of the U.S. and Canada inside the International Peace Garden (a move that always feels a bit like a party trick) staring at the sky like a child. Feathery cirrus clouds arch across the brilliant blue, their ice crystals suspended like a series of chandeliers. Along the horizon line, dramatically dark stratocumulus clouds churn towards us at a shocking speed, heralding the storm front that will soon bury our log cabin under several inches of snow.

My ancestors, farmers and fishermen, would have been able to read this portent. Thinking of all the things they knew that have been lost to me, I try to capture the day's clouds in watercolor. They are rosy as cotton candy at daybreak, inky dark and orange when the sun sets over Lake Metigoshe and a dozen combinations of white, black and gray in between.

I turn my face to the sun as it streams through the window, following its warmth and slanting, watery light like a cat. When the moon rises, I follow that too. It's taken decades for me to finally learn the difference between the waxing and the waning moon, to observe the rhythms that my great-great-grandmothers would have known deep in their bones. But now that I've started to notice, I can't look away.

THE POWER OF ATTENTION

Tuning in to the moment and noting nature's subtle rhythms is a skill. Some of us are observant in the way our ancestors would have been forced to be. Naturalists, hunters, park rangers, birders and anglers are good at stillness. They're accus-

tomed to noticing the tiny changes in their environment. People who pray, meditate, create art or practice yoga often share these skills, although they use them for different purposes. For the rest of us, paying attention takes effort.

"Our attention wanders, relentlessly," says David George Haskell in "The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature." "Bring it gently back. Over and over, seek out the sensory details: the particularity of sound, the feel and smell of the place, the visual complexities. This practice is not arduous, but it does take deliberate acts of will."

At first, I was surprised to read that Haskell, a naturalist and biology professor at Sewanee: The University of the South, used the same language as meditation and yoga teachers. But I shouldn't have been. Perceiving the natural world and spiritual practices like prayer, meditation and yoga are all rooted in open-minded observation. And Haskell's groundbreaking book is all about revisiting one tiny patch of ground — exactly one square-meter of old-growth forest — in different seasons. It's all about noticing the tiny changes from day to day and season to season.

In this spirit, I turned my attention to my own suburban West Fargo neighborhood. For many of us, a daily walk became a pandemic tradition. I just extended mine into the darkest days of winter.

THE (SOMETIMES PHYSICAL) PAIN OF WINTER

This was easy on warm, sunny days, the kind where snow sparkles on the roof like a Christmas card. But it was much harder on those gray sky days where the cold hits you like a punch to the solar plexus and the air is actively attempting to kill you.

"There is no bad weather, only bad clothing," is a common expression in Scandinavia. I see this same hardy stoicism in most Midwesterners as we scrape our windshields in the morning and clear the sidewalks after a blizzard.

But while many U.S. residents retreat to the couch to survive winter, most Norwegians live by a philosophy called *friluftsliv* (pronounced free-looftsliv), which means "open air living" or "free air life." It

emphasizes staying active outdoors in every season – including the icy northern winters.

Even though daylight is scarce in Norway (Oslo nights drag on for 18 hours in December), many Norwegians soak up this scant sunshine by jogging, skiing, snowshoeing, fat tire biking and exploring their own cities and neighborhoods. Even babies and toddlers get in on the action, napping outdoors in their strollers, bundled up in snowsuits and tucked under layers of thick blankets, tiny little Vikings triumphing over the elements.

I think the Scandinavians are on to something. They reap the physical and mental health benefits of regular exercise and exposure to nature and get a quick hit of Vitamin D from the sunshine while they're at it. Outdoor activity keeps them moving and breaks up the monotony and depression that can accompany both dark days and limited physical activity. They don't bemoan or ignore the season -- they celebrate it.

That doesn't mean they're in denial about the harshness of winter. It just means that they understand that a fallow period is a necessary part of the life cycle of every living being, including humans.

In "Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times," Katherine May uses winter as a metaphor for the challenging physical and emotional periods that occur in every human life. Her gentle memoir guides readers to look to nature to learn how to accept and adapt to the hardships of literal and figurative winter.

