

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Public Urged To Drive With Caution With Bighorn Sheep Present

PIERRE — Last month, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) released 26 bighorn sheep in the high country near Deadwood. In the past two weeks, some of the herd has repeatedly traveled down and around roadways which, at times, has caused them to be a potential hazard to travelers.

"It is not unusual for bighorn sheep to travel near and around roadways in search of salt," stated Mike Kintigh, regional supervisor out of the Rapid City GFP office. "We expected them to be visible to travelers and area residents. We also anticipated that during this time of year they would drop down near or on the plowed roadways to catch a break from snow cover."

Roadways where bighorn sheep are expected to travel and cross include Highway 385, from the top of Strawberry Hill down through Deadwood and Highway 14A (Boulder Canyon) from Radio Tower Road through Deadwood and Lead.

"We appreciate the public's concern for this new herd as we have received daily phone calls and emails about their visibility in the area. We want travelers and residents to be aware that our staff continue to monitor them very closely and that we will do our best to keep them from being a potential hazard on roadways," stated Kintigh.

Prior to the release of this herd, GFP officials worked closely with local and state partners to inform area residents of the herd's presence in their community. Work continues with officials from the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) to install permanent caution signs with flashing lights at the above mentioned roadways to warn motorists that bighorn sheep may be present. In the meantime, GFP is working with SDDOT to install temporary signs.

Construction Begins On Wildcat Hills Shooting Complex

LINCOLN, Neb. — Construction has begun on a new, family friendly shooting complex at Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area near Gering.

The facility will be geared toward families of beginners and novices who want to learn, develop and hone shooting sports skills.

The facility will include a 50-yard small-bore rifle range for .22 caliber rifles with 10 shooting stations, a 100-yard rifle sight-in range, a 60-yard archery range with 24 shooting stations, a 5-station trap range with 5-stand shotgun range, and an indoor, 10-yard pellet gun range with 10 shooting stations.

"As we have experienced at Platte River State Park and Ponca State Park, these shooting facilities are a tremendous complement to parks and recreation areas," said Jim Swenson, parks administrator with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. "These facilities bring many new visitors into Nebraska parks for a more complete outdoor experience. This facility will provide a user-friendly and family-friendly shooting sports and outdoor skills education center set in a fun and safe environment. It will be a phenomenal education center in the western part of the state."

Work by contractor Paul Reed Construction of Gering has begun. The facility, located adjacent to the Nature Center, is scheduled to open to the public in 2016.

The facility is being built in part with the help of a donation by the Robert B. Daugherty Foundation.

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Shed Hunting: One Of Mother Nature's Most Beautiful Art Forms

BY GARY HOWEY  
Hartington, Neb.

I think we're all ready for spring, something we have been waiting on for a long time, with an opportunity to get outside and enjoy some of the warmer weather.

As it gets closer to spring, this is when I head to the woods, to do my pre-season turkey scouting. While I'm out there sneaking through the woods looking for turkey sign, I'm also keeping an eye out for deer sheds, Shed Hunting.

For those of you that haven't hunted sheds, it's a great thing to do this time of the year. Sheds are the buck's antlers from the previous year shed or dropped after the rut.

Bucks shed their headgear/rack/antlers annually and if you can beat the rodents and other critters out there that chew on them to obtain a source of calcium, you'll have the opportunity to find a shed or two.

A buck's antler/rack is a lot different from cattle horns, which are hollow, as a deer's rack consists of honey combed solid bone. Pedicles, are a knobby nub protruding from the buck's skull, this is where the new antler/rack grows and what supports the buck's rack.

When bucks start to grow their new racks/antlers, they're no more than bony growths covered with skin and hair known as velvet. They grow incredibly fast in 3 to 4 months, making them the fastest growing living tissue there is.

These pedicles are a permanent part of the buck's forehead, the point where the antler comes off when shed. Shed hunting in the spring is also an excellent way to determine if the big buck you hunted last season made it through the winter.

If you find his sheds, he's still around, unless the winter did him in and once you've found his shed, you can start putting together your hunting plan for next season.

Once the rut is over, bucks no longer need their racks. They needed their rack during the used to attract and impress the does and most importantly to fight off other bucks trying to draw the females away from his harem.

