

Hunting Deer? There's An App For That

BY BRIAN S. PETERSON
Brainerd Dispatch

BRainerd, Minn. (AP) — Gary Drotts can see it now. Or maybe it's sometime in the future.

"It will get cheap enough with (trail) cameras where you could have four to five monitors in your deer stand going at one time," Drotts, DNR wildlife manager in Brainerd, said of the impact of technology on deer hunting. "You could sit there and sleep until one (of the monitors) beeps when a deer comes in and then just get up and shoot the deer."

Whether Drotts was being futuristic to make a point remains to be seen. But there's no doubt that electronics and technology have changed the deer hunting experience in recent years, creating potential challenges for Drotts and those who will monitor Saturday's Minnesota firearms deer hunting opener.

"They (deer) haven't adapted at all, but we keep inventing better, faster tools to harvest deer," Drotts said. "They (technological advances) do probably increase the harvest rates some. If so, we have to look at that and decide if we have to change anything. Is it a problem today or tomorrow? Is it a problem now? Probably not. But with time ..."

Years ago, about the only electronics in the field for deer hunts were two-way radios — walkie-talkies — which, of course, have given way to cellphones. And in a big way — a majority of the 500,000 or so hunters in the field this season will likely have cellphones with them.

And that's OK, Drotts said. "You can carry them (in the field) and they're a good safety device," he said.

Tim Collette, DNR conservation officer for the Pequot Lakes area, agreed that cellphones have their place in the field in these modern-day hunts. But misuses remain a concern.

"It isn't even the calling back and forth or the texting. The main thing people need to remember is that it's fine to text or call another hunter and say 'I want to go in. It's cold.' Or 'I need help dragging this deer out.' But where they cross the line is you can't use electronics to aid in the taking of big game. You can't say 'A deer is coming in your direction.' Or 'We're making a drive. Get ready.' That's aiding and abetting. But with the prominence of texting, people don't even stop and think about it. They automatically do it."

"That's crossing the line. But it's getting more and more common where I'm interviewing someone for some reason and this person knew this deer was coming. That's where we say 'Did you get a text on this. Can I look at your phone?' I have (checked hunters' phones for texts). But I have not had a case where I've caught anybody. I've had ones where they admitted 'I texted and didn't even think of it.' But it wasn't where they actually took a deer. So I give a lot of verbal warnings that you can't do that, it's a violation to do that."

Hunters using phones to aid in the taking of deer face fines and other penalties.

"Part of hunting is to preserve the traditions of the hunt and how you frame fair chase," Drotts said. "It's obvious to them (cellphone users) that it's a useful tool (for hunting) and they don't hardly think about it anymore (using cellphones in hunts)."

But beside safety reasons — using the cellphone to call in case of an emergency or using cellphone GPS devices to find one's way — there are other obvious advantages to such electronics. Minnesota hunters may register their deer by phone or Internet, which eliminates having to drive to a registration station.

Other informative websites also are accessible for hunters who have Internet access on their cellphones. And, of course, there are cellphone apps for hunters, too. Among the new deer hunting apps this year is "Deer Diary, the App for Hunters," which offers satellite map locations, current weather data and a locator tool that gives hunters the exact location of their stand or allows them to mark harvest locations.

Collette, the DNR conservation officer, calls the app "a great example of how things are changing." He said hunters keeping good notes is "just a smart way of looking at hunting," so he would embrace that.

"You can't begrudge people (deer hunters) for stepping it up in note-taking. As long as you keep it to that it's fine," Collette said.

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Smallmouth Bass On The Rocks...

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

I could feel the chub at the end of my line moving around frantically and then there was a slight tap on the end of my rod a fish had picked up the bait on the end my live bait rig. I dropped the line back, giving the fish time to get the large bait and hook into it's mouth and then I set the hook hard.

As the fish dove deep into the rocks, doing its best to dislodge the nasty chub that was pulling at it, I cranked my reel frantically, knowing if the fish made it into rocks, there was a good chance I'd loose him.

