

## OUTDOORS DIGEST

## Fish For Free On Saturday In Nebraska

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission says Saturday's Free Fishing and Park Entry Day is an opportunity for people to enjoy fishing or a state park area without needing a fishing or park permit.

All other fee requirements, laws and regulations will be in effect. Anglers at Two Rivers State Recreation Area's trout lake must buy a daily trout tag.

As part of Saturday's activities, the commission will host Family Fishing Clinics at several locations. They include Carter P. Johnson Lake; Fremont Lakes; Lewis and Clark State Recreation Area; Summit Lake; Louisville State Recreation Area; and Ponca State Park.

Tackle will be available for children to use, including rods and reels and bait. Game and Parks employees and volunteer fishing instructors will hand out materials and offer fishing tips.

## NE Nebraska Archery

## Tourney May 19, 26

HARTINGTON, Neb. — The Northeast Nebraska Archery Club 3-D Archery Tournament will be held May 19 and May 26 at the outdoor range located three miles east of Hartington, Neb., on Highway 84.

Registration times are 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information, contact Kevin Millikan at 402-640-3322.

## Highland Memorial Trap

## Shoot Is May 26

The Isaak Walton Larry Highland Memorial Trap Shoot will be held on Sunday, May 26, at the Yankton Isaak Walton Trap Field, located six miles east of Yankton on the north side of Highway 50.

The field will open for practice at 9 a.m. and competition starts at 10 a.m. This is a 250 target non-registered event.

Free lunch will be served and prizes provided by the Highland Family.

For more information, call Kevin Geraldson at (605) 660-1463 or Jim Barger at (605) 660-2443.

## GFP Youth Activity Day Set For June 11

A free youth activity day, sponsored by the Department of Game, Fish and Parks, will be held Tuesday, June 11, running from 5-9 p.m. at the Jim River Trap Range, located approximately 4 miles east of Yankton on Highway 50.

The event will be held rain or shine, so dress accordingly. Youth ages 8 years of age and up, must be accompanied by Parent or Guardian. (Parent or legal guardian need to sign waiver form before youth participates in events).

The activities are: archery, trap shooting, rifle shooting, and BB gun shooting.

Youths must pre-register, contact the Lewis and Clark Recreation area at 668-2985. Registration is limited to 50 youths. Cost if free and a meal will be provided.

## East River, West River, Black Hills Deer Seasons

## Posted At GFP Meeting

CHUSTER STATE PARK — The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission has proposed East River, West River and Black Hills deer seasons for a public hearing on June 6.

The East River Deer Season proposal would provide 1,050 fewer one-tag licenses than the 2012 season, 1,500 fewer two-tag licenses and 1,300 fewer three-tag licenses (an overall reduction of 7,950 tags). East River Deer season dates would be Nov. 23-Dec. 8, with Dec. 28-Jan. 5 valid for antlerless deer tags only.

The Commission also proposes the West River Deer Season with dates for Units 30A (Gregory) and 50A (Mellette) of Nov. 2-5 and Nov. 18-24, Units 24A (Dewey), 64A (Ziebach), 20A (Corson) from Nov. 2-24, and all other units from Nov. 16-Dec. 1. Only antlerless deer tags would be valid Dec. 28-Jan. 5.

The proposed 2013 season would change resident license numbers from last year by increasing one-tag licenses by 240, reducing two-tag licenses by 1,260 (2,520 tags), and increasing three-tag licenses by 305 (915 tags).

The proposal would also adjust nonresident license numbers by increasing one-tag licenses by 20, cutting two-tag licenses by 102 (204 tags), and increasing three-tag licenses by 24 (72 tags) compared to 2012.

Changes to East River and West River deer license numbers are mostly the result high deer losses caused by Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease in portions of the state last year.

The proposed Black Hills Deer Season, which would be from Nov. 1-30, would offer 200 resident and 16 nonresident "any deer" licenses, 3,000 resident and 240 nonresident "any whitetail deer" licenses, and 100 resident and eight nonresident "antlerless whitetail deer" licenses. The license allocation would be 50 fewer resident and four fewer "antlerless whitetail deer" licenses compared to the 2012 season.

