

## OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

## How You Set Hook Makes A Difference

BY GARY HOWEY  
Hartington, Neb.

If I've heard it once, I've heard it a hundred times, you know, the old cliché, "fishing is one jerk on the end of the line patiently waiting for a jerk on the other end of his line."

There is a bit of truth to that statement because, not jerking or setting the hook properly, will give us a lot of practice at setting the hook and not much actual catching, making us feel like jerks when we keep missing the fish.

It's an every day occurrence, we feel a tug or extra weight on the end of our line and we instantly jerk back, which at times works out well and other times doesn't!

There's a big difference as far as when and how to set the hook, depending on what you're fishing for, what action rod is and what type line your spooled up with.

Since it's fish we're after, let's look at it from their perspective.

He's just lying around on or near the bottom when along comes a tasty looking morsel, in this case a jig with a minnow. The fish slowly works his way over to our bait, flairs his gills, sucking the bait in, only to have it ripped out of the side of his mouth.

What went wrong, we had the fish where we wanted him, with his mouth around our bait and all we had to do was to give it a jerk and we had him.

To begin with the best place to hook a fish is in the top of its mouth, in the bony part, not in the side where there's very little bone and a whole lot of soft skin.

When setting the hook, it's best to pull straight up, giving you a better chance at penetrating the top of the mouth. If you pull to the side you're more apt to pull the hook away from the fish or hook them in the soft tissue in the side of the mouth where it can easily shake or tear loose.

If we're using a Lindy live bait rig or jig and feel a fish pick it up, our best bet to get a good hook set is to:

- Reel up any slack line as we bring the rod down towards the water, which



Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Jon Thelen, of Crystal, Minn., caught this walleye on Mille Lacs using the proper hook setting methods mentioned in this column.

- will eliminate any bow or slack in our line.
- With all the slack out of our line we want to feel if there is any resistance on the line, which hopefully will be the weight of the fish.

- Then bring the rod tip straight up not off to the side, forcing the hook into the top of the fish's mouth.

By reeling up the slack line, we're removing the bow or slack in our line, shortening the distance between the end of our rod and the hook, which allow us to drive our hook home with less effort and more power.

This is especially important when

using monofilament line because mono has a tremendous amount of stretch. To set the hook using mono, not only do we have to use enough force to penetrate the hard, bony surface of the fish's mouth, we also have to pull hard enough to make up for the stretch in the line.

If we're using one of the super lines like Fireline and Spider Wire, it's a whole different story.

To get the inside scoop on these super lines and how to fish them different, I talked with the folks at Berkley, the manufacturers of both Fireline and Spider Wire. According to the experts at the plant

in Spirit Lake, IA, "we're going to have to fish super lines much differently than we'd fish mono since super lines have no stretch."

If we'd fish Fireline or Spider Wire the same way we'd fish mono, we're going to end up pulling the bait away from or tear it out of the fish's mouth."

For walleye fishing, they recommend a rod with a fast, limber tip as this takes the place of the stretch in the mono, giving you a little give when you set the hook.

"When fishing for Bass, Pike and Muskie, we're going to want to go to a moderate action rod which not only gives us a little give when you set the hook into those hard hitting, hard charging fish. The heavier rod will have enough backbone to drive the hook home and be able to bring them to the boat."

This is especially true in current as you need to be quick with your hook set, but not so quick that you rip the bait from the fish."

If you're fishing super lines in shallow water, they suggest that we go with a Medium Light rod. In medium depths a Medium rod will work well and when we're fishing water deeper than 25' he'd they recommend a Medium Heavy rod."

With super lines, basically, we want the rod to do the hook setting for us.

What we need to remember in order to become a more consistent catcher and not just a jerker is to make sure once we feel a bite, that we take up all the slack line, bringing our rod tip straight up when we set the hook.

If we set the hook by pulling to the side, more times than not, we'll pull the bait away from the fish or tear the hook through the soft tissue on the side of the fish's mouth."

