

North Dakota Wildlife Federation

Flickertales

Summer 2021



The North Dakota Wildlife Federation is a grassroots organization, which protects and enhances North Dakota's wildlife, wildlife habitat and access to that habitat, and promotes hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife related activities through education, programs, and projects.

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 were concerned about the loss of North Dakota's natural lands, healthy waters, and abundant wildlife. Our dedicated affiliates, volunteers, and staff maintain this legacy.

Affiliates

Barnes County Wildlife Federation
Bottineau County Wildlife Club
Cass County Wildlife Club
Central Morton Sportsmen's Club
Eddy County Rod & Gun 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 Fur Hunters & Trappers Association
Red River Area Sportsmen's Club
Richland County Wildlife
Stutsman County Wildlife Federation
Tri-County Trap & Wildlife Club

Executive Board Members

Dave Dewald, President, Bismarck
Kerry Whipp, Vice President, Pingree
Mike McEnroe, Secretary, Fargo
Terry Allbee, Treasurer, Bismarck
Dave Brandt, NWF Representative, Buchanan
Wayne Beyer, Past President, Wahpeton

At Large Board Members

Josh Holm, Director 1, Valley City
Joe Lautenschlager, Director 2, Berthold
Mike McEnroe, Director 3, Fargo
Paulette Scherr, Director 4, Kensal
Terry Allbee, Director 5, Bismarck
Nick Simonson, Director 6, Bismarck
Daryl Simmons, Director 7 Garrison
Gene Masse, Director 8, Bismarck
Joe Keller, Director 9, Wahpeton

Photos: Mike LaLonde, Matt Patrias, Nick Simonson



From the Executive Director

This continues to be an exciting time to be part of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation! We have started updating our strategic plan and mission, setting the framework for the Federation to better serve North Dakota's wildlife, habitat, hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users into the future.

NDWF and our conservation partners are also already looking ahead to the 2023 Farm Bill. We are calling for a doubling of the conservation title in the next Farm Bill. Farm Bill conservation programs give farmers resources and technical assistance that support a variety of voluntary conservation practices and help farms, wildlife and communities reduce emissions, adapt to a changing climate and boost conservation efforts nationwide.

At the state level, this fall we will see the new e-posting system in place for sportsmen and women to use when they take to the field. The Interim Committee on Access will be monitoring the roll out and how it can better serve hunters. There likely will be glitches in the program that will be fixed over time, but in the meantime check and double check that the land is truly unposted before entering. We as hunters should strive for zero trespassing offenses every fall, but particularly this fall -when all eyes will be on the new electronic posting system.

Maybe I need to get out fishing more, but I am already thinking about the next legislative session in 2023. The key to our success is building relationships with legislators, informing them on our issues, and holding them accountable when they vote against conservation and sportsmen's issues. In order to deliver on accountability, NDWF has launched our [2021 Legislative Voting Record](#) to inform voters and legislators alike.

While we are focused on the future, we have not forgotten NDWF's history and the members, clubs, and leaders who were instrumental in the Federation's past successes. We are standing on the shoulders of giants. As you can see throughout this newsletter, we are working hard on wildlife and habitat management policy, access issues, R3 activities, and engaging ND's hunters and anglers all over the state.

Contact John at jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com



Message from our President



The outdoors have provided a relief from a lot of Covid concerns. Hunting and fishing became an escape for many people, when in the boat or following a dog in the field, it is easy to forget about masks, hospital bed shortages, and national headlines on the delta variant.

Hunting and fishing license sales are up in North Dakota and across much of the United States. As more folks head out to hunt or fish, whether new or old to the outdoors, we need to activate them into conservationists. It's not enough to get new hunters and anglers outdoors, we need to keep the momentum going by keeping them engaged and involving them in ways to support habitat and access across the state.

I challenge you to get someone new involved with fishing this summer or hunting this coming fall. Whether it is youth or young adults hunting or fishing for the first time, all it takes is an invitation to recruit someone new into the fold. We need to re-engage and reactivate those that have quit hunting and fishing.

