

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Moose Sighted In Neb.

Panhandle

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission officials are reporting that a moose has been spotted numerous times by residents in the North Platte River Valley in the Panhandle.

The confirmed sightings suggest that the moose has been in the region for several weeks and was last reported in Morrill County. Moose are not common in Nebraska, but are occasionally spotted in the western part of the state. Wildlife biologists expect that the moose wandered into the state from Wyoming.

Officials are urging wildlife watchers to keep their distance from the wild animal. Even if moose appear to be docile, they have been known to become aggressive.

GFP Commission Adopts Final Elk Management

Plan for South Dakota

PIERRE -- The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission formally adopted the Elk Management Plan for South Dakota (2015-2019) at their April meeting last week.

"This plan serves as the guiding document to ensure elk populations and their habitats are managed appropriately; addressing both biological and social tolerances while considering the needs of all stakeholders," stated Tony Leif, director of the GFP division of wildlife. "Staff will continue to work closely with private landowners, the Black Hills National Forest, Wind Cave National Park along with sportsmen and women to overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities regarding the future of elk management in South Dakota."

The elk management plan provides important historical background and significant biological information for the formulation of elk management over the next five years. Current elk survey methods and management tools are presented, along with a thorough discussion of objectives and strategies to guide management of this resource. This plan is a working document for staff that will be amended as new biological and social data provide opportunities to improve management of elk resources in South Dakota.

The plan outlines a Black Hills population objective (excluding Custer State Park and Wind Cave National Park) at 7,000 wintering elk, with a range of 6,000 to 8,000 elk depending on habitat conditions. The Custer State Park population objective is at 800 wintering elk, with a range of 700 to 900 elk.

The plan, in its current and final version, benefitted greatly from the elk stakeholder work group and the public comment period held Dec. 10, 2014, through March 22, 2015.

GFP Holds Annual Antler Auction

PIERRE -- The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) will host its annual antler auction Saturday, May 2, 2015, at the Rapid City regional office shop located at 4130 Adventure Trail.

Items up for auction include, but are not limited to antelope, deer and elk antlers on skull plates; deer and elk bulk antlers; deer and elk shoulder mounts; bobcat pelts as well as mountain lion skulls and hides. Other miscellaneous items will also be on the auction and include tree stands, goose decoys and elk ivories. Auction items are subject to change and are limited in quantities.

Doors open at 9 a.m. MDT and the auction begins at 10 a.m. MDT. The public is invited to attend.

For additional details, please view the event poster on our Facebook page.

Turn In Poachers (TIPS) Program Approves New Board Member

PIERRE -- The Board of Directors of the Turn In Poachers (TIPS) program has selected Mike McKernan of Twin Brooks to represent northeastern South Dakota; which he will serve as appointed for a three-year term.

"This is a very exciting opportunity. I am proud to represent the sportsmen and women of northeastern South Dakota and will work to ensure that those who illegally take fish and game in our state are held responsible," stated McKernan. "One objective is to protect the future of hunting and fishing for our children and grandchildren. These outdoor activities are part of our South Dakota heritage and it is important to protect those privileges from those who abuse public resources."

McKernan is a retired Grant County Sheriff, part-time cattle rancher and an avid outdoorsman. For over 30 years, he has been a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), served on their state board and is the current president of the NWTf South Dakota Chapter.

"We are pleased that Mike is now part of the team and look forward to his representation for northeastern South Dakota," said Dave Nauman, TIPS president.

Neb. Game & Parks Seeks Input On Potential Waterfowl Changes For 2016-2017 Season

LINCOLN, Neb. -- The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is seeking input on potential changes to duck zone and goose unit boundaries for the 2016-17 hunting season.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) allows changes to duck zone boundaries every five years, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has paired this with dark (Canada) goose unit boundary changes.

Duck zones and goose units provide an opportunity to coordinate duck and goose migration patterns and hunter preferences with hunting season dates for different areas within a state. The opportunity provided by USFWS to change zone boundaries allows Game and Parks to survey hunters about their preferences.

Hunters can find more information and provide input by visiting: <http://www.outdoornebraska.ne.gov/hunting/guides/waterfowl/index.asp>

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

# The ‘Run And Gun’ Method

GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

No matter what type of outdoor activity you are into, windy, cold, damp days can put an end to most activities before they start!

This especially true when it comes to a spring turkey hunt, making a hunter thinking more about the nice warm bed he's in than chasing turkeys in the rain!

