

**ARTICLE 30-01  
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

Chapter  
30-01-01            Organization of Department

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ORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT**

Section  
30-01-01-01        Organization and Functions of the Game and Fish Department

**30-01-01-01. Organization and functions of the game and fish department.**

**1. Organization of department.**

- a. History. The first game and fish laws were established in Dakota Territory in 1861 but it was not until 1893 when the superintendent of irrigation and forestry was designated as game commissioner that a game and fish department was formed. In 1909 the game and fish board of control was established. The board continued to function as the agency controlling fish and game until 1929 when legislation was passed providing for a single commissioner charged with certain duties and powers to administer a game and fish department. The title commissioner was changed to director in 1991.
- b. Divisions. The department consists of the following five divisions:
  - (1) Administrative services.
  - (2) Enforcement.
  - (3) Fisheries.
  - (4) Conservation and communications.
  - (5) Wildlife.
- c. Director. The director is appointed by the governor. The director holds office for four years beginning on the first day of July after the governor's election and until a successor is appointed and qualified.

The director shall appoint a deputy director who may be removed at the director's pleasure. The director may also appoint a chief game warden, district game wardens, biologists, and technicians to enforce the game laws and to perform duties specified by the director.

The director is charged with statutory duties and has specific powers relating to the department and the resources it must manage. In addition to these specific duties and powers spelled out in North Dakota Century Code sections 20.1-02-04 and 20.1-02-05, the director has additional authority and power given by various sections of North Dakota Century Code title 20.1.

- d. Game and fish advisory board. There is an eight-member game and fish advisory board, each appointed for a four-year term by the governor. The board has the authority to advise the director regarding any policy of hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations, and may make general recommendations regarding the operation of the department and its programs which the director may carry out.

- e. Orders and proclamations of the governor. After investigation and recommendations by the director, the governor may open seasons for hunting, fishing, and trapping. The governor may determine in what manner, the numbers, the places, and at what times game, fish, or fur-bearers may be taken.

**2. Functions of department divisions.**

- a. Administrative services division. This division includes the following:
  - (1) Business operations. Responsible for business operations, such as accounting functions, grant management, federal aid coordination, etc.
  - (2) Data/technology. Responsible for department data and analytics. Provides coordination and management of department data, systems, and technical resources.
  - (3) Licensing. Responsible for all licensing-related functions for fishing, hunting, trapping, and boating. This section includes department customer support services.
  - (4) Facilities management. Responsible for the management of facilities for the department headquarters and district offices throughout the state. Responsible for department print service management.
- b. Enforcement division. The law enforcement program enforces game and fish laws and rules and regulations necessary for proper management of fish and game resources. Enforcement officers called district game wardens have districts averaging approximately two thousand six hundred square miles [673396.92 hectares]. In addition to their enforcement activities, they must carry out education programs, and assist other divisions during busy periods of the year.
- c. Fisheries division. This division is divided into four programs:
  - (1) Fish production. Fish are raised at two fish hatcheries and stocked into waters of the state. Also, adult fish are trapped and transported into various waters.
  - (2) Fish management/research. Responsible for research and survey work connected with sport fishing. It gathers information about the status of lakes and fish populations and carries out management practices on lakes.
  - (3) Fisheries development. Provides public use facilities, lake improvement systems, lake and pond construction, and other developments on public fishing waters.
  - (4) Aquatic nuisance species. Implements measures to reduce the spread of aquatic nuisance species throughout the state. Measures include education, monitoring, and inspections.
- d. Conservation and communications division. This division has three major sections:
  - (1) Conservation. Since the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1970, state game and fish agencies across the nation are routinely asked to conduct environmental reviews on development projects that have a federal nexus (e.g. a project that is funded with federal money or occurs on federal land). Staff within the conservation section carry out those reviews. The conservation section also deals with all issues related to nongame wildlife and rare and declining species, including federally listed species.

- (2) Communications. Responsible for department communication, including marketing/R3, digital media, North Dakota Outdoors/publications, and video production. Staff in this section write news releases, publish a monthly magazine, manage production of hunting guides and an annual private land open to sportsmen guide, produce weekly webcasts and television news segments, manage social media accounts, write blogs, manage the website, produce a bimonthly podcast, design brochures and publications, handling of phone and electronic mail inquiries from the public, manage the department's marketing efforts, and direct the agency's recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters and anglers.
  - (3) Education. Includes hunter education, fur harvester education, bowhunter education, aquatic education, boating education, educator resources, national archery in the schools program, and public information outreach staff located statewide.
- e. Wildlife division. This division is divided into three sections:
- (1) Resource management. Responsible for all habitat development, and management and maintenance on wildlife management areas. This involves tree plantings, herbaceous cover and food plantings, road construction, weed control, signing, water developments, and any other activity that enhances these areas for wildlife, hunting, and other compatible uses.
  - (2) Game management. Responsible for population surveys that are used to determine annual harvest seasons and conduct research with the objective of improving population management on various species of game for the citizens of the state.
  - (3) Private lands. Responsible for carrying out private land habitat improvements and hunting access programs. The program involves annual leasing and development of fish and wildlife habitat and hunting access on private land and entering into cost-sharing agreements with landowners or partners to develop conservation practices which benefit fish and wildlife. The section also carries out practices which will alleviate big game and predatory animal depredation.
3. **Inquiries.** General inquiries regarding the game and fish department may be addressed to the:

North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
100 North Bismarck Expressway  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-5095

Specific inquiries about division functions may be addressed to the chief of the division involved.

4. **Personnel roster.** A roster of personnel with the department may be found in the monthly issue of North Dakota Outdoors or on the department's web page.

**History:** Amended effective February 1, 1982; September 1, 1983; December 1, 1985; January 1, 1992; March 1, 2002; April 1, 2023.

**General Authority:** NDCC 20.1-02-04(2)

**Law Implemented:** NDCC 20.1-02-04(2)