By keeping a tight line, we're going to detect more bites and by setting the hook by bringing our rod straight up, you won't believe how much your fish hooking ability will improve.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament fisherman, hunting and fishing guide and the producer/host of the syndicated outdoor television series *Outdoorsmen Adventures*. You can contact him by E-mail at [outdoorsmenproductions@hartel.net](mailto:outdoorsmenproductions@hartel.net).

## OUTDOOR REPORT

## Pheasant Harvest Near 1.7 Million In '09

PIERRE — The Game, Fish and Parks Department estimates that South Dakota's pheasant harvest in 2009 was just short of 1.7 million roosters.

A survey of those who hunt upland birds — pheasants, grouse and partridge — indicates that more than 70,000 South Dakota residents and nearly 98,000 nonresidents hunted at least one of those species last year.

Hunters harvested an average of 10 birds. The 1.7 million birds was the 6th highest in the past 40 years.

In addition to the pheasant harvest, hunters took more than 39,000 sharp-tailed grouse and prairie chickens during the 2009 hunting season, and 8,500 partridge.

## Elk, Bighorn Sheep Seasons Finalized

PIERRE — The number of licenses available this year for elk hunters in South Dakota has been trimmed by the state Game, Fish and Parks Commission, which has also finalized the Archery, Black Hills and Prairie Elk hunting seasons.

The Archery Elk season will see a reduction in elk licenses from 114 "any elk" and 71 "antlerless elk" licenses in 2009, to 96 "any elk" and 49 "antlerless elk" licenses this year.

The Black Hills Elk season will have a reduction of available licenses from 605 "any elk" and 760 "antlerless elk" licenses in 2009 to 495 "any elk" and 570 "antlerless elk" licenses in 2010.

The Prairie Elk season will see an increase in available tags from 45 "any elk" and 86 "antlerless elk" in 2009 to 50 "any elk" and 86 "antlerless elk" this year.

The GFP Commission also extended the 2010 Bighorn Sheep hunting season. The 2010 season will run from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31.

## Pheasant, Mourning Dove Seasons Set

PIERRE — The Game Fish and Parks Commission has finalized two popular game-bird seasons.

The 2010 Pheasant Season will run a total of 79 days, from Oct. 16, 2010, Jan. 2, 2011. The only change from the 2009 season is the Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge Pheasant Season, which will be Dec. 13, 2010, to Jan. 2, 2011.

The Commission also set the 2010 Mourning Dove season as Sept. 1 - Nov. 9.

## Archery Antelope, Deer Seasons Finalized

PIERRE — The Game Fish and Parks Commission has finalized the 2010 Archery Deer and Archery Antelope Seasons without change from 2009.

The 2010 Archery Antelope Season will run Aug. 14 to Oct. 31, except when the Prairie Firearm Antelope season is open. Unlimited resident and nonresident "any antelope" and "any antelope plus two doe/fawn" licenses are available.

The 2010 Archery Deer Hunting Season will be Sept. 25, 2010, to Jan. 31, 2011.

## GFP Proposal Would Give Dog Training Permit Control Back To Forest Service

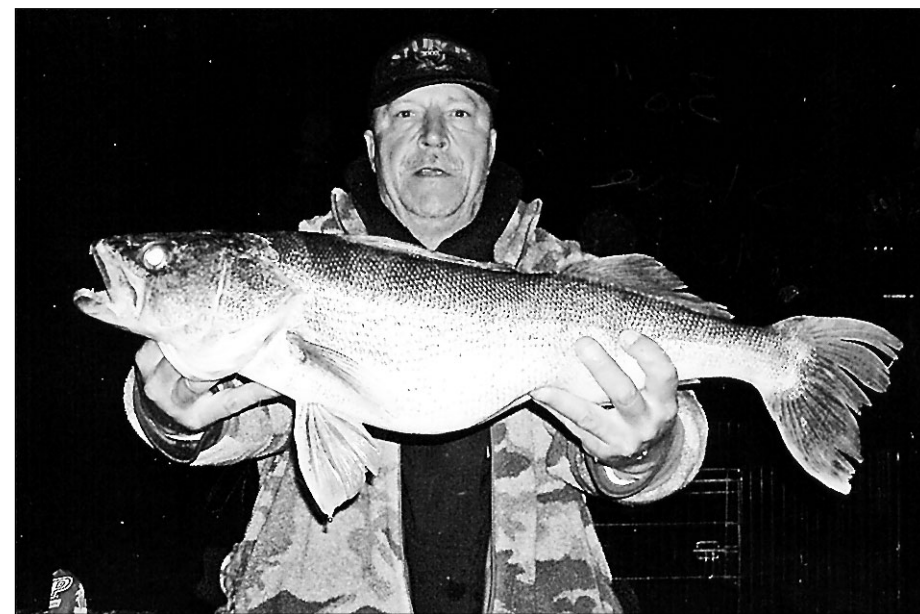
PIERRE — A proposal to be considered by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission would give the U.S. Forest Service control over permitting dog training from horseback on National Grasslands.

