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(see page 75, #1 for more information)

**Statewide Hunting Forecast & Fall Fishing Roundup**

# TEXAS OUTDOORS

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**JOURNAL**



October 2018 / \$3.99



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"Bragging Rights"

For more information on "Bragging Rights" and other fine works of art by Pat Pauley, visit [www.patpauleyart.com](http://www.patpauleyart.com).

# Editor's Insight | Bill L. Olson



## A Change In Attitude

Have you ever seen a doe lead a yearling buck out of a thicket on a cool morning? The wary female exhibits caution as the family group ambles toward the clearing or food plot to feed.

However, once they break the security of the shade and shadows of the trees and brush the youngster simply can't restrain himself any longer. He bounds ahead of his mother bucking, kicking, prancing and just feeling good about the moment. His pent up energy is his display of exuberance for life.

A similar mood at one time or another has struck us all, and there is no better way to get that feeling than when the first true hint of cooler weather finally arrives. It is a wave of excitement that over comes us and makes the young prance while the old remember when they could.

It is that moment when we realize summer's heat is fading like a distant memory in the rearview mirror of another year. It results in an attitude change. We look at that young buck and offer him a smiling thought of, "Yeah, dance a little for me. It does feels good."

For some this fall feeling may not come from being afield. It could occur in a heavily vegetated cove on some quiet lake. So many are absent as they recuperate from a night of football or are preparing for the big game that the lake is like a private tranquil sanctuary.

Every sound can be heard with subtle noises; splashes and swirls letting us know our finned friends feel the change too. Their commotion is self-preserving as they are beginning to aggressively feed in advance of colder weather that is still weeks and even months away.

There is a similar stirring along the coast. A school of redfish is first spotted pushing a wake and then turning so the morning light flashes off their copper-colored scales. It is fall and some of those fish are headed to the Gulf to begin the next phase of their life.

Overhead early arriving ducks of varying species flash by. The sound of their wing-beat and soft-splash as they set down bring a knowing smile to those that observe these moments. It is a time of change, and a change that stimulates an attitude adjustment.

All of these subtle messages and observations are reminders that we are on the threshold of the most magical season of the year. Fall is approaching and it feels good.

Hunters know the crispness of a cool morning is just the beginning and that a warm afternoon waits. As time passes the coolness lasts a little longer until it consumes the entire day.

On any water body there is a contrast as well with water still being warm while anglers are surrounded by the refreshing coolness around them. This too will change over time as air and water temperatures that had been so different will become more similar. A chill is coming.

The best thing about this change is the way it impacts our individual attitude. It is a sustained period of near perfection of not too hot and not too cold, but just about right.

This is a time when everyone should answer the calling to getting outdoors. It is one thing to be told of this event, or even read about it, but to experience the reality of the moment will bring a smile to ones face even on the most challenging of days.

This is another annual gift we are given by our Creator. We marvel at all we have been given and give thanks for the times we can just sit back with a smile, a change in attitude and say thanks.

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

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Volume 27, Number 10



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## TOJ Notebook

### Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission Adopts Rules Permitting Pneumatic Weapons for Hunting

Beginning this fall, hunters in Texas will be able to use air guns and arrow guns that meet criteria established under new rules adopted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission.

The regulations create a new category of legal means for hunting in Texas defined as pre-charged pneumatic devices. Unlike pellet guns and traditional air rifles that can be charged manually or with an attached CO2 cartridge, pre-charged pneumatic air guns and arrow guns are those weapons for which an unignited compressed gas propellant is supplied or introduced from a detached source.

The TPW Commission decision follows months of scrutiny to avoid creating undue risks of wounding of wildlife from pneumatic weaponry. These devices must meet minimum standards of ballistic efficacy.

Minimum ballistic specifications of pre-charged pneumatics approved by the Commission for hunting alligators, big game and Rio Grande turkeys are: .30 caliber bullets weighing at least 150 grains powered by an unignited compressed gas propellant charge capable of attaining a muzzle velocity of at least

800 feet per second (fps) or any bullet weight and muzzle velocity combination that produces at least 215 foot pounds of energy.

For furbearers, pre-charged pneumatics must be at least .30 caliber. For squirrels, chachalaca, quail and pheasant an air rifle does not need to be a pre-charged pneumatic, but it must be able to propel a minimum .177 caliber projectile at least 600 fps.

In addition to minimum standards for pre-charged pneumatic devices, the Commission adopted provisions that hunter education certification requirements be met in order to hunt any wildlife resource.

At least 10 other states permit the use of pneumatic devices for hunting big game, and all but three states allow their use for hunting certain other wildlife species. Their use in Texas previously was limited to hunting anything other than game animals (except squirrels), game birds, alligators, and furbearers.

The new rules take effect Sept. 29, 2018. Additional information on the use of air guns and arrow guns is available at [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov). ★★

### Research Shows Coastal Environment Rebounded After Harvey's Destructive Rains

Historic rains accompanying Hurricane Harvey's 2017 landfall on the Texas coast triggered large low-oxygen events in coastal lagoons – but they also had a restorative effect on the ecosystem, according to observations by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi researchers.

Those findings come from a National Science Foundation RAPID Research Response study led by Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies' ecosystem studies and modeling chair Dr. Paul Montagna in the immediate aftermath of Harvey.

Co-Principal Investigators, Dr. Xinpeng Hu, assistant professor of physical and environmental sciences and Dr. Michael Wetz, associate professor of marine biology, also worked on the study, which allowed researchers to conduct widespread sampling of water, sediments and marine life across the Matagorda, San Antonio, Corpus Christi and Baffin Bay systems to watch the storm's short and long-term impacts.

"What we're finding is that the natural environment, unlike the human-built environment, is very resilient," Montagna

## Cover Art

Popular wildlife and sporting artist Pat Pauley has capture a fall scene right out of east Texas or any place that hardwood bottoms exist in the Lone Star State. The title of this painting is "Bragging Rights." In these remote, inaccessible areas bucks grow big enjoying the forage found around those watery bottom areas.

Pauley has painted a monster buck within his hardwood haven and in the company of a couple of doe. As those doe come into estrus this big monarch's genetic traits will be passed on to another generation of bucks that may have "Bragging Rights" antlers.

For more information on "Bragging Rights" and other fine works of art by Pat Pauley, visit [www.patpauleyart.com](http://www.patpauleyart.com), email at [pat@patpauleyart.com](mailto:pat@patpauleyart.com) or call (712) 545-3639. ★★



"Bragging Rights"





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said. "It reminds me of a forest fire – they're devastating, but the forests that grow back after the fire are often healthier than the ones that were there before."

Harvey made landfall in August 2017 near Rockport as a Category 4 hurricane with winds up to 130 mph. Beyond the immediate impacts of hurricane force winds and surge, coastal flooding occurred as the storm lingered along the coast for four more days, dumping as much as 50 inches of rain near Houston, one of the largest floods to ever hit the Texas coast.

Montagna, who's studied and monitored Texas estuaries for more than 30 years, said the grant provided an unprecedented opportunity to examine how these unique coastal systems where fresh water and salt water mix would handle a huge influx of rain, nutrients, and debris.

Wetz, who conducted water quality monitoring for the project, said Harvey's rains "basically turned the estuary into a river. The salinity went down to zero." That triggered a hypoxic event, a

condition of low-to-no oxygen waters that can kill or distress marine life and lasted for 10 days. But the system recovered fairly quickly from the event.

Though the rains had a lasting, destructive impact on the human-built environment, the freshwater flush revived the estuary, Montagna said, literally clearing it of debris, bringing an influx of nutrients and dissolved oxygen, and making space for new healthy life. In addition, he said, scientists have found that rapid change in salinity and water quality can even trigger some marine species to reproduce.

"The most heartening thing to me is that this has shown us the ecosystem is resilient. It's adapted. It doesn't need intervention from us," Montagna said. "The marshes may get chewed up by the wind and waves, and the oysters may get buried in the mud. But we're seeing a real bloom in our recent samples. Within a year, organisms have made a comeback and they're stronger than before." ★★

### 2018 Numbers are Down but Populations Remain Healthy

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Ducks Unlimited has reviewed the 2018 USFWS duck population survey and reports that most species populations have dipped from 2017 levels but are still above long-term averages. On August 20 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released its report on 2018 Trends in Duck Breeding Populations, based on surveys conducted in May and early June by FWS and Canadian Wildlife Service.

Overall duck numbers in the survey area remain high. Total populations were estimated at 41.2 million breeding ducks in the traditional survey area, 13 percent lower than last year's estimate of 47.3 million and 17 percent above the long-term average. The projected mallard fall flight index is 11.4 million birds, down from the 2017 estimate of 12.9 million.

"The dip in the population for prairie-breeding puddle ducks is not unexpected and by no means unprecedented given

2018 WATERFOWL SURVEY  
[ducks.org/ducknumbers](https://ducks.org/ducknumbers)

Species	2018	2017	% change from 2017	% change from LTA
Mallard	9,255	10,488	-13	+17
Gadwall	2,886	4,180	-31	+63
American Wigeon	2,820	2,777	+3	+8
Green-winged teal	3,043	3,605	-16	+63
Blue-winged teal	6,450	7,889	-18	+21
Northern shoveler	4,208	4,353	-3	+63
Northern pintail	2,365	2,889	-18	+40
Redhead	0,999	1,115	-10	+38
Canvasback	0,686	0,739	-8	+18
Scaup	3,589	4,372	-18	+20
<b>Total Ducks</b>	<b>41,193</b>	<b>47,384</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>+17</b>
<b>May Ponds (US/Can)</b>	<b>5,227</b>	<b>6,096</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>0</b>

Numbers in millions. LTA (Long-term Average)

that conditions on the prairies this spring were drier than last year," said DU Chief Scientist Tom Moorman. "As a result, 2018 populations dropped accordingly. However, populations of all key species except northern pintails and scaup remain above long-term averages. This year's breeding population decline is a reminder of the need to sustain the capacity of breeding habitats, particularly in the prairies as we go through natural variation in wetland conditions. Waterfowl populations are adapted well to short-term swings in habitat conditions, but we must continue to guard against the long-term loss of prairie breeding habitat." ★★



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# FIRST AIR OF AUTUMN



*Mark Nichols poles his Maverick HPX across the shallow flats of the Lower Laguna Madre with anglers Taylor Garcia and Klaryssa Suarez sight cast to fish in clear, pristine waters.*

***Anglers should make every effort to spend as much time on the water as possible this month.***

*Story and Photography by Danno Wise*



Although the seasons officially changed in September, October is when Texas inshore anglers see the first air of autumn settling over the coast. This is a good thing... A very good thing, in fact, as autumn's cooler temperatures encourages a wide variety of saltwater fish species to behave in a more aggressive manner and, in the bays and back lakes, spend more time in the shallows. Autumn is also a time of migration for many species found along the Texas coastal curve. All of this activity adds up to outstanding inshore angling action during October.

One of the most attractive things about fishing in October is the variety of species that is active and available in Texas bays. Not only can anglers pretty much pick the species they want to target this month, but it is also the best time to catch a "slam" of some sort (multiple species in one session).

Speckled trout will be among the top targets this month. For trout, October is almost like a double transition month. To start with, the cooler water temperatures will encourage speckled trout to spend much more time in shallower water. Later in the month, as the water continues to cool, fish will continue to hang out in the shallows, but will slowly begin transitioning from hard sand bottom areas to places with soft, muddy bottoms and deep water nearby – where they will spend the winter months. In many bays, they will frequently be found on flats within close proximity to Gulf passes, putting them in close quarters with redfish and flounder later in the month. This gives anglers an even better shot at catching a "Texas Slam."

Schools of redfish are one of the defining characteristics of October. Essentially, in October anglers are able to reap the fruits of seeds that were sown in late summer, when redfish began ganging up in huge herds inside the bay and began making their way to the nearest Gulf pass for their annual autumn spawn.

By October, most of mature fish are either inside passes, along the beachfront adjacent to passes or cruising toward a pass from inside the bay. If they are still making their way out from bay waters, they will most likely be found along channel edges or shorelines that lead them to a pass. Along the beachfront and in



*Capt Brian Barrera caught this Lower Laguna Madre redfish on a D.O.A. C.A.L. jerk bait while fishing over a shallow grass flat.*

passes, they will be found cruising close to the surface, looking for an easy meal.

Wherever they are found, this time of year, redfish are often clumped together in large schools, providing anglers with an epic visual to go along with the great fishing action. And, they are generally plenty "friendly," attacking a variety of lures and baits with abandon.

Flounder, like redfish, will also be making their way out of the bay to spawn during autumn. However, they begin their

migration a bit later than redfish, so at the onset of October, flounder will just begin making their way out of the back lakes and can be found staging around marsh drains and cuts. Later in the month, they will slowly begin heading toward the nearest Gulf pass — although the full-on flounder run usually doesn't begin until around Thanksgiving along the Texas coast.

As they move out of the bay, they will usually follow channel edges or



*Mark Nichols lands a Lower Laguna Madre redfish.*



*In October schools of migrating redfish are on the move. This redfish was caught on a D.O.A. Shadtail rigged weedless while drifting over a shallow grass flat.*



*Capt Mike Segall of Reel Threel Charters shows of a solid speckled trout he caught. Look for a variety of gamefish to be more aggressively feeding in October in advance of winter.*

shorelines, so anglers targeting flatfish are best served to concentrate on these areas. Once anglers find a pile of flounder, they can usually follow them the remainder of the way to the nearest pass over the course of days and weeks, as the school moves slowly and methodically toward the open Gulf.

Without a doubt, anglers will have plenty to keep them busy in October chasing the “Big 3” of the Texas coast, but, those wanting a bit more variety will find plenty of willing targets as well. Sheepshead and Spanish mackerel will be hanging around most every jetty on the Texas coast this month, with plenty of sheepshead also being found in the various bays. Mangrove snapper – which have spread their range to cover much of the Texas coast – will also be thick around the jetties in areas in which they are found. By October, tarpon will have begun leaving the Upper Coast, but they will still be hanging around the passes and beaches along the Middle and Lower Coast regions. In fact, October usually represents the best time to tangle with a giant tarpon in these areas. And, October is usually one of the best months to fish for snook, which like mangrove snapper seem to be popping up more and more frequently in bays they previously have not been found.

Again, weather is key to making October such a magical month. The cooling weather makes fish more active and makes fishing more comfortable for fishermen. Typically, aggressive fish are easier to catch. Anglers can use a wider variety of baits to tempt them and hard striking fish are easier to hook. Furthermore, cooler temperatures mean angler can fish longer, giving them more opportunities, and will be 'crisper' in their presentations, retrieves and hook sets. Plus, fish will stay up on the shallow flats much longer than they do at other times of the year – often they are on the flats all day long.

Light winds, which will be particularly welcome after this year’s windy summer, are another trademark of October and offer a couple of advantages. For starters, day after day of mild wind allows bay waters to regain clarity, which allows anglers to effectively use a wider variety of lures and baits. Also, light-wind conditions put the entire bay in play - no water is off-limits due to being too rough. Additionally,



a light-wind day makes it easier for fishermen to cover a wide-expanse of water, by being able to run full throttle between fishing spots, rather than slogging through rough, choppy water.

Fishermen usually don't need to be quite as patient in October as they otherwise need to be. This is because, unlike other seasons, during fall there really isn't a lot of guesswork required to figure out the proper presentation and retrieval speed. Usually, all fishermen need to do is fish fast, work power retrieves across the flats and cover water. The fish are aggressive enough this time of year that they will let you know if they are nearby.

This aggression combined with their penchant to be found in shallow water during fall usually results in excellent topwater fishing this month. Hands down, topwaters are one of the most exciting ways to fish the flats in the fall. Aggressively retrieved walk-the-dog plugs are usually the best bet. Among the best surface plugs for fall duty are the Heddon Super Spook Jr., Bomber Badonk-a-Donk (3.5 inch), MirrOlure She Pup, and D.O.A. PT-7.

In direct opposition to "power fishing," sight-casting and fly fishing are also excellent ways to target fish in October. Sight-casting, whether with conventional tackle or fly gear, is one of the most exciting ways to target fish in shallows. And the tenth month of the year usually

offers perfect sight-casting conditions. So, for fishermen willing to slow their pace and embrace the challenge of casting to specifically targeted fish, sight-casting is the way to spend the mid-day hours (sight-casting requires a high sun angles, which usually doesn't happen until around 10 a.m. in October).

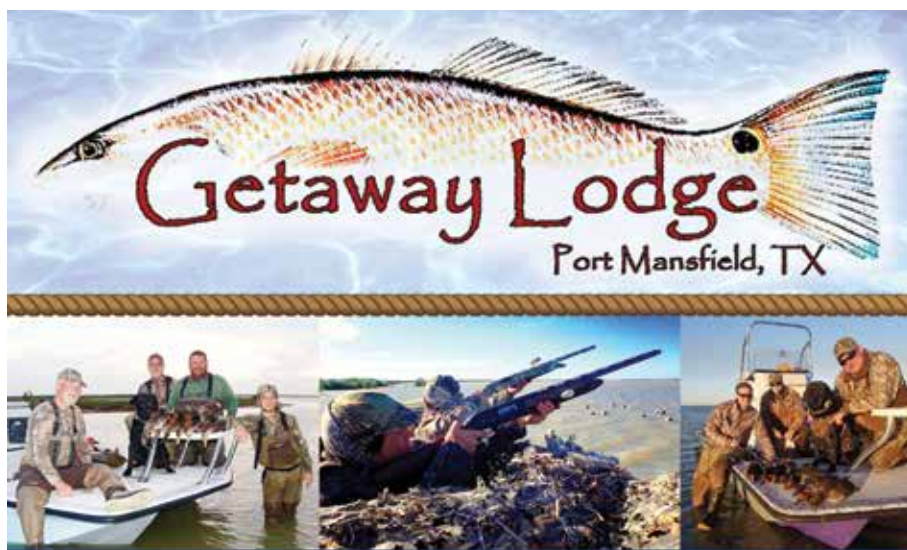
As a bonus, fishermen can usually expect fast action by finding flocks of active seagulls in October. Birds are so active this month because shrimp, like redfish and flounder, are making their way out of the bay this time of year. So many

shrimp and baitfish making their way out of the marshes and back lakes, birds will often point the way to successful fishing. Anglers can spend an entire day moving from school to school, catching full limits by watching for working gulls.

In short, with apologies to Christmas, October is the most wonderful time of the year on the Texas coast for inshore anglers. But, like Christmas, this excellent October angling action comes but once a year, so fishermen should make every effort to spend as much time on the water as possible over these next few weeks. 🌟🌟



October usually offers outstanding topwater action.



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## Houston Represents America's Anglers and Ranger Boats

It's not that often that you hear about two of America's most distinctive personalities (and hair-dos) coming together alongside a prominent example of one of the world's most famous bass brands as it flanks one of the world's most iconic landmarks.

But that's went down late last summer as President Trump met with America's favorite fisherman on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, D.C.

The meeting didn't come about by chance. Instead, it was part of annual event held meant to showcase American products on what is arguably this country's biggest stage.

Manufacturers from all 50 states were represented at Trump's 2018 Made in America Showcase, and professional bass fishing legend and television host Jimmy Houston of Cookson, Okla., was in attendance as the face of Ranger Boats.

Headquartered in Flippin, Ark., Ranger was founded in 1968 by a former White River fishing guide named Forrest L. Wood. The brand has a rich history in the boating industry and is famous for its high

quality construction and reliability. Even though it's not always the fastest horse in the corral, many regard Ranger one of the most well-built, high performance bass boats on the market. It's also one that holds its resale value remarkably well.

Houston, who was inducted to the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in 1990 and the IGFA Hall of Fame in 2008, bought his first Ranger in 1968. He continues to run the brand a half-century later as he competes full-time on the FLW Tour.

Houston, now 74, said he was flattered when he was asked to attend the function on behalf of Ranger.

"It was awesome deal," he said. "I've had the privilege of getting to meet several presidents in my lifetime and I've bass fished with George H. Bush and George W. Bush. It was a tremendous honor to represent Ranger and to represent bass fishing at a high-level function like that. It was really cool seeing a Ranger bass boat sitting out in front of the White House, right in front of an F-35 fighter jet."

The F-35 is a fifth generation combat aircraft manufactured by Lockheed Mar-

tin Aeronautics in Maryland. It's been clocked at speeds up to 1,200 m.p.h.

Houston said he got the opportunity to speak with Trump for several minutes. The conversation went several directions before eventually leading to Houston's signature blonde hair do.

"He even commented about my goofy-looking hair — he said he liked it," Houston said.

Not surprisingly, Houston said the President seemed amused when he told him the limited edition Ranger Z521L ICON could probably give the sleek F-35 fighter jet a run for the money.

"He laughed and said he didn't think so," Houston chuckled. "I told him let's put them both on the Potomac River and see what happens."

Houston said the conversation never turned to bass fishing, but it didn't stop the President from looking the boat over carefully. The personable angler said Trump rubbed the gunwale with his palm and asked what it was made of.

"It's metal flake fiberglass — pretty tough stuff," Houston said. "I told him



*Pro bass angler Jimmy Houston (right) recently met with President Trump on the White House lawn during a special event showcasing American made products from the 50 states. Houston, 74, attended the event on behalf of Ranger Boats, which represented the state of Arkansas. Photos Courtesy of Ranger Boats.*



everything on the boat from the trailer to the Mercury outboard motor and the Minn Kota trolling motor was made in America."

As much of an honor as it was for Houston to share a meaningful conversation with President Trump, the function may have been an even bigger deal for the small town of Flippin.

Located in the Ozark Mountains in the northeast corner of the state, Flippin is a tight-knit community of around 1,350 people, many of them employed by the boat company that has ranked as the largest source of jobs in Marion County for years.

"For the past 50 years, Ranger Boats has called Arkansas home," said Ranger Marketing Director Matt Raynor. "The people of Arkansas are a vital part of our company DNA. Ranger is committed to producing the highest quality American-made products and we do it right here in Flippin with dedicated, hardworking employees. We are honored to represent our great state and the people we call family, friends and neighbors." 🌟🌟



*Renowned bass angler Jimmy Houston said, "It was a tremendous honor to represent Ranger and to represent bass fishing at a high-level function like that. It was really cool seeing a Ranger bass boat sitting out in front of the White House, right in front of an F-35 fighter jet."*

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## Fake News and 3D Printers

I'm sure that every one has seen the shows on television that show you how to build your own gun at home using a 3D printer. Well to put it in President Trump's words, "that's fake news."

The 3D printers are great tools used for making prototype items. If you have a new idea for a valve and want to see how it would look, use a 3D printer and make one. Now if you want to make a production run of the same valves, there are much better ways to make them, a CNC lathe or mill works great.

Now there are some parts that can be made from a 3D printer, in fact you can build the lower of an AR rifle or frame of a 1911 style pistol. You can build many non-critical parts that take little pressure. But you cannot build important or critical parts like the barrel, the bolt, firing pins, springs and many more.

If you want to be a stickler, the frame of the gun is where the serial number is so

that is considered the gun. However you can't make it work without a lot of the other parts made from high-pressure metals.

