

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

The Big Stone Perch Bite

Two Mountain Lions Harvested In Neb.

LINCOLN, Neb. — Two mountain lions were harvested on Jan. 2 during Nebraska's first regulated hunting season. Both hunters harvested male mountain lions.

A male lion weighing 103 pounds was harvested in Sioux County and a male lion weighing 138 pounds was harvested in Dawes County.

The hunt took place in the Pine Ridge Unit of northwest Nebraska. Season 1 ended with the harvest of two lions. The state's inaugural season opened Jan. 1. Season 2 in the Pine Ridge Unit will open on Feb. 15. For more information about mountain lions in Nebraska, visit the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's mountain lion web page at OutdoorNebraska.org.

Discover Ice Fishing At Mahoney SP On Jan. 11

LINCOLN, Neb. — Learn the basics of ice fishing or pick up a few new tips on Saturday, Jan. 11 at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will host Discover Ice Fishing from 1-4 p.m. at the park's CenturyLink Pond. Families and ice anglers of all skill levels will receive guidance on techniques, equipment, bait and safety. Hot cocoa will be served.

A park entry permit is required. All fishing regulations apply. Loaner equipment will be available but limited, so participants are encouraged to bring their own equipment.

The event is free, but participants must register by Jan. 9. To register, email victoria.mullins@nebraska.gov or call Larry Pape at 402-471-5447.

Nebraska G&P: No Boating-Related Deaths In 2013

LINCOLN, Neb. — There were no boating-related deaths in Nebraska in 2013. The state had not gone without at least one fatality in a year since it began tracking boating accidents in 1965, according to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

The number of reported boating accidents also decreased, from 44 in 2012 to 31 in 2013.

"That's what diligent law enforcement, coupled by expanded, excellent boating safety education, can do," said Herb Angell, Nebraska's boating law administrator.

The state has averaged five boating-related deaths a year since 1965. There were eight fatalities in 2012.

The state certified 2,410 students in 169 boater safety classes in 2013. To find a boater safety course or more information on boating in Nebraska, visit BoatSafeNebraska.org.

Spring Turkey Permits Available Jan. 13

LINCOLN, Neb. — Spring turkey hunting permits for 2014 will be available from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission starting at 1 p.m. Central Time on Jan. 13.

Each spring turkey permit allows a hunter to take one male or bearded female turkey with bow and arrow in the archery season or with a shotgun in the shotgun season. A person may purchase up to three spring turkey permits.

Archery season for youth and adults opens March 25. Shotgun season opens April 5 for youth and April 12 for adults. All seasons close May 31.

For more information on turkey hunting, check out the 2014 Turkey Guide. Purchase permits at OutdoorNebraska.org.

Neb. G&P To Offer Ice-Fishing Tips

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — New and experienced ice anglers can hone their skills in January at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will host a "Discover Ice Fishing" event on Jan. 11 at the park's CenturyLink Pond from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Families and anglers will receive guidance on techniques, equipment, bait and safety. Hot cocoa will be served.

A park entry permit is required for the free event.

Participants must register by Jan. 9. To register, email victoria.mullins@nebraska.gov or call Larry Pape at 402-471-5447.

Neb. G&P Seeks Hunting Gear Donations

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is accepting donations of new and used hunting gear and clothing.

The donations will go to the commission's mentored youth hunting program. Organizers say many youths who participate don't have access to appropriate clothing and gear. The commission is requesting camouflaged and blaze orange hunting gear.

The commission says it will accept insulated bibs, parkas and insulated coats, hooded sweatshirts, insulated boots, shooting sticks, game calls, gloves, facemasks and new wool socks, among other items. Donate items should be clean and in good, working condition.

Game and Parks cannot accept tree stands, firearms or ammunition.

Donations can be dropped off weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Game and Parks offices in Kearney, Lincoln and North Platte.

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

As I peered down into the hole of our Ice Castle Ice House, the clarity of the water amazed me. We were on the south end of Big Stone Lake over ten foot of water and I was able to see my 1/16th ounce lure and the remaining vegetation lying on the bottom.

I looked away for a minute, checking to see how my fishing partners were doing, looking back, I glanced down at my Vexilar locator, when it suddenly lit up like a Christmas tree.

Peering back down into the water, I could see what was happening, as my lure was now surrounded by a school of perch.

I twitched the rod tip, once, then twice, gaining the attention of several fish. Raising the lure slightly, then letting it come to rest was all it took and the bite was on as a chunky perch grabbed the lure, allowing me to bring the first of many perch up into the house.

We were on Big Stone Lake, a twenty-six mile long body of water that forms the south Dakota-Minnesota border between Big Stone City, S.D. and Ortonville, Minn. The lake, long and narrow has 12,610 surface acres of water where there are two state parks with twelve public access points.

Since I was born and raised in northeastern South Dakota, I knew Big Stone as a walleye lake, which had a few perch. All that changed three years ago, with the perch population coming on, exploding with huge numbers of these fish now found throughout the lake.

The perch bite on the lake goes on throughout most of the year on the lake, beginning the first part of July and continues through the winter. This along with the early walleye bite on the lake makes Big Stone a four-season destination for those of us who enjoy the outdoors.

When Artie Arndt, Arties' Bait Shop in Ortonville offered to have us up, it did not take Team Outdoorsmen Adventures Larry Myhre (Sioux City, Iowa) and I to decide as we packed our gear and headed north.

Artie's, located right in Ortonville knows where the bite is at, has everything the angler could need, Vexilar locators, Jiffy ice augers, rods, reels, as well as all brands of tackle and bait.