"We like to imagine that it's possible for life to be one eternal summer and that we have uniquely failed to achieve that for ourselves. But life's not like that," May writes. "It is all very well to survive in the abundant months of the spring and summer, but in winter, we witness the full glory of nature's flourishing in lean times.

"Plants and animals don't fight the winter; they don't pretend it's not happening and attempt to carry on living the same lives that they lived in the summer," she continues. "They prepare. They adapt. They perform extraordinary acts of metamorphosis to get them through. Winter is a time of withdrawing from the world, maximizing scant resources, carrying out acts of brutal efficiency and vanishing from sight; but that's where the transformation occurs. Winter is not the death of the life cycle, but its crucible."



Alicia Underhew Nelson

REIMAGINING FAMILIAR GROUND

These words remind me to be a little kinder to myself about how I've weathered nearly two years of a pandemic – an emotional winter none of us could possibly have imagined. These daily walks helped me learn how to flourish in lean times. I took it step by step, moment by moment.

The trees were bare, so the fermenting apple stashed in a tree stood out. A dusting of snow made it simple to follow the squirrel's route back to my neighbor's Ohio buckeye. I traced a particularly bold rabbit's trip up unto my porch steps. (In related news, the mystery of what nibbled last year's flowers on that same step has now been solved.) And on the very week I learned that mice and voles sleep, eat and move under the snow through a series of subnivean caverns – a sheltered rodent superhighway – I was stunned to see evidence of these very tunnels in my own backyard.

I smelled wood smoke and pine and the

boggy wet of decomposing leaves. I spotted last year's bird nests and watched the seed pods on a row of American lindens quivering in the wind, decorated with a lacy coverlet of frost. I observed the burnished orange maple leaves fading to brown as time, paws and running shoes pressed them into the sidewalks through the month of November. The vivid red sumac and burning bush foliage blazed well into winter, bright as flame against the snowdrifts.

I craned my neck to watch geese fly above the rooftops as I took an unhurried stroll at dusk, just after Thanksgiving dinner. I discovered that the chatty choruses of neighborhood birds prefer blue spruce trees. They hush when I approach, then resume their nattering the second I'm out of sight, like junior high kids when a teacher pokes her head into the classroom.

These kinds of close-to-home observations are common. But they're not inconsequential. And you certainly don't need to be an expert to make them. In fact, sometimes an outsider's perspective is the secret ingredient. Bernd Heinrich's "Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival," tells the story of how the observations of one ordinary person changed how we see the natural world.

Your teacher probably taught you that no two snowflakes are alike. Indeed, every temperature and humidity fluctuation shape every snow crystal into a unique – and utterly ephemeral – creation. But we don't owe this knowledge to famous scientists like Johannes Kepler (who studied snow's six-sided structure in the 1600s) or to the generations of academics who built on his research.

Instead, much of what we know about snow comes from the observations of Wilson Bentley, a farm kid from Vermont who took the world's first photo of a snowflake in his woodshed when he was 20 years old. After studying snow through the lens of his camera and microscope for several years, Wilson went down the road to the University of Vermont and asked if anybody was interested in his photos. By his death in 1931, Wilson had written a book and 50 articles about snow. He also published 2,500 of his 5,000 snowflake images and earned a nickname – "The Snowflake Man."

As the snow falls softly outside of Dunseith, I'm glad Wilson took the time to explore his particular

passion. Because I learned about his life, I now know that the curtain of white blanketing my sleeping car's windshield is made up of thousands of conglomerate snowflakes, ice crystals that form on warm winter days and combine into large, three-dimensional clusters as they tumble to earth. One sticks to the smooth surface of my glove.

I don't know what makes me glance down. But when I look, I do a double take. This particular snowflake is a spatial dendrite, an elegant, six-pointed star with graceful arms that mimic the delicate lines of a fern. A tiny column perches at the very tip of all six points, arching upward, a marvel in three dimensions.