So why does the media show us so many untruths? I remember back in 1986 when a new handgun came out and it had a plastic frame. The press was in a big uproar saying you would be able to sneak it through the x-ray machines at airports.

The big police departments condemned the pistol and said this gun should be outlawed.



*The frame of this pistol can be made with a 3D printer.*

Well, that very handgun is the most popular handgun on the market. More police departments and federal agencies use that handgun more than any other. The pistol made in 1986 is the Glock.

The Glock frame is made from a special polymer which could go through a metal detector and not show up. However there are other parts that make up the gun that have to be made from steel. Major parts like the slide, barrel, all the internal springs and the magazine just to name a few are all made from steel. Plus the ammunition would also show up and having a handgun without ammunition is like having nothing at all.

How about using some of the new ammunition which is made with a polymer case and has a mix of polymer and powdered metal for the bullet? Now this might get through an x-ray machine.

Could someone build a complete gun from polymer and powdered metal mixture and be able to shoot it? I don't think so, even the cheapest revolvers which shoot 22 short have a metal lined cylinder and a steel liner in the barrel. Even then the shape of the gun would show up in an airport x-ray and hopefully a TSA agent would find the gun in the luggage.

Why would anyone want to build a

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*These parts can not be made with a 3D printer, so it is impossible to make a gun with just a printer.*

gun with a 3D printer any way?

Most people don't know it but you can legally build a gun for your own personal use. If you check some of the online websites like Gunbroker you can buy an 80% frame for AR-15's, Glock's, and 1911 style guns. With just a few simple tools you can drill some holes, cut some metal and buy all the other parts to finish your rifle or handgun.

You don't even have to put a name or serial number on the gun. However, I think it is a good idea to engrave your name and a serial number because if you are ever stopped by the police, you don't want them to think that you are carrying a stolen firearm. The old saying you can beat the crime but you can't beat the ride is very true.

So why is the Fake News showing the half-truth about the 3D printed guns? Right now the socialist liberals hate guns and with all the shootings they can keep the hatred going towards the guns and not the criminals.

Yes, these shootings are terrible but it is not the guns doing it. The guns are just tools like a knife, a club, or a car. All are capable of killing and all are used to kill. The problem is with the people and some of the mental illness in our country. The mentally ill have so many rights that it is impossible to be able to force them to get help before they do the crime.

Also, if you look at some parts of our country where minorities grow up with no hope and have to join gangs just to stay alive. Where kids have no idea who their parents are or which daddy will be

there to help them grow up right. In Chicago, there are over 20 shootings every weekend.

I told this to a liberal friend of mine the other day and her answer was, "well that is just in a small part of Chicago." For me personally, I would hope that

it wouldn't happen anywhere and that it is not okay even if it is just the poverty stricken parts of Chicago. The Fake News is afraid of the truth about guns or maybe it is just more exciting to build up the untruth about guns and continue to portray law abiding gun owners as the bad guys.

Last, a good 3D printer is not cheap. An inexpensive 3D printer can cost as much as \$1,000.00 or more and for that kind of money you can buy a great handgun and an AR-15 with money left over for ammunition. And all of that would be legal. ★★

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A man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a blue and green patterned shirt and a grey cap with 'PFG' on it, is smiling while holding a large, silvery fish (likely a white drum) on a boat. The fish is held vertically by its mouth with a gaff. The background shows the ocean and a clear blue sky.

# SCHOOLED UP AND HUNGRY

*A variety of fish gang up in the fall that provide big time catches along the coast.*

*Story and Photography by Robert Sloan*



Getting “schooled” takes on a whole new meaning during October. This is a time when gamefish begin to feed in large groups in preparation for the coming winter months.

One excellent example occurs at the Port O'Connor jetties. During October the incoming tides bring in a wild melee of feeding reds and jack crevalle.

This phenomenon all starts at the mouth of the jetties in West Matagorda Bay. The incoming tide brings in lots of crabs, mullet, pogies and shrimp. Waiting in the current will be huge schools of reds and jacks. When this happens, there is no way you can miss the action, or have problems find feeding fish. They will be tearing up the surface as they forage. The commotion looks like boulders falling out of the sky.

To get in on the action is simply a matter of motoring up to the surface feeding fish and making a cast with live and dead baits, or lures. If you set up just right the boat will drift in to the action and you'll have bull reds and 20 pound-plus jacks busting bait within feet of the boat. It is sight casting at it's very best.

One of the best lures is a five inch Yum Money Minnow in white or chartreuse. I like to rig them on a 5/0, ½ ounce Assassin screw lock jig head for a longer cast. Once this jig hits the water reel it in on a fast retrieve and hang on. It's some of the wildest fishing you'll find along the Texas coast, and it'll be going on throughout October.

The bull reds will mostly be feeding on bottom. One of the best baits is a half of a fresh dead blue crab. I'll fish them on a Carolina rig with a one ounce barrel weight on bottom. You can also use live shrimp, croakers or pinfish.

Another October classic is to fish the surf for trout. As we begin to get cold fronts through the surf will flatten out and schools of big trout can be found in the first and second guts along the beach.

It's fun fishing says Dan Simmons, who has been targeting surf run trout for years along the coast from Matagorda to Pass Cavallo. “Once a front moves through the light north wind will flatten out the surf and set up some of the finest trout fishing we'll have all year,” he says. “Schools of trout will run the surf pigging out on mullet and pogies. These are mostly solid trout in the two to five pound class.

“I'll usually start out with a topwater early then switch over to a slow sinking mullet imitation like a MirrOlure Catch 2000 or a MirrOdine. Both will draw big bites,” he explained. “In a Catch 2000 a red head/white/silver belly is a good pattern. Or you might try a chartreuse/pearl/silver combination. With a MirrOdine I like green/white/silver or black/orange/silver patterns.”

Of course soft plastics will work all day. A good plastic that looks like a shrimp is a 5-1/2-inch rat-tailed Deadly Dudley. Another good imitation of a pogie is a D.O.A. Swimming Mullet in pearl/chartreuse tail or clear/red glitter. The main thing to remember is to fish something that resembles a pogie or mullet. That's what the marauding schools of trout will be feeding heavily on in the surf.

In the offshore world of fishing now is a good time to target schools of ling. Along the upper Texas coast from

Freeport to Sabine you can fish the rigs and tap into some of the best action of the year for ling. Some of them will be whoppers and they are hungry.

One of the best days of ling fishing I've ever had was during the second week of October. We had made a run out of Galveston specifically to target ling. We were not disappointed. We were able to fish on a day just after a light cool front moved through. The seas were flat and we ran about 46 miles out, wide open, to a group of pipe stands in about 100 feet of water. The first pipe stand we chummed came to life within seconds. A school of big ling showed up from the depths and they were hungry.

This is the time of year when ling will move farther offshore than normal. They seem to hang out around the many rigs that are easy to fish. Without a lot of boat traffic and anglers to keep them on the move the ling are a little more user friendly.



PHOTO BY JOHN FRANKSON

*Another October classic is to fish the surf for trout. As cold fronts move through the surf will flatten out and schools of big trout can be found in the first and second guts along the beachfront.*

When ling are bunched up like that it's just a matter of putting a bait in front of their nose. Big plastic swim baits will catch them all day long. So will silver spoons trailing a ballyhoo or Spanish sardine.

One of the finest places to find flounder and reds is on Sabine Lake. This place is crazy. I've been fishing Sabine Lake for over 25 years. I can pretty much guarantee you that during October schools of big reds will be roaming the lake gorging on shad and menhaden.

Tapping into the action is simple. You bring along a pair of binoculars and scan the lake for fish feeding on the surface. Or look for what appears to be a boat wake. Those wakes can often turn out to be a school of upper slot reds on a big feed.

"I've never seen schooling reds like we have here on Sabine Lake," says guide Colby Denbow. "During October they just kind of go crazy. They school up and feed like crazy. I can run up to a school of them then put the trolling motor in and hang with them. Most of those reds are in the 25 to 30 inch class. They will hit just about anything you put in front of them.

"Some of the best action will be in the middle of the day. Catching them on a topwater lure is easy. But once they go down I'll use a soft plastic on a 1/4-ounce



*During October schools of big reds will be roaming places like Sabine Lake, gorging themselves on shad and menhaden.*

jig head. It's a good bait to bounce along bottom and catch the reds feeding deeper."

The schooling reds will often continue on this pattern into November, or until the baitfish supply runs out with colder water.

Keep in mind that during October the birds will still be working really well over pods of baitfish on Sabine Lake and East Galveston Bay. Most of the birds will be feeding over schools of trout. But here's the kicker – many of those trout will be in the two to four pound class, or even heavier.

Galveston Bay guide Jim West says he'll be fishing the birds through the end of October. He says that during October some of the best fishing will be on the middle and upper areas of the bay.

"The trout schooled up under the birds in October will be fish you don't have to measure," says West. "Some of the bigger ones can be caught on topwater lures early. But for the most part soft plastics will be the best lures to use. Just about any color will catch them. It's just a matter of getting the lure in with the feeding fish."

October and November are two of the best months to be catching flounder on rod and reel. I've also had some outstanding nights of flounder gigging during October when that option is available. Flounder gigging is not an option during the month of November when flatfish can only be taken with pole and line.

On one particular night in San Antonio Bay we came up on an extended point at about 2 a.m. and were bug eyed at the number of flounder laying on the white sand bottom. There must have been 25 or 30 of them.

This is when the fall flounder run kicks into gear. The water temperature is beginning to fall, and the flounder will start ganging up before heading to the passes and jetties that feed into the Gulf of Mexico. Two of the best places for catching them on rod and reel are on



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*The great thing about fishing during October is that fish are bunched up and on the move, plus they are hungry.*



Sabine Lake and East Galveston Bay.

What a lot of anglers do on East Bay is wade the mouths of bayous and guts leading into the bay from the marsh. It's easier to wade than try and catch them from a boat. West says that he'll wade the shallow edge of a gut and work jigs on bottom in the deeper water.

On Sabine Lake guide Jerry Norris says he'll be fishing Bass Assassin Curl Tail Shad at the mouths of bayous feeding into the main lake.

"Fishing the outgoing tide is the way to catch numbers of flounder during the October run," says Norris. "They will bunch up in the deeper channels at the mouths of the bayous. When they stage like that they are easy to catch. I'll rig the Assassins on 1/8 ounce jig heads so I can work them along the bottom slower than normal."

Paul Falgout has been fishing the Sabine waters for years. During the fall migration of flounder he says that Sabine Pass can be red hot.

"There's a lot more flounder structure in the pass than what you'll find on the lake," he says. "I like to fish the pilings,



October and November are two of the best months to catch flounder on rod and reel.

bulkheads and the small points at the mouths of guts. The shoreline along the island in the pass can hold a lot of flounder during the fall run. Most of the time I'll be fishing a Deadly Dudley Jr. Terror Tail in black and chartreuse. I'll rig them on a 1/8 ounce jig head and bump them slowly

around the structure."

The great thing about fishing during October is that fish are bunched up and on the move. Plus, they are hungry. It's one of the best times to be fishing along the Texas coast.



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## Loving October Fishing

I say it every year — October is my favorite month. After a Texas summer I can look forward to October providing some relief from the heat, and some great fishing.

Since I was never afflicted with the bow hunting disease, I am not focused on trying to take a deer this month. I will be scouting, doing maintenance, filling feeders and other pre-hunt preparation in advance of the opening of the general whitetail deer season next month. The cooler weather makes these tasks more pleasant and when I'm done I can relax and fish while waiting for opening day.

As a shallow water fisherman, I enjoy the opportunity to fish the way I really like to fish. Generally, the cooler water temperatures mean topwaters in the morning will produce more and bigger fish. As the shad move shallower, the bass will follow.

Fall also usually brings a little more cloud cover throughout the month. That translates into more days with a topwater bite lasting well into the day. My favorite topwater is a buzzbait, followed closely by a frog. I'll usually have both on the deck at the same time.

The buzzbait will be used along any open water cover like rip rap, exposed logs, seawalls and the like. Anywhere I can get the blades to turn without picking up too much muck or grass, I'll throw that bait.

As soon as I see some slop, be it hydrilla, duck weed, or anything else that will foul my buzzbait blade, I pick up the frog. I like the Ribbit frog, or any frog with floppy legs. I'll fish it just like I do the buzzbait. Make a long cast and begin reeling immediately to get it on top. Then reel just fast enough to keep it there. If I see a hole or gap in the weeds, I may stop reeling and let the frog sink into that space. A twitch or two and if I don't get bit, right back to the surface.

That's one reason I like this type of frog. Most hollow body frogs float when you stop reeling and can't be dropped into these holes. In addition, I seem to get a higher percentage of hookups to hooksets



*When the topwater bite plays out the author loves to run a bank, pitching a watermelon/red flake Senko into brush, alongside laydowns and into grass pockets.*



*In the fall the author will fish a buzzbait along any open water cover like rip rap, exposed logs, and seawalls — anywhere he can get the blades to turn without picking up too much muck or grass.*

with the solid body plastics.

For the most part I'll stay with a shad/scale color in the buzzbaits, occasionally switching to black. Most folks know you should use a black buzzbait at night, but it seems that not that many anglers will use that color during the daytime. I find that when it works, the strikes are vicious.

Another bait I really like is the Kalins

Mogambo Grub. I've spoken about this bait before but it bears repeating. A 5" big body grub, the Mogambo will accommodate a 4/0 wide gap hook quite well. When fished in the same way as the frog above, the tail makes a flapping noise similar to the frog or buzzbait, and this bait can also be dropped into holes in the vegetation or next to logs and such.



Wait until you feel the fish pull and set the hook hard.

Another bait you'll see on my deck quite often is the Chug Bug. In chartreuse/chrome this bait is another great open water choice. Throw it alongside docks, rocks and anywhere else a bass can hide and you'll get plenty of awesome topwater action.

When the bite on top plays out, more often than not the fish will still be shallow. That allows for a cover-oriented approach like pitching. I love to run a bank, pitching into brush, alongside laydowns and into grass pockets. I'll use a couple of different baits including the Senko in watermelon/red flake and a jig in black/blue or maybe some shade of green.

Fish the Senko weightless for water depths to six feet or so. A 4/0 worm hook, or wide gap, is plenty of weight for this approach. When the Senko lands, give it a moment or three and let it sink. That's the key to the effectiveness of the Senko.

As it sinks, the bait will undulate back and forth. After a few moments twitch it

once or twice. The bait will rise in the water column, and you let it sink again. Watch your line as it sinks, if you see it jump you've got a fish. Again, wait until you feel a little tug and then set the hook.

Senkos are very soft baits so the hookset doesn't have to be Herculean. Add a dash of chartreuse on the last inch of the bait to increase the appeal to the bass.

If you're fishing past six feet, there are a couple of choices available to get the bait deeper. The new tungsten spike/nail weights will get the bait down, but again, the Senko is a soft bait and this approach can tear the bait. You'll be going through a lot of baits using this method. I like a split shot about 18" inches ahead of the bait if I'm not fishing vegetated areas.

In vegetation you can use a small tungsten weight in a Texas rig fashion, but this changes the way the bait works, pulling it down nose first. You lose that side-to-side wiggle that works so well.

When pitching a jig I don't really do anything much different than the standard approach. I like to use a 3/16 or 1/4 ounce jig in shallow water, and I use a swim jig even when pitching to shallow cover. The reason for this choice is simple. When I pitch into a laydown for example, I may want to swim the jig over the log if I don't get a bite on the initial presentation.

Other than that it is just a matter of making quality pitches to a very focused target. Rifle marksmen have a saying, "Aim small, miss small." This is an approach for those shooters looking for extreme accuracy. Don't aim at the bulls-eye, but rather aim at a tiny point within the bulls-eye. A miss with this approach often leads to a hit that is still within the 10 ring.

The same can be said for pitching. Aim at a very specific spot within a piece of cover. If you're off just a bit, you'll still be in the strike zone. Another pitching tip—just as your bait gets a few inches from the water, lift your rod tip ever so slightly and set it back down. This will essentially stop the baits forward progress and gently drop it into the water with very little splash and commotion. Shallow water bass can be spooked by a bait presented with too much disturbance. This technique takes a little finesse and practice to master, but it is well worth the effort required.

Two other shallow water baits I never



*The author's square bill choice is the Strike King 1.5 KVD bait. With the recent introduction of the deep diving model of this bait, he can cover water from zero to nine feet as well as fish it around a variety of structure.*



*D.O.A.'s PT-7 has built a solid following along Texas coast and is now building a reputation on Texas lakes. It's soft body is similar to a soft body frog, but the shape affords a traditional walk-the-dog action. Since it is rigged weedless it can be fished in and around a variety of vegetation and other structure.*

leave home without include a 3/16 to 1/4 ounce spinnerbait, and a selection of square billed crankbaits. My go to spinnerbait is chartreuse and white with Indiana blades, one in nickel and one in gold. I am so retentive that it even makes a difference to me which blade is which color. The rear, or farthest blade from the bait, is the gold one. Some people may not believe that makes a difference but mine are all set up like that. Just sayin'.

My squarebill of choice is the Strike King 1.5 KVD bait. With the recent introduction of the deep diving model of this bait, I can cover water from zero to nine feet. On any of our Texas lakes with rocky features, whether it's rip-rap or a lake like Texoma or Whitney, I'll throw this bait where I would use a spinnerbait in a weedy, woody feature lake. If you want to, can fish the squarebill in the shallow timber as it is very adept at crawling through cover and avoiding hang ups.

Just writing about it makes me long for October. I can't wait to get out there and catch 'em.

See ya' on the water. **T&J**



# HUNTING SEASON HARVEST & MANAGEMENT

*Story and Photography by Bob Zaiglin*



*Deer management is not rocket science but more common sense management.*

*Without population control, including a conservative harvest of bucks, mature bucks like this cannot develop.*

As Texans enter another deer hunting season, a dearth of rainfall, particularly in the spring, has generated a bit of angst among sportsmen because of the negative impact it could have on antler size.

Rainfall is of paramount importance to everything from farming practices to the maintenance of our backyards, and all deer hunters know it's an integral ingredient to antler development. Prior to the spring of 2018, Texas, particularly South Texas, has realized three relatively wet springs, but it doesn't take long for the residual moisture banked deep in the

soil to dissipate under the relentless Texas sun. In reality, we are actually realizing climatic conditions that are quite normal to the arid Southwest, which fortifies the importance of managing our deer herds to do well in those commonly occurring drought periods, so that when ideal climatic conditions occur, they come closer to exhibiting optimal performance.

Antlers, however, are not the only thing that is dependent on rainfall. Of major concern is fawn survival. Fawns must be able to survive extreme temperatures as well as predation, both of which are affected by rainfall.

During prolonged drought, an adequate understory fails to develop, relinquishing fewer places for fawns to avoid the debilitating rays of the sun.

A lack of herbaceous cover also increases the efficiency of the coyote as a predator. One way of thinking about the canine's ability to obtain protein during the hot, dry summer months is to imagine the ground layer in a checkerboard pattern with black squares representing adequate cover composed of a variety of weeds and tall grasses, and red squares areas void of vegetation. In a year with adequate rainfall, black squares increase,



forcing the coyote to cover more terrain to locate prey. With vegetation uniformly distributed across the landscape, the predator's ability to locate fawns is reduced, forcing the predator to consume other more readily available food sources such as persimmon fruit or any other mast, and even insects, such as grasshoppers. As a result, more fawns escape predation.

During a droughty summer like 2018, the number of red squares increases, reducing the area a coyote has to investigate, increasing its ability to locate fawns, and fawn survival plummets.

The understory also represents screen cover, or shade. The insulation it provides reduces ground temperature, making the environment not only more hospitable to fawns, but protects what soil moisture remains deep in the soil important to plant growth.

The limited ground cover this past summer has resulted in a lower than average fawn survival, but its ramifications will not become evident for six to seven years from now (when mature bucks are at a minimum). The impact of drought flows outward for years like ripples of water following a rock hitting the surface, becoming more evident in proceeding hunting seasons when the number of mature bucks become hard to find simply because few exist.

Fawn survival is also dependent on the dams' ability to lactate, which is negatively impacted by the decrease in nutritionally beneficial plant growth during drought. In other words, the habitat represents both food and cover, which are vital to the health and survival of all deer.

During drought, the recurrent brush that sustains deer in good and bad times goes into a state of consequential dormancy, a time period of arrested plant growth. It's a naturally occurring survival strategy enabling plants to endure adverse conditions by retaining nutrients in their root systems until adequate rainfall occurs.

Deer, however, will continue to utilize the stagnated brush, but it's only a diet of subsistence. Should an excessive number of deer exist, over-browsing of select brush species could be lethal to the plant, making herd management prior to drought conditions even more important to the overall health of not only the deer,

but those highly nutritional brush species that deer and all herbivores depend upon.

Nothing impacts the quality of a deer's diet more than precipitation, and it is particularly evident and measurable in the size of racks developed by yearling males. This is based on the fact that body growth takes precedence over antler development. In more simplistic terms, a young male utilizes a high percentage of its diet to sustain body growth, affording little to antler development. In a year with above average rainfall, particularly in the spring, yearling males obtain an ample amount of nutritious vegetation, which represents what could be considered a nutritional jumpstart for those youngsters along their way to developing the caliber of racks hunters are searching for.

This is not the case in 2018, and hunters geared, more importantly, to removing spike-antlered yearlings in an attempt to genetically manipulate or improve overall antler quality must consider the fact that some of those yearling spikes occurring this season are not genetically limited, but environmentally impacted. In other words, under ideal conditions they could exhibit branched tines.

The negative impacts of drought on antler size may not be as evident on well managed landholdings, but it will definitely be obvious on landholdings where excessive numbers of deer exist. In reality, the ultimate method of combating

drought is an annual harvest of an adequate number of deer.

The impact of drought will result in a decrease in fawns and a preponderance of spike-antlered males, but antler size in adults will reflect less of an impact because mature bucks are simply no longer required to satisfy the demand for body growth. They are fully developed physiologically, thus a surplus of nutrients will remain and provide for an adequate set of headgear. I must repeat 'adequate' because seldom will peak antler size develop in years characterized as extremely dry.

There is, however, a theory that during drought deer are forced to eat only the more nutritionally beneficial brush such as granjeno, southwest *Bernardia* and kidneywood along with other nutritious brush species that remain present, unlike periods when a surplus of rainfall occurs and a myriad of succulent plants develop that are extremely palatable to deer, but contain minimal amounts of the antler building blocks for antlers — crude protein.

I refer to top choice brush species as "hospital food." No one likes it, but it is healthy. We would rather travel to the various fast food chains and consume a diverse array of tasty meals that are obviously less than beneficial to our health. Those overly abundant, palatable succulents that deer relish are like fast



*Young bucks are impacted most by drought simply because their body growth takes precedence over those antlers.*

foods, lacking the essentials required for does to lactate and for bucks to develop large racks.

Now that I portrayed a gloomy report on the status of the upcoming deer season, what can we expect those bucks to look like antlerwise in 2018?