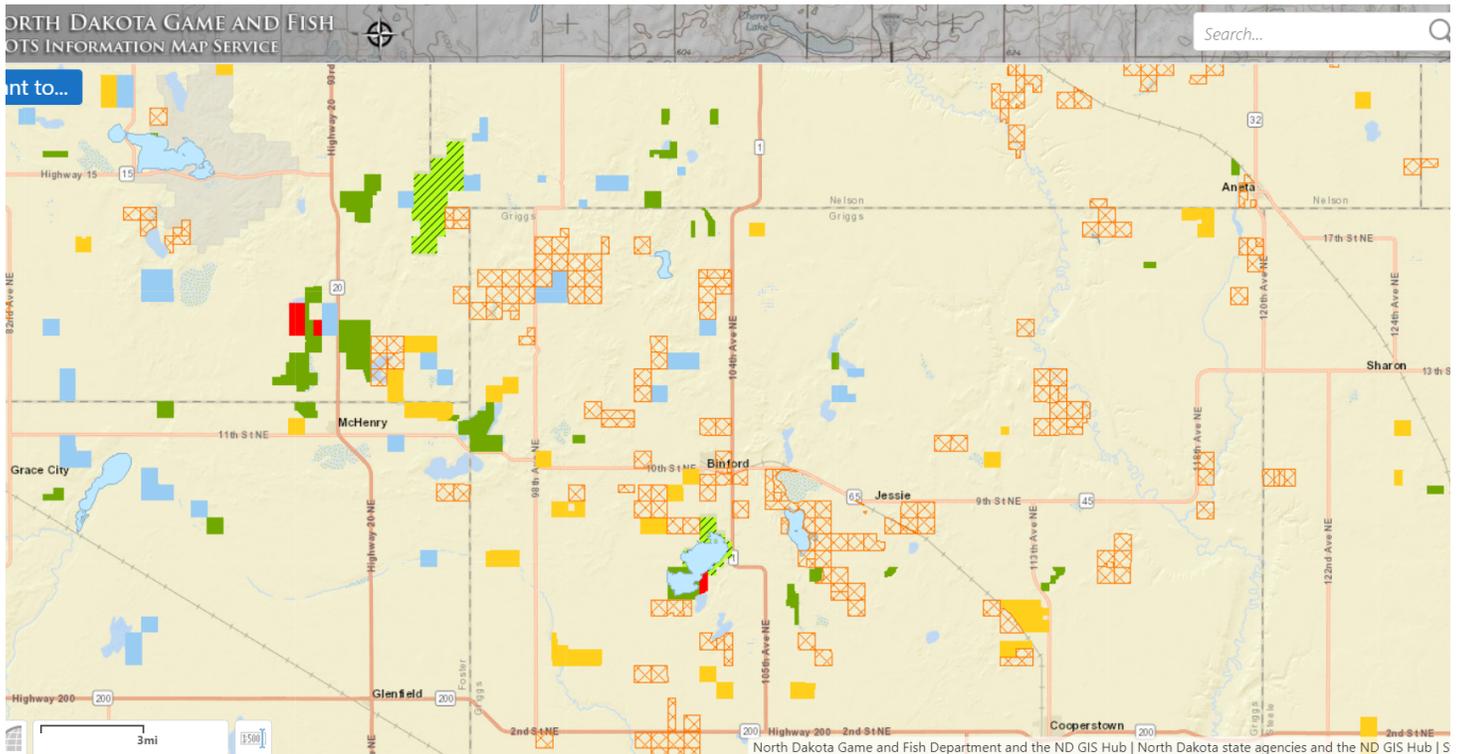
Multiple clubs have youth hunts coming up this fall and the Red River Area Sportsmen Club will host their 3rd Annual Ladies Rooster Roundup. Our affiliate clubs have been the leaders of R3 and I for one am proud of the work they and NDWF has done in getting new hunters and anglers excited about the outdoors

Have a great end of summer and stay safe out there this fall!

-David Dewald, President

E-Posting System in Place for Hunting Seasons

By: NDWF Staff



This fall will be a bit different for North Dakota hunters. Not only will we be dealing with a historic drought, fire restrictions, and fewer wetlands on the landscape, but we will also need to embrace a new system for finding where we can and cannot hunt. Earlier this month, North Dakota's new electronic posting laws went into effect, right in time for the early Canada goose management season. The 2021 state legislature passed a bill to allow electronic posting of private land, giving landowners another option for posting their land. For hunters taking to the field, it means that we have a new responsibility to check land is designated posted with physical signs or electronically when it comes to hunting private ground. Luckily, the tools available to find where to hunt are simple to use and are free to the public.

