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NEW YEAR,  
SAME OLD BASS



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> By Humberto Fontova

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THE ALLURE OF VENICE



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Donald Lee of Jamestown dropped this 174-inch DeSoto Parish buck on Nov. 23, after returning from a deer-hunting trip to Kansas. He thought the first trail-cam photos he saw of the buck were fake, photoshopped.



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Outdoor  
**UPDATE**

Savanna Burns caught this beautiful red snapper on July 4 about 35 miles offshore of Port Fourchon, while fishing with Down the Bayou Charters. It weighed 20.96 pounds and hit a squid bait.

# GULF COUNCIL SNAPPER ESTIMATES TRIPLE THOSE BEING USED BY FEDS

## LOUISIANA NUMBERS ARE GULF'S SECOND-HIGHEST

By Kinny Haddox

**F**ishing is supposed to be a fun, relaxing activity. Conservation must be a natural part of that, too. Anglers just want to catch fish, and at the same time, ensure future fish populations are preserved.

But it isn't that simple in the Gulf of Mexico.

When it comes to red snapper fishing off the Louisiana coast, neither fishing nor conservation seems to come without controversy and turmoil, two things fishermen try to stay away from. At the heart of seasons, limits and conservation efforts is the question "How many snapper are there?"

At the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's meeting that ended Dec. 1, one of the main topics of discussion was the result of the "Great Red Snapper Count," a collaboration between scientists, their institutions and state agencies along the Gulf to provide responsible limits and seasons on the fish.

What's confusing Louisiana fishermen is that the numbers in the Council's estimates of the Gulf's red snapper population are three times those used by the federal authorities to set snapper for recreational fishermen.

This latest study estimated there are 29 million red snapper at

least 2 years old off Louisiana's coast, second only to the 48 million estimated off Florida. Texas has 23 million, and there's a count of 10 million combining Mississippi and Alabama waters.

### HIGHER QUOTAS?

Those numbers are great news for red snapper fishermen. The question remains, will they be used to allow increased harvest numbers in 2021?

"This report is good news for the fishery and for anglers," said Chris Schieble, interim director of marine fisheries for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. "The Council discussed incorporating the Great Red Snapper Count into an interim analysis for red snapper that may be available in the spring and noted that red snapper catch limits are expected to increase because of this. LDWF biologists will likely present alternative management options to the Commission, if indeed there is an increase in catch limits. We are very hopeful that any increase in red snapper quotas will result in increased access to the fishery by the anglers."

The increase in numbers should lead to an increased harvest quota for everyone concerned with red snapper.

"The current Gulf-wide harvest allocation based on the federal stock assessment is 15.5 million pounds, which is split between commercial and recreational sectors," Schieble said. "We are hopeful the Great Red Snapper Count results will be utilized by the interim assessment in 2021 to increase the current harvest allocation (15.5 million pounds), so that all user groups get more access to red snapper."

## HOPEFUL BUT CAUTIOUS

Sports fishermen and charterboat operators who target red snapper hope for the same increase but watch with a wary eye.

"We won't know what it means until we see it in writing," said Capt. Brett Ryan, who runs Offshore Sportfishing Charters out of Venice. "I think that these numbers show that the state is doing its job. Snapper has long been miscounted, and I think that Louisiana having boots on the ground and seeing what's coming in everywhere instead of just guessing on some number based on other things, it's making a difference."

Ryan also has a very unique perspective on snapper fishing that gives him a insight on numbers that few others have.

"I'm a scuba diver and a spear fisherman in addition to being a rod and reel guy," he said. "I see the snapper down there. When we dive on spots like off Grand Isle and we see six boats tied up to the rig, we'll ask them how the fishing is. They'll tell us they are catching a few, and we dive down there, are there are so many snapper we can't even shoot anything else because the snapper are so thick. They are just not always feeding."

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Schieble said the next step is for the data from the Great Red Snapper Count to be vetted by the Gulf Council's Science and Statistical Committee. Once that happens, the Southeast Fisheries Science

Center will incorporate any feedback provided by the SSC and will then provide a completed interim analysis to the SSC, hopefully at its March 2021 meeting.

Next, the SSC is expected to provide a revised fishing limit recommendation for consideration by the Council at its April 2021 meeting. The Council will then work to address changes to the catch limits based on the interim analysis at a future meeting. LDWF is expecting that the timing of any changes, due to the interim assessment, would likely come after the start of the season in May, but is hopeful it can be incorporated prior to the end of the fishing year. ■



Mallory O'Brien Talley caught this big red snapper.

# TOLEDO BEND ANGLER HAS FOGGY NOTION ABOUT LUNKER

By Dan Kibler

**M**ichael Woods Jr. may never think anything bad about fog again.

Woods, a 35-year-old construction worker in the oil and gas industry from Many, La., wanted to pre-fish for a bass tournament on Lake Sam Rayburn on Tuesday, Nov. 17, but after idling around in the fog for a while, he decided to put his bass boat back on the trailer and head to Toledo Bend.

He put in at a ramp off Highway 21 next to Keith's Toledo Bend Tackle in Hemphill, Texas, and ran to an offshore hump in Carrice Creek, where his second cast with a jig turned into a 10.25-pound large-mouth, the second-largest of his life.

"I started at Rayburn, pre-fishing for a tournament, but it was so foggy, I left," he said. "I idled around for about 30 minutes, then I came back to Toledo Bend, put in, pulled up to my first spot, and caught her on the second cast."

## A BIG SURPRISE

Woods was fishing a ¾-ounce, black/blue Denny Brauer structure jig with a Rage Craw trailer, dragging it through some wood and brush, when the fish made her move about 10 minutes before 8 o'clock.

Michael Woods Jr., caught this 10.25-pound Toledo Bend lunker on his second cast the morning of Nov. 17.



"She thumped it, real hard — about pulled the rod out of my hands," Woods said. "It took a little while to get her up. She was heavy. I didn't have to fight her for that long, but she put up a good fight."

"When she first hit, I knew she was heavy, maybe a 5- or 6-pounder. It felt like she had me in some brush, but when I got her up a ways, I realized she didn't have me in brush, and I figured she was a 7- or an 8-. When I finally got her in the net, I figured an 11 or 12. They just look so huge."

Woods' big fish was 25 inches long, with a 19-inch girth. He pulled out a set of scales

and didn't even wait to see a final number.

"When I saw it hit 10, I didn't even wait for my scales to lock up; I put her in the livewell and headed back to Keith's," he said.

On certified scales at the tackle shop, Woods' fish weighed 10.25 pounds. His biggest, a Toledo Bend lunker caught on Aug. 18, 2018, had weighed 10.32 pounds.

Woods filled out the paperwork to enter his fish in the Toledo Bend Lunker Bass Association's program. He will receive a replica mount of the fish, which was released alive back into the lake. ■

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# 2020 WATERFOWL SEASON OPENER HAD UPS AND DOWNS

By John Manion

**J**ust as you'd have expected for 2020, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries' annual waterfowl survey estimate captured the fewest number of ducks since the annual survey began in 1969.

Only 855,000 estimated birds were seen during southwest, southeast and Catahoula transects flights. By comparison, that is not half of the average 2 million estimated birds that are typically vacationing in Louisiana at the start of duck season. Regardless of those numbers, it's "big duck" season, and waterfowlers across are happy to get back to the normalcy of chasing ducks.

Opening day success is as varied as the ducks themselves, ranging from the worst start to the best start. Hunters who were able to set up on or near concentrations of waterfowl are doing well.

Ryan Lambert of Cajun Fishing Adventures has been filling limits of big ducks every morning before 8 a.m.

"More widgeon than I've seen in 10 years," Lambert said. "Seeing less teal; I didn't shoot any opening day."

Drew Mire, who hunts the Delacroix area, was also trying to get on birds for the Coastal zone opener.

"We didn't see a duck for the first 30 minutes of shooting time," Mire said. "We did not lift the guns for half an hour."

But with hunting pressure moving decoy-receptive ducks around, Mire and his 4-man group all managed to take their limits.

"We mostly shot big ducks," Mire said, "greys, widgeon, a few mottles and the rest teal. We weren't covered up with ducks, but the birds we saw wanted to work."