First of all, it's important to know the region and in particular the area you hunt. Texas is a big state, 790 miles long and 773 miles wide at its most distant points, and some rain has occurred on some areas in varying amounts. Should your favorite piece of deer turf be located where spring rainfall was abundant, conditions should be quite good. But for most sportsmen, particularly those of us who call South Texas home, Nature was less than kind.

Signs related to drought will be rather obvious in immature males. Adult deer no longer required to satisfy the demand for body growth will relinquish more towards antler development; that is, if there exists a well distributed age class structure, which is generally the result of conservative buck harvest in previous seasons.

The bottom line is if an adequate

number of deer have been removed over the past hunting seasons, one can expect to see healthy animals regardless how dry the summer has been. In other words, what one can expect to see this fall has already been determined over the last several seasons.

For example, if one's goal is to see mature bucks of five and six years of age, the four and five-year-old bucks had to be protected in 2017. If not, few if any of those bucks in their prime antler developing years will be available, regardless how much or little rain occurs.

Deer management is not rocket science. I like to think of it more in terms of common sense management. Only so



*Fawns must pass through a gauntlet of heat and predation assuaged only by adequate rainfall.*

## RACKS & TUSKS Deer and Hog Contest

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### OUR MISSION

Racks-&-Tusks is a non-profit organization that raises money for scholarships through a hunting contest. Our goal is to instill the character traits of outdoorsmanship and hard work in youth.

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*Rainfall can only be considered as a bandaid if too many deer exist on a property.*



*Nothing fires up sportsmen more than a wet year when it comes to antlers, but even then a conservative buck harvest is required to control the production of racks sportsmen cherish.*



*With vegetation uniformly distributed across the landscape, a predator's ability to locate fawns is reduced, forcing the predator to consume other more readily available food sources such as persimmon fruit, mast, and even insects, such as grasshoppers. As a result, more fawns escape predation.*

many deer can inhabit a property. We refer to this number as carrying capacity. An uncontrolled population can reach a point that results in some form of natural die-off, but the impact it has on the habitat is sometimes beyond any chance of rebounding, particularly those plants considered nutritionally desirable. They are simply browsed to a point of no return, relinquishing less than desirable invasive plants to replace them.

This is what wildlife managers try to avoid, and the answer is simply to hold that herd in check through harvest with each animal removed, reducing the burden on the vegetation. Manage the habitat and 'those cherished antlers' will develop.

Like any season, some great deer will show up, but where is the question. If the property you hunt has been conscientiously managed over the last few years, it could be you that realizes one of nature's rare jewels — a trophy buck. Good luck and good hunting! 🏆🌿

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## Improve Your Skills

Falling into a rut is not only easy, but it's extremely comfortable as well. Most of us thrive on fixed routines every day of our lives and tend to structure them into fishing. Think of it as fishing the same waters over and over again or using the same type of tackle or techniques or lures every time we go out. Some of us may only troll, while others prefer casting and another group insists that bouncing a bait along the bottom is the only way to go. There are those who love to chum or dangle a live bait from a kite.

In the final analysis, there is more regimentation when we fish than the majority of anglers might care to admit and there's good reason. Like the fish we seek, we too, become creatures of habit. It's much more comfortable knowing our way around and not having to struggle with something new. Angler after angler will tell you that if a method works, why even think about exploring new tactics and techniques.

Beginners measure success in terms of catching fish. As long as something is tugging on the line, it doesn't matter how it got there or if the tackle was too heavy or too light for the task at hand. As one gains experience, our values begin to change and they start to reflect on how the fish was caught and the techniques that were

used. Somewhere along the way, other approaches begin to take on increased importance. As an example, we begin to wonder how much more fun it would be if we caught that fish on spinning or fly gear instead of conventional tackle. What would the feeling be like if we battled that fish in a new spot that we just discovered instead of the waters we fish constantly.

As surprisingly impressive number of anglers tend to start with only one type of tackle and one method of catching fish and cling to it forever. They constantly resist even the slightest temptation to become more versatile by trying something new. Spinning is by far the most popular method of casting because it requires the least amount of practice to become proficient with it. It's easy to use and it works, so the tendency is to stop right there and search no farther.

Competent anglers should be able to handle fly tackle, bait casting gear, and conventional outfits in addition to spinning and be able to do it with equal skill. If you decide to learn to fish with different types of tackle, the best time to use it is when you find fish and are catching your share. Measuring angling success in terms of how full the fish box happens to be leads to a very shallow understanding of fishing. There's a wonderful sense of satisfaction



*If you decide to learn to fish with different types of tackle, the best time to use it is when you find fish and are catching your share.*

each time you become proficient with another type of tackle or technique. And eventually, you reach the stage of releasing fish unharmed rather than fill the fish box or hold them up for too many photographs.

Whether trolling, drifting, or anchored, the boat owner who spends each weekend working the inshore or offshore waters eventually learns how each location should be approached and fished. He may try another method or another spot temporarily, but if he doesn't enjoy instant success and starts catching fish as soon as he gets there, you can bet he'll switch right back to the comfortable rut he has been in. And, you can make book on the fact that he won't be in a hurry to try new waters or different techniques again.

The goal in all this centers on the ability to expand your horizons in two basic ways. You want to be able to locate productive areas even if you haven't seen them before and you want to master more than one fishing technique because it adds so much more to the sport. That means as you work on adding to your knowledge about fish and fishing, you give every new approach a fair chance for success.

Most of the leading fishermen and



*Somewhere along the way, other approaches begin to take on increased importance. As an example, what would the feeling be like if we battled that fish in a new spot that we just discovered instead of the waters we fish constantly.*



professional guides are extremely versatile in their attitudes and skills. Their focus may be on a single species or a given area, but they are constantly working on improving their knowledge and ability. Since they have the understanding to work an area backwards and forwards with different tackle and techniques, they have a much better chance of catching fish than the casual practitioner.

The light tackle, saltwater angler frequently epitomizes versatility in his quest for gamefish. Whether your home waters boast only a few species or they are filled with countless critters as the warmer seas are, mastering several approaches improves your success ratio and makes fishing more meaningful. No one can deny that it takes patience and practice to acquire the needed timing in casting a fly or to develop an educated thumb so vital in bait casting. Take some time when you're not on the water to learn to fly cast or work a bait casting outfit.

The ultimate challenge in recreational angling lies in hooking and landing a fish you can see free swimming within casting range or among trolled baits. As you battle a gamefish, think of what it would



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*Spinning tackle is by far the most popular method of casting because it requires the least amount of practice to become proficient with it.*

be like slugging it out with lighter line or more sporting tackle. When you hook a fish on live or dead bait, imagine that the same fish had inhaled an artificial. Any of these examples will last longer in memory and put a much broader grin on your face.

Fishing is an individual sport. Any

type of tackle and method that pleases you is the right one to use. Once you decide to expand your horizons and set your sights on becoming more versatile in the tackle and techniques you use, you'll derive even more pleasure and become a better fisherman in the process. ★



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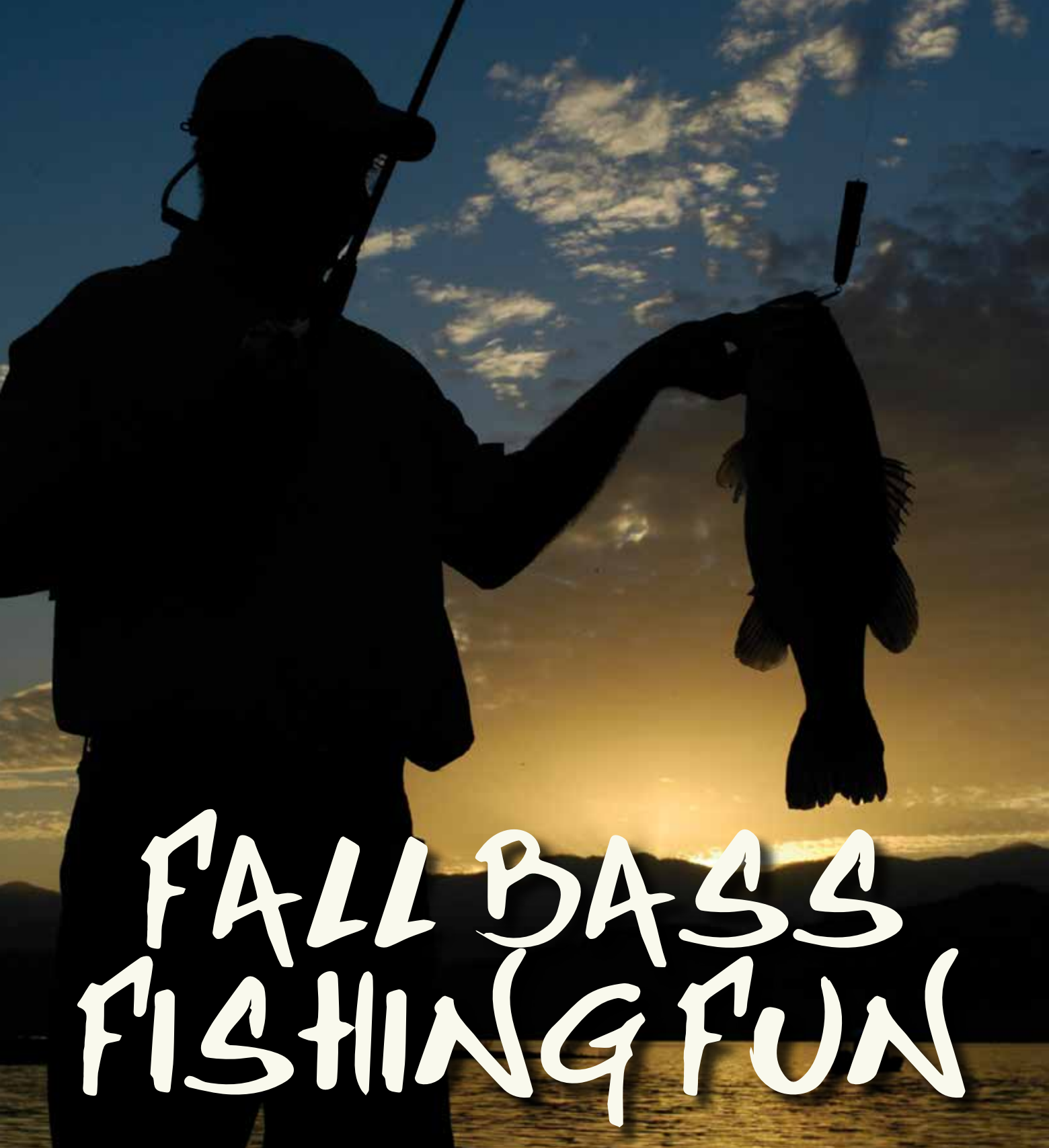
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# FALL BASS FISHING FUN

***Top to bottom anglers follow the shad to hook up with bass.***

*Story and Photography by Matt Williams*





*Bass turn super aggressive with the fall cool down. Tophwater lures like a popper or buzz bait are great choices for tempting them.*

Texas bass anglers are abuzz these days. It's an intoxicating high fueled largely by the signature signs of fall — seasonal badges that can be felt in the crisper air and witnessed on reservoirs all around the state as the fish become increasingly active on the heels of what turned out to be a scorcher of a summer.

Fall, which officially got underway on September 23, is the harbinger of cooler weather that is ushered in by much welcomed cold fronts from the north. Once the fronts begin rolling through in late September and October, they almost always increase in frequency and intensity with the passage of time. Coupled with the shorter days and longer nights brought about as the earth rotates on its axis, these factors add up to a gradual decrease in water temperatures on lakes across Texas.

The pleasant changes in the weather and cooling water have a way of bringing out the mean streak in *Micropterus salmoides*. It's a feel-good deal that some anglers believe makes bass more aggressive than they were around Labor Day, when water temperatures on some lakes were nudging the 90s.

Another common theory is that fall's cooling trends play tricks on the bass' biological ticker by relaying the message that a change in seasons is coming, triggering more frequent feeding binges to fatten up a little for winter.

I don't know about all of that. However,

what I do know is that fall brings with it some the year's very best bass fishing, particularly in shallow water where the fish are prone to stack up in large numbers in areas where anglers are the most comfortable soaking their baits.

#### **The Science Behind It**

Todd Driscoll's guess is the increased activity in the shallows is fueled largely by bait fish movements — predominantly succulent threadfin shad. Driscoll is a Texas Parks & Wildlife Department inland fisheries biologist who spends a considerable amount of time studying bass behavior, chasing them in tournaments and fishing for fun.

Like most anglers, he has come to realize that shad always make an annual trek towards the backs of pockets and coves once it becomes evident that another summer is history. He is convinced those movements influence bass behavior more than anything else. Simply put, bass go where the shad go.

"Once you get a bass outside the spring spawning window — pre-spawn, spawn and the post spawn recovery period — their whole life is controlled by their prey," Driscoll said. "That behavior in the fall is directly related to the shad population."

The biologist says he has no definitive explanation as to why shad gravitate towards the shallows during in fall. He's researched the topic in-depth and only found one scientific study linked to the

seasonal movements of the prolific bait fish.

"The study showed shad were primarily offshore in open water during the summer months.," Driscoll said. "However, in the fall the majority of shad left the open water and hit the banks, both during the day and night. Shad tended to be uniformly scattered in shallow water, both in main lake areas and in coves. That's why beating the banks and covering a lot of water may be the most productive fall bass fishing pattern. The shad will be widely distributed around everything from bulk heads to creek channels to grass edges."

#### **The Waiting Game**

Jasper bass pro Todd Faircloth is a 16-time Bassmaster Classic qualifier who is a firm believer in the "find the shad, find the bass" logic that goes hand in hand with fall fishing. As good as the autumn bite can be, however, he pointed out that it is not something that happens overnight. It happens gradually over a period of time.

"I think a lot of anglers try to rush things when it comes to fall fishing," Faircloth said. "We'll get one or two nights and days of cooler weather and it's human nature to think that the fish should really start biting. But that's not the way it works. You won't really start to see a noticeable change until the water temperature dips down into the upper 70s. It's been my experience that it usually takes two to three weeks of cooler weather off and on for that to happen. I've seen it start in late September, but it's usually late October or November before it really starts kicking in."

And it's a great time to be on the water once it does. According to Faircloth, the lakes tend to be less crowded in lieu of hunting seasons, plus the fish are super active and willing to chase. Plus, you can sometimes pick your poison when it comes to lure selection and tactics.

"It's a great time to catch numbers, but you can also catch some big ones, too," Faircloth said. "The biggest bass I ever caught, an 11 3/4 pounder I caught during October on Sam Rayburn. I'll never forget it."

#### **The Highs of the Lows**

Something else to keep in mind about early fall is low water levels. As a rule, most lakes will be at their lowest point of the year after a blistering Texas summer.



*Channel swings are always good places to look for fall bass. Find one and you might find the mother lode.*

Low water can provide some distinctive advantages for anglers that high water takes away. For starters, it reduces the size of the playing field and makes the fish easier to find. It also has a way of pulling bass off the shallow flats and concentrating them along the edges of creek channels, river channels and other structure.

According to Hemphill bass pro Stephen Johnston, this often puts the fish on a collision course with roving pods of shad that are making their way towards the shallows and using channels routes to get there.

"As soon as the water cools the shad will really start to bunch up in the creeks," Johnston said. "The bass are going to be where the bait is at. Fishing around creeks and ditches that connect shallow water to deep is an old school fall fishing pattern that will work just about anywhere in the country."

#### **Hide and Seek**

Like Faircloth, Johnston says fall's most definitive patterns probably won't start coming into play until later in October and on into November, when water temperatures cool sufficiently to spur mass movements of shad towards the shallows. Once that happens he'll spend a high percentage of his time dissecting

creeks channels.

"Covering water until you find them is the main deal," said the Ranger pro. "They could be in the mouth of a creek, in the bend around wood, on a point near a channel swing or along a straightway with grass. It can vary from day to day."

Johnston added that wind can be a big factor in where the fish might be positioned along a creek and which baits might work best.

If it turns off warm and still, they could be sitting in the bottoms of the creeks, whereas if we get some wind they might get out and roam around the shallower lips or flats. At any rate they are going to relate pretty close to the creeks."

#### **Food For Thought**

According to Faircloth, one of the neat things about fall fishing is it often points to large groups of hungry bass that are congregated in relatively small areas. The fish are generally pretty aggressive, so they can be caught using a variety of baits and prescribed fishing techniques that don't require a whole lot of skill. Baits that are chrome, silver or white in color often work best, because they closely resemble the bass' primary forage.

"The fish tend to get higher in the water column during fall," he said. "They'll hold closer to cover, starting roaming the edges and they get in more of a mood to chase. That opens the door to using a variety of baits — anything from a topwater to a crankbait to a spinnerbait or a Fluke-style bait."



*The author is shown with a fat fall bass he caught on a spoon. The spoon is a choice for targeting schools of fish around main lake structure. It's known as a numbers bait, but will occasionally catch some big ones.*



One lure Faircloth says a lot of tend to neglect during fall is a lipless crank bait.

"A lot anglers associate it more than pre-spawn fishing around grass more than anything else, but it also can be deadly in the fall," he said. "It's a little more difficult to fish in the fall because the grass is thicker. But it will work for you along the outside edges of the grass and catch some big bass if you'll give it a chance. I prefer a 3/4 ounce over a 1/2 ounce whenever I can get away with it."

Another good choice at times is an old school Texas rig matched with a light slip sinker. Johnston likes to throw it in calm conditions whenever he finds a group of fish relating to a defined channel swing.

"You can sit back and whack on them with the Texas rig," he said. "Lots of times after you catch a few it will get the whole group fired up and they'll come up schooling. Then you can catch them on a Rat-L-Trap, spinnerbait or a topwater."

#### **Schools Away from the Bank**

As good as the fall bite can be in the shallows, Johnston says there will still be fish to be caught away from the bank around main lake points, ridges and other structure.

"We're really fortunate in Texas in that we've huge populations bass and shad in some of our lakes," Johnston said. "There so many that they can't all go into the creeks. A percentage of them live out deep, except when they go

shallow to spawn. Those are the fish you can sometimes catch one after another on cranks, spoons and plastics. They may not be big, but they can be a heck of a lot of fun." And fun is what fall fishing is all about. ★★



*Slow falling fluke style baits that are white in color do a good job of simulating the bass primary fall forage — shad.*



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## CoastWatch | Danno Wise

Anglers usually can't wait for October to arrive for good reason. Thanks to shorter days, October anglers will enjoy cooler temperatures even before the season's first true cool fronts push across the Upper Texas and Louisiana coastlines. The fish will also begin to be more active as the temperature begins to sink. Speckled trout and redfish will be found more often on shallow flats this month. And, when they're found, they are also much more likely to eat than they were during the heat of summer.

This combination of comfortable weather and active fish makes it much more pleasant and productive for fishermen spending time on the water this month. Plus it makes it possible to spend more time on the water – at least on a by-the-day basis – without feeling physically drained.

Unlike August and September when the scorching sun pushes most anglers off the water by midday, October's pleasantly mild temperatures allow fishermen to feel fresh even after fishing all day. Of course, having stead action also encourages fishermen to remain on the water longer.

However, as much as October has to offer anglers, the total amount of time most fishermen spend on the water is likely to decrease during October because of hunting season, kids' school activities, etc. So, even though the fishing is as good as it gets this month, the fishing pressure will be relatively light.

Although finding time to get on the water can be difficult during October, the rewards are well worth it. So, if at all possible, make sure to find a way to spend time on the water before Halloween. ★★

### UPPER COAST



Matagorda guide Capt. Tommy Countz said October is hands down the best time to fish along his portion of the Texas coast.

"The question that I get asked the most about fishing is, 'When is the best time of the year to go,'" said Countz. "It's a pretty simple answer — October! It is without a doubt the best month of the year to fish. If you can't catch fish in October then any advice that I can give you is just plain wasted.

"By the time that October rolls around, all of the conditions that lend to good fishing are here and Matagorda is no exception. Water and air temps are cooler and our tides are higher.

"We have several options that come into play here. If the white shrimp have moved into the bays, then 'working the birds' is our main option. Hungry trout and reds herd up shrimp driving them to the top of the water. Hungry gulls and terns spot the shrimp and zero in on them, hovering above and diving down to pick them off as they hop around on top of the water. You simply idle your boat in up wind of the diving gulls cutting the engine and start casting. I prefer to use ¼-ounce lead heads rigged with almost any color plastics. A long cast into these diving birds is usually instant success. Our best bay for catching quality trout and reds is East Matagorda. West Matagorda has plenty of bird action too, but the trout tend to be smaller.

"If you are a wade fisherman, you can't beat throwing topwaters at daybreak in



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT. GREG VERM

*Big bull redfish will be caught around the jetties and along the beachfront in October.*

October. The south shore of either one of our bays can produce some pretty exciting action on reds or trout.

"Any way that you decide to go, October fishing in Matagorda is the very best time of the year."

Freeport guide Capt. Mike Segall of Reel Threel Charters says October offers variety and excellent fishing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT. MIKE SEGALL

*Soft plastics rigged on a jighead is a great fall option when fishing under the birds, on the flats or even probing deeper depths around shell.*



“Well, when we go fishing in October, there will finally be some cooler days,” said Segall. “The bull reds will be good along the beachfront, jetties and passes. We’ll be looking for big schools roaming the waters along the beachfront or Brazos river area. Any bait will work — if you throw it at them, they will get it.

“Also in October, big blacktips will be thick behind shrimp boats, so we will be chasing them also. The kingfish in state waters and snapper will still be good along the rocks and reefs. Offshore fishing will be good for a variety of other species. Blackfin tuna, cobia and dorado will be a good thing behind deep water shrimp boats. Remember bring extra bait for chum, as the more the better when it comes to chumming.

“We will be fishing the bays and Brazos River for trout and reds. We’ll also be looking to catch some mangrove snapper along the rocks in the channels.”

Galveston guide Capt Greg Verm of [fishinggalvestontx.com](http://fishinggalvestontx.com) says fishing will be going off in October along the beachfront and in the bay.

“October will bring us in full swing red fish spawn,” said Verm. “The jetties and beachfront will have lots of bull reds and nice slot reds along the boat cut of the north jetty as well as the tips of both the north and south jetty. Also, speckled trout and Spanish mackerel will still be around.

“Back marshes and bayous will be holding lots of redfish and flounder. Live shrimp under popping cork and live mullet fished along the bottom – targeting drains and drop-offs.

“Flounder gigging will be hot during October. West Galveston Bay, San Luis Pass area and also in Christmas, Drum, and Bastrop bays are places we will be gigging flounder. We actually have a lodge Bay’s Landing in Freeport and we are very excited about having the ability to lodge our gigging clients.”

Galveston guide Capt. Tim Young of Tim Young Outdoors says shrimp will be the key to finding redfish and speckled trout in the Galveston Bay complex during October.

“October – and fall in general – means cooler air and falling water temps,” said Young. “This will trigger the shrimp to leave the marshes and enter the bay. So, redfish and trout will be keying on shrimp this month. Fishermen can usually find

good bird activity in the northern portion of Trinity Bay. Umbrella Point to Jack’s Pocket and across to the Anahuac Pocket usually has consistent bird activity in October. I prefer to throw 3/8 jig heads with Z-Man scented Shrimpz or scented Shadz, not only for casting distance, but to get down past the smaller fish.

