

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Neb. Hunter Education
Instructors Recognized

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is honoring volunteer hunter education instructors who have provided training of novice hunters for at least 20 years.

The following instructors, with years of service, are being recognized in June and July, and each will receive a certificate and gift from an area conservation officer:

22 Years — Dale G. DeLamotte, Doniphan; Gary E. Howey, Hartington.

21 Years — Robert L. Brammeier, Sterling; Jill L. Dahl, Grand Island; John J. Eskins Jr., Wynot; Joseph R. Kovarik, Grand Island; Richard M. Higgins, Hartington.

20 Years — Robert B. Barton, Alexandria; Gary L. Dedrickson, Clay Center; Russ Fangmeyer, Deshler; Larry G. Guy, Beaver City; Mark Hagedorn, West Point; Kenneth Hager, DeWitt; Ted M. Hillman, Lynch; Doug McCloud, Bridgeport; William Miller, Oakdale; Max Nickel, DeWitt; Lonny Polacek, Kearney; Henry W. Prokup, Crete; Duane Risinger, Orchard; Larry L. Teahon, Chadron; David E. Thome, Hastings.

Neb. Officials: Leave
Wildlife Babies Alone

LINCOLN, Neb. — It is natural for some people who see a young wild animal apparently abandoned by its mother to want to rescue it. The correct course of action is to leave it alone.

Here are some rules of thumb from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission:

- A lone fawn, or other young bird or mammal, may appear to be abandoned or injured, but the mother frequently is off feeding or drinking. Do not move it. The longer the fawn is separated from its mother, the slimmer the chance that it will be reunited with her. In some cases, an orphaned fawn will be adopted by other deer.
- It is normal for a doe to leave its fawn to keep it from being detected by predators. The doe can be seen by predators as it feeds, so she leaves the fawn hidden and leaves the area to draw attention away from the fawn's location.
- Do not try to raise wildlife babies as pets. As animals mature, they become more independent and follow natural instincts to leave and establish their own territories. Rescued animals are poorly prepared for life in the wild.
- Most wildlife babies are protected by state or federal law and it is illegal to possess them.

New Neb. Regulations In
Place To Restrict Baitfish

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The state Game and Parks Commission says new regulations are in place to restrict the movement of baitfish collected in eastern Nebraska.

The commission says it's now illegal for individuals or bait dealers to transport any baitfish away from the Missouri River that were collected downstream of Gavins Point Dam. The restriction also applies to rivers and streams east of U.S. Highway 81 from the South Dakota border to York, north of Interstate 80 from York to Lincoln, and east of U.S. Highway 77 from Lincoln to the Kansas border.

Officials say they're concerned about the movement of small Asian carp and white perch, along with other invasive species.

Spearfishing Enthusiasts
Seek More Opportunities

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Bill Donovan of Sioux Falls often makes the long trek to the Missouri River to spearfish, and he'd love to be able to enjoy his sport a little closer to home.

South Dakota's spearfishing season opens Saturday, but for those wanting to bring home walleyes or crappie, heading out to the Missouri is about the only option.

The Game, Fish and Parks Commission this past year expanded spearfishing in the state, extending the season's winter ending dates by a half month and allowing for the shooting of northern pike in East River lakes.

But Donovan says the expansion is largely symbolic because spearfishing enthusiasts want the same fish as hook-and-line anglers. And he says East River lakes are typically too cloudy by the time the season opens.

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Introducing Youth To Outdoors

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

As I become more "mature", I find that being in the outdoors becomes much more important to me each day.

Much of it is just getting away from the office and the racket that's associated with it!

To me it's an escape and a chance for me to get back to my roots.

My brother and I were very fortunate to have mentors to teach us about the outdoors. Our mentors were our Dad who did some hunting, our grandparents that fished a lot and our next door neighbor, Glen Matteson, who did everything imaginable in the outdoors.

Glen was really into the outdoors. He knew about archery, up-land game, waterfowl, trapping, ice fishing and everything there was to know about the outdoors.

We thought he was the smartest man in the world when it came to the outdoors.

He knew just where the fish were biting, when the geese came through, when the furs were prime and the answer to every stupid question we asked.

We spent hours in his garage looking over his "Stuff". Glen has lots of stuff, especially outdoor gear. I believe he had enough outdoor gear in his garage to open up a sporting goods store.

He was willing to answer all of our questions, no matter how silly they may be. We were like a couple of hungry bullheads gobbling up all the information he could give us.

Armed with the information we gleaned from Dad, our grandparents and Glen, my brother and I spent every minute we could a block from our house along the Sioux River, and a mile away around Lake Pelican.

There wasn't much in the outdoors that we didn't do! We fished, hunted, trapped, shot bows, hiked and did all the things kids could do in the outdoors.

