

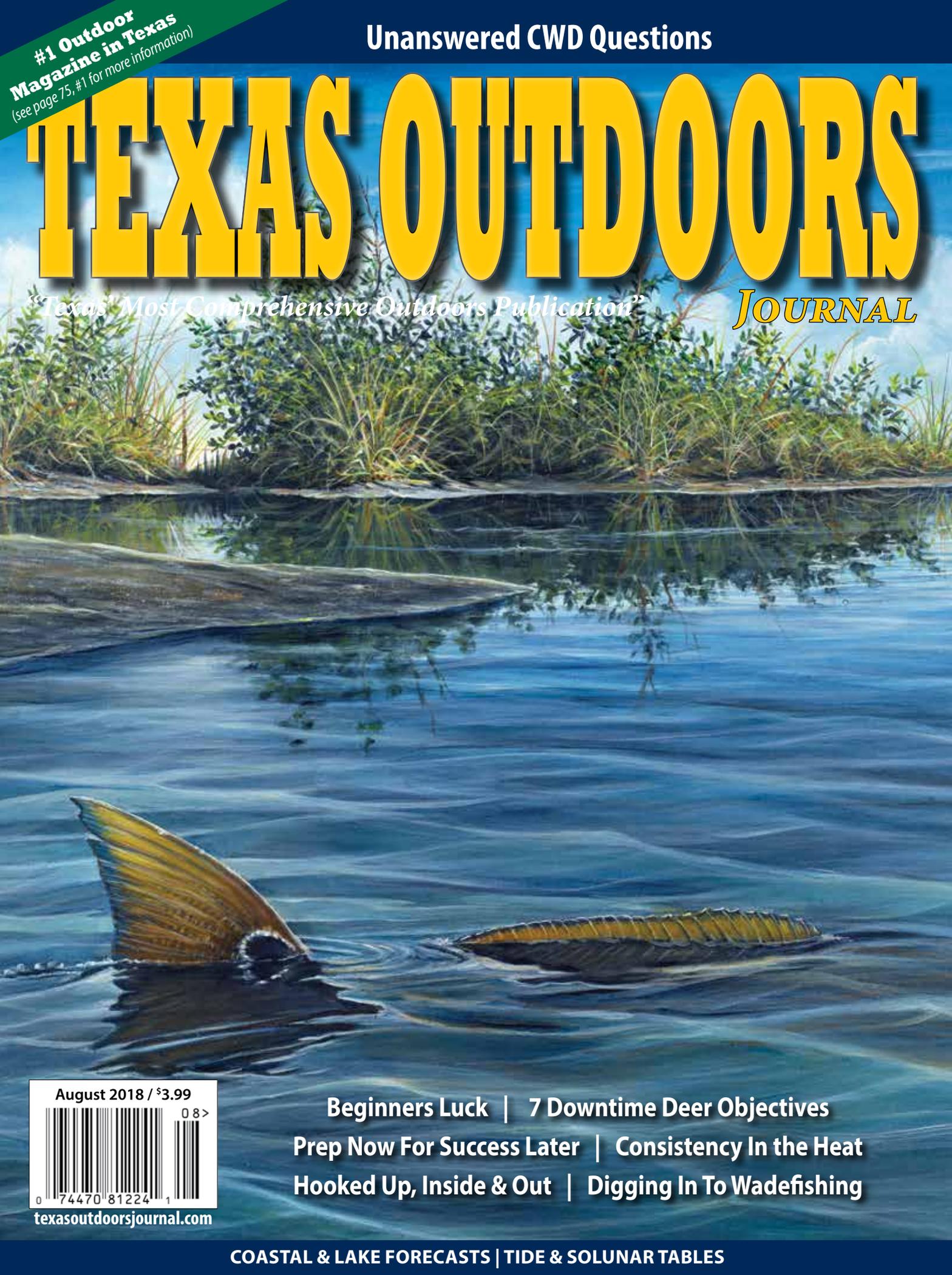
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Unanswered CWD Questions

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"Texas Tailing Redfish"

For more information on "Texas Tailing Redfish" and other fine works of art by Steve Whitlock, visit www.stevewhitlock.com.

Editor's Insight | Bill L. Olson



Wow

Over the past several weeks I have reflected on events that have impacted my life. May 29 marked the 12 anniversary of my wife Ann's passing. Late July marked one year since my Dad departed this world. At the end of this month millions will remember the impact of Hurricane Harvey — a storm whose after-effects many are still dealing with.

In between a friend remembered it had been 11 years since her husband was suddenly and tragically taken in a plane crash. Memories of the past set the stage for the future.

Two other events contributed to my personal reflections of life and faith. Jimmy Hassell, co-founder and Executive Director of the Greater Houston Christian Outdoor Fellowship's (www.ghcof.org) invited me to speak at their annual coastal fishing tournament. Hassell suggested I simply speak my heart on the outdoors and my relationship with the Lord.

In front of a group of like-minded men, women and youngsters I delivered a less than fluid reflection on what I call "Wow" events. The presentation started well enough as sunrises/sunsets, fishing or hunting success and memorable moments or missed were recalled. Then for some reason my extemporaneous talk started to deviate into more personal areas.

I shared with this group of anglers of how my faith helped me deal with Ann's 20 month battle with brain cancer. I explained how a seemingly healthy 49 year old woman was suddenly in the battle of her life and the resulting impact it had on our family. I knew what was ahead was bigger than me and am thankful for my faith to lay that burden at God's feet.

Over those months every need was met while we did a lot of enriched living. It remains the most inspiring experience of my life. I shutter to think of those that are confronted with similar challenges and try to face it alone.

At the conclusion of my talk an unexpected "Wow" moment was experienced. Hassell presented me with a fishing rod with a special inscription that read, "In Loving Memory of Ann." He had no knowledge of my topic and based on my presentation I had been lead in a slightly different direction than planned.

A few days later I was in Port Mansfield at Getaway Lodge (www.getawaypm.com) for a gathering of manufacturers and outdoor professionals for a few days of fishing. The first day on the water resulted in consistent fishing with plenty of photo opportunities of great fish along with memories and good-natured fun. I wondered how day two could be any better.

Sometimes it is not the big things or successes that create a "Wow" moment but its a less significant incident that creates the memory.

The second day found me on Capt. Ted Springer's boat along with Getaway Lodge owner Mike Sutton and TOJ's Robert Sloan to drift more pristine Laguna Madre grass flats. The day started slowly as we searched for speckled trout. By mid-morning things erupted with more consistent flurries of impressive action. Solid fish were caught and good-natured kidding ruled the day.

Then Springer power-poled down and distributed some sandwiches, chips and drinks for lunch as we bobbed over a beautiful, clear grass flat. In a few minutes I realized how quiet the boat had become. Not a word was being uttered as four friends were consumed in the same moment with their own thoughts.

There is no doubt that tranquil incident was a part of a greater plan that intended the four of us to share. Personally, it was a moment that was the culmination of days of reflection and thoughts that brought me to my most recent, "Wow."

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

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TOJ Notebook

Applications Now Accepted for TPWD Drawn Hunt Permits

Hunters can start making plans for the upcoming seasons by applying for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Drawn Hunts. The online system is currently accepting applications and the first hunt category deadline is August 1.

This year about 9,500 permits in 49 hunt categories are up for grabs for drawn hunts on public and private lands. Among the offerings available through the online system are hunts for white-tailed and mule deer, pronghorn, turkey, alligator, exotic gemsbok, and scimitar-horned oryx.

New for this season, hunters will have an opportunity to draw special permit hunts for exotic Sambar deer, as well as for white-tailed deer, on the new Powderhorn Wildlife Management Area. Youth deer hunt permits on this unique coastal area will also be available. Also new this year, Palmetto State Park will be offering a youth archery deer hunt through an e-Postcard drawing.

In addition to drawn hunts managed by TPWD, the system includes applications

for hunts administered by other entities, including almost 2,200 deer and exotic hunt positions on four U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges in Texas and 2,500 antlerless deer permits for U.S. Forest Service properties in East Texas.

The program's highly-popular private lands dove hunt permit category will feature almost 150 hunt slots at seven prime locations around the state, including dove rich Uvalde, south of San Antonio near Pleasanton, north of Dallas/Ft. Worth in Young County, and newly acquired opportunities in Bell and Ellis counties. These permits are for dedicated hunt positions with quality dove hunting outfitters. Application fee is \$10 with no additional hunt permit fees for this category.

Among the program changes this year, all drawn hunts associated with the \$48 Annual Public Hunting Permit will not be available for application until Aug. 15, when APH Permits go on sale. Applicants

for e-Postcard hunts and USFS Antlerless Deer Permits must have a current APH to apply. This change is intended bring the postcard hunts back to the way they functioned before the draw system went on-line.

"The second big change is limiting the number of youth applications per hunt category to three," said Kelly Edmiston, TPWD public hunts coordinator. "When the new online drawn system launched, you could apply to as many different areas as you wanted within a hunt category. Because of this, we have been experiencing a number of 'no shows' in cases where youth hunters were selected for multiple hunts within a youth hunt category. To ensure more youth have an opportunity to participate and increase attendance, this year applicants will only be allowed to select up to three hunt areas in the same youth hunt category."

Drawn hunt opportunities can be viewed online by category or by area via an interactive map and all applications,

Cover Art

The beginning of August is one of those grit your teeth and grind it out along Texas coast. However, each day takes anglers just a little closer when things start to change.

One of changes about mid-month is when scattered redfish begin to come together to school. These weather-hardy fish provide sightcasting opportunities as well as an opportunity to catch them tailing along shorelines, spoil islands or mangrove islands.

Popular veteran marine artist Steve Whitlock has capture one of those copper-colored spottails finning its way along a shoreline in his "Texas Tailing Redfish." Visual targets like a redfish tail or just the water bulging and waking as it cruises along makes any angler's heart rate quicken.

Whitlock's "Texas Tailing Redfish" was the Texas-CCA Dinner Print that was exclusively auctioned off at all of the Chapter banquets in the Lone Star State.

For more information on "Texas Tailing Redfish" plus Chart-Art and other fine works of art by Steve Whitlock, visit www.stevewhitlock.com, email at steve@stevewhitlock.com or call (941) 359-8106. 🌟🌟



"Texas Tailing Redfish"

fee payments and permit issuance is handled electronically. To participate, applicants will need internet access, an email address and a credit or debit card. The Customer ID number from the applicant's hunting or fishing license is one of the easy ways to access the system.

Last year, the department received 155,000 applications for drawn hunts.

The first application deadlines is Aug. 1 for the alligator hunt categories, pronghorn, youth deer, and the new private lands dove hunts. August 15 is the deadline for archery deer, exotic, and javelina. Application deadlines are on the 1st and 15th of each month. A full list of category deadlines can be found online. Hunters can apply up to 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the application deadline and after the application is submitted they can check their drawing status online at any time.

The Drawn Hunts program offers affordable hunting experiences throughout the state, including several Youth-Only hunt categories. Application fees are \$3 or \$10 depending on the hunt category. Adult hunters that are selected may also need to pay a Special Permit fee of \$80 for regular hunts and \$130 for extended hunts. Some categories, such as the Youth-Only hunts, require no application fees or permit fees. Permits are open to resident and non-resident hunters alike. Last year, about 4 percent of applicants were non-resident.

For more information or for applications visit the TPWD drawn hunts web page. For questions contact hunt@tpwd.texas.gov or call (512) 389-4505 Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. — 5 p.m. **T★J**

Invasive Zebra Mussels found in Grapevine Lake

Invasive zebra mussels have been discovered in Grapevine Lake, a popular outdoor recreation destination located in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

On June 22, a team led by Christopher Churchill, Ph.D. from the United States Geological Survey Texas Water Science Center found a juvenile zebra mussel attached to a sampler on the southern end of the reservoir. In addition, plankton samples collected by the USGS in May revealed the presence of a microscopic larva. Follow up surveys conducted by TPWD at marinas and along the shoreline failed to document any additional juvenile or adult zebra mussels. Thus, it appears this

is a new introduction and both agencies will continue monitoring the lake closely.

Currently throughout the Trinity River Basin, one lake is classified as suspect, meaning zebra mussels or their larvae have been positively identified one time in the lake (Lake Ray Hubbard), five lakes are now classified as positive, meaning zebra mussels or their larvae have been documented more than once (Lakes Grapevine, Lavon, Richland Chambers, Worth and Fishing Hole Lake) and five more lakes are classified as infested, meaning they have an established, reproducing population (Lakes Bridgeport, Eagle Mountain, Lewisville, Livingston and Ray Roberts).

As of June 2018, in Texas, 14 water bodies in five river basins are listed as infested with zebra mussels, six water bodies are listed as positive – including Grapevine Lake and three water bodies are listed as suspect for having zebra mussels.

The rapidly-reproducing zebra mussels can have serious economic, recreational and environmental impacts on Texas reservoirs and rivers. TPWD and partners will continue monitoring high risk lakes in Texas, installing signage and reminding boaters to clean, drain and dry their equipment when leaving public boat ramps.

More information about zebra mussels can be found online at tpwd.texas.gov/ZebraMussels. **T★J**

Top 5 Heat Hacks to Stay Safe This Summer

With temperatures soaring into the triple-digits, it's important to make sure you have the essentials before hitting the trails at a Texas State Park or a favorite fishing spot on an inland lake or along the coast.

Experts from the Texas Parks and

Wildlife Department are sharing their top five heat hacks for staying safe on the trails during the summer months.

Here are the top five recommended hacks:

1. **Hydrate:** It's important to drink at least 16 ounces of water every hour in the heat to replenish your body and prevent dehydration. Don't forget your four-legged family members and make sure to bring enough water for them.

2. **Dress Smart:** Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing, a hat, correct shoes, sunscreen and wet bandanas to keep you cool while in the sun.

3. **Stay Salty:** Food helps keep up energy and replace salt lost from sweating. Snacks such as jerky, granola, trail mix, tuna and dried fruit are a fantastic way to nourish your body.

4. **Buddy System:** Two brains are better than one. It's beneficial to have someone with you in hot conditions so you can look after each other. With high temperatures hitting Texas, heat-related illnesses are common and having a friend around to help recognize the early symptoms can save you from getting sick.

5. **Plan Ahead:** Study the map and have it with you. When on a trail hikers move at about two miles per hour so allow plenty of time to avoid hiking in the heat of the day. Make sure to rest in cool or shaded area to recover from the heat if necessary. It is also a good idea to let someone know your plan before you hit the trails just as it is important to file a float plan when heading to the water. Let them know what time you should be back, where you are going as well as the trailhead or launch site. That way, if you become lost, people know where to look.

T★J

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POTENTIAL UNKNOWN CONSEQUENCES OF CWD



Questions relating to the real impact on infected ranches have not yet been addressed.

Story and Photography by Bill L. Olson

While wildlife biologist wrestle with ways to check or at least slow the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease there are other questions relating to restrictions on ranches infected with the disease that have not yet been addressed. As a real estate broker for 40 years I have raised questions about CWD's potential impact on real estate values, and property restrictions or its usage for the past three years. The questions have been raised to title

companies, rural/agricultural lenders, real estate education professionals and Texas Parks and Wildlife officials.

Each time the questions have been raised the responses have been non-specific at best, or without knowledge of the concern and potential problem particularly within the real estate community. On most occasions the response has been, "I never thought of that."

Some instances where real estate usage may be restricted or prohibited have

not been addressed as it relates to any attachment to the title of the property. Certainly once this issue is addressed will determine the impact CWD may have on real estate values of infected properties.

Specific information on CWD in Texas is available on TPWD's Home page. In the middle of the page under Hot Topics click on the link to Chronic Wasting Disease. In the middle of that page is a link to CWD Positives in Texas that provides a chronological history of the disease for

both free ranging animals as well as those at deer breeding facilities or high fenced game ranches (a.k.a. Release Sites).

The origin of Chronic Wasting Disease is a bit vague. Some say it can be traced to free-range mule deer in Colorado in the late 1960s. Some say the mule deer were not free-range animals but were in a high fence release site in Colorado. Regardless of the original positive test, no one has yet been able to determine the origin of the infection of the first deer.

CWD first appeared in Texas in the Trans-Pecos region in free-ranging mule deer in 2012. Since then there have been 101 total incidents as posted on the TPWD site. Of the 101 incidents 23 infected free-range animals have been found. This includes the original eight free-range mule deer in 2012 -2015 in Hudspeth County. In 2015 an infected free-range mule deer was discovered in Texas' panhandle in Hartley County.

The first positive test of a whitetail deer in a breeder facility occurred in 2015 in Medina County and a positive tested whitetail in Lavaca County. This was followed in 2016 when two whitetail deer testing positive for CWD at a deer breeder release site that straddles Uvalde and Medina counties. Plus, four additional positive tests on whitetail deer at the same breeder ranch in Lavaca County that had previously tested positive in 2015.

In 2016 a free-range whitetail deer from Medina County was discovered. The remaining positive test in 2016 included free-range mule deer in Hartley and Dallham counties in the panhandle plus El Paso and Hudspeth is west Texas.

In 2017 through the latest entry on March 27, 2018 all of the positive test on free ranging deer have come from mule deer in the same counties as noted above. The lone exception is a free-range whitetail that tested positive in Hartley County in 2017.

The rest of the positive tests on white-tails have come from deer breeder facilities in Medina and Uvalde Counties with other facilities or pastures being noted. There was an elk that tested positive in 2017 at a release site on a ranch in Medina County that previously had a whitetail deer test positive.

In the Lone Star State the native deer species susceptible to CWD are whitetail,



One of the challenges of containing animals within a high fenced areas are the water gaps. Some animals are able to go over or under the fences, but when water gaps open due to heavy rains, animals escape.

mule deer and elk. According to Clayton Wolf, TPWD Wildlife Division Director, "Moose and reindeer are CWD-susceptible species though neither are currently found in Texas.

"Fallow deer have been tested and it is generally accepted they cannot get CWD through natural transmission," Wolf explained. "Axis deer have not been experimentally exposed and we (TPWD) have not collected enough of them to say this for sure. Sika deer are susceptible to CWD and found in parts of Texas. For the rest of our exotics, I would say they are "not known" to get or transmit CWD.

When it comes to free range animals Texas Parks & Wildlife has implemented various strategies and restriction zones to sample harvested animals, and have even tested road kill of native indigenous deer. These zones restrict movement of certain live deer and deer carcasses as additional measures to check, or at least slow the spread of CWD.

Unlike free-range or low fenced ranches, release and breeder facilities have their own built in restriction in the form of a high fence that contains game somewhat within the confines of the high fenced property. As most know there is a question about water gaps and how effective they are or are not about containing the game within. This is where questions as it relates to real estate could have an impact on values and usage of the property to an unknowing or uninformed buying public.

Here is the background on what is generally known about high fenced ranches

as a result of having tested positive for CWD.

There are numerous incidents where a deer breeding facility has tested positive for CWD around the country. On some of those breeder facilities the entire deer herd has been destroyed, the property sterilized and in some instance the topsoil has been scraped to try and remove the CWD prion. Some facilities have been left unpopulated by native deer for a number of years.

However, in each case, once whitetail deer or other native deer species are reintroduced to those ranches the deer herd again becomes infected. To date, there has not been any method that has completely eradicated or removed the CWD prion from property once it has been infected.

The rules and restrictions on high fenced released ranches are somewhat different. Landowners or potential buyers should refer to the TPWD website on CWD and contact the department for further specific explanation and guidance.

The real estate related questions I have raised since 2015 on high fenced ranches that have tested positive for CWD remain largely unanswered and unaddressed. The questions and potential restrictions are as follows:

To Title Companies: With confirmed CWD cases now in Texas are there any exceptions to the title being made noting a particular property has tested positive? The reason this question is important is because if there are restrictions on a property it could impact the value of the property.



According to TPWD there have not been enough tests on axis deer to determine if they are resistant to the CWD disease, or could possibly help spread the disease. Axis deer are the largest population of non-native, exotic big game in the state of Texas.

To Lenders: Are you currently considering whether a ranch has tested positive for CWD during the loan approval process? If a ranch does test positive for CWD how might this impact the terms of the loan or of an existing loan?

According to Wolf, “TPWD regulations that are property specific for a CWD positive property are based upon and follow any restrictions placed on the property by Texas Animal Health Commission. It is TAHC that would place restrictions on a property. These restrictions can be somewhat temporary pending additional studies or findings to an outright quarantine.”

The following are some hypothetical scenarios that need to be addressed.

Currently a deer breeding facility that has tested positive for CWD can be restricted from ever having native indigenous deer placed on or added to the property. This restriction has already been established and applied by Texas Animal Health Commission. Is that restriction a recorded document that attaches to the land and is of public record?

Can a positive tested high-fenced piece of property remove the high fence to avoid the expense of maintaining the fencing thus allowing free-range animals to once again traverse the land that was once behind a high fence?

It is known that with a single panel of high fencing that free range deer naturally nuzzle with deer behind a high-fence. It

is also known that CWD is spread through saliva and other natural secretions. Is a second fence being considered as a requirement to prevent this type of interaction between deer inside and outside of the fence?

In Wisconsin CWD has been a hot topic since its discovery in 2002. In recent years there has been discussion of having a second full height fence constructed inside

of the perimeter fence to prevent deer from interaction physically with those on the outside.

On a May 2, 2018 posting on Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker’s FACT Sheet website (walker.wi.gov/fact-sheets/fact-sheet-governor-walker-takes-aggressive-new-actions-combat-chronic-wasting-disease) states he is taking aggressive action to prevent the spread of CWD within the Wisconsin deer herd. It further states, “After several years of scientific study and broad stakeholder engagement among sportsmen and deer farmers, the Governor concluded new steps were necessary to address the real threat CWD poses to the state’s deer herd.

The plan outlined here recognizes the role both hunters and farmers play in preventing the spread of CWD, and that both communities are deeply invested in ensuring the long-term health of the herd.

Though these steps are aggressive, they represent a balanced approach build on the shared responsibility of both hunters and deer farmers to prevent the spread of CWD.

The Wisconsin Governor’s web post outlines a three Step plan:

“Step 1: Enhanced Fencing

“The Governor directed the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to create an emergency rule requiring enhanced fencing for all deer farms taking

immediate action to prevent the spread of CWD.

“The emergency rule will give deer farmers options for implementation; a second eight-foot-high fence, an electric fence, or an impermeable physical barrier to meet the rule’s requirements. Current farms need only a single eight-foot fence.

“This rule will apply to all 376 registered deer farms/hunting preserves in Wisconsin.

“This new directive comes in response to appeals by Deer Advisory Councils, the Conservation Congress, and other stakeholders emphasizing the importance of and need for additional concrete steps to protect the herd.

“Step 2: Live Deer Movement Restrictions

“The Governor directed the Secretary of DATCP to create an emergency and permanent rule banning the movement of deer from deer farms in CWD-affected counties.

“Currently, only deer farms enrolled in DATCP’s herd management program can move deer to farms or game preserves elsewhere in the state, even if the sending deer farm is in a CWD-affected county.

“The movement of live deer between farms in different counties has been a source of significant concern for the spread of CWD (see, e.g., “CWD-positive Kewaskum deer farm linked to Bayfield County concerns,” Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, March 17, 2018). The new rule aims to limit exposure and contain the spread of the disease.

“Step 3: Deer Carcass Movement Restrictions

“The Governor is directing the Secretary of Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to create emergency and permanent rules banning the movement of deer carcasses from CWD-affected regions.

“Under the rule, a hunter who harvests a deer in a CWD-affected county may only move the carcass within the county of harvest or to a directly adjacent CWD-affected county unless the carcass is delivered to a licensed taxidermist or meat processor.

“Hunters can still debone the deer at the harvest location and then take the remainder of the carcass outside the CWD-affected regions. Deboning ensures the parts of the deer’s body most likely to host the infection remain in the CWD-af-

ected region.

“When hunters harvest an infected deer from a CWD-affected county but then take it to their home or camp in a clean county, their disposal of the infected deer carcass in the clean county can spread the disease.

“To prevent this, hunters must take the entire carcass to a licensed taxidermist or meat processor in any county, since those facilities are equipped to handle carcasses in a way that minimizes the spread of CWD.

“For more information, contact the DATCP or the DNR.”

While there is not a permanent ban on movement of deer from breeding facilities in Texas there are restrictions on conditions under which deer can or cannot be moved. There are also regulations as to what a hunter can and cannot do as it relates to movement of a deer carcass in a CWD Restricted Zone and are spelled out on the TPWD CWD page.

