

OUTDOORS DIGEST

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Several S.D. Hunting Seasons Close In January

PIERRE — As South Dakota hunters turn the calendar to 2013, they will find several hunting seasons still open for at least a few days in January.

The pheasant hunting season comes to a conclusion on Sunday, Jan. 6. In addition, hunting seasons for grouse, prairie chicken, partridge and quail also close on Jan. 6.

The extended "antlerless tags only" season for both East River and West River deer hunting opens on Dec. 29 and closes on Jan. 6. "Any Deer" tags do not convert to "antlerless tags" and are not valid during these dates.

The Archery, Muzzleloader and Youth deer seasons all close on Jan. 15. For both Archery Deer and Muzzleloader Deer, "any deer" tags do convert to "antlerless only" tags and are valid from Jan. 1-15. The Fall Turkey hunting season will close on Jan. 31.

Duck hunting on the High Plains unit remains open until Jan. 17.

Goose hunting opportunities remain available after the end of January as Unit 2 of the Canada Goose hunting season is open through Feb. 15. Both cottontail rabbit and tree squirrel hunting are open through Feb. 28.

Only Antlerless Tags Valid For Deer Season Extension

PIERRE — Deer hunters who have unfilled antlerless deer tags for the East and West River Deer Seasons will have nine additional days available to harvest antlerless deer beginning Dec. 29 and ending on Jan. 6.

The Game, Fish and Parks Department is reminding hunters that this provision is a change from past years when unfilled "any deer" tags converted to "antlerless only" and were valid. For the 2012 season extension, "any deer" tags are not valid.

The changes were made as part of deer herd management objectives to direct additional antlerless harvest in the areas of the state that need it most while curtailing the doe harvest in areas where it is not needed. Antlerless tags are valid only in the unit for which they were originally issued.

Experience The Mickelson Trail On Snowshoes

PIERRE — Winter is a beautiful time to explore the Black Hills, and what better way to snowshoeing on the George S. Mickelson Trail?

The trail will host three snowshoe hikes this winter. Hikes will be held at 1 p.m. MST on Jan. 5 and Jan. 19. Both will start at the Englewood Trailhead. A snowshoe hike will also be held at 1 p.m. on Feb. 2, with the location yet to be determined. Call the Black Hills Trails Office at 605-584-3896 for more information and the location of that hike.

Staff will teach basic snowshoeing skills while leading a nature walk along the trail.

There is no cost for the hikes, although a trail pass is required. Both day and annual trail passes will be available for purchase before the hikes begin. Participants should dress appropriately for the weather.

Enjoy Winterfest At Ponca SP On Dec. 29

LINCOLN, Neb. — Spend a winter day at scenic Ponca State Park on Dec. 29 and enjoy indoor and outdoor activities for the entire family. Winterfest is an all-day event designed to allow visitors to rekindle wintertime family traditions.

Indoor activities include art display, crafts, wine and cheese tasting, soup supper, and entertainment. Outdoor activities include sledding (if weather permits), fruitcake flinging contest, children's kindling hunt, Yule Log Quest, bonfire and hayrack rides.

The Yule Log Quest is a team competition to locate the log within the park. Teams will complete tasks to earn clues to find the log. The kindling found in the children's contest will be used to light the log for the bonfire.

A park entry permit is required for each vehicle entering the park.

For more information, call the park at 402-755-2284.

First Day Hike At Ponca SP

LINCOLN, Neb. — Start 2013 off on the right foot (then the left) with a First Day Hike at Ponca State Park. Individuals and families are welcome to take part in unguided hikes from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 1. The event offers an opportunity to begin the New Year connecting with the outdoors and getting great exercise with a trek through Ponca State Park's natural and scenic places.

Participants may check-in at the park's Missouri National Recreational River Resource and Education Center for trail information and then return after their hike for hot cider and cookies.

The First Day Hike program is part of a national effort by America's State Parks to get people outdoors and into state parks. There are 646 First Day Hikes scheduled across the country, and people from all 50 states are expected to join the effort to celebrate the New Year with a hike in a state park.

Iowa Officials Offer Ice Advice For Anglers

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Iowa officials are reminding ice fishing enthusiasts to be careful with newly developed ice formed during a major snowstorm last week.