An existing state rule lets GFP allow up to 30 individuals to train dogs by horseback on the National Grasslands. The new proposal would let the government agency that holds land-management authority oversee those dog-training permits.

The GFP Commission will take final action on the measure at its May 6-7 meeting in Custer State Park at Sylvan Lake Lodge.

Residents who would like to provide written comments on the proposal may do so up until 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 5. Comments may be mailed to Game, Fish and Parks Commission, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, S.D., 57501, or e-mailed to [wildinfo@state.sd.us](mailto:wildinfo@state.sd.us). All comments must have the senders' full names and addresses in order to be included in the public record.

## TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



Steve Motykowski of Bloomfield, Neb. caught this 30-inch, 10-pound walleye on April 10.

## Sportsmen Against Hunger Helps Feed The Needy

PIERRE — Hunters donated about 97,000 pounds of game meat to needy individuals and families across South Dakota during the 2009 hunting seasons through Sportsmen Against Hunger, nearly reaching the organization's goal of 100,000 pounds.

Sportsmen Against Hunger is a non-profit organization whose mission is to find a convenient way for hunters to donate harvested game to needy families.

This past year, Sportsmen Against Hunger reimbursed participating meat processors for processing 2,045 antlerless deer and 261 doe/fawn antelope donated by hunters, an increase from the 1,946 antlerless deer and 354 doe/fawn antelope donated in 2008. In addition, hunters donated 245 buck deer, 34 buck antelope, and 5,929 pheasants for which the hunters paid all processing costs.

Processed meat is periodically collected from participating processors and distributed to needy families and individuals across the state through more than 60 food pantries, which frequently are in short supply of fresh meat. Commercially processed game meat was also donated to food banks through a clean-out-your-freezer food drive in many areas, or was taken directly to food banks.

Total donations in 2009 amounted to 390,000 healthy meals for the needy.

"The generosity of hunters never ceases to amaze me" said Jeff Olson, president of South Dakota Sportsmen Against Hunger. "I am surprised by the increase, as donations of deer and antelope to SAH programs across the country were down in many states last fall. To show any increase at all really shows the sportsmen are becoming even more dedicated to this program in South Dakota."

Sportsmen Against Hunger reimburses participating processors \$50 for each antlerless deer donated. The certificate program is costly and the organization is always looking for new ways to fund the program.

Last season, sportsmen donated almost \$30,000 to SAH through an optional check-off program when applying for big-game tags. Hunters are encouraged to support the program by contributing through the check-off program when applying for 2010 tags.

To make a tax-deductible donation or see a complete list of participating processors in South Dakota, visit the following website: [www.feedtheneeds.com](http://www.feedtheneeds.com).

## Snagging Giant Paddlefish A Rite Of Spring At Lake Of The Ozarks

BY BRENT FRAZEE

(c) 2010, The Kansas City Star

WARSAW, Mo. — Anthony Ford was speeding down the Osage River arm of Lake of the Ozarks in his boat, heading to a spot where he knew he had a good chance of running into a big snag.

