

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

# On The Hunt For Turkeys

## State Record Yellow Perch Caught

PIERRE — Weighing 2 pounds, 13 ounces, an Aurora resident recently caught the largest yellow perch ever recorded in South Dakota.

Chase Jensen iced the monster perch on Bitter Lake in northeastern South Dakota on March 7, 2015. The yellow perch is one of the most popular and sought after fish in the state. Late ice conditions often put the large, pre-spawn panfish on a feeding frenzy. Images can be found on our Facebook page.

The previous yellow perch record of 2 pounds, 12 ounces, also came from Bitter Lake in 2004.

For a fish to qualify as a state record, anglers must have the fish identified by a state fisheries biologist and weighed on a certified scale.

## Young Male Mountain Lion Shot In Sheridan County, Neb.

LINCOLN, Neb. — A young male mountain lion was shot and killed on the evening of March 8 approximately 5 miles south of Whiteclay in Sheridan County.

A homeowner and a neighbor were working outside when they heard growling come from under the porch of the farmhouse. They found the cat growling at them from under the porch. The cat was shot after the homeowner could not get the cat to leave. The incident was reported to the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department, which contacted the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

The cat weighed approximately 40 pounds and was approximately 4-5 months of age. It appeared to be in poor condition and likely had suffered earlier injuries.

## GFP Commission Finalizes Aquatic Invasive Species Rules

PIERRE — The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission finalized several rules to prevent the introduction and slow the spread of existing aquatic invasive species in the state.

Boaters and anglers will be required to remove all vegetation and aquatic invasive species from all boats and boat trailers. In addition, it will be required that all drain plugs and related devices be opened or removed from boats when in transport. An exception would be granted to allow livewells to hold water while being transported from a boat ramp to an immediately adjacent fish cleaning station.

Anglers will not be allowed to transport fish or aquatic bait in water obtained from a lake, river or stream except when they are traveling from a lake, river or stream to an immediately adjacent fish cleaning station. Anglers will be allowed to transport fish and aquatic bait using domestic water resources or on ice.

These new rules will not be effective until 20 days after filed with the Secretary of State's Office.

More information in regard to these new rules as well as aquatic invasive species will be available to resident and nonresident boaters and anglers as the spring and summer months approach.

## Draft Elk Management Plan Remains Open For Final Review

PIERRE — Last December, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Division of Wildlife released a draft of its five-year elk management plan and sought review and comments from the public.

The draft management plan and a reference depicting the adjustments incorporated from the initial public comment period is available for review until March 22, 2015, prior to its submission for final adoption by the GFP Commission.

The draft elk management plan can be found online at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/big-game/elk/default.aspx>. Written comments on the draft plan can be sent to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, S.D. 57501, or emailed to [wildinfo@state.sd.us](mailto:wildinfo@state.sd.us). Comments must be received by March 22, 2015, and include your full name and city of residence.

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

I can't wait until old man winter releases his grip on the upper Midwest and spring arrives when I can hit the woods to begin another season to pursue spring turkey.

This will be my 41st season where I hope to add my 104th bird to my turkey log. This year, I'll have three Nebraska tags and help my Son-in-Law Matt and grandson Teddy to tag their first birds in South Dakota.

It's a good time to get out, spend some time in the woods doing a combination turkey scouting and shed hunting trip. Deer general; shed their headgear in mid-February, but not all deer shed at the same time. It's possible you will find sheds shortly after the rut. While I'm out looking for sheds, I have my eye out for turkey sign as I hunt sheds in the same areas where I hunt turkeys.

When my camera crew and I are seriously thinking about turkey hunting, the first thing we need to do is to put together some sort of a plan.

If you are hunting locally, putting a plan together doesn't take much time, but if you're looking at hunting in a different area or even a different state, making a plan will be very important.

If I'm going to be hunting in a different state, I start by checking the web sites of the state's Game and Parks or DNR I'm looking at getting a permit. If they have a lot of information and columns devoted to turkey hunting, it's a good bet there a good number of the birds in the state.

After looking at the South Dakota Game & Parks site where I had hoped to have the opportunity to do some turkey hunting with my son in law and grandson, I was disappointed to find out the county they would be hunting in, didn't issue any nonresident permits, I had to re-plan the hunt.

We would have to start checking around at the states where we would have a chance at obtaining a permit; I'll grab the phone and contact the game department of the state. This is where I obtain as much information as



Gary HOWEY



Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Nicole Grev of Pierre is pictured with a South Dakota gobbler she took last season.

