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**Finding The Next Honey Hole**

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# TEXAS OUTDOORS

"Texas' Most Comprehensive Outdoors Publication"

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# Editor's Insight | Bill L. Olson



## ALWAYS DAD

Life is filled with "Firsts" and this June I experience another one. This is my first Father's Day when Dad is not around. On July 28, 2018, at the ripe old age of 92, and after having lived a very full, productive life he left this world for his eternal home in Heaven.

A dad is different than other people that impact our life. The day after Dad's passing our pastor, Clois Smith met with my Mother and two sisters. He asked us kids to describe Dad in just a word or two.

My youngest sister, Cindy said, "Daddy was my best friend. He was always there." Jan, the next oldest commented how he was also her friend. She revealed he had been a mentor in the business world and had pushed her to get her degree.

As I listened I heard two daughters trying to describe their father. Their comments acknowledge the special relationship girls have with their dad.

Clois turned to me and said, "Bill, how about you, how would you describe your Dad?" Without missing a beat I said, "Well Dad was certainly not my friend. He was my Dad and that holds an even loftier position than a friend.

"Many times a friend tells you what you want to hear. A friend will BS you — wanting to make you feel good when times are tough.

"Dad didn't mince words and always told it like it was — even when I didn't like what he said."

It is a challenge being a dad. I know it has been for me with my daughter and son. I've commented before that a father starts out behind the emotional, physical and bonding curve when it comes to a relationship with a child.

I understand the connection between a father and daughter. Maybe it is as simple as the difference in sexes, but have never felt competition between my daughter and me. I didn't see it between my Dad and sisters either.

Having a son offers a whole different set of challenges, even when a dad doesn't want there to be. A father and son relationship may be just as easy to define, but is challenged to accept roles and changes during a life. It might be that simple and it may be more complex.

A father really doesn't want to compete with his son, but for some reason the son wants to compete with the dad. It could be desiring that fatherly acceptance and approval. It could be a lack of experience and maturity by both at that specific phase of life.

It is hard to argue with success and my Dad was successful in so many ways. Professionally he was one of the hardest working men I've known. He certainly pushed the hell out of me in the years I worked for him developing real estate and beyond. This served as my foundation as I was the beneficiary of his experiences.

In the outdoors, Dad was a hell of a shot and had great hand/eye coordination. He was an early mentor on the water at the helm of a boat as well as a good fisherman. Because of him I developed a passion for 4-wheel drive vehicles and off-road adventures.

I have lots of memories of Dad and cherish each. Some are funny as they recall a time I was growing from a boy to young man and then on to middle age. It was a time of growth for Dad too as he came to accept my abilities. It was then he became more of a friend, but still remained Dad.

This month we celebrate Father's Day. Spend some time outdoors with your Dad. It creates memories you will be able to share later.

*Until next month:* Pursue all of your outdoor activities in a safe and ethical manner.

**CAUTION:** All technical data in this publication, especially for handloading, reflect the limited experience of individuals using specific tools, products, equipment and components under specific conditions and circumstances not necessarily reported in the article and over which Texas Outdoors Journal has no control. The data have not otherwise been tested or verified by Texas Outdoors Journal. Texas Outdoors Journal, its agents, officers and employees accept no responsibility for the results obtained by persons using such data and disclaim all liability for any consequential injuries or damages.

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## Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Approves 2018-19 Fishing Regulations Changes

Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission adopted a suite of changes to this year's fishing regulations that includes standardizing harvest regulations for largemouth bass to the statewide limits at 12 lakes and increasing the daily bag limit for commercial and recreational take of king mackerel from two to three. The Commission adopted these changes to the 2018-19 Statewide Recreational and Commercial Fishing Proclamations, the details of which will be incorporated into this year's Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Outdoor Annual:

- Change from 16 inch minimum length limit to a 14 inch minimum length limit. Daily bag will remain at five fish at Lake Granbury, Possum Kingdom Reservoir and Lake Ratcliff.

- Change from 18 inch minimum length limit to a 14-inch minimum length limit. Daily bag will remain at five fish at Lake Bryan, Cooper Lake and Old Mount Pleasant City Lake.

- Change from 14 to 18 inch slot length

limit to a 14 inch minimum length limit. Daily bag will remain at five fish at Lake Bridgeport, Burke-Crenshaw Lake, Lake Georgetown, Lake Madisonville, San Augustine City Lake and Sweetwater Reservoir.

- Change from 14 to 18 inch slot length limit and five fish daily bag limit to no minimum length limit and a bag limit of five fish (only two may be less than 18 inches) at Grapevine Lake.

- Change from 14 to 24 inch slot length limit to a 16 to 24 inch slot length limit. Daily bag will remain at five fish (limit of only one bass 24 inches or larger) at Fayette County Reservoir, Gibbons Creek Reservoir and Lake Monticello.

- Change from catch and release with an exception allowing for possession and weighing for bass 24 inches or greater for possible submission to ShareLunker program to a 16-inch maximum length limit and five fish daily bag with the ShareLunker weighing and possession exception for bass 24 inches or greater

at Purtil Creek State Park Lake and Lake Raven.

- Change from an 18 inch minimum length limit and five fish daily bag for largemouth bass to a 16 inch maximum length limit and five fish daily bag with an exception allowing for possession and weighing for bass 24 inches or greater for possible submission to ShareLunker program at Lake Bellwood.

- Change from 14 to 18 inch slot length limit and five fish daily bag limit for largemouth bass to a 16-inch maximum length limit and five fish daily bag with an exception allowing for possession and weighing for bass 24 inches or greater for possible submission to ShareLunker program Davy Crockett Lake.

- Increase daily bag limit for commercial and recreational take of king mackerel from two to three.

The changes to the 2018-19 Statewide Recreational and Commercial Fishing regulations take effect on September 1, 2018. **T★J**

## Cover Art

“What A Day” is what many coastal anglers hope to exclaim during the month of June. Popular sporting artist Chance Yarbrough's painting of the same name captures three anglers filling stringers with gamefish as they wade a productive shoreline.

June is arguably the single best month of the year to catch speckled trout. Shorelines with grass or scattered shell become popular places to wade and even drift. So are larger spoil islands as well as larger reefs.

Yarbrough's painting captures the color and excitement that awaits coastal anglers. It is a scene every angler would love to step in too this month.

For more information on “What A Day” plus other fine works of art and commissions by Chance Yarbrough, visit [www.chanceyarbroughart.com](http://www.chanceyarbroughart.com), email him at [cyearbrough84@yahoo.com](mailto:cyearbrough84@yahoo.com) or call (254) 424-3171. **T★J**



“What A Day”

## TPWD Unveils New Alligator Gar Website

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department unveiled a new website to educate and inform Texans about alligator gar – the largest freshwater fish in Texas and one of the largest freshwater fishes in North America. The site, which can be found at [tpwd.texas.gov/texasgar](http://tpwd.texas.gov/texasgar), features informational articles about alligator gar and the findings of studies conducted by TPWD biologists.

The new website was created by TPWD Inland Fisheries staff to provide anglers and non-anglers with all the information they need about Texas alligator gar in one place. That includes information on alligator gar identification, management, distribution and fishing tips and tactics.

“There is a lot of misinformation floating around about alligator gar regarding their impact on other fish, where they are located throughout the state and population sizes of the gar that live in our reservoirs and rivers,” said Dave Buckmeier, Research Program Director. “This website will provide Texans with a one-stop shop to find science-based facts and information about alligator gar and

clear up some of the confusion surrounding these misunderstood fish.”

Some other common myths and misconceptions about alligator gar addressed on the website include the idea that they attack humans, that they are not native to Texas, that they are invasive and that their populations are plentiful throughout their range.

“Alligator gar are only present in a handful of states in the country, and although Texas has some of the most robust populations, these fish still face challenges related to angling pressure and limited access to floodplain spawning habitats,” said Dan Daugherty, TPWD research biologist.

“In order to sustain this unique fishery for future generations of anglers we want to engage the public and provide a better understanding of these fish both as a recreational resource and as a valuable part of the ecosystem.”

To date, TPWD research has focused on understanding how long alligator gar live, how fast they grow, how often they successfully reproduce and how healthy our populations currently are. But while they have learned a great deal about these

topics, researchers know relatively little about the anglers who fish for them.

To help answer this question, the new alligator gar website is hosting pre-registration for an upcoming constituent survey that will gather information about people’s preferences, attitudes and opinions about these fish. This information will be used by researchers to help inform upcoming management decisions about fishing rules and regulations for alligator gar.

The alligator gar constituent survey will launch in June, but anglers can pre-register now on the new alligator gar website.

Pre-registered anglers and non-anglers will be notified via email when the survey launches this summer. **T★J**

## TPWD Projects 82-Day Red Snapper Season for Private Recreational Anglers in Federal Waters

Private recreational anglers fishing in federal waters off the Texas coast will see a projected 82-day season starting June 1 under an agreement between Texas

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Parks and Wildlife Department and National Marine Fisheries Service. This is an increase of 40 days from last year's red snapper season.

The agreement is a modified version of the Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit application submitted to NMFS earlier this year, and will allow TPWD to establish the opening and closing of the red snapper fishery in federal waters off the Texas coast for private recreational anglers fishing from their own vessels in 2018 and 2019.

Based on current harvest quota estimates, TPWD projects an 82-day red snapper season in federal waters, while state waters out to 9 nautical miles are expected to remain open year-round. Bag and size limits will remain unchanged under the permit; 2 fish per person daily with a 16-inch minimum size limit in federal waters, and 4 fish per person daily with a 15-inch minimum in state waters.

The federally permitted for-hire sector, which allows recreational anglers to fish from charter boats or headboats, will remain in its current management structure set by the federal government. NMFS will announce the opening and closing dates of the for-hire sector.

In September 2017, NMFS invited each of the Gulf States to apply for an EFP that, if approved, would authorize the states to manage recreational red snapper harvest in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Texas submitted its application for an EFP in February 2018 and subsequently held three public meetings along the coast and set up a web portal online for official public comment. The public overwhelmingly supported the original EFP application and the combination of the private recreational angler sector with the for-hire sector. Under this scenario,

anglers were projected to receive up to 104 fishing days in federal waters.

While NMFS accepted the EFP allowing TPWD to manage the red snapper fishery, it rejected the application's plan to combine all recreational anglers into one user group. "While we respectfully disagree with that decision, we are confident that Texas can successfully manage the red snapper fishery to the benefit of anglers and the resource. As such, this is a positive step forward in our larger discussions with NMFS and the Gulf States about state-based management of the red snapper fishery," said Carter Smith, Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

"Historically, charter boats have been included by NMFS in its allocation for recreational anglers. As a result, I believe it was unreasonable for NMFS to refuse to include the for-hire sector under the Exempted Fishing Permit offered to Texas," said Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Chairman Ralph H. Duggins. "I have advised senior representatives at NMFS that I will vigorously oppose any future efforts to privatize the charter sector through the use of individual fishing quotas. To do so would undermine the fundamental linchpin of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation – that fish and wildlife are public resources."

When managed as a separate group, the allotted poundage for private recreational anglers corresponds with a projected 82-day red snapper fishing season in Texas. Once Texas' allotted poundage is reached, the season will be closed. The red snapper season can also be closed in Texas if the Gulf-wide Total Allowable Catch is exceeded.

TPWD believes if a state significantly exceeds their annual allocation not only

should their waters be immediately closed to red snapper fishing but the following year's state allocation should be reduced by the amount it was exceeded during the previous fishing season. This will motivate each state to manage the red snapper fishery off their coast responsibly and to stay within its allocation.

Help TPWD better manage this resource by downloading the iSnapper app on your smart phone and reporting your red snapper landings. 🌟🌟

## Quail Forever Biologists in Texas Set to Influence Quail Populations on Private Lands

Quail Forever has announced the addition of two Coordinating Wildlife Biologists in the state of Texas to assist landowners in implementing early successional habitat projects for the benefit of quail and other wildlife.

New team members, Derek Wiley and Will Newman, will work alongside Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Natural Resource Conservation Service staffers to help restore the whistle of quail in both the Rolling Plains and South Texas Plains regions.

Supported in part by the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture Partnership as well as upland game birds stamps purchased in the state of Texas, Wiley and Newman will add much-needed capacity for private lands conservation assistance as part of the state's Farm Bill Biologist Partnership. Commonly referred to as the "One Stop Shop" for anything conservation or wildlife-related on private lands, Quail Forever biologists possess the knowledge of federal, state, and local programs to assist landowners in finding the right program to meet their personal habitat, wildlife, and land use goals. Since 2012, the program has impacted 692,130 acres for habitat conservation efforts in the Lone Star State, including technical assistance for 1,875 farmers, ranchers, and landowners.

For more information about private lands conservation programs available to landowners in Texas' Rolling Hills, contact Derek Wiley at [DWiley@Quailforever.org](mailto:DWiley@Quailforever.org).

For more information about private lands conservation programs available to landowners in the South Texas Plains, contact Will Newman at [WNewman@QuailForever.org](mailto:WNewman@QuailForever.org). 🌟🌟

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# Finding the Next HONEY HOLE

*Don't be afraid to branch out and find new water to fish by following these tips.*

*Story and Photography by Robert Sloan*

One sure fire way to have a better success rate of catching trout and reds is to be aware of your surroundings and be able to make changes or adjustments that will put you on more fish. The last week of April 2018 was a perfect example of what I'm talking about.

We had cool fronts moving through every few days. One day the wind would be out of the north, the next it would

be howling out of the south. A hot spot on one day would be toast the next, and muddy enough to walk on. However, we managed to catch a lot of fish that month. In fact, limits of trout were easy on most days.

Towards the end of the month we were on plenty of reds and trout. It was fun fishing, but it was not always easy to find fish.

On high tides we were finding a good number of solid trout, fish in the three to

four pound class in the grass and sand pockets on backwater lakes. One area that came through with numbers of trout was Pringle Lake. It's located just south of the old Army base on Matagorda Island. Getting into that lake can be a trick. But once you are in the drift fishing can be world class for both reds and trout. It's a favorite place for fly fishing guide Tom Horbey.

"During late spring and early summer, it's not unusual to find trout in the six to



seven pound class in Pringle,” he says. “But the fish are often tough to reach. If you go into some of the shallow ponds located on the north side of Pringle there are holes that hold good trout. It’s not at all unusual to find tailing reds.”

Those are areas that a lot of lure fishermen won’t get too because it’s too much work. Just below Pringle is Contee Lake. On the upper end of that water is a small island. On the back side of that island is a channel that’s about eight feet deep. On a hard falling tide it’ll stack up with reds. Here’s the catch – getting to that water is just about impossible with a boat. The way to get there is by wading and working your way through thick mangroves. It’s one of those spots that doesn’t get a lot of fishing pressure. But on an outgoing tide it’s worth the effort.

The latest jag for a growing contingent of anglers looking to find fishing hotspots off the beaten path is to load the kayak up in your fishing boat and head out to parts unknown. I’ve got a friend, that wants to remain anonymous, that fishes about five days a week around Rockport. It seems like he’s always into reds. In fact, that’s

about all he wants to catch.

His game plan is to run his center console to the mouth of drains, anchor and offload his kayak. Over the years he’s found some excellent drains leading into backwater estuary lakes. He said it’s not unusual to paddle up some of the drains and see upwards of two to three dozen tails. But here’s the key to his success – those backwater areas almost go dry on a falling tide. So, he works his way off the grid with incoming tides that bring plenty of hungry reds in with it.

For a good combination of reds and trout you definitely want to check out Redfish Bay, located south of Rockport. I recently fished there with guide Robert Hamilton. We fished about five hours and had a nice box of trout and reds. We put in at Cove Harbor and headed south to Redfish Bay.

The wind was absolutely honking. But the game plan was to fish the protected sides of grass along the Intracoastal Waterway. It was a hit and miss type of fishing. We probably fished 20 spots that day and well over half of them were holding one or two trout.



*There are locations all along the Texas coast that will be covered up with redfish when a rising tide floods an area.*



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*Sometimes great fishing areas are shallow flats, shorelines and back lake areas that are only accessible on flooding tides. Being aware of changing conditions is a key to finding that next honey hole.*

The reds were feeding off the grass and “mudding” on open flats. As the tide turned the reds began feeding on small crabs and mullet. Hamilton had fresh dead ladyfish on board and that was the ticket. The reds would not hit anything but that type of bait.

Instead of fishing the usual areas for reds, where most of the other boats were, we branched off and used the tidal flow and sight casted to reds creating muddy spots in the green water. It was a classic situation of observing where the reds were feeding. When the tide turned is when the muds started showing up. Just about all of them were holding reds, and the occasional trout.

What a lot of anglers don't do is fish along the Intracoastal Waterway, that runs continues from the Texas/Louisiana border down to the Texas/Mexico border. While fishing with Hamilton we eased over to a stretch of the ICW and switched over to live shrimp under a popping cork. That's where we caught several trout up to about four pounds. The high tide had moved the trout up on the grass along the flats of the canal. Pods of mullet were moving along the flats where they dropped off into the deeper water. And trout were not far behind them. Incredibly we were the only boat working the ICW, and it was loaded with fish.

Another very good place to fish flats adjacent to deepwater drops is in the ship channel where it flows into Sabine Pass, located on the Texas/Louisiana border. This is where long time guide Jerry Norris

will fish big topwater plugs for trout.

“There is a liquid natural gas plant located on the ship channel,” says Norris. “On the south end of that facility is a shallow flat that's about 300 yards long. Big trout will move up on that flat with an incoming tide. It's easy fishing but is practically devoid of boats most of the time.

That particular flat has produced trout up to about eight pounds over the past few years. Boats go by it all day long. Those big trout will almost always be feeding on finger mullet. That's why Norris, and a few other anglers, fish this particular

flat with big mullet imitation plugs. Super Spooks are very good. So are Corky Fat Boys that float.

What's amazing is that some lures rule on certain areas of water. For example, Keith Lake, located just west of Sabine Lake is loaded with reds. It's also a well-kept secret among local fishermen.

This is a big and shallow estuary lake. One lure that rules on this water is a Mann's Baby -1. This is the bait Mike Iacconnelli used to win the 2003 Bassmaster Classic. The Mann's Baby -1 is one of the hottest shallow running crankbaits for bass fishing. It's also one heck of a lure for catching reds on Keith Lake. The gold and black color combination is tough to beat. This lure is a floater and runs a few inches under the surface.

Another excellent lure for catching reds is a D.O.A. PT-7. This is a soft plastic lure that's extremely weedless and has an action similar to a knuckle ball. I've used this lure with very good success on the feeder bayous that empty into Keith Lake. Those bayous are loaded with grass that attract a lot of reds. If you fish in areas with lots of grass this is the lure to use.

It's got a crazy walk-the-dog action. They come pre-rigged with a single premium 7/0 hook. One of the best color combinations is black and gold.

If I had to pick one lure for catching both reds and trout on any given day, anywhere along the Texas coast, it would



*The author's go-to bait for trout and reds is a 3 1/2 inch Yum Money Minnow in white/chartreuse.*

be a 3 ½ inch Yum Money Minnow in white/chartreuse. It's a great imitation of a finger mullet or mud minnow. It's especially effective over sand and grass spot holes along Matagorda Island at Port O'Connor and on the Laguna Madre around Port Mansfield.

It's no secret that soft plastic tails rule. But it's amazing how some colors rule on specific bays, lakes and bayous. For example, Norris says the absolute best color you can use on Sabine Lake is red/shad. About 99 percent of his fishing is with a red/shad Assassin.

On East Matagorda Bay guide Charlie Paradoski lives and dies with a 5-inch morning glory/chartreuse tail Shad Assassin.

"That's one lure and color pattern that's tough to beat on East Bay," he says. "I don't know why it's so good. But it is what it is."

One lure that absolutely rules for catching both trout and reds over pockets of sand and grass is a Super Spook Jr., and the go-to color pattern on just about any given day is chrome/blue. There is no telling how many thousands of fish have been caught on this lure in that color combination.

"I've been using a chrome/blue Spook Jr. for decades," says Greg Gamble. "It's got the right action and flash that will catch trout all day long."

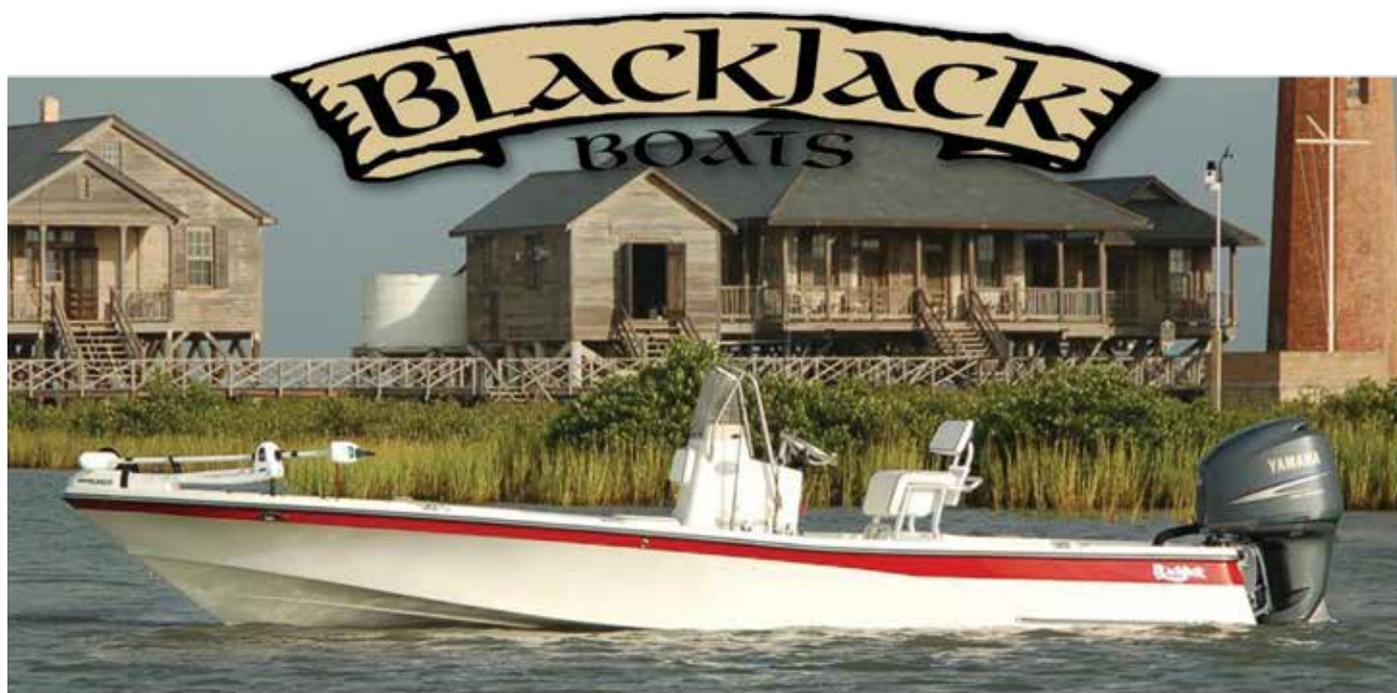
Next time you're out fishing remember that it's always best to slow down,

observe what's going on, pay attention to the tides and always know the major and minor feeding times. And don't be afraid to branch out and find new water to fish. You never know where that next honey hole is going to be located. **T★J**



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*D.O.A.'s PT-7 is a soft plastic lure that's extremely weedless and has an action similar to a knuckle ball. It is great to fish along flooded grassy shorelines and back lake or areas plagued with floating grass.*



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Lake Area Marine

## A Romance Built Around Bass

Stacy Spriggs and Clint Wade met in a honky tonk back in 2010. While both will admit it wasn't exactly "bass at first sight," it wasn't long before green fish became the foundation for a romance forged on hooks, lines and sinkers.

