

Briefs: Boating Class June 2 In Yankton

A six-hour boating class will be held Saturday June 2, starting at 9 a.m. sharp at All Seasons Power Sports, located at 3609 West Highway 52, Yankton.

There will be an hour lunch break at noon, so bring a sack lunch or lunch money. The class will finish up at about 4 p.m. with the final test.

All boat or jet ski operators born after Dec. 31, 1985, in Nebraska must complete this course, pass the test and have a valid boating certificate in his or her possession when operating any boat or jet ski.

All boaters over the age of 14 from any state are welcome to take the class which could save a life, prevent a boating accident, or possibly get you a reduction in your boat insurance premium.

To register for this Nebraska Boating Skills and Safety course, call Holly at All Seasons Power Sports at 665-7433.

GFP Commission Proposes Furbearer Changes

CUSTER STATE PARK — The Game, Fish and Parks Commission is proposing a muskrat hunting season and expansion of bobcat hunting and trapping to portions of eastern South Dakota.

The muskrat hunting season was recommended as part of a new state law passed by the 2012 South Dakota Legislature. The law requires that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission propose rules to specify hunting seasons, hunting units, and other restrictions for the hunting or taking of muskrats necessary for the proper management of wildlife and to address damage caused by muskrats to roads and other infrastructure, as well as private property.

Under the proposal, the muskrat shooting season would run from April 1 through Aug. 31 statewide. Nontoxic shot would be required for shotguns. Only landowners or lessees on land they own or operate and state, county or township highway officials could shoot muskrats within road rights-of-way.

The proposed expansion of the bobcat season would allow a limited season in certain counties east of the Missouri River, with a limit of one bobcat per hunter or trapper. For 2012, that would include the counties of Brule, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Bon Homme and Yankton. Season dates would be Dec. 8-30.

Three Flood-Damaged Parks To Re-Open

PIERRE — State recreation areas damaged in last summer's flood will open in time for Memorial Day weekend.

Farm Island Recreation Area, has been repaired and the park's main campground is set to open on May 24.

At Oahe Downstream Recreation Area near Fort Pierre, Campground 3 will open for the year starting May 18, but campers should be aware of the ongoing shoreline repair taking place in the area. Campground 2 will be ready for campers for a 4 p.m. arrival on Friday, May 25. Campground 1 has been open since mid-April.

All campsites at North Point Recreation Area near Pickstown will be open with full facilities on May 18.

"Park staff have been working hard," said Doug Hofer, direct of S.D. state parks. "We didn't expect to have these campgrounds open until June. The warm spring helped considerably, but I can't say enough of the efforts from our employees."

Reservations can be made for Memorial Day weekend at Farm Island and Oahe Downstream Campground 2 starting Wednesday, May 16 at 7 a.m. CT. Reserve online at www.campsd.com or by calling 1.800.710.2267.

Parks Asking For Input On Recreation In South Dakota

PIERRE — The South Dakota Division of Parks and Recreation is asking residents for their opinions about issues facing outdoor recreation in the state.

Public input is a valuable part of the planning process that brings recreational facilities and services to South Dakota communities.

"This survey shows us where the greatest need for recreational facilities is," said Al Nedved, assistant director of the Parks and Recreation Division. "We ask everyone to fill out this survey, even those who aren't avid outdoorsmen."

The survey asks questions about perceptions of outdoor recreation in South Dakota and provides the "big picture" of outdoor recreational needs. Public input gathered from the survey will be incorporated in the development of the South Dakota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Local grant programs, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, use SCORP to determine priorities for outdoor recreational development in South Dakota.

The 10-minute survey can be found online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2012SDOutdoorRecSurvey>

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Great Fishing On The Mighty Missouri River

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

Since the flood of 2011, the fishing on South Dakota Great Lakes, the Missouri River has been phenomenal as anglers fishing for walleyes; bass and other species are reporting excellent numbers and quality.

Wit the high water last year and all of the water blowing through the dams, good numbers of both bait and prey fish were introduced into the rivers and lakes below the dams.

Locals in our area have been doing well on Francis Case all the way down to Gavins Point Dam at Yankton. Those anglers jigging and trolling crankbaits are doing exceptionally well.

A couple of weeks ago, Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Larry Myhre and I decided to venture farther north to see if the anglers fishing on Lake Sharpe and Lake Oahe were experiencing similar results.