Ryan Lambert and a guest with  
an opening day bag limit.



## SOUTHWEST OPENER

The southwestern corner of Louisiana is coping with repeated hurricane strikes to the marsh habitat. Brent Goodyear hunts in the Pecan Island area, which was lucky to avoid the large saltwater influx from Laura and Delta. However, areas to the south and west of Pecan Island did take the hit, which has proven to have both good and bad results.

"The saltwater that did come in killed all the invasive grasses: salvinia, water hyacinth," Goodyear said, "but so was your wide-geon grass and all your natural duck food. Now, everybody has wide open ponds; water is super clear."

With areas opened up for the ducks, Goodyear is optimistic that southwest Louisiana can have a good year. The opener was a step in the right direction.

"On a scale of one to 10, I said we had about a six," Goodyear said, "pretty much all teal, but better than last year for sure."

Clif Lane, who hunts the Delta Plantation near Jonesville in central Louisiana, had some opening day success. His 3-man blind managed to take limits of mostly big ducks, but numbers on his farm were down substantially from late October.

"A month ago, we had ducks like we hadn't seen since the 90s," Lane said. "Today, we didn't see a dozen mallards this morning."

Lane attributes that to warm weather pushing birds out of the area. "It went to 80 degrees," he said.

But Lane remains optimistic for the rest of the season.

"I do believe that we have enough habit here to hold the birds here," he said. "It's just a matter of Mother Nature pushing those birds back."

## COASTAL ZONE OPENER

As survey numbers predicted, this year's Coastal zone opener resulted in lower-than-average takes. Opening day bag checks across Atchafalaya Delta, Pass a Loutre, and Point aux Chenes WMAs revealed an average bag of 1.7 birds per hunter hunters, but the season ain't over just yet.

Conditions up the Mississippi Flyway remain dry, and more substantial cold weather is yet to make it to Louisiana. Both factors are conducive to pushing more ducks to Louisiana. Shortly after the Coastal opener, a light front moved through, and the average duck harvest immediately improved. On Nov. 18, across those same WMAs, bag checks recorded an average bag of 3.2 birds per hunter.

Larry Reynolds, waterfowl program manager for LDWF, explained that there is no doubt that high salinity levels negatively impacted the coast marsh. Even Catahoula Lake has been impacted by high water flooding the pastures. Across the state, duck usage of our habitat and the corresponding hunter-success rate will be impacted by this year's hurricane impacts.

"I remember back to 2005 (after Katrina), when the marsh was also impacted, but we had ducks," Reynolds said. "Even a damaged marsh can still support a number of birds."

Lambert shares the hopeful outlook.

"We don't have a speck of grass, but do have the potato roots," he said. "Hopefully, that will be enough to hold 'em this year. I'm gonna kill ducks come hell or high water!" ■



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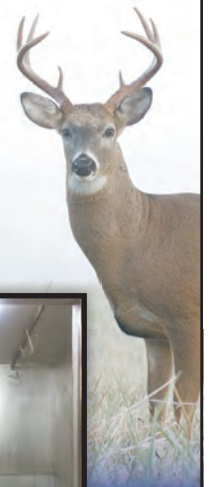
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# BIG BUCK TAKEN ON TINY LINCOLN PARISH PLOT

By Glynn Harris

It's Nov. 13; that's a Friday, as in Friday the 13th, traditionally a day when you have to be on your guard. You watch for black cats crossing in front of you and for sure, you don't want to walk under a standing ladder. All sorts of bad things can happen on this day known for producing bad luck.

Don't tell that to Choudrant's Jay Smith, something happened to him that smacked of anything but bad luck: a 14-point, 166-inch buck stepped out at 75 yards.

"I was hunting on a 5-acre piece of land owned by my family on the outskirts of Ruston," Smith said. "Actually, I was scheduled to go to the barber shop for a haircut that afternoon but changed my mind at the last minute. I could get my hair cut later, but I had the urge to go sit in my little ground blind instead."



Jay Smith took this 14-point, 166-inch Lincoln Parish buck on Nov. 13.

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One reason that prompted the change in plans is that friends had told him about a big buck hanging around in the area, and he thought, just maybe, this would be the day the big one decided to pay him a visit.

"My family at one time owned a towing business on the property," Smith said. "There is still an old building on the place and a few old vehicles utilized for parts that are still out there. The little 5-acre plot backs up to an old, grown-up clear-cut."

## A GOOD SIGN

When he heard about the big buck, Smith had gone out to the property on the previous Tuesday and had put out some corn to see if he could attract any deer hanging out in the area.

"When I decided to postpone my haircut and go sit in my blind, I was pleased to see that the corn I had piled up on Tuesday was all gone, and this gave me hope that at least something had visited the area," he said.

Smith drove his truck down to his blind, put some more corn out, drove to the other side of the property and walked back to his blind.

"I got in the stand around 4:30 and settled in to see what might happen," Smith said. "Around 5:15, I watched a doe come through the broomsedge to the corn pile and begin eating. I also noticed that she kept looking back in the direction she had come from. I figured maybe her yearling might be coming out to join her."

## BIG BUCK ARRIVES

Fifteen minutes later, Smith saw movement in the broomsedge patch and realized it was another deer headed toward the doe.

"The doe also saw the other deer, and she moved a few steps away from the corn pile," Smith said. "Then I saw what she was looking at: a big buck. The buck turned around like he was going to leave but then turned and started scraping the ground, lifting his head high like he was smelling the doe. He stood facing me, but then he turned a bit, and I got a bead on him with my Thompson Center Encore .300 Magnum and squeezed off a shot. He took off, and my heart

almost stopped; I was afraid my shot was off."

The buck disappeared, and Smith walked over to where the buck had been standing and found a couple of blood spots on the ground where the buck had been scraping. He followed a blood trail and found the buck piled up 30 yards away.

"I had no idea he had a rack like that; I was expecting to find a nice 8-point but he had a lot more than that," he said.

The buck, estimated to be 4½ years old, weighed 180 pounds and was a main-frame 10-point with four smaller points. The buck's inside spread was 15¾ inches, with heavy mass and long tines. He took the buck to Simmons Sporting Goods in Bastrop to be entered in that store's big buck contest, and the rack was measured at 166¾ inches.

Friday, Nov. 13, turned out to be anything but unlucky for Smith. ■

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# SECOND TIME IS THE CHARM FOR BUCK BAGGED IN RED RIVER PARISH

By Ryan Arena

**P**atrick Kennedy has been going hunting, he said, since he learned to walk, taking his first deer at age 11. But his Nov. 2 trip to Red River Parish was different.

A monster buck stood in front of him; Kennedy took aim, and the shot was perfect — well, almost perfect.

“That shot had everything it needed but a bullet,” Kennedy said, chuckling.

Indeed, Kennedy had neglected to load his gun after taking off the scope caps, but after the original trigger pull, the buck was still in range, and the second shot was true, the 7MM Magnum bullet finding its target 285 yards away and making a day of hunting great, and then some.

“It’s by far the biggest I’ve taken,” Kennedy said of the big, 13-point, palmated buck that hasn’t been scored. “A deer like that ... it’s pretty rare, because typically in that area, the rut is Thanksgiving week. This was Nov. 2. He just kind of wandered out there.”

There was a reason for that, it appears. Shortly after Kennedy dropped the buck, two more deer emerged from the woods, one of them a doe.

“I saw the doe come from the thicket, being chased by another trophy deer,” Kennedy said. “I know someone might hear that and say, ‘Well, two deer running off together after a shot doesn’t mean one was chasing the other.’ But I’ve spent my share of hours in a deer stand and I’ll say, without a doubt, that buck was on a mission.”

## A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

The buck Kennedy shot had been in trail-camera photos for months, but seeing it up close was a different experience altogether. When Kennedy recognized it, he said his heart may have skipped a beat or two. In fact, his early misfire may have been a good thing in hindsight, he believes.

“To be honest, I’d have probably missed,” Kennedy said. “For the

Patrick Kennedy took this big, Red River Parish buck on Nov. 2 after pulling the trigger on an empty chamber when it first appeared.



last couple of years, it’s actually kind of been a problem for me. It hits me too soon, and I get too worked up. I just told myself, ‘Do not look at his rack! Don’t look at the antlers, whatever you do, because if you do, you’ll lose your cool.’