There are a couple free mapping apps available on your smart phone or computer to find electronically posted land. Both the PLOTS Guide viewer and ArcGIS Explorer app will show electronically posted lands in orange crosshatch. When you click on a land parcel, it will display the individual who posted the land and may include additional contact info like a phone

number or email. While looking at the Arc GIS Explorer app, I've selected parcels at random and have been pleasantly surprised at how many landowners have voluntarily included a contact phone number on the site. Hopefully this trend continues, allowing more hunters and landowners to connect and secure permission for hunting.

These map applications can be accessed by a computer and others are available as an app on your smart-phone. These apps offer a variety of features outside of identifying what land is posted, including who to contact for private land access, hunting districts, PLOTS, WMA and WPA boundaries and the ability to work offline or without cellular service. In talking with the folks at Game & Fish, it appears other apps will jump on this trend and provide the electronically posted land information this fall as well, including the popular Hunt OnX. Whether from the truck or on foot, all these apps should allow a hunter to see where they are in relation to posted land, unposted land, or public ground.

There may be a bit of a learning curve for those "low tech" or "no tech" hunters who want to use the app. But for those who prefer paper maps, the online maps from the PLOTS Guide viewer can be printed and used like the traditional paper PLOTS Guide. With the deadline for landowner sign ups already over, one big print job will cover the entire state and should last the entire season.

We as hunters should strive for zero trespassing offenses every fall, but particularly this fall -when all eyes will be on the new electronic posting system. Is this a perfect system for hunters? Of course not, but if it's embraced by landowners and respected by hunters, it should decrease tensions between hunters and landowners and prevent all lands from being automatically posted closed to public hunting in the future.

215 American Agriculture, Conservation, Wildlife and Sportsmen Groups Call on Congress to Increase Agriculture Conservation in Once-In-A-Generation Reconciliation Opportunity

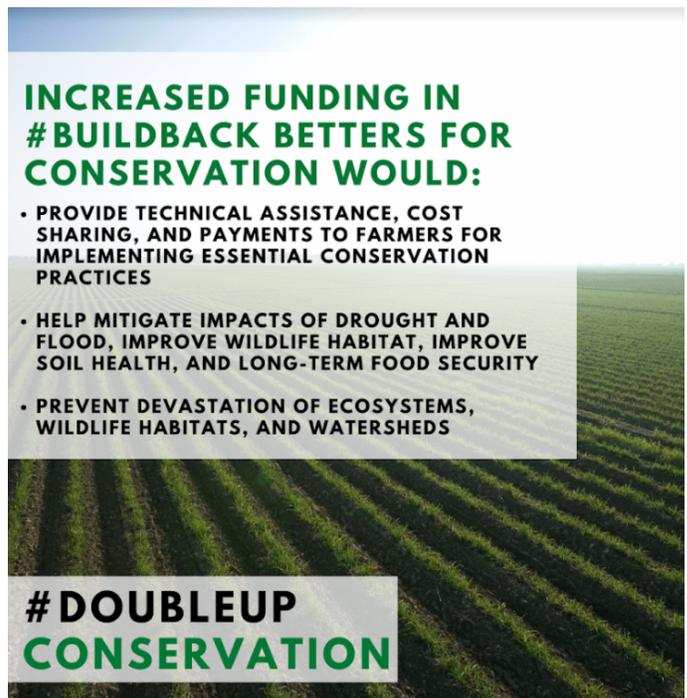
Broad and diverse coalition points to popular, effective and in demand Farm Bill conservation programs as a key path to giving farmers a role in tackling climate change while also benefiting rural economies

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A coalition of 215 American farmer, rancher, conservation, wildlife and sportsmen and women groups today called on Congressional leaders to increase funding in the reconciliation bill for Farm Bill conservation programs. Farm Bill conservation programs give farmers resources and technical assistance that support a variety of voluntary conservation practices and help farms, wildlife and communities reduce emissions, adapt to a changing climate and boost conservation efforts. The conservation programs are vital to giving American agriculture a role in addressing climate change, supporting jobs and aiding economic recovery, all cornerstones of the “Build Back Better” reconciliation package.

