

OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

Pitching On The Lake Of The Devil

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

When we headed north for Devils Lake in mid-central North Dakota, we had no idea as to what we were in for.

It could be three days of good weather, poor fishing or poor weather and good fishing.

As anyone who does an outdoor television series can tell you, it's not very often that you expect it to be excellent weather and great fishing.

Well, that's the way it happened last week when Team member Scott Ulrich and I along with cameraman Kyle Nickolite made the trip north to the big lake.

When I say big lake, I mean big lake, as Devils Lake is 177,100 surface acres, covering about 208 square miles and growing.

Not good for the landowners in the area, but great for anglers as it creates miles of new

water for us to fish and structure beyond belief as there are flooded roads, railroad tracks and acre upon acre of flooded vegetation.

We met up with our guides the folks from Perch-Eyes Guide Service www.percheyes.com around 2:30 that afternoon and were on the water by 3:30 looking for areas where the wind was pounding into the flooded vegetation.

Since the lake is so clear, the fish were attracted to the mudlines and the warmer water temperatures in those areas.

The plan was to pitch Lindy Shadling crankbaits and X-change jigs up into the shallows of these areas, hoping to entice the fish to bite and bite they did!

Our guide on day one was Jason Feldner who knew the lake well and had us on fish shortly after we reached the north shore.

Because of all the flooded vegetation in the lake, the northern pike population has done well, so any bait that we tied on had to be accompanied by a light leader.

While Scott and I cast Shadlings, Jason probed the shallow water along the cattails, connecting with a pike on his third cast.

Not a giant, one around 10 pounds, but one that thought it was larger than it really was, as it went around the front of the boat as well as under it before it was landed and released.

Shortly there after, Scott's collected the dollar for the first walleye when his



Guide Kyle Clifton (left) and Outdoorsmen Adventures host Gary Howey with the two big fish taken on the Devils lake trip.

Shadling was inhaled by a nice 2-pound walleye, one of the many taken during the first day of our trip.

After five hours of pitching Shadlings and X-Change jigs, our arms were sore as we'd landed northerns up to 10 pounds, white bass over 2 pounds and walleyes over 4 pounds, not a bad day in anybody's book.

On day 2, our guide would be Kyle Clifton who would take us to a new area where we'd start out using slip bobbers and leeches.

We started fishing the ultra clear water in the flooded timber, unfortunately, it was early in the day and the water temps in the timber hadn't reached that magic 59-60 degrees needed to turn the fish on.

After several moves with no luck slip bobber fishing, we started looking for the warmer water while pitching our Shadlings and X-Change jigs up shallow.

Once again it was our guide, using an X-change jig connected with our first fish of the day, another nice pike.

It was my turn to collect the dollar of the day for the second walleye, by the

way, which I never received, when a nice 18" fish tried to tear up my Shadling while ripping my rod out of my hand, taking the bait right at the boat.

The warmer dirtier water was the key as we hammered walleyes, white bass and pike almost continually.

Before long, all three of us in the boat were pitching crankbaits up shallow with our best bait on this trip being the number 5 Lindy Shadling Redtail and Golden Shiner.

Two to three fish on at a time was a common occurrence and after a while all you heard was "Fish On."

By the end of our second day my cameraman was earning his pay, jumping back and forth trying to catch all the action of the fish being caught.

With the sun was setting in the west; we were pitching cranks up into a wind-blown cattail bed when I had a jarring strike, one that I couldn't gain ground on.

I managed to move the fish away from the shoreline, but then thought that it had ran into a snag, as I couldn't budge the fish.



Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Scott Ulrich (Hartington, Neb.) with one of the many walleyes he took on the Devils Lake trip.

Our guide backed off on the trolling motor, allowing me to work the fish towards the boat.

By the head shaking that was going on, I didn't think it was another northern and slowly moved it towards the net.

When the fish came up, it was pure bedlam as it was a monster and seeing the boat made a desperate dive to shake loose the Shadling in it's mouth.

Finally I managed to get the fish's head out of the water while our guide Kyle worked it into the net.

