

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Mount Marty College Hosting USCA Indoor Collegiate Nationals Today, Sunday

Mount Marty College will be hosting the United States Collegiate Archery Indoor Collegiate Nationals today (Saturday) and Sunday, March 3, at the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Complex.

The Yankton site is one of 10 different sites across the United States hosting the Indoor Collegiate Nationals. Some other sites include Texas A&M and Tulare. Once the sites have concluded competition the national rankings will then be determined and carried into the outdoor season that begins in early April. Mount Marty College finished last season ranked #11 overall in the nation and finished #1 in the Mixed Team Bow Hunter division.

A 1 p.m. Collegiate 600 FITA Indoor and a guest 3D trickle line will kick off the competition followed by a 4 p.m. guest Vegas 300 on Saturday. The same events occur on Sunday with 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. start times.

The Mount Marty College archery club program will be competing against five other collegiate teams and are also competing for All-Academic recognition at the event — with shooters needing a 3.0 GPA for consideration.

GFP To Host Black Hills Fisheries Open House

RAPID CITY — Fisheries staff from the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department will host a meeting on fisheries in Black Hills lakes on March 14 at the Outdoor Campus West in Rapid City.

GFP fisheries staff will present information from recent fisheries surveys and share comments received on West River fisheries during general open houses in February 2011 and January 2012.

A discussion involving GFP staff and those attending the March 14 open house from 7-9 p.m. MST will follow, focusing on current management plans for Black Hills lakes and ideas for future management direction.

Neb. Sets Firearms Education Instructor Training

NORTH PLATTE, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has scheduled training in northeast Nebraska for apprentice firearm hunter education instructors.

The session is scheduled to run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 12 at the Lifelong Learning Center in Norfolk.

Those interested should register by March 11 by contacting Mike Streeter at 402-471-6134 or mike.streeter@nebraska.gov, or visit huntsafenebraska.org.

Nebraska Deer Harvest Declined 30 Percent In 2012

LINCOLN, Neb. — Drought and an outbreak of epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) in 2012 caused significant reductions in whitetail deer populations, permit sales and harvest.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission responded to the outbreak in October by reducing antlerless permit quotas and hunters responded by purchasing fewer permits and harvesting fewer deer.

Deer permit sales in 2012 declined 13 percent to 122,214. Total deer harvest fell 30 percent to 60,548. The whitetail buck harvest fell 29 percent to 26,309; whitetail antlerless harvest dropped 36 percent to 24,974; mule deer buck harvest declined 3 percent to 7,325; and the mule deer antlerless harvest fell 8 percent to 1,940.

Whitetail buck harvest declined 50 percent in the Calamus West and Loup West units in 2012, 35 percent in Calamus East, Elkhorn, Keya Paha, Loup East, Missouri and Wahoo units, and 25 percent in all other units, except the Frenchman, which was down 8 percent. Whitetail buck harvest also decreased on the following permits: Landowner (41 percent), Youth (37 percent), Archery (36 percent) and Muzzleloader (32 percent).

The Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners will consider deer and other big game recommendations for 2013 at a meeting March 8 in Kearney. The deer season recommendations are designed to allow for controlled herd growth in most areas of the state. Staff recommends a reduction of approximately 4,000 deer permits and 86,000 bonus antlerless deer tags. To view the recommendations, visit: <http://www.sos.ne.gov/dyindex.html>.

Commissioners To Consider Big Game Changes

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners will consider changes to big game regulations when they meet March 8 in Kearney. The meeting starts at 8 a.m. at the Fairfield Inn and Suites, 510 Talmadge St.

The public hearing on proposed big game changes starts at 8:45 a.m.

The board also will consider adding Ash Hollow and Rock Creek Station state historical parks to the list of parks that allow hunting. That public hearing is at 8:30 a.m.

Agency staff will show a brief video to the board. The video is an outreach effort to build appreciation for the fishing, wildlife and recreation opportunities of the Niobrara River.

Also on the agenda are appearances by Mark Harrell of the Nebraska Forest Service and Keith Cline of the Northern Nebraska Special Youth Challenge.

Spring Turkey Hunting Workshops Scheduled

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will host two spring turkey hunting workshops this March in eastern Nebraska to help prepare hunters for the upcoming seasons.