Those season proposals will be finalized at the June 6-7 GFP Commission meeting, which will be held in Pierre at the Capitol Lake Visitor Center. To view the full proposals on those seasons, visit: [www.gfp.sd.gov/agency/commission/default.aspx](http://www.gfp.sd.gov/agency/commission/default.aspx) and look under the "Rule Proposals" heading.

To comment on any of the proposals, send a letter to: South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501; or email [wild.info@state.sd.us](mailto:wild.info@state.sd.us). Comments on proposal will be taken until 5 p.m. CDT on June 5. To be included in the public record, please include your full name and city of residence.

To comment in person on any of the proposed deer seasons, the public hearing will begin at 2 p.m. CDT at the Capitol Lake Visitors Center on Thursday, June 6.

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Gary Howey | Of The Outdoors

## Early-Season Bass Fishing

BY GARY HOWEY  
Hartington, Neb.

This is the time of the year when many anglers develop tunnel vision, thinking only of walleyes and big water fishing! When you do this it means that you're missing out on some of the best early season fishing there is.

Many of these anglers will be running great distances when some of the best fishing available will be right in their own backyard for Bass.

In the upper Midwest, there are excellent populations of both small and largemouth bass and now is the time to take good numbers of both species.

Small and largemouth bass can be found in most of the Missouri River reservoirs all the way up stream into Lake Oahe.

Most NRD dams, ponds, farm dams, lakes and reservoirs throughout the Midwest also contain cacheable populations of largemouth bass.

Depending on where bass are located, spawning temps will vary with the largemouth bass spawning in water temps from 55-65 degrees while their smaller cousins the smallmouth bass will spawn in 55-75 degree water.

During the spawn, both species can be found in and adjacent to their spawning grounds. The females will remain deep until water temps have reached ideal spawning temps and can be caught in the deeper holes adjacent to their spawning beds.

Bass are nest builders, with the males, using their tails will create a small depression or nest. When water temps are right, the females will move up into these shallow areas to spawn and once the eggs are deposited and fertilized, the nest will be guarded by the male.

Male bass taken off the nest should be released as soon as possible as without the male to guard the nest, predators will move in quickly.

After spawning, bass will move off into deeper water to rest up from the rigors of the spawn and as water temperatures start to warm, they'll become more active. When water temperature move into the low 70's, bass will start to feed aggressively.

Look for bass this time of the year spending much of the day in deep water, moving into the shallows early in the day and later in the afternoon looking for an easy meal.

In the river and areas with current, you'll find bass throughout the day tucked in behind some sort of cover.

Anything that cuts or slows down the current, which are known as slack water pockets, are likely to be a good hiding spots for the bass.

Points, rock piles pockets in the weeds and down timber all cut the current and make excellent locations to look for bass in the river.

Both large and smallmouth bass can be taken on spinners, spinnerbaits,



TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES PHOTO  
**Cassie Howey, Hartington, Neb., with a post spawn largemouth bass taken from a small pond in northeast Nebraska using a Mepps Spinner.**

crankbaits, worm rigs and jigs.

When fishing for smallmouth, it's a good idea to downsize your baits as the larger baits used for largemouth may over power a smallmouth.

In the lakes, ponds and stock dams found throughout the area, look for bass in ambush areas out of the sun. These areas include the pockets just inside the weed line, under boat docks, next to down timber or adjacent to brush piles.

If it sticks out of the water or lies along the shoreline, chances are that sometime during the day a bass will be near it.

If there is no apparent structure along the shoreline, look for bass to be located in the deeper water areas adjacent to the shallows.

Since bass have a tremendous appetite they'll eat anything they can get their mouth around.

Bass can be taken on livebait such as crawlers, minnows, waterdogs and salamanders.

Sliding sinkers behind a large hook tipped with any of these live baits will take Bass in any body of water.

Many bass fishermen use only artificial baits for bass and match their baits to the time of the season that they're fishing.

In colder water period or when a front has moved through, slow down their

presentation, using a jig and pig or plastic baits such as Power Bait worms or the new Gulp.

These plastic baits when Texas or Carolina rig are an excellent choice when bass have lockjaw and won't take another bait.