We contacted good friend Kent Hutcheson (www.fishinghutch.com) or "Hutch" as he's known to his friends and clients, who graciously agreed to spend a couple of days on the water with us in the Pierre area.

Larry and I met Hutch and two of his fishing buddies from Ida Grove, Iowa after lunch at the West Bend boat launch, down river from Pierre on Lake Sharpe.

Like on much of the Missouri River, the spawn was pretty much over, but there were still plenty of fish in the staging areas to be caught.

We'd be fishing a submerged island or gravel bar where the walleyes were stacked up during the spawn. Our plan of attack would be to vertical jig or pitch light 1/8th ounce jigs up into the shallow water working them back on out to the boat. Hutch and Larry were using jigs tipped with minnows, since I'd had such good luck with the pearl white 3" Gulp minnow, I threw it, catching as many if not more than the jigs tipped with live minnows.

Later, Larry switched to his old favorite, the 4" ringworm on a jig, which took several nice fish when cast and slowly retrieved along the bottom.

All of the fish we were catching were the aggressive males, the ones you want to catch and keep this time of the year, as the larger females, the spawners had moved into deeper water. The smaller males will hang around the spawning areas just in case a female, which hadn't spawned, came cruising by.

The bite was almost non-stop with the majority of the fish we took in the 15 to 17" range, just the right eating size, making for some excellent eating after a day on the water.

On day two, we decided to head north to the big lake, Lake Oahe to fish the Cheyenne River arm, hoping to get a few larger fish.

We traileered to the far end of the arm to the Miniconjou ramp where we launched and headed out to check out a few of the many points found in the area.

As on the day before, we'd be pitching light jigs up shallow and working them back to the boat. I stuck with my 1/8th ounce jig tipped with the Gulp minnow while Larry and Hutch



Gary
HOWEY



LARRY MYHRE PHOTO
Guide Kent Hutcheson, of Pierre, is pictured with one of the walleyes taken on a recent Pierre fishing trip with columnist Gary Howey.

worked jigs tipped with minnows.

As in the day before, the majority of the fish were the 17 to 18" males as the females had completed their part of the spawn and had moved off into the deeper water.

All of the fish we took on this trip, in both Lake Sharpe and Lake Oahe were in really good shape, fat and healthy.

With all the water going through the dams, there was some concern about the flood impact on the fish populations, I'm here to tell you, if the fishing we've had on Lewis & Clark, Lake Sharpe and Lake Oahe, unless we have a major disaster, it doesn't look like we're going to need to worry about a thing.

Recent reports from the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks indicate the walleye population in Lake Oahe is at the second highest level since 1985 and their prey species, rainbow smelt and gizzard shad should be in pretty good shape. In 2011, the rainbow smelt reproduction was the highest in 11 years. With the majority of the smelt lost through the dam were young fish. The gizzard shad population should be in good shape as the mild winters we've been having have helped to increase winter survival and the stockings of pre-spawn adult shad this spring will add to the population. This along with stocking being done by the Game, Fish and Parks we should have good numbers of prey fish.

On Lake Sharpe, indication are that there is a large 2 year age class of fish in the lake and the high number of three-year old fish will be a

catchable size this year. A far as the gizzard shad go, in 2011 their reproduction was believed to be low because of the cool water, but, there should be no shortage of prey fish because of all the rainbow smelt that came through the dam from Lake Oahe.

Anglers can expect to find good salmon fishing on Lake Sharpe as the water coming through the Oahe Dam brought with it good numbers of salmon which will now be roaming the waters of the lake.

On Lake Francis Case the walleye numbers should be very similar to last years, when there was some of the best fishing on the lake that I can remember, this along with aback-to-back strong years of walleye production should help keep to assure a good walleye population.

The fishing below Ft. Randall Dam on down stream has also been excellent with excellent walleyes and smallmouth being caught.

Now's the time to get out and do some fishing as the bite has been strong and should continue throughout the season.

More information on the great outdoor opportunities on the Great Lakes of South Dakota can be found at www.sdgreatlakes.org.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the President of Outdoorsmen Productions, producer/host of the Outdoorsmen Adventures television series and the co-host of Outdoor Adventures radio. Check him out on Facebook and on the web at www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

S.D. Birding Festival This Weekend

FORT RANDALL — The second annual South Dakota Birding Festival will be held today (Saturday) and Sunday at Fort Randall. This festival is for both novice and expert bird watchers.

