

OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

Cranking Your Way To More Fish

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

The toughest part of fishing for all anglers is locating the fish as a very small percentage of the water in the lake actually holds fish.

There are numerous ways to find the fish, unfortunately, most of these take a lot of time and we all know that there's never enough time to go fishing.

One method to help you to locate the fish and to catch the more aggressive fish would be to use crankbaits.

What exactly is a crankbait, well, it's a bait that needs to be trolled behind a boat or cast and retrieved, as this is how the vibrating side rocking action is put into the lure.

The action of the bait depends on the bill or lip of the bait, the larger the bill, the deeper the bait will dive.

There are numerous versions of when it comes to crankbaits, there's the floating, sinking as well as the suspending baits.

Crankbaits come in several sizes with the size 5 and 7 being the most popular.

They come in every color imaginable, natural to almost bizarre colors, some are jointed while others aren't.

A few of those that I carry in my bait box include: Shadling, Shad Rap, Thundestick and the Flicker Shad.

I prefer a floating crankbait in a size 5 as the bodies of water that I fish, aren't all that deep and a size 7 gets down to the depth that I want to fish.



Gary Howey



Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Chuck Doom of Brandon is pictured with a huge largemouth bass caught down south while using crankbaits.

The depth a crankbait will dive is directly related to the diameter of the line you're using. Heavier lines will have more resistance when being pulled through the water, so a crankbait snapped or tied to 10 pound test monofilament won't dive as deep as one tied to 6 or 8 pound test.

The diameter of the line you're using when fishing crankbaits is important, that's why I pull crankbaits using 14-pound Fireline as it has the strength of 14-pound line with the diameter of 6 pound, allowing my bait to dive deeper than it would if I were using standard 14-pound monofilament line.

The depth your baits runs is one of the most important things, as a bait that's up too high or too low won't be seen by the fish.

It's best to put your bait above the fish, since their eyes are on the upper part of their head and their best vision is above.

Crankbaits run at different depths, with the size of the bill, line diameter and speed the bait is trolled or retrieved the things that influence the depth your bait will run.

To know exactly how deep each crankbait will run on different line

weights, you can learn by taking them out on the water and test them while fishing, which generally costs you a few crankbaits or you can pickup Mark Romanack's book "Precision Trolling."

Mark's book takes all the guesswork out of trolling crankbaits as it lists all the popular crankbaits along with the most popular line weights that you might use, including both monofilament and super lines.

It will tell you just how much line you'll need to put out while trolling a certain bait in order to get it down to the depth you want to fish the bait.

As the weather warms up and fish patterns change, you can use them behind Off Shore planer boards or push them deeper by adding Off Shore Snap Weights or use them with leadcore line and downriggers.

They can be fished in numerous places, catch most species of fish and will work year round, so crankbaits are a win, win situation and once you start using them, you may not want to try any other methods.

I don't think you want to become a one-method angler, relying on only crankbaits to catch fish, as there are times when fish location makes it impossible to put a crankbait in front of the fish.

Crankbaits aren't super bait, but once you've become familiar with them, they'll help you to up your fish catching percentage.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of Outdoorsmen Adventures TV which can be seen throughout the upper Midwest or online at www.MyOutdoorTV.com If you'd like more information on fishing and hunting go to www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Enjoy Summer Activities At A S.D. State Park

PIERRE — Summer is near, and South Dakota state parks are offering several ways to enjoy time outside on the first weekend in June.

During the weekend of June 5, state parks will host several events, including the annual Fort Sisseton Festival, several nature hikes and a fishing derby.

