

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Neb. Commission Offers Tips for Enjoying Water Safely

LINCOLN, Neb. – Hot summer temperatures can bring people to the water in droves. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission urges everyone enjoying a day on the water to do so safely.

Outdoor recreation in Nebraska is safe. Spending time outdoors or at any of the state's family-friendly state park areas is a great way to make memories. Game and Parks has the following reminders for safety on the water:

Avoid Alcohol – Whether boating, swimming or tubing, alcohol consumption should be avoided. It causes dehydration and impairs judgment. Boating Under the Influence is a criminal violation on the same level as Driving Under the Influence in a car and is enforced actively in Nebraska.

Wear a Life Jacket – Most boating fatalities involve a person falling from or being ejected from a boat. While a life jacket is required to be readily accessible for most in a boat, there usually is no warning before it is needed. Children under age 13 and anybody on a personal watercraft are required by law to wear a United States Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device. People being towed by a boat on skis, a tube, or other similar device also must wear their life jacket. In addition, consider a life jacket for young children swimming at a beach.

Have All Required Safety Equipment on Boat – Life jackets, throw cushions, fire extinguishers, and bailing devices are required on most boats. For a list of requirements (rules vary based on size and style of boat), check out the 2015 Boating Guide available statewide and at OutdoorNebraska.org/boating.

Be Wary of Surroundings – Many boat collisions occur because people do not keep an eye on what is going on around them, or boats get too close to each other when going too fast. The best boat operators constantly are looking around for other boats, swimmers, stumps and other hazards. This is especially true for operators of personal watercraft or other high-speed vessels. Speeds in excess of 5 mph are prohibited if within 30 yards of any other vessel, swimming area or dock.

Take a Boating Safety Course – Motorboat operators must be at least 14 years of age to operate a motorboat or personal watercraft. Any operator born after Dec. 31, 1985 must have successfully completed the Nebraska boating safety course and be in possession of a valid certificate. Visit OutdoorNebraska.org/boating to find a course.

Swimming – If possible, swim at a state park pool, which has lifeguards on duty. The following state parks have pools: Niobrara, Platte River, Ponca, Chadron, Eugene T. Mahoney, and Fort Robinson. Game and Parks does not have lifeguards at lakes it owns. Swim only in designated areas of those lakes. Also swim with a friend. It is safer and more fun.

On a River – If tubing or paddling a river, life jackets do not have to be worn, but they must be accessible. Be wary of deep holes in rivers, underwater hazards and obstructions in the water. Do not litter. Pack out what you pack in with you. Do not trespass.

Watch the Weather – Get off the water immediately if lightning is in the area or a storm is approaching.

Neb. Super Tag Lottery Permits Drawn

LINCOLN, Neb. – The lottery drawings for the two Super Tag multispecies permits were held at the July 16 meeting of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in Sidney. Steven Peck of North Platte won the single-entry Super Tag permit while Cory Lynch of Fremont won the multiple-entry Super Tag permit.

On July 13, Game and Parks electronically drew the winners of the Combo multispecies permits. Eric Colvin of Lincoln won the resident permit and Billy Bridges of Royal, Ark., won the nonresident Combo permit.

The Super Tag and Combo permits are valid in 2015 and 2016. The Super Tag bag limit is one elk, one antelope, one deer and two turkeys. The Combo bag limit is one antelope, one deer and two turkeys. The permits are valid in open seasons with appropriate weapons.

There were 1,164 entries in the Super Tag single-entry lottery (\$25 application fee). In the Super Tag multiple-entry lottery, 1,060 people submitted 1,992 applications at \$10 each (1,252 resident and 740 nonresident applications). There were 396 entries for the resident Combo permit and 294 for the nonresident Combo permit. Each entry had a \$10 fee.

National Wild Turkey Federation Honors GFP Officer

PIERRE - The South Dakota Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) has named Michael Klosowski, regional conservation officer supervisor as its 2015 Wildlife Officer of the Year.

Officer Klosowski has served as a conservation officer for over 11 years with the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP). Mike started his career in Day County, where he became a field training officer and defensive tactics instructor.

Officer Klosowski is now serving as regional conservation officer supervisor in Watertown. He and his law enforcement staff provide input on turkey management in northeast South Dakota. Officer Klosowski also enjoys turkey hunting and supports the local NWTf.

Officer Klosowski will be honored by the NWTf at its State Convention in January 2016. In addition, the State Chapter will forward his name to compete for a national award at the NWTf's national convention in February 2016.

Jigging The Big Lake

BY GARY HOWEY
 Hartington, Neb.