“Sometimes you will find skipjack and gafftop under the birds as well. So, you have to move from school to school until you hit the right ones.

“But, really, there is no need to pull into a school if another boat is already there. There are plenty of schools working around the bay this time of year, so you can always find one to have to yourself.

“Topwaters will produce larger fish



PHOTO BY NATE SKINNER

*In October, anglers that find the birds will find the fish. If fish under one group of birds is small then simply move to the next flock of feeding birds.*

out of these same schools. October is a great time to sightfish for redfish in the north part of Trinity Bay as well. Areas like Bulkhead Cove and other areas of Jacks Pocket, as well as the skinny shorelines from Long Island Bayou to Reds Bayou will be holding pods of reds. Wade fishermen can also catch some solid specks from these areas..”





PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT. TREY PRYE

*Jaxon Prye is truly a "chip off the old block" not only in looks, but also fishing ability. The son of Capt. Trey Prye shows off the first redfish he caught. There is a good chance Jaxon and his Dad will chase some more redfish together in October.*

Sabine Lake guide Capt. Randy Foreman says he'll be looking for birds to help find fish during October.

"October is all about finding active birds," said Foreman. "The birds will be following the shrimp as they migrate out of the marsh, into the lake and, eventually, into the Gulf. So, the birds will start working on the north end of the lake and then follow the shrimp as they move through and then out of the lake."

"When a front move through, it helps blow the water out of the marsh. When the water in the marsh drops, the shrimp move out of the marsh and into the lake. The lower the water, the more bird activity you can expect. When we have a northwest wind, it completely drains the marsh and the shrimp just pour out."

"We'll have both specks and reds underneath the birds. But, you have to fish deep. I'll be using plastic in glow/chartreuse on a heavy head or a 3/4-ounce spoon and slow-roll it on the bottom. If you're catching a lot of ladyfish, you're not fishing deep enough. You need to be

near the bottom to get into the trout and reds.

"Our flounder will also be getting more active. They will start staging and getting ready to run throughout October. They don't leave until November, but they'll be moving up and feeding, getting themselves ready to go."

"These fish will be staging on the points and eddies along the Louisiana shoreline and near the ship channel. They will be feeding on shrimp, mullet and pogies. A lot of people think flounder don't like sand. However, when they are staging in the shallows, they're there to feed and they will stage on sandy bottoms. I catch a lot of my flounder out of the sand holes along the edges."

★



Lake Calcasieu guide Capt. Nick Poe says October is perhaps the most anticipated month of the year.

"October is a month that every speckled trout fisherman on the Louisiana coast looks forward to every year," said Poe. "The first half of the month will begin much as the last part of September. Trout will still be in transition to their fall patterns. You will find them under birds as well as on reefs. The southern end of the estuary will become less and

less productive due to the fish moving northward on their annual journey."

"With every passing northerly wind and falling tide they will continue to move north until water temperatures force them to become less nomadic. They become more sedentary toward the end of October when water temperatures get back in the upper 60s. This is usually when my job gets very easy. Trout will sit on deeper oyster reefs and gorge themselves for the entire ebb tide range."

"A north wind and an outgoing tide in October means I'm headed to Turners Bay seven out of 10 days. This area gives the fish everything they need at this time of year. It offers me the same thing as most days as redfish will be prowling with the trout as well. There is nothing better than catching both of the targeted species in the same spot."

"October is for the most part about fishing birds. Keep in mind that the fish are more sedentary, so anchoring on birds is very effective when water temperatures dip and the current is strong."

"Also keep in mind that most fish species that are current dwellers feed straight into the current. Therefore if all the birds fly away try moving up current to prolong your bite. Keep your eyes and ears open and direct all your attention to what is happening under the birds. Listen for fish busting the surface and always keep an eye out for shrimp jumping."

Fishermen leaving out of Venice can expect outstanding inshore and offshore action in October. Those who choose to work the inshore waters around Venice will find plenty of big trout off the marshes and passes along the Mississippi River. With water temperatures beginning to fall, fishermen can expect most of the bigger fish to be holding in areas that feature a combination of shallow and deep water. The Mississippi River and all of the Gulf passes will be full of redfish during October. Both redfish and trout will be easily fooled by soft-plastics under popping corks.

However, the top draw in October in the Venice area will belong to tuna. There will be plenty of tuna within an easy boat ride of Gulf passes throughout the southern Louisiana area. Around the oil platforms and rigs off the Louisiana coast, tuna will be joined by amberjack and cobia, giving anglers heading offshore a trio of appealing options. ★





PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT. GREG VERM

Capt. Greg Verm says flounder gigging will be hot during October. West Galveston Bay, San Luis Pass area and also Christmas Bay, Drum, and Bastrop are areas he will be gigging flounder. These two flounder giggers show the results of a productive night.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT. RANDY FOREMAN

Look for redfish to be deep under the birds on Sabine Lake this month. This angler caught this nice redfish while fishing with Capt. Randy Foreman.

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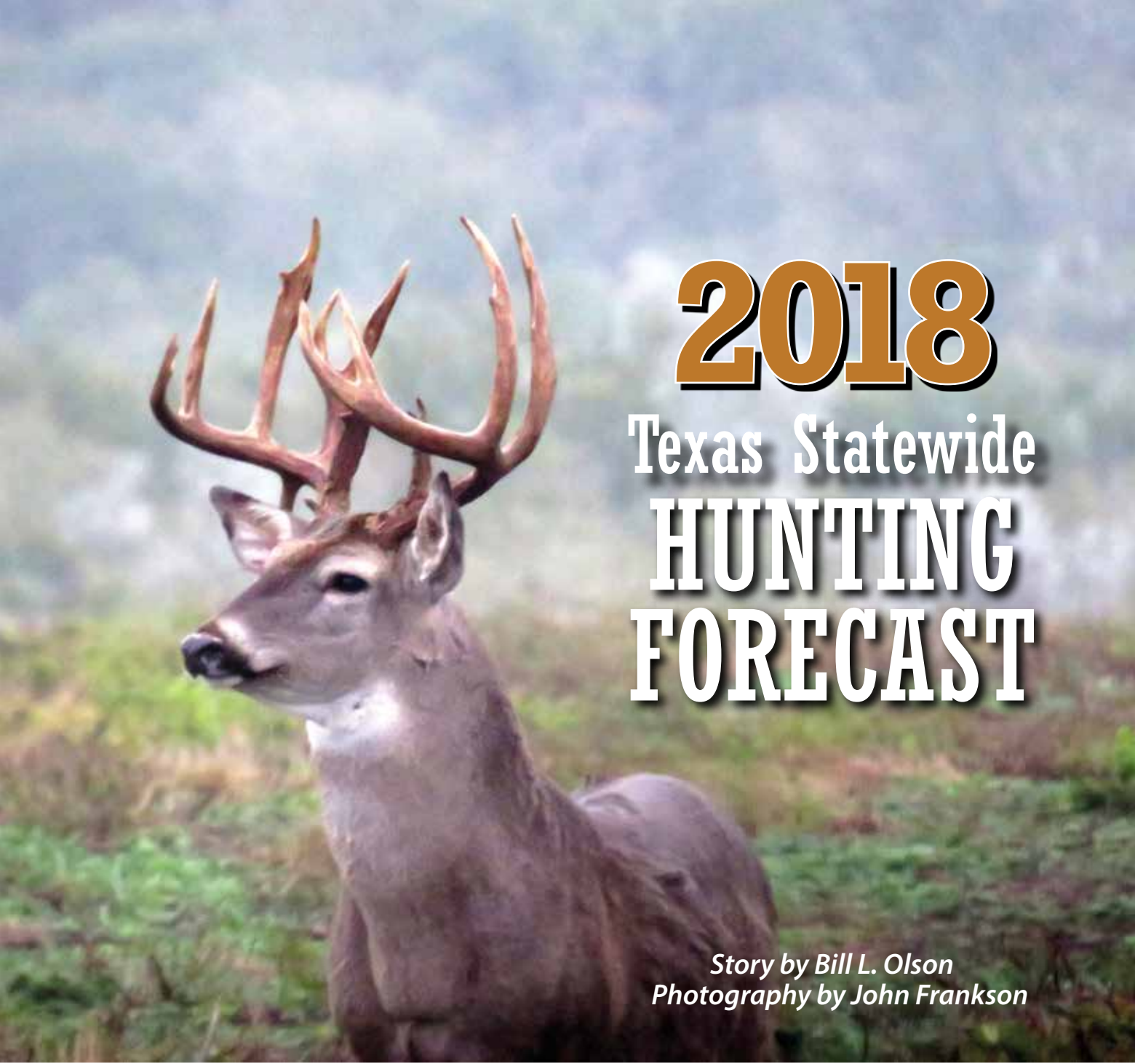
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# 2018

## Texas Statewide HUNTING FORECAST

*Story by Bill L. Olson  
Photography by John Frankson*

### ***TOJ's Annual Forecast of Whitetail, Mule Deer, Pronghorn, Quail and other Game Animals along with the latest from-the-field information.***

**W**hen it comes to compiling a hunting forecast weather is the critical ingredient that determines opportunities in the fall and winter. Trying to forecast weather, particularly in a state as large as Texas many times seems to be a “fool’s game.” However, historical data of what occurred provides insight into management decisions every hunter will make in the field.

The forecast for the 2018-2019 season

is complex and diverse. Many still look back at the drought of 2011 that has had a lingering influence in some areas.

Then there was the impact of Hurricane Harvey at the start of the 2017-2018 hunting season. Parts of the state saw game animals impacted while other regions went unscathed.

There was also the impact on hunters’ personal lives last year that prevented them from playing a management role as harvesters of surplus animals. The

lack of harvest puts more pressure on the rangeland and resources that are available.

As reflected in the eight District reports, drought conditions have once again taken a hold on some parts of the Lone Star State while others are seeing its encroachment. As this is written at the start of September tropical moisture is making its way into some regions. For some this could provide some relief while for others the wait continues.

Here is our annual statewide hunting



forecast from all eight Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's District Leaders.

### **REGION 1, DISTRICT 1, Trans-Pecos (West Texas)**

Mike Jannis, district leader based in Alpine said, Most of the Trans-Pecos had an extremely dry winter and spring, with no significant precipitation from October through May except for one snowfall event in December. Although summer monsoons brought relief in late June, rainfall has been highly variable throughout the region this summer, and some areas are still dry.

"Last year's harvest of whitetail and mule deer were about on par for an average year," Jannis said. Mule deer and whitetail numbers continue to build in the wake of the drought of 2011," he said. "This is particularly true with mule deer that reach their peak at 7 ½ years of age.

"Low fawn production in 2011 and 2012 due to drought continues to affect mule deer hunting in the Trans-Pecos. Consequently, there should be few six and seven year-old bucks available for harvest. However, the cohort of five year-old bucks that are beginning to enter maturity is much better. Antler development is expected to be average. Fawn production will probably be below average due to the dry Spring. We continue to work through that "hole" in the age structure.

"White-tailed deer have limited distribution in the Trans-Pecos, with good numbers occurring in the eastern Trans-Pecos. Like mule deer, they were affected by drought in 2011-2012, but because they mature a bit earlier, this season should be average to above average with a good cohort of 5 year-old bucks in the population. Rainfall has also been slightly better in the eastern Trans-Pecos."

When it comes to ground nesting birds Jannis said, "It's too early to tell if July rains will translate into a good quail season. Much depends on what happens the rest of the summer, but the dry spring

did not get quail off to a good start. Biologists have observed few broods as of July. Many areas are still dry, and our best guess is that quail hunting will be average at best in some areas and below average in many unless we get some late reproduction."

Winter moisture is critical to Trans-Pecos pronghorn, and the dry winter and spring has negatively impacted this prairie speedster. "June surveys suggested a decline in pronghorn numbers and a poor fawn crop," Jannis stated. "We have completed our pronghorn survey and this year it reflected about a nine percent fawn production. That compares to the Long

River are where these birds are found. Jannis said these birds were hurt due to the drought.

Dove season is already underway across the Lone Star State. "Areas that received summer rain have an abundance of forbs and seed producing plants for dove," the district leader said. "Hunting will vary highly depending on location, but should be average to above average. Of course, dove hunting can change in a hurry depending on what the weather does in late summer."

Big horn sheep numbers may be a down a little this year. "Surveys were just completed in late August and the number of permits issue may change a little," Jannis said. "However the transplant projects to Black Gap WMA, Beach, Baylor and Sierra Diablo areas are doing well. We have only seen eight or nine mortalities of collared sheep this year."

### **REGION 1, DISTRICT 2, High Plains (Panhandle)**

"Most of the Panhandle experienced a severe drought from October 2017 through April or May of 2018, with many areas receiving less than one inch of moisture during that time," District Leader Calvin Richardson reported. "The dry spring conditions were only exacerbated by hotter than normal temperatures in

May, with numerous days creeping over 100 degrees. By mid-summer conditions had improved somewhat, following a few thunderstorm events in late May and June. Precipitation events were almost normal in late July and August, but this moisture came too late for most wildlife production that relies heavily on spring and early summer moisture.

"Pronghorn surveys were completed in June and early July. Overall numbers are down 14 percent compared to last year. Fawn crops were slightly below average, ranging from 22-27 percent. However, we didn't lose many bucks. Buck to doe ratios are really good with 2.8



Term Average of 30 percent, (meaning for every 100 doe 30 fawn are observed\_.

"A combination of better rainfall the past few years and success with trans-relocation had shown some areas increasing in numbers until this year. Every one of the survey-core units reflected a dip in numbers. The area around Marathon continues to do well.

"Pronghorn hunting is by permit only in Texas and fewer permits are expected to be issued in the Trans-Pecos this year."

Rio Grande turkey are mostly limited to riparian areas in this region. The Davis Mountains, south of Alpine and the very eastern edge of the district near the Pecos

does per buck in the northeast Panhandle, 2.2 does/buck in the northwest and a surprising 1.9 does per buck west and southeast of Lubbock.

“As always, abundant winter wheat is a substantial contributor to cold-season nutrition for Panhandle pronghorn when bucks are replacing their horn sheaths that were shed in October and November. Horn growth probably will not be exceptional this year, but buck numbers are still very respectable. Hunters that are fortunate enough to obtain a permit should have a good chance of harvesting a quality buck.”

White-tailed deer spotlight surveys were initiated in late August and will continue through September or October. “We anticipate that overall numbers will be similar to last year and perhaps slightly lower. The fawn survival this year should be slightly below average,” the Canyon based District Leader explained. “Antler mass may be down due to a very dry spring, but recent rainfall events and improving conditions should help bucks to put a good finish on their racks with well-developed main beams and tine length.

“Mule deer fawn crops should mirror that of white-tailed deer at slightly below average. As with the whitetails, mule deer antler quality should be slightly below average, given the moisture conditions this spring and early summer. Fawn survival for both deer species was

excellent during 2014-16, so expect to see lots of 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 year old bucks.

“Most of the playas were dry this spring, but many received enough periodic moisture this summer to produce an abundance of vegetation/food for waterfowl. Of course, the forage found in the playas is always supplemented by grain crops (corn, milo, other sorghums) found throughout the Panhandle.

“As is often the case, the stage is set for a good waterfowl year if we can get some early fall showers on the High Plains. If rainfall continues like we’ve experienced during late summer, many of the playas should have water and the Panhandle could be covered up with ducks, geese and sandhill cranes. Without some early fall precipitation, many of these birds will shift back north or head southeast.

“Quail surveys in the Panhandle were completed by mid-August. Last year many areas in the Rolling Plains and on the High Plains near New Mexico supported good quail numbers but not great like in 2015 and 2016. Because of the very dry fall, winter, and spring, we’ve experienced a decline in quail numbers. Biologists observed an average of 5.5 birds per route, compared to 22.4 birds per route last year.

“The decline will be evident in most areas of the Panhandle, but a few areas that were fortunate enough to receive a few showers in April and May will maintain fair numbers — especially those properties with well-managed vegetation prior to the drought.

“Panhandle biologists and landowners haven’t reported many turkey



*The impact of the drought of 2011 is almost a distant memory as 5 1/2 and 6 1/2 year old whitetail deer born after that dry year are reaching their maturity.*



*Management decisions will be made by hunters all over the state this hunting season. Whether to take a young promising buck or let it walk in hopes of it reaching its full potential in a couple of years.*

poults over the summer. Nesting cover in most pastures is below average. For hens that were able to pull off a successful hatch, poult survival is expected to be below average. Because production has been respectable to above average the past three to four years, hunters should expect to find plenty of mature gobblers, especially along the creeks and river drainages in the Rolling Plains.

“The quality and duration of our dove season in the Panhandle is often dictated by the timing of the first cool front that sends many of the birds further south. Nest success will be impacted a bit by the below-average conditions this spring and early summer. After a poor start to the year reproduction appears to be below average, but seed-producing plants are finally becoming abundant. We don’t anticipate a banner year for doves, but proper food and water sources can still produce some good bird concentrations in September.

“Pheasant surveys will be conducted in October/November. Surveys and observations showed only fair pheasant number over the past three years. With very dry conditions early on and improving conditions over the summer, we anticipate only fair nesting success and slightly lower bird numbers this fall.

“With only fair pheasant numbers last year, we received some reports of some really good hunting days for folks with ideal habitat (areas with irrigated grain



crops adjacent to good cover such as rank, weedy playas or CRP). The playas that are supporting good cover this year will be worth checking out during December.

### **REGION 2, DISTRICT 3, Cross Timbers, Rolling Plains**

Veteran District Leader Kevin Mote said, "Things started out pretty dry early in the year in March and April. That was combined with temperatures in the mid-to-upper 90s early in the spring. This part of the state seemed to get into summertime patterns of hot and dry very early. There were some spotty rains, but more of the district missed out than got rain. As of late August we are still dry with the western part of the district really dry.

"It looked like we had a pretty good fawn crop early, however as the summer progressed we observed fewer and fewer doe with trailing fawn. Surveys commenced in early September and we could use some rain.

"Given the conditions this year I expect antler development will be average at best. Body weight will be about average too.

"The hunting pendulum looks like it will favor the hunter this season. What mast was developing seems to have dried up and already fallen off.

"The dove season is off to a good start, particularly around waterholes. Those ranches that got some rain and have sunflowers will do best. However, both native and planted sunflowers really didn't make this year."

Mote said ground nesting birds, both bobwhite quail and Rio Grande turkey struggled this year. "Our quail production was poor since the vegetation burned up pretty early. Chick survival was not very good.

"The same thing can be said about turkey. However, hunters should see plenty of mature "Toms." In 2015 we had a decent hatch, and in 2016 and 2017 we also had good recruitment."

Waterfowl hunters will need to find water to find success. "Ranches that are already holding water should attract waterfowl this season. However, areas around Brown, Comanche, Eastland and Erath are reporting conditions that are worse than 2011."

Mote summed things up with a good rule to remember, "Droughts are broken in the fall and winter — not in the summer.

If it happens (rains) in late winter then the next year could get off to a good start."

### **REGION 2, DISTRICT 4, Edwards Plateau (Hill Country)**

This popular hunting region draws heavily from hunters in southeast Texas and other parts that were severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey. District Leader Mike Miller of Kerrville said, "Across the district we heard stories of hunters that did not come to camp because they were taking care of things at home due to Harvey. This was true out west in Val Verde and Edwards County with

similar stories heard in the northern part of the district as well. Lack of hunter participation impacted our harvest.

"Plus last year we had a pretty good acorn crop. When that happens deer don't go to feeders or food plots and the harvest goes down. The combination of these two factors resulted in the harvest being lower than normal.

"Coming out of last winter our deer herd was in pretty good shape. However, it didn't take long for dry conditions in late spring sent things in a downward spiral. Rains have been sporadic and

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spotty to non-existent. In mid-August Kerr County was 10 inches below normal. Mason County was even worse and this had an impact on antler development

"There are spots some are saying are as bad or worse than 2011. On Mason Mountain some waterholes are as dry as I've ever seen," Miller said. "Then there is an area west of Junction that got some good rainfall. It seems like the eastern part of this district fared the best."

Miller said fawn recruitment will be lower and that is to be expected given the hot dry conditions. Hunters will need to remember that this year's low recruitment won't be realized until this age class reaches maturity in five or six years from now.

"Antler development overall will be below average but there will be plenty of opportunities to harvest deer. Their body weight will also be down from last year.

"Hunters should also harvest exotic game animals. For every exotic animal, like axis deer that is on the range means one whitetail deer is being supplanted. Some think they can have the best of both worlds, but they need to remember there are only so many mouths that can

be carried on a piece property.

"To be successful there needs to be a management plan with excess animals removed. If someone feels strongly about having exotics there is the habitat, but three is a limit. It is a balancing act."

Miller said they got a good assessment of last year's Rio Grande turkey production with a lot of birds trapped and banded earlier this summer.

"Overall we banded more adults than normal," he said. "However all of our biologist reported this year's recruitment is down.

"There should be some pretty good gobblers available, but hunters should resist filling out all of their tags to increase the carryover."

Bobwhite quail are incidental to the Edwards Plateau, Miller commented.



*Pronghorn numbers took a dip after several good years of recruitment in the Trans-Pecos region.*

"However, we have had a number of reports district wide of hearing quail," he said. "We also have seen an uptick in scaled (blue) quail numbers in the western part of the district."

Hill Country hunters hunting wild swine should make sure that dark-colored animal is a wild hog and not a black bear. "Black bear have always been here and we are still learning about them," Miller said. "We have had an increase in sightings. Around Val Verde County the extreme drought and fires in Mexico pushed some bear out and increased our sightings.

"We thought they would return home but it seems they have established themselves resulting in a resident population. We have seen a sow with cubs pretty deep into the district. There was a well publicized confirmation of a bear hit by a vehicle near Ozona."

### **REGION 3, DISTRICT 5, Northern Post Oak Savannah, Blackland Prairies**

From his office in Tyler, District Leader John Silovsky said, "Whitetail range conditions throughout the Post Oak Savannah should be considered good to better than average. Sporadic rains through the growing season will provide varied habitat conditions. The most consistent rainfall has occurred north of I-30. With normal rainfall as we head into the hunting seasons, habitat conditions in the uplands should remain adequate.

"The estimated deer population in the Post Oak Savannah is 600,000 deer and survey data indicates a slow but steady

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*Turkey recruitment is down across the Lone Star State but there are plenty of mature gobblers available to hunt due to several years of good poult production.*

population increase since 2008. Hunter participation in the Post Oak Savannah District is estimated to be 123,000 individuals with a total harvest of 90,000 deer. Hunter success averages nearly 60 percent.

“Through the utilization of antler restrictions the harvest of 1.5 year old bucks has decreased significantly. Harvest data from the past few years suggests a trend of increasing numbers of older bucks in the annual harvest. Bucks make up more than 55 percent of the total harvest and more than 80 percent of those bucks are at least 2.5 years old.”

Silovsky says the best eastern turkey populations are located in the northern counties of the Post Oak Savannah along the Red River. Research and restoration efforts continue for these birds.

