

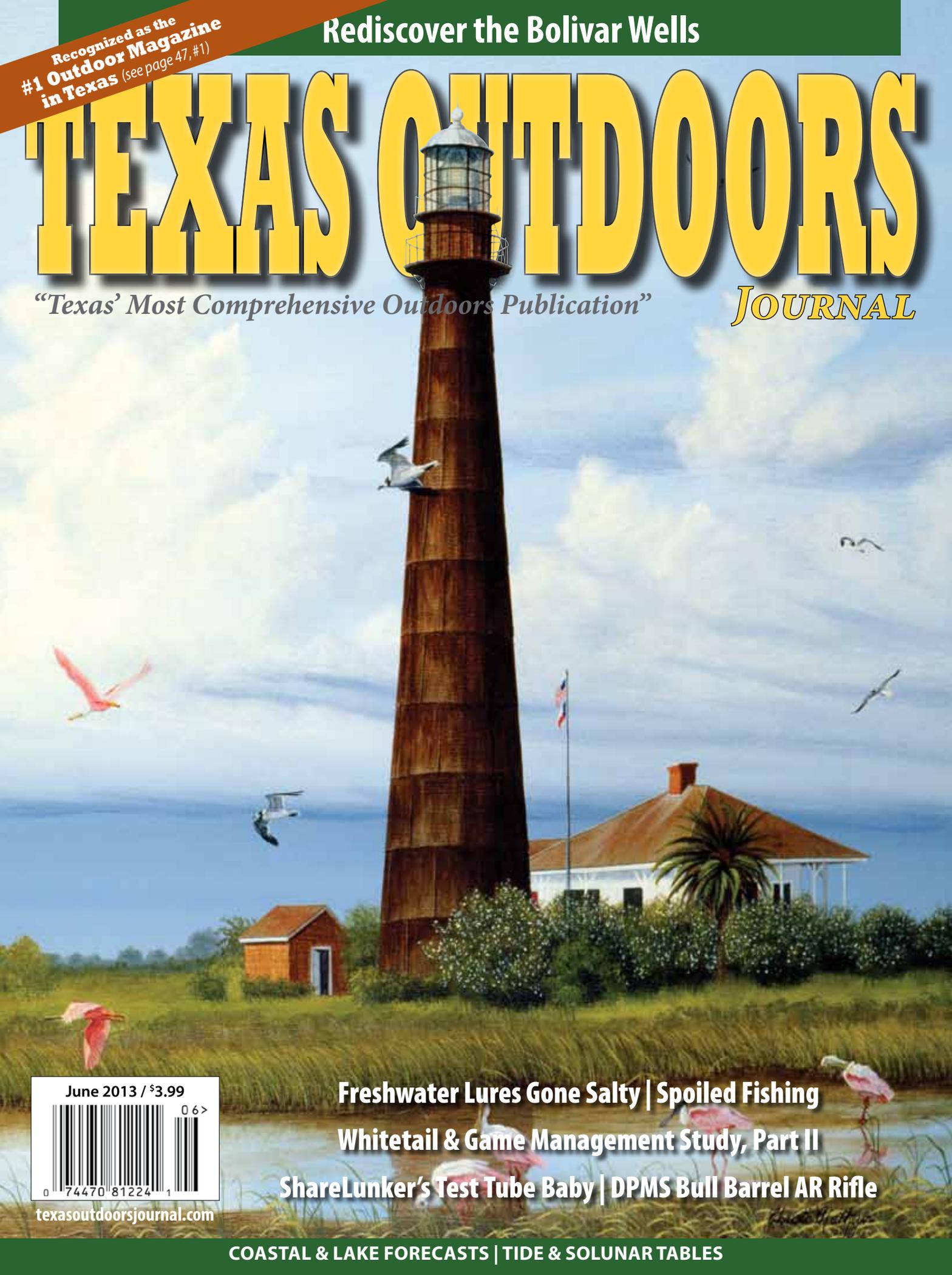
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Rediscover the Bolivar Wells

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Old School – New School – Same School

Each year at this time I suggest that while school is out the learning really begins. That is if parents, grandparents, and mentors will simply invest the time with kids outdoors.

In this age of new technology it is easy for kids of all ages to be distracted to the latest and greatest. However those with a little more gray in the hair left upon their head can remember a time when outdoor activities occurred without the benefit of advanced electronics.

Now don't get me wrong, new technology has always made things easier when it comes to fishing. The paper chart recorders worked well decades ago though not as good as the new side imaging units of today.

In some respects each of the electronic advancements were just like the cash register that tells the now-day clerk how much change to return to the customer. However, if the power goes out, or God forbid, the odd pennies are offered do they know how to make change?

The same is applicable during the summer months while fishing. At the risk of showing my age, here are some old school tips that still work that some may remember, while the younger crowd would do well to learn — just in case.

How many times have you been at a favorite fishing hole and used triangulation to locate, remember, and then return to that same spot. Today's GPS certainly makes things easy, but triangulation will get you back to the spot while the electronics confirm your mental effort.

Coastal anglers use modern depth recorders and sounders to determine depth and bottom structure/contour. Back in the day a piece of inch and three eights wooden clothes pole would be used as a sounding pole in shallow water. A modern lightweight pushpole will do the same and allow one to f-e-e-l the bottom make up.

Soft plastics are the staple on the coast and have been for decades. Today some tackle manufacturers are releasing something called a "hair jig" or bucktail. Does anyone remember the tandem trout rigs? If not, ask you parent or certainly your grandparent.

Do bass anglers remember a Heddon Hellbender? They are still on the market but what was a hot bait in the 70s is hardly mentioned. I admit I missed a few classes while at Baylor U to fish one for black bass on Lake Waco.

Now this month's column is not designed to simply be a memory walk, but rather an opportunity for two different generations to share and both learn. The younger generation can probably make any electronics sing with ease, while graybeards can teach them to navigate using a compass and chart, or lake map.

When it comes to maps, those that love to hunt can pass on how to read a topographic map, and orienteering with just a compass. If you plan on escaping Texas summer heat to some high country getaway then invest in a topo of the area. Then find an alpine park and figure out exactly where on the map you are sitting amongst all of those circular contour rings. This will help the newcomer use their imagination to understand that lines closer together mean a more rapid and dramatic elevation rise or fall. It's fun to point out the different peaks, and find the open parks or saddles where elk, mule deer and other critters feed and move.

There's nothing wrong with new school gadgets, but just remember, when batteries run out, or a signal is lost, there is always old school ways to get you where you want to go.

Until next month: *Pursue All of Your Outdoor Activities in a Safe and Ethical Manner.*

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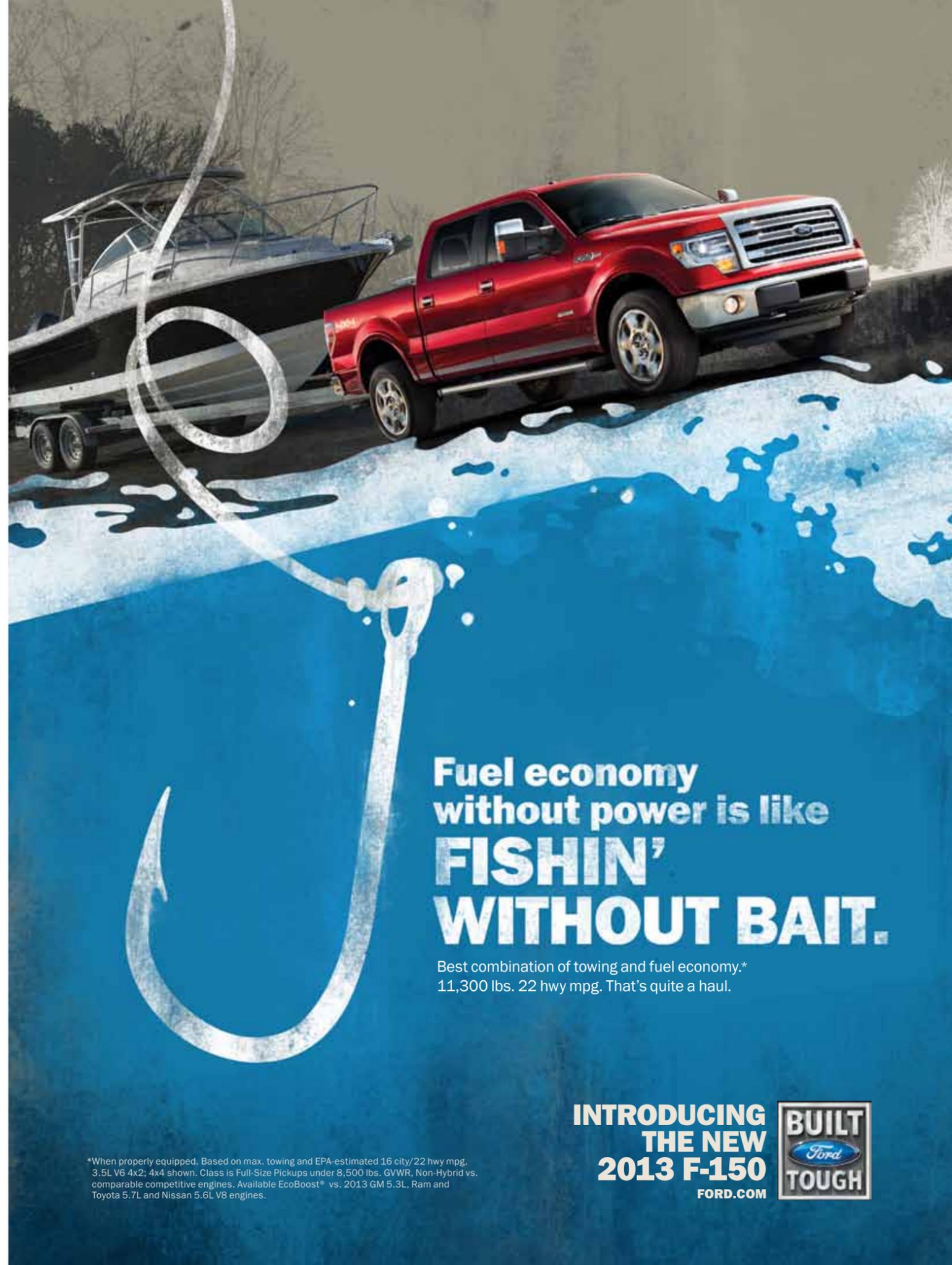
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Reasons for Hunting Are Diverse

American sportsmen hail from every walk of life imaginable, and just as they are a diverse crowd, so too are their reasons for participating in hunting. While many portray hunting as an intense effort to get game, the reality is the overall outdoor experience holds much more sway in attracting people to the sport.

To monitor long term trends, each year HunterSurvey.com inquires about hunters' motivations. The January 2013 poll found that rather than one key or leading reason that motivated sportsmen to hunt, there are actually many. And no single motivator stands completely head and shoulders above the rest.

When asked "Why do you like to hunt?," respondents provided the following answers (participants could check all that apply): 92% Like to spend time outdoors. 87% Enjoy seeing wildlife. 87% Enjoy the peace and quiet of the outdoors. 80% Enjoy the challenge. 74% Like to spend time with friends/family who hunt. 70% Like providing food for my family/friends. 9% Other reasons.

"This matches recent in-depth National Shooting Sports Foundation research that showed hunters go afield for fun, social and outdoor reasons. From

spending time with family and friends outdoors to the peace and solitude of being alone in nature, hunting is much more than taking game," says Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys. "Future efforts to increase hunting, or to successfully promote hunting-related products and services, must emphasize fun, social interactions and the total outdoor experience hunting provides." ★

Concealed Carry Jumps Among Florida Women . . .

More than 1 million Floridians have their concealed carry permit, but the gender and age bracket showing the largest increase might surprise you — it's women 66 years of age and older. Their numbers have jumped 619 percent since 2004, reports the Orlando Sentinel, and total nearly 35,000 individuals licensed to carry a firearm in the Sunshine State and 35 other states.

The Sentinel also reports that women in the youngest age bracket, 21 to 35, with pistol permits increased 463 percent to more than 40,000. While gun ownership is up, the Sentinel reports violent crime in Florida has dropped nearly 60 percent in the last 20 years. ★

Mossberg 500 Fastest Selling Shotgun of All Time

Since the first model came off the line on August, 21, 1961, Mossberg's 500 Pump-Action shotgun has received accolades from sportsmen and women, law enforcement and military personnel alike for its reliability, versatility and affordability; and notably its distinctive ambidextrous top-mounted safety. Now this American classic has reached an astonishing milestone of 10,000,000 produced; and in an unprecedented 52 years making the 500 Pump-Action the fastest-selling shotgun in history.

Lead design engineer, Carl Benson, and his team at O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc. began work on a slide-action shotgun to replace the unique design of the 200 Series which had been in production since 1955. Though the Model 200 had set a new standard for innovation, Benson knew that Mossberg needed a more traditional-looking pump shotgun to compete with the "big three" at the time.

The result was the 500 Shooting System, a 12-gauge pump-action base gun with interchangeable barrels. This original design remained virtually unchanged for 30-plus years. ★

Rise in Public Approval of Hunting . . .

The National Shooting Sports Foundations reports that data compiled by Responsive Management, an independent research firm, shows 79 percent of the American public approves of hunting—the highest level of support for hunting since 1995.

The nationwide scientific survey showed the public's approval of hunting rose five points in the past year, up from 74 percent in 2011.

Support for hunting has remained generally consistent during this time—73 percent in 1995; 75 percent in 2003; 78 percent in 2006; 74 percent in 2011; and a peak of 79 percent in 2013.

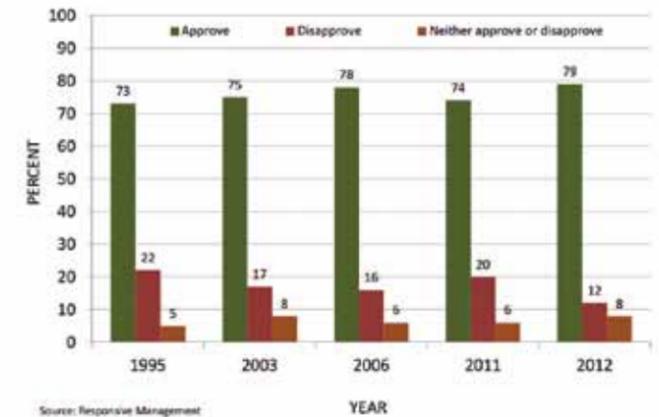
Mark Damian Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, is still evaluating survey results to better understand why approval has increased. "Approval of hunting among Americans is fairly stable and bounces between 73 and 79 percent," Duda said. "The reasons for this increase are still unclear, but it is probably related to the increase in hunting and shooting participation.

"Since 2006, hunting participation has

increased by 9 percent while shooting participation has increased 18 percent since 2009," he continued. "Other studies we have conducted on public opinion on hunting show that the strongest correlation for approval of hunting is knowing a hunter—over and above demographic variables or anything else. With the increased number of hunters in the field and sport shooters at the range, it is possible that this is being reflected in this uptick

in support for hunting." One thousand Americans 18 years old and older were surveyed to achieve a sampling error of plus or minus 3.00 percentage points. More than half (52%) of those surveyed strongly approved of hunting. At the other end of the spectrum, 12 percent of Americans disapprove of hunting. Another 8 percent neither approve nor disapprove (total does not equal 100% due to rounding). ★

General Population's Attitude Towards Hunting



Cover Art

There was a time when Texas lighthouses helped mariners find safe passage through passes and inlets from the Gulf of Mexico into the bays. Shinning beacons were located at Port Isabel, Port Aransas (Lydia Ann), Pass Cavallo (Matagorda Island), Half Moon Reef (West Matagorda Bay), Sabine Bank, Galveston Jetty, and Bolivar.

Texas artist Christi Mathews has captured the "Bolivar Lighthouse" that today stands as a reminder of times passed. Colorful coastal birds circling the old house as the old beacon continues to watch over productive waters many anglers love to fish.

For more information on "Bolivar Lighthouse," or other works of art by Christi Mathews visit Mathews Gallery in Aransas Pass, her website at www.christimathews.net, or call (361) 758-1838. ★



Bolivar Lighthouse by Christi Mathews



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FRESHWATER LURES

Story and photography by Robert Sloan

GONE SALTY



A number of years ago I was fishing a gut off the east end of the Chandeleur Islands with Mike Barnes and Victor Randazzo. The water was trout green and we were working on full stringers of specks and reds. It was as if we could do no wrong and it was all due to one lure – a five inch long jointed Red Fin. That's a Cotton Cordell classic that was first produced to catch both stripers and largemouths. But like so many other lures this particular twitch bait was destined to become a crossover from freshwater to saltwater.

"I remember that afternoon like it was yesterday," says Randazzo, who has racked up over 40 years of plugging the Texas coast, and now spends most of his time fishing for trout and reds out of Port O'Connor. "I knew that lure was good, but not that good. In fact, that was not the only day we absolutely hammered the trout with jointed Red Fins. There were many years when that was the go-to lure in the surf and on the bays along the entire Gulf Coast. The chrome-blue Red Fin was a killer. We would cast it out and reel it in on a stop and go retrieve. Additionally a

steady retrieve, like used with a spinner-bait, would also work."

However, like a lot of other lures it's go-to status slowly dwindled as newer and more popular baits were created.

The Rebel Minnow, with a plastic lip, is similar to the Red Fin. It's got a slim design and is built to fish anywhere from the surface and down to about 2 to 3 feet. For years it was the darling of bass fishing anglers. Then one day some yahoo took one to the coast and quickly discovered that it would catch reds and specks all day long. It wasn't long before a Rebel

A number of lures originally designed to catch bass and other freshwater fish have found their way into the "Hall of Fame" for catching coastal species.



It's an extremely rare day when you'll find an experienced saltwater angler without some sort of Spook ready to fish and hook up.

Saltwater Minnow was hanging on tackle store racks. The silver/black and silver/blue fooled enough trout and reds to sink an aircraft carrier. Like the Red Fin the jointed version of the Saltwater Minnow skyrocketed to popularity with its 5-1/2 inch model as the best producer.

Another popular jerk bait that rose from freshwater fame and crossed over to catching reds and trout is the Bomber Long A. It was designed with a tight wiggle that would fool largemouth bass. And it could be cast a country mile. The saltwater version of the Long A is souped up with

saltwater grade hardware.

Phil Brannon is a hard core bass fisherman that not only crossed over to the salty side of fishing, but brought along one of his top lures – the Long A.

"I don't know if there is a better lure made for catching numbers of trout and reds on the flats," says Brannon. "Along the coast the jointed Long A is one of my go-to lures. The silver flash with a red head is a killer. Ditto that for one in silver and chartreuse.

What makes this lure so good is that it looks just like a struggling mullet. On

the inland lakes it was made to mimic a shad and minnow. Along the coast trout and reds feed heavily on mullet. The Long A is the perfect mullet imitation. It floats and with a slight twitch will dive.

You can fish the bait fast or slow. Usually a faster retrieve is best during the warm water months. A slow and steady retrieve is best during late winter and early spring when trout are slower to react to a swimming lure."

Poppers like a Chug Bug and Pop-R made the move from largemouth bass to trout and reds. Back about 12 years ago the Chug Bug was an absolute killer in the surf. On one particular morning I was wading the beachfront just east of the Sabine jetties. Four of us caught it on a flat day when the surf was clean and green to the beach. We wore the trout out with silver Chug Bugs.

On days with just a little ripple on the water's surface a bone or chrome/blue Pop-R was a good plug to be working over shallow shell on the flats.

There is absolutely no way you can talk about crossover lures without centering on the extremely popular Heddon Zara Spook. Talk about a lure that belongs in the Hall of Fame for all-time best plugs, this is it.

The Spook was introduced to the freshwater fishing world by James Heddon in 1939. It was the first of Heddon's million sellers. The magic of this lure is the classic "walk-the-dog" action from its torpedo-like design.

Many lures have been created over the past few decades to mimic that distinctive action. But it's an extremely rare day when you'll find an experienced saltwater angler without some sort of Spook handy and ready to fish.

The two most popular Super Spook sizes are 5 and 3-1/2 inches. The original Spook was the 5-incher. It was followed up by the 3-1/2-incher. The most popular offshore Spook is 7-inches long. It's called the Magnum Zara Spook.

If you have a weak heart leave the magnum at home. But if you're into eye-crossing excitement take this bad boy offshore and do some topwater fishing for ling, king mackerel and jacks. Last year while fishing out of Venice, La. for yellow fin tuna I tied a magnum on just to see what would happen. At the time the tuna were busting the surface. On about my third

cast a big tuna blew up on the Spook and headed south.

One of the best blow-ups you'll ever see on a topwater plug is to work a Spook for kings. They will rocket from the depths to eat a swaggering Spook.

The overwhelming favorite Spook along the Texas coast is the 3-1/2 inch Super Spook Jr. This is a compact lure with a seemingly magic action in the water. Best colors are bone, blue/chrome, spectrum and white/red head. Veteran Texas saltwater guide Dwayne Lowrey

says a bone colored Spook Jr. is a fish catching machine.