We were really lucky to have someone to get us interested in the outdoors.

These days, things have changed! It used to be that a large part of our population were rural and people that lived in the rural areas were closer to the land, they knew that hamburger came from a cow and pork came from a hog, not from McDonalds.

They knew hunting and fishing were part of the American Heritage and a huge part of the wildlife management program.

The sad thing about things today is the fact that those that fish and hunt are the minority and as the minority we need to get our behinds off the couch and start promoting our sports.

There are getting to be fewer and fewer folks like my neighbor Glen, people who will take the time to introduce a kid to the outdoors.

Many kids come from one parent households with a parent who doesn't know much if anything about the outdoor or who have no one in their family whose into the outdoors to teach them.

We can no longer sit by and think our sports are holding their own and there are people out there willing to teach people about the outdoors.

It's up to you and me and other members of the hunting and fishing society to show youngsters all the great things that the outdoors has to offer.

You can pitch in and help by becoming a fishing instructor for the Game & Parks or DNR. No one expects you to know everything there is to know about the fishing, you're going to be talking with youngsters that are eager for every bit of information they can get on the sport.

And you know what, you're just the one who can give them that information! No one knows everything about fishing and those that think they do aren't the types of individuals you want to have as teachers any way!



PHOTO: TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES
Dylan Kneifl of Pilger, Neb., is pictured with a bass he caught on one of his first outings with his grandfather.

Groups like Pheasants Forever and other wildlife conservation groups have mentor hunts and these groups are always looking for volunteers to help out.

Cub and Boy Scout groups have wildlife and conservation merit badges, the leaders of these groups would love to have you come in and talk with their group.

Every state has a Hunter's Safety program, I know these programs can use all the help they can get. Even if you don't have time to become a full fledged instructor, you can always volunteer to talk to the kids about archery, muzzleloading or dog handling.

All you need to do is to take a kid out and show him how to catch a fish, doesn't need to be a monster fish. In fact, it's best if you start kids on easy fish to catch like bullheads or bluegill.



Gary
HOWEY

In Frogs' Croaks, Volunteer Hears Nature's Pulse

LONG LAKE, Minn. (AP) — Half an hour past sunset in rural western Hennepin County, Madeleine Linck strains her ears. She's listening, believe it or not, for the sounds of courtship.

Frog courtship, that is. Linck is helping with a survey gauging the presence of the state's 14 frog and toad species. She's listening for the male mating call.

"The females do no calling," Linck said.

She offers no judgment on the family values of frogs.

"The females, once they lay their eggs, usually disperse pretty quickly and the males will hang out and be hopeful another female might come by," she told Minnesota Public Radio.

The survey started 19 years ago due to concerns worldwide that amphibian populations were in decline

due to habitat destruction, disease and other factors. Results show the state's frog and toad population is relatively stable with the exception of gray tree frogs and spring peepers, where the number of calls heard is down.

A frog's life is treacherous — predators, weather, disease and even traffic can take a heavy toll.

"They cross our busy roads, and on a rainy night, thousands will be run over," Linck said.

Why worry about frogs? Well, for one, experts say, their numbers tell us about the health of our environment.

Linck is one of the original volunteers for the survey. She grew up in suburban Massachusetts captivated by the out-of-doors generally, birds and amphibians specifically, and moved to Minnesota 25 years ago.

As the night goes on, the males come awake and are calling out to available females.

Frogs' and tadpoles' popularity as food for other critters is what makes them interesting for study. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources herpetologist Carol Hall said tadpoles especially are an important source of food. She said wading birds, raccoons, even other frogs make a meal of them. Going the other direction on the food chain, frogs eat a lot of invertebrates.

Hall said frogs and toads are worth saving not only because of their importance in the food chain but also for potential benefits to humans if research shows ways to make use of their antifungal properties, the ability to regenerate tissue and recover from freezing.

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT

SUBMITTED PHOTO
Keith Tramp caught this 4-pound, 11-ounce Walleye at Lewis & Clark Lake on June 5.



DO YOU HAVE A PHOTO?

Send Your Hunting, Fishing
Photos To The P&D At
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Minnesota Man Leaves A Lasting Legacy For Muskies

BY DOUG SMITH

(c) 2013 Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

MINNEAPOLIS — Hugh Becker was a modest, frugal man whose passion for fishing and the outdoors ran so deep he left his entire \$3 million estate primarily to benefit fish and anglers.

His life was remarkable _ from baseball fields at the University of Minnesota, to battlefields in the South Pacific in World War II, to his efforts to bolster fish and wildlife conservation in Minnesota.