"We eat, live and breathe bass fishing," said Spriggs, 35. "If you were to hang around our house very much you would probably get tired of hearing about fishing.

"We're constantly talking about strategies, something that happened at the lake or reading about it. Fishing is our life."

But things haven't always been that way. To hear Spriggs tell it, bass fishing jargon like 8XD and Carolina rig weren't part of her vocabulary when she bumped into Wade on that muggy August night

at Mo's Place on Kingsland Blvd in Katy.

"I didn't know a thing about bass fishing when we met, but Clint was determined he was going to make me his fishing partner," she said. "He taught me everything I know."

Judging from headlines and tournament chatter that surfaced around eastern Texas last spring, Wade has taught his companion extremely well.

The couple competes as a team on several tournament circuits and they have established themselves as a team to beat in just about any tournament they enter. This is especially true on Sam Rayburn, where Spriggs has had a hot hand at reeling in the big ones.

On March 10, the anglers finished seventh in a Bass Champs event with

five bass weighing 25.56 pounds. Spriggs caught three of the fish.

Later in the month, they won a TTZ team event on Rayburn with an enormous five-fish limit weighing 37.80 pounds — an average of nearly 7 1/2 pounds per fish! Spriggs reeled in all but one of the bass, including a 9.71 pounder that at the time ranked as her personal best.

"That was a phenomenal day," Spriggs said. "Our previous big stringer was 27 pounds. Our goal had always been to crack 30 pounds, but we sort of blew it out of the water that day.

"What was funny about it is I knew how much weight we had because I keep close check on what we're catching," Spriggs added. "The smallest fish we had was a six pounder and I kept telling Clint we needed to cull it with something bigger. Clint was like, 'listen to what you are saying,' but in my mind I felt like somebody might have 38 pounds and beat us. There are so many good fishermen on Rayburn, and the lake is fishing so good right now, that you never feel safe. It's been crazy down there."

Amazingly, Spriggs' knack for connecting with the really big bites surfaced again the following weekend when the couple entered the 2nd Annual Stan Burgay Memorial Tournament.

"We felt pretty good going in because of what we'd caught the week before - we were on some good fish," Spriggs said. "But we went to all of our primary spots that morning and it was like we were fishing dead water. Nobody was home."



TTZ PHOTO

Clint Wade (center) and his girlfriend, Stacy Spriggs, both of Huntsville, display the massive 37.80-pound limit they reeled in during the TTZ Team Trail event held March 24 on Sam Rayburn. Spriggs reeled in four of the five fish.

About 10:30 a.m., Spriggs said they moved to a main lake point in about 10 feet of water in a last ditch effort to make something happen.

They had been fishing the spot for a about 30 minutes without a single bite when she felt something mushy at the end of her Carolina rig, which was baited with a watermelon/red V&M J-Bug.

"It knew it was a big fish, because it bit like a big fish," Spriggs said.

"All the big fish I've been catching lately are just sucking it — it just gets heavy all of the sudden."

Spriggs said it felt as though she'd found a stack of bricks on bottom when she set the hook.

"It felt like a big weight at the end of the line," she said. "I'd made a long cast and it came to surface about 40 yards from the boat and belly rolled. All we saw was a white belly. Clint thought I'd foul hooked a bass, but then it came up a second time about 20 yards from the boat. All we saw was this giant head and mouth. It didn't fight much at all. She came straight to the boat and went right to the net."

The lady angler said she weighed

the fish at about 12 3/4 pounds on an uncertified scale before placing it in the livewell.

"I was more wrapped up in us catching our limit than anything else at that point," Spriggs said. "I was pretty rattled after that. It never crossed my mind that would weigh 13 pounds."

But it did. In fact, Spriggs bass weighed 13.06 pounds on certified scales later that day. She entered the fish in the Toyota ShareLunker program as the sixth Legacy Lunker of the 2018 spawning season, which closed just a few hours later.

Some guys might have a tough time taking such a thrashing by their girlfriend, but not Wade. He claims he is proud of his partner and taking it all in stride.

"You don't hear about many women catching them like she does, but you also don't hear about many women spending as many hours on the water as she does, either," Wade said.

"She works hard at it. We're at the lake 48-50 weekends a year. If we are there, we're fishing. We fish 8-10 hour days, and that adds up to about 1,000 hours a year. It would take most people five or more

years to rack up those kinds of hours. She's caught more big fish in two days than most 70-year-old fishermen have caught in their lifetimes."

Not surprisingly, Wade says he has spent much of the last month trying to pinpoint what his lady partner is doing that he isn't.

"I think she's more patient — she fishes a little slower," Wade said. "I have tried to emulate her last few weekends as much as I can, but it just hasn't worked for me."

"At the end of the day my excuse is she is just living right," Wade added. "Maybe she opened the door for a crippled man and is being blessed for something that I haven't done yet."

"I've been opening the door for women and been overly nice to people the last few weeks, but I obviously haven't done the right thing yet."

What makes Spriggs' track record even more impressive is she has done it all from the back deck while Wade runs the trolling motor and positions the boat.

"I just can't fish up front with Clint — he gets in my way," she chuckled. 🌟🌟



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## When You Can't Find Ammo Anymore

There is some ammunition that is hard to find and some ammunition that is just not made anymore.

What do you do if you have a perfectly good gun in a caliber no longer made or an old classic gun that has not had ammunition available for it in years? The answer is you have to make it or pay someone big bucks to have it made for you.

Winchester came out with the short magnum calibers about 15 years ago. Some of the calibers worked great and some didn't. Some of the calibers were just so stupid that nobody bought them and after a few years they were taken off the market.

All of the super short mags are gone. The 224WSSM and 244WSSM are gone and if you can find ammunition now - you pay an arm and a leg for it. Remington tried to compete with Winchester's 300 WSM caliber by making the 300 Remington Short Ultra Mag. Well, the Winchester's sold well but the Remington's were a failure and they stopped producing the short ultra mags.

There are some older great calibers which are just fun to shoot or hunt with — calibers like the 32 Winchester or 375 Big Bore Winchester. How about the 30 or 35 Remington calibers?



(Left to right) 30-30 Win, 32 Win special, and 375 Win. All three have the same parent case — the 30-30.



Heating the necks of the brass to make them softer while sitting in water allows necking up to 375 caliber without cracking the case.

Guns made for these calibers are well made, fun to hunt with or just to shoot and all you need is the ammunition.

So what needs to be done to get the ammunition to shoot these guns when those calibers are no longer commercially produced? Well, my suggestion is to get a set of dies, figure out what the parent case is or a modern case that is close and load your own ammunition.

The 32 Winchester and the 375 Winchester both have the same parent case, which is the 30-30 Winchester. It is simple to take a common 30-30 case and run it through a die to neck up the brass to accept the larger 32 caliber or 375 caliber bullets.

I needed to make some 375 Winchester

ammunition for TOJ's Publisher and Editor Bill Olson. Bill enjoys pistol hunting and has a Thompson Contender chambered in 375 Winchester. So for this article, and as an example I made some and will show you the steps needed to take 30-30 brass and modify it into 375 Winchester finished loads.

In the case of some calibers like 300 Norma Mag or 358 Norma Mag, you would start with a 338 Winchester or 7MM Remington Mag case.

You will have to neck it up and trim the neck to make the case then you will be ready to load it.

The 224WSSM can be made from 244 WSSM or even 270 WSM cases which will take some extra work and trimming to make it, but if there is no ammo available then this is what you have to do.

For a long time I could not get 7MM STW brass for my wife's long range rifle and there was not any 8MM Remington Mag brass to make it from. I did find that with a little work I could use 375 H&H brass. I had to neck it down in three steps,

first down to 338, then down to 30 caliber, and last I resized it in a 7MM STW die and the brass worked great.

When the 300 Black Out first came out you had to do the same thing by using a 22 Fireball case and opening the neck to 30 caliber or take 223 brass and open the neck, trim the case. Then you can load the 300 Black Out loads and shoot the gun.

Now, back to the 375 Winchester. First I had to find some good 30-30 brass then clean and check it.

Going from 30 caliber to 375 is too big of a stretch and the brass will split, so I had to soften up the neck of the brass and then stretch it in several steps.

To soften the brass, I put the brass in a pan of water with the body of the case in the water and the neck of the brass just above the water line. By doing this, the water will keep the body of the brass cool so it won't soften and allows just the neck to heat up and soften. I used a torch to heat the necks to a red color that softens the brass enough to be stretched for the new caliber.

First, I open the 30 caliber neck to 338 caliber, from there I can take it up to 375 caliber in the next step.

Last sizing step is to full length size the case in the 375 Winchester die, punch out the old primer and find a good load from a reloading book and load the new 375 Big Bore Winchester ammunition.

Now finding a load was not as easy as I thought.

All the new reloading books do not have loads for the 375 Winchester. I had to dig out some of my 20 year old books and found two manuals that had loads for the 375 Winchester.

Sierra said a 200 grain bullet with 37.5 grains of RL-7 powder was the best load and Hornady said a 220 grain bullet with 35 grains of RL-7 was the best load.

I had Sierra bullets so I loaded 10 rounds using their recommended load and I loaded 10 rounds with 33 grains of RL-7 powder and a 250 grain Swift A-Frame bullet. Both of these loads should have a velocity over 2,000 feet per second out of Bill's 14" Thompson



Finished loaded rounds include, (left to right) 30-30, 32 Win. SPL and 375 Win.

Contender. I will give him both loads to shoot and he can let me know which one groups the best.

Old calibers like 222 Remington Mag can be made from 204 Ruger brass and the 264 Win Mag can be made from 7mm Rem Mag brass.

Newer calibers like the 260 Rem and the 7mm-08 Rem can be made using 308 Win Brass.

You just have to find a caliber with brass that is close to what you want to make and then use a little engineering to get what you need. 🌟🌟



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# Port Mansfield

## A Fisherman's Paradise



***Once known as Redfish Landing, this end-of-the-road destination offers world-class angling options.***

*Story and Photography by Danno Wise*

**B**ecause it is located at the terminal end of State Highway 183, once you reach Port Mansfield, you can literally drive no further — at least not in an automobile.

But in a boat — oh, the places you can go. It's little wonder generations of Texas shore anglers have considered this cozy village and its surrounding waters a fisherman's paradise.

Fishermen in the Deep South Texas county of Willacy will tell you anglers have been accessing the Lower Laguna Madre at a point some 23 miles from Raymondville since the early 1900s. At that time, this tiny spot surrounded, which then was part the King Ranch was known as Redfish Landing.

In 1933, Redfish Landing officially became a public access point when Henrietta King, widow of Richard King, leased 197 acres to the American Legion of Willacy County. However, it remained more or less just an access point for several more years.

That all changed following World War II. The Willacy County Navigation District was created in 1948, essentially creating a legal entity that could create a port for the nearby cities of Raymondville and Lyford. In 1950, the WCND condemned more than 1,700 acres, including the American Legion's leased land at Redfish Landing, to create what is now present-day Port Mansfield.

Miles of shallow, clear grass flats are the signature feature of the Lower Laguna

Madre. Anglers leaving out of Port Mansfield have the option of fishing these flats either north or south of town. In fact, it is the remote location combined with endless angling options that sets Port Mansfield apart.

The entirety of the Lower Laguna Madre runs from the Brazos Santiago Pass, just south of South Padre Island and Port Isabel, to the Kenedy Land Cut some 20 miles north of Port Mansfield. Along its length, the Lower Laguna Madre varies from two to six miles wide.

The depth varies somewhat as well. One of the overriding features of the Lower Laguna Madre is its vast shallow flats. The bay's average depth is two and a half feet, with some deeper holes and channels, most notably the Intracoastal Waterway, which bisects its entire length.

Considering the entire Lower Laguna Madre is only some 30 miles long, it is a common assumption guides and fishermen from Port Isabel, South Padre



*Shallow grass flats with lots of sand pockets allow anglers to drift for redfish and speckled trout.*

Island and Port Mansfield all regularly fish the same waters. However, the truth is, these groups rarely cross paths.

The Port Isabel and South Padre Island fishermen generally fish the southern half of the bay, from the Brazos Santiago north to Three Islands. Anglers leaving from Port Mansfield fish the northern half, which stretches from a few miles south of town north to the Land Cut. Sure, there is some overlap, but in general, the bay is treated as if it has two distinctly different territories.

For the Port Mansfield fishermen, fishing "south of town" is much less common than running north. But, there are a couple exceptions. One such spot is the Saucer. This depressed "dish" is, as the name implies, a saucer-shaped low spot in the otherwise extremely skinny flats. Fish often congregate in and around the Saucer. It is typically a consistently productive area for both speckled trout and redfish.

Another area that requires fishermen to turn right and run south of town when they leave Port Mansfield Harbor is Rattlesnake Bay. Located a little further south than the Saucer, Rattlesnake Bay is one of the few spots Port Isabel, South



*At this paradise port anglers regularly practice and encourage catch and release of redfish, speckled trout and other gamefish.*



*A perfect way to wrap up a trip to a fisherman's paradise - Port Mansfield. A solid redfish having inhaled a hammered gold spoon fish over a sand/grass bottom*

Padre and Port Mansfield anglers share water frequently.

Situated on the west side of the ICW, Rattlesnake is a shallow, grassy area tucked in behind the ICW spoils. Rattlesnake is best from spring through fall, as it is just too shallow for fish during winter. In fact, during extremely low winter tides, much of Rattlesnake is often dry. But, during summer and fall it is one of the most consistent areas to sight-cast to redfish.

Immediately north of the town of Port Mansfield is the Kenedy Ranch. The entire western stretch of bayshore is known as the Kenedy Ranch Shoreline or just "Ranch Shore" for short. There are a variety of spots along the ranch shoreline that provide excellent wadefishing, as well as drifting and poling. There are some reds to be found in this stretch of water, but most fishermen working the Kenedy Ranch Shoreline are seeking sow speckled trout.

Further north, just before the entrance to the Land Cut, is Gladys Hole. A relatively deep area for this shallow bay, Gladys Hole is a great summer and winter spot. Due to its muddy bottom composition, it is

especially productive during winter and early spring when spawning size speckled trout are seeking the insulated warmth the mud and deeper water provides.

On the far northern end of the Lower Laguna Madre is the Land Cut. Once upon a time, the Lower Laguna Madre and Upper Laguna Madre, which runs up to Corpus Christi, were not connected. Instead,

there was a jutting piece of ranchland separating them. This changed in 1949 when the US Army Corps of Engineers dug a channel through the Kenedy Ranch and connected the two bays. The primary purpose of this channel, which is part of the Intracoastal Waterway, was to facilitate maritime shipping. However, it also altered water flow patterns in the Lower and Upper Laguna and created a fantastic fishing spot.

The Land Cut is an important feature in this fishery for a couple of reasons. One is its excellent fishing action. This long deep canal is bordered by a "shallow shelf" that provides fish a combination of deep and shallow water habitat. At various times of the year, the Land Cut is an outstanding location for trophy trout, redfish, and black drum.

Another manmade creation that has helped enhance fishing in and around Port Mansfield is the famed East Cut or Mansfield Channel. While the Land Cut connected two previously separate bodies of water, the East Cut did just the opposite - it split what was once a large, contiguous barrier island. In 1957, the Mansfield Channel, which has come to be known as the East Cut, was dedicated, effectively creating South Padre Island by detaching it from Padre Island.

In 1962, granite rock jetties were placed along the Gulf side of the Channel,



*A number of lodging options exist around Port Mansfield including the renowned Getaway Lodge that offers this tranquil view of the Mansfield Harbor from its deck.*

completing the construction of what has become of the most dynamic fishing spots on the Texas coast. Shortly after it was dug, the East Cut became a virtual magnet for all species of inshore and near-shore fish.

Today, the flats, spoils and cuts on the bay side of the East Cut produce gobs of speckled trout, redfish and flounder. Along the granite rocks which jut into the Gulf of Mexico, anglers regularly tangle with big bull reds, tarpon, Spanish mackerel and kingfish.

Just above and below the East Cut lie large sand flats. Although redfish are common throughout the Lower Laguna Madre, these expansive sand flats offer some of the best sight-casting opportunities for redfish found anywhere. These flats are particularly productive during summer and fall. The firm sand bottom offers excellent footing for wadefishermen. Those wishing to stay in the boat can still be experiencing good action while drifting or poling these pristine flats.

### Port Mansfield Harbor Entrance

Port Mansfield Port Director Ron Mills is currently fighting for funding to dredge the Port Mansfield Harbor Entrance, which has silted to the point that it has limited the size of vessels which are able to enter the harbor. While the harbor entrance is an immediate concern, the East Cut channel is also in need of dredging once again and the adjacent Padre Island National Seashore is experiencing a receding shoreline. While it would be possible to use dredge material from the East Cut to restore the beach at the southern end of Padre Island National Seashore, this too will require a budgetary battle.

The East Cut, which was dropped from the Army Corp of Engineers maintenance schedule in 2004, was last dredged in 2009 and was only after a lengthy process of lobbying and circulating petitions by a number of concerned parties. Today, Mills and many others concerned with the economic health of Port Mansfield and the environmental stability of the Lower Laguna Madre and barrier island beaches are encouraging the same sort of grass roots effort to obtain the necessary funding to move forward with these projects. To find out how you can help, contact Mills at [rmills@portofportmansfield.com](mailto:rmills@portofportmansfield.com). ★

When spending time off the water, the big attraction around town is the deer and wild turkey that populate the area. Evenings see visitors hand feeding corn to deer at various spots around town, making for great photo opportunities. The turkey, while more skittish than the deer, will certainly come within photo range more often than not. The Port Mansfield Nature Park is also a popular stop for birding and nature watching.

Due to its size and remote location, dining options are a bit limited in Port Mansfield. However, there are a few

restaurants in town, most notably the Windjammer and The Pelican – the latter of which is on the water.

It's a good idea to bring the majority of your supplies with you when visiting. Poco Loco is a quaint little store that stocks most anything that could be needed on a fishing vacation.

There is a wide range of accommodations, including a number of rental homes. However, visiting fishermen can hardly go wrong booking a room at the renowned Getaway Lodge or renting a trailer at R&R RV Park. 🌟🌟



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# Lake Roundup

## CENTRAL TEXAS



By John Jefferson

There's an old baseball saying that goes: "You win some, lose some, and some get rained out."

I've used that saying in the past, but I'm really not sure it applies too much in life – even fishing. Sure, there are days when it might be better to remain in dock and stay off the water, but many fishermen are aware that you never know when your

bait is going to pass in front of a fish that is either hungry enough or annoyed enough at a trespasser to snap it up. Days when a storm is forecast and foretells danger, though, is a day to reconsider.

One blustery day in Rockport was like that. I met my guide at The Duck Inn, and he called me outside to consider a blowing gale. He said he was willing to take me out that morning, but he doubted that we would catch any fish. I agreed, telling him that I had a couple of rules: one was if my hat blows off in the parking lot on the way to my truck, I re-consider fishing that day. The other was if a wave breaks over my fender on the way to breakfast, I go back home – or plan to stay at the restaurant and drink coffee with the guides. Both had occurred that morning.

We shook hands and went back to our coffee. And lived to fish another day.

Thursday, April 19 was a day sort of like that, but not nearly as dramatic – nor dangerous. The weather forecast all week indicated good sailing. But a front blew in overnight, and **Lake Travis** was white-

capping. I met my guide, Don Steussy, at the Mansfield Dam boat ramp shortly after seven that morning. He hadn't put his boat in the water yet, I guess waiting to see how badly I wanted to go fishing. He seemed confident, although admitting that it "was going to be rough."

So, we went. And I'll admit that crossing the lake to the more protected side made me wonder about our wisdom. We ended up along Hippie Hollow. The first thing I noticed was that there were no hippies. Guess nudity was not the uniform of the day with that high chill factor. Good thing; naked people jumping into the water always frightens the fish. The second thing I saw was comparatively calm water. The bluff the buff people dive from protected us bundled-up fishermen. At least to an extent.

Don said shakey-head jigs would be a wise choice, so that's what we began with. There were still gusts where we were, and our lines bowed in the wind despite the heavy, round jig heads. He also said to fish very slowly. I usually fish too fast, so took his advice.

Not long afterwards, Steussy set the hook on a scrappy largemouth. Its large mouth was bigger than its slender stomach, and if we had been keeping fish, it would have required measuring. But that gave us hope and justified our decision to get in the boat to begin with.