I catch my breath and stare. There is again, a rare thing in this cold and weary world.

ALICIA UNDERLEE NELSON is a freelance travel writer and photographer from West Fargo. She blogs frequently about travels within North Dakota on her website, prairiestylefile.com.

WINTER READING

- "Forest Therapy: Seasonal Ways to Embrace Nature for a Happier You," by Sarah Ivens
- "On Looking: Eleven Walks With Expert Eyes," by Alexandra Horowitz
- "Stokes Nature Guides: A Guide to Nature in Winter (Northeast and North Central North America)," by Donald W. Stokes
- "Stokes Nature Guides: Animal Tracking and Behavior," by Donald and Lillian Stokes
- "The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature," by David George Haskell
- "Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times," by Katherine May
- "Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival," by Bernd Heinrich

FOR KIDS (OF ALL AGES)

- "Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You," by Clare Walker Leslie and Charles E. Roth
- "Over And Under The Snow," by Kate Messner
- "Slow Down: 50 Mindful Moments in Nature," by Rachel Williams

“THE DRIFT PRAIRIE, A TRANSITION ZONE WHERE GLACIAL DEPOSITS FORMED ROLLING HILLS AND PRAIRIE POTHOLES. I TREAD HERE OFTEN, WHETHER BETWEEN ICE AUGER HOLES, OR DEEP INTO THE MUCK OF A SECRET GADWALL HIDEAWAY.”



THE
DRIFT



GF.ND.GOV/THE-DRIFT



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH



SANDRA JOHNSON

View Wildlife From a Distance in Winter

Wildlife managers urge outdoor enthusiasts to consider where they recreate during North Dakota's leanest months to spare already stressed animals that are simply trying to survive the snow and cold.

This advice is especially true this winter as wildlife habitat and available food sources are limited because ongoing drought conditions leading up to winter nearly crippled the development of vegetation that many animals rely on to survive.

"People in North Dakota want to have fun in winter because we have four or five months of it, which means we've got a lot of people out shed hunting, riding snowmobiles and track machines, snowshoes, those kinds of things," said Casey Anderson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department wildlife division chief. "It's important, the tougher the winter is, that people are cognizant about where wildlife are and really view wildlife from a distance.

"That means wait to shed hunt until later in the spring so that you're not pushing deer in and out of thermal cover where they're trying to just conserve energy," he added. "You push them out into the open, then they get exposed to the elements a lot more and it adds further stress. Also, people need to realize if they're out on a snowmobile or a machine and are pushing wildlife, chasing wildlife, that's actually an illegal activity in North Dakota as far as harassment of wildlife is concerned."

Anderson said it's common for snowmobilers and others to ride in areas where snow has accumulated, such as near shelterbelts and other wooded habitat.

"Those areas can be fun to ride because that's where the drifts are, but people also have to realize that there could be deer or other wildlife within those areas that are using that for thermal cover and a windbreak. And so, every time you push them out, it increases the amount of energy they expend to survive the next day."

These same warnings, for shed hunters and others, also apply on Game and Fish Department owned or operated wildlife management areas where many animals gather to weather the winter months.

Fish Caught Deep

North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries biologists are encouraging ice anglers to keep fish caught from deep waters.

Catch-and-release fishing, no matter the time of year, is discouraged for fish caught in 30 feet or more, because fish reeled in from those depths have a greater chance of dying if released.

Fish caught in deep water won't likely survive because of the extreme change in water pressure, which causes the swim bladder to expand. Fish can no longer control their balance in the water column when this happens. Other internal injuries, such as rupturing of organs and bleeding, are also likely for fish caught from deep waters.

Devils Lake ice anglers commonly catch yellow perch in 30-45 feet of water during the winter months. This also occurs to fish in other deep water bodies around the state.

Game and Fish recommends that anglers targeting fish in deeper water make the commitment to keep what they catch. And once they reach their limit, anglers should stop fishing at that depth to avoid killing more than their limit.



