

# OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

## Bassin' For Walleyes On Big Mac

BY GARY HOWEY  
Hartington, Neb.

You know the saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks?"

Well, let me tell you that it can be done, because this, mature dog, — I don't like the word "old" — recently learned a new trick that will not only catch walleyes, it will catch "big" walleyes.

Last week, our film crew made a trip down to Lake McConaughy in southwestern Nebraska to film the 2010 Cabela's Regional Walleye Tournament.

First of all, let me tell you a little about McConaughy. It's back, and no longer the largest beach in Nebraska, as the water

levels were so low that it looked more like a huge beach with a small lake in the middle.

According to the Central Public Power and Irrigation District, Big Mac is up 30 feet since last December with the lake that is now more than 20 miles long.

When we headed for the lake, we knew it held large walleyes as the state record walleye — a 16-pound, 2-ounce lunker — came from the lake.

The two-person teams in this tournament had to qualify by finishing in the top twenty-five in their respective state.

Anglers from the Kansas Walleye Association, Colorado Walleye Association, Nebraska Walleye Trail and the Wyoming Walleye Stampede were represented in the tournament that paid \$10,000 for first place.

One of the neat things about this tournament was that there were several father/son and husband/wife teams, helping to make this a family event.

It didn't take long for us to realize that this was going to be a big fish tournament as there were numerous six-plus pound walleyes weighed in early, 40 minutes into the tournament.

What amazed us was what a lot of the anglers were using to take their big fish was spinner baits that would be the downfall for the big fish on McConaughy in this two day tournament.

Not walleye spinners, but bass safety pin type spinner baits with two and a half inch willow leaf blade up front and a smaller willow leaf below that, the ones bass anglers use to pull largemouth out of the brush and submerged structure.

They were pitching them into and along the weeds and newly submerged



PHOTO: TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES

Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Steve Isom of Valentine, Neb., is pictured with a seven-pound walleye taken on a bass spinnerbait while fishing Lake McConaughy.

trees, which were mostly cottonwoods or trolling them on lead core running about 120 foot of line behind the boat that was running about 2 miles per hour.

The design of the spinnerbait is perfect for fishing in or around trees and weeds as the shape of the bait along with its large spinner blades allow the bait to push grass and limbs out and away from the bait.

Well, I was seeing it, but finding it hard to believe, until our boat went out to get some shots on the water, where we saw several boats land "big" fish on the baits.

Those contestants that were on fish,

were banging big fish with the one fish more than 22 inches long that each angler was allowed coming into the boats easily as we watched some of the contestants released several fish more than nine pounds because they'd already weighed their big fish earlier.

I was seeing it, but finding it hard to believe, so we had to try it.

Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Steve Isom (Valentine, Neb.) who'd used them to catch walleye on Merritt Reservoir, took team member Bill Christensen and I out to show us how it was done.

We started out by throwing 3/8th ounce white double willow leaf spinner baits up into the submerged cottonwoods.

It didn't take Steve long to take his first fish — a fat seven-pounder — followed by a big four-pounder.

A few cast later both he and I connected on a double of healthy four-pounders, while Bill did a great job of handling the net and double scooping both fish at the same time.

Steve popped another four-pounder and then lost the skirt on his Strike King spinnerbait to a big walleye right at the boat.

Now, I was a believer and couldn't wait to get back home to try it on our lakes and river.

The key is to try and match the spinnerbait color and blade design to the forage fish in your area.

Since we have shad, I'd think a white or chartreuse spinnerbait with a double willow leaf blade. The outside larger blade should be silver with the smaller inside blade being gold, which should give off more vibration and a combination of color flashes that should attract the fish.

This bait will also attract white, small-mouth and largemouth bass as well as other species.

We watched as one boat that we were shadowing catch a nice channel cat using a spinnerbait.

Areas where there's vegetation along the shore or areas where shad are being chased would be a great place to pitch these baits.

I'm also going to try trolling them along the old river channel in the reservoir to see what might take a whack at them.

What this trip has taught me is to think outside the box, just because the packaging says bass, walleye or striped, it doesn't mean it's the only fish they'll catch.

On your next trip, try something different; pitch a bass spinnerbait as you may catch a big fish like the contestants did at McConaughy as the biggest fish to come to the scale, a twelve pound two ounce beauty was taken on a bass spinnerbait.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of the Outdoorsmen Adventures television series and can be seen on Fox in South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska or online @ www.MyOutdoorTV.com. For more information on them outdoors check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

## Odd Hook-And-Lure Pairing Is A Grabber

BY RAY SASSER

(c) 2010, The Dallas Morning News

PAMPA, Texas — One issue that bass fishermen have had with buzz frogs since the genre of lures first appeared is difficulty in hooking the fish that so aggressively bite these soft-plastic lures.

The first models were fished on a single, wide-gap hook with the point of the hook buried in the frog's thick body, making the lure very weedless. Fishermen who used heavy rods and stretch-free braided lines reported hooking about 70 percent of the fish that bit.

Anglers like me who prefer lighter rods and monofilament line didn't do that well. Luckily, the market responded with several types of double hooks that improved the hookup ratio.

The model I like is Gambler's Double Trouble Toad Hook, designed by bass pro Chris Lane. This hook is designed to be matched to Gambler's Cane Toad with the hooks penetrating through the body and just barely exposed on the lure's back. It works the same way with many of the wide-bodied frog designs.

By accident, I tried the Gambler hook with a Stanley Ribbet Frog body and found a combination that provides a solid hookup more than 90 percent of the time.

