

OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

PDR Youth Hunt One To Remember

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

Most of us know just how great it is to spend time in the outdoors hunting deer and creating memories that will be talked about around the campfire for years to come. Creating wonderful memories that will be etched in our minds and stay with us as long as we live.

What would it be like to have the desire to participate in these things, but because of disabilities, believe that it was just a dream, something that others would be able to do, but you couldn't?

In years past, that's the way it was, but not anymore. There are individuals and groups determined to share the opportunity to hunt with youth whom without their help wouldn't have these opportunities.

There's a group headed up by Dean Rasmussen in the small community of Clark, S.D., population 1,285, who are making these dreams come true for disabled youths throughout the state.

The PDR Youth Hunt is named for Payton Dean Rasmussen, grandson of Dean Rasmussen. Payton passed away from spinal meningitis in 1999.

It was Dean's vision that would enable disabled youth the opportunity to be part of a true South Dakota deer hunt. He and other volunteers obtain landowner permission, locate guides, build blinds/shooting platforms, provide housing, meals and plan other activities for the guardians that accompany the kids.

He wanted this to be a real hunt, a hunt like any other deer hunt with the kids in the blinds before sun up.

Dean brought his idea to community, local school and area leaders and a board was formed, holding their first hunt in 2008 with three kids.

The small but energetic group knew what they were taking on would be a huge task. Through determination, hard work and numerous hours, their dream has



One of the participants of the 2009 PDR Youth Hunt gets into position prior to the blind being assembled around him and his guide.

become a reality. As with any other endeavor, getting the event off the ground would be the toughest part as they were starting from square one. They started out slowly, making sure they would be doing it right. An event like this isn't something that can be put together hastily as disabled individuals have special needs.

Obtaining land to hunt and finding volunteer guides was the easiest part as the

folks around Clark supported the group wholeheartedly.

Everything that would be involved would need to be handicap accessible, which includes the blinds where the youth would be hunting. Local individuals constructed blinds with the high school kids from Clark sewing the camo strips that would be used to conceal the hunters. Not only did the school kids help with the blinds, they also developed and

built the organization's Web site www.pdryouthhunt.com.

The group also knew that some of the participants might not have the ability to hold a rifle, so special equipment needed to be obtained. Several devices, including a Zero Recoil Machine were donated anonymously, which allowed the youth at the event to use the rifles. The Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association and the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks donated the rifles for the hunt.

The Game & Parks also helped with a grant allowing them to purchase a scissor lift, which gives the youth the opportunity to shoot from elevated stands.

Various motels, restaurants and catering services donated the housing and meals for the event.

Deer taken by the PDR Youth Hunt participants are processed at no charge by the locker plant in Clark. The hunt takes place during the South Dakota youth hunting season, an antlerless deer hunt.

Funds are raised through donations and other methods to support the event and make it bigger and better each year.

It was obvious while talking to Dean that the event had changed his life as well as others in the community. They were dedicated to the event and as he spoke his emotions were obvious.

We are looking forward to being part of the 2010 PDR Youth Hunt as our television crew will be on hand this year to film the event. The show will air during Outdoorsmen Adventures 2011 season.

It makes my heart feel good to see that there are individuals like Dean and his group who will go the extra mile to bring the enjoyment of outdoor activities to others.

If you'd like more information on the hunt or to donate towards it, go to www.PDRyouthhunt.com.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a syndicated outdoor writer and the producer/host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series which can be seen on Fox network throughout the upper Midwest and on line at www.MyOutdoorTV.com. For more information on the outdoors go to www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

S.D. GFP Commission Proposes Increased Limit, Opening Custer SP For Mountain Lion Season

ABERDEEN — The South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Commission proposed an increased harvest limit for the upcoming 2011 South Dakota Mountain Lion Season.

The proposed season would run from Jan. 1-March 31, 2011 and have a lion harvest limit of 45, or 30 female mountain lions.

The Commission also proposed to open Custer State Park's boundaries to mountain lion hunters, and to give those hunters the option of using dogs.

The Custer State Park Season would run in conjunction with the Black Hills Mountain Lion Season and would allow five resident hunters, chosen by lottery, to harvest one adult lion each. The license for this season would be \$305.

Custer State Park hunters would have to notify the park office at least 18 hours prior to each day they plan to hunt in the park. Houndsmen would be required to register with the Custer State Park office and can only pursue mountain lions during the open season when accompanying a licensed hunter with a valid tag.

Custer State Park hunters

would be required to harvest the first legal cat they have a reasonable opportunity to take, and would not be allowed to release dogs on tracks indicating multiple cats traveling together.

Hunters would not be allowed to have more than one mountain lion license in any one year, and any hunter who received a Custer State Park license in any of the preceding nine years may not apply for a license in that season.

Citizens who want to provide written comments on these Mountain Lion Season proposals may do so until 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 6.

Comments may be mailed to Game, Fish and Parks Commission, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD, 57501, or e-mailed to wildinfo@state.sd.us.

All comments must have the senders' full names and addresses in order to be included in the public record.

Comments may also be presented in person during the GFP Commission public hearing, which is scheduled for 2 p.m. MDT on Thursday, Oct. 7, at the Spearfish Canyon Lodge, near Spearfish.

Reopening Snook Fish Harvest On Florida Wildlife Commission Agenda

BY SUE COCKING
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MIAMI — Snook — one of Florida's most revered game fish — died by the thousands in January's big chill, prompting the closure of the hugely popular recreational fishery throughout the winter, spring and summer months.

