

Briefs: TIP Calls Result In 146 Arrests, Tickets

S.D. Game, Fish & Parks Dept.

Fall hunting is now in full swing, and the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks is reminding hunters who see illegal activities to call the Turn In Poachers (TIPS) hotline at 888-OVERBAG (683-7226).

The hotline, which is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, allows people to report information about wildlife violations — and if they choose — remain anonymous. Those who would prefer to email TIPS reports may do so on the GFP website.

From July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011, a total of 394 TIPS cases were investigated. Those investigations led to 146 arrests or citations. As a result of successful cases closed during that period, poachers were assessed more than \$27,000 in fines and were sentenced to 1,730 days in jail. Offenders were also assessed almost \$50,000 in civil damages.

Wildlife Protection, Inc., the nonprofit agency handling TIPS rewards, paid \$8,725 to those who took the initiative to report wildlife violations.

Since the beginning of the South Dakota TIPS Program in 1984, there have been more than 10,000 investigations, leading to more than 3,000 arrests or citations. Violators have been required to pay \$650,000 in fines and more than \$500,000 in civil damages.

During the same 28-year period, nearly \$130,000 in TIPS rewards have gone to witnesses who provided information on violations.

"These numbers are proof that South Dakotans are serious about protecting our natural resources," said Charlie Wharton, TIPS coordinator for GFP. "As caretakers of nature, we all have a vested interest in the public trust of preserving wildlife for future generations. It's heartening to have people take an active interest in reporting violators and protecting our resources."

Wharton reminds those who witness wildlife violations, and even those who learn of them later, to call their local conservation officers or use the TIPS hotline.

While any information can be useful, those things that can be most beneficial are accurate physical descriptions of people committing hunting and fishing violations, specific geographical information and vehicle information.

Neb. Game & Parks, State Patrol Catch Spotlighters

LINCOLN, Neb. — Seven people were cited for game law violations in a joint effort by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) to catch spotlighters in the St. Paul area over the weekend.

An NSP airplane using heat-detecting equipment discovered individuals in three vehicles and guided five Game and Parks conservation officers on the ground from 8:30 p.m. Nov. 18 until 12:30 a.m. Nov. 19.

All seven individuals were ticketed for hunting with the aid of an artificial light. Two of those also were cited for no fur harvest permits, one for failure to tag his traps, and one for liquidated damages on a raccoon. More than \$2,000 in fines was assessed, in addition to liquidated damages of \$25 for the raccoon.

Jerry Pecha, a Game and Parks law enforcement supervisor, said the project was carried out during the November firearm deer season to increase the possibility of catching deer spotlighters in response to many complaints in the area.

A similar project is planned for the future, Pecha said.

OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Optics Make Things A Little Clearer

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

If you're into the outdoors, hunter, bird watcher or hiker, you're going to need a good pair of binoculars. Good binoculars can mean the difference between clearly seeing that buck, exotic bird or some special landscape or not being able to see it at all.

My first binoculars, really looked as if they'd do the job and would fit into my limited budget working well in the store but when hit the field, it was a different story.

They were always fogged over and after a few trips in the field; they were worthless, hard to focus and not worth having.

It was the first pair of binoculars I'd purchased and had no clue as to what I was looking for; ending up with binoculars that didn't do the job I'd hoped they would.

Today, it's even more confusing than it was when I was looking for binoculars, as there are so many options.

There are dozens of binocular manufacturers out there. In their commercials and ads, they all say they're the best. They come in all shapes, sizes and prices.

In order to get the best pair of binoculars for the job, you're going to need to know something about binoculars.

Because I'm no expert on optics, I talked with several optics experts that manufacturer a complete line of top quality binoculars, scopes and spotting scopes.

Below is some of the information from these experts that will make purchasing of binoculars a little clearer!

When you start looking for binoculars, you're going to see things that you may not understand and have probably wondered what the numbers associated with optics



PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE

Using good quality binoculars helped hunters in South Dakota spot these Snow Geese coming up in Nebraska well before the hunters would had the opportunity to see them without the use of good optics.

means.

For instance, what is a 10 X 42 binocular?

The first number (10) is the magnification or how many times what you're looking at will appear closer. This means that the 10 X 42 bring the object you're looking at 10 times closer.

The second number (42) is how big the objective is or the size of the bottom lens. The larger the lens (objective), the more light the binocular gathers light which means that larger numbers will give you better viewing in low light conditions. Binoculars with larger objectives are going to be slightly heavier.

Binocular terminology can also be confusing, terms such as field of view; eye re-

lief, resolution and coated optics are all terms related to optics.