Enjoy one of these weekend events:

- Fort Sisseton Historical Festival, Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, June 4-6. The West is alive and well at Fort Sisseton during this annual June celebration. Observe cavalry, artillery and infantry demonstrations. The festival includes continuous living history demonstrations, musical entertainment, and food booths. Visit the Rendezvous camp or watch arena events. Kids 11 and under free. Camping available. Info: 605-448-5474

- Prairie Trails National Trails Day Walk, Custer State Park, June 5, 9 a.m. MDT. From wildflowers to grasses, from wildlife to unseen beauty, this guided hike exposes participants to the significance of the Great Plains. This is an easy to moderate hike. Participants will meet at the Wildlife Station Visitor Center. Info: 605-225-4515

- Little Devil's Tower National Trails Day Hike, Custer State Park, June 5, 1 p.m. MDT. This guided hike takes participants to one of the highest points in the Black Hills. Hiking through a spruce-pine forest, then through a rocky terrain, participants will venture to the summit of the geological landscape. This hike is considered strenuous and is not recommended for people with health conditions or physical limitations. Meet at the Sylvan Lake General Store parking lot. Info: 605-255-4515

- Festival of Feathers, Indian Creek Recreation Area, June 5, 10 a.m. CDT. West Whitlock Recreation Area, June 6, 10 a.m. CDT. Participants will go on a guided hike, learn some basic identification tips, try to spot some of the local inhabitants, listen to guest speakers and make some bird-themed nature crafts. Info: 605-845-7112

- Geocaching and basic GPS, Lake Thompson Recreation Area, June 5, 7 p.m. CDT. Learn the basics of the GPS and the fun and excitement of Geocaching, a modern-day treasure hunt. Info: 605-847-4893

- 4th Annual Kids' fishing derby, Oahe Downstream Recreation Area, June 5, 10 a.m. Kids will have the opportunity to fish and win prizes for the largest, smallest, and most unusual catches of the day. A limited number of fishing poles and bait will be provided. Event is weather dependent. Info: 605-223-7722

The programs are open to all ages. There is no cost to participate in any of the events, though a park entrance license is required.

For more info on South Dakota state parks, visit www.gfp.sd.gov or call 605-773-3391.

Ozarks River Holds Hot Spot For Keeper Bass

BY BRENT FRAZEE

(c) 2010, The Kansas City Star

LAKE OZARK, Mo. — On a beautiful spring morning, Lake of the Ozarks was buzzing with activity from bass and crappie fishermen.

But not far from there, Alfred Chapman was in a different world. He was fishing the Osage River below Bagnell Dam, searching for the bruiser bass that have given central Missouri fame.

And in his eyes, he wasn't sacrificing a thing by not joining the crowd.

"Look at this. Hardly a boat on here," Chapman said. "Everyone must be up on the big lake, fishing for bass."

"There's some great fishing up there, but it's pretty darned good on this old river, too."

"It's just that the Osage gets overlooked."

Not by Chapman, 54, of Rolla, Mo. He started a guide service this year centered on a desire to show fishermen "the other side of Lake of the Ozarks."

He has fished the Osage most of his life, long enough to know that the river offers some surpris-

ingly good bass fishing. While others are up on the big lake, casting to boat docks and fishing points, Chapman often is fishing the moving water of the Osage.

And by the end of the day, his catch often compares favorably with that of the lake fishermen.

Consider a recent weekday. No sooner had a reporter asked Chapman about the biggest bass he had ever caught on the river, he produced the fish.

He cast a jig tipped with a twin-tail plastic trailer to a rock bar just a few miles downstream from Bagnell Dam and immediately felt a tap. When he set the hook, that faint bite turned into a heavy pull.

The bass came to surface and wallowed, then angled into the current in an effort to get away. But this time, the big one didn't get away.

Soon, Chapman was grabbing the giant bass by the lip and admiring his catch.

"That fish will probably go between 6 and 7 pounds," he said before easing it back into the water. "That's my biggest bass ever on this river."

"But there are lots of good, solid keepers in here."

Chapman produced more proof throughout the day.

He and I caught and released 27 bass in the first five miles below Bagnell Dam. Many of them were 15 inches or larger.

But that wasn't all. We also caught huge drum, a few walleyes and some white bass.

The key to our success? Well, it never hurts to have a little bit of luck on your side.

Electricity was being generated at the dam, creating current in the river. That meant the water level was rising, which often triggers the bass to move shallow and feed.

