CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

2011 co-champion Richard Rud and his teammate Leroy Wilson race across Sand Bay Thursday morning during the opening day of the 2013 Fort Frances Canadian Bass Championship. The International Falls team finished the tournament in 26th place in Division II after catching 13.04 pounds of bass on Saturday.

BASS

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Day 2 with 15.90-pound bag, which gave them a two-day total of 35.93 pounds.

The duo saved their best bag for the final day, however, as they hauled in an impressive weight of 20.35 pounds, which proved to be the second biggest single day catch of the entire weekend.

"Things really have to work well for you in order to win a tournament like this one, as the competition here is very fierce," Peterson noted.

"We had a big first day weight, a pretty good second day, and we got a really good catch here on Day 3 to really anchor our win," he added.

An all Fort Frances team finished right behind Gustafson and Peterson in the standings, as Ryan Hyatt and Karl Wolff came home in the runner-up spot with a three-day weight of 53.84 pounds.

Tony Holenko, of International Falls, brings his fish towards the stage Thursday afternoon during the weigh-ins at the Sorting Gap Marina. Holenko, who teamed up with Darren Ward of Fort Frances for the second straight year, finished in 10th place in Division III Saturday with a weight of 13.24 pounds.

Having entered the day in third position, the first-year tandem were able to move up one spot in the standings with their 17.91-pound bag on Saturday.

They were unable to knock Gustafson and Peterson off of the "hot seat," however, as they finished 1.58 pounds behind the eventual champions.

"It's nice to know that we made a lot of good decisions during the weekend, and we stuck with what we thought was going to work," Wolff said.

Day two leaders Troy Norman and Jay Samsal were the final bullet that Gustafson and Peterson had to dodge during the weigh-ins, but their 15.60-pound bag was not enough to move them back into the lead.

That left the tandem with a 51.63-pound total for the weekend, and a third place finish.

"Any time you get to go through a tent with a crowd like that, it gets your heart pumping," enthused Norman, who is from Fort Frances.

"That was the highlight of my fishing career so far," added Samsal, who lives in Kenora.

"The guy who won [Gustafson] is one of our best buddies, and I couldn't be happier for him," he stressed.

Defending champions Mark Raveling and Mike Luhman briefly held the lead on Saturday, as their 17.17-pound bag gave them a three-day total of 51.39 pounds.

Gustafson and Peterson knocked them out of the top spot shortly afterwards, and the reigning title holders would finish the tournament in fourth place.

"We actually did better in the tournament than we did during our pre-fishing," Raveling noted.

"Everything went right for us during all three days, and we just did the best we could," Luhman added.

Dale Labelle of Devlin and Dave Byrnes of Fort Frances moved their way into the top five on Saturday, after they started the day in 14th place.

The local tandem were able to haul in an impressive 18.70-pound bag on Day No. 3, which gave them a three-day total weight of 50.12 pounds.

"Today [Saturday] was a lot of fun for us," Labelle smiled.

"We were just happy to be in the top 15, and we were able to catch a lot of fish and have a good bag.

"There was some wicked weather out there though, and I'm just glad everyone was able to get back here safe and sound," he stressed.

Rounding out the top ten were Paul Kielb and Jim Picha (49.96 pounds), Lauren Ras and Chuck Olson (49.27), Chad Adrians and Caleb Colwell (48.98), George McDonald and Kevin Erickson (47.47), and Glenn Leroux and Trevor Zimak (47.22).

Prior to the weigh-ins in the 15-boat Championship Flight, Fort Frances' Bryan Gustafson and Kenora's Jamie Bruce nearly stole the show on their way to winning the Division II title, which consisted of anglers that were in 16th-52nd place after Day 2.

The 2013 Castin' for Cash winners on Lake Despair reeled in the biggest bag of the tournament on Saturday at 20.36 pounds, which included a 4.89-pound hog that was the biggest single bass that was caught all weekend.

"We gambled a lot during the first two days of the tournament, and we ran up and down looking to run into them [the fish]," Gustafson said.

"We grinded out an area for all it was worth today [Saturday], and we were able to capitalize on every fish that we caught," he added.

The Division III title, which featured the teams that were ranked from 53rd-89th place after Friday's weigh-ins, was won by Sean Good and Pete Badiuk, as the Fort Frances duo topped the standings with a 18.19-pound bag.