The secret is exposed hooks, which somewhat limits where you can effectively fish this lure. If you cast it in the middle of a moss bed or a patch of lily pads, for instance, you'll get hung up. It works great around the edges of cover and, once you have the lure churning across the surface, it's pretty weedless as it swims over most emergent vegetation.

This hook and lure combination works so well because the Stanley lure is the only buzz-frog-style lure I've seen that has a tapered waist. The lure cradles perfectly into the gap between the two Gambler hooks.

Also by accident, I decided to cinch the lure into place by tightly wrapping it with a rubber band. The result is a surface-fishing lure that's reasonably weedless, works as it was designed to and catches nearly every fish that gets the lure in its mouth.

There's a bonus. The rubber band holds the lure securely against the hooks, resulting in few lost or damaged lures.

Because bass tend to attack the surface frog so aggressively, you may only catch one or two fish on a frog before it's so torn that it's unusable. With my rubber band rig, I've caught as many as 20 bass without replacing a lure.

Be sure after every fish to check that the lure is aligned with the hooks. Otherwise it tends to spin and will twist your line.

Another thing that I've learned to do is rig several of the frogs in advance and keep them handy. If you have to replace a lure when the fish are biting, it's quicker and easier to simply snip the line and tie on a fresh, rigged lure.

## Lion Hunting Proposed In Custer State Park

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A first-ever hunting season within Custer State Park is proposed as part of the 2011 hunting season on mountain lions in the Black Hills.

The Game, Fish and Parks Commission will finalize the season regulations at its October meeting.

There would be a drawing for five licenses within the fenced portion of Custer State Park that

would cost \$305 each. Hunters could use dogs to track lions in the park.

The season quota outside the park would be 45 lions total, or 30 female lions. Licenses outside Custer State Park would cost \$25 each. Tracking dogs would not be allowed.

Hunters killed 24 female lions and 16 male lions in this year's season.

## TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sister Maribeth Wentzloff (right) and Ryan Tramp caught these catfish on Aug. 7. The biggest fish weighed 13 pounds.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S

Stephanie Hoerle of Chambers, Neb. caught this 75-pound paddlefish on July 11 below Gavin's Point Dam.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S

Hunter Fedders caught this five-pound walleye on May 31 at Lewis & Clark Lake.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S

Reynold Veiring of Howells, Neb. caught this 12-pound, 12-ounce catfish on June 30 at Lewis & Clark Lake.

## OUTDOOR REPORT

### Step Outside Event Set For Aug. 28

The Yankton Sportsmen for Youth will be hosting the second annual Step Outside Event on Saturday, Aug. 28 at the Izaak Walton League of America trap range, located on Highway 50 east of Yankton.

The event is free and is open to the public. Registration and light free lunch will begin at 11:30 a.m. and will conclude at approximately 4 p.m.

Participants will get the opportunity to learn about shotgun shooting, archery, BB gun shooting, fishing, trapping and waterfowl hunting.

Children shall be between the ages of 8-16 and be accompanied by a guardian.

To pre-register, call 668-2985, ext. 10. Space is limited so please register your child prior to the day of the event.

### Pro Anglers Head To Tiny S.D. Town Along Lake Oahe

PIERRE (AP) — The small town of Akaska in north-central South Dakota will see a big jump in population this week when the town of a few dozen residents hosts the South Dakota Walleye Classic and Festival.

About 200 professional walleye anglers will compete as part of a tournament series that includes other stops in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Several thousand others are expected to attend other festival events that include live bands, bull riding and art in the park.

The fishing tournament is Thursday through Saturday on Oahe Oahe.

### 5th Annual Bat Festival Returns To Custer State Park

CUSTER — The S.D. Bat Working Group, in partnership with Custer State Park, is sponsoring the 5th Annual South Dakota Bat Festival on Saturday, Aug. 14.

Join biologists and other bat enthusiasts for an evening of exhibits, talks, crafts, and an opportunity to see and hear live bats. There will be something for all ages, so bring the entire family. Formal program will begin at 6 p.m., but exhibits will be up at 5 p.m., MDT.

There is no charge for any of the bat activities, although a park entrance license is required. The festival site is immediately adjacent to the Game Lodge Campground, near the Tatanka Theatre.

For more information, call Joel Tigner, 605-390-2061 or Brad Phillips, 605-673-4707.

### S.D. Annual Pheasant Survey Underway

PIERRE — It's not always easy to make a connection between the dog days of August and South Dakota's annual pheasant hunting season, but the Game, Fish and Parks Department does that in a very big way with its annual pheasant brood route survey.

GFP staff survey 110 established routes from late July through mid-August to compare the observed number of roosters, hens and pheasant broods. The survey, conducted annually since 1949, is used to develop a comparison of pheasants-per-mile counts within specific areas surveys from previous years.

"We will run each of these routes at least once in the next three weeks when the counting conditions are ideal," said Travis Runia, GFP's senior upland game biologist. "The results from this survey give our biologists excellent historical data as part of our pheasant population monitoring, and more importantly, give hunters a glimpse at what they should expect when they take to the fields this autumn."

GFP staff drive the designated routes early in the morning. Pheasants gather along roadsides at that time to feed, gather grit to help digest food, and dry the morning dew from their feathers.

Runia said the brood route survey would be completed around Aug. 15, and it will take about two weeks after that to analyze data and present a report on the survey results. GFP will provide a pre-season, pheasants-per-mile index for each area and an overall average for the combined surveys at the end of August.

The 2009 brood route survey indicated that the South Dakota pheasant population had declined 26 percent from the 2008 observation.

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