I can from their experts. I'll talk with the people that spend a lot of time in the field and have their finger on what's happening as far as turkey numbers. This information helps me to zero in on an area with good numbers of birds and if I'm lucky, I may even be able to obtain some names of folks in the area that may allow hunting.

I choose a zone or area where I have a good chance of getting a permit. Then it's that anxious time, waiting to find out if you were successful on the draw. Once I know I have a permit or tag I look for any public land in the area, if that area happens to be one the game department was high on, I get an aerial map of it and see what's there, checking out any heavily wooded areas for possible roosts and areas where the birds could feed.

I've hunted turkeys in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas and Mississippi and got my best information from those states Game & Parks-DNR's. Some of them have turkey density and harvest information that helps us to choose what area to hunt.

As much of our hunting was on public ground, we avoided opening weekend, as there are just too many folks out in the woods during opening weekend. Before I avoided opening weekend of the turkey season, I called almost as many hunters in as I did turkeys. When we head out to film a turkey hunt, there are at least two

people with us and when it comes to calling critters, be it, waterfowl, turkeys or deer, the less people you have to compete against the better.

On many of our hunts, generally, the first time we see the ground we will be hunting will be the day before when we arrive in the area. Which means there isn't a whole lot of pre-season scouting; this is why we rely on aerial maps and the advice from the local game officials?

The first thing we will do upon arriving, is to carefully look over our aerial map, trying to pick out those areas where the birds may roost and possible food sources as wells as any funnels going from their roost to a feeding area. A funnel is anywhere two terrains come together, such as a valley between two forested areas. Funnels are good places to set up as it narrows down the bird's path, putting the turkeys within shotgun and bow range.

Next, we do a drive around of the area, comparing what's there with what is on the aerial map. We also like to stop by any adjoining landowner to introduce ourselves, to see if they have seen any birds and ask them if it's Ok to hunt on their land, should the birds move onto their land off the public ground.

Then it's sit down time for us to put a plan together so when the season opens, we will be fairly close the right place ready to go.

We always leave enough time prior to the sun down, to be out and

use our locator calls, our crow, owl and coyote howler to get the birds to shock gobble. If that happens, armed with the information from the game department, our use of aerial maps, the talks with landowners and a gobble giving away where he spends the night, we now have a plan

The next morning before the sun appears in the eastern sky, it's time to head out and try locating their roosting areas by getting close and using our locator calls.

As the sun appears in the eastern sky, we have our decoys out, backs against the tree, using soft tree calls, letting the Toms know where we are and ready for another opening day.

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 in the Yankton area on local channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday@ 7:00, on KTTM/KTTW-TV Fox-Sioux Falls and Huron at 6:30 am Saturdays 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. If you are looking for more outdoor information, check out [www.outdoorsmenadventures.com](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).

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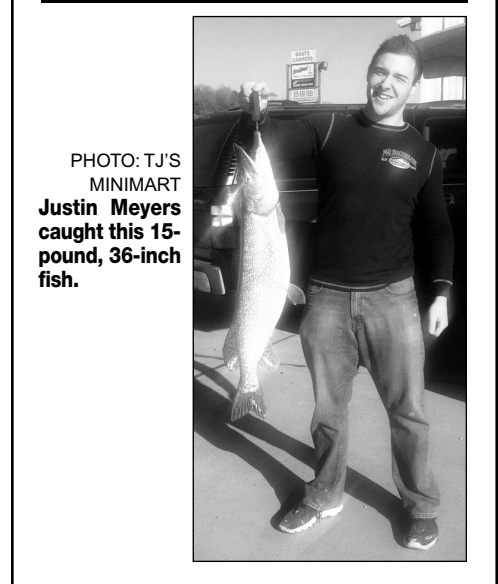


PHOTO: T.J'S MINIMART  
Justin Meyers caught this 15-pound, 36-inch fish.

## 'University' Focuses On Salmon Fishing Techniques

BY JEFFREY P. MAYOR

© 2015 The News Tribune (Tacoma, Wash.)

Anglers wanting to improve their skills should consider attending the two-day Salmon University later in March in Kent, Wash.

For the ninth year, Tom Nelson of Salmon University is bringing together some of the best fishing experts in the Northwest for two days of sessions focusing on fishing techniques and destinations.

"The Northwest's saltwater fishery is world-renowned," Nelson said. "This year's Salmon University will help both veteran and novice fishermen learn how to better fish Northwest waters."

"The university opens with a full-day series of seminars emphasizing basic angling principles and designed to build the foundation of the fisherman's technique. The second day of classes opens the field of instruction to developing advanced techniques and fishing style."

Nelson said a new session added to the schedule this year will teach anglers how to properly smoke their catch.

