

Spring 2020



Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association

Conservation Education



The Voice of Conservation Education in Alberta

Magazine



2020 W.I.S.E. AWARDS

Honouring Outstanding Albertans

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Left to right: Robert Gruszecki, President AHEIA; Dave Paplawski; and the Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks.



Honouring Outstanding Albertans

18th Annual W.I.S.E. Awards

February 8, 2020

By Robert Gruszecki



Robert Gruszecki
President - AHEIA

The 18th Annual Conservation Education W.I.S.E. Awards and Banquet, held on February 8, 2020 at the BMO Centre in Calgary, was a very special event in many ways. Despite the continued challenging economy in Alberta, our friends and corporate partners supported our cause through their attendance as well as by donating items for the evening's silent and live auctions. During the evening we honoured a deserving recipient, who holds a special place in our hearts, for his life-long commitment and work done for the sake of Conservation Education. It was a festive and memorable event which brought together people from throughout the province to help commemorate 56 years of Conservation Education.

We were very pleased to have the Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks, attend and provide the opening address to attendees. Minister Nixon is very familiar with the work that we do, and the importance of Conservation Education programs for all Albertans. He spoke of his passion for our rich and diverse wild spaces, and personal experiences as an avid hunter. His attendance reaffirmed the important alliance we have with the Provincial Government, for which we are both grateful and proud. Although unable to attend due to a prior engagement, Premier Jason Kenney provided a letter of support, acknowledging AHEIA's leadership and

commitment to Conservation Education. We are honoured to be recognized by the highest levels of provincial government as stewards of the environment and her wildlife within.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of this year's W.I.S.E. Award to an exceptional Albertan, who was recognized for a lifetime of conservation-minded contributions to both public service and our cause. The following is an excerpt of the presentation made to this outstanding individual.

The Overall Conservation Alva Bair Memorial Award

The Overall Conservation Alva Bair Memorial Award is intended to honour the memory and amazing contribution to the cause of Conservation made by Alva, and the recipient is recognized for demonstrating similar levels of passion and commitment to wildlife and wild places. Alva left us on March 4, 1999 but his legacy lives on. By presenting this award, Alva's name, personality and love for wild things and wild places will be perpetuated.

Mr. Dave Paplawski

From a very young age Dave remembers camping and fishing at lakes with his family in both Alberta and B.C., and as a teenager Dave began fishing on his own and with friends in streams and rivers in his hometown of Edmonton. He sought out schoolmates who fished and hunted and joined up with them whenever they ventured out. He was mentored by older brothers of school mates, as at the time there was no structured mentoring that existed. Every chance they got they would go—the boys even brought their

shotguns to school and went out after classes and hunted, though Dave only fished. When he was 12 and 13 years old, he spent his time studying maps and would circle places where he would like to eventually go fishing and hunting.

Continued ➤





“ Dave’s first job was with Alberta Fish and Wildlife, working on a migratory bird crop depredation program ... Even though he worked seven days a week, often 14 hours a day, Dave thought it was loads of fun. ”

Thinking about his future, Dave was certain he would get into a field that enabled him to be outdoors and he knew he was going to do something conservation based with his life. In 1973 he enrolled in a two-year Biological Sciences Diploma through NAIT, where graduates become Parks Officers, Wildlife Technicians and Wildlife Officers.

Dave’s first job was with Alberta Fish and Wildlife, working on a migratory bird crop depredation program near the farming community of Eaglesham, Alberta, approximately 120 km south of Peace River. It was an area where four to five thousand birds would gather during their migration and eat the farmer’s wheat and barley. Dave, along with two others hired on the project, would monitor and count the birds. They used scare cannons and decoys to move the birds to bait stations, where they would then use net cannons to catch the birds so they could band and study them. Even though he worked seven days a week, often 14 hours a day, Dave thought it was loads of fun. He had a truck, a hotel room, a gas card and a shotgun, and with his supervisor 60 miles away, he thought it was the perfect job. The contract ended in November after four months when all the birds left after freeze-up. That winter, Dave applied for two jobs with Alberta Fish and Wildlife—one in Enforcement and the other in Hunter Training. In March 1976 he was offered both positions and he took the Hunter Training Officer position through the Edmonton office—he was just 22 years old.

Dave ran the Narrow Lake Hunter Training camp for Alberta Fish and Wildlife. Hundreds of schools booked outdoor experiences for their students, involving shooting, archery and camping. While working at the camp, a staff member took Dave under his wing and taught him big game hunting. He remembers his first successful hunt, getting permission from a landowner to hunt on his property and quietly waiting in a field every night on a log pile, until one night he shot a mule deer fork-horn buck. From then on, he was hooked on both bow and rifle hunting.

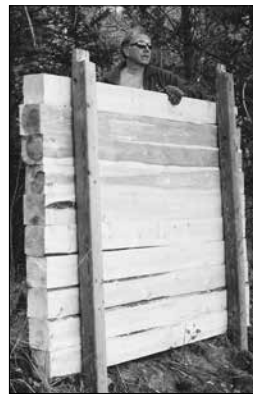
The fourth year into his job, Alberta Fish and Wildlife made some changes and Hunter Education fell into the Enforcement section. Dave became an Enforcement Officer and aside from his enforcement responsibilities, he continued teaching Hunter Education and provided firearms training for all new officers. Unfortunately in 1996, when schools started moving away from outdoor education programs, Dave’s position was abolished and he was faced with having to do full-time enforcement, which would involve transferring to a remote town in Alberta, or leave Fish and Wildlife. After 21 years with Fish and Wildlife, Dave said, “It was devastating, but it all turned out for the best.”

The Hunter Education Program and Narrow Lake Camp were privatized and taken over by the WISE Foundation. In April 1996, Bob Gruszecki offered Dave a position with the Foundation to continue to run the Hunter Education Training

Program in Alberta. Bob claimed that day as a pivotal day in the evolution of Conservation Education. For five years Hunter Education, the Narrow Lake Camp and the newly acquired Alford Lake Camp were all run through AHEIA and the WISE Foundation from the Edmonton office. In 2001 Dave was moved to Calgary with his wife Lucille and their family, to become the Provincial Coordinator for Hunter Education, working from AHEIA’s head office.

In the early days Hunter Education was AHEIA’s main focus. However, Dave claims Bob could see that so much more could be done and says that his role was to act in support and help grow the AHEIA Conservation Education group of programs. This description is very modest as his role was substantial! Aside from evolving Hunter Education, they expanded the Fishing Education program and took over the Canadian Firearms Safety Course program in Alberta from the RCMP. At Fish and Wildlife, Dave developed a Mentored Hunt program called the *First Time Hunter Program*. He remembered the “interesting” training he had as a teenager from his schoolmates, and over the years at AHEIA developed and expanded the program to what it is today—now upwards of 400 people per year experiencing their first-time hunt through AHEIA’s Mentored Hunt program.