It seems the number of questions relating to Chronic Wasting Disease continues to build and the answers to others are slow in coming. The good news is wildlife biologists around the country are

sharing their experiences and strategies with each other.

When it comes to the impact CWD may have on Texas’ rural real estate values and property uses or restrictions, a new set of questions now needs to be addressed. It is needed to protect real estate brokers and agents as it relates to disclosure to clients as well as protecting the clients they represent.

A document a real estate agent should try to obtain and buyers should request, is

a letter from Texas Animal Health Commission stating the known condition of any high-fenced ranch prior to the time title transfers from seller to buyer. It is something the Texas Real Estate Commission needs to address to protect all parties involved.

CWD is a more complex issue than most originally thought with more questions being raised than there are answers. Its impact can have a much greater consequence than is being discussed. **T★J**



TPWD’s website on CWD helps explain the complexities of regulating infected properties that differ from deer breeder facilities to release sites or other high fenced ranches. However, any restrictions that may be placed on a property that has animals testing positive with CWD are regulated by Texas Animal Health Commission.

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A man wearing a yellow cap, sunglasses, a white long-sleeved shirt, and khaki pants is fishing from a boat. He is holding a fishing rod that is bent, indicating a catch. The background shows a vast expanse of greenish-blue water under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The man is seen from the back, looking out over the water.

Consistency

IN THE
HEAT

***August is arguably the best summer month to fish along
Texas' Upper Coast.***

Story and Photography by Nate Skinner

August is arguably the top month of the summer season to fish from West Matagorda Bay to Sabine Lake. It is consistently hot, fish have hunkered down in the summer holes and each day brings more of the same. That's why so many refer to this time of year as "dog days."

The late summer conditions have helped fishing patterns stabilize and a more consistent bite can be found just about anywhere. All of the areas fished earlier in the summer are still holding concentrations of fish, and the ideal conditions for targeting these hot-spots are more prevalent than ever.

What's taken place across bays and estuaries over the past several weeks has also created an opportunity for additional strategies to produce positive results. The list of potential hot-spots that afford anglers with consistency is constantly growing as well. The events that occur over the next few weeks will continue to expand the playing field for those willing to bear the heat.

When referring to the eighth month of the year, most anglers are quick to complain about the scorching temperatures that it produces. Yes, if August has a downfall, it's definitely that it brings sweltering conditions.

However, light winds and calm seas also persist for the majority of the month. This result in cleaner bay waters and makes it possible for anglers to fish almost anywhere they want.

Calm conditions are especially important when it comes to targeting fish along the jetties, unprotected open bay waters, beachfront, and near-shore Gulf waters. All of these areas are chock full of a variety of species right now. August will provide anglers with one of the largest windows of opportunity available throughout the entire calendar year to safely navigate and fish.

Tripletail is a viable and often overlooked option. I cannot stress enough how excellent a month August is for pursuing this species due to the prevailing weather patterns. Inside West Matagorda Bay anglers should find almost all open bay waters to be clean and calm. This will allow them to not leave any leaf unturned as they search channel markers, wellheads, and float-ing debris in search of the tasty species.

The beachfront west of Sabine Pass

should also have calm and clear water. This will make spotting tripletail floating along the surface a breeze. Then all that's left is to fool them with a precisely placed cast.

Sometimes they like larger baits and other times they will only strike smaller offerings. Car-rying a variety of jigs that sink slowly is the best bet for successfully sight casting to and land-ing tripletail along the beachfront out of Sabine.

Another thing that anglers should consider this month is fishing pressure and how it affects the fish they target. Upper coast bays likely experienced their peak period of boat traffic during June and July. This immense activity will start to die down as fall semesters commence and schools return to session by the middle-to-the-end of the month.

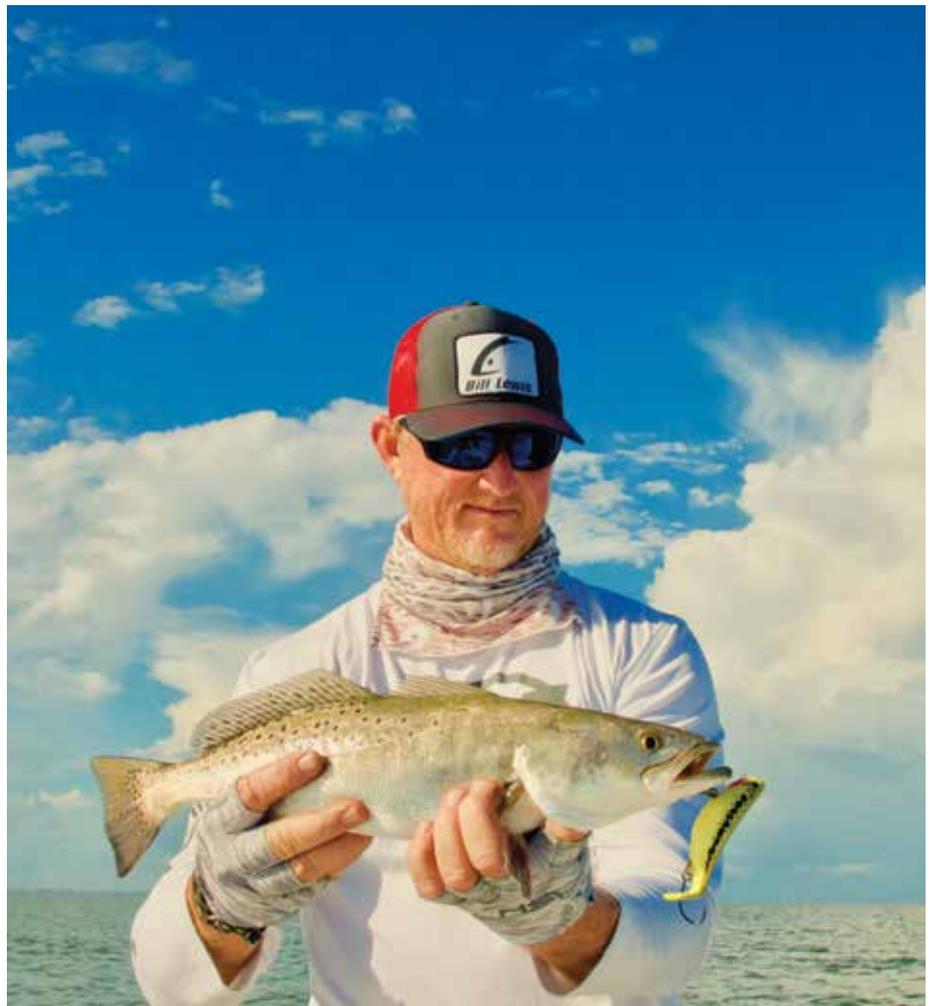
Football and fall hunting seasons are both on the horizon and they will contribute to the re-duction of boat traffic as well. Soon some anglers may choose to

stay off the water to cheer on their favorite team or prepare their gear for alternate outdoor activities.

The heavy fishing pressure upper coast bays have endured the past two months presents an opportunity for anglers to find fish somewhat off the beaten path. In the first part of August when boat traffic is still pretty steady, look for fish to be pushed out to the edges of structure or reefs that have been constantly ran over by summertime crowds. A lot of times open stretches of water adjacent to popular fishing grounds remain untapped and could be holding hoards of fish.

I recently spent two days fishing over on Calcasieu Lake in southwest Louisiana with my fa-ther-in-law. Just east of the Lone Star State's border, this estuary is considered to be an exten-sion of Texas' upper coast by many because it is a rock's throw away and experiences similar patterns.

While fishing with Big Lake Guide



Capt. Tim Young proves that once fishing pressure dies down later in the day that chunky specks will be willing to feed aggressively.

Service's Captain Nick Poe, we encountered schools of speckled trout concentrating just off the edges of popular reefs he said had been extremely productive for most of the summer. Flocks of gulls diving over swarms of shrimp and pogies clued us in to where the schools of specks were hanging out. Catching them was the easy part.

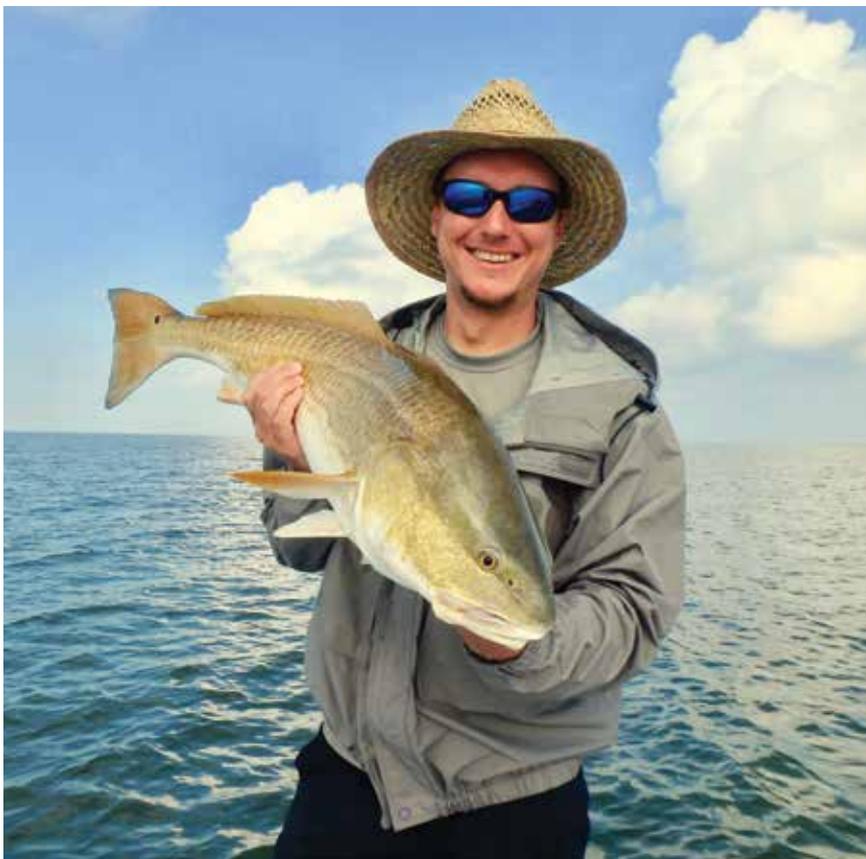
Poe claims that the fish had moved out away from the center of the reefs a few hundred yards because of the amount of boats that had ran over and pestered them day in and day out for several weeks.

"Once folks know where good numbers of fish are staging, they'll keep hammering those particular spots without exploring any of the nearby water that surrounds them," he explained. "When they stop catching fish over that particular reef, hump, or whatever structure it may be, they will simply assume the fish have left. What has actually happened is that the fish have just pulled off out into open water. They are usually holding close to the bottom, as far away as they can get from the pressure without leaving the general area."

The same type of pattern can be



Steve Kotara, the author's father-in-law, hooked up with some keeper sized trout while fishing with Capt. Nick Poe of Big Lake Guide service off the edge of a popular reef. Birds revealed exactly where the fish were staging.



Redfish like this brute caught by Matt Ebrom can be found roaming upper coast mid bay waters during mid to late August.

found in early August in the Galveston Bay Complex. Take Hanna Reef for example. It is quite possibly the most well known reef in all of Texas' largest bay system. Thousands of boats have been cruising over this large stretch of shell for months. It just makes sense that fish will likely be concentrated on the ends and edges of this reef, away from where the most dense boat traffic has been occurring.

This same strategy can be applied to just about any popular summertime hotspot on the en-tire upper coast. Anglers should look for slicks, nervous bait, and diving or hovering birds surrounding these areas to pin point where the fish are located.

Fishing during the afternoon and evening hours is another way to combat the effects of in-tense fishing pressure during the first half of August. It seems that hardly anyone fishes in the evenings anymore, which leaves the small amount of anglers that do with the bays to them-selves.

Unlike the strong winds that accompany most afternoons and evenings during previous months, light afternoon breezes in August should be nothing more than

a bit of relief from the stifling heat. The majority of bay waters will still remain fishable throughout the entire day.

Popular fishing grounds that may have looked like a parking lot of boats during the morning hours will provide a more aggressive bite with the lack of pressure later in the day. I can't tell you how many times I've ran out into the middle of East Galveston Bay in the afternoon with-out crossing paths with another boat and experienced some outstanding topwater action in areas where others told me they had been skunked that morning. Fish are more willing to come up from the depths and feed when they aren't constantly getting run over. The afternoon hours may be warm, but the results are often well worth the extra sunscreen and bottles of water.

As mentioned, the latter half of the month will see a reduction in crowds and fishing pressure as summer winds down. This is when anglers can take full advantage of the consistent and aggressive bite that August is known for. When the boat traffic starts to dwindle, expect to find action in just about any summertime hot spot known to produce big time catches.

August is also a time when anglers should start seeing red. There is usually a stretch of days late in the month that triggers a mass movement of large redfish across marshes and bays as they begin to make their run towards passes to spawn in the Gulf. The late coastal scribe A.C. Beck-er, Jr. always noted that some sort of tropical disturbance typically kicked off this migration of redfish. So if a storm makes its way into the Gulf during the middle to the end of the month and brings a surge of high tides into upper coast bays, anglers can almost bet on encountering schools of redfish on the move shortly after.

Open water schools of reds can be found in any bay system along the upper coast. Slicks, mud boils, and diving terns are the telltale sign of a school nearby. One of my favorite places for chasing schools of monster reds in open water is the south end of Sabine Lake. Capt. Randy Foreman showed me how these schools start swarming the southern portion of the lake during mid-to-late August about five years ago. A few terns are usually hovering over them, and when they come to the surface the water turns to a boiling broth of copper and bronze. These fish are literally some of the prettiest reds



Ideal conditions in August will make it easier for anglers to run the beach front out of Sabine Pass in search of tripletail along the water's surface.

to be caught all year long as many have just left the marsh, are in good shape, and are lit up with aggression.

As the saying goes, actions speak louder than words. Folks may complain about the heat, but it takes much more of a toll on us than it does on the fish swim-

ming under the surface in deep water.

August's consistency is proof. With a little thought, planning and know-how, the next hook up is simply a cast away.

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Long Range Shooting Schools = Better Shots

My wife Carol is a naturally good shot. I have seen her drop pronghorn antelope at 400 plus yards. I also saw her shoot an Eland at over 450 yards on a hunt in Africa.

Most of the time she and I shoot neck and neck with handguns and shotguns. I have been very proud of her ability as a marksman and proud of myself for teaching her how to shoot and hunt. However, there is only so much a husband can teach his wife, and there is also only so much you can learn from shooting at a range or from a shooting bench.

Carol and I talked about going to one of the long range shooting schools so she could become proficient in shooting at longer distance. I thought about how and what I teach my regular students but it is more difficult to teach your wife or own children. They don't want to listen to you and they think a professional can do a better job.

This is true, professional teachers can be more critical of a shooter's way of shooting. They can be more judgmental of what is being done wrong, as well as, being able to praise the things that are done right.

When a husband teaches his wife how to shoot, or even how to golf, one thing he has to remember is that he has to go home

with his lady and live with her. A professional teacher does not.

I recently returned from helping teach an all-woman's shooting/hunting course called "She Hunts". This year the course was held at Record Buck Ranch near Utopia, TX. The shooting course and classes are very basic. The class begins with how to mount a scope, how to sight in a rifle, and how to load the rifle. She Hunts teaches just what most women need to know, how to do it all and not just have a husband or guide hand them a rifle and say shoot it.

The course is taught by Britney Boddington, Shannon Landsdowne, Steve Rand and several other professionals from varied sectors of the outdoor industry. I was asked to teach a class on how to handle guns, how to mount scopes and how to sight in a rifle. Representatives from Leupold and Norma Ammunition taught classes on how to use and understand a rifle scope and which bullet to use for specific types of game.

After four days of shooting, cleaning rifles, learning how to stalk and track game animals, plus how to judge an animal's trophy quality and where to shoot the animal the ladies were allowed to hunt a game animal of their choice on the Record Buck Ranch. I was impressed with how well the classes

went and how much these women enjoyed learning the basics.

When I sent Carol to a shooting school, I wanted her to have more of an advanced course where she could learn from both the instructors and the other students. She knew the basics but needed to learn how to shoot long range and how to shoot faster if a dangerous situation happened with really big game.

We talked to Tim Fallon of FTW Outfitters about Carol enrolling in his course and if he thought what he offered would be a proper fit. Tim said he had a class with several other women in it that would be starting in about six weeks. It sounded like what I was looking for, so we signed Carol up.

The course is called the SAAM course. SAAM stands for Sportsman All-Weather All-Terrain Marksmanship and the school teaches real world hunting situations. Students will shoot more than 300 rounds of ammunition in four days.

The school is nestled in the Texas Hill Country near Barksdale and the shooting is done on different ranges



Chip instructor with FTW Ranch explains gun handling and safety.



The author's wife, Carol with a javelina she shot with a revolver.

from 100 to 500 yards and beyond. I liked the course because of the variety of real world situational shooting that takes place. Shooters will shoot up-hill, down-hill, across deep canyons and while maneuvering through heavy brush. All of these different types of shooting situations will have many different effects on bullet drop as well as drift from the wind.

Carol's instructors were retired Navy Seals named Chip and Doug. From what Carol told me and from what I saw from her notebook, they definitely know their stuff. Carol learned proper care and cleaning of her rifle and optics (I don't have to do this any more). She learned how to use her scope and crosshairs to judge distance and wind drift and how to judge wind force by watching the grass and trees. She also learned how much hold over to use for all the different ranges but more importantly she learned how to use her new Swarovski Z5 Ballistic Turret scope to the full potential.

The course is very intense. Training starts at sunrise and finishes at sunset everyday. By the time Carol finished the SAAM School, she had developed a new confidence and knowledge and she is now capable of making shots out to 600 yards and even more. Whether she is shooting up hill or across a canyon with changing wind, she now has the confidence for long shots.

Carol learned to change her old way of gripping and holding her rifle which resulted in even better accuracy. Much of her shooting was done from a prone or lying down position. She also learned how to use a bipod or a backpack for support.

For long distance shooting and this course, it is important to have a scope with enough magnification to see targets at 500 or 600 yards. The scope needs to have crosshairs thin enough as not to cover the entire target at long range. Nothing is worse than having to guess at which spot to shoot because the crosshairs are too big.

The new Swarovski Z5 Ballistic Turret scope has enough magnification (3x18) and the appropriate type of cross-hairs that make long range shooting easy.

The scope is also set up with a new range-adjusting turret which allows the shooter to set four different range settings. In a matter of seconds you can change your zero setting from 200 yards to 500 yards and make the long shot without any



Steve Ran with She Hunts provides 19 year old Jessica Barlow with shooting instructions.

of the guesswork on where to hold over on the animal.

There is another shooting course at FTW that I like very much called "Dangerous Game Shooting". This course teaches close in shooting for dangerous game. For the hunter who is going after Buffalo or Elephant in Africa you will not have 200 or even 100 yard shots. Dangerous game hunting happens close and fast.

I shot my Cape Buffalo at 22 yards and needed a quick second shot. This course teaches how to use a big bore rifle and how to make that quick second follow-up shot. They even have a charging buffalo to shoot at. There is nothing like shooting at close quarters on dangerous game. It is truly an experience that must be prepared for through practice and to

mentally preparation.

Hunting trips have become so expensive that taking situational shooting schools are well worth the price that is charged. Buying good optics is also worth every penny if it instills hunter confidence to make that once in a lifetime shot.

Now that Carol is back I can't wait to go to the range with her to see what she has learned. Maybe the next time we go shooting together I will be the student and she will be the instructor.

If you are interested in finding out if you can "go the distance" with your shooting abilities contact Tim Fallon at FTW Outfitters; www.ftwoutfitters.com, or Britney Boddington at She Hunts; www.shehunts.com. You will never know your true shooting abilities until they are put to the test. 🌟🌟



Steve Ran shooting a MGA Banshee in 300 Win at 600 yards during the She Hunts shooting school. Long range and situational shooting schools helps hunters evaluate different in-the-field hunting scenarios while building shooting confidence.

Hooked Up

Inside and Out



In the summer time live bait rules inshore and offshore.

Story and Photography by Robert Sloan

While talking recently to Capt. Mike Williams we hit on the topic of what baits were best for tarpon and kingfish off the Galveston beachfront.

He laughed.

“That’s a no-briner,” he said. “Live bait, not lures, rule anywhere on earth. I’ve caught a ton of tarpon and kings on all sorts of live baits. Very few on lures. You put out a live croaker, piggy perch or sand trout and you are going to catch something along the Texas coast. That’s a fact.”

And he’s right. Think about the king fish tournaments held along the entire Gulf coast. Very few of the tournament anglers use lures. It’s all about live bait.

Capt. Bill Platt, who is one of the very best at catching big kings, uses nothing but hardtails.

“If I can fish a couple of live hardtails behind the boat and kings are there we’re going to catch them. It’s that simple.”

Many marlin fishermen off the Texas coast have just about forgotten about pulling lures. For many years the technique of bump trolling live baits like bonito and hardtails is the only way to go.

Even snapper fishermen are warming up to the idea of fishing live baits. Greg Gamble and his crew of offshore anglers don’t leave the dock without at least a few dozen pinfish.

“We’re not the kind of fishermen that like to tie off to a rig and wait for a bite,” he says. “One way to find and catch big snapper is to drift fish structure above and below the surface with live pinfish. If big snaps are there that’s the way to catch them real fast.”

Inshore fishermen know that live baits rule during the hot summer months. Using a live shrimp along the jetties is one sure fire way to catch trout and reds. One of the best ways to catch trout at the rocks is to free-line a live shrimp. It’s a simple way of fishing that delivers more often than not from about May through October. If you don’t know how to free-line a shrimp this is how it’s done.

I’ve pretty much gone to fishing with nothing but braided line. The brand I used is Seaguar Smackdown in 20-pound test. It’s an eight strand braid that’s super strong and amazingly sensitive. It’s perfect for feeling the soft bites of a trout eating a free-lined shrimp.

Take the tag end of the line and tie it

off to a size 3 black Spro swivel. Next take a three foot section of Seaguar Pink Label fluorocarbon 15-pound test line and use it as a leader. Tie one end off to the swivel and the other to a No. 2 Gamakatsu Shiner hook. This is a thin wire hook that won’t kill a shrimp or croaker. You want to hook the shrimp through the tail, or in the head between the horn and dark spot. This allows the shrimp to move freely. With a live croaker hook it between the dorsal fin and tail above the spine.

A free-line rig can be fished with or without a split shot. A split shot can be pinched onto the line about 12 inches above the bait. The idea is to get the bait to slowly sink as it moves with the current. Make a short cast and feed the line off the reel. If you feel subtle tap set the hook. Or if the line goes side ways set the hook. It’s that simple. During the summer months the bigger shrimp will definitely catch heavier trout at the jetties, along with the occasional red and tarpon.

When it comes to tarpon, one of the best places to see and catch them is at the Port O’Connor jetties. From about July

through September you can see them rolling about 10 feet off the rocks. The heavier tarpon are usually hooked up at the end of the jetties. This is where you want to fish the biggest shrimp you can find. Or fish them about six to eight feet under a slip cork.

Williams says drifting with live baits is the best way to catch tarpon, along with lots of kings, jacks and sharks. When he’s fishing for tarpon, in 30 to 60 feet of water, he’ll rig up to fish live bait with a 5 to 10 foot-long section of 200-pound test monofilament line. To keep the bait swimming normally he’ll run an 8/0 to 16/0 circle hook from the lower lip to the upper lip.

If you are live baiting for kings you’ll want to use a No. 8 coffee colored wire leader that’s anywhere from two to five feet long.

Free-lining live bait is also good offshore around the rigs, over wrecks and reefs. It’s always good to take a variety of live baits offshore. Mullet and croakers are good. So are live shrimp. One of best baits you can use for catching big ling is



Fishing live baits for tuna is a whole different ball game. It's game on every second the baits are in the water.



Pogies can many times be found flicking on the surface. Get close with a cast net and load up.

Gulf coast is a piggy perch or pinfish. A pinfish is named for all the spines in their back and tail fins. They have a black spot just behind the gills. Pinfish are usually smaller than piggy perch. You can hook both just in front of the dorsal fin. With a piggy perch do not run the hook through the lateral line. Another option is to hook them from the bottom lip and through the top lip. Or hook them just behind the dorsal fin.

Pinfish are excellent baits for big trout. What a lot of anglers do is trim the spines along the dorsal.

Both pinfish and piggy perch can be caught around boat docks and pier pilings all day long. Once you find out where they are hanging out you can drop a cast net on them and catch quite a few in a hurry.

