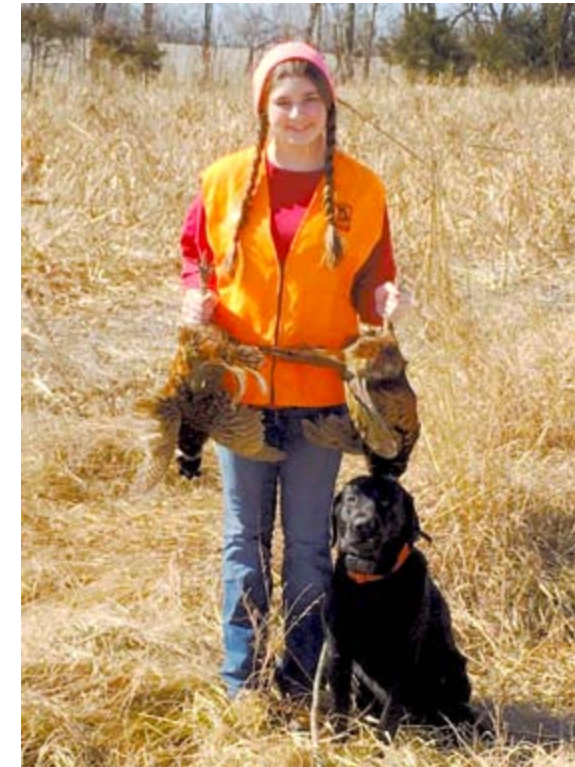


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Women and youths looking to get a start in the sport of upland bird hunting have an ideal opportunity with MDC's Youth and Women's Pheasant Clinic and Hunt. Photo by MDC

NEBRASKA

NEBRASKANS TO BE SURVEYED ON UPLAND GAME SHOOTING HOURS

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is surveying hunters and other interested parties about their views and preferences as part of an evaluation of upland game shooting hours.

To take the survey, visit OutdoorNebraska.gov/shooting-hoursurvey. In addition, anyone who purchased a hunting (small

game) license in 2016 and did not receive an invitation to participate in the annual hunter success survey can access it at OutdoorNebraska.gov/huntersuccessurvey.

Shooting hours are the time of day when legal hunting can start and by which time hunting must end during the hunting season. Upland game includes species such as pheasant, quail, prairie chicken, sharp-tailed grouse, dove, rail, snipe, woodcock, partridge, cottontail and squirrel. Wild turkey and waterfowl are not included.

NORTH DAKOTA SPRING LIGHT GOOSE SEASON

North Dakota's spring light goose season opens Feb. 18 and continues through May 14.

Residents must have a valid current season 2016-17 (valid through March 31) or 2017-18 (required April 1) combination license; or a small game, and general game and habitat license. The 2017-18 license is available for purchase beginning March 15.

Nonresidents need a 2017 spring light goose season license. The cost is \$50 and the license is good statewide. Nonresidents who hunt the spring season remain eligible to buy a fall season license. The spring season 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 Da-

kota.

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, by calling 800-406-6409, and at license vendors.

Availability of food and open water dictate when snow geese arrive in the state. Early migrants generally start showing up in the southeast part of the state in mid-to-late March, but huntable numbers usually aren't around until the end of March or early April. Movements into and through the state will depend on available roosting areas and the extent of the snow line.

Hunters must obtain a new Harvest Information Program registration number before hunting. The HIP number can be obtained online or by calling 888-634-4798. The HIP number is good for the fall season as well, so spring hunters should save it to record on their fall license.

The Game and Fish Department will provide hunters with migration updates once geese have entered the state. Hunters can access the department's website, or call 701-328-3697, to receive generalized locations of bird sightings in North Dakota until the season ends or geese have left the state. Migration reports will be updated periodically during the week.

The spring season 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 season is closed to whitefronts, Canada geese, swans and all other migratory birds.

Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. There is no daily bag limit or possession limit. Electronic and recorded calls, as well as shotguns capable of holding more than three shells, may be used to take light geese during this season.

There are no waterfowl rest areas designated for the spring season. Hunters should note that private land within waterfowl rest areas closed last fall may be posted closed to hunting.

Nontoxic shot is required for hunting all light geese statewide. Driving off established roads and trails is strongly discouraged during this hunt because of the likelihood of soft, muddy conditions, and winter wheat that is planted across the state. Sprouted winter wheat is

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considered an unharvested crop. Therefore, hunting or off-road travel in winter wheat is not legal without landowner permission.

