

OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

Released Water Means Bite's On

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

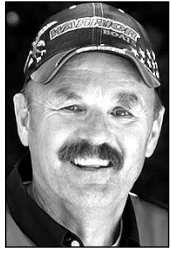
High water with heavy flows following a rain makes for tough fishing.

These seem to be the norm this year as there's high water everywhere, coming down every creek, river as well as in all the ponds and lakes.

The bad side of this is that all the water running into the lakes and rivers, muddies up the water, making it hard to fish without getting your crankbaits, jigs and livebait rigs all gunked up.

The old wives tale, "with every bad there comes some good" is very true in this instance, as water flowing into any body of water means the fish will be on the move.

It might take a few days for the water to settle down and the swift current to subside, but you can bet when there's a rise in the water level, with water being released downstream the fish will become active.



Gary Howey

The reason for this is pretty basic; the influx in water will bring new food sources down stream.

Worms, insects, zoo plankton as well as the baitfish and fingerlings that were tucked safely into the creeks and backwaters are now being flushed downstream into the rivers and lakes, bringing a smorgasbord to the fish that will be moving towards the incoming water on their way to see what's on the menu.

In the river, sandbars and vegetation that were once high and dry will now become flooded and the insects and other material that was lying in these areas are now in the water.

In a river, this influx of water and new food sources will attract the fish to the slack water located behind sandbars and points.

Fish, both big and small will move towards the incoming water to feed on what's being washed or forced downstream.

The biggest benefit of high water in reservoirs located on the Missouri River will reach capacity and water will need to be released through the dams.

Some of the deepest water in the system with the most hospitable water temperatures is located directly above the dam and because of this, there will be large concentrations of fish in these areas.

Once the gates are open to release the excess water from the lake a tremendous amount of water is released, flushing thousands of gallons of water and fish through the gates into the river system below.



Andy Johnson of Yankton is pictured with a 10.5-pound walleye he caught on a crawler while shore fishing below Gavin's Point Dam after a high water release.

Outdoor Lovers
Can Do Part To
Save Environment

BY RAY SASSER

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Since the horrific Gulf of Mexico oil disaster, the talk about going green to help save the environment seems ramped to new heights. Outdoors enthusiasts have a vested interest in clean water and pristine wildlife habitat.

Here are some simple suggestions that do not include trading in a pickup truck or SUV for a hybrid car:

- Eat the fish and game that you harvest. Some hunters enjoy the hunt but don't like the taste of doves, ducks or venison. They should learn the fine art of game cooking or give the game to someone who appreciates it. There's no purer meat than wild meat that's been properly cared for.

- Plan your fishing day carefully. Even if your boat-towing vehicle is a gas-guzzler, it's more efficient than a boat. Driving farther to launch near your fishing area just makes sense. Rather than running your boat from one side of a lake to the other, concentrate on one specific area where you expect to catch fish.

- When you're hunting, make a concerted effort to pick up every spent shotgun shell or rifle cartridge that you fire. Some shells can be recycled, and empty shells left in the field are a particularly noxious form of litter that takes many years to deteriorate.

- Every boat should be equipped with a trash receptacle that has a secure lid or other closure method. Even if you try not to litter, unsecured cans, plastic and other trash accidentally blows out of a boat moving at high speed.

'Mr. Crappie' Finds Fish No Matter Conditions

BY RAY SASSER

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CANEY CITY, Texas — It's the first day of summer, and the forecast calls for temperatures pushing triple digits, calm winds and cloudless skies. Hearing that forecast, most crappie fishermen would turn up the air conditioner and pour a tall glass of lemonade.

Not Wally Marshall, also known as Mr. Crappie. The Garland, Texas, fishing pro knows that bright skies and calm weather at Cedar Creek Lake send summertime crappie into deep water or into the shade provided by hundreds of boat docks around the popular recreational lake 50 miles southeast of Dallas.

Most crappie fishermen fish from plain Jane fishing boats or pontoon boats. Not Mr. Crappie. His boat is a gleaming fiberglass stallion powered by a veritable remuda of horsepower.

Most crappie fishermen use live minnows to tempt the succulent panfish into biting. Not Mr. Crappie. He's designed dozens of lures and specialized fishing tackle into a namesake brand sold in sporting goods stores throughout America.

"I live to feel the 'thump' of a crappie biting my jig," explains Marshall with a wolfish grin. On this particular day, his jig of choice was a Mr. Crappie Slab Daddy in a color he calls "electric chicken" — pink and chartreuse.

The body is made of chenille wrapped tightly on a thin, wire hook. The Slab Daddy is dressed with a dyed hackle, from the



Side imaging sonar under a highway bridge distinctly shows pilings and fish near the pilings.

neck feathers of a chicken. The hackle undulates seductively in the water, giving the lure appeal, even when it's not perceptively moving.

Most crappie fishermen are low-key types who tend to shy from the spotlight. Not Mr. Crappie who, after all, has the nerve to call himself Mr. Crappie in the first place. His screaming-yellow boat, his monster Ford truck covered with Mr. Crappie decals and his flamboyant personality all combine into a marketing juggernaut that may yet change the personality of crappie fishing.

Most crappie fishermen use an inexpensive sonar unit to check the water depth, find a submerged brushpile or scan a flooded tree to see if fish are using it for cover.

that there may be new fish coming through the turbines.