This time, he kept his composure until he landed the shot.

“Oh, it was heart attack city when I got him,” Kennedy said. “A deer of that caliber is something I’m not used to seeing. It was almost like, ‘Pinch me. Is this a dream?’ It was crazy that I was even able to keep calm. I may have been kind of in shock, I guess.” ■

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# LINCOLN PARISH PRODUCE 17-POINT BUCK

By Glynn Harris

**W**hen it comes to big bucks, Lincoln Parish has been a big producer this hunting season. Chris Lewis of Choudrant is the latest hunter to sample the kind of bucks that Lincoln Parish grows when he took a 17-point, 166-inch non-typical on Nov. 1 on hunting club land east of Ruston.

"This is a buck that I have had on my trail camera, and this year was the first year he has shown up," said Lewis, 48, who works in the oil and gas industry.

Hunting during the primitive firearms season, Lewis saw quite a few deer, but the big one he had his eye on was a no-show.

The club land consists of a few hundred acres of mixed pines and hardwoods, with a little creek running through the property. Lewis hunts from a box stand that overlooks a food plot where a wildlife mixture is planted.

"After not seeing the big buck so far this season, I was starting to get a bit discouraged, thinking maybe he had moved on or

Chris Lewis and his big 17-point Lincoln Parish buck taken on Nov. 1.



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another hunter on neighboring property had gotten him," he said.

Hunting his stand the morning and evening of Oct. 31, Lewis said he didn't see anything and was getting disappointed. Heading back to the stand the next afternoon, he settled in to give it another try.

"I got in my stand around 2:45 that afternoon, and for 2½ hours, I didn't see anything that interested me," he said. "Then, about 5:15, the big one showed up."

## CHASING THE FEED

Lewis had put out a pile of deer attractant, Mo-Bucks, about 120 yards in front of his stand. The big buck stepped out and came to the pile of food and began feeding.

"There are does in the area, but this buck was more interested in eating than he was chasing a hot doe," he said.

"As it was getting late, I wasn't really sure it was him, and I scoped him out to be sure the deer was legal for our club; we have a 6-point of better rule, and it didn't take long for me to know this one met the minimum at least.

"When I realized he was a shooter, I didn't hesitate so I wouldn't get a case of the jitters. I put the crosshairs on my Thompson .270 on his shoulder and pulled the trigger. I could tell I made a good hit on him, and he only ran about 30 yards before he piled up."

## GENUINE TROPHY

The buck was a genuine trophy with an estimated weight of at least 200 pounds. His rack sported 17 points with an inside spread of 16½ inches.

Lewis entered the buck in the big-buck contest at Simmons Sporting Goods in Bastrop, where measurements revealed a score of 166%, good enough to put him in first place for a short time in the Men's Division. ■

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# CELL PHONE GRUNT CALL BRINGS IN BIG BUCK

By Glynn Harris

**W**hen Ray Mangrum's son, Sam, tried to attract the attention of a big Bienville Parish buck with his rattling bag on Nov. 20, nothing happened.

Then, he picked up his cell phone and used it to activate a loud, deep grunt call. A huge, 14-point buck came rushing out of the woods, spoiling for a fight.

"This is a buck we have been keeping up with for the past three years," Mangrum said. "Two years ago, he was a nice 8-point. Last year, he was a really good 8-point, but this year, he just exploded."

## FATHER-SON HUNT

Mangrum, a retired engineer who lives in Minden, hunts on his own Bienville Parish property, a 45-acre tract connected to Lake Bistineau.

"I had noticed that although trail-cam photos showed the buck coming out before daylight, he had started showing up a little later each morning," Mangrum said. "On the morning of Nov. 20, my son and I headed for my box stand around 5 a.m. to be there in the event he should decide to come out of the woods."

Soon after daylight, a few does showed up to feed around a feeder Mangrum had set out, along with two food plots planted in a mixture of winter peas, rye grass and oats.

"As it got to be around 7 a.m., I told my son that I guessed the buck was not going to come out today," he said. "When we walked in, we scared a bunch of deer off the food plot, and I figured one of them may have been him."

## WORTH HANGING AROUND

Before deciding to vacate the stand and call it a day, Mangrum's son decided to try something different, feeling that at least it

Ray Mangrum killed this 14-point, 174-inch buck on Nov. 20 in Bienville Parish.



couldn't hurt. He had a rattling bag, and on his cell phone he had installed a buck grunt call, one that is loud and deep. After getting no response from the rattling bag, he pulled out his phone and hit the button to emit the loud, aggressive grunt.

"As soon as Sam's phone made the grunt call, the buck just shot out of the woods at full speed, and he looked mad, apparently thinking another buck was messing with his does," Mangrum said. "I only had time to get my gun up and on him — I shoot a Weatherby .280 — and hit the trigger. When I shot, the buck turned and ran towards us down an old trail and then collapsed about 50 yards from where I shot him."

In this 2019 trail cam photo, Ray Mangrum's buck was only an 8-point.

## HUGE BODY, ANTLERS

Mangrum and his son sat in the stand a few minutes just to be sure the buck was down, and when they walked over to him, they were astounded at its size.

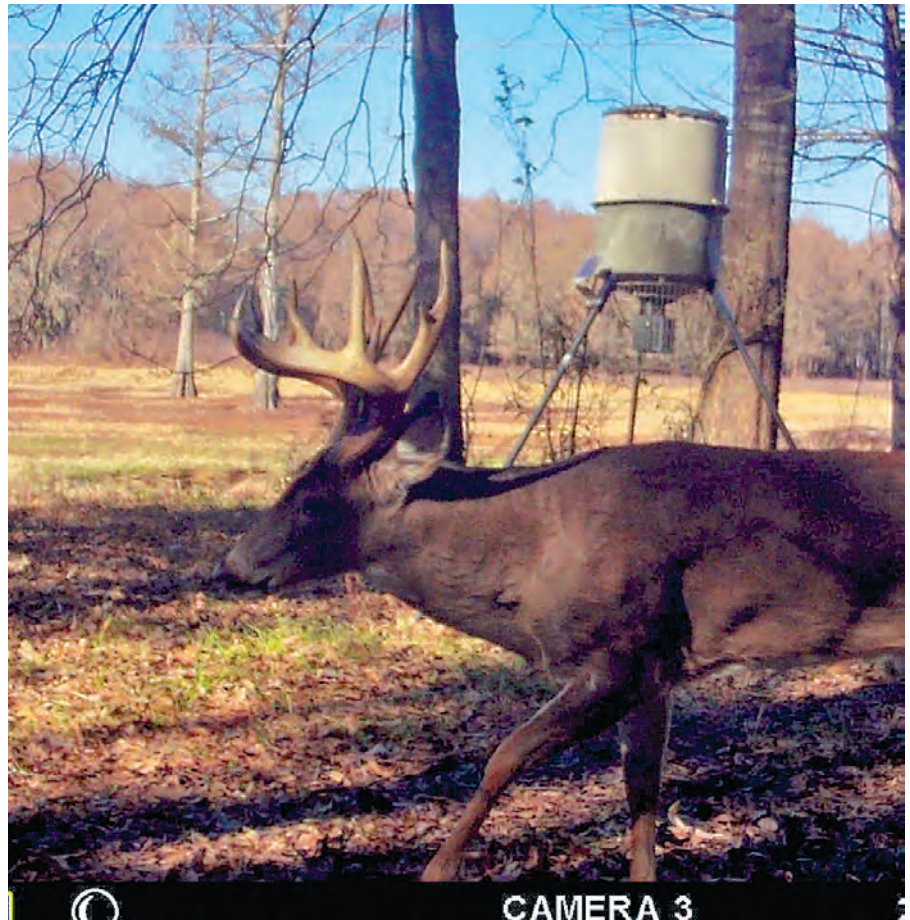
"He had fallen beside an old log, and when I reached down to grab his rack, I couldn't believe the bases, which were later measured to be nearly 7 inches each," Mangrum said.