TY STOCKTON



ASHLEY PETERSON

Spring Light Goose Conservation Order

North Dakota's spring light goose conservation order opens February 19 and continues through May 15.

Residents must have a valid current season 2021-22 (valid through March 31) or 2022-23 (required April 1) combination license; or a small game, and general game and habitat license.

Nonresidents need a 2022 spring light goose

conservation order license. The cost is \$50 and is valid statewide. Nonresidents who hunt in the spring remain eligible to buy a fall season license. The spring license does not count against the 14-day fall waterfowl hunting season regulation.

In addition, nonresident youth under age 16 can purchase a license at the resident fee if their state has youth reciprocity licensing with North Dakota.

A federal duck stamp is not required for either residents or nonresidents.

Resident and nonresident licenses are available online at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

Hunters must register annually with the Harvest Information Program prior to hunting in each state. The HIP number can be obtained online. The HIP number obtained for North Dakota's spring conservation order is also valid for North Dakota's fall hunting season.

The spring conservation order is only open to light geese – snows, blues, and Ross's. Species identification is important because white-fronted and Canada geese travel with light geese. The conservation order is closed to whitefronts, Canada geese, swans and all other migratory birds.



MIKE ANDERSON

Ice Fishing Reminder

Winter anglers must clean up the ice after fishing. This not only applies to trash, but fish as well.

It is not only unsightly, but it is illegal to leave fish, including minnows used for bait, behind on the ice. According to state fishing regulations, when a fish is caught, anglers must either immediately release the fish unharmed, or reduce them to their daily possession.

It is common practice for some anglers to fillet fish on the ice, which is allowed, as long as fish entrails and other parts are removed from the ice and properly disposed of at home.

In addition, all trash, including aluminum cans, cigarette butts and Styrofoam containers, must be packed out and taken home.



ASHLEY PETERSON

Hunter Education Classes

If you were born after 1961, are 12 years or older, you must take a certified hunter education course before you can get a firearm or bowhunting license in North Dakota.

Understanding this, especially if you have your sights set on hunting in fall, now is not the time to drag your feet.

"In some of our communities, especially our smaller communities, there's only one course a year, so if you need to meet that hunter education requirement, people need to be thinking about it now as the vast majority of our courses are from January through May," said Brian Schaffer, North Dakota Game and Fish Department hunter education coordinator. "We've been working on providing more volunteer-led courses throughout the summer months, but calling the Department in August to get certified before our hunting seasons beginning in early fall likely won't work. And when that class disappears off the Game and Fish website, it means it's full, so there needs to be some personal responsibility here."

Individuals interested in taking a hunter education class in 2022 must click on the education link at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov. To register for a class, click on "enroll" next to the specific class, and follow the simple instructions. Personal information is required. Classes are listed by city and can also be sorted by start date. Classes will be added throughout the year as they become finalized.

Individuals interested in receiving a notice by email or SMS text message when each hunter education class is added, can click on the "subscribe to news and alerts" link found below the news section on the Game and Fish home page. Check the box labeled "hunter education" under the education program updates.

Again, state law requires anyone born after Dec. 31, 1961, to pass a certified hunter education course to hunt in the state. Children must be turning 12 during the calendar year to take the home study course, and age 11 during the calendar year can take the traditional in-person class.

Hunter education got its start in North Dakota more than 40 years ago, and the program is approaching a significant signpost, especially when you consider the effort to certify thousands of students has long been led by giving volunteers.

"In the next couple of years, we're going to hit 250,000 students that have successfully completed hunter education in North Dakota," Schaffer said. "It's a milestone that all of our volunteers, our agency and anyone who's ever been part of hunter education should be proud of. It shows a collaborative effort to make North Dakota hunting safer and not just for hunters, but for the landowners and for the citizens of North Dakota who we've been teaching for over 40 years what we think is important for our hunters to know before they ever step foot in a field in North Dakota."

Typically, about 5,000 students take and pass hunter education in North Dakota every year.