The walleye had engulfed the entire Shadling, weighed in over 9 pounds and was the biggest fish of the trip.

But it didn't end there as shortly after we took photos of the fish, Kyle connected with another big fish, this one over 8 pounds, another picture fish.

What a trip, as in less than 15 hours of fishing, we'd boated over 200 fish, an extraordinary trip, and one that won't be forgotten.

If you're looking for a great place to fish, a lake that offers a smorgasbord of fish species, you'll want to give Devils Lake a try; it's well worth the trip.

If you'd like more information on the Devil's Lake area you can go to www.devil-slakend.com.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of Outdoorsmen Adventures and the President of Outdoorsmen Productions LLC. For more information on the outdoors check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Deer Harvest Declines In S.D.

PIERRE — South Dakota hunters reported mixed results for the 2009 deer seasons, with weather and unharvested crops playing major roles.

Harvest surveys compiled by the Game, Fish and Parks Department show that last year was the first year the statewide deer harvest has fallen in the last ten years.

GFP Game Harvest Survey Coordinator Corey Huxoll said an estimated 69,000 white-tailed deer and 18,000 mule deer were harvested during the 2009 hunting seasons, for a total of more than 87,000 deer. That is a reduction of more than 4,000 deer from 2008, but still 41,000 more than the 46,000 deer harvested in 1999.

Reductions in the harvest of East River Deer, Muzzleloader Deer, Youth Deer and Black Hills Deer accounted for most of the decline, with an offsetting increase in the West River Deer harvest. Both whitetail buck and doe harvest estimates declined from 2008 by 1,600 and 2,779 respectively. The mule deer buck harvest also decreased from 2008 by 624; however, the mule doe harvest increased by nearly 800. Mule deer accounted for about 20% of the total harvest.

The overall deer harvest success declined statewide from 48 percent in 2008 to 43 percent last year. Harvest success ranged from 23 percent at Sand Lake Refuge to 75 percent for West River Special Buck.

Information for surveys is collected in a random post-season sampling of hunters, and Huxoll says the department thanks them for the important role they play in helping gather harvest information for all game species in the state.

"It is only through the cooperation of hunters completing harvest report cards that we are able to assess the success of the harvest for each of the deer seasons," Huxoll said.

Wisdom Gained From Matching Wits With Turkeys

BY MICHAEL PEARCE
(c) 2010, The Wichita Eagle
(Wichita, Kan.)

WICHITA, Kan. — It's been 30 years since I toted my first spring tom — a mighty jake — from the Ozark woods. Here's what I've learned since.

• Wild turkeys aren't nearly as smart as I once thought.

Back in the day, we used words such as "clever" and "wise" when talking about toms we couldn't call.

Wary — very.

Smart — like a box of rocks.

A tom that doesn't come the distance may be stymied by a woven wire fence or creek it could easily hop or fly across.

A bird that gobbles but doesn't come may be a coward, fearing the hen is with a bigger tom that may pound his tail.

• I don't know nearly as much as I once thought. I never knew more about turkeys than after I'd shot two or three.

A hundred-or-so birds later, all I "know" is that nothing is certain when turkey hunting.

We're dealing with birds with brains the size of a peanut and raging testosterone.

• How you call is more important than how you sound.

It's best to have a mastery of everything, from calling super-submissively to obnoxiously loud and aggressive.

There are times you'll need both — sometimes on the same bird.

• Good woodsmanship is more important than good calling, but the best turkey hunters are great at both.

• None of us sound as good at calling as we think or as bad our family and friends may say, especially with mouth calls.

• More hunters would kill more turkeys if they'd become proficient with slate and box calls.

• The differences between subspecies is overblown. I've had my



Three young tom turkeys give a close look to a plastic decoy in Butler County, Kan. Michael Pearce lists things he has learned in three decades of turkey hunting.

tail whipped by Merriams and had some slam-dunk Osceola and big woods eastern hunts.

Things like hunting pressure, terrain thickness and the breeding cycle have more to do with how a turkey acts than genetics.

• It doesn't take huge artillery to kill turkeys. One year I was in on about 25 birds as caller, killer or spectator. The average shot was about 18 yards.