In 2007 the National Archery in the Schools Program came to AHEIA and Dave became AHEIA’s Provincial NASP Coordinator. The program started with 12 schools and now there are over 400 province-wide that are involved, with 30,000 students participating in NASP each year. In the beginning, a provincial tournament evolved as schools wanted to know how their students compared with others. The first year a tournament was offered, and 100 students registered and participated at their schools. Last year at the Edmonton EXPO Centre there



were 93 schools that attended the tournament and 1870 students registered for the event. This year Dave is anticipating over 2000 students to be registered. Although retired, AHEIA’s NASP Program is very close to Dave’s heart, having developed it in Alberta since its infancy, and he will be running the tournament again this year.

Throughout his years at AHEIA, Dave worked tirelessly to help develop educational programming for all Albertans. He provided instruction in programs and courses such as the Outdoor Women’s Program, teachers’ seminars, International Bow Hunting Program, student camps, NASP, Fishing Education, Hunter Education, Pleasure Craft Operator Training, online training, Firearms Safety Training, and the list goes on. His development of the Mentored Hunter Program has brought landowners, mentors and students together throughout the province and his contribution to Conservation Education in Alberta is immeasurable.

The old adage of being retired and having little time is very true for Dave. He and his wife Lucille are avid outdoor people, and have carried on the tradition of camping, fishing and hunting that they have done with their children since they were very young. Dave’s favourite activity is bow hunting moose, and his passion and enjoyment for fishing and hunting has extended to family and friends, evident during their family fishing trips and tournaments. It is our wish for Dave that he finds more time to continue to participate in these activities that he has made his lifelong passion.

We are anticipating 2020 to be one of our busiest years on record, with an emphasis on new program development and increased participation in leagues and workshops. In order to do this and satisfy the demand for our unique offerings such as the Outdoor Women’s Program, Youth Hunter Education Camps and AHEIA’s renowned Mentored Hunt Program, we require the assistance of many volunteers. This year we are hoping to expand our roster of volunteers to include more people who would be willing to share their knowledge and expertise, helping to enlighten and enhance our student’s enjoyment of wilderness activities. Please let us know if you are interested in becoming part of, what we believe, the most dedicated group of volunteers in the province.

With an increase in programming and ongoing maintenance and upgrades of our facilities, it is necessary for us to continue to raise funds in order to cover the costs of these substantial

expenditures. The reduction of grants and donations, which keep our doors open, has provided a challenging environment for us to do so. To aid in this shortfall, we encourage you to purchase a ticket in our 100 for \$100 Raffle. This annual raffle will raise some much-needed capital for AHEIA and offers you 100 chances at 100 prizes worth a minimum of \$500.00 each. In total, there is over \$100,000.00 worth of prizes up for grabs! We also have many other terrific raffles throughout the year. Please visit our website, aheia.com, for more information. Our next big fundraising event will be the annual Spring Fling, held in Edmonton on Thursday, June 4, and is another opportunity for you to provide some support. Please contact our Edmonton office if you would like to donate items for the auction or purchase tickets. We hope to see you there!

There are many ways you can keep track of the exciting events we offer throughout the year: subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter *The Bugle*; follow us on our social media feeds including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; or frequently check our website which now includes a one-page calendar of AHEIA’s 2020 events that you can download and print. This quarterly

magazine, provided to those who are members of AHEIA, is also a great source of information about programs and special activities. If you plan on visiting the Calgary Firearms Centre, check our website for upcoming closures or call the clubhouse at (403) 256-0665.

With spring just around the corner, our excitement for warmer weather grows daily, providing a renewed energy to get outdoors. Bring a friend and join us at one of our centres for a scheduled event or workshop and be part of the many thousands of Albertans who will enjoy our wild habitat with appreciation and enhanced skills learned through Conservation Education programs.

Have a terrific spring and summer and we hope to see you very soon.

Cheers!

Robert A. Gruszecki
President, AHEIA



“ ...his role was to act in support and help grow the AHEIA Conservation Education group of programs. This description is very modest as his role was substantial! ”



Would You Like to be Published in
**Conservation
Education?**

If you, or someone you know, has an article of outdoors educational content or subject matter related to Conservation Education in Alberta that you would like us to publish in a future edition of our magazine, we would be happy to hear from you. Articles of approximately 1,000 words with accompanying pictures are ideal. We also encourage readers to alert us to news for possible publication.

Contact David Dolph at daviddolph@aheia.com for additional information.

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The Gun Sale has been postponed and will be rescheduled.
Check our website, social media or call our offices
for updated information.



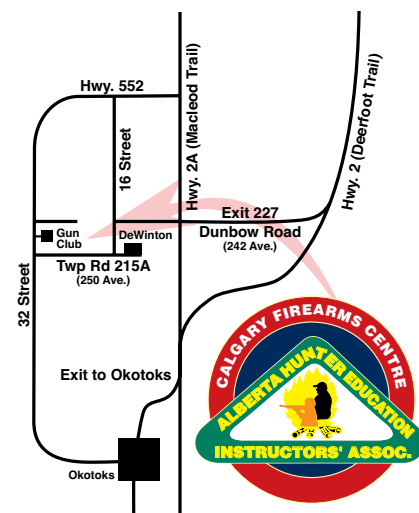
Fourth Annual SPRING GUN SALE

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020
1:00 - 4:00 PM

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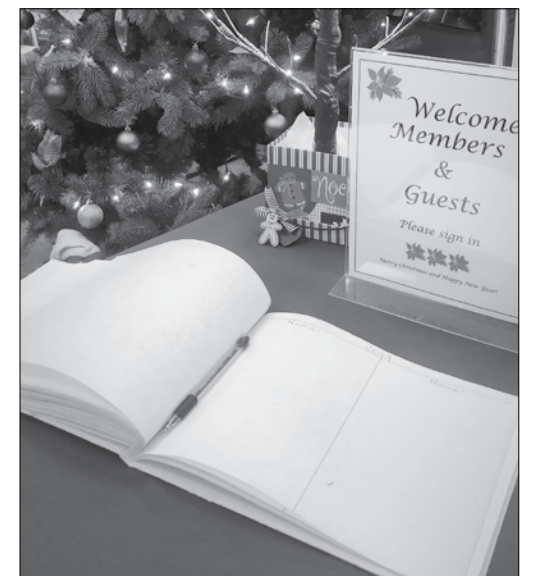
AHEIA Hosts

Annual Christmas Open Houses

On December 6, in our Calgary office, and December 13, 2019, in our Edmonton office, AHEIA held our Annual Christmas Open Houses. These are great opportunities for AHEIA staff, members and volunteers to enjoy some refreshments and celebrate the holiday season together.

We always look forward to having as many people come as possible, so please mark you calendars for

December 4, 2020, in Calgary and December 11, 2020, in Edmonton. Hope to see you there!