The buck sported 14 points, with an inside spread of 16 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. Main beams were 23 and 24 inches, while G2s were each more than 12 inches long. And the most astounding feature of the 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ -year-old buck was the size of its body.

"We didn't weigh him, but it took all my son and I could do to load him up," Mangrum said. "Sam is a big fellow, and we estimated the buck would have weighed in the 280-pound range. We took him to Simmons Sporting Goods, where he scored 174 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches, which at the time put him in first place in the Men's Division in the store's big-buck contest."

Mangrum said the deer in his area seem to be of a good strain, and as a result, they limit the number of does they take each season to keep the blood line intact.

"There are two more bucks on the property that will rival this one," he said, "and it will be interesting to see what they are a year from now." ■



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Will Hanna's 24-point Red River Parish buck, taken on Nov. 8, scored 186½.



# RED RIVER HUNTER KILLS MASSIVE BUCK

By Monique Roth

**W**ill Hanna left work on Nov. 8 with the goal of downing a deer in mind, but with the odds stacked against him.

"It was rainy off and on all that day, and I started to not go, but two buddies of mine that I work with coaxed me into it. I slipped out of work a little early and got into the deer stand about 3:45," he said. "It was pouring down raining, and I wasn't sure if I would see anything. The mosquitoes ... I was about to get carried away with them. I was about to get out and go to the truck and call it a hunt."

His persistence paid off.

"At about 4:45, the rain stopped, and a small 8-point walked out; behind him was the one I killed," Hanna said.

The giant, 24-point deer Hanna killed was one he's had his eye on for a while.

"I had pics of him last year," said Hanna, who lives in DeSoto Parish. "He's trashy ... just a lot of small, crazy horns. When I started running my cameras this September, I started getting pics of him. He started getting on a pattern. He was coming out every

evening for about four days around 5 o'clock in the evening."

## A MONSTER BUCK

The private family land in Red River Parish where Hanna shot the deer on is equipped with trail cameras, and Hanna has been studying this particular deer for two years.

"I wasn't very confident," he said. "I was worried that it would get too dark, and I wouldn't be able to see. After I shot it, I called my dad to come down there in case I had to go look for him. I shot and waited about 20 or 30 minutes, but when we walked down there, I had dropped him right in his tracks."

Hanna, a lifelong hunter, said a buddy of his initially scored the rifle kill at a little over 184. When he had it officially scored, it measured 186½ inches.

The kill was a family affair, with Hanna's father-in-law helping to get the deer dressed.

"I plan to get it mounted," Hanna said. "It's the highest scored I've had. Around here, a score of 140 to 150 is considered a really good deer. It's still kind of blurry for me ... I was so excited." ■

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Donald Lee of Jamestown took this giant trophy buck on Nov. 23 in DeSoto Parish.

# DESOTO PARISH GIVES UP MONSTER BUCK FOR JAMESTOWN DEER HUNTER

By Ryan Arena

**A**t first, Donald Lee of Jamestown thought it was a joke. In early October, a friend sent him a photo of what appeared to be a huge deer on the leased hunting land they share in DeSoto Parish.

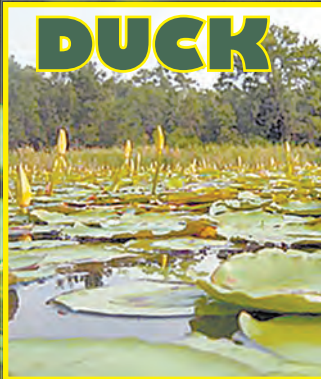
"I thought it was a fake ... photo-shopped," Lee said, chuckling. "I kind of blew it off."

Little did Lee know, he was just a few weeks away from taking the deer himself. The trophy buck, taken Nov. 23, was an 8-pointer that went on to score 174%.

"The past few days, I haven't even hunted," Lee said. "I've seen a few decent ones on camera, but it's going to be hard to top that one. I told everyone, 'I'm on sabbatical.'"



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A few days after he saw the trail-cam photo, he checked his own camera and saw the deer himself, though not at first.

"I saw a small 8-pointer under a feeder, and then in the back, I see this big frame silhouette of this deer about 40 yards behind it. So I thought, 'Looks like something to this,'" said Lee, who saw the buck more and more in later photos.

It didn't take any more for Lee, a lifelong hunter, to know what his next goal was. The only problem? He was pretty booked up for the several days after seeing his target, between a trip to Kansas and

his son's birthday.

"I saw him right away (in photos) while I was in Kansas," Lee said. "I was twisted in a knot, not being able to hunt this deer."

But as soon as he was home from Kansas, he was back in DeSoto Parish.

## FINALLY HOME

The first day was fruitless. He saw 11 different bucks, but not the big one. He got to his stand early in the morning on they second day he hunted the buck, Nov. 23, and about an hour after he arrived, it showed up.

"I saw him coming at me," Lee said. "I thought it was one of those young 8-points at first, but it was him. I reached for my gun and shot him.... I told people I knew that I was hunting him and that I'd just shot him. I waited for awhile and then went out and looked.... I didn't see any blood. I'd already told people I shot this deer, c'mon."

A short time later, he spotted what looked like it could be a log, but it wasn't.

"Sometimes your mind plays tricks on you . . . but I realized, 'Okay, that looks grainy, not like a log,'" he said. "I realized it was him. And when I got there, there was no shrinkage. He was everything I thought he'd be."

## THE ULTIMATE PRIZE

Lee has hunted deer since the age of 12. His father died tragically around that time, and a family friend introduced Lee and his brother to deer hunting. The two brothers killed their first deer the same day, Lee a small buck and his brother a doe.

His latest kill left him "pumped up."

"Whatever I do, I want to be the best at it. Whether I'm shooting a gun.... If it's horse-shoes, I want to be the best at horsehoes," he said. "I played sports all my life and always wanted to be that guy who hit the most home runs, had the fastest speed, so when I saw I got him, I felt like, 'Mission Accomplished.'" ■



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# ILLNESSES DON'T STOP JENA MAN FROM TAKING TROPHY

By Glynn Harris

**O**ne would think that for a fellow fighting COVID and meningitis, deer hunting would be the last thing on his mind.

However, with his wife along for support, 49-year-old Monroe Roark of Jena settled into his box stand on his Winn Parish lease on Thanksgiving afternoon, Nov. 26, and dropped a monster 9-point buck that measured better than 162 inches.

"I work on an offshore rig for Chevron, and I started feeling bad," Roark said. "It was determined I had contracted COVID, so they air-lifted me off the platform to the hospital, where I stayed for four days. While there, it was also determined I also had meningitis."

After leaving the hospital and returning home, he felt well enough to go out and check his trail cameras and found that a big buck he had been seeing in photos had been coming out during daylight hours. He talked his wife into going to sit with him that afternoon; she insisted on going with him for support.

"When I left the hospital, the doctor inserted a picc line in my arm so that I could receive medication three times a day. When the doctor started to insert it on my left arm, I asked him if it could go in my right arm instead. He wanted to know why, and I told him I shoot from my left shoulder," Roark said, laughing.



Monroe Roark took this Winn Parish 9-point buck on Nov. 26, while recovering from COVID and meningitis.

## HUNT CLUB 'HIT LIST'

Roark hunts on the 2,700-acre Beech Bottom hunting club in Winn Parish. The land features a mixture of creek bottoms and pine hills. The club's rules are that only bucks 4½ years old or older can be taken. Club members had agreed that the buck on Roark's camera would be on this season's "hit list."

Sitting in a box stand overlooking a gas line with a feeder out front and a food plot planted in wheat, Roark and his wife were enjoying the scenery when he looked up to see a big deer step out at 175 yards.

"I picked up my binoculars and saw it was a big buck, the one I had on camera," Roark said. "I laid the binoculars down and picked up my .257 Weatherby Magnum and got him in the scope.

The buck was walking our way, but then stopped at 155 yards, and I watched him thrash a licking branch over his head before stopping to paw the ground, making a scrape. He did that for probably 2 minutes, and I was getting more nervous all the time. I told my wife I had to put the gun down for a minute so I could calm down."

When the buck finally left the licking branch and scrape, he turned slightly, giving Roark a quartering shot.

