

State News You Can Use!

MINNESOTA

SPRING LIGHT GOOSE HARVEST BEGINS FEB. 15

Enormous flocks of snow geese fill the skies each spring in the central United States, including in far western Minnesota, as they migrate toward the Arctic.

The flocks weren't always so large. More intensive agriculture in decades past gave the birds easier access to food, and eventually an overpopulation of the geese caused considerable damage to fragile ecosystems in Arctic coastal areas and around Hudson Bay.

Hunters have an opportunity to help reduce the population of light geese through a federally authorized spring conservation harvest. This year, light geese can be taken Thursday, Feb. 15, through Monday, April 30. Light geese are snow geese, blue-phased snow geese and the smaller Ross's goose.

"Minnesota participates in the action, but in our region the majority of the light geese take happens west of the state," said Steve Cordts, waterfowl specialist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "The harvest in Minnesota has varied from a few hundred to several thousand."

The conservation action is authorized by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which allows harvest of specific bird species during times when other waterfowl seasons are closed. Minnesota has participated in this spring conservation harvest each year since 2000.

To participate, a spring light goose permit is required and may be obtained wherever Minnesota hunting licenses are sold, via telephone at 888-665-4236 or online at mndnr.gov/buylicense. There is a \$2.50 application fee to cover the cost of issuing the permit. No other license, stamp or permit is required.

A summary of regulations is available at mndnr.gov/hunting/waterfowl/lightgoose, from license vendors, DNR wildlife offices or by calling the DNR Information Center at 888-646-6367 or 651-296-6157.

NEBRASKA

SEE SHARP-TAILED GROUSE ON LEK APRIL 7 IN BOYD COUNTY

Take a guided sunrise tour to watch sharp-tailed grouse on a lek April 7 in Boyd County.

The Sharptails and Saddle Tales event will provide the public an opportunity to view the annual return of sharp-tailed grouse to their spring dancing grounds. A lek is an assembly area where grouse display their courtship behavior. The males extend their wings, stomp their feet and dance around the lek, and then suddenly stop – all to impress on-looking female grouse.

Following the tour, participants will meet at the Naper Café for a breakfast buffet, presentations on sharptail biology and stories of how sharptails and grouse hunters are giving back to Nebraska ranchers by providing conservation cost-share opportunities. The morning will conclude with a history and tour of the White Horse Ranch Museum in Naper.

The \$30 registration fee includes transportation to and from the lek, breakfast, educational speakers, and the museum tour. The registration deadline is April 5. Call 402-582-4866 or 402-376-5842 or email northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net to sign up or reserve a spot in the photo blind.

For more information, visit necrd.org/news-events.

The tour is sponsored by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Northern Prairies Land Trust,

Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Central and Northeast Nebraska Resource, Conservation and Development, and Naper Historical Society.

COMMISSION APPROVES 2018 WATERFOWL HUNTING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission approved 2018 waterfowl hunting season recommendations at its March 16 meeting in Columbus.

The recommendations for white-fronted goose season proposed a change from a 74-day season to an 88-day season and from a three-bird daily bag limit to two. Most other waterfowl season recommendations included only calendar date adjustments.

The approved recommendations are:

Early Teal – Low Plains: Sept. 1-16; High Plains: Sept. 1-9; Daily bag limit: six; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

Youth Waterfowl – Zone 1: Oct. 6-7; Zone 2: Sept. 29-30; Zone 3: Oct. 20-21; Zone 4: Sept. 29-30; Daily bag and possession limits same as regular duck season

Duck and Coot – Zone 1: Oct. 13-Dec. 25; Zone 2: Oct. 6-Dec. 18 and Jan. 7-27; Zone 3: Oct. 25-Jan. 6 and Jan. 7-27; Zone 4: Oct. 6-Dec. 18; Daily bag limit: six (with restrictions); Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

Dark Goose – East Unit: Oct. 29-Feb. 10; Niobrara Unit: Oct. 29-Feb. 10; North Central Unit: Oct. 6-Jan. 18; Panhandle Unit: Oct. 29-Feb. 10; Platte River Unit: Oct. 29-Feb. 10; Daily bag limit: five; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

White-fronted Goose – Statewide: Oct. 6-Dec. 9 and Jan. 19-Feb. 10; Daily bag limit: two; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

Light Goose Regular Season – Statewide: Oct. 6-Dec. 26 and Jan. 19-Feb. 10; Daily bag limit: 50; Possession limit: none

Light Goose Conservation Order – East Zone: Feb. 11-April 15; West

MARKETPLACE

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Zone: Feb. 11-April 5; Rainwater Basin Zone: Feb. 11-April 5; Daily bag and possession limits: none

Crow – Statewide: Oct. 15-Dec. 15 and Jan. 13-March 14

Falconry – Zone 1: Feb. 25-March 10; Zone 2: Low Plains: Feb. 25-March 10; High Plains: Concurrent with all duck season dates in High Plains Zone; Zone 3: Low Plains: Feb. 25-March 10; High Plains: Concurrent with all duck season dates in High Plains Zone; Zone 4: Feb. 25-March 10

In addition, the commissioners approved the 2018-2022 Focus on the Future strategic plan. The plan outlines the core values, guiding principles, goals, strategies, strategic directions and desired outcomes for the agency in the next five years.

The commissioners also approved the designation of a 155-acre parcel of land in Richardson County as the Thomas C. Matter Wildlife Management Area.

Big game, fisheries and environmental reports also were presented to the commissioners.

GAME AND PARKS SEEKS INFORMATION ON SCOTT'S BLUFF COUNTY WANTON WASTE CASE

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is seeking information on illegally dumped waterfowl

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ART

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