It's a known fact that not all of the bucks will drop their racks at the same time. Some will begin to lose them

following the rut, when their hormone levels begin to drop.

Generally, deer in the upper Midwest will shed their antlers in February and March.

The amount of daylight in a day, the fluctuations in the deer's hormones, their diet and stress will have a lot to do as to when a buck will shed.

There are several reasons deer shed their antlers, one allowing the buck regeneration, or re-grow a new set of antlers.

Others believe they shed, making it easier for them to make it through the winter, as winter, with its harsh conditions and less food make it tough for a deer coming out of the rut to survive.

When the buck sheds its antlers: it helps them to conserve energy while eliminating excess weight.

The entire shedding process will take two to three weeks to complete, while the re-growth will take the entire



PHOTO BY DUSTIN LUTT

Shed hunting gives outdoorsmen and women time to get out after a long winter and an opportunity to do some spring turkey scouting.

summer.

The first to drop their antlers are more likely to be those bucks, which chased hard during the rut, those that have become fatigued from fighting and breeding during the rut.

If you don't have an area where you've found sheds in prior years, a good place to start looking for sheds would be to drive through the country, looking for those well-used deer trails crossing the roads.

I've found heavily traveled trails; those leading from heavily wooded areas, crossing a road heading into the deer are feeding areas to be a good starting point.

A good trail to start looking for sheds would be those resembling a hard packed cattle trail.

Once you've located a well-used trail, get permission from the landowner to shed hunt on the ground and then formulate a plan.

The main spots I've found sheds were those near their

bedding areas, along a route heading to an area where they're feeding and of course at their food sources.

You'll find more sheds in areas where the deer feed, as when a buck feeds, there's a lot of up and down head movement, causing the antler to drop off.

Another reason that you'll find a good number of sheds near a food source is that they'll spend a lot of time there during the winter months.

During the winter, when other food sources become covered by snow and ice, deer have a tendency to "Yard" up in large groups near their food supply.

These feeding areas can be corn/bean fields, near haystacks, grain piles and in or near cattle feed lots, as deer know these areas offer easy access to a food supply.

If they're feeding near bale piles, spend a little extra time checking these areas out as I've found a lot of sheds here as bucks will hit their rack

shaving jokes are not over-exhausted towards these dads.

You can follow Rogelio Rodriguez on Twitter at twitter.com/RogelioUlisesR. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net

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Tourney

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he was four and now hes a senior so I would like to see him go out a champ," said Selleck.

Apart from being a supportive father, Selleck takes a larger load of responsibility by being the team coordinator. Some of his duties include submitting rosters, typing score sheets, meeting with other coordinators, and above all, being at every game.

"I don't miss a game," said Selleck.

Don is one of many unsung heroes of the sport's world. He, along with Yankton's Kelle Loecker and many more, spent endless hours planning out every detail of this event and somehow managed to still be a support system to both players and parents. Selleck mentioned that he and Loecker have been in contact since late November of 2014 to assure that this tournament was special.

Above all, Selleck believes

that his team needs to have fun. The philosophy must be working because Brookings came in to the tournament ranked number one.

Super Fan

Corey, a fan and father from Aberdeen Central, has a unique way of showing support for his son, Kolton. Corey wears a bald cap topped with blue mohawk hair style while cheering for his son's hockey team.

"We had a crazy hat theme for a game last year and I constructed this," said Corey.

The mohawk surely catches the attention of rival fans and must give the players a calming sense knowing they have the "cool dad" cheering them on.

Along with his flashy hair style, Corey carries with him a blue and yellow can of coins.

"It's a quarter jar, we put money in it after every goal," said Corey.

After every goal that Ab-

erdeen scores, Corey passes the can around the parents and they add a little loose change to the jar. At the end of the season they use the money to throw the players a party as a reward for their hard work.

"It also makes a great noise-maker," said Corey.

'I Mustache You A Question'

Parents are always looking for unique ways to support their kids' sports endeavors. Aberdeen Central's hockey team has found a way for dads to profess their allegiance to their kids.

Many of the Aberdeen dads were handed a cut-out of a large, black mustache mounted on a stick before their game against the Sioux Falls Flyers. Attached to the stick was a piece of paper with the words "If you mustache, I'm a hockey dad."

How did this come about?

"One of the moms thought

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