

OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

Interesting Facts About The Antlered Kind

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

No matter what state you're in, more than likely you'll see deer, especially during the Rut when they're mating which in our area is around the middle of November or this time of the year when deer herds yard up where they congregate near their feed source.

Because of the huge deer population, there are several seasons, giving hunters numerous opportunities to tag a deer, which helps to control the excess deer numbers.



Gary Howey

In Nebraska, those hunters with the Landowner Youth or Season Choice deer seasons will have the opportunity to hunt until January 15.

In South Dakota, East and West River hunters who didn't fill their "any deer" and "any whitetail antlerless tag as well as all unsold tags will be changed to antlerless tags. This season will re-open running from Dec 26 - Jan 3, 2010.

Other South Dakota deer seasons that will remain open through January 31st include: the Archery, Muzzleloader and the Youth season.

Here's some information on deer that you might find interesting and if you ever get on the TV game show "Jeopardy," it might make you a few "bucks."

- Deer have existed for 20 million years and have changed very little over the last million years.

- In 1832 deer were given their scientific name "Odocoileus virginianus, Odocoileus is the Greek word meaning hollow tooth with the later part of the name, Virginianus coming from the fact that it was named in the state of Virginia.

- They are amazing creatures and very adaptable, they are native to Canada, Mexico and forty-nine of our fifty states.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Deer have extraordinary senses and can detect a hunter hundreds of yards away.

There are no deer native to the state of Hawaii. The deer found on the Hawaiian Islands were introduced into that area.

- There are 30 sub-species of deer in North America and an additional 10 sub-species found in South America.

- In 1900 the estimated total number of deer in North America was 500,000 animals the estimated population today is 20 to 30 million.

- They have the ability to run in excess of 35 miles per hour; can leap over fences eight feet tall and can cover up to 30 feet in a horizontal leap.

- In the wild, deer can live as long as 11 years with deer in captivity living as long as 20 years.

- Deer are strong swimmers as the layer of hollow hair acts as a life preserver keeping the buoyant. The hollow hair actually serves several purposes with the most important being, providing insulation during the winter months.

- Just like humans, deer have a set of "baby teeth" that fall out and are replaced by permanent teeth with their permanent teeth in place by the time the deer is 2-1/2 years old.

- There are several myths about deer, including that a bucks age can be determined by the number of points in its rack when in fact, the way biologists determine the age of the deer is by examining the deer's teeth.

- Another is that deer use their antlers during the winter to dig for food under the snow, which is false as bucks shed their racks in January. They use them as a weapon when dueling with other males during the mating season.

- Rack size depends on several factors, including age, nutrition and genetics. Generally, the larger more massive racks are found on middle age deer (4-6 years old)

and will reduce in size as deer get old age.

- When deer grow their antlers or rack, they are covered with "velvet," a soft, fuzzy tissue. This velvet is the only regenerating skin found in mammals. It's the fastest growing tissue in mammals with some antler growth being measured at one inch of growth during a 24-hour period.

- Deer, elk, caribou and moose are all members of the Cervidae family, they like cows are ruminants, swallowing food that is later brought back up to chew, which releases more nutrients.

- Deer can eat almost any type of vegetation and are not affected by eating some pretty tough and nasty stuff including poison ivy.

- Under good conditions an average adult deer can consume as much as 5 to 9 pounds.

- A deer's senses are uncanny as they have extraordinary sight, hearing and smell.

- Does will normally have one fawn the first year they breed and after that twins are the norm.

- The spots on a fawn are a form of camouflage, this along with the ability to lie motionless, not moving help them to avoid detection from predators.

- For those of us still willing to brave the cold and often time 6-foot snowdrifts to pursue deer, we still have a little time to fill the tag and our freezers.

- For those of you who'd rather not go out, get caught up on those honey does so when it comes time to get out and hunt spring goose or turkey or to hit the water in pursuit of your favorite fish you'll be way ahead so that you'll have all the time you need to enjoy the great outdoors.

Have a Happy New Year!

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former hunting and fishing guide and the producer of the award winning *Outdoorsmen Adventures* television series that can be seen each week throughout the upper Midwest. For more information on the outdoors, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Fishing In The Ice Truly Is Nice For This Wisconsin Family

BY PAUL SMITH

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EAGLE RIVER, Wis. — The Christmas express has landed in the North Woods. Not Santa and his reindeer, but close.

Give Roy Kalmerton or son Patrick a red outfit and white beard, and you'd have a ringer for the fabled gift giver.

But today the Kalmertons are decked out in something a little more practical — black, silver and yellow insulated, waterproof coveralls.