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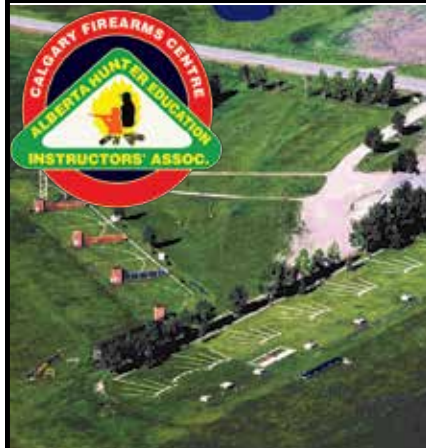
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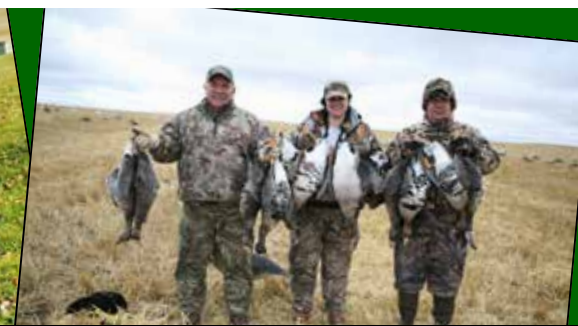
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wild places be part of the value system of over 100,000 students
annually.



This event may be cancelled pending decisions around social gatherings regarding the current health crisis.

Check our website and social media feeds for updates or contact us directly.



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with like-minded individuals
while helping
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The Conservation Education W.I.S.E. Foundation and
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association are pleased to announce the

Seventh Annual Spring Fling Banquet

Thursday, June 4, 2020 • Silvermoon Banquets, 3223 Parsons Road (99 Street), Edmonton, Alberta

Tickets \$70.00 each or \$630.00 for a table of 10.

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AHEIA's Mission is to Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of Every Albertan

Photo of bison courtesy of Don Kesler Nature Photography.

Edmonton Report

“ At the time there was a bit of chatter about COVID-19. Then at about 4:00 pm the chatter intensified dramatically ... ”

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

COVID-19.
Who would have thought that such a small thing could impact us in the ways it has?

The Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show is one of the largest outdoor themed shows of its kind in Canada and AHEIA always has a big presence during this event.

This year the Sportsmen's Show was scheduled to run from March 12-15. Prior to the show itself, there is a huge endeavour of coordinating everything and preparing for the move-in. The move-in started on March 10 and ran right up until the start of the show. We were also running the largest NASP Provincial Tournament to date at the same time. Add on a 3D archery tournament, as well, and we were going to be extremely busy. Just the way we like it!

Then it happened. Everyone who had not been "living under a rock" was already aware of the Coronavirus. I feel most people were not taking it too serious during the early stages in Alberta.

The show started at noon on Thursday, March 12 and AHEIA had already set up the numer-

ous protocols that were being recommended by Health Canada at the time, so I felt we were in good shape going forward. At the time, there was a bit of chatter about COVID-19. Then at about 4:00 pm the chatter intensified dramatically and at 6:00 pm the show was shut down and everyone was directed to move out. Six hours and we were done. Very disappointing indeed, but understandable.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the set-up and teardown as well as manning all the various stations. You are real troopers.

Looking forward to a better outcome moving forward with fun and games at the 2021 Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show. See you there.

All things being equal, as we move forward there are a couple of upcoming events to tempt you with.

Our 2020 Youth Hunter Education Camps run July 5-10, July 12-18, July 19-24 and July 26-31. The 2020 Outdoor Youth Seminar is set for August 21-23. For more information contact edmontoninfo@aheia.com or download the registration/information package on our new and improved website www.aheia.com.

Please mark June 4, 2020 on your calendars. On that day, we will be holding our seventh annual Spring Fling Banquet in Edmonton at the Silvermoon Banquets. Same great location as in previous years. For more information please

contact me directly at len@aheia.com. We are already working diligently to make the 2020 event another great affair. Tickets are now available through our Edmonton office. Hope to see you there!

We continue to look for volunteer support for all of our courses, camps, events, etc. as well as with our day-to-day office workings. If you, or any of our friends, wish to become part of something greater, please let me know. Giving back has great personal rewards. It really does make one feel great when you volunteer. At the end of the day the more help we get the better for all involved.

Well, spring is almost here and a number of your thoughts probably turn to spring black bear hunting. Baiting black bears tends to be a lot of work, but the effort and rewards make it well worthwhile. It is very enjoyable watching bears come into your site. I have learned a lot about their habits, which has made me into a more successful hunter. I have written a few articles on the subject over the years. Check out our 2016 Spring Conservation Education Magazine for *Spring Black Bear Hunting* and our 2018 Spring Edition for *Black Bear Tips*. Back issues of our magazine can be located on our website. I hope you have as much fun chasing bears as I have over the last 40 years or so.

Take care and enjoy the Great Outdoors.



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Firearms Education Report



“ It's always a pleasure to speak with instructors and glean their insight into the program. ”

By John Morrissey



John Morrissey
Firearms Education
Coordinator
AHEIA

As we move into a new year with spring on the way, as firearms instructors we are still in waiting mode on any proposed changes that the Federal Government may or may not implement to the Firearms Act and the Canadian Firearms Safety Program. That said, at the time of writing this article the status quo remains.

We are now out of our show season, and I did have the opportunity to meet a number of our instructors at the Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton shows. It's always a pleasure to speak with instructors and glean their insight into the program. Please remember, should you have any questions or concerns please contact me anytime at the Calgary office.

A number of instructors have noted that the number of students attending the Non-Restrict-

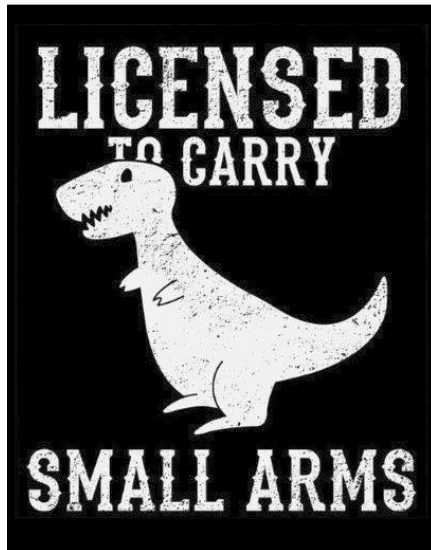
ed courses appears to be down from previous years. In reviewing the year end numbers this appears to be somewhat true. What the numbers indicated is more students are attending the Restricted course. This trend may be attributed to a new generation who is more interested in target shooting than hunting. Also, uncertainty on proposed changes to the Firearms Act may have given students the impression that they should complete their restricted course now, as it may not be available if new legislation is passed.