"I've been using them for years," says Lowrey. "I don't ever leave the dock without a box of Super Spook Jr. lures. It's a lure that's got the right shape, sound and action."

By the way the newest thing in Super Spook design is the Chug'n Spook and Super Spook XT. The 4-7/8th inch long Chug'n Spook has a cupped face that splashes and spits on a walk-the-dog retrieve. The XT is beefed up and extra

tough for saltwater. It's available in a 5 inch and all new 4-1/2 inch.

The Rebel Jumpin' Minnow is a topwater lure that rose to the top of the saltwater world then slowly faded out of sight. Rebel lures founder, George Perrin, had an injection company that mostly made parts for refrigerators and kitchen cabinets. Being an avid angler he decided to make a minnow-imitating lure that could be molded from plastic. The result was the first Rebel Minnow. It tore up the bass fishing world for decades.

For years the most popular lure along the Texas coast was the Jumpin' Minnow. It is a lure that when twitched will glide from side to side and has a lead rattle inside.

I especially like the action of this lure. It doesn't make a lot of noise on the surface. On a fast retrieve it'll dart from side to side and dive a couple of inches under water. It's got a unique movement that summer-time speckled trout will attack with a vengeance.

Long time Sabine Lake guide Jerry Norris says the Jumpin' Minnow is one of his all-time producers.

"It's one of those topwater lures with some sort of action that really attracts trout," says Norris. "The 4-1/2-incher in bone or copper/black/orange belly are my favorites. I do a lot of fishing over shallow oyster reefs on Sabine. In places like Lighthouse Cove I can work a Jumpin' Minnow in the guts between the reefs and get some all-time blow ups. One thing that I do is attach a small piece of lead to the shank of the back treble hook. That way it sits deeper in the water for more visibility and casting distance."

The Bill Lewis Rat-L-Trap made the move from freshwater fame to saltwater years ago. The crawfish-colored Trap is worth its weight in gold on lakes like Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend during March and on up to June. Conversely, the blue/silver or chrome/chartreuse Trap is a trout and redfish magnet when fished along the jetties and under the birds during the fall. It can be fished at all depths.

Over the past decade or so spinnerbaits have become pretty popular among anglers targeting redfish. The best day I've ever had for catching 5 to 10 pound class reds was with Billy Murray. We were fishing the marsh out of Venice, La. The day before we went out he said we would



The saltwater version of the Long A is souped up with saltwater grade hardware.

be pitching black and gold spinnerbaits to big reds. That was about 10 years ago, well before the redfish/spinnerbait jag began to take shape. To make a long story short we had a blast. We actually pitched the spinners to shallow feeding reds. Others were caught while wading the baits along the edge of grass. It was the same tactic I had used for catching bass on places like Lake Fork and Choke Canyon.

Spinnerbaits designed to catch reds have come a long way over the past several years. Reds are big, bad tough fish that can crunch baits. Heavy duty wire and saltwater grade hardware make today's spinnerbaits tough as nails. The great thing about fishing spinners for reds is that it's akin to bass fishing except the target fish are on steroids, and you had best have a firm grip on the rod when you set the hook on a big and hungry redfish.

Some of the lures mentioned are still on the go-to list for many salty anglers. Others are dust collectors and can be tough to find. But one thing is certain – all of them still catch plenty of trout and reds on any given cast along the Texas coast. **T★J**

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Eternal Vigilance

Early in my career, an extremely successful and highly skilled angler insisted that the price for catching fish was eternal vigilance every moment one is on the water. Whether you are fishing the flats or prefer the offshore grounds, the key is learning to recognize the signs. If there is a secret to all this other than experience and practice, it lies in total concentration. This is not casual fishing where you can let your eyes and mind relax or wander aimlessly. It demands a determined and systematic approach.

Your head and eyes become a radar antenna, scanning everything around you until something breaks that beam. On the shallow flats, it could be the sighting of a fish or structure or nervous water that indicates something is moving beneath the surface. Offshore, you might spot a school of fish breaking the surface, baitfish, birds hovering overhead, differences in water color, floating weeds, and so forth.

Set up a pattern that starts at the boat and scans outward until you reach the limit of your vision. Then, begin again near the boat and continue the process. If you are trolling, at least one person must focus on the baits continuously while a second angler scans the water off the beams and the bow. Beginners have the habit of allowing their gaze to rest in one spot too long or they search at random without establishing a meaningful pattern.



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

Once your targeted specie is identified make a presentation as soon as it is within a comfortable range. The first cast is always the most important.

Hunters learn early in the game that they do not always see the entire animal standing out clearly in the open. A deer hunter, for example, may only see a patch of white on the tail or the tines of the antlers. Captain Rob Gorta was a master at spotting redfish in the shallows at distances that defy description. Rob always worked a flat slowly and as quietly as possible. As he scanned at maximum distance where few other people could spot and

identify redfish, he would whisper that there were fish ahead.

How did he do it? Experience taught him that as redfish move and feed or even hold in one place, their bodies periodically give off a subtle flash. There could be a school of reds, but you may only see a single flash at a time. To the trained eye looking for it, this signal broadcasts the presence of fish much farther than one would even hope to identify something.



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

Capt Randy Seidel of Aransas Pass wears polarized sun glasses to cut the glare while searching for redfish on shallow flats.

Most anglers would never see it happen. Again, it necks down to knowing and recognizing the telltale signs of your target.

Flats fishermen look for life in the shallows. Seeing sharks cruising about is a good sign of activity. Rays feeding and mudding also tell you that the flat is active. Even when you don't spot your target species immediately, spotting other forms of life should build confidence that you are about to find the fish you seek.

When you do identify your target species, you want to make a presentation as soon as it is within a comfortable range. The first cast is always the most important. However, just before you make it, take a quick scouting look around that fish. If there are others with it and your cast lands too close to one of them, you will spook the entire school. You don't want to lose sight of the fish you can see, but it's worth a quick glance to make sure there aren't others a short distance from the target.

Approaching a school of baitfish or gamefish in deeper water or offshore must be done carefully. If you run the boat hard and charge into the school, you may put it down or scatter it. The two preferred locations are on the seaward side off the forward corner of the school or behind it

on the outboard corner. In the first position, the key centers on getting your presentation slightly ahead of the school or just beyond the closer corner. You may frequently find some fish lagging behind and that's why the rear of the school is also an important position.

Fish want to isolate their prey, so you must make the presentation on the outskirts of a bait school rather than in the middle of it. And, it's important that the bait or lure is moving in the same direction as the predators or on a forward angle to that direction. Bigger fish seldom want to turn in the opposite direction that the school is traveling.

If you are trolling and locate a single fish on or near the surface or a school of fish, the technique is basic. Keep the boat away from the fish as you move forward of it or the school. Then, ease the boat slowly in front of the target and maintain the direction that

the school is traveling. Finally, slow down just enough so your baits move right in front of your quarry. It has to look as if the predator suddenly located food directly in front of it. That's a natural occurrence.

It goes without saying that polarized sunglasses are essential on the water to spot fish and any of the signs of fish. Whenever possible, you also want the sun at your back or at least off to the side. Looking into a glare is counter productive. On the flats when your focus is looking through the surface and studying the bottom, you periodically want to lift your eyes and scout the top of the water as far as you can see. You're looking for a telltale fin or tail, a wake, or even some type of commotion.

Maintaining total concentration and eternal vigilance is a demanding task. It automatically removes the concept of spending a relaxing day on the water. At the same time, only practice and experience will give you the edge and the only way to gain it is to spend time on the water. When you become proficient at focusing all your efforts on the water around you, your catch rate will rise dramatically and the rewards far outweigh the challenge. ★★



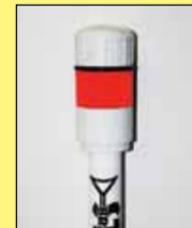
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Story and photography by Danno Wise

SPOILED FISHING

The arrival of spoils islands and humps decades ago irreversibly changed the fishing patterns in Texas' bays.



Today the practice of open bay dredge dumping is a thing of the past. But, for decades, dredgers working to deepen channels along the Texas coast routinely deposited the sediment sucked from the channels in nearby shallows. The practice was eventually stopped because there are some ecological drawbacks associated with open bay spoil dumping — ie altered tide movement, reduced visibility due to suspended particulate until the material settles, etc.

However, there was also a big benefit — the creation of fish attracting islands and humps in otherwise featureless flats. In short, the arrival of spoils islands and humps irreversibly changed the fishing patterns in bays up and down the Texas coast. Anglers who know when and how to take advantage of these unnatural islands can certainly increase their odds for angling success, especially during the upcoming summer months.

What Are Spoils?

Spoil islands are the remnants of gunk that has been sucked from the bay floor in shipping channels and placed in the shallows alongside the channel. Often times, these spoils dumps formed fairly solid islands. Other times, the mound of spoil material never reached the surface (or initially poked about the waterline but eroded and flattened beneath the surface). In both instances, the spoils provided new fish-attracting structure while also altering the flow of tides moving in and out of the bay and, thus, fishing patterns.

Nature of Spoils

Because spoils are made of sediment sucked from deep beneath the bay floor, it is usually not pure sand. Rather, it is a combination of mud, clay, sand, shell, decaying matter and more. As a result the bottom near spoils is usually mucky and muddy. Water clarity varies near spoils depending largely on how much vegetation has taken root.

Near spoils without vegetation, the water often stirs with any slight breeze. Around spoils that have a good deal of grass growing on the nearby flats, the water holds much cleaner. Some spoils also have vegetation such as salt grass or, in Deep South Texas, mangroves lining the edges.

Spoils also tend to appear in “chains,” with small cuts separating different dump sites. These cuts often concentrate tidal flow.

All spoils are located near channels — after all, they are the result of digging and dredging these channels. Spoils often offer a variety of structure, from visible islands and/or vegetation, to submerged points and humps, shallow flats, deep drops, channels, channel edges, and in some areas, posts and pilings.

Due to such a diverse habitat located in spoil areas, they can be productive year around. However, late spring through summer is ideal time for fishing spoils because they are great transition areas. Again, they offer everything from shallow to deep water, good tidal flow, and plentiful prey items such as shrimp, crab and finfish.

Visible Spoils

As mentioned above, a number of these spoil dump sites protrude above the bay's surface. These sites, usually referred to as spoil islands, are the easiest to locate as they are plainly visible. Although each spoil island has “dry” land, they vary in consistency.

Some have never quite solidified, staying in a permanent “mucky” state. These are the most difficult to fish. Anglers need to stay in a boat or kayak or be ready for some difficult wading. Other spoil islands have become hardened and stable. These islands may still be surrounded by mucky bottom, but the islands themselves are hard enough to offer a stable platform to fish from.

In either instance, anglers should pay particular attention to the ends of the islands. At times, there are small cuts or channels separating islands. At other times, the point at the end of the island extends into relatively deeper water in the open bay. Regardless, the islands ends are always a good spot for beginning a search for fish as they are natural areas of concentration and ambush points for predator species such as speckled trout and redfish. This is particularly true when tidal flow is rolling around the points.

Submerged Spoils

Not every spoil dump site has resulted in a permanent island. In some instances, the dredge material was never piled high enough to break the water's surface. In other cases, what was once a



Spoils are especially productive for tailing redfish, flounder, and speckled trout.



Some spoil islands may still be surrounded by mucky bottom, but the islands themselves are hard enough to offer a stable platform from which to fish.

visible island has eroded to the point it is now submerged.

Anglers should pay particular attention to tides when fishing humps. In short, some humps fish better on low tide, while others fish better on high tides. As a rule, deeper humps fish better on low tides and shallow humps fish better on high tides,

when fish are able to feed directly on top of the structure.

Species Found Around Spoils

Pretty much every bay species will be found around spoils at some point in time. However, spoils are especially productive for the "Big 3" of speckled trout, redfish, and flounder. Black drum are the next most common visitor. During times of



Some dredge spoils created humps that never broke the surface of the water while other islands have simply eroded back into the water. However humps can be productive when fished on appropriate tides.

cooler water temperatures, the insulation of the mucky bay floor near spoils offer fish security. During times of extreme heat or cold, the nearby location of deep water in combination with shallow flats on which to feed prove alluring to predator species.

Techniques for Fishing Spoils

Frontal Flats

Between spoils and channels they were created from is usually a gently sloping flat. Even during the heat of summer, predator species will spend at least a portion of the day prowling these shallows. Typically, on hot days, fish will spend the low light hours — early and late in the day — on the flat looking for food. This is when anglers are able to experience some exciting topwater action. Spoons and lightly weighted soft-plastics are also good.

Freelining Edges

When fish are transitioning between the shallows and the depth of the channel and just sort of "hanging there" suspended and not aggressively feeding, freelining live baits along the edges can be extremely effective. Live shrimp, finger mullet and silver dollar size crabs are among the best baits in this situation, although a variety of suspending plugs and lightly weighted soft-plastics will also work.

If there is current moving, simply let the current pull the bait along the edge. If not, allow the bait to slowly sink over the edge before retrieving.

Channels & Cuts Between Islands



Anglers should pay particular attention to the ends of the islands where channels or cuts may hold fish.

When the tide is flowing through cuts and channels between spoils, fish will stack up on either side waiting for an easy meal to wash down. To take advantage of this concentration of feeding fish, anglers can wade, stake out or anchor outside of cuts and work them thoroughly with a variety of natural and live baits.

During slack tide periods, fish will often sulk on bottom inside the cut itself. At times like these, anglers should drag baits through and across the channels and cuts, using multiple casts in order to work all depths.

Dredging the Bottom

When fish are sulking low in the water column, dragging lures and baits slowly across the bottom is often the best bet. This is true whether fish are in the depths of the channel or hugging the bottom on the flats.

When working the bottom around spoils, using heavy Carolina rigs for natural baits or over weighted jig heads for soft-plastics will kick up a stream of silt off the bay floor, helping nearby fish locate the bait. The key is using a slow, steady retrieve in order to allow the bait to stay in contact with the bottom.

Running the Length

More often than not, when fishing spoils fishermen will cast to spoil islands and retrieve back at a 90-degree or near 90-degree angle. Ditto for anglers working humps, who are in a habit of casting over and retrieving across submerged humps. While fishing these structures at sharp angles can be productive, it is often more productive to cast parallel or alongside the structure.

The key is locating at what depth the fish are working. Usually, the degree of

drop heading away from the structure is relatively constant. So, once the right depth is found, a cast parallel to the structure will keep the lure or bait working through the productive zone during the entire retrieve as opposed to simply crossing that zone with angular retrieves.

Drops & Channels

Within a short distance of all spoils will lay a deeper channel. Again, spoils owe their existence to these channels, so they are usually close by. The type of channel used to create a spoil system

varies (ICW, major shipping channels, old oil and gas well channels, etc.), therefore the depth of these channels vary.

However, all are sufficient enough to attract fish during heat of summer. Anglers should fish edges of channels during transitional times and fish within the channels during heat of day.

One of the best things about spoils is every bay system in Texas has them. And, as summer fishing gets underway, anglers wishing to avoid having the brutal Texas heat spoil their day on the water should locate the nearest spoil system and brace for some exciting angling action. **T&J**



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Rediscover THE Bolivar Wells



Locate uncharted fish attracting shell pads by combining modern day tools and technology.

Story and photography
by Nate Skinner

In the 1970s and 80s some of the hottest speckled trout fishing spots in Galveston Bay were the scattered wellheads and their shell pad bases below located off the Bolivar Peninsula. The shell pads were the actual attractant for trout as they rose off of an otherwise featureless bay floor creating structure for fish to relate.

Finding these highly visible fish magnets was just a matter of opening your eyes and looking for the “Christmas trees” surrounded by their protective steel barriers. Then using old fashion sounders, paper graph recorders or just trial and error anglers would probe the edges and corners of the shell bases looking for their quarry.

That was the way most anglers fished the Bolivar wells. However there were a few “lazy” anglers that would simply run the wells looking for bent rods held by anglers already on fish and then squeeze in to try to claim their share of the bounty.

Over the years the area located northwest of Port Bolivar and lining the northern edge of the Houston Ship Channel near the mouth of the Galveston Bay Complex has change tremendously. What was once a gas field composed of twenty to possibly thirty operating wellheads, now holds a mere six smaller wells and one larger platform. Long time Galveston Bay guides Captain Mike Cacciotti

and former Galveston Bay guide Captain Charlie Paradoski, who now fishes out of Matagorda, both attest to the removal of structure over the past thirty plus years.

“I can recall as many as twenty operating wellheads at a time,” says Paradoski. “Many had moving parts that made noise and radiated heat on the water’s surface attracting fish.”

Cacciotti’s accounts of the former, much larger Bolivar lease are similar. “Some years there would be as many as maybe twenty five wellheads present, all holding tons of fish,” he says.

Although the current Bolivar gas lease is but a blemish on the water’s surface compared to what it used to be, the oyster shell foot prints from past well locations still dot the bottom of Galveston Bay. There is no telling how many shell pads are left behind, uncharted on the bay floor, as the visual references once used to locate them from above have long since been removed.

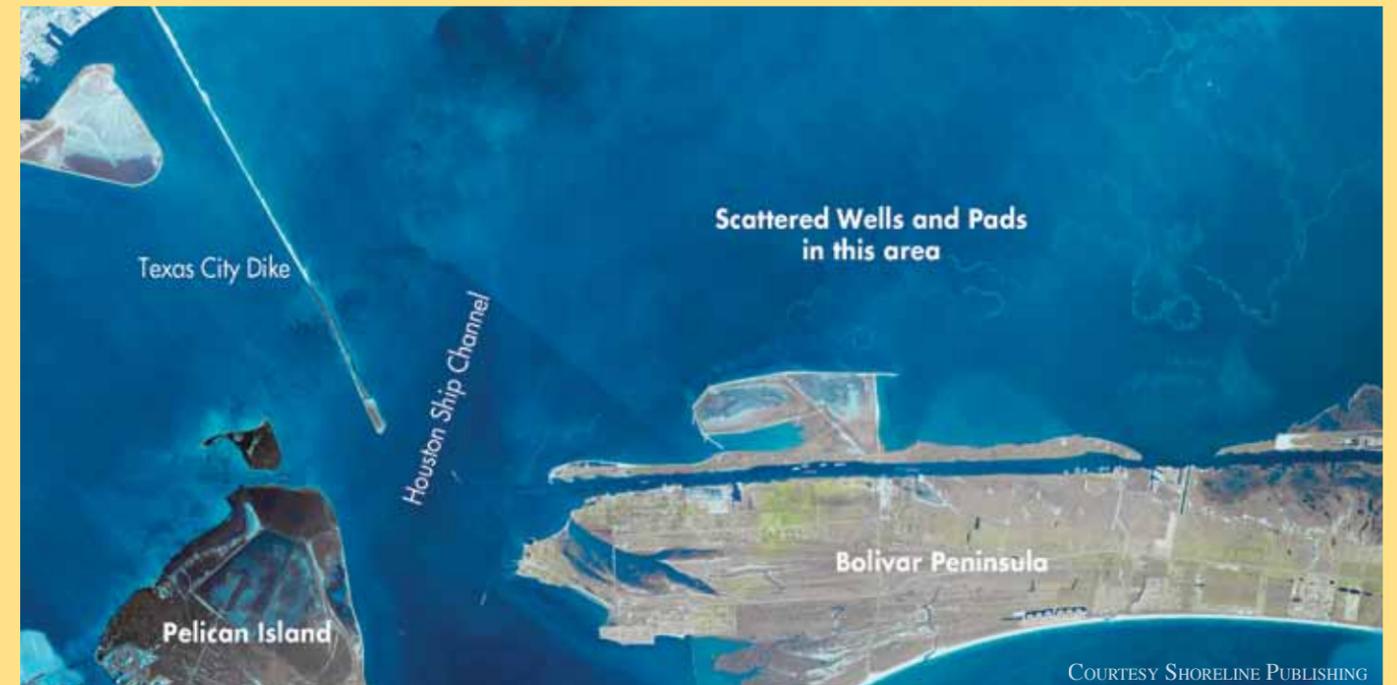
When asked about the idea of there being dozens of uncharted shell pads northwest of Port Bolivar, Captain Tim Young concurred. “There’s definitely a ton of humps still down below where there once was many well heads,” he says. “There’s also no telling how many fish they’re holding!”

Guiding in the Galveston Bay Com-

plex for over twenty years, Young has seen countless wellheads removed. “I consistently catch fish from many mid bay humps, that once served as the pad for a well. The removal of the well doesn’t automatically discount the location’s ability to produce fish—it just makes it harder to find,” he says.

Other than old, faded charts, which are now outdated and no longer publicly sold, there is little available documentation on the former Bolivar well locations. Of those that still possess charts marking the now removed wells, few were able to keep GPS coordinates of their locations. Most of the outdated charts were created in Loran-C units, instead of today’s standard GPS coordinates. A mathematical equation would have to be used to convert the locations recorded on the chart from Loran-C into GPS coordinates.

Many fishermen used a triangulation method for positioning themselves on the “sweet spot” of a shell pad near a well, using land marks from Port Bolivar, the Texas City Dike, channel markers, and the well head itself. Paradoski says this is how he would find his favorite holes within the Bolivar Lease before modern GPS units and depth recorders became a staple onboard. “When I would really start slamming fish on a well, I would try to line up three different landmarks with



The Bolivar Wells were scattered over an area to the north of Bolivar Peninsula, and to the east of the Houston Ship Channel.