The state Department of Natural Resources says a minimum of 4 inches of quality ice is recommended for ice fishing. At least 5 inches of ice is recommended for snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles.

DNR officials also recommend using small baits and a light line for catching finicky fish.

The snowstorm dumped several inches of snow around the state last week.

As we made our way down into the park, the ghostly forms of several deer could be seen moving across the golf course, silently slipping into the heavily wooded draws leading into the bluffs, giving all hope they might eventually pass by the blind we would soon be occupying.

Once arriving at the drop off point, our group made our way along the bluffs at the edge of the crop ground as we headed towards the draw where our blind was set up. I'd be bringing up the rear, a few yards behind Tyler Wulf's, the Assistant Ponca State Park Superintendent, whose was illuminating our way, with our youth hunter, Turner Korth (Hartington, Neb.) would be out n front.

Our team was hunting at Nebraska's Ponca State Park, a picturesque 1,400 acre park located in the heavily forested rolling hills, which lay along the banks of the Missouri River. The park, a short 2 miles north of Ponca in northeastern Nebraska, is one of the Nebraska Park systems most picturesque parks and the home of the annual Missouri River Outdoor Expo.

Turner was one of the lucky eight young hunters, five boys and three girls who'd recently completed their Hunters Safety Course and been invited to participate in this, the second annual Youth Muzzleloader Hunt, the only gun hunt allowed in the park.

The event, was developed by a group of Nebraska Game & Parks Conservation Officers and Ponca State Park personnel, to help introduce youth to the sport of hunting.

This year event kicked off late Friday afternoon with the young hunters meeting their mentors and making preparation for the weekend hunt. Helping to make this a successful hunt were sponsor's from across eastern Nebraska who came through donating food, gear for the eight hunters, including hunter's orange clothing and the two muzzleloaders donated to be some of the prizes for drawings on Saturday evening. The two muzzleloaders were furnished by the members of the Norfolk Elkhorn Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited, while the meals and the lodging, in the parks mini-lodge cabins were provided by the crew of Ponca State Park.

Following breakfast Saturday morning, a brief safety meeting was held with the kids reviewing what they studied in their Hunter's Safety Course, after which, the hunters and mentors heading to the parks Eric Wiebe Shooting Range, spending time learning how to safely handle, load, and accurately shoot the muzzleloaders they'd be using on the hunt. It took the kids only a couple of shots before they were dead on, shooting like pros, hitting the targets set out as far as 100 yards.

Later that afternoon, hunters and mentors were dropped off near their hunting area, where they'd make their way into their hunting locations, to patiently wait for a deer to come within shooting distance of their blinds.



Our team made our way out to our Double Bull Blind, strategically placed on the high ground overlooking a draw where several well traveled deer trails converged. The numerous trails around the blind meandered on down towards the crop ground lying along the Missouri River, which created the border between South Dakota and Nebraska.

Getting situated in the blind, we settled down, waiting for that golden hour, just prior to dark when wildlife begins to move from their bedding area out to feed.

Shortly after arriving, Tyler spotted some movement behind us, working it's way down the hill, not the deer we were looking for, but a dozen long bearded Tom turkey's picking their way from the ridge into the bottom, back up the adjacent ridge, before disappearing into the heavily wooded cover to the east.

As the darkness surrounded us, our first day of hunting came to an end as we quietly made our way from the blind, back to our pickup area, heading back to hunt headquarters at the Missouri River National Recreational River Resource and Education Center for the evening meal and other activities.

Weather reports indicated temperatures would be dropping with heavy wins arriving the following morning, we prepared for the worst, hoping some of the deer might spend a little extra time on the river bottom feeding before heading back into the deep woods to bed and wait out the cold weather.

After being dropped off the following morning, we were looking forward to a good hunt as a mid morning deer drive through the park was scheduled around 9:00, upping the odds that deer would be moving around giving our young hunters shooting opportunities.