As far as training of new CFSC/CRFSC instructors, 2019 saw 22 new instructors completing certification. This brings the number of instructors in the Province to 412. Given the number of instructors, however, I still receive phone calls from potential students stating they cannot find an active instructor in their area. As an instructor, be active in your community and a role model for positive firearms ownership.



Also of interest, the RCMP *Firearms Reference Table* is now available to the general public <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/firearms/firearms-reference-table>.

The table contains 98,223 pages of firearms including Non-Restricted, Restricted and Prohibited firearms. Searching this may be a daunting task, as I could not locate a "Search" feature on the site.



Update Regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic

In light of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic, AHEIA may be forced to postpone or change the dates of our programs and events. Please check with us to confirm any of the program or seminar details you see in this magazine.



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SCENES FROM THE 18th ANNUAL

W.I.S.E. Awards & Banquet





AHEIA Holds Annual General Meeting



On Sunday, January 19, 2020, AHEIA held its Annual General Meeting in our Calgary office. Bob Gruszecki gave a detailed President's Report, beginning with the 2019 year in review and financial summary followed by AHEIA's future plans and goals. Attendance was great, with Bob emphasizing the value of AHEIA's members and volunteers in enabling AHEIA to continue to be successful.

Attendees were entered into a door prize drawn at the end of the meeting. Clayton Jensen was the lucky winner of the Revolutions Arms .410 Hinge Action, Single Barrel Shotgun!

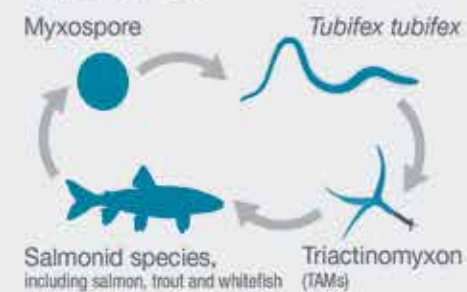
AHEIA encourages all members to attend the Annual General Meeting, so watch for the announcement of the date of our next meeting scheduled for **January, 2021 in Calgary.**



WHIRLING DISEASE

Caused by *Myxobolus cerebralis*

Life cycle



UP TO 90% Mortality rate for juvenile fish

FOUND IN WATERSHEDS
Oldman, Bow, Red
Deer and North
Saskatchewan River

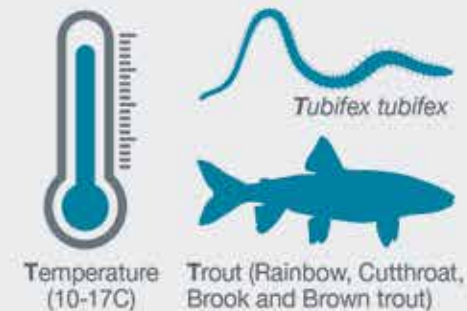


Affected fish may:

- have a blackened tail
- show skeletal deformities of the spine or skull
- have a shortened operculum (gill cover)
- whirl in a tail-chasing behavior

Three T's

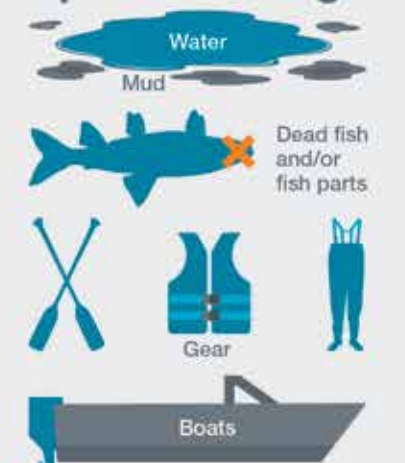
Key factors for outbreak



PULL the PLUG

Standing water in bilges, ballasts, live wells and buckets can harbour aquatic invasive species and diseases!

Spread through



before moving it between waterbodies.

Alberta



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"Over the last three years we have provided instruction to hundreds of new and enthusiastic archers..."

NASP is Growing Archery in the Peace Country

By Glenn Bielech

The Game Country Archers are strong supporters of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). Our archery club has undertaken various initiatives and set objectives to help bring the sport of archery to the youth in the Peace Country. To promote NASP with the teaching community, our club attended the last two Grande Prairie area teachers' conventions to start the conversation about the program and its introduction to the local school systems.

We garnered a lot of interest and provided valuable information on how our club, along with AHEIA, promotes NASP. Our sasquatch target got into a lot of selfies with a bunch of the "friendly" teachers.

Our next goal was to get the training course brought into the Grande Prairie area. Working with AHEIA we have put on two instructor courses in Grande Prairie in the last three years. To encourage engagement, and as a promotional tool, our club has covered the teachers' cost of the course. We now have 15 members and four area teachers who have become certified as NASP instructors. We are planning a third session in 2020 to bring more teachers and members on board with NASP.

With talking to the teachers, we found most did not have the financial resources to purchase a full NASP setup to do the instruction. This provided direction for our club and we took this on as our club's next goal. To effectively get NASP into the local schools, we needed to provide the equipment free of charge to whoever wanted to initiate and instruct NASP.

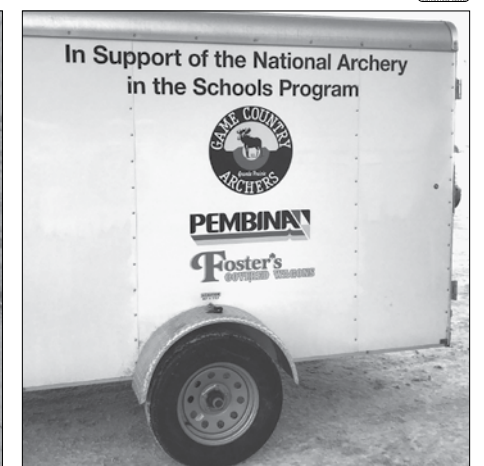
Our club did a major fundraiser to achieve our target. We were able to acquire three sources of donations that would allow us to set up a utility trailer, complete with all NASP gear.

Pembina Pipeline provided a very generous donation of \$5,000 to purchase the trailer. Fosters Covered Wagons gave us a huge discount of \$3,000 on our 12-foot enclosed utility trailer. TaqaNorth, which has a youth donation program, provided \$500 towards the equipment purchases. To reach our overall funding target, our club set up an additional archery shoot in the summer of 2019 to raise funds specifically for the NASP equipment. We partnered with our local ski hill, Nitehawk Adventure Park, and set up an "Extreme Shoot" utilizing the rugged terrain and elevation changes



to create some very challenging and long range (100 yard) shots. We made the shoot into a social evening with a steak supper and a silent auction. We had a great turnout with 38 shooters and raised over \$1,500. Mission accomplished! Our club was able to complete the trailer setup in the fall of 2019. Our first school, Whispering Ridge in Grande Prairie, started their NASP March 1, 2020.