We're talking about the kind of snag that swims. A giant paddlefish.

And Ford knew where to go. With his dog Radar at the front of the pontoon boat, shivering in the cool wind, he headed upstream until he got to one of his favorite snagging holes.

When he looked at the screen of his color fish-finder, he knew he was in the right place.

"When I first started snagging, we didn't have all this modern technology," said Ford, 36, who runs the [catfishingguide.com](http://catfishingguide.com) guide service. "We just went out and tried to run into something. It was like finding a needle in a haystack."

"Now, I don't have my customers start snagging until I see fish on the screen."

And Ford did. "Look at all those big marks," he said, pointing to a hole stacked with fish. "Those are paddlefish."

Seconds later, Ford's friend and fellow guide Chad Short was dropping his line with huge hooks and large sinkers to the depths. He jerked his line through the water several times before he hooked into something that jerked back.

Paddlefish! The 100-pound test line stretched tight, and the fish began taking line from the big baitcasting

reel. But in a matter of minutes, the gray fish floated to the surface and Ford was able to gaff it.

To many, the paddlefish would have looked huge. Not to Ford and Short.

"That's a small one," Ford said. "Probably about 45 pounds."

That gives you an idea of what Ford and Short are chasing each spring.

When Missouri's paddlefish snagging season opens March 15, they are pursuing the biggest fish in the lake. Paddlefish can grow to 100 pounds or bigger. The state record, caught at Table Rock Lake eight years ago, weighed 139 pounds, 4 ounces.

There's no finesse involved in this type of fishing. Leave your lures, bait buckets and ultralight equipment at home. In this game, fishermen use tackle that looks like it is better-suited for deep-sea fishing.

They drop huge hooks and sinkers to the bottom, then start jerking. If they're lucky, they'll snag into a fish. A big fish.

"My biggest fish weighed in the 80s," Ford said. "But I know a lot of people who have taken one bigger than that."

I had a customer who took one in the 90s last year. I think that's what brings so many people out."

Missouri's fishery is known nationwide. The Missouri Department of Conservation raises paddlefish at its hatcheries, then stocks them in reservoirs such as Lake of the Ozarks, Truman and Table Rock.

When those fish begin their

spawning run each March, snagging season opens. Actually, the fish just go through the motions; when the reservoirs were built, they flooded much of the native paddlefish's traditional spawning areas. That brought about the need for stocking.

The stocked fish still feel the urge to make their spawning run each spring, but they aren't successful in hatching eggs.

The Department of Conservation has been able to keep up with the demand. The Lake of the Ozarks, for example, receives 15,000 paddlefish measuring 12 to 14 inches each year, with as many as twice that every three years.

That has resulted in a population that is in "great shape," according to Trish Yasser, who leads the paddlefish program for the Department of Conservation.

"I'd have to say that our paddlefish snagging is among some of the best in the country," she said. "We have good populations at all

"When I first started snagging, we didn't have all this modern technology."

— ANTHONY FORD, MISSOURI FISHING GUIDE

three of our major reservoirs — Lake of the Ozarks, Truman and Table Rock."

Other fishermen apparently realize that. Ford has guided customers from as far away as Russia and Japan.

"I had to communicate with the Russians through a translator," he said. "They would have their vodka with them, and if they caught a fish, they'd take the eggs, put them in a jar and eat their caviar on a cracker right out there in the boat."

Ford tries to take some of the guesswork out of the snagging by relying heavily on his electronics. The fish will hang out in the same holes on the upper end of Lake of the Ozarks each year, he said. He examines those holes with his

fish finder to see if the paddlefish are there.

"Studies have shown they can travel 40 to 60 miles a day," Ford said. "But they'll rest in these holes."

"That's where we'll have our best snagging."

But even then, there is luck involved, Ford said. Many times, he has marked holes loaded with fish, but not one is hooked.

"I remember one time when I took an older couple from Wisconsin out," Ford said. "She wasn't even wanting to fish, but her husband talked her into it."

"Well, she landed (and released) five fish before her husband even got one. You never know."

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