Shortly after that, he landed another. It took me a while to get the cadence down, but finally began having some action, and caught two, myself. If the game warden had shown up, however, he might have ticketed me for child abuse, although the other one was arguably close to a legal 14 inches.

After the sun finally found its way over the mountain, the wind calmed enough for Don to motor us further north. He



PHOTO BY JOHN JEFFERSON

*Lake Travis fishing guide, Don Steussy, came prepared for a cold, windy day on the water in April, although it didn't help the fish to bite.*

considered entering Cypress Creek – until he saw the whitecaps. The north wind was screaming down the creek toward the lake and churning the water. We continued upstream on the **Colorado River** channel.

By the time we got to Lakeway, the wind had calmed to roughly about 15 knots and was no longer at risk of being named by NOAA. Fishing behind the breakwater by the Lakeway Marina, we switched to the Lake Travis favorite lure: the smoke-glitter-colored, twisty-tailed grub. Ironically, Alan Christenson motored in to the marina while we were fishing with grubs. Alan was the first person I remember mentioning these grubs and their popularity with Travis largemouths and Guadalupe bass 25 years earlier. I didn't have to tell Steussy that, however, since Don often guides for Alan when he has an overflow. To be so big, I guess Travis is still a small world when it comes to the fishing guides that work it.

The grubs produced several short, slap-at-it strikes for both of us, and I managed to land one more bass before we decided to call it a day.

It had been a good one, in spite of the wind and cold front that turned the fish off. It also proved that even a less than perfect day can still be productive if your guide knows the lake and where to find shelter. Steussy does.

April is our windiest month of the year. The 2018 version of it was no exception. Remember all the wildfire warnings? The wind shouldn't be that much of a problem in June, although we'll begin to get into hurricane season. ALWAYS check the weather.

Hot weather will also send the fish deeper. Pleasure boaters will start to populate the lakes, too — especially on **Lake Austin**. One way around the heat and boat traffic is to fish at night. The full moon rises on Wednesday, June 27, and that's a fine time to be on the water. A night or two before and after are also productive. Plus it's usually more comfortable, temperature-wise.

A week after our trip, I asked Steussy what fishermen could expect in June. He acknowledged that Travis, along with **Lake LBJ**, were both still hot, and would probably remain that way into June.

"Maybe a couple of hours of topwater bait fishing," he replied, "but that will end around 9:00 or 9:30. Then the fish will go deeper. I'll fish worms after that." He

added that for any topwater bite, a little wind to chop the surface slightly should help since Travis is so clear.

"But nothing like we had that day in April," he quickly interjected. Neither of us would have called that "a little wind."

I had planned to throw a Teckle Sprinkler frog before I got to the lake that April morning. When I saw the whitecaps, I abandoned that thought. I was afraid the hollow-bodied frog might blow back in my face. But in June – unless there's wind that talks me out of it that's what I'll start with in the morning.

June will also be a good month for schooling action early on. The frog may work, but then slightly heavier lures might work better since you usually need to make some long casts to reach the schools of shad-chasing bass that are often slapping the surface for no more than about 15 seconds, or less.

Some anglers keep a rod rigged with a jigging spoon for that challenge. Others of us toss a clear Tiny Torpedo. The Lake Travis reliable smoke-glitter, twister-tail grub is a good compromise since it casts well and still resembles a fleeing shad amid all that chaos of a feeding frenzy.

The weight of jigging

spoons and grubs seem to get them a little deeper and perhaps down to bigger fish than the smaller schoolies near the surface. Schooling can happen on any lake, but Travis, **Buchanan, Bastrop, and Fayette County Reservoir** are my choices.

With water levels the way they are, you can't go wrong this month on most lakes. **T&J**



PHOTO BY JOHN JEFFERSON

*A spunky largemouth that fell to the Lake Travis dependable bait, the smoke-glitter, twister-tail grub on a shaky head jig.*

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# THE MORE WE LEARN



*The latest research trends and survey results were shared at the 2018 Southeast Deer Study Group.*

*When it comes to satisfying the amount of acreage it takes to satisfy a buck's home range, wildlife cooperatives could be the answer, particularly in Texas where the average ranch size is 521 acres.*

*Story and Photography by Bob Zaiglin*

**T**his past February the 41st annual Southeast Deer Study Group meeting, hosted by the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, was held in Music City, Nashville, Tennessee. The theme for the meeting 'Stakeholder-focused, Science-Based, and Data-Driven—The Gold Standard for the State Deer Management System' was addressed by Steve Williams of the Wildlife Management Institute.

Williams described the impact social and technological changes that occurred over the last 20 years have on deer management. He emphasized that deer biologists and managers are stewards

of wildlife that belongs to the public, requiring professionals to not only apply scientifically backed information, but to understand the public's viewpoint when it comes to managing deer.

Like I teach my students, wildlife management is people management, and the public, particularly the non-hunting segment, have a powerful voice as to how wildlife will be managed in the future.

Loss of deer habitat due to fragmentation continues to render management-oriented hunters with less acreage to apply basic proven deer management strategies. When it comes to developing quality deer on small

landholdings, success relies on the practices conducted on the other side of the fence. Should an excessive harvest of bucks occur on one tract, for example, fewer bucks have the opportunity to reach those older, large antler producing age classes on either property. The same is true when one's goal is to balance the sex ratio as it is virtually unachievable because of the influx of surplus animals from the adjoining tract exhibiting little regard to harvesting surplus doe.

In order to circumvent this chronic loss of habitat, wildlife cooperatives have increased as both hunters and more importantly state agencies are beginning

to realize the benefit of managing deer employing accepted management techniques on larger land tracts.

Investigating the interest state agencies and deer hunting sportsmen have in wildlife cooperatives, Matthew D. Ross and his associates at Quality Deer Management surveyed state agencies by requesting information such as whether they entertained cooperatives with full-time staff, if interest in cooperatives increased over the last five years, and were there any agencies that promoted such programs or provided incentives for participating landowners.

Respondents to the survey indicated that 14 states employed a staff member instrumental in developing, maintaining and providing technical guidance to cooperatives. There are 21 states that had no idea as to interest and 12 states recognized an increasing interest in coops over the last five years. Survey results indicated 12 states had cooperative programs while 16 states provided incentives for coops. Ross and his associates also discovered that a minimum of 3.5 million acres are in a wildlife cooperative across the U.S., but stated it could be as high as 29 million acres.

We have learned through research that the does' genetic contribution is equivalent if not greater, in some cases, than the buck doing the breeding.

In order to determine any physical characteristics exhibited by a buck that could serve as a selection trait by female deer, Mississippi State University graduate student Daniel L. Morina along with his co-investigators Steve Demarais, Bronson K. Strickland, and Jamie E. Larson manipulated antler size, body size, and age of bucks subjected to individual does to measure the females' response while in estrus.

With a single buck located in a pen on either side of a doe induced into estrus, located in a central pen, the female was allowed to accept or stand for the buck



*Coyotes and their impact on deer herds is always a concern to managers, but controlling the animals remains difficult.*

of its choice.

In trial one, one large and one small-bodied male of the same size with antlers removed were made available to 30 different does.

In trial two, one old and one young male (3 years different in age) with antlers removed and of the same body size, were made available to 29 different females.

In trial 3, bucks with large antlers versus those exhibiting small antlers of the same age and body size, one pair of six-year-old and one pair of yearling males were made available to 25 females.

Morina employed a uniquely designed circular metal coupler to exchange antlers on bucks used in trial 3.

Based on their findings, does demonstrated no preference for either body size or age, but did select for large antlers. For the six-year-old buck pairing, females preferred the male with larger antlers in 17 of 20 trials based on time spent walking and eight of 10 trials based on time bedded.

Females spent more than 50% of their time close to yearling bucks with larger antlers in three of five trials based on time walking and in all three trials based on time bedded.

A well-presented, scientific-based study employing much creativity, Daniel was recognized for his effort by being

awarded first place in the prestigious student presentation segment of the meeting.

One of the challenges to obtaining credible information from the popular camera survey is the accuracy of identifying deer images. Chad Newbolt and Stephen S. Ditchkoff of Auburn University investigated the factors that influence classification of deer images by employing an online survey delivered to a diverse group of 726 individuals with varying degrees of experience using the technique. Experienced biologists and observers with a high level of experience were also included in the survey. Sex and age estimates of images provided to participants were utilized as a prediction of accuracy.

No surprise that images were more accurately identified by biologists and those experienced with cameras, but the sex and age of bucks was 4.73 and 11.47 times more likely to be classified correctly by all participants than doe and fawn images.

Based on my experience, timing of a survey is critical to identifying fawns because their body size is a reflection of not only birth date, but more importantly habitat condition, which is a reflection of climatic conditions, making it more important to identify unique males and

their age, as the sex ratio and fawn-to-doe ratio can be obtained by obtaining incidental sightings throughout the early fall and incorporated into the camera survey results.

The impact coyotes have on deer remains a concern to managers, and their interest has paralleled the predators' increase over the last few years throughout

the Southeast. Research findings from the western U.S. indicates that coyotes may increase reproductively in response to intensive predator control, but their response in the Southeast remains relatively unknown.

To get a better understanding of the coyotes' reproductive response to intense control, John C. Kilgo of the USDA Forest

Service Southern Research Station and his associates used litter size, pregnancy rate, and fecundity in unexploited coyote populations in order to measure the impact of exploitation. The researchers examined the reproductive tracts from 235 females trapped from 2010 through 2012.

Results of this study indicated that the number of coyotes trapped annually remained similar indicating that reproduction compensated for those removed with the age structure of the population leaning toward a younger one. Although not significant, adult reproductive parameters tended to increase through both trapping and pre-trapping periods; however, fecundity was lower during the trapping period. They attributed this fact to an increase in juvenile animals which oftentimes failed to breed. As a result, compensatory reproduction in response to trapping was not evident, and the population recovery was considered the result of migrating animals from contiguous land tracts.

CWD (Chronic Wasting Disease) remains on the mind of biologists across the U.S. And even though the states where it has surfaced continually attempt to restrict its emasculating effect, it continues to slowly spread.

The most recent discovery of the disease was a hunter reported buck in



*Deer management on small landholdings remains dependent on what happens on the other side of the fence.*

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Issaquena County, Mississippi. Working in cooperation with the Mississippi State University Deer Lab and the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute in order to determine the animal's origin, the genetics of the animal were compared to known genetics of resident deer, and it was determined to be a native deer.

As of January, 2018, CWD has been reported in 186 counties in 22 states as well as two provinces in Canada. It has also been documented in reindeer and moose in Norway and a small number of imported cases in South Korea.

The last evening of the meeting was celebrated over dinner as deserving students were recognized for their presentations. As chairman of the student presentations, I can assure everyone that we are leaving the management of this iconic species to well-trained and motivated young, upcoming biologists.

The top three student presenters recognized in 2018 were Daniel L. Morina, Jordan L. Youngmann, and Jacob L. Dykes, all students at Mississippi State University.

Onalise R. Hill (Texas A&M-Kingsville) and Jonathan A. Matthews (University of Kentucky) were awarded

first and second places, respectively, while Kent A. Keene (Auburn University) and Colby B. Henderson (Mississippi State University) shared third place honors in the poster presentation awards.

The most coveted award in whitetail deer management, the "Deer Management Career Achievement Award" was bestowed

upon my close friend and colleague Dr. Steve Demarais, the Dale H. Arner Professor of Ecology and Management at Mississippi State University.

The 2019 Southeast Deer Study Group meeting will be hosted by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife in late February in Louisville. **T★J**



*Although a doe will select her mate based on antler size, it often depends on the male available as bucks spend much of their time competing for a position in the breeding hierarchy.*

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# CoastWatch | Danno Wise

June is always a welcomed sight for Texas coastal fishermen. After winter fronts and spring winds, saltwater fishermen along the coast are anxious to experience June's calmer breezes and warmer currents. The calmer winds and warming temperatures usher in the start of summer fishing activity along the Texas coastal curve.

During the succession of warm weather months that starts in June, Texas saltwater fishermen will have more options available to them than at any other time of year. Redfish, trout and flounder will be plentiful. Additionally, a good many light-tackle anglers will be fishing along the beachfronts and jetties for speckled trout, redfish, Spanish mackerel, jacks, mangrove snapper, tarpon and snook.

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 patrolling the nearshore 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 testing angler's mettle throughout the summer.

And, lest anyone forget, June 1 is the long-awaited opening of the federal red

snapper season. It's a safe bet there will be plenty of Texas anglers running offshore together their red snapper fix once the season opens. 🌟🌟



South Padre Island guide Capt. Austin Camacho says he is looking forward to some easy fishing in June.

"June is a real good month for us," said Camacho. "Really, it's usually pretty easy to catch fish in the Lower Laguna Madre during June.

"One of the easiest ways to catch limits of specks is using popping corks and shrimp while fishing along the ICW and around the spoil islands early. Later in the day, we'll head up north and start looking for reds over on the east side.

"When I'm fishing the east side flats, I'll mix it up when it comes to what I'm throwing. During the calm morning hours, I'll throw topwaters. After that, I'll switch between skipping ballyhoo and

throwing red cocohoes. We can usually pick up plenty of reds through the morning and, really, into early afternoon.

"Starting in the middle of June we'll start fishing Gaswell Flats a lot more. There will also be plenty of trout around the causeway and on The Pasture - the flats just north of the causeway.

Of course, the extreme southern Texas coast is best known for variety and beginning in June anglers at the tip of Texas will have plenty of beachfront and offshore options to choose from in addition to good bay fishing. 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.

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.

Port Mansfield guide Capt. Steve "JR" Ellis of Get-A-Way Adventures Lodge says June will see lower winds, calmer water and outstanding fishing in his part of the Lower Laguna Madre.

"I really look forward to June," said Ellis. "That's when it starts getting hot and



PHOTO BY DANNO WISE

Back lake and marsh areas, grassy shorelines and the Land Cut are all productive option on the Lower Laguna Madre in June.



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON JR.

As temperatures heat up anglers will fish through the night or well before first light. Tamara Murray caught this 34 inch redfish at Packery Basin while fishing bait well before sunrise.

calm and the water starts to get warm and clear – perfect for sight-casting, which is my preferred way to fish. Anywhere along the ICW where there are spoil islands along both sides and clear water, there will be fish. The sand flats along the east side will have fish working over them.

“There will be fish almost everywhere in June, but I really like fishing along the spoils along the East Cut. Those can be pretty good early in the morning. Along the west shoreline, wadefishing is also good. Usually it is too windy to fish that area in the spring, but by early summer it calms down enough to fish there.

“Of course, summer is also when the traffic starts increasing and people are running everywhere looking for fish. So, when it starts getting crowded, I like to start in an area where I can kind of see where all the traffic is moving. Once I get an idea where everyone has been running, I will hit the areas where the boats haven’t been running. That will save you a lot of running and allow you to fish water that hasn’t been hit.

“Our jetty fishing also gets going in June. We’ll have bull reds, tarpon,

kingfish and Spanish mackerel around the jetties starting in June. Any chance we get, where we have good conditions, we’ll be out around the jetties.”

From the Land Cut, around the mouth of Baffin Bay, up through the Upper Laguna Madre and along the entire shoreline of St. Jo Bay Island in Aransas Bay is some of the most diverse habitat providing excellent fishing throughout the summer months. With warm water temperatures, lighter winds and speckled trout wrapping up their spring spawn the “big feed” is on.

Channel ledges, rocky structure, grassy shorelines and sand pockets offer a variety of structure to fish in Baffin. At first light anglers will want to be wading or drifting shorelines in



A gold spoon fished in clear shallow water grass flats is a good way to get hooked up with a redfish.



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PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

Red snapper season opens in Federal waters on June 1. This angler caught this nice snapper while fishing out of Port Mansfield. Notice the trout tackle used to add even more sport to the battle with these tasty fish. Port Isabel, Port Mansfield, Packery Channel and Port Aransas are all ports offshore anglers will leave from in their pursuit of a variety of pelagic species this month.

shallow water. Topwater lures are a good option and can be an opportunity for a good portion of the day when winds are light. Try fishing D.O.A.s PT-7 in grassy areas or when there is an abundance of floating grass. This torpedo shaped lure has a rattle chamber and is rigged weedless.

As the morning warms look for speckled trout to slowly make their way to deeper depths. Soft plastics rigged on light jigheads will help continue the action.

If the water is a little off color or sandy, try throwing a paddle tail soft plastic. The additional vibration will help fish hone in on your offering.

In June live bait anglers will be throwing croaker. Many will target the sand pockets surround by grass beds. Cast to the pockets and when a thump is felt indicating a speck has picked up the croaker pause for three to four seconds before setting the hook.

Some anglers will accomplish this by keeping their reel in free-spool and letting the fish run with the bait while others will simply extend their arms to full length before setting the hook.

Either side of the JFK Causeway is crash channels and grassy flats. The grass beds along Laguna Shores Drive is a good option. On the north side of the causeway the Boat Hole and surround flats will keep anglers busy catching scattered trout as well as redfish.

Angler should also drift the deep pocket of Packery Flats. Also fishing the Packery Basin by the launch ramp as well as around the granite jetties is a good way to catch some nice trout as well as a possible surprise — snook.

Those fishing from a kayak will find a variety of access points behind Mustand Island. The channels and flats around Shamrock Cove is a good way for paddlers to fish some beautiful waters and catch some nice fish. **T★J**



Aransas area fishermen will mostly be targeting trout during the late spring/early summer time period that is June. Trout will be found in two to five feet of water over sand and grass. Look for a good topwater bite early. Later in the morning, anglers will need to switch to soft-plastics or live bait. The go-to bait for most trout fishermen in the Aransas area starting in June 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 mid-day on, after the boat traffic has died done. Soft-plastics and spoons will produce plenty of reds, as will cut shad and mullet. Anglers should also keep an eye out for large schools of black drum on the flats this month. When black drum are found, dead shrimp will draw plenty of strikes.

There will also be plenty of options for fishermen in the Rockport area during June. Those wanting to fish close to Rockport should check Aransas and

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Redfish bays, which should be holding plenty of trout this month. Croaker or pinfish will be the bait of choice for most trout fishermen, although there will be a decent topwater bite early and soft-plastics will also produce some fish later in the day.

The Upper Laguna Madre will also be producing some good catches of specks and probably be a little less crowded for those willing to run a little further. Anglers can also expect to find a decent amount of redfish on the flats throughout the day. Live shrimp, cut mullet, spoons and soft-plastics will be the best bets for redfish.

Black drum will also be prevalent on the shallows this month. During June, fishermen can expect to see huge herds of black drum working across area flats. Dead shrimp are the most consistent producers 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.

As the month of June warms look for anglers to catch their trout limit early in the day and then will switch to trolling for kingfish. Be sure to tie on a titanium leader. Kingfish will also hit topwater lures so tie on a floating fake with silver side that offers a lot of flash to tempt the king mackerel.

Seadrift guide Capt. Nathan Beabout of N&M Sportsman's Adventures says June sees summer fishing patterns in full swing.

"By June, our summer time pattern is in full swing," said Beabout. "The later part of April and first half of May have been a little tricky with late season cool fronts. The water in San Antonio Bay has been about a foot lower than normal this time of year, but is slowly starting to come back.

"I expect the same trout and redfish patterns for June. With much of our grass beds returning after a hard winter, trout specifically tend to pull off the shorelines and linger in more of the scattered sand pockets than over the grass covered shorelines. The bait will tend to hover in the grass and stay clear of the sand pockets, but I believe these predator fish can't move as stealthy as they want in the dense cover, so they patrol the edges using it as an ambush point.

"It is hard to make yourself fish outside the bait, but under this instance it can

be more productive. If we have some coastal flooding, which usually happens at least once in June, then your predator fish will be found on top of the grass bed. Throwing a topwater, a Corky Softdine or a 4-inch Down South Southern Shad with a 1/16-ounce jig head will be effective.

"For us, redfish have been in short supply on the shorelines and reefs. Now they are loaded in our back marsh, but it's kind of hard to go walking through the mud after spending the better part of the day on firm bottoms. According to the old log book, schools of reds will start to show up in certain locations in June. Over the next several weeks I will be on the lookout.

"One thing I am excited about in this summer pattern, is that my research and figuring out some of the trout

spawning cycle has continued to produce big trout for me and my customers. In the last couple months in correlation with their cycle we have had several fish between 26 and 28.5 inches at certain times of the month.

"I hope to continue this trend all through the summer, and continue to fine tune what I have discovered in our bay system." ★★



PHOTO COURTESY CAPT. NATHAN BEABOUT

One thing Capt. Nathan Beabout is excited about is that his research has figured out some trout summer pattern cycles that continues to produce big trout.

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# A Season of Lunkers



*The recap of the new 2018 ShareLunker categories along with the big, over-13 pound bass that led the way.*

*Story by Matt Williams*

*John LaBove almost released his 15.48 pounder after a faulty scale showed it to weigh 12.9 pounds.*

COURTESY PHOTO

**T**oyota ShareLunker recently wrapped up its first spawning season under a revamped format aimed at taking Texas Parks and Wildlife's 32-year-old spawning/genetics research program in a new direction. The direction is new because the program now allows for year-round participation and in several different weight classes instead of one. Following a blueprint similar to Florida's highly successful TrophyCatch program, ShareLunker accepts entries as small as eight pounds. Anglers can enter electronically with proper photo documentation and everyone who enters is automatically eligible to win neat prizes by random computer drawing, including

\$5,000 shopping sprees to an outdoor retailer.

Some of the main ideas behind the new format are to drum up more angler interest, help fisheries scientists get a better grip on statewide trophy bass distribution and provide a jump start on rebuilding the state's Florida bass brood stock using offspring from giant Texas bass.

TPWD put plenty of incentives on the table to boost participation this year, and lots of anglers have gobbled up the bait.

As of April 20, 206 entries had been received in the program's four categories. Three of the categories — Lunker Class (for bass 8-pounds-plus or 24 inches or

longer), Lunker Elite (for bass 10 to 12.99 pounds) and Lunker Legend (for bass 13 pounds and larger) — are open for entry year around, Jan. 1 - Dec. 31.