OBERSTAR

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Koochiching Economic Development Authority Director Paul Nevanen and Shawn Mason, city economic and community development director, described for Oberstar a few development leads they are exploring. Each discussed potential projects that could involve relationships with First Nations and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and manufacturing leads that would involve use of rail services and local resources.

Discussion about what kind of customers would benefit from the district and FTZ centered around the existing clients of area rail service providers.

With the increased use of wind power, Oberstar suggested the group consider bringing the parts of the towers into the community for assembly and then shipping them out to where they are being placed.

And Oberstar encouraged the group to consider obtaining information about the area's geology to find out if fracking sand is available nearby that could be transported to places using it for extraction of gas.

DNR offers fewer wolf licenses, lowers 2013 target harvest

DNR STAFF REPORT

A smaller Minnesota wolf population means fewer hunting and trapping licenses will be available when the wolf season opens Nov. 9.

The Department of Natural Resources set the statewide target harvest of wolves at 220 — 180 fewer than last season.

Starting Aug. 1, hunters and trappers can apply for 2,000 early-season and 1,300 late-season licenses. That's a reduction from 3,600 early-season and 2,400 late-season licenses in 2012. The deadline to apply for the hunting and trapping license lottery is Sept. 5.

"The changes are a management response to the most-recent wolf population estimate," said Dan Stark, the DNR's large carnivore specialist. "As with other game species DNR manages, adjustments are made to regulate hunting pressure and harvest to ensure long-term population sustainability and provide hunting and trapping opportunities."

Minnesota continues to have the largest wolf population in the lower 48 states. The DNR's 2013 wolf population survey estimated 2,211 wolves last winter compared to 2,921 in the winter of 2008. The most-recent estimate does not include the birth of as many as 2,600 wolf pups this spring, some of which will survive into winter and be counted in next year's population.

"DNR's population survey confirmed Minnesota's wolf population remains firmly established on the landscape," Stark said. "We can manage seasons for a sustainable population of wolves like we do for dozens of other game species."

The DNR manages wolf harvest, in part, through a system of hunting zones. The target harvest in the northwest zone is 145, down from 265 in 2012. The target harvest in the northeast zone is 65, down from 133. The east-central zone target harvest is 10, down from 18. With the possible exception of the east-central zone, those harvest targets will be split between the early and late seasons.

Individuals who apply must pay a $4 fee, show proof of a current or previous hunting license and choose one of three available license options:

■ Early season hunting, which is concurrent with the firearms deer season, unless a zone closes earlier because the target harvest is met. The early season runs from Saturday, Nov. 9, through Sunday, Nov. 24, in all Series 100 deer permit areas and Nov. 9 through Sunday, Nov. 17, in Series 200 deer permit areas. In the east-central zone, the early season is scheduled to be a two-day hunt this year, concluding when legal shooting hours end on Sunday, Nov. 10.

■ Late season hunting, which runs from Nov. 30 through Jan. 31, 2014, or when the target harvest is met, whichever occurs earlier. If the east-central zone's target harvest is met during the early season, the late east-central season will not open.

■ Late season trapping, which runs from Nov. 30 through Jan. 31, 2014, or when the target harvest is met, whichever occurs earlier.

The statewide bag limit is one wolf and licenses are not zone specific. Lottery winners will receive a wolf hunting booklet with their notification.

Wolf licenses cost $30 for residents and $250 for nonresidents. The early season purchase deadline is Nov. 1, with surplus licenses going on sale at noon Nov. 6. The late season purchase deadline is Nov. 22, with surplus licenses going on sale at noon Nov. 27.

The DNR sets wolf seasons and quotas based on long-term sustainability, as it does with more than 50 other game species, including many other furbearing mammals. The DNR received strong direction from the Minnesota Legislature to conduct a wolf season and manage wolves as a prized and high-value fur species by setting the season when pelts have value.

DNR's goal for wolf management, as outlined in the state's wolf management plan, is to ensure the long-term survival of the wolf in Minnesota and resolve conflicts between wolves and humans. The state wolf management plan includes wolf-specific population and health monitoring, research, depredation management, public education and law enforcement efforts.

Additional information about wolves is available online at www.mndnr.gov/wolves.

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