The workshops are March 19 at the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium from 7-9 p.m. and March 26 at the Lincoln Izaak Walton League from 6-8 p.m.

The free workshops are open to all turkey hunters, regardless of experience and will feature Game and Parks specialists covering strategies, equipment, biology and tips to becoming a successful turkey hunter.

Preregistration at HuntSafeNebraska.org is required.

Branched Oak To Host Pointing Breed Gun Dog Champ.

LINCOLN, Neb. — The AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog Championship will be held at Branched Oak State Recreation Area from March 16-25. Nearly 200 dogs from around the country representing nine breeds are expected to compete.

The event is a joint venture of the American Kennel Club and the Nebraska Field Trial Association, a group of eight dog clubs that promote dog trials in the state and maintains the trial grounds at Branched Oak. Call Tom Maneely at 402-606-9936 for more information.

Crofton

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Wragge, whose father, Mark, is the elementary principal in Crofton, said it didn't take her long to feel welcomed to an already dangerous team.

"They were all great right away, made me feel like part of their family," Wragge said, after posing for photos with former teammates from Fillmore Central, who traveled to Lincoln in sup-

port. "They treated me like one of their own."

Wragge helped Crofton build a 17-2 surge that pushed the lead to 35-15 midway through the third quarter. The closest Homer got the rest of the game was 14 points.

Sophomore point guard Allison Arens added seven points for Crofton, while senior Tiffany Tramp had three points, and the trio of sophomore Maria Wortmann, senior Olivia Monaghan and freshman Katie Petersen all scored two points.

The Lady Warriors will face similar balance in today's champi-

Gary Howey | Of The Outdoors

Late Season Pheasants: S.D. Style

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

Plan A would be, to have the blockers to work their way around the field to block on the opposite end, with the walkers holding in position until we were in place, blocking the bird's escape route, attempting to keep the birds in the field and shelterbelt from flying out before any of us had an chance to get within shooting range.

We were no more than half way around when a hundred or so birds, many of them hens, took wing between the shelterbelt and the grass, giving us some indications what this late season hunt would be like.

Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Larry Myhre, Sioux City, Iowa, and I had made the trip to Gann Valley Ranch in South Central South Dakota www.gannvalleyranch.com to join up with Justin Larson, South Dakota Tourism, Bruce Campbell, Sioux Falls, and a group of hunters who worked in the meat processing industry for a late season hunt.

Gann Valley Ranch features excellent habitat with 3,500 acres of native grass, corn, sorghum, milo food plots and shelter belts, making the area a pheasant hunters dream.

According to Jim Nelson, manager of the ranch, these late season birds were well educated, having been hunted since the first of September and because of the cold weather, were stacked up in several areas.

Our group consisted of 18 hunters, who'd be pushing through some large fields and shelterbelts. Because of this, we'd need to use every late season hunting trick in the book including double wing men on both sides as well as on the end of the field, walkers moving slowly while zig zagging through the field covering as much of the big field as possible with a good number of dogs working ahead of us with blockers at the end of the field.

Another trick needed during the late season especially in the good cover we'd be hunting was to have our walkers stop short of the end of the field or shelterbelt allowing the dogs to ferret out those birds hunkered down in the cover, waiting for the hunters to walk

onship opponent, Hastings St. Cecilia. The Hawkettes don't boast any double-digit scorers, but have four players 5-foot-10 or taller.

"They look like they have good guards, good depth on their bench, and are solid at ball handling and shooting," Losing said. "We'll hopefully understand what they're all about and be ready for them."

"They'll be a challenge, they've been ranked number two in almost all the polls all year."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck



LARRY MYHRE PHOTO

Where good habitat exists, excellent bird numbers can be found, as these hunters at Gann Valley Ranch found out during a late season hunt in February.

past them.

On each field, there would always be good numbers of birds pushed to the end and without the dogs, there's no doubt in my mind we'd have walked past many of them.

Another thing needed to be done this time of the year is to approach the end of the field quietly, so not to spook the birds before the dogs got at them, as making too much noise upon approaching the end of the field causes the birds hiding there, who were already aware of the blockers, to run between the hunters and dogs, flushing out behind, out of range.