Another option is to get the kids into the action. Give them a little push button rod and reel, bait a tiny hook with a small piece of peeled shrimp, add a little split shot and you are good to go. They absolutely love to catch bait. It's just like bream fishing.

Another way to catch these little baitfish is with a wire perch trap. Bait it up with sliced mullet or chicken wings, lower it down near a boat dock and by the next morning you'll likely have a few dozen live baits.

A live pogie is an excellent live bait. This is an oily fish that's usually four to six inches long. Kings, ling, snapper and tuna love them. You can usually find pogies flicking on the surface. Idle up close enough with a cast net and you can load up.

a big live shrimp.

Regardless of what live baits you take offshore it's very important to have at least two rods rigged up to free-line live baits. And they need to be handy and ready for action.

I like to use about a three foot section of Seaguar 50-pound test fluorocarbon for a leader. The connection from the braided line to the leader is made with a 230 pound test Spro Power swivel. The business end of the leader is connected to a 7/0 Gamakatsu octopus circle hook. For larger baits a 10/0 hook is best.

One of the absolute best live baits you can use just about anywhere along the



Get the kids into the action with a push button rod and reel, bait a tiny hook with a small piece of peeled shrimp, add a little split shot and you are good to go. They absolutely love to catch bait.

A lot of the offshore boats will use hardtails for bait to catch big yellow fin tuna and blue marlin. They can be caught around near shore rigs with six hook Sabiki rigs. These are tiny jigs attached to one leader with a weight at the bottom. They are designed to catch multiple baitfish in one cast. The angler makes the cast, and another person is nearby to take them off the hooks and get them into the live well ASAP. When done right you can load up with hardtails within 15 to 30 minutes.

I caught my first blue marlin in the Gulf of Mexico while fishing out of Port Aransas with a free-lined hardtail. We were bump trolling two live hardtails about 20 to 30 yards behind a 54 foot Bertram. We caught two blues that day.

The hardtails were bridled with hooks through the nose. The key was to have two guys holding the line between their index finger and thumb. When the hardtail started getting fidgety the line was released and about that time usually drew a strike from whatever was messing with the bait. It's fun fishing that involves a little teamwork. But when the line comes tight, and the angler sets the hook and a

marlin comes out of the water doing head shakes – well, that's pretty fine stuff.

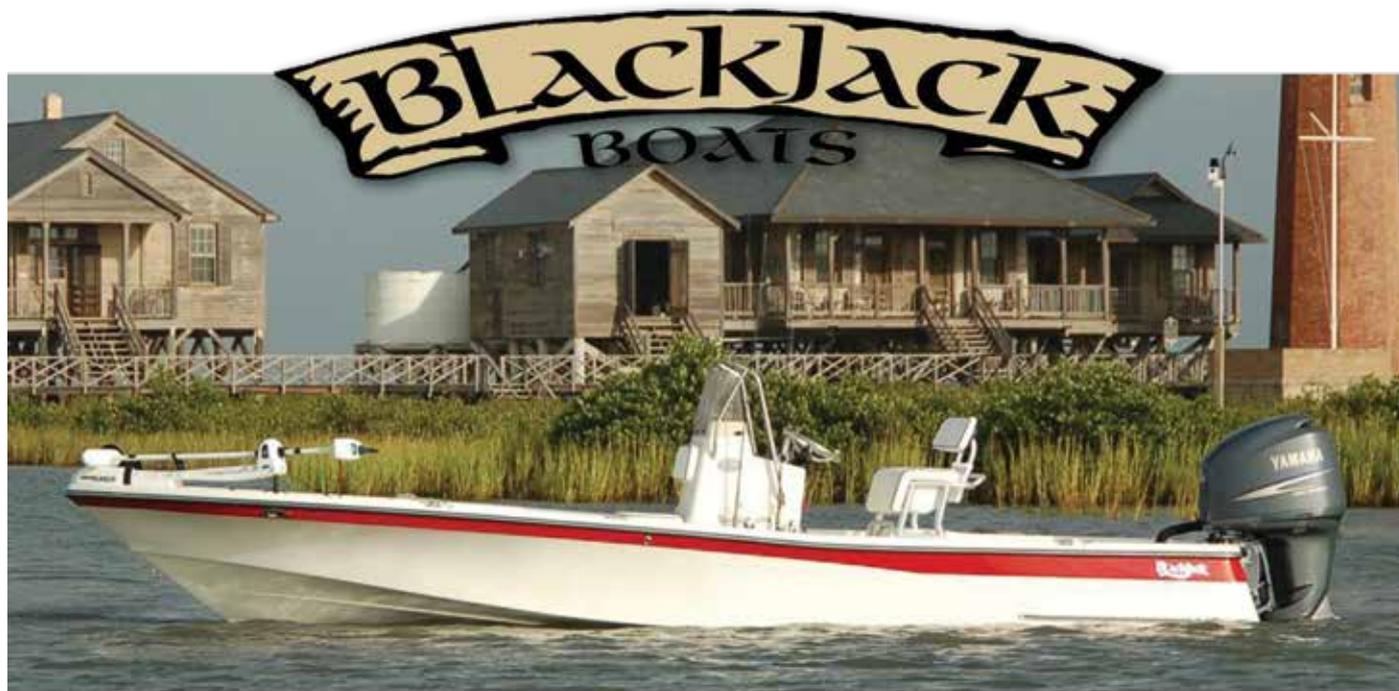
Fishing live baits for tuna and marlin is a whole different ball game. It's game on every second the baits are in the water. Some of the bonito we have used as bait were two feet long. We would bridle them up, drop them in and either fish them off the stern or the outriggers. There is nothing wrong with pulling a spread of

five lures when you're in the hunt for big fish, but it can get to be pretty boring.

However, when you've got live baits out you are on point every single second. Here's why. On July 11, 2014 Richard Richardson Jr. was out in the Gulf of Mexico fishing for marlin and tuna with live baits. The end result was a state record blue marlin that weighed 972.70 pounds. **T★J**



Mullet are another good live bait to take offshore when fishing around rigs, reefs and wrecks.



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fish and estimates both were well over 11 pounds.

Several other Texas tournament anglers have experienced big bass magic over the years. In fact, 40 pound limits showed up pretty frequently at Lake Falcon during its hey day roughly 8-10 years ago.

Remarkably, Robert Ballard of Del Rio and Clarence Vaughn of Amarillo did it on two consecutive days during the Oct. 2011 Skeeter Bass Champs South Division Championship. Ballard and Vaughn caught 10 bass weighing 86.18 pounds — an average of 8.6 pounds apiece.

The following year, Terry Oldham of Wimberly and Jaime Buitron of San Antonio exploited the fabled Texas/Mexico border lake for five fish weighing 45.52 pounds. Oldham said the catch ranks as the heaviest single day total in Bass Champs history.

Lake Conroe in eastern Texas has kicked out its share of big bags in the past,

Other Texas Mega Sacks to Note

but none to compare to the 45.10-pound limit brought to the scales in January 2011

by Willis anglers Dusty Schultz and Rusty Lawson. The anglers were competing in a Sunday morning tournament out of Stowaway Marina.

As individual weight records go, Florida's Terry Scroggins owns what may be the biggest single-day, five-fish limit caught by the same angler on a Texas public lake during a tournament.

In April 2008, Scroggins was competing in the Bassmaster Elite Series Lone Star Shootout on Lake Falcon when he reeled in a monstrous 44.4 pound limit in the final round. Mississippi's Paul Elias set the current BASS four-day weight record in the same tournament with 20 bass weighing a whopping 132.8 pounds.

* Charles Whited/Phillip

Walker, 44.98 pounds, Bass Champs Team, Choke Canyon, 2007

* Keith Combs, 41 pounds, 1 ounce, FLW Outdoors single day weight record, Lake Falcon, 2010

* Mike Metcalf/Glenn Kirk, 40.76 pounds, Angler's Choice Team, Sam Rayburn, late 1990s. **T★J**



PHOTO COURTESY OF TXTT

Albert Collins (left) and Clayton Boulware display the massive 40.28 pound limit they reeled in during the Texas Team Trail Championship on Sam Rayburn. It ranks among the heaviest sacks ever brought to the scales in a tournament held on the 114,000-acre reservoir.



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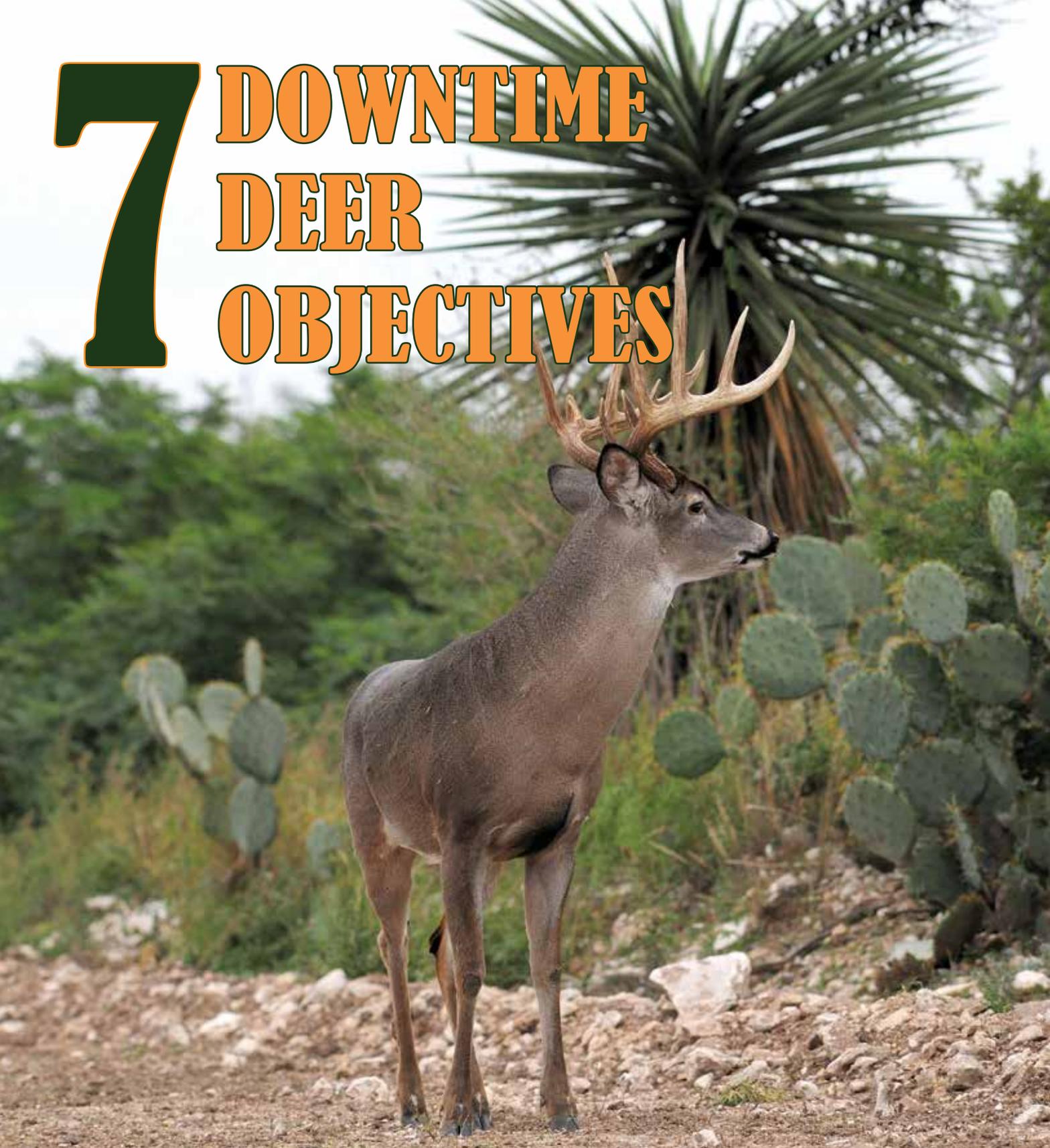


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7 DOWNTIME DEER OBJECTIVES



August is the time to begin planning out the upcoming season by revisiting former objectives and generating new ones if necessary.

Tools that help justify money spent and what is done to benefit whitetail deer.

Story and Photography by Bob Zaiglin

The uncomfortably sultry month of August is not conducive to spending a substantial amount of time outdoors. However, some early morning and late evening fishing on those small impoundments inhabited by bass and bream is available, and for those seeking adventure, late August is the time to hike the talus slopes of the Northwest Territories in search of Dall sheep. But for the deer hunting enthusiast, outside of a little hog control around one's favorite feeder, time is more efficiently spent planning out the upcoming deer hunting season.

August can be considered limbo for the South Texas deer hunter; however, time ensconced in our artificially controlled environments, home or office, can prove beneficial to management-oriented sportsmen if some time is dedicated to reviewing information obtained from previous hunting seasons critiquing and sometimes establishing new objectives for managing deer on one's favorite piece of real estate.

With appropriate deer population data, one can review herd status such as age class structure of bucks, adult sex ratios and fawn survival all of which contributes to the development of an effective harvest strategy for the upcoming season. Population statistics, if gathered and recorded properly, defines the direction in which a deer herd is heading. More importantly this information can be used to determine what caliber and quantity of animals are harvested in the future.

The aerial helicopter survey may be the most popular way of obtaining deer population data, but it is not only expensive, it is not always practical. This is particularly the case on small landholdings that represent the lion's share of deer turf.

Even if one can afford it, an aerial survey on a couple hundred acres is extremely difficult as deer are often hazed to the periphery of the property temporarily, forcing animals off the area, thus going uncounted, and if it is game fenced, the loud, whooping sound of those blades overhead can impact the health of deer as they attempt to escape from this perceived aerial predator sometimes dashing into the fence and being injured. Population estimation techniques such as a camera survey or incidental sightings are

more user-friendly, exerting virtually no impact on deer while valuable population data is obtained, plus it minimizes the burden on one's wallet.

Regardless the technique employed, information obtained must be organized in a comprehensible format on an annual basis in order to decipher changes in the population. In other words, after a few years of gathering data, it becomes easier to recognize trends in not only population fluctuations, but antler size, sex ratio, and fawn recruitment as well.

It's also important to understand the difference between a survey and a census. A census is an exact account of the population, which is virtually impossible to achieve in the wild. A survey is simply an estimate often affected by variables such as weather conditions and time of year.

If you are interested in improving the deer herd on a particular landholding, August represents some down time that

can be put to good use by reviewing one's initial objectives or establish new ones. And it's vital that realistically achievable objectives be developed.

For example, if the property is small, say 200 acres, managing for six-year-old bucks is not really applicable as deer on the property move on and off of it on a daily basis and are subject to neighboring harvest practices.

If one's ultimate goal is to develop larger racked bucks in the future, objective number one would be to establish a wildlife cooperative incorporating adjacent landowners willing to consolidate their efforts under one agreed-upon management plan. By establishing appropriate and mutually agreeable harvest guidelines, cooperators can at least increase the probability of some bucks reaching those older, larger rack-producing age classes. Passing over young to middle-aged bucks is the most cost effective method of increasing antler



The consolidation of small landholdings into a wildlife coop is the ultimate way of developing a quality deer herd.



Data collected from bucks harvested on an annual basis is one way of justifying expenses, particularly when it comes to supplemental feeding.

quality and one of the ultimate benefits of a wildlife cooperative.

The second objective would be to focus on what information should be obtained from deer harvested on the property of concern. Correctly gathered harvest data can be compared to analyzing one's retirement fund. By simply reviewing an annual financial report, one can see just how much they

contributed and to what degree it changed, which is the bottom line. If funds are increasing to one's satisfaction, they can then review individual investments to see which ones are doing well and which are not and make necessary changes. Decisions made, however, must be based on the assumption that the data being reviewed is correct. This is no different than analyzing antler size within each age

class. If time is not taken to collect both age and antler size of each buck harvested, the data is rendered ineffective. Thus objective number two would be to collect data correctly because it represents the ranch report card so to speak, at the end of each hunting season.

It's also important to note that appropriately collected data can be used to justify expenses. For example, if a supplement feed is provided on an annual basis, it can be quite expensive, particularly on larger tracts. In order to justify the continuation of such a practice, one can review the harvest data and see whether antler size is increasing or decreasing in the various age classes and if it isn't, a decision must be made to whether providing a supplement is justifiable or in some cases should be increased. Once again, the objectives, which are always measurable can be employed to determine the effectiveness of any technique employed.

The concerted effort to collect incidental sighting data throughout the season is objective number three. I refer to this technique as windshield biology as the number of bucks doe and fawns are recorded from not only blinds but by sportsmen while riding around. This cumulative information can be made more enlightening by estimating the age of bucks observed in order to generate the age class structure of the male segment of the deer herd. But remember, it's of paramount importance that all data be tabulated on an annual basis in order for it to be effectively employed in measuring trends.

No one knows more about the landholding hunted than the sportsmen on it, thus August is an ideal time to map out and thoroughly review the area to determine the most effective locations to hunt. Thus objective four is to determine when and more importantly where a blind or two should be positioned.

Objective five would be to determine the location of food plots if desirable. August is not the optimal time to plant, particularly in South Texas, but it's a good time to decide where those plots should be established and planted in late September and early October when rainfall is most apt to occur.

Should one decide that food plots are not desirable or practical, objective six would be to decide where some form of

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natural land enhancement practices can be employed? This strategy simply deals with developing portions of the ranch in a natural way that not only benefit the hunter but the deer on a year-round basis. They can be established inexpensively utilizing tools ranging from a small shredder to a chain saw.

For example, if a desirable stand is located on the edge of a thicket facing an expanse of semi open country, sightings could potentially be increased by establishing a network of small clearings or serpentine-like lanes in the dense stand of brush. In some cases, cleared alleyways not only represent a quality food source for deer, but a means by which they travel through the jungle of vegetation.

If one is capable of identifying highly preferred brush species, they can actually elevate the deer's nutrition by carefully focusing on the removal of plants less than desirable to deer, such as white brush. The point is, with nothing more than a chain saw or mower an individual can benefit deer nutritionally while making them more visible. Strategically established lanes can even increase the



A camera survey at the various water sources in August is extremely productive as deer concentrate around this valuable entity at this time of year.

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probability of deer moving closer to one's hunting position.

Based on incidental sighting data, objective seven could mean an adjustment of the adult sex ratio. In other words, the data might indicate that the adult sex ratio is two does per buck, thus it may be desirable to tighten that ratio by increasing the doe harvest or it could dictate a decrease in bucks removed in order to allow more bucks the opportunity to reach those older, larger rack-producing age classes.

A myriad of objectives can be established, but it's always important they remain realistic and above all achievable because if they are too difficult to carry out, it's easy to give up on them, forcing one to return to square one. It's best that only a few objectives be initially established in order to enhance one's confidence in completing them. Others can be added over time. Remember, objectives represent a measuring tool by which one can justify what they do and spend on those deer they love, and if it all works out and that trophy materializes, one can be proud of the fact that they played a role in its development. 🌟



August is an opportune time to study one's hunting turf and decide where their efforts can be most effective in the hunting season.

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To most Texas and Louisiana saltwater anglers, August is the time of year when temperatures begin to get borderline unbearable. It is also the time of year when crowds on coastal waters explode. And, it is the time of year when the Gulf Coast region is most likely to experience tropical storm or hurricane conditions. But, it is also the time of year when fishermen have a variety of angling options to explore along the coastal curve.

Inshore anglers will certainly be able to catch plenty of specks and reds, although they will most likely find the fish are behaving a bit differently than they did a month or two ago. However, those anglers who are able to adjust their presentation techniques to target fish in a late summer pattern should enjoy plenty of success.

Of course, many anglers seeking speckled trout will shift their search to the surf, assuming they haven't already done so. August is a month that, assuming there is no pending tropical weather system, the beachfront is generally flat and 'green to the beach.' Under those conditions, landing a nice string of specks is almost a given.

Also, along the beachfront will be schools of Spanish mackerel and jack crevalle. By month's end, virtually every jetty in the state will see schools of bull redfish showing up.

Just off the beachfront, anglers can expect to pick up kingfish, tarpon, bonito and ling. Those wishing to make the run to the open Gulf can expect to find wahoo, dorado, red snapper, amberjack and sailfish as well. 🌟🌟



Matagorda-based guide Capt. Tommy Countz said he hopes to spend more than a few August mornings fishing in the surf.

"We should have more stable winds in August, so the surf should clear up," said Countz. "If we get out in the surf, we will throw topwaters early, then go to spoons and plastics.

"In West Bay, we'll look on the outside bars. It is almost like a winter pattern. You have to fish slow and bump the bottom. It will be a subtle bite, so don't be so quick to set the hook. Reel down and feel the fish before setting the hook.

"There should also be some good fish around the gas wells in the Palacios Channel. Redfish will be back in the shallows. We have a lot of bayous and back lakes behind the Matagorda Peninsula that will be holding reds. The key – as always – is bait. Find the bait and you'll probably find some fish.

"In East Bay, we may have some bird action in late August, you never know. It doesn't happen every year, but some years the shrimp move in to East Bay real thick and the birds start working pretty good. Like I said, it doesn't always happen, but it can occur.

"You can also do pretty good wade fishing the mid-bay reefs in East Bay during August. There should also be some redfish along the shores. Actually, if you are strictly looking for reds, you might want to look in East Bay. But, for overall fishing action during August, I'll fish mostly in West Bay."

Freeport guide Capt. Mike Segall of Reel Threel Charters says he looks forward to fishing in August.

"Hello to August," said Segall.



PHOTO BY JOHN FRANKSON

From Matagorda to Sabine and on to around the Cameron jetties in southwest Louisiana fishing the surf can be magical when conditions are right. Besides speckled trout in the guts near the beachfront anglers can also tangle with jack crevalle, bull redfish and even triple tail.

"August can be one the best months to fish. It can be hot at times (weather-wise), but the fishing can be hot offshore, too!

"Nearshore for sharks and kingfish within sight of land can be awesome. Now that shrimping season has reopened fishermen should look to fish behind shrimp boats. If they are chumming, you will catch all you want. I like to drift sardines off the back of the boats or behind them in the current.

"Also look along water color change for the kingfish. Sardines and deep diver lures work well in that situation. The state water reefs will be holding large schools of kingfish and Spanish mackerel, as well.

The amberjack season reopens in August so the platforms and structure out in deep sea waters 180 to 200 feet will be the go to spots. I will be using live hardtails and piggy perch. Just drop those down and you better hold on.

"Also look to check shrimp boats in the area for cobia and black fin tuna. Make sure to bring lots of chum while doing so. If you throw out lots of chum, it will attract the fish to the top. The kingfish and dorado also will be hanging around boats. Again, use sardines or, really, any live bait."

Galveston guide Capt Tim Young says

August's heat should drive most of the fish deep.

"With the heat of August, the deep game will be in play in Trinity Bay and upper Galveston Bay," said Young. "You should look from the wells in C-Lease off the Trinity River channel all the way to the Old Sun wells between Umbrella Point and Smith point for some fast trout action.

"Common to all of these wells is the 'pad' or shell base, which deflects the current, attracts baitfish, and holds gamefish. Current is a must for an active bite whether using live bait or artificials. Mix in active baitfish such as menhaden or mullet and chances for a good bite increase significantly.

"One question I get concerning fishing the wells is should I fish up-current or down current? Most of the time the down current side of the shell is the answer. That shell and the well structure itself will alter the current giving baitfish an area to congregate without fighting the full force of the current, making them easy prey for speckled trout and redfish.

"What makes well hopping so productive for you the angler is that you can cover the water around each well quickly, allowing you to fish numerous

wells until you find one holding fish. Then it's game on. Once you find 'em, try to anchor or "spotlock" in place with your trolling motor and work it over.

"Depending on the strength of the current, 1/4 to 3/8 ounce jigheads with Z-Man Scented JerkShadz or Paddlerz can be deadly in these situations. Don't overlook the deep, large reefs such as Lost, Dow's, Beazley's, Fisher's, and Trinity. Water clarity, current, baitfish, and slicks will be keys to your success in all of these areas.

"August anglers should also note that we have seen huge schools of small menhaden in Trinity which could lead to some awesome topwater and subsurface trout action in open water. As the winds calm you will find these schools on the surface and actually see the trout busting



PHOTO BY JOHN FRANKSON

Even during the heat of August, quality speckled trout will be caught. The biggest advantage anglers have is that the pattern is fairly consistent. Once fish are found they will usually hang in that same area until they are either driven off or conditions change.

through them. The StutterStep 4.0 in silver, floating Rat-L-Traps in silver and Black, and regular Rat-L-Traps in pink and silver mimic these baitfish, will draw explosive strikes, and are my 'go-to' baits when this is happening. Stay cool, drink lots of water, and good fishing!"

