

OUTDOORS DIGEST

SD Lawmakers Approve Shorter Bobcat Season

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers have approved a state panel's decision to shorten next winter's hunting and trapping season for bobcats in the western part of the state.

Rules passed by state agencies cannot take effect unless they are approved by the Legislature's Rules Review Committee. The committee has now approved the bobcat season set by the state Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

Because of questions about how many bobcats live in western South Dakota, the commission decided to shorten next winter's season by two weeks in an effort to limit the number of cats that will be taken. The season will run from Dec. 26 through Feb. 15.

A limited season also will be held in five southeastern South Dakota counties, where each hunter or trapper can take just one bobcat.

S.D. Canada Goose

Hunting Opens Aug. 3

PIERRE — South Dakotans can get an early start to fall hunting on Saturday, Aug. 3 with a hunt designed to lower the population of Canada geese.

Resident Canada goose populations in many states have exploded over the past several years. South Dakota has been no exception, with a goose population that exceeds the level designated by state game managers.

"The Game, Fish and Parks Department works in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managing migratory waterfowl," Chad Switzer, GFP wildlife program administrator, said. "Ultimately the framework for waterfowl seasons is determined at the federal level and one of the provisions they have provided is this August Management Take Canada goose hunt."

The hunt is for South Dakota residents only, and will run from Aug. 3-31 in the counties of Brookings, Brown, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Hamlin, Hanson, Grant, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, Marshall, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Pennington, Roberts, Spink, Union and Pennington County west of the Cheyenne River.

Resident hunters must have a 2013 small game or combination license, and the state migratory bird certification. The federal waterfowl stamp is not required for this August hunt.

The daily bag limit for Canada geese is 15 with no possession limit.

"The goal is to encourage a healthy harvest of geese to help bring the numbers more in line with our population goals," Switzer said. "Estimates placed the Canada goose population at approximately 270,000 birds in 2012. Our management goal is 80,000."

Hunters will be able to avail themselves of an opportunity to donate geese to the South Dakota Sportsmen Against Hunter program. Designated meat processors will take the geese at no charge to the hunter.

Adams Homestead To Host Celebration

NORTH SIOUX CITY — Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve is celebrating 16 years as a state park with its annual festival on Aug. 10.

There are many new and exciting activities that are scheduled throughout the day including a threshing machine demo, corn shelling, candlemaking, tin punching, homestead tours, rope making, musicians, watermelon seed spitting contest, buffalo chip throwing contest, face painting, Dutch Oven Cooking Demo, kids games, homemade pie contest and more.

Those interested in participating in the homemade pie judging contest need to bring their pies to Adams Homestead by 10:30 a.m. Judging begins at 11:30 p.m. Pies will be judged by their appearance, texture and taste.

Plan to spend the entire day at Adams. Food and refreshments, activities, presentations, music and crafts will be available for the entire family to enjoy. Get a sense of history, learn about your heritage and explore the outdoors! Bring your walking shoes, bikes, strollers and your love for the great outdoors.

Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve is located off Interstate 29 Exit 4, 1-mile west, and 1-mile south. Follow the brown nature area signs from the interstate.

For more information, please call 605-232-0873.

SD GF&P Honors Three Landowners

PIERRE — The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department is honoring four individuals who have taken part in the agency's Walk-In Area program since its inception 25 years ago.

Access to land is an important part of hunting and the Walk-In Area program has played a major role in placing South Dakota among the nation's best hunting locations. Under the program, private land is leased for public access and there are currently over one million acres of private land enrolled across the state.

The program started in 1988 with 26 South Dakota landowners taking part. Now, 25 years later, three of those original 26 contracts still have land leased for Walk-In Area.

The four individuals involved in the three original contracts — Bud Thorpe, Dwight and Harold Wookey, and Robert Weber — will be honored at the GFP Commission meeting on Aug. 1.

"Their participation in the Walk-In Area hunting access program has significantly contributed to South Dakota's hunting heritage, culture, and economy," SD GFP Secretary Jeff Vonk said.

"Every year over 200,000 people hunt in South Dakota to spend time with family and friends, enjoy the great outdoors and provide food for their tables. Having a place to go hunting is a hunter's primary concern, and these landowners have opened up opportunities for so many people," Tony Leif, director of GFP's Wildlife Division, said.

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Birds: Your Eyes In The Sky

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

Something strange was going on out in the center of the lake as the noise made being made by a large concentrations of gulls circling over the open water.

As we approached, it appeared as if the water was boiling, as a hundred yards of the waters surface was alive, as a school of hapless baitfish were being forced to the surface by a huge school of feeding white bass, making them easy prey for the circling birds.

The bass below were slashing into the school, what they didn't engulf, had escaped or were injured, splashed about on the surface.

These circling birds were pros at this feeding method, diving to the waters surface, scooping up the baitfish, returning to the flock, and getting back in line, preparing for their next assault.

