

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

# Outstanding Fishing On The Missouri

BY GARY HOWEY

Our first trip of the year to Lake Oahe began Tuesday around 4 a.m., when I made the six hour trip North with Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Bill Christensen, Hartington, Neb., and his grandson Carson Becker.



Gary HOWEY

Upon arriving, we stashed our gear in the Miller Lodge www.cabins.com and then made the short 10-mile drive to Swan Creek boat ramp, as we approached the landing

at Swan Creek near Akaska, it was obvious water levels were up on the lake, but you couldn't tell it by the boat launch as both ramps were high and dry.

Two of our fishing partners, Roger Merkel, Hartington, Neb., and Mel Loecker, Crofton, Neb., had came up on Monday afternoon, spent the night and were on the water fishing when we arrived.

It didn't take us long to get on the water and didn't need to go far before dropping the trolling motor and beginning our drift. We'd be drifting in 13 to 15 foot of water pulling 1-2 oz. bottom bouncers, plain, one and two hook rigs tipped with either leeches or crawlers.

On our second drift, I set the hook on a good fish and the way it was pulling my drag and head shaking, I knew it had to be a big walleye. As it neared the surface, it rolled and I could see it was a bigger fish, but before we could get the net under him, it came unhooked. Talk about a rookie mistake, and after giving myself a good tongue lashing for trying to horse the fish the last couple of yards, it was back to fishing.

Shortly there after, Bill tied into another good fish, only to loose it at the boat. Man! I could see a pattern developing and I knew we weren't going to like it.

Not long after, Carson had a fish that came unhooked at the boat; it was obvious we were doing something wrong and were getting good at it. It looked as if we weren't giving the fish enough time to get the hook in its mouth and once we felt the fish hit the bait, we needed to drop back with our rods, feeding the fish line allowing them to get the hook farther in their mouth before setting the hook.

Shortly there after, we got into our rhythm, with all of us landing several of the decent fish.

At the end of the drift I felt a fish pickup the bait, dropping back on the rod, I fed it some line



Mel Loecker, Crofton, Neb., and Roger Merkel, Hartington, Neb., with a few of the walleyes taken while fishing near Akaska.

and as I set the hook, I could feel the weight on the end of the line and realized it was a big fish and this time; things went our way and as Bill slipped the net under it, we had our first big fish, a chunky 21-inch walleye.

We finished out the day with six keeper walleyes while our fishing partners, who'd fished most of the day ended up just a couple fish short of their limit.

The following day, Bill and his grandson would have to leave early while Roger and Mel planned on fishing a couple of more days. Since I didn't need to be back before Thursday so I chose to move into their boat and depending on how the fishing would be either head home with Bill or stay an extra day.

Our first attempt would be on a flat on the west side of the river, an area a local guide had pointed out to Roger and Mel. When we arrived, it looked like we'd be the only ones there, but it didn't take long before the place got pretty busy.

Bill trolled the area, picking up a couple of nice fish and a big Northern, while we drifted with bottom bouncers, two hook rigs and crawlers. In short order, we realized that there were a few walleyes on the spot, but the large concentrations of boats that had joined us in the area

were either taking all the fish using the area or were pushing them off the flats out into deeper water.

Under these circumstances, we decided to head back to the area Bill and I begin fishing yesterday. Using the same rigs we started with, we began drifting in 10 foot. On the first drift, we took a couple of small fish, with most coming from the deeper water.

On each ensuing drift, we caught at least two fish, with numerous drifts where we boated several fish apiece. As it was the day before, the key to hooking and landing the fish was to give the fish little more slack line when we felt the pickup.

We ended the day just a few fish short of our limits, retiring early to rest up and make plans for our final morning on the water.

On the water early the next day Roger, Mel and I hoped to take the few fish needed to fill our legal limit.

Coming out of Swan Creek, we hung a right, made the short trip to the spot we'd left yesterday afternoon and put out our lines. Once again, the combination of bottom bouncers, two-hook worm rigs and crawlers was what the walleyes were looking for as it only took us four or five passes to fill out our limits. Included in

the mornings catch were a couple 3 plus pound fish.

No matter where we went in the last month, Lewis & Clark, Fort Randall and Lake Oahe, the fishing on the Missouri River has been excellent with some of the fattest healthiest fish that we've ever taken.

Sure there are some of the boat docks that can't be used and even a few that are closed, but for every one that's closed, you can always find others like the ones at Swan Creek where launching a boat is no problem.