Off the Bolivar Peninsula there was once twenty to possibly thirty operating wellheads anglers would target and find fish. Today only six smaller wells and one larger platform remains visible, but there are still numerous shell pads below the surface holding fish.

the well head, noting a compass bearing to each one. I could then return to that same spot time and time again.”

Even with the lack of concrete documentation for the locations of past wells, there are a few tools and methods that, combined with today’s marine navigation technology, allow a new generation of anglers to unlock these best kept secrets of the past.

Since many of the wells have been

removed, there is little above the surface to gain information from. The seven remaining structures continue to give anglers a reference point to take in the right direction as they still produce fish. The location of these structures can be found on the internet through the use of Google Earth. Zoom in and put the pointer on a well, and the latitude and longitude needed for a GPS is noted there on the screen.

In addition to Google Earth, the Texas General Land Office has GIS maps available on their website, showing locations of both present and former well locations. Once again, zoom into these locations and move the pointer over the well and the longitude and latitude will be displayed on the screen.

These GPS coordinates acquired from the computer will put anglers relatively close, possibly within a few yards. All that’s left is a little idling and paying attention to the depth recorder and bingo, the creation of an underwater map charting the Bolivar well pads is underway! The triangulation method, similar to that of Paradoski’s mentioned above, can help

What’s Significant about the Shell Pads Left Behind?

Oyster reefs are enhanced and/or created by man all the time when the remaining shells from shucked oysters and clams are returned to the bay floor. “Nothing offers a better surface to live from for a live oyster than another oyster shell,” claims Charlie Coleman, a marine scientist and lecturer at Texas A&M University at Galveston. “Returning shells to the bay floor is like cultivating and growing your own oyster reef.” This process is what makes the shell pads stabilizing well heads in the bay ideal fish attracting humps along the bottom. When the pads were created for a given well, they became a large evolving and forever growing reef. ★



Veteran Galveston guides recommend fishing the down current side of the wells for the best chance for success.

during this discovery process.

The Bolivar Wells are unique to every other lease in the Galveston Bay system. They have much deeper water, and are located right at the mouth of the bay system. These two components make this location the perfect summer time hotspot. The Bolivar Wells hold fresh, cool water from the Gulf, offering fish depths near the Houston Ship Channel to take refuge from summer’s heat.

During times of weak tidal movement, these wells and shell pads can be targeted with deep sinking artificial lures; however, a Carolina rigged live shrimp has been the proven method throughout the years. The stronger the current the heavier the weight needs to be.

“Anchoring on the down current side of a pad or well is the best option,” explains Cacciotti. “This allows you to cast up current and let the bait drift back down alongside the well and off the shell pad.”

If the tide is incoming, Cacciotti prefers to anchor on the Bolivar side of the pad or well he is targeting. If it is outgoing, he will target the same structure from the Texas City Dike side.

Paradoski also affirms that fishing the down current side of the well and shell pad produces a better bite. “I liked to work the entire shell pad, but my best success was always on the down current side.” he admitted.

Once a stretch of water containing many wellheads that attracted a parking lot of boats, the Bolivar Wells may now be just a good memory to some who had the pleasure of fishing the area years ago. However, the underwater structure that made this location a gold mine is still

Anchoring at the Wells 101



One might think, “I know how to drop anchor—no brainer!” This may be true most of the time in shallow water, but there’s more to it than simply heaving the object overboard mindlessly. When anchoring at the wells a common “danforth” style anchor works best. Make sure there is an adequate amount of rope (150 plus feet) and a large eight foot chain attached to it.

Wait until the boat is moving down current and ease the anchor into the water with the spikes facing towards the boat, down current. This will allow for the spikes to dig into the bottom from tension in the rope, holding the boat in place. Let plenty of rope out, letting it slide through your fingers while keeping it tight enough to feel if the anchor is dragging on the bottom. Keep the motor running until the anchor is set, the anchor rope is tied off, and the boat is in a safe position. Keep in mind the deeper and rougher it is, the more anchor rope will be needed to hold the boat in place. ★

there. Technology has paved the way to rediscover the shell footprints and create modern day memories similar to the tales from the past. Get out on the water to unlock the mystery and rediscover the Bolivar Wells.

Editor’s Note: A link to the Texas General Land Office GIS Map can be found on TOJ’s website. Please visit www.texas-outdoorsjournal.com for more info. ★★

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CoastWatch | Danno Wise

The traditional “beginning of summer” — Memorial Day — is now in the rearview mirror. Although the summer solstice — the actual beginning of summer — won't occur until near the end of June, most folks won't be waiting until then to take advantage of summer. With nice weather, no school for the kids, and longer daylight hours, hordes of people will be heading to the coast during June. So, anglers can expect the coastal waters of Texas to be a bit more crowded beginning this month.

However, despite an increasing number of anglers on the water in June, there will still be plenty of action both inshore and offshore. And, since summer weather allows for a greater variety of areas to fish, there should be plenty of room for anglers to spread out. The relatively calm winds of June will allow access to all corners of most bays. Additionally, consistently flat seas will allow more anglers offshore and, of course, the slick surface and “green to the beach” tides of the surf will encourage more fishermen to hit the beachfront and jetties.

June also marks the start of ‘big game’ season for coastal fishermen. Sharks will be everywhere — from the guts just off dry sand to offshore oil rigs.

Tarpon will be found in the near-

shore waters off the Texas coast from the Rio Grande to the Sabine. Kingfish, bonito and ling will also provide close-to-shore action. A little further offshore, wahoo, tuna, sailfish and marlin will be primary target species throughout the summer.

Of course, June 1 is also the long-awaited opening of the federal red snapper season. Although the season is always controversial, this year is much more so, as the feds are attempting to severely reduce the length of what would have already been the shortest federal season to date for Texas and other states that have a year around state water harvest. A lawsuit has been filed to prevent the reduced season.

As of this writing, it is unclear whether Texans will have 12 days or 28 days for federal red snapper season. However, it's a safe bet there will be plenty of Texas anglers running offshore to get their red snapper fix for however long the season lasts.

Finally, CCA's annual STAR tournament takes place during the summer months, giving anglers yet another reason to head to the coast. This popular event, runs between Memorial Day and Labor Day and awards prizes in a variety of inshore and offshore categories for both children and adults. **T★J**



Port Isabel guide Capt. Gencho Buitureira Jr says June is a time when fishermen can be successful with a relatively simple game plan.

“June is a pretty easy month,” said Buitureira. “Probably 75 to 80 percent of time I will start on the ICW up north. I'll be doing pretty much the same thing as last month - fishing deep drops and structure. I like fishing the ICW, the causeways, the South Bay Channels - places like that. That's where I'll be catching most of my trout. And, I'll also start picking up some good mangrove snapper in those areas in June.

“If we're looking for redfish, I'll get on flats. If it's windy, I'll fish the color lines on Gas Well Flats. If we have an outgoing tide, I'll fish South Bay and Mexiquita Flats. We'll also have snook coming in those areas in June.

“For the most part, I live on the deep drops and around the Old Causeway in



Red snapper season opens on June 1.

June. For me, it's all about fishing deep drops and structure - shaded structure especially. I'll be free-lining with live shrimp or mullet. Then, when I move on the flats, I'll be fishing in two feet of water, drifting potholes. On the flats, I'll be bottom drifting cut ballyhoo, mullet heads,

piggy perch, or cut skipjack.”

Besides bay fishing, anglers at the tip of Texas will have plenty of beachfront and offshore options to choose from. June usually sees plenty of speckled trout, mangrove snapper, Spanish mackerel and snook along the jetties. Additionally,

schools of kingfish and tarpon will be frolicking in the Brazos Santiago Pass between the jetties, as well as along the beachfront — particularly the stretch of sand known as Boca Chica Beach, which runs from the pass south to the mouth of the Rio Grande River.

Offshore, South Padre anglers have been catching kingfish, snapper, dorado and amberjack for weeks now. As June wears on, each of these species will still be plentiful and will be joined by sailfish, marlin, wahoo and an occasional tuna.

In Port Mansfield, guide Capt. Bruce Shuler of Get-A-Way Adventures Lodge says June is the beginning of some excellent offshore fishing, although the bay fishing will still be hot as well.

“In June, we do an awful lot of snapper fishing,” said Shuler. “We also have a lot of kingfish around the beachfront and jetties. We'll do some trolling for sailfish and marlin as well.

“When we're fishing in the bay, we're usually targeting trout in June. We usually start shallow and follow the fish out to deeper water as the day wears on. In the morning we'll fish knee-deep water and

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throw small topwater plugs like Skitter-walkers and Super Spook Jrs. During the middle of the day, the fish will be hanging on the outside edge of the grass flats in three and a half to four feet of water.

“Redfish will be working the flats as well. We’ll chase them with gold spoons and soft-plastics. The other thing we’ll do in June is some nighttime wading around the full moon. We have a lot of clients who like wadefishing for trout at night. But, if you want to go with us, you had better call quick because we’ve about got the whole full moon period booked.”

Corpus Christi guide Capt. Allen Sifford of Fish On Guide Service says June is a prime trout month in the Upper Laguna.

“In June, I will be fishing in Baffin and the Upper Laguna, looking for trout,” said Sifford. “Most of the time we’ll be throwing croaker. By then, there will be plenty of bait-size croaker around and that’s usually what we throw. But, you can also do pretty good with Top Dogs and Bass Assassins. My main focus will be on trout, but usually we run across a school of reds during the day. So, even if we’re fishing croaker for trout, we always keep a rod rigged with a lure to throw at

redfish if we run across them.

“We have a lot of options in June. If we have light wind, we can fish the shell reefs in Nueces or the rocks in Baffin. If the wind’s blowing, we can fish up here in the Upper Laguna. If it’s really laid down calm, we can fish the surf for specks and reds or run out to the rigs for kingfish and ling. That’s what I like about June, there’s so much that you can do that a lot of time you never do the same thing two days in a row.” ★★



Aransas area anglers can expect excellent speckled trout fishing during the spring/summer transition during June. Trout will be found in two to five feet of

water over sand and grass. This month anglers can also expect a good topwater bite early. Later in the morning, anglers will need to switch to soft-plastics or live bait.

Starting in June, the go-to bait for most trout fishermen in the Aransas area will be live croaker. There will also be good redfish action during June. Reds can be found on the flats throughout the day, but are usually caught a little more consistently from midday on, after the boat traffic has died down. Soft-plastics and spoons will produce plenty of reds, as will cut shad and mullet.

One super hot bait through early spring has been Egret Bait’s Vudu shrimp. Rigged under a popping cork, mauler or Alameda Rattling float and its tail and action come to life. The new shrimp imitation is extremely lifelike and durable. Some of the best colors have been pearl/chartreuse, and natural or brown. The demand by anglers that have fished these shrimp have been so high that the best way to find these baits is not at your local tackle dealer but online at www.egretbaits.com.

Anglers should also keep an eye out for large schools of black drum on the flats this month. When black drum are found,



PHOTO BY BILLY OLSON

All of the Texas jetties will attract fish and crowds of anglers this month.

dead shrimp will draw plenty of strikes.

Rockport anglers will have plenty of options in June, with several bays in the area turning on with good trout fishing in June. Aransas and Redfish Bays will be loaded with fish. Croaker or pinfish will be the top baits for most trout fishermen.

Although it requires a little longer boat ride, the Laguna Madre will also be producing some good catches of specks. While trout will be the focus for most fishermen, anglers can also expect to find a decent amount of redfish on the flats from mid-morning on. Shrimp, spoons and soft-plastics will be the best bets for

redfish. The “other” flats fish — black drum — will also be readily available.

As June gets underway, anglers can expect to see huge herds of black drum working across area flats. Shrimp produce the best bets for black drum. Starting in June, anglers should also keep an eye on the beachfront, as trout action in the surf can be outstanding when the conditions get right.

Port O’Connor guide Capt. Lynn Smith of Back Bay Guide Service said June is typically a time anglers can locate good numbers of speckled trout by finding schools of glass minnows.

“In June we’ll start hitting the sand and grass,” said Smith. “We’ll be throwing soft-plastics and topwaters and wading anywhere from knee-deep to waist-deep, depending on the time of day and water temperature. But, by June, the water has definitely warmed up, so the fish will be off the mud and will be on the sand and grass flats.

“We’ll be targeting mullet and glass minnows. We’ve had a lot of glass minnows and have been finding a lot of trout feeding on them. Those glass minnows should be around through the end of summer. I like throwing small soft-plas-

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VIEW FROM BALCONY






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BlackJack 224

By Bill Kenner





The hottest bait this spring has been the Vudu shrimp rigged under a popping cork, mauler, or rattling float.

tics - clear/glitter usually. I'll also throw small Super Spooks. I usually like chrome/blue back in that small Spook, especially around the glass minnows. Pretty much, if you concentrate on bait, sand and grass, you'll find fish.

"There will also be redfish on the shorelines. The reds will be following mullet for the most part. You can usually catch them on soft-plastics or spoons - or even on topwaters." **T★J**



Matagorda guide Capt. Tommy Countz says that although early summer action for speckled trout and redfish should be outstanding, it is a lesser known species that will have his attention in June.

"June is usually when we start our tripletail fishing," said Countz. "The exact time when the tripletail show up varies a little from year to year, but usually they come in around mid-June and stay through August. Although you don't hear a lot about it, I think Matagorda is the premier tripletail fishery on the Gulf Coast. The average fish we catch is 10 to 15 pounds, but we catch a lot of them over 20.

"Tripletail are structure-oriented fish,

so you need to key in on any structure you come upon. You'll usually find them around buoys and marker posts. One of the best ways to catch them is to throw a live shrimp under a popping cork right up against a marker post. Let the current push the cork right against the post and let it stay there. When it goes down, you'd better hang on.

"Most of our best tripletail fishing is in West Matagorda Bay. In June, I'll be spending most of my time in West Bay. Besides tripletail, that is also where we have some of our best trout fishing during June.

"I'll be wadefishing over grass flats, concentrating on the outer bars. We'll start off shallow, then move deep later in the day. Then, I'll go back inside and re-work those grass beds in shallow. Usually, later in the day, the trout will go hide in the grass beds. Those grass beds have literally thousands of tiny minnows and the trout will lay up in there and feed on 'em. So, when we go back in later in the day, we selectively cast at the grass beds and try to pull the fish out of them.

"In June we also start looking real heavy at the surf, too. That can be really good action if it's flat. I normally start out



PHOTO BY JOHN FRANKSON

Bigger tugs offshore will be felt all along the Texas coast.

with a big topwater, the switch to a Corky or a Sand Eel."

Freeport guide Capt. Mike Segall of Reel Threel Charters says June is the start of the wide-open summer angling season.

"In June, we'll be fishing for red snapper, as well as all of the pelagics. We'll be looking around weedlines for dorado and wahoo and kingfish. The kingfish will be moving in really close - we'll have king-

fish within sight of land that time of year.

"We'll also be seeing some ling around the close in structure. You always want to check around the buoys and any floating stuff you find on the way in or out. And, just because you're not seeing ling doesn't mean they're not around. If I'm not seeing them around the buoys, I'll drop a grub or a swimbait down deep. A lot of times, we'll hook up by jiggling down deep even if we don't see any on the surface."

"But, I don't go offshore every day in June. We'll still be catching a lot of bull reds and sharks in close. And, like I said, we'll have kings moving in close as well. So, right off the jetties, you'll be able to catch kings, bull reds and big shark starting in June and going throughout the summer."

Galveston guide Capt. Tag Anderson of Oak Island Fishing Adventures says he expects to have an excellent summer - starting in June.

"We've had some really good fishing and it's only getting better," said Anderson. "Our bay system is set up for us to have an excellent summer.

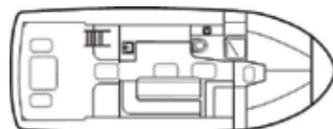
"In June, I'll be keying on slicks, work-



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Anglers will hook up with redfish on grass flats all along the Texas coast this month.

ing deep water structure, fishing over lots of shell, and even doing some wading in the morning with topwaters. But, again, we'll be fishing more structure in June. For the most part, we'll be fishing gas and oil wells with plastics like Tidal Surge Lures and Norton Sand Eels. I'll also be working

some mid-bay mud boils. You'll see a lot of those mud boils in the upper end of Trinity Bay during June.

"I will be doing a little bit of croaker fishing in June. I use mostly artificial, but I will use some croaker out on the ship channel at times. But mostly I'll be keying

on gas platforms and throwing plastics.

"Most of the time during the summer, I'll be fishing Trinity and East Bay. In fact, I'll be fishing Trinity Bay 90 percent of the time. The only thing that will change that is if we get too much fresh water coming into the bay. But, this year has been so dry and the water is so salty, a little rain would actually help. It would put some more oxygen in the water. It might cloud the water for a day or two, but it would clear up real quick.

"Again, our bay is in real good shape heading into summer. I can't even describe how good fishing has been. We are catching a bunch of fish and some really big - like 9 pound fish. And, we've been catching a lot of solid fish in the 5-6 pound range. If everything holds like this, it's going to be wide open in June."

Guide Capt. Mike Cacciotti of Mike's Fishing Service also believes June will be an outstanding month in the Galveston Bay Complex.

"May and June are when our trout are spawning," said Cacciotti. "Our big fish are spawning in May and into June, so right now is a good time to catch big fish. During the spawn, fishing time is always best for big trout five days before full moon.

"Early in the month it will still be windy. During the first week or two of June, the fish in the Galveston Complex will be on the spoils along the ship channels and all the deep reefs. The key starting in June really is deep structure. In East Bay, areas like Deep Reef and Hannah's Reef — all those reefs in 6 to 9 feet of water — are good. I'll also drift around spoil banks along the Houston Ship Channel.

"We'll also be switching over to croaker in June. I will be using croaker probably 90 percent of the time in June. When I'm throwing croaker, I don't like the bait to sit still. I like to shake 'em to keep him moving. If it sits still, you'll end up with gafftop or something like that. You need to keep it moving to catch trout. I also like drifting with croaker, which is a good way to keep them moving, too.

"You do pretty good on lures, too, in June. But, the keys to locating fish will be a little different. In June, you don't have shrimp in water like you normally do, so you have to key in on baitfish. Instead, you have to key on pods of shad for medium size trout and pods of mullet for bigger trout.



PHOTO BY JOHN FRANKSON

On light wind days anglers will be drawn to the surf to fish from a boat, as well as the beachfront.

If you find pods of mullet, you will find big trout. It seems like big trout like to feed on big mullet right before they get ready to spawn. So if you are throwing lures, throw something that imitates baitfish. Early in the morning, I like to throw topwaters. Then, after a couple hours, I move out and throw soft-plastics. Just look at water clarity to choose your lure colors. But, in June, I always like something with a little chartreuse mixed in.

"For the most part, I'll be fishing for trout during June. But, we're always going to have redfish around. A lot of times in June, there will be redfish mixed in with trout. The reds like to hang around the deeper reefs like Hannah's and Windmill and Frenchy's. And, they will hit croaker just like trout will.

"If the wind lays down or if it is blowing out of the southwest, you can do real good on the beachfront. You want green water to the beach. If you don't have green water to the beach, don't even think about fishing the beachfront. But when the green water comes in, it is a great place to fish. Along the beachfront, you want throw MirrOlures and spoons, but you can also

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catch fish live croaker and shrimp. This beachfront action starts in June and continues into July.”

Sabine Lake guide Capt. Randy Foreman said June is a good time for fishermen looking for specks in both the lake and along the beachfront.

“In June, we should have birds all over the lake,” said Foreman. “We’ll also have some good fishing in the channel. There will be trout all along the Sabine Channel. You want to concentrate on the points and drops and use soft-plastics. Glow/

chartreuse will be the go-to color. It’s a real shrimp looking color.

Once the shrimp move back into the lake, I almost always throw glow/chartreuse.

“I’ll be using Down South Southern Shad. At times, I’ll also put some Pro-Cure Gel on them. That scent can make a big difference, especially if the fish aren’t feeding aggressively.

“June is also when our jetties and surf get going good. Starting around mid-June the wind will start laying down, the water

will clean up and we’ll have plenty of trout and reds along the jetties and in the surf.

“You can start out in the surf throwing a topwater. Then, later in the morning, switch to a soft-plastic. Again, glow/chart is the color. If you’re looking for redfish along the jetties, use the same baits, just let ‘em drop down deep.” **T★J**



June is historically the month Lake Calcasieu produces a disproportionate amount of trophy trout. As a result, as June gets underway, most Big Lake anglers will be turning their attention to sow specks. Most fishermen seeking super-size specks on Calcasieu will be throwing topwater plugs, such as Top Dogs, She Dogs and Super Spooks, although some decent fish will be taken on soft-plastics such as Bass Assassins.