Two National Wildlife Refuges and a South Dakota Wildlife Production Area will be featured with field trips to all three. The area is unique in that these three excellent birding areas are in close proximity to each other. The Lake Andes Refuge borders the 4,616-acre Lake Andes Lake north of the Missouri River and is only 10 miles from the Karl E. Mundt National Wildlife Refuge located on the Missouri River.

SATURDAY: May 19 will begin at the Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge with a bird banding workshop. Continuing during the day will be birding field trips, Basics of Photography workshop, a program on Owls of South Dakota and an Owling Field Trip.

SUNDAY: Action will begin with a Bird Banding Workshop at the Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge followed by a Birding Field Trip at the Karl Mundt National Wildlife Refuge. The Karl Mundt Refuge is not open to the public except at this time which is an added bonus for festival attendees.

For an event schedule and registration form, go to www.sdgreatlakes.org/greatoutdoors/birdinginfo. Or call the Wagner Chamber of Commerce at 605-384-3741.

Neb. Officials: Leave Wildlife Babies Alone

LINCOLN, Neb. — It is natural for some people who see a young wild animal apparently abandoned by its mother to want to rescue it. The correct course of action is to leave it alone.

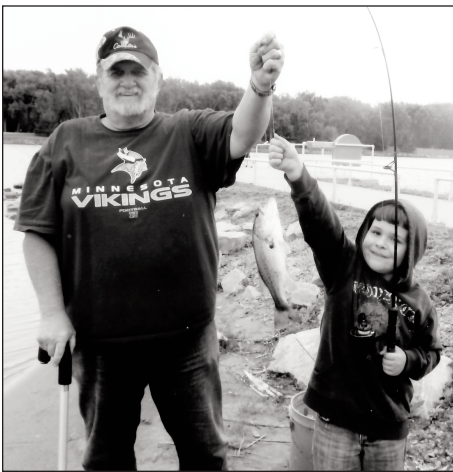
Here are some rules of thumb from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission:

— A lone fawn, or other young bird or mammal, may appear to be abandoned or injured, but the mother frequently is off feeding or drinking. Do not move it. The longer the fawn is separated from its mother, the slimmer the chance that it will be reunited with her. In some cases, an orphaned fawn will be adopted by other deer.

— It is normal for a doe to leave its fawn to keep it from being detected by predators. The doe can be seen by predators as it feeds, so she leaves the fawn hidden and leaves the area to draw attention away from the fawn's location.

— Most wildlife babies are protected by state or federal law and it is illegal to possess them.

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



LEFT: Mel Rempfer, left, and grandson Brandon caught this largemouth bass at Lake Yankton on May 5. (Submitted Photo)

RIGHT: Lisa Runyon caught these walleye and perch at Lake Yankton. (Captain Norm's)



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Wiebe Complex Dedication Today

PONCA, Neb. — Conservation Officer Eric Wiebe was well-known within the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Ponca region for his dedication to Hunter Education, mentored youth hunts and shooting sports.

In January, 2007, the Board of Commissioners of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission passed the following resolution:

The Eric Wiebe Memorial Shooting Complex at Ponca State Park will help achieve many of the objectives of this RDR plan and will greatly enhance the Nebraska Game and Parks Commis-

sion's mission of perpetuating the heritage of hunting and shooting sports. The completed Eric Wiebe Shooting Complex features all-weather ranges for pellet gun, archery, muzzle-loader, .22 rifle, shotgun, and slingshot. This project includes a memorial entrance and paved roadway.

The Dedication Ceremony will take place at Ponca State Park today (Saturday) at 11:00 a.m. at the entrance of the shooting complex. Following the event, the park will host free public shooting from 1:30-4:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend this event.

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Memorial Day Deadlines

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan will be closed Monday, May 28th, for the Memorial Day holiday.

The following deadlines will apply:

Out On The Town — Wednesday, May 23

Tuesday, May 29 newspaper – 5 p.m., Wednesday, May 23

Wednesday, May 30 newspaper – 5 p.m., Thursday, May 24

Thursday, May 31 newspaper – 5 p.m., Friday, May 25

There will be no newspaper on Monday, May 28, 2012.

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