Recently, our crew headed to Lake of the Woods, Minnesota to do some fishing with Nick Painovich of Zippel Bay Resort.

This 50,000-acre lake is a pristine body of water, which lies along the Minnesota and Canada border. There you will find, 65,000 miles of shoreline, numerous bays and over 14,000 islands, and some of the finest fishing available in North America.

We arrived at the resort shortly after noon, with plans to spend a couple of days fishing on Lake of the Woods.

Looking at the extended forecast, it looked as if we had better not waste any time, as a severe weather pattern was heading our way.

It didn't take us long to stow our gear in one of Zippel Bays thirty foot charter boats and make our way out of Zippel Bay into Lake of the Woods.

Nick motored out to one of the areas where they had been picking up some nice fish during first week of the Minnesota walleye season.

Dropping anchor, we positioned ourselves along the edge of the rock pile, tied on our jigs, tipped them with salted minnows and begin jigging. We were fishing along the edge of the rocks, hopping to pick up some of the post spawn walleyes making their way out into the deeper water.

The smaller males as well as the sauger were eager biters, some of which would join us at our fish fry that evening. As Nick and I were catching our dinner fish, Larry set



Gary
HOWEY



Nick Painovich, of Zippel Bay Resort, is pictured with one of the large walleyes taken on a recent trip to Lake of the Woods.

PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE

the hook on what appeared to be a good fish and after a short battle, a twenty-seven inch slot walleye slid into the net, had her photo taken and then was released. Larry, who claims to be a multispecies angler, also landed a smaller northern. Not to be out done, Nick hooked another good fish, another of the slot fish, twenty-five inches that had her photo taken.

As the bite slowed, Nick would bring up the anchor and move onto another rock pile where we would work our baits off the rock pile down along the edge where it dropped off into deeper water.

We would move several times, working along the edges near deeper

water and then making our way up onto the top of the rock piles working our way through each rock pile carefully.

With heavy winds and rain predicted for the next two days, we fished hard that afternoon on into the evening, not wanting to miss a minute of the excellent bite.

Before the front arrived the next morning, we hit the water early, hoping to get some more footage before the clouds opened up and dumped on us.

On the way out of the bay, we pulled plugs to see if the resident pike populations were home. It didn't take us long to catch several that call the weed line in Zippel Bay home.

As we made our way into the main lake, did the day before, we fished the rock piles using jigs, jumping from one rock pile to the next. Each time we made a move we took some good fish, as we always have when fishing out of Zippel Bay Resort.

As we worked our way back to Zippel Bay, the sky opened up with as a three-day rainstorm settled in, dumping several inches of rain in the area.

That evening as the rain hammered on the roof of the resort, we closed out a great trip with a walleye and sauger supper prepared for us in the resort's lounge.

It was a great trip, as we spent some time on beautiful Lake of the Woods with good friends, catching good fish while beating out the bad weather that would roll into the area for the next two days.

If you're looking for a great Lake of the Woods experience, give Nick and Deana at Zippel Bay Resort a call. You can contact them at 1-800-222-2537 or on the web at zippelbay.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 locally in Channels 2 and 98 at Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 am. It is also seen on KTTM/KTTW-TV Fox, Sioux Falls/Huron, S.D. on Saturdays at 6:30 am and on the MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 am. He and Simon Fuller Co-Host the *Outdoor Adventures* radio program on *Classic Hits* 106.3, *ESPN Sports Radio 1570* in Southeastern South Dakota and Northeast Nebraska. In Northwest Iowa, it airs on *KCHE 92.1 FM*. If you are looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Wisconsin Boy, 11, Hauls In Near-Record Lake Trout

BY SAM COOK

(c) 2015 Duluth News Tribune (Duluth, Minn.)

Eleven-year-old Connor Seeger had no idea he was fighting a lake trout of near-record proportion. He just knew it was heavy.

"It felt like pulling up a big log," said Connor, who lives in Ashland, Wis., with his dad, Joe Seeger, and in Washburn, Wis., with his mom, Jennifer Seeger.

He caught the fish June 27 on Lake Superior in the Apostle Islands. After a battle that lasted an hour and 15 minutes, Joe Seeger netted the massive lake trout. It weighed 46 pounds, 12 ounces on Seeger's digital scale. Connor was fishing with his dad and his dad's girlfriend, Jeannie Snow.

The Wisconsin state-record lake trout for outlying waters, caught in 1946, is 47 pounds even. It was caught in Lake Superior near Bayfield, according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Connor's lake trout was 47 inches long and had a 37-inch girth.