To maintain good landowner relations, hunters are advised to seek permission before hunting on private lands or attempting any off-road travel during this season.

All regular hunting season regulations not addressed above apply to the spring season. For more information on regulations refer to the 2017 Spring Light Goose Hunting Regulations and the 2016 North Dakota Waterfowl Hunting Guide.

TENTATIVE 2017 SEASON OPENING DATES

To help North Dakota hunters prepare for hunting seasons in 2017, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department annually provides its best estimate for opening dates for the coming year.

Dates become official when approved by governor's proclamation. Tentative opening dates for 2017 include:

- Dove, - September 1
- Sharptail, Hun, Ruffed Grouse, Squirrel - September 9
- Youth Waterfowl - September 16
- Early Resident Waterfowl - September 23
- Regular Waterfowl - September 30
- Youth Pheasant - October 7
- Pheasant, - October 14

WISCONSIN

DNR SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON UPDATE OF GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN MANAGEMENT PLAN

The public is invited to provide input regarding revisions to the Department of Natural Resources' 10-year greater prairie-chicken management plan.

A public meeting Feb. 22 at the Fine Arts Center in the McMillan Memorial Library, 490 East Grand Ave., Wisconsin Rapids from 5-7 p.m. will give attendees an opportunity to receive information regarding the plan revision process, current prairie-chicken population, draft conceptual alternatives and share feedback with DNR staff.

"This public meeting is a great opportunity for stakeholders and the interested



Greater prairie chicken. Photo Credit: DNR

public to give early input as DNR staff and partners begin the process of revising the prairie-chicken management plan," said Mark Witecha, Department of Natural Resources upland wildlife ecologist.

Informational displays will be available at the public meeting and DNR staff will be present for one-on-one discussion and questions. People can submit comments

at the public meeting or via an online comment form (which will be posted following the public meeting) through Friday, March 10. Additional public input opportunities will be available after a draft plan is developed and again when the final plan is presented to the Natural Resources Board for approval.

"We look forward to hearing the public's thoughts on managing this iconic native bird and how to keep grassland habitats healthy into the future to benefit both people and wildlife," said Lesa Kardash, Wildlife Biologist for Portage County.

The greater prairie-chicken is a native grouse species that lives in open grassland habitats. In Wisconsin, this species resides in four nearly-isolated sub-populations centered within four DNR Wildlife Areas - Leola Marsh, Buena Vista, Paul J. Olson and George W. Mead - located in Adams, Portage, Wood, and Marathon counties.

Population declines over the past several decades have led to an increased emphasis on grassland habitat management on these four core properties and neighboring private lands through land use agreements, and continued declines raised concerns that Wisconsin population was losing genetic diversity.

Following recommendations from a nationwide panel of experts, prairie-chicken hens from Minnesota were trapped and translocated to Wisconsin between 2006 and 2009. While this effort did provide positive genetic results, further action is needed to ensure the long-term success of this gamebird. Ongoing research has highlighted additional potential avenues to stabilize Wisconsin's population.

The previous greater prairie-chicken management plan was completed in 2004 and covered the period 2004-2014. Department staff are hopeful that an updated management plan and strengthened ties

with local communities, stakeholders and interested citizens will allow the greater prairie-chicken to once again thrive in Wisconsin.

To learn more about prairie-chickens in Wisconsin and management plan revisions, visit dnr.wi.gov and search keywords "prairie chicken plan."

That's It for State News!

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SARACEN IRISH WATER SPANIELS. Due Nov. 30, 2016. Sire: "Cain" - CH Archwave Another Cain UDX, RAE2, JH, TD, WCX, QVA. Dam: "Bri" - Ch Saracen Diamond on the Snow. Thoughtfully bred for temperament, biddability, working ability, health, conformation. Parents CHIC. Bri is our 8th generation of Ch working IWS, with her sire Paddy (GRCH Saracen Blue Thunder on the Marsh CD JH MHU RN WC WDX QVA) the 2nd IWS to earn the MHU and sire of 1st MHU titled IWS bitch. Cain is the 5th generation of Ch Working IWS. In the background are CH MH dogs, Qualified All Age dogs and Irish FTC. Contact: Robert Deihl, 262-255-3639 www.irishspaniel.com

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