

OUTDOORS DIGEST

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

York County Cougar Report Unconfirmed

YORK, Neb. (AP) — Another report of a cougar has reached York County officials. The York News-Times says a Waco-area resident reported seeing what appeared to be a cougar in the resident's yard on Tuesday morning. The resident said the animal leaped a 5-foot-tall fence as it left the property. The York County Sheriff's Department says no paw prints were found and the sighting has not been confirmed. Cougars have turned up as far east in Nebraska as Omaha. There were several unconfirmed cougar reports last summer in York County.

Disabled Youth Deer Hunt Sept. 14-15

CLARK — A free whitetail deer hunt for disabled youth is seeking participants for the event, to be held Sept. 14-15 near Clark. The PDR Hunt is a non-profit organization that provides a white-tail deer hunt to disabled youth. The hunt is held annually in mid-September. Qualified participants receive an all-expenses paid hunting adventure. Included for both hunter and one parent or guardian are: meals/lodging for two nights as well as access to: firearms, ammunition, targets, prime private hunting land, special ground-level deer blinds with hard surface floors to accommodate wheel chairs, individual hunting guides, transportation to/from the field. For more information, contact Dean Rasmussen at 605-233-0331. Applications are available online at www.pdryouthhunt.com.

Backyard Camping Workshop June 16

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Becoming an Outdoors-Family program is hosting a Backyard Camping Workshop June 16 at Lincoln's Pioneers Park Nature Center. The workshop will cover all aspects of family camping, including campsite and fire building, games and meal preparation. To register, contact Andrea Faas at 402-441-7895 or afaas@lincoln.ne.gov.

Lincoln Izaak Walton League to Host Family Camp

LINCOLN, Neb. — The annual Family Camp, hosted by the Lincoln Izaak Walton League, Husker Covey/Quail Unlimited and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, will be held June 23 at the Lincoln Izaak Walton League Shooting Range. This free event is for families with youth ages 11 to 17 who want to learn new outdoor skills, including rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader and archery shooting, as well as fishing. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Participants must register at huntsafenebraska.org by June 19. The Lincoln Izaak Walton Shooting Range is located a half-mile north of 134th Street and Nebraska Highway 2.

Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium to Host Geocaching Workshop

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium Outdoor Education Center will host a geocaching workshop June 16. Geocaching involves searching for hidden treasures using GPS devices. After learning the basics, participants will spend time geocaching at Schramm Park State Recreation Area. The event is from 10 a.m. to noon. The aquarium is located at 21502 West Nebraska Highway 31, Gretna. Call 402-332-3901 to register. Space is limited.

Pitchin' The Shoreline In S.D.

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

The road that we were on, leading to the water we'd be fishing, wasn't quite minimum maintenance, but it was close, but the body of water, which it led to, had been producing really nice fish and we weren't about to let a muddy road stop us from completing our mission.

Team Member Larry Myhre and I had arrived shortly after lunch and met up with Team member, Cory Ewing of Waubay Lakes Guide Service at Sportsman's Cove (www.sportsmanscove.20m.com) where



Gary HOWEY

we talked with Doug, got the latest fishing report and picked up supplies and tackle for the afternoon trip.

Our plan, on trip would be to fish one of the numerous sloughs in the Webster/Waubay area, that, because of the high water tables over the last several years were now huge lakes.

In this part of north-eastern South Dakota, there are countless numbers of sloughs that had now become lakes and numerous smaller lakes that now joined with other lakes and sloughs, forming some of the largest natural lakes in the state.

The no name slough we were about to launch on was known for it's excellent walleye population as well as some nice perch and we were anxious to get started on another of the great fishing excursions with Cory.

Our plan would be to cast crank baits or jigs up into the shallows as we'd done before on numerous other trips and to ever so slowly work them back towards the boat. It didn't take Cory long, just a couple of cast before he hooked into the first of our many good walleyes.

The walleyes were up in the shallows, feeding after the rigorous spawning season, which had just completed in the last week or so.

The spawn, which is hardest on the females, who had moved deep to recuperate after the spawn, eating very little and now it was time for them and the aggressive males to fill up before heading into their summer haunts.

Pitching jigs or crankbaits up along the shoreline is an excellent method for not only taking walleyes, but also bass and other predator fish. This method works on all bodies of water as we'd proven on our last trips to Lake Sharpe and on lower and upper Lake Oahe.



PHOTO: GARY HOWEY
Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Larry Myhre is pictured with one of the walleyes that were taken on a recent fishing trip to the Webster-Waubay area in northeast South Dakota.

We'd be pitching Lindy Shadlings, Rapala's and Fuzz-Grubs tipped with minnows or pieces of a crawler, all of which imitated the baitfish and other food sources found in the lake.

Using Fireline and light mono, we shot our baits into the shallows and if the walleyes didn't pick it up as it hit the water, we'd work them back towards the boat using a hopping method.

On the retrieve, we needed to keep the slack out of our lines as many times a fish would follow the bait to the boat and with out a tight line, they could pick it up and unless we had a tight line, we may not detect the bite.

As we worked our way around on point onto another, there were very few casts

when one of us would have a pick up and a fish on.

All of the fish we took were fat and healthy, indicating that the food base, which was primarily fresh water shrimp and other small prey species which the walleyes and other fish in this and other bodies of water in the area were feeding on.

After a short afternoon on the water, we finished out the day with our two man limit of fish running from 16" on up to 21", not bad for as few hours of casting crankbaits up on a shore line.

Looking at the weather report that evening, it looked as if the weather would be similar to that afternoon, with on e exception as there was a chance the wind would

After-School Walleye Program Special For Fisherman

BY SAM COOK
(c)2012 Duluth News Tribune
(Duluth, Minn.)