With the continued interest in archery, and our club's promotion, we know our NASP trailer will get a lot of use in the future. Our club continues to promote archery by providing public lessons the first six months of the year. Every second Sunday we provide a two-hour lesson on archery basics utilizing the NASP fundamentals. Over the last three years we have provided instruction to hundreds of new and enthusiastic archers, ranging from four to 60 years of age. We also have interacted with local private groups, like the Sexsmith 4H, Bezanson School and the GP Breakfast Club, as another means of bringing archery instruction to youth. Private groups, our biggest client being the city of Grande Prairie, with close to 100 participants, have booked numerous archery lessons and we have garnered a few new members from those encounters. Our club is very proud to be promoting NASP and we see the benefits of it as an activity that all kids and adults can excel at and does not discriminate on the basis of popularity, skill, size or gender. Our club membership is steadily increasing, with almost 25% being youth. This is a great way for youth to learn focus, self-control, discipline, patience and some of life's lessons that will support them as they mature. Thanks to AHEIA who has helped our club make our work with NASP a tremendous success.



“Shed hunting gives us a great excuse to get out of the house, shrug off those winter blues and get some exercise in the shoulder season ...”

Spring is the Time to Go Shed Hunting!

By Brad Scheidl



Brad Scheidl
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - South

With warmer weather on the horizon, it is time to start thinking about getting outdoors more and more in the coming months. With spring comes the melting of snow, uncovering treasures that have been buried during the winter. Deer start dropping their antlers throughout the winter, commonly during January to March

and most have dropped by April. Late March into April is a good time to start shed hunting as the colder months are behind us and the animals have started moving from their winter refuges, expanding into more of their summer habitat.

Shed hunting gives us a great excuse to get out of the house, shrug off those winter blues and get some exercise in the shoulder season before spring bear seasons open. It is important to note that shed hunting too early in the season or too frequently can lead to pushing the animals out of their wintering grounds, causing them undue stress at a crucial time of year. It is best to plan on going once the weather is warming up and the snow is melting to provide a wider variety of quality habitats for the animals to move into if you happen to push them from the area.

There is a lot to be learned from taking a walk through the woods looking for signs of what the deer have been up to over the winter. You can learn about fall and winter bedding areas, feeding areas, scrapes, rubs and trails, and start to get a sense of what the animals have been up to over the past few months. Another positive bonus is that once you start finding those elusive antlers you learn which animals have survived through the winter and what bucks are in the area. Finding sheds of the bucks in the area can start the ball rolling on plans for next fall.

Equipment

In Alberta, naturally shed wildlife parts, such as antlers, can be kept or sold without a special permit, as long as they were found outside of

a provincial or national park or other protected area. If you have found a skull, bone, or any other wildlife part that you are hoping to keep, contact the nearest Fish and Wildlife office.

There really is not much equipment required to go out shed hunting other than a good pair of boots, some waterproof pants or gaiters, and layers to keep you at the right temperature. I always like to bring along binoculars when I go out as you can use them to search areas for sheds or check out animals if or when you see them. If you are going out on a longer hike into the back country it is always a good idea to take a day pack with your survival kit in case something were to happen.

Where to Look?

Both public and private land will have wintering deer on them. If you're shed hunting on public land be sure to know where you are and ensure you let someone else know where you will be. If shed hunting on private land make sure you have contacted the landowner and have received permission to be on their property before venturing onto their land.

Deer spend much of their time in the winter between just a few different areas. Looking for bedding areas, feeding areas and the trails between them is key. In the cold Alberta winters deer tend to concentrate in areas with cover, but also south or east facing slopes to soak up that sun when

What to Look For?

Looking for antlers on the ground is a skill that has to be practiced and once you start looking and training your eyes what to look for you will start to find more sheds. Start by looking for the general shape of the antler, or the curves as it would be lying on the ground. Start small. Looking for smaller objects will help you train your eyes to see a tine of a larger antler, rather than concentrating on looking for the whole antler itself. Look for the colour of the tines sticking through the snow or undergrowth in the area you are in. Going out on a bright sunny day may seem like a good idea because it is warmer and you are more willing to be out there for longer; however, on cloudy days it is easier to spot the antlers in the snow. This is because when it is sunny the snow will reflect the light back towards you, causing snow blindness and leading to missing antlers that would otherwise be found. When the antlers are under the snow or just poking through, they will often soak up more heat than the surrounding snow and have a small gap around the tines which can help in finding them if the conditions are right.



Walk slowly as you are out looking for sheds as they are not easy to spot at times. As you're walking and get into an area with lots of animal sign, look around often from different angles, both high and low, to see the ground from a different perspective. Once you do find an antler start looking in the immediate area for the other antler of the pair. Often when a buck loses an antler they do not like the lopsided feeling of only having a single antler and they will begin to shake their heads, which often dislodges the other antler. So if there is one lying on the ground the other might be nearby! Start slowly walking in semi circles around where you found the first one and try to locate additional antlers.

Once you start finding shed antlers you will start to notice that they become easier to find over time. You can find sheds year round; however, there is competition from the two-legged and the four legged variety, so often people are more successful as the snow is melting in the late spring. Good luck, stay safe and have fun if you decide to go out shed hunting this spring!



it does peek out. Starting with these areas and looking for tracks to indicate deer activity is the key to finding an area to start looking for sheds. When looking for trails that the animals are using look particularly at spots where the animals may have to jump over a fence or downed tree. The impact and movement of jumping may dislodge a loose antler.

Bedding areas will typically consist of areas of dense cover where the animals will spend the majority of their day resting and staying away from predators. Look for dense patches of trees, shrubs, and other coniferous cover on south facing slopes to start with and try to find deer sign and trails leading into or out of the cover. Look for dips, ravines and other natural cover that animals will seek for protection from the prevailing winds as well.

Feeding areas in the winter will be concentrated and are a good place to search for sheds as the antlers can be easily knocked loose during feeding. Look for woody vegetation and signs that deer have been feeding anywhere from ground level to about five feet off the ground. Saplings, buds and branches are their main target as well as other similar vegetation. These foods don't provide much nutritional value so there will be frequent trips to higher quality food sources. High quality food sources for woody vegetation will be near edges of fields, cut blocks, or areas without a dense canopy.



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May 6, 13, 20, 27, June 3, 10

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July 8, 15, 22, 29, August 5, 12

FALL 2020 SESSION

September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

No target or rental charges.

Firearms rental, eye and ear protection included.
No firearms licence required.
Coaching provided by certified shotgun instructors.
Ammunition will be sold at member pricing.

Shooting starts at 6:00 pm.

