

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

# What To Watch Out For

BY GARY HOWEY  
Hartington, Neb.

With spring making the turn towards summer, those of us who spend a lot of time in the outdoors will need to take precautions before heading for the lake or the woods. Fishermen, hunters and others who spend a lot of time outdoors need to protect themselves from the sun, as well as insect borne diseases such as West Nile disease and Lyme disease.

## West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus is another thing you'll need to be aware of when going outdoors. The disease originally showed up in horses and birds and first diagnosed in 1999 in New York. It's transmitted by the bite of mosquitoes and has slowly worked it's way westward.



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To date, the disease has infected animals or people in most states including Nebraska and South Dakota. The greatest outbreaks of the disease have been in the south where muggy weather produces record numbers of mosquitoes. In Nebraska, the first human case was in Hall County in 2002 and additional cases have been diagnosed in South Dakota. Those that come down with the virus will have flu like symptoms but the disease can be fatal if not diagnosed properly.

With the mushroom hunting season just getting started and warm weather arriving, those of us in the outdoors need to do what ever we can to minimize the chances of getting infected. The odds of being bitten by an infected mosquito are slim, as only 1 in 150 bitten will develop the sever form of the illness, but don't take any chances.

However, even in the areas where the disease is present the majority of the mosquitoes don't carry the disease and most people that are bitten by mosquitoes infected with the disease will not become ill.

Concerned hunters and those that enjoy the outdoors can reduce their chances of being bitten by using mosquito repellent, as mentioned before are those that contains Deet as it seems to be especially effective. Once again, reducing the exposed skin by wearing long sleeves and reducing the amount of bare skin helps.

A few cases of the non-fatal form of the disease have been reported in dogs, it seems that dogs aren't particularly susceptible to the disease.

To date there's been no evidence that West Nile Disease can be transmitted from game animals to humans or their pets through direct contact with blood. It's recommended that concerned hunters wear rubber gloves when field dressing an animal and to make sure the meat is cooked thoroughly.

There are several things that can be done to prevent the spread of the disease. These include:

- Remove any standing water, where mosquitoes often breed. Empty buckets, trash cans, pots, remove discarded tires and other containers where water might accumulate.
- Make sure your roof gutters are draining properly.
- Change the water in bird baths at least once a week
- Eliminate any standing water that col-



Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Jim Hamilton of Canton is pictured with a buck he took during last year's archery season

lects on your property.

- Wear long sleeve shirts and pants when venturing outside.
  - Avoid spending too much time outdoors at dawn or dusk, as this is the time that mosquitoes are most active.
  - Use insect repellent when going outside. Those containing DEET work the best. (Read and follow manufacturer's warnings and recommendations before using)
  - If you have horses, you should have them vaccinated against the disease.
- The good news is that once temperatures start to cool, most of the mosquitoes will die off, which should bring an end to the season. The disease isn't one that we need to get paranoid over, but it is something that we should be aware of.

## Lyme disease

Lyme disease has been around since 1977 when arthritic conditions were observed in children near Lyme, Connecticut. The bite of the deer tick, a very small cousin of the common wood tick is the critter that transmits the disease.

There are some things you can do to make your trip into an area that might be infected with ticks.

If you're going into an area that could be

tick infested, start by wearing light colored clothing as it's easier to spot ticks on lighter colors and they're easier to remove before they attach to the skin. Wearing a long sleeve shirt and tucking your pants into your socks or your boots will also help to keep the ticks away from your skin. This may not win you any best-dressed awards, but it helps to keep ticks away from your skin.

When I'm heading into the woods or afield, I like to use an insect or tick repellent that contains DEET and if applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations can be used safely on both adults and children. We'll have more information on Lyme disease in upcoming columns.

Because we outdoorsmen and women spend so much time outdoors, who are out early in the morning and stay out into the evening, we need to aware of this disease and take precautions.

*Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, hunting and fishing guide. He's the President of Outdoorsmen Productions, Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series and the Co-Host of Outdoor Adventures radio program. More information on the outdoors is available at [www.outdoorsmenadventures.com](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).*

## Briefs: GF&P Warns Visitors To Keep Hands Off Young Animals

PIERRE — Spring and summer are wonderful times to enjoy wildlife in South Dakota, but the Game, Fish and Parks Department warns that well-meaning wildlife encounters can be potentially lethal to baby animals.

"We have a very strong nurturing instinct when it comes to wildlife, especially baby animals," said Chuck Schlueter, communications manager for the Division of Wildlife. "Not only do we want to see wildlife thrive in our state, we want to make sure that every individual animal is taken care of. It is part of who we are as human beings, and unfortunately it can be very harmful."

The problem, according to Schlueter, arises when people pick up baby animals — bunnies, squirrels, turtles, fawns, birds, raccoons, and others — that are thought to be abandoned. They are often taken to GFP offices and local veterinarians in efforts to save them from abandonment.

"In many cases, probably most cases, the baby animals have not been abandoned," Schlueter said. "It is natural for wildlife to leave their young to forage for food, and even as protection to draw attention away from the young. They return to feed and care for them."

The apparent abandonment is a very natural process of animals bringing up their young in the wild. It is when those behaviors take place in urban areas and around homes that baby wildlife are sometimes picked up by humans. Survival away from their natural setting can be stressful and often fatal to young animals.

"I know it goes against our instincts, but the most responsible way we can protect young wildlife is to keep the wild in wildlife and leave young animals where we see them. It is a lesson for both adults and children. The touch of a human being can lead to mortality as fast or faster than the challenges wildlife face in their natural setting," Schlueter said.