Our first deer we spotted, came hard from the southwest, moving quickly through the heavy woods off to our right, not giving Turner an opportunity for a clear shot. Another came from the south, passing shortly before charging off to the east, not long enough for our young hunter to get a bead on it, soon several others charged through the trees on the other side of a dry dam to our south, not

ABOVE: Pictured are the mentors and five boys and three girls that took part in this year's Ponca State Park Youth Muzzleloading weekend. (PHOTO: Gary Howey)

RIGHT: Luc Bloomquist of McLean, Neb. (left) and mentor Conservation officer Dan Robert of Fremont, Neb. are pictured with the buck Luc took during the muzzleloading hunt at Ponca State Park. (PHOTO: Larry Myhre)



hesitating, moving quickly back into the heavy cover.

I would be keeping an eye on the trail behind us, while Tyler kept watched the trails off to the southwest, then, Turner moved slowly to his left in the direction of a small buck he'd spotted coming off the ridge, as it moved on down the trail. Turner, moved silently, ever so slowly, like a well seasoned pro, cautiously moving his muzzleloader to the left, getting into position for the shot if the buck paused long enough for a shot.

As he lined up the buck in the scope, it spooked, charged down the trail, disappearing out of sight.

With that, our hunt ended and as we made our way from the blind, back down the trail we talked about the hunt, and since no shots were heard, wondered if any of the other hunters had seen any deer.

Upon returning to the center, we along with several other hunters and mentors had lunch, talking about their hunts when word came that one of the young hunters, Luc Bloomquist (McLean, Neb.) had taken a nice doe.

He and his mentor Conservation Officer Dan Roberts (Fremont, Neb.) were at the shed, waiting for the rest of the kids to come down for photos and to see a

demonstration on how to clean a deer as this hunt wasn't just about hunting, it was the whole package, safety, how to, hunting, right on down to all needed to be done after a deer is down.

Not all of the young hunters may have ended with filled tags, which happens all to often when it comes to hunting, but filling the permit isn't what hunting is all about, yes, filling a permit can be a big part of it, but there's a lot more to it than that.

As enjoying the experience of being in the woods, seeing things you wouldn't see back home, while spending time with good people, meeting some kids who could end up becoming good friends and enjoying one of Nebraska's most beautiful parks all make this weekend one that will be remembered for years to come!.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide, the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series which can be seen on Fox affiliates in the upper Midwest. He and Simon Fuller are the hosts of the Outdoor Adventures radio program on Classic Hits 106.3 and ESPN Sports Radio 1570. If you're looking for more outdoor information, it can be found at www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Lancer Men Win At Johnson & Wales; MMC Women Fall In Florida

DENVER, Colo. — Mount Marty College tied a season high for three-pointers with nine in a 73-63 men's basketball win over Johnson & Wales on Friday night in Denver, Colo.

Joe Hieb led four Lancers in double figures with 16 points on 5-of-8 from three-point range, while Jose Pena-Benjamin added 15 points and seven rebounds.

Scott Odekirk chipped in with 11 points and eight rebounds, while Tyler Payer drained three 3's off the bench for the Lancers (5-8).

Johnson & Wales got within 68-62 on a three-pointer with 2:45 remaining, but Mount Marty's defense held tough.

J.P. Mile led Johnson & Wales with 18 points and seven rebounds off the bench.

Mount Marty stays in Colorado

for a matchup today (Saturday) with Sterling College.

MOUNT MARTY (5-8)
Saladin Smith 1-4 2-2 4; Scott Odekirk 4-6 3-4 11; Joe Hieb 5-11 1-2 16; Austin Harms 2-5 1-2 5; Jose Pena-Benjamin 4-8 7-8 15; Chris Richardson 0-1 0-0 0; Tyler Payer 3-4 0-0 9; T.J. Johnson 2-5 0-0 4; Jeff Larsen 1-2 2-3 4; Scott Sellers 1-3 0-0 3; Anthony Stransky 0-0 0-0 0; Chay Fischer 1-1 0-0 2; Alex Irvine 0-0 0-0 0. TOTALS 24-50 16-21 73.

JOHNSON & WALES (2-12)
Cedric Ennis 3-8 4-4 10; Chris O'Neal 6-12 0-0 12; Corey Puckett 1-4 2-3 5; Aaron Lampkin 2-6 3-4 8; Cody Demer 3-6 0-0 8; Isiah Mendoza-Forsyth 0-0 0-0 0; Taiyo Robertson 0-1 0-0 0; Dustin Jenkins 0-0 0-0 0; Kahler Grandbouché 1-3 0-0 2; J.P. Mile 6-12 4-5 18; Tyler Wright 0-0 0-0 0. TOTALS 22-52 13-16 63.