The fourth category is Lunker Legacy (for bass 13 pounds and larger). These fish are particularly special because they must be caught Jan. 1 - March 31 and turned over to TPWD for spawning purposes. Craig Bonds, TPWD's chief of inland fisheries, calls Legacy Lunkers the "heart and soul of the program."

A recount of nearly four months of entries illustrates what just about any Texas big bass junkie already knows: There are big bass to be caught from public lakes in all corners of the state.

More than five dozen lakes (64) have produced ShareLunker entries since January 1. Among them are 148 Lunker Class; 55 Lunker Elites, 2 Lunker Legends and six Legacy Lunkers. Lake Fork leads in total entries with 31; Conroe (18), Athens (10), LBJ/Sam Rayburn (9 each) and O.H. Ivie (8).

It's no surprise that all of the Legacy Lunkers were March lunkers. March has long been considered the bewitching month for catching heavyweight Texas bass. Of the 576 ShareLunkers reported since the program's inaugural season in 1986-87, 247 were caught during March.

Five of the six Legacy Lunkers were paired with hand-picked males for spawning in hatchery raceways at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens. Lake Fork produced three of the fish. Lakes Kurth, Sam Rayburn and Twin Buttes accounted for one each.

The Twin Buttes 13.4 pounder caught by Austin Terry of San Angelo and the 13.34 pound Kurth bass caught by Pablo Torres of Lufkin are particularly noteworthy. Terry's fish is the first ShareLunker reported from the 9,000 acre West Texas lake in nearly three decades.

Torres' fish is the first ShareLunker ever reported from the 726 acre impound near Lufkin. It is also the only Legacy Lunker of the year shown to have pure Florida genes via genetics testing. TPWD fisheries biologist Todd Driscoll of Brookeland

says Kurth has a rich history of Florida bass stockings dating back to the early 1990s, so it came as no surprise to learn the bass was pure.

As spawning success goes, this season wasn't the program's best year on record by any means. But it wasn't the worst, either.

A 13 pounder caught from Lake Fork by Michael Terrebone of Cut Off, LA, produced an estimated 28,000 bass fry, while a Fork 13.06 pounder caught by Alex Finch of North Richland Hills yielded about 14,000 offspring.

TFFC hatchery manager Tony Owens says the Torres bass spawned an estimated 46,000 eggs in mid-April, but about 50 percent were lost because they weren't fertilized by the male. The biologist says it is not



COURTESY PHOTO

*Pablo Torres' 13.34 pounder from Lake Kurth was the only pure Florida strain largemouth turned over to the Toyota ShareLunker program this season. Biologists say the fish recently spawned about 46,000 eggs at the program headquarters in Athens. Any offspring from the fish will be used by the state in rebuilding its Florida bass hatchery brood stock.*

uncommon for such losses to occur in the wild.

The biggest fish of the bunch — a 15.48 pounder caught at Fork by John LaBove of Greenville — produced only a handful of fry but became a movie star in the process.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department fisheries technician Shane Carter placed a GoPro camera in the hatchery raceway with the 15 pounder and her three-pound male companion resulting in some really cool footage that can be viewed on the TFFC Facebook page.

The video shows the much smaller male bass nudging, rubbing and nipping the giant female as part of the courtship ritual. The big female occasionally tilts on its side and shutters in an attempt to deposit eggs on an Astro-turf door mat strategically placed in the center of the hard bottom raceway to simulate a spawning bed. It may be biggest bass actively spawning that has ever been documented on high quality video.

That's all interesting stuff. So are the stories behind the individual fish and how



TPWD PHOTO

*Lure designer Alex Finch used a bladed jig that he designed to fool this 13.06 pounder at Lake Fork. Finch's bass spawned an estimated 14,000 eggs.*

they were caught. Here's a recap:

Angler: Austin Terry

Weight: 13 pounds

Date: March 14

Bait: 1/2 ounce spinnerbait,

Terry and his stepdad, Randy Wrobel, both of San Angelo, were out enjoying an afternoon of fun fishing in Wrobel's new Bass Tracker when Terry made a casual cast to a nearby shoreline with Santone Red River Special spinnerbait that resulted in a bass of a lifetime.

"Actually, the fishing had been pretty good considering the lake almost dried up two years ago," Terry said. "We had only been on the water for about 30 minutes and I had already caught several fish and lost two that felt pretty big. I cast to the opposite side of some salt cedars and she grabbed it about 10 feet from the boat."

An avid tournament angler, Terry knew right away that he had connected with a big fish.

"She ended up running back through the brush and getting wrapped up before she swam back out and I could work her to the boat," he said. "It got pretty chaotic there for a minute."

Angler: John LaBove

Weight: 15.48 pounds

Date: March 2

Bait: 3/8 ounce black/blue Berkley Jig

LaBove was fishing alone on the afternoon of March 2 when he reeled in the biggest bass reported from Lake Fork since 2013 and the No. 48 heaviest Texas

bass of all time. He said he had already caught nearly a dozen fish, including a 6 1/2 pounder, from the stained water using a Chatterbait when the bite slowed to a crawl.

The angler said he thought about calling it a day but decided to make a few casts with a jig first. A cast that landed near shore in about three feet of water resulted in a subtle thump and a 26 1/2 inch giant with a mouth seemingly large enough to engulf a softball.

"She grabbed it and I felt a little tick," he said. "The line moved about five feet and I set the hook. It came right towards the boat but didn't really fight that hard. The fish rolled on its side and that's when I got a look at how big it was. It was huge."

LaBove didn't have a scale to weigh the fish, so he approached a nearby boat to ask another angler for some help.

"He had scale and it read 12.9 pounds," LaBove recalled. "I was about ready to release it back into the lake, but the guy who weighed the fish told me he thought his scales were wrong. He thought the fish was much heavier than 12.9 and convinced me to take it in have reweighed. I'm glad I did."

Angler: Michael Terrebonne



TPWD PHOTO

Austin Terry's 13 pounder from Twin Buttes Reservoir is the first ShareLunker reported from the 9,000-acre lake since 1989.

Lake: Fork

Weight: 13 pounds

Date: March 8

Bait: Black Salty (Live Bait)

Michael Terrebonne's big bass experience at Lake Fork was a family affair witnessed by his 71-year-old dad, Michael Sr., and his brother, Dwayne. The Terrebonnes, from Cut Off, LA, were in the middle of their annual spring vacation to Fork when the biggest bass any of them had ever seen came calling.

Terrebonne, 50, said big winds had made it difficult for his dad to fish that week, so he and his brother tethered their boat to a stump on a point in the mouth of Little Caney Creek and broke out the live bait.

"We were using Black Salty's under a cork," Terrebonne said. "I'd caught a 9 1/2 pounder on a crankbait two days earlier, but the winds were so bad my dad could hardly fish. That's why we decided to go to live bait."

Terrebonne said it took about 30 seconds hook-to-net to get the fish in the boat once it gobbled up the black salty, which is technically a goldfish.

"The only thing that scared me was when she dove under the boat at the last second," Terrebonne said. "We had already seen her roll on her side and she was huge. Everybody was yelling 'get the net!' It was pretty exciting."



TPWD PHOTO

Lady angler Stacy Spriggs of Huntsville reeled in her 13.06 pound ShareLunker while competing in a bass tournament on Sam Rayburn.



TPWD PHOTO

Michael Terrebonne was using a live Black Salty beneath a cork when he caught his 13 pounder at Lake Fork. The fish spawned an estimated 28,000 eggs.

Angler: Stacy Spriggs  
 Lake: Sam Rayburn  
 Weight: 13.06  
 Date: March 31  
 Bait: Carolina rig J-Bug

Stacy Spriggs, 35, has had a hot hand for outsize bass at Sam Rayburn this year. The lady angler from Huntsville has reeled in number of big bass topping the seven-pound mark since Jan. 1, including the 13.06 pound giant that grabbed her Carolina-rigged J-Bug as she dragged it through 10 feet of water.

Spriggs, who was fishing a team tournament at the time with her boyfriend, Clint Wade, said the big fish brought a welcomed end to what had been an otherwise dull morning.

The couple had fished all of their best spots without much luck on that memorable Saturday morning when they decided to move to a main lake point with hard bottom.

"We been there about 30 minutes when she hit," Spriggs. "It just loaded up when she bit. I knew it was a big fish."

Interestingly, Spriggs and Wade didn't win the tournament because they were unable to put together much weight to go with the huge kicker. They finished fifth with 19.69 pounds.

Angler: Pablo Torres, Jr.  
 Lake: Kurth  
 Weight: 13.34  
 Date: March 25  
 Bait: Senko

Pablo Torres, Jr. of Lufkin was fishing

at Lake Kurth with his son-in-law, Ryan Cantrell, on a breezy Sunday when he cast a wacky rigged Stik-O in eight feet of water near the dam and let it fall slowly towards bottom. He attempted to move the bait after a few seconds, but it wouldn't budge.

"They were biting sort of funny that day," Torres said. "You'd just pick up and it would feel heavy. At first I didn't even know it was a fish until it took off. She came up a good ways from the boat and she was so big she could barely get her head out of the water. When I got her up to the boat, I told my son-in-law he needed

a bigger net."

While other big fish have been reported from Kurth over the years, Torres' bass is the first to be weighed on certified scales and officially documented as a weight record for the small lake owned by the City of Lufkin.

Angler: Alex Finch  
 Lake: Fork  
 Weight: 13.06  
 Date: March 11  
 Bait: 3/8 ounce Finch Nasty Thumper Bladed Jig

Alex Finch is a Dallas-area banker who designs some fishing lures on the side. In early March, he caught a 13.06 pounder at Lake Fork that has been particularly good for his bait business. The fish pounced on a Finch Nasty Thumper bladed jig in a juvenile gizzard shad color pattern.

"A lot of people hadn't heard about this bait, but there are a lot of them throwing it now," Finch said.

Finch said the big bass hit at high noon in five feet of muddy water on a large spawning flat.

"I don't think she was spawning, but she was definitely up there making her way towards the shallows," Finch said. "When I stuck her she jumped about 30 yards from the boat, but I didn't really realize how big she was until she jumped again, right beside the boat. That's when I knew it was in a different class than anything I'd caught before. I've always wanted to catch one of these fish. It's been a dream for me." **T★J**



This screenshot image of a TPWD video shows John LaBove's 15.48 pound Toyota ShareLunker engaged in spawning activity in a hatchery raceway at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens. The GoPro footage was captured by TPWD fisheries technician Shane Carter.



## Choosing the Right Artificial

No matter how many artificial lures are crammed into your tackle box, picking the best one for the task at hand is easy. If you study the selection of lures carefully, you will suddenly discover that you have a gut feeling about one of them. Whether it's an old standby that boasts an enviable record of success or a new acquisition that has never been in the water and you can't wait to try, you'll do everything possible to make that bait work because you believe it will catch fish.

Confidence is the key to success in any endeavor and it certainly is the key to fooling fish with an artificial lure. Too many anglers go through the motions of casting and retrieving a bait without really becoming convinced it will work. A strike takes them completely by surprise because they don't really expect it. Experts tell us that it is much better to fish a lure enthusiastically for a short time rather than keep it on when you don't expect it to catch fish.

If there is a secret to working a lure successfully, it has to be a continuing feeling that a fish is eyeballing it every second it's in the water and will strike any moment. When you begin to lose that confidence, switch lures or go back to fishing with natural bait. It is truly senseless to keep chucking an artificial and going through the motions when you are



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*Obviously, the person catching fish is doing something slightly different than his partner.*

defeated before you even cast.

Experience helps to inspire confidence. The more you fish artificials, the more you will believe in their effectiveness. Start by selecting a few lures for the type of fishing you do and learn how to work them. It takes a bit of practice before you can make a bait dance enticingly across the skin of the water or wiggle and waggle below the surface. One way to hone this skill is to make a number of casts in a swimming pool or in shallow, clear water. That's also a good way to master the retrieve on a new lure.

Some of the best fishermen limit themselves to a small selection of baits,

reasoning they could catch more fish if they can work a bait to perfection. My father was a prime example. His favorite offering was a small, yellow, Upperman bucktail. He worked it so well that he could catch anything on it regardless of his quarry's size. Dad was the first to tell you that there was no such thing as a secret lure. No manufacturer is going to put money into an artificial bait that has not caught fish at one time or another.

Most fish spend the majority of time either on or near the bottom or at mid depth. Once in awhile (depending on the species), you'll find them at or near the surface, particularly when baitfish are near the surface.

That means your selection of lures should cover all three zones. And, if you know the species of prey your quarry frequently feeds on, you want to be able to match the size with an artificial. If that lure isn't getting strikes, switch to a slightly larger bait and then a smaller one.

Fishing artificial lures requires total concentration. The retrieve can be critical and that means you have to go through a series of variations until you discover what's working that day. There are countless tales of two anglers in the same boat fishing side by side with the same lure. One keeps catching fish while the other doesn't. They can even swap rods and the results are the same. Obviously, the person catching fish is



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*Most fish spend the majority of time either on or near the bottom or at mid depth and at or near the surface, particularly when baitfish are near the surface. That means your selection of lures should cover all three zones.*

doing something slightly different than his partner. It could be a momentary pause or speeding up the retrieve for a moment or letting the lure sink more or vibrating his wrist which makes the lure flash. Sometimes, that's all it takes.

When a fish does strike a lure, you should know instinctively exactly the retrieve you were using down to the last detail. Keep repeating that retrieve until it no longer works before you try something different. If you're using a sinking bait, be sure to start a countdown the instant it hits the water. A simple system such as 1,000 and 1, and 1,000 and 2, and so forth is all you need. That way when you do hook a fish you know exactly how long you allowed the lure to sink. Using the same method, you can systematically cover various depths until you locate the fish.

No matter how rigid and detailed a lure manufacturer's quality control program might be, you can buy a dozen baits that look absolutely identical and it won't take you long to recognize that some of those baits will result in many more strikes than the others. Theoretically, out of 12 identical lures, perhaps three

will consistently catch many more fish than the other nine. Another three may prove to be fair in their performance, while the remaining six are a total disappointment. No one can explain why this happens, but you can count on it.

When you look in your tackle box, covet those baits that barely have any paint left on them and boast teeth marks. Most anglers want to replace these lures with identical new ones that look pretty. Instead, ask yourself why the paint has been destroyed on the lure in your box. I'm willing to bet that it will outfish a brand new lure with a full coat of paint.

Artificial lure fishing adds a vital dimension to the sport and demands much more of the angler than natural bait. A good time to start fishing with artificials is on those days when the fishing has been good on natural bait. That's when you want to try catching those fish on a lure. The rewards and the feeling of accomplishment make it more than worthwhile. 🌟🌟



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*If there is a secret to working a lure successfully, it has to be a continuing feeling that a fish is eyeballing it every second it's in the water and will strike any moment.*

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# Lake Roundup

## NORTH TEXAS



By Brian Hughes

**COOPER** — Jim Chapman lake is unique for several reasons. First, while many lakes have a mix of timber and open water, Cooper is the only one I've seen that has such a defined line between the two. One end is completely devoid of timber, while the other is as thick as you can

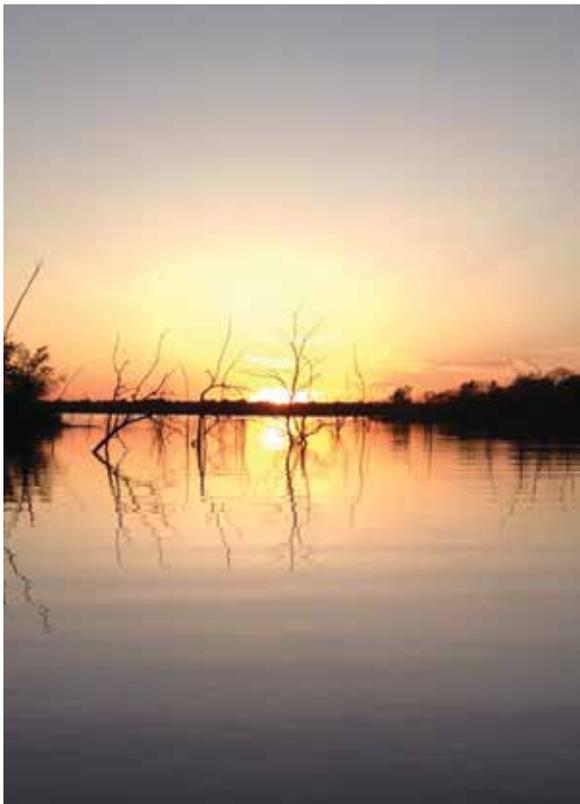


PHOTO COURTESY TED KRELL

*A great way to start the day is with a topwater bite at first light.*

imagine. This tends to divide fishermen as well, putting the anglers seeking white bass and hybrids on the open water, and bass anglers in the timber.

In addition Cooper is very much an afternoon lake in the summer months — at least as far as the white bass and hybrids are concerned. Starting in June you'll have more consistency in the afternoons than early in the day. This is not to say that you won't catch fish in the morning, but by afternoon they'll really start to school and attack the baitfish.

Regardless of the time of day, start on main lake humps in eight to eighteen feet of water. Look these over with your graph. If you see baitfish, or schooling fish, throw a 4" Sassy Shad in shad colors. Toss your bait out and let it sink to the bottom and begin a reel-and-punch retrieve. By that I mean reel four or five quick turns and then punch the cast button again, letting the bait fall back down.

If you move deeper or the school gets larger, use the flutter spoon. Try a 6" spoon and work it off the bottom with quick upward rips of the rod tip. If you want to catch white bass, you'll want to do the same things, but downsize the baits. Smaller spoons and slabs in the same locations will get you a limit of sand bass.

Bass fishermen will have good fishing early with topwaters. As soon as the topwater bite wains, spinnerbaits and Senkos will dominate. Throw watermelon/red and bubblegum in the Senko. White/chartreuse with one gold and one nickel blade will be a hard color to beat in a spinnerbait. For bass fishermen looking to beat the heat and the crowds, night fishing will be an option. Fish the edges of the timber with 10" worms, spinnerbaits and jigs in

combinations of black/blue or red shad. A black buzzbait will be effective around the banks and along the dam.

**RICHLAND CHAMBERS** — The program in June on R-C is the sand bass. These fish will transition from the slab and trapbait to a great topwater bites sometime in June. It is impossible to predict exactly when this will happen, but you'll know it when it does. Acres of sandies will be visible in many areas of the lake. Start looking in the area from the South Shore marina to Fergusons Point. If you see schooling activity throw a Tiny Torpedo or tailspinner-type bait. If they are not up yet, slabs and spoons in chartreuse or white/chartreuse can be dropped down on the fish.

If you're keeping fish, it is important to be sure you're keeping legal sand bass and not under-sized hybrids. TPWD will be vigilant in the enforcement of this regulation. It is your responsibility to know what you're catching. There are many tutorial videos on the web that can show you exactly what to look for when determining species.

While known for sandies, R-C is a good bass fishery as well. June bass will be holding around the boat docks, and deep structure. Cedar and Little Cedar creeks, located north of the Highway 287 Bridge are good spots to begin your search. Fish the mouths of the creeks with spinnerbaits and topwaters early.

Later move out into the oil field area with a Carolina-rigged French fry in chartreuse/pepper, or drop-shot a finesse worm in Morning Dawn or Junebug. You may also want to work the main lake points around these creeks with the same deep-water baits.

For those that like the Texas rig and jig, try the docks. A craw or worm I black/blue or Junebug will work on the T rig, while black/blue or green pumpkin (depending on water clarity) is your default color in the jig.

Crappie fishing will be best around the timber, brush and bridges.

**FORK** — As with most North Texas lakes, Fork will see the beginning of the summer pattern during the sixth month



PHOTO COURTESY RICK POWELL

*This Lake Fork bass hit a Texas rigged watermelon red Yum Dinger — a good choice this June.*

graph to see how deep they are. Once it gets down past the fish, retrieve it back up through the school and you'll catch the bass.

Night fishing is good all through the month, but will really pick up on the full moon.

Fish the three to twelve foot range, where grass is present, using buzzbaits and big Colorado bladed spinnerbaits. Stay with black or black/blue. If there is no grass present, 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.

Crappie will be back from the creeks, on deeper trees and the bridges.

**TAWAKONI** — Tawakoni in June is much like Cooper. You'll be looking for schooling activity for hybrids, whites and largemouth bass. The difference is that Tawakoni

will be productive all day.

Start the day around humps and flats. Look for shallow water, with deep water nearby. Use your Assassin-type baits, swimbaits on jigheads and umbrella rigs in these areas.

You'll also want to keep an eye on the 20 foot range for swirls, jumping bait, or any sign of baitfish activity. This will tell you a school of fish may be nearby. You'll want to be ready with a Kahuna spoon. These are large, wide spoons used for the bigger hybrids.

Much like Cooper, if you're chasing hybrids you'll want to use bigger baits in the same areas as you would for sandies. The bigger baits prevent the smaller fish from biting. If you want sand bass, use the hellbender/pet spoon rig, trolling in the 15-25 foot range, keeping it close to the bottom.

All things considered we should be in great shape this June as we have had plenty of rain to fill the lakes. And we have also had two great years of recruitment from the fish spawns at all of our lakes. There is plenty of water and plenty of fish to be caught. Now you just need to make plenty of time to catch them. 🌟🌟

## EAST TEXAS



By Matt Williams

**NACOGDOCHES** - June is a pretty solid month for bass fishing on Lake Nac. The fish are typically settled into their summer patterns by now so you should be able to get bit and catch a few fish shallow, deep or just about anywhere in between.

The best shallow bite will almost always be during low light conditions, usually in relation to scattered patches of hydrilla or new growth pads in water five feet deep or less. The best stuff is almost always found in close proximity to deeper water provided by a creek channel or some other abrupt change in contour. Points also can be good.

Topwaters, frogs and buzz baits will be worth a shot at first light, then switching to plastics or some sort of sub-surface moving bait like a square bill, swim jig, swim bait or Chatterbait once the sun gets up.