“Researchers believe that the lack of quality nesting, brood habitat and connectivity between suitable habitats are limiting the success of these birds,” he explained. “Some nesting success has been realized from birds recently reintroduced to the area. Eastern turkey harvest this past season of 213 gobblers was above average compared to the past four seasons and remains below the long term average of 220 birds.”

Good dove hunting opportunities in the district will be scattered with the best hunts located where food, water and cover are located in close proximity. Sunflower fields, harvested corn, milo, and fallow farm fields are always a good early season bet, with late season action heating up on goat/dove weed patches.

“The Blackland Prairie counties in the northern part of the district have traditionally offered better dove hunting,” Silovsky said. “Hunters should purchase an annual public hunting permit and take advantage of the numerous dove hunting opportunities in that program. A little pre-season scouting will provide the best chances for good dove hunting opportunities early in the season.”

Squirrel hunting for the 2018-19 seasons should be good to excellent; primarily due to the fact that enough rainfall has fallen to indicate a good acorn crop should be produced in most of the District. Years with good mast production (2016 & 2017) are typically followed by years with good squirrel reproduction.

“The abundance of ducks in East Texas is dependent on having water at



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the right time with an adequate supply of preferred foods such as acorns and aquatic plants,” Silovsky stated. “Habitat conditions are considered fair throughout the district as many of the reservoirs are at or near conservation pool. Without a mid-summer drought mud flats may be in limited supply to create additional moist soil plants for food. When fall/winter rains fill our East Texas bottomland forests and wetlands, duck hunting opportunities can be significant, but it will also require colder weather and snow cover to the north. East Texas waterfowl hunters would certainly be ahead of the game by indulging in some pre-season scouting to locate those wetlands with good food and water combinations.”

This year five Class 1 black bear sightings have occurred. Bear sightings are increasing as these animals make their way into parts of east Texas from southeast Oklahoma, Arkansas and western Louisiana. Hunters are reminded that black bear are a protected specie in Texas.”

#### **DISTRICT 3, REGION 6, Pineywoods**

Rusty Wood has assumed the helm of the Jasper based District Office. Wood said the whitetail deer harvest last year was down a little with some contributing factor being hunters impacted by Hurricane Harvey. “We didn’t loose any animals due to the Hurricane but we certainly had some deer that were relocated due to flooding,” he said.

“The start to spring was great with good timely rainfall,” he said. “Once we started seeing doe drop fawns it became abnormally dry.

“Then in late June and early July we got some timely rains. This will result in a scattered mast crop that may keep deer from moving as much in some areas.

“Overall whitetail antlers should be average and so should body weight,” Wood said.

The District Leader also said squirrel recruitment will be average. “With the drought of 2011 this population really crashed. Then about three years ago it peaked at its high.”

Landowners in east Texas have embraced a management philosophy for ground nesting birds, specifically Eastern turkey. This plan that works for turkey works for all animals.

“We have a few turkey management

co-ops focusing on the Nueces and Sulphur River basins,” Wood explained. “It is getting harder to amass the minimum 10,000 acres required to have a turkey co-op. Plus it is getting harder and harder to get birds. All of the birds we release come from out of state. Iowa and Missouri are two of the bigger contributors.”

#### **DISTRICT 4, REGION 7, Southern Post Oak Savannah, Coastal Prairies and Marsh**

Last year this district had another flood event. “This made three years in a row that flood waters impacted whitetail deer,” said La Grange based, veteran District Leader David Forrester. “The first two years late spring flooding along the Colorado and Brazos Rivers may have had an impact on fawn survival. The flooding associated with Hurricane Harvey displaced deer to new areas with no real negative impact. We are surprised that many displaced deer remained in their new area as opposed to returning to where they were displaced.

“Plus the vegetation and all of the debris had an impact. This may take a while for this to recover.

“The biggest impact was personally to our hunters. They had other pressing things on their mind. This year has been a recovery on hunting grounds as deer stands, hunting camp and things related to hunting being repaired or replaced. All of this generally contributed in a lower harvest but was not necessarily the case across the entire district.”

Forrester says this is going to be an average year for antler development. “While Harvey certainly inundated the district, this year we have been drier than recent years. It turned off really dry in May and June. By July and late August we were really dry, but that is our norm. Those that were doing supplemental



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON, JR.

*Bobwhite quail numbers are down after a poor nesting season. Hunters will need to not put heavy pressure on coveys to allow a greater carryover of birds to serve as broodstock for next season.*



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON, JR.

*The playas in the Panhandle should be in good shape to attract and hold waterfowl this upcoming season. Look for good conditions in East Texas as well as along the coast as well.*

feeding have helped.

“The hot, dry year will impact whitetail deer body weight as well as fawn survival. The fawn survival should be about 40 percent, which will be ok.

“We need some fall rains to break the heat. This is the first time in three or four years we have seen stock tanks going down. This is not 2011 it is not that bad.”

Turkey continued to struggle in this district. Forrester said he would have thought there would have been some nesting success the past two years, but that has not been the case.

“For us getting up to a 15 percent poult recruitment is pretty good,” he stated. “Getting up to 35 percent results in a boom portion of the cycle.





PHOTO BY CALVIN CARTER

*Exotic and invasive species like wild hogs need to be removed from the rangeland. Along the Colorado and Brazos River hogs have been displaced to new areas by recent floods.*

"Flooding didn't kill any turkey but it did displace them. There is not a lot of turkey in the Brazos River bottom. Those in the Colorado River bottom were simply displaced and just didn't have a good nesting season."

Wild hogs were another specie that was displaced and pushed into areas outside of the river bottoms. "I don't think any hogs were killed but they were

certainly pushed into other areas."

## REGION 4, DISTRICT 8, South Texas (Brush Country)

Veteran District Leader David Veale of Pleasanton said South Texas was on the dry side this year. "All things considered we are in pretty good shape to start the year," he began. It wasn't until May and June that we started drying out.

"With good spring conditions the bucks got off to a good start with their antler development. Deep south Texas got some good early rains while the north portion of the district was dry. We seemed to get a little rain as we needed it.

"Conditions were also good when doe started to drop fawn. We are just starting our deer surveys but I am guessing our fawn production will be over 50 percent but there will be isolated pockets where they didn't get any rain.

"We still look to 2011 as the year to compare for bad, drought conditions.

Its importance has diminished as it now impacts the tail-end of an age class. Overall antler and body weight should be average to slightly above average."

Both quail and turkey production was down this year. That was to be expected in a drier year. Veale said last of cover was more of the limiting factor.

Reports before and at the start of the dove season indicated pretty strong numbers. The U.S. Highway 90 corridor west of San Antonio continues to hold good numbers of mourning and white-winged dove. Anywhere there is a good source of water and food will have dove.

## CONCLUSION

Once again this hunt forecast proves how big Texas truly is and how varied conditions can be across the state. Across Texas this is a good year to take surplus animals, both native and exotic off the rangeland. It would also be prudent for ground nesting birds to not be heavily hunted so the carryover will be greater heading into 2019.

Finally, regardless of the hunt forecast for the region being hunted, just enjoying the hunting experience is an ample reward. From each outing something new can be learned. **T★J**

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# Lake Roundup

## CENTRAL TEXAS



By John Jefferson

If you haven't read John Graves' classic narrative *Goodbye to a River* of canoeing the upper-middle **Brazos River** before it was dammed along the way and ultimately formed **Lake Whitney**, you owe it to yourself to do so. But finish reading my column and the rest of *TOJ* first.

Graves, who passed away several years ago, decided he wanted to see the Brazos once more before it became dammed and changed forever. He had spent his formative years on the river. He packed his canoe with tent and supplies, called up his little dachshund and struck out from below Possum Kingdom Dam for a nostalgic floating tribute to the river that had helped him become who he was. Just the two of them, the river and his thoughts.

He wrote of the sandy bends in the stream, the fish and wildlife, the twists of the area's history and the coming changes. As an old river-runner, I understood and envied Graves' experience. He had taught college English, and some of the narrative reflected the labors of the wilderness voyage in scholarly style. It's still a good read, though.

My late friend, Bob Hood, former outdoor editor of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, along with the late Jerry Dean, editor and publisher of *Honey Hole Magazine*, paddled a similar adventure farther upriver. Their demise was not



PHOTO COURTESY OF LCRA

An aerial view of Tom Miller Dam, which forms Lake Austin, shows the nine floodgates which are being replaced by the Lower Colorado River Authority over the next 16 months. The project began in late summer. Below the dam is Lady Bird Lake.

caused by their voyage. Their trip and Graves' were suggestive of the motivation behind the suspenseful river trip in the movie and book, *Deliverance*, though without the man-made ugliness.

Graves did a fair amount of fishing en route, which I hope justifies this review. He made a few civilization-stops along the way for supplies, but for the most part lived off the land and the river, camping every night.

Maybe it'll also encourage a fall float trip on the **Llano**, the **Colorado**, or the **Guadalupe** rivers. Paddlers don't have to spend most of the fall on the water and its sand bars, as Graves did, but October and some of November are ideal for short trips – even overnight ones. Times and Texas are different now, and civilization, development and population explosion prevent just camping anywhere along the way, but with a little planning, it could become your trip of a lifetime, as the Brazos was for Graves, Hood, and Dean.

There aren't any dams planned on these rivers that I know about except one on the Colorado in rice farming communities near Wharton. Fall is a good time to float one of them. Graves trip

started in early fall. Fishing's good then.

All three of those Central Texas Rivers are fine fishing – especially the Colorado downstream from Longhorn Dam. The Llano is noted as perhaps the best Guadalupe bass fishery in Texas and the world. Catfishing with worms, cut bait, or commercial catfish bait will be better this fall, too.

And that rambling book review leads into this column, which could be entitled "Goodbye to a Floodgate". Or, more accurately, to nine of 'em.

Floodgates in Tom Miller Dam, that backs up water to form **Lake Austin**, were installed in the late '30s. I've wondered how substantial they were when I've paddled my canoe or kayak near the dam. They must have been pretty stout. L.C.R.A. has decided to replace them, however.

The nine floodgates will be replaced over an 18-month period that began in late summer. It should take about six weeks on each floodgate.

"We need to keep the dam operational," said John Hoffman, L.C.R.A. veep for water. "We're in Flash Flood Alley, and we need to be able to react quickly and



move floodwaters downstream at any time. Doing the work one floodgate at a time takes more time but allows the dam to be operational throughout the project.”

That’s good news for fishing and anglers or for recreational paddlers on **Lady Bird Lake**. The upper end of Lady Bird between the low water bridge and the dam is popular with fly fishermen and others seeking quiet water for bass and sunfish.

“There should be no water quality issues on Lady Bird Lake due to the floodgate replacement,” said Clara Tuma, L.C.R.A.’s information director. She said water clarity shouldn’t be affected. A huge barge toting a large crane was launched at the Loop 360 boat ramp and propelled downstream on Lake Austin to assist in the work. It will be docked near the dam, and in sight of L.C.R.A. offices and the Hula Hut. Very little fishing will be interrupted there due to water depth, and the barge and work shouldn’t even disrupt boaters. A second barge will ferry the floodgates and equipment to the dam. Each floodgate will weigh between 40,000 and 50,000 pounds. Stay out of their way.

And that should tell you that Lake Austin won’t be lowered in January for dock repairs and vegetation control as it often is.

So back to fishing. Seasoned fishermen will tell you that October and November are our best fishing months, other than the spring months. Maybe that’s said because it’s so much more pleasant when fish come to the net without already being cooked in the hot surface water. The weather has cooled off enough that being on the water is pleasant, and the fish are willing. **Lake Travis** fishing guide Don Steussy, agrees.

“Fishing will pick up in October and November,” he says. “Fish three days before and three days after a front blows in,” is his advice. “The shad will move out to the brush and the bass will follow them.” Between fronts, many find fish back in the coves and creeks in the fall. Steussy prefers shaky head worms and flukes, but also is one of the many believers in the three-inch, smoke-glitter grubs for Lake Travis bass. The lure is an uncanny bass snatcher on Trav. Smoke gray seems to be the best color. Bass may think it resembles a shad with its vibrating tail. Whatever they think it is,



PHOTO BY JOHN JEFFERSON

*The floodgate project is not expected to disturb water quality on Lady Bird Lake or Lake Austin as Central Texas anglers cast into the wonderful fall fishing period. Pictured is the usually placid portion of Lady Bird between the dam and the low water bridge on Redbud Trail.*

they attack it.

When I fished with Steussy back in the spring, it was a slow day, fishing-wise. But we both caught a fish or two with the magic grubs and catching a fish at all in that spring wind was tough.

Until the cold fronts markedly chill the water temperatures, which warm back up a little in each episode of the spasmodic Indian Summer weather, you won’t have to fish in 25-foot deep water for them. They’ll be shallower. Topwater baits will also be back on the menu during this superb season of fishing – and catching. I’ll dust off my Teckle Sprinker Frogs and have some fun with them, now.

I haven’t mentioned Rat-L-Traps in a while, but I will use Traps along rocky shorelines and along main lake points. Chatter baits are also effective near the rocks.

An old friend, Mark Nichols, owner/creator of D.O.A. lures, sent me several of his popular saltwater baits, knowing I have a somewhat salty approach to freshwater fishing. I’ve had good luck with such seemingly alien baits before.

His PT-7 is a dog walker that will also exercise my casting arm this fall. His 5/8 ounce “Bait Buster” resembles a lure of his that I lost on a thrilling break-off the last time we fished together. That had to have been the biggest trout I’ve ever had on a line. But Fishermen always say that about break-offs, don’t we? I’ll report on the D.O.A.s next month. **TAJ**



PHOTO BY DUKE KINLEY

*ON GOLDFISH POND ... That’s actually a smallmouth buffalo caught by former U.T. football player, Lever Jenkins on a crappie jig on Decker Lake (Walter E. Long), guided by Duke Kinley. Some thought this fish might have been an overgrown goldfish that had somehow gotten into the lake and survived to super-size. TPWD Inland Fisheries Director, Craig Bonds, however, confirmed it as a smallmouth buffalo with a goldfish glow possibly caused by afternoon light on the fish and stress of being caught, causing slight bleeding around its scales, contributing to the strange color. Buffalo are most active in cool water and can be caught on carp bait.*

A person is silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky, standing on the deck of a boat and holding a fishing rod. The water reflects the warm orange and yellow hues of the setting sun. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, capturing the essence of a fall fishing trip.

# FALL into UPPER GALVESTON BAY

***Texas' largest estuary offers premier autumn angling opportunities along its upper end.***

*Story and Photography by Nate Skinner*



Thank God for northern breezes. Fall cool fronts are arriving and Texas anglers have put the dog days of summer in their rearview mirrors. The stifling heat has been replaced by more comfortable conditions plus the fish are becoming more aggressive with each passing day. Birds are working, hoards of shrimp are swarming, and some of the hottest action of the year is taking place as water temperatures begin to drop.

In the Galveston Bay Complex, anglers should look to the north to find a consistent bite. The upper portion of Texas' largest estuary rules during the autumn months, and this region will continue to produce phenomenal catches as fall transitions into winter.

Upper Galveston Bay receives generous amounts of much needed nutrients from both the San Jacinto and the Trinity River watersheds, as well as from secondary bayous and creeks. Although these sources of freshwater inflows can make certain areas of the upper Galveston Complex highly susceptible to runoff, they are also what make this section of the system such a gold mine during the fall.

Marshes, back lakes, bayous, and creeks within the watersheds located in Upper Galveston Bay serve as nursing grounds for a variety of species, including baitfish, shrimp, and other crustaceans. When the northwest winds associated with cold fronts drop water levels in these shallow areas, baitfish and shrimp are forced to leave and enter main bay waters. This scenario is what sets up the feeding frenzy that anglers can count on encountering every fall.

Another aspect that makes hotspots along the upper end of Galveston Bay fantastic during the fall and winter months is their location. Because they are situated on the north half of the estuary, many are protected from moderate to strong north winds. This means they are going to hold cleaner water than other areas after a cold front hits. They also provide anglers with fishable stretches of water even when frontal systems are passing through.

One of my favorite areas to fish in Upper Galveston Bay is the stretch of shorelines from April Fool Point to Eagle Point, and then from Eagle Point on up to the Kemah Flats, Seabrook Flats and Sylvan Beach. There are two key types of structure here that hold fish. They include



*Capt. Tim Young hooks up with a solid fish caught from the open waters of Trinity Bay during the early fall.*

oyster shell and pier pilings.

These shorelines are littered with the docks and piers of waterfront properties. There is plenty of scattered oyster shell located off the ends of these wooden structures. Sometimes trout and reds are concentrated amongst the pilings and other times they are staging a littler further out over the oyster shell.

There are also some locations between the piers in this area that contain small, heavy oyster shell reefs. These uncharted structures can be as minute as a dinner table and as large as a decent sized living room. When anglers stumble upon these minor reefs they should fish them thoroughly. They often remain untapped and are holding good numbers of fish.

Another portion of the Upper Galveston Bay complex that will produce this fall is the stretch of water located out in front of Houston Point, Beach City, and Umbrella Point. This area forms the western shoreline along the mouth of Trinity Bay and is similar to the other mentioned hotspots as both pier pilings and oyster shell attract gamefish to the region.

Out off this shoreline

lies open bay waters and some noteworthy reefs. They include Dow Reef, Beazley Reef, and Fisher Shoals. Slicks are often the most obvious telltale sign as to where fish are feeding around these oyster shell humps. There is typically quite a bit of bird activity in this area. Many times the birds can be found working in stretches of open water between the reefs.

To the southeast of Dow Reef, Beazley Reef, and Fisher Shoals anglers will find several wells and shell pads. Veteran Galveston Bay fishing guide, Captain Tim



*The author's brother, Brandon Skinner landed this quality speckled trout while fishing a reef near Eagle point.*



*Birds working over shrimp pushed from back marsh areas by north winds are great indicators of feeding fish below.*

Young, said this structure was referred to as the “Sun Wells” by those that have been fishing the areas for a few decades.

“When Dow and Beazley Reefs have consistent action, the Sun Wells usually do too,” he confessed. “Sometimes there will be birds working in and around these shell pads and on other occasions

the best approach is to work areas with fresh slicks.”

North of the Sun Wells, anglers can also plan to find fish along the wells and shell pads within the area known as “C Lease.” Bird activity and slicks are the norm here as well as far as aggressively feeding fish are concerned.



*Chunking topwater plugs is a great way to draw strikes from larger specks like this one caught by Galveston Bay Angler Ed Mutch while fishing the birds.*

It is important to keep in mind that the further north anglers travel in Trinity Bay, the closer they get to the sources of the Galveston Complex’s significant freshwater inflows. These waters will remain salty unless the Trinity and San Jacinto Rivers are flooded by a major runoff from heavy rains. In the event this happens, most of the water north of the Sun Wells will likely be too fresh to fish.

If we avoid heavy rain and flood events this fall, anglers will definitely want to spend some time fishing Jack’s Pocket and the Anahuac Pocket, both of which are located in the northern most reaches of Trinity Bay and Galveston system. After the passage of a cold front, the open waters within these areas are almost guaranteed to be swarming with shrimp being chased by both hungry gamefish below the surface and squawking gulls hovering above. When this happens anglers can catch piles of fish in a hurry and just about any artificial offering will do the trick.

If the Trinity and San Jacinto River watersheds do receive flooding rains this fall, anglers can expect the majority of fish to push down around Smith Point and concentrate along oyster shell reefs near the north shoreline of East Galveston Bay. Sheldon Reef, Richard’s Reef, Whitehead

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Reef, Stephenson Reef and Cowshed Reefs are all excellent options. Birds will be working over schools of speckled trout around these reefs. Larger specks will be found in stretches of water containing rafts of mullet and fresh slicks.

Another East Galveston Bay reef worth mentioning is Bull Shoals. Located just west of Hanna Reef, this oyster mound is the shallowest mid bay reef in East Bay. At one time the center of it stuck out above the water. After the effects of erosion from hurricanes over the years, the shallowest portion of Bull Shoals now remains just below the water's surface except for when extremely low tides occur.

The edges of Bull Shoals are surrounded by deeper water and that's exactly where the fish tend to hang around it. On an incoming tide the eastern edges of the reef are more productive and on an outgoing tide the western edges are better.

Fall is the perfect time of year for anglers of all skill levels to pursue trout and redfish with hardware. The fish can usually be found in schools and they are typically willing to eat just about anything.

When fishing around working birds, soft plastics rigged on one quarter to three eighths ounce jig heads are pretty much the standard. Sometimes the larger fish can be found feeding below schools of smaller ones. A heavier jig head will help anglers get their bait down below the schoolies.

An additional strategy that will entice strikes from better caliber fish under the birds is throwing topwater plugs. The larger bait presentation should weed through undersized fish and draw heftier ones to the surface.

While drifting reefs and other structure soft plastic jigs are also the go-to bait. When there are a lot of shrimp and small baitfish present throughout the water column, the four inch C.A.L. jerk bait made by D.O.A. Lures is an exceptional option.

Don't underestimate the effectiveness of a topwater lure in open water situations. Even when the fish are not schooled up under the birds, they may still be aggressive enough to come play on the surface. When a particular reef has a lot of fresh slicks around it, a topwater bait is always a good choice.



*Shell reefs located off the ends of piers from waterfront properties in Upper Galveston Bay are exceptional areas to catch trout and reds this fall.*

As water temperatures continue to plunge and shrimp begin to leave the estuary, anglers should make the switch to larger, mullet imitation plugs. One of my all time favorite mullet imitation baits to throw during the fall and winter months is the 52MR MirrOlure in red/gold/yellow. The sinking twitch bait is deadly when

fish are suspended over shell. Slowly retrieve the lure while giving it several twitches and pauses, and hold on tight.

The days are getting shorter, temperatures are mild and the best fishing of the year has finally arrived. Fall for Upper Galveston Bay's consistent patterns and don't look back. **T★J**

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## Last Minute Bowhunting Tips

Bowhunting can be challenging but four decades ago bowhunting was really tough. With my old Fred Bear Whitetail Hunter it was tough for me to put four arrows in a pie plate at 25 yards. Young bowhunters of today don't have a clue how tough it used to be.

Fast forward 40 years and the equipment and particularly bows have improved tremendously. Today there are a lot of good bows on the market compared to what used to be available. I have used an Obsession or a Mathews but there are other good manufacturers making bows available on the market.

However, even with the improvement in bows that doesn't translate into automatic success. There are still other factors than just owning a good bow. Let's hit a few of those.

### BROADHEADS

When hunting with archery equipment an animal is killed by hemorrhaging. This means your broadheads must be razor sharp. A dull broadhead pushes arteries aside instead of cutting them. You don't want that. You want to slice every artery, vein and organ that it touches or passes through.

If you're like me you occasionally miss, but just because you hit the dirt doesn't mean you have to throw away your broadhead. They're expensive so learn how to sharpen them or if they have some kind of replaceable inserts do that. To sharpen mine I use a Smith's Products fine diamond stone to remove dings and then fine tune it on one of their smooth Arkansas stones.