"Also, because of the humpy year, we'll focus a little more than usual on how to catch and care for humpies," Nelson said.

Humpies, better known as pink salmon, return to Washington waters during odd-numbered years, and will do so next beginning in late July and August. The

South Sound offers some of the best opportunities to catch pink salmon in the Puget Sound region.

This year's class schedule features basic sessions on the first day, with more advanced sessions on the second day.

Day one offerings include downrigger fishing techniques, jigging for salmon and bottom-fish, mooching techniques, and fishing destinations of Vancouver Island, Columbia River and Pacific Ocean.

The second day's courses are crabbing and shrimping, halibut fishing techniques, advanced downrigger fishing, albacore tuna fishing, and additional information on the ocean and Columbia River fisheries.

# Guide Uses Electronics To Keep Track Of Bass When They Go Deep

BY BRENT FRAZEE

© 2015 The Kansas City Star (Kansas City, Mo.)

BRANSON, Mo. — On a cold, late-February morning, Mike Webb was playing his favorite video game.

Well, kind of. Sitting at the front of his bass boat, he stared at the screen of his sonar unit glowing with bright colors and dropped his lure to the depths of Table Rock Lake.

"This is just like playing a video game," he said with a smile. "Except that this is real."

"I can see where the fish are and I can drop my lure right to them. I can put it right on their nose."

"It's like a game." With his boat sitting in 60 feet of water, Webb watched as the screen etched a thick mat of brush coming off the bottom. Then he spotted a fish moving out of that brush.

"C'mon, girl," he said. "Time to eat."

Webb moved his Rapala Jigging Rap right in front of the

fish and wiggled it. Then he braced for a hit. But it never came.

"That one was just kickin' tires," Webb joked. "She was just looking."

But minutes later, another bass showed more than a passing interest. When Webb dropped his lure into the depths and stopped it, he watched the mark move closer to his lure. When the two joined, he set the hook without even feeling the hit.

His fishing rod bowed sharply, and the fish took out line. But after a spirited fight, Webb had a big smallmouth bass to the surface and guided it into a waiting landing net.

"That is a good smallmouth," said Webb, 55, who guides on Table Rock and is a member of Bass Pro Shops' national pro team. "That one will go close to three pounds."

"But that's not unusual. This is the time when you can catch the big ones. They're full of eggs right now, and they're feeding up before the spawn."

"There are times when I'll

bring a fish into the boat and it's just spitting up shad."

Webb specializes in a type of fishing that many anglers can't even envision.

From December into March, he often is a lone wolf in the middle of deep, clear Ozark reservoirs such as Table Rock. While other fishermen are pounding the banks, he is fishing vertically at depths of 50 to 80 feet of water.

He uses the electronics on his boat to tell him where the fish are active. For example, he often targets places where the brush is thick on the bottom. If he spots fish moving on the screen, he will drop his lure right in front of that mark and try to tease them into eating.

His dream scenario? Using his electronics to find a huge ball of shad.

"That usually means the shad are being chased," Webb said. "When you find one of those big balls suspended up off the bottom, there are usually gamefish around them."

Some might say the modern electronics give fishermen an unfair advantage. Not so, Webb said. Because of the depth of the water he fishes, even finding the bass can be a trying process. And even when the lure is dropped in front of the fish, there are no guarantees it will hit.

"A lot of times, I'll see a fish streak up to take a look, then it just drifts away," he said.

But Webb knows one thing: Big bass can be taken from Table Rock's deep water.

Flash back to April Fool's Day in 2013. Webb, who is known for his mastery in using electronics, was checking out a point near Big Cedar Lodge. When he spotted a mark in 30 point of water, he immediately dropped an Alabama rig into the depths and began vertically jigging it. The bass he had marked hit on cue. And the fight was on.

Soon, he was landing the biggest bass he has ever caught on Table Rock — an 11.07-pound largemouth.

Webb weighed the fish, took its measurements, then let it go.

Score another victory for high-tech fishing.

It's a method that Webb, a longtime fisherman on Table Rock, learned about 20 years ago.

"The first time I tried it, I was hooked," said Webb, who lives north of Branson. "When you can go out and catch 20 to 30 fish a day and watch them on the screen come up to eat your bait, that's fun."

Webb and I didn't have one of those days on a recent trip. But we did catch a mix of big smallmouth, Kentucky and largemouth bass as deep as 60 feet. We lured the fish with red-copper colored XPS grubs, Rapala Jigging Raps and Alabama rigs on spinning outfits with eight-pound test line.

"This deep fishing was unbelievable back in December," Webb said. "We had some 60-fish days."

"It's dropped off since then, but you can still catch fish."

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