Hopefully, there will be some decent grass beds beginning to take shape along Big Loco Creek and on the big flats north of the island and out from Hayter camp house. Some of the deeper grass went away over winter, but it can bounce back pretty quick so long as the water stays clear so the sun can get through. If you like to flip a big jig or heavy Texas rig, this is a good area to do it when the grass is in good shape.

The offshore bite should be heating up daily, but it's more of a numbers game than anything else. Isolated pieces of hard-bottom structure from the pipeline crossing north to the island will be holding schools of fish on and off throughout the day. Most will be in the one to two pound range, particularly around the larger schools, whereas the bigger fish tend to stay more to themselves. Best baits away from the bank are Carolina rigs, shaky

of the year. The topwater bite will still be available early in the morning around points and the bridges to start the day. Buzzbaits, Yellow Magics, and Whopper Ploppers are a good choice and you can stay with those until the bite plays out.

A Senko in watermelon/red with a dash of chartreuse dip on the tail will keep the shallow bite going, as will a chartreuse/white spinnerbait, until the fish begin to pull off towards deeper water. Jigs in ¾ and ½ ounce around the same points and bridges near the creeks will work at this time. Try black/blue, brown/pumpkin and white jigs. Shaky heads and Carolina rigs on the deeper fish, out to about 15 feet, can also be a good choice.

Eventually you'll begin to see schooling bass. On most lakes the "schoolies" are small fish. But this is Lake Fork and the schools can be five and six pounders. You won't know 'til you check them out. Target these fish with the Boot Tail Magic Shad from LFT.

If you're catching sandies, instead of bass, you need to get past them to get to the green fish. Use a one ounce spinnerbait with double willow leaf blades, and count it down to the fish by looking at the

heads, Fumble Bugs, spoons and football jigs.

**LIVINGSTON** - Lake Livingston fishing guide Randy Dearman says water temperatures on most East Texas lakes should be nudging the lower 80s by the time this issue of TOJ hits the streets.

According to Dearman, that means two things on his home pond. And offshore fishing isn't one them.

Dearman says boat docks and square bills can be a deadly combination this some of year.

"I love Strike King square bill and I like to throw it a lot around boat docks in early summer," he said. "It can be one of the most reliable ways to catch 'em and it's great for catch numbers."

Dearman says the most productive docks are usually those that are situated on main lake points with brush and/or deep water created by a channel swing or drop off nearby. Laydown logs or stumps also can be a big plus.

If the dock pattern isn't paying off, Dearman suggests checking out the northern reaches of the Trinity River and keying on any laydowns or logjams that flank the channel's edge or cuts that intersect with the channel.

Dearman always suggests fishing as tight to the wood cover as possible. Crash the bait into it if you can. Often times, this is what creates "reaction strikes."

"When the bait deflects off the wood it will dart one way or the other or flutter up on its side like a wounded or disoriented bait fish," Dearman said. "Lots of times that's you'll get hammered."

Dearman says assorted color patterns will work, but it's hard to go wrong with chartreuse/blue or firetiger to simulate a bluegill and something in a silver to imitate threadfin shad.

If the docks and points aren't paying off Dearman suggests heading north up the Trinity River. He'll throw the crankbait around laydowns and logjams that line the river's edge in four to six feet of water.

June also is a month to start looking for schools of white bass busting shad over main structure from mid-lake south. Dearman says lipless cranks and topwaters are his go-to baits when the fish are active on the surface. He likes a slab or spoon when the fish retreat to bottom. Trolling with crank baits also can be effective.

**CONROE** - Lake Conroe fishing guide Butch Terpe predicts water temperatures



PHOTO BY RICHARD JUE

*Crappie will be a good option around brush piles early in June before the water heats up and sends them deep.*

in the low 80s during early June and says bass, crappie and catfish will be settling into their summertime ways.

"Just about everything will be away from the bank for the most part," Terpe said. "You'll be able to pick up a few bass early around rocks and docks using plastics crankbaits and maybe a topwater. By mid-morning it's time to break out the Carolina rig or a deep diving crankbait."

Terpe likes to drag a Carolina rig on points, pond dams and channel ledges in water ranging 9-15 feet deep. Sweet spots will often be isolated around brush piles, hard bottoms or scattered stumps.

The guide says the crappie bite usually begins to wane in June once the water temperature climbs into the low 80s. Until then, anglers can expect to pluck a few limits off brush piles in water ranging 12-20 feet deep using live shiners or jigs as bait.

"It's always best to stay on the move and hit as many different brush piles as you can," Terpe said.

Terpe's final two guide options for June are channel catfish and hybrid striped bass. For channel cat, he will focus on baited holes in water ranging 18-22 feet deep, mainly along the edges of channel breaks. Terpe baits his spots using cattle range cubes, but any soured grains like maize, milo or chicken scratch will work just as well. Range cubes are the cleaner option of the group.

You won't find Conroe's hybrid stripers everywhere, but the bite can be violent once you do.

"They're really strong fighters and pretty good to eat," Terpe said. "I fish for them a pretty good bit this time of year."

Terpe relies on his electronics to look for schools of hybrids holding around main lake points and humps in water ranging 20-30 feet of deep. Once located, he likes to troll around the sweet spots using a Hellbender or Mud Bug crankbait trailed by a small Tony Acetta Pet Spoon.

**PALESTINE** - Lake Palestine fishing

guide Ricky Vandergriff is a bass guy at heart but he generally likes to steer clients to whatever happens to be biting best at the time. The table should be wide open when June rolls around on Lake Palestine.

**Bass:** Vandergriff says bass will be fully recovered from the post spawn lull and settling into their early summer patterns. How he will fish for them varies with the area of the lake.

Up north, Vandergriff likes to target the Kickapoo Creek arm, targeting shallow flats and shore cover using frogs and buzz baits early and late in the day when the sun's light is soft and low. He likes a Big Eye jig/craw combo or Texas rigged Brush Hog under big sun, keying on any wood cover located in close proximity to the edge of the channel.

Farther south, Vandergriff likes to target main lake points using a Carolina rig Brush Hog or citrus shad pattern crankbait in water ranging 3-12 feet deep. He also likes to pitch a jig or bladed jig around deeper boat docks doctored with brush.

**White Bass:** Vandergriff always begins the early search shallow on main lake points with lipless cranks at first light to

catch fish that are schooling on shad. He'll switch to a deep diving crankbait or spoon once the schooling activity subsides to go after fish holding on the nearest drop in 6-12 feet of water.

**Catfish:** Baited holes along the Neches River channel and main lake humps in 14-16 feet of water are the ticket. Vandergriff uses range cubes to attract whiskered fish to his fishing holes and he tempts them with punch bait and night crawlers.

**SAM RAYBURN** - Sam Rayburn is coming off one of its best spring fishing seasons in years on big fish, as illustrated by numerous five-fish sacks upwards of 30 pounds brought to the scales in individual and team tournaments. Several of the sacks were anchored by lunkers in excess of 10 pounds, including one 13.06 pounder.

Early summer typically doesn't produce the numbers of big fish on 'Rayburn that spring does. But anglers can still put together some banner days if they get on the right pattern. That's the word from tournament angler Clint Wade of Huntsville, who spends roughly 48-50 weekends per year on the big lake near Lufkin.

"June can be pretty good month on 'Rayburn," he said. "Lots of stuff will be working with fish to be caught shallow around grass or away from the bank in deeper water. I'm going to be spend the majority of my time around brush piles and channel ledges out deep."

Wade says 16-22 feet will be the magical window as water depths go. His preferred baits and tactics include Carolina rigging and winding deep crankbaits, but he pointed out that Texas-rigged worms and football jigs can be productive as well.

The angler added that there also will be some fish to be caught close to shore around hay grass and hydrilla

beds.

"There's always a shallow bite on 'Rayburn," Wade said. "It's not really my deal, but if I were going to fish shallow I'd throw a topwater like a Whopper Plopper or a Zara Spook for about the first hour of the day and then back out a little deeper and fish a Fluke or something like that over the tops of grass. There also could be pretty decent flipping bite around the deeper grass in 10-12 feet. A lot of that is going to depend on what the water level does."

Don't forget the frogs, either. Wade says hollow bodies and buzz frog will work all time at times, even under big sun.

Good as the bass fishing is on 'Rayburn, the crappie fishing prospects may be even better. The best bite always comes in relation to brush piles in water ranging from 25-35 feet deep, usually on live shiners but sometimes on jigs. Limits are plentiful this time of year and often come in short order.

**TOLEDO BEND** - Veteran Toledo Bend fishing guide Tommy Martin says June is the month when water temperatures start heating up into 80s and largemouths start setting up around their summertime haunts away from the bank. Some salts around the lake refer to the sweet spots as "old worm holes," but you can bet that T-Bend lunkers will wrap their lips around more than that.

"Crankbaits work really good during the early part of the month and they'll catch you some big ol' fish," Martin said. "After that is when I'll make the switch to a Texas-rigged Zoom Trick Worm (Junebug or redbug) or football jig. It's also a good idea to have a Carolina rig ready, too, just in case it gets windy."

Martin says the best depth ranges can vary with the area of the lake up for discussion. He says the best depth range from San Patricio Creek north is about 13-16 feet. From mid-lake south he'll focus his fishing with jigs and plastics in 18-24 feet of water.

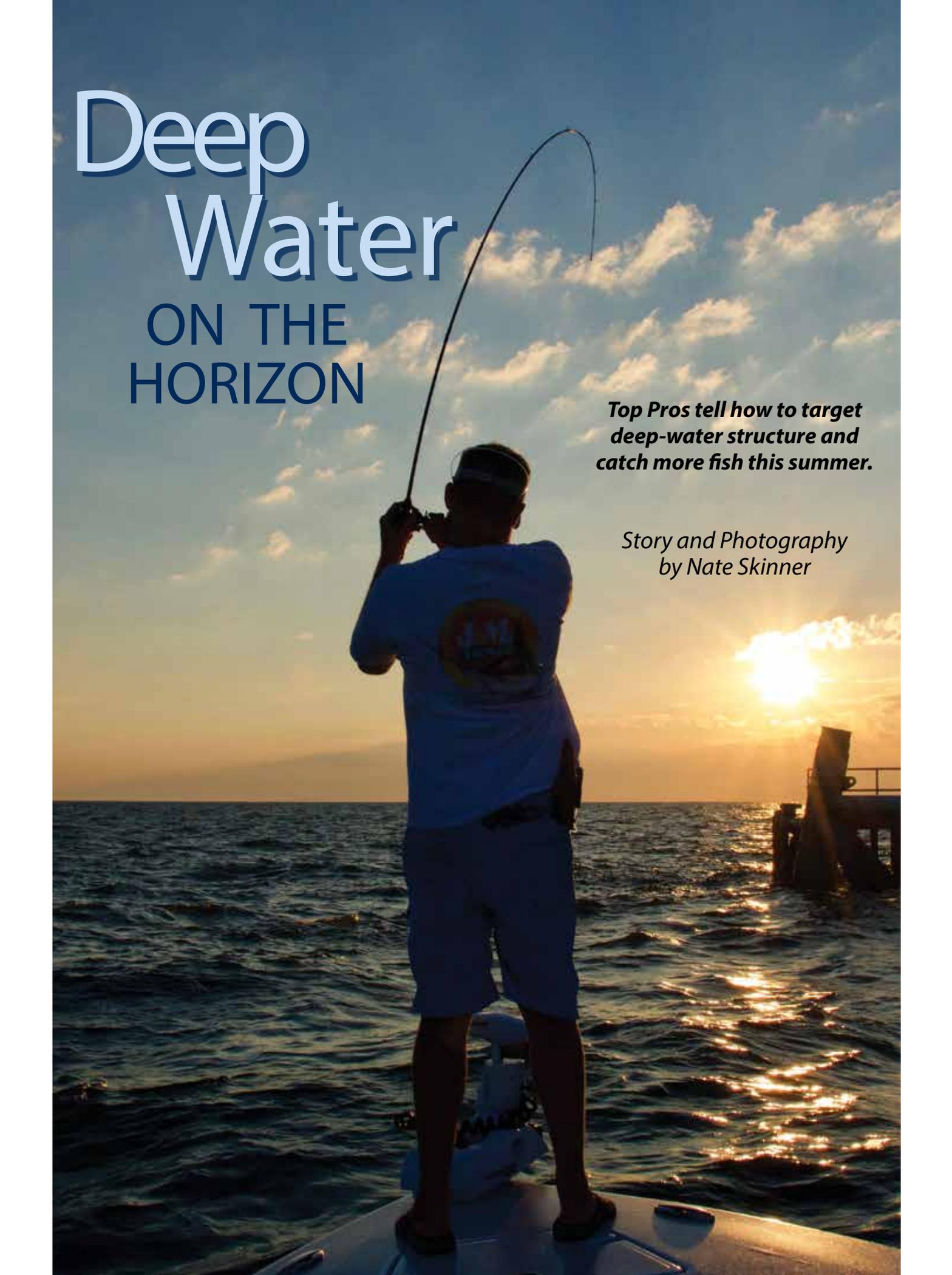
Like the bass, crappie will be settling into their summertime patterns, as well. With the majority of the hydrilla gone, a high percentage of the fish are going to be hanging tight to brush piles well away from the bank.

According to fishing guide Stephen Johnston, the best depth range will vary between 18-24 feet. Jigs and shiners are the orders of the day. **T&J**



PHOTO BY RICHARD JUE

*Catfish on Lake Conroe and other East Texas lakes will be a good option this month around baited holes.*

A fisherman in a white t-shirt and shorts is silhouetted against a sunset sky as he reels in a large fish. The fish is hooked and its body is arched high into the air. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a shimmering path of light on the water's surface. The fisherman is standing on the deck of a boat, and a portion of a pier or structure is visible on the right side of the frame.

# Deep Water

## ON THE HORIZON

*Top Pros tell how to target  
deep-water structure and  
catch more fish this summer.*

*Story and Photography  
by Nate Skinner*

Summertime in Texas means one thing — it's going to be hot. During this season of extreme warm temperatures, many coastal fish species will seek refuge in the deepest water they can find.

On upper coast estuaries where open waters and extensive channels are the norm, this can equate to depths of 20 feet or more.

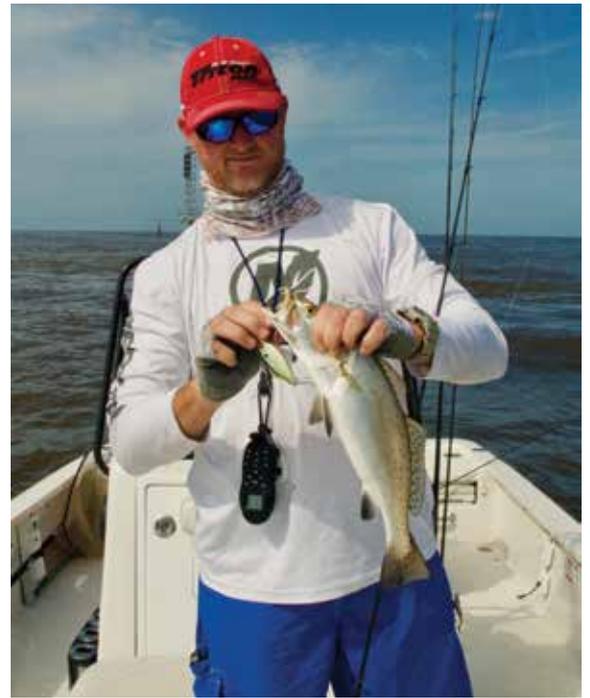
With that much water to cover anglers must know what to look for, understand the most effective approach, and employ productive strategies in order to be successful.

Some of the most valuable knowledge I have ever gained on the subject of targeting deep water has come from fishing just across the Texas-Louisiana border on Calcasieu Lake. Often referred to as Big Lake, the estuary encompasses many of the same characteristics as bays along Texas' upper coast. These include deep channels and bayous, a pass lined with rock jetties, mid bay reefs, and a laundry list of other deep-water structures.

One of the top pros on Calcasieu Lake, especially when it comes to finding trout and reds in significant depths, is Captain Nick Poe of Big Lake Guide Service. Some of Poe's favorite summertime fishing grounds lie along the Calcasieu ship channel where he will focus his efforts in depths of 6-30 feet of water or more.

That's a tremendous area to cover in terms of all the possibilities for fish to be holding at a particular depth. Then there's always a chance that specks and redfish could be suspended within the water column instead of on the bottom, which creates an added challenge.

These variables beckon the question, "Where does an angler start in order to effectively find the fish and get them to bite?" When posed this inquiry, Poe's



Capt. Tim Young caught this speck on a Rat-L-Trap while drifting a spoil bank off the Houston Ship Channel in Galveston Bay.

reply was fairly simple.

"Structure is the key to any deep water I fish during the summer," he explained. "I'm targeting major underwater obstructions that create a break in the current like oyster reefs, rocks, points, and rip rap. Basically anything that will create an eddy and deflect water movement will hold fish."

Poe says the best approach while targeting structures that concentrate fish within the Calcasieu ship channel is to anchor up or use a trolling motor to hold the boat within casting distance of the focus area.

"It's difficult to drift over reefs, points, and other hotspots along the channel and be successful," he confessed. "The best action occurs when the tide is moving at a moderate pace, which also pushes an unanchored boat along pretty quickly. With fish holding tight to specific areas drifting just doesn't work."

Poe claims the best tactic is to anchor on the down current side of the structure that is being targeted and cast jigs back in the up current direction.

This allows the bait to sink through the water column while it is being swept along with the tide.

When it comes to lure choice Poe prefers to rig soft plastics on the lightest jig head he can get away with that will still allow the bait to sink to the bottom.



Straight tail soft plastics will produce better results when using a vertical presentation than will a paddle tail bait.



*Along the jetties target eddies and washouts where water is flowing through the granite rocks. Also cover water around underwater rocks found out away from the main jetty structure.*



*Capt. Randy Foreman admires another quality trout caught along the outside of the Louisiana Jetty rocks near Sabine Pass.*

“My jig head selection is dependent on the strength of the current,” he elaborated. “During a weak tidal exchange I’ll typically throw a 16th ounce lead head. As the water movement picks up, I’ll switch to an eighth or even a quarter ounce jig if necessary.”

Poe states that jig head size plays a key roll in success when fishing deep water.

“You don’t want the bait to sink straight to the bottom as quick as it can,” he informed. “Baitfish exhibit a fluid motion in the water. When a heavy jig head makes a soft plastic plunge rapidly through the water column, the bait looks nothing like the lifelike motion it is supposed to be imitating.”

Lighter jig heads allow a soft plastic to sink slowly while still being swept by the current. This appears more natural and will draw strikes from fish that are suspended throughout the water column all the way down to the bottom.”

Poe also places emphasis on the type of soft plastic that he uses. In deep water scenarios he typically goes with a straight tail bait over a paddle tail.

“Soft plastics

with a straight tail, like the Lil John by MirrOlure, have a much better vertical presentation than a paddle tail,” he explained.

“This makes a straight tail much more effective when I’m trying to cover a large range of water depths to find the fish. I will use a paddle tail soft plastic occasionally when I think a more horizontal retrieve is necessary.”

In addition to structure along the Calcasieu ship channel, Poe will employ the same aforementioned tactics while fishing the jetties and short rigs in the nearshore waters of the Gulf. Along the jetties he will target eddies and washouts where water is flowing through the granite rocks. He also likes to cover water around underwater rocks found out away from main jetty structure.

When fishing the short rigs, Poe always keeps his boat on the down current side of the platform and pitches jigs along the legs of the rig. The fish are typically holding tight to these structures and are usually suspended in the water column.

The strategies Poe uses while targeting deep water structures on Calcasieu Lake will also produce success in many areas along the upper Texas Coast.

Veteran Sabine Lake guide, Captain Randy Foreman, uses similar techniques to keep his customers’ rods bent during the summertime while fishing along the Neches River, Bessie Heights Canal, Intracoastal Waterway, Sabine Pass, Sabine Jetties, short rigs, and reefs on the south end of Sabine Lake.

Fishing the Neches River is a lot like fishing the Calcasieu ship channel. Similar to Poe, Foreman focuses on specific structural targets here like points, reefs, turnarounds and drop offs. Trout and reds in this area tend to hang out on the shallower bars, flats and reefs of the river early in the morning. As the sun comes up and water temperatures rise, they pull off into the drop offs along the ledges of the river channel.

I’ve had some exciting trips with Foreman during the summer that started off catching trout on topwaters over reefs and rip-rap along the edge of the Neches River.

Then later in the morning we switched to soft plastic jigs and caught plenty of redfish and a few trout along holes, drop offs, and points.

Some of the fastest summertime

action I've ever experienced has occurred while fishing the Sabine Jetties on hot, calm days with Foreman. At times the bite would be so good that catching a fish was as easy as casting a soft plastic towards the granite, dropping the rod tip towards the water's surface, and then reeling the bait straight back in using a moderately steady retrieve.

While fishing the jetties, Foreman spends most of his time on the outside of the Louisiana jetty rocks.

"An incoming tide and light winds are the best conditions for catching trout along the beach side of the Louisiana jetty," confessed Foreman.

"I target a few areas where I have found small piles of rocks located out away from the jetty rocks that can be seen above the surface. I'll position the boat over these small rock piles and cast jigs towards the jetty."

Foreman claims that when the fish are aggressive during an incoming tide they can be caught up in the water column with a horizontal retrieve. Once the tide slows down and the action fizzles out, he suggests using a more vertical presentation out off the jetty in deeper water. The Galveston Bay complex provides anglers with a plethora of deep water options when the summer heat sends schools of fish to the depths. Oysters reefs, gas wells, well pads, spoil banks, and the jetties are some of the primo spots to find consistent action.

Captain Tim Young is a deep-water structure guru when it comes to summertime on Texas' largest estuary. He

fishes a variety of locations in Trinity and East Galveston Bays, but one of his favorites is the Houston Ship Channel.

Young spends a good portion of the warm months chasing redfish and speckled trout along spoil banks lining the channel.