I use Wasp broadheads but there are other good broadheads on the market. Just make sure you choose a stout one that can break through bones and that is razor sharp. Expandable broadheads are popular and I think they are great for turkeys and probably whitetails but I wouldn't use them on larger animals.

I was hunting with the Slow Glow gang earlier this year and the owner's son Clint Choate hit a big hog broadside and the arrow simply bounced off the hog. The impact drove the expandable



*The author hit this deer twice but due to not waiting for it to bleed out he had to track it a considerable distance before finally recovering the animal.*

broadhead into the shaft of the arrow. I can only assume that it hit the ball joint in the shoulder or the shoulder plate. I don't think the broadhead even penetrated over a ¼-inch deep.

### PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

It is irresponsible not to practice so you can make a clean kill. It's imperative to hit the kill zone (heart/lungs) so you need to determine at what range you can effectively shoot your bow. I have buddies that can ethically shoot at 50 yards and a few probably at longer distances. I can't.

Get a good target and practice. I use Morrel targets. Practice at varying distances, angles and uphill/downhill if possible. And it goes without saying, use the same type of arrows and grain of field tip as the broadheads that you will be hunting with when practicing.

I read an article once that helped me a lot. You know how sometimes you may be wobbling ever so slightly and try to time your release when the pin is in the right spot? This will result in you jerking the trigger. Don't do that. Pull normally without trying to time your release. Try

this and I guarantee you that your groups will tighten.

### SHOT ANGLE

This is a huge consideration when bowhunting. You need to visualize how your arrow will pass through the animal being shot. If the animal is moving 30 yards out and off to your right and you put the pin behind his shoulder it may barely clip the lung thus resulting in a gut shot. It is a lot better to exhibit some patience and allow an undisturbed animal to move to a more favorable position. The obvious best shot is to hit it broadside or quartering away so you double lung the animal.

If you are an excellent shot you may be able to make a head on shot but you have to be really good. All my buddies and I wait on broadside shots or quartering away shots. Be patient grasshopper.

### WAIT 30 MINUTES TO TRACK

If you make a perfect shot, don't be tempted to start tracking too soon. Let your animal bleed out. Hopefully it lays down within view but if it runs off assume that it will lay down fast. If you start tracking too soon and bump it off of its bed, it may run for a long way.



Two things may prompt you to start tracking too fast:

1. A lot of our shots are at dusk. You may only have 30 minutes of daylight left. You may think it's prudent to go start tracking while you still have daylight. Don't do that. If you bump him off his bed you'll have a long track in the dark which is even more difficult. I did this once and I ended up tracking it until 11:30 and had to go back and finish tracking the next morning before I eventually found my buck.

2. You know you had a good hit. Why wait? Sometimes it is not all as it appears. Once I hit a deer semi-quartering away behind the shoulder. I could see a blood spot right where I aimed. I flung another arrow and missed — then while it was walking I flung another arrow. It thumped the deer but a little far back. Great. I now had two arrows in it. The second shot blew a good 8-inches of liver out of the side and was hanging out. I knew it was about to tip over.

I didn't see a need to wait 30 minutes. This deer was hurting for certain. The bad deal is, my first shot hit right where I had aimed but unbeknownst to me, it must have hit a rib and deflected back. It resulted in a gut shot without hitting the lungs.

It was an easy trail. It was bleeding like the proverbial stuck hog but it resulted in a half mile track. I should have waited 30 minutes.

### TRACKING

This is a whole article in and of itself but I wanted to briefly touch on it because if you're a bow hunter you better be a good tracker. I carry toilet paper. I start where I made the hit to evaluate the shot.

First find the arrow. Is it covered with blood? Fat? Ingesta? The arrow will tell you what kind of shot you made. Lay a small pinch of TP at every spec of blood. Occasionally tie a piece on the limb of a bush so you can spot it from far away.

I like for the arrow to pass through so it's bleeding out of both sides. If you don't see anything on the ground, look for blood rubbed on bushes.

If tracking gets tough look for broken branches or vegetation. An animal that has been arrowed is not walking along stealthy, they're panicking and stumbling as their adrenaline courses through their body. I'll follow up someday with a more in-depth tracking article in the future

### VISIBLE NOCKS/ARROWS

I like visible nocks, arrows etc. They might help you see where you hit or help you recover your arrow. If filming, many times you can follow the path of your arrow in reviewing the film.

Rely on your practice sessions and the confidence you have gained. Plus take shots within your ability.

And remember to wait those 30 minutes. It'll save you time and help you recover more game in the long run. **T★J**



*The author uses pieces of toilet paper to mark specks of blood or other points of reference when he is tracking deer or other game animals.*

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## Lake Roundup

### NORTH TEXAS



By Brian Hughes

October. What can you say about this month? So much to do, perfect weather, everything just seems better in October.

Oktoberfest is celebrated by many Texans with a cold brew, and some sort of party, festival or gathering. I don't really drink much beer, and I like to celebrate the outdoors by being out there and enjoying the solitude. I guess that is another way to say I don't care for settings in which I am jammed together with a lot of strangers.

Instead I prefer to go out with family or a close friend or two, or even by myself, and experience the wonder of God's magic. Let's see what magic awaits.

**FORK** — October jig fishing should be excellent on ¼ to ½ oz. jigs in black/blue, black/brown and pumpkin/watermelon around any grass beds you can find. And therein lies the key. Grass on Fork is not nearly as abundant as it once was. It takes a little searching and some effort to find any beds of any size. Once found, these beds should be thoroughly explored. In addition to jigs, shad colored spinnerbaits and Texas-rigged soft plastics would be good tools for searching out bass.

Of course, I wouldn't dream of starting the day with anything other than a variety of topwater baits. Buzzbaits, frogs, and other topwaters will kill around pads early in the day. Plus, it's just got to be the most fun way to catch a fish.

In addition to these shallow water patterns, the fishing should also be good on the humps found on the main lake.

Deep-diving crankbaits, Carolina rigs, and drop-shot rigs will all be effective to some degree in October.

Although you don't hear a lot about them, the flutterspoon will see more action later in the month. Those will also be productive through the winter months.

The sand bass fishermen will want to take smaller jigging spoons to the same areas. For the crappie fishing at Lake Fork, look for the crappie to move from the deep-water hangouts of summer up the creek arms to shallower areas in 5-15 feet of water. Once in the creeks they'll stay there until colder water temps encourage them to move back into deeper water once again.

You can intercept them at the bridges, using crappie jigs and LFT Baby Shad in bull bream and shad colors, near the end of the month. Once they reach the deep water at the dam, they'll be there until spring.

You can find them by simply looking for the "crappie armada" that shows up every year. Play nice, be respectful and you'll be welcome to join the party.

**TEXOMA** — Cooling water temperatures will bring the smallmouth into about 6-12 feet of water along the rocks and boulders on the south bluffs at Texoma. Crankbaits diving to eight feet in crawfish and citrus shad colors should work, along with small soft plastics on a shaky head rig.

If you like to throw a net, and have the skills to do so, you can do well with a threadfin shad on a circle hook. Use a light spinning outfit with six pound line and a 1/0 circle hook.

Of course, the stripers will begin moving up to gorge on the shad in October as

well, so you may lose a few hooks when they break off that six pound line.

If you're after the stripers, keep an eye on the main lake points. You can catch these feeding fish on topwater plugs in ultra-shallow water. You are reminded that these can be big, strong fish and should be treated as such. Use stout rods with braid in 30 pound test.

Catfishing on Texoma will really begin taking off with true monster sized fish cruising the dam area. If you just want some keepers they can also be found on the rocks along the south bluffs.

Here's a secret tip for the catfishing guys—look for the striper guides cleaning fish at the end of the fishing day. They'll throw the leftover stuff in the lake at their cleaning tables and the catfish will be waiting. Cut bait will get you a limit in no time.

**CEDAR CREEK** — Cedar Creek is a great lake for many species, and October is a great time to be on the lake. Bass fishermen will find fish on the docks and breakwaters in the shallows. Start the day on top and gradually move deeper.



PHOTO COURTESY MIKE MCGREGOR

*Kate Sanders of Waco went fishing with her grandfather Mike McGregor of Lorena and got hooked on fishing after catching this nice hybrid. October is a month that is perfect to introduce someone, particularly kids to the sport. The weather has cooled and the fishing is heating up.*



When any vegetation is found in eight feet or less, be sure and spend some extra time working it over. Shad colored spinnerbaits such as white or white/chartreuse will get active fish around the edges, while Texas rigged worms in Junebug or tomato will probe inside vegetation and brush. Docks can be pitched with jigs and shaky-head rigs, after a quick edge run with a squarebill crankbait.

For crappie, you can go about halfway back into any creek and watch your electronics. You're looking for brush. Points are also a good starting place, as are any humps you can locate. Use 1/16th and 1/8th ounce crappie jigs on six pound test at about 8-15 fifteen feet in both the creek arms and on the main lake.

Sand bass will also be found at about 8-15 feet on the humps and points, but you'll want to use a 3/4 ounce slab for these fish. Near the end of the month, they'll get harder to find as they move deeper in the water column.

**WHITNEY** — Whitney strippers will hit Redfins in white/red, and chrome/white if you fish it right. You need to wake the bait. It's not a walk-the-dog really but you need to get their attention with a good commotion. And don't be too quick on the hookset.

Sand bass will attack various topwaters as well. Torpedos, Zara Spooks and Yellow Magics in shad colors will all be good choices in October. The Willow Island and Bird Island areas are good places to start, working up on the shallow flats.

Later, you'll want to move off to the deeper points and humps. Once there use spoons and slabs to get connected. Trolling is also very effective, running baits just above the fish. Catfishing will be good in the back of the creeks and they should hit cut bait readily.

While there is decent crappie fishing on Whitney, nearby Lake Aquilla has plenty of timber, and has been enhanced with brushpiles. Crappie jigs under a cork will catch all crappie you're allowed.

**RAY HUBBARD** — Located on the eastern edge of the DFW metroplex, Ray Hubbard is a secret gem in the area. Thousands of anglers will pass right over the lake on I-30, headed east to fish lakes with a name for big fish.

What they fail to realize is that Ray

Hubbard has some BIG bass. In the last couple of weeks in mid-to-late August four fish over 10 pounds have been noted, and one went 11.75, a giant indeed. Most of these fish were caught around the riprap on the highway bridges.

Later in the year it will be popular to go further up the river in search of big bass. October will see far less recreational traffic as the summer crowd moves out, leaving more water for the fishermen.

Start the morning shallow around the marina docks or riprap with 'Spooks and Z Dawg topwater baits, moving to Senkos and spinnerbaits as the morning progresses. Squarebills and then deeper diving baits will be key on the rocks, while the docks will require a shaky-head with a finesse worm, or a Texas rigged worm. Use natural colors unless fall rains muddy the water, then use dark colors such as black/blue or red shad.

Sand bass on Ray Hubbard will, as on most lakes, be found over main lake humps and structure. Using your electronics and cruising over the lake bottom should yield several waypoints. Save these and fish each in turn, until you find fish. It should only take about 10 minutes to decide if they are present and active. Any longer than that without a bite, move on to the next. Once located, you should be able to work them for a half hour or so before moving to the next waypoint.

Catfishing is overlooked at this lake by all but a few savvy anglers. More's the pity as this lake is an excellent catfishery. Look to the point by the old power plant and the dam as the top areas for cats. Live bait, cut bait and prepared catfish formulas are the standard, with chicken livers and such being a second option.

**BRIDGEPORT** — I've recently "discovered" this lake on the western edge of the DFW area. Located about an hour northwest of Fort Worth, Bridgeport is a 12,000 acre reservoir with good fishing for bass, sand bass and catfish. There are also hybrid striper, and a decent population of smallmouth in the lake as well.

As my home base has moved to the west, so has my fishing. I'm fishing lakes I had never been to before, and one of those is Bridgeport. After a couple of years I'm starting to get a few things put together.

Sand bass will school in October and

most main lake points and the islands will see plenty of action. They may hit topwater baits like the Heddon Tiny Torpeo in chrome and clear colors, but sometimes they just won't.

On those days when a topwater gets a snub, I've caught them on a 1/2 ounce jighead with a three or four inch swimbait. Shad colors are effective, as are chartreuse, lime and Chicken On A Chain. Small inline spinnerbaits like the Blue Fox and RoosterTails also catch fish, as does the old Beetle Spin. Using light spinning gear with four to six pound test makes the catching a lot of fun.

Largemouth bass are very plentiful and can be a challenge in the clear water. So far I've had a great time fishing my number one spinnerbait, the Homers Clown. This is a 1/4 ounce bait in white/chartreuse with one nickel and one gold Indiana blade. Throwing this up shallow in the rocks has yielded a lot of fish, some up to five pounds. The bigger fish have come a little deeper, say 5-12 feet, on crankbaits and shaky head jigs. Green pumpkin, watermelon, and other natural colors have been effective in the clear water.

Docks are also good when the temps get extreme, hot or cold. One of the most effective baits I've found is a Yamamoto Kreature rigged on a 1/4 ounce shaky head, pitched along the banks between the boathouses and docks. Sometimes I'll have to pop it a couple of times, but generally hits are immediate and vicious.

All in all, October is one of the best times to be outdoors in Texas. Fishing is great, the weather is hard to beat, and the summer crowd is long gone. Here's to an outdoorsman's Octoberfest. **T&J**



By Matt Williams

**NACOGDOCHES** - Lake Nacogdoches entered fall about nearly three feet below full pool with matted hydrilla up and down the lake and in the backs of the major and secondary creeks. With water temperatures on a gradual cool down things are setting up for some outstanding fishing, particularly for bass fishing crowds.

Shad always gravitate towards the backs of creek during fall and the bass won't be far behind. Focus on the creeks over the next 60 days and you're almost certain to be around large numbers of fish. The key is to cover water until you find them.

The grass is matted to about 10 feet, which makes it easy to stay in the channel. Fish any deeper and you'll have to rely on your electronics to maintain optimum position around "sonar grass." It's generally best to start at the mouth of the channel and work your way in.

Flipping heavy Texas rigs or jigs around deeper grass lining the channel breaks is always a good plan of attack during fall. Black/blue and black/brown/amber are historically good colors, but you might want to change things up and try something white to match the hatch. Not many people flip with white jigs, but I've seen it produce good results more than once.

Another good pattern to try is tossing a light Texas rig around defined channel bends and swings. The bass will sometimes stack up like cordwood in the bottom of channel swings this time of year, particularly on sunny, still days when it turns off warm. Catch one and you might catch 20 or more without moving the boat. The fish may not be big, but they are fun to catch.

School bass are another good option. You'll find them herding shad to the surface on the lake main lake as well as around creek channels and points. The fish can be caught on assorted topwaters, Rat-L-Traps and soft jerk baits when schooling on or near the surface. Don't be discouraged and leave if the activity stops. Often times the bass will reposition on or near bottom when the surface action wanes. You can catch them on spoons, Carolina rigs, shaky heads and deep crank baits.

**PALESTINE** - The 20,000-acre lake near Palestine was nearly two feet low as

August gave way to September. Barring any recent floods anglers can look the lake to be even lower by the time October rolls around.

That's not the greatest of news for anglers with limited experience on the lake. Low water can make navigation a dicey proposition, particularly at the upper reaches. There are gobs of stumps up there and many of them will be visible on the lake's surface.

"It's the ones you can't see that'll get you, though," says fishing guide Ricky Vandergriff. "You need to be careful up there if you don't know the way around. You'll definitely need to slow down."

As tough as getting around up north can be, it can be worth it once you get there. Vandergriff says the water has cleared up nicely and the fish should be the mood to chomp with water beginning to chill down and the shad beginning their annual treks up the creeks.

"You'll definitely want to spend some time in Kickapoo," he said. "There are quite a few pads and a little grass is starting to come back with the water beginning to clear."

Vandergriff says several patterns could be at work. Jigs and Texas rigs are good choices for casting or pitching along creek edges, especially in bends with stumps and other wood cover. There also could be decent bite on frogs and buzz baits worked across adjacent flats, especially early and late or under overcast skies.

Anglers who had rather play it safe and fish south should use Texas rigs and jigs to probe around boat houses in five to six feet of water with brush piles nearby. The guide added that there also will be some fish on points in 10-16 feet to be caught on shad pattern crank baits and Carolina rigs.

"You'll need to keep an eye peeled for schooling white bass, too," Vandergriff said. "They'll be showing up mostly on main lake points, but you'll also be able to find some around the old Highway 155 roadbed on jigging spoons."

**LIVINGSTON** - Wanna' catch a few bass Lake Livingston this fall? Take the advice of veteran fishing guide Randy Dearman and head up a creek. Just be sure and don't leave your spinnerbait box behind. Creek fishing and spinnerbaits go together like cowboys and honkey tonks.

"It's hard to beat a spinnerbait during the fall," Dearman said. "It does a great



PHOTO COURTESY MIKE MCGREGOR

*Remington Brown from Lorena may be destined to host his own television fishing show. His grandfather said he carried on a running dialog as he fought "a good one" that was almost as big as he is.*

job of imitating shad and you can fish it around wood extremely well. Those are the two things to key on over here."

Dearman says the majority of the fish will be concentrated in the main creeks and the small ditches feeding them. He will spend the majority of his time fishing the creeks north of the Highway 190 Bridge, but creeks south of the bridge to the dam area can good, too.

"The fish live shallow throughout summer on Livingston and they'll stay there through the fall," Dearman said. "Difference is they'll be way more aggressive with water cooling down and the days getting shorter. Winter is coming and I think they know it. They'll be feeding up on shad pretty strong."

Dearman says he'll usually spend most of his time in the upper half of creeks because that's where the majority of the baitfish will be. His bait of choice is a 3/8 or 1/2 ounce spinnerbait that is white or white/chartreuse in color. Double willow or willow/Colorado combination blades work best so long as the water stays pretty clear.

Dearman also likes a square bill crank bait and lipless crank bait during fall. The latter works extremely well in cases where he comes across the fish schooling. You can chunk it a considerable distance and



it simulates shad almost to the tee.

"Buzzbaits can be super effective at times, too," Deaman said. "I'll always have a white one tied on."

**CONROE** - It's been a long, hot summer in east Texas and nobody is looking forward to cooler weather more than Lake Conroe guide, Butch Terpe. Terpe says cooler weather chills the water to a more moderate degree. That factor, combined with shorter days and cooler nights, naturally puts Conroe bass in more of a mood chase and feed.

"Cold fronts and changing seasons are definitely going to shake things up," Terpe said. "It'll get progressively better from now right on through December."

The guide says he'll spend a considerable amount of the time targeting shallow water around rocky bridge structure, bulkheads and break waters in any number of major and secondary creeks. Flooded cover up north in the vicinity of the national forest also will be holding fish.

"You can catch them a variety of ways but a square bill crank bait, Chatterbait or Senko can be hard to beat," Terpe said. "A swim jig should work pretty good up north around flooded brush, too."

Anglers probably shouldn't write off main lake stuff yet, either. Brush piles on points in water ranging 12-18 feet was well as channel swings with brush could be holding some big ones that you can catch on a medium diving crank bait, jig or Carolina rig.

Anglers looking for a little meat for the freezer will be able to find plenty in Conroe's bountiful channel cat population. The lake produces good numbers year around, but Terpe says the quality always goes up once the fall cool down is underway.

He primarily targets baited holes in about 20 feet of using a cheese dip bait and sponge hook. He always sweetens the pot using cattle range cubes, but you can also use a soured grain like maize or chicken scratch.

**TOLEDO BEND** - Toledo Bend was nearly four feet below full pool as August gave way to September. It's likely to be even lower come October as the Sabine River Authority continues its fall drawdown.

If you've never set stump hooks for catfish, from now through November

would be a good time to try it a try on the big lake along the Texas/Louisiana border.

"The stump hookin' always gets good during fall," said Charlie Shivley, owner of Bill's Landing at the lake's upper reaches. "The low water pushes the fish off the flats and they'll really prowl at night. We always see a bunch of big ol' flatheads this of year, and a bunch of them are caught on stump hooks."

There are literally thousands of stumps to choose from up north. According to Shivley, the best ones will be located along the edges of major and secondary creeks. That's where the fish like to feed at night.

He always builds his stump hook set-ups from heavy tarred nylon twine attached to a circle hook as big as 12/0 to hold outsize fish. Live perch are the order of the day. He prefers set the hook so the perch is suspended about two to three feet beneath the surface.

As bass fishing goes, Toledo Bend has been fishing pretty tough all summer long, but it should improve once water temperatures start dipping into the 70s. That's when the shad will start piling into creeks and drains. Naturally, the bass will follow.

"That's where I'll be," says fishing guide Ben Matsubu of Hemphill. "Creeks and drains should start holding lots fish and you should be able to catch them a variety of ways using several baits like Whopper Ploppers, spinnerbaits, Chatterbaits, lipless crank baits and square bills."

Matsubu pointed to the 1215 area as a stretch of water that could be particularly good. "There is a good bit of hydrilla up there in four to five feet of water," he said.

**SAM RAYBURN** - Sam Rayburn has proven itself as a muscle lake for all seasons, one where bass anglers can sometimes pick their poison and catch fish shallow or deep using any number of baits and prescribed fishing techniques.

Fall is one of those times when the fish will be chomping and lots of things will be working. If you enjoy the excitement of catching bass on surface plugs, there may not be a better window to do it than the next 30 to 60 days.

"They always catch 'em really good on topwaters this time of year," says Ann Wilson, owner of Ann's Tackle Shop in Jasper. Yellow Magics, 'Spooks, Chug

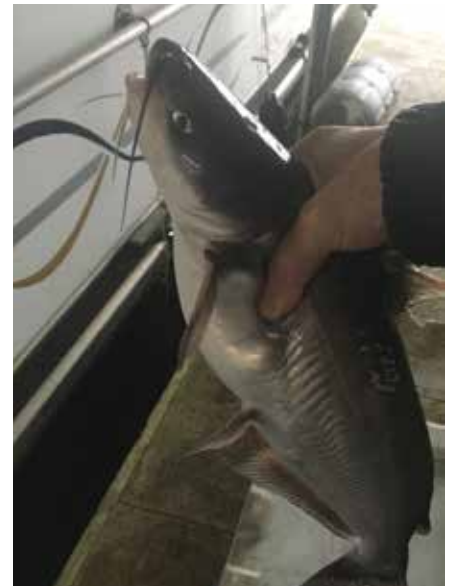


PHOTO COURTESY RICHARD JUE

*Catfish will be on the move on East and North Texas lakes in October. Bait a hole with range cubes, fill up a cooler with some good fish and then have a fish fry.*

Bugs — you name it. The buzzbait and frog fishing can be pretty darned good, too."

Violent topwater action can happen just about anywhere, but it is most likely to occur in skinny water around hydrilla beds and hay grass in water ranging six feet deep or less. Lots of 'Rayburn bass live in skinny water year-round, but fall's cooling water temperatures have a way of bringing out the head hunter in the fish. There will be lots of shad gravitating towards the shallows by way of creeks and ditches, too. Translation: Concentrate on creek channels and the chances of crossing paths with a school of hungry bass will be much better than making random casts on open flats.

