

OUTDOORS DIGEST OF THE OUTDOORS | GARY HOWEY

Yankton Man Wins World Walleye Title

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, Wis. — Yankton resident Curtis Olivier was one of two South Dakotans capture top honors and more than \$32,000 in prize winnings at the Cabela's Masters Walleye Circuit's 2012 World Walleye Championship on Oct. 20.

The Championship pitted 48 elite two-person teams from 14 states against one another for more than \$100,000 in cash — including \$25,000 first place — plus thousands more in sponsorship bonuses.

Olivier and Mike Dorris, of Madison, S.D., sat in sixth place after day two of the event, and after a nail-biting finish came out on top by 0.08 pounds. Their total weight was 43.99 pounds.

Teams qualified for the 2012 World Walleye Championship by earning points during the 2011 Cabela's MWC season at world-class walleye destinations from Lake Oahe to Lake Eerie.

Nielsen Fishing Tournament Oct. 27

CROFTON, Neb. — The fifth annual Brian Nielsen Fishing Tournament will be held on Saturday, Oct. 27, at Weigand Marina near Crofton, Neb.

There will be a raffle and auction to follow at C.J.'s At The Lake.

For more information or to get a registration form, contact Julie at 605-664-1072 or 605-665-9522.

Ideal Weather, Crops, Greet SD's Pheasant Hunters

PIERRE — Sunny skies, most crops harvested and increased bird numbers made an enjoyable experience for a majority of opening-day pheasant hunters in South Dakota.

A long, dry summer has sped the harvest of corn and soybean crops, where many early season pheasants seek refuge. This year, the birds had to resort to sloughs, grassy patches and shelterbelts, making them easier to find in many areas of the state.

"Hunter numbers seemed to be down in central South Dakota," said Region 2 Game Manager Nathan Baker.

"Hunter success was about 1.5 birds per hunter, but seemed to be higher than that in Campbell Woolworth and Potter Counties."

There were two known hunting accidents in the area, both hunters being struck by pellets. Neither hunter was seriously injured. In the northeastern part of the state, hunters found birds in a mixed bag of areas.

In southeastern SD, GFP Regional Game Manager Ron Schauer reported happy hunters.

"All the groups I talked to were in good moods," Schauer said.

He reported that most groups had between 1/2 a bird to 2 birds per hunter. "Keep in mind most of our groups seem to shoot a lot of birds in the last hour of the day."

The lack of rain across much of South Dakota did come into play, said Kirschenmann. "This year's drought has reduced the amount of cover available for pheasants. Birds concentrated in those areas of quality cover and hunters had success finding birds there."

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

Well it's finally arrived, what thousands of upland game hunters have been waiting for, the 2012 pheasant-hunting season.

Since the beginning of the year, hunters have been anxiously awaiting information giving them some indication as to what they might expect for bird numbers on opening day.

You don't need to have a PHD to realize that the most important factor when it comes to wildlife populations is habitat. With habitat disappearing at an alarming rate, there are fewer and fewer places for wildlife to live.

Thousands of acres of habitat throughout the upper Midwest have been converted to cropland with sloughs being drained, woodlands leveled and grasslands broke up and planted to row crops.

In those areas where habitat remained and pheasants were present, hunters will have a good chance at getting into some excellent hunting, while in areas where little if no habitat exists hunting will be a tough go.

The drought this year was extremely hard on wildlife, but in areas where the larger sloughs/wetlands existed, the drought actually helped the pheasant population.

With the extremely hot temperatures this summer, the outside fringe areas of these wet areas dried out, creating excellent habitat for upland game, as the vegetation that remained when the water receded, gave the birds excellent cover and roosting areas.

In Nebraska surveys indicate that overall, pheasant numbers were down this year, yet, Nebraska is still among the top states in the Midwest for pheasant hunting.

In the Cornhusker state, in 2011, hunters harvested an estimated 217,700 pheasants.

