

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Yankton Step Outside Event June 21

Yankton area youth will have a chance to participate in the sixth annual Yankton Step Outside event on Saturday, June 21. The event will take place at the Isaak Walton Trap Range east of Yankton on Highway 50 and will run from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Youth attending the event will be able to shoot shotguns, .22 rifles, BB guns, bow and arrow. The event is free and is open to youth 8 years old and older. All youth must be accompanied by an adult.

There will be a free lunch provided. The event will be held rain or shine, so come dressed for the weather.

If you have any questions, contact Conservation Officer Sam Schelhaas at 668-2985.

S.D. High School Fishing Championship Headed To Lake Mitchell

MITCHELL — The Bass Federation (TBF) and FLW, the world's largest tournament-fishing organization, have partnered to present the 2014 South Dakota State High School Fishing Championship on Sunday, June 15. The tournament will take place on Lake Mitchell in Mitchell and is open to any high school fishing team in the entire state of South Dakota.

The tournament will be held at the Mitchell City Boat Ramp on Indian Village Road in Mitchell. The South Dakota state championship is a two-person (team) event for students in grades 9-12. Registration for anglers and their coach, who will provide the boat they compete in, is online at HighSchoolFishing.org. Takeoff will be at 5:45 a.m. and weigh-in is scheduled for 3 p.m. at the boat ramp. High School Fishing takeoffs and weigh-ins are free and open to the public.

For more information about this event, contact the TBF National Youth Director Mark Gintert at (580) 716-4251 or (330) 993-0014.

The top 10 percent from each TBF/FLW state championship field will advance to a High School Fishing conference championship along with the top 3 teams from each of the six 2014 High School Fishing Opens that coincide with the 2014 Walmart FLW Tour.

Neb. Storms Claim Capitol Peregrine Falcon Chicks

LINCOLN, Neb. — The severe weather that wreaked havoc across much of Nebraska on the evening and night of June 3 also appears to have claimed the two peregrine falcon chicks atop the Nebraska Capitol building.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission provides live streaming video of the nest box, and many falcon watchers awoke to find it empty early June 4. Game and Parks and Capitol staff, along with personnel from Fontenelle Forest's Raptor Recovery, found the bodies of both chicks early June 4. One chick was discovered on the second floor roof and the other was found on the ground; both appear to have died instantly.

News media reports state that winds in Lincoln exceeded 70 miles per hour during the storms.

Pheasants Forever Chapters Help Create New 160-Acre GPA

BROOKINGS — South Dakota pheasant hunters will have the new 160-acre Gideon Game Production Area (GPA) to explore in northwest Moody County this pheasant season. The South Dakota Game, Fish, & Parks Department purchased the land using Pittman-Robertson dollars, contributions from the Minnehaha and Brookings County Pheasants Forever chapters and the Tony Dean Legacy Memorial Fund.

The new GPA is being named in honor of Gideon Moody, a U.S. Senator from South Dakota in the late 1800s and namesake of Moody County.

Pittman-Robertson dollars, tax revenue generated from firearms and ammunition sales, accounted for 75 percent of the \$160,000 used to purchase the land. The Brookings County Pheasants Forever Chapter, the Minnehaha County Pheasants Forever Chapter and the Tony Dean Legacy Memorial Fund made up the remaining 25 percent match used to permanently protect the habitat and open it up to public hunting as a state Game Production Area.

The new Gideon GPA is only 10 miles south of Brookings and within 50 miles of Sioux Falls making it an excellent public hunting option for two of South Dakota's largest population centers.

Bobwhite Quail Initiative Habitat Tour June 11

LINCOLN, Neb. — Landowners and other interested parties are invited to attend a tour highlighting habitat needs and management techniques for bobwhite quail and pollinators on Wednesday, June 11.

The event starts at 11 a.m. at the Alexandria Community Center on the east side of Nebraska Highway 53 in Alexandria.

This event includes information about the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, quail habitat needs, and management techniques to increase quail numbers. A tour of public and private land sites to show different habitat types and management techniques to improve quail habitat will follow a free lunch.

The Bobwhite Quail Initiative is a joint effort of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Quail Forever, Pheasants Forever, Nebraska landowners, and resource and conservation partners aiming to increase the populations by creating and enhancing habitat in focus areas.

