



PHOTO: GARY HOWEY

Keeping your dog hydrated and resting it from time to time during the early season will assure there will always be tomorrow for both you and your best hunting partner, your hunting dog.

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Heat Can Be Hard On Your Hunting Dog

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

It is that time of the year when mornings can be cool and by noon unseasonably warm. If we dress for the cooler mornings temperatures you are over dressed and by mid afternoon, when the sun started to warm things up.

As temperatures warm up, the heat is going to take its toll on our hunting dogs.

Can you imagine what it is like for a hunting dog, having been in a kennel the biggest part of the year and as the season opens, trying to cover large fields on these warm days? They are covering at least twice the ground we are, nose to the ground, head in the dust and dirt, running back and forth across the field of heavy cover, unable to sweat or release heat from their body except by panting and they do it all while wearing a fur coat.

This could be a death sentence to a dog if they are overweight and out of shape, as a hunting dog will keep going until they can go no further and drop.

One of the things you can do prior to the season would be to get yourself and your dog in shape.

Imagine what type of shape you would be in if you spent most of the year inside a kennel, let out to run only for short periods each evening, then taken out into the field during hunting season and be expected to run hard for hours on end without becoming tired?



Gary
HOWEY

Dogs should be worked on a regular basis in order to stay in shape, which can be tough when their owner holds down a full time job.

Some kennels are large enough allowing the dog to get a little exercise, but not enough to get them in top shape.

Dogs are like humans when it comes to getting exercise, we need someone like an owner or a wife, husband, girlfriend, boyfriend to get us to do it.

Like humans, if not given the opportunity to run or forced to exercise, most dogs will simply lie around, becoming over weight and out of shape.

The alternative to running your dog regularly is to take him on brisk walks, which takes very little time and the exercise it gives you will do you good.

Another thing that hunters forget to take into consideration when they hunt early season is the heat when their hunting dogs really take a beating.

Each year as the hunting seasons open up, when temperatures are high, veterinarian find themselves working on hunting dogs with heat exhaustion. Many of which will not survive.

Keeping your dog hydrated is extremely important when hunting early season! Hunters need to make sure they carry enough water to keep their dog hydrated. Having this water in the vehicle does not do you or the dog a lot of good if you are a half mile away from the vehicle.

It is an excellent idea to carry a small bottle of water in your hunting vest when you are in the field. When you take a break, you can pour some water into your hand and let the dog lap it up.

Squirt bottles like the bottles sports drink come in work very well as they have the caps allowing you to squirt the water at the dog allowing it to get a drink. I carry both a squirt bottle and a

collapsible water bowl in my vest. When we stop to rest, I will use my squirt bottle to put water into the dish, making it easier for my dog to drink. If a pond or creek is in the area you are hunting, allow the dog to wade in and cool off before continuing.

During hot weather, rest your dog often, preferably in the shade, allowing it to cool off slowly. If you are fortunate to have several dogs in your hunting party, rest one while the other hunts. The dog you are resting will not like being left out, but he will be rested and ready when it is their turn to hit the ground.

It can be a blessing to not have to hunt in the cold weather which is usually associated with hunting season, but to a hunting dog that is out of shape, hunting in the heat, it can be a death sentence.

Exercise your hunting dog regularly, carry lots of water and don't overdo it because if you do it right there is always a tomorrow for both you and your best hunting partner, your hunting dog.

Gary Howey, originally from Watertown, S.D. who now resides in Hartington, Nebraska, is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. He is the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series, on the MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 am. The show airs in nine states in the upper Midwest. He and Simon Fuller are the hosts of the Outdoor Adventures radio program on Classic Hits 106.3, ESPN Sports Radio 1570 in Southeastern South Dakota and Northeast Nebraska and in Northwest Iowa on KCHE 92.1 FM. If you are looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

OUTDOORS DIGEST

GFP Warns Pheasant Hunters Of Dry Conditions

PIERRE – Dry conditions exist across much of South Dakota. While that is good for farmers harvesting crops, and hunters trying to harvest pheasants, it can quickly create dangerous situations in the field.

