

# OUTDOORS



Late fall pheasant season is a chance to start a new tradition, according to the DNR.

## Start a new tradition: Late-season pheasant hunting

DNR STAFF REPORT

An abundance of birds, lack of snow and higher late season bag limits are all good reasons why Minnesotans may want to try some late season pheasant hunting.

“Hunters are still flushing a lot of birds,” said Nicole Davros, a wildlife research scientist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. “The season doesn’t end until Jan. 4 so there’s plenty of time to get outdoors and get into some good hunting.”

Even though December tends to be a busy time of year for many, perspective on the rush of life can be gained by getting away from it all, even briefly, Davros said.

“There are few better ways to take a break from eating cookies at holiday gather-

ings or buying presents than getting out into the fields to flush some birds,” Davros said. “Do it once and it may well become a welcome tradition around the holidays.”

The birds are out there, especially in the southwest, south-central and west-central regions of Minnesota. This year’s DNR roadside survey count of pheasants taken in August showed a six percent increase in the state’s pheasant population compared to last year, though long-term the trend in pheasant numbers is down.

“Even though pheasant numbers are down on a long-term scale, it’s important that people get out and experience pheasants in their habitat, and for most people that means hunting them,” Davros said. “Once you see these birds out in the wild, it’s hard

not to care about their plight, which represents the plight of all grassland wildlife and the health of their habitat in general.”

A small game license for Minnesota residents age 18 and older is \$22, and the required pheasant stamp is \$7.50. Pheasant hunters age 16 to 17 must buy a \$5 small game license but need not buy a pheasant stamp, and hunters under age 16 can hunt pheasants without a license.

Minnesota’s 2014 pheasant season started Oct. 11 and runs through Sunday, Jan. 4. Through the end of the season, the daily bag limit is three roosters and the possession limit is nine roosters. Shooting hours are 9 a.m. to sunset. Additional details are available on the DNR website at [www.mndnr.gov/hunting/pheasant](http://www.mndnr.gov/hunting/pheasant).

### VNP TRAILS REPORT

Changing temperature conditions and lack of snow cover has slowed winter trail progress at Voyageurs National Park.

The green trail from Rainy Lake/Frank’s Bay to Kabetogama Lake/Crane Lake is open and staked. Lake ice and overland portages have minimal snow cover, causing slick lake surfaces and rough portages. Use caution while traveling along the trail system.

All other snowmobile trails are closed at this time, but ice checking and portage clearing continues. The snowmobile speed limit within the park is 45 mph on frozen lake surfaces and 25 mph on all overland portages. Speed limit signs are posted at trailheads and portages.

Ski trails do not have significant snow accumulation to allow grooming at this time.

Snowshoe trails are

open, but not packed, and snow accumulation is poor.

The Rainy Lake Visitor Center is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. During business hours, the visitor center offers maps, information, and hot cocoa. Snowshoe loans and cross-country ski rentals have not started for the season.

The most up to date winter trail conditions are available at [www.nps.gov/voya](http://www.nps.gov/voya).

### CO WEEKLY REPORT

**12-15-2014 District 5 — Eveleth area**

■ CO Troy Fondie (Orr) reports little outdoor activity over the week. Forest roads and access sites were monitored. Weekend rain and temps in the 40’s further limited outdoor activities. Vehicle work along with administrative items rounded out the week. Deer remain scarce and fishing reports were poor.

■ CO Brad Schultz (Cook) reports checking angling and muzzleloader deer hunting activity throughout the week. A few anglers and spear fishermen were observed, however none had much to show for their efforts. The warm weather made sitting outside quite comfortable.

■ CO Marc Hopkins (Tower) spent the week checking anglers on area lakes. The success seems to be sporadic, but some nice fish are being caught. The officer observed several walleye over 28 inches being caught while he was checking licenses. One angler had the unique experience of observing grey wolves hunting and eventually catching a deer out on an area lake.

The muzzle loader season continues, however the number of hunters has declined dramatically. CO Hopkins assisted CO Frericks with a snowmobile safety class in Virginia, with a nice turnout of students. The officer took in an incidental fisher caught by a trapper, and issued two deer possession permits. Enforcement action was taken on the following issues: extra lines angling, unattended lines, illegal operation of ATV by juveniles, and no helmet on ATV.

■ CO Don Bozovsky (Hibbing) worked angling and hunting activity, complaints of dumped deer carcasses and wanton waste, and followed up on open deer hunting cases. A trapper tried to register a fisher and marten four days after mandatory fur registration day. On top of that, he didn’t obtain the required site tags until the day he brought them in (that were supposed to be validated before removing from the site of the kill) and claimed that they were reprinted. Unfortunately for him, the computer date and time stamp told otherwise. Follow up on the hunter

that had been trespassing on the officer’s land during the firearms deer season, revealed that the hunter failed to register the deer. Enforcement action was taken on fail to register/site tag fisher and marten, fail to register deer, no spearing license and no angling license in possession.







■ CO Matt Frericks (Virginia) spoke at two snowmobile safety classes and ran the students through the riding portion of the class. The biggest problem encountered with the riding portion of the class was lack of snow and overheating snowmobiles. Anglers on area lakes were checked. Enforcement action was taken for unattended lines and angling with extra lines. Reports of deer carcasses being dumped on public land continue to come in. In one case a site tag was found. When the owner of the deer was contacted he admitted to dumping the carcasses and also admitted that he did not register the deer. The person who dumped the carcasses said he did not know it was illegal to dump deer carcasses on public land. A citation was issued.

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