"The demographics of our hunter education courses have changed drastically over the last 10-20 years. Historically, our hunter education classes in the 1980s and 1990s consisted of mostly our children, and the vast majority of them were male students," Schaffer said. "That shifted quite a bit and now it's almost a 50-to-50 ratio of male to female. And we're also seeing a lot of young adults taking hunter education, people who didn't grow up in a hunting family or for whatever reason, they didn't take hunter ed as a child, we're seeing more and more adults taking hunter education."

What hasn't changed is that the program leans heavily on the selfless individuals who teach the classes across North Dakota.

"We have roughly 700 volunteers who teach hunter education in a given year, and some of those people have been teaching for 30 and 40 years," Schaffer said. "We also have people who are only a year or two into it. And so, if you have any interest in helping out, there's a variety of ways we can get you involved in the hunter education program. It's a way to give back to your community and give back to our hunting heritage here in North Dakota."



ASHLEY PETERSON

Midwinter Waterfowl Survey

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual midwinter waterfowl survey in early January indicated about 81,000 Canada geese in the state.

Andy Dinges, Department migratory game bird biologist, said that number likely would have been higher, but snow and bitterly cold weather in late December undoubtedly pushed some birds south just prior to the survey.

"The number of waterfowl recorded dropped substantially from last year's survey, but that was a relatively mild winter with little snow accumulation," Dinges said.

In addition, Lake Sakakawea didn't officially freeze over until Jan. 24 last year, which was the latest date on record.

"Despite recent weather we are still wintering a good number of waterfowl this year and conditions remain fair for wintering birds, unless we get too much snow accumulation," Dinges said.

During the survey, an estimated 55,000 Canada geese were observed on the Missouri River, and another 21,100 on Nelson Lake in Oliver County. Dinges said after summarizing the numbers, an additional 7,000 mallards were tallied statewide, most of which were recorded on Nelson Lake. Lake Sakakawea officially froze over just a few days before the survey this year.

The 10-year average (2012-21) for the midwinter survey in North Dakota is 123,100 Canada geese and 24,700 mallards.

All states participate in the midwinter survey during the same time frame, to reduce the possibility of counting birds more than once.

Participation Needed in Hunter Harvest Surveys

Even though North Dakota's 2021 hunting seasons have been put to bed, hunter success, or lack thereof, still matters.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has conducted hunter harvest surveys for more than a half-century, using the findings to help manage the state's wildlife populations. Thousands of surveys are sent annually, and participation is strongly urged because hunter harvest plays a noted role, for example, in setting hunting license numbers for the upcoming season.

"We survey hunters about their hunting activity because understanding how many animals were removed from the population is a really important ecological piece of information," said Chad Parent, Department survey coordinator. "We use that information that we get

back from the hunter harvest surveys to compare against where we're at with our harvest objectives at any point in a given year. And that can mean, in some cases, license increases. It can sometimes mean that we decrease the number of licenses, potentially in the case of a site that was hit hard by EHD, for example. But ultimately these surveys are important because they inform the recommendations that we pass along to the governor during the proclamation setting process."

Thousands of big game, small game, waterfowl, swan, turkey and furbearer questionnaires will be emailed to randomly selected hunters. A follow-up survey will be mailed to those who did not respond to the first survey.

Not everyone who, say, receives a hunter harvest survey for the 2021 deer gun season will have harvested a deer, but Parent stressed that those hunters still need to fill out and return their surveys.

"We design our surveys so that a random sample of hunters get those surveys, and we understand that some hunters weren't successful, which in a lot of ways is just as important as knowing who did harvest a deer," he said.

Parent said the hunter harvest surveys are short and



take very little time to complete. He added that a follow-up survey will be mailed to those who did not respond to the emailed survey.

"The more surveys we get back from hunters, the more robust the statistical information is to help us produce better harvest estimates," Parent said. "I equate the hunter harvest surveys to the work we do at Game and Fish. We fly aerial surveys to count deer and we drive roadside surveys to count upland game birds. The more

time biologists spend in airplanes or driving North Dakota backroads, the better the estimates we get back. And it's the exact same concept for hunter harvest surveys."

