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## Conservation Notes

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

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### Habitat Sets the Seasons

Each year sportsmen and sportswomen look forward with anticipation to hunting season. The Game and Fish Department uses habitat conditions and scientific surveys to measure trends in game populations. These scientific data establish the number of animals that can be taken each season while sustaining populations. Using this information, the Game and Fish Department sets the season with bag limits and license restrictions. The critical factor that ensures sustainable populations and open hunting seasons from year to year is adequate habitat for each species. Insufficient habitat conditions mean reduced populations resulting in limited or poor hunting opportunities. Our hunting seasons and opportunities to hunt have a major positive impact on our state's quality of life and our overall economy.

The habitat for many of our game species has been declining for several years. We have significantly fewer acres in the Conservation Reserve Program. Changes in cropping patterns have also reduced traditional, available habitats. Urban sprawl encroaches on areas formerly available as habitat. There are fewer federal and state dollars available for use in maintaining and establishing habitat. Our State leadership needs to strongly advocate for programs that keep existing habitat on the land, and that promote establishment of new habitat in support of our hunting traditions. **Habitat sets the seasons!**

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: 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 ([www.ndctws.wordpress.com](http://www.ndctws.wordpress.com))-articles.