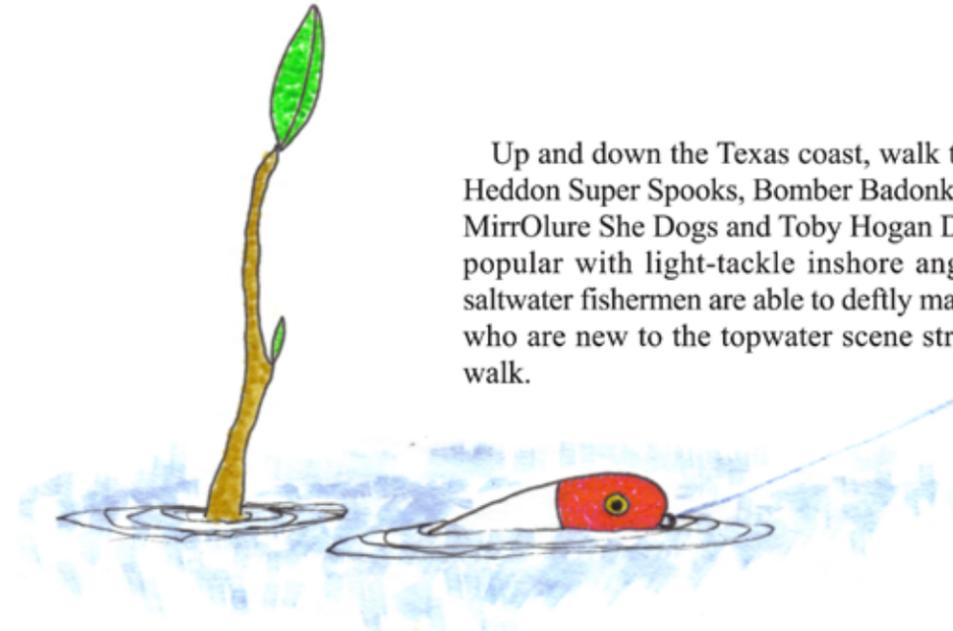
June is also a good time for fishermen looking to box a number of eating-size trout. Good numbers of keeper specks can be taken on live shrimp or soft-plastics around the reefs. Redfish will also be available for Big Lake fishermen in June. Anglers seeking spot tails should concentrate on the shorelines, throwing spoons, RattleTraps, and soft-plastics.

Venice fishermen will have a mix of inshore and offshore fishing available in June. Red snapper, kingfish, dorado, wahoo and ling should all be within a relatively short run. A little further off, marlin action should be heating up and there will still be some tuna to be had. Later in the month tarpon should begin showing in catchable numbers around the passes.

Inshore, fishermen will find plenty of sight-casting opportunities for redfish in the marshes this month. Trout fishermen can chase the birds looking for boxes of keeper fish. When the birds aren’t working, trout will most often be found around deeper structure this month and are best targeted with live shrimp or soft-plastics. **T★J**

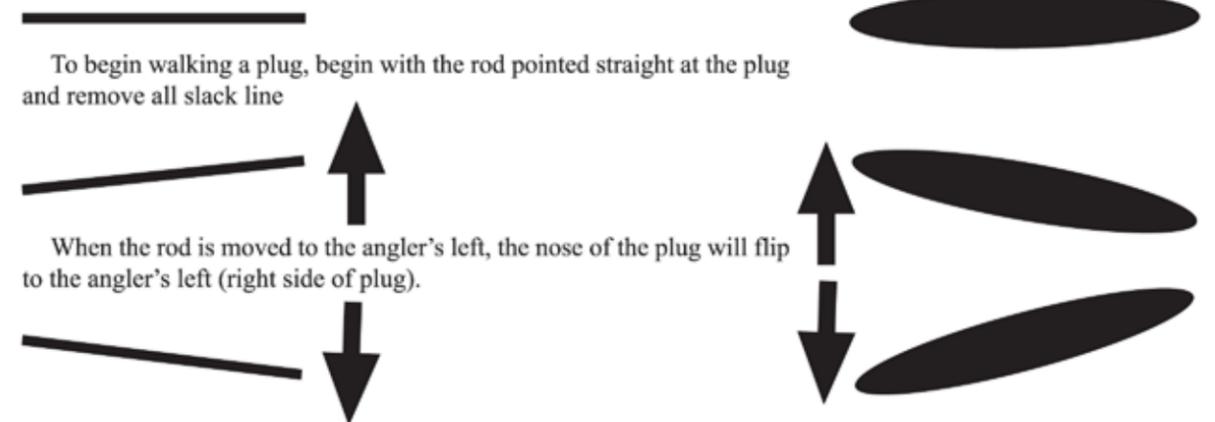
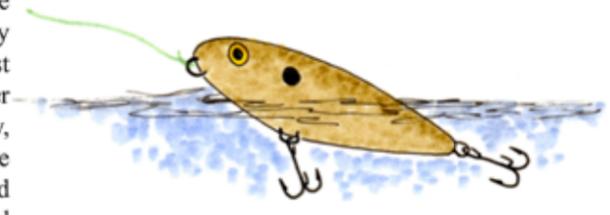


Walking The Dog



Up and down the Texas coast, walk the dog type plugs such as Heddon Super Spooks, Bomber Badonk-A-Donks, TTF Dummies, MirrOlure She Dogs and Toby Hogan Double Dogs are extremely popular with light-tackle inshore anglers. Although seasoned saltwater fishermen are able to deftly make these lures dance, many who are new to the topwater scene struggle to make these dogs walk.

Manipulating a topwater plug is just a matter of directing the lure with the rod tip. Whichever way the rod tip moves, the lure will follow. The speed of the retrieve is controlled by the reel. For a continuous retrieve (traditional in walk the dog applications), the fishermen must continually crank the reel while moving the rod tip from side to side. This is the most difficult part for most fishermen to master. Therefore, sometimes it is easier for fishermen to begin by moving the rod and reel separately - essentially, twitch the rod to one side or the other then reel in the slack. Although there will be pauses in the retrieve using this method, it is still effective and easier to master. In fact, even after gaining experience, anglers will find this stop-and-go walking retrieve is still effective for non-aggressive fish.



To begin walking a plug, begin with the rod pointed straight at the plug and remove all slack line

When the rod is moved to the angler’s left, the nose of the plug will flip to the angler’s left (right side of plug).

By moving the rod to the right, the nose of the plug will move in the opposite direction. Remember, if not reeling continuously, the slack will need to be reeled in between twitches (similar to using a popping cork). This pattern of alternate left and right twitches of the rod tip and removing slack should be repeated throughout the retrieve.

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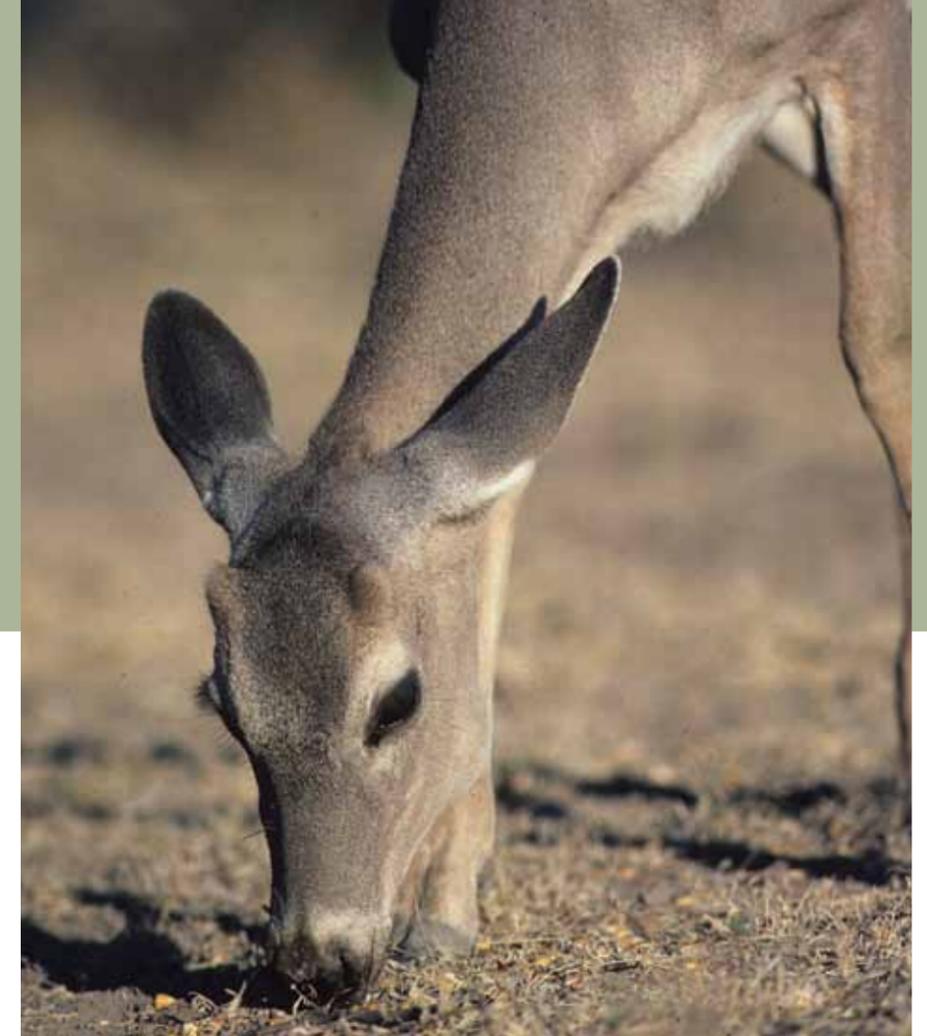
Evaluation, Decisions, & Implementation

Story and photography by Bob Zaiglin

*A multi-part discussion
of whitetail deer and
game management on a
hypothetical 2,000 acre
South Texas ranch. Part II*

*Photo Right: Incidental sightings collected
throughout that first hunting season
can give you an idea of fawn survival,
which is important when making harvest
recommendations.*

*The number and quality of mature bucks
observed over that first season can be used
to determine the number of trophy bucks
available for the upcoming season.*



That first hunting season one experiences on a newly acquired piece of deer real estate is important for several reasons. First there is no other time of the year that sportsmen spend more time in the field, enabling them to become more familiar with the habitat, its inhabitants, and more importantly where those desirable mature bucks spend their time when it counts most. Once that first hunting season comes to an end, it's time to go to work.

By reviewing incidental sighting data collected throughout the hunting season, the sex ratio, fawn survival, and even the male age class structure of the deer herd can be determined. Such information dictates herd status, which can be employed to adjust the harvest for the upcoming season.

For example, if two does were recorded for each buck observed, the doe harvest would have to be increased in order to balance the deer herd. If few mature bucks were observed, a conservative male harvest becomes important, simply because

no other management strategy yields an increase in antler size as swiftly as allowing deer to enter the older age classes. In other words, the fact that bucks are allowed to get one year older means larger-racked bucks will show up the following year.

One's knowledge as to where those bucks prefer to spend much of their time in the winter plays a vital role in the decision making process as to where those permanent deer blinds should be positioned. Some blinds may be erected in areas providing panoramic views, while others may be located in areas inundated by brush, but with a little cosmetic brush work, the area around these blinds can be modified to make them more effective.

Something as inexpensive as a chain saw can be used to clear narrow travel lanes through the maze of vegetation, luring bucks into the small openings, and if designed right, some of those elusive bucks may be drawn toward instead of away from the blind.

If fortunate enough to see a substantial number of bucks during the hunting

season, one should have an idea of antler quality. However, seldom is one lucky enough to see a large number of exceptional-racked bucks early on in a management program, but the application of several proven techniques can improve overall antler quality.

Food plots are a ubiquitous part of modern deer management, but before you go through the laborious, not to mention expensive task of developing a planting scheme, one must consider their effectiveness. In South Texas, cool season

plantings composed of oats and wheat are effective in facilitating harvest while providing some nutritional benefit to deer during a nutritionally deprived time period, but can they be depended upon as a productive annual practice? Based on my 35+ years in South Texas, 'oat patches' are productive only three to four times over a 10-year period—so why would they still play a role in management?

First of all, once an area is cleared of brush and plowed up, a substantial amount of edge is established, and since

deer and most all wildlife are edge-oriented species, such disturbed areas become extremely attractive to all wildlife, particularly when adequate moisture is realized. They are particularly attractive to does, and as a result, they are frequented by bucks during the breeding season, decorating the entire perimeter of the field with scrapes, an activity they will repeat annually whether the oats develop or not.

The most important aspect of a man-made food plot is its productivity in the spring when rainfall is most dependable and a plethora of native weeds, grasses, and more importantly forbs, representing a valuable source of palatable and highly digestible forage, inundate the prepared natural seedbed.

In other words, a South Texas food plot will only develop an adequate stand of planted cereal grain three or four times out of 10 years, but one can count on those fields being nutritionally beneficial virtually every spring when deer require it most. I refer to this activity as natural land enhancement (NLE) and consider it an extremely important tool in deer management. It can be employed in a variety of ways that are not only productive, but more importantly cost effective. NLE can be employed by simply mowing, shredding, or disking narrow strips along roadways followed by fertilizing. But the major advantage of NLE is that there are no limits to size or location of area upon which it can be employed.

Although NLE is an ideal method of augmenting a deer's nutritional regime, it does take some time, and if there is one thing most individuals in today's world lacks, it is surplus time!

One alternative method of nutritionally benefiting a whitetail population is to supplement their diet with a high protein pellet. Depending on the size of area, this practice can be costly. Research on the subject indicates that one feed station per 400 acres is effective, thus on a 2,000-acre area, that would equate to five feeding sites. This is a manageable number, but before it is implemented, the feed stations must be constructed. Each station should contain one or two bulk feeders that allow deer to feed freely and in a stressless environment. With cattle, javelina, and feral hogs present, the area should be fenced off in order to prevent use of the expensive pellet by non-targeted species. And the



Following the first season, one can determine just what caliber of bucks should be harvested to improve overall antler size.

space within the confined area must be large enough to provide deer ample room to move freely about in order to avoid confrontations between aggressive deer. I recommend a 40" x 40" 38-inch tall bull panel fence with 60" x 60" even better.

The pellet should be freely available from January through August in order to nutritionally assist bucks following the rut and throughout the antler growing period. It also provides doe with a consistently nutritional diet during their most stressful time of the year when they represent the support system for fawns. Matter of fact, based on my research on supplemental feeding back in 1975, one of the benefits of a supplemental feeding program is an increase in fawn survival.

Providing deer a pelleted feed over part of a year is supplemental feeding, but providing it year around is plain and simple feeding. Obviously, there are advantages to feeding year around, but on open range, the cost can be prohibitive, particularly since deer will gravitate onto the ranch from contiguous properties.

An alternative method of enhancing a wild deer's diet is with whole cottonseed.

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The feed source can be distributed in a trough or contained in a basket created by double-wrapping fine chicken mesh fencing around two or three t-posts that are driven solidly into the ground. A basket-shaped fence three to four feet tall and 30 to 40 inches in diameter would suffice. Initially, I would establish one or two on an experimental basis, and if deer use becomes evident, additional cottonseed dispensers can be established.

The principal advantage to feeding deer cottonseed is that hogs will not use it excessively, eliminating the requirement of additional fencing. Thus, a large number of feed stations can be economically and rapidly developed for distribution, complementing the benefit derived from the pelleted feed stations.

Whole cottonseed contains high amounts of digestible energy, protein, and moderate amounts of fiber. More importantly, it does not degrade in moist conditions and is not readily sought after by non-target animals unless range conditions are poor. These traits are beneficial where protection of feed from raccoons, feral pigs, and the elements may be difficult.

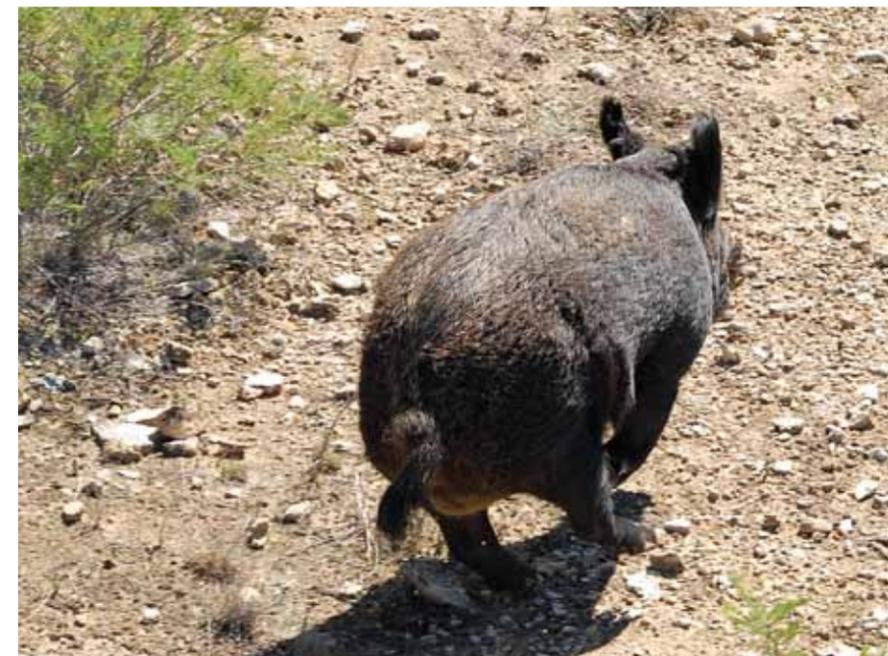
One concern of feeding whole cottonseed is the presence of gossypol, a natural chemical that has been shown to decrease reproductive capability in livestock, especially in males, and a reduction in body weight and condition if consumed at high

doses over several weeks. However, with a diversified food source on open range land, this is not apt to occur. It remains prudent, however, to curtail feeding cottonseed minimally five weeks before the breeding season.

Minerals are an important element in the development of antlers, thus a source of minerals for deer is worth investigating. This can be accomplished by simply digging a shallow hole approximately 12 inches deep and three to four feet in diameter, pouring a quarter to half a sack of mineral into the cavity, then covering it lightly with soil. It's an inexpensive method of establishing a natural mineral lick. Before doing so, however, it would be wise to collect several soil samples throughout the ranch and have them analyzed in order to determine what lacks most, phosphorus or calcium. Once this is determined, get a local feed dealer to create a mix.

Before distributing mineral licks throughout the ranch, I suggest establishing several around high deer use areas in order to investigate its acceptance by deer.

The production of trophy caliber deer takes time, thus it's important that managers and sportsmen remain patient. In the next article, I will address the advanced strategy of augmenting the genetic integrity of the deer herd as well as keeping them on the ranch. **T★J**



The major advantage to distributing whole cottonseed lies in the fact that it is not readily utilized by collateral species like hogs.

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DPMS Panther – NOT an Assault Rifle

When a conversation is engaged about AR platform rifles it doesn't take long to figure out the ones that are clueless about the subject. If someone thinks AR stands for "Assault Rifle," then they are sadly mistaken and have been misinformed by the unknowing media. The original and accepted explanation is that AR stands for Aramalite, the original manufacturer of this type of firearm.

I'll admit I was late to the "appreciation party" of these efficient and effective semi-automatic firearms. I grew up in a time when the "only" accurate rifle was a single shot or bolt action model. The majority of the semi-automatic rifles built in the 60s, 70s, and even into the 80s could not deliver the same accuracy as the bolt action version.

Fast forward to May 2010 — TOJ's Shooting Editor Kerry O'Day, his wife Carol, my son Billy, and veteran hunters and friends Buck and Billy Payne and I headed to West Texas to field test some of M-G Arm's Coyote rifles, its custom line of ARs. We would shoot prairie dogs, call coyotes, and other varmints. After that long weekend I can attest there is no better way to spend a few late spring days than surrounded by such expansive big Texas country with friends.

We experienced strong persistent winds so the coyote calling was not very productive and it seemed like the plague



The DPMS Panther 20" Bull Barrel .223 AR Rifle

had already taken out many of the dogs in the prairie towns. However, there were still enough targets to test M-G Arm's Coyote in .223 and .204 Ruger. Each of the rifles were topped off with Swarovski's top of the line varmint scopes.

While most of the group concentrated on the available dogs to shoot, I did some cholla trimming. At distance either side of 300 yards I took aim and neatly clipped the lower branch of a fork of new growth off of this variety of cacti. Trimmed and cleanly cut off with one shoot, the upper branch was targeted and dispatched. It may not sound exciting, but the long range accuracy of the rifled and my shooting had my chest swell with pride.

Extremely accurate, light recoil, and field friendly for easy cleaning were just a

few reasons I became an AR fan. My next question was how would a "production gun" compare with a custom built firearm?

O'Day continued to be my mentor as I queried which manufacturer should be selected for my first AR, along with barrel length, caliber, twist, and other factors. As we discussed this little comparison O'Day kept mentioning he bought a lot of component parts from one particular company for his custom ARs. The name that kept coming up was Minnesota based gun manufacturer DPMS.

My son had just finished building his first AR, a lightweight, 16" barrel in .223 that has made him a nice "brush gun." However, what I wanted was something for long distance shooting to compare the "out of the box" variety to the



A Bushnell Elite 6500 2.5 x 16 scope is an excellent choice to top off the DPMS rifle.

custom firearm.