Galveston guide Capt. Greg Verm of FishingGalvestonTX.com says August will see a little of everything going on.

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“August will find us beginning to see a better movement with flounder gigging, as the daylight hours will begin to lessen,” said Verm. “I believe this triggers something with the flounder migration, and we see a slight hint of things changing and flounder movement increases.

“Offshore out of Freeport and Galveston will be hot. Amberjack season

will be reopening, and we will be shrimp boat hopping for mahi, blackfin tuna, cobia, kings, wahoo, shark, bonita, and more. Our offshore season has been hot, and Bay’s Landing Lodge has been a great place to stay for our clients.

“To explain the ‘shrimp boat hopping’ the Texas Gulf water reopened to shrimping July 15. This is my favorite

time to fish offshore. What we do is look for the shrimp boat fleet, as they are usually anchored up during the day. They drag nets all night, and cull their by-catch. What happens is fish follow these boats eating the cull or ‘chum’, and will hang around them most of the day. We find em, and cast around them or bump troll. It really is fun stuff.

“Jetties will be great option for a wide variety of fish species. Specks, reds (pre-spawn will be taking place), bull reds, Spanish mackerel, at times king mackerel, pompano, drum, sheepshead, lots of sharks, tarpon, and more will be being caught.”

Sabine Lake guide Capt. Randy Foreman says August will still find fish in a summer pattern.

“August will be more or less like the last two months – our fish are still very much in a summer pattern,” said Foreman. “We’ll have some birds working in the lake and there will be a lot of trout around the jetties. The fishing around the short rigs should be outstanding.

“The jetties are usually option number one. We’ll have lots of fish around the jetties and in the surf in August. Whenever the conditions are right, I’ll start out in the surf or at the jetties. In the surf, it seems like darker colors always work better.

“When it’s calm, I’ll run out to the short rigs. You’ll can catch all kinds of stuff at the short rigs – specks, Spanish mackerel, triple tail, ling. I’ll be throwing pretty much the same baits, but there’s a lot of different species feeding around those rigs.

“If I’m fishing for trout in the lake, I’ll be looking for birds. And, I always fish for flounder in August. we’ll be catching plenty of flounder along the Louisiana shoreline, concentrating on the bayous, cuts and drains.” **T★J**



PHOTOS COURTESY JIMMY HASSELL

In late June the Greater Houston Christian Outdoor Fellowship held their annual tournament at Rod & Gun Adventures in Bay City. A great group of anglers gathered for the fun and fellowship plus some solid fish provided bragging rights for many.

Rick Alba caught a “wow” fish with a nice “saddle blanket” flounder. Joe Erickson shows a solid speckled trout. Larry Marlatt with a nice slot redfish. Look for the action in August to be the equal or better for anglers fishing Matagorda’s bays.



Lake Calcasieu guide Capt. Mary Poe of Big Lake Guide Service says she is definitely looking forward to August.

“August is here and it is one of our favorite months,” said Poe. “It provides opportunities to fish the entire estuary. Trout will be scattered from the salt water barrier, on the Calcasieu River, to the Cameron Jetties. Due to high water temperatures, fishing adjacent to deeper water is highly necessary. The Calcasieu Ship Channel will provide great action throughout the day. The jetties and close rigs will also offer fast action.

“Soft plastics, like the MirrOlure Lil’ John, rigged on a 1/4 oz jig head will be our go-to lure. When choosing colors, translucent colors should be saved for



PHOTO COURTESY CAPT. GREG VERM

Out of Freeport and other Texas ports offshore fishing sizzles as big tugs await for a variety of pelagic species



PHOTO BY CAPT. TIM YOUNG

In the deeper depths of Galveston and Trinity Bays Capt. Tim Young will probe the well pads and reefs for speckled trout with ZMan’s ElaZteck scented with Pro-Cure Super Gel.

clean water and solid colors for stained water.

“The tide is a key aspect in planning your day fishing. Being in the right spot, at the right time, within a specific tidal window can determine your success or failure. These crucial factors make August a fun challenge to any fisherman!”

In Venice, fishermen will have their choice of hot inshore and offshore action to choose from. On the inside, redfish will be back in the marshes. Anglers sight-casting along the grass beds in areas like the Wagon Wheel and Highline Pond can expect to find plenty of redfish to inhale their soft-plastic jigs and spoons. Speckled trout will be numerous along

the outside beaches and nearshore rigs. Live shrimp and soft-plastic jigs will be the go-to baits for specks.

Offshore action will be hot as well, with snapper, gag grouper, black

grouper, amberjack, sharks and kingfish congregating around the rigs. Toward the end of August, tuna should start moving within easy reach as well. **T★J**

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Beginners Luck

There are numerous avenues a Texas angler can take to enjoy affordable fishing.

Story and Photography by Matt Williams

Freshwater fishing is a whopper of a deal in Texas, and no other state agency that I'm aware of does a better job of reaching out to its customers than Texas Parks and Wildlife. This is especially true for young anglers and newcomers to a sport that has been around since the dawn of time and ranks among the purest, cleanest and most challenging of recreational pastimes.

There is a passel of great avenues a Texas angler can take to get their feet in fishing without investing a lot money.

Just call it beginners luck.

One of the best places to go dabbling for details is TPWD's Angler Education Program.

The program website (tpwd.texas.gov/education/angler-education) is like one stop shopping for meaningful information for anyone looking to get into the sport or show a newcomer the ropes.

A true rookie can learn a lot about the basics of fishing on the site before they ever wet a line. There are nearly a dozen videos explaining everything from casting

basics and gear selection to bait choices, knot tying and how to clean your catch for the frying pan.

Additionally, there is information about free fishing classes taught by certified volunteer instructors, workshops and youth fishing derbies that are held at state parks according to a monthly calendar.

No fishing gear to fish with? No worries.

The program has loaner tackle kits available for large groups or individuals.

The equipment includes rods, reels, tackle boxes, hooks, sinkers and bobbers. Loaner tackle may be checked in and out like library books for periods up to seven days. A deposit may be required at some locations.

A portion of the tackle is purchased using grant money and some of it is donated. In early June, Bass Pro Shops donated 750 rod/reel combos for beginning anglers to fish with.

Many of the tackle loaner sites are located at TPWD state parks, more than 70 of which allow visitors who pay park entrance fees to fish for free with no fishing license or stamps required to fish in rivers, streams, lakes and ponds fully enclosed by park boundaries. Free fishing also is allowed in the surf along the shores of coastal state parks.

Another great resource for beginning anglers is takemefishing.org. Run by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, the site contains a wealth of information about freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing and flyfishing with categories detailing dozens of different fish by region along with the most productive tactics and baits to use for catching them. There also are links to inspirational stories written by lady anglers, state licensing requirements, a list of free fishing days around the country and an interactive state map that shows hundreds of different places to fish.

There is no shortage of places to wet a



Bluegills, aka bream, are by far the top option for young anglers. Bluegills and other small sunfish can be found in big numbers in lakes all around the state.

hook in Texas. In addition to hundreds of public reservoirs and community fishing lakes, there are 367 miles of coastline and literally thousands of private ponds and stock tanks. Just remember. Private waters should never be accessed without getting permission first.

A Dallas-based club called Private Water Fishing (privatewaterfishing.com) is a great option for anglers who like to fish without having to deal with the crowds sometimes found on public water. The membership only club provides access to more than 50 private lakes

across Texas and Oklahoma.

Most of the Texas lakes are located in the central and eastern half of the state. The club offers memberships for individuals, families, seniors, active military and businesses.

If you're on a really tight budget or looking to whet the appetite of a young angler, a trip to one of the small lakes included in TPWD's Neighborhood Fishin' program may be in order.

Founded in the early 2000's, the program is built around 18 small lakes and ponds where kids under 17 can fish for free and the fish are almost always willing to bite.

The lakes — which range in size from 1/2 acre to 7 acres — are located in close proximity to larger cities including Dallas, Houston, Tyler, Amarillo, Austin, College Station, San Angelo San Antonio and Waco, usually in well-lit park locations that offer easy access. Five of the lakes including Greenbriar Park, Lakeside Park, City Lake Park, South Lakes Park Pond and Chisholm Park are located in the D/FW area.

Neighborhood Fishin' lakes are generously stocked with hatchery reared channel catfish and trout during peak fishing seasons. Trout stockings occur during the late fall and winter, when water temperatures are cool. Stockings with channel catfish began in April and will continue twice a month through November, except for a month-long break during the August heat.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAKEMEFISHING.ORG

There is no shortage of places to wet a hook in Texas with hundreds of public reservoirs and community fishing lakes, plus there are 367 miles of coastline and literally thousands of private ponds and stock tanks.



Whites bass usually demand a little skill as far as casting goes, but bites are easy to come by when a feeding spree is underway.

There is a comprehensive list of stocking dates listed for each lake. The action can be particularly fast soon after the fish are released.

Adults 17 and older who fish are required to have a fishing license and freshwater fishing stamp fish in the neighborhood lakes. You will need your own gear and bait, too. Fishing is allowed with pole and line only with the limit of two poles per person. Each person fishing is allowed to keep five catfish per day and five trout, no minimum size limit. There is no minimum size limit.

There are several other good options

Other Fishy Options

for introducing a beginner to fishing.

Public fishing piers and docks rank among the best. Many piers have been doctored with brush piles that are prone to attract fish of all types and sizes. Some piers can be accessed for free, while others charge a fee.

Piers have a history of producing some large fish, too. To wit:

* In 2002, George Ward of Garland caught a 3.92 pound black crappie fishing off the Minnow Bucket fishing pier at Lake Fork. The fish still ranks a state record for that species. The fee for accessing the pier is \$3 per angler.

* In 2005, John Babich of Lewisville caught a lake record 13.93 pound largemouth bass while fishing from the Lake Lewisville Fishing Barge in

Lewisville. The enclosed barge is fully air conditioned/heated for inside fishing or you can fish around the perimeter. Adult access is \$10; \$5 for kids under 10. Fishing tackle is available for rent.

* In 2010, Ashleigh Defee of Manville reeled in a 70 pound flathead catfish while fishing from the 150-foot fishing pier at 429 Resort and Marina at Lake Tawakoni. Defee, who was 16 at the time, still holds the Texas junior angler state record for the catch. The fee for accessing the pier is \$10 per angler.

Anglers who had rather get out on the water but don't have a boat should

Hire A Guide

consider hiring a guide. If there is a beginner in the group, tell the guide ahead of time so he can come prepared with the right game plan and equipment. Most guides offer half and full day rates based on two people ranging from around \$250-\$500. There is usually an additional fee for extra anglers.

It's best to look for a multi-species guide who specializes targeting fish that are abundant and relatively easy to catch. Crappie, white bass, hybrids and catfish all fit the bill.

If you forget everything else you read here, remember this: Keep it simple.

Do It Yourself Options

Especially if the student is a youngster.

Kids like action. The best way to

stoke a kid's interest in the sport is to take them fishing and let them catch something and have fun doing it. The best way to put a damper on it is to drown them with boredom or force them to fish for fish that aren't willing to bite to those that can be difficult to catch.

Not all freshwater fish are created equal. Some are more plentiful and easier to fool than others. Here are some of the best choices:

Bluegills: This is by far the top option for young anglers. Bluegills and other small sunfish can be found in big numbers in lakes all around the state. If a lake has a good bass population, there is a good chance it will have an abundant population of sunfish.

Sometimes called "bream," bluegills and other sunfish can be often found spawning in "colonies" during the summer months. A spawning bed will be about the size of a dinner plate. It's not uncommon to find dozens of beds in an area no bigger than a pick-up truck. Most sunfish will spawn in water that's two to four feet deep; redears like to spawn a little deeper.

The fish also can be found big numbers this time of year lounging around shallow shore cover like grass, fallen trees, stumps and bushes, or taking advantage of shade provided by docks and piers.

Anyone can catch bluegills using

basic equipment and elementary tactics. All you need is a pole, line, bobber and a small hook tipped with a wax worm, small earthworm or grasshopper. Sunfish also will hit artificial baits like small jigs, spinners and popping bugs on fly gear, but half the fun is watching a cork disappear.

The small panfish are hard fighters, too. A long pole like 10-13 foot Black Widow matched with a strand of six-pound line, tiny hook and a Thill Shy Bite float is a great set up for kids. It's best to place a small split a few inches above the hook to keep the bait down and make the float stand erect.

White Bass: White bass are an open water school fish. They are very aggressive when the dinner bell rings. It's not uncommon to catch a 25 fish limit in as many casts when you get into a big swarm of whites, also called sand bass.

The fish will occasionally feed around docks and points near shore this time of year, but the best action usually occurs away from the bank when the fish are schooling on the surface or grouped on underwater humps and roadbeds.

One of the best indicators of schooling whites are gulls and other shore birds seen hovering just above the water's surface. The birds gather to dine on wounded or disoriented shad driven to the surface when the fish are actively feeding.

Not every Texas lake has white bass, but a bunch of them do. Among the best are Livingston, Tawakoni, Palestine, Cooper, Cedar Creek, Ray Hubbard, Richland Chambers and Toledo Bend. The fish can be readily caught using live shiners, cut shad, slab spoons, crankbaits and Rat-L-Traps. Whites usually demand a little skill as far as casting goes, but bites are easy to come by when a feeding spree is underway.

Catfish: Catfish including channels and blues are prolific species that can be found in great number in many lakes and rivers across Texas. Channel cat tend to run in schools and can be enticed using assorted baits, including live minnows, earthworms, cut bait or manufactured stink baits. They will feed by eyesight, but rely heavily on their sensitive olfactory glands to locate food.

A high percentage of rod and reel channels are caught by anglers who use commercial stink baits, night crawlers, chicken livers and blood baits to fish



Crappie spend a high percentage of their lives roaming in large schools away from the bank.



The allure of channel cat as a fun fish are liberal limits and their tasty meat.

vertically in relation to "baited hole."

Baited holes are isolated spots that have been doctored with soured maize, wheat, range cubes, cottonseed cake or soybean chips to appeal to the cat's keen sense of smell. Baiting can be done short term to spark a sudden feeding frenzy, or it can be performed long term to hold fish in a general area. It works best on points, timber flats or along creek channels. Adding to the allure of channel cat as a fun fish are liberal limits and their tasty meat.

Crappie: Like white bass, crappie

spend a high percentage of their lives roaming in large schools away from the bank. Cover nuts by nature, the fish like to gather around standing timber, docks, bridge pilings and brush piles. They can be caught on small jigs, but live shiners are hard to beat.

Crappie are prone to suspend in the water column between the surface and bottom. Once the correct depth is determined, suspend a bait at that depth using a slip cork or on a tight line and wait for the bite. **T★J**



Proper Knife For The Job

It floors me as to some of the weird designs that knife companies come up with. Some are well-made knives but are of such a weird design so they're not functional in the outdoor world. If the manufacturers aren't outdoorsmen, why don't they at least talk to those that are to see what design works best? So it's possible to have a well-made knife but due to its design, it is dysfunctional.

When it comes to knives used in the outdoors there are designs for specific purposes and applications. For 40 years I worked in the big meat packing plants and took what I learned there and applied it in the outdoors. I do a lot with knives.

I am on Pro-staff with numerous knife companies, sponsored by many more and test hundreds of knives each year. I write a weekly Knife Product Review for AmmolandShootingSportsNews and conduct knife related seminars from Texas to Alaska. That's the background I come from and experience from which I speak.

I am going to share the best knife design for the appropriate job at hand and what to look for when selecting a knife. Now I realize even among experts that there are varying opinions. For example to skin an animal some people favor a clip point knife and some prefer a drop point. The good and bad of each design is going to be covered.

But first, let's answer the question many are going to ask — why can't you just buy one knife and call it good? The answer is simple, because a knife is a tool just like you don't have just one screw driver

A knife is a tool and our outdoor chores requires a different designed knife for each job we perform. In the outdoor world we could justify buying five different designs. Let's go over those five designs.

SKINNING KNIFE

Under this category there are two popular designs:

1. **CLIP POINT** — This is a knife has a point that sweeps up. This is a common design and good for cutting the pattern on your big game animal (Cutting



The Legacy is a classy skinning knife. Notice that even though it has a shorter blade, it still has a full handle so you maintain good control when skinning.

the pattern is when you stab into the hide and make the initial cut down the belly line and out to each hoof) and then using it to skin your animal. The downside with this design is it's easier to accidentally cut a hole in the hide while skinning. If you're not saving the hide it's not a big deal.

2. **DROP POINT** — The point doesn't sweep up like the clip point and you can skin faster without being as likely to cut a hole in the hide. For this reason a lot of people favor a drop point for skinning their trophies. You will still need a clip point to mark the pattern.

Diamond Blades was smart when they designed their Traditional Hunter. They ground down the spine to a semi point so it features the best of both worlds. It



The author believes the Diamond Blade Traditional Hunter is the best designed knife on the market. Not only is it a great drop point but the spine is ground down somewhat to a point so it can also be used to mark the pattern.

has a point to mark the pattern and a drop point so you can skin fast and not worry about cutting a hole in the hide all with the same knife.

In the above two designs you can get lock blade folders or straight blade knives. Both are extremely popular and I may carry either one. Folders are popular because they are more compact. I favor a 3 1/2 to 4 inch long blade.

CAPING KNIFE

If you're going to mount the head you'll need a small, pointed blade knife

to skin around the eyes and lips. Most caping knives have a narrow 2 ¼ inch blade and are very pointed so you can do some intricate and precise cutting. These knives are also good to skin the feet and toes on bears and to breast out geese, ducks and pigeons.

One thing that puzzles me are manufacturers that try to make a lighter, more compact knife and put a dinky handle on it. A high percent of the time when you're skinning an animal you're exhausted from the hunt, plus it's cold, and the knife is bloody and slippery.

Add to this scenario a dinky, petite handle and you're going to get cut. Whether you're using a caping knife or a skinning knife, you still want to have good control of the knife. Don't buy dinky handled knives.

BONING KNIVES

To efficiently bone out big game animals a boning knife is needed. There are a couple of good ones on the market but you want one of the exact same design as the Dexter Russell "Don't Tread On Me" 6-inch boning knives. You'll want a semi-flex, not a super flimsy blade that you can't control, nor do you want a super stiff one that has no bend. With a good boning knife, you can retrieve all of the meat.

Myself, I favor a 6 inch boning knife but I have buddies that are just as good of boners as me and they favor a 5 inch semi-flex. This is not a right or wrong proposition but rather a matter of preference.

The bad thing about boning knives is that they don't come with a sheath. So how do you carry it safely in your backpack or scabbard on your horse? I found some clamshell scabbards made by Forschner that work great.

8-INCH TRIMMING KNIFE

These have the same design as a 6 inch boning knife except the blade is 8 inches. Here's why I like them. Using a longer blade you'll have smoother cuts when trimming fat or slicing steaks. Sure, you can slice steaks with a 6-inch knife, the cuts just won't be as smooth.

To me, the best designed hunting knives as far as quality and design are produced by Knives of Alaska and Diamond Blade (DB is the cream of the crop). Charles Allen owns both companies and he field tests all of his designs at his hunting/fishing lodge in Alaska (Alaska



On top, the clamshell scabbard the author likes to carry his boning knives in. In the middle is the perfectly designed six inch boning knife made by Dexter Russell. To make it cool the author had it souped up by Adaptive Graphics. On the bottom is an eight inch trim knife which is great for slicing steaks or trimming fat.

Expedition Co.).

They have so many good ones I sound like a catalog. Most companies have one or two decent knives but Knives of Alaska and Diamond Blade make scores of sweet knives. The Diamond Blade Traditional Hunter is the best-designed knife on the market. As mentioned previously it is a drop point skinning knife with the spine ground down so it has enough of a point to cut the pattern.

However, the Diamond Blade Summit is also a great skinning knife or consider The Legacy. For caping, the Pinnacle II or Knives of Alaska Cub Bear are great. And to make it even better, KOA and DB

are made right here in the Lone Star State.

Finally, which knife a lot of people carry is really based on sentimental reasons. If your favorite uncle that taught you how to hunt gave you his hunting knife right before he died, then carry it and be happy. What could be more special than that?

The older I get, the more I enjoy using a good knife. In deer camp it seems everyone compares their knives at night while swapping stories around the campfire? It shows you know your business when you pull out a knife that becomes the envy of the camp. Pick a good knife and you're set. **T★J**



When skinning a game animal as large as a moose more than one knife will be needed. Jack Fenwick poses with Master Brown Bear guide and knife craftsman Charles Allen.



Selecting Natural Bait

Good fishermen are fussy, especially when it comes to the bait they are about to impale on a hook. If you watch a veteran angler closely, you'll see him sift through an assortment of dead baits or scan a bucket of live critters carefully before making the final selection. He's looking for a bait that is fresh, active, and about the right size for the fish he intends to catch. When his eyes focus on the one he wants, he already has confidence that it will appeal to the fish.

The bait you use is the most important ingredient in attracting your quarry to the hook. That's not the place to cut corners. In choosing any natural bait, your first decision is to select one that appeals to the species of fish you seek and a bait that is easily available in your area. If you have any doubts, tackle dealers, local anglers, or the dockmaster at the marina can usually tell you the most popular baits. If you're serious about catching

fish, it often makes sense to take two or three different types of bait with you. That way, if the primary bait does not produce results, you have alternatives.

If you are using live bait, it should be fresh and particularly active or frisky. Frequently, the bait is in excellent condition when you buy it, but improper care causes it to deteriorate before you put it on the hook. Remember that bait should always be kept where it is cool and certainly out of the sun. Baitfish require adequate oxygen



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

If you're serious about catching fish, it often makes sense to take two or three different types of bait with you. As croaker (top) get larger many anglers will switch to smaller piggy perch.

in the water. That's vital in keeping bait alive and in prime condition.

If you don't have a well-designed livewell on the boat, there are pumps available that will circulate the water and introduce oxygen. Many of these can be jury-rigged to a plastic garbage pail or a bait bucket or even an ice chest and they can insure that the bait will stay in prime condition when you are ready to use it. If you don't have a pump, use as large a container as possible and don't put too much bait in it as well as changing the water frequently. And keep in mind that if you don't get a strike on a live bait within 15 or 20 minutes, you can put it back in the livewell to recover and put on a new bait.

Dead bait is much easier to keep fresh, but you should take a few simple precautions. Make certain you keep it cool at all times and out of the sun. Don't leave it on a cutting board where it will lose moisture or dehydrate. It's a simple fact that fresh bait catches more fish than bait that has seen better days. Change cut bait frequently so it remains fresh in the water and gives off stronger odor. It is poor economy to save cut bait from one day to the next or freeze it. Most dead bait has already been frozen once when it was originally shipped to the dealer. If you re-freeze a bait, it will lose some of its appeal.

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A live bait must appear natural to a predator. That means it has to swim well and not be limited in any way. Two factors are critical. The size of the hook should be chosen carefully and the manner of hooking the bait is also a prime consideration. Most anglers insist on using hooks that are too big and are too strong. Smaller, lighter hooks prove to be more effective in allowing a live bait to swim easily and they also hook more fish. The breaking strength of the line plays a role in hook selection, but you still want to make sure that a live bait is not saddled with too heavy a hook.

If you remember one thing about hook size, you want the lightest wire and smallest hook you can logically use. Circle hooks are more effective than other styles and the major benefit is that you don't have to swing the rod to set it. All you have to do is hold the rod steady until the line comes tight and the hook will usually set itself.

When you are putting a hook in a live bait, hold the bait as gently as possible and don't squeeze the life out of it. Impale the hook through the lips, behind or above the eye sockets, or in front of the dorsal fin (without damaging the backbone). At

times, a live bait can also be hooked near the tail, but this is the exception. Make sure the hook is sharp so it penetrates the bait easily and also the jaw of your quarry. If you hook a bait improperly you can seriously injure it or possibly kill it. With dead bait, you should use a hook that can be pretty well hidden. Remember that even with dead bait, smaller, lighter hooks are the answer.

Fish can be finicky feeders. The

successful angler is the one who offers the right bait that is fresh in a natural manner and he changes it frequently whether it is live bait or dead bait. And, he usually has a selection of baits so that if one isn't working, maybe another one will. The worst mistake you can make is to believe that a fish will settle for any bait no matter how it is presented. This, alone, accounts for more failure in fishing than most other factors combined. **T★J**



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

If using live bait, it should be fresh and particularly active or frisky.

