

OUTDOORS DIGEST

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Neb. G&P: 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 regarding wildlife babies:

-- 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.

-- Do not try to raise wildlife babies as pets. As animals mature, they become more independent and follow natural instincts to leave and establish their own territories. Rescued animals are poorly prepared for life in the wild.

-- Most wildlife babies are protected by state or federal law and it is illegal to

“Go Fourth” Program Encourages South Dakota Youth to Get Outdoors

PIERRE – Twelve thousand fourth graders in South Dakota schools will get a special taste of summer freedom through South Dakota Game, Fish, and Park's new “Go Fourth” program.

The “Go Fourth” program, presented in partnership with the South Dakota Department of Health, will distribute free entrance licenses for one day in any South Dakota state park to every fourth grade student in South Dakota. The passes allow entrance to any South Dakota state park to students and their families and include a free hour of kayak, canoe or paddleboat rental, where available.

“The program aims to give every student exposure to local natural resources and a chance to start a lifetime of healthy habits,” said state park director, Doug Hofer. “The program will showcase activities and opportunities available at state parks, as well as events and educational programs taking place.”

The passes will be distributed at all public and private schools. Families can turn in the day-pass for a discount off of an annual pass. The entrance licenses are valid between the distribution date and Dec. 31, 2015.

“South Dakota's many state parks and recreation areas are great places for families to get out and get active,” said Linda Ahrendt, chronic disease prevention and health promotion administrator for the Department of Health. “We're very pleased to be part of the ‘Go Fourth’ program and its effort to get kids outside and moving in our state parks.”

Ranch Couple Honored As Fort Robinson Dedicates New Building

The newly reconstructed 1891 Officers Quarters at Fort Robinson State Park was described as “a welcome addition to a world-class place” as it was dedicated in honor of a highly-regarded Sandhills ranch couple during a ceremony Saturday morning.

The event at the new building paid tribute to the late Don and Olive Forney of Rushville, whose friends and family contributed a majority of the funding for the \$1.7 million building. About 75 percent of the project's costs came from private donations the Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation.

The new frame structure, which blends historical features with modern amenities, was erected at its original footprint on the northwestern corner of the park's central complex, complementing the other historical lodging facilities along the horseshoe-shaped drive and standing within an uninterrupted view of the scenic Red Cloud Buttes and the park's parade grounds. Each of the duplex's two sections will sleep 16 people, complete with air conditioning, a sitting area, gas fireplace and a full kitchen.

With the sun shining and more than 100 people overfilling bleachers in front of the building, the ceremony's speakers noted the hospitality of Don and Olive Forney at their ranch and said the new building will stand as a fitting tribute as families and other groups gather to build memories just as they did at the Forneys' place. Those in attendance were among the first to be greeted by signs paying tribute to the Forneys and the more than 30 donors as they toured the building following the ceremony.

Jim Douglas, director of the Game and Parks Commission, noted that Fort Robinson State Park has been named by USA Today as one of the top 10 places in the nation to have a family reunion, and that the new building will only make it better.

The Forneys were also remembered as being exemplary stewards of the land and natural resources and as ardent promoters of the Sandhills and northwestern Nebraska. Don Forney was recognized for his role as a Foundation board member, playing instrumental roles in the development of many projects including the Bowring Ranch State Historical Park near Merriman and the Buffalo Soldiers Barracks reconstruction at Fort Robinson State Park.

Along with Douglas and Game and Parks assistant director Roger Kuhn, speakers included Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation board members Jim Abel and John Gottschalk. Game and Parks Commission board chairman Kent Forney of Lincoln, Don and Olive's son, was one of many Forney family members in attendance and closed the ceremony by paying tribute to his parents and thanking the Foundation and Game and Parks Commission for making the project's vision become reality.

The building represents one of five two-story officers' quarters that were constructed along with many other buildings during an expansion in 1891. They were demolished in 1956, after the fort's heyday as a military installation and prior to it becoming a state park. Since all of the buildings from that expansion had been razed, the new building will represent an era of architecture that had been lost at the fort.

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

This is the time of the year when many anglers develop tunnel vision, thinking only of walleyes and fishing on the bigger water!