A 20" bull barrel DPMS Panther model was selected. Weighing in at nine and a half pounds before a scope, bases, and rings were mounted, this is no lightweight. That was the idea.

Its overall length is 38.5 inches and comes with a 41 stainless steel bull barrel. This isn't a short barreled rifle designed to be kept in a hunting vehicle available for quick action. Instead this baby is for setting up and reaching out to touch targets at distance. The added barrel length would help generate more velocity for long range shooting while the 1 x 9 twist would stabilize popular .223 ammunition loaded with 45-55 grain bullets.

Affixed to the flattop of the upper receiver was a Bushnell Elite 6500 scope. The 2.5 x 16 is just as the manufacturer claims, "the ultimate all-round scope for jump shooting to long range precision." I love the 2.5 lower power that really allows for a wide field of view. On the top side the 16 power is actually more than my eyes need. Most of my distance shooting has been from 12-14 power, but it's nice to know there's more if needed.

With the scope weighing 17.3 ounce, plus bases and rings added to the nine and a half pound Panther means the entire rig weighs just a couple of ounces under 11 pounds. That is not something you want to lug around in the field, and could hardly be called an "assault rifle."

What had been put together was a modern hunting rifle designed for varmint hunting and long range shooting built upon an AR platform. The accuracy of this combination not only impressed me, but several veteran shooters and hunters I regularly shoot with.

The two stage trigger didn't take long to adjust as the slack is taken up, then the target reacquired before touching the gun off. This is different than a traditional

single stage trigger found on most hunting rifles. However, I found the two stage design actually made me focus more on the distant targets when making final adjustments before firing and improved results.

Plus the Bushnell Elite 6500 scope series is a great value with features that will rival the more expensive names. It is available in duplex and mil-dot versions.

So is there a final decision in this comparison? Reality says no. A custom firearm has subtle features that reflect the substantial time invested as each gun is built.

However, the DPMS Panther is one

hell of a gun. In fact it is being carried over into phase two of my shooting experiment, and that is to take a quality production rifle and tweak it to further improve on its already impressive performance.

Just as firearms our Dads, Granddads and even our forefathers use as service weapons became the cornerstone of advancements in sporting rifles for hunters and recreational shooters, the AR today joins that prestigious rank. The AR platform has come a long way, and it has certainly entrenched itself as the hunting platform for generations to come. ★★



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I Shoot Too Fast!

Once a shooter starts reloading their own ammo, they will find they can shoot their custom loads much faster than they can make them. This is where a progressive loader comes in handy.

A progressive loader is a reloading machine which will make a round of ammunition for every time the handle is pulled. A normal single stage loader like a Rock Chucker will take four or five different steps to make a round of ammunition where a progressive loader will do all the operations with one pull of the handle.

It resizes the case and pushes out the old primer, installs a new primer, drops a fresh powder charge, seats a bullet, and crimps the bullet and brass all at the same time. All the reloading operator has to do is keep up with feeding bullets and moving the shell plate. Some progressive loaders will even rotate the ammo and feed the bullets.

Progressive loading machines will make from about 200 rounds an hour to more than 5000 rounds an hour. Also, the faster it operates the more expensive the machine is. A good 300 round Dillon loader will cost about \$400, where an Ammo Load machine, which will make 5000 rounds an hour, will cost upwards of \$15,000.

I bought my first progressive loading machine in the late 70's. It was a Mec and was used so I could keep shooting skeet every week. At the time I was shooting in competition skeet tournaments almost every week plus my practice, so I was shooting about 500+ shotgun shells a week. I could not afford factory Winchester AA shells, so I made my own using the old fired hulls which I kept after shooting.

The Mec loader could make about 200 quality shells in an hour so for about 3 hours work I had enough loaded shotgun shells to shoot the next week. In those days, I could load a box of shells for a little less than \$1.00 per 25 shells. Today, the cost is around \$2.00 for 25 rounds. I still have that Mec loader and continue to use it from time to time. Though I no longer shoot competitively I still enjoy shooting a round of skeet or sporting clays every

month and using that Mec loader.

My first progressive pistol loader was bought in 1980 when I started my business. It was a Dillon RL450. This loader could load about 300 rounds of good ammo in an hour. With this reloader you do have to remember to put a shell in the plate, rotate the plate, pull the primer arm and push the powder drop. It sounds complicated, but after a little time you would get into a rhythm and load quality pistol ammo at a good rate.

As I added more employees, I wanted a faster and easier machine to use. I also wanted a loader that would put the primer in place and drop the powder without worrying whether I had forgotten a step. I bought a Star loading machine.

This became my favorite pistol loading machine and it still is today. I could load 500 rounds of 45 or 357 Mag. in an hour and they would all be right. I still have a Star loading machine which I use to load .45 ACP ammo. The old 1976 built machine still works and still makes great shooting ammunition. We have estimated that for almost 4 decades, this old Star loader has made more than two million rounds of 45 ACP and is still making quality ammo today.

One of the best machines for progressive loading of rifle ammunition was the Dillon RL1000 which has been upgraded to a RL1050. These loaders can load both pistol and rifle ammo at a very fast pace. If you have a strong right arm, you can load seven or eight hundred rounds of pistol ammo or five hundred rounds of 223 rifle ammo in an hour. The other nice thing about this loader is it will swage out the primer crimp on military rifle and pistol brass.

The automated loaders like the Ammo-Load are more for the commercial loader who is going to load tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition at a time. These machines are fully automated, so there is no handle to pull.

Your main job is to inspect the brass and put it in a brass feeder, load primer tubes and watch it run. If you run low on powder, it will let you know or if you



This Star loader was made in the 70's and is still one of the best.

have a bad piece of brass, it will let you know that too. These machines can load a hundred rounds of pistol ammunition faster than you can put a hundred primers in a tube. It is amazing to just watch these machines spit out quality ammo at the rate that it does.

There are several problems with progressive loaders that should be pointed out before you buy one. First, they will not meter all types of powder. Powder like IMR4831 will not give you very accurate charges. Also very small ball powders like AA#9 or Winchester 296 will stop the primer arm from moving back and forth correctly. So it is best to stick to flake powder like Unique or Winchester 231, or larger ball powder like Accurate 2230 or Winchester 748. These powders will work just fine.

Second, if you get distracted or don't have your mind on what you are doing, then you can really mess up. At best, you will miss a primer or a case will miss powder and you will have to clean up the spilt



This loader does every thing with one pull of the handle.

powder. At worst, you will skip a powder charge or even double charge a case and end up hurting your gun or even yourself. So, if you are a little absent minded or would rather be watching NCIS on TV, then you should be using a single stage loader.

Lastly, these machines need to be kept clean and lubed at all times to work properly, so regular maintenance is necessary. Also don't expect the powder to never

change, check it every 50 to 100 rounds to make sure all your settings and tolerances have not changed in any way. Compiling this article brought back some good old memories, so I sat down to see how fast I could load a fifty round box of 45 ACP ammo on the old Star loader. I used some Unique powder, Winchester large pistol primers and a 200 grain SWC hard cast bullet. After six minutes and thirty seconds, I had fifty rounds of ammo ready to go into the cleaner and shoot this weekend. Not bad for a 50 year old machine and a 50+ year old guy! 🎯

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The Shooter's Library

Some folks just love to shoot, and I fall into that category. I hunt to be able to shoot. I am fond of many disciplines and am ok at most of them, but I do not rabidly follow one of them enough to be considered world class. I thoroughly enjoy skeet, sporting clays, long range, short range, cowboy and combat shooting. I am most happy when I am at a wide-open space with a trusted .22 firearm with a large supply of .22 Long Rifle ammunition and several empty drink cans. To those who also love to shoot I offer my suggestions for some books that should be included in your shooter's library.

First, you should dig deep into the history of the association that stands firmly between us and the gun grabbers. "NRA: An American Legend" is a fascinating and most interesting history of the National Rifle Association. This big book is filled with rare photos of events, firearms, and the men and women who

have been the guardians of our rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment. From the NRA's founding in 1871 with the goal of improving marksmanship training after the Civil War, setting the standards for military training, expanding safety and educational programs, to the commitment to keep America safe and free it takes us to the publication year of 2002. As author Tom Clancy says in the foreword, "The Constitution, remember, tells the government what it may not do. So, the preexisting right of the people to keep and bear arms (we are not peasants under the rule of the nearest earl) shall not be infringed."

Some believe the only thing bigger than Elmer Keith's ego was his cowboy hat. There is no argument that this man of slight stature was a giant of a gun writer whose exploits and opinions had great effect on the American firearms industry and the habits of shooters worldwide.

Keith was an advocate of big bullets for both rifle and pistol and was instrumental in the development of the .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .41 Magnum and .338 Magnum cartridges. He was a prolific writer of ten books and a regular contributor to Guns & Ammo from 1961 till the early 1980's. Keith's "Gun Notes: Volume 1" covers his columns and features in Guns & Ammo from 1961 to 1970. Here we find his highly regarded opinions on pistols, revolvers, bolt-action and double rifles, shotguns, ammunition, loads, bullets and accessories. These opinions stand the test of time. While searching for "Gun Notes: Volume 1" look for his highly prized life story, "Hell, I Was There."

More exciting reading and valuable information comes from the writings of Jeff Cooper. Col. Cooper is hailed as the father of modern pistolcraft and devoted his life to historical study, military service and teaching his pistol and rifle technique the world over. He was founder of the still famous American Pistol Institute at Gunsite Ranch in Arizona and the International Practical Shooting Confederation. Cooper's first anthology, "Fireworks," is filled with tales of history, travel, adventure, firearms, shooting advice and war stories. You will find yourself quoting Cooper as in his open letter to legislators where he writes, "An individual man is individually responsible for his own transgressions, so let us by all means punish the transgressor, not someone whom you feel, in your total lack of understanding, may conceivably become a transgressor. Get after the criminal, sir, but get off my back!" Cooper's second anthology, "To Ride, Shoot Straight, and Speak the Truth," focuses on shooting... technically, socially, sportively and historically "insisting that 'the Age of the Wimp' is not our proper destiny, and that knowledge of personal weapons and skill in their use are necessary attributes of any man who calls himself free. Buy this one, read it, then loan it to your kids.

No one before or after has so fully researched or clearly explained how to shoot a shotgun as the late Bob Brister did with his book, "Shotgunning: The Art



The author's suggested books that should be in every shooter or hunter's library.

and the Science." Bob clears up virtually every shooting problem you are likely to face. With photos taken over the gun barrel he teaches how to mount, point, and swing through with the proper lead. He covers selection of guns, chokes and loads for completion and hunting. During his illustrious career Bob was outdoors editor of the Houston Chronicle, shooting editor of Field and Stream and winner of championships around the world in trap, skeet, and his real love, box and thrown bird shoots. He has been called the father of sporting clays in the United States and was inducted into the National Sporting Clays Hall of Fame in 1999. Bob was always tinkering and experimenting and we are the beneficiary. Once I was at a live bird shoot standing behind the line with Bob's wife Sandy. Over the course of the shoot Bob changed guns, stocks, loads and even shirts. Sandy turned to me and said, "He'd change his arms if he could." Brister's "Shotgunning: The Art and the Science" is a must have.

Good reference books are always "must haves" and here are two of my most used. "Firearms Encyclopedia" by Major George Nonte, Jr. explains a great deal alphabetically. This is an easy way to answer a firearms question or win a bet. What is the difference between a bullet that is "boxer" primed and one that is "berdan" primed? What is the proper definition of a "clip" and a "magazine?" Need an explanation of Minute of Angle?

You'll find it here.

In greater detail on a more specific subject is "The Shotgun Encyclopedia" by John Taylor. Here you can not only find the definition of "chopper lumps" and details about "nontoxic shot," but gain in depth information about choke sizes

and constrictions and how the gauge of a shotgun is determined. There is extensive coverage of guns, manufacturers and inventors. John has devoted his Army pension to shooting, hunting, duck calling, and writing for practically every shooting and hunting magazine in the nation.

As the pressure is on and the availability of ammunition is tight many are starting or returning to reloading. Your library must contain the Speer Reloading Manual for Rifle and Pistol. The information is here for hundreds of cartridges with case sizes, powder choices and amounts, bullet sizes and weights, and much more. Speer covers step by step from the reloading bench to the range and equipment needed to troubleshooting techniques. The 14th Edition Speer Reloading Manual is available from www.speer-bullets.com. Also, the internet has an amazing reloading resource covering just about every cartridge on the planet. Visit www.loaddata.com.

Search for the books above and others to add to your library at Amazon, Ebay, Safari Press or Google.

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Story by Matt Williams | Photographs by Larry Hodge

TEST TUBE BABY



Little Lake Naconiche giant is the first ShareLunker offspring documented at whopper size

COURTESY TPWD, LARRY HODGE

On April 13, Lane Kruse of Garrison boated a 12.54 pound bass at Lake Naconiche in eastern Texas that TPWD geneticists have tied to a host of ShareLunker descendants dating all the way back to a 16.13 pounder caught in 1988 from Gibbons Creek Reservoir near Bryan.

The big bass drums are thumping to a rhythmic beat these days at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens. That's because fisheries biologists there have confirmed that a 12.54 pound whopper caught earlier this year from Lake Naconiche in eastern Texas has genetic ties to nearly a half dozen former Toyota ShareLunkers.

It marks the first time in the program's history that one of its test tube babies has come full circle and grown to lunger size

and bit an angler's hook. Needless to say, the ShareLunker brass is stoked about it.

"This is the perfect example of why the ShareLunker program was established," said Allen Forshage, director of TFFC. "It's called ShareLunker because the program gives anglers the opportunity to share their catch with others. Fingerlings from ShareLunkers that spawned have been stocked into more than 60 reservoirs across Texas."

For those who might not be familiar with ShareLunker, it is a highly-publicized

program run by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department since 1986. The program solicits anglers to donate Texas-caught bass weighing 13 pounds or more to the state. In exchange for their fish, anglers are given a free replica of their catch and other goodies.

Each ShareLunker entry is DNA tested to determine its genetics and the results are filed in a data base for future reference. Female fish with pure Florida genes are paired with pure Florida males for spawning in

hatchery raceways, while hybrids (Florida/native crosses also called intergrades) are immediately returned to the lake from which they were caught, regardless of size. The theory behind TPWD's current protocol is cut and dry: Crossing two bass with pure Florida genes provides the best formula for producing fish with the superior genetics.

Not all of the Florida females retained for use in the program are able to spawn. But those that do are highly successful in terms of survival, largely because of the controlled environment in which the process takes place.

Once hatched, a percentage of the ShareLunker offspring are stocked into Texas lakes at fingerling size. Others are nurtured to advanced growth (6-8 inches) before stocking, and a few grown into adulthood for use in the selective breeding program.

While ShareLunker began as a public relations tool to promote catch and release and popularize Texas bass fishing, it has since shifted a lot of its emphasis to spawning and genetics research aimed at

unraveling the mysteries of big bass DNA and, ultimately, producing bigger and better bass for Texas anglers to catch.

Nearly three decades down the road, the verdict is still out as to whether or not the ShareLunker program and selective breeding are truly making a significant difference in the quality of Texas bass fisheries.

A common thread among naysayers is the state might be better off channeling its efforts towards producing more good

ol' fashioned Florida bass, since those fish are the foundation of Texas bass fishing as we know it today. Others are beginning to wonder if the 27-year-old experiment has run its course, and if the returns are worth the time and money that is being spent on it by the state as well as program sponsors.



PHOTO BY MATT WILLIAMS

TPWD fisheries biologists have stocked Lake Naconiche with Florida bass from the very start, including hundreds of adult offspring from super-size Toyota ShareLunkers.

By no means is this to say ShareLunker hasn't accomplished some good things.

If Emmy awards were given for PR stunts, this program would be a legitimate candidate to grab one for the amount of positive publicity it has generated for Texas bass fishing and its five-star trophy potential. With every ShareLunker that is caught, press releases go out to hundreds of news outlets nationwide.

Furthermore, with more than 500

ShareLunkers caught from dozens public reservoirs over the lengthy history, its data base provides a reliable road map to steer anglers in the direction of the state's hottest trophy lakes. It also sheds some light on best months to target big fish on the top lakes, and which baits and water depths might be the most productive.

More recently, the program has made some really cool strides in genetic fingerprinting that allows scientists to identify ShareLunker offspring years down the road, and even the parents and grandparents that produced them.

A Naconiche Record

The 12.54 pounder caught from 690-acre Lake Naconiche by Lane Kruse of Garrison is a glowing example of how TPWD geneticists are able to trace a ShareLunker's family tree. Amazingly, this one's pedigree has genetic ties to huge bass caught from three different Texas lakes, including Lake Fork, Gibbons Creek and Lake Falcon way down on the Texas/Mexico border.

Just for the record, Kruse, 46, was sight fishing on Naconiche that sunny Saturday afternoon with his wife, Tracie, when he spotted the big bass along with much smaller male on a spawning bed in about three feet of water.

The angler said he pitched a Texas rigged Zoom Baby Brush Hog onto the bed and caught the male bass in short order. The female stayed put and he caught her four casts later.



TPWD's Tony Owens releases a ShareLunker in the lunger tank.



Fisheries biologist Tony Owens harvests a batch of ShareLunker fingerlings.

Kruse said he knew the fish was big, but he didn't know how heavy until he ran into a friend who had a scale. The bass weighed 14 pounds on the uncertified scales, so Kruse made the call to ShareLunker Coordinator, Juan Martinez.

When Martinez arrived a few hours later he scanned the fish using an electronic device that detected a passive integrated transponder (PIT tag) inside its body cavity. PIT tags are implanted in every fish entered in the ShareLunker program for future identification purposes. The tags also are placed inside many adult size ShareLunker offspring before they are stocked in public reservoirs.

The mere fact the Kruse bass was wearing a PIT tag told Martinez he was onto something special. That's because Lake Naconiche, which opened for fishing just seven months ago, has been the recipient several hundred adult ShareLunker offspring since 2009.

"We felt like if we got a ShareLunker out of Naconiche that there was a good chance it would have a PIT tag indicating it is one of our ShareLunker offspring," Martinez said. "It turned out that this one did (have a tag)."

When Martinez weighed the bass on certified scales, it fell just shy of the 13-pound mark necessary to be officially entered in the ShareLunker program. In the meantime, Kruse released the fish and

has submitted applications to have his catch certified as a water body and catch and release record for the new impoundment northeast of Nacogdoches.

A Fish with a Family History

While the tank on Martinez' transport truck was empty when he drove away from Lake Naconiche, he left with a 10 digit PIT tag number and a fin clip from the Kruse bass in his pocket. Together those two things combined to tell a very compelling story in the days that followed.

For starters, the PIT tag identified the fish as one of 173 adult ShareLunker offspring released into the new East Texas lake in 2009. The stocking included fish from three different year classes - 2005, 2006 and 2008.

Martinez said he is certain Kruse's fish was one of the 24 adult females from the 2005 year class. He said those four-year-old fish - all intergrades - ranged in size from 2.46 to 3.38 pounds.

TPWD geneticist Dijar Lutz-Carillo of San Marcos performed DNA analysis on the fin clip to learn more about the fish's pedigree. Not surprisingly, the analysis indicates the Kruse fish comes from a family with a rich history of weight problems.

To wit:

Lutz-Carillo's findings identified the bass' mother as a Lake Falcon 14.28 pounder that was caught in 2004 by Jerry

Campos. That fish was originally believed to be a pure Florida, but upgraded testing methods have since identified it as an intergrade.

The pure Florida daddy of the Naconiche bass was little guy weighing only 2.25 pounds, but its descendants included a long line of fat girls.

Among them were its 14.67 pound mother caught from Lake Fork in 2000, its 14.25 pound grandmother caught at Fork in 1994 and its 16.13 pound great-grandmother caught from Gibbons Creek in 1988. Interestingly, former ShareLunker Coordinator David Campbell said the Gibbons Creek bass was aged at only seven-years old.

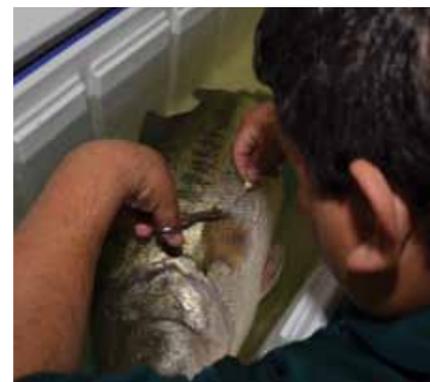
Just the Beginning?

So what might be expected down the road from brand new bass lake that has been open to fishing for only seven months and is already kicking out lunkers pushing 13 pounds?

I posed that question to TPWD fisheries biologist Todd Driscoll of Jasper, but first I asked if he was surprised to see a bass stack on nine-plus pounds as quickly as the Kruse fish did.

"I'm not surprised by it at all, not at Naconiche," Driscoll said. "The watershed up there is extremely fertile and the forage base - particularly the threadfin shad population - is unlike anything I have ever seen. Plus, it has all the right habitat to go along with it.