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Lake Roundup

CENTRAL TEXAS



By John Jefferson

Years ago, my next-door neighbor, Clyde, asked me to go fishing with him one summer afternoon on **Lake Georgetown**. He had an old – *very old* – Skeeter Bass Boat. It was one of those long, thin, sitting-low-in-the-water models from around the first vintage of Skeeters. I’ve always loved them since they were probably the first bass boats I ever saw. I still think they are cool. If you got your speed up and hit even a little swell, you were going to get wet.

That didn’t matter. We were on the water. Little else mattered. We tried several likely looking coves, but to no avail. Later that afternoon, we saw some surface action and motored closer to take a look. It appeared to be a school of largemouth bass chasing shad, so we quickly tied on shad-looking lures and threw to them.

Mine was a Cotton Cordell Spot — so named for the obvious black spot on its tail. In case you’re not familiar with it, it may have well been the first “lipless crank bait.” It helped me catch fish when no other lure would work. I loved it so much (and had so little money at the time, as now) that one day I let a wayward cast get away from me and hung it on a low-hanging power line that I hadn’t seen. I spent most of my fishing time getting it down. But I did.

Back to the fishing trip: On my first cast toward the schooling action, I hooked about a pound and a half largemouth. Clyde had one on, too. The bass were in such a frenzy chasing the shad that they actually chased several up onto the bank. Then the school was gone. But before it left, we had about six one and a half to



PHOTO BY DUKE KINLEY

Joey Eischen is holding the smallmouth buffalo that Jadis Molina caught while fishing with his father, Jerry Molina, Eischen, and Duke Kinley on Lake Austin.

two pound bass.

Afternoon schools are more rare than morning schools. Clyde said he had noticed a school one morning earlier in the week on **Lake Buchanan**. We decided we wanted more of that action, and laid plans to be on the water early.

Early came earlier than expected. Clyde said we had to leave at 4:30. That’s in the morning. Before daylight. I thought I was dreaming when the alarm went off.

We got to the ramp an hour or so later and put the boat in. It was still dark. We motored about 10 minutes away, and I wondered how Clyde knew where he was going. That’s a big lake, and there aren’t any street signs. We couldn’t see the bank on either side. He cut the engine and we drifted a few extra yards. He turned

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toward me and softly said, “Sit still and listen.”

I was too excited, or I could have gone back to sleep. It was the most beautiful silence I have ever known. There was not a sound anywhere, and no lights on the shore. No other boats on the water since it was a weekday, and no breeze to slap the sides of the boat with waves. Then, we heard it.

Somewhere in the darkness that was trying to turn to grayness, we heard a gentle splashing on the surface.

“There they are,” Clyde whispered, as he started the engine. “Get ready!” He motored about 60 yards and cut the engine, again. Had we had a trolling motor, we could have made a quieter approach, but it didn’t seem to matter. The school had submarined, so we sat silently again.

As if on cue, the school surfaced again, a little off to our left. I gauged its direction from the sound of the splashing and cast my chrome Cordell Spot a little ahead of where it sounded like it was heading. As it sank, I felt a bump, but I couldn’t tell whether it was a strike or a collision. I jerked it in case it was the latter, and began reeling. Nothing. The lure came in alone.

By then, it was light enough to make out Clyde in the stern. He was reeling in his line and waiting. Instants later, the school erupted again to the side of the boat. This time we both had hook-ups. The action was frantic for a few more minutes as more schools seemed to appear, some close by, others off in the distance.

It came and went like that for a little over an hour. We boated nearly 30 bass, sometimes just dropping new ones on the deck to hurriedly cast again.

So went my first introduction to summer schooling bass on the Highland Lakes. It happens on every one of our lakes in July and August. I’ve had similar luck on **Travis, Bastrop, Stillhouse Hollow, and Fayette County**, but I’ve heard of it on **Granger, Decker** and the other **Colorado River** lakes. Go getcha some!

I still use that Cordell’s Spot, but have added Rat-L-Traps of chrome, blue and other shades. Shad Raps and Tiny Torpedoes are also excellent. And always have an extra rod handy with a heavier jigging spoon attached for

distant schools that require magnum casts.

I should have bought that old Skeeter from Clyde when he upgraded. I’ve had a boat for a good part of my life. My first one was a beloved old wooden row boat my grandmother bought for me when I was about 10 or 11. It was heavy, hard to row, even harder to capsize, so, it was safe – hard to spill. To me it was the Queen of the Guadalupe.

My only close call was when some fool was shooting pecans off a tree just around the next bend, and his rounds began dropping around me. It took a minute or two to figure it out since he was far enough away that I didn’t connect the distant “pop!” with the little nearby splashes. When it dawned on me that he couldn’t see me around the bend in the river and didn’t think about where his shots might be landing, I had to lie down in the boat and paddle with my hands to shore.

He was still shooting when I finally got to his perch atop a hill. We, uh, *chatted* about it for a minute or two. He and his father were clueless.

Hopefully, nobody will be shooting at you once August gives way to the Labor Day Weekend, but beware of other clueless boaters. All agencies will on duty to try to keep you safe.

Jerry Molina worked with Duke



PHOTO BY JOHN JEFFERSON

Lures for schooling summer bass: A Tiny Torpedo, a Cordell’s Spot, and a Live Target Bait Ball with three shad inside the plastic ball that looks like part of a school of shad.

Kinley at APD. His son, Jadis, was visiting from Ohio during Spring Break and fished some while he was here. He told his father he wished he could catch a big fish while he was here. Jerry called Duke, and they all went fishing. They fished from the shore on **Lake Austin**, and Joey Eischen, from South Austin Marine, came along and brought some of his homemade dough bait.

Jadis Molina got his wish. That’s him standing with Joey who’s holding perhaps the biggest fish Jadis will ever catch – a huge, 35-pound, Lake Austin smallmouth buffalo. Duke’s scale only goes to 30 pounds, and the fish weighed all of that and then some.

If you want to catch a big largemouth, try either **LBJ** or **Travis** this month, and fish deep. I’m going to try something different — a Rat-L-Trap that glows underwater. I’ll Carolina rig the Glow-Trap with a weight at the end of the main line that will pull the Trap down closer to where the bass are. Will it work?

Quien Sabe? I’ll let you know. **T&J**

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Digging In To Wade Fishing



Pro's Pointers to get the most out of fishing experiences in August.

Story and Photography by Danno Wise

Although it seems like summer has already stretched on into infinity, August is actually just the mid-point in the year's hottest season. Make no mistake about it – the summer heat will be at its apex over the next several weeks. As a result, one of the best ways to stay relatively cool and have a productive day on the water is to get out of the boat and wade.

The biggest advantage to wade fishing is the ability to quietly and thoroughly cover water. This is particularly helpful when fish are tightly bunched, skittish or lethargic.

Waders are also more capable of targeting specific fish and/or structure. If the bite is hot, they can stay in the same place and keep casting and catching. The ability to stay stationary when necessary also makes it easier to work finesse or slow-sinking baits. One overlooked advantage to being able to stand still, is that wade fishermen can fish slowly and cover water thoroughly even when it's windy, which is admittedly rare in the summer months, but can happen nonetheless.

Wade fishermen can also fish shallower than any boat is able to float. Whether this is a shallow shoreline or a deep hole behind a shallow bar, wade fishermen can access water that's off-limits to boaters. This is a big plus when fish are feeling pressured in easily accessible locales – which is common during the peak of summer vacation season.

Also, it is an entirely different experience than fishing from a boat. More often than not, anglers feel more connected to the bay system they are fishing simply by being literally immersed in it.

“The two biggest reasons I wade fish is to give the clients an experience they may have never had and to cover a fishing area more thoroughly,” said Capt Nathan Beabout of N&M Sportsman Adventures in Seadrift. “When you're fishing out of a boat say you land on the fish but after seven or eight bites it quits. Well, you've got a 50/50 chance on which direction they moved. By the time you pull your anchor, get your clients reeled in and fire up the motor, those fish could have completely moved off the area.

“Now, if you're wading and you string four to five people out 50 to 60



Capt. Ruby Delgado released this redfish as the sun set on another great day of wade fishing.

yards apart, chances are when you walk into them, no matter if the fish move one of y'all will still be getting bites and it allows the entire line to shift one direction or another. But that is key – ‘holding the line.’ Each person stays on the same plane, nobody walks out front, nobody falls behind. Say you shift the line to try to get more of you clients on the bite. In doing that the people on the end more times than not find their own bite. A bite that might have been completely missed if you were fishing out of the boat, because wading we are covering 100 to 200 yard swath of a flat and out of the boat you are only covering 20 to 25 feet of it or the length of your boat and casts from it.

“Before each wade I give the customers the layout of a particular flat, drop off, shell reef or whatever we are fixing to wade. I try to give them key things to look for and maybe one or two of them a certain area to concentrate on. I tell them let's sweep this area by spreading out, and in doing so one of should find the bite. When we do, the guys not in the fish relocate next to their buddy and get in on the action.

“Now, when we walk into a bite and each customer is hooking up, I will tell them let's dig in here for a moment until the bite leaves us. Then, we slowly ease forward when it does. A rule of thumb that I use is once we know we are on the fish we slow down and typically only move 50 to 75 yards per hour. This way we do not walk through the bite and leave the fish behind us. It also allows us to work the area over thoroughly fan casting and not leaving any bit of water in front of us unfished.

“On a typical day with any sort of winds my favorite places to wade are areas with grass beds and sand pockets. I like these areas over the shell because they just seem to hold bigger fish. In years past I have caught some solid fish on our oyster shell, but it is not as consistent as the grass beds in my opinion. That and the fact many of the good shell reefs are harder to fish with three to four clients because of the small key area.

“As to what we are going to throw, that may change with each area we fish. Of course, everybody loves a topwater bite. The piece of advice I give my clients



Capt. Ruby Delgado puts on her wade booties as she prepares to wade a shallow shoreline.

when deciding whether to throw a top or a tail is this – if I look out across the flat we are going to wade and there is mullet jumping everywhere, I will probably not throw a topwater. When I choose to throw

a topwater, I want my bait being the only one on the surface making noise. It is a much easier target for a trout or red under those conditions. So, if the bait is on the surface I will throw a tail, if the bait is

laying close to the bottom I will throw a topwater. Keep in mind there are a few other variables that play into this, but it is a pretty good rule of thumb.”

While some guides and anglers will fish almost exclusively out of the boat during summer months, others do so with a specific purpose in mind.

“I’ll only get off and wade once I know we’ve got a lot fish in an area,” said Southern Salty Girl Capt Ruby Delgado. “In other words, we’ve gotten a good amount of bites and we can slow it down and cover the area better by getting out of the boat. I also waded up to my knees – no higher than that. I’m fishing shallow, clear flats – usually sight-casting, but sometimes blind casting as well.

“DOA 4-inch jerkbaits are my favorite lures for wade fishing. Sometimes I’ll throw topwaters if there’s not much wind. I’ll use a DOA PT-7 if there is a lot of floating grass and a MirrOlure She Pup in Bone/Chrome/Bone if there’s not any floating grass.”

Summer temperatures can make fish act lethargic, which is another situation in which wade fishing offers anglers an advantage.

“The one thing people need to be aware of is the bite in the bay is usually pretty subtle during August,” said Matagorda guide Capt. Tommy Countz. “Really, fishing in August is a lot like fishing in the winter. The water is really hot, so the fish are a bit more lethargic. So, you have to fish a little slower. It’s a whole lot easier to do that when you’re wading.

“My favorite spot in the summer is wading in West Matagorda Bay along the south shore. I’ll spend less time in knee-deep water and more in waist deep water. Grass beds with guts and sand bars running thru them will be my main choice. I’ll be tossing 1/16 or 1/8 ounce lead heads rigged with Mirrolure Marsh Minnows or Soft Shad. My main colors will be Morning Glory or Glo/chartreuse. I’ll also throw some Mirrolure Lil’ Johns in Glo/chartreuse or Purple Demon rigged on 1/16 ounce lead heads.

“In West Bay, the key will be the grass beds. I’ll start out wading these beds early, then come back and re-wade them later in the afternoon. A lot of times, the fish will move into those grass patches during the day. I don’t if it’s because there’s a lot of little baitfish in the grass or if the water is a little cooler. But, whatever the reason,

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I usually find them in the grass patches later in the day.”

Something else for anglers to consider is that wading can be productive outside the bay as well.

“Any time that the surf gets flat and green, I’m going to be there,” said Countz. “Here in Matagorda, we’ve got about 23 miles of beach front north of our jetties that is accessible by boat or a four-wheel-drive vehicle and another 23 miles to the south that is accessible by boat only. If it’s calm enough I suggest that you anchor on



Joseette Guerra lifts a nice double-spot redfish from the Lower Laguna Madre.



Redfish can be found on the shallow flats even during the heat of summer.

the first bar and get out and wade. I’ll start off throwing topwaters and later switch to spoons, 51 Series MirrOlures or soft plastics. Watch for bait activity and slicks – those signs will help you find the fish. Wading in the surf is one of my favorite things to do in the summer.”

Regardless of their reason or location, Texas saltwater anglers just may find that a mid-summer’s day wade is just what they need to get the most out their fishing experience in August. **T★J**



This redfish took a gold spoon fished over a shallow grass flat.

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Handgun Hunting — More Than an Alternative

Hunting with a handgun opens another dimension to our outdoor experiences. A bit more challenging than a rifle, a handgun demands we follow the lesson of “Practice, Practice, Practice.” I have known shooters that could hit a 36” square dinger at 300 yards with a single action .45 Colt with open sights and a 5 1/2 inch barrel. They knew their firearm, ammunition and did a great deal of “practice.”

When hunting with a handgun the desire is to get close and personal to assure a clean kill and honor the game. It is not a contest as to who can hit an animal at the greatest distance. For most we need to restrict ourselves to shots of 50 to 75 yards with pistol calibers with open sights and 100 to 150 yards with rifle calibers and scopes.

The popularity of hunting with a handgun was kicked into gear in the 1960’s when Warren Center developed a break-action, single-shot pistol in his basement workshop and called it the Contender. In 1965 he teamed up with the K.W. Thompson Tool Company and they changed the name to the Thompson/Center Arms Company and introduced the Contender to the public in 1967.

The most notable feature was the ability to easily change barrels. By

removing the fore-end, a large hinge pin is exposed; by pushing this hinge pin out, the barrel can be removed. Since the sights and extractor remain attached to the barrel in the Contender design, the frame itself contains no cartridge-specific features. A barrel of another caliber can be installed and pinned in place, the fore-end replaced, and the pistol is ready to shoot with a different barrel and pre-aligned sights. This allowed easy changes of calibers, sights, and barrel lengths.

A flip of a selector switch on the hammer adds to the versatility by providing firing pens for both rimfire and centerfire cartridges, depending on which barrel is installed. The current catalog shows eleven different barrels from .17 HMR to .45/70 Gov.

The present day Contender is the G2 and changes from the original are in the trigger group and grip dimensions and angle relative to the bore line. This has made the Contender much more comfortable to shoot and my small hands are grateful.

Some years ago, when I ordered my G2 I requested two barrels. One in the classic .30-30 Winchester, the other appealed to my spirit of adventure; the now discontinued .375 JDJ Hand Cannon. Both barrels were topped with a T/C

1.25 to 4 power long eye relief scope made by I don’t know who. These days there are several great pistol scopes from folks like Leupold, Bushnell and Nikon.

First, I tried the .30-30 and must admit it was with some trepidation as I had never fired a rifle cartridge in a handgun. Using the tried and true Winchester 150

grain Silvertip I was amazed at how comfortable the G2 was to shoot with the improved grip doing its job. Interestingly the gun was dead on at 100 yards as was the other barrel. Someone at T/C had worked their magic.

Hornady used to offer the .375JDJ Hand Cannon as a factory load, but it is now relegated to hand loading. JDJ are the initials of J. D. Jones, president of SSK Industries, J.D. has been most prolific in developing wildcat cartridges and the firearms to handle them. This cartridge is based on a necked down .444 Marlin and my factory ammunition propels a flat point 220 grain .375 caliber bullet up to 2,200 feet-per-second. Elephants have been taken with this load.

While an elephant was not handy I did find a 200 pound feral boar for testing. I centered punched the swine and it went straight up in the air like a popped armadillo and hit the ground stone dead. The number of feet he went up in the air will sound like an exaggeration so I won’t bother. While processing the pig I had never seen such damage from entry to exit and everything in between.

I believe a single shot rifle or pistol focuses our concentration and makes us better marksmen from sighting, squeeze to follow through. Of the various animals taken with these two barrels I have never needed a second shot.

Sometimes more rounds in a cylinder is a good thing whether you need another shot to anchor that trophy or when looking over a feeder full of pigs. For an off-the-shelf hunting handgun there is none better than the Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter.

The Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter in .44 Remington Magnum is an excellent choice. There are many choices of ammunition and the mild shooting .44 Special provides comfortable recoil for practice and hunting.

Holding six rounds this gun is built tank tough from stainless steel and all including the 7 1/2 inch cold hammer forged barrel carry a satin finish. The forging process makes for an accurate long lasting barrel. The black laminate grips add a nice touch while filling the



Customized Ruger Blackhawk Bisley with an El Paso Saddlery “Tanker” holster.



Thomson/Center Arms .375 JDJ Hand Cannon (bottom) with extra .30-30 Winchester Barrel

hand and the grip angle provides natural pointing and recoil comfort. Ruger's use of coil springs adds reliability and a great trigger.

The Hunter comes with an adjustable rear sight and a fixed, replaceable insert front sight. Machined on the solid steel barrel rib are their patented integral mounts for rock solid attachment of a scope. The Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter is an outstanding performer for under \$1,000.00.

Sometimes well enough is not let alone and several years back I took on a project. It began with a good condition used Ruger Bisley New Model Blackhawk in stainless steel with a 7 1/2 inch barrel chambered for .45 Colt.

First, I am a nut for the .45 Colt cartridge. One reason is the wide range of available ammunition from milder loads for pleasant practice to hand loaded monsters taking advantage of the big case.

A word of caution, you need a gun built to take hot loads and the Blackhawk can with ease. In fact, it is the handgun recommended by Garrett Cartridges of Texas for use with their .45 LFR+P Hammerhead. This round pushes a 365 grain SuperHardCast flat point at 1,250f.p.s. that will get any animals attention.

First it was off to Mag-Na-Port for their famous recoil reducing barrel porting, action tuning and jeweled and polished hammer and trigger. Back in Houston it went to Briley Mfg. to mount a larger adjustable rear site and fiber optic front sight.

The only touches I was able to do myself was replace the cylinder base pin with a #5 model from Belt Mountain Enterprises to remove any cylinder wiggle and change out the factory grips with some of cocobolo wood from Grips by Esmeralda. In all a most satisfying project that shoots as good as it looks.

On the top of the scale would be a dedicated hunting handgun built from scratch and to our wishes. The DragonSlayer from MG Arms, Inc. in Spring, Texas is one of the best. Constructed of 416 stainless steel, the frame is created in house. The match grade Pac-Nor barrel is available in custom lengths and is ported. The massive

unfluted cylinder holds five rounds of either .44 Mag., .45 Colt, .454 Casull, .475 Linebaugh or .500 Linebaugh. The single action trigger is tuned and set at 21/2 pounds.

Among available finishes are blue, plus Teflon or ceramic in a variety of colors and patterns. Grip choices are from Pachmayr and Hogue. The frame is drilled and tapped with bases, rings and scopes available as an optional upgrade. Accuracy is guaranteed and the works backed up by MGA's Infinity Guarantee for the lifetime of the owner.

A DragonSlayer in .500 Linebaugh with an 8 inch barrel mounted with a 2-power Leupold scope and coated in a military green ceramic finish has been used by MG Arms founders Kerry and Carol O'Day to take dozens of trophy animals including four of Africa's "Big Five" with this setup. A loaded DragonSlayer is \$1,895.00 and it and other custom arms can be found at www.mgarmsinc.com.

When hunting with a handgun remember the Cowboy Action Shooting adage..."No target too big or too close."

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Lake Roundup

NORTH TEXAS



By Brian Hughes

August drives me crazy! It is still hot as blazes and I am just not a fan. To further compound this attitude, it is still a month until dove season opens, which I very much look forward to each year.

Of course, fishing helps pass the time and just because it's hot doesn't mean I'm staying indoors. I might get out a few times for night fishing trips, and a few early mornings or late afternoons. I'll try to avoid the midday heat and wait out what seems like the longest month of the year. When I do get to fish I think I'll try the following:

FORK — Catfishermen should fish the deeper water near the dam. The Chaney Point area, where the old tire reef is marked on most maps.

The reef is not really what I'm looking for, but rather it's the area where the creeks come together off the point that interests me. Try starting with the shallower water on the southeast side first, then work deeper and turn north.

For keepers work around the 154 Island plus the area around Hurley pool and the roadbed/hump along there. The crappie fishermen should fish the bridges and most importantly the cross members on the bridges.

Some days minnows are all papermouths will eat, while on other days crappie jigs are the ticket. And don't forget the night fishing for crappie. Daytime anglers will want to use standard

colors like chartreuse, while nighttime anglers should try darker blues, blacks and reds.

Bass fishermen are fortunate in that there is no end to the number of ways to catch bass on Fork. You can fish shallow, especially early and late in the day. Look for grasses, pads and other cover in the shallows and work your spinnerbaits, Senkos and jigs through the thickest stuff you can find. A frog bait like the Ribbit or Snagproof is a good way to start the day in the pads, while a buzzbait will work around the edges.

As soon as the sun gets out you'll need to start working into the thick stuff. Bass will pull back into cover for shade and cooler water temperature. You'll have to go in and get them, or go out to deeper water.

There are numerous humps and ridges marked on the better maps of the lake. Find a handful and go graph them.

You're looking for baitfish. Once you find the bait, drop a Carolina rig or drop-shot on them and see if the bass are home.

A word of warning, if you fish a standard drop-shot rig with a tiny weight and eight pound test line with a number one hook like is fished out west — you are going to get your heart broken.

Instead step up your game with a ¼ ounce weight on 17 pound test line and a 1/0 heavy wire hook — I prefer a circle hook. This will handle most of the bigger fish you're likely to encounter.

For night fishermen lighted boat docks will be productive and you'll want to work outside in. That is, work from the outside of the dock with baits like buzzbaits, spinnerbaits and crankbaits, all in black or dark colors.

After you've picked off the active fish, work to the inside of the dock, around dock posts and under the dock, with jigs and worms — also in black/blue and other dark colors.

You should also always have a 'Trap, tailspinner or topwater plug rigged and ready. Schooling bass at Fork can be above average sized fish, and you never know where they'll show up — So be ready!

WHITNEY — A good way to start the day at Whitney is by fishing for sandies on top. There should be some big schools of whites running the lake. Small crankbaits and swimbaits are two good lure choices. Another great weapon is a flutter slab.

While these fish will be above the thermocline, you'll want to drop below the main school to get to the bigger fish below. They hang out waiting for the dead and dying shad that fall from the feeding activity above. You can make a long cast past the main school and let the bait pendulum back down to the fish below.

Stripers will also be above the thermocline and you'll want to fish where the thermocline meets an edge or a ledge. That's usually in about 20 or 22 feet of water. When it connects with a bluff, point or channel you'll find fish. Good lure choices include horsehead jigs with plastic trailers in chartreuse or a chartreuse/white combination.

A rod-n-reel catfisherman can go to the state park bank and make a long cast and probably reach the cats there. You can also catch catfish below the white bass. They'll be feeding on what the whites lose.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS — RC can be frustrating at times. White bass can be as easy as 1-2-3, or as difficult as any fishing can be. Schooling fish will show themselves around the Pelican Island area, on up to the dam, in the middle of the lake, with no particular structure or pattern in place.

You'll want to be ready with a glitter slab and a crappie jig tied above it. Tie it one or two feet above the slab and use white or chartreuse. A topwater like the Baby Torpedo in clear is also a winner, if you are close enough to the surfacing fish.

For fish that are a long way off, keep a spinning rod with a tailspinner or ½ ounce jighead and swim body at hand. You can cast those a mile and reel 'em back through the school.

If there is grass on RC that's where you'll find the bass. There is usually some grass in the Harbor Inn Marina area, and in some of the coves, but you'll have to do your homework to find what grass does exist. Your topwaters and frogs will work



PHOTO BY RICHARD JUE

In August a variety of fish will seek any shady cover available. The abundance of boat docks provide plenty of targets for anglers to fish up under.

if there is grass.