"I decided he was giving me a good enough angle, so I hit the trigger, and the buck hit the ground right there," he said. "We gathered our stuff, climbed down and started walking toward him, and he seemed to get bigger and bigger as we got closer."

### ROARK'S BIG BUCK

The buck was a dandy, estimated to be 5½ years old and sporting a main-frame 8-point rack with a kicker off a tine on the left antler. Main beams were both longer than 26 inches, with a 17-inch inside spread. The most-outstanding feature of the rack was the mass with bases more than 5 inches and circumferences better than 4 inches at each spot on the beams. The buck's

estimated weight was 225 pounds.

The buck was entered in the big buck contest at Simmons Sporting Goods in Bastrop with a score of 162½ inches. ■



*I decided he was giving me a good enough angle, so I hit the trigger, and the buck hit the ground right there.*



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# TWO DOES ON ALERT CLUE IN HUNTER TO HUGE TROPHY

By Glynn Harris

**C**arlos Stewart of DeRidder had a pair of skittish does give him clues about why they were so nervous.

Moments after the does fled the scene, a big buck, a 174-inch deer Stewart had never seen, stepped out of some pine trees, giving him the chance he was hoping for. He took it.

"I hunt on a 3,500-acre hunting lease south of DeRidder in Beauregard Parish, a club where I had taken a nice buck earlier this season," said Stewart, 57.

Having established a Facebook page, Bucks of Beauregard, Stewart invited area hunters to send him photos of bucks they have taken; he posts them on the page.

"This gives deer hunters the opportunity to share their success at this one site, and they seem to enjoy it," he said. "I know it's something I enjoy doing, and I have received lots of compliments from hunters whose big deer show up on my website."

On the morning of Nov. 20, Stewart downed a buck that earned a spot on the page, a deer other successful hunters admire and perhaps envy a bit.

"I went out to my stand early that morning and climbed aboard," he said. "My stand is a box elevated a few feet off the ground, and sitting in my stand, I have two lanes where I have a feeder and rice bran on the ground. One stand gives me a view to the east, while the other is open to the north.

## LAST MINUTE

The morning dawned with heavy fog that lifted by around 9 o'clock, but the only thing he had seen were squirrels



Carlos Stewart killed this impressive 13-point Beauregard Parish buck the morning of Nov. 20.

working on the corn on the ground beneath the feeder.

"I was getting tired and decided it was time to head home; I wasn't seeing any deer," Stewart said. "So I started gathering my gear and making plans to leave since it looked like nothing was going to happen that morning."

Just as he was preparing to climb down, a doe darted out on his north lane and shot across in a hurry.

"I got my gun ready, because I thought maybe a buck could be following her," he said. "About that time, here came another doe that paused and then took off across the lane."

Stewart had gotten word of a big buck on his club; a member had images of a really good one on his trail camera. However, he had not seen the buck and didn't have any of his own trail-cam photos of the buck in the area he hunts.

"After seeing the reaction of these two does, I was on high alert, when a buck with a big rack stepped out at about 75 yards from me," he said. "As soon as I saw him and his impressive set of antlers, I took my eyes off the rack, because I knew if I looked at them too long, I would really get shook up."

## GIVING THANKS

Putting the crosshairs of the scope on his

Thompson Center .270 behind the buck's shoulder, Stewart squeezed off a shot, and the buck took off running straight down the lane.

"I sat there for probably 30 minutes regaining my composure before getting out of the stand and starting that way," he said. "As I headed where the deer was standing when I shot, I pulled out my phone and set it to record. As I walked and filmed, I was thanking the Lord that even though the year 2020 had been such a terrible year, with me losing some good friends and hunting buddies, I was thanking God for giving me the chance at a buck like this. When I got to where the buck had been standing, I saw blood."

Continuing down the route the deer had taken, Stewart had covered about 65 yards when he looked up and saw a white belly 30 yards out; the buck was down for good.

The buck only weighed 155 pounds and was old, with teeth worn almost completely down, and it was estimated to be at least 8 years old. Sitting atop his head was a massive rack of 13 points. The inside spread was 19 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches, both main beams were more than 23 inches long, with bases 4 inches in circumference. At K&K Taxidermy in Reeves, the buck was unofficially scored at 174 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches. ■

# WEBSTER PARISH MONSTER COULD BE STATE BOW RECORD

By Glynn Harris

An arrow that fell off his bow string, not once but twice, didn't prevent Doyline's Wesley Miller from finally getting off a perfect shot on a 178-inch Webster Parish buck, a deer that could be in contention for a state record for typical bucks taken with a bow.

Miller, a registered nurse at Pathway Rehabilitation Hospital in Bossier City, hunts on his family's 300-acre tract near Dubberly, property that was devastated by a tornado in January 2020.

"We lost 40 acres of big oaks from the tornado, which left a tangled mess on the property, destruction that created a problem with trying to pinpoint the core area of a big buck we had on camera," Miller said.

## DEER SIGN

On Saturday, Nov. 28, Miller shot a doe with his rifle, a deer he had to track down. While searching, he discovered something that gave him hope that maybe he'd located the big buck's home turf.

"While retrieving the doe, I was working my way through the tangled limbs and trees, and I spotted a deer trail," Miller said. "Upon further checking, there were some big rubs and scrapes along the trail, so I decided this would be a good place to set up to have a chance at this big buck."

The next afternoon, Miller attached his climbing stand to a tree with a good view of the sign he'd found. Another thing that gave him hope is that while in his stand that afternoon, several does came by,



Wesley Miller killed this potential state-record archery buck in Webster Parish on Nov. 30.

which suggested a buck would likely be in the area.

"The next morning, Nov. 30, I headed to the area early and mounted my stand before daylight," he said. "A front had blown through, and it was very windy that morning. I climbed to 29 feet up an oak thinking that by making sure I was scent-free and that high, a deer shouldn't be alerted to my presence."

## SERIES OF MISHAPS

At 9:30, Miller watched the buck he was after step out of one of the downed tree-tops and begin walking in his direction. Within moments, his chances of taking the buck almost disappeared.

"I had everything in my favor as the buck made his way through the woods, and I spied a small hole in the foliage and was prepared to release my arrow when the buck stepped into the hole," Miller said. "However, when I tried to pull my bow back, my arrow fell off the bow string. By then, the buck had passed through that opening, so I spied the next opening; I was ready."

"However, when I pulled back on my bow, the arrow fell off the string again and made some noise that alerted the buck. With the high winds and my being scent-free, I watched the buck just standing there, looking around. By then, he had moved to my right, and it is difficult to turn your body to the right when shooting a bow, especially when wearing a

safety harness. I had to get down on one knee, pull back the bow again, and by then, the buck was standing with a 6-inch hole exposing the area behind his shoulder when I released my arrow."

## TROPHY BOW KILL

Miller watched the deer run toward an old logging road, then stop and stand there.

"I was getting really nervous thinking maybe I had made a bad shot when the buck began wobbling and just tipped over," Miller said. "I stayed in my stand trying to calm down and made a few phone calls. When I got down, I walked back to my 4-wheeler, taking my climbing stand and gear before going to check on the deer. I just wanted to be sure he was down for good."

The huge buck was dead when Miller got to it. The buck's rack was a main-frame 12-point with a kicker. The inside spread was 20 inches; the main beams were 24 and 25 inches long, with bases 5 inches in circumference. The 4½-year-old buck weighed 186 pounds, and its symmetrical rack scored an even 178 inches.

A check of the state big-game records reveal that the largest typical buck taken with a bow scored 175 inches, taken by Shannon Presley in 1981. Miller's buck, once the 60-day drying period is over, could challenge for the record. Only time will tell. ■

## BIG BUCK GALLERY >

# SPORTSMAN'S BIG BUCK GALLERY



On the afternoon of Oct. 11, Kayslyn Hall, 13, took advantage of youth season in Natchitoches Parish to take this 10-point buck, which measured 140.



On Nov. 5, Kaylee Hall, 17, took this buck on family land around Marthaville in Natchitoches Parish. The rough score on the rack was slightly more than 140 inches.



Scott Simmons took huge non-typical Lincoln Parish buck on Nov. 2.



