

## Waterfowl Hunters Reminded of ANS Regulations

Waterfowl hunters are reminded to do their part in preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species into or within North Dakota.

Waterfowl hunters must clean boats, decoys, waders and other hunting equipment before leaving a water body. Hunters must also drain water from all hunting equipment prior to leaving the water, and are encouraged to brush their hunting dogs free of mud and seeds.

Cattails, phragmites, bulrushes and terrestrial plants may be transported as camouflage on boats. All other aquatic vegetation must be cleaned from boats prior to transportation into or within North Dakota.

Detailed ANS information and prevention regulations can be found by accessing the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

## Pheasant Numbers Down, Similar to a Decade Ago

North Dakota's roadside pheasant survey conducted in late July and August suggests poor production this spring, meaning a lower fall population in all areas of the state.

Stan Kohn, upland game management supervisor for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, said the survey shows statewide total pheasants are down 36 percent from last year. In addition, brood

observations were down 38 percent, but the average brood size was up 4 percent. The final summary is the result of 222 runs made along 104 brood routes across North Dakota.

"Brood survey numbers from this summer match closely to numbers from 2001, when hunters harvested 420,000 roosters," Kohn said. "If fall weather conditions hold through most of the year, I could see a fall harvest of about 400,000 birds. But if winter weather sets in early, we could be much lower. Either way, this could be the first fall since 2001 that we harvest less than 500,000 roosters."

Kohn said several factors contribute to the decrease in pheasant numbers: three difficult winters in a row with above average snowfall has reduced spring's adult breeding population; wet conditions during peak hatch in mid-June of 2008, 2009 and 2011 reduced chick survival; and the loss of nesting habitat on the landscape as more Conservation Reserve Program acreage is removed from pheasant range.

"Boiled down, hunters will likely have to put in more time in the field to find success," Kohn said. "But as always, there will be local areas within all four pheasant districts where pheasant numbers will be much above or much below what is predicted for the district."

Statistics from southwestern North Dakota indicate both the number of broods and number of birds observed were down 26 percent from 2010. Observ-

ers counted 14 broods and 118 birds per 100 miles. The average brood size was six. "Census numbers indicate this district will have the best pheasant numbers in the state this fall," Kohn said.

Results from the southeast show the number of birds observed down 54 percent from last year, and the number of broods was down 60 percent. Observers counted four broods and 36 birds per 100 miles. The average brood size was 5.7. "Removal of CRP in the southeast may have already affected the number of birds produced this spring, with weather conditions adding more pressure on spring production," Kohn said.

Statistics from the northwest indicated pheasants are down 53 percent from last year, with broods down 62 percent. Observers recorded two broods and 21 birds per 100 miles. Average brood size was 5.5.

The northeast district, generally containing secondary pheasant habitat with much of it lacking good winter cover, showed 0.4 broods and four birds per 100 miles. Average brood size was six. Both number of birds observed and number of broods recorded were down roughly 66 percent. "Hunters should concentrate their efforts in the southern counties of this district for the best potential to find birds," Kohn said.

The 2011 regular pheasant season opens Oct. 8 and continues through Jan. 8, 2012. The two-day youth pheasant hunting