## Gov. Daugaard Proclaims Water Safety Month

PIERRE — Gov. Dennis Daugaard has signed an executive proclamation designating May as Water Safety Month in South Dakota. Swimming and other aquatic activities enhance the quality of life in South Dakota, and water-safety rules should be followed, the Governor said.

"Citizens of South Dakota recognize the ongoing efforts and commitments to educate the public on pool and spa safety issues and initiatives by the pool, waterpark, recreation and parks industries," Gov. Daugaard said.

In addition to May serving as Water Safety Month, May also serves the unofficial start of South Dakota's summer boating and camping seasons. South Dakota's state parks are a popular summer destination for a day trip to some of the finest swimming beaches in the state. Park visitors are reminded that swimming at state parks is at their own risk, and there are no life-guards on duty. These are multiple use areas, and swimmers should also be aware of other water users such as boaters and fishermen.

South Dakota has tremendous water resources, and good safety practices allow those waters to be enjoyed by all, said Brandon Gust, boating law administrator in the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks. To ensure a safe boating trip, Gust advises boaters to do a thorough safety-equipment check prior to each outing. Inspect life jackets, be sure they fit those who wear them, and have life jackets for everyone on board.

For more information on boating in South Dakota, pick up a free copy of The Handbook of South Dakota Boating Laws and Responsibilities from any local GFP office.

## Ponca SP To Host Outdoor Cooking Camp

LINCOLN, Neb. — Ponca State Park will host a family outdoor cooking camp May 4-6.

The cost of the workshop is \$50 for adults and \$35 for children age 12 and under. Topics include campfire and camp stove cooking, Dutch oven cooking and grilling. There will be children's classes, a wild edibles hike and a class on making food for birds. Specialty classes include dressing and cooking wild turkey, making wild game sausage, cleaning and cooking fish, making wild game jerky, smoking meat and trail and backpack cooking.

Participants who spend the weekend at the workshop will get a 30-percent discount on cabin and camping rates.

For more information or to request a registration form, contact the park at 402-755-2284 or [ngpc.moriverexpo@nebraska.gov](mailto:ngpc.moriverexpo@nebraska.gov). A park entry permit is required.

## TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



PHOTOS: CAPTAIN NORM'S  
LEFT: Ariel Hood caught this Rainbow Trout at the South Dakota Fish Hatchery on April 21.  
RIGHT: Kayla Martian caught this Ranbow Trout at the South Dakota Fish Hatchery on April 21.

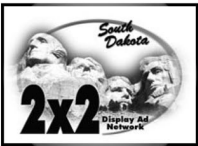
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2100 Broadway, Yankton



BY SAM COOK  
Duluth News Tribune

DULUTH, Minn. (AP) — Toy Carson was resplendent in camouflage waders, a leopard-print scarf and a furry bomber hat, ear flaps down. Duluth's Carson and her crew of smelters working the Park Point beach were squealing and shrieking as they waded ashore with another net full of writhing silver fish.

The smelt were running Monday night. "This is my first year. It's crazy," said Mark Syvoraphane, up from Shakopee, to help Carson. "This will not be my last time!"

After a series of so-so nights on Park Point, netters on Monday hauled in nets with hundreds of the squirming rainbow smelt. A single net full often would fill three 5-gallon pails.

The sheer abundance and availability of all that wriggling biomass was something to behold. It isn't often that nature offers up a tasty bounty in such heaping quantities. It was all available for the price of a fishing license, a pair of waders and a decent net.

Whoops and hollers rang out up and down the beach, where lantern light and small fires illuminated the night.

This was the night smelters had been waiting for. "Oh, God, that was heavy," said Trung Nguyen, 26, as he let a seine full of smelt drop on the sand. "We've done 20 pulls. This is by far the best."

He and his buddies, Chu Her, 29, and Xang Her, 28, both of St. Paul, began scooping handfuls of the 5-inch fish from the net into

waiting pails. They knew how they would prepare the smelt when it came time to eat them. "Beer batter and Guinness," Nguyen said.

When warm weather came early to the North, many thought the smelt run might start early, too. But when colder nights cooled waters, the smelt seemed content to wait. A few good reports came in, but mostly the action had remained slow. Monday night, at least on Park Point, all of that seemed to change.

Today's smelt runs are still a mere shadow of those in the 1970s and 1980s, when dipnetters in North Shore streams could fill a bucket with three or four scoops and seines were almost too heavy to lift. Lake Superior's ecology has changed. A recovering lake trout population and lots of planted salmon have held the smelt population in check. Smelt runs are more modest now.

In the heyday of smelting, the phenomenon took on a party atmosphere and often got out of hand. Monday night, most smelters seemed to be there for the fish, not the frivolity. But a

Park Point resident three or four years ago said an inebriated smelter walked right into her home looking for the bathroom.

Meanwhile, earlier on Monday evening at the Lester River, 15 or 20 smelters used dipnets, not seines, in hopes of scooping up a few dinners. Through at least 10:30 p.m., no significant run had materialized. Smelters were getting one or two smelt every now and then, and nobody had more than a couple dozen.

The atmosphere was subdued and peaceful. One fire on the cobblestones. The soft patter of conversation. Shloop went a net as it entered the dark current. Tick, tick went the hoop of the net as it clicked along the river bottom. Up it would come. Nothing again. Or maybe one lone-smelt flopping at the bottom.

Shloop. Tick. Tick. Shloop. Tick. Tick. Other smelters sat on their pails along the river, content to wait until a whoop from the water indicated a better run.

But across the muzzle of Lake Superior at Park Point, it was the land of plenty. The amber lights

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