No matter what area of the ranch we hunted or how we approached it, hundreds of birds were getting up out in front of the hunters, gaining altitude, going high overhead trying to out wing the group of hunters pushing through the cover.

From the end of the first field, we could see birds erupting from the cover with a volley of shots ringing out behind them and dozens of birds winging our way, many of those being hens those birds that would produce next years hatch.

At one point, when roosters

would flush, shots began ringing out with, one, two, three, four and five birds come crashing down around the hunters.

No matter how we set up a field, roosters burst from the cover in every direction, winging off into the next field and shelterbelt accompanied by huge numbers of hens.

We moved from a shelterbelt covered with pheasant tracks, into grass fields and then back into some thick food plots with each walk adding to our bag limit.

The fire from the walkers was devastating and as they approached the end of the field, they'd pause, giving the dogs time to work the area thoroughly, forcing the birds into the air as the hunters called out hen or roster letting everyone know which bird to go for.

We'd arrived around noon and within a few hours, closed out the afternoon with our 18 man limit, just in time to enjoy some of Bruce's excellent cooking.

Bruce and his wife Kim love to cook, especially wild game with his favorite being pheasant and that's one of the reasons they'd put together their Brooster's Dakota Cuisine cookbook

www.broosterssd.com which is packed for numerous ways to prepare pheasant.

We took part in sampling his pheasant chilly, appetizers and pheasant lasagna, making for some great eating.

The following morning, we were at it again, spending time in the great outdoors, doing one of the numerous things that South Dakota is famous for, hunting the state's game bird, the Ringneck Pheasant.

These hearty birds, although not native to the state since they originally came from China, have done amazingly well, inhabiting much of the state.

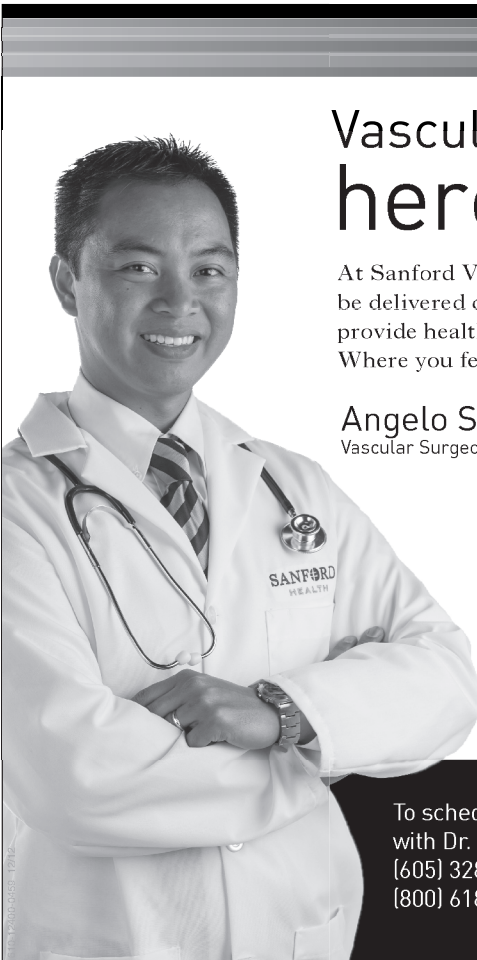
During the night, a snow had fallen, painting the landscape with a frosty white coating, adding to the beauty of this late season South Dakota pheasant hunt.

As we did the day before, we hit the field, heading for excellent habitat on the ranch, to hunt their numerous CRP grass, shelterbelts and food plots.

Once again, we had the incredible bird flushes we'd encountered the day before, that the pheasant hunts South Dakota is known for, filling the remainder of our limits well before noon.

Late season hunts are something all hunters should have the opportunity to experience as huge concentrations of birds, the experience of sharing time in the field with other hunters and friends this time of the year will be a trip that will long be remembered.

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 on Fox affiliates throughout the upper Midwest. He and Simon Fuller are the hosts of the Outdoor Adventures radio program on Classic Hits 106.3 and ESPN Sports Radio 1570. If you're looking for more outdoor information, it can be found at www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.



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