Big Three Lottery

Elk, moose and bighorn sheep applications must be submitted online before midnight March 23.

To apply online, visit the Game and Fish website, gf.nd.gov. Paper applications are not available.

Hunters who have received a license through the lottery in the past are not eligible to apply for that species again.

In 2021, 26,032 people applied for the 470 moose licenses; 23,023 applied for the 519 elk licenses; and 19,126 applied for the four bighorn sheep licenses.

STAFF NOTES



Jeb Williams (left), Department director, and Wes Erdle, fisheries development project manager.

Wes Erdle Named Game and Fish Employee of the Year

Wes Erdle, fisheries development project manager for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department in Bismarck, received the agency's Director's Award for professional excellence at the Department's annual staff meeting in December.

Jeb Williams, Game and Fish director, said Erdle and his crew are responsible for all new boat ramps undertaken by the Department, and he is solely responsible for coordination and management of development staff, contractors, entities and landowners.

"The amount of planning and prioritizing to make the development program effective is enormous," Williams said. "Wes serves as the engineer, foreman and lead equipment operator. He is extremely motivated, ambitious and hard-working, and we are fortunate to have him working on our team."

Game and Fish Recognizes Employee Efforts

North Dakota Game and Fish Department director Jeb Williams recently honored employees with performance-based awards. Williams presented the following with special recognition awards during the Department's virtual staff meeting in December.



Todd Caspers, fisheries biologist, Devils Lake, was recognized for his efforts in the fisheries management of Devils Lake, Stump Lake, Lake Irvine and the Red River.



Todd Buckley, wildlife resource management biologist, Williston, was recognized for being instrumental in increasing grazing as a management tool for habitat treatments on wildlife management areas.



Corey Wentland, federal aid manager, Bismarck, was recognized for his involvement with state and federal audits, and his management and compliance with federal grants.



Robert Miller, wildlife technician, Riverdale, was recognized for his efforts in coordinating upgrades in facilities at the Riverdale office complex.



Wildlife resource management supervisor Brian Prince (left), private land biologist Andrew Ahrens (middle) and wildlife technician Scott Olson (right), all Devils Lake, were recognized for their efforts managing aspen forests on public and private lands.



Dave Dewald (left), past president of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation and Mike Anderson, Department video project supervisor.

Communicator of the Year

Mike Anderson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department video project supervisor, received the North Dakota Wildlife Federation Communicator of the Year Award in January. Anderson was nominated for the award by the Lewis and Clark Wildlife Club.

"Anderson has brought videography, reporting and information distribution of current wildlife and fisheries news to a new level at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department," according to the nomination letter. "His timely reporting provides hunters, anglers and the general public pertinent and current information on North Dakota's wildlife and fish resources."

Anderson's work today airs on 11 television stations in North Dakota and on the Department's website (gf.nd.gov) and Facebook page.

Department Weed Warriors

Bill Haase, North Dakota Game and Fish Department assistant wildlife division chief, and agency wildlife technicians, Tom Crutchfield and Jim Houston, were awarded the Weed Warrior Award from the North Dakota Weed Control Association in January.

The trio's efforts were commended for expanding prescribed grazing on Department wildlife management areas, to get desired vegetation response and increase grass production, and annual and perennial wildflowers and forbs.

The use of livestock and temporary rotational grazing produces a healthier grassland grazing community and increases plant diversity while using cattle to put pressure on noxious weeds, reducing the need for a significant amount of chemical control and provide healthy grasslands.



Pictured (left to right): Jim Hennessey, NDWCA president, Tom Crutchfield, Jim Houston and Bill Haase, all with the Game and Fish Department, and Darrell Fick, NDWCA board member.

The crew invested a significant amount of time and money to develop grazing systems. They coordinated grazing systems, drilled electric and solar wells, obtained easement for electricity, and installed temporary and permanent fencing to provide for grazing rotations. Because of this success, other districts have also expanded grazing opportunities as well.



