

Russell Kinzler

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Hello everyone. My name is Russell Kinzler. I was raised on a dairy farm near Kulm, North Dakota. After graduating from Kulm High School in 1989, I attended NDSU-Bottineau for two years and received an Associate Degree in Fish and Wildlife Management. I then attended North Dakota State University where I received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Zoology with a fisheries emphasis in 1993.

I have worked for the North Dakota Game and Fish department since 1991; first as a seasonal fisheries aid for two years in Riverdale and had moved into a full time seasonal position when I was hired as a Fisheries Technician at Devils Lake in December of 1993. I was only in Devils Lake for six months when I transferred back to Riverdale. I worked as a Fisheries Technician in Riverdale for a little over 12 years. This spring I accepted a Missouri River System Biologist position in Riverdale. After four months in this position everything seems to be going quite smoothly.

My job duties are mainly associated with Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River tailrace below Garrison Dam. My field season starts in April with northern pike and walleye spawning. At this time we are also tagging walleye on Lake Sakakawea and chinook salmon that will be released from Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery into Lake Sakakawea in early June. The summer is filled with sampling fish in the Missouri River System and assisting with District Lake sampling when we are needed. We also collect water quality information to monitor the cold water habitat in Lake Sakakawea during the summer months. Beginning in early fall we are busy with sampling young of the year fish throughout the Missouri River System. The field season ends in October with the Chinook salmon spawning operation. Winter will be spent analyzing data, writing reports, and assisting in the shop. Lastly, my position also includes assisting in the distribution of fish raised at the hatchery to all parts of the state.

I enjoy my job as it is always challenging and forever changing. Every week brings something different. When you are working on the Missouri River System, you never know what might pop out of the water next. It might be a net full of thousands of rainbow smelt, a twenty pound northern pike, or a 100 plus pound paddlefish.

If you are in the area around Riverdale, stop in and say hello.