Halftime: MMC 34-21. Three-Pointers: MMC 9-18 (Hieb 5-8, Payer 3-3, Seller 1-2, Smith 0-1, Pena-Benjamin 0-1, Richardson 0-1, Johnson 0-2), J&W 6-15 (Mile 2-3, Demer 2-4, Puckett 1-2, Lampkin 1-3, Ennis 0-1, O'Neal 0-1, Robertson 0-1). Rebounds: MMC 27 (Odekirk 8), J&W 26 (Demer 7, Mile 7). Assists: J&W 17 (O'Neal 4, Puckett 4), MMC 12 (Harms 3). Turnovers: J&W 8, MMC 7. Personal Fouls: J&W 19, MMC 16. Fouled Out: Smith, Puckett, Grandbouché.

Women: Webber Int. 74, Mount Marty 67

BABSON PARK, Fla. — Webber International, an NAIA school in Florida, scored the

game's final 14 points to rally past Mount Marty College 74-67 in women's basketball action Friday afternoon in Babson Park, Fla.

Taylor Forsch scored a game-high 23 points thanks to seven three-pointers for the Lancers (8-6), who led by as many as 11 points in the second half.

Forsch has now hit 17 three-pointers over the last three games

Mount Marty, which drained 10 three-pointers in the game and hit 23-of-30 free throws, led 62-52 with 6:33 to play on a Forsch three-pointer.

The hometown Warriors, however, got to within 66-60 with 3:23 left. Mount Marty got a free throw, but Webber International closed on a 14-0 run in the final 2:33 to pull away.

Alexa Berg added 13 points and April Winne had 12 points for MMC, while Brittany Little had six points and seven rebounds.

Jasmine Singleton and Yesenia Lora had 17 points apiece for Webber International (3-6).

Mount Marty will face Emmanuel College of Georgia today (Saturday) at 2 p.m. Central.

MOUNT MARTY (8-6)
Taylor Forsch 7-15 2-6 23; Alexa Berg 5-11 1-1 13; April Winne 2-7 7-8 12; Allison De Kam 1-3 5-7 7; Brittany Little 1-5 4-4 6; Alyssa Whetham 0-1 2-2 2; Holly Hegge 1-3 0-0 2; Raquel Sutura 0-1 2-2 2; Kelli Norrid 0-1 0-0 0; Hannah Youngberg 0-0 0-0 0. TOTALS 17-47 23-30 67.

WEBBER INTERNATIONAL (3-6)
Jasmine Singleton 8-15 0-0 17; Yesenia Lora 8-14 1-4 17; Jasmine Rodriguez 4-14 6-7 14; Sarah Oleonardo 2-8 0-0 5; Al-ishia Khan 0-3 1-3 1; Samantha Harvey 3-7 0-0 7; Erin Henry 2-5 0-0 6; Kala Alicia 1-4 0-0 3; Shambirika Tomlin 0-1 2-2 2; Kristin Throckmorton 1-3 0-0 2; Jakira Robinson 0-3 0-0 0. TOTALS 39-77 10-16 74.

Halftime: MMC 33-29. Three-Pointers: MMC 10-28 (Forsch

7-11, Berg 2-8, Winne 1-4, De Kam 0-1, Little 0-1, Whetham 0-1, Hegge 0-1, Norrid 0-1); WEB 6-21 (Henry 2-3, Alicia 1-3, Harvey 1-3, Singleton 1-4, Oleonardo 1-5, Lora 0-1, Khan 0-1, Robinson 0-1). Rebounds: WEB 37 (Rodriguez 9), MMC 32 (Little 7). Assists: WEB 12 (Henry 3), MMC 11 (Berg 4, De Kam 4). Steals: WEB 14 (Singleton 5), MMC 4 (4 with 1). Turnovers: MMC 23, WEB 11. Personal Fouls: WEB 21, MMC 18. Fouled Out: None.

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