By slowly working these baits through or adjacent to the structure, they'll be able to entice a few of these slow moving Bass to bite.

As the weather warms, bass will become more active and fishing will improve.

Anglers using spinnerbaits, buzzbaits and crankbaits during this time of the year will pick up good numbers of bass.

You can bounce these baits off of the logs, rocks or boat docks that the bass will be hiding near, taking the more active and aggressive bass.

One problem that anglers will face as the water warms, especially in the clear water lakes will be weeds.

If you're going to fish these areas, you'll need to adjust your methods in these weedy areas or spend much of their time snagged up or pulling weeds from your baits.

If you're fishing these weedy bodies of water, your going to have to use some type of weedless bait or a bait that will run through, over or under the weeds.

Since most of the weeds either lie just

below the surface or have open pockets in them, there are several baits that will produce in these salad bowl areas.

If the weeds aren't grown up, covering the surface, a top water bait worked slowly across the top of the weeds works well.

Work it slowly across the top, stopping occasionally to give the bass a good opportunity to look your bait over or to locate it through the weeds.

If you're fishing weeds that come up to the surface a spinnerbait or buzzbait works well. You'll need to start your retrieve, getting the bait working along the surface on the edge before you come into the weeds.

If you're using a buzzbait, you'll need to keep it on the surface all the way across the weed bed. If there's larger open pockets, you can slow down the retrieve; you still need to keep the bait on top, so you'll have to raise your rod tip to keep it up on the top. By slowing the bait down, Bass that were following the bait may be triggered into striking.

With a spinnerbait, once you've got it working along the top, you keep it moving until you roll over open pockets that might hold fish.

This is when you'll want to pause and let the spinner bait helicopter or slowly drop into the pocket. This will give bass hiding in the pocket an opportunity to strike.

To bring the bait back up on the surface, you'll need to hold your rod tip high and crank pretty aggressively to bring the bait to the top and to get the blades to start spinning again.

You're going to need some pretty tough line like Berkley Big Game, a longer medium heavy or heavy rod and a reel with a ratio that allows you to pick up a lot of line with each crank of the handle.

In weeds, the bass is going to hit hard and then head into the weeds, so it won't be a finesse type bite.

In order to win this battle you're going to have to set the hook hard and muscle him onto the surface or he'll break you off in the weeds.

The transition from the post spawn to warm season fishing is a numbers game.

You throw your bait at as many snags, stick-ups and weedy spots that you see and eventually you'll be rewarded with an aggressive strike and the hard fight of the Bass.

This is the time of the year when bass fishing can really be good and some real trophies can be taken, so don't develop tunnel vision and chase only one species. Give early season Bass fishing a try, you'll be darn glad you did!

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 MYUTV channel 10 on Saturday afternoon at 4:30 pm. In Yankton the series airs on channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 am. He and Simon Fuller are the hosts of the *Outdoor Adventures radio program Monday-Saturday at 6:45 am 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](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).*

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## Youth Education Challenge Returns To SD

PIERRE — Young hunters will get a chance to demonstrate both their shooting abilities and their knowledge of conservation at the 2013 Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) June 15 in Mitchell.

South Dakota youth who participate in the daylong event will compete in two age divisions and eight separate shooting sports and outdoor skills tests. Events range from firearm and archery proficiency to orienteering and wildlife identification. All rules and regulations will follow

National Rifle Association International rules as much as possible.

"YHEC is designed to promote youth participation in the shooting sports, hunting and overall knowledge of the outdoors," said Gary Stadlman, South Dakota YHEC Coordinator. "This is a test to see how we have done as HuntSAFE instructors, and I would encourage any youngsters who have completed their HuntSAFE classes to participate in this year's event."

All registrants must be at

least 12 years old, hunter-education certified and have parent or guardian approval. An adult coach or parent/guardian must be present at the event. For registration information, interested individuals should email [outdoorprogramming@gmail.com](mailto:outdoorprogramming@gmail.com). For general information, phone Gary Stadlman at 605-227-4286

The 2013 YHREC event is sponsored by the South Dakota Shooting Sports-YHEC Committee and the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

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