Field of View is the size of the area that you'll see 1,000 yards. The higher the magnification, which is the first number, the narrower the field of vision will be.

Eye Relief is the distance, in millimeters from the lens to a point where the eye is positioned to be able to see the entire image. Eyeglass wearers should look for binoculars with a long eye relief.

Resolution describes how sharp or clear an object appears when viewed. Better quality binoculars, generally will have higher the resolution.

Coated Optics: Optics are coated to prevent the glass surfaces from loosing reflected light. The best optics will be Fully

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



PHOTO: CAPTAIN NORM'S

The father and son tandem of Neal Neuhaufen caught these two fish in a recent outing. Neal Sr. caught this 78-pound paddlefish, while Neal Jr. caught this 7-pound channel catfish.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Aaron Schroeder shot this 4x3 buck on his family's farm near Crofton, Neb. on Nov. 20.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mason Sundleaf of Yankton shot this 5x5 buck on the opening day of East River deer season.

South Dakota Forest Service Battling Pine Beetle Epidemic

NORTHERN HILLS, S.D. (AP) — The Black Hills National Forest faces some serious challenges in terms of combating the mountain pine beetle, but its managers say there is hope of success.

In terms of the beetle epidemic, Forest Supervisor Craig Bobzien said that with the variety of resources available to us, we can be optimistic about successfully preventing the total infestation of the forest.

"I'm of the belief — and I will say this is a shared belief among a lot of people who are working on this — that in the Black Hills, we have the ingredients in place to have the best chance of being successful in having a healthy forest, of really any place that I know of in the West that's being threatened right now," Bobzien said.

To achieve that success, the Forest Service has formulated a strategy for responding to the beetles, but it will also take cooperation with governments, landowners and other entities across the forest.

The Western Bark Beetle Strategy, published by the Forest Service in July, identifies three main "prongs" or considerations in treating for the beetles: human safety, forest recovery after a devastating infestation, and long-term forest resiliency through

thinning and treatment methods.

Bobzien said the Forest Service treats for safety first, in areas like campgrounds, trailheads, roads and the wildland/urban interface where public communities meet forestland.

He added, though, that many of those areas aren't facing serious public safety threats right now.

"(Safety) is our first priority, but it's the smallest part of what we do on the Black Hills," Bobzien said. "We don't have many areas like that because we've been able to manage so much of the forest in advance of the beetles."

"We are really working to look at the areas that are both most at risk and where the public resource values are the highest — said differently, where we'd have the greatest consequence if we didn't take any action."

Strategically, Bobzien said the most effective place to be — and where the Forest Service is trying to be and remain — is in the "leading edge" zone, which is the area beetles are approaching but have not yet reached.

Strengthening the forest in those areas will presumably prevent the beetles from extending any farther, protecting the forest from further infestation.

Coyotes

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"Whoever ends up getting the job, you'll feel like you're behind in recruiting no matter what,"

Beschorner said. "The assistants have done a good job identifying guys we think belong here and can help us win. Kids will be told a bunch of different things about USD, but the bottom line is we're 40-5 at home."

"That's got a lot to do with the coaches here on staff and the ones who have been here before."

Following last Tuesday's decision by athletic director David Saylor to not renew Meierkort's contract, the remainder of the USD coaching staff was retained to guide the program through the recruiting process.

The news of Meierkort's firing

was a bit surprising to those on staff, Beschorner said.

"From the beginning, when Ed told me, I was a little bit in shock," he said. "It was one of those things where you felt like one or two more wins and it's darn near impossible to make changes, especially knowing where we're at and where we came from."

When Beschorner got to USD in the fall of 2001, the Coyotes were coming off an 8-3 season under former coach John Austin. Over the next three years, the program had a record of 10-22 before Meierkort was hired after the 2003 season.

With Beschorner as the starting quarterback, USD posted back-to-back 9-2 records in 2004 and 2005, and clinched a share of the North Central Conference title in 2005.

"When I got to school here, USD football was not that relevant; hadn't had much success at all," Beschorner said. "So, to get that turned around in the next 10 years and to be ranked in the top 25 for

10 straight weeks (this season), I have a lot of pride in that."

That feeling is shared by those players who have eligibility remaining with the Coyotes, Beschorner said.

"Our guys, from the day we recruited them and ever since, are resilient young men; they fight through a lot of stuff," he said. "We've had to go through a lot of different things here. We've played every different kind of team in

every different atmosphere, and had some success."

Beschorner didn't shy away from USD's late-season struggles, saying that will be a point of improvement for those players coming back. The Coyotes (6-5) had two chances to win a share of the Great West championship, but lost both road games to close the season — blowing fourth-quarter leads at Cal Poly and North Dakota.

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