

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

It's High Water On The Red For Catfish

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

GRAND FORKS, N.D. – The water in the Red River was up, up a lot, thirteen feet with debris, branches, logs and even entire trees, floating by as they made its way north towards Canada.



Gary
HOWEY

The Red River originates where the Bois de Sioux and the Otter Trail rivers flow between Minnesota and North Dakota flowing

northward through the

Red River Valley into Manitoba Canada.

Larry Myhre (Sioux City, Iowa), our guide Brad Durick and I had anchored just above one of Brad's favorite catfish holes.

Brad, a guide specializing in fishing for channel catfish on the Red of the North, is the author of the 2013 book, "Cracking the Channel Catfish Code" and a nationally recognized educator and outdoor writer.

On this trip, we were after channel catfish, which have poor eyesight, but a tremendous sense of smell as they have receptors in, along the outside of their lips and on the barbells protruding from either side of their mouth. Catfish use these receptors to follow the scent coming down river, helping them to locate their meals. With catfish, it seems like the oilier and smellier the bait better for catfish. We were using chubs and goldeye for cutbait, both are oily fish and when cut into inch and a half to two-inch pieces, they leave a scent trail easy for the fish to follow.

They may not be the prettiest of fish and more than likely be found in or around the nastiest snags and logjams in the river, but they are fighters.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Guide Brad Durick, Brad Durick Outdoors, and author Gary Howey display one of seven channel catfish, a 15-pounder caught on a recent fishing trip on the Red River near Grand Forks, N.D.

We anchored out of the current above a logjam in a location where Brad had found fish on previous trips. Shortly after the rods were out my rod jerked violently and once I set the hook on the fish, I knew it was a good fish. It was not one of those nibblers; those bait robbers we often catch in the Missouri River back home.

When I put pressure on the fish, it turned and doing its best to tunnel back into the snag from where I pulled it. Brad had everything set up perfectly, the Rippin Lips Super Cat rods, reels spooled with twenty-pound line and sharp 8/O circle hook allowing me to turn the fish's head and bring it my way.

When the fish broke water by our boat, Brad slipped the net under it, a chunky eleven pounder and after a few photos; I gently released the fish back to the water.

As the bite slowed, we would relocate downstream to other spots within casting

distance of some of the many logjams located in the river that were ideal catfish habitat.

Larry and I were taking turns on the rods and when the next couple of fish came into the boat, I was thinking, finally I had the big fish of the trip and the bragging rights.

Myhre was up when the tip of the big Rippin Lip rod dipped, bending in two, he set the hook hard and by the looks of the pressure being put on the long rod, my big fish title could just be in jeopardy.

He brought the rod up, cranked hard on the reel handle and gained a foot or so. The fish was irritated, doing its best to dive back into the logjam where a minute before it was lounging, as it waited for some tasty meal to drift by. The fish would take drag, gaining a foot or so, with Larry bringing the rod up, cranking down on the fish attempting to gain back the line he had lost.

The battle between Larry and the catfish, reminded me

of one of those back and forth fights, like you often see in the boxing ring. One fighter pops the other solidly in the head, the other boxer responds, going back and forth, appearing as if it was going to be a tie.

In fishing, there are no ties, as either the fish gets back in the logjam, wrapping itself and the line around a snag and breaks off or the angler, with his heavy tackle, with his drag set properly will muscle the fish out of snag into the open water.

When the fish broke water, its broad tail slashing at the water as it made another dive, trying to shake the hook from its upper lip. Larry would have none of that, turning the big cat and in the direction of the boat and as it came alongside; our guide scooped it up with the net.

Looking at the fish, it was longer and appeared to be fatter than my big fish, the eleven-pounder, and dang; out fished again. The fish tipped

the scales at sixteen pound, so I was going to have to step it up if I were going to capture the big fish title.

When the tip of the rod bounced, I was ready, moving into position, I lifted the rod from its rod holder, felt a tug and tugged back, setting the hook hard. This was a big fish, but could it top sixteen pound? I put pressure on the fish, pulling it from the cover towards the boat and into the net. It looked close, perhaps this would be my day, but it was not to be as my largest fish would be a fifteen pounder, I had been beat by one pound, but there was still time.

Larry's next fish, one of the seven catfish we would catch, another nice fish, one in the seven-pound class.

I was running out of time when my rod indicated a bite and I set the hook, the fish ran right into the mass of tree roots, limbs and branches. This was not looking good, as catfish very seldom swim out

of a snag into open water. I put pressure on the fish, hoping to keep it from borrowing too deep into the snag, then it happened, it swam out into the open water. It was not a big fish, but it just didn't seem to be fighting like a catfish, it was head shaking like a walleye, but it couldn't be a walleye as they feed by sight and in this turbid water, it would be impossible for a walleye to find the bait, especially a piece of oily cutbait.

As it neared the boat, a familiar body size and coloration came into view. It was a nice four-pound walleye, one we would film and release to go back into the snag to hang out with some of its catfish friends.

It was an excellent trip, even though I lost "Big" fish bragging rights by one pound, as we caught catfish running from four to sixteen pounds and the one walleye.

Brad, who has been guiding for eight years, knows the river, what gear and bait to catch catfish, making our four and a half hour trip on the river a great one as Red River catfish are on the bite.

More information on the great fishing on the Red of the north, give Brad Durick a call at 701-739-5808, via E-mail at braddurick@gmail.com or on the web at redrivercatfish.com

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 locally in Channels 2 and 98 at Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 am and on the MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 am. He and Simon Fuller Co-Host the Outdoor Adventures radio program on Classic Hits 106.3, ESPN Sports Radio 1570 in Southeastern South Dakota and Northeast Nebraska. In Northwest Iowa, it airs on KCHE 92.1 FM. For more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

OUTDOORS DIGEST

“Go Fourth” Program Encourages S.D.

