

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

S.D. State Parks Offers Nature Camps For Kids

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

North Point Recreation Area is hosting a Nature Day Camp on Monday, June 17, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. CDT at Lake Wagner City Park in Wagner. Activities include disc golf, arts and crafts, nature exploration, kayaking and archery. Call 605-487-7046 for more information.

Kids' fishing will be held at Rocky Point Recreation Area near Belle Fourche from 9:30 a.m. to noon MDT on Wednesday, June 19. Call 605-745-6996 to register.

Kids will learn all about trees at Big Sioux Recreation Area near Brandon on Thursday, June 20, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. CDT. Participants will enjoy a hands-on lesson, craft project, hike and games. Call 605-594-3824 for more information or 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.

For a complete list of state park events, visit South Dakota state parks on the web at www.gfp.sd.gov

Johnson Lake SRA To Host Craft Fair June 8

LINCOLN, Neb. — Johnson Lake State Recreation Area (SRA) south of Lexington is hosting its Craft Fair on June 8.

Approximately 30 vendors will be showing and selling their items from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the main park entrance in the campground overflow area.

Contact the SRA for more information at 308-785-2685 or ngpc.johnson.lake@nebraska.gov. A park entry permit is required.

National Survey Will Explore Dove Hunter Opinions

LINCOLN, Neb. — Some Nebraska dove hunters will be asked to participate in the National Dove Hunter Survey. Hunters will begin seeing surveys in the mail later in June.

The national survey will ask dove hunters to share their experiences and opinions about dove hunting. Topics will include learning about hunter characteristics, time spent hunting, hunters' perceived constraints to hunting, and thoughts about potential effects of spent lead from hunting ammunition on mourning doves and other wildlife.

Only a random sample of hunters who indicated they had hunted doves on their Harvest Information Program registrations will receive the surveys. The survey is a cooperative effort by the state fish and wildlife agencies, all flyway councils and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"The results from this survey will allow state and federal agencies to better communicate issues concerning dove hunting and to make more informed decisions when addressing issues related to future dove hunting," said Jeff Lusk, upland game program manager for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

There aren't too many fishing publications or fishing shows where you don't hear the words structure being used a lot and you can bet if you locate the structure in a body of water, you're going to find the fish.

What exactly is structure? My definition of structure would be any difference or change that appears on the bottom. At times it might be large and at others it's minuscule.

No matter what size or type of structure you find on a given body of water, you can bet that some aquatic life exists in the area.

So know we know the fish you're hoping to catch might be relating to some structure in the lake, all you need to do is to locate the right piece of structure.

This change in the bottom contour can attract many different types of aquatic creatures.

To put it into above water terms: lets pretend an open pasture is your body of water with a large tree in the middle and a small clump of plum brush in the corner.

If a deer, coyote or a hunter enters the field, the first thing they're going to see is these two changes or features in the field and they'll be drawn to it.

These changes if they were under water would be called structure.

The change doesn't need to be huge, as I've caught walleyes relating to a slight depression on the bottom or areas where the bottom content changes from a soft mud bottom to one with hard gravel.

It could be a weedbed, rock pile, humps, points or the old river channel, submerged timber. I just t doesn't have to be a drastic change; it just needs to be something different.

How Do Fish Relate To Structure?

There have been studies made on that show us how fish relate to structure and how much is needed in order for the fish to be attracted to one particular area.

In studies, fish have been placed in stock tanks with no structure, which gave the fish nothing to relate to so they wan-

dered all over the bottom of the tank.

When anything was placed in the tank, the fish moved right into it.

The last part of this test really puts it into perspective. As a black dot was painted on one side of the tank, which attracted all of the fish, so even the slightest change in the bottom configuration or structure can and does attract fish.

What draws these fish to these areas is simple; structure gives the fish everything they need.

1. Food Source

Aquatic creatures are attracted to structure as this is where their food source is. Structure is attractive to all aquatic creatures, from the smallest microorganisms to the minnows and baitfish that feed on it as well as the larger game fish, as they will all be relating to or using the structure on the bottom.

Structure is where the aquatic food chain begins and ends in some instances.

