



2011 Looking Good For Hunters In Yankton County

BY HEIDI HENSON

heidi.henson@yankton.net

2011 could prove to be a good year for landowners and hunters, according to Sam Schelhaas, Game, Fish & Parks Conservation Officer.

All across the state landowners are being encouraged to participate in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CERP). Designed after the Conservation Reserve Program, CERP's goal is to "provide additional undisturbed habitat for wildlife and public hunting access," said the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks website.

In South Dakota, the GF&P is focusing on the James River Watershed. Schelhaas said the state currently has several thousand acres already designated CERP land — 1,000 acres in Yankton County so far.

"It's a great program. There is an incentive for landowners because they will get a good annual payment. And the hunters will benefit from the public hunting access," said Schelhaas.

Part of the focus for the program is to reduce soil erosion and provide flood control, while creating additional nesting habitat for pheasants.

Schelhaas also said this will really bring in the deer, in particular whitetail deer.

"Yankton County has always been known for its deer hunting," he added.

Good deer hunting isn't the only thing hunters should be happy about. Canadian Goose numbers are up again this year, said Schelhaas.

"The duck population is looking good too," he added.

The flooding along the Missouri and James Rivers didn't hinder waterfowl



numbers this year. Quite the opposite says Schelhaas.

"It's been great for waterfowl."

Schelhaas adds that depending on how fast the Missouri goes down there might be some great hunting along the Missouri River.

One area of hunting that hasn't fared well is the pheasant population.

"We observed abnormally high mortality of hen pheasants during the brutal winter of 2010-11," explained Jeff Vonk, Secretary of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department. "The loss of that reproductive potential inhibited the ability of our pheasant population to rebound to the record levels that we have enjoyed in recent years."

According to the state GF&P office,

pheasant brood counts have dropped below the record numbers seen the past few years. In eastern South Dakota, the lower numbers are due to the winter and loss of grassland nesting habitats.

"For several hard years in a row we've had above average snow depth and above average precipitation in the spring. We've had some hard winters," said Schelhaas.

"We knew this day was coming when important pheasant habitats provided by the cover in Conservation Reserve Program fields were lost," Vonk said.

CRP enrollments in the state are currently at 1.17 million acres, down from 1.56 million acres in 2007. The reduction equates to over 600 square miles of grassland habitat.

"On the other hand, we were pleas-



antly surprised how well pheasants responded in central South Dakota, where abundant moisture from winter snow and spring rain allowed grasslands to flourish and provide the essential habitat for excellent pheasant production," Vonk said.

Schelhaas said hunters shouldn't be concerned because the pheasants can still be found in the fields.

"If you're serious about hunting it won't stop you from going out," he said.

As for the anglers, Schelhaas said he is anxious to see what happens out at Lewis & Clark in the coming weeks.

He said typically the walleye really start biting in early to mid October.



"It will be interesting to see if that picks up like it typically does."

No matter what this fall brings, hunters and anglers won't have too much to worry about. Hunting should be good all around.

Just remember to be safe, watch for others and keep it legal.

Paddlefish Snagging Season Will Occur

PIERRE — The 2011 South Dakota paddlefish snagging season will begin October 1 and run through October 31 as previously planned. Anglers should receive tags in the next week.

High flows in the Missouri River throughout the summer may have led to damaged shoreline and rip-rap along the river below Gavin's Point Dam. The extent of the damage will not be known until the water fully recedes later this fall. Access, especially for shore fishing, may be impacted at times by issues associated with repair work.

River levels remain higher than normal and boaters will need to be aware of changes in the river channel, sandbars, underwater hazards, and floating debris that may persist.

Anglers with questions concerning this season may e-mail wildinfo@state.sd.us or contact their local Game, Fish and Parks office.

Tasty Advice From GF&P

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks website offers great advice for hunters and anglers. But did you know they also have recipes and other great advice for preparing your meat or fish. Here are just a few things you will find at <http://gfp.sd.gov>.

Marinating Wild Game

Acid is the tenderizing agent in the tenderizing process. Wine, lemon or lime juice and tomato juice are great products to use. Another great tenderizer is a can of Coke.

Oil is the product that makes the marinade stick to the meat so include salad oil in your marinating recipe.

Marinating wild game enhances the flavor but also tenderizes the meat. You may use the prepackaged tenderizers but be careful that they don't contain MSG agents that can cause some people irritation of the stomach. The marinating process should be done for a minimum of 12 to 24 hours to truly enhance the flavor and give the maximum level of tenderness desired.

Tenderizing can begin with the freezing process when you can rub the meat with a tenderizer of your choice. Freezing accelerates the tenderizing process!

Marinating Ideas

Soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce are great added to a red or cooking wine. Remember that these will greatly affect the flavor of the game so be careful to test the taste of the marinade before adding too much of any ingredient. If the flavor is too strong you may add milk or half/half to make a milder flavor. However, do not add the milk if you are using the marinade on meat to be grilled as it may "bleed out" during the grilling process and leave an undesirable flavor.

Meat should not be left in the refrigerator in a thawed state for more than 4-5 days but may be in the marinating sauce while in the refrigerator for that period. The tenderizing process is only enhanced with the time allowed to marinate.

The shoulders and hind-quarters of large game will require the longer marinating process and would benefit from the tenderizer being added before freezing.

Larding

Larding is a process used to tenderize the larger roasts of big game especially in older animals or from the neck/shoulder region as well as the rump.

Larding involves pushing a piece of bacon or salt pork into sections of the meat at about 2-3 inch intervals using a "larder" tool or a thin, sharp knife with a long blade. This process will disperse the fat needed to tenderize the meat while cooking. Garlic salt can also be used with the bacon to speed up the tenderizing process.

Buffalo meat is extremely lean and should be larded. Bear cuts should be larded to enhance the tenderizing of the toughness especially in the muscular regions. Elk and moose have shoulder, neck and rump regions that would benefit from larding as well.

Be A Good Sportsman — Report Violators

Since 1984, TIPs has played a vital role in stopping poachers because people care enough to report the violations.



TIPs began in 1984 in the Black Hills after two elk were poached. Sportsmen became upset and offered a reward. It was so successful that it went statewide in 1985. It now has a new hotline number 1.888.OVERBAG (683.7224). You can also submit an online report on a violation. — just go to gtp.sd.gov and look for the TIPs link.

According to TIPs coordinator, Charlie Wharton, because of reports received they are able to make cases like two poachers with 110 walleyes, a poacher with 59 walleyes, three poachers who killed 6 deer and left them, three poachers who killed an elk and two poachers with 120 pheasants.

"These all started with one call either to the local officer or directly to TIPs. Anyone can call and report violations and WILL REMAIN COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS," says Wharton in an online release.

Rewards of up to \$300 for big game and \$100 for fish and small game. Higher rewards may be paid in extreme cases.

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