Joel Masters killed his trophy buck, nicknamed Bullwinkle, on Nov. 13 at the M and S Hunting Club in Sabine Parish. The rack was measured at 147½ inches.



Riley Smith killed this 144¾-inch trophy buck in Union Parish on Nov. 7.



Lee Sullivan (left) with his 150-inch buck and Kenny Sullivan with his a 140-inch, 8-point buck. Both were killed on Nov. 20 in Red River Parish.



On Nov. 15, Brett Nobles took this 14-point buck with an unusual rack and lots of mass in Lincoln Parish.

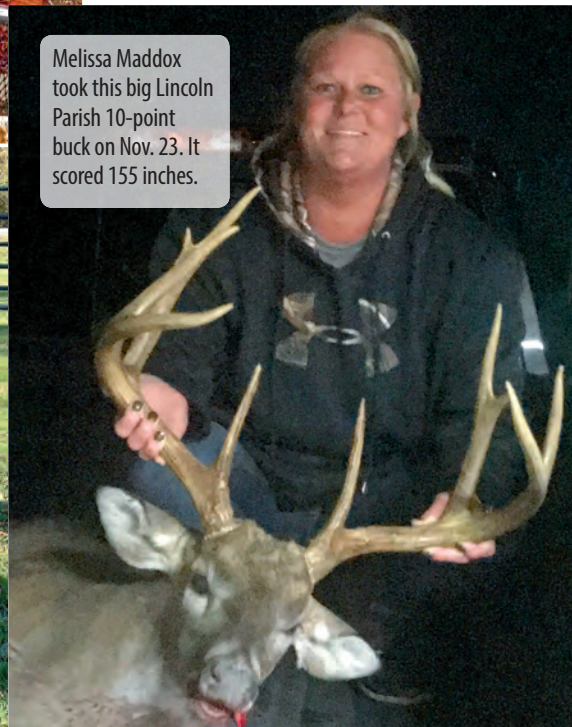


Kelly Downey took this 10-point buck at Little Cypress Creek hunting club in Bossier Parish on Nov. 15. The rack measurements came to 159 3/4 inches.

To read full stories about any of these trophy bucks, go to **LouisianaSportsman.com** and visit the Deer of the Year section.



Lane Cox took this buck, which measured 153 3/4 inches, on Nov. 23 at the Winter Quarters Hunting Club in Tensas Parish.



Melissa Maddox took this big Lincoln Parish 10-point buck on Nov. 23. It scored 155 inches.

# SPORTSMAN'S BIG BUCK GALLERY

Outdoor  
**UPDATE**



Teddy Dupuy took this big 8-point buck in Kisatchie National Forest in Grant Parish on Nov. 22. The buck had an 18-inch inside spread and 22½-inch main beams with long G2s and G3s and 5-inch bases. It scored 153¾ inches.



Steve Davidson took this big Claiborne Parish 10-pointer on Dec. 2. The buck weighed slightly more than 200 pounds and was scored at 160¾ inches.



Levi Madden arrowed this big Madison Parish 11-point buck on Nov. 29. Tipping the scales at 235 pounds, the rack was measured at 152¾ inches.

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## LDWF SECURES AGREEMENT TO REOPEN LAKE MARTIN RAMP

From News Reports

**T**he public was the winner on Nov. 30 when the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Chauffe-Hebert family reached an agreement to provide full access to Lake Martin through a boat launch that had been at the heart of a months-long dispute, according to LDWF.

LDWF had been in negotiations with the family for months to have barriers removed that had been blocking access to the launch and traditional parking area since March 1. The publicly built launch is the only public entry point for boaters into the lake, which is legislatively designated as a game and fish preserve.

The LDWF and the family agreed to an interim consent judgment that allows the launch and adjacent parking area to remain open until the merits of the lawsuit are resolved or when LDWF and the family reach a permanent agreement.

"The launch is a gateway to a pristine, natural environment that people have enjoyed for decades," said Jack Montoucet, LDWF's secretary. "We are happy that the family and all concerned could reach this decision. This is a decision many people can cheer about."

This interim agreement was established through the efforts of LDWF legal staff along with the Louisiana Attorney General's office and representatives of the Chauffe-Hebert family.

According to the LDWF, the reopening

comes at a time when sportsmen need access to Lake Martin for duck hunting, fishing, boating and birding.

"We commend the family for agreeing to get this done at this critical time. So many folks are rediscovering the outdoors and have found a way to have fun and still meet Governor Edwards' COVID-19 distancing guidelines," Montoucet said.

### THE CLOSURE

The boat launch was blocked for nearly 9 months after the family, which owns property adjacent to the launch, said it was concerned that it could be held liable should any accidents happen while people were on their property, headed to the launch.

After months of congenial and earnest discussions about the possibility of reopening the launch were unsuccessful, LDWF eventually asked the courts to intervene.

LDWF lawyers, assisted by the attorney general's office, filed a lawsuit in



November against the property owners seeking to have the launch re-opened. On Nov. 19, 16th Judicial District Court judge signed a temporary restraining order to re-establish public access to Lake Martin through the boat launch and to prevent any obstruction impeding use of the launch.

After the court's ruling, the parties continued their efforts to resolve issues surrounding the boat launch and agreed to an interim consent judgment, which clarifies that the launch and adjacent parking area will remain open to the public until a permanent agreement is reached or the court rules on the merits of the lawsuit. The agreement also addresses the liability concerns raised by the family. ■

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## LDWF ONLINE-ONLY HUNTER ED CERTIFICATION DEBUTS

From News Reports

**T**he Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has set Jan. 2 as the date that anyone 16 and older requiring a basic hunting license to earn their hunter education certification completely online. The online-only option will not be available to anyone under 16 years of age.

Under the new process, there is no additional field day required for those who

qualify and who successfully complete Louisiana's approved online course, which can be found at <https://www.hunter-ed.com/louisiana/>. A fee will apply. Qualifying individuals who successfully complete the online course will receive their hunter education credentials digitally.

The traditional classroom course, which is open to those 10 years and older, will still be offered. Those choosing the online/

field day option will still be required to complete a field day. LDWF will continue to offer field days. There is no cost for the classroom or field day courses.

Current regulations will remain in place until Jan. 2. Traditional classroom courses and the online course with a field day will still be available for all students preferring these formats. ■

# THISTLETHWAITE FAMILY AGREES TO EXTEND WMA LEASE

From News Reports

**F**or almost 55 years, Thistlethwaite WMA in St. Landry Parish has provided the public an outstanding venue to hunt, observe numerous species of birds and enjoy the best of the Sportsman's Paradise.

Thanks to the Thistlethwaite family, which owns the land, that will continue for many years to come.

The family has agreed to continue to allow the 11,100-acre WMA to be administered for public opportunity by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The Thistlethwaite heirs signed a lease with LDWF in May of 1966 to create the WMA and, renewed the lease on Dec. 7.

"The reason was to allow the public to use this wonderful piece of property for the enjoyment of hunting and outdoors conservation," said Lawrence Thistlethwaite, spokesman for the family.

"We've had a good relationship with LDWF; they're always willing to listen to any concerns we might have, and we've always been

able to work well together. It's been a good partnership and benefitted the public."

"We're so pleased the Thistlethwaite family will continue to allow us to use this treasured land for public use and wildlife focused recreation," said Jack Montoucet, LDWF's secretary.

"Thistlethwaite WMA features some of the best public-land deer hunting in the state. We've worked with the Thistlethwaite family in managing the public access for consumptive and non-consumptive use of the wildlife resources present on this bottomland hardwood forest. It's a place in which we take great pride in overseeing."

Thistlethwaite WMA is located northeast of Washington off Louisiana Highway 10. You can also access the WMA via I-49 at the Lebeau exit.

For more information on Thistlethwaite WMA, go to <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/thistlethwaite>. ■

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# BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCKS TEST POSITIVE FOR AVIAN CHOLERA

From News Reports

**W**ild black-bellied whistling ducks in the New Orleans area and Audubon Park have tested positive for avian cholera, according to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

This naturally occurring bacteria can result in death, especially when the bird is stressed. Co-mingling of waterfowl spreads the infection.

