

OUTDOORS DIGEST

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Viral Disease Killing Deer Along Platte River

LINCOLN, Neb. — A viral disease is killing deer along the Platte River and possibly over a much wider area, according to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. There have been reports of dead deer in and near the river in eastern Nebraska.

Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) is a hemorrhagic disease caused by a virus. EHD is similar to bluetongue, another viral disease that can affect deer. It spreads from deer to deer by the bite of a small insect known as a midge. The disease quickly kills the deer through hemorrhaging within the body. A high fever may result, causing the deer to seek water to cool off. Dead deer usually are found in or near water. Deer may show bleeding from body openings, although they usually are in good body condition because of the quickness of the disease. EHD is not a threat to humans.

Game and Parks is interested in determining the extent of the disease and its possible effects on the deer population. The public should report any deer deaths that may be attributed to this disease to their nearest Game and Parks office: Alliance, 308-763-2940; North Platte, 308-535-8025; Kearney, 308-865-5310; Bassett, 402-684-2921; Norfolk, 402-370-3374; and Lincoln, 402-471-0641.

State Parks Offers Summer Nature Camps For Kids

PIERRE — Five South Dakota state parks are hosting nature day camps for kids ages 7-12. The camps are a great way for kids to explore surrounding recreation areas and focus on the outdoors.

Oakwood Lakes State Park near Volga is hosting a day camp from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. CDT on Tuesday, Aug. 7. Bring a sack lunch and meet at the welcome center for an afternoon of games, crafts, and campfire cooking! Call 605-627-5441 to register.

"Nature Explorers" is the theme at Angostura Recreation Area near Hot Springs on Wednesday, Aug. 8, from 9:30 a.m. to noon MDT. Does catching insects, discovering tracks, smelling flowers, identifying animal droppings and looking at birds through binoculars sound fun to you? If so, come to Shelter House 2 and spend the morning being a naturalist and exploring nature! Wear water shoes, bring a water bottle, sunscreen and a snack. Call 605-745-6996 for more information or to register.

North Point Recreation Area near Wagner is hosting a camp at Lake Wagner City Park on Thursday, Aug. 9, from 2 to 5 p.m. Activities may include disc golf, kite flying, arts and crafts, kayaking, archery and nature exploration. Everyone will have the opportunity to get wet and muddy! Call 605-487-7046 for more information.

"Pioneers" will teach participants about South Dakota pioneers with a hands-on lesson, craft project, hike/walk and games at Big Sioux Recreation Area near Brandon on Aug. 9 from 9 to 11 a.m. CDT. This qualifies as a Junior Naturalist program. Call 605-582-7243 for more information and to register.

Lake Poinsett Recreation Area near Arlington is hosting a day camp from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. CDT on Aug. 9. Bring a sack lunch and enjoy a day of outdoor activities. Call 605-983-5085 to register.

While the camps are geared for kids ages 7-12, younger children may attend if accompanied by an adult. Kids are reminded to wear clothing appropriate for the weather, and also bring bug spray, drinking water and shoes comfortable for walking. 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 to enter state parks and recreation areas.

Bow Hunter Education Instructor Training in Norfolk

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will train bow hunter education instructors Aug. 23 in Norfolk. Apprentice volunteer instructors will be trained at Norfolk Printing Company, 302 Phillips St.

Training begins at 6 p.m. Register by Aug. 22 at [huntsafenebraska.org](http://huntsafenebraska.org), then click on "Become a Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor," or contact Mike Streeter at 402-471-6134 or [mike.streeter@nebraska.gov](mailto:mike.streeter@nebraska.gov).

Living History Set For Aug. 4-5 At Fort Atkinson SHP

LINCOLN, Neb. — Life at an 1820s military post will be depicted at Living History Weekend at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park on Aug. 4-5 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Visit with re-enactors portraying soldiers, laundresses, coopers, blacksmiths, butter makers and others.

The weekend will feature a discussion of the Monroe Doctrine at noon each day, and there will be a presentation on "Coins of Fort Atkinson" on Aug. 5 at 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Fort Atkinson, the first military post west of the Missouri River, is seven blocks east of U.S. Highway 75 near Fort Calhoun.

Contact the park for more information at 402-468-5611 or [ngpc.fort.atkinson@nebraska.gov](mailto:ngpc.fort.atkinson@nebraska.gov).

BY GARY HOWEY  
Hartington, Neb.

I just returned from scouting a new area I'll deer hunt this fall. It's an area I'd hunted spring in the last couple of years, so I did have an idea as to how everything laid out.

I saw a few deer while turkey hunting but at that time, didn't have permission to hunt deer, so I didn't pay much attention to where the deer were traveling or bedding.

Wished I had as now the corn is waist high leading into the area, the drought has the ground rock hard and there are cows in the pasture.

Pre season scouting is darn important, if you haven't already done some scouting, you still have time to scout late summer.

There are several things I look for when I do my scouting:

- Well-used deer trails
- Scrapes
- Rubs
- Bedding areas

Once I've looked over an area, there are things that I need to do in preparation for the season opener in order to be ready at first light on opening day.

Before heading out to ready my area for the hunt, my Polaris Ranger would be loaded with all the tools needed to get ready for deer hunting and in order to quickly install my deer stand or blind.

- Saw, hatchet and brush shears to open up shooting lanes and trails
- RACKs mineral
- Shovel, to prepare ground for mineral lick
- Stand and ladder
- Ratchet straps, to hold ladder stand to the tree
- Safety harness, in place when I climb into the stand on opening morning
- Game cameras
- Tools (hammer etc.)
- Come along, if needed to pull stand to tree.

