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Conservation Notes

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

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One Small Step to Help Our Deer Population

Hunting over bait is defined as the placement and/or use of baits for attracting big game and other wildlife to a specific location for the purpose of hunting. The ND Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) has deer hunting baiting restrictions covering approximately one-half of North Dakota. These are areas already infected by chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal disease of deer, moose and elk that can cause long-term population declines if left unchecked. In almost all cases, baiting on public hunting areas is restricted statewide.

These restrictions are in place to help slow the spread of CWD, a transmissible disease that can be spread directly from animal to animal, or indirectly through CWD-contaminated environments. Baiting and feeding artificially increases how frequently deer come into contact with one another. Numerous peer reviewed scientific studies have shown that baiting and artificial feeding increases the time deer congregate in an area which increases the risk of CWD.

But baiting is still allowed in a large portion of North Dakota, because many deer hunters oppose restrictions on baiting and lobby the NDGFD and Legislators to prevent elimination of baiting. Hunters that disregard or oppose scientific recommendation from our professional deer management agency (NDGFD) to lessen the impact of CWD, put our deer herd and ultimately their hunting opportunities at risk.

One small step will help slow the spread of CWD. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department along with the North Dakota legislature needs to ban baiting over the entire state. If we don't eliminate baiting, then our North Dakota deer hunting heritage is at stake. Let's be "Legendary" and eliminate baiting to protect our deer population and our strong hunting heritage.

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