"The perfect storm is brewing in that little lake," Driscoll added. "Give it another 3-5 years and there is no telling what might come out of there. I wouldn't be surprised to see somebody break the state record (18.18 pounds) up there. It definitely has what it takes to grow one." **T★J**



ShareLunker coordinator Juan Martinez takes a fin clip sample for DNA testing.

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Trailers need some love, too — or else

If you own a full-size boat of any kind, chances are good you rely on a trailer of some sort to get it to the lake or bay and then back home again. Just call it the cradle that totes the chariot.

Some anglers tow their rigs thousands of miles in a year's time, while others dump their boats in the water no more than a half dozen times per year. Regardless of how often you use your boat, it is always a good idea to develop some sort of maintenance schedule for the trailer. It is even more important that you follow it.

True. Performing maintenance on a boat trailer is about as eventful as watching grass grow. But it needs to be done.

Take it from someone who knows. Neglect your trailer long enough and sooner or later you will find yourself in a bind, possibly miles from home with no cell phone service and no one except the coyotes to keep you company.

Here is user's guide on some good ways to give your boat trailer some love:

- 1. Tire Inflation:** Check the inflation pressure of every tire, including the spare, at the beginning of each trip. Tires should be inflated (cold) to the recommended pounds per square inch (PSI) number for the tire. This is listed on the sidewall.

Maintaining proper inflation will help extend the life of the tire. Plus, it will help prevent blow-outs and optimize the fuel mileage of your tow vehicle. While you are at it, check for excessive or irregular tire wear. If you notice either, it would be wise to replace the tire before making a long trip.

- 2. Proper Wheel Alignment:** Trailer axles and spindles that aren't running true can cause a tire to wobble, wear unevenly, or, in severe cases, cause the trailer not to follow straight behind the tow vehicle. If an axle or spindle is bent, replace it.
- 3. Excess Grease:** Watch for excessive grease or oil on the wheels or the inside of the tires. This could be a sign of a worn out wheel bearing seal that needs to be replaced.
- 4. Wheel Bearings:** Perform routine



A little preventative maintenance to your trailer will keep you rolling, problem free, to your favorite fishing destination.

checks on wheel bearings by raising the tires off the ground. Spin each wheel. If you hear a roaring or grinding noise, trouble is brewing. Another sign of a bad bearing is when you feel slack when you grab the tire firmly on each side and work it back and forth.

- 5. Lug Nuts:** Check them regularly for tightness using the proper size of lug wrench.
- 6. Winch Stand:** Periodically inspect the winch stand (this supports the roller at the nose of the boat) for slack. If it is loose, tighten it.
- 7. Brakes:** If your trailer has hydraulic brakes, keep check on the fluid level to ensure the reservoir is filled to manufacturer specs. It is also a good idea to check brake pads and rotors periodically for wear.
- 8. Runners:** Check runners and trailer bunks to make sure they stay snug. If you notice worn spots on the runner carpet it would be a good idea to replace it before it wears all the way through. The carpet is there to protect your boat's gel coat from contact with the bare wood beneath it.
- 9. A Level Ride:** The boat and trailer should sit fairly level when hooked to the tow vehicle, not nose up or nose down. A drop hitch will help achieve

a level ride with a tall-riding 4X4. The distance between the road surface the nut on your trailer ball should be about 16-18 inches.

- 10. Wash It:** Ice typically isn't a problem this far south, but up north it is a given during the winter months. Road crews rely heavily on salt to melt the ice, and salt can cause serious corrosion to a trailer frame if left intact. Case in point: If you tow your boat down a icy road that has been salted, wash it clean with fresh, soapy water as soon as possible.

- 11. Grease Shot:** Use a high quality marine-grade grease keep the coupler bushings and railer jack operating smoothly. It doesn't take much to do the job. A couple shots in each zerk fitting twice a year should be plenty.

- 12. Trailer Ball Size:** Always make sure the trailer ball attached to your tow vehicle is same size as the coupler on the trailer. Check the ball periodically for snugness.

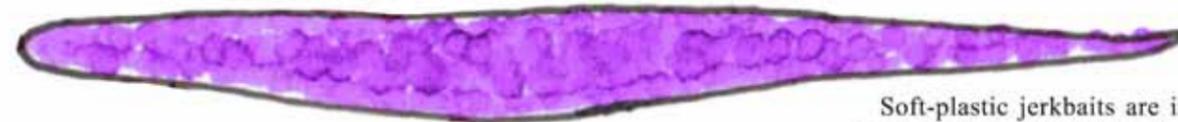
- 13. Safety Pin:** Periodically check the safety pin on the coupler to make sure it maintains snug fit. A worn safety pin can work itself loose, creating a potential hard should the coupler's lock-down mechanism fail.

- 14. Light It Up:** Check all trailer lights and turn indicators to make sure they are working correctly. 🚗

Rigging Flukes & Jerkbait



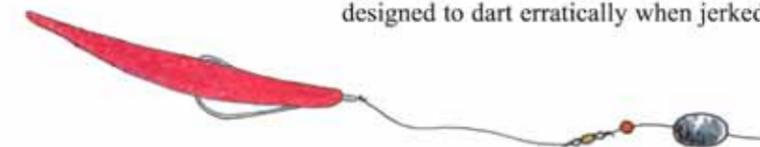
During the summer months, soft-plastic jerkbaits -- fluke-style lures -- are among the most effective offerings for largemouth bass on Texas lakes. Although a number of freshwater fishermen use soft-plastic jerkbaits, many are unaware at the wide variety of ways these simple pieces of plastic can be rigged.



Soft-plastic jerkbaits are incredibly simple in design. Essentially, they are thin, tapered sections of soft-plastic which are designed to dart erratically when jerked.



Soft-plastic jerkbaits are commonly used with a bullet weight and/or bead in a standard Texas rig.



Flukes are also effective when rigged Carolina-style with an egg sinker, bead, barrel swivel and leader.



Weightless, weedless soft-plastic jerkbaits are effective for use over and around grass beds during the summer months.



Jerkbaits can also be rigged on weedless jig heads for working in the holes in hydrilla beds.



When the fish move deep, flukes can be rigged on drop shot rigs to target bass suspended at depth.



Another effective way to use soft-plastic jerkbaits is Carolina rigged using a rattle sinker instead of a traditional egg-sinker.

Lake Roundup

EAST TEXAS



By Matt Williams

NACOGDOCHES — June is when the bass begin settling into their summer patterns across eastern Texas, and that should mean some outstanding flipping action on Lake Nacogdoches this year. The hydrilla was in excellent shape as April gave way to May. If the grass is not topped out on the surface just yet, it should be real close to it.

For those who have not visited the lake before, the majority of the better grass is located at the lake's upper reaches north of the powerlines along the Big Loco creek channel. The key here is to keep your boat positioned in the channel so you can fish the edges effectively using a heavy jig or a Texas rig beaver-style bait. Texas rigged equipped with a tungsten sinker weighing 3/4 ounce or more will provide the best penetration.

When fishing the grass, pay close attention to little indentions, points or visible guts you can see with the aid of polarized sunglasses. Often times these oddities are indicative of a change in water depth, which at times will attract fish like a magnet. Well defined channel swings also are worth a look.

In addition to the grass bite, there should be some fish setting up on deeper main lake structure like channel bends, points, humps and drop offs. Deep cranks, Carolina rigs, Texas rigs and jigs will pay off in these areas.

Anglers who like to fish shallow should be able to pick up some fish early in the day using cranks, topwaters and frogs

around shallow vegetation. The topwater bite can be good for extended times in overcast conditions.

Crappie? For starters it might not be a bad idea to probe or stroll along deeper outside grass lines using Stanley Mini Wedge Runner or a 1/8 ounce jig. Brush piles in 18-25 feet of water also should be holding some fish over the next 60 days. The night fishing bite can be real good at times.

TOLEDO BEND — T-Bend was in great shape as April gave way to May. The water level was only about 1 1/2 feet low and the grass (hydrilla) was coming on strong at the south end of the lake.

Fishing guide Tommy Martin says there should be a number of good bass fishing patterns at work this month. Anglers can fish shallow and pick up fish on topwaters, flip grass or probe deep structure in search of the motherlode. From a guide standpoint, Martin likes his chances out deep best because it offers the best opportunity for clients to catch numbers of quality fish.

"There should be a lot of fish beginning to group up on some of the old structure spots in June, and there will be some good ones out there, too," he said. "I'll spend a lot of my time on underwater points, ridges and other structure spots in 20-30 feet of water this month."

Martin says some of his favorite sweet spots are located within six to eight miles north and two miles south of the Pendleton bridge. He'll probe them with assorted bottom bumpers including a Texas rig Zoom Trick Worm, football jig, spoon and Carolina rig.

The guide says flippers can find plenty of green stuff south of the bridge. The best grass will form a distinctive edge in 12-15



There are other good fish to catch this month beside black bass, crappie, and catfish.

feet of water. Jigs, punch jigs, and Texas rigs matched with a tungsten sinker weighing 3/4 ounce or more will all work here.

In shallower water, Martin says frogs, buzz baits and topwaters will produce some vicious strikes but it will pretty much be an early and late deal unless skies become overcast.

Crappie fishing prospects always begin heating up in June. Two patterns should be working. Try strolling or casting around outside grass edges using jigs and Road-runners. There also should be quite a few fish grouped up around deep brush piles. These fish can be caught on jigs or shiners.

SAM RAYBURN — June fishing patterns on Sam Rayburn should be re-

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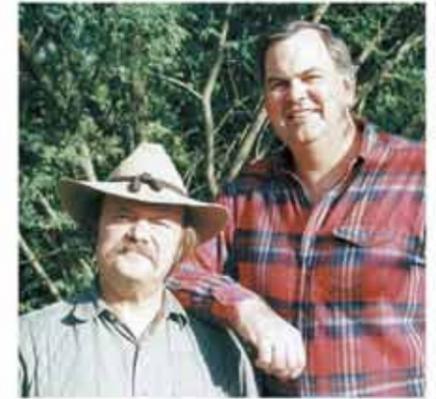
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PHOTO BY RICKY VANDERGRIFF

Lake Palestine fishing guide Ricky Vandergriff says crappie will be hanging tight to brush piles throughout the summer.

markably similar to those playing out on Toledo Bend, with the exception that there won't be much of a flipping bite. Mainly because there is not much deep grass to flip, according to fishing guide Tommy Martin of Hemphill.

What there are plenty of, however, are brush piles that have been planted on the lake's bottom. Many have been strategically placed by crappie fishermen, but bass anglers have sank their share, as well.

"Fishing along main lake points, drop offs and other structure will produce lots of fish," Martin said. "These types of places are usually all the more productive if they have brush. Brush piles are a big deal on Sam Rayburn during the summer months. There are hundreds of them out there."

To find the brush, anglers will need to spend some time idling and using their electronics to scan the bottom. Those with side and down imaging units are at a huge advantage here. Used properly, one of these units will not only draw a clear picture of what is beneath the boat. It also will show you the bottom for a significant distance on either side of the boat.

Anglers who prefers to fish shallow should be able to find some takers throughout the day around flooded hay grass, pepper grass and hydrilla beds. Topwater baits like a Pop R or Yellow

Magic tossed around the outer edges of vegetation will be a good bet at first light. Once the sun gets up, is when frogs should come into play, mainly around hydrilla clumps, pads, and hay grass from the bank out to four feet.

June's crappie fishing typically revolves around two things — outside grass lines and brush piles. The key to finding fish around the grass is covering lots of water and fishing the deeper outside edges with jigs, Roadrunners and Stanley Wedgetail Runners.

Good electronics are essential for getting positioned around brush piles. The best stuff will be planted vertical in water ranging 18-30 feet deep. It is worth noting that crappie like to suspend around brush. Experiment at different depths until you find the most productive zone.

PALESTINE — Fishing guide Ricky Vandergriff says June is always a good month for a mix bag fishing opportunities aimed at black bass, crappie, catfish and white bass. Here's how the guide said he will play the various games:

Bass: "Crankbaits — medium and deep — will be the main deal," Vandergriff said. "I'll be concentrating mostly on main lake points at the south end of the lake. The best ones will have timber, brush, rock or a combination of those things. Carolina

rigs will work in these areas, too."

Vandergriff also pointed to boat docks as good holding spots in early summer. The best docks will be doctored with brush. He'll probe them using a 1/4 ounce jig or a Texas rig baby brush hog or worm.

Crappie: Brush piles will be the ticket. Vandergriff suggests targeting brush that is situated in water ranging 14-16 feet deep. He suggests using jigs and minnows. Minnows are typically available in three sizes at most

bait shops. Vandergriff says small shiners are the order of the day for Palestine slabs.

White Bass: This will be an early and late bite. Vandergriff suggests being on the water at first light and watching main lake points for signs of surface feeding activity. Rat-L-Traps, spoons and topwaters will get you bit when the fish are in a feeding mode.

Catfish: Vandergriff will spend most of his time targeting main lake humps in about 15 feet of water using punch bait, chicken livers, and night crawlers. You can boost the odds by dumping a little soured grain down each side of the boat. Just make sure not to put out too much. The idea is to attract the fish, not feed them. A small coffee can or two is usually all it takes to do the trick.

CONROE — June is a great multi-species month on Lake Conroe. Fishing guide Butch Terpe didn't mince words when asked to provide viable plans of attack for black bass, hybrid stripers and channel cat. Here's what the personable guide had to say about each one:

Black Bass: Terpe says bass will be settled into their summertime patterns by now. In his book that means probing around main lake structure spots such as humps, roadbeds, the old tram, points, pond dams and ridges in water ranging

10-20 feet deep.

"There are several ways to catch them, but I tend to go with a Carolina rig most of the time," he said. "Deep cranks also can be effective."

Terpe added that there will be some fish hanging around rocks and some in deeper marina breakwaters. He'll target these areas with the same baits.

Catfish: "June is always one of the best months of the year for catfish, if not the best," he said. "The spawn will be over the fish will be in a feeding mode."

Terpe will go after channel cat using a prepared cheese bait on a sponge hook. He likes to fish around baited areas at the Highway 1097 bridge crossing and along the San Jacinto River channel. He attracts fish using range cubes, but you can also do the job with soured maize.

Hybrids: Terpe will use his electronics to detect schools of fish on main lake points and humps in water ranging 18-30 feet deep and he will troll over those types of places using deep crank trailed by a pet spoon. Once he pinpoints the fish he will switch to a 3/4 ounce slab. Live shad also can be super effective, but the fragile bait fish can be hard to keep alive in the hot water conditions.

LIVINGSTON — Lake Livingston is in great shape with summer fast approaching. The water level as of this writing was only two inches below normal and the water clarity was good.

Fishing guide Randy Dearman of Onalaska says anglers can expect to find assorted takers in skinny water throughout the month. Black bass are the No. 1 entree on Dearman's menu.

"It'll be pretty good in June," Dearman said. "These fish are going to be setting up on the creek channels and the river channel and they'll be pretty aggressive, feeding up after spawn."

Dearman says anglers should key on stumps and lay down logs located right along the edges of the channel where it breaks from 3-6 feet. Wood located in distinctive channel swings will be especially attractive for bass.

The guide will probe sweet spots using a Strike King crank bait. If the fish aren't in the mood to chase he will switch to a Texas rigged Rage Craw. He pointed out that it is important to work lures as tight to the available cover as possible, regardless of which one is tied to the end of your line.

Dearman says the white bass action will be heating up daily throughout the month as the main lake schoolers become increasingly active with the passing of each day. Anglers should watch for surface feeding activity over humps, points, road beds, and old trams.

"They'll school a lot early and late, but it can be good all day at times," Dearman said. You catch them on "Traps and topwaters when they are up, or you can reel a spoon right though the middle of them. Once the fish go down to bottom you'll have to throw the slab."

Dearman says channel cat will be in feeding mode this month as well. He suggests targeting shallow flats adjacent to any creek using night crawlers or prepared bait on a tight line. **T★J**

NORTH TEXAS



By Brian Hughes

June is a month of transition. Usually North Texas will see a shift from mild temperatures to warmer days and nights. And the fishing will reflect this change. Of course I say usually because as I write this nothing has really gone according to plan weatherwise this year.

Parts of North Texas have seen record low temps in late April, and the drought is still a concern. If, however, the usual pattern prevails, June will mark a change in the way you need to approach your fishing day.

For bass, the early morning hours will yield a few topwater fish until the sun hits the water. Then you'll need to shift to a subsurface bait such as a spinnerbait or, my favorite, a Senko for the next couple of hours.

As the day warms, a Texas-rig will come into play. Sand bass, and stripers, will begin to hang out in deeper water and begin pushing baitfish together in big schools, which

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they will then attack from below. This causes great disturbances on the surface and great opportunities for the fisherman in the right place at the right time.

The biggest fish will stay below the fray and are prone to hit tailspinners dropped or ripped through their midst, but the real fun will be on top.

Some people will resort to fishing late in the evening and at night to beat the heat and while night-fishing can be fun it brings with it a whole new set of challenges.

There is another way to beat the heat but I'll get to that later. All in all June can be either the last nice-weather month or the first of the truly hot summer months. Either way, fishing will be different!

CADDO — Guide Paul Kieth likes Caddo in the summer for one simple reason, "Fishing is dependable and predictable" he says. "Most days we know we'll be fishing certain baits and certain cover or structure, and we know the fish will be there." That's a valuable quality, indeed, for a guide.

"We'll start the day shallow around lilly pads and hydrilla grass with buzzbaits and frogs," he said. "Working over the top and openings will get a few bass and get the day started. I like darker colors on the cloudy days and lighter colors on the sunny days."

As the day wears on he'll let conditions dictate the approach. "If we get cloud cover the topwater bite can go on through the day," he explained. "Most likely though, the sun will pop out and we'll switch to a Senko around the grass and pads first, later moving on to the creek channels with a Texas-rigged worm or lizard." June bug, black/blue, and watermelon/red are some of the recommended colors. "I'll stay with the basics on color and I use a ¼ oz. weight."

Bream fishing is also good in June on Caddo. "The bream spawn should still be going or just wrapping up and that is a fantastic way to have some fun," Kieth said. "It's also one of the best ways to get a kid into fishing. The gear is simple and the technique couldn't be any easier. Just get a pole and put a cricket on a small hook. Redworms will work if you prefer them. Drop this in any opening in the shallow grass and pads, or around the Cypress islands and you're in business!"

He also mentioned an old-timey way of finding fish—smell. "I know people



Some of the authors favorite night fishing baits include, top to bottom:
Bass Pro Shops Lazer Eye Buzzmaster
Bass Pro Shops Lazer Eye Pro Series spinnerbait
Fliptail 9" Big Daddy Worm

won't believe this but you can smell 'em. When you move around the lake and suddenly get that real fishy smell in your nose, that's a whole bunch of brim up shallow. You want to fish there!"

COOPER — Down eight feet at this writing, Cooper is one of those lakes that could be effected by the drought. "If we don't get some rain between now and June we could lose another ramp on this lake" says Tony Parker, veteran guide on Cooper.

Fishing however has a bright future according to Tony, "June is my favorite month for consistency. The weather is usually stable and the fishing is very dependable."

Right on schedule for the year Parker sees a bite that will follow the Cooper pattern of past years, "Cooper is very much an afternoon lake," he stated. "I don't mean that you won't catch fish in the morning, certainly you will, but by afternoon they'll really start to school and attack the baitfish."

Looking for birds or watching your electronics will clue you in to the location of the bait and both hybrids and sandies will be close by them. "I'll start on main

lake humps in eight to eighteen feet of water and look around with the graph," he explained. "If I like what I see I'll start throwing a Sassy Shad in 4" sticking with the shad colors. It's pretty simple throw and wind fishing.

Sometimes, especially as I move deeper or the school gets larger, I'll use the flutter spoon. I use the Moes tackle 6" spoon and work it off the bottom pretty quick this time of year."

That's the way Parker chases hybrids but, sandies are different. "If I want to catch white bass I do everything the same but I'll downsize the baits. I use bigger stuff specifically to target the hybrids. Smaller baits in the same locations will fill a cooler with the sand bass."

No longer a bass fisherman, when pressed for an answer Parker offered, "I really don't fish for bass anymore but yeah, I guess the bass guys would do pretty good at night, maybe around the timber". I'd venture to say that a magnum worm or spinnerbait, both in black, would do very well indeed around the timber.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS — Richland-Chambers shares a couple of traits with Cooper Lake. First, they both need rain. During the last drought many marina owners dredged and improved their ramp facilities and hopefully that will hold them through the current situation. The other common denominator is that both lakes were seen to be the next big thing in bass fishing when they were impounded, but both have sort of fallen off the bass map so to speak.

"We still get a few bass fishermen and some smaller tournaments on the lake, but hybrids and sand bass are really the game here now," said Royce Simmons of Gone Fishin' Guide Service. "We used to see a ton of tournaments on every level including the Bassmasters, but that has changed over the years."

R-C is still a good bass fishery, with June fish holding around the docks and deep structure. North of the 287 Bridge you'll find Cedar and Little Cedar creeks, where you can fish the mouths of the creeks with spinnerbaits and topwaters early. Later move out into the oil field area and try Carolina-rigged frys in char-treuse/pepper and red shad.