Assorted moving baits like a square bill crank bait, swim bait, spinnerbait, swim jig or Chatterbait can be just as effective as topwaters, sometimes even more so. It's also a good idea to keep a light Texas rig or wacky worm handy for probing along outside grass edges were bass like to set up camp and wait for an easy meal to swim dangerously close.

Another pattern that always shines during fall is fishing along the edges of the Angelina River in the vicinity of the Highway 103 Bridge and beyond. The bite is always best when the water level is low like it is right now, mainly on big Texas rig worms, Carolina rigs and crank baits. 🌟🌟



## CoastWatch | Danno Wise

October is one of, if not THE most anticipated months of the year for anglers along the Lower and Middle Texas coast. Increased fish activity, cooling temperatures and less crowded conditions add up to make days on the water more productive and pleasant.

Redfish and speckled trout will still be the most sought after species, but October offers plenty of options for these and other species. Topwater activity in the bay will be great for both species this month. And, because the redfish spawn is getting underway, beachfronts and Gulf passes will be holding large numbers of big, bull redfish. As a result, October is usually the best time for South Texas saltwater fishermen to land a true trophy redfish.

Flounder, which have been making a comeback along the Lower and Middle Coasts in recent years, will also become more active during the first full month of fall. Like redfish, flounder will be getting ready to spawn and the annual 'run' of flounder can start anytime from mid-October through November. This will be determined when the temperatures start declining significantly.

In South Texas, anglers know October is one of the finest months to chase some of Texas' more 'exotic' inshore species – tarpon and snook. Both species will

be common in South Padre's Brazos Santiago Pass and Port Mansfield's East Cut.

Again, despite the vast variety of species available, angling pressure is expected to be fairly low during October. This, of course, is due to a variety of factors such as school, hunting and football seasons, and other time-consuming pursuits. However, all this does is serve to make fishing expeditions even more enjoyable for those who are able to find the time to get out on the water this month. **TAJ**



In the Lower Laguna Madre, guide Capt Austin Camacho will be splitting his time between hunting and fishing throughout the fall and winter. However, he says fishing will be about as good as it gets in October.

"Of course, all fall and winter, we'll be doing some hunting trips as well as fishing trips," said Camacho. "But, fall fishing – especially in October – is really, really good. It's really easy too. You can basically catch fish just about wherever and however you want."

"Most of our time will be on the south end of the bay. There will still be a lot of trout out front and the reds will be working their way south, also. So South

Bay and Mexiquito Flats will also be good. You'll also start seeing redfish on the Pasture during October.

"You'll have bull reds around the jetties, as well as mangrove snapper and even tarpon. There will also be a few kingfish still hanging around the jetties in October. So, you can do a little bit of everything."

"Snook fishing will be good in October, too. There will still be snook in the bay and around the jetties. And, of course, there will be plenty of snook in the Ship Channel as well."

"Really, you can catch fish on just about anything in October. Live bait guys will usually be throwing shrimp. We have a really good topwater bite in October as well. And, soft-plastics and spoons will catch fish, too."

Port Mansfield guide Capt. Steve "JR" of Get-A-Way Lodge says redfish will be the number one target in October.

"October is always really good," said Ellis. "In fact, it's really my favorite time to fish. For the most part, we'll be focused on redfish. And, there will be redfish everywhere. There will be huge – like half-acre – schools of reds on the flats. Plus, there will still be some bull reds around the jetties. But, we'll also have some good fishing for trout and flounder and there will still be some snook around, too."

"Again, redfish will pretty much be everywhere, but the biggest herds will be on the east side flats. The flats on both sides of the East Cut will be good, as will the spoils along the East Cut."

"For trout, the breaks will be really good. As the water starts cooling off, the trout will start moving back into the potholes. And, grass lines and depth changes will be really good, as will all of the submerged spoil islands along the ICW."

"Most of the time, I'm throwing green and white Norton Sand Eels and Sand Eel Jrs. But, dark colors like red and purple with either white or chartreuse tails also work real good."

"Something else I'll be doing is



PHOTO BY DANNO WISE

*Clear pristine waters on Texas' Lower and Middle coast provide opportunities to sight cast to redfish this month.*



looking for flounder. In October, a lot of time you can find them around the mouths of drains along the East Cut funneling water off the flats. We'll also run out to the jetties, not just for bull reds, but also for tarpon, kingfish and Spanish mackerel.

"October is always one of the better months to fish around here. We can have great flat fishing and really good fishing at the jetties. And, the weather is usually perfect for fishing that time of year."

Quite a few anglers in both Baffin Bay and the Upper Laguna Madre will still be throwing pinfish and shrimp, but more and



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*October is the month to throw topwater lures. Somedays the topwater bite will last all day long.*

*October is the month to throw topwater lures. Somedays the topwater bite will last all day long.*

more will be utilizing soft-plastics and topwaters in October. Throughout most of the month, the fish will spending a good deal of time in the shallows and will be susceptible to taking topwaters for a longer portion of the day – often all day.

When the topwater bite dies down, fish can be taken on spoons and a wide variety of soft-plastics. Fish will be transitioning towards their winter homes later in the month – meaning they will find flats closer to deep water access (like along the ICW) and with a mixed or mud bottom as opposed to sand. 🌟



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October offers great fishing for anglers in the Aransas area. Starting at the jetties, October sees big bull reds as well as some remaining kingfish and tarpon hanging around the rocks. And, October offers consistently good conditions for fishing the jetties and near-shore waters.

Bay fishing will be hot as well, with fish being found on the flats and in the guts along the spoil islands. Topwaters will produce both specks and reds early. Later in the morning, anglers can chase reds on the flats with spoons and plastics or probe the reefs for trout with live shrimp or plastics.

Rockport area fishermen will have

plenty of redfish to chase during the next few weeks. As the reds get ganged up and start making their way to the Gulf, fishermen should look to intercept them in areas such as the Lydia Ann Channel. There will also be herds of big bull redfish around the jetties, where they are easily targeted with bottom-rigged jumbo shrimp and finger mullet or heavily weighted jigs.

There will also be plenty of action along the shorelines and around the reefs in Aransas Bay, Redfish Bay and Corpus Christi Bay. A mix of redfish and trout can be expected in these areas, along with a few flounder. Popular areas such



PHOTO BY BILL L. OLSON

*In October more "exotic" species like snook will start showing up in the Brownsville Ship Channel.*

as East Flats, Dagger Island and Traylor Island will also be filled with fish during October.

When fishing on the flats, fishermen can expect plenty of topwater action, especially early in the day. Once full light shines on the flats, which usually happens around mid-morning, fishermen should look to cast jigs, spoons and plugs to potholes or cruising fish.

October is also an excellent time for wade fishing along the Middle Coast. Rockport area anglers can expect productive wades along shorelines and over reefs. Again, topwaters will draw strikes early, whereas soft-plastics and weedless spoons will be the 'go-to' baits later in the day.

Seadrift guide Capt. Nathan Beabout of N&M Sportman's Adventures says October will see some outstanding fishing in his area. "With the first cool fronts of the year approaching the Middle Texas Coast in October, our water will start its yearly cool down, and we approach the final trout spawn," said Beabout. "Trout activity can become more regular and not as hard to pattern as the dog days of summer. We will also start to see a lure selection change in the month ahead, depending on when our next front hits.

"If fronts start stacking up, and start to drive our water temps down more, our bait selection will move from four inch plastics to five inch plastics. Some Corky Fatboys will be cleaned off as well. A lot of folks automatically think they must

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start throwing dark colors. This is true to a certain extent, but just remember, to match lure color to the water. One of my favorite baits this time of year is Down South Lure's Strawberry Wine.

"Again, this all depends on Mother Nature. If our water climbs back up into the mid-to-high 80s normal summer baits will continue to produce. Nonetheless, seasons of change are knocking on our door, and the fishing will increasingly get better with the fall patterns.

"October can host some of the best wade fishing and sight casting days. Between the outside shorelines, shell, and the back marsh, there is no shortage of places to fish. A couple days before a front arrives, look for fish to go on an aggressive feed. Now while a couple days after can be tough for trout, it is typically a light and variable wind, which makes for some great days to be on the tower chasing redfish down the banks.

"Remember, chase the bait this month and pattern it, and you will find the bite. If our weather pattern changes the area you fished the last couple days may not work. Look for the signs to tell you where to be jumping out of the boat." ★★



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT. NATHAN BEABOUT

*This angler shows off a nice fall speckled trout he caught while fishing with Capt. Nathan Beabout. Beabout says in October, "Trout activity can become more regular and not as hard to pattern as the dog days of summer."*

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## Deer Season Guns and Gear

Texas' state holiday — the opening of deer season, is almost upon us so it is definitely time to gear up. There are new products at the sporting goods store calling out, so let us pay them a visit. First on our list — a new rifle.

The busy folks at Mossberg expanded their line of classically-styled, bolt-action rifles with the introduction of the Patriot Cerakote line in six popular calibers: 6.5mm Creedmoor, .243 Winchester, 7mm-08 Remington, .308 Winchester, .270 Winchester and .30-06 Springfield. They have combined a weather-resistant, black synthetic stock with the Patriot's barrel and bolt with a Cerakote Stainless firearm coating in a dark pewter metallic finish providing improved protection from scrapes, chemicals, corrosion, and the combination looks great.

The stock is designed for durability and comfort and constructed from a rugged synthetic with textured stippling on the grip and all three sides of the forend to provide for a solid grip. The straight comb, rounded edges and raised cheek piece reduce felt recoil aided by a black rubber recoil pad. A polymer block insert with integral magazine well provides an effective bedding platform.

The works is based on Mossberg's time tested twin-lug, push-feed machined-steel action and is fed from a lightweight polymer, flush box magazine with four round capacity. The 22-inch button-ripped barrel is constructed of carbon steel, free-floating and has straight-edge fluting and a protective recessed muzzle crown. Special features include Mossberg's patented Lightning Bolt Action, user-adjustable trigger with a two to seven pound range of adjustment, spiral-fluted bolt, ergonomic bolt handle, Weaver-style bases and sling swivel studs round out the standard features. The Mossberg Patriot Cerakote rifle series has a pleasant list price of \$440.00.

If premium features and more bling fit your taste and wallet then Mossberg has just the ticket with their Patriot Revere bolt-action rifles available in five classic calibers: .243 Win, .308 Win, .270 Win,



*The capable and cool Mossberg Patriot Cerakote.*



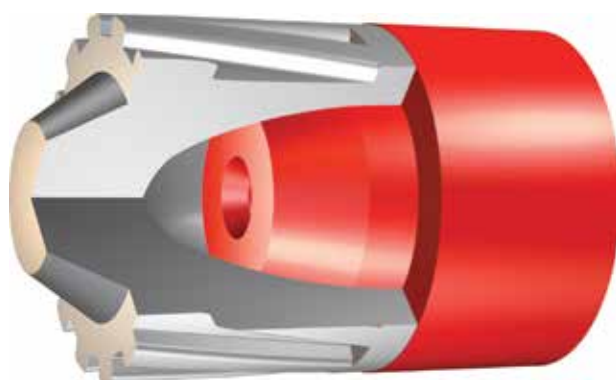
*The fast handling Browning X-Bolt Micro Composite.*

.30-06 Sprg and .300 Win Mag, and the immensely popular 6.5mm Creedmoor. The Revere has all of the attributes of the Patriot line with some regal touches.

The graceful beautifully designed stock is fashioned from Premier #2 Grade European walnut with rosewood forend tip and grip cap; both bordered by maple wood spacers. Distinctive fine-line checkering adorns the forend and grip with a Mossberg-monogrammed "M" branding the grip cap. Completing the look, the walnut stocks are enhanced with a hand-rubbed oil finish to waterproof and protect the stock. The clean 24-inch barrel has a polished blue finish to round out this classy package. The Mossberg Patriot Revere carries an M.S.R.P. of \$823.00 and the Patriot line may be viewed at [www.mossberg.com](http://www.mossberg.com).

Browning hits a sweet spot for both smaller shooters and faster handling with the new X-Bolt Micro Composite bolt-action rifle. The composite stock has textured gripping surfaces, a palm swell,

Dura-Touch Armor Coating and a compact 13" length of pull. It features sling swivel studs and a Pachmayr Decelerator recoil pad. The steel receiver has a matte blue finish is glass bedded and drilled and tapped for scope mounts. A 60 degree bolt lift makes for quick shucking and other features are an Adjustable Feather Trigger, detachable rotary magazine, top-tang safety and bolt unlock button. More fast handling is provided by the 20" barrel with a matte blue finish, threaded muzzle brake, light-sporter contour, target crown and all free-floating and chambered in the venerable .243 Win which is as good



*The Winchester Deer Season Slug is similar to a traditional Foster-style slug in that it is paired with a rear stabilizer that is inserted into the heel of the projectile and results in increased accuracy.*





*The AR specific AR Optics 3X9 from Bushnell.*

a deer cartridge as exists. The entire package weighs just 6.5 pounds making it perfect for long walks, getting in and out of the truck or the stand, and if purchased for a young hunter the Browning X-Bolt Micro Composite is eligible for their growth insurance program allowing the rifle to grow with the shooter. A long term investment for around \$900.00 retail.

Some states require the use of shotguns for deer season. In Texas we have more options with more on the way. A properly set up shotgun shooting slugs is great on deer and hell on pigs.

Winchester is now offering their newly developed Winchester Deer Season Slug ammunition. Shotgun slug technology has advanced and this bad boy benefits from those technological advancements.

Similar to a traditional Foster-style slug it is unique in that it is paired with a rear stabilizer that is inserted into the heel of the projectile. The slug and stabilizer travel as one downrange, resulting in accuracy that deer hunters need in the field.

Additionally, this shot shell is designed to be used in smooth bore, rifled choke tube or fully rifled barrels to make ammunition selection easier than ever. Additionally, the large diameter impact tip of the slug will provide rapid energy transfer on deer size game. Most impressive is this 12 gauge 2 3/4 inch shell propels the 1 1/8oz. slug (492 grains) at a very respectable 1600 f.p.s. The Winchester Deer Season Slug in a five round box will run around \$6.00. How many do you need?

The very versatile and adaptable AR-

type modern sporting rifles can always benefit with good glass. Bushnell has stepped up their game with AR Optics, riflescopes designed specifically for the AR platform. Their line of scopes cover most popular caliber including, 22 LR, .223/5.56, .308, 300 Blackout and even 6.5 Creedmoor.

New this year is a Texas favorite, a 3 x 9 by 40 mm variable featuring a .223 specific design incorporating their Drop Zone-223 reticle calibrated for .223 ammunition. It has target turrets and side parallax focus for precise adjustments and every scope features a Throw Down PCL lever that can be customized with two different heights. This is screwed on the magnification ring for quick spinning depending on need.

These scopes feature fully multi-coated lenses for superb light transmission, BDC reticles for precise elevation holds for specific ammunition; illumination for a clear sight picture in low-light scenarios, their respected Rainguard coating making water bead instead of run and the Bushnell AR Optics are waterproof.

An outstanding value at around \$ 225.00 and the line is viewable at [www.bushnell.com](http://www.bushnell.com).

It is never too late to scout your hunting grounds and Bushnell has a new tool to assist.

The Impulse Cellular Trail Camera is the result of innovative engineering that delivers a cellular option. Impulse makes it faster than ever to get connected with easy setup to any smartphone and any provider, with no contract. Ultra-fast dual processors work simultaneously to take one picture per second versus one per minute with competitor cameras. That means you get more images of each animal passing by.

Features include sorting photos by weather and wind data, GPS anti-theft alerts, live video camera views, HD Images and video, six month battery life, solar panel compatibility and more. Through your phone you see what the camera sees and that is very cool.

Window sticker is \$355.95. Check it out at [www.bushnell.com](http://www.bushnell.com).

Here is to a great hunting season and be safe out there. **T★J**

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# Lake Roundup

## SOUTH TEXAS



By Danno Wise

South Texas fishermen know October as one of the best months to fish lakes in the region for several reasons. The heat of summer is a thing of the past and the cooler, crisper fall weather is in the air and triggering a change in bass, as well as other species. Fish have begun moving up into the shallows and are acting much more aggressive than they did just a month before.

Since bass are shallower and more aggressive, October is that time when fishermen can fish their favorite way and still expect to catch plenty of fish. This time of year, it is not unusual for the topwater bite to last all day. Shallow water lures like spinnerbaits and shallow draft crankbaits will draw plenty of strikes as well. Jigs flipped into shallow cover will tempt plenty of fish. Soft-plastics can be rigged in a myriad of ways and still catch fish this month.

However, as great as the fishing is, October is also one of the more difficult times for fishermen to find time to be on the water. Football season, hunting season, kids' school activities and other activities vvy for time during October. Quite a few anglers don't have the time to fish much, if at all. The lack of pressure is just one more reason October is a great time to spend on the lake.

Of course, bass aren't the only species that reacts favorably to fall weather. With the days growing shorter and the water getting cooler, virtually every freshwater species will become more active. Channel

catfish, crappie, white bass, hybrid bass and a variety of panfish will be just as active as bass this month.

**COLETO CREEK** – Victoria bass pro Dennis Lala says October is a great time to just have fun fishing.

"October is always really good on Coleta," said Lala. "We'll have a lot of fish up shallow and should have a really good topwater bite. It's usually a really fun time to fish on Coleta Creek.

"It's also starting to get cooler, which makes it more comfortable for fish and fishermen. As the water cools-off, the fish will get really active in the shallow water. In October, I usually start off throwing a Frenzy Popper right up against the bank. I'll also throw some buzzbaits. The topwater bite is usually pretty strong for the first couple hours of the day. It won't last all day, but I'll stick with it as long as they're hitting it.

"When the topwater bite dies down, I'll switch to a spinnerbait. I like chartreuse or chartreuse/white spinnerbaits. You can fish a spinnerbait all day long in October. I'll still start with a topwater, then switch to a spinnerbait.

"After that, I'll work the shorelines and points with a weightless or lightly weighted Power Jerk Shad. You can keep fishing a spinnerbait, but I feel like in the middle of the day a Power Jerk Shad will produce a few more big fish — especially early in the month when it's still warm.

"When the water really cools off, the fish will start stacking up around the warm water discharge. That usually doesn't happen until November. But, you never know. If we get a couple of hard fronts in October, it can change things up."

**MEDINA** – Fall means good fishing on Medina, which is holding about half full as the seasons change. According to Jim Gallagher of Jim's ReBait Tackle, October is one of the easiest month's to catch fish on Medina.

"This lake can be tough at times, but in October, anybody can catch fish out here," he said. "Late-September into October, the fishing patterns start to change. So, from now through mid-November is really some of the best fishing we have on this lake every year.

"The thing that changes the fishing pattern is cooler water. That usually happens with the second front. The first front really doesn't do much. But, once we get a couple that make it all the way through South Texas, the water starts cooling off. When that happens, the fish will be more active and move a little shallower — not springtime shallow, but shallower than they've been since spring.

"October is really a transition month. We start seeing a little bit better topwater bite. Spooks, Bomber As, and PopRs will all work. On this lake, the Bomber 14A actually works better than the 15A. This is still basically a 'downsize' lake.

"And, as is always the case when our fish are shallow, there will be a pretty good spinnerbait bite so long as you aren't using anything bigger than a ½ ounce. On this lake you'll do much better using a ¼ ounce or 3/8 ounce spinnerbait."

"Although the fish will stay shallow quite 'a little longer,' barring any heavy late-season rain, the water will still be really clear. So, the sun will still be a factor. As usual, you are better off using natural colors in this lake. Chrome/blue, chrome/black and bone are good colors. Red and fire tiger rarely work on this lake. Chartreuse/blue back will work at times because it really resembles a small perch. The Norman Deep Little N and Deep Baby N in chartreuse/blue works well.

"Creek channels are always productive on this lake. But, you have to fish parallel to the creek channel, not across it. But, almost all of the creek channels, ledges and drop-offs will be holding fish.

"There will still be some hybrids and whites schooling on the lake. You can catch all you want when they are on top. It's a good idea to keep a rod rigged with a little jig or spoon in case you come across a school of white bass."

**CHOKE CANYON** — Choke Canyon continues to struggle with water level, but autumn's cooler temperatures should have a favorable effect on fishing there. Traditionally, October is the time when more anglers hook up with trophy largemouth bass on Choke Canyon than virtually any other time of year — despite the fact the fish are at their heaviest in



spring, not fall. October has also been the best time to catch big bass on topwater baits. This year should be no different, despite the low water levels.

As the water cools in October fish will begin spending more time along the shorelines and around shallow structure. Fishermen working shallow structure and shorelines can do well with noisy topwater lures such as Pop Rs and buzzbaits. October usually sees a prolonged topwater bite on Choke, with surface action often stretching well into the afternoon.

Once the topwater bite dies down, shallow water jerkbaits and spinnerbaits will produce. If the fish move a little deeper, fish a Texas rigged lizard. This pattern typically holds on Choke through October and well into November.

**FALCON** – Falcon is once again struggling with water levels. However, even with low lake levels, Falcon still has miles and miles of flooded brush, shoreline and other visible structure plus it is still producing plenty of fish. October will see plenty of bass hanging around these flooded brush shorelines. Early in the day, the topwater bite will be strong. Dog-walking baits like the Heddon Zara Spook will produce good results, as will buzzbaits and artificial frogs.

Although there will be plenty of solid bass taken from the flooded brush, along with a few big ones, the vast majority of Falcon's bragging size bass will still be hanging on the main lake and secondary points. Anglers targeting fish in these areas should use jumbo-sized worms, creature baits and crankbaits.

Catfish will be more than willing to bite, with the best action taking place in the river channel and up the river. ★★



By TOJ Staff

**AMISTAD** — As of early September "Big Friendly" was 36.82 feet below

conservation pool, a level not seen since the same time in 2014. However, there is some hope as this is written — heavy rains were moving up through the watershed out of Mexico plus there was heavy tropical rains coming inshore out of the Gulf. Hopefully those rains will help refill this popular border fishery. Regardless there is still plenty of water to fish and October should see fish really turn on.

With falling water temperatures just about anything will work. It all begins with a good topwater bite. Traditional dog-walkers, buzzbaits and frogs are all good options. When that bite slows switch to crankbaits, spinnerbaits and lipless crankbaits.

Look for bass to be more aggressive in their feeding patterns. This should increase in activity on into November.

Striped bass will have started their way up the Rio Grande, Pecos and Devil Rivers this month. Look for surface activity or use your electronics. Large topwater lures or Rat-L-Traps will catch those fish on or close to the surface. Slabs are a good option for subsurface fish.

Catfish will also be on a vertical move. Look for "whiskerfish" to be moving toward the surface from their deep summertime haunts. Best depth should be 20 feet and less.

**O.H. IVIE** — This popular lake has been fluctuating within a 10 foot range the past several years. The low mark has been about 45 feet low, a level it was at to start September.

Water temperatures should be falling into the 70s by October and bass will be on the feed. Look for them to be working toward more shallow water where topwater lures, frogs and buzzbaits will be good options.