"Avian cholera outbreaks are not an uncommon occurrence in waterfowl and occur throughout the country every year," said Dr. Jim LaCour, wildlife veterinarian with the LDWF. "Unfortunately, an infected bird has brought the disease to us."

"Mortality events in the wild can be limited to a few birds or can cause mortality in many thousands of birds and can be short-lived or endure for months. Luckily, the setting for this outbreak allows some mitigation of natural spread, which should help to minimize the mortality effects."

Because the dead birds have been found near Aududon Zoo, the carcasses can be picked up, which is essential in stopping the outbreak. That is generally not possible or feasible in a wild setting.

"Audubon Nature Institute is working with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to manage avian cholera by reducing sources of potential



contamination," said Steve Marshall, vice president and managing director of Audubon Zoo & Park. "Our veterinary team noticed a recent increase in wild whistling duck mortality and sent samples out for testing."

"Out of an abundance of caution, Audubon is implementing new protocols to reduce the risk of contamination in our bird populations, including closing the Zoo's aviary to the public and moving waterfowl out of the South American Pampas Lagoon."

Many species of birds and mammals, including pets, are susceptible to infection from the bacteria that causes avian cholera, but the waterfowl strain does not

commonly infect those species.

According to the National Wildlife Health Center, avian cholera is not considered a high-risk disease for humans, who don't appear susceptible to the avian strain.

Cases of avian cholera in humans have been documented, so do not pick up or handle dead wildlife. Common signs of avian cholera are erratic flight, loss of head control, mucous discharge from the nasal openings and death.

To report suspected cases of this disease in waterfowl, contact LaCour at [jlacour@wlf.la.gov](mailto:jlacour@wlf.la.gov) or Audubon Nature Institute (504-212-5151) if you see distressed or deceased birds in Audubon Park. ■

**2020's TOP 10** ➤

# TOP 10

## STORIES OF 2020

Louisiana's outdoor scene certainly wasn't lacking in newsworthy stories throughout the past year. It seemed like a month didn't go by without something of great interest to hunters and fishermen taking place — some good news, some bad news and some just plain interesting.

So we researched the archives of LouisianaSportsman.com and came up with the 10 best-read stories of the year.

Hope you enjoy looking back at last year's recap of some impressive deer, big-time bass and other interesting stories.

## 2 SNAKE I.D. - LOUISIANA'S 7 VENOMOUS SNAKES



Photo by CJ Hillard

Kevin Hood started his very popular Snake I.D. series back in June. He went on to cover multiple species in the next several months, with the goal to educate outdoorsmen and

women on the snakes they could encounter in the woods and waters of Louisiana.

## 1 DAD ALERTS DAUGHTER ABOUT APPROACHING 8-POINT; INSTEAD SHE DOWNS A 14-POINT

Lacie Russell from Downsville was hunting with her dad, Greg Russell, on their 500-acre property in Morehouse Parish on Jan. 4, when she got a text from her dad who was sitting on a nearby stand.

"My dad's stand is about 300 yards from mine, and he texted me around 8:50 that he was looking at some does when a nice 8-point buck ran out in front of him too fast for him to get a shot," Lacie said. "He told me to be on my toes because the 8-point was headed in my direction."

At 9:00, instead of the 8-point approaching, a bigger buck suddenly appeared in the right hand lane with a doe in front of him at 100 yards.

The 14-point buck Lacie killed went on to score 166  $\frac{7}{8}$  inches.

— Glynn Harris



## 3 PUBLIC-LAND HUNT YIELDS HUGE 10-POINTER FOR KINDER HUNTER



On Jan. 7, Cory Fontenot of Kinder got a huge reason to love the Buckhorn Wildlife Management Area: a monster 10-point buck that grossed more than 177 inches with very few deductions.

— Glynn Harris

## 4 TOLEDO BEND SPITS OUT THREE DOUBLE-DIGIT LARGEMOUTHS

Bernard Fruge and Sean Page weren't among those disgusted with the weather and the action in August. They struck it rich on Toledo Bend Reservoir.

Fruge, from Noble got it started with an 11.43-pound monster on Aug. 1, caught in the San Miguel area. Then, Page showed up early in the evening of Aug. 21 with a 10.59-pound bunker. Just to prove his first fish was no fluke, Fruge, later that evening, weighed in a 12.35-pound brute caught about 400 yards from his first double-digit fish.

— Dan Kibler

# 5 LOUISIANA'S 2020 RUT REPORT

For the second year in a row, the annual Rut Report is in the Top 10. Dave Moreland puts the rut prediction for all of Louisiana's deer-hunting areas in reader's hands so they can start making plans and have a successful season. Last year, an early rut gave deer hunters some much-needed time of recreation in the Bayou State.

# 6 BATON ROUGE ANGLER BAGS LUNKER ON LAKE FAUSSE POINTE

Fate was on Baton Rouge bass angler Joseph Martin's side on a mid-February day that dawned with near-freezing temperatures before he launched his 1994 Blazer 202 bass boat around 8:30 a.m. at Lake Fausse Pointe State Park.

That's a plausible explanation behind the personal best 8.17-pound bass he hooked and boated Saturday, Feb. 15, on Lake Fausse Pointe, which rarely gives up bass heavier than 6 pounds — and the rewarding aftermath.



— Don Shoopman

# 7 COX DOWNS BIG-BODIED BUCK IN TENSAS PARISH



Ruston's Lane Cox took this buck measuring 153% inches on Nov. 23 at the Winter Quarters Hunting Club in Tensas Parish. Deer in that part of the state generally run heavier because of the rich soils of the Mississippi Delta. This buck weighed an astounding 268 pounds.

— Glynn Harris

For full details on these stories, as well as all the latest outdoor news — plus tips and tactics to make you more successful out in the field — visit [LouisianaSportsman.com](http://LouisianaSportsman.com)

# 8 BLACK GROUPEL WEIGHS ALMOST DOUBLE THE PREVIOUS STATE RECORD

Cole Thurman's first time fishing offshore in Louisiana was a trip he'll never forget — his catch made him a state-record holder.

With an official weight of 106.2 pounds, the black grouper Thurman hauled in was 56 inches long. The weight nearly doubled the previous state record.

The catch of a lifetime happened Sept. 3 when Thurman and some friends launched out of Port Fourchon with Down the Bayou Charters. Two boats were loaded down with anglers, with Thurman's boat guided by Capt. Ian Buzbee.



— Monique Roth

# 9 BOW HUNT-ONLY CLUB YIELDS BIG DIVIDENDS FOR KNOLL

Blake Knoll from Marksville took a huge buck at Corbett Farm Hunting Club in Avoyelles Parish. Knoll was in the right place at the right time under perfect conditions to zip an arrow through the vitals of the big 11-point buck. Knoll's taxidermist scored the rack with 166% inches of bone.

— Glynn Harris

# 10 LAFOURCHE PARISH MAN HOOKS HUGE SAC-A-LAIT IN LAKE VERRET



When Thibodaux's Dickie Daigle set out to fish on Oct. 1 with his friend Glenn Landry, he said nothing seemed to be going right.

"We left and were on our way to my camp and I realized I left my night crawlers, so we turned back around to get them," Daigle said.

At around 9:30 a.m., Daigle caught a 4.2 pound sac-a-lait that measured 17 inches long.

