

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Weeds Can Be Friend And Foe

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

Once again, summer has arrived with a vengeance, because of the warm temperatures, the water temps are now warm enough to allow the weeds in our ponds and dams to really take off.

Weed growth in these smaller bodies of water, especially those that are shallow or with dark bottomed warmed up early, allowing shallow weed growth to blossom.

The heavy vegetation growing along the shoreline and found throughout the smaller bodies of water, can make it almost impossible to fish.

Those of us who like to fish during the heat of the summer, have or will need to learn to deal with the weeds or spend a lot of our time on the deeper lakes or reservoirs or one the dingier bodies of water where weed growth is minimal.

In this column we'll talk about several ways that the summer angler to productively fish in the weeds.

There are all types of aquatic weed growth found in the upper Midwest and depending on the body of water you're fishing, they'll appear and die back at different times.

In the shallower or clearer ponds, lakes and streams, weed growth occurs much earlier and will be heavier than those found in those bodies of water less clear.

Most bodies of water may contain several types of weeds including: cattails, bull rushes, lily pads, cabbage beds, hydrilla, and wild rice.

All of these weeds produce oxygen and during the heat of the summer is where fish are able to find comfortable oxygen levels.

In most ponds if there are weeds, they're thick which means, you'll want to use heavier line than normal because of the abrasiveness of the weeds which can quickly weaken or cut line.

Once hooked, a fish will bury deep into the weeds and you'll need to wrestle, not only the fish and a bunch of weeds, so heavier line is needed.

Bulrushes and cattails are pretty common in most ponds, lakes and the backwaters found in the river. Walleye, bluegill, perch, bass, and pike, will be tucked into the weeds in these bodies of water looking for an easy meal.



Joel Vasek of Geddes is pictured with a largemouth bass taken during the heat of the summer from a small lake in south central South Dakota.

Walleye/Sauger/Panfish

Foe walleyes, sauger and panfish, a livebait rig tipped with worms, nightcrawlers, a minnow or leech worked along the edge of the weeds fished or under small slip bobber are an excellent choice.

The rig doesn't need to be fancy, the old hook line, sinker and a bobber is a pretty basic rig. You'll want to match your rig with the species of fish you're after, using larger hooks and bobbers for the larger predators and downsizing your rig for panfish.

This rig is made up of a slip bobber, a bobber stop to set the depth, a small split shot (weight) with a small hook tipped with a minnow or leech.

These rigs are easy to cast and by using the wind to drift the bait over a productive area, allows the angler to naturally present his bait in the areas the fish are using.

When fishing a slip sinker rig for walleye, I like to use the smallest Thill slip bobber I have, just big enough so the weight so the top of the slip bobber is verily visible, which allows the fish to inhale the bait as, with this rig they feel very little resistance and are more apt to keep from spitting out the bait.

When fishing from a boat, for

larger predators, a Lindy or slip sinker rig works well, consisting of some type of sinker which allows the line to slip through (Lindy sinkers, Bullet Weight, or egg sinkers). A snap swivel is tied to the line below the slip sinker and attached to it you add a 10' to 12' snell with a #2 hook tied to the end of the snell.

Tipped with one of the above-mentioned baits, this rig is deadly early in the season as well as during cold fronts periods.

With this rig, once the fish picks up the bait, the angler either drops back his rod or feeds the fish line, since the sinker is not tied directly to the line, the fish can move off with the bait as it feels little resistance until all the slack in the line is taken up, when the angler will set the hook.

These rigs work very well along the edge of the weedlines, off drop offs and in slack water pockets.

Bass/Pike

Other baits that work well in the weeds for bass and pike include; spinnerbaits, weedless spoons and buzz baits.

Cabbage beds and lily pads are another common weed found in our waters. They grow from the bottom,

spreading out along the surface.

These weeds provide fish with a place to hide underneath, allowing them to be in the shade. Since most of the weeds are on the surface, fish can easily cruise through them while waiting for something to drop in for lunch.

In these types of weeds, weedless baits such as a surface spoon, floating frog, jig & pig, Texas rigs, buzzbaits or spinnerbaits will often bring the fish up out from under the weeds to your bait.

Try casting a buzzbait, spinnerbait or weedless spoon into the open pockets and then by holding your rod high and cranking hard, you'll be able to keep the bait running along the surface just above and through the weeds.

With the weedless top water frog, you'll want to cast it right into the weeds, let it set a few seconds, just enough times for the ripples to disappear and then slowly work it back across the top of the pads and floating vegetation. Pause from time to time, as this will give the bass the opportunity to zero in on the bait.

Bass will know when the bait touches down and will follow it across the weeds and come up through the weeds to get at it.

Once the water boils around

your bait, set the hook hard as you'll need to force the hook through the bony part of its mouth and pull it up onto the top of the weeds in order to skate him across the top of the water.

When using a jig & pig or a Texas rigged plastic worm, cast into the open pockets and then work the bait right through the middle of the heaviest cover.

Jig & pigs are weedless, so you won't need to worry about snagging up and the plastic worms can be rigged Texas style making it weedless.

Texas rigs are a bullet weight, a large offset hook with a plastic worm. The bullet weight is threaded over the line, a small bead is placed below it, which keeps your weight from jamming into the hook which is tied to the end of the line. Rigger this way, the weight will slide up and down your line, allowing you to work over and through the weeds.

