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Conservation Notes

Current topics and issues affecting hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in our North Dakota.

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Financing Hunting and Fishing

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department budget comes from two sources. First, money generated from the sale of resident and non-resident hunting and fishing licenses. Second, the Department receives funds generated by federal taxes on hunting and fishing equipment via the Pittman- Robertson Act and the Sport Fish Restoration Act. The revenue from these funds is critical for N. D. Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) management of our wild resources. No General Fund money is appropriated to the Department.

But recently the number of licenses sold for hunting and fishing has decreased which means the Department receives less money for management activities. Meanwhile, management costs, e.g., installation and maintenance of boat ramps, increased rental payments for PLOTS, fuel and land management costs continue to rise. If the current trends in decreasing license sales continue, then operating funds will also decrease accordingly.

Loss of license revenue due to decreased participation in hunting and fishing is exacerbated by the Department paying credit card fees for purchase of licenses. Bi-annually, the Department pays or loses approximately \$800,000 in fees to card companies which significantly reduces funds for management. If credit card fees were paid for by the person buying the license, then the savings generated to the Department could be used for management activities.

Therefore, the NDGFD and the ND legislature should increase the non-resident license fees for hunting and fishing to align with neighboring states more closely. In addition, the fees charged by credit card companies should be the responsibility of the license buyer not the Department. The increased revenue will offset the decrease in license sales and ensure that NDGFD has funds to appropriately manage resources.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com), Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation(mecenroe@midco.net) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, (bluebill@bis.midco.net). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit (ndctws.org)-library