“We believe farmers, ranchers, and foresters are ready to move agriculture toward net zero emissions if they are provided the tools and resources to make that goal a reality. Action this year on the climate and infrastructure bill represents the best opportunity in decades to meet farmer demand for conservation programs.” The organizations wrote in the letter.

The letter also noted that the Farm Bill conservation programs are effective and popular and, as a result, often oversubscribed. *“The full suite of voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs administered by USDA enables farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to adopt practices that build soil health, sequester carbon, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving surface and ground water quality, increasing water efficiency, and creating habitat for fish and wildlife. Unfortunately, however, Farm Bill conservation programs are routinely oversubscribed. Demand for conservation on 13.8 million acres goes unmet because of inadequate funding every year.”*

The President and key administration officials, including USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, have stated that American farmers are an essential part of efforts to lead the world in addressing climate change. In addition, Senate leaders, including Senate Agriculture Committee Chair, Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) have pointed out that this is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to increase funding for conservation programs and build farm bill baseline. For more information on what Administration officials and Congress have said, background on Farm Bill conservation programs and information those who support ag conservation and climate efforts please see this [fact sheet](#).



Legislative Voting Record

By: John Bradley, Lobbyist



The 2021 Legislature was a busy one for issues affecting wildlife, habitat and access for hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts. As we have in years past, NDWF played a crucial role at the Capitol, monitoring key issues and speaking up for habitat, wildlife, access, and our outdoor heritage. NDWF created a voting record detailing six important bills to sportsmen from the last session. **What makes a legislative voting record so important? Accountability.**

Few public institutions are more important than legislatures. Whether it is Congress, a state legislature, city council, or school board, legislative bodies have the power to impact our lives in profound ways. Representatives are chosen by the public to decide on its behalf the policies we live by and to act in the best interest of their constituents.

In doing so, representatives are accountable to their constituents for their actions. Accountability is impossible, however, without adequate information about legislative performance, an essential part of

democratic governance.

Conversely, voting records can also be used by legislators to improve their performance.

That is the purpose of NDWF's legislative voting record: to arm you with information for legislative accountability and improve the performance of the North Dakota legislature for issues important to the outdoors community. Ultimately, it is up to you to examine the information and act in a way you believe necessary. Consider sharing this document with like-minded individuals. [You can find the 2021 Legislative Voting Record here: www.northdakotawildlife.org/2021-voting-record](http://www.northdakotawildlife.org/2021-voting-record)

Sharptail Success Jumps Ahead of Possible Slump

By: Nick Simonson

Perhaps the most amazing number included in the North Dakota Game & Fish Department's (NDG&F) recent release of upland tallies from the fall of 2020 was the jump of more than 52,000 estimated sharptailed grouse harvested over the previous season. Coming on improved nesting and recruitment of broods into the population, last autumn's grouse harvest was also buoyed by a 43 percent increase in hunters pursuing the birds which can be found throughout much of the state. In total, an estimated 19,971 sharptailed grouse hunters took approximately 86,965 birds last fall, but long-term comparisons and this summer's drought may put a damper on that excitement.



According to Jesse Kolar, NDG&F Upland Game Management Supervisor, the increased take of sharpies was due in part to more hunters pursuing them, following two seasons of improved nesting conditions and brood data. With the increase in bird numbers and word of better hunting getting around over the past two seasons, more sportsmen and women took to the field for the native upland species; the season for which begins earlier than ringneck pheasants, in mid-September, and runs into the first weekend of January. Even the relatively good numbers reported from 2020 belie longer term trends which aren't as optimistic.

"It's pretty significant, but it's coming from almost record low harvest and hunter participation the last few years following the drought in 2017 when our population for sharptails really bottomed out," Kolar comments, adding, "then last year and the year before, people were finding a lot more sharptailed grouse, especially in the east and central part of the state, more than what they were used to, so we had higher participation."