We would be on the ice with Artie and Eric Brandreit, Big Stone City, fishing out of one of Artie's rental Ice Castle Ice Houses and be headquartered out of the Rustling Elms Resort



Gary HOWEY



PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE

Artie Arndt, of Artie's Bait and Tackle (Ortonville, Minn.) is pictured with one of the many perch caught on Big Stone while filming with Outdoorsmen Adventures Television.

in their rental log cabin located right on the lake along the Minnesota side.

As we made our way out onto the lake, it was obvious something was going on as small communities of permanent and portable ice houses could be seen scattered across the lake.

Arriving at the icehouse we would be fishing out of, an 8' X 16' Mille Lacs Ice Castle, we would have a lot of room for our crew and the gear we brought with us. The house had all the comforts of home, thermostat forced air heat, microwave-Pizza oven, twenty-two inch TV/satellite, double futon, bunks with a bathroom all powered by a super quiet 2,000 watt-110 volt generator.

Even though it was cold and windy outside, inside the Ice Castle, we were able to fish without the heavy clothing we had brought with us.

The schools would move in under us on a regular basis, keeping us busy from the time we arrived until dark.

Our best baits were the Lindy-1/16th ounce Frostee Spoons and the small Rattlin Flyer Spoon tipped with spikes, a tough skin little wiggler similar to small maggots.

The perch which were continually on the move, moving in under our

house to my left, where Artie was fishing, giving him the first shot at them, then over to me, onto Eric and then Larry. It was not uncommon for two or three of us to have perch on at the same time.

The perch were all sizes, with many of those we caught in the one-pound range and there were not many times when one of us did not have a fish on with very little time in between bites.

When the bite did stop for a short period, I wondered what had changed to move the perch out, as I glanced up at the big screen television, it became apparent they had vacated the area for good reason as a large northern pike nosed his way up to the underwater camera. Once the pike decided to move on to harass other schools of perch, the bite continued with our group ending up with a nice bunch of perch.

It was a great trip, with all the things making for a memorable trip, good people, a lot of water to explore and great fishing. It is an area, we plan to return to, in the near future, to return to take part in the open water perch and walleye bite this next spring.

When you are in the Big Stone area, check out the Rustling Elms Re-

sort as they have cabins available as well as overnight campsites. You can contact them at (320) 839-3845 or on the web at www.rustlingelmsresort.com

Want more information on the perch bite on Big Stone, you can get all the up to date information at Artie's Bait Shop 320-839-2480 or on the web at www.artiesbaitandtackle.com.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. He is the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series, seen on Fox affiliates throughout the upper Midwest. In the Yankton area, it airs on local channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 am. It is also available on KTTW/KTTM-TV (Fox) Sioux Falls/Huron, S.D. Saturdays at 7:00 am as well as on MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 am. 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 are looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

S.D. Junior Duck Stamp Avon Deadline March 15

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SPEARFISH — Ducks, crayons, paintings, prizes, fun and more ducks. What does that mean? It's time for the annual Junior Duck Stamp Program!

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service at D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery invites students to learn about wildlife conservation and express their creativity by entering the 2014 Junior Duck Stamp competition. The deadline for entries is March 15.

The Junior Duck Stamp Program is an annual free art contest that provides students with the opportunity to learn about biology and express their knowledge of the beauty and diversity of wildlife through art. The Junior Duck Stamp Contest, partnered with a dynamic art curriculum, teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students kindergarten through high school.

Since the Junior Duck Stamp Contest was introduced in South Dakota in 1993, over 10,000 students have submitted artwork in the state. In 2013, over 800 South Dakota students from 50 towns participated in the program; and throughout the United States, over 27,000 students submitted artwork to a state contest. Annual revenue from the sales of Junior Duck Stamps raises an estimated

\$200,000 annually to fund scholarships, support the contest, and create environmental education opportunities for students who participate in the program.

Prizes are awarded to the top nine entries in four different age groups at a public awards reception held in April. Last year over \$4,000 in prizes like art supplies, field guides, DVDs, and binoculars were awarded to South Dakota students. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Booth Society, the Friends Group of the D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery & Archives in Spearfish, sponsor the South Dakota contest.

The Best of Show winner from South Dakota is judged nationally in Washington D.C., and the winning submission from the national contest will be used to create a Federal Junior Duck Stamp the following year, which is sold for \$5 a stamp.

The South Dakota Junior Duck Stamp Contest is free and open to all students K-12. The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2014. For more information and art submission rules, visit <http://www.sdjuniorduck.org>

Dakota Blue Devils, the two teams have faced each other in numerous team camps.

So they were plenty familiar with each other — particularly in that neither side would give up.

"I mentioned to the girls that the last four minutes we really hustled and gave ourselves a chance," Poppe said. Doering, a 6-foot senior, scored 11 points in each half to finish with a game-high 22, to go along with three assists.

"I saw a ton of leadership from her tonight," Hames said. "We were struggling early on, but she took over in the post, which we usually don't see."

A Northwestern College (Neb.) recruit, Doering seemed to rise to the occasion of the intense game, her coach said.

"She feeds off this kind of a game," Hames said. "She wants the ball in her hands in those final minutes; she's not afraid."

Chesney Nagel, on the other hand, was backed by a pair of other standouts for

the Lady Pirates. Sophomore Heidi Cap finished with 13 points and seven rebounds, while senior Ariana Oorlog added 12 points.

What does the win tell Avon?

"I think it just tells us that we're a good team and we can pull it out in close games," Nagel said.

On the other side for Alcester-Hudson, the loss is far from too deflating, Hames said.

"This was a learning experience for us," she said. "We'll take this in and get back to

work. We have a ton of potential."

With many of the same faces that helped the Cubs qualify for the state volleyball tournament this past season, the AH basketball team naturally has high hopes.

"Having that kind of experience really pushes the girls," Hames said. "They want to do the same in basketball; to get back there."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net

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