Now the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has a decision to make: whether to reopen snook to recreational harvest as scheduled Sept. 1.

The commission's next regular meeting is Sept. 1-3, when members will get a snook status report from scientists at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute in St. Petersburg and take comments from anglers and guides. The executive order closing the fishery is expected to remain in effect until the outcome of that meeting.

Mark Robson, director of FWC's division of saltwater fisheries, recommends reopening the season — (one fish per angler per day) — while collecting harvest information throughout the fall and then deciding whether additional closures are necessary.

Commission chairman Rodney

Barreto of Miami said he will listen to the scientists and keep an open mind, but he harkens back to the thousands of dead snook he saw in flights over the Everglades last winter.

"I have a lot of concerns," Barreto said. "I've spoken to a lot of guides, fishermen and other folks. Those fishermen seem to think we ought to keep it closed. According to them, they go all day and catch one snook, and they see the resource has been damaged."

Luiz Barbieri, head of marine fisheries research at FWRI, said his staff has spent the past six months collecting data to help commissioners make a decision. FWRI researchers hauled up snook in seine nets in four estuaries — the north Indian River Lagoon, south Indian River Lagoon, Charlotte Harbor and Tampa Bay. They interviewed recreational anglers returning from fishing trips to docks in Everglades City and Flamingo in Everglades National Park. They evaluated the logbooks of about 30 inshore fishing guides on the east and west coasts. They logged hits from acoustic tags implanted in about 100 snook between Jupiter Inlet and Port Canaveral.

Barbieri said the most reliable data came from the seine nets, known as fisheries-independent monitoring.

"It's clear to us that the smaller-size fish were hit the hardest," Barbieri said. "The year class of the fish spawned and born in 2009 were hit pretty hard. Their numbers are pretty low — the lowest juvenile abundance that we have recorded in the last 15 years."

Barbieri said information from recreational fishers was less reliable because the long harvest season closure meant fewer anglers targeted snook.

"Having the season closed seemed to have discouraged people to fish for snook. Much lower sample size and the margin of error was high," he said.

But the news from field researchers wasn't all gloom and doom. Barbieri said the numbers of snook bearing sonic tags that were recorded returning to ocean inlets to spawn in the spring were no lower than in past years.

"That's a sign to me that those large spawning females didn't get hit as hard as those younger age classes," he said.

Barbieri noted that a 2007 change

in snook rules — reducing the bag limit to one fish per person per day statewide and tightening slot limits and harvest seasons — might have served as a buffer against worse damage from the cold.

"The new regulations were beginning to show effect," he said. "The population was increasing. When you build that savings account, then a rainy day happens, you're prepared."

He said reopening the harvest in September will allow researchers to resume collecting carcasses from anglers for age and growth studies. A full scientific stock assessment is scheduled for 2012.

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



PHOTOS: CAPTAIN NORM'S

LEFT: Andrew Stainbrook of Parkston caught this 48-pound paddlefish using a bow and arrow on July 11 below Gavin's Point Dam.

TOP: Santos Calderon of Wakefield, Neb. caught this 27-pound Drum fish on June 18 on the Missouri River.

OUTDOOR REPORT

Adult-Youth 3-D Archery Tourney Set For Aug. 22

HARTINGTON, Neb. — The Northeast Nebraska Archers and the Shannon Trail are offering the third annual Adult-Youth 3-D Archery Tournament on Sunday, Aug. 22, at the Hartington Outdoor Archery Range, located one mile east of Hartington Recycling. The event starts at 8 a.m. and is open until 2 p.m.

First division is adult with youth ages 8-12. Second division is adult with youth age 13-15. A 40-target course will be set up, one arrow per target.

Concessions will be available on the grounds.

For more information, contact Kevin Millikan at 402-373-2713.

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.

Boat Owners Will Be Required To License Every Year

ABERDEEN — In a move that will allow boat owners to apply for licenses on-line, and to bring boat licenses in sync with other vehicle licenses, the South Dakota Game Fish and Park Commission voted to repeal the three year licensing option for boats.

As of Jan. 1, 2011, boat owners will be able to purchase their boat licenses at the same time they purchase their vehicle plates or tags. Boat licenses will expire the same month as the owner's vehicle tags.

Bow Hunters To Help Reduce S.F. Deer

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The Sioux Falls City Council has voted unanimously to allow bow hunters to help thin a deer herd causing headaches in the northeast part of the city.

Officials estimate up to 400 deer live in the area, causing problems such as car accidents. Seventy permits will be issued to area bow hunters through a lottery process to help reduce the population, starting in October.

The chosen hunters must be licensed and must go through training. They can kill only antlerless deer.

Some landowners in the area are against the special hunt. Lester Larson, Jr., calls it "totally outrageous." He says he won't let hunters on his land.

Board To Set Neb. Waterfowl Seasons

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners will set the 2010 waterfowl hunting seasons at a meeting Aug. 31 in Ogallala.

The meeting is scheduled for 8 a.m. at the Lake McConaughy Visitor and Interpretive Center.

The board also will consider amendments to fishing regulations and changes to the Open Fields and Waters Program. It also will consider allowing hunting at some state park areas.

Youth Instructor Certification Sept. 8

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will certify adults who want to become volunteer youth fishing instructors for the Youth Fishing Program. The free training is Sept. 8 at 6 p.m. at the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, south of Gretna.

Certified instructors will learn how to put on fishing programs, derbies and club activities for children and families. Instructors will have the use of free fishing tackle and educational resources at clinics.

Contact Andrea Faas at andrea.faas@nebraska.gov.

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