The main lake points between the two arms of the lake will also have some deep fish for the Carolina-rig and drop

shot fishermen, as will the many creek mouths on the far south side of the lake. Recent development has added a substantial number of boat docks for the jig and Texas-rig enthusiast as well. But the real story is the sand bass in June.

"White bass will transition from the slab and trap bite to a great topwater bite sometime in June" says Simmons. "We don't know exactly when this will happen but you can't miss it, and it will last the rest of the summer once it gets going."

He suggests looking in the area from the South Shore marina to Fergusons Point. "You'll see literally acres of schooling fish. Get on 'em with a Tiny Torpedo or tailspinner-type bait and get ready for some hot action."

Remember to check all your fish to make sure you're keeping sand bass and not an under-sized hybrid. "Every year anglers will get cited for under-sized fish by a TPWD Game Warden. It's the anglers responsibility to know what he's catching and putting in the livewell!"

Crappie at R-C will be moving to the timber, bridges and brush. Minnows and small jigs will be the bait for papermouths there. Finally, Royce offers the following, "June can be tough for hybrids. For whatever reason, they seem to take a little vacation about that time. Give it a couple of weeks and they come back with a vengeance."

LAKE FORK — If there is a bad month for fishing Lake Fork, I don't know what it is. June will see the beginning of the summer pattern, starting with the topwater bite. Bass will slowly come together in schools and run baitfish toward the points. Use your topwaters on these points and around the bridges to start the day.

Buzzbaits and Yellow Magics will do the trick according to Mark Stevenson, "We'll try these first just to see what happens. If they produce, we'll stick with them until the bite plays out."

At some point he'll move into deeper water around the points and bridges as well as creekbends, "Jigs in ¾ and ½ ounce around the creeks will work and recently I've become a big fan of the white jig from Johnsons. We'll also use shaky heads and Carolina rigs on the deeper fish."

When the schooling fish show up Stevenson likes to target them with the Boot Tail Magic Shad from LFT in 41/2 inch size, "There's supposed to be a bigger



There will be some really good fish caught from South Texas lakes like Falcon and Choke Canyon with the fish in a post-spawn pattern.

one coming and I'm looking forward to using it because it'll keep the sand bass off my rig.

There are times when you can't get through the sandies to catch a bass with this bait."

One trick for "clean-up" fishing under the sandies or after the Carolina rig/jig fished areas is the jumbo spinnerbait. "I'll throw a 1 oz. Johnsons Pescado with double willow leaf blades and count it down to the fish by looking at the graph to see how deep they are. Once it gets down past the fish I can retrieve it back up through the school and catch the better fish." Be sure and use a good stout 7 ½ foot medium-heavy rod for this bait.

June will also mark the beginning of really good night fishing on the lake. Even though night fishing is good early in the month, "That'll really pick up on the full moon", says Stevenson, "I'll stay between 3-15 feet, focusing on the five to ten foot range with buzzbaits and big Colorado bladed spinnerbaits in black if there is any grass around."

Without the grass I use soft plastics like a Texas-rigged creature bait or 8" Zoom lizard or 10" Power Worm in green pumpkin or black with red flake. Another good bait is the big LFT ringworm, they really hold on to that one."

Crappie will be on deeper trees and the bridges. They'll also become very consistent in June with the minnow and crappie jigs both producing limits rather quickly. **T&J**



By Danno Wise

June is the first month of summer vacation, meaning a lot more people will be heading to lakes across South Texas beginning this month. Although increased crowds will be somewhat of a bother, dedicated anglers will still find plenty of good angling action on South Texas lakes over the next few weeks. The key on the area's most popular water bodies will be an early start, as there will be more active fish and fewer active people during the early morning hours this month.

COLETO CREEK — Most South Texas fishermen believe June will be a true summer month this year, as a warm winter and spring have led to somewhat of an early summer pattern on most lakes. Victoria pro Dennis Lala is no different, saying June will find Coletos bass acting as if summer is in full swing.

"As hot as it's been already, I really think our fish will be in a summer pattern by the beginning of June," said Lala. "We will have a pretty good topwater bite, but it's early, early, early. You can usually catch pretty good numbers of fish up shallow first thing in the morning throwing topwaters or even spinnerbaits. However, after that, the fish will move deep. Once the sun gets up good, you can forget about the shorelines and move out to the outer edge of the grass beds."

"For the most part, I'll be focusing on the outside edge of grass beds in 12 to 14 feet of water. Usually I'll be throwing a Texas-rig or Carolina-rig right up against the grass. Those bass will be lying under the grass beds, so you want to get right up in there. In fact, if you see any holes or trails without grass, throw right up in them.

"I like using either a Power Jerk Shad



Tournament pro Dennis Lala shows off a Choke Canyon bass he caught from the edge of the hydrilla.

or Gulp! Worm on my Carolina rigs. I know a lot of guys who will be catching fish on jigs, too, but I think the soft-plastics give you the best chance to catch a lot of fish and some good fish as well.

“Our water is usually pretty clear in June. So I usually prefer throwing a watermelon color. However, if we get a lot of rain and they hold the gates open a long time, the water will muddy up a bit. Then I’ll go with something darker.

“Also, I really like using a pretty light weight on my Carolina rig during the summer. I’ll use an 1/8 or 1/16-ounce, or even a split shot. Then, I’ll use about 12-inches of leader. Sometimes, I’ll even rig my worms wacky style as well. That can really work good when it’s hot and the fish are on the outside of those grass beds.

Lala says that June also offers some good catfish action on Coletto, but anglers looking for Mr. Whiskers need to pay attention to water quality as the summer heat rises.

“Most of the catfish are deep this time of year,” said Lala. “You can catch them on rod and reel with nightcrawlers and stink bait, but most of them are caught on jug lines. When that water gets really hot, you’ll find some areas of the lake where the oxygen level is kind of low. Those areas won’t be holding near as many fish. If you can find an area with a little cooler water, you’ll do much better.

“The other thing you need to be aware of starting in June is the amount of boat traffic on the lake. This is also getting to be the time of year when you might want to time your trips during the middle of the week.

We’ll have a lot more fishermen out

here during the summer and we’ll have a lot of other water activities going on, too. On weekends there will be all kinds of people out here swimming, jet skiing, water skiing – you name it. But, then again, most of the good fishing will be early, before the lake gets too crowded, so you can still do pretty good on weekends if you get out early and beat the crowds.”

MEDINA — On Lake Medina, fish will also be settling into a summer pattern as June gets underway, says Jim Gallagher of Jim’s Rebait Tackle.

“In June, we’ll be starting our summer pattern,” Gallagher said. “Main lake and secondary points will be the key. Early in the morning – and by that I mean before the sun gets up – you can get a topwater bite. Otherwise, the fish will be deep.

“Our fish are usually deep, especially in summer, but sunny days and clear water drives them off the points and even deeper. It’s not unusual to find fish as much as 300 yards off the points and suspended in 50 feet of water. So, practice your jigging spoon skills – or fish early or late.

There is not a lot of visible structure – stuff people can see and cast to. But, there is some structure down deep.

“Fishing in the creek channel can be real good – so long as you fish in the channel, not on either side of it. Fish will come up as much as 25 feet to hit a bait in the channel, but they won’t move five feet outside the channel to strike. So, you have to find that channel and stay in it – even if it winds.

As summer gets started, Gallagher says the number of potential target species will rise along with the heat.

“We have perch all over the lake –

bluegill, readears, warmouths – you name it, we got ‘em,” Gallagher said. “There will also be some crappie action if you can find some submerged trees. Catfish are always good. And, whites and hybrids will still be around. If you find ‘em schooled up you can have some really good action.”

CHOKO CANYON — June is the start of the summer fishing pattern on Choke Canyon, which means one thing for most fishermen — grass. From now through fall, the majority of the bass will be holding on the outside edges of the grass beds. The few bass that aren’t on grass beds during summer will be on offshore structure in the main lake or in the river channel. Texas-rigged lizards are the traditional favorites for targeting bass around the grass beds on Choke. However, heavy jigs and deep diving crankbaits will also be plenty productive during the summer months.

Although most of the bass fishing action during June will involve probing the depths, there will be some decent shallow water activity during the lowlight periods. During the predawn and early morning hours, fish can still be found holding shallow in the grass beds and along shorelines. Noisy offerings such as Ribbit Frogs, buzzbaits and Pop Rs are among the best bets for surface striking fish.

One added bonus for bass fishermen headed to Choke Canyon is the relatively light summer crowds. While there is definitely an increase in traffic on Choke from June through August, it pales in comparison to what fishermen on other South Texas lakes have to tolerate.

FALCON — Of course, considering it is the southern most major impoundment in Texas, it only stands to reason Falcon will experience a summer pattern earlier than other South Texas lakes. Given this year’s warm winter and spring, anglers should expect the summer pattern to be in full swing before June even begins.

Falcon will still have some shallow water bass activity during the early morning periods during the first few weeks of June. Anglers working the flooded brush along the shorelines can do well with Zara Spooks, buzzbaits and spinnerbaits until the sun gets bright overhead.

By mid-morning, look for bass to be concentrated on main lake and secondary points, as well as offshore structure. Deep diving crankbaits are the top choice for deep water bass on Falcon. But, jumbo



PHOTO BY JOHN JEFFERSON

Fourteen year-old Jonathan Gray proudly displays a meager catch compared to his personal best eight-pounder taken on Lake Pflugerville. Brushy Creek Lake in Leander, though, holds a promise of some unforgettable fish beneath its dark waters. After fishing it with TOJ’s Central Texas editor, he asked his daddy if he would take him back over there the next weekend!

Texas-rigged plastics, swim baits, creature baits and jigs will also produce plenty of bass around deep structure this month.

Anglers hoping for a different type of bass should focus their efforts on the lower end of the lake. Hybrids will be schooling sporadically throughout the month in the deeper water near the dam.

On the opposite side of the lake, the river and upper end of the lake will be teeming with catfish. Prepared baits will produce plenty of channel catfish, while live bait will be a better choice for anyone hoping for a shot at a blue or yellow cat. ★★

CENTRAL TEXAS



By John Jefferson

Spring has sprung, and summer is among us. The bass – all species – have spawned and gone into their post spawn

pattern. Some are slipping into the summer pattern. As cool as our spring was, they may still be in somewhat shallow water, especially in early morning and early evening. They’ll be feeding then, so try topwater lures to start with.

During the day, go deeper for them around points and drop-offs, using plastics. Fish early in the month for the best chance of catching the fish before the weather gets hot and they go deeper ... and more lethargic.

At last count on April 30, **Lake Austin** had produced two of the 12 entries this ShareLunker season. **Lake Fork**, unsurprisingly, marked four. The other six entries were distributed among six lakes. **Lake Dunlap**, on the **Guadalupe River**, just east of New Braunfels was one of those six.

The big lakes produce big bass, to be sure. And they provide countless hours of recreation, both fishing and other water sports. But this column, and most other fishing reports have made the big lakes famous, and will continue to. But there are other fish in the ponds, and other ponds in which to catch them.

THE LESSER LAKES — Every year, about this time, we get calls wanting to know where to take kids fishing. These smaller water bodies provide just that, and more. Some allow swimming, and some have produced some big fish. All are fun. Check ‘em out!

BRUSHY CREEK LAKE — This

38-acre scenic lake in Leander near the intersection of Brushy Creek and Parmer Lane, sits alongside Brushy Creek Lake Park, which offers all the usual park facilities for families and kids, including a water playscape.

The winding track around it gives bank fishermen entrée to most of the north side of the lake, and provides an unending cadre of joggers to study in case the fishing is slow. The south side is Avery Ranch Golf Course, and has bluffs that tell you that’s the deep side.

There is a kayak/canoe launch area on the east end of the north shore near the dam, and they have rented kayaks in the past. Don’t overlook the dam area, since that is known fish habitat. A fisherman walking it the last time I was there caught as many fish as did two of us in kayaks.

If you walk it late in the day, beware of snakes. It’s their habitat, too.

Like most of these small lakes, it hasn’t yielded any bass over eight pounds, but that’s still a trophy. TPWD has stocked it with bass, catfish and sunfish, and will continue to. It also has a fair population of white crappie, too.

Like the other lakes in this column, no gasoline motors are permitted, and it’s a little bit of a hike to tote a kayak to the water. You won’t want to lug a jon boat. Trolling motors are permitted. It looks like it should provide better fishing than it does.

The upper end under the bridge and visible from the Parmer Lane has a lot of stick-ups that are reminiscent of **Lake Bastrop** and others, but it disappointingly proved to be a very shallow mud bottom area. I hoped it might be a likely spot for a spring spawn, but the deep mud might prohibit that. Parks and Wildlife, however, says their surveys show decent bass populations, so there must be a fair spawn.

LAKE PFLUGERVILLE — 180-acre reservoir is seven years old and coming of age as a new lake begging to be fished. Although it is popular with tri-athletes in training, there's still room for everybody. Families and kids love it. There's a nice fishing pier and bank fishing is possible almost all the way around it.

It's a former corn field, so the trees aren't very tall, and sunscreen is a must. Fishermen are beginning to talk about it, but it's still under-fished.

Jonathan Gray, in the photo taken on Brushy Creek Lake, swears by Pflugerville, and has caught an eight-pounder and several other respectable bass out of it. There is a launch area for small boats, but gasoline motors are not permitted, nor are gas cans aboard boats.

It also has catfish, crappie and sunfish. For fish habitat, it has water willows and hydrilla. It's at the intersection of Weiss Lane and Pflugerville Pkwy. In Pflugerville.

MEADOW LAKE — This may be the best kept fishing secret on my beat. I hear the fisheries biologists call it "Thirteen-pound Lake," since they feel it will produce a lunker someday soon. It's north of Dell Diamond and even north of Bright Lake in Old Settlers Park in Round Rock.

Marcos de Jesus, TPWD district biologist in San Marcos tells me their electro-fishing surveys turned up a number of four to six pound bass. Marcos also says it has been stocked with Florida bass. He points out that the area around the park is shallow, restricting bank fishing.

A canoe or kayak is needed to get to the other side and the better fishing. No gas motors allowed.

BRIGHT LAKE — This is the shallow lake to the north of Dell Diamond in Old Settlers Park. It's a shallow but popular 18-acres pond but will probably never be a trophy bass lake. Its record bass weighed 4.63 pounds. There are plenty of sunfish, however. Canoes and kayaks help, but



Even though Amistad Reservoir is over 60 feet low, there are still plenty of places to catch some great fish.

most fish from the bank. There's good access.

LAKE KYLE PRESERVE — Located about a mile east of I-35 on County Road 150, this small lake has potential. Parks and Wildlife is managing it with a 14-21 inch slot limit, which should encourage growth of some large bass. Bass under 14-inches may be kept, up to the statewide limit of five bass. According to de Jesus, it has nice bass and sunfish, a fishing pier and a fish feeder.

BULL FROG POND — The name has fascinated me since I noticed on the rainbow stocking list that it receives trout during the winter stocking. But don't look for any rainbows this late into the year. They're long gone.

It is, however, stocked with catfish every two weeks, making it a popular pond and a good place to get kids started in fishing. Its size and habitat limit its potential. You'll find it near Manor.

TWIN LAKES — This is that inviting-looking water body located on the tract that the YMCA occupies on Hwy. 183 in Cedar Park. It has been stocked with catfish but I'm told they stay on the bottom in the deeper holes away from the bank.

Anecdotally, I've heard that there are some large bass in it on the side with the high bluffs, but getting to them is a problem. No motorized crafts are permitted, and it's a good hike from the parking area to carry a canoe or kayak.

Its size restricts the possibility of grow-

ing large bass, and both lakes are catch and release. The park sometimes closes for events, but otherwise it is open.

BLUE HOLE — This lagoon on the **San Gabriel River** in Georgetown proved to be disappointment when I looked into it. It's a very scenic stream with an enticing waterfall, but just a little stream fishing to interest anglers.

And it gets crowded with recreational users and smokers. It might possibly provide a little early morning fishing before the crowd gets there.

So that's the lineup. Go try 'em. And take a kid! **T★J**



By TOJ Staff

AMISTAD — Since last month's report "Big Friendly" has dropped another five feet. As of early May this popular big bass producer stands at over 60 feet low. Agricultural needs, downstream commitments, lack of rain, and water the

Mexican government has not released are all contributing factors.

This continued decline could well be the reason this lake was a no-show in this year's ShareLunker program that ended the end of April.

Factor in crazy weather patterns and it seems the fish are as confused as some anglers.

At the start of summer look for bass to be solidly in post spawn patterns. The biggest challenge is for anglers that don't regularly fish Amistad to make adjustments and learn a "new" lake.

Topwater lures will work around any vegetation early and late. Once the sun breaks the horizon and starts to heat things up, anglers should switch to Carolina rigs. Rat-L-Traps, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits will also find and catch fish.

Stripers will continue to be working the deeper water in front of the dam. With the sea gulls now on the coast, look for surface commotion, or mark fish on graphs.

Catfish will still be shallow as their spawn continues. Look for catfish moving to and from water 10 feet deep to the bank.

O.H. IVIE — As of early May Ivie was almost 38 feet low. In June this popular bass fishing destination will see the onset of schooling fish across the lake. Black, white, and smallmouth bass will all be schooling together and actively feeding.

My Ivie regulars call this "run and gun" time as once the early topwater bite has ended they will spend the rest of their time looking for these feeding schools. Rat-L-Traps or Cordell Spots will be good for fish marked below the surface.

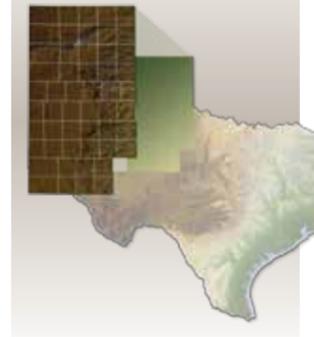
Fish on the surface will attack Pop-Rs, and Zara Spooks.

Early in the month of June, look for the remaining bass that have not spawned to do so in deep water. With cooler weather that persisted later than normal in the year, there is still an opportunity to pick up some good fish.

BROWNWOOD — It looks like this popular lake level is stabilizing at about 11.5 feet low as May began. Look for bass to be relating to grassy edges, boat docks, and any other structure early in the day. A good topwater bite should be available.

Boat docks will become more prominent targets for fish to seek cover, as well as anglers to fish. Small crankbaits will attract plenty of attention. **T★J**

HIGH PLAINS



By TOJ Staff

HIGH PLAINS — More of less is what anglers in the Panhandle are experiencing.

Toyota ShareLunker Season Ends with Mixed Results

The 2012-2013 Toyota ShareLunker program received a below-average number of entries during the season that ended April 30, however the number of lakes producing 13-pound or bigger largemouth bass continued to increase, and investments in DNA testing showed promising results.

Nine fish were intergrades and two were pure Florida largemouth bass. The two pure Florida entries spawned, producing a total of 58,550 eggs. In addition, a ShareLunker offspring from a research lake produced 36,957 eggs. Each lake producing an entry this past season will receive a share of the fingerlings resulting from those spawns.

Twelve entries were received from eight lakes. Two of those lakes, Dunlap and Palestine, produced their first ShareLunkers ever. The Lake Palestine fish, a 13.13-pounder caught by Lindell Booth, Jr., of Chandler, is a new lake record.

Eleven of the 12 fish were returned alive to the lakes from which they were caught. One, Toyota ShareLunker 545, the new Lake Palestine record, was donated to the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center for display.

Lake Fork rebounded from low production the past few seasons to produce four entries, the most of any lake. Lake Austin produced two entries, and Lakes Dunlap, Falcon, Toledo Bend, Palestine, Amon G. Carter and Lake O' the Pines produced one each.

Lake Fork also produced the big bass

This region needs some drenching rains and so far what has fallen has gone into the parched ground as opposed to draining into area reservoirs.

Options remain limited with Lake Alan Henry the best. Post spawn bass will be cruising shorelines, deeper points, and rocky slide areas.

Crankbaits are good choices as are Rat-L-Traps.

Early in the day topwater lures will continue to be a proven tactic. Fish Zara Spooks or slightly larger baits to see if you can tie into a good bass.

For the rest of the region, it all comes down to where boats can still launch. Check the TOJ website for a link to current lake levels. **T★J**

of the season, a 16.04-pounder caught by Richard Scibek of Granbury on February 2, 2013. Scibek's catch earn him Angler of the Year honors.

An analysis of ShareLunker entries since the program's inception in 1986 shows a slight decline in the number of entries per season, from an average of 19.6 the first five seasons to 18.8 the past five. There has also been a slight decline in average weight from 14.1 pounds the first five seasons to 13.8 pounds the last five.

Driving these declines were the fish from Lake Fork. It has contributed 253 of the 548 ShareLunker entries, and its decline from extraordinary to merely great has obscured the patterns observed among other reservoirs. "There's nothing wrong with Lake Fork, it's just getting older, and largemouth bass productivity typically declines as reservoirs age," said TPWD geneticist Dijar Lutz-Carrillo. Lake Fork's average weight of this season's four entries was 14.55 pounds, well above the program's historical average of 13.8 pounds.