If I'd had permission earlier, last year, I'd



PHOTO: TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES  
Spending time in the woods doing some preseason scouting helped Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Ben Bearshield of Gregory to tag this buck during the muzzle-loading season on the Rosebud Reservation.

put the Racks mineral lick and game cameras along well-used deer trail. The licks give the deer the nutrients needed, helping them to make it through the post rut when bucks and does are at their weakest, when food is hardest to find and to give them the nutrients in order to develop healthy racks.

The game cameras placed at the RACKs site and along game trails where the deer travel gives me an idea as to the deer numbers and the quality of the herd.

They'll help you to locate deer trails,

rubs and the trails leading to bedding areas, giving me an heads up when it comes to installing my stand or blind.

I wouldn't put all my hopes on just one stand location, especially if you use the same stand each year as things may have changed from one year to the next. The mast in the area may be different as may the cropping and if there's a drought like we're experiencing this year, where the deer water may also change.

If possible, I like to establish three stand

locations, just in case things change drastically and the deer start to move on other trails than the one I planned on hunting from.

Once the stands or blinds are in place, I'd do some tree trimming, opening up the game trails coming into the area, making it easier for the bucks to come into the area and to my stand. You don't want to trim all of the vegetation from around your stand as any that's not in the way acts as natural camouflage. By trimming off excess vegetation, I'm able to see deer approaching at greater distances and once they're in range, it gives me an opportunity for a good shot for a quick kill.

If there were other trails coming into the area that were out of range of my stands, I'd use the branches and limbs I'd trimmed from the main trails going by my stand and use them to block these other trails off, directing the deer towards my stand.

If there are trails that cross fences near my stand sites, but aren't being heavily used because the fences are too high, I'll make it easy for the deer to get over them by pulling down the top wire just a bit with light wire or bailing twine. You don't need to lower in much, just enough so it's the easiest spot for them to come across.

If they are jumping a shorter fence and not passing by my stand, I'll force them to cross where I want them to by making the fence look taller than it actually is by adding to the height of the fence stringing twine above the top strand on the fence at that point, which will direct the deer to the lowered fence and by my stand location.

Without doing some preseason scouting, you'll be going into the field blind, not knowing where the deer are running in your hunting area, decreasing your chances for success.

Get out and do a little snooping around ahead of the season and your hunting experience will be a lot more fulfilling.

*Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, hunting and fishing guide. His award winning television series Outdoorsmen Adventures can be seen through out the upper Midwest on Fox affiliates. He and Simon Fuller Co-Host the Outdoor Adventures radio program. More information on the shows and the outdoors can be found at [www.outdoorsmenadventures.com](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).*

Fla. Scientists Study Health Of Sharks After They Are Caught, Released

BY SUSAN COCKING  
(c)2012 The Miami Herald

PLACIDA, Fla. — Tagging sharks for research is nothing new. For years, scientists have been logging all kinds of information about shark movements and the types of areas where they like to hang out. And while attaching satellite, streamer and acoustic tags to these top predators, researchers are also able to take DNA, blood and tissue samples for later study.

What is new is the level of detailed information scientists from Sarasota's Mote Marine Laboratory are getting on the animals' behavior,

physiology and survival after they are caught and released by anglers. The object is to find out the post-release mortality of blacktip sharks \_ an important species for recreational and commercial fisheries in Florida.

"Nobody has tied the physiology with the behavior, so we're kind of trailblazing in that respect," said Paul Anderson, a scientist with the Florida Aquarium in Tampa.

With the help of Port Charlotte light-tackle guide captain Robert Moore, Anderson, Mote staff scientist Nick Whitney and their colleagues have caught 16 blacktip sharks on rod and reel in the Charlotte Harbor area since last fall.

Leaving each shark in the water, secured by ropes to keep it still, Anderson draws a small blood sample and immediately puts it into a small field analyzer unit that can spit out results in two minutes.

Meanwhile, Whitney and Mote biologist Jack Morris and college intern Taurus Vilgalys attach an acoustic transmitter tag with a built-in accelerometer. The accelerometer records the animal's body posture, tail movements, water depth and temperature every few seconds following its release. The tag is set to pop off within a couple of days and transmits a radio signal that enables the scientists to find and recover it using an antenna receiver. They haven't lost

one of the \$1,400 reusable tags yet.

The combined information of the shark's physiology as measured by the lactic acid, carbon dioxide, pH level and other factors in its blood and its post-release attitude and movement as detected by the accelerometer provide a picture of the animal's physical condition and its response to stress.

The scientists are also looking at whether j-hooks or circle hooks contribute to more shark deaths after they are released. The team hopes to tag another 16 animals before its \$192,000 NOAA Fisheries research grant runs out this fall.

"It's amazing how little we know about their post-release mortality," Whitney said.

He said it's too soon to draw any

conclusions, but the sharks' swimming movements tend to be "weaker" after they are caught and released.

"We've seen a (recovery) range of between a few hours and 12 to 18 hours depending on the individual," Whitney said.

He said two of their study subjects died after being tagged and released, but he said neither was in great shape when they were caught.

Fishing with Moore, the scientists have caught sharks on nearly every trip, except when rough weather kept them from venturing into the open Gulf.

Said Whitney: "Rob Moore is on it."

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