Don't let the reports of flooding scare you off the Missouri River Reservoirs as there's great fishing on all the reservoirs from Lewis & Clark on up to Lake Oahe.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the president of Outdoorsmen Productions LLC and the producer host of Outdoorsmen Adventures television series. For more information on the outdoors, go to www.outdoorsmenadventures.com

OUTDOORS SPOTLIGHT



Dean Hamling caught this 3-pound smallmouth bass on July 4 on the Missouri River.



F.J. Konfrst caught this 17.5-pound flathead catfish on July 4 on the Missouri River.

## S.D. Archery Paddlefish Season Closed For 2011

PIERRE — Because of flooding on the Missouri River, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission adopted an Emergency Rule on Thursday, July 7, to close the 2011 Archery Paddlefish Season.

The season was scheduled for Saturday, July 9 through Aug. 7 for the Missouri River below Gavin's Point Dam.

License fees for anglers successful in the 2011 archery paddlefish drawing will be refunded and preference points adjusted accordingly.

The closure of boating in the Missouri River below Gavin's Point Dam, restrictions on foot traffic on Corps of Engineers' property immediately downstream from the dam, and forecasted releases out of Gavin's Point Dam at 160,000 cubic feet per second through the end of July were key issues in the Commission's decision.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has also closed the archery paddlefish season for 2011.

### YOUR SPORTS! THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

## Baseballs

From Page 8

right field stands to the warning track at Citizens Bank Ballpark in Philadelphia while reaching for a ball hit during batting practice. Clearly shaken, but not seriously injured, Campbell was comforted by Mets pitcher Mike Pelfrey while stadium officials rushed to examine him.

For some, the eagerness to catch a souvenir has brought anger. Phillies outfielder Jayson Werth berated a man for catching a foul ball over Werth in 2010, and of course Steve Bartman was vilified by many for touching a ball near him in the stands, preventing Cubs outfielder Moises Alou from a chance to catch it in the 2003 NLCS.

All that pales in comparison to what happened to 39-year-old Rangers fan Shannon Stone, who was fatally injured when he fell 20 feet to his death while reaching for a ball tossed into the stands by Hamilton, all in an effort to get it for his 6-year-old son Cooper.

Stone's death resonated with players throughout the league. It may only be a \$10 piece of rawhide, rubber and string to them, but to fans it's a treasured keepsake and a story that can be told forever.

"I always toss it three or four rows deep at least," Indians outfielder Michael Brantley said.

"What a sad sight that was to see. I feel so bad for everyone involved."

Milwaukee closer John Axford agreed.

"It's such a friendly part and a happy part of the game, especially with a father and son and for it to end in such a tragedy, it's just full-on brokenhearted," he said.

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2011 Relay For Life Of Yankton County!

**FRI., JULY 15 & SAT., -10**  
**6pm-6am • Riverside Park**

**EVERYONE WELCOME!** Come Join The Fun!  
Check out all the activities at the camp sites, raffles, games & more!!

**Community Dinner**  
Friday • 5:00-7:00PM  
**Hot Dog or Hamburger, Chips & Pop \$3.00**

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| SCHEDULE OF EVENTS         |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Friday, July 15th</b>   |   |
| 4:00-6:00 p.m.             | Team Registration & Check-in                  |
| 4:30-5:45 p.m.             | Survivor Registration & Check-in              |
| 5:00 p.m.                  | Survivor Reception & Meal                     |
| 5:45 p.m.                  | Survivor Photo                                |
| 5:00-7:00 p.m.             | Community Dinner                              |
| 5:00-9:00 p.m.             | Luminaria's Available                         |
| 5:00-9:30 p.m.             | Relay Store Open                              |
| <b>6:00 p.m.</b>           | <b>OPENING CEREMONIES/SURVIVOR'S LAP</b>      |
| 6:00-10:00 p.m.            | Silent Auction                                |
| 7:00 p.m.                  | Honorary Survivor Chair/Drawing               |
| 7:15 p.m.                  | Entertainment/Academy of Dance                |
| 8:00 p.m.                  | Team Introductions                            |
| 9:30 p.m. (dusk)           | Luminaria Ceremony                            |
| 10:00 p.m.                 | Community Raffle Drawings/Silent Auction Ends |
| 11:30-4:00 a.m.            | Big Kahuna Games & Overnight Entertainment    |
| <b>Saturday, July 16th</b> |   |
| 5:00 a.m.-6:30 a.m.        | Community Breakfast sponsored by McDonald's   |
| 5:30 a.m.                  | Closing Ceremony/Fight Back Ceremony & Awards |
| 6:00 a.m.                  | Last Lap led by Survivors                     |

**Community Breakfast**  
**Saturday Morning • 5:00AM**  
Sponsored by: McDonalds  
**Juice & Various Breakfast Sandwiches**  
**Free Will Donation**

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ALL MEALS!

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American Cancer Society

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