

## OUTDOORS DIGEST

### Youth Activity Day Set For Aug. 23

SCOTLAND — A free Youth Activity Day will be held Saturday, Aug. 23, at the Scotland Trap Range, east side of town near the baseball fields. Check-in runs from 8 - 8:30 a.m. and the activities run from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Activities include: archery, trap shooting, .22 rifle, fishing, Wii Skii and duck calling.

The cost of this event is free, lunch is included and two guns will be given away. It goes for ages 8 and up but parents need to accompany their children in order to sign a waiver before your youth can participate.

### S.D. Spearfishing Rules & Regulations Reminder

PIERRE — Underwater spearfishing is a popular pursuit for many SCUBA divers in the Pierre and Ft. Pierre communities. The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) would like to remind spearfishing anglers and boaters of rules and regulations pertaining to diving on Lakes Oahe and Sharpe.

General rules that apply to diving and spearfishing:

- Divers must display a diver-down flag on a float or buoy and remain within 75' of that flag.

- Underwater spearfishing is not permitted within 100 yards of a designated swimming or water ski area, boat dock, power intake tube or spillway.

- Rough fish can be speared any time of day or night year-round in areas not posted or defined as no fishing zones.

- Game fish (except paddlefish and sturgeon):

- Can only be taken by spear from June 15 to March 15, with the exception of catfish; which can be speared year-round for noncommercial purposes.

- Can only be speared from sunrise to sunset.

- Daily and possession limits of each species are the same as and in combination with the hook and line limits.

- Individuals spearfishing shall not possess speared game fish in an area not open to the spearing of game fish.

- Rules specific to boating near diver-down flags:

- Boats may not operate using an internal combustion (gas powered) engine within 75' of a diver-down flag.

- Boats under the power of an electric motor may legally be operated within 75' of a diver-down flag.

- Rules specific to Lake Sharpe:

- Game fish can only be speared (with the exception of channel catfish and northern pike) from Big Bend Dam at Fort Thompson upstream to the downstream edge of the U.S. Highway 14 bridge between Pierre and Ft. Pierre. Underneath this bridge is closed to the spearing of game fish; similar to the out of bounds line on a sports field — step on the line and you are out of bounds.

- Rough fish, channel catfish and northern pike may be taken, in accordance with the general rules outlined above, from Big Bend Dam to Oahe Dam.

Divers on the Missouri River and reservoirs are also reminded to review pertinent federal rules and regulations that may govern where diving is allowed.

### Neb. Sets Early Teal Season In Entire State

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska will have an early teal duck season next month over the entire state.

The 2014 season dates are Sept. 6-14 in the High Plains zone — roughly the northern half of the state — and Sept. 6-21 in the Low Plains zone — the southern half.

The Nebraska Game and Park says the northern half of Nebraska previously had been closed to an early teal season. The commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will monitor hunters' attempt to shoot other species during this year's experimental season.

Hunters who shoot or attempt to shoot ducks other than teal will be subject to prosecution.

To view or download Game and Parks' 2014 Early Teal Guide, visit [OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org).

### Neb. G&P To Debut Outdoor Encounter

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will debut a state-of-the-art interactive outdoor experience - Outdoor Encounter - at the 2014 Nebraska State Fair. The Outdoor Encounter includes an aquarium, archery range and shooting gallery.

The Outdoor Encounter, housed in the new Nebraska Building, includes a 5,900-gallon aquarium stocked with more than 150 fish commonly found in Nebraska.

Scenic features include a waterfall, plunge pool, 150-foot meandering stream and mural modeled after the Niobrara River Valley. An indoor archery range and old-fashioned shooting gallery will offer fairgoers a chance to try shooting sports in a family-friendly setting. A 4,500-square-foot outdoor area includes a children's play area with donated playground equipment and climbing structures, play campsite, pollinator garden and seating areas where fair guests can relax. Game and Parks also will offer children's games, demonstrations and more. All activities are free.

The Nebraska State Fair built the Nebraska Building in 2014. Game and Parks received a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the major features, including the aquarium, waterfall and stream. Many outdoor features were donated.