Sharptailed grouse harvest estimates are based on a number of data sources including annual surveys which are sent out those who purchased a small game license; the number of licenses sold; and the samples provided through the NDG&F wing survey where biologists utilize hunter-submitted grouse wings to determine age and gender of birds and the relative abundance in counties of harvest. Kolar stated that all of those indicators were up year-over-year, but likely below longer-term trends which have been influenced from heightened numbers of birds harvested in the early 2000s, when CRP was at its height and more habitat helped increase grouse abundance.

The upswing evidenced in the 2020 tallies may be short-lived however, as indicators at the halfway point of the NDG&F 2021 summer roadside brood survey suggest a decrease in sharptailed grouse numbers. “We were down pretty much at every number; our sharptails especially. Birds per mile being seen, broods per mile, and the chicks per adult when we do see broods; all those numbers were down roughly fifty percent. We’ll have more solid numbers in September,” Kolar suggests, once agents have totaled their observations when the survey concludes at the end of August.

While the drought conditions across much of the state throughout spring and summer likely impacted the quality of nesting habitat, and possibly the food sources for young grouse, those same dry conditions may also possibly be skewing survey data negatively for the state’s upland birds. Kolar holds out hope that those circumstances, and not poor reproduction, are what influence the number of birds observed thus far in the department’s annual survey.

“One potential saving grace is that our roadside surveys are designed for dewy mornings when the birds are coming to the bare ground on the roads to seek refuge from wet grass, and we haven’t had any dewy mornings so those birds might not have any incentive to go sit on the roadside like they normally do...but dew doesn’t explain that full fifty percent, so there’s definitely a true drop in the numbers,” Kolar cautions.

The NDG&F roadside survey wraps on Aug. 31 and results are typically provided to the public in the first week of September, where populations of ringneck pheasants, sharptailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, mourning doves and other upland species are estimated for the upcoming hunting seasons.

This year’s sharptailed grouse season opens on Sept. 11 and runs through Jan. 2, 2022.

New Bill Would Galvanize Wildlife Conservation, Help Prevent Extinctions in North Dakota

By: NWF Staff

New bipartisan legislation in the House and Senate will fund locally-led efforts to help prevent extinctions and help wildlife thrive nationwide. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will send approximately \$14.3 million to North Dakota each year, which North Dakota Game & Fish will use to help the species of most concern in North Dakota, such as the Piping Plover, Western Meadowlark, and other non-game species.



“We are facing a looming wildlife crisis. This commonsense, bipartisan bill will allow us to get ahead of the problem by stepping in to help at-risk wildlife early with collaborative, voluntary measures,” said David DeWald. “This will create jobs restoring native grasslands, benefiting numerous at-risk bird species like the Western Meadowlark.” The Recovering America's Wildlife Act was just introduced in the Senate by Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Roy Blunt (R-Mo.). Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) and Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.) introduced a similar version of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in the House in April.

“The historic, bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act is by far the most important piece of wildlife legislation in the past half century,” said Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. “At a time when more than one-third of wildlife species are at heightened risk of extinction, this critical legislation will help recover thousands of at-risk species through proactive, collaborative efforts in every state, territory, and Tribal nation, creating jobs while preventing extinctions. We

applaud the incredible bipartisan leadership of Senator Heinrich and Senator Blunt, and their House partners Rep. Dingell and Rep. Fortenberry, who are all demonstrating once again that wildlife conservation can unite all Americans.”

Nationwide, the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act dedicates \$1.4 billion annually to locally-led wildlife restoration efforts, with most of the money going to wildlife agencies like North Dakota Game & Fish who will use the money to implement existing plans for at-risk wildlife. At least 15 percent of the funds will be used to help species that are already considered endangered or threatened. Tribal Nations, such as the Mandan, Hidatsa, & Arikara Nation (Three Affiliated Tribes), would share \$97.5 million annually to fund wildlife conservation efforts on the tens of millions of acres under Tribal management nationwide.

+++

The National Wildlife Federation is America’s largest conservation organization uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife thrive in a rapidly-changing world.

NDWF 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.

ND Archery Opener- September 3rd, 2021

ND Sharptail Grouse Opener - September 11th, 2021

ND Waterfowl Opener - September 25th, 2021

ND Pheasant Opener - October 9th, 2021

NDWF Fall Board Meeting - Casselton - October 14th, 2021

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.



Make Checks Payable To:

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



NDWF Membership Form

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

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Make Checks Payable To:

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