Calling spring turkey when it is cold and damp is a tough job, but do not think all turkeys hole up during these types of weather conditions. There are always a few toms out there looking around for a receptive hen!

This is when we revert to what we refer to as aggressive turkey hunting tactics. This is something not talked about a lot as it involves more work than other turkey hunting tactics.

You've more than likely seen TV shows or videos where the hunter makes a few calls, sets down in one



Gary HOWEY

spot for a couple of minutes and then the bird magically appears!

These hunters on these programs do not need to look around a whole lot to locate the birds because they are in an area that they have been in before or he is hunting next to a feeder in his own backyard.

If you spend a lot of time in an area and spend a lot of that time looking for the birds, you are going to know exactly where they are!

Because we are filming in different locations, in areas we may have never seen before, we arrive the day before the hunt, scouting as time allows, but there are times when our schedule puts us into an area after dark and scouting just does not happen.

This is where we revert to my aggressive turkey calling.

On opening morning, we are in the field well before daybreak, not a half hour, I mean when it is pitch dark as turkeys may not have the best night vision, they still can detect movement in low light conditions.

If the area looks like it would hold turkeys, we like to use a locator call to get a response from the Toms.

We start our hunt by jumping from one ridgeline to another calling with our owl, crow or predator calls trying to get an old gobbler to shock gobbler

Don't travel along the top of the ridges: as a turkey's keen eyes will pick you out against the skyline and your hunt will be over before it begins.



PHOTO: TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES  
Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Larry, Myhre (Sioux City, Iowa) is pictured with a Gobbler take using the Run & Gun method.

Travel just below the ridgeline, high enough to be able to see and hear what is going on below you, but not high enough to be silhouetted against the skyline.

If there is no answer, we will break out our binoculars and glance along the ridges, trying to spot the birds as they come down from the roost.

Once we have located a gobbler, we set up, calling quietly at first, getting louder with each repetition. Loud and long can be the key. Not so loud that you spook the bird, but loud enough so the Tom knows you are there.

One of my hunting partners and I have taken over thirty Toms this way and most of them being long beads.

In order to do this, we have had to compete with other hens as well as several Toms. By calling aggressively on and off for up to a half-hour, we have pulled birds in from long distances.

If the Tom will not come to us, we will work on the hen. We call loud, trying to sound like another boisterous hen trying to draw the Tom away from the boss hen.

You would be surprised how upset this makes the hen. On many

occasions, we have had an old hen walk/run over to see who is making all the racket, trying to take her boyfriend away.

We have had a hen go beak to beak with our decoy, where it looks as if a fight was about to break out, when the tom finally followed, looking for his wandering hen.

When hunting aggressively, you need to make sure that all your bases are covered; you may have to carry numerous calls.

With our crew, it can mean as many as a dozen diaphragm calls as well as slates, box calls, locator calls or even push button yelpers.

Never fail, on certain days the birds will want to talk to one call when I am using a different one.

Since you never know when you will hear a gobbler, as it could be in the next valley or just across the fence, camouflage is an important part of the equation!

When it happens, you may not have a whole lot of time to find a place to hunker down in and camo allows you to blend into a small amount of cover.

This is why we mix and match camouflage patterns, allowing us to blend in with most terrain. A wood

pattern all-purpose camo works great for the areas we hunt. We try to use the same camo pattern for our turkey vest, face-mask and cap as it helps us to blend in well.

If we are hunting late season when the trees have leaved out, we will go to dark on the bottom with more green on the top as this has always produced for us during late season.

I don't go into the woods with one of my shiny shotguns, as it would stick out like a sore thumb. My semi-automatic shotgun has a synthetic Mossy Oak camo pattern while my partner's shotgun is flat black.

Since we are using the walk and talk method where we move from ridge to ridge and call or as we call it. "The run and gun method", we need to travel light and anything that makes noise will spook birds.

The last several years we have experimented with several decoys including foam, hard body, expandable, inflatable and silhouette decoys.

Depending on what part of the season, we have used as many as four hens and two Jakes.

I set my Jake decoy out in front at 25 yards on my left side, as I'm right-handed while my partner, a left-hander sets his up off to the right. We scatter our hens around the Jakes, making sure there is at least three feet between the Jakes and other decoys as the incoming Tom will go right to the Jake and will need room to strut around the decoy.

Once the Tom is in the decoys, because we will be filming, we let him do his dance for a few minutes and then tip him over.

By using aggressive calling tactics, covering ground and hunting smart, you do not need perfect weather conditions to take a gobbler.

Let's be honest, how many times do you choose a weekend to hunt gobblers that are perfect?