Thread your worm on up over the eye of the hook and then run the hook back through the worm, trying to keep the worm as straight as possible with the hook point just under the surface, but still allows the hook to pop through with a good hook set.

All of the baits mentioned above will work well in hydrilla and wild rice.

With spinnerbaits or buzz baits, the key is to getting your bait running in some open water before going into the weeds and with spinnerbaits, it's a good idea to let your bait drop into the open pockets.

To get a spinnerbait up out of these open pockets and back on top of the weeds you'll want to hold your rod tip high, and crank hard on the reel to get your bait spinning or moving fast enough to slide up over and hop across the next clump of weeds.

Summer fishing can be hot in more ways than one, once you've figured out how to fish the weeds, those hot summer days on the water will be a lot more enjoyable.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. Howey is the Producer/Host of the award winning *Outdoorsmen Adventures* television series which can be seen in Yankton the series airs on channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 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're looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com and like *Outdoorsmen Adventures* on Facebook.

Spitfire Finish Pool Play 2-1

CHASKA, Minn. — The Yankton Spitfire won both their games in the NAFA 18-Under girls' softball championships on Friday, advancing to gold bracket play beginning today (Saturday).

The Spitfire beat the St. Paul, Minn., Rockies 4-3; and the Omaha, Neb., Quakes Black 5-3. They will begin gold bracket play at 8 a.m. today against the South Dakota Fusion Silver squad.

SPITFIRE 4, ST. PAUL 3: Andi Sprakel had two hits and a RBI, and Katie Koletzky had two hits to lead Yankton. Ely Miller posted a RBI double and Haley Hinseth added a hit in the victory.

Jaclyn Arens earned the win, striking out four.

SPITFIRE 5, OMAHA 3: Katie Koletzky helped her cause, going 2-3 with a double, and two other Yankton players had two hits in the victory.

Karlee Kozak had a double, a single and two RBI for the Spitfire. Jessica Wirth had two hits and a RBI. Taylor Ruby had a hit and a RBI, and Paige Thieman added a RBI in the victory.

Koletzky struck out three in the win.

Iverson

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tential, Pensack said.

"Ultimately, Brad Stevens (new coach) loves Colton, Danny Ainge (general manager) loves Colton and Austin Ainge (director of player personnel) loves Colton," Pensack said. "There's a lot of fans of Colton in the Boston organization."

"They spent a lot of money on the pick to get Colton. They specifically targeted him."

Second-round picks ultimately, though, find it tough to make the roster, Pensack added.

"It's the way it goes often times, you run into a logjam," he said. "It happens every year. We're still hopeful for this year."

For now, Iverson has found himself a good landing spot to see significant playing time immediately, his agent said.

"It's not the best-case scenario, but it's a good situation," Pensack said. "There's a lot going for it."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

Pro-Am

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Only one other event on the Dakotas Tour has a charitable mission, Metheny said, that being at Bakker Crossing Golf Course in Sioux Falls (held July 6-8).

"This is an all-around fun tournament," he said. "Six of us have played here for almost ten years, and we wanted to turn it into a premier event on the tour."

Money raised will go to three entities, the Yankton Sack Pack Program, the Yankton Area Special Olympics, and a similar Sack Pack Program in Scotland.

Thursday's auction featured such items as a dessert of the month promotion that raised \$1,000, a flight-seeing airplane tour from Jake Hoffner, autographed South Dakota State and Nebraska football helmets, a signed football from Riley Reiff and a signed photo of Nate Wolters.

Will the new title sponsor stay involved in future years?

"As long as they keep us, we'll be happy to stay involved," Metheny said. "We just want to give back as best we can. That's the mantra of

our company; giving back."

Long Travel For Pro

As do many of his professional colleagues, Ben Pisani chooses to walk the golf course rather than ride in a cart.

For the 26-year-old, though, distance is a way of life.

Pisani, a native of Brisbane, Australia, is competing in his third year on the Dakotas Tour — his first playing a full schedule.

"I've competed in Yankton before, so I think that gives me some nice local knowledge," he said after carding a 70 in Friday's first round at Fox Run.

"I don't mind all the space here, because you can pick your moments to attack. It's not as tight as the other course (Hillcrest)."

A 2010 University of Minnesota graduate, Pisani said the style of golf in the United States is "a little softer" than it is back in Australia.

"You can throw the ball at the target a little more out here," he said. "The courses back home have more trees, it's more like links golf."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

OUTDOORS DIGEST

S.D. State Parks Offers Summer Nature Camps For Kids

PIERRE — Four 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. 6. Bring a sack lunch and meet at the welcome center for an afternoon of games, crafts, and campfire cooking! Please call 605-627-5441 to register.

"Nature Explorers" is the theme at Angostura Recreation Area near Hot Springs on Wednesday, Aug. 7, from 9:30 a.m. to noon MDT. Catch insects, discover tracks, smell flowers, identify animal droppings and look at birds through

binoculars. Join us at Shelter House 2 and spend the morning being a naturalist and exploring the outdoors! Call 605-745-6996 for more information or to register.

A Nature Day Camp at Big Sioux Recreation Area near Brandon will teach participants about South Dakota reptiles with a hands-on lesson, craft project, hike/walk and games. The camp runs from 9 to 11 a.m. CDT on Thursday, Aug. 8. This qualifies as a Junior Naturalist program. Call 605-582-7243 for more information and 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.



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