"I'm looking for active baitfish and slicks when I'm running the channel," he informed. "Once I find an area that looks fishy I'll make a drift while keeping a close eye on my depth finder. If we start catching fish I'll make note of what depth the action took place, and focus on keeping the boat in that particular area and water depth."

Young states that using a marker buoy as a point of reference is a good strategy when drifting spoil banks along the Houston ship channel.

"Slip the buoy over the side of the boat



*Bill Richards stuck this 20 inch trout while fishing the Sabine Jetties with Capt. Randy Foreman during an incoming tide.*

when a fish is caught and use the trolling motor to circle the area," Young advised. "I've found a lot of my summertime hotspots using this approach. I can't tell you how many times I've dropped a marker buoy in the water when I started catching fish, and then noticed a slight depth change or hump along the bottom on my depth finder.

An uncharted detail like this is usually the reason the fish are concentrated in that area, and you can bet plenty of boats have driven right over it without ever knowing it exists."

The use of a good depth finder is crucial to deep water success. I use a Lowrance HDS Gen 3 Series unit with 3D Structure Scan technology on my Majek 25 Xtreme. It reveals characteristics of the bay bottom that would otherwise remain undiscovered.

Summer is here to stay on the coast. With water temperatures on the rise, deep-water options are on the horizon. Hit the hotspots, cover the water column, and get ready to set the hook. **T★J**



*The author shows off a chunky trout caught while fishing the Calcasieu Ship Channel.*



## The .22 Rules!

For every 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win. and .70 Goliath that is sent downrange, thousands of .22 Long Rifle cartridges are touched off and for several good reasons. Ammunition for the .22 is plentiful, cheap, and perfect for practice, plinking and hunting. Also, there are more case/bullet combinations available than ever before. No one demonstrates this versatility better than Aguila Ammunition because they are one of the world's largest if not the largest manufacturers of .22 ammunition. Their current catalog list over a dozen different .22 choices.

Aguila, whose name means "eagle" in Spanish, has manufacturing facilities in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, that was originally a Remington plant. Established in 1961, this complex has grown to over 120 acres. Product demand is so high they are currently constructing an additional factory in Conroe, Texas, home to their U.S. distributor, Texas Armament and Technology.

The quality of Aguila's components and manufacturing is proven by it being the cartridge of choice for many competitive shooters including Olympians. In addition to match grade and standard grade, there are many innovative products they have developed.

The Colibri is the world's only powderless .22 load. The Colibri looks

much like a standard .22 LR round, but it has a smaller, lead .20-grain bullet. Inside, the case lacks propellant, so the bullet is propelled strictly by the power of the primer. It was designed to operate in .22 revolvers for pest control pushing the 20 grain bullet up to 600 feet-per-second. The added advantages are the Colibri produces very little noise, no recoil and packs enough power to kill rats and other vermin at close range plus, it is a quiet, recoilless training round for new shooters and old shooters who like sneaky plinking.

Aguila's .22LR Sniper Subsonic round carries a longer 60-grain lead bullet in a shorter case which makes the overall length the same as a standard long-rifle round. With a muzzle velocity of 950 f.p.s. and still strolling along at 848fps at 100 yards this is a surprisingly effective small game getter.

The top of the food chain in their .22LR line is the .22 Supermaximum Hyper Velocity with a 30-grain copper plated solid point. This is the fastest long-rifle rimfire round on the market, leaving the muzzle at 1,700 f.p.s. and maintaining 1,190 f.p.s. at 100 yards.



Some of the .22 ammunition line up from Aguila.

For a step up in performance and varmint whacking capability, the Aguila .22 Win. Mag. Silver Eagle is the ticket. Engineered for controlling the population at medium range from bolt action rifles this round pushes a 40-grain semi-jacketed soft point out the muzzle at 1,875 f.p.s. with a retained speed of 1433 f.p.s. at 100 yards.

Yes, this is a .22 article, I would be remiss if I did not mention an Aguila innovation for those toting a shotgun — the MINISHELL. This 1 3/4 inch jewel provides less recoil and noise so it is perfect for new shooters and old shooters who are tired of being abused. This holds true for old shotguns and these loads are just right for side by sides and over/unders.

Additionally, they double the capacity in pump guns, but you must test drive first to see if they function. Mossberg offers a snap in spacer for their chambers that allows them to feed the MINI. These Aguila MINISHELLS are surprisingly good performers for clays and hunting as they come in 5/8 ounce loads of 7 1/2, 8, 9 and buckshot leaving the pipe at 1,200 f.p.s. Now back to the .22.

With an available supply of ammunition how about something to shoot, and gun stores are filled with reasonably priced new and used rifles and pistols. Here are a few new items.

Sturm, Ruger and Co. cut their teeth on the Standard Model .22 auto pistol in 1949 and have grown the line to the point of having something for everyone. The hit of this year's S.H.O.T. Show was



The Ruger 10/22 Target Lite has a good looking laminate stock with thumbhole, is adjustable for length of pull, a heat-stabilized-glass-filled polymer trigger housing plus it is fed by Ruger's patented, detachable 10-round rotary magazine.



Savage's new A22 Target Thumbhole features a precision-built featherweight thumbhole pepper laminate stock and heavy fluted 22 inch barrel with a satin finish being fed from a 10-round rotary magazine.



*Aguila's minishot shell has less recoil and increases the capacity, a big asset for home defense.*

the new Ruger Precision Rimfire Rifle covered in these pages in March. This is a scaled down version of their popular big bore Precision Rifle with all the bells and whistles in the \$400 range.

Now comes the Ruger 10/22 Target Lite. The good looking laminate stock with thumbhole is adjustable for length of pull and a heat-stabilized, glass-filled, polymer trigger housing. That holds their exclusive BX-Trigger with a light 2.5 - 3 pound trigger pull with minimal overtravel and a positive reset. Fed by Ruger's patented, detachable 10-round rotary magazine, they have added an extended release for easy magazine changes.

The 16.13 inch cold hammer-forged barrel is surrounded by a tensioned aluminum alloy sleeve and has a 1/2"-28 threaded muzzle for accessories. The combination scope base adapts for both Weaver-style and .22 tip-off scope mounts that are included. The 10/22 Target Lite's MSRP is \$649.00.

Ruger is still in the pistol business in a big way and they have added the wild looking MARK IV 22/45 LITE. The "45" part is because the polymer grip frame has the classic 1911 contour with a serrated frontstrap, checkered backstrap and checkered grips. The threaded barrel rides inside the receiver made of aerospace-grade aluminum and is ventilated, making the pistol extremely light. Internal cylindrical bolt construction ensures permanent sight to barrel alignment and higher accuracy potential than conventional moving slide designs and the sighting system features an adjustable rear sight and a factory-installed Picatinny rail for easy mounting of optics.

There is an ambidextrous manual

safety and a convenient push-button magazine release on the left side of the frame. The contoured ejection port and easy-to-grasp bolt ears aid in the reliable operation. This pistol features their new one-button takedown. A recessed button in the back of the frame allows the

upper receiver to tilt up and off of the grip frame without the use of tools for ease of maintenance. The suggested retail for the MARK IV 22/45 LITE is \$559.00.

Savage's new A22 Target Thumbhole features a precision-built featherweight thumbhole pepper laminate stock and heavy fluted 22 inch barrel with a satin finish being fed from a 10-round rotary magazine. It is available in both .22LR and .22 Magnum. It uses a straight-blowback action in its .22 Long Rifle chambering and Savage's exclusive delayed-blowback action in the .22 WMR for extremely

reliable semi-automatic performance.

These rifles feature the user-adjustable AccuTrigger and the same thread-in headspace system famous on Savage's centerfire rifles for superb accuracy. The A22 Target Thumbhole in .22LR lists for \$445 and in .22 WMR for \$629.

The pistol folks at Smith & Wesson have added a Target Model to the award-winning SW22 Victory. The .22 LR SW22 Victory Target Model pistol is loaded with features. The stainless steel frame holds a match grade 5.5 inch bull barrel with a custom polished feed ramp fed by a 10-round magazine slipped into a beveled magazine well. The barrel is topped with a black blade front sight and adjustable rear target sight, plus a Picatinny-style rail for use with optics. An added feature is the barrel can be removed for cleaning or changed out with a simple one screw takedown.

The target grade trigger has an adjustable trigger stop and the textured polymer grip panels offer a thumb rest for both right and left handed shooters. The SW22 Victory Target Model pistol retails for \$429.

We all started with the .22 and yes, we can go home again. **T★J**

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## Through the Looking Glass



June is a time of transition for bass fishermen. Bass that have been shallow all spring will, by the end of the month, be out in deeper water. This is the beginning of the summer pattern months.

Texas is a big state and in some portions they'll begin this move earlier, while other areas will see a later move. Moreover, not all bass will follow the trend to deeper water, spending the entire year in the shallows. But the majority of the fish will look for offshore structure and set up house for the next few months. So how do we find these fish? Electronics.

Electronics are more important during this time of year than they were a couple of months ago. In the spring you can run almost any bank and catch some fish. While summer offers a brief topwater bite early in the morning most days, by nine or ten o'clock you'll need to be looking deeper to stay with the fish. Electronics today offer more to the fishermen than ever before. They are our "looking glass" into the world under the boat.

When I first started fishing, chart recorders were just that, recorders. A paper scroll would roll across the screen while an armature moved up and down across the page, leaving an ink mark behind. When you learned how to read the marks properly you could discern trees, channels, and even fish.

Today we have an impressive pallet of colors to choose from on our 3D, down-scan, side-imaging, 360 degree, does-everything-but-make-you-a-latte units. This array of choices can be both frustrating and confusing. Which unit is right for you? How do you get the most from your unit? And what are you looking at anyway?

These are good questions and ones posed to an expert in the field of "fish finders."

Slade Dougherty will be the first to tell you that "fish finder" is really a misnomer. The electronics on freshwater boats are more properly called sonar units. They emit a sound signal through the water column that travels a distance and "pings," or bounces back, when it detects

something. That something could be a fish, a tree, the lake bottom, or anything else that stops the signal. Even debris and oxygen bubbles can cause a return signal. To understand what you are seeing you must first understand what you are looking at. Sounds simple enough right? You would think so, but there is a little more to it.

The first thing is choose a brand. There are several good brands and they all do a good job.

"I tell folks to use what they know," opined Dougherty. "If you've used a brand and have familiarity with it, keep using that brand."

If you're a complete novice with no experience with electronics then you'll have to decide without the benefit of prior experience. You should know you'll be fine with any of the major brands — simply choose the most-user-friendly unit you can find.

Each brand offers units on several levels. Each level will have more features and be more complicated to operate. Another factor is cost. More features translate into more expensive equipment. What you should spend depends entirely on your budget.

"I advise getting all you can afford," Dougherty commented, "It's very rare you will purchase more than you need. It's far more common for an angler to be disappointed because they tried to save a few bucks."

Another thing you should be aware of is that all manufacturers make pretty much the same thing. They may use different terminology (gain as opposed to sensitivity), but the actual functions remain similar.



*An old school paper chart recorder.*

While each will introduce a new feature every year or so, they stay pretty uniform. If company "A" adds a feature you can bet company "B" will be right behind them. This is the nature of competition.

If you absolutely must have the latest and greatest, your decision will be to get the newest piece available. No matter the brand chosen, a good session on the company's website is in order. Check features offered, and what those features accomplish.

Once the purchase is made and the unit installed, the real work begins. All "graphs" are different, and each must be set up properly. New units come out the box with factory default settings that allow the unit to give about 50 percent performance. When properly set up you can get 100 percent of available performance. The problem is most anglers lack the knowledge and experience to do it right. When they consult the web, they get a different opinion from every video so by the time they've watched several videos they're hopelessly lost.

What is the number one mistake most anglers make?

"The biggest mistake I see is in the sensitivity setting," said Dougherty. "Too many anglers turn it up way too high, or make much bigger adjustments than needed." In addition, the chart



Multi-screen views allows a lot of information to be available at one time.

are just what they sound like. While your typical sonar signal is projected in a downward cone below the transducer, side-imaging is projected to the sides of the unit, showing you a left and right view. This is handy when fishing docks, bridge pilings and such, and anytime you want to see what's next to the boat instead of below the boat.

A SI signal that is spread too thin will have weak readings, while one that is too short is missing a lot of what is out there. "I set the Side Imaging to a distance of about 80 feet on each side of the boat," Dougherty recommends. "This covers a reasonable distance, and the signal remains strong.

Too many anglers will set the unit at the maximum of 240 feet. This both weakens the signal, and dilutes the resonance."

Bottom line, you'll see a better picture at the lower setting. These two fixes will have you well on your way to seeing and catching more fish.

Modern electronics also offer the advantage of the split-screen feature. This allows several different views on a single screen.

You may choose to see map, SI and DI images all at once. Or you might prefer to see the instrument readout from the boat on a screen, along with your map.

The options are numerous — so numerous in fact that many anglers are now putting two units at both the console and the bow. This allows for more available options at the same time.

When running this many units, it is a good idea to install an extra battery as a backup. Most

systems have the electronics running off the starting battery. Drawing so much power could leave you without enough juice to crank the motor.

The "transducer" on your graph is the instrument that actually sends and receives the sonar signal. By mounting the transducer on the trolling motor you get a real-time image of what is directly beneath you. When mounted in this fashion, a separate "head" unit is usually installed at the bow of the boat. This is the unit you watch while you are actually fishing. A transducer mounted on the rear of the boat, or "shot through" the hull, sends the signal from the rear of the boat to a head unit mounted at the driver console. Specialty transducers are often necessary in order to have the specialty features in many models.

In addition to reading the water, electronics now offer navigational aids, mapping/recording capability, Bluetooth connectivity and even the ability to operate your trolling motor via the chart readings. Mapping "chips" are available to insert into the unit. These will have pre-installed maps and charts of lakes in a region and will integrate with the information picked up by the graph.

"Waypoints" can be set in order to return to that honey hole recently found. Gone are the days of lining up trees on the bank with boat docks to triangulate a position. Now great fishing spots can be stored and recalled at any time.

What will electronics be able to do in 20 years? One can only imagine. For now, the looking glass is giving us the best look we've ever had. 🌟

speed is usually set to run too fast on the unit. "There is so much we can do to the unit to tune it to our specific needs," Slade commented, "Chart speed is one example. Sensitivity is another. Just making these two adjustments will show a huge improvement in what the angler will see."

I've got to get a bit technical, while not getting TOO technical here. There are many different types of signals available today and it's important to understand what they do and how they work.

Down Imaging- The old school sonar signal tells you how dense something is by color variation. This is still a feature in the newer units, but another imaging process is available called "Down Imaging." Think of DI as an MRI, whereas sonar is more of an x-ray. The actual picture will have much more definition in DI mode. By setting the sensitivity, and adjusting the chart-speed you'll get more out of your signal.

"I go with about 60% sensitivity and match my chart speed to the idle speed of the boat. These are pretty much my default settings for any unit," Slade said.

Why wouldn't you want to use all of the available power in your unit? Well, it has to do with CHIRP, an acronym for Compressed High Intensity Radiated Pulse. CHIRP was brought to us by our military and is designed for water that is 1000 feet deep and more. It is really too strong for our freshwater fishing applications. Think of it like a car stereo that blasts the sound across the intersection. By turning the volume down a bit, you can actually hear it better.

Side-Imaging—Side imaging signals



Side scan imaging allows views to the right and left of the craft.



## CoastWatch | Danno Wise

June signals the start of summer along the Texas and Louisiana coasts, which carries a bit of both pros and cons. On the plus side, there will be numerous seasonal species available from now through the end of summer. Fish such as kingfish, Spanish mackerel, ling, tarpon and various shark species will be found along the beachfront and in nearshore waters along the entire Northern Gulf.

This month also sees the coastal winds calming, making it easier to maneuver throughout the inshore bays. And, the surf action will usually kick off by the end of June.

On the downside, June means more crowds. These crowds are a combination of fishermen, boaters, skiers, swimmers, windsurfers, jet skiers and beachgoers. However, although there may be a little longer wait at the boat ramp and traffic may make travel time to the coast a bit longer, once on the water the crowds aren't as big of a factor. That's because there are so many angling options and so many stretches of water will be producing fish this time of year.

As most offshore anglers are well aware, June 1 is the opening federal red snapper season. June is also the first month of the annual CCA S.T.A.R. tournament in both Texas and Louisiana. As usual, the S.T.A.R. runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day. 🌟🌟



Matagorda guide Capt. Tommy Countz says June is a time when both East and West Matagorda bays will produce good catches of fish.



PHOTO COURTESY TREY PRYE

*June is a month when numbers of quality speckled trout can be caught. It also is a month that will give up some trophies like this one caught by Captain Trey Prye.*

"During June, I'll mostly be wading West Bay, fishing around grass beds," said Countz. "I'll be keying on slicks and bait. Early in the morning I'll be throwing topwaters. I like She-dogs and Skitterwalks, but basically you can throw whatever bait you have confidence in. Once the sun gets up, I'll switch to a Tequila-colored Norton Sand Eel Jr."

Anglers just looking to catch fish in Matagorda during June should keep an eye on the sky, Countz says. "We have birds all over West Matagorda Bay in June," said Countz. "A lot of the fish under them are small trout, so you don't get a lot of keepers. But, they are real consistent and it works well if you are fishing with kids or beginners that just want steady action. In East Bay, we can have some 'pseudo-fall'-like bird activity if we have enough shrimp in the bay. There can be some good fish under these birds, but they aren't as consistent as in West Bay."

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

then switch to a Corky or a Sand Eel."

However, despite having excellent speckled trout action during the early summer, Countz claims the best action he has to offer clients in June has nothing to do with specks or reds. "Matagorda is the premier tripletail fishery on the Gulf Coast," Countz boasted. His tales of 20-plus pound fish back up his claim. "The average fish we catch is 10 to 15 pounds, but we've caught them up to 26 pounds. This is the type of fishing where you don't have to be the one on the stick to get excited."

"When the tripletail get here varies a little from year to year, but usually they come in around mid-June and stay through August," said Countz. "Most people think we will fish for them in the surf, they just don't realize they come up in the bay like they do. These are structure-oriented fish, so you need to key in on any structure you come upon."

Freeport guide Capt. Mike Segall of Reel Threel Charter says June sees fishing in his area kick into high gear.

"In June, our fishing blows wide open,"

said Segall. "Of course, June 1 starts the federal red snapper season. There are some really big snapper around those structures in federal waters, so we're anxious to get out there and do some snapper fishing.

"We'll also start seeing our kingfish and ling moving in. There will be dorado hanging around the weedlines. And, closer to the jetties and beachfront, we'll still be fishing for sharks and bull reds. If the surf cleans up, we'll also be catching some trout along the beach. And, we'll still be doing some trips in the bay and in the river for trout and redfish. So, we'll be able to do just about everything in June."

Capt. Greg Verm of FishingGalvestonTX.com says there will be tons of inshore and offshore action for fishermen out of Freeport and Galveston during June.

"June will find us running wide open covering almost every type of fishing you can do on the Texas Gulf Coast," said Verm. "The biggest event happening in June is the opening of red snapper season in federal waters on June 1. CFH gets 51 days this year while recreational anglers in private boats get a whopping 82 days.

"We will be going after red snapper

first," he explained. "Once we limit the boat on red snapper we will be trolling for kings, mahi, cobia, wahoo, black fin tuna and more. We will be dropping live and dead baits for snapper, and trolling live and dead baits for the rest. Hopefully the weed lines will be there this summer, which really make mahi fishing great. We will be running most of these trips out of Bay's Landing Fishing Lodge in Freeport.

"Bays and Marshes of West Galveston Bay will be holding lots of reds, speckled trout, flounder. Live shrimp under popping corks will work best.

"Flounder gigging will be hot and heavy in June as weather and winds stabilize allowing the water clarity to get right. We will be concentrating mainly in West Galveston Bay.

"Jetty and beachfront will be hot for about every species known to swim these passes. Speckled trout will be hot and heavy. Live shrimp, piggy perch and live croakers will all be working. Redfish will be caught on the same baits as well. Also, we will be seeing Spanish mackerel, pompano, sheepshead, bull reds, sharks, and more being caught.

"June also starts our annual one-day Galveston Kids Summer Fishing Camps,"



PHOTO COURTESY CAPT. TOMMY COUNTZ

While many anglers will pursue Texas "Big 3" in West Matagorda Bay there is a fourth fish that draws a lot of attention - triple tail. This angler caught this big triple tail while fishing with Capt. Tommy Countz.

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Verm concluded. Galveston guide Capt. Tim Young says the weather becomes more consistent in June, providing anglers with increased options.

"June typically means a more consistent weather pattern creating better water clarity throughout the Galveston Bay System, unless we have a major flood event," said Young. "Minus that flood event, wade fishing protected shorelines in East Bay and Trinity will be a great bet. Be on the lookout for rafts of mullet, where more is absolutely better.

"Topwater baits such as the Stutter Step 4.0 will be my go to bait early. Mimicking an injured baitfish and are simple to use compared to other topwaters. You will be able to cover a lot of water quickly to find the sweet spots. Fish right in the middle of the thickest schools of mullet you can find. If you find you are getting a lot of blow ups and not hooking up switch to a subsurface twitch type bait. This will let you do two things at once. Downsizing your lure and presenting it just under the mullet. These two changes usually will draw strikes from finicky fish. Floating Rat-L-Traps actually dive down about 12 inches then slowly

float to the surface with a lot of flash and will catch 'em when they just will not eat a topwater. Soft-plastics are always an option especially if the fish move off the shoreline to a little deeper water.

"This same pattern will work on Trinity's East shoreline as well if salinities are right. Add slicks to the equation and get ready to have your drag tested. For the boat fisherman look to the deeper shell along the lower Houston Ship Channel and mid Bay oyster reefs of East Bay. Mix water clarity, a little current, bait, slicks, and structure and you could have a great day catching.