Schooling bass made up of whites, blacks and smallies will still be herding shad in coves. Small Rat-L-Traps and other rattling lipless crankbaits are good lure choices.

Ivie has a population of bass that remains fairly deep, not coming up to shallow water. This is evident each June with the deep spawn on this lake. In October continue fishing for these fish with a Carolina rig.

**BROWNWOOD** — Like many west Texas lakes Lake Brownwood is lower than it has been in recent years. To start September this popular lake was over seven feet low, however the fishing has

remained very good — a forecast that should continue into the tenth month of the year.

Black bass will move up and be found on the more shallow lake flats, some of which may be near the surface. Fish the edges of these areas as well as around the boat docks. The best depth will be four to eight feet of water.

Throw opwater lures early followed by anything that moves. Soft plastics flipped under boat docks is another good option.

Crappie should still be around brush piles in water eight to 15 feet deep. Tub jigs as well as minnows are the baits of choice. ★★

## HIGH PLAINS



By TOJ Staff

**ALAN HENRY** — In October 2014 this high plains big bass producer cut is deficit from 18 feet low at the start of September to just nine feet low. At the start of September 2018 Alan Henry was approaching nine feet low. We could use another heavy rain to refill this lake.

In the fall Alan Henry's bass make a move up to more shallow water while still relating to sub-surface rock structure. Even though the best fall bite on this lake typically occurs next month, look for bass to be caught on small crankbaits, seven to 10 inch PowerWorms and watermelon red Baby Brush Hogs.

**COLEMAN** — Lake Coleman was almost five feet low to start September. Anglers will continue to concentrate on bass fishing that has been good coming out of summer and to start fall.

The best lures have been Rat-L-Traps, spinnerbaits and chartreuse soft plastics. Look for fish to be on the move and in more shallow water.

Crappie will also be actively feeding. Minnows and white or chartreuse tubes are good choices. ★★

## HOT Lure Options for Fall Trophy Trout



When most fishermen think trophy trout, they think winter and spring. While it's true that trout pack on the pounds leading up to the spring spawn, they are usually easier to catch during October. The cooler (but not cold) water temperatures of autumn lead trophy trout to spend plenty of time in shallow water, often exhibiting aggressive feeding behavior.

Everyone likes to catch fish on topwaters. And, there is really no better time than October to experience amazing topwater action. Walk-the-dog plugs such as Bomber Badonk-A-Donk, DOA PT-7, Heddon Spook and Spook Jr, and MirrOlure Top Dogs and She Dogs are among the most popular and effective models.



The generally calmer conditions found in October also allow floater/divers such as Bomber Long As and Cordell Redfins to be effective as well. These baits can be used with a twitch-and-pause retrieve or used as a "wake bait" steadily, but slowly, reeling them back to the rod tip.

Swimbait such as the YUM Money Minnow and DOA Baitbuster are also good choices -- especially when fish are found around schools of finning mullet. Anglers can work these baits at various depths, but they too are often effective when waked just beneath the surface.



When fish are being a bit more finicky, slow-sinking, finesse style baits such as DOA Shrimp and Corkys can be used in potholes. DOA Shrimp are also a very effective sight-casting lure to big trout laid up in the shallows.

One very unique way to target trout in the shallows is to rig a DOA Airhead on a screw-lock weedless hook, then cut a notch in the tail. This bait can be "buzzed" across the water's surface, often drawing explosive strikes. If the fish misses the bait or is swirling behind or just following, anglers can pause the bait and let it drop. This regularly proves too tempting for undecided fish. Essentially, anglers are able to have a topwater and follow up bait all in one and can quickly cover wide swaths of shallow flats.





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## Cool Shallow Water Fall Fishing



Texas bass fishermen live for October. Shallow water lures such as jigs, spinnerbaits and Texas rigged plastics will all catch fish. However, now is also the time for some outstanding surface action Bass will often viciously detonate on noisy topwater lures such as buzzbaits and artificial frogs this time of year.

Bluegill and other panfish will also be spending more time in the shallows. As active as they are in October, just about any small lures and baits will produce fish. However, one of the most enjoyable ways to spend the day targeting panfish is by tossing popping bugs with a fly rod.

Although they rarely hit topwater plugs, slab crappie found in the shallows are very susceptible to small spinnerbaits. When they are shallow and aggressive, crappie will often attack much larger lures than they do at other times of year. And, anglers throwing spinnerbaits in the shallows during October will often end up with a mixed bag of crappie and bass.

Like crappie, channel catfish usually won't hit topwater plugs (although, it can happen). However, when they move into the shallows, they are easily targeted by bank fishermen and boating anglers alike. Night-crawlers, shrimp and a variety of prepared baits will usually produce enough channel cats for a nice fish fry.

White and hybrid bass won't be found in the shallows, but they will often be seen schooling on the surface during October. When they are found "up top," a wide variety of lures will draw fast strikes, although lipless crankbaits, spoons and jigs remain the most popular. It is always a good idea to keep a light rod rigged for white bass when cruising across the lake, as they can pop up at any time.

October means cooler water temperatures in Texas lakes. As a result, most fish species will be much more active and will begin spending more of their time in shallower water. This not only makes them more accessible and easier to catch, but also allows fishermen to use a variety of fun lures and baits to catch them with.





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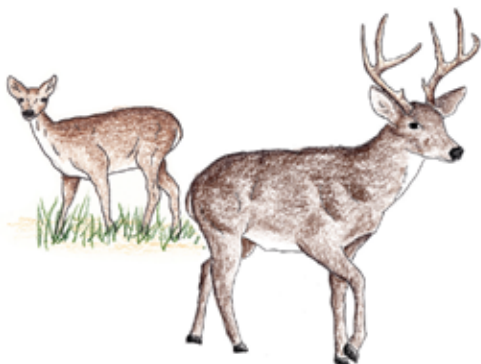
## MISCELLANEOUS

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## Bowhunting Reminders



Bowhunters take to their stands this month in hopes of sealing the deal on a close encounter with a whitetail. Whether the goal is to ethically harvest a trophy buck or simply score some meat for the freezer, final preparations can make or break the outcome that will occur split-seconds before and after they come to full draw.

One of the key components to a successful archery hunt is the encounter itself. Not only is this one of the driving forces behind many bowhunters' obsession, it is also what makes an ethical harvest possible. Archers must be within close proximity of a deer in order to make a lethal shot. This will only happen if a whitetail is unaware of a hunter's presence.

Washing clothes that will be worn in the stand with a scent eliminating and scent-free detergent is a must. After being washed, garments should be hung outdoors in a tree or among other vegetation to air dry. If this is not an option, there is several scent eliminating dryer sheets on the market that will keep clothes scent free.

Once all clothing to be worn during a hunt has been washed, dried and scent eliminated they should be stored in a scent controlled bag or tote. Hunters should leave them inside this scent-free chamber and only open it to dress in the field right before taking their stands. These steps will lessen the chance of an archer from being winded by a whitetail.



Prior to taking a stand, last minute target practice should focus on shot placement. Shoot at a 3D target, incorporating different angles and hunt scenarios. Hunters should take note of the path an arrow will take through the body of a deer in relation to the way the animal's body is oriented. Plenty of practice shots should have already been made during preseason practice sessions as well as between hunting forays. Position the target to face broadside, as well as quartering away and quartering towards the archer.

Practice shots should also be made while wearing the appropriate gear that will be necessary as the weather begins to cool down. These items include jacket, gloves, hat, and facemask. Sooner or later this added gear will be needed in the bow stand.

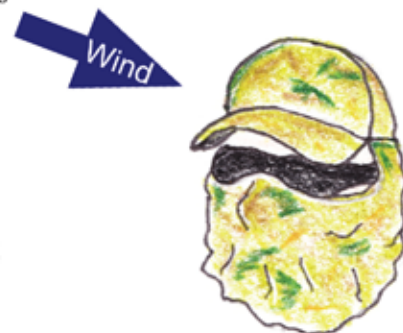
The outdoor items can hinder an archer's ability to make a shot, especially if they somehow interfere with the string upon the release of an arrow. This type of error can be avoided if hunters simply take the time to see how their shooting technique responds to donning more gear.



The approach hunters take when traveling to their stand is also vital for success. Archers should always try to keep the wind in their face when walking into an area to hunt.

One other productive strategy when it comes to a hunter's approach is to take a stand well in advance of the expected time of game activity. This will allow plenty of time for the disturbances a hunter creates when entering a stand to settle down.

Choosing which stand to hunt on a particular day given a specific set of conditions is also important. Hunters should always play the wind when planning a bow hunt. Blinds and platforms situated downwind of the area a hunter anticipates the deer will stage are preferred. Crosswinds can create a positive result as well. Hunters should avoid hunting a stand where the wind will be blowing from their backs into the area deer are expected to appear.





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# Outdoor Calendar

**THROUGH OCTOBER 7,**  
**Pronghorn Antelope Seasons (by permit only)** *Trans-Pecos, Permian Basin and Panhandle (41 of Texas' 254 counties have a season)*. For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH OCTOBER 30,**  
**Dove Season, South Zone.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH NOVEMBER 2,**  
**Rio Grande Turkey – Fall Archery Only Season, Statewide.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH NOVEMBER 2,**  
**Whitetail Deer – Fall Archery Only Season, Statewide.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH NOVEMBER 2,**  
**Mule Deer – Fall Archery Only Season, Trans-Pecos & Panhandle.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH NOVEMBER 4,**  
**Dove Season, North Zone.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH NOVEMBER 4,**  
**Dove Season, Central Zone.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2019**  
**Javelina season, South Zone.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2019**  
**Squirrel Year-Round Season, (open**

*counties with no bag limit)*. For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 1 – FEBRUARY 24, 2019,**  
**Squirrel Fall Season, 51 East Texas counties.** For more information consult the TPWD Outdoor Annual, website, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 1 – FEBRUARY 24, 2019,**  
**Javelina season, North Zone.** For more information consult the TPWD Outdoor Annual, website, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 2,**  
**Johnson County Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, Cleburne.** Call (817) 556-8074.

**OCTOBER 3,**  
**Tomball Chapter Ducks Unlimited Ducktoberfest, Tomball.** Call (281) 851-9776.

**OCTOBER 4,**  
**Grapevine Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, Grapevine.** Call (817) 601-7357

**OCTOBER 4,**  
**Wichita Falls Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, Wichita Falls.** Call (940) 782-2852.

**OCTOBER 4,**  
**Matagorda County Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, Bay City.** Call (979) 240-6637.

**OCTOBER 4,**  
**Denton Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, Denton.** Call (940) 367-0679.

**OCTOBER 5,**

**Stephenville Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, Stephenville.** Call (254) 459-9586.

**OCTOBER 6,**  
**Go Fish! Learn To Fish Event, McKinney Falls State Park, Austin.** Youth and adults can learn the basics of fishing through fun, hands-on activities. Take away a fishing fun pack and enter the drawing for a door prize.

Equipment and bait provided for you to use during the event, or bring your own. No fishing license necessary. Event is free, but park entrance fees apply. Adults must accompany children. Bring sun protection and water. Meet on the Onion Creek Trail behind the Amphitheater Restrooms. Event start time is 9:00 A.M. For more information call (512) 243-1643.

**OCTOBER 11,**  
**San Marcos Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, San Marcos.** Call (512) 665-3324.

**OCTOBER 13,**  
**Jasper Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet, Jasper.** Call (409) 384-7005.

**OCTOBER 13,**  
**Shore Fishing Clinic, Sea Rim State Park, Sabine Pass.** Learn about shoreline fishing from the beaches of Sea Rim and learn how to shoreline fish like a pro. We will supply the gear or you can bring your own.

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**OCTOBER 16,**

**West Bowie Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet,** *DeKalb*. Call (903) 278-1079.

**OCTOBER 16,**

**Texoma Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet,** *Dennison*. Call (903) 820-8882.

**OCTOBER 18,**

**San Antonio Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet,** *San Antonio*. Call (210) 722-7787.

**OCTOBER 18,**

**Dallas Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet,** *Dallas*. Call (214) 673-9638.

**OCTOBER 20,**

**Gregg County Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet,** *Longview*. Call (903) 653-1695.

**OCTOBER 20,**

**Northeast Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation Fundraiser Banquet,** *Mount Pleasant*. Call (903) 577-2674.

**OCTOBER 20-21,**

**High Plains Mallard Management Unit: Youth season.** (*92 counties*) For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 20-21,**

**South Padre Island Fishing Days & Fishing Tournament,** South Padre Island Convention Center, *South Padre Island*. Celebrate the great fishing and fall season with top outdoor exhibitors, coastal fishing guides, boat manufacturers and more. Saturday 10am – 8pm and Sunday 11am – 5pm. For more information visit [www.sopadre.com/event/spi-fishing-days-2](http://www.sopadre.com/event/spi-fishing-days-2) or call (866) 639-8940.

**OCTOBER 24,**

**West Texas Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation Fundraiser Banquet,** *Hereford*. Call (620) 334-9026.

**OCTOBER 25,**

**Brenham Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet,** *Brenham*. Call (979) 966-5003.

**OCTOBER 25,**

**Permian Basin Chapter Mule Deer Foundation Fundraiser Banquet,** *Odessa*. Call (432) 254-7992.

**OCTOBER 26,**

**Rob Harper Memorial — Texas Shootout,** Elm Fork Gun Range, *Dallas*. Co-sponsored by FC Foundation-Dallas. Four man team sporting clays shoot — 100 targets. Benefits go to further beginning youth soccer programs. For registration information visit [fcdallasfoundation.com](http://fcdallasfoundation.com) and click on Rob Harper Memorial Shoot or [www.friendsofrob.org](http://www.friendsofrob.org).

**OCTOBER 27,**

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual West Bay Redfish Showdown & Fundraiser,** West End Marina, *Galveston*. Annual two man team tournament and fundraiser benefiting Shriners Hospital for Children – Galveston. Live Weigh-in, Live Music, Auction, Raffle, Door Prizes, Food & Drink. For entry information and registration call (713) 594-4252 or visit [www.fishwestend.com](http://www.fishwestend.com).

**OCTOBER 27,**

**Rockport-Fulton Chapter Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser Banquet,** *Aransas Pass*. Call (361) 463-6934.

**OCTOBER 27-28,**

**South Zone Duck: Youth season.** (*54*

*counties*) For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 27-28,**

**Special Youth Only Whitetail Deer Season,** Counties where a whitetail deer season occurs, *North & South Zones*. For more information consult the TPWD Outdoor Annual, website, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 27-28,**

**Special Youth Only Rio Grande Turkey Season,** Counties where a Rio Grande turkey season occurs, *North and South Zones*. For more information consult the TPWD Outdoor Annual, website, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 27-28,**

**High Plains Mallard Management Unit: Regular season, first split.** For more information refer to TPWD Outdoor Annual, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 27- JANUARY 27 1, 2019,**

**Sandhill Crane season, Zone A.** 103 counties. For more information consult the TPWD Outdoor Annual, website, or call (800) 792-1112.

**OCTOBER 27 – FEBRUARY 24, 2019**

**Quail season, Statewide.** For more information consult the TPWD Outdoor Annual, website, or call (800) 792-1112. **T★J**

**Mail your Outdoor Calendar items to:**

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**Pkwy North**

**Houston TX 77043**

**Fax: 713.957.3996**

**Email: [toj@airmail.net](mailto:toj@airmail.net)**

# Tide Tables

## OCTOBER 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	L2:59A 1.6 H5:18A 1.7 L3:26P 0.3	H12:42A 1.8 L4:37P 0.3	H1:47A 1.9 L5:51P 0.3	H2:32A 1.9 L7:03P 0.3	H3:06A 1.8 L8:42A 1.5 H12:39P 1.6 L8:09P 0.4	H3:35A 1.8 L9:06A 1.3 H2:08P 1.7 L9:08P 0.5
	1	2	3	4	5	6
H4:01A 1.7 L9:40A 1.1 H3:24P 1.8 L10:02P 0.7	H4:25A 1.7 L10:18A 0.9 H4:34P 1.8 L10:53P 0.8	H4:47A 1.6 L10:57A 0.7 H5:42P 1.8 L11:42P 1.1	H5:08A 1.6 L11:37A 0.5 H6:48P 1.9	L12:33A 1.3 H5:26A 1.6 L12:18P 0.4 H7:55P 1.8	L1:29A 1.4 H5:38A 1.6 L1:01P 0.4 H9:06P 1.8	L2:52A 1.5 H5:30A 1.6 L1:45P 0.4 H10:21P 1.8
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
L2:35P 0.4 H11:43P 1.8	L3:31P 0.5	H1:00A 1.8 L4:37P 0.5	H1:54A 1.8 L5:46P 0.6	H2:27A 1.7 L6:49P 0.6	H2:48A 1.7 L7:28P 1.4 L7:41P 0.7	H3:06A 1.7 L9:26A 1.2 H1:46P 1.4 L8:25P 0.8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
H3:21A 1.6 L9:28A 1.1 H2:50P 1.5 L9:04P 0.8	H3:36A 1.6 L9:40A 0.9 H3:48P 1.6 L9:41P 0.9	H3:50A 1.6 L10:01A 0.8 H4:43P 1.6 L10:18P 1.1	H4:02A 1.6 L10:28A 0.6 H5:38P 1.7 L10:57P 1.2	H4:12A 1.6 L11:00A 0.4 H6:34P 1.8 L11:37P 1.3	H4:18A 1.6 L11:36A 0.2 H7:33P 1.8	L12:19A 1.5 H4:21A 1.6 L12:18P 0.1 H8:38P 1.8
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
L1:06A 1.6 H4:20A 1.7 L1:05P 0.1 H9:48P 1.8	L2:04A 1.6 H4:14A 1.7 L1:59P 0.1 H11:03P 1.8	L3:02P 0.2	H12:12A 1.8 L4:14P 0.2			
28	29	30	31			

## NOVEMBER 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				H1:05A 1.8 L5:33P 0.4	H1:43A 1.7 L8:16A 1.3 H11:40A 1.4 L6:51P 0.5	H2:12A 1.7 L8:30A 1.1 H1:27P 1.4 L8:01P 0.6
				1	2	3
H2:38A 1.6 L7:57A 0.8 H1:51P 1.5 L8:04P 0.8	H2:00A 1.6 L8:29A 0.6 H3:03P 1.6 L9:00P 1.0	H2:21A 1.5 L9:03A 0.4 H4:06P 1.7 L9:52P 1.1	H2:39A 1.5 L9:37A 0.2 H5:04P 1.8 L10:42P 1.3	H2:55A 1.5 L10:12A 0.1 H6:00P 1.8 L11:33P 1.4	H3:06A 1.5 L10:47A 0.0 H6:54P 1.8 L11:23A 0.0	L12:32A 1.4 H3:01A 1.5 L11:23A 0.0 H7:50P 1.7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

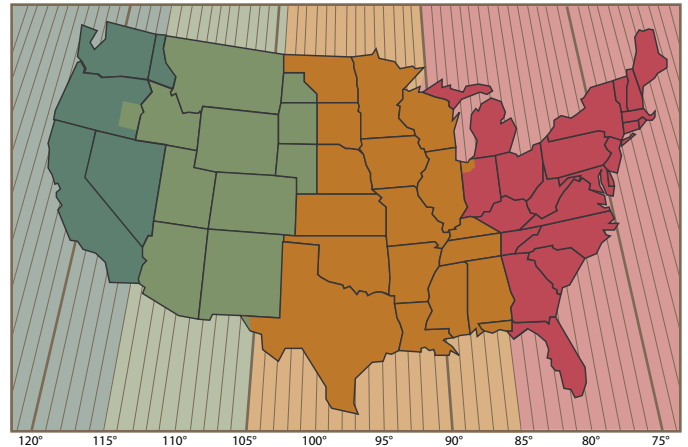
### Times are for Galveston, Galveston Channel

TIME DIFFERENCES	High	Low
Calcasieu Pass, Louisiana	-2:14	-1:24
Sabine Pass Lighthouse	-1:46	-1:31
Sabine Pass Jetty	-1:26	-1:31
Sabine Pass	-1:00	-1:15
Mesquite Point, Sabine Pass	-0:04	-0:25
Galveston Bay ent. south jetty	-0:39	-1:05
Port Bolivar	+0:14	-0:06
Galveston Bay		
Texas City, Turning Basin	+0:33	+0:41
Eagle Point (1)	+3:54	+4:15
Clear Lake(1)	+6:05	+6:40
Morgan Point (1)	+10:21	+5:19
Round Pt.,Trinity Bay (1)	+10:39	+5:15
Point Barrow, Trinity Bay	+5:48	+4:43
Gilchrist, East Bay	+3:16	+4:18
Jamaica Beach, West Bay	+2:38	+3:31
Alligator Point, West Bay	+2:39	+2:33
Christmas Point, Christmas Bay	+2:32	+2:31
Galveston Pleasure Pier	-1:06	-1:06
San Luis Pass	-0:09	-0:09
Freeport Harbor	-0:44	-1:02
Pass Cavallo	0:00	-1:20
Aransas Pass	-0:03	-1:31
Padre Island (South End)	-0:24	-1:45
Port Isabel	+1:02	-0:42
Tidal adjustments are not predictable for Port O'Connor, Matagorda Bay; Port Lavaca, Matagorda Bay; and Riviera Beach, Baffin Bay since they are driven by wind and weather. — NOAA		

# Fishing & Hunting Times

## US TIME ZONES

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



## OCTOBER 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 ☉	2 ☀ LQ	3 ☀	4 ☉	5 ☉	6 ☉
	4:40A - 9:40A	5:30A - 10:30A	6:20A - 11:20A	7:10A - 12:10P	8:00A - 1:00P	8:50A - 1:50P
7 ☉	8 ☉ NEW	9 ☉	10 ☀	11 ☉	12 ☉	13 ☉
9:40A - 2:40P	10:30A - 3:30P	11:25A - 4:25P	12:25P - 5:25P	1:20P - 6:20P	2:15P - 7:15P	3:10P - 8:10P
14 ☉	15 ☉	16 ☉ FQ	17 ☉	18 ☉	19 ☉	20 ☀
4:00P - 9:00P	4:25A - 9:25A	5:15A - 10:15A	6:00A - 11:00A	6:40A - 11:40A	7:20A - 12:20P	8:00A - 1:00P
21 ☀	22 ☉	23 ☉	24 ☀ FULL	25 ☉	26 ☉	27 ☉
8:40A - 1:40P	9:25A - 2:25P	10:10A - 3:10P	11:00A - 4:00P	11:55A - 4:55P	12:55P - 5:55P	1:55P - 6:55P
28 ☉	29 ☀	30 ☀	31 ☉ LQ			
2:55P - 7:55P	3:55P - 8:55P	4:25A - 9:25A	5:20A - 10:20A			

## NOVEMBER 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 ☉	2 ☉	3 ☉
				6:10A - 11:10A	6:55A - 11:55A	7:40A - 12:40P
4 ☉	5 ☉	6 ☀	7 ☀ NEW	8 ☀	9 ☉	10 ☉
7:25A - 12:25P	8:10A - 1:10P	9:00A - 2:00P	9:50A - 2:50P	10:40A - 3:40P	11:30A - 4:30P	12:25A - 5:25P

☀ 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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