Chapman's experience also played a big part. He was using a jig that he hand-ties, a bait that often lures bass when the water is rising.

The biggest factors down here on the river are the current and the changing water levels," he said. "I look for current breaks or good cover, like laydowns, boulders or stumps."

And when the water is high, as it is now? Chapman often goes up creeks and sloughs and flips to the cover there.

"These bass want to get out of

that fast current," said Chapman, who runs the Lake Ozark River Fishing Guide service. "Sometimes, I can go a mile or more up these creeks when the river is high."

"I've caught some nice fish that way."

Chapman uses everything from jig and pig to spinnerbaits and buzzbaits to Senkos to catch the river bass. When he is looking for some variety, he will go the lower end of the Osage and fish for smallmouth bass.

The stretch from Tusculumbia to Wardsville offers good opportunities, he said.

Chapman also guides fishermen on the Gasconade and Big Piney rivers for smallmouths. But he admits that the Osage is his favorite.

"I've been fishing the Osage since I was 7 or 8," he said. "I'd go along with my dad, and we'd use Lazy Ikes and Bambinos to catch walleyes and bass."

"Back then, we'd catch fish to eat. Now it's for recreation. We release the bass we catch."

"But the fishing's still good. If anything, the bass fishing has gotten better over the years."

Focus Of New Book Keys On Preservation Of Sharks

BY SUSAN COCKING

(c) 2010, The Miami Herald

MIAMI — Jim Abernethy firmly believes that anyone who really gets to know a shark will switch from fearing the animal to wanting to protect it.

"They're not man-eaters. They're like dogs. They have different personalities," Abernethy said.

Abernethy, a well-known shark diving pioneer and photographer who operates live-aboard and day-trip dive boats in Palm Beach County, has just published a book full of breathtaking photos and informative text aimed at turning shark haters into shark advocates.

Sharks Up Close explains in simple terms why sharks are important to the health of oceans worldwide and exhorts the reader to get

involved with organizations dedicated to protecting these apex predators.

"I wrote it because I knew sharks were headed for extinction," Abernethy, 52, said in a telephone interview. "I'm worried the oceans are going to collapse one at a time because of the loss of apex predators."

According to Abernethy and other shark experts, the animals play a vital role in the marine environment by preying on sick or weak marine creatures. This culling process strengthens gene pools and helps to curb disease outbreaks.

But people worldwide are catching and killing sharks faster than the species can reproduce, mainly under the false but lucrative assumption that shark fins and livers are valuable as aphrodisiacs or medicines.

Backed by information from the World Health Organization, Abernethy writes that shark meat has such high concentrations of mercury — a heavy metal that, once ingested, never leaves the body — that it is widely considered unsafe for human consumption. Mercury poisoning can cause birth defects, neurological problems and even sexual dysfunction.

Abernethy believes people should either leave sharks alone, or like him, visit them in their natural environment to observe how they behave.

"Sharks are smart, graceful, interesting..." he wrote. "Sharks are COOL."

Abernethy said that the animals' reputation as a threat to people is false, citing statistics that, on average, less than one person per year is

killed by a shark in U.S. waters. Deer, he writes, kill an average of 130 people per year.

Abernethy said shark bites are usually a mistake; the animals do not seek out people as a food source. But on his dive boat two years ago, Austrian tourist Markus Groh was fatally injured when a shark bit him during an underwater feeding in the Bahamas. "It was an accident, a mistake," Abernethy said. "I've never seen a shark attack anyone."

As an illustration, a photo in the book shows a tiger shark investigating a wad of seaweed by biting it, even though seaweed is not part of its diet.

Abernethy hopes his book will become a staple of marine education programs in schools and a favorite of nature lovers.

OUTDOOR REPORT

Make Reservations To Camp Labor Day Weekend In S.D.

PIERRE — Campers making plans for Labor Day weekend can begin reserving campsites in South Dakota state parks on June 5 for arrival on Friday, Sept. 3. For reservations, call 800-710-2267 or go online to www.campsd.com.

A three-night stay is required during holiday weekends at all state parks, except Custer State Park.