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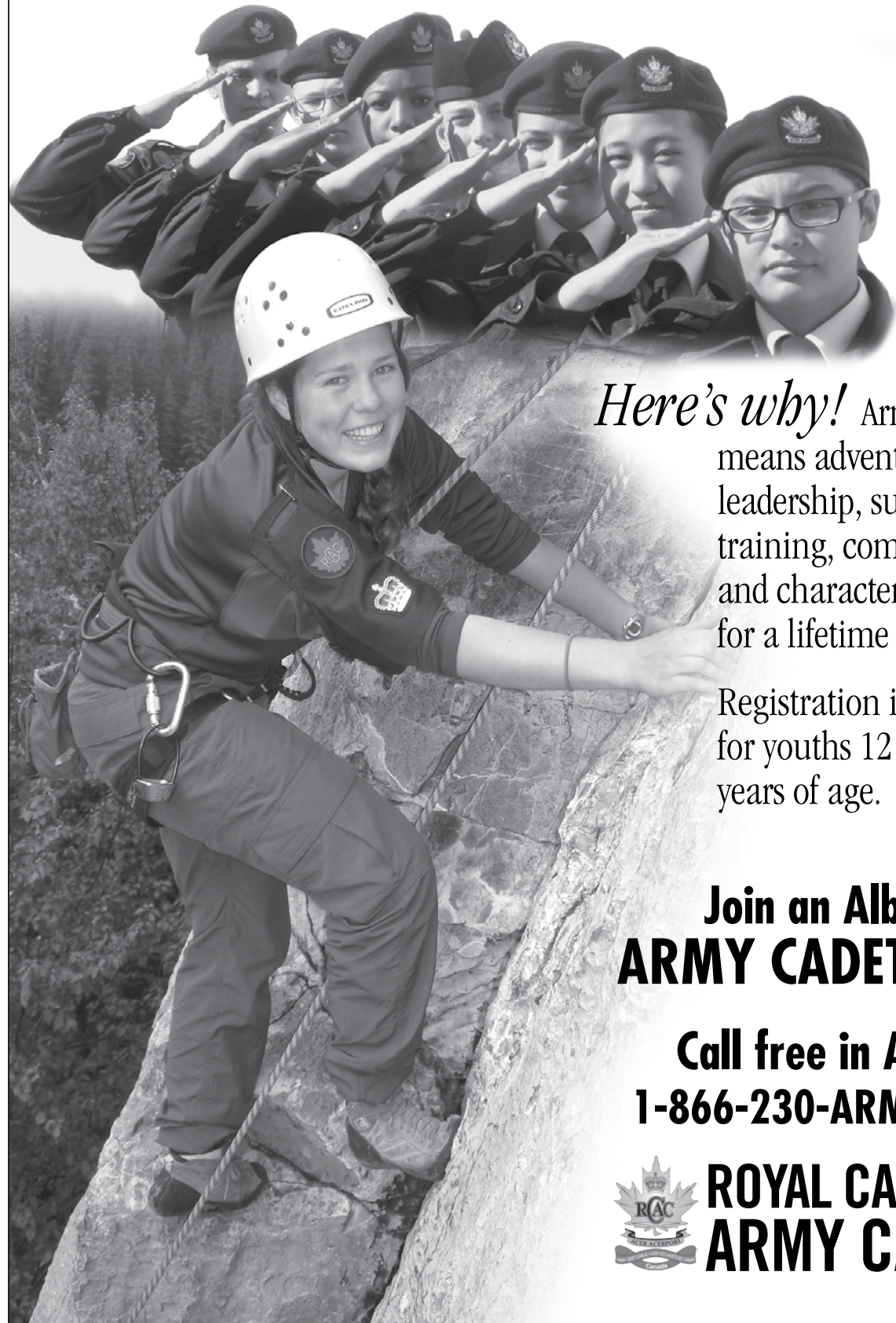
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“Every brookie pond I fished as a teenager had a healthy population of black flies which, as they hatched, absolutely covered the surface with the dimples of rising hungry trout.”

The Black Gnat: A Classic Wet Fly

By Jeff Smith



Jeff Smith

There is a rite of passage that all Canadians must go through as a part of enjoying the great Canadian outdoor experience; the slathering on of bug juice! Depending on where you are located in Alberta, the bug juice season commences as early as April. And if you didn't already know this, the further north in Alberta you go, the stronger it needs to be! Evenings are spent sitting near to a somewhat smoky campfire in an attempt to hold the bugs at bay. Just what is the bug we are trying in vain to avoid? While the mosquito is often blamed, there is another even more annoying insect: The Black Fly! (aka No-See-Ums and a few other terms not meant

for a family outdoor magazine). These annoying bugs, which are very capable of sucking you dry of every ounce of blood, leaving behind angry welts on bare skin, are widespread anywhere great fishing is found. While fly fishers don't exactly love these creatures, we have found a reason for their existence. Trout will feed on them at every opportunity. This tends to be especially true, in my experience at least, with Brook Trout. Every brookie pond I fished as a teenager had a healthy population of black flies which, as they hatched, absolutely covered the surface with the dimples of rising hungry trout.

Not surprisingly there are several patterns which are designed to catch trout during the Black Fly hatch. This particular pattern, the Black Gnat, has been in existence from the earliest days of fly fishing with examples being found in the texts of earliest English literature. Early patterns were tied as wet flies, with the fly evolving over the years

to a dry fly, then returning to its roots as a wet fly again. The reality is both wet and dry patterns are effective. The wet fly is certainly the more popular tie. Most versions call for a dubbed body of dyed rabbit or other soft fur. Synthetic dubbing is another excellent choice as most are quite translucent. For those preferring a natural fur which is translucent, seal fur is a good choice.

Beginning in the 1930s, floss and chenille bodied versions started to appear.

The actual insect this pattern imitates seems to be open for debate depending upon where you live and or fish. Size and materials used dictate if it is imitating a tiny black midge or the common gnat of North Country infamy. Others will tie it as an imitation of the various dark mayflies. Another common finding is that some of the patterns tied are winged and others are not. James Leisenring came up with a great soft hackle, wingless

version that is still popular in some circles today. Winged versions call for slips cut from slate grey to black quill sections. John Goddard has a cool looking winged version using Rainbow Krystal Flash tied low over the body in a "V" shape. Another part which is optional is the inclusion of a tail. When a tail is tied in it is usually black hackle fibres tied the same length as the body. I have seen one variant with Guinea hackle fibres which was quite elegant appearing. A silver tag really set the tone for the fly. The chenille bodied flies are uniformly tied with a small bundle of red hackle fibres, a silver rib over black chenille and white wings with shiny black hackle. A very gaudy but useful brookie pattern. For a good many years I thought this was the only Black Gnat fly. I used it to great effect in the tea stained trout ponds around Argentia, Newfoundland and Labrador as a kid. Sacrilege that it was, I even caught a few Atlantic salmon, mostly grilse, on it but, hey, I was just a teenager that didn't know better! I have used it across Canada taking panfish, bass and grayling in addition to various trout species. It is a fun fly to use to introduce kids to fly fishing as it casts and fishes easily in both still-water and smaller streams. It is downright deadly in beaver ponds! For some reason I haven't had much success in the larger rivers such as the Bow or Oldman, but in their smaller tributaries it works great.