Also fish boat docks if there is not any grass to be found with Texas rigs. St. Elmo, Winkler and Oil Field points on the main lake will be good places to use the Carolina or drop-shot rigs, and maybe even deep diving crankbaits.

RAY ROBERTS — For August bass on Ray Roberts you'll want to start the morning on main lake points with grass or some kind of vegetation. Throw the Zara Spook, Whopper Plopper or frog, until the bite plays out. On cloudy or windy days this may last well into the late morning hours. Of course, on a clear day it could end quickly, once the sun gets up in the sky.

After the topwater bite savvy anglers will head to the humps, ridges, and pond dams. Jigs like a football head and crankbaits such as the 6XD or 10XD can both be productive. Look for baitfish on the structure and remember to check back on structure that appears bare throughout the day. Baitfish may use a piece of structure at any time throughout the day, and when the baitfish show up, the bass are not far behind.

When the going gets tough try the shaky head. A Tattletail from Gene Larew, or a Roboworm in Morning Dawn are good choices.

Most days will find the sand bass schooling along the face of dam. Another good area would be the flat just south

of the marina. Again, the Heddon Baby Torpedo in clear is a good bait for the fish on top. Once they drop deep go to the one ounce in chartreuse or white. Many anglers will put a dab of red dye on the bait near the top to imitate a red throat, or gill area.

Crappie should be holding on one of the many Corps of engineer brushpiles. These are marked on most quality lake maps.

CEDAR CREEK — Cedar Creek is a great summer lake. With "11 million docks" you have plenty of cover for bass and crappie.

The many humps and ridges on the lake floor offer endless opportunities for white bass. To begin the day for crappie, go to 20-30 feet and look for fish suspended over timber or tall brush. The fish will be at the 8-12 foot level, over the much deeper brush. Use 1/16 ounce or 1/8 ounce crappie jigs in your choice of color.

You'll want to throw 10-15 feet past the brush and just close the reel. That will let the bait pendulum back to cover. As the bait falls, it falls naturally. This is as opposed to vertical jigging technique from above the fish. Also, watch your line, as you may not feel bite but just see line movement.

Another crappie catching options is fishing boat docks with a minimum of 10 feet of water underneath. Use the same baits, but shoot, or slingshot, the jigs

under the docks to reach the shady parts.

It should be noted that largemouth bass can be caught in these same places, but you'll probably want to upsize your line and baits. While you can catch some pretty good fish on the smaller baits, landing them on light line can be tricky to impossible, especially around the docks. Try the shaky head jig with a small 4" finesse worm in the brush. You'll hang up a little but that worm floating down beside the brush is a deadly trigger.

If you can skip the bait under a dock you'll get twice the bites as the guys working the edges only. A spinning rod with 12-17 pound test will allow for the dock "shooting" technique, much like the crappie anglers use.

Cedar Creek sand bass roam around in huge schools, looking for bait. Watch your electronics and stay in the 12 to 20 foot range, around main lake points, channels and humps. You should spend some time graphing any big contour change. You can fish with ¼ to ½ ounce jigheads paired with small flukes, or use ¼ oz. spoons in gold or silver.

Night fishing for crappie will be a lighted dock game. Mark a few docks that are lit, especially those isolated docks that have several dark docks around them. That tends to concentrate the fish, as opposed to a strip of several docks that are all lit, which will spread out the fish.

Live minnows and jigs will work, with the crappie preferring one over the other on occasion. It's just a matter of offering both and then determining which they like on a given night.

Bass at night will be around any good cover about halfway back in the creeks. If you can find some grass and lay down timber, you're in a pretty good area. Use the dark colored spinnerbaits, with a Colorado blade. One-quarter to ½ ounce in dark reds, blues and blacks are best. A medium speed retrieve along the cover will draw strikes.

A dark buzzbait is also a fun way to catch them in the night. Retrieve the bait fast enough to keep it on top of the water.

My third choice is a magnum worm, 8-12 inches, also in dark colors. Texas rigged with a pegged weight, toss it around docks, timber and on main lake points.

August can be a productive month, even if it does seem to be a long one. 🌅🪱

EAST TEXAS



By Matt Williams

CONROE - If you thought July was hot, you haven't seen anything yet. Lake Conroe fishing guide Butch Terpe says August may be the hottest month of the year in eastern Texas. He pointed out that the torrid heat has a way of throwing just about everything finning around in his home lake into a funk except for ol' whiskers.

"You can still catch a few bass shallow early and late or away from the bank around brush piles, but channel cat are definitely going to be the best bet until things start cooling down," Terpe said. "I fish for them a lot this time of year."

The guide says baited holes are the ticket to quick limits. A baited hole is a spot that is salted with soured grain or range cubes that are routinely fed to cattle.

The catfish's sensitive olfactory glands can detect the smell of the grain and they will come from a considerable distance to feed on the slop. Drop a glob of punch bait, cheese bait, a night crawler or piece of cut shad or perch down there amongst a feeding frenzy and you are just about certain to get bit.

"The main thing to remember is you are just trying to attract the catfish, not feed them," Terpe said. "You don't want to put out so much that they get full on it."

Terpe says the best depth to fish is around 18-22 feet. He likes to key on the edges of the San Jacinto River channel or the edge of a major channel.

As earlier mentioned, bass anglers will have a couple of short windows early and late when they can catch a few fish on topwaters, Texas rigs and crank baits. Otherwise, you'll need to target offshore brush piles, pond dams, points and road beds with Texas rigs, deep cranks and Carolina rigs.

NACOGDOCHES - If you're looking to get your feet wet in night fishing, Lake Nac is a good lake to do it on. At 2,200 acres, it's small enough that you rarely have to worry about wind and it's relatively open with limited obstructions to deal with so long as you stay south of the power lines. Plus, the water clarity is great.

There are plenty of stumps in isolated areas north of the power line crossing, so be sure and run at slow speeds unless you know the lay of the lake. It's best to hug the east bank up to Anderson Point then shoot straight north until you reach the grass on the big flat that's dissected by Big Loco Creek. That's where you'll need to shut it down.

If you like to fish shallow, there is plenty of torpedo grass, pads and hydrilla along the east and west banks for throwing frogs, buzz baits, spinnerbaits and dragging Texas rigs. There are quite a few boat docks and boathouses on the lake proper, as well.

Just put the trolling motor down and cover water. Main lake points or places where there is a definitive change in water depth deserve special attention.

Three other main lake spots to check out are the dam, pipeline crossing near the east shore and the hump on the west side near the mouth of Pine Cove. The pipeline is like a washboard with all sorts of erratic contour changes at depth ranges from 18-28 feet. It's clearly visible on a Navionics chip, as is the hump, which rises to 8-10 feet out of 20-plus feet of water.

Flipping the grass up north should be a great option during the daytime hours this month. The grass should be matted in water ranging 10-12 feet with definitive walls along the main creek channel. Creature baits matched with big weights and heavy jigs rule in this arena.

As for crappie, brush piles in water ranging 18-25 feet will be the ticket. The fish will likely be suspended so make sure not to fish too deep.

LIVINGSTON - Ask veteran guide Randy Dearman to summarize the best bass summertime bass pattern for Lake Lake Livingston and he'll typically do it with two short phrases — creek channels and boat docks.

"It's hard to go wrong fishing creek channels any time of the year," Dearman said. "Livingston is a pretty shallow lake and the bass relate a lot to channel



PHOTO BY RICHARD JUE

Beating the heat at night can provide unknown excitement. This Lake Conroe hybrid was caught while fishing at night.

breaks that fall from around three feet to seven feet. They will usually be right on the edge."

To refine the search Dearman will key places where the channel makes a defined swing or bend. Stumps and laydowns can be huge plus. "There isn't any grass in the lake to speak of, so wood will sometimes attract fish like a magnet. It's not uncommon to catch several off the same stump."

Dearman's go-to baits around channel breaks include a spinnerbait, square bill crankbait and Texas rigged Rage Craw. He typically starts off with a moving bait first, then switches to the Texas rig if the fish want something moving slower.

The guide pointed out that it is always a good idea to keep a white buzz bait handy this time of year, especially if the water is clear.

"It doesn't work a lot more often than it will, but when they do get on a buzz bait they'll hammer it," Dearman said. "It doesn't necessarily have to be cloudy or dark skies for it to work, either. At times they'll blast it right up in the middle of the day under clear skies and bright sun."

As boat docks go, Dearman likes to target those structures that are located in close proximity to a channel swings or some other defined contour change with

deeper water. He says it is always a good idea to target the shady side.

“The corners of the docks can be especially good,” he said.

PALESTINE - Ricky Vandergriff has never been one to put all of his eggs in one basket. But when August rolls around on Lake Palestine the veteran guide puts way more faith in the lake’s bountiful channel cat population than anything else.

“That’s definitely the most reliable bite,” Vandergriff said. “The water will be really hot and the bass and crappie fishing can get really slow. But you can almost always count on the channel cat. They won’t be great big, but you’ll catch some good numbers.”

Vandergriff will fish around baited holes exclusively. He likes to use range cubes to concentrate the fish around humps and old sloughs in 16 feet of water on the main lake, but the tactic also will work along the main Neches River channel and major creek channels. His preferred bait is King’s punch bait. The tasty cats also can be caught on night crawlers, liver and small pieces of cut perch.

When targeting bass this time of year Vandergriff says he will spend most of his time at the south end of the lake. Main lake points, old road beds and underwater bridges will get plenty of attention with a 3/4 ounce black/blue/chartreuse jig, deep diving crank bait and a Carolina rigged Brush Hog. He’ll also spend some time near the bank targeting brush piles between boat docks in water ranging three to six feet deep. Light Texas rigs, jigs and vibrating jigs are the orders of the day around docks.

Hybrids are another good option, especially for anglers who like a good fight. Vandergriff says the fish can often be found schooling on shad at first light on main lake points. Some of them will be big, too.

“There are a lot of fish in the three to eight pound range,” he said. “They’ll hammer a crankbait or Rat-L-Trap.”

SAM RAYBURN - Sam Rayburn was nearing two feet below full pool as of this writing and water levels were dropping daily with the brutal summer heat. Barring any tropical storms or hurricanes, the water level could be significantly lower by the time August rolls around.

Local bass pro and fishing guide Tommy Martin of Hemphill says things

are setting up nicely this summer for some outstanding frog fishing in skinny water.

“Last year things weren’t right because the hydrilla was growing so thick that you couldn’t get a boat into the right areas to fish,” he said. “It’s not looking like it’s going to be that way this year. In late June the shoreline hay grass was still pretty clean. If it stays that way the frog fishing should be great.”

Buzz style frogs will work around the hay, but hollow body popping and walking models typically rule because they can be stopped and twitched intermittently in small openings to coax strikes in super thick cover. Best colors are white, black or some sort of shad pattern. Texas rig worms fished along the outer edge of hay grass also will draw some quality bites.

Martin says there should be big fish to be caught flipping a big jig or heavy Texas rig around matted hydrilla in water ranging 8-10 feet deep. Some of best stuff is located in Harvey Creek, behind the Black Forest and in several other major creeks up and down the lake.

Another good pattern to look at is fishing around brush piles, isolated stumps and hard bottom structure in water ranging 15-20 feet deep. Carolina rigs, football jigs, deep crank baits and light Texas rigs should get you bit if you stumble across a group of fish away from the bank.

Crappie guides will continue mining main lake brush piles in 20-30 feet of water throughout the month. The fish will likely be suspended around brush. If you see fish grouped up on the depth finder, take note of the depth at which the fish are holding and place your bait at that depth. Live shiners and jigs will produce equally well at times.

TOLEDO BEND - The water level on Toledo Bend had dropped to about two and a half feet below normal as of this writing. It will likely be significantly lower come August with no water coming in to replace what is lost due to daily evaporation and periodic generation by the Sabine River Authority.

If this August is like most, some of the productive bass fishing patterns will be geared towards underwater structure like old road beds, points and drops at mid-range depths. That’s the word from veteran fishing guide Tommy Martin of nearby Hemphill.

“We don’t have much grass to speak of

in the lake right now, so the fish are pretty much going to be relating to structure,” he said. “But they won’t be deep. A lot of the fish move shallow when it starts getting really hot because the oxygen levels start to deplete in deeper water. I’ll spend a lot of time in water ranging 8-15 feet this month.”

Martin says any number of bait will produce, but it is hard to beat a light Texas rig matched with Zoom Trick Worm (red bug or June bug) or a crankbait like a Strike King 6XD in some sort of shad or perch pattern. There also could be some schooling activity beginning to take place along some of the major creeks towards the end of the month. While most of the schoolies will be small, they can be fun to catch on a Rat-L-Trap, Texas rig or crank bait.

Another good option his month is night fishing. The bite is generally best around the full moon.

August crappie fishing can be outstanding. The best bite is always around brush piles in water ranging 25-30 feet, according to fishing guide Stephen Johnston.

Johnston says the fish will most likely be relating to the edges of the brush and suspended about 15-20 feet down. Live shiners are the main order, but you can also run up the score on small jigs from time to time. **★J**



PHOTO BY RICHARD JUE

The most reliable bite on most lakes in August is for catfish around baited holes.

PREP NOW FOR SUCCESS LATER

*Wingshooters prepare now for
the opening of fall hunting seasons.*

Story and Photography by Nate Skinner



It's human nature to procrastinate. There are those rare individuals among us that don't, but for the most part just about everyone tends to put things off until the very last minute in some aspect of life or another.

One of the most notorious groups of people known for stalling when it comes to completing tasks that need to be done is hunters. Over the years I've had friends or acquaintances tell me about making late night trips to sporting goods stores to stock up on ammunition for the next day's morning hunt. On more than one occasion I can recall fellow hunters hurrying to purchase their hunting license on the way to the field for a hunt. Even worse, I've hunted with folks that when checked by a game warden at the end of a shoot, realized they never did purchase a license for the current season.

Many of us have been guilty of poor preparation prior to hunting season at some point in our life. Hopefully it was something minor like having to make a last minute gear purchase rather than breaking the law.

Either way, the bottom line is that the time to get prepped and ready for fall hunting seasons is now. With dove and early teal seasons opening in September, there's 31 days worth of reasons why all hunters should develop a sense of urgency when it comes to planning.

First things first. The no brainer initial step in the preparation process is to make sure your hunting license is obtained with the proper stamps and endorsements. Dove and teal hunters must possess a hunting license with a Migratory Game Bird Endorsement and be H.I.P Certified. Teal hunters are also required to accompany their licenses with a Federal Duck Stamp. One rule that a lot of people are unaware of is that in order for a duck stamp to be valid, a hunter must sign the front of it and permanently affix it to the license.

Licenses for the 2018-2019 season will go on sale in mid August. Create reminders on your smart phone or calendar if needed, but make concrete plans to purchase a license well before the first scheduled hunt takes place.

When it comes to gear preparation, a good place to start is the pack or bag used to carry shotgun shells and other items into the field or blind. Hunters that are going to pursue both dove and teal should



Practice at the sporting clays or skeet range will make those long crossing shots easier once seasons open.

go ahead and plan on preparing and using two separate gear bags. This will prevent different types of ammunition from getting mixed up, as teal hunters cannot have any lead shot or dove loads in their possession while actively teal hunting.

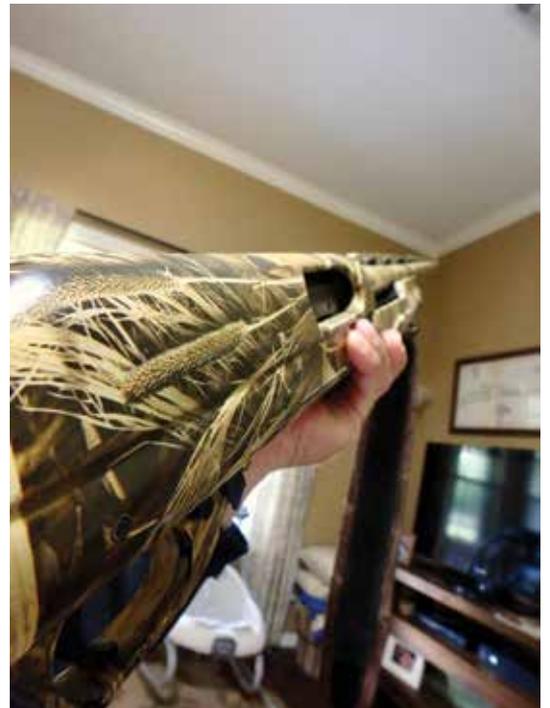
Once field and blind bags are obtained, hunters should begin filling them with important items that will help them achieve success. At the very least, both packs should have some sort of shotgun cleaning and repair kit stored in them.

There's no telling what might go wrong with a shotgun during a hunt. When a problem occurs with a shotgun, a hunter can become a spectator quickly if the necessary tools are not readily available. From tripping, falling and filling the barrel with mud and water to jamming a shell — things happen. A compact gun cleaning and repair kit will get a shotgun back to shooting in no time.

This kit should include a gun cleaning oil product, bore snake and gun cloth. A punch tool to remove pins, small screwdrivers that fit the hardware of the gun being used, and a pair of pliers are necessary. Some of these tools can be found on a simple, hand-held multi-tool found at most hardware stores. This small kit will take up little room in a bag and will keep shotguns operating flawlessly.

Other items hunters should keep in their dove hunting pack include a pair of game shears, zip-lock bags, sunscreen, shell belt, and bird vest. The game shears and zip-lock bags will come in handy when it is time to clean birds. Sunscreen will be needed on hot, sunny afternoon hunts. A shell belt and bird vest will make it easy to conveniently carry shotgun shells, empty shot shell casings, and a limit of doves.

In addition to a shotgun cleaning and



Practicing mounting and swinging a shotgun at home will help build muscle memory. Tracking the seam where the wall meets the ceiling is a good way to create a smooth swing.



Pre-season practice and conditioning should also include your bird dog or retriever.

repair kit, teal and waterfowl hunters should also keep some additional items in their blind bag. These include tie wraps or zip ties, a facemask, gloves, game shears, zip-lock bags, trash bags, a head lamp, and lens wipes.

Like in a dove gear bag, game shears and zip-locks will be needed when it comes time to clean ducks. Zip-lock bags can also be used as waterproof storage for items like cell phones and wallets. Tie wraps can be used as a duck strap to tie an individual's limit of birds together, plus they can also help attach brush or vegetation to a blind. A face mask and gloves will help keep hunters concealed when ducks are approaching, while a head lamp is a great hands free alternative to a flashlight that will make putting out decoys in the dark much easier. Lens wipes are a lifesaver when it comes to cleaning glasses, cell phone screens, and camera lenses. Trash bags will come in handy when its time to clean up after a hunt.

One additional item that both dove and teal hunters should include with their gear bag if they are hunting with a retriever is a collapsible dog bowl. These small, lightweight bowls usually come with a clip that will easily attach them to the strap of a gear bag. This dish will ensure that retrievers stay hydrated during warm hunts.

Other gear preparations that need to be made this month include readying and rigging whatever decoys will be used. For dove hunters this doesn't

require that much work, but it's a good idea to obtain a couple of spinning wing motion dove decoys. The birds are often drawn to the flashing illusion created by the rapidly spinning wings of these motorized fakes which can make for some easy shot opportunities. A few clip on dove decoys can also be productive, especially when hunting along fence lines or around trees with low hanging branches.

Teal hunters will need to pull out their decoys and make sure they are not tangled or do not need any repairs. This is the perfect time to rig any decoys that need their anchor lines replaced or weights added to them. Adding a teal spinning wing decoy to a spread is also a killer trick. Don't wait until the last minute to try and find one of these motion decoys on the shelf at a sporting goods store—purchase one now.



The teal season that opens in mid-September is the second opportunity for shotgunners to get in on the early hunting action.

Motion decoys are useless without batteries. Whether it's a teal or a dove spinning wing decoy that's being used, find out what type of batteries it takes and keep an ample amount of spares on hand.

If hunters have not done so, they should purchase their ammunition now. Waiting much longer will risk the chances of suppliers being out of stock and store shelves being picked over.

August is also an excellent time to get retrievers up and moving to condition them for the hunts that lie ahead. Dog trainer, Captain Nathan Beabout of AB Kennels, suggests that hunters begin employing some routine bumper work with their retriever in the weeks prior to the season commencing.

"Retrievers will instinctively pick back up where they left off last season, but they still need to knock the rust off before going on a hunt after laying around all summer," he confessed.

The same is true for the hunter. Regularly handling a shotgun and shouldering it is good practice prior to shooting at a flying bird for the first time since last season. The idea is for the firearm to feel like a mere extension of your body by the time opening day comes around. This can be achieved in a number of ways. One is to repeatedly shoot skeet or sporting clays at a local shooting range.

Another way to get comfortable handling a shotgun without ever leaving the house is to practice shouldering it and then swinging in different directions. One good exercise that helps develop muscle memory is to shoulder the gun and point the barrel at the seam where two walls or

a wall and the ceiling meet.

Practice shouldering the firearm and then following the seams along the interior of your home in all directions. Swing up and down between two walls, and then left to right and right to left while following the seam between a wall and the ceiling.

While completing this exercise, imagine swinging on an approaching dove or teal. The human eye is instinctively



One of the author's hunting bags with the gear he carries to the field is shown. To make sure he has all needed gear and is legal he used one game bag for dove hunting and a separate game bag for waterfowl hunting.

drawn to motion, and on a bird that is its wings. However, swinging to the wings of a bird and then pulling the trigger will likely produce a shot that is behind the target.

A good motto that will prevent this from happening is, "Butt, beak, boom." Swing from the butt of the bird all the

way through to its beak before taking the shot. This will result in a much higher success rate.

Hunting is a passion. For some it's an addiction, others it's an obsession, and for many it's a way of life. Make it a priority one month earlier and get prepared now as success and memories await. **T★J**

Dove and Early Waterfowl Season Dates

North Zone

Dove:

Sept. 1 - Nov. 4, 2018 & Dec. 21, 2018 - Jan. 14, 2019

Central Zone

Sept. 1 - Nov. 4, 2018 & Dec. 21, 2018 - Jan. 14, 2019

South Zone

Sept. 14 - Oct. 30, 2018 & Dec. 14, 2018 - Jan. 21, 2019

Special White-winged Dove season:

Sept. 1, 2, 8, 9 (special regulations apply)

Statewide

Teal:

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Developing A Pattern

Sit around the café and eavesdrop on a group of fishermen's conversations long enough and you'll hear them mention "patterns." Deep patterns, shallow patterns, jig patterns, everyone wants to find a pattern.

But what does all of that jargon mean? And how do you find and use a pattern?

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word "pattern" in several ways of which a few may apply to this discussion. The first definition is: "a form or model proposed for imitation."

The next useful definition is number seven, "a reliable sample of traits, acts, tendencies or other observable characteristics of a person, group, or institution."

The last definition that can be applied to fishing is: "a discernable coherent system based on the intended interrelationship of component parts."

Taken as a whole, these definitions pretty much sum up what all anglers are looking for. It doesn't matter the species, all fishermen want to catch fish. If an angler can use "a reliable sample of traits, tendencies or other observable characteristics" of the fish being pursued, in order to develop a "discernable coherent system based on the intended interrelationship component parts," he now has "a form or model proposed for imitation."

Stated another way — if I can figure out what a majority of the fish are doing

on a given day, I should be able to relate that to the lures or baits I use to catch fish. I should also be able catch fish in the same manner again and again — thus a pattern is established.

In establishing a pattern you must first consider what type of fish is being sought, and the time of year in which it is being fished. Seasonal patterns apply to all species, but not all species act the same in the same seasons.

Spring, for example, sees white bass making their journey up the rivers to spawn, while black bass head to shallow banks. Crappie will spawn on shallow brush in the creeks, while bluegill will use the bass beds after they move off. So it is important to understand the fish being pursued and how that species acts throughout the year — particularly as their actions pertain to the seasons and specifically to the season at hand.



This is a good combination of lure to work the water column from top to bottom. The lures include (left to right and top to bottom) popper, walking bait, Senko, spinnerbait, diving crank bait Carolina rig and jig.

Simplistically, most species will spend some amount of time shallow in the spring, followed by a trip to deeper water during the summer. When the water temperature moderates in the fall, many species will return to the shallows, before again moving deeper in the winter months. These movements are triggered by rise and fall in the water temperature for sure, but also by the movement of the bait forage upon which they prey.

Shad is a primary forage for almost all species of freshwater fish. As they move shallow the predators will follow.