SILVER BAY, Minn. — The canoe already was on Ward Kaiser's pickup when he came home from school Wednesday afternoon. Except for grabbing some leeches, he was virtually ready. He tossed an old blue pack with tackle, rain gear and his fishing rod in the truck.

Kaiser, 40, calls this kind of outing an "after-school special."

Up the back roads, into the boonies, he will head for a remote lake somewhere in the vicinity of the Sawbill Trail north of Tofte, Minn. It's late May, and Kaiser knew a spot where the walleyes school this time of year. He needed a bow paddler, so he gave me a call.

"I like to go on weekdays when I can," said Kaiser, a social studies teacher and football coach at Kelley High School in Silver Bay. "There usually aren't many other people."

Getting to the lake involves a modest amount of paddling and portaging. Out of courtesy to Kaiser, we'll keep it nameless.

This is the kind of little trip that you can do only if you're lucky enough to live someplace like Silver Bay or Ely or Grand Rapids or a hundred other communities across Northeastern Minnesota. It is, in fact, why a lot of people like Kaiser and his wife, Liz, choose to live here, close to the land and the water and all the opportunities they offer.

If your gear is ready — and it always is — you can be fishing in an hour or so after work, stay until dark, come out by starlight, clean fish and call it a late night.

"Sometimes, I'm a little tired in the morning," Kaiser said. But it beats watching "The Bachelorette." Or even the Twins. Kaiser had been specific about how we'd be fishing for these walleyes.

"Black jigs. One-eighth ounce," he had said. We found the spot along a little bulge in the shoreline where a white pine stands above the rest of the forest. We dropped the anchor, a rock we had borrowed from the last portage.

Kaiser tipped his jig with a minnow. I tried a leech. Already, the evening cool was

descending over the water. The forecast called for frost warnings. We were worried that the cold might put the walleyes off their feed.

"On the plus side, at least we won't be sweating on the way out," Kaiser said.

We tossed our jigs into about 7 feet of water and bounced them down a rocky drop to about 12 feet. I picked up a 16-inchery pretty quickly, and we hoped that was a sign of things to come.

This was not a catch-and-release endeavor. It was a catch-and-string mission. Kaiser was having a gathering at his place over the weekend, and he hoped to fry some fish.

It was a handsome evening. A shard of half-moon tickled the tree-tops on its way west. The lake was nearly still.

We could hear the soft splashing of loons a long way off.

It was good to be with Kaiser. We had crossed paths about 20 years earlier when he was at the University of Minnesota Duluth. It had been fun to meet Liz, who sent us off with tummies full of her wild rice soup, and two of his three young daughters. Allison, 9, had been busy at the kitchen table, working on illustrations for the book she had written, "The Three Little Mice." She told me all about the family's recent trip to Arizona.

Because he's a good dad and a family guy, Kaiser doesn't abuse his freedom to make these quick fishing trips. Once a week at best. The Kaisers recently bought a travel trailer, and they hope to do a lot of camping with the girls this

summer. There's a good chance they'll be learning about fishing along the way.

While we fished, we talked about kids and schools and football and mayflies and a hundred other things. It looked as if there was going to be plenty of time for conversation between bites.

"I think we should move just a little bit," Kaiser said.

We moved twice during the evening, fishing shallower after the sun had dropped behind the tree line. The walleyes certainly weren't eager to participate. They'd tentatively suck on our leeches or mouth our minnows, and we missed a lot of hits. But with persistence, we began to put some fish on the stringer. I took three on leeches. Then Kaiser began putting on a minnow-and-black-jig clinic. Pretty soon we had a decent stringer, a one-person limit of six walleyes.

We slowed our presentations, dragging our baits along the bottom rather than jiggling them actively. Like gamblers responding to intermittent reinforcement, we kept catching just enough walleyes to keep us happy.

But the night was darned cool. It became somewhat problematic to tie on a new jig if you snagged up, or to pick up a leech that fell to the bottom of the canoe. Grabbing a walleye alongside the canoe felt

good because the fish were much warmer than our fingers.

We kept thinking the fish might turn on and go on a minor feeding binge, but that never happened.

"They're not poundin'," Kaiser said.

No. But one by one, they kept us interested until, at 9:35, when it was too dark to see your black jig dangling below your rod tip, we put the last walleye in the canoe. We had an even dozen, our limit, all from 15 to 18 inches long. We had thrown back a couple of others.

We hadn't found the odd 21- or 22-incher that Kaiser often finds on his after-school get-aways, but the stringer looked good in the moonlight. Kaiser would have a decent fish fry.

Back at shore, we were both shivering, and our words came out in little pieces. Kaiser pulled his gloves from his pack. I was mildly envious. Once we got to portaging, we began to warm up a little.

On our last lake, moonlight reflected on the water, breaking into white ribbons where it intersected the canoe's wake. Stars had begun to poke through the night sky. The only sounds were sucking of the water in the little swirls behind our paddle strokes.

That, and the occasional flop of a walleye on the bottom of the canoe.

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Beau Heimes, 12, caught this 9-pound, 4-ounce drum on June 2 while shore-fishing on the Missouri River north of Wynot, Neb. He caught it with his favorite lure, a Strike King crank bait.

Health Alert Issued For Two Nebraska Lakes Over Algae

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — State officials have issued a health alert for two lakes in southeast Nebraska.

The two lakes are Rockford Lake, which is southeast of Beatrice in Gage County, and Swan Creek Lake No. 5, which is near Tobias in Saline County.

Officials say water samples showed high levels of a toxin released by blue-green algae. The levels exceeded the state's threshold.

Some types of toxic blue-green algae can produce dangerous toxins.

People can still camp, fish and boat on lakes under an alert, but they should not have full-body contact with the water.

Drinking toxin-tainted water can cause vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory failure and, rarely, death.

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