They are pulling sleighs, but the horsepower is provided by a pair of ATVs.

And the presents, well, most are heavy on a fishing theme; the rest are courtesy of Mother Nature.

That suits me and the rest of the assembled crew just fine.

Not exactly elves, the other six of us, but we do go to work: Neatly stored tip-ups are pulled out of buckets and jigging rods are unloaded from cases.

A power auger rumbles to life and in short order the lake's 6-inch crystal lid is perforated with an array of holes.

"OK, first one to 25," says Patrick Kalmerton of Howards Grove, dropping a small ice jig down a hole and throwing out a challenge. "Who's in?"

If there were any doubts, the Wisconsin winter is officially "on."

Not only are most of the lakes around Eagle River covered with 4 to 6 inches of ice, the temperatures are in the mid-teens and the solstice is at hand.

The first hard water angling trip of the year sealed the seasonal proclamation.

This particular North Woods experience has a distinct Sheboygan County flavor.

In addition to the Kalmertons (60-year-old Roy and 29-year-old Patrick), there was Mike Laack, 51, and Matt Schuette, 30, all of Howards Grove; Mike Scharo, 32, and Greg Schoemer, 20, both of Sheboygan; and Shannon Watzka, 40, of Elkhart Lake.

The Kalmertons operate Wolf Pack Adventures, a fishing and hunting guide service. This trip is a holiday shake-out cruise.

In winter, the Kalmertons base their operations wherever there is good ice and the fish are biting.

Half of that equation logically brings them north in December.

"I've been fishing up here since my boys were knee-high to a grasshopper," says Roy Kalmerton, noting the family has a cabin in the area. "It helps to get experience on lots of lakes and at different times."

Ice covered all the lakes we visited in Vilas County.

"Early ice can bring some of your best action," says Patrick Kalmerton, checking water depth with a portable, battery-powered graph. "But you still have to fish



PAULA A. SMITH/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL/MCT

ABOVE: Patrick Kalmerton, front, and his father Roy Kalmerton, both of Howards Grove, fish on a lake near Eagle River, Wis. on Dec. 20. BELOW: Patrick Kalmerton lands a walleye.

smart, including making sure the ice is safe."

Kalmerton diligently checked ice conditions at each lake we tried by walking and poking holes with a spud.

Modern ice fishing technology not only helps anglers stay more comfortable but it allows greatly increased mobility.

Some refer to it as "ice trolling."

"If we're not catching fish, we're moving, simple as that," says Kalmerton.

Over three days, the crew tried six lakes, including a couple of small remote lakes and the big waters of Lac Vieux Desert and North Twin.

The ice and snow conditions varied widely. Vieux Desert, dumped on by more lake effect snow than the others, was covered with a slushy mix that made travel more difficult.

But by targeting deep weed edges and flats in 10 to 25 feet of water, we found action on all the lakes.

After a weed edge was located in about 10 feet of water, we covered water on its deep edge and adjacent flats and drop-offs.

Tip-ups were set with a variety of minnows, including 5-inch suckers and smaller shiners, to within a couple feet of the bottom. The braided main lines were tipped with fluorocarbon leaders and tiny (size 10 to 14) treble hooks.

And we jigged with spoons and small

jigs, tipped either with plastics, wax worms, spikes or minnows, while we watched for flags.

We watched the skies daily for the movement of purple snow clouds to the north. When the northwest wind picked up, the lake-effect — as in Lake Superior — snow wasn't far behind.

Thanks to the cold air, the flakes that fell were delightfully light and fluffy.

It did impair our vision at times.

"It's not the kind of flag you just watch wave in the breeze, Mike," says Patrick Kalmerton, feigning disgust with Scharo for not getting on a tip-up sooner.

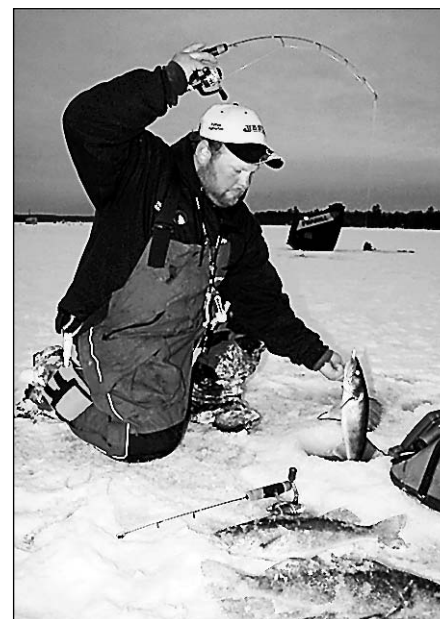
Schoemer and I trotted over to the flag and found the line pulled out at an angle but unmoving. After watching it for another few seconds, I picked it up and set the hook.