To register, call Kelsey Drey at 402-471-1755 or Jake Holt at 402-471-5413. The registration deadline is June 10.

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

On a recent filming excursion, I had the opportunity to talk with several individuals about activities that they enjoy in the outdoors.

One person mentioned that he would read my columns, but did not agree with me on some of the things I had written.

I told him that disagreement was good and asked him what he did not like!

He jokingly replied, anytime I go fishing, I hear, "You should have been here yesterday!"

You know, there is a lot of truth in that statement! There are many times, no matter whom you are that the fish bite better the day before you arrive or perhaps the day after you leave.

I think everyone has heard that line and when you hear it, you think to yourself, "here we go again."

The big thing that we need to do when we hear that the bite is off or the fishing has slowed is to look things over and see what has changed.

It is probably not the fact that the fish have quit biting; it is probably that they have changed their pattern or that their food source has moved.

Fish will follow their food around, so if the fish are biting shallow one day and quit the next, do not keep pounding the shallow water, move deeper, chances are the baitfish have moved and the prey fish have went with them.

If you are fishing from a boat, use your electronics to locate the fish and what they are feeding on.

When fish move, generally it is not all that far and usually it is deeper unless there is a drastic change in the water level or temperature.

These two conditions will send fish on long distance moves and then you will need to rethink the whole plan.

When baitfish are pressured by predator fish, they'll head for a more secure place, not too far, generally



Gary HOWEY

it's a place that gives them cover to hide in such as weeds, brush or amongst the rocks.

If the weather has changed drastically, fish will go deep and generally be holding tight against the bottom.

These are the times when you'll need to slow down the way you're presenting the bait and this may mean going to a lighter line and lighter weight.

When fish are in a negative mood, they react about the same way people do, not wanting to eat and to go somewhere to wait it out and rest.

Fish in a lake will usually shut down or quit biting sooner than the river fish. River fish may not be affected as quickly by pressure changes or other weather factors.

If the lake fish shut down, chances are that a few fish are still biting in the river.

Different species of fish react differently to weather changes.

Walleyes seem to be the first to go dormant on the bottom. Other species such as largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, white bass, panfish and pike will often continue to bite in all types of weather conditions.

If the walleyes quit biting, it is not a bad idea to switch species until the walleyes are back on the bite.

I feel that it is better to be catching something rather than nothing at all.

Fish like any other species need a couple of days of consistent weather to get back into the swing of things.

It can be consistently cloudy or consistently sunny, just so it is the same!

When the weather goes from bright and sunny to cold and windy every other day, the fishing is going to be tough.

I have fished on days, when it is not fit for beast or man. The wind is whipping up white caps; the rain is running down the back of my neck or it is staring to hail or snow. You know the day where nothing goes right!

Yes, when I was fishing tournaments, I had to be out in this type of weather. If I did not go out, it could be a long time between paydays. As I become experienced, and much wiser I realized that on those days, the only thing that will work for taking fish on in those conditions would be a Perch colored hand grenade and since the game warden really frowns on this type of fishing.



PHOTO: GARY HOWEY

When the walleye bites turns off on the Missouri River reservoirs, Bass, both Largemouth and Smallmouth like shown in this photo will continue to bite. Team Outdoorsmen Adventures Member Doug Haas of Mitchell is pictured with a healthy Smallmouth taken from Lake Francis Case.

Those are the days when I head for the shed, because there will be better days down the road.

Fish often, fish safe and take a kid fishing!

Gary Howey, Hartington, Nebraska, is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. He is the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series, seen on Fox affiliates throughout the

upper Midwest. In the Yankton area, it airs on local channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 am as well as on MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 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 are looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Catfish King: Miss. Angler Offers For Early-Summer Cats

BY BRYAN BRASHER

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COUNCE, Tennessee —

When 82-year-old angler Reuben McGee boarded Phil King's 24-foot SeaArk below Pickwick Landing Dam on Tuesday afternoon, he told King the biggest catfish he'd ever caught weighed a modest 12 pounds.

King, a longtime catfish guide and winner of numerous major tournaments, took that as a challenge.

He set out trying to put McGee on the catfish of a lifetime — and by the time they left the water around 9 p.m., they had boated one cat that weighed 12.5 pounds and two that weighed more than 20.