Reservations for campsites and camping cabins in South Dakota state parks can be made within 90 days of arrival dates. Custer State Park is currently accepting reservations for the entire camping season. Reservations for state lodges at Mina Lake, Shadethill, Newton Hills, Palisades, Oahe Downstream and Lake Thompson are currently being taken for stays through this calendar year.

The call center is open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily Central Time.

Online reservations can be made 24 hours a day, but sites cannot be reserved until 7 a.m. on the first day of the 90-day window. There is a \$7.70 nonresident reservation fee per site, which does not apply to South Dakota residents. A daily or annual park entrance license is required on all vehicles entering the park. Entrance fees are in addition to camping fees.

For additional information on South Dakota state parks and recreation areas and to view the 90-day window calendar, visit the South Dakota state parks website at www.gfp.sd.gov.

Trolley Rides Allow Physically Limited To Visit Mickelson Trail

DEADWOOD — On June 8, visitors to the Deadwood area have the opportunity to view the Mickelson Trail without the need for bicycles or even walking shoes.

The Mickelson Trail staff, City of Deadwood, Deadwood Chamber of Commerce, and Neighborhood Housing Services of the Black Hills are joining to offer trolley rides to people with physical limitations who want to view the scenic trail.

The trolley, which will leave at 1 p.m. MDT from the Deadwood Trailhead, will provide tours of the Mickelson Trail from Englewood to Rochford. Riders will learn the history of the abandoned railroad and the inception of the popular trail. Rides are about three hours long. The trolley has space available for up to two people who use wheelchairs.

Reservations are required. Each person reserving a space on the trolley will be required to have a handicapped parking permit. One assistant is allowed to accompany the person, if needed. Call 605-578-1401 for reservations and arrangements. The Deadwood Chamber of Commerce will provide refreshments, and the City of Deadwood will provide the trolley.

For more information, contact the Deadwood Chamber of Commerce at 800-999-1876 or the Mickelson Trail office at 605-584-3896.

Funding Available For Outdoor Recreation

PIERRE — South Dakota State Park Director Doug Hofer announced today that applications are being accepted for grants from the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Outdoor recreation projects sponsored by city, county, township and tribal governments are eligible to receive the grant money.

"Outdoor recreation is important to a healthy community," Hofer said. "Families can spend time together close to home while enjoying the variety of recreational opportunities parks have to offer."

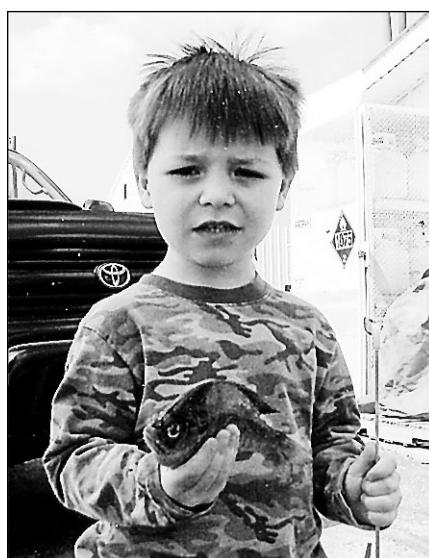
The Land & Water Conservation Fund provides up to 50 percent reimbursement for approved outdoor recreation projects.

Examples of eligible projects include new playground equipment or ball diamonds or swimming pool renovation projects. The application deadline is June 30, 2010.

S.D. Will Allow Aug. Geese Hunting

PIERRE — In an effort to control crop depredation by Canada geese, the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Commission has decided to allow hunters to participate in an August Canada Goose Take Season this year. The season will be held in 15

counties of 32. The August Canada Goose Take Season will be held in Brookings, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Hamlin, Grant, Kingsbury, Lake, McCook, Marshall, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody and Roberts counties.



Hunter Eggen caught this bluegill on April 22 at Lake Yankton.



Lindsay Christen caught this 25.9-pound spring turkey, her first, on April 17. Pictured with her is Mark Nedved.

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