2. Security

These areas also offer security, giving the aquatic insects, minnows, fry, crabs and other creatures a place to hide and hopefully to keep from being eaten.

3. Comfortable Water Temps

Some types of structure, for instance; weed beds and submerged timber give fish a place to get out of the sun and in the case of the weedbeds, is an area where more oxygenated water can be found

It doesn't take much of a change!

In the past, I've found walleyes lying in shallow muddied water during the heat of the day next to the only structure on that stretch of the river. It was a 4" deep depression running from the shore out into the deeper water. This foot wide trench was created when a heavy rain came off an adjacent road, cutting a small depression in the shallows.

The depression had attracted shiners, which had followed the zooplankton into the shoreline and were using the depression to hide from the game fish. When one made the mistake of poking his head out of the trench, a walleye was there to make sure that it didn't get a chance to make that mistake again.

We ran into a similar situation on recent trips to the Webster, SD area as the only real structure in the lake that we could find were submerged trees, not exactly what most people would consider prime walleye structure.

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.



Gary
HOWEY



PHOTO: TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES
Team Outdoorsmen Adventures Member Bill Christensen of Hartington, Neb., with an early season walleye taken from a slight depth change in the bottom structure on Lewis & Clark lake.

Well, there were several factures that made this ideal walleye habitat or structure.

The 25 MPH wind was blowing hard into the trees and had blown zooplankton in along the shoreline, which brought the baitfish into the area.

The wind blowing into the shoreline where the submerged trees were standing had created a "magnum" mud line.

Mud lines are created when waves crash into the shoreline. As they move back away from the shore, they carry sediment out into the water.

This muddied water had cut the suns penetration, giving the light sensitive walleyes the opportunity to move shallow into the flooded trees which now has become ideal structure attracting not only walleyes, but all species of predator fish.

On this trip, we tried several different methods to fish this area with the heavier Cabela's Firetiger colored lipless crankbaits being cast up into the trees working best.

One thing that some anglers do is to think that only one particular structure is holding all the fish in the lake and that area is the only place where the fish are biting.

When in fact that there are probably

dozens of other areas on the lake areas where the same scenario is being played out.

If you find some type of structure that's holding fish and don't want to fight the crowds. Take the information you've learned from that area and search for other structures that's similar as you can bet once you locate a similar area, there will be fish biting there also.

If the crowd is trolling crankbaits along a muddied up rocky shoreline with a 56 degree surface temperature with rocks extending out from the shore line into 5 to 6' foot of water, you should be able to take this information and head to another area with similar structure to see if you can find your own hot spot.

Not all structure in the lake will hold fish at the same time, but unless something changes drastically, every year when conditions are about the same, you'll be able to catch fish over certain types of structure.

It's not rocket science, it all has to do with the wind, water temps and water clarity.

On calm sunny days, in a clear water lake all aquatic life will relate to deeper structure to avoid the direct sunlight.

Of course the exception to this is if the wind is blowing hard as you'll want to fish the structure on the windy side as the food chain will be forced to follow their food and the mud line created allows the predator fish to move shallow to feed.

If you're fishing dirty or turbid water, you may be able to fish the shallow structure throughout the day until shallow water temperatures become too hot.

Don't overlook even the slightest piece of structure as a small change in the bottom contour can hold some truly big surprises.

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.

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
John Koletzky caught this Largemouth Bass on Lake Yankton.

PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
BELOW: Joann Blaaid caught these Walleye on Lewis & Clark Lake.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
ABOVE: Scott Dittmer caught these Catfish on the James River.

PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
Ashley Preisler caught this 8-pound, 5-ounce Walleye below Gavin's Point Dam.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
Jacob Bruns caught this Northern Pike below Gavin's Point Dam.

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Send Your Hunting, Fishing Photos To The Press & Dakotan At jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
Julie Stevens caught this Sauger on Lewis & Clark Lake.



Farley Fest
Milbank, SD

**\$30 General Admission • \$45 Reserved
\$80 VIP • \$20 Student**

Saturday, June 29 • 7:30 p.m. • Farley Park, Milbank
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