A number of good hunters now carry lightweight 20 gauges, shooting three-inch shells through tight chokes.

• Good turkey hunters are more proud of the birds they shoot at five yards than those at 50 yards. Calling them in close is what the sport's really about.

• A turkey's gobble has amazing powers. It can so unnerve even big macho guys that they can barely breathe, let alone shoot.

And sometimes it has great healing powers, too. Years ago on a windswept Flint Hills morning, my son and I stopped to call one last spot before heading in.

I hit a high-pitched box call and a second later the kid headed toward the truck.



A tom turkey listens closely to calls in Butler County, Kan. Michael Pearce lists things he has learned in three decades of turkey hunting.

"Bird gobbled," I said, pointing downward. He commented my legendary bad hearing was playing tricks. I made him follow me about 150 yards downwind and I hit the call again.

Through the gale, he barely

heard a tom's gobble where I'd predicted.

"Hey," he said, "how is it you can hear a turkey gobble a half-mile downwind but you can't hear mom talking to you across the room?"

Like I said, truly amazing.

OUTDOOR REPORT

Captain Norm's Walleye Classic Set For June 5

The inaugural Captain Norm's Walleye Classic will be held on Saturday, June 5, at Lewis and Clark Lake in Yankton.

There is a limit of 49 two-person teams.

For more information, call 665-4271.

South Dakota Will Allow August Canada Geese Hunting

PIERRE — In an effort to control crop depredation by Canada geese, the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Commission has decided to allow hunters to participate in an August Canada Goose Take Season this year.

The season will be held in 15 counties of 32.

The August Canada Goose Take Season will be held in Brookings, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Hamlin, Grant, Kingsbury, Lake, McCook, Marshall, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody and Roberts counties.

Hunters participating in the special August season will not need the Federal Migratory Bird Stamp, but all other restrictions are the same as those in effect for the Early Fall and Regular Canada Goose seasons.

Alcohol A Factor In Sherman Boating Fatality

LINCOLN, Neb. — Alcohol was a contributing factor in a boating fatality at Sherman County Reservoir on May 17, according to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, which has completed its investigation.

Bennie Wright, 34, of Loup City, was pronounced dead at the scene after the boat he was operating struck the dam at a high rate of speed. His blood alcohol level was three times the legal limit. The legal limit for operating a boat in Nebraska is .08.

The fatality is the second boating death in Nebraska this year.

Outdoor Expo Site Of GFP Antler Auction

PIERRE — A change in state law has paved the way for the Game, Fish and Parks Department to auction items that have been confiscated in recent years as part of the agency's conservation law enforcement work efforts.

"The 2009 South Dakota legislature passed a law that allows our agency to offer for sale items we have seized through law enforcement activities," Andy Alban, Law Enforcement Program Administrator for the GFP Division of Wildlife said.

"In the past, if the GFP would have sold anything like antlers, hides or skulls, the buyer would not have been allowed, by law, to resell them. The law now gives full ownership to anyone buying these items. The law also stipulates that we sell these items in a manner that brings a competitive price. We feel that offering them through auction will meet those requirements."

The auction will take place as part of the 3rd Annual South Dakota Outdoor Expo on June 12 at the State Fairgrounds in Huron. The Outdoor Expo will open its gates at 9:00 a.m. and the auction will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Antlers will make up the bulk of auction items. There are over 500 sets of antlers that will be offered individually and numerous shed and miscellaneous antlers that will be auctioned by the pound. The auction lots include both deer and elk antlers. In addition, there will also be shoulder mounts, mountain lion skulls and bobcat hides offered.

The proceeds from the auction will be used to offset Department allocations to Sportsmen Against Hunger and the Turn In Poachers (TIPS) Program.

U.S. Forest Service To Handle National Grasslands Dog Training Permits

PIERRE — Dog trainers on horseback who train dogs on National Grasslands in South Dakota will now have to get permits from the National Forest Service.

The change has been approved by the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Commission.

Previously, the Game Fish and Parks Department issued those permits on a limited draw basis.

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