"Z-Man scented Jerk Shadz, Pogyz, and Paddlerz on a 1/4 or 3/8 jighead will be my go to baits. My favorite colors are Bad Shad and Sexy Mullet. Topwaters will draw strikes in the same waters if not too choppy and the mullet or menhaden are on top. Redfish should be schooling between Bolivar and Smith Point and in the back of East Bay. Charge your trolling motor batteries up if you plan on chasing these schools. Be on the lookout for birds, slicks, mudboils, and the Reds themselves tearing through bait.

On Sabine Lake, veteran guide Capt. Randy Foreman says trout fishing should be extra good in June.

"In June, we should have some really good trout fishing," said Foreman. "Usually that time of year, we have birds everywhere. If we don't have too much freshwater runoff and the salinity stays good, there will be trout all along the Sabine Channel. You want to concentrate on the points and drops and use soft-plastics. If we do end up with some runoff, everything will be stacked up on the south end of the lake. So then you would need to concentrate on those reefs on the south end. But, either way, June is always a good month for trout.

"In June, our fish will be feeding on shrimp. Glow/chartreuse will be the go-to color. That's the lure color that best imitates a shrimp. You can catch them on a variety of soft-plastics, but whatever I'm throwing, it will be glow/chartreuse.

"June is also when our jetties and surf get going good. 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.

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PHOTO COURTESY REEL THREEE CHARTERS

While many anglers will pursue speckled trout in June, plenty of redfish will be caught from the marsh as well as while drifting or wading shorelines. These two anglers doubled up on some slot-sized redfish.

You can start out in the surf throwing a topwater. Then, later in the morning, switch to a soft-plastic. Again, glow/chartreuse is the color. If you're looking for redfish along the jetties, use the same baits, just use a heavier head and drop them down deep." **T★J**

## LOUISIANA COAST



Lake Calcasieu guide Capt. Jeff Poe of Big Lake Guide Service says June is a much-anticipated month for Southwestern Louisiana anglers.

"We are really looking forward to June," said Poe. "Things are really shaping up for it to bust wide open. The amount of baitfish in the system at this point is pretty incredible. The entire system seems to be one continuous school of pogies.

"Water temperatures are on the rise and the trout have finally started to make a strong appearance. Water quality is getting better by the day and so is the fishing. Winter is finally passing according to the fish. By June we will be catching fish from



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*The BIG News along the Gulf Coast is that red snapper season in Federal waters beyond nine nautical miles opens on June 1. Recreational anglers will have the longest red snapper season in many years.*

Calcasieu Pass all the way to Lake Charles.

"The jetties, surf, and close rigs will also be good on days the weather permits. The ship channel, however, will be our main area of focus. Reefs adjacent to it in The Washout and Nine-Mile Cut will be hotspots in June.

"Some incredible early morning topwater bites will be had on these reefs. Redfish will again be roaming the middle of the lake in massive schools. Birds circling high above the water will be dead giveaways. The key to catching them will be getting in casting range. Once you do that they'll eat anything you put in front of them."

Venice fishermen will be enjoying a mix of inshore and offshore fishing in June. Red snapper, kingfish, dorado, wahoo and ling should all be available 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 tarpons 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**



PHOTO BY NATE SKINNER

*Captain Nick Poe of Big Lake Guide Service shows off a solid Calcasieu speckled trout. In June options are almost endless to fish inshore, along the beachfront or at the short rigs off the Louisiana coast.*

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## Fish Aren't Biting? Go Bowfishing!

A huge gar swam lazily up the oversized creek with four to five smaller 18 inch males following her. I flung an arrow right fast but missed. As I worked down the creek she surfaced again. This time I didn't miss. The water exploded and she went ape crazy. I was afraid the line was going to snap but after a big struggle I finally got the four foot irate gar to shore.

Bowfishing is a blast. Unlike fishing, the fish don't have to be feeding. As kids, my brother always seemed to have an old recurve. We used it hunting bullfrogs but couldn't hit the broad side of the proverbial barn from the inside with the doors shut. So the first real bowfishing that I did was 39 years ago. I had an old recurve I bought from Herter's as a kid for \$12 and put a Fred Bear fishing spool on it.

I missed a lot but I also hit quite a few 18-20 pound carp with it. I then progressed and put a spool on my compound. It seemed like right at the moment of truth, the string was always wrapped around the sights or a bush eight feet behind me. But despite the challenges of the old days, I shot a lot of carp.

Fast forward a few decades and things have really progressed in the bowfishing world since I first began. In those days, I don't know if I even knew anyone else that bowfished. Now? Gee, there's all kinds of bowfishermen out there. There are also

all kinds of boats with elevated decks in front and nightlights which I never even heard of back then.

Let's talk some basics first before getting ahead of ourself.

If you've never bowfished how do you get started? What if you're a kid on a paper route budget? It may sound expensive but don't panic. Bowfishing is truly a sport that paupers on up to princes can enjoy.

### BOW

If you only have a few dollars in your pocket, buy an old recurve at a garage sale, slap a Muzzy bowfishing reel on it, grab a few Muzzy bowfishing arrows and you're in business. You'll want to bowfish with a reel and not a spool. Spools can be frustrating. You'll cuss less and fish more with a Muzzy reel.

I don't use my good hunting bow for bowfishing because it'll get thrown in the bottom of the boat, covered with fish slime and maybe even dropped in the water. For years I used an old Fred Bear Whitetail Hunter which was my first bow. A few years ago I got a Matthews Craze II. It's a great little bow for sticking fish and can be adjusted from 13 to 70 pounds.



*Bow fishing Tools of the Trade — In the foreground is the author's Matthews Craze II compound and in the back is his CenterPoint take down Aspen recurve (Beautiful bow). The Craze II is great in that the poundage is super adjustable. Notice a pair of First Tactical shooting gloves clipped on the Craze II. These protect the author's fingers when dragging in carp. Rounding out the equipment are Muzzy reels & arrows.*

75 pound pull. Fish flesh is soft and an arrow easily zips through one. Also, on a good day you're going to be getting a lot of shooting and a lot of your shots will be fast snap shots, so 40 to 50 pounds is plenty of poundage.

But don't feel like you're a back of the bus sportsman if you don't own a compound. In fact, I just grabbed one of the new CenterPoint Aspen recurves and put on a Muzzy XD reel. Pay a few extra dollars and get one with the flip release. Here's why — if you have a push button, somewhere during the course of the night you'll unknowingly hit the retrieve handle and lock it in place. Then when you rip loose an arrow it'll rip the guts out. That screws up your night. I remember the first time I did that and missed out on a million shots.

In the course of the day I'll use my recurve half of the time and my compound the other half. In some ways a recurve has an advantage. If a carp is in front of a rock, you don't have to pull back to full draw. Just pull 2/3's of the way back so you don't shatter your arrow. Also they're faster to throw up and shoot. You may find yourself favoring a recurve. If so, check out the Crosman Aspen takedown



*Pulling in big fish will eat up a bowfisherman's hands. To help protect them wear shooting tabs, shooting gloves or tape fingers with athletic tape.*

recurve. It's a nice looking bow.

### SIGHTS

Whataboutsights? Most bowfishermen don't use them because it's just one more thing for the string to get hung up on. I have sights on some of my bows though. It's a matter of personal preference.

For arrows I favor the Muzzy Classic Carp Point with a sliding nock or the Stingray point. If you have an arrow that ties the string on the arrow then it's going to hang in your rest, sights and anything else. Use sliding nocks.

### BOUNCE BACKS

I like using lighter weight line so if something hangs instead of having a bounce back the string will snap. But it's hard anymore to find light bowfishing line. For this reason, some people favor shooting higher poundage bows so the line will snap instead of bouncing back like they tend to do with lighter pull weights.

Muzzy reels are the ticket, in the old days all we had were the old Fred Bear spools and they were a pain. It seemed like every time you'd throw up your bow for a shot, you'd suddenly notice that the line had hung on a bush eight feet behind you.

### CLOTHING

Do you need any special clothing? As we know, getting suited up to hunt can cost a small fortune.

Irish Setter Drifter hiking boots, Browning hiking socks, XGO base layers, Field & Stream shirts, Gore-Tex jacket, gloves and the list goes on and on. For bowfishing? Ha, I've shot boatloads of carp just wearing a pair of cut-offs and tennis shoes.

In fact, in a lot of small creeks and rivers, sloughs and backwaters you can only get around by wading. But if you do have access to a boat you will have an advantage in the bigger rivers, lakes and deeper sandpits and sloughs.

### BOATS

You don't have to have a boat but in most cases it will greatly benefit you. In the spring when they're spawning you can shoot them hand over fist up in the shallows wading but for the rest of the year, a boat helps.

I have a small 12-foot Little Jon that I use. It can be maneuvered in shallow water and if you stand on the seat you're elevated better than when wading. So if you have a small Jon boat with a trolling motor that will give you a lot more access

to shooting areas.

Ok, we've been talking about fishing on a pauper's budget. Now let's move up a few tax brackets. If you really want to jump into bowfishing the ultimate is spotlighting at night.

To do this you'll need a flat bottom boat with an elevated platform and spotlights around the bow.

I don't have a souped-up rig but my buddies that do have invested heavily in them. It takes a special light to penetrate murky water as compared to clear water so they have different lights to cover all scenarios. We'll float down the edges of

the rivers slaying the carp.

You'll want to cruise along quietly so they don't spook. A lot of your shots will be snap shots.

I've noticed that the tournament bowfishermen are always shooting. Nonstop. If a fish is in sight they shoot. You are not always going to have perfect shots.

They'll carry a couple of 55-gallon barrels with the tops cut off and on a good night will fill both barrels. I love bowfishing so I could go forever but hopefully that's enough to get you started.

Good luck. 

## Bow Fishing Regulations In Texas

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department provides the following summary of state regulations that apply to bow fishing.

A freshwater, saltwater, or all-water license package is required to bow fish in Texas public waters. No additional stamp or license is required.

You don't need a fishing license if you are:

- Under 17 years of age
- A Texas resident born before January 1, 1931

A hunting license is required to take turtles and frogs. You may elect to purchase a Combination or Super Combo license, which covers both fishing and hunting.

### Legal Equipment

Fish may be taken with longbow, recurved bow, compound bow, or crossbow.

### What to Catch

Bows are legal for taking **non-game fishes** such as gar, buffalo, mullet and sheepshead. A bow may be used to take any species of fish that is:

- NOT listed as a game fish on the definitions page and
- NOT listed as an endangered or threatened species

No minimum lengths or daily bag limits apply to non-game fishes in fresh water, except:

- For alligator gar, there is a statewide limit of one per day, with the following exceptions:
  - On Falcon International Reservoir, the limit is five per day.
  - On portions of Lake Texoma, harvest of alligator gar is **prohibited** during the spawning season in May.
  - Certain areas may be temporarily closed to alligator gar fishing when optimum spawning conditions occur.

• For Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin, there is a daily limit of one (1) trophy-sized common carp, defined as a carp measuring 33 inches or more. No limits apply to smaller carp.

Limits exist on some non-game fishes in salt water. Check the Outdoor Annual for specific details.

Any fish that is edible or can be used for bait (includes all gar species, common carp and buffalo) may not be released back into the water after being taken with lawful archery equipment.

### Where to Fish

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department regulations permit bow fishing in Texas coastal waters and in most rivers and large lakes. However, this method is not allowed in:

• Community Fishing Lakes: public impoundments of 75 acres or less, located within a city or a public park. For a list of specific lakes go to [tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/lakes/cfl.phtml](http://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/lakes/cfl.phtml).

• Lakes lying totally within the boundaries of a Texas state park, or anywhere on state park property

Other government entities may have rules that apply to bow fishing on properties that they own or manage. TPWD is aware of the restrictions listed below, but there may be others. When fishing within city limits or at any lakeside park, it's a good idea to check first with local authorities.

• The Lower Colorado River Authority prohibits bow fishing in Bastrop and Fayette County lakes and enforces special regulations on bow fishing in other Central Texas reservoirs. For details, see LCRA regulations.

• The City of Tyler prohibits bow fishing on Tyler East and Tyler West lakes. 



# Lake Roundup

## SOUTH TEXAS



By Danno Wise

June is here and so is summer. The hot water and heavy boat traffic of summer can cause bass to go deep and stay there. However, in June, summer's first full month, there is still the possibility to find a few fish shallow - especially early and late.

When the fish head to deepwater structure, fishing can still be plenty good for those willing to put in the time to locate them. The good news about these deep-water bass during the summer months is they are usually concentrated. So, once they are found, the action can be fast and furious. Summer also means anglers will be sharing the water with both an increased number of fishermen and a wide variety of water sport enthusiasts. Again, this doesn't mean fishing can't be fun and productive. Timing trips during the early morning and late evening hours will help you avoid most of the crowds. And, if you do find yourself at a crowded ramp or having to deal with hordes of boats on your favorite lake, just remember to practice proper angling etiquette.

**COLETO CREEK** - Victoria bass pro Dennis Lala says grass will still be a key to finding fish in June, even though hydrilla is almost non-existent on Coletto Creek these days.

"Everything will be on the outside of the grass in June," said bass pro Dennis Lala. "Most of our hydrilla has been depleted. But, we have plenty of coontail grass. The fish don't like to live in that coontail grass like they do in hydrilla. But

they will move up and down the edges eating minnows and small perch. There are also some areas with flooded grass and a few stands of lily pads. You can find fish almost anywhere you can find any kind of vegetation on this lake. "Early in the morning you can get a decent topwater bite. One thing I like to do first thing in the morning is use a soft-plastic of some sort on just a hook - no weight. You can wiggle that bait along the edges and get some really good strikes. Noisy topwater baits - like a Frenzy Popper or Rattlin' Buzz - will work real good, too.

"After about the first hour or so, the fish start heading deeper. From then on, I'll be focusing on the points, humps and offshore structure in about 12 to 14 feet of water. Pretty much everything I'll be throwing will be Carolina-rigged. I like using a Power Jerkshad on a light Carolina-rig. I usually use an 1/8 or 1/16-ounce, or even a split shot. Then, I'll use about 12-inches of leader.

"You can also do pretty well on a GULP! Worm. I'll rig the worms Carolina-style usually, but sometimes I'll rig them Wacky Style. That can be really good when the fish are stacked along a drop or point or piece of structure.

"I'll also be throwing some spinnerbaits. You can always catch fish on a spinnerbait on this lake. Early in the day, work the bait on the surface or just under the surface. Later in the day, fish it a little deeper or slow-roll it along the bottom.

"This isn't a very big lake and we'll have a lot of other water activities going on during summer. Swimmers, jet skiers, water skiers, boaters, and fishermen - pretty much everybody will be here during summer, especially on weekends. So, it can get pretty crowded. But, most of the best fishing will be early, before all the water sport people get on the water."

**MEDINA** - According to Jim Gallagher of Jim's Re bait Tackle, June is when the fish on Lake Medina begin settling into a summer pattern.

"In June, we'll be starting our summer pattern," Gallagher said. "Main lake and secondary points will be the key. Early in the morning, like 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. Jigging spoons are always good on this lake in summer. Other vertical fishing techniques work as well. So, really, during summer, you either fish deep or fish early or late. There is not a lot of visible structure - the kind of stuff people can see and cast to. But, there is some structure down deep and the fish will be concentrated on this structure.

"Fishing in the creek channel can be real good. But, you have to fish in the channel, not on either side of it. The fish that are in the channel will move up or down to hit a bait, but they will not go outside of the channel to strike. So, you have to find that channel and stay in it - even if it winds - you have to fish in the channel if you want to catch fish.

"There will also be a lot of simple, kind of family-friendly fishing during the summer. We have perch all over the lake - bluegill, readears, warmouths - you name it, we got 'em. 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 marks the beginning of summer fishing patterns on Choke Canyon. Starting in this month, hydrilla beds and offshore structure will be the keys to finding fish. The majority of the bass will be holding on the outside edges of the grass beds and over offshore structure in the main lake or in the river channel. Most experienced Choke Canyon fishermen use Texas-rigged lizards, worms or creature baits when targeting deep water bass, although heavy jigs and deep diving crankbaits will also produce their share of bass. Although the water temperature will be substantial higher in June than it was during spring, there will still be some shallow water action on Choke this month, but it will be during

the opposite ends of the day. During the predawn and early morning hours, plenty of fish can still be found holding shallow in the grass beds and along shorelines. Artificial frogs, buzzbaits and Pop Rs are among the best bets for targeting fish on the surface. DOA's new weedless dog walker, the PT-7 is another good choice for topwater fish around the matted hydrilla beds and other dense cover.

Like most lakes, Choke will see its share of jet skiers, water skiers, boaters and fishermen this summer. Due to its remote location and lack of shoreline development, it is one of the least crowded lakes in Texas during the summer months, making it a great destination for anglers wanting to escape summer crowds and still be able to catch plenty of quality fish.

**FALCON** – Although the heat will be rising, 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 mid-morning hours. Once the sun gets high, fishermen should begin looking 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 Texas-rigged plastics, swim baits, creature baits and jigs will also produce plenty of bass around deep structure this month.

While much of the bass fishing action will be concentrated on the lower half of the lake, the river and upper end of the lake will be the place to look for 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. **T★J**



By TOJ Staff

**AMISTAD** — “Big Friendly,” as well as the anglers that fish her, is at the mercy of downstream and agricultural draw-downs this time of year. The one constant is the lack of consistency as to how this border impound will be impacted.

In May respects 2018 is shaping up similar to 2016 with the water level in early May about 24 feet below conservation pool. Then looking at reports from 2017 and it indicates this lake was drawn down and the level over the month of May went from about 24 feet low to over 32 feet low.

Hopefully the similarity to 2016 will continue and anglers will find this big reservoir no more than 24-26 feet low. If we get some much needed rain it could be better and if we don't – we will be lower.

Even during draw-downs Amistad black bass fishing continues to be good. There is still plenty of flooded standing timber and brush. Plus the ever-present rocky structure, ledges, slides and deeper channels keep bass happy.

Early in June throw spinnerbaits, topwater lures and medium diving crankbaits. Work from shallow to deep beginning before first light. Once the sun is up expect fish to be just off the first drop. Texas rigged worms and Senkos are good options around standing timber.

Stripers are not hard to figure out on this lake. They are in the deep water in front of the dam. Look for surface commotion or watch a chart recorder until bait balls and stripers are spotted. Big Rat-L-Traps, Red Fins, as well as live or cut bait are good baits. Catfish should be in water 10-20 feet deep. All varieties of prepared and cut bait are good options.

**O.H. IVIE** — In early May 2016 Ivie was approaching 40 feet low when heavy rains fell within its watershed and this popular lake captured about 10 feet of water, reducing its deficit by one fourth. In 2017 the lake held fairly constant at 33-34 feet low through early summer. As of early May Ivie was about 40 feet low.

This seems to be the new normal for this lake. Until either a monsoon hits the water shed or several heavy rains fall this lake is going to remain low. That is why it is important to keep a log to refer to ever changing conditions.

In early June there may be a few late spawning black bass on deep water flats. Implement the “Ivie Drift” that has been explained regularly in these pages.

Look for white, black and smallmouth

bass to begin to school. All three species will be caught from the same school. Topwater lures, medium Rat-L-Traps and crankbaits are good options.

**BROWNWOOD** — For the past several years, ever since the drought broke, this popular lake has been just inches of either side of full. At the start of May 2018 the lake is four and a half feet low. Fishing remains good and that should continue on into summer. Look for black bass to be in the six to 12 feet of water until summer really heats up. Shad colored swim baits, chartreuse/white Rat-L-Traps or craw and shad colored crankbaits are good options.

One of the most consistent patterns on this lake for bass is to fish the boat docks. Those anglers that are able to shoot a small soft plastic under a dock will be regularly bit. Crappie will be good around brush piles or vertical timber along the creek and river channels. Also downsize baits for crappie around the boat docks. **T★J**

## HIGH PLAINS



By TOJ Staff

**ALAN HENRY** — Until the middle of June look for black bass fishing to remain pretty good. Fish will be in a post spawn pattern and then seem to go into their summer funk and will relate to deeper water. Jigging spoons and jigs are the best option for this deeper bite. As of early May this lake was over seven feet low compared to just over three feet low to start June 2017. Should this region catch some much needed rain look for the catfish bite to turn on. Fish the stained, flowing water with a variety of prepared and cut bait.

**COLEMAN** — This lake is one of the better summertime options in the region. As of early May it was about three feet low compared to inches over the full mark in 2017. Bass should still be either side of the first drop through most of June. Then they will head to deeper water. **T★J**

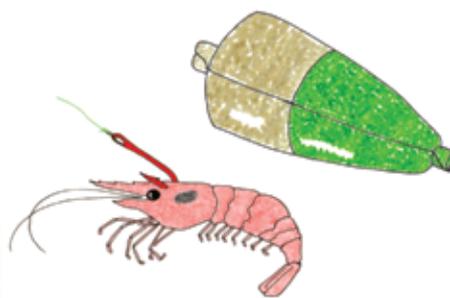


## Rigging For Bait



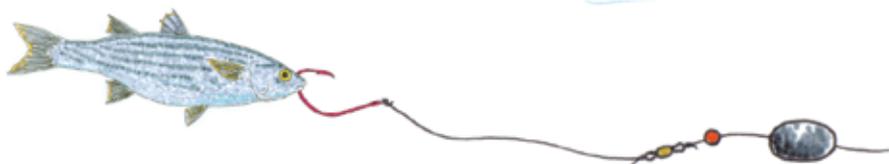
As summer gets underway, Texas bays will be filled with a great variety of prey items on which speckled trout, redfish and flounder can dine. Shrimp, glass minnows, crabs, pinfish, shad, mullet and croaker are all on the menu through the summer months. As a result, a good deal of Texas coastal anglers will be utilizing natural baits in the coming months.

Without a doubt, the most common live bait used along the Texas coast is shrimp. And, most often, these crustaceans are dangled beneath some sort of cork or float. While shrimp can catch plenty of fish under popping corks, they can also be freelined or used on any one of the rigs described below.



Recent years have seen Texas coastal fishermen begin using a various inline rattling weights. These weights not only help keep the bait low in the water column, they also provide a fish attracting rattle that can be useful in calling in fish in deep or dirty water.

