

## **Randy Hiltner**

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Hello everyone. I was born and raised in Langdon and after graduating from Langdon High School in 1976, I attended NDSU-Bottineau Branch for two years, receiving an Associate Degree in Fish and Wildlife Management. I then attended the University of North Dakota where I obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fish and Wildlife Biology and a Master of Science Degree in Biology. My Masters Thesis pertained to rainbow smelt and walleye biology and ecology in Lake Sakakawea. I also procured my secondary education certification while in Graduate School, which led to my first job as a science teacher at Anamoose High School. After four years of teaching, I applied for and was hired as a District Game Warden and was stationed at Kenmare. I was a Game Warden for three years before applying for and landing a fisheries biologist position at Riverdale. I was only in Riverdale for about six months as a new fishery biologist position was created at Devils Lake. I took this job in 1991 and have been here ever since working as a biologist and now as a fisheries supervisor.

As the Northeast District Fisheries Supervisor, I am responsible for fisheries management of approximately fifty district lakes as well as Devils Lake and Stump Lake. I supervise one full-time fisheries technician, one twelve month seasonal employee and one three month seasonal employee. The goal of a fisheries supervisor is to provide quality fishing opportunities for anglers.

My field season usually starts in April when fish spawning/egg collection starts at Devils Lake. April is also a busy month for trap and transporting adult perch to area lakes. The summer/fall season is busy with organizing and conducting netting surveys on select district lakes and Devils Lake. Netting surveys provide us with information on the various fish populations for management decisions such as stocking, regulations and responding to angler questions. During the winter months, the information that was collected during the field season is analyzed and put into reports. There are also training and professional meetings to attend. Answering many email contacts/questions from anglers is also part of the job. Some winter field work includes checking oxygen levels at the District Lakes and conducting a Devils Lake freshwater shrimp trapping survey

I enjoy my job as it is mentally and physically challenging. It requires a “jack of all trades” type person as one day you are public speaking and the next you are out in the boat pulling nets in a high wind. You also need to be technologically savvy as you work with gps, computers, water quality meters, etc. I guess there was a reason for the demanding college curriculum to get this job. I like the fact that the job changes with the seasons, it offers diversity and is interesting. If you are in the Devils Lake area, stop in the office and we can “talk fish.”