"It was a fat thing," Joe Seeger said.

The fish was not weighed officially on a certified scale.

The Seegers had hooked the fish on a downrigger line in 120 feet of water, Seeger said, trolling a flasher and a Spin N Glo. Seeger set the hook and handed the rod to his son. Connor, who weighs about 85 pounds, leaned into the rod and held on. Connor had caught a 20-pound lake trout once before. This one felt different, he said.

"It felt like pulling up two of those," Connor said.

The fish didn't make many runs, Connor said. It just tugged. He wasn't gaining much of his 16-pound-test line on it.

"Then we shut off the boat and let it drag us around for a while," said Joe Seeger, a veteran Apostle



PHOTO COURTESY JOE SEEGER

Connor Seeger looks on as his dad, Joe Seeger, holds the 46-pound, 12-ounce lake trout that Connor caught while they were trolling in the Apostle Islands on June 27. The Wisconsin lake trout record for outlying waters is 47 pounds.

Islands angler. "That's what tired him out."

When the fish began coming up, Joe gave a word of advice to his son.

"Dad said not to freak out," Connor said. "But when it started to come up, he started to freak out."

"That was pretty neat to see," Joe Seeger said, "just seeing it come up from the abyss."

He got a net under the fish and hoisted it aboard.

"Then we just started walking back and forth unbelievably," Connor said.

News of the fish spread fast in Ashland.

"Wasn't that a pig?" said Carolyn Swartz of Anglers

All in Ashland. "That's the biggest lake trout I've ever seen. This story is going to go down and be told again and again and again."

Jared Myers, Lake Superior fisheries biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in Bayfield, said the fish probably was an old one.

"If somebody told me it was between 35 and 50 or more, I wouldn't be surprised," Myers said. "It's a pig, for sure. You hear about fish breaking the 40-inch mark, but the weight on that fish is what's really impressive."

Joe Seeger plans to have the fish mounted.

Groups Want Protection For Midwest Moose

BY JOHN LUNDY

(c) 2015 Grand Forks Herald (Grand Forks, N.D.)

DULUTH, Minn. – Two environmental groups last week filed a legal petition seeking federal Endangered Species Act protection for moose in Minnesota and other Midwest states.

Citing the dramatic decline in moose numbers in Minnesota – down 60 percent in less than 10 years – the Center for Biological Diversity and Honor the Earth said it was time for the feds to lend their help in the big animal's rescue and recovery.

"If we don't protect them, moose could be lost forever from the north woods," said Collette Adkins of the Center for Biological Diversity. "Growing up in Minnesota, I loved seeing moose during family vacations up north. It's a tragedy that today kids like my own only know this symbol of the north woods as stuffed toys in tourist gift shops."

The petition includes moose in northern Minnesota, northeastern North Dakota, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Isle Royale, as well as a small population in Wisconsin.

The groups noted that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must respond to the petition within 90 days, deciding whether the petition warrants further review.

Over the past 20 years Minnesota saw its northwest population of moose plummet from some 4,000 animals to just a few dozen. And in Northeastern Minnesota, moose numbers have dropped from about 8,500 moose as recently as 2006 to about 3,500 today.

Scientists say a combination of factors spurred by warmer temperatures may be to blame, including parasites such as brainworm and winter ticks. Indeed, recent research

by the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa found that 80 percent of adult moose mortality is related to parasites or other health issues – not predators.

By far the most frequent killer of adult moose, the band's research has found, is brainworm, a parasite carried by whitetail deer but harmless to deer. Some researchers have suggested that as deer have increased in number in the northern reaches of the state, more moose are dying.

Other research also has shown, however, that as moose numbers dwindle, wolves and bear are taking a larger share of the remaining moose, especially calves. As many as 70 percent of moose calves are killed in their few weeks by predators.

Already at the southern edge of the global range, scientists have suggested that – considering current mortality rates – the moose's days in Minnesota may be numbered. Moose numbers are declining in other areas, too, such as Vermont and parts of Ontario.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has made the moose decline a top priority and, along with university and tribal researchers, are working to pinpoint the causes of moose mortality. Minnesota canceled its longstanding moose hunt in 2013, while other groups are working to improve moose habitat.

But the petitioning groups say the state effort so far is not enough. They said protection under the federal Endangered Species Act would highlight the cost of failing to address emissions of climate-warming greenhouse gases, bring additional federal dollars for research on the plight of the moose and provide additional habitat protections that are needed "to help moose weather our warming world."

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