— Monique Roth

**RUT CALENDARS ➤**

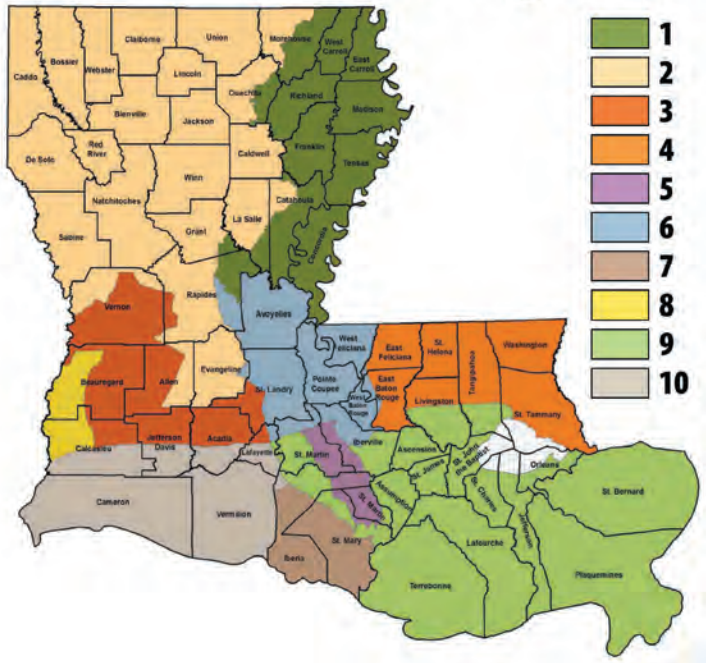
# JANUARY/ FEBRUARY RUT CALENDARS

**As** long as it takes deer season to get here, it sure doesn't seem to last. January marks the end of the road for most hunters, and rutting activity is pretty much limited to the eastern half of Louisiana.

Deer in Areas 4 and 9 in Southeast Louisiana are predicted to wrap up their second breeding period slated to run from Dec. 29 to Jan. 12.

In Areas 1, 5 and 6, in the Mississippi Delta and the upper-Basin parishes, 2021 kicks off during the first breeding period of the season, which is scheduled to wrap up on Jan. 12. The second scraping period is set to crank up Jan. 13-27, followed by the second breeding period from Jan. 28 to Feb. 1.

## 2020 - 2021 Deer Hunting Areas



### JANUARY 2021

### Areas 4 & 9

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 2nd Breeding Period Ends	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

### JANUARY 2021

### Areas 1, 5 & 6

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 1st Breeding Period Ends	13 2nd Scraping Period Starts	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 2nd Scraping Period Ends	28 2nd Breeding Period Starts	29	30
31						

### FEBRUARY 2021

### Areas 1, 5 & 6

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1 2nd Breeding Period Ends	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

A man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a green sweater and a cap, is smiling and holding a deer head with large, light-colored antlers. He is standing in a pine forest. The text "OLD-FASHIONED, LATE-SEASON DEER HUNTING" is overlaid on the image in white and green. A text box on the right contains advice for success in Louisiana's piney woods, attributed to Humberto Fontova.

# OLD-FASHIONED, LATE-SEASON DEER HUNTING

AS A NEW YEAR APPROACHES, IT TAKES A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO TAG A NICE BUCK, AND IT DOESN'T TAKE A TRAIL-CAMERA TO LET YOU KNOW. FOLLOW THIS ADVICE FOR SUCCESS IN LOUISIANA'S PINEY WOODS.

■ By Humberto Fontova

# “Whooo-EEEH – WOW! ..... Wonder what he’d score?!”

“Looking at pics on a game cam, right?” Comes the reader reaction. “Next to the feeder at the food plot, right?”

Nope. In fact, the excited hunter in question doesn’t even own a game cam, despite a constant barrage of cajoling from his hunting friends and family.

“Heck,” he smirks when asked about his archaic hunting habits. “I know darn well most deer in southeast Louisiana are mostly nocturnal, especially by Christmas. Why confirm it with a game cam?”

None of “dem “new-fangled game feeders” were in sight, either, and the closest food plot was a quarter-mile away.

Don't be afraid to get out and do some scouting as the last month of deer season approaches. You need to change with them.

Also, from a distance of 50 feet behind him (where I stood), his attendant “score” comment was slightly misheard. Actually, he was quickly following up his initial exclamation by asking “Wonder what’s the score?”

You see, a half-hour earlier, we’d left the camp’s mega-screen TV with the LSU-Georgia game at halftime and the score kinda tight. What a difference a year makes!

In fact, this hunter’s idea of “scoring” a deer is measuring the decibel level of the “OOOHS!” and “YUMS!” from the dinner or tailgate “paaaw-ty” guests when the Bambi fajitas, cutlets or parmesan are served up.

“That’s a trophy everyone can appreciate,” is how he explains his Paleolithic hunting philosophy. Hunters and non-hunters alike. Heck, even some anti-hunters come around when they taste the properly prepared and cooked fruits of our harvest. After sampling some backstrap mignon, in merlot — mushroom sauce — oh sure, they remain “Bambi lovers.” But after that first serving, it’s in a radically different way!

In fact, during the comment initiating this story, the excited hunter in question was looking at the ground, waving me over, and pointing at a nearby pine sapling. “Oh yeah!” I whooped while approaching, crouching and focusing. “Does look like the handiwork of a nice one!” The handiwork was a rub on a pine sapling about 10



inches in circumference. The tracks around it also looked impressive. They came from two intersecting deer trails and went in both directions. And the droppings scattered nearby were not Raisinet size, more like Milk Duds size. After accidentally stepping on a couple, they were the size of Junior Mints.

So we were pumped. Oh, and yes, you read right. We were actually scouting for deer. In the actual woods. Not on a food plot. A reactionary practice for sure.

In the December 2001 issue of *Louisiana Sportsman*, I wrote an article titled "Hunt Hard — Stay Young." I marveled that a 75-year-old man, my father, Humberto N. Fontova, could hunt ducks and deer with an obsession matching his kids and grandkids.

And these were not the catered variety of duck and deer hunts. These were, and are, mostly roughing-it hunts on southeast Louisiana piney woods property leases. I've seen "dedicated" and "expert" deer hunters move to southeast

Louisiana from the midwest or northeast, employ their "dedication" and "expertise" in our thick, brushy, piney-woods habitat — and quickly take up golf.

Well, my father still hunts deer as fanatically, and practically in the same manner, at age 94 as he did when featured in that long-ago article. And he continues to hunt mostly from portable ladder stands in thick or select-cut timberlands.

Health gurus regale us with drugs, potions and regimens for a long, active and happy life, but I haven't seen one prescribe hunting — yet I've never seen anything remotely as effective. That the hunts are shared with kids and grandkids, and the trophies — antlers or no antlers, and whatever their size — are shared during family feasts, holiday celebrations, tailgate paw-ties, etc. — just might contribute to the amazing success of the Fontova family's prescription for a long and happy life.



Rick Small

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**T**he rub and tracks that provoked the “Who-ee!” were near an intersection of two heavily used trails near an edge between two different types of timber habitat. Here, a 15-year-old pine select-cut met a creekbottom of gums, maples and water oaks.

Dad’s ladder stand had stood at an almost identical habitat intersection a few hundred yards away since Thanksgiving, long by our standards. And by Christmas, the trails leading to the corn, very widely dispersed by hand, looked like cattle ruts.

But three hunts — two morning and one evening — produced not so much as a deer sighting. The sign was obviously from nighttime movement. Oh, I know, I know, you’re right: a game cam could have shown us that without the “bother” of the hunts. But for us, deer hunts without a kill hardly qualify as “bother.” There’s no bother at all watching the woods come alive on a crisp winter morning, deer or no deer, thank you.

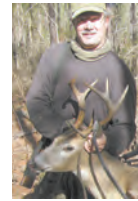
So, as we often do in mid- or late season, we decided to relocate the lightweight ladder stand. Things had changed since its initial placement. Other factors influenced our move. For one, by this time of year, the rut is finally raging in southeast Louisiana’s pine woods — often, it keeps raging after the season closes.

Also, many of the natural food sources available in early November, including acorns and browse, have vanished. The prime browse vanishes from frosts and freezes. The acorns vanish mostly from high creeks and branches flooding oak bottoms and washing away or rotting the water oak acorns that litter the floor in early season. Consequently, our widely dispersed corn becomes all the more attractive both to the does that attract bucks this time of the year, and to ravenous bucks themselves as they expend energy during the rut.

So all we did — not exactly rocket science — was follow those cattle-like trails out from the crude bait stations and try to determine where the deer making all those tracks and rubs were hanging during most daylight hours.

Naturally, with diligent scouting we had patterned the area’s deer starting back in late October, but by Christmas, and after frequent hunts, most of those same deer had patterned us.

Now, we were pumped to



**Humberto Fontova** has hunted and fished obsessively in Louisiana for over 40 years. He’s the author of four books and a frequent commentator on national media. For more details visit [www.hfontova.