During the summer months shad are the most predictable "locator" of fish an angler can use, regardless of species being sought. Striped bass, white bass



Small adjustments can be made as is necessary to refine a pattern. Changing a color of a bait, or its size and even the weight being used may make a difference. However keep notes of the changes to further define what does and does not work.



Pay attention to what was being done when the fish bit. Were you jigging the jig high off the bottom and letting it fall back down, or just popping it up a few inches?

and hybrid stripers are much the same in their summer activities. They hang around deeper water, waiting for shad to ambush. They'll find some type of structure, such as a hump, and relate to that while they wait. At some point they'll herd the shad up onto the point and feed voraciously, usually in the early morning and late afternoons.

There are two main types of freshwater shad, the gizzard and threadfin. Threadfin shad have a very distinct black spot on the "shoulder" region, as well as having a yellow tint to the fins. This is much like the tint seen on the bluegill, and one of the main reasons we use chartreuse dipping dye on our baits.

Gizzard shad are a little darker looking than the threadfin. While threadfins are preferred by most species, when they become scarce gizzard shad will become

the sought after prey.

Shad will spawn up to four times a year, starting in late spring and into the fall. These spawns will take place in shallow water and explain why you'll sometimes see stripers running the shallows in the heat of the summer, when you would expect to see them out deep.

Largemouth and smallmouth bass will both follow shad schools during the summer months. Often largemouths are spotted schooling on the surface as they feed on huge pods of shad.

Smallmouths also love the threadfin, but rarely show up on the surface like black bass. Instead, smallies will ambush the shad over deeper structure like ledges, or individual boulders. Both smallmouth and largemouth bass will hit the shad hard in the shallows as they spawn.

One other helpful bit of shad knowledge is the thermocline. The thermocline is a situation caused by a warm layer of water sitting over a colder, deeper layer. This stratification causes a lack of oxygen in the deeper layer. Shad are very sensitive to changes in both oxygen content and temperature so they will stay above the thermocline. Locate the depth at which the water stratifies and keep baits above that depth.

A good place to start are main

lake points. Find the area where the thermocline intersects the point and fish from there back towards the more shallow water. At some place along that line fish should be intercepted. The same technique works on humps out in the main lake. Any way it is sliced, find the shad and chances are catchable feeding fish will also be found.

When it comes to patterns there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, one fish does not a pattern make. I say this all the time while bass fishing. If a fish is caught on a buzzbait, it doesn't mean that that is a guarantee that more fish will be caught. It only means I've figured what that particular fish would bite. It takes several fish to know a pattern is solid.

So notes must be taken. This is where the "reliable sample of traits, acts, tendencies" part of our definition comes into play.

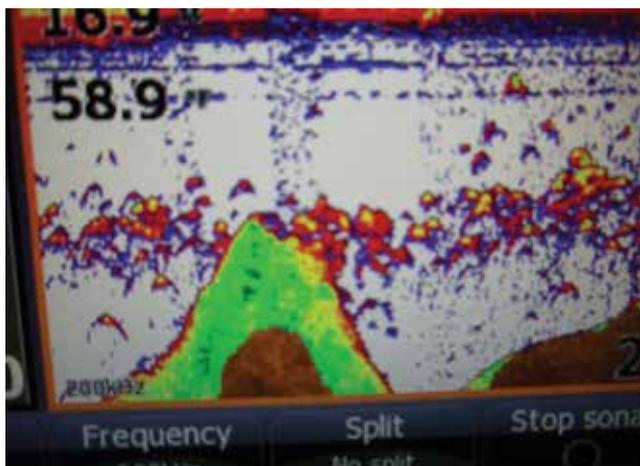
Pay attention to what was being done when the fish bit. Whether you're talking catfish, bass or crappie, you need to pay attention to the details. At what depth was your bait? How fast was the retrieve? Were you jigging the slab high off the bottom and letting it fall back down, or just popping it up a few inches? These are some of the "component parts" mentioned in our definitions of a pattern. Each piece of information goes into that "discernable coherent system based on the intended interrelationship component parts."

Small adjustments can be made as is necessary to refine a pattern. For instance, changing a color of a lure, or size of a minnow. You can also change line size, or the size of the weight being used. However, each change needs to be noted and the results catalogued for future reference.

Sometimes a change is made because fish are not being caught. However, it is also important to consider changing the approach even when fish are being caught. Sometimes that can lead to even more or bigger fish. You'll never know if you don't try.

Once all of the information has been developed, you should see a pattern emerge. Some things work, while others don't. Some things generate quick bites, and other are slower. It takes a little time, but by being methodical results will be usually obtained.

Otherwise you can just chunk and wind. **T★J**



To find fish quickly identify where the thermocline intersects structure and fish above the thermocline.



CoastWatch | Danno Wise

For anglers who enjoy fishing for a variety of game fish, August is the time to be on the Lower and Middle Texas coastal waters. August offers light tackle anglers and inshore fly fishermen opportunities to tangle with bigger, faster, and stronger fish on a routine basis, as kingfish, tarpon, ling and more will all be within an easy boat ride of the beach.

However, there will still be plenty of good days ahead for the diehard trout and redfish crowd. But, there will also have a bit of diversity in fishing for those species, as trout will be found in the surf and redfish will begin hanging around the jetties.

Of course, with August having some much to offer Lone Star State anglers, crowds can be an issue. This is particularly true during the first few weeks of the month before the kids head back to school and over Labor Day weekend.

Although there are more anglers on the water in August than perhaps any other month, the normally calm conditions ensure there is more water for everyone to spread out over. This combined with the fact many anglers will be chasing various species helps lessen the claustrophobic feeling that comes from fishing an overcrowded bay. **T★J**



Port Isabel/South Padre Island guide Capt. Austin Camacho says anglers will have plenty of opportunity come August.

“August is crazy,” said Camacho. “We really have a lot of stuff going on. One of the big things is the reds start grouping up on the flats in August, so we’ll be looking for herds. Usually, I’ll be throwing GULP! Shrimp, mostly in New Penny. I will fish it under a popping cork, but

at other times I just straight-line it. August is also the time when a lot of guys will be throwing ballyhoo on the flats for redfish.

“We’ll still be catching good numbers of trout mostly on the deeper flats. Flounder fishing usually starts picking up in August as well. For the most part, we’ll find the flounder in all the little channels and guts, especially along the Intracoastal. When I’m fishing for flounder, I’ll usually freeline shrimp or mullet, but I’ll also throw some GULP! for flounder.

“Another thing is August is when we start fishing for snook a lot in South Bay and around the jetties. And, we have a lot of kingfish and tarpon around the jetties then, too. Most days, I’ll hit the kings early – trolling for them in the pass. After about an hour or so, we usually have a few kings, so we head into the bay and start looking for our trout and reds, or possibly snook.”

Port Mansfield guide Capt Steve “JR” Ellis of Get-A-Way Adventures Lodge says August can be an amazing time to fish despite the high heat.

“Even though it’s usually really hot, I like fishing in August,” said Ellis.



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

Port Mansfield has provided some consistent speckled trout fishing this summer. D.O.A.'s C.A.L. paddle tail and shad tail soft plastics have provided consistent hookups for anglers fishing out of Getaway Lodge.

“That’s really kind of when we start getting our most consistent sight-casting conditions – which is what I really like to do. We’ll have redfish up on the flats throughout the day and once the sun gets up high, you can see them real well.

“We’ll also have a lot of reds hanging around the jetties and August is a time when we have consistently good conditions for fishing. But, it won’t just be redfish around the jetties. We’ll also catch



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

As August begins to wane anglers have the opportunity to sight cast to schools of redfish. Mike McGregor (right) of Lorena teamed up with Capt. Nathan Beabout to catch this slot redfish.

kingfish and tarpon, snook and Spanish mackerel and it seems like you always get one of those mystery bites at the jetties – a big fish that you never get to see.

“We will still be catching good numbers of trout. There will be some good topwater action on the flats really early. For the most part, if you’re looking for trout in August, you need to focus on those grass beds that are in three to four feet of water. Sometimes we’ll throw GULP! under a FP3 Cork, but you can also do real good on a variety of soft-plastics.”

Throughout the Upper Laguna Madre and Baffin Bay, the majority of fishing will be done in deeper water, with anglers concentrating on deep drop-offs and deep structure. The trout bite should be good in the shallows early, with fish backing into four to eight feet of water during the heat of the day. A large number of fishermen will still be using croaker, while many others will begin switching to pinfish. However, GULP! and a variety of soft-plastics will still be good as well. And, even though most of the fish will be deep, there should be a decent topwater bite during the early morning hours. During the mid-morning time frame there should also be some good sight-casting opportunities, particularly for redfish. The key to successful flats fishing during August will be locating shallow flats with deep water access nearby. **T★J**



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

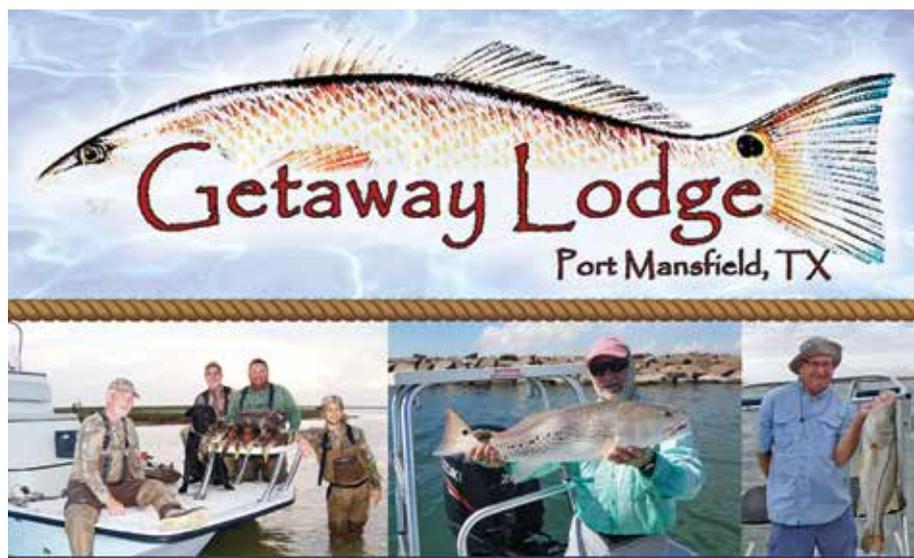
Capt. Pete Martinez looks on as Capt. Ruby Delgado positions a solid speckled trout for a few photos during a gathering of outdoor professionals and manufacturers at Getaway Lodge.



Aransas Pass and Port Aransas area anglers will have a variety of inshore options during August. In the bay, most

fishermen will resort to croaker and pinfish for both trout and redfish, although cut shad and mullet will still be used often for reds. However, there will be a decent topwater bite most mornings, as soft-plastics will still account for a fair share of fish. With the exception of the topwater bite, the majority of the bay action will come along channel edges and deepwater structure. Anglers will also find good numbers of specks and reds, along with Spanish mackerel, along the surf and jetties during August. Tarpon can also be found along the jetties during August.

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PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

In August the Port Aransas jetties as well as other jetties along the Texas coast not only attract a variety of fish, but also rock walkers and boaters alike.

San Antonio and Aransas bays. Anglers fishing live shrimp - either free-lined or under a popping cork - can score well, as can fishermen throwing croaker or an assortment of soft-plastics.

Anglers can expect to encounter some redfish around the reefs as well. However, those looking

steady trout action along the beachfront during August. As is the case elsewhere on the Texas coast, these fish will readily strike topwaters and plastics in the first gut early on before moving out to the second gut later in the day. Once in the deeper water, spoons and plastics are the way to go.

Back in the bays, the most consistent trout action will be around the deep shell and mid-bay reefs in Copano, St. Charles,

specifically for reds should check out the shallow flats. Sandy grass flats will be the primary shallow water areas holding reds. Soft-plastics, topwaters, and, as always gold spoons, will take plenty of spot tails.

In Seadrift guide Capt. Nathan Beabout of N&M Sportsman Adventures says the Texas coast can see harsh weather during August, but can also experience fantastic fishing.

“Well, I know it’s on everybody’s



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

The red snapper season will continue into August this season and that will allow anglers to be in a position to catch other reef dwelling fish like grouper.

mind and hopefully the Middle Texas Coast isn’t devastated by a hurricane this August,” said Beabout. “But, from much needed rainfall the Coastal Bend received in the middle of June that ranged from 5 to 11 inches in a three to four-day period, our bays will flourish with life. Many folks get scared when they hear our rivers have crested and are dumping into the bay, and yes, the initial push of water may dampen fishing for a week or so, but our bays need this continual influx of freshwater.

“This freshwater helps to lower our salinity levels and drops the bay water temperatures. Because of this, our fish are less likely to leave in search of the perfect salinity. Also, one of the major food sources, shrimp and crab, get flushed out of the river deltas bringing an abundant food source out into our bay.

Although these big rains fell in mid-June, it will set us up for some phenomenal fishing in late July and August. I know our fish will still be concentrated over shell reefs and grass/sand shorelines. The summer time patterns will not change from the start of May-September, not until first few cool fronts of the year pass through our area.

“From what we have been seeing here over the past few weeks is the rafts of bait have been lingering along the edge of the



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grass line, and trout and reds have been just outside of that lying in wait in the scattered sand pockets ready to ambush bait fish. Now depending on your location this sand pocket line varies in depth from thigh to waist deep. What we have found is if you get too far out of the sand pockets over just hard sand bottom with no cover the skip jacks have torn us up.

“As I have talked about over this past year, figuring out a key element to catching trophy trout in the summer remains to be holding true. Certain times of the month for three to five days, my customers and I have got to put our hands on several fish per day between 26 and 28 inches.

Our best baits – all rigged on a 1/8-ounce jig head — have been Chicken of the Chain from first light until about 10 am, then as the sun gets high and really penetrates the water column, Blue Moon, and Pumpkinseed Down South Lures.

“I am looking forward to many good days on the water if we can keep some consistent rainfall. Just remember whether it’s your favorite fishing hole or your trying a new area, always try to fish in and amongst rafts of mullet. Casting

to the edges of these rafts should produce the best results. Also, during the crowded summer months whether you boat fish or wade fish, remember to be courteous of others, as we are all trying to enjoy this awesome resource.”

Port O’Connor area anglers will be taking advantage of optimal surf fishing conditions most days in August. Trout,

redfish and Spanish mackerel will all be in the surf and around the jetties over the next few weeks. Tarpon will also be regularly found along the POC jetties.

Back in the bay, trout will be working along the outside edges of the sand/grass flats. Redfish will be up shallower and can often be found tailing on the shallow flats or along the shorelines. **T★J**



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

To beat the heat in August Buck Payne fished late in the afternoon and into the evening hours. It was then he hooked up with this big redfish.

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Lake Roundup



SOUTH TEXAS

By Danno Wise

Heading into summer's final full month, lakes across South Texas are in various states of health water level-wise – from almost full to nearly empty, the water levels in these various reservoirs are reflective of the sporadic drought and rainfall conditions throughout the region this year. But, no two ways about it, August will always be hot. Finding a way to deal with the sometime oppressive summer heat is what makes the difference in stringer length this time of year. And, this usually means finding deep water, which will actually be even easier on lakes that are experiencing lower water levels.

Heat isn't the only factor fishermen have to deal with over the next few weeks. The heat usually beckons a myriad of water sport enthusiasts to South Texas lakes. Swimmers, skiers, jet skiers, divers – anyone who enjoys getting wet will more than likely be 'at the lake' in August. For fishermen, this means avoiding crowds can be almost as challenging as finding fish during late summer. But, it can be done. By adjusting fishing times to the cooler, low-light periods of the day, anglers can often kill two birds with one stone, so to speak, as fish are typically more active and crowds generally are thinner during the early morning and late evening hours.

The final few weeks of summer before the kids head back to school is also an ideal time to take the family fishing. In addition to black bass, which can be a bit tricky during August, families will

find plenty of willing fare in the way of catfish and a variety of panfish during late summer – despite the heat. Using natural baits and fishing around shaded areas is a sure-fire way to let the kids enjoy plenty of lakeside action before hitting the books later this month.

COLETO CREEK — Victoria bass pro Dennis Lala says fishing is pretty simple on Coletto Creek in August – fish early, late or deep.

"You can still have a topwater bite in August," said Lala. "But you'd better be there pretty early. Those fish only stay up shallow until about 30 minutes after sunrise. After that they'll be deep until late in the evening when you can find them on the points and grass flats again.

"If you get there early – or fish really late in the evening, just before dark – those fish around the points are really aggressive and will just smash a topwater. The points and the shallow shorelines – especially those with flooded brush or other visible structure – are always good. I like noisy baits like the Frenzy Popper or Rattlin' Buzz. Besides plugs, regular buzzbaits and spinnerbaits will also catch bass around the points and along the shorelines early and late in the day.

"When those fish are shallow early and late, you can also catch them on soft-plastics. A lot of times when they aren't real aggressive on topwaters or spinnerbaits, you can catch more fish on plastics. Personally, I like using a weightless lizard. But, Wacky Worms and baits like Gulp! Shaky Worms and Sinking Minnows work real well, too.

"But, again, we will be in the middle of our summer pattern. Which for us, means most of the fish will be coming on the deeper points, ledges, underwater structure like tank dams and humps and any grass beds you can find. It's rare to find hydrilla on this lake now, but we do still have some coontail grass and lily pads.

"When we're fishing deeper, we'll usually be using Texas rigs or very light Carolina rigs. Some guys will rig Wacky-style, but I prefer using an 1/8 or 1/16 ounce Carolina rig with a five inch Shaky

Worm in June Bug, watermelon/red, watermelon/candy or Red Shad.

"You can also use fluke-style baits behind Carolina rigs. Something else that's a little different, is using worms on real light jig heads. Whatever you do, you have to keep it light when you're fishing whatever deep structure you can find this time of year.

"For families that are coming out, there will also be some pretty good catfish and panfish action. You can catch channel cats really all over the lake. Panfish will be just about anywhere you can find shade and you can usually do pretty well for crappie around the bridge."

MEDINA — As August dawns, Medina is sitting at just over half full. However, given how deep this lake is, there will still be plenty of water for fish to hide in. And, fishing deep will be the key to finding fish on Medina this month, according to Jim Gallagher of Jim's Rebait Tackle, who says the deep water techniques used on Medina are somewhat different than those used on other South Texas Lakes.

"It is always hot in August and that means the fish are going to be deep," said Gallagher. "Of course, our fish are usually deep. But, the hotter it gets, the deeper they go.

"This time of year is really a time to work on vertical jigging. I know I've said it before, but this isn't a technique a lot of South Texas anglers are accustomed to, because you don't really use it that much on other lakes. But here, that is the way to go in the summer time. Jigging spoons and drop-shot rigs are really the most consistent ways to catch fish on this lake during late summer. But, if you're not used to doing it, it takes a little practice.

"The topwater bite is practically nonexistent this time of year, but if you're willing to fish deep, you can usually do pretty good. Another thing to keep an eye on is the white bass and hybrids. They are hard to locate consistently, but they can pop up at the surface at any time. When you find them up top, you can have really fast action.

"And, of course, you still need to

downsize your lures. We use a lot of ‘Junior’ and ‘Tiny’-type plugs and four inch worms. With our clear water, the normal size lures just don’t produce as well.

“The other thing is catfish and panfish are always good in the summer. Catfish and perch are always catchable and they’re pretty easy to find. They’re a lot of fun, especially for families with kids who want to do a little fishing.”

CHOKO CANYON — Due to its general shallow depth, figuring out where the fish are on Choke Canyon is usually pretty simple during August, as there is very little in the water of deep water structure. This makes it easier on fishermen to deduce where the bass are hiding as they attempt to avoid the summer heat. And, with the lake at only 25 percent capacity this summer, this task should be even easier. Basically, fishermen should find the deepest water they can. If there is structure in the area, there will more than likely be bass as well.

The majority of Choke’s deep structure consists of old tank dams, submerged roadways and old creek channels. Texas-rigged lizards, creature baits and deep diving crankbaits will all produce well over this type of deep structure.

There will also be plenty of bass hiding beneath the canopy of dense hydrilla. Fishermen should use a heavy - 1 ounce - jig or Texas rig to punch through the hydrilla and reach the bass hiding below. Early and late, the outside edges of the grass beds will produce fish on Ribbit Frogs, buzzbaits and Pop Rs.

FALCON — Although Falcon Lake filled to half capacity during spring, it enters summer’s final stretch at less than 30 percent full. But, there are still fish to be caught and, much like other South Texas lakes, fish on Falcon will be in a pretty predictable pattern during August. Early in the morning, fishermen can find reliable action on topwater plugs, shallow crankbaits and spinnerbaits around the miles of flooded brush rimming the lake.

As the day wears on, the fish will move deeper. Ledges, humps, drop-offs and secondary points will be the key areas of concentrations. From mid-morning on, deep-diving crankbaits, slow-rolled spinner baits, jumbo worms and creature baits will be the ticket around this deep structure.

Catfish should also be plentiful,

as usual, on Falcon during August. Although channels and blues can be found throughout the lake, the majority of the fish will be taken in the upper portion and in the Rio Grande River above the lake. **T★J**



By TOJ Staff

AMISTAD — As our country’s 242nd Birthday was celebrated this forecast was compiled. Looking at historical records and trends August 2018 should shape up similar to the same patterns as in August 2017.

Look for “Big Friendly” to be about 32-33 feet low. Water temperatures are going to range in the upper 80s and black bass will hit a topwater bait, coming from its deep water haunts – even 25 feet deep.

With the lower lake levels look for woody or rocky structure to hold fish. As the sun rises fish Rat-L-Traps, spinnerbaits and weightless Slug-Gos just off the outside drop. Crankbaits are another options, particularly around rocky areas or when needing to bump up against some laydowns.

Stripers will be active early and late. During those times Red Fins, broken backs or large Rat-L-Traps are good options for fish on the surface. During the midday hours use your chart recorder and drop down with slabs.

Catfish will be beating the heat in deep water. Best depth will be 40 feet deep and deeper.

O.H. IVIE — As of July 4th week this popular bass fishery was over 41 feet low. The last time the lake was this low was 2015, so dust off your notebooks.

When Ivie is this low everything is obviously changed as far as where fishing-holding structure is located. The key is to fish the depth that has produced fish in the past. Don’t worry about the location, just key on the depth.

In the heat of summer there will be plenty of schooling activity for some run and gun – fun. Whites, blacks and smallmouth will be after bait in the covers or on top of the first drop early and late. Downsize your baits to match the hatch.

BROWNWOOD — Even though this lake is a little over five feet low the most consistent summer bite is fishing the shade and that means boat docks. Pitch or shooting small jigs, tubes or even ‘Traps under the dock can score on black bass as well as crappie.

Out in the main lake through the first week in July black bass have been consistently caught in water eight to 15 feet deep. Texas rigs, Senkos and crankbaits have been reliable offerings.

Crappie remain around brush piles in 15-18 feet of water. Minnows or blue tube jigs are good choices. **T★J**



By TOJ Staff

ALAN HENRY — Through the early part of summer and at the start of July Lake Alan Henry had been producing a consistent and reliable topwater bite. Whopper Ploppers were the go-to bait.

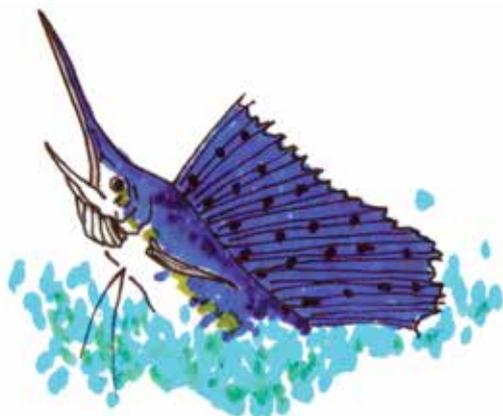
That could still be an option in August early in the morning before sunup, late in the evening or even at night. Slow down your retrieve to entice the fish to make a move from wherever they are sulking from the heat.

Crappie at night is another option for this lake. Vertical structure along the banks of the river channel are a good option.

COLEMAN — This lake is almost four feet low, but still producing consistent action for black bass and crappie. For bass fish Rat-L-Traps, spinnerbaits and soft plastic creature baits.