"I've spent a lot of time out here bumping bottom for catfish, and I've caught a lot of them," McGee said. "But I never caught any really big fish. That's what we were hoping to get on today."

McGee and his son, Jimmy, who both live near King in Corinth, Miss., came to fish with the famed catfish guru because of his reputation for catching big fish. He rarely goes without catching at least one big cat, and he knows how to find them during any season.

Right now, he's targeting catfish in the post-spawn phase.

"A lot of the catfish have just finished spawning, and you're catching fish that are just coming off the beds," King said. "The fish that I'm catching from deep water right now are all scratched up with scars that are scabbing over. That tells me they're just now coming off the beds, and there's a certain way you have to fish for post-spawn catfish that are just getting back into their regular feeding habits."

A Delicate Approach

After a harsh winter that saw the surface water temperatures on Pickwick dip into the 30s for the first time since 1988, King expected the blue cat spawn to happen a little later than it has in years past. But when he went out looking for blues in deep water during April and early May, he found they had already moved shallow to spawn much earlier than usual.

While that threw a kink into King's typical springtime routine, it's made for some excellent fishing during this valuable portion of the year when school has just let out

and daytime temperatures are still relatively mild. But a delicate approach has been necessary for catching catfish that are still a little ragged after the rigors of the spawn.

"The females we caught Tuesday night were still slick and in pretty good condition except for the weight loss and egg loss," King said. "But the male fish are really beat up, and they've lost about a third of their body weight. Their tails are all beat up and cut up, and they look pretty rough."

Since post-spawn fish have usually gone long periods without eating, King said it's important to downsize your bait.

"In a normal situation, we use some really big baits because we're trying to catch really big fish," King said. "But in a post-spawn situation, the catfish don't always feel like eating a whole lot. If you use too big a bait, they might just grab the end of it and then let go as soon as you pick up the rod to set the hook."

One of the 20-pounders King and the McGees caught

on a recent Tuesday bit a one-inch piece of cut bait.

"Think of a person who just lost 50 pounds in a short time," King said. "That person is likely to be a little weak and probably won't feel like eating a whole lot. It's the same way with catfish."

Locating Post-Spawn Fish

Unlike crappie and bass — two species that move slowly back toward deep water after spawning in the shallows — King said catfish don't waste any time making their way back to the deep-water structure they call home for most of the year.

He uses a Humminbird 1199 depth finder with a 10-inch screen to identify big fish — and there's no water on local fisheries he considers too deep.

"In a smaller river, 'deep water' might mean 20, 25 or 30 feet," King said. "But on the Mississippi River, it might mean 60, 70, 80 or up to 100 feet. The Tennessee River has some 70-80 feet water, and all of it holds big catfish."

Besides searching for

deep water, he also looks for dramatic structural elements along the bottom.

"The bigger the structure, the better for big cats," King said. "Instead of a slow, sloping drop-off that tapers from 40 feet to 70 feet over a half a mile, I prefer one that goes immediately from 40 to 70 feet."

King looks for all types of structure — ledges, drop-offs, boulders, sunken brush, standing timber, etc. — and he uses the side-scan and down-scan features of his Humminbird unit to actually distinguish between "good" fish in the 20-pound range and "really good" fish in the 40- to 60-pound range.

"The electronics we have available today really are amazing," King said. "If I've got my unit on 4X or 6X zoom and I lay my hand next to the screen and see an arc the size of my little finger, that's a good indication there's a 40- to 50-pound fish I just rolled over."

"That takes a whole lot of the guess work out of searching for big fish."

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The South Dakota Unified Judicial System is inviting applications for Court Reporter positions in Belle Fourche, Yankton & Mitchell. The salary is \$20.70/hour. Additional compensation is given per page for transcripts, \$3.00/original and \$4.00/copy. 5% increase in salary after successful completion of CRR (Certified Real-time Reporter) certification. Benefits: paid health ins., life ins., generous leave, paid holidays & retirement. Duties include performing stenographic work in recording & transcribing verbatim circuit or magistrate court proceedings, hearings & conferences. Requires graduation from high school and an NCRA accredited/certified Court Reporting School. Successful completion of a criminal background investigation is required. To Apply: please submit an electronic application at <http://bhr.sd.gov/workforus>

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