When you do this, it means that you are missing some of the finest early season fishing.

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

In the upper Midwest, there are excellent populations of both Small and Largemouth bass and right now is an excellent time to take good numbers of both species.

Both are found throughout the upper Midwest, in Missouri River

in Lewis & Clark Lake up stream into Lake Oahe. In South Dakota, you will find excellent bass fishing in most lakes including on Reetz Lake, Roy Lake, Big Stone and Enemy Swim.

Most dams, ponds, farm & stock dams, lakes and reservoirs also contain cacheable populations of Largemouth bass.

During this time of the year, bass will have moved off into deeper water to rest up from the rigors of the spawn. As the water temperatures begin to warm, they will become more active.

As water temperature moves into the low 70's, the bass will start to feed aggressively.

Look for bass this time of the year spending much of the day in the deeper water and then 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 will find bass throughout the day tucked in behind some sort of cover.

Anything that cuts or slows down



Gary HOWEY



Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Doug Haas (Mitchell) is pictured with a large Smallmouth Bass caught and released in Reetz Lake near Webster.

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 will not take different baits.

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

weeds.

If you are using a buzzbait, you will need to keep it on the surface all the way across the weed bed. If there are larger open pockets, you can slow down the retrieve; you still need to keep the bait on top, so you will have to raise your rod tip to keep it up on the top. By slowing the bait down, bass that were, follow-

Tying Lures And Fishing Help Put Veteran On Road Back From War

BY BRENT FRAZEE
(c) 2015 The Kansas City Star (Kansas City, Mo.)

When Joe Bragg caught a live well full of big crappies recently, it represented one more step on his road to recovery.

Just two months ago, the Army veteran couldn't imagine such moments would ever be enjoyed again.

“I was totally stressed out,” said Bragg, 36, who served two tours of duty in Iraq. “My life just hit rock bottom.”

“At the time I couldn't see any way out.” After returning from the war, Bragg's life unraveled. His wife left him, he lost his house, he couldn't find a job and he suffered from the effects of post traumatic stress disorder.

That's when he turned to a unique kind of therapy. During the nights when he couldn't sleep, he started tying feather crappie jigs. It was a craft he learned years ago from his father, who looked for unique lures that the fish hadn't seen before.

For Bragg, it started as a way to get his mind off his troubles – to relax and forget life in the aftermath of war. He would buy feathers, chenille and Flashabou, and craft them into beautiful fishing lures.

If he made a few bucks selling them, all the better.

“I started tying jigs so I didn't have to sit in front of Walmart begging for money,” said Bragg, who lives in Topeka, Kan. “It was that bad.”

“I was a master carpenter before I went into the service, but after you've been in the Army, your body gets banged up. The mind's willing, but the body just can't handle a lot of things.”

Bragg started displaying his homemade jigs on his Facebook page, Flint Hills Afield and Custom Tackle and he was surprised to get a positive response from fishermen. That's when he began a business selling those lures.

He truly is a custom builder. He ties his jigs to the customer's desires. Purple, white and chartreuse? No problem. Bragg ties them up and usually has them in the mail within 36 hours.

He even takes his lure-building station with him in the boat. If he sees a situation that calls for a certain color pattern, he'll take time to tie a few right there on the water.

The ultimate? Catching a big crappie with a lure he had made just minutes earlier.

He did that many times Thursday while fishing a private lake in the Kansas City area. Casting to rocky banks and slowly retrieving his lures with a jigging motion, he caught a combination of crappies, bass and bluegills. All of the fish were tossed back, and Bragg had more proof that his homemade baits work.

Buoyed by the early success of his lures, he is planning bigger and better things. He hopes to expand his business, which now sells lures primarily through his Facebook page, and hopes to start guiding and fishing tournaments.

In short, he has hope – something he didn't have several months ago.

Serving in a war can be tough on a man, he'll tell you. He witnessed horrors that he wouldn't wish on anyone. He saw friends killed. He survived mortar fire 17 times (yes, he remembers the exact number), and he suffered the pain of losing three friends to

Braggin' Board



Photos from T.J.'s Minimart



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