Becker, a die-hard muskie angler, worked for years as a physical therapist at the former Minneapolis Veterans Administration hospital. He never married and had no relatives, so when it came time to consider what to do with his fortune, the decision was easy. He set up a nonprofit foundation that — in perpetuity — funnels the yearly earnings of those millions to the Twin Cities Chapter of Muskies Inc., which Becker helped start, and to the little Chippewa Rod and Gun Club in Chippewa Falls, Wis., where he fished.

"The money goes to fisheries, stocking, habitat work and youth programs," said George Selcke of Minnetonka, a friend of Becker's and chairman of the Hugh C. Becker Foundation.

Since Becker's death in 2007 at age 89, almost \$700,000 has been distributed. The principal continues to grow, so his legacy will live indefinitely. Yet, most Minnesotans — even the 1.5 million anglers — probably have never heard of

Hugh Becker.

Who was this guy, where did he get all of that money, and why did he leave it to benefit muskies and muskie fishing?

Here's his tale:

A STROKE OF LUCK

Becker was born in Olivia, Minn., grew up in south Minneapolis and attended Washburn High School. He lettered in baseball at the University of Minnesota from 1938-1940, and was a weightlifting champion. When World War II broke out, he joined the Marines and saw action at Guadalcanal and Okinawa in the South Pacific as an artillery officer. After the war, Becker worked as a physical therapist.

But physical therapists don't make millions. His top salary was \$17,500.

A stay at the Naval Base in San Diego shortly after the war changed his future _ and, strangely, the future of muskies in Minnesota and elsewhere. A wealthy San Diego family befriended Becker, taught him about investing and, when they died, left him a substantial inheritance.

"He received something like \$51,000 a year from 1949 to 2000," Selcke said. "He never touched it; he would just invest that money. He was a very shrewd investor."

Despite his wealth, he lived frugally. Except when it came to fishing.

"He had the best fishing equipment money could buy," said Sel-

cke, who himself was wounded in the Vietnam War and was treated by Becker at the VA hospital in 1969. They became close friends.

"He had 30 days off a year at the VA, and he would go two weeks in the spring and two weeks in the fall to Lake of the Woods to fish muskies, bass and everything," Selcke said. "He also fished a lot at Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls."

Paul Hartman, 43, of Blaine, another friend, said he tried to encourage Becker to splurge a little and hire muskie-fishing guides to take him on some of his favorite waters.

"He looked at spending money on guides as wasteful," said Hartman, who runs the yearly Minnesota Muskie Expo. Becker drove a modest sedan, "and his boat was a 15-footer, nothing fancy."

AHEAD OF HIS TIME

Becker never married, though he and Helen Ness of Minneapolis

were close companions for years. And she was an accomplished angler herself.

When Muskies Inc. was being founded, Becker argued that the group should include women and children, because both were essential to the future of fishing, he thought.

And when he set up his foundation, he wanted some of the proceeds to go to kids programs, which it does.

Becker also helped launch the catch-and-release philosophy, now commonplace, especially among muskie anglers.

"Back then, it was a tough sales pitch," Hartman said. "He firmly believed if you keep putting them back, there'd be more to chase when you returned."

With the permission of the Wisconsin DNR, he tagged and released muskies he caught in Wisconsin, which showed catch-and-release worked.

"He tagged more than 1,000 muskies over 30 years," Selcke said.

A LASTING LEGACY

Becker made it clear to Selcke how he wanted his millions to be used.

The Twin Cities chapter of Muskies Inc. gets 75 percent _ more than \$100,000 this year _ and a chunk of that is redistributed as grants to muskie groups and fisheries agencies around the nation and in Canada. The 150-member Chippewa Rod and Gun club gets 25 percent, and some of that, too, is redistributed to other groups.

"We've put over 700 fish cribs into Lake Wissota, for fish habitat," said Tim Hebert, treasurer of the club. "It's a man-made flowage with not a lot of natural structure. We stock trout in local creeks and release pheasants on public hunting grounds."

And the club recently held a Big Brothers-Big Sisters trout-fishing event.

Among the money Muskies Inc. distributed in Minnesota this year: \$4,000 to acquire shoreline habitat on Leech Lake, \$5,700 for muskie stocking on Lake Minnetonka, \$5,000 for muskie stocking in White Bear Lake, \$5,000 to assess muskie populations in the Mississippi River near Brainerd, and \$2,000 for youth programs in St. Cloud.

Other grants are going to programs in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Illinois and Ontario.

"Mr. Becker left a huge legacy for muskie fishing, not only here but nationally and in Canada," said Tom Keith, president of the Twin Cities Muskies Inc. chapter. "He lived such a varied life, with amazing experiences. His influence will last into the future."

Becker's name is on an 81-acre state wildlife management area near Olivia, land he inherited from his uncle, Fred Roeck, and donated to the state.

But otherwise, except for a few Muskies Inc. members, his philanthropy is virtually unknown.

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