



P.O. Box 1442, Bismarck, N.D. 58502



P.O. Box 1091, Bismarck, N. D. 58502

## Conservation Notes

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

Issue #96, March 2024

### Living in the Past

Hunting in North Dakota had an excellent run during the 1990's and early 2000's. But the "good old days" of hunting in North Dakota are rapidly declining. When hunters express their concerns, the common excuse given over the decline in hunting is "It's still better here than anywhere else." **It's not!** This shows a lack of understanding and concern for maintaining this valuable resource. The result is we are not doing enough to stem the decline. Not accepting the fact that the habitat and natural resources supporting our hunting heritage are declining significantly is a path to mediocrity. Numbers paint the picture: almost 150,000 deer licenses in 2007-08 have declined to a few more than 50,000 in recent years. Pheasant harvest of 907,000 (2007) dropped to less than 300,000 from 2019-2022. The question is not "when will the numbers increase"; the real concern is "how much farther they will decline?" Hunting in North Dakota is pursued by more than 100,000 residents and non-resident visitors and contributes hundreds of millions of dollars to local and small-town economies. The harvest numbers show just how vulnerable wildlife is without addressing the critical need to increase the amount and quality of habitat. The State and its partners need to step up and address the declining resources and decline of our hunting heritage before it is too late. **Living in the past takes away the future.**

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