Phalen Retires

Tim Phalen retired in December after 37 years with the Game and Fish Department. Phalen joined the agency in 1984 as a wildlife technician and started as a district game warden in 1987 in the Wyndmere district where he remained his entire enforcement career. Over the years, Phalen acted as a Department field

training officer and firearms instructor.

"Tim retires with a wealth of enforcement experience and a deep understanding of the district he patrolled for so many years," said Scott Winkelman, Department enforcement division chief. "Tim will be missed."



Ressler New Marketing Specialist in Bismarck

Jackie Ressler has been named the Game and Fish Department's marketing specialist in Bismarck.

Prior to accepting the position, Ressler gained nearly 20 years of experience working in the marketing and advertising industry in Bismarck.

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BACKCAST

By Ron Wilson

Life is hard when everything wants to eat you.

From winged- to four-legged predators, gardeners with little tolerance for freeloaders, and hunters with pockets heavy with .22-caliber long rifle shells, cottontail rabbits are seemingly always on the dodge from something.

Wildlife biologists tell us that a young cottontail has about a 10% chance of making it through its first year and only a 1% chance to make it more than two years.

Those are tough numbers if you're a rabbit.

Odds of hitting a cottontail – with an open sight .22 – caliber rifle – flushed from thick cover and quickly heading to equally dense escape cover are seemingly as poor, it turns out, as the animal's reputed survival statistics.

Good thing we're packing plenty of ammunition.

When I was a kid, I cut my hunting teeth on cottontail rabbits and the bigger jacks. While many hunters can say the same, I've never fully retired from the pursuit and get excited when cottontail numbers are up because, weather permitting, I know what I'm going to be doing once the deer, sharptail and pheasant seasons are closed.

My two sons and I are hunting on land North Dakota historians say was once, in the early 1900s, the largest underground lignite mine in the world. By the early 1930s, the operation shifted to open pit stripping done with big machines. What remains today, is a wealth of wildlife habitat and spoil piles that are so steep in spots, the only way to the bottom as I see it is to unload my firearm and slide down the snow on my backside.

It's one of those winter days that you appreciate. Big, blue skies, temperatures above freezing and no wind. When it's like this, when you're gifted even the shortest of reprieves, it's easy to fool yourself into thinking that getting through winter isn't going to be the grind you anticipated.

An hour into the hunt, the snow has gone soft in the rising temperatures and the seat of my pants are wet. While sliding down these hills wouldn't be my first choice of a mode of descent, I'm a long way from hating it, no matter how ungraceful I look doing it.

Between ducking under low-hanging branches and stomping around patches of brush littered with tracks and rabbit pellets, I hear the occasional crack of a .22 and random scraps of elevated conversation that suggest, if nothing else, that my boy's are having fun.

When we meet up, they say it's best to have one hunter walk the tops of the hills, and there are many, while the other hunts from down below. Then repeat.

I fall in line behind them as we hike to find another likely looking spoil pile hilltop and brushy slope to hunt that will lead us back to where we parked.

I notice the backs of their hunting pants aren't wet like mine, but I'm not surprised as I fall a little farther behind and keep my mouth shut. I've got 30-plus years on the oldest of the two and it chaps me, only a little, that some things are getting a little harder.

But I do want to give them some grief about making the old dude in the group carry their three cottontails but hesitate because they'll quickly point out that I'm the obvious choice since I'm the only one wearing a backpack.



RON WILSON

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The National Archery in the Schools Program state tournament will return to live action March 18-19 at the All Seasons Arena in Minot. The tournament the last two years was held virtually due to COVID-19 concerns. Jeff Long, North Dakota Game and Fish Department NASP coordinator, said event organizers expect record attendance in 2022, with more than 1,000 participants. "It's nice to get back to live action for the kids," Long said. "From what I'm hearing from coaches is that the kids can't wait to get into that arena and compete. And we're excited to give them that opportunity." The NASP program got its start in North Dakota in 2009. Today, roughly 12,000 students in schools around the state are involved in NASP.



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