"We had good moisture in the spring and summer in many parts of the state," said South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Wildlife Division Director Tony Leif. "That led to high grass and good habitat, but it has dried out quickly and we are urging hunters to be careful where they park and drive."

The heat from catalytic converters, mufflers and other engine parts can quickly start a fire. Whether it is a harvested crop field, a slough or grassland, conditions are very favorable for starting fires.

"We are encouraging people to really inspect their vehicles when they get out," Leif said. "Watch for grass, cornstalks and other materials that may be caught underneath their vehicles. Also don't park in tall grass."

If a fire does start, hunters are encouraged to carry plenty of water to put out small fires. If a fire escalates, call 911 immediately.

"Knowing exactly where you are hunting is important," said Leif. "Giving precise directions to where you are and where the fire is can make all the difference."

Fort Robinson Christmas Dinner Tickets Available

Nov. 2

It may be the season of pumpkin patches and changing leaves but people should think ahead to a different season if they want a place at the table for the annual Historical Christmas Dinner at Fort Robinson State Park. Tickets for the popular event, which are known to sell in a hurry, will become available at 8 a.m. Monday, Nov. 2. The dinner will be Saturday, Dec. 5.

This year's menu replicates the bill of fare from the Fort's dinner in 1891. That year is special because the park this spring celebrated the completion of a new lodging duplex designed to replicate a series of officers' quarters at the fort that were originally constructed in 1891 but demolished decades ago.

The feast features a menu of two dozen items headlined by roasted pork, roasted turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie. Attendees, who are encouraged but not required to dress in attire from the designated period, will be entertained by live music and historical commentary.

This marks the 21st year of the dinner, which has a limit of 200 attendees. Tickets may be purchased at the park's headquarters, the Chadron Visitors Center at 706 West Third St., or Rea's Market at 195 Main Street in Harrison. Because of the high demand, there is a limit of four tickets per household.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help with the Christmas dinner or sponsoring decorations for one of the historical buildings may contact the Fort Robinson State Park office at 308-665-2900.

Braggin' Board



PHOTO: T.J.'S MINIMART

Tom Keller of Malcolm, Nebraska, caught this Nebraska state record paddlefish on Oct. 9. The fish weighed 130 pounds and measured 50 inches long.



PHOTO: T.J.'S MINIMART
Larry Ashby from Newman Grove, Nebraska, caught this 45.5-inch, 53-pound paddlefish.



PHOTO: T.J.'S MINIMART
Keith Schreurs from Brandon hauled in this 50-inch, 87-pound paddlefish.

GFP: Some CREP Areas May Be Hayed

PIERRE – As pheasant hunting hits full stride in South Dakota, hunters may find some Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) areas with less than anticipated cover conditions. Due to a stipulation in the Conservation Reserve Program contracts, landowners are required to conduct mid-contract management (haying in most cases) on CREP acres.

"This is an important management requirement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)," said Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Wildlife Biologist Mark Norton. "The CREP partnership between the USDA and GFP has made over 80,000 acres of quality habitat available for public

hunting. Managing the habitat is a necessary and mandatory part of the process."

While some hunters may be discouraged that last year's "honey hole" has been hayed, Norton explains the mid-contract management practice will ultimately improve future habitat conditions.

While these land management practices - haying, light disking or harrowing - cause a short-term and temporary loss of hunting opportunity, in the long run these practices result in higher quality wildlife habitat and improved hunting opportunities. The most common management practice will be one half of the CREP area hayed one year, and next year, the other

half.

"This year is one of the first years that many CREP acres fall within the required time period of mid-contract management. Next year, expect to see over half of the CREP areas with reduced cover conditions as these will also be eligible for mid-contract management."

Norton urges hunters to scout ahead of time, if possible, to ensure they aren't surprised on opening day.

"In many of the CREP areas, hunters won't have to go far to find another tract of quality public ground. We just want to make sure hunters are aware of what is happening to these popular hunting areas."

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OUTDOORS SPOTLIGHT



LEFT: Randy Cromwell of Arlington, S.D., caught this 55.5-pound, 49-inch paddlefish.

RIGHT: Matt Buhler of Sturgis, S.D., caught this 87-pound, 50.5-inch paddlefish.

PHOTOS: CAPTAIN NORM'S