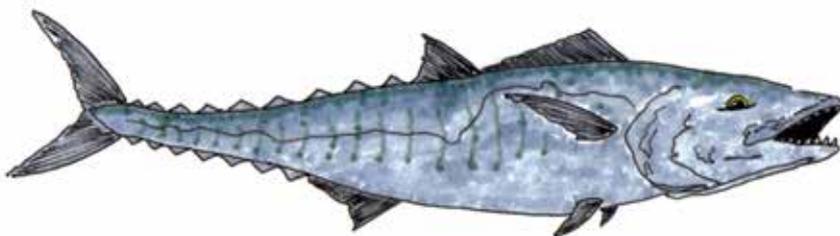
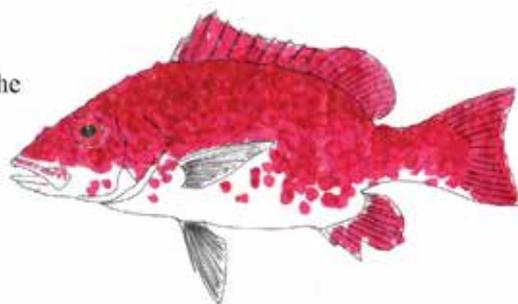
For crappie the best bait is usually at night and around the full moon. Lil’ Fishies or minnows are good options. **T★J**

August's Offshore Magic



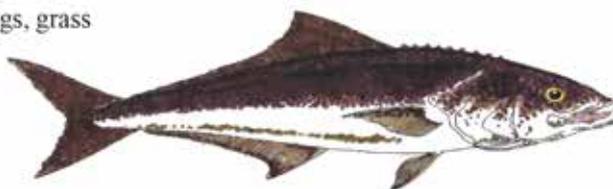
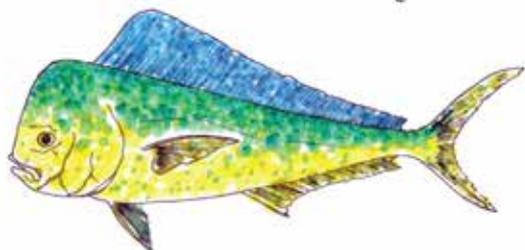
All along the Texas coast, August is THE time for fishermen to venture offshore. Typically, August see consistently good offshore conditions and a greater variety of species within a shorter run of dry land.

Fishermen across the Gulf Coast are thrilled with the longer-than-usual federal red snapper season this summer. And, plenty of impressive catches have been made both in state waters and federal waters this summer, with most anglers tangling with sow snapper on every trip.

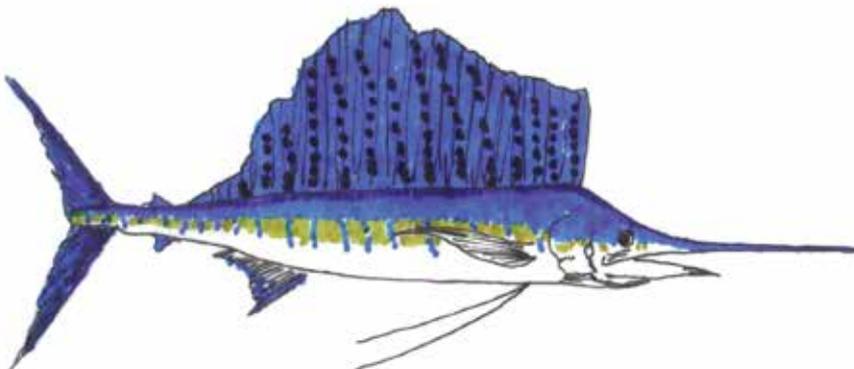


Kingfish are another very popular and accessible target this time of year. In fact, in August, anglers in many areas of the Texas coast can begin catching kings as soon as they leave the jetties and nowhere are kings more than a short boat ride off the beach during late summer.

Also moving closer to shore this month will be ling and dorado. Both species will often be relating to structure, whether that be rigs, grass lines or floating debris.



A bit further offshore, billfish will be a realistic possibility in August as well. Sailfish are the most numerous and typically will be the billfish species found closest to shore in Texas waters. However, both blue and white marlin are also commonly caught by the Texas offshore fleet during the late summer months.



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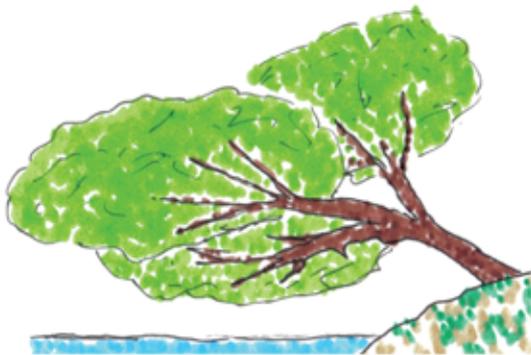
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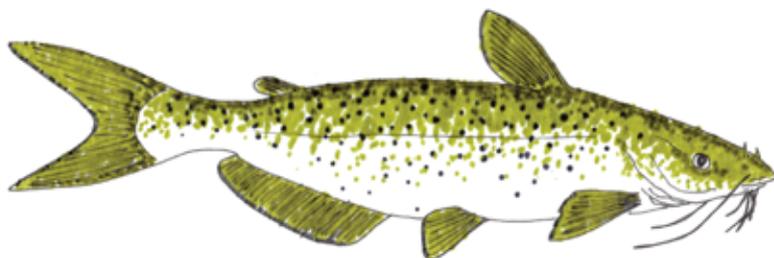


Shady Honey-Hole



While August fishing for largemouth bass on most Texas lakes can be a bit technical due to fish clinging to deep water structure. Those looking to just catch a mess of fish can often do so by simply finding the nearest shade tree. As water temperatures climb, a variety of fish species will be looking to escape the heat by finding shaded water. Whether that shade is produced by an overhanging tree, dock or bridge, shaded water will be substantially cooler than sunlit water and will attract fish for that reason.

Bluegill and a host of other panfish species will be found under shade trees and docks during the summer months. These are great targets for fishing families or anglers equipped with ultra-light tackle. More often than not, there will be plenty of panfish stacked up in one spot, negating the need to fish in multiple locations.



Channel catfish will also often be found concentrated in shaded water -- especially in deeper water under overhanging trees, outstretched docks or bridges. Catching a mess of scrappy channel cats is a great way to prepare for a summer fish fry.

Also found in relatively deeper, shaded water will be both black and white crappie. While the majority of docks and overhanging trees won't be covering deep enough water for crappie, most bridges spanning Texas lakes will hold a good concentration of these tasty panfish during the summer months.



The other great thing about this type of fishing is the simplicity of the baits and rigs required. While bluegill, crappie and other panfish can be caught on various artificial lures, one of the easiest ways to catch a mess of fish from shaded water during summer is to use one of several easily obtained natural baits -- grasshoppers, grubs, earthworms or minnows. Each of these baits can either be fished beneath a float or with just a hook and split shot.

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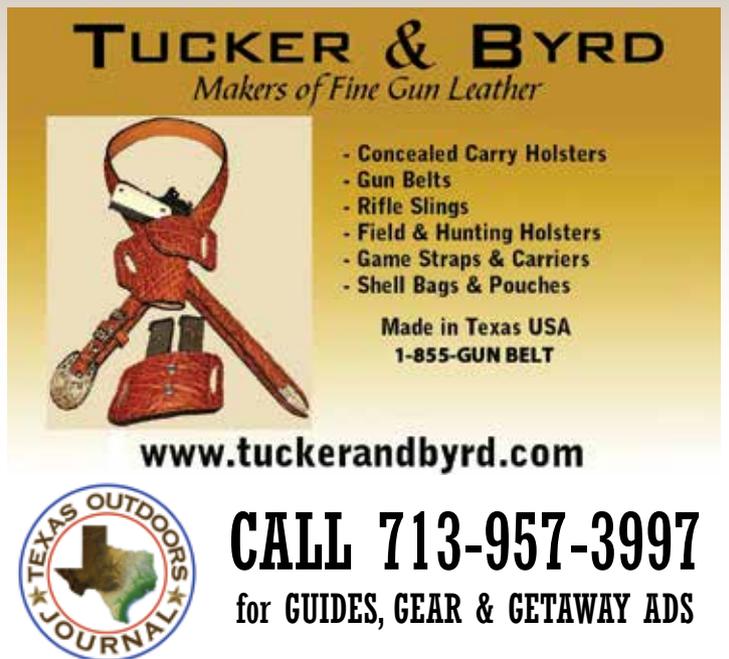


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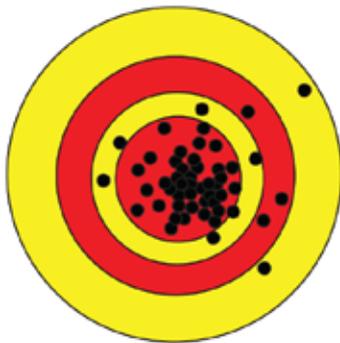
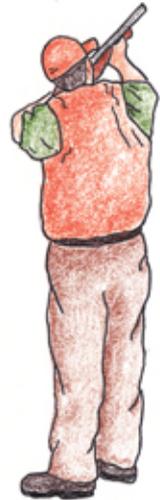
Shotgun Prep & Practice

September is just days away and so are the opening seasons for dove and early teal. Each year many hunters head to the field without having ever fired a shot during a practice session or even shouldered their shotgun.

It is no wonder the average number of birds harvested per box of shells, or the number of shells fired to harvest a bird, reflect this lack of preseason preparation. Most reports indicate a good shot will harvest a dove for every three shots fired.

On the other end of report it indicates hunters average eight to nine shots fired for every dove harvest — that is the average of shots fired. This means there are many hunters that will harvest only a couple of dove per box of 25 shells shot.

When it comes to ducks the average number of shells fired is five or six per bird in hand. While this average is for all ducks I might offer that the number of shells fired may be even higher for the swift flying teal.



To improve the average of bird bagged to shells shot practice certainly takes center stage. However, there are some other pieces of information to consider before practice begins.

Most hunters never pattern their shotgun to see how the smoothbore is digesting a certain brand or load of shotshells. This is common operating procedure for veteran spring turkey hunters.

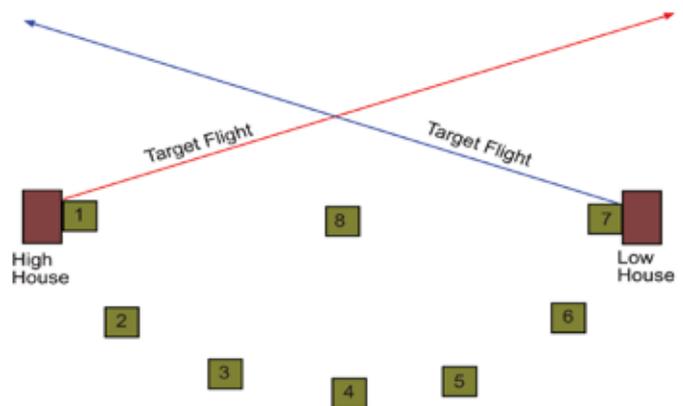
Even with the increased number of shot in each load fired at ducks or dove, preseason patterning will provide information of how the shot is distributed. Trying and patterning different loads with different chokes will instill the confidence in the shot payload being sent toward winged targets.

Another consideration is how the shotgun fits the shooter. Just because your father's shotgun dropped birds like raindrops for him is no indication you will be as successful. This is true if your build is different and is certainly different if the hunter is a woman.

Shotgun shooting instructors will use a shotgun that has a variety of adjustments made so when the gun is mounted the head, eye and sight down the length of the barrel is properly aligned. With this information a gunsmith can then make the appropriate adjustments to a shotgun and improved success will follow.

When at the skeet or sporting clays field, "practicing with a purpose" is important to improve on shooter weaknesses. Instead of shooting a normal round of skeet ask the rangemaster if certain stations can be shot repeatedly.

Crossing shots are what give many hunters the most problem. For right-handed shooters the most natural swing is from right to left. When swinging from left to right many hunters feel somewhat "restricted." The left to right presentation at the skeet field should be practiced more and affords the opportunity to adjust one's feet for a less restricted swing. The opposite is true for left handed shooters. Basically concentrate practice sessions on one's weakness.



On the sporting clays course ask if the rangemaster will allow shots taken from a sitting position. Many dove hunters will use a swivel-top bucket to sit upon while in the field.

Duck hunters will be seated in their blinds and shots will be taken while seated or after raising to a standing position. Pay attention to getting your feet and body into position as a bird is inbound. Practicing this in advance will increase one's success.

The long and short of Outdoor News from across the state and nation.



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Outdoor Calendar

THROUGH AUGUST 31,

Federal Red Snapper Season – Recreational Anglers, *Gulf of Mexico*. The season opened June 1 and continues for 82 days or until the recreational angler allocation has been met. The Federal water limit is two fish per day per angler. Minimum length is 16 inches. Be sure to record your catch on iSnapper app. For more information visit Outdoor Annual app or website.

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.

AUGUST 3-5,

Hunter's Extravaganza, NRG (Reliant) Center, *Houston*. For more information visit huntersextravaganza.com or call (800) 800-3207.

AUGUST 4,

Lee County Bull Busters Chapter Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game banquet, *Dime Box*. For information and reservations call (979) 366-9366.

AUGUST 4,

Blackland Prairie Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *West*. For information and reservations call (254) 855-2902.

AUGUST 4,

Angler Education Instructor Workshop, Bass Pro Shop, *Pearland*. Become a TPWD certified Angler Education Instructor. This free workshop is open to anyone 18 or older interested in teaching fishing skills in their communities. The program

provides the curriculum, equipment, materials and support to help volunteers successfully introduce youth and their families to fishing. Ideal for teachers, youth group leaders, after-school or camp staff and community volunteers. TEA-approved CPE available for teachers. Participants should wear comfortable clothing for outdoor activities, wear hat, sunglasses and bring a sack lunch and a water bottle. 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Preregistration is required, please contact Greg Akins, TPWD certified Angler Education Volunteer Instructor/Trainer, (713) 201-8110 or greg.akers@tpwd.texas.gov

AUGUST 4, 11, 18, 25,

Archery 101, Estero Llano Grande State Park, *Westlaco*. We're providing all equipment, an Eagle Scout Archery range, and Rangers to teach Archery. We provide bows and arrows (please DON'T bring your own equipment), a new range, and teaching Rangers, so just bring yourself and your friends. Meet on the deck outside the Visitor Center Park Store. The program is FREE but Park Admission is required (adults \$5, children 12-and-under free). For more information and registration call (956) 565-3919.

AUGUST 9,

Fayette County Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *La Grange*. For information and reservations call (979) 966-7688.

AUGUST 10,

Lake Somerville Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *Somerville*. For information and reservations call (979) 777-4115.

AUGUST 10,

Cibollo Creek Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *Schertz*. For information and reservations call

(210) 332-7133.

JULY 21,

East Texas Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Longview*. For information and reservations, you are able to call (903) 445-2943.

AUGUST 10,

Harris County Wildlife Group Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Houston*. For information and reservations call (832) 292-1811.

AUGUST 10-12,

Hunter's Extravaganza, Fort Worth Convention Center, *Fort Worth*. For more information visit huntersextravaganza.com or call (800) 800-3207.

AUGUST 11,

North Texas Chapter Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game banquet, *Grapevine*. For information and reservations call (214) 693-8503.

AUGUST 11,

Deep East Texas Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Jasper*. For information and reservations email call (409) 384-6385.

AUGUST 11,

South Plains Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Lubbock*. For information and reservations call (806) 789-6824.

AUGUST 11,

Archery 101, Resaca de la Palma State Park, *Brownsville*. Learn the basics of archery. Bows and arrows will be provided. Recommended for children 5 and up. Bring comfortable walking shoes, weather appropriate clothing, cameras, hats/caps, sunglasses, water, snacks, sunblock, and insect repellent. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Admission: Adults: \$10, Children 12 and Under: \$6. Registration is required. For more information and registration call (956) 350-2920.

AUGUST 15,

2018-2019 Fishing & Hunting License GO ON SALE, *Statewide*. It's time for new fishing and hunting license. Don't procrastinate

AUGUST 16,

Montgomery County Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Conroe*. For information and reservations call (713) 823-2958.

AUGUST 16,

Lone Star Chapter Quail Forever fundraiser banquet, *Grapevine*. For information and reservations call (972) 332-1612.

AUGUST 17-19,

Hunter's Extravaganza, Freeman Coliseum Expo Hall, *San Antonio*. For more information visit hunterextravaganza.com or call (800) 800-3207.

AUGUST 18,

Rusk County Gobblers Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *Henderson*. For information and reservations call (903) 539-1505.

AUGUST 18,

Wise County Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *Decatur*. For information and reservations call (940) 255-5034.

AUGUST 18,

Art & Crab Fest, Burton Coliseum Complex, *Lake Charles LA*. 5-8 p.m. Features an extensive crab and beer tasting, an art walk, and live music. As one of Louisiana's three crab festivals, the event celebrate the ties between Louisiana seafood and culture by offering a comprehensive experience of the best of Southwest Louisiana's culture, food, music, and art. This popular event sells out every year. Tickets range from \$30 - \$40 and festival-goers can access an exten-

sive crab and beer tasting which will feature 10 restaurants each offering a crab dish that is representative of their cuisine's styles and personalities. Each crab dish will be paired with a complementary beer sample. Similar to a wine pairing, each Louisiana beer will complement each dish's unique flavors and textures. For more info, visit www.artscouncilswla.org.

AUGUST 21,

East Texas Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation fundraiser banquet, *East Mountain*. For information and reservations call (903) 445-2943.

AUGUST 23,

Frisco Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *Frisco*. For information and reservations call (214) 491-7130.

AUGUST 24,

Celina Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *McKinney*. For information and reservations call (972) 822-8549.

AUGUST 25,

Lake Somerville Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *Somer-*

ville. For information and reservations call (979) 777-4115.

AUGUST 25,

Crabbing 101, Sea Rim State Park, *Sabine Pass*. Join us for some basic instruction on how to catch blue crabs in our tidal pools. Bait and tackle will be provided. No fishing license required. Free with park entry. 10:00 a.m. until noon. Call (409) 971-2559, x222.

AUGUST 30,

Southeast Texas Chapter Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game banquet, *Beaumont*. For information and reservations call (409) 673-2771.

AUGUST 30,

Rice Belt Chapter Ducks Unlimited fundraiser banquet, *El Campo*. For information and reservations call (361) 648-4279.

AUGUST 31,

2017-2018 Fishing & Hunting License Expire, *Statewide*. It's time for new fishing and hunting license. Last year's license expires at midnight tonight. **T★J**

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Tide Tables

AUGUST 2018

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			L12:51A 0.2 H8:45A 1.2 L2:39P 0.8 H7:13P 0.9	L1:26A 0.4 H9:05A 1.2 L3:29P 0.6 H9:20P 0.8	L2:05A 0.6 H9:20A 1.1 L4:17P 0.4 H11:24P 0.9	L2:53A 0.8 H9:28A 1.1 L5:04P 0.2
H1:12A 1.1 L4:02A 1.0 H9:30A 1.2 L5:53P 0.0	H2:31A 1.3 L5:53A 1.1 H9:34A 1.2 L6:43P -0.2	H3:27 1.4 L8:01 1.2 H10:11 1.3 L7:36 -0.4	H4:14A 1.5 L8:57A 1.3 H11:34A 1.4 L8:29P -0.5	H4:56A 1.6 L9:30A 1.3 H12:56P 1.4 L9:22P -0.6	H5:36A 1.6 L10:06A 1.3 H2:11P 1.5 L10:15P -0.5	H6:13A 1.5 L10:49A 1.2 H3:23P 1.5 L11:06P -0.4
H6:49A 1.5 L11:39A 1.1 H4:37P 1.4 L11:58P -0.2	H7:22A 1.4 L12:35P 0.9 H5:55P 1.3 L7:21P 1.2	L12:49A 0.1 H7:53A 1.3 L1:37P 0.7 H7:21P 1.2	L1:41A 0.4 H8:23A 1.3 L2:42P 0.5 H8:58P 1.2	L2:39A 0.7 H8:51A 1.2 L3:48P 0.4 H10:48P 1.2	L3:56A 1.0 H9:16A 1.2 L4:52P 0.2	H12:46A 1.3 L6:10A 1.1 H9:39A 1.2 L5:51P 0.1
H2:30A 1.4 L6:44P 0.0	H3:36A 1.5 L7:32P 0.0	H4:21A 1.5 L8:15P 0.0	H4:52A 1.5 L8:53P 0.0	H5:14A 1.5 L10:45A 1.2 H1:12P 1.3 L9:27P 0.0	H5:32A 1.5 L10:33A 1.3 H2:05P 1.4 L9:58P 0.0	H5:49A 1.4 L10:35A 1.2 H2:55P 1.4 L10:28P 0.1
H6:08A 1.4 L11:39A 1.1 H3:45P 1.3 L10:57P 0.2	H6:29A 1.4 L11:30A 1.0 H4:38P 1.3 L11:27P 0.3	H6:49A 1.4 L12:07P 0.9 H5:38P 1.3 L11:59P 0.5	H7:08A 1.4 L12:47P 0.8 H6:47P 1.2	L12:32A 0.7 H7:23A 1.4 L1:29 P0.7 H8:09P 1.2	L1:09A 0.9 H7:33A 1.3 L2:15P 0.5	

SEPTEMBER 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						L1:51A 1.1 H7:33A 1.4 L3:07P 0.4 H11:26P 1.4
L2:43A 1.3 H7:23A 1.4 L4:05P 0.2	H1:02A 1.5 L4:04A 1.4 H7:03A 1.5 L5:09P 0.1	H2:15A 1.6 L6:14P 0.0	H3:07A 1.7 L7:17P -0.1	H3:48A 1.7 L8:47A 1.5 H11:53A 1.6 L8:17P -0.1	H4:24A 1.7 L9:11A 1.4 H1:27P 1.6 L9:14P -0.1	H4:56A 1.7 L9:48A 1.3 H2:45P 1.7 L10:08P 0.1

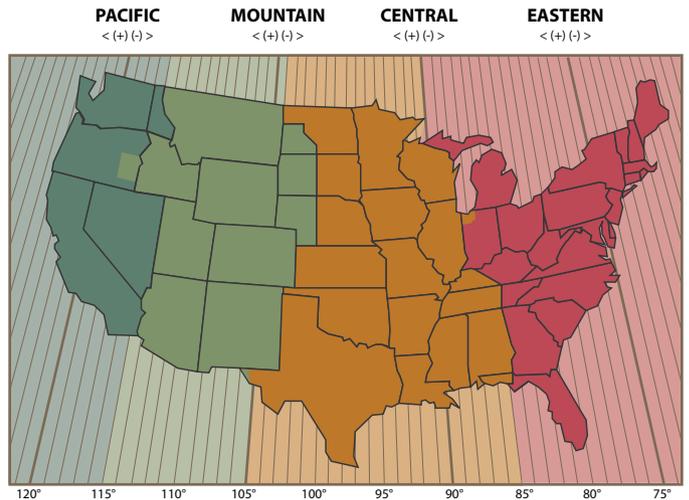
Times are for Galveston, Galveston Channel

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



AUGUST 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 ○	2 ○	3 ☉	4 ☉ LQ
			3:00P - 7:00P	3:50P - 8:50P	4:15A - 9:15A	5:10A - 10:10A
5 ☉	6 ○	7 ☉	8 ●	9 ●	10 ☉	11 NEW ☉
6:00A - 11:00A	6:50A - 11:50A	7:45A - 12:45P	8:40A - 1:40P	9:35A - 2:35P	10:30A - 3:30P	11:25A - 4:25P
12 ☉	13 ☉	14 ☉	15 ○	16 ☉	17 ☉	18 ☉ FQ
12:25P - 5:25P	1:20P - 6:20P	2:15P - 7:15P	3:10P - 8:10P	4:05P - 9:05P	4:35A - 9:35A	5:25A - 10:25A
19 ☉	20 ○	21 ○	22 ☉	23 ☉	24 ☉	25 ●
6:10A - 11:10A	6:55A - 11:55A	7:35A - 12:35P	8:15A - 1:15P	9:00A - 2:00P	9:45A - 2:45P	10:30A - 3:30P
26 FULL ●	27 ●	28 ☉	29 ☉	30 ○	31 ○	
11:15A - 4:15P	12:05P - 5:05P	12:55P - 5:55P	1:45P - 6:45P	2:35P - 7:35P	3:25P - 8:25P	

SEPTEMBER 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30 ☉						1 ☉
4:10P - 9:10P						4:15P - 9:45P
2 ☉ LQ	3 ○	4 ☉	5 ●	6 ☉	7 ☉	8 ☉
4:45A - 9:45A	5:35A - 10:35A	6:25A - 11:25A	7:20A - 12:20P	8:15A - 1:15P	9:10A - 2:10P	10:05A - 3:05P

● 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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