A solid force pulled back, but after a 90-second tug-of-war an 18-inch walleye was in hand.

"If you come on the ice for quiet, you need to pick your partners carefully," retorts Scharo. "At least he isn't doing his lcky Shuffle anymore. No one should have to watch that man dance."

We landed fish as we traded bars. The best yellow perch action came on ice jigs tipped with red spikes and a thin plastic tail fished right on the bottom.

The best walleye action came in the 30 minutes before dark on sucker minnows



fished about 2 feet above bottom in 18 to 20 feet of water.

And we caught several northern pike each day, up to 34 inches in length, on shiners or suckers fished at a variety of depths.

Each day resulted in a mess of fish for the crew to clean and some memorable dinners.

Thanks, Santa.

OUTDOOR REPORT

Fishing Regulations Changed For New Year

PIERRE — Anglers hitting the ice on Jan. 1 should be aware of several changes to bass and walleye regulations at some popular South Dakota fishing waters.

"Our goal is to keep South Dakota fishing regulations as simple as possible without sacrificing the quality of our fisheries," said Game, Fish and Parks Department Fisheries Program Administrator Geno Adams. "These changes will help accomplish that goal."

Anglers are encouraged to check the 2010 Fishing Handbook for all current regulations. The handbook is available from retail license agents, GFP offices, and in PDF format on the department's Web site: www.sdgifp.info

Notable changes include removal of the 14-inch, minimum-length limit for walleyes from Waubay Lake and Lake Kampeska, with the daily limit on Waubay Lake increasing from two walleyes per day to four. Numerous lakes — including Lakes Mitchell, Enemy Swim, Pickrel, Bitter, Roy, Shadell, Angostura, and Poinsett — will now have a 15-inch minimum walleye length limit with a four-fish daily limit and eight-fish possession limit.

On some lakes, anglers will now be able to harvest up to five largemouth and smallmouth bass (in combination) under 14 inches in length; and at most lakes, anglers can keep one bass 18 inches or longer as part of daily limits. Lakes changing to these regulations include Waubay, Roy, Clear, Pickrel and Enemy Swim.

Walleye and bass regulations on many other South Dakota lakes have also changed.

Prior to fishing in 2010, anglers are encouraged to review the 2010 Fishing Handbook and note where regulations have changed. Anglers can also contact local GFP offices for answers to questions about the regulations.

GFP Continues Evaluation Of Walk-In Areas

PIERRE — The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department has been conducting an evaluation of Walk-In Areas to determine how hunters are using those areas and the effectiveness of the program.

Walk-In Areas are private lands leased by GFP for public hunting opportunities. Currently, more than one million acres are enrolled in the hunting program.

GFP began evaluating 91 Walk-In Areas along 10 different routes taken by GFP personnel on random schedules during the past hunting season. Survey cards were placed on windshields of parked vehicles on survey routes, and hunters were asked to complete the cards and drop them in the mail.

Five of the survey routes will end Jan. 3. Surveying on the remaining five routes will conclude at the end of January. Hunters who have received cards and have not already returned them are encouraged to send them in immediately so the data can be included.

A second phase of the study will involve a general survey of the entire Walk-In Areas Program to determine hunters' use of it and their evaluation of the program. An e-mail invitation to complete the online survey will be sent to a random sample of hunters on Jan. 3, and a mail survey will be sent to non-respondents at month's end. Hunters are encouraged to complete the surveys on the use and value of the Walk-In Areas Program.

Neb. Volunteer Youth Fishing Instructors Will Be Certified

LINCOLN, Neb. — Adults may be certified as volunteer youth fishing instructors for the Youth Fishing Program. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will have free training on Feb. 6 from 10 a.m.-noon at Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium.

The certified instructors will learn how to put on fishing programs, derbies and club activities for children and families. The aquarium is at 21502 W. Nebraska Highway 31, Gretna. Pre-registration is required for any adult.

Visit OutdoorNebraska.org to learn more about the Youth Fishing Program. Contact Andrea Faas at (402) 332-3901 or andrea.faas@nebraska.gov to register.

DO YOU HAVE A FISHING/HUNTING PHOTO?

Photos of your catch or kill may be e-mailed to the *Press & Dakotan* for publication in the Saturday Trophy Spotlight. Along with the photo, please include the name of the hunter, as well as the location and date of the catch or kill. Photos may also be dropped off to the *Press & Dakotan* at 319 Walnut in downtown Yankton. Send the info to jere-my.hoec@yankton.net

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