You never know what you might catch once new water has come into the river, as this is when anglers will start to pick up numerous varieties of fish, some which may not have been common in the area before the water release.

Prior to high water releases, the fishing below the dam may be slow, but several days after high water releases fish will become active.

When fishing below a dam that has released new water, you'll want to keep your tackle pretty basic, as you won't need anything fancy to catch fish during this time.

Try to use as light weight of line as possible with a simple live bait rig consisting of a hook, split shot or lightweight sinker tipped with a crawler, leech or minnow being a good bet when fishing after water releases.

Some anglers like to use heavy weights to hold their bait in the current, keeping it on the bottom.

Unfortunately that may be where your rig stays as the heavy current can jam the weight tight into the rocks and other bottom obstructions where it may become part of the bottom structure once you've snagged up.

The lighter rigs will drift along with the current like the baitfish that have come through the dam, eventually settling in the slack water pockets where the game fish will be waiting for lunch to arrive.

No matter how you fish, be it from boat or shore, the next time there's a big water discharge, give the fishing down stream a try as there's bound to be fish moving up to see what all the fuss is about.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of the *Outdoorsmen Adventures* television series, which can be seen throughout the upper Midwest and on www.MyOutdoorTV.com. For more information on the outdoors go to www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Mr. Crappie's
Fishing Tips

- Be patient. You may have to present your jig at just the right angle to get a bite. One fish biting the lure may trigger its schoolmates into a feeding frenzy.

- Most anglers give their lure too much action. Especially if you use a hair jig with a hackle tail that undulates in the water, you can catch fish by holding the jig as still as possible.

- Some lure colors always seem to catch fish. If the fishing is slow, however, change colors until you find something the fish like.

- When fish are barely biting, use a smaller jig and lighter line for a more subtle presentation.

- High-visibility line will enable you to see the slightest movement and catch fish you wouldn't ordinarily catch.

merged structure that I didn't know existed."

On the first day of summer, Marshall used side-scanning sonar to locate and catch crappie suspended beside bridge pilings, but he mainly shot jigs under boat docks because that's his favorite fishing technique. For every fish caught by his fishing companion, Marshall caught at least three fish. That's why he's Mr. Crappie.

OUTDOOR
REPORTHikers To Look For
Rare Ferrets

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK (AP) — Rangers at Wind Cave National Park will offer special night hikes this summer to look for black-footed ferrets, a rare animal that was once considered extinct.

The excursions at the park in southwest South Dakota will be done two nights a week. Participants will be taken to a prairie dog town where ferrets live. A captive breeding program provided enough ferrets that they were put back in the wild in South Dakota and a few other states.

Mountain Lion Plan
Available For Review

PIERRE — The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department is offering citizens an opportunity to review a draft of a new five-year management plan for mountain lions.

The South Dakota Mountain Lion Management Plan 2010-2015 describes how state authorities propose to manage mountain lions in South Dakota. The draft is available for review through July 26. Interested residents are encouraged to submit comments on the plan by that deadline.

Game, Fish and Parks held public meetings earlier this year to inform the public about mountain lion management and gather input on the future direction of mountain lion management in the state, said Tony Leif, Wildlife Division director. A primary goal in the draft is to maintain a viable but reduced population of mountain lions in the Black Hills.

White Swan
Lakeside Use Area
Closed July 12-17

PICKSTOWN — White Swan Lakeside Use Area and boat ramp near Pickstown will be closed for a cultural event July 12-17. Call 605-487-7046 for more information.

State Parks Offers
Summer Nature
Camps For Kids

PIERRE — Angostura and Big Sioux Recreation Areas are hosting nature day camps for kids ages 7-12 in July. The camps are a great way for kids to explore the surrounding recreation areas and enjoy the outdoors.

Finding your way with GPS at Angostura Recreation Area near Hot Springs will be held Wednesday, July 14, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. MDT. Participants will learn how to use Global Positioning System (GPS) units in the outdoors for some recreational fun! Kids will use the devices for finding waypoints and locating travel routes along hiking trails. Call 605-745-6996 for more information or to register.

Big Sioux Recreation Area near Brandon is hosting Pioneer Life on Thursday, July 15, from 9 a.m. to noon CDT. This day camp will explore pioneer life in South Dakota. Kids will enjoy a hike, game and crafts. Call 605-594-3824 for more information and to register.

While the camps are geared for kids ages 7-12, younger children may attend if accompanied by adults. Kids should wear clothing appropriate for the weather, and also bring bug spray, drinking water and comfortable walking shoes. Sandals are not appropriate. No snacks or refreshments will be provided, but kids are welcome to bring their own. There is no fee for the camp; however a park entrance license is required.

For a complete list of state park events, visit South Dakota state parks on the web at www.gfp.sd.gov.

S.D. Trapping
Regulations Changed

CHAMBERLAIN — Trappers will no longer be able to claim or mark a potential public land trap site before the mink trapping season opens due to a vote by the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Commission.

The prohibition states that no person may place any trap (set or unset), stake, cable, chain, wire or other device used for the purpose of attaching a trap or otherwise attempt to claim or mark a trap site on any public road right of way or public lands or waters open to trapping within 30 feet of water from October 1 to the day before the opening of the mink season.

The Commission also voted to extend the March 1 deadline for trapping on or in muskrat houses to March 15.

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