The exhibit will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. each day of the Nebraska State Fair, with most activities running from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. There will be a ribbon cutting at the Nebraska Building on Aug. 22 at 10 a.m.

The Nebraska State Fair runs from Aug. 22-Sept. 1 in Grand Island. More info on the Outdoor Encounter exhibit is available at [OutdoorNebraska.org/StateFair](http://OutdoorNebraska.org/StateFair).

## Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

# It's Fall: The Bite Will Be On

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

It is that time again, where we are making the turn towards the fall, with the summer almost gone.

The time our kids are heading back to school, and as temperatures decrease, water temperatures will start to cool and our fishing will pick up.

With all of these things happening: you can bet it won't be long before the good fall fishing takes off.

As the water temperatures start to decline, wall species of fish will really start to feed heavily.

Because of this during the fall, you will want to switch to larger live bait.

In the fall, fish will be on a mission, trying to fatten up before the freeze up. For the larger predators, creek chubs and larger minnows seem to attract the larger fish, out producing the smaller baits.

In the rivers, you will find the walleye, sauger and smallmouth moving shallow to clean up any remaining baitfish or the crawfish that have survived the summer.

While those fish living in a lake, the bluegills, crappies, largemouth bass and pike will move into and along the edge of the weeds, picking off insects and of course each other.

Lake walleyes will spread out over the mud flats or be working the weeds looking for a late season snacks.

The time of the year that you



PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE

**Fall is the time of the year that all fish, including smallmouth bass will be feeding heavily stocking up for the cold hard winter which is just around the corner.**

should look for the greenest vegetation, you can find.

There are several reasons fish will move into green weed beds. One is because their food source, baitfish will have moved there, another is because this is where they will find the coolest temperatures because of the shade and the oxygen given off by the vegetation.

As anyone who has fished the weedy areas can tell you, theses areas can be a nightmare as weeds can eat tackle as fast as you tie it on.

If you are after bass, you will probably be probing thees weedy areas with some sort of weedless rig such as a Texas rig or some sort of jig and pig combination.

Fall bass can also be caught using slow rolling spinner baits ran over the top of the weeds and then letting them drop down into the pockets in the weeds or you can run a buzz bait over the top of the weeds.

With decreasing water water temperatures, fish, which are cold

blooded, will begin to slow down; you will need to do the same, slowing down the way you are fishing.

Those anglers fishing for panfish should work the pockets and along the edge of the weeds with small tube jigs or light livebait jigs.

To draw panfish out of the thicker cover they hide in, try slip bobbers with split shot and a small hook tipped with a smaller minnows or pieces of night crawlers cast along the weed edge.

The time off the year that walleye anglers will be making the change from night crawlers back to minnows. You will want to experiment a little bit with your baits, as not all walleyes change from worms to minnows at the same time or on a certain date.

Walleye anglers will have good luck using jigs tipped with larger minnows or creek chubs worked along the edge of the weeds and on the breaks along mud flats.

Pike fisherman, will be working the weeds and weed edge using a couple of excellent pike producing baits.

One of these is a spinnerbaits ran over the top or along the edge of the weeds which is a great fall bait for pike.

You will want to hold your rod high and speed crank the bait over the top of the weeds. When you come across a hole or pocket in the weeds, let your spinnerbait drop or helicopter down into the pocket and then hold your rod tip high, while cranking it back onto the top of the weeds.

The pause and slow drop of the spinnerbait will often tempt bass that are buried in or along the edge of these pockets.

Another is a spoon; especially weedless spoons ran along the weed edge or over the top of the weeds.

# Crossbows Ready To Make Entrance During Deer Season

BY PAUL A. SMITH

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Thwack!

The sound of a projectile striking a target isn't unusual at an archery club.

But this one was notable for its type and location. It was a bolt fired from a cross-bow. And it took place at Racine Instinctive Bowmen in Sturtevant.

The event, a sight-in held before the 2014 Wisconsin spring turkey season, was a red-letter day for RIB.

For the first time since the club was formed in 1952, it held a crossbow shoot.

Until this year, the equipment had been prohibited at RIB, where rules and philosophy long favored "traditional" archery gear such as long-bows and recurves without sights.