The Nebraska season opens October 27th, running through January 31st 2013 with a daily limit of 3 and a possession limit of 12.



Gary HOWEY



No matter what the conditions, pheasant hunters are going to be in the field. The author and Team Outdoorsmen Adventures Tom Mitchell, KELO radio, Sioux Falls won't let a little snow and cold weather stop them from hunting pheasants.

PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE

Summer surveys indicated the southwest region of the state will offer the best hunting opportunities, which includes Willow, Hitchcock and Hayes counties looking

to be the areas giving hunters their best opportunities for good bird numbers. The eastern portion of the Panhandle region, which showed a 19% increase and the

Central region of Dawson, Sherman and Greeley counties, should also offer good pheasant hunting opportunities.

South Dakota has always been the destination for pheasant hunters from throughout the United States, where even during bad years, millions of birds can be found.

In South Dakota hunters hit the field October 20th and will have until January 6th, 2013 to hunt with a daily limit of 3 and a possession limit of 9.

The 2012 South Dakota's August pheasant brood counts indicated its statewide pheasant population would be up from last year, great news for those of us who love pheasant hunting. The reason for this was our mild winter last year and good habitat.

Pheasant numbers per mile this year 2012 were 4.21, which is up 18 percent from last year.

The areas with good habitat showed the biggest improvement in the pheasant numbers. The pheasant hunting throughout South Dakota should be good with those areas within the traditional pheasant range providing excellent hunting opportunities.

In 2011, hunters in South Dakota harvested more than 1.5 million pheasants, and the counts this year show that 2012 will be another exceptional year for pheasant hunting in the state.

Several of the areas where pheasant numbers have increased in South Dakota include Aberdeen, Brookings, Huron, Mitchell and Watertown.

You can bet, no matter which state you plan on opening the season, you'll see plenty of hunter's orange out in the fields as pheasant hunting in the upper Midwest is a family tradition and an event, that no matter what the conditions are will go on.

Gary Howe, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series which airs on FOX affiliates throughout the upper Midwest, co-host with Simon Fuller of the Outdoor Adventures radio show heard each morning on KVHT-106.3 FM and ESPN AM 1570. For more information on outdoor activities, live outdoor videos and information on the Outdoorsmen Adventures television series check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

OUTDOORS DIGEST



ABOVE LEFT: Ryan Pickingpaugh of Ernst Lake, Neb. caught this 42-pound, 46.5-inch paddlefish.



ABOVE RIGHT: Ryan Ulmer of Volin caught this 66-pound, 50-inch paddlefish.



Scott Muilenburg of Utica is pictured with this 56-pound, 48-inch paddlefish he caught during a recent outing.



Melvin Knox of Ewing, Neb. caught this 52-pound, 50-inch paddlefish.



Nick Kleinschmit of Crofton, Neb. caught this 65-pound, 49-inch paddlefish.



RIGHT: Michael McDonald of Yankton caught this 3-pound, 4-ounce walleye.

PHOTOS BY CAPTAIN NORMS

Email your Hunting/Fishing photos (with information) to jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

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Dear Editor,

As South Dakota copes with the worst drought in decades, and as our nation faces an out-of-control federal budget, this is not the time to raise taxes by an extra \$180 million for the sole benefit of two special interest groups. Pulling \$180,000,000 out of South Dakota's economy will lower the economic engine's energy needed to push our normal tax receipts higher for all and very well could cause a recession.

Initiated Measure 15 on the November Ballot would boost the state sales tax by 25 percent and give the money to only two entities in educating and taking care of people. Higher Ed., Tech Schools, Dept. of Ed., State Hospitals, DSS, DHS, DOH, SV H, and TANF would be left out of the money loop. That is not how we roll here in South Dakota!

Measure 15 is the wrong idea at the wrong time. Please join me in voting against #15.

Sincerely,
Charlie Hoffman
District 23 Representative
Eureka, South Dakota

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