Youth To Get Outdoors

PIERRE – In May, 12,000 South Dakota fourth graders received a free pass to South Dakota State Parks through the new “Go Fourth” program.

“So far we’ve had nearly 200 fourth graders use their pass,” said state park director Doug Hofer. “The passes are valid through the end of December, and we hope that every family with a fourth grader will take advantage of this opportunity to explore the state parks.”

The “Go Fourth” program, presented in partnership with the South Dakota Department of Health, distributed free entrance licenses for one day in any South Dakota state park to every fourth grade student in South Dakota.

The passes allow entrance to any South Dakota state park to students and their families and include a free hour of kayak, canoe or paddleboat rental, where available.

The program aims to give every student exposure to local natural resources and a chance to start a lifetime of healthy habits.

Families can also turn in the day-pass for a discount off of an annual pass at the end of their adventure in the park.

Other “Go Fourth” partners include the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program in South Dakota, the American

Heart Association in South Dakota and the South Dakota Parks and Recreation Association.

For more information, call 605.773.3391, email lynn.spomer@state.sd.us or visit gfp.sd.gov.

Father's Day Events Planned For S.D.

State Parks

PIERRE – Celebrate this Father's Day weekend at a South Dakota state park. Weekend programs and demonstrations are suited for families of all ages and sizes.

Saturday, June 20

- Geocaching 101 – Union Grove State Park, Beresford. 10 a.m. Info: 605.987.2263

- Forces of Good Earth – Good Earth State Park at Blood Run, Sioux Falls. 11 a.m. Info: 605.987.2263

- Lewis and Clark Homestead Day – Pierson Ranch Recreation Area, Yankton. 1 p.m. CT. Info: 605.668.2985

- Campfire Cooking with Dad – Lake Poinsett Recreation Area, Arlington. 4 p.m. CT. Info: 605.983.5085

- Murder Mystery – Good Earth State Park at Blood Run, Sioux Falls. 4 p.m. CT. Info: 605.987.2263

- Pie Iron Pizza at the Park – Cow Creek Recreation Area, Pierre. 4 p.m. CT Info: 605.223.7722

- Dutch Oven Cookout – Mina Lake Recreation Area, Aberdeen. 5 p.m. CT. Info: 605.626.3488

- Father's Day Bluebird Box Workshop – Angostura Recreation Area, Hot Springs. 6 p.m. MT. Info: 605.745.6996

- Outdoor Cooking Challenge – Lake Vermillion Recreation Area, Canistota. 7 p.m.

- CT. Info: 605.594.3824
- Lantern Tour – Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, Lake City. 9:30 p.m. CT. Info: 605.448.5474

Sunday, June 21

- Journal Journey – Good Earth State Park at Blood Run, Sioux Falls. 3 p.m. CT. Info: 605.987.2263

Campaign To End Boating Under Influence To Ramp Up

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission plans to heighten a campaign intended to curb alcohol use while boating.

Operation Dry Water is part of a national effort to reduce the number of accidents and deaths related to boating under the influence.

The commission says the operation is a year-round campaign, but that the effort will be heightened by Game and Parks officers from June 26 through June 28.

Alcohol use while boating is the leading factor in boater deaths. In Nebraska, it's illegal to operate a motorboat with a blood alcohol level content of .08 percent or greater. Doing so constitutes boating under the influence, or BUI, which carries penalties that may include vessel impoundment, fines, jail time and loss of boating privileges.

More information can be found www.operationdrywater.org.

Aquatic Habitat Project Begins At Valentine Refuge Lakes

VALENTINE, Neb. (AP) — An aquatic habitat project began this month at Valentine National Wildlife Refuge to address the presence of common carp in refuge lakes.

Engineers designed improvements to the water control structures below Watts, Hackberry, Dewey, Whitewater, Clear, Willow and Pelican lakes. These new structures are designed to limit upstream fish passage and help control high densities of carp in these lakes.

In addition, West Long Lake will have some earth fill added

to a roadway berm.

There may be construction and construction equipment along the public roads and trails through next May, and there may be short road and trail closures.

For information on the project or the refuge, call Juan-carlos Giese at 402-376-1889 or go online at <http://1.usa.gov/1MhCvJ8>.

CORN FARMERS

Did you harvest or sell corn between
2010 and the present?
You may be entitled to compensation.

Call Attorney Charles H. Johnson
1-800-535-5727

the one to trust
to keep your
body in **Motion**

OUTREACH CLINICS

Yankton

Orthopedic Institute
605-665-0077

Dr. Mitch Johnson
Dr. Suga
Dr. Dan Johnson

July 14, 28
July 10
Monday, Wednesday & Thursday

Creighton

Avera Creighton Hospital
888-331-5890

Dr. Dan Johnson

July 9

Call to schedule an appointment.

OrthopedicInstituteSF.com

ORTHOPEDIC
INSTITUTE

No physician referral is needed unless required by insurance.

YANKTON COUNTY WEED AND PEST NO SPRAY PROGRAM

Every summer, Yankton County begins its annual spraying of noxious weeds. This is done on the County Right-Of-Ways in order to control the spread of noxious weeds.

If you do NOT want us to spray, then you need to visit our website, email, call or stop by for a NO SPRAY REQUEST FORM. This will have to be renewed on a yearly basis.



www.co.yankton.sd.us/Departments/Highway
karla@co.yankton.sd.us
605-260-4473
3302 W City Limits Road, Yankton SD 57078

PRE-ENGINEERED STEEL BUILDING



GREAT SAVINGS!
30' x 40' to
120' x 260'



Drop off
or
Turnkey

NORTHERN PIKE BUILDERS
605-670-3566