But a Wisconsin law signed in 2013 started a cascade of events in the state. Beginning this fall, all legal hunters in Wisconsin, regardless of age or physical ability, will be able to use a crossbow to hunt deer in a season concurrent to the archery deer season.

Individuals, hunting parties, clubs, businesses and even the state's hunting culture is in a time of flux and assessment.

Though the decisions are as varied as the number of hunters, the bottom line is clear: Beginning this year, crossbows will assume a higher profile in Wisconsin than ever.

"Might as well get on it before everyone else does," said Keith Elliot of Raymond,

an RIB member for 32 years. Elliot prefers to shoot a long-bow, but he is realistic about trends in archery and supported the club's decision to hold the crossbow shoot.

The Wisconsin law is part of a trend of states allowing greater crossbow use during deer hunting seasons.

The changes have been opposed by some in the archery community, including the Wisconsin Traditional Archers and at various times the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association.

Opponents have expressed concerns about potential shortening of the archery deer season as a result of increased deer kills by crossbow hunters as well as more hunters in the woods leading to a lower-quality hunting experience.

Opposition to crossbows has a familiar ring to it, according to many Wisconsin hunters who were around when compound bows became popular in the 1970s.

"I well remember people talking pretty foolish about how compounds were going to decimate the deer herd and ruin bowhunting," said Al Hofacker of Athelstane. "Of course that turned out to be false."

Hofacker, co-founder of Deer and Deer Hunting magazine, first bowhunted in 1969. He used a recurve in his first years, then bought a compound in 1975.

"You never hear those complaints about compounds these days, but the same arguments are trying to be used against crossbows," Hofacker said.

If experiences in other states are any guide, Wisconsin hunters will increasingly adopt crossbows for deer hunting in the coming years.

Michigan has allowed crossbow use during its archery deer season since 2009. The first year, 19 percent of hunters used a crossbow during the Michigan archery deer season. In 2011, it increased to 37 percent; in 2012, it was 43.7 percent; and in 2013, it was 49.5 percent.

Ohio has allowed crossbows for a four-month archery deer season since 1982. According to Ohio data, about 55 percent of licensed deer hunters use crossbows.

"I think with crossbows, we'll see more people hunting deer in September and October than we have in the past," Hofacker said. "Unless you're totally selfish, that's a positive."

The economic impact of Wisconsin's crossbow season is another positive, especially for archery shops.

Wade Jeske has owned Lena Swamp Archery in Oconto Falls since 2005. His June sales had typically been about half his July numbers each year. But this year, June beat his best July ever. The reason? Crossbows.

Jeske said his overall business is up about 40 percent this year. Most of his crossbow sales are to hunters older than the age of 50 who haven't archery hunted in several years, Jeske said, and are getting back into it because of the law change.

"Many of them tell me the crossbow is making it possible for them to hunt with

their grandchildren and children again," Jeske said.

Jeske said he expects crossbow sales to peak in the next couple years, then stabilize at a lower number.

Crossbows offer an advantage to hunters principally because they don't require drawing just before the shot, they are often fitted with magnified scopes and they can be shot on a rest.

But data show crossbows don't devastate deer herds. In Ohio, the success rates of deer hunters using vertical bows and crossbows is the same, 15 percent. And the state's deer herd grew as crossbows were increasingly used over the last three decades, said Mike Tonkovich, deer management administrator with the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

"Contrary to claims by anti-crossbow groups of herd decimation and severe restrictions on hunting opportunity and harvest, Ohio has never adjusted harvest regulations as a result of the crossbow," Tonkovich said.

"Modern firearms have, and will always account for the majority of the harvest and have the greatest impact on Ohio's deer population."

Tonkovich said his experience suggests crossbows may help retain and recruit new hunters, especially youth and women. And an Ohio deer hunter survey found that the crossbow is the preferred bow type of the state's senior hunters (66 years and older).

The range and performance of crossbows are often exaggerated, Jeske said. For most setups, he recommends crossbow users limit shots to less than 40 yards.

Jeske said anyone who buys a crossbow should consider: size and fit of the bow; cocking mechanism; scope or sights; safety considerations of shooting and handling a crossbow; case; and warranty. He recommends all new crossbow owners shoot and sight-in the equipment before they leave the store.

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