Seeing what was going on, I and my fishing partner carefully maneuvered out boat towards the school, dropped our trolling motor, quietly moved within casting distance and proceeded to cast into the school with what we had tied onto our lines.

I made one, two and was about to crank the handle for the third time when my rod bent and the fight was on.

The strikes were vicious and I did our best to get the fish into the boat as quickly as possible, allowing us to get our lures back in the water before the event was over. When the disturbance finally subsided on the surface and the birds moved on, we'd boated ten huge white bass.

We spent the rest of the afternoon watching the sky, running from one area to another, allowing the flock of birds to be our fish finder.

I've seen this happen over and over again, with the one mentioned above happening on Lake Francis Case, where the fish tearing into the school of terrified baitfish, were white bass.

The first time I had birds guide to me to some excellent fishing happened on Lewis and Clark lake in southeastern South Dakota, we were fishing out of the Miller Creek area, trolling crankbaits in the deep water of the old river channel when we noticed a group of birds working the shoreline.

As we approached the shallow water, we could see flashes of silver along the shoreline, where walleye and white bass had forced a school of



TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES PHOTO
John Thelen of Rogers, Minn., is pictured with two walleyes taken while fishing an area he was drawn to by a large concentration of circling birds.

shiners into the shallows, corralling them and cutting off their escape route, forcing them to go airborne or onto the shore to avoid being gobbled up.

The birds were picking up the wounded shiners and those who'd in the confusion had jumped out of the water onto shore.

Again, we got within casting distance, flung our crankbaits shallow and proceeded to pull our two man limit of walleye as well as some huge white bass before the attack subsided.

I've also seen this happen below Gavin's Point Dam when the black-birds and gulls lined the waters edge, perched on the concrete apron along the fast water, as they waited for their next meal, to appear on the surface.

The shiners were being attacked by every imaginable species of fish in the river as on this trip and several

that followed, we caught walleye, sauger, white bass, crappie, rough fish and even a brown trout along the wall.

With our boat tied to the wall, I cast a silver number four Mepps spinners upstream, held my rod high and power cranked my reel, allowing the silver spinner to tumble downstream, resembling a shiner trying to escape, the hungry fish that were stacked up behind the rock rip-rap all along the wall, waiting for lunch to float by.

My partner, working from the back of the boat, cast a shiner colored floating Rapala down stream, slowly working it back to the boat along the concrete wall, enticing the fish tucked in along the wall.

Birds, just like all of God's creatures are opportunists and will take advantage of any situation in their favor. When a few birds, winging it over a body of water notice a disturbance on the surface, they zero in on

it, attracting every bird in the area.

When this happens, it's a sign there's a disturbance on the surface as hundreds if not thousands of baitfish are being forced to the surface by a school of game fish intent on having them for dinner.

It can happen anyplace, along a shoreline, next to a dam or in the middle of the lake and when it happens, it's an opportunity for anglers to clean up on the fish.

When you happen upon one of these areas where the birds are congregated, waiting for a wounded baitfish to float to the surface, allowing them to clean up on those damaged baitfish ignored by the baitfish. Don't worry about hat you've got tied on, throw what ever you have on as schools of game fish that have driven baitfish to the surface don't have time to look over a bait, they are in a feeding frenzy and will pounce on anything on or just below the surface.

Jigs and crankbaits work great, with color not being a factor as is the speed of the lure. You can throw any bait, any color fished at any speed as long as you're in the general area of the school.

Once you have a dish hooked, don't mess around, get the fish to the boat and unhooked as quickly as possible because these events may not last long, so keep pounding the water until the school moves off.

Don't give up once the fish have moved off, keep an eye out as the birds will be your eye in the sky and zero in on the school again once they've started working the surface.

Once you locate the birds and the fish, quietly move over to the area and start pounding the water, it will be one of the best bites you're ever going to encounter.

When fishing, we need to use everything in order to be successful and keeping an eye on the birds ; letting them lead you to the fish is another weapon anglers should use to help make your fishing trip more successful.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. Howey is the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series which can be seen in Yankton the series airs on channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 am. and on KTTM/KTTW-TV Foz, Sioux Falls at 6:30 am on Saturday. He and Simon Fuller are the hosts of the Outdoor Adventures radio program Monday-Saturday at 6:45 am on Classic Hits 106.3 and ESPN Sports Radio 1570. If you're looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com and like Outdoorsmen Adventures on Facebook.

N.D. Walleye Tournament Provides Anglers With New Twist

BY BRAD DOKKEN

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(Grand Forks, N.D.)

A walleye tournament that began Aug. 2 on North Dakota's Devils Lake includes an interesting twist for the professional anglers who'll be competing to bring the heaviest bag of fish to the scales.