Not many, so try hunting aggressively and you'll find that your Thanksgiving supper could be wild turkey, not ham like it's been so many years before!

*Gary Howey, Hartington, Nebraska, is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. He is the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series, seen in the Yankton area on local channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday@ 7:00 on the MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 am. He and Simon Fuller Co-Host the Outdoor Adventures radio program on Classic Hits 106.3, ESPN Sports Radio 1570 in Southeastern South Dakota and Northeast Nebraska. In Northwest Iowa, it airs on KCHE 92.1 FM. If you are looking for more outdoor information, check out [www.outdoorsmenadventures.com](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).*

## Wasting Disease Spreads Through More Kansas Deer

BY MICHAEL PEARCE

(c) 2015 The Wichita Eagle (Wichita, Kan.)

Chronic wasting disease, an illness that's 100 percent fatal in deer and elk, has spread to six new counties in southwest Kansas. To date, the disease has never been passed to humans or livestock, though it is related to mad cow disease and some other illnesses that can be fatal to both.

Shane Hesting, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, wildlife disease coordinator, said of about 600 deer tested, nine carried the disease. Most were shot by hunters during deer seasons. New counties with the disease are Gray, Hodgeman, Kearny, Pawnee, Meade and Scott counties, with one deer each. Decatur, Norton and Rawlins counties in northwest Kansas each had one deer test positive from last fall's samples. All three have had multiple deer test CWD positive in past years. Hesting said hunters who killed the animals are being notified of the results, and urged not to eat the venison from those animals as a precaution. The disease now nearly stretches from Kansas' borders with Nebraska and Oklahoma. Biologists in Oklahoma have been notified the disease was found about 30 miles north of the state line. Hesting said the six southwest Kansas deer that tested positive came from a test sample of 213 deer. "It's a small sample size so the prevalence is probably higher than we expected in that part of the state," said Hesting, who added that none of the 338 deer recently checked from south-central Kansas tested positive for CWD. He said the state focused its testing last fall on southwest and south-central

Kansas. The three deer from northwest Kansas were tested because the hunters who killed them suspected the animal was ill because of actions or appearances.

Chronic wasting disease, a contagious neurological disease, was first discovered along the Wyoming/Colorado border in the 1960s, impacting deer and elk. The disease spread slowly on its own but appears to have had some help as infected animals from game farms in that region were shipped across the country. CWD has now shown up as far away as New York, southern New Mexico and parts of Saskatchewan.

It's believed the disease is passed from animal to animal through things like saliva and feces, though it's been known to contaminate an area for years in the soil. It is mostly contained in the central nervous system and bones of infected deer.

Some states no longer allow hunters to bring the complete skulls and bones of deer and elk they've shot from states with CWD, like Kansas, into their home state. Hunters in many states are now advised to avoid contact with the brains, glands and to avoid cutting or breaking bones when they're cleaning deer, elk and moose they've killed.

As the disease gradually spread into the Dakotas and Nebraska, Wildlife and Parks began testing deer in northwest Kansas for CWD in 1996. The state's first positive in a wild deer was in 2005 in Cheyenne County, in extreme northwest Kansas. A captive elk transplanted from Colorado tested positive for the disease in Harper County in 2001.

Since 2005, 73 deer have tested positive in Kansas. Hesting said about 24,800 have been tested through the years. A loss of federal

funding several years ago means the agency must focus it's testing on one or two areas of the state annually. Four years ago testing in southwest Kansas showed now signs of the disease.

Trained technicians, often taxidermists or veterinarians, remove the glands or tissue needed to test for the disease for the department. Testing is done at Colorado State University and Kansas State University. Hunters can also pay to have samples taken and tested.

Hesting said two of the positive bucks were mule

deer, of which only 51 were tested last fall. The rest were whitetails. All were bucks at least 3½ years old when they were shot. All seven of the southwest Kansas bucks appeared healthy to the hunter and the technician who took the sample tissue or glands.

Lloyd Fox, Wildlife and Parks big game program coordinator, said initially most animals found with the disease in northwest Kansas appeared healthy, too. More and more are being found showing weakness, poor physical conditions or wandering aimlessly in

that region because of the disease. Also, some localized areas have produced CWD deer for several years.

So far the disease hasn't had much of an impact on the deer populations in Kansas. Fox said that could change.

"The first few years we see little impact but most of us think it will, in decades, have to have a population effect as they environment becomes more contaminated," he said. "When that happens, populations won't jump back quickly from this. It's a terrible disease."

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