#### Devils Lake Journal

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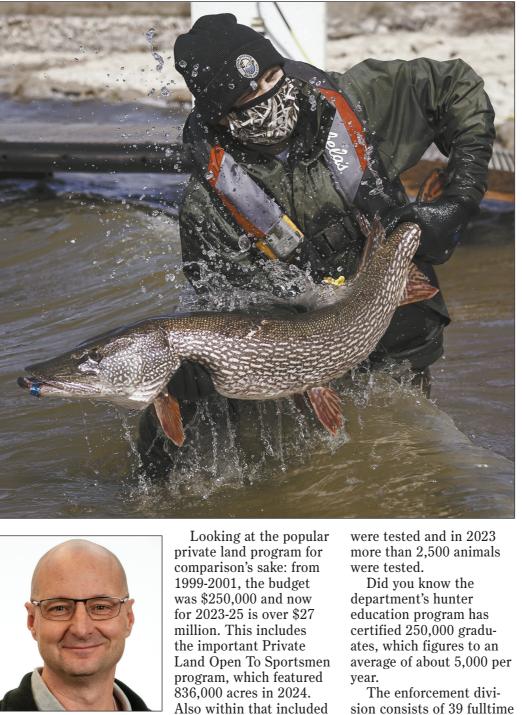


### **North Dakota Outdoors In Numbers**

#### By Doug Leier, Outreach **Biologist**, NDG&F

I was compelled to jot down some interesting numbers that pertain to North Dakota's outdoors as Jeb Williams, Game and Fish Department director, recently addressed the joint Senate and House Legislative Natural Resource committees.

Did vou know the Game and Fish Department man-



## News from NDG&F

Leave Baby Animals Alone, Watch for Deer

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department offers a simple message to the well-intentioned who want to res-

ages 439 fishable waters which make up

851,462 acres? For comparison sakes, North Dakota is made up of 70,704 square miles. Land is 68,900 square miles, while water is 1,804 square miles; of those there are 1,330 square miles that are considered fishable.

Fourteen million fish were stocked in those waters last year (second highest on record), including 37 community fishing ponds in urban areas providing more proximate fishing access to underserved anglers.

Also, recent numbers showed that 142,272 residents and 55,379 nonresidents bought fishing licenses in 2024.

In 2024, the state permitted 84 fishing tournaments, 41 of which were nonprofit. A total of 7,719 anglers participated and the tournaments paid \$25,000 in conservation fees and \$2.2 million in entry fees.

In addition, access to North Dakota's fisheries by boat is aided by 294 boat ramps installed and maintained through various local partnerships.

Among the many responsibilities of the department's wildlife division, agency staff manages nearly 222,000 acres on 243 wildlife management areas. Of that, 103,761 acres are owned and 117,747 are leased.

As a measure of hunting, the universally

required general game license sales broke down to 100,832 residents and 49,567 nonresidents for 2024. The 2024 deer gun allocation was 50,100 and deer bow sales in 2024 broke down to 23,993 residents and 3,113 nonresidents.

Looking at the deer hunting numbers; our youth deer broke a record in 2024 with 6,503 licenses issued at age 11 for antlerless deer and at age 14 for any deer.

the Working Lands program at 506,568 acres: CRP Access at 204,815 acres; Habitat Plots at 61,729 acres; and the Wetland Reserve Program at 41,518 acres.

The wildlife division oversees the department's chronic wasting disease surveillance efforts and the effort to increase education and awareness of the disease. In 2009, the first positive test was found. Looking at the testing from the last data shows that from 2000-22, more than 47,000 animals

game wardens covering 70,698 square miles. North Dakota is the 19th largest state but the 47th in terms of game wardens. For comparison, South Dakota has 87 conservation officers.

These wardens in 2024 made 39,531 resident field checks and 13,626 nonresident field checks. Also, 2,401 citations were issued, and 71 safety and assistance responses were logged with 131 landowner complaints taken.

Find more numbers on the Game and Fish website gf.nd.gov

cue what appear to be orphaned baby animals this time of year: don't touch them. Whether it is a young fawn, duckling, cottontail rabbit or a songbird, it is better to leave them alone.

Often, young animals are not abandoned or deserted, and the mother is probably nearby. Young wildlife are purposely secluded by adults to protect them from predators.

Anytime a young wild animal has human contact, its chances of survival decreases significantly. It's illegal to take wild animals home, and captive animals later returned to the wild will struggle to survive without possessing learned survival skills.

The only time a baby animal should be picked up is if it is in an unnatural situation, such as a young songbird found on a doorstep. In that case, the young bird can be moved to the closest suitable habitat.

Citizens should also steer clear of adult wildlife, such as deer or moose that might wander into urban areas. Crowding stresses animals and can lead to a potentially dangerous situation.

In addition, motorists are reminded to watch for deer along roadways. During the next several weeks young animals are dispersing from home ranges, and with deer more active during this time, the potential for car-deer collisions increases.

#### **County Restrictions Remain on Oahe WMA**

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department removed the open fire ban on Oahe Wildlife Management Area. However, this area still falls under county burn restrictions.

More information, including restrictions, on current fire danger indexes is available at NDResponse.gov.

Oahe WMA covers more than 16,000 acres along the Missouri River south of Bismarck and Mandan within Burleigh, Emmons and Morton counties.

#### Leier