I knew by the way the fish was fighting, diving deep, taking line and fighting hard, that I'd connected with a Smallmouth Bass as these fish, known as the Bulldogs of the Deep are the hardest fighting freshwater fish to be found in North America. After a lengthy battle, our guide Cory Ewing, Waubay Lakes Guide Service www.waubay-lakeguideservice.com slipped the net under a healthy 18-inch fish.

Cory, Larry Myhre and I, had fished the day before for walleyes on one of the sloughs in the area, netting several big walleyes including one well over 7 pounds after filming an excellent walleye segment for our Outdoorsmen Adventures television series we now had the opportunity to highlight another species found in the numerous lakes in the Waubay area.

We'd decided to switch gears, as we knew that in Enemy Swim, located just outside of Waubay, held excellent populations of Smallmouth Bass as well as



PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE
Columnist Gary Howey, left, and Cory Ewing of Waubay Guide Service are pictured with three of the Smallmouth they took while fishing Enemy Swim Lake near Waubay,

walleyes and panfish.

The fish we'd just landed would be the first of over 30 Smallmouth Bass we'd catch on this half-day trip with the largest being right at 4-pounds.

The Smallmouth population in many bodies of water in South Dakota, including the Missouri River has exploded. Once only found in a few bodies of water in N.E. South Dakota, smallmouth can now be found in most bodies of water throughout the area because of the high water, which has allowed numerous species of fish, including the Smallmouth to move from one body of water through the creeks, rivers and sloughs.

Smallmouth can reach trophy size in this area of the state as the South Dakota state record Smallmouth; a 6-pound 9-ounce fish was taken from Lake Poinsett, north of Arlington on April 27, 2008.

These fish are eager biters and are consistently taken on live bait rigs during the fall as this time of the year is when Smallmouth Bass will be found schooled up around rock piles and points, pigging out in preparation for the winter months ahead.

We were using medium Light and medium spinning gear filled with 8-pound Fireline and mono leaders with livebait rigs made up with Lindy NO-SNAGG Slip

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
Louis Maring, of Merna, Neb., earned first place in the Captain Norm's Paddlefish Contest after catching this 107-pound, 12-ounce paddlefish.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
James Ishmael, of Springfield, captured second place with this 86-pound catch.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S
Scott Phillips, of Tyndall, finished third after catching this 79-pound paddlefish.

Briefs: Niobrara Ducks Unlimited Banquet Nov. 19

NIOBRARA, Neb. — The Niobrara, Neb., chapter of Ducks Unlimited will hold its annual banquet on Saturday, Nov. 19, at 6 p.m. at the WFLA Hall in Niobrara.

The banquet, to focus efforts on conserving wetlands, will feature a live auction, including guns, a raffle and a prime rib dinner.

For more information, contact Jamie Novacek with the Niobrara Ducks Unlimited chapter at 402-336-7925 or email jlnovacek@yahoo.com.

Turn To Public Access Atlas For Pheasant Season

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraskans may refer to the 2011 Public Access Atlas to find hunting areas for the upcoming statewide pheasant, quail and partridge seasons, which opened Saturday, Oct. 29.

Hunters will find in the Public Access Atlas public hunting lands, including wildlife management areas, and private lands open to public walk-in access, such as Open Fields and Waters sites. Hunting these upland birds is not allowed on state and federal refuges and sanctuaries.

The daily bag limit for pheasants is three and the possession limit is 12. Only rooster pheasants may be harvested.

The seasons run through Jan. 31, 2012.

G&P Commissioners Do Not Accept Grant Award

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commissioners voted to not accept a \$2.4 million Environmental Trust Fund grant award intended to be used to purchase a portion of Snake Falls Ranch. They met Oct. 27 at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford.

Game and Parks had hoped to collaborate with the Snake Falls Sportsmen's Club to purchase a portion of the land along the Snake River in Cherry County to allow limited public access to the prized trout water, as well as Snake Falls. However, by Oct. 27, the Snake Falls Sportsmen's Club had not assured Game and Parks it would join the agency in the purchase.



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