That's because the tournament, a qualifying event on the Cabela's Masters Walleye Circuit, is limiting anglers to artificial baits; no natural, live or prepared baits are allowed.

According to Chad Maloy of Fargo, a longtime MWC competitor with fishing partner Don Denning of Fargo, the artificial-only rule will be a good test. Maloy says he's competed in fishing tournaments where he just pulled crankbaits, but switching to live bait always was an option.

Not so, on Devils Lake. The tournament is scheduled for Aug. 2 and Aug. 3, with Aug. 4 available in case bad weather

forces organizers to cancel either of the previous days. Grahams Island State Park is tournament headquarters.

"I'm kind of excited to see what happens," said Maloy, 44, a mortgage loan officer with Gate City Bank in Fargo. "Sometimes, when you're forced to do something, you do it, and it reinforces a good thing. Like trying broccoli for the first time — you might like it."

Using artificial bait or lures on Devils Lake is hardly revolutionary. Devils Lake has a well-established track record for producing walleyes on crankbaits, either pitched into shallow water or trolled deeper with lead-core line. And the wide range of soft plastic baits that have hit the market in recent years — Berkley Gulp! and Northland Tackle Mimic Minnows among them — have proven effective, as well.

No doubt, they all get put to the test this week.

Maloy said he and Denning fished an MWC tournament last

year on Lake Oahe near Pierre, S.D., where they trolled bottom bouncers with spinners and live crawlers on one rod and spinners with Berkley Gulp! "Killer Crawlers" on the other.

The artificial crawlers, he said, "outfished live bait 10 to 1."

Maloy said anglers who normally use leeches, minnows or nightcrawlers have to remember the live bait provides most of the movement that triggers fish to strike. Fishing with artificial baits, especially soft plastics, requires more effort from anglers.

"With artificial, you have to give the bait the action," he said. "That's the big thing. In Devils Lake, using a large, lively leech has been a deadly tactic slip-bobbering in the trees. You can't use real bait in the tournament, but if we get a nice ripple where the bobber is going up and down and lifting the jig up and down, you can get by with plastics, and those walleyes will scarf those up."

Maloy said the Devils Lake tournament is one of 10 on this year's MWC circuit, and each two-person team has to fish at least three events in hopes of qualifying for next year's championship, which is set for Oct. 8-11, 2014 on Devils Lake. Maloy and Denning fished a tournament in late May and early June on Lake Michigan, placing 41st out of 103 teams, and plan to fish Cass Lake — the final stop on this year's circuit — in mid-September.

Maloy says he expects it will take 45 pounds to win the Devils Lake tournament. Teams can weigh in five walleyes each day.

"My theory is the big fish are there," he said. "You just have to find them, and in the summer they might be more scattered. Some guys are going to find a good clump of fish, some are going to struggle, and a couple are going to get lucky and find big fish both days."

Maloy, who said he's fished the MWC with Denning for the

past five or six years, said they're hoping to weigh 20 pounds of fish a day and finish in the top 10. Given the caliber of competition, though, that won't be easy, he concedes. The circuit draws anglers from New York to Montana, but most are from the upper Midwest.

"We've come close but haven't won" an event, he said. "The anglers are phenomenal, and to win one of these is a pretty prestigious accomplishment. It takes a lot of hard work, but it also takes a little bit of luck to beat all of these excellent anglers."

"We really enjoy the circuit. It's a really good group of guys. ... They're competitors, but at the end of the day, everybody is congratulating each other."

Yankton Transit

is having a youth transportation meeting:
Will be held on
8/5, 7pm, at the
National Field
Archery Museum,
800 Archery Lane,
Yankton.
(605) 487-7634

New Option To Complete South Dakota Bowhunter Education

PIERRE — A new online bowhunter education course is now available to help South Dakotans improve their archery skills.

"This new, totally online option teaches safety in-the-field, bowhunting basics, shot placement and recovery techniques through easy-to-understand information, instructional videos and detailed illustrations," Jason Kool, hunter education administrator for the Game, Fish and Parks Department, said.

All archery big game li-

censees ages 11-15, all first-time archery big game licensees regardless of age and all archery elk licensees are required to possess bowhunter education certification prior to obtaining an archery license.

The program includes a field day, but attendance is not required.

"This new training opportunity meets the national and state bowhunter education program requirements and allows students to learn at their

own pace," said Kool.

This new online course is a partnership between GFP, the National Bowhunter Education Foundation and Kalkomey Enterprises allowing students to study for free, paying only \$30 when they pass the online course.

Students wanting to complete this new online South Dakota bowhunter education course can visit <http://www.bowhunter-ed.com/southdakota/>.

For those who are looking for a more personable approach to their completion of bowhunter education, the in-person classroom option is still available for free. Class listings can be found under the Outdoor Learning section on the Game, Fish and Parks website www.gfp.sd.gov.

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