"If we take Lake Fork out of the analysis, a different picture of trophy largemouth bass in Texas emerges," Lutz-Carrillo said. "The average number of ShareLunker entries has actually increased from 6.2 the first five seasons to 16 over the last five seasons, and the average weight of these fish has been remarkably consistent, 13.9 pounds over the first five seasons and 13.8 over the last five." **★**

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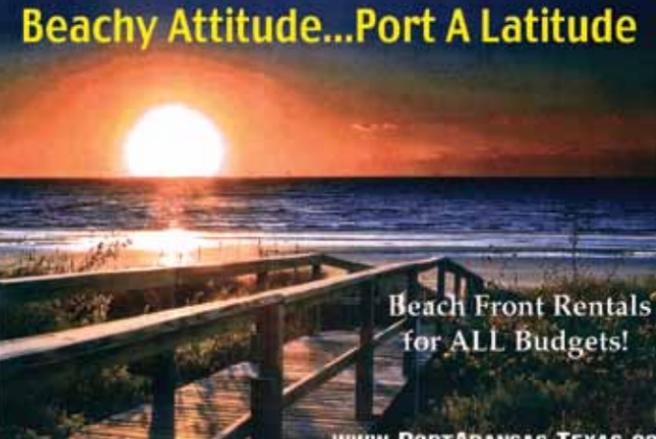
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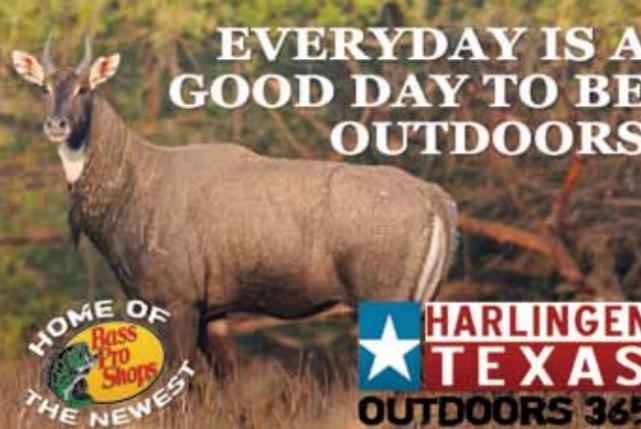
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Outdoor Calendar

Through September 2,
Coastal Conservation Associations Annual S.T.A.R. Fishing Tournament, Statewide. **Call (800) 626-4222.**

Through December 29,
Ranger Programs, **Goliad State Park and Historic Site** — Every Saturday and Sunday free programs and tours at 10:00 a.m. experience a special nature program at Goliad State Park on topics that vary from a nature walks, to bird watching 101, to discovering the plants of the mission, to backyard wildlife. At 2:00 p.m. enjoy a historic journey of Mission Espiritu Santo with a park ranger. For more details call (361)645-3405.

June 1,
26th Annual Houston Chapter Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game Banquet, **Houston**, held at the Houston Marriott Westchase. The oldest, largest, and most successful RMEF Chapter in Texas, and one of RMEF's Top Ten Chapters. For tickets and reservations call Kirk Waldron (713) 688-2627 or Tom Grahmann (281) 389-0488.

June 1,
Hopkins County Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser, **Sulphur Springs**. Call (903) 885-6237.

June 1,
Lone Star Oil Shale Chapter Friends of NRA fundraiser, **Grandview**. Call (972) 435-1170

June 1,
National Fishing Day Youth Fishing Event, Sea Center Texas, **Lake Jackson**. Catch-and-release fishing at marine fish hatchery and visitor center. Open to guests 16 years old and younger accompanied by an adult. Bring your own gear and bait with barbless hooks. No corks, artificial bait, metal leaders or treble hooks. Volunteers and staff on hand to assist first-time anglers. 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Call (979) 292-0100, ext 23

June 1,
Nature Programs and Hikes, Brazos Bend State Park, **Needville**. At least 3 free programs and hikes every weekend, year-round. Call (979) 553-5101

June 1,
Adult Rough Fish Contest, Lake Arrowhead State Park, **Wichita Falls**. Fishing event for anglers 17 years and older. Prizes will be awarded. There is a \$2.00 registration fee for the Rough Fish Contest. Fish must be caught within park boundaries. Angler must be registered prior to the event. Call (940) 528-2215

June 1,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish Event, Lake Whitney State Park, **Whitney**. Families can learn the basics of

fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (972) 900-1296

June 1,
National Trails Day Hike, Palo Duro Canyon State Park, **Canyon**. Meet the Park Interpreter at Overlook parking lot to hike the historic CCC Trail. Wear hiking shoes/boots, bring water and a hiking stick if preferred. The trail is steep in places and we will walk from the rim to the floor. No pets. Call (806) 488-2227, ext. 226

June 1,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish Event, Eisenhower State Park, **Denison**. Families can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (903) 744-3324

June 1 - 2,
Texas Outdoor Family, Ray Roberts Lake State Park Isle du Bois Unit (north of **Dallas-Ft. Worth**), Learn a variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389-8903

June 1,
21st Annual Mark Howell Kid Fish Rodeo, Lake Arrowhead State Park, **Wichita Falls**. Come join us for this exciting fishing event. Tackle and bait will be provided while supplies last. Parents and guardians may assist. Prizes will be awarded in each age group. For kids 3 to 16 years of age. Call (940) 528-2215

June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
Wild Cavern Tour, Kickapoo Cavern State Park, **Brackettville**. Participants should be able to hike, clamber, and climb over loose material to traverse the cavern. Helmets are provided but participants must bring two light sources per person, drinking water, and sturdy footwear for hiking. Signing a liability release is required. Reservations are required. For information and reservations please call (830) 563-2342.

June 1,
Driving Tour, Palo Duro Canyon State Park, **Canyon**. Meet in the parking lot by the Entrance Office for a tour through the canyon with the Park Interpreter. A 13 passenger park van is provided for your drive. No pets, please. Call (806) 488 2227, x226

June 2, 5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26, 30
Nature Tram Tour, Estero Llano Grande State

Park, **Weslaco**. A great introduction to Estero Llano Grande and to the south Texas ecosystems on a two hour guided tour. For more information and reservations call (956) 565-3919.

June 7,
Hill Country Chapter Friends of NRA fundraiser, **Kerrville**. Call (830) 257-0092.

June 7,
Wildlife Habitat Management Workshop, Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area, **Tennessee Colony**. Monthly, first Friday of each month thru August. The workshop begins with a brief overview and history of the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area. Participants will then be taken on a guided tour of the WMA by a wildlife biologist who will explain proper habitat management practices for the Post Oak Savannah Ecoregion. Topics will include prescribed fire, hardwood timber management, strip disking and other mechanical treatments, harvest management, grazing management and herbicide application. Call (903) 928-2251.

June 7, 14, 21, 28
Fishing with the Ranger, Inks Lake State Park, **Burnet**. Every Friday of the month through October- 5:00-6:00 p.m. Up to 30 participants for free catch and release instructional program. No fishing license required while on state park property. We have the poles and the worms. Free with park entrance fee. Call (512) 793-2223

June 7 - 9,
Texas Outdoor Family, South Llano River State Park — Special Two Night Event, **Junction**. Learn a variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389 8903.

June 8,
Pease River Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser, **Crowell**. Call (940) 684-1372.

June 8,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish Event, Bastrop State Park, **Bastrop**. Families can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (512) 581-0377

June 8,
Beginner's Fly Fishing Class, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, **Athens**. 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Call (903) 670-2222

June 8 - 9,
Texas Outdoor Family, Lake Somerville State Park, Birch Creek Unit, **Somerville**. Learn a

variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389 8903.

June 8 - 9,
Texas Water Safari, Palmetto State Park, **Gonzales**. Texas Water safari is a canoe race that starts in San Marcos on the San Marcos river and finishes in Sea Drift TX. Palmetto is the first check point of the race. The race is 250 miles long and is usually over in three days. The race has grown through years, and is expected to have about 150 participants plus support crews and spectators. Palmetto's part in the race usually starts around 4:00 pm and is over about 11-12:00pm Saturday night. For more information about the race visit www.texaswatersafari.org, or call (830) 672-3266

June 9, 23
Geocaching 101, Sheldon Lake State Park & Environmental Learning Center, **Houston**. Learn the basics of this fast growing sport that merges the digital age with a love of the outdoors. Geocaching uses GPS technology to take you on a scavenger hunt finding items hidden throughout the park. No equipment or experience necessary. Advanced reservation is recommended as spaces are limited; call (281) 456-2800 x230.

June 10 - 14, 17-21, 24-28
Jr. Ranger Summer Camp, McKinney Falls State Park, **Austin**. Junior Ranger Basics Each camp week session runs Monday through Friday. Campers will learn from outdoor professionals and are led by staff of qualified counselors. This is an outdoor-dominate camp experience. Activities include flint knapping, swimming, geocaching, fishing, guided hikes, camp games and more. Ages 8-12. For more information, reservations, and fees call (512) 415-8793/

June 11,
Pattison Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser, **Brookshire**. Call (281) 259-9638

June 13,
Hood County Chapter Friends of NRA fundraiser, **Grandbury**. Call (817) 578-1932.

June 14,
Fort Bend County Chapter Friends of NRA fundraiser, **Rosenberg**. Call (281) 543-1667.

June 14 - 16,
Texas Outdoor Family, Caprock Canyons State Park 2-night special event **Quitique**. Learn a variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389 8903.

June 15,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish Event, Buescher State Park, **Smithville**. Families can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany

children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (512) 581-0377.

June 15,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish Event, Eisenhower State Park, **Denison**. Families can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (903) 744-3324

June 15,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish Event, Cedar Hill State Park, **Cedar Hill**. Families can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (972) 900-1296

June 15,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish at Texas State Parks, Lake Tawakoni State Park, **Wills Park**. Families can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (903) 560 -7123

June 15,
Fishing with a Ranger, Blanco State Park, **Blanco**. Open to all ages. Whether you are experienced, or a first-time angler, come on out and catch some fish with us! We have the poles and the worms, and a fishing license is not required. Regular entrance fees apply. Call (830) 833-4333

June 15 - 16,
Texas Outdoor Family, Pedernales Falls State Park, **Johnson City**. Learn a variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389 8903.

June 19 - 23
Houston Summer Boat Show, Reliant Center, **Houston**. Come by the Texas Outdoors Journal booth, #420 and let's talk fishing, boating, hunting, or anything outdoors. For more show information call (713) 526-6361.

June 19, 26
Leave No Kid Inside Day Camp, San Angelo State Park, **San Angelo**. Explore the great outdoors. Enjoy fishing, canoeing, flint knapping, learning to identify animal calls and tracks, leather work and more. Ages 9-12. Deadline to register is June 12, 2013. Call (325) 947-2687.

June 20,
Hays County Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser, **Buda**. Call (512) 289-4025

June 20,
Guadalupe River Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser, **New Braunfels**. Call (210) 861-0405.

June 20 - 23,
Texas Outdoor Family, 3-night Super Awesome

Summer Adventure at Balmorhea and Davis Mountains State Parks, **Balmorhea and Alpine**. Learn a variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389 8903.

June 21 - 23, 28-30
Texas Outdoor Family, Inks Lake State Park, Special Two Night Event, **Burnet**. Learn a variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389 8903.

June 22,
Coastal Bend Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser, **Goliad**. Call (361) 573-2298

June 22,
Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish Event, Galveston Island State Park, **Galveston**. Families can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Equipment and bait provided or bring your own. No license necessary. Adults must accompany children. Registration and start time is 9:00 a.m. Call (713) 376-9873.

June 27,
Northwest Houston Chapter Friends of NRA fundraiser, **Cypress**. **Call (281) 948-8758.**

June 28,
Collin County Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation, **Plano**. **Call (972) 496-1471.**

June 29,
Top of Texas Longbeards Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser, **Pampa**. **Call (806) 669-7032.**

June 29,
Central Texas Big Game Chapter Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation banquet, **Waco**. **(254) 717-7137.**

June 29,
Taylor County Chapter Friends of NRA fundraiser, **Abilene**. **Call (325) 428-8160.**

June 29 - 30,
Texas Outdoor Family, Eisenhower State Park, **Denison**. Learn a variety of camping, cooking, fire building, and other outdoor skills. Participants will need to bring their own food, plates, sleeping bags and personal items. For more information and reservations call (512) 389 8903.

HAVE YOUR OUTDOOR EVENT INCLUDED IN TOJ'S OUTDOOR CALENDAR.

Mail your outdoor calendar items to:

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Houston TX 77043 or
fax to: 713.957.3996 or
email to: toj@airmail.net

Tide Tables

JUNE 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
L4:40A 0.7 H10:43A 1.1 L6:28P 0.1 30						L5:13A 0.6 H11:51A 1.3 L7:08P 0.4 1
H1:24A 1.1 L6:50A 0.8 H12:19P 1.2 L7:48P 0.2 2	H:00A 1.2 L8:21A 1.0 H12:42P 1.2 L8:24P 0.0 3	H4:08A 1.4 L9:37A 1.1 H1:01P 1.2 L8:56P -0.1 4	H4:59A 1.4 L10:40A 1.1 H1:17P 1.2 L9:25P -0.2 5	H5:39A 1.5 L9:53P -0.2 6	H6:12A 1.5 L10:21P -0.3 7	H6:42A 1.5 L10:49P -0.3 8
H7:12A 1.5 L12:21P 1.2 H2:27P 1.3 L11:20P -0.2 9	H7:44A 1.4 L12:37P 1.1 H2:47P 1.2 L11:52P -0.2 10	H8:19A 1.4 11	L12:25A -0.1 H8:54A 1.4 12	L12:59A 0.0 H9:29A 1.3 13	L13:4A 0.2 H10:01A 1.3 14	L12:13A 0.3 H10:27A 1.2 L6:08P 0.7 H10:04P 0.8 15
L2:58A 0.5 H10:47A 1.2 L6:05P 0.5 16	H12:23A 0.8 L3:57A 0.7 H11:02A 1.2 L6:29P 0.2 17	H2:01A 1.0 L5:23A 0.9 H11:15A 1.2 L7:03P 0.0 18	H3:10A 1.2 L7:08A 1.1 H11:30A 1.2 L7:43P -0.3 19	H4:03A 1.4 L8:38A 1.2 H11:57A 1.3 L8:28P -0.5 20	H4:52A 1.5 L9:38A 1.2 H12:40P 1.3 L9:15P -0.7 21	H5:38A 1.6 L10:23A 1.3 H1:35P 1.4 L10:04P -0.7 H6:23A 2.6 22
L11:04A 1.3 H2:35P 1.4 L10:54P -0.7 23	H7:08A 1.5 L11:52A 1.2 H3:38P 1.4 L11:45P -0.6 24	H7:50A 1.5 L12:48P 1.1 H4:48P 1.3 L7:03P -0.2 25	L12:36A -0.4 H8:31A 1.4 H11:58P 1.3 H6:08P 1.1 26	L1:28A -0.1 H9:08A 1.3 L3:17P 0.8 H7:47P 1.0 27	L2:22A 0.2 H9:43A 1.2 L4:33P 0.5 H9:45P 0.9 28	L3:21A 0.5 H10:15A 1.2 L5:36P 0.3 H11:54P 0.9 29

JULY 2013

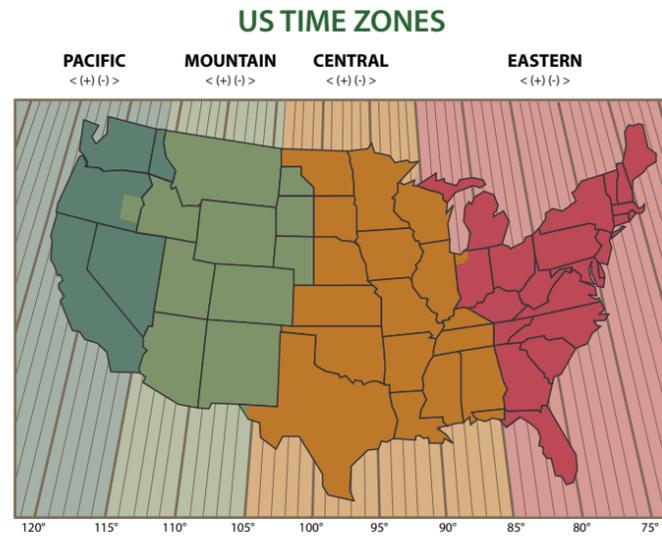
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	H2:02A 1.0 L6:38A 0.9 H11:08A 1.1 L7:13P -0.1 1	H3:35A 1.2 L8:28A 1.0 H11:29A 1.1 L7:53P -0.2 2	H4:32A 1.3 L8:29P -0.3 3	H5:13A 1.3 L9:02P -0.3 4	H5:42A 1.3 L9:32P -0.4 5	H6:05A 1.3 L10:02P -0.4 6
H6:26A 1.3 L11:17A 1.1 H1:55P 1.2 L10:31P -0.3 7	H6:48A 1.3 L11:22A 1.1 H2:36P 1.2 L11:00P -0.3 8	H7:13A 1.3 L11:52A 1.0 H3:14P 1.1 L11:29P -0.2 9	H7:39A 1.3 L12:36P 0.9 H3:14P 1.1 L11:59P -0.1 10	H8:05A 1.2 L1:28P 0.8 H4:47P 0.9 H6:14P 0.8 11	L12:30A 0.0 H8:30A 1.2 L2:33P 0.7 H6:14P 0.8 12	L1:03A 0.2 H8:51A 1.2 L3:14P 0.6 H8:20P 0.7 13

Times are for Galveston, Galveston Channel

TIME DIFFERENCES	High	Low
Calcasieu Pass, Louisiana	-2:14	-1:24
Sabine Pass Lighthouse	-1:46	-1:31
Sabine Pass Jetty	-1:26	-1:31
Sabine Pass	-1:00	-1:15
Mesquite Point, Sabine Pass	-0:04	-0:25
Galveston Bay ent. south jetty	-0:39	-1:05
Port Bolivar	+0:14	-0:06
Galveston Bay		
Texas City, Turning Basin	+0:33	+0:41
Eagle Point (1)	+3:54	+4:15
Clear Lake(1)	+6:05	+6:40
Morgan Point (1)	+10:21	+5:19
Round Pt., Trinity Bay (1)	+10:39	+5:15
Point Barrow, Trinity Bay	+5:48	+4:43
Gilchrist, East Bay	+3:16	+4:18
Jamaica Beach, West Bay	+2:38	+3:31
Alligator Point, West Bay	+2:39	+2:33
Christmas Point, Christmas Bay	+2:32	+2:31
Galveston Pleasure Pier	-1:06	-1:06
San Luis Pass	-0:09	-0:09
Freeport Harbor	-0:44	-1:02
Pass Cavallo	0:00	-1:20
Aransas Pass	-0:03	-1:31
Padre Island (South End)	-0:24	-1:45
Port Isabel	+1:02	-0:42

Tidal adjustments are not predictable for Port O'Connor, Matagorda Bay; Port Lavaca, Matagorda Bay; and Riviera Beach, Baffin Bay since they are driven by wind and weather. — NOAA

Fishing & Hunting Times



JUNE 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30 ☾ LQ						1 ● 6:10A - 11:10A
2 ☾	3 ○	4 ☾	5 ☾	6 ☾	7 ☾ NEW	8 ☾
9 ●	10 ●	11 ●	12 ☾	13 ○	14 ☾	15 ☾
16 ☾ FQ	17 ☾	18 ○	19 ☾	20 ☾	21 ☾	22 ☾
23 ☾ FULL	24 ☾	25 ☾	26 ●	27 ●	28 ●	29 ☾

JULY 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 ☾	2 ☾	3 ○	4 ☾	5 ☾	6 ☾
	7 ●	8 ● NEW	9 ☾	10 ☾	11 ☾	12 ☾
	13 ☾	14 ☾	15 ☾	16 ☾	17 ☾	18 ☾

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Fish, game and all wildlife move in search of food in cycles relative to the moon's location to the earth. The time spans listed above are the prime times to start each day at and along each time zone meridian of longitude 75 degrees (Eastern) 90 degrees (Central) 105 degrees (Mountain) and 120 degrees (Pacific) during Standard time and Daylight Saving during the time it is in effect. To determine the feeding cycle time for best fishing and hunting in the area you plan to fish or hunt advance the sum of 4 minutes for each degree west and back up 4 minutes for each degree east. The next prime feeding cycle (not listed on the calendar) will be approximately twelve and one-half hours later. There are minor periods that occur between the prime or major periods. The minor periods are typically fair periods and last only about half as long as the prime periods.

Feeding Times by Dan Barnett have been proven by analysis of 124 - 3 day bass tournaments between 1967 through 1985 to be reliable and accurate in predicting wildlife feeding activity. The Feeding Times are not a cure-all. Weather and other environmental conditions affect wildlife feeding activity. Annual vest pocket books, which show all the major and minor periods, can be ordered by sending a check or money order for \$15.00 per book. For S&H, please add \$4.00 to an order of 1 to 4 books. Make check or money order payable to: Feeding Times, P.O. Box 2240, Covington, GA 30015. After Oct. 1, please indicate book year. For questions or comments, you can call 404-373-7151.

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