Carolina rigs, which consist of a hook, leader, barrel swivel, bead and egg sinker, are a good way to work baits through potholes and over other clean bottom areas. The bead makes a clicking sound when it bumps against the swivel or sinker. And, the line-through design of the egg sinker allows the fish to move off with the bait without feeling resistance.



When the current is moving strong, it may be necessary to use a inline slider sinker to keep the bait stationary. Sinkers with swivels attached are best, as they prevent line twist as the bait swims around.

Freelining is an effective method for working any live bait item in relatively calm water conditions. If the current is too strong, a free-lined bait will stay on the surface, but if the current is mild, free-lining allows the bait to move much more naturally. It is still a good idea to add a barrel swivel above the leader to prevent line twist.



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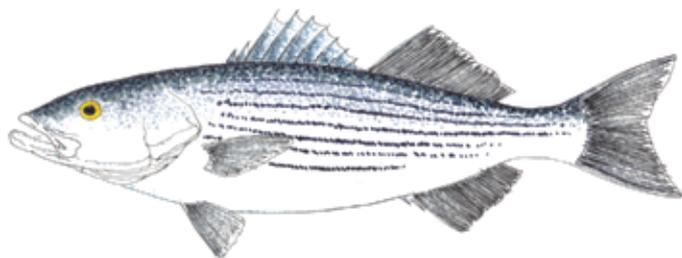
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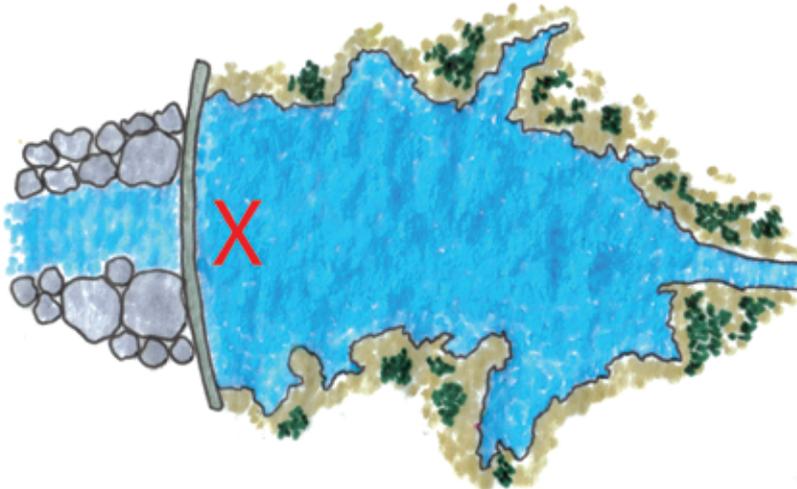


## Going Deep For Stripers



Summer is a great time to enjoy catching the largest of bass species in the Lone Star State. Striped bass are found in most of Texas' major reservoirs and can reach proportions largemouth bass can only dream of. However, fishing for stripers is quite a bit different than what most Texas anglers think of as bass fishing.

During the heat of summer, the most consistent striped bass fishing will usually be found in the deeper water on the lower end of lakes, generally by the dam. Depending on the time of day these fish can be found in various parts of the water column from the surface to the bottom.

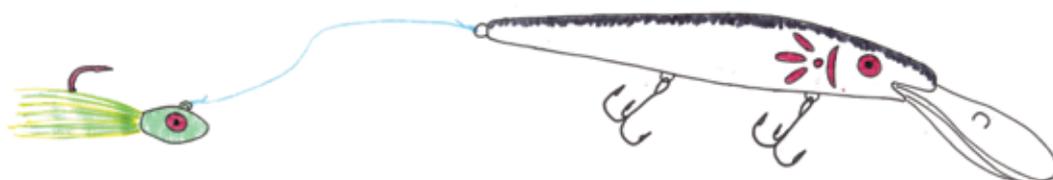


One of the easiest ways to find schools of stripers is to look for flocks of diving gulls and other birds -- just as anglers do along the coast. At times, flocks of birds on Texas lakes may be over black bass, white bass, hybrid stripers or striped bass. Quite often, the bigger stripers will be hanging below schools of hybrids or white bass and cleaning up the stunned baitfish they are attacking. Lipless crankbaits and bucktail jigs are among the best baits to cast at schools of stripers under birds.

When schools of fish are sulking near the bottom, using jigging spoons are a good way to tempt them. Jigging spoons can also be used for suspended fish by simply determining the depth at which the fish are holding and jigging the spoon at that point in the water column.



More commonly, anglers will troll spoons or large diving plugs prospecting for stripers in likely areas. At times, jigs or live baits may be drug behind plugs or planers, which help keep the baits at the proper depth.



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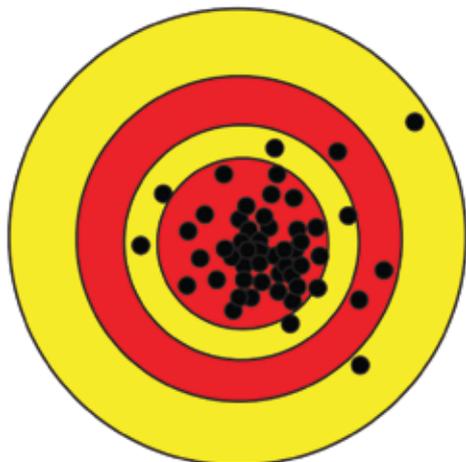
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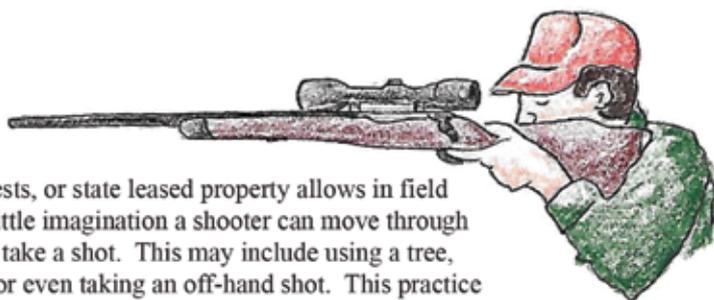
## Plinking & Practical Practice

For many hunters the beginning of summer is a reminder that hunting seasons are still at least three months away. Unfortunately those same hunters take this as a cue to simply forsake their long gun until sometime closer to the big season they will hunt.



Even for many urbanites shooting an air rifle at targets increases concentration of holding steady on target. With the slower lock-time of an air rifle punching paper, shooting cans or pine cones creates fun times

Indoor shooting with air rifles can be accomplished by building a “home-made” pellet trap out of old phone books, or bound bundles of newspaper placed inside a corrugated box. Outdoors empty soft drink cans, pine cones, clay targets even cheap-throwaway plastic containers become targets that are repositioned each time they are hit.



Taking the practice to hunting grounds, National Forests, or state leased property allows in field practice while simulating hunting scenarios. Using a little imagination a shooter can move through an area, spot a target, take whatever rest is available to take a shot. This may include using a tree, limb, assuming a kneeling or sitting shooting position or even taking an off-hand shot. This practice technique is a best when using a .22 since greater distances can be shot at that improves one’s skills.



Just handling a firearm in the field builds increased comfort level with the weight and balance of the rifle while also practicing shouldering techniques. Sometimes practice comes when a shot is not even taken. It may be a running animal that allows the shooter to track a moving target and “count coup” with the rabbit, squirrel, opossum, or other animal never being shot.

Sometimes practice may come in the form of “trimming” some bushes. Several years ago while on a West Texas prairie dog hunt the number of prairie dogs compared to the number of shooters was out of balance. To get in some shooting practice there were plenty of cholla whose limbs were pruned while we waited for our turn to pop a dog.

The practice targets were the short new limb growth. The point of aim was where the new growth connected to the main stalk. At distance with center-fire modern sporting rifles clipping these spiny appendages was almost as satisfying as flipping a barking dog. Even at close range a .22 will increase the concentration of the shooter.

At the very least, in the comfort of your den at home handle favorite rifles over the next few months. Work the action, engage and remove a magazine, put the safety on and off, even clean the gun that may have set up since the last time it was fired last season. All of this contact with a firearm builds confidence.

It is during these inspections when something may be noticed that needs to be addressed. It is better to have the time to repair the gun or take it to a local gunsmith than heading afield this fall knowing something is amiss.

Sure it is the off-season, but there are plenty of opportunities to remain more intimately familiar with your guns while putting in some practice time. The season opener is closer than you think.



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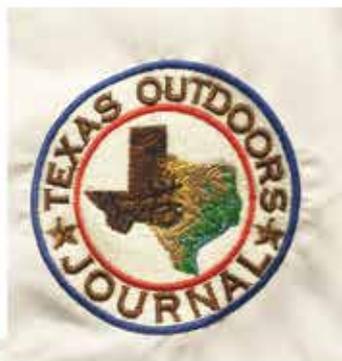
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# Outdoor Calendar

## THROUGH AUGUST 31,

Javelina season, South Zone (*50 counties*). For more information consult the TPWD Outdoor Annual, website, or call (800) 792-1112.

## THROUGH SEPTEMBER 3,

C.C.A. S.T.A.R. Tournament, *statewide*. For more information call (713) 686-4222 or visit [www.ccatexas.org](http://www.ccatexas.org).

## JUNE 1,

Federal Red Snapper Season – Recreational Anglers, *Gulf of Mexico*. The season opens June 1 at 12:01 a.m. The Federal water limit is two fish per day per angler. Minimum 16 inches. Be sure to record your catch on iSnap-per app.

## JUNE 2,

Houston Chapter 31st Annual Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game Banquet, New Location – *SBJST Hall, 1435 Beall Street, 77008, Houston*. For information and reservations call (281) 389-0488 or visit [www.rmef-houston.com](http://www.rmef-houston.com).

## JUNE 2,

National Fishing Day, Free Fishing, *Statewide*. Free fishing day is a great opportunity for beginners to try out fishing. Also fish without a license throughout the year at Texas State Parks.

## JUNE 2,

Annual LBJ Fishing Day, LBJ State Park & Historic Area, *Stonewall*. Celebrate Free Fishing Day by fishing the Pedernales River. Poles and bait will be provided. No dogs allowed. 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For more information call (830) 644-2252.

## JUNE 2,

Angler Education Instructor Workshop, Bass Pro Shop, *Pearland*. Become a TPWD certified Angler Education Instructor. Free to anyone 18 or older interested in teaching fishing skills in their communities. TEA-approved CPE available for teachers. 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Preregistration is required, please contact Greg Akins, (713) 201-8110 or [greg.akers@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:greg.akers@tpwd.texas.gov)

## JUNE 3,

Llano Estacado Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Muleshoe*. For information and reservations call (806) 787-9217.

## JUNE 7, 14, 22, 28,

Annual Archery Clinic, LBJ State Park, *Stonewall*. There will be a free Archery clinic every Thursday in June at LBJ State Park Baseball field. Archery Equipment will be provided. 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. For information call (830) 644-2252.

## JUNE 9,

Tri-County Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Buckholts*. For information and reservations call (254) 760-2784.

## JUNE 9,

Lake Tawakoni Sportsman's Association Sand Bass Tournament, Lake Tawakoni State Park, *Willis Point*. Raising money to re-stock Lake Tawakoni each year with hybrid striper fingerlings. Come enjoy a day of great Fishing, Food, Prizes, and Family FUN. 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For more information call (903) 560-7123.

## JUNE 9,

Shore Fishing Clinic, Sea Rim State Park, *Sabine Pass*. We will supply the gear or you can bring your own. No fishing license is required when fishing from the shore at Texas State Parks. Event 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

(noon). For more information call (409) 971-2559, x222.

## JUNE 14-17,

Houston Summer Boat Show, NRG Center, *Houston*. For more information call (713) 526-6361 or visit [houstonboatshows.com](http://houstonboatshows.com).

## JUNE 15,

Blunt Spurs Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Palestine*. For information and reservations call (903) 229-3883.

## JUNE 16,

South Texas Chapter Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game Banquet. *San Antonio*. For information and reservations call (210) 557-4586.

## JUNE 17,

Father's Day — *Statewide*. Do something outdoors with Dad.

## JUNE 20,

Cottonwood Creek Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Frisco*. For more information and reservations call (214) 693-0024.

## JUNE 23,

Central Texas Chapter Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game Banquet. *Killeen*. For information and reservations call (254) 718-0504.

## JUNE 23,

Crabbing 101, Sea Rim State Park, *Sabine Pass*. Learn how to catch Blue Crabs. Bait and tackle will be provided. No fishing license required. Free with park entry. 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For more information call (409) 971-2559 X 222.

## JUNE 29,

Southeast Texas Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Beaumont*. For more information and reservations call (409) 658-4914. 

Mail your Outdoor Calendar items to:

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# Tide Tables

## JUNE 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					H8:35A 1.5	L12:34A -0.1 H9:19A 1.5
					1	2
L1:12A 0.0 H10:06A 1.4	L1:53A 0.1 H10:52A 1.4	L2:37A 0.2 H11:31A 1.3	L3:27A 0.4 H12:03P 1.3 L8:29P 0.7 H10:52P 0.8	L4:27A 0.5 H12:27P 1.2 L7:49P 0.6	H12:59A 0.9 L5:40A 0.7 H12:45P 1.2 L7:46P 0.4	H2:23A 1.1 L7:02A 0.8 H12:59P 1.2 L8:04P 0.2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
H3:28A 1.2 L8:20A 1.0 H1:10P 1.2 L8:32P -0.1	H4:24A 1.4 H1:23P 1.2 L9:08P -0.1	H5:15A 1.6 L10:27A 1.2 H1:40P 1.3 L9:49P -0.5	H6:06A 1.7 L11:18A 1.2 H2:06P 1.3 L10:34P -0.6	H6:57A 1.7 L12:05P 1.3 H2:41P 1.4 L11:22P -0.7	H7:49A 1.7 L12:55P 1.3 H3:24P 1.4	L12:13A -0.6 H8:42A 1.6 L2:00P 1.2 H4:13P 1.3
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
L1:07A -0.5 H9:33A 1.5	L2:04A -0.2 H10:20A 1.4 L8:08P 0.9 H7:29P 1.0	L3:06A 0.0 H11:02A 1.3 L6:02P 0.7 H9:56P 0.9	L4:18A 0.3 H11:37A 1.2 L6:46P 0.5	L5:09A 0.9 H12:07P 1.2 L7:27P 0.2	H2:02A 1.0 L7:21A 0.8 H12:32P 1.2 L8:04P 0.0	H3:29A 1.2 L8:48A 0.9 H12:52P 1.1 L8:38P -0.2
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
H4:31A 1.3 L1:03A 1.0 H1:09P 1.1 L9:09P -0.3	H5:20A 1.4 H11:08A 1.0 H1:20P 1.1 L9:38P -0.4	H5:58A 1.4 L10:06P -0.4	H6:31A 1.4 L10:34P -0.4	H7:02A 1.4 L11:04P -0.4	H7:34A 1.4 L11:36P -0.3	H8:08A 1.3
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## JULY 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
L12:09A -0.2 H8:43A 1.3	L12:43A -0.1 H9:19A 1.3	L1:18A 0.0 H9:53A 1.2	L1:56A 0.1 H10:23A 1.2	L2:37A 0.3 H10:47A 1.1 L6:20P 0.5 H11:12P 0.7	L3:28A 0.5 H11:05A 1.1 L6:23P 0.3	H1:10A 0.8 L4:37A 0.7 H1:17A 1.1 L6:47P 0.1
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H2:33A 1.0 L6:13A 0.9 H11:27A 1.1 L7:21P -0.2	H3:33A 1.2 L7:56A 1.1 H1:40A 1.2 L8:01P -0.4	H4:24A 1.4 L9:13A 1.1 H2:07P 1.2 L8:45P -0.6	H5:12A 1.5 L10:04A 1.2 H2:53P 1.3 L9:33P -0.7	H5:58A 1.6 L10:43A 1.2 H1:50P 1.3 L10:22P -0.8	H6:44A 1.5 L11:23A 1.2 H2:51P 1.3 L11:13P -0.7	H7:28A 1.5 L12:11P 1.2 H3:58P 1.3
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

### Times are for Galveston, Galveston Channel

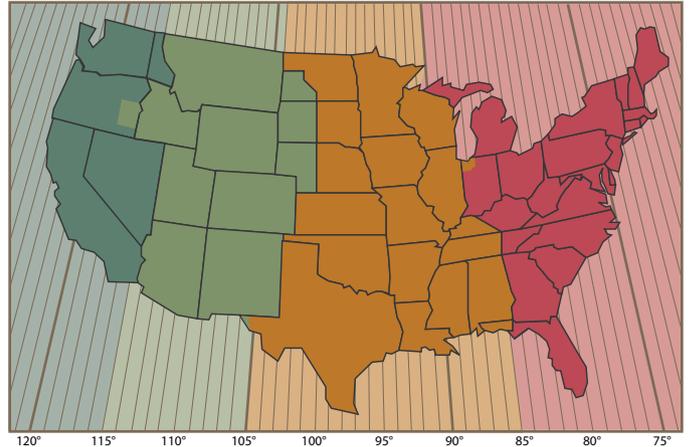
TIME DIFFERENCES	High	Low
Calcasieu Pass, Louisiana	-2:14	-1:24
Sabine Pass Lighthouse	-1:46	-1:31
Sabine Pass Jetty	-1:26	-1:31
Sabine Pass	-1:00	-1:15
Mesquite Point, Sabine Pass	-0:04	-0:25
Galveston Bay ent. south jetty	-0:39	-1:05
Port Bolivar	+0:14	-0:06
Galveston Bay		
Texas City, Turning Basin	+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

## US TIME ZONES

PACIFIC < (+) (+) >  
MOUNTAIN < (+) (+) >  
CENTRAL < (+) (+) >  
EASTERN < (+) (+) >



## JUNE 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 ☉	2 ☉
					1:35P - 6:35P	2:30P - 7:30P
3 ☉	4 ☉	5 ☉	6 ☉	7 ☉	8 ☉	9 ☉
3:25P - 8:25P	3:55A - 8:55A	4:45A - 9:45A	5:35A - 10:35A	6:20A - 11:20A	7:00A - 12:00P	7:40A - 12:40P
10 ☉	11 ☉	12 ☉	13 ☉	14 ☉	15 ☉	16 ☉
8:25A - 1:25P	9:10A - 2:10P	10:00A - 3:00P	10:55A - 3:55P	11:55A - 4:55P	1:00P - 6:00P	2:05P - 7:05P
17 ☉	18 ☉	19 ☉	20 ☉	21 ☉	22 ☉	23 ☉
3:10P - 8:10P	4:10P - 9:10P	4:40A - 9:40A	5:40A - 10:40A	6:35A - 11:35A	7:25A - 12:25P	8:05A - 1:05P
24 ☉	25 ☉	26 ☉	27 ☉	28 ☉	29 ☉	30 ☉
8:45A - 1:45P	9:25A - 2:25P	10:05A - 3:05P	10:45A - 3:45P	11:25A - 4:25P	12:10P - 5:10P	1:00P - 6:00P

## JULY 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 ☉	2 ☉	3 ☉	4 ☉	5 ☉	6 ☉	7 ☉
1:50P - 6:50P	2:45P - 7:45P	3:40P - 8:40P	4:05A - 9:05A	4:55A - 9:55A	5:45A - 10:45A	6:30A - 11:30A
8 ☉	9 ☉	10 ☉	11 ☉	12 ☉	13 ☉	14 ☉
7:15A - 12:15P	8:05A - 1:05P	8:55A - 1:55P	9:45A - 2:45P	10:40A - 3:40P	11:40A - 4:40P	12:40P - 5:40P

● BEST ☉ GOOD ☉ FAIR ○ POOR

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 1983 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 \$19.95 per book. For S&H, please add \$4.95 to an order of 1 to 4 books. Make check or money order payable to: Feeding Times. Send 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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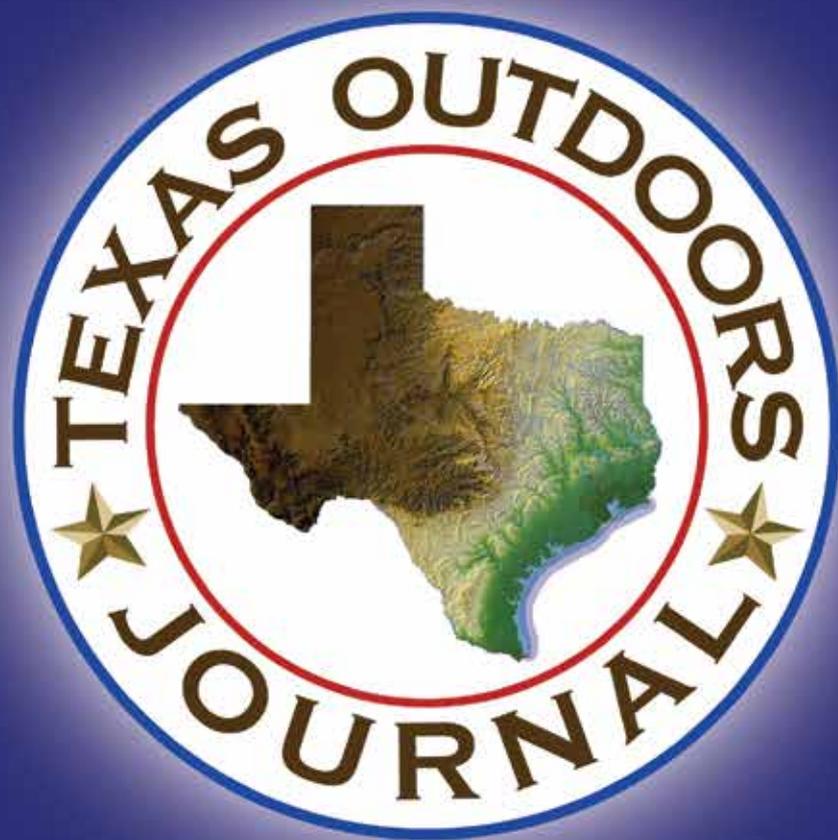
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