Tackle-wise a fly rod of 8½ to 9 feet that casts a 4 or 5 weight line is perfect. Leaders should taper to about a 6x tippet in creeks and 4x or 5x in ponds, as trout here may be a bit bigger. On streams, cast the fly upstream and let it drift with the current through the pool. Cast close to the bank if casting along a grassy bend. At the end of the drift allow the fly to rise to the surface then cast again. In a pond it is most useful if you cast toward a drop-off in clear water. Allow it to sink until it is just above the bottom, then retrieve using a slow overhand twisting motion with your free hand. If you are fishing from a canoe you can also very slowly troll the fly along the edge of a drop-off. If there is a spring in the pond, I found the area around it to be a magically productive place.



HOOK:
Wet fly size 10-20

THREAD:
6/0 Uni black

TAIL:
Red hackle fibres

RIB:
Silver oval tinsel

BODY:
Black Seal fur dubbed

WING:
White duck quill slips

HACKLE:
Black hen



BLACK GNAT TYING STEPS

1. Tie in a short bunch of red hackle fibres.
2. Attach rib material.
3. Dub a bulky body.
4. Wind 3 or 4 turns of oval tinsel.
5. Tie in matched slips of duck quill for wings.
6. Tie in and wind hackle collar.
7. Fold back the hackle, wind a small head to complete fly.



Olde English Black Gnat on the left, Fancy Black Gnat on the right.

AHEIA Announces Its New Online Fishing Education Program for Albertans

LEARN FISHING BEST PRACTICES FOR ALBERTA'S WATERWAYS.

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Graduates receive a wallet card and certificate.

The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA) is pleased to introduce the online Alberta Fishing Education Program (AFEP), aimed towards new and experienced fishing enthusiasts alike to teach them about the best practices of fishing in Alberta's pristine waterways. The AFEP will include the following eight course modules and a final exam for students in an effort to offer the most comprehensive learning experience possible.

- Alberta Fishing Regulations and Management
- Identification of Alberta Game Fish
- Fishing Equipment
- Fishing Techniques
- Preparing and Cooking Your Catch
- Safety While Fishing
- Ethical Behaviour
- Legal Responsibilities

"I believe that the Alberta Fishing Education Program is another important and proactive educational tool that will continue to perpetuate the province's conservation efforts. The AHEIA team has worked very hard to create a program that is enjoyable for all ages, yet still incredibly informative so that even the most serious fishing enthusiasts will find it worthwhile," says Bob Gruszecki, President of AHEIA.

"Given the current set of circumstances to do with COVID-19 that everyone is dealing with, we feel that now is the perfect time to release the Alberta Fishing Education Program for free, for a limited time, so that all Albertans — young and old — can take advantage of this extra little bit of time they may have found themselves with, while they self-isolate/quarantine at home away from school and work," adds Gruszecki.

The Alberta Fishing Education Program is the only program of its kind offered in North America. Its aim, beyond providing essential education about fishing in Alberta, is to provide confidence through understanding, so as to better enable more people to go outside and enjoy and preserve our provinces most beautiful wild places and wildlife.

To take the online Alberta Fishing Education Program, please visit AHEIA.com and navigate to *Programs and Courses* and then to *Online Training*.



"Many Albertans are practising physical distancing right now, so what better time to learn about our province's wildlife? Our partners at AHEIA have generously offered to make the new Alberta Fishing Education Program available free of charge, and we hope Albertans—kids and adults—will take advantage of this opportunity. I recently took the course along with my two youngest children, and the three of us learned so much about the aquatic biodiversity of our province!" (Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks)



2020 AHEIA ATV Raffle

Drawn March 15, 2020 at the Calgary Firearms Centre.
Licence #556469.

Jennifer Ostero

is the winner of a 2019 Polaris Sportsman ATV.
(Ticket #2173)

2020 AHEIA Knife Raffle

Drawn January 19, 2020 at the Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence.
Licence #550070.

Jon Tumu

is the winner of this "Every Knife You'll Ever Need" package.
(Ticket #92)

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Navigation Safety Equipment

By Allan Orr



Allan Orr
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A. Red Deer - South

In an ongoing boating safety message, I am going to discuss some equipment that each boater should/must carry in order to remain safe on the water. Some of this equipment will get you to where you are going and back again, while others will ensure your safety while on the water.

Magnetic Compass

A magnetic compass is a device that shows the direction of travel of that particular vessel in relation to magnetic north. North, south, east and west are always marked on a compass and most have several direction marks between the major directions. A pleasure craft less than eight metres in length that operates within sight of seamarks (or landmarks) does not legally require a magnetic compass. However, it is always a good plan for any traveller to have a magnetic compass in their survival kit. Equally as important is the knowledge and ability to use it. Even if your ability goes only as far as to be able to use your compass to point your boat in a constant direction, it will eventually find you a shoreline while on a lake of any size. If travelling on a lake in the Canadian Shield, it is very easy to get turned around and having a simple magnetic compass will get you going again in the direction you want to be going ... and



yes, I do have a story about that. It is important to remember to have a magnetic compass in your pack and not to rely solely on a battery-operated device which are all subject to failure.

Map or Chart

A compass is most effective with a good map or chart. A chart is basically a marine-based map that has marine based items on it that are useful only to those experienced in marine navigation. Very few lakes on the prairies are charted, and in Alberta only Lake Athabasca has an actual nautical chart. The rest of the lakes have been mapped in many ways and are available from a variety of sources. Topographic maps that show the contours of the land around a waterbody are extremely useful for navigation, and bathymetric maps which provide contours of a lake bottom are useful for safe passage (and finding hot fishing spots) on the waterbody itself. Before you head out, be sure you know how to use these maps along with your compass rather than relying solely on an app or GPS.

Sound Signalling Device

All vessels are required to carry some sort of sound signalling device, whether it be a hand-held device (whistle, bell, horn, etc.) or a fitted appliance like the fog horns we hear as two ships pass in the night on those dark and stormy nights. Vessels under 12 metres are not required to carry a fitted (permanently affixed) sound device, but must have some sort of method for sending sound signals. One of the best devices for small vessels is simply a whistle attached to your life jacket or PFD.

There are certain sound signals that every boater should be aware of and use when necessary. They are:

- Sounds that Signal Changing Directions
 - One short blast means I am altering my course to starboard.
 - Two short blasts mean I am altering my course to port.
- Sounds that Signal Reduced Visibility (fog or poor weather)
 - Power Driven Boat: One prolonged blast at intervals of no more than two minutes.



- Sailboat: One prolonged blast plus two short blasts no more than two minutes apart.
- Warning Signals
 - One prolonged blast is a warning signal. A vessel is coming around a blind bend or a large vessel is departing a dock (ever been on a BC ferry?).
 - Five short blasts mean you don't understand or don't agree with another boater's intentions. It can also signal danger.

Navigation Lights

Navigation lights are required on all vessels operating in limited visibility or between sunset and sunrise. This includes engine powered and non-engine powered vessels. On most non-engine powered vessels we find in the prairies, a functioning flashlight will usually meet the requirement for safety lights. These flashlights should be watertight and must have functional batteries in it. Be sure to refresh the batteries every spring, or if they get wet. As well, make sure you put batteries in a flashlight you purchase with any Marine Safety Kit (available from AHEIA). A flashlight is not considered a navigation light, so if you are out on the water on any vessel after sunset or during limited visibility, you will need specific navigation lights on your vessel.

Common Vessel Navigation Lights

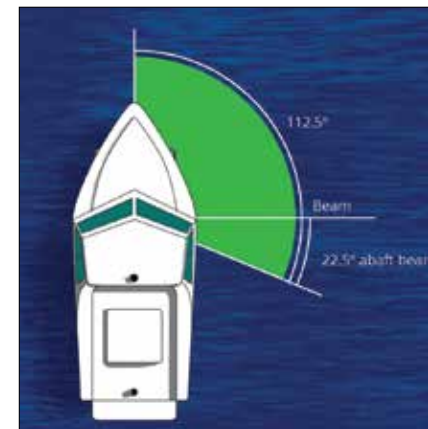
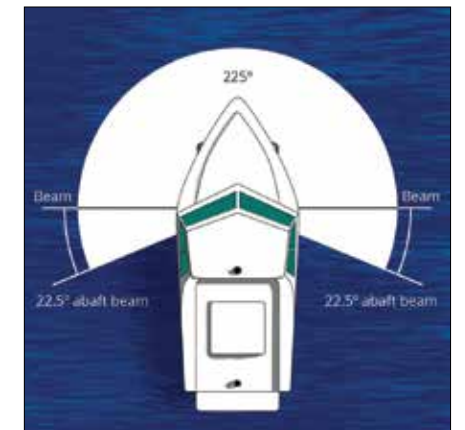
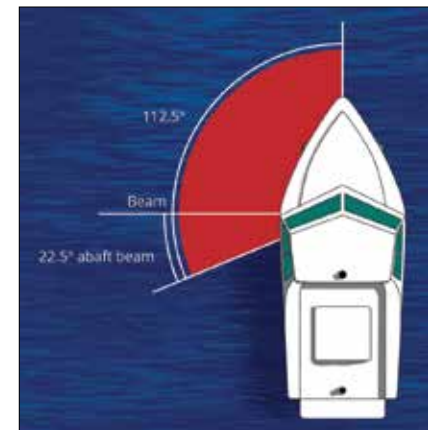
The most basic and most common navigation lights we see on the prairies are a white light seen from 360 degrees around a vessel, and a red light on the left (port) side and a green light on the starboard (right) side.

Without getting too complicated, basic rules of the road (so to speak) when travelling on water are as follows:

- If you are about to cross paths with another vessel and you see their red light, you need to move so as to avoid that vessel. Think of the red light as a stop light.
- If you are about to cross paths with another vessel and you see their green light, you have the right-of-way, provided the other vessel gives it. Never assume that the other vessel knows these rules and/or will follow them. You are responsible for your safety and the safety of your passengers and those in any other vessel you come in contact with.
- If you see a white light in your direction of travel, proceed with caution as you may be coming up on the stern of another vessel, or you may have a smaller craft (canoe, sailboard, etc.) in front of you and they may be in trouble.
- If you see a yellow light, you are behind a vessel that is towing or being towed by another vessel. Steer well clear of this light.
- If you see a blue flashing light coming towards you ... it's the police.

There are other navigation lights that boaters on big waters will come across, but on the prairies we will generally only see the ones mentioned above.

There are many more rules and regulations regarding the use of safe navigation equipment while on your vessel. The best way to get to know them is to take the Pleasure Craft Operator Training course from a certified AHEIA instructor or online at AHEIA.com.



Pleasure Craft Operator Training

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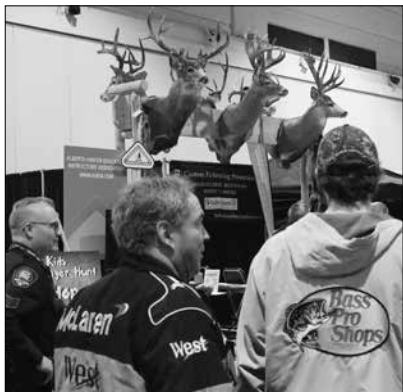
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Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Mennonite Wild Game Meat Loaf

2 pounds ground wild game	2 slices thick cut bacon
2 1/2 cups crushed Ritz crackers	Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes	2 cloves garlic, minced
1 medium onion, chopped	2 large eggs
1/4 cup brown sugar	3/4 cup ketchup
1/2 cup cilantro, chopped	

Meat Loaf Topping:

1 cup ketchup	2 tablespoons white vinegar
Salt and pepper	2 tablespoons yellow mustard
1/2 cup brown sugar	

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl mix ground meat, Ritz crackers, onion, eggs, 3/4 cup ketchup, 1/4 cup brown sugar, garlic, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper, and cilantro until well blended. Use your hands, they work well. Press into a 9"x5" greased loaf pan. Lay the bacon over the top (cut to fit). Want more bacon? Add more!

Bake for 1 hour in the preheated, 350°F oven or until internal temperature reaches 155-160°F.

While the loaf bakes, combine all the meat loaf toppings in a bowl and mix well. Spread over the top of the meat loaf for the last 15 minutes of baking.

Serve with your favourite baked beans and add a garden salad for a full meal.

Elk Parmigiana

2 pounds boneless elk steaks	1 large egg
1 tablespoon milk	2/3 cup seasoned bread crumbs
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese	5 tablespoons olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped	2 cups hot water
1 can tomato paste, 6 ounce	1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon dried basil	Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups Mozzarella cheese, shredded	1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
1 clove garlic, finely minced	1/4 cup parsley

Pound steaks to 1/4" thickness. Cut into serving size pieces. In a shallow bowl beat egg, Tabasco sauce and milk. In a separate bowl combine bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese. Dip elk in egg mixture, then coat with crumb mixture and set aside.

Place olive oil in large skillet. Brown meat on both side over medium high heat. Place in a greased 13"x9" baking dish. In the drippings (fond) sauté onions and garlic for 2-3 minutes or until tender. Stir in the water, tomato paste, salt, pepper, sugar and basil. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a slow simmer. Cook uncovered for 5 minutes. Pour over elk.

Cover and bake at 350°F for 50 minutes or until the meat is tender. Uncover and sprinkle with cheese and bake 10-15 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Prior to serving top with parsley.

Serve with your choice of pasta and bread sticks. Recipe also works well with moose or venison.



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