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Conservation Notes

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

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Pay attention to Climate Change

Arguing about what causes climate change does not diminish the impacts. Ignore the crisis of melting icecaps and glaciers causing rising sea levels in Florida. Look at the science. Look at North Dakota.

Wildlife is our early warning system. They tell us that our environment is changing. Data from the ND Game and Fish Department show peak fall snow goose migration occurring in November, a month later than the historical mean in mid-October. Average fall (October) temperatures in central ND are about 4-5 degrees warmer than 50-60 years ago.

Data from the U.S. Geological Survey at Jamestown, ND show many migratory bird species arriving or passing through ND 2-3 weeks earlier in the spring than 50 years ago, often without adequate food sources. Minnesota DNR data show that lakes in Minnesota are freezing 2-3 weeks later in the winter than they were 40 years ago.

Climate changes affect wildlife and hunters and anglers, as well as our state's economy. Dismissing impacts to outdoor resources as minor and without consequences is short sighted. Think about how these climate changes and impacts will affect the rest of our state's environment. Agriculture will be negatively affected by changed weather and introduction of new insect pests and disease affecting crop and forage production. Flood protection measures, and municipal and industrial water supplies will have to adapt to the changing weather extremes. No one will escape the impacts, we are all in this together.

If the legislature does not have the vision to address the causes and mitigation of climate change, and continues to ignore the scientific evidence, they surely should begin to discuss and plan how to fund the **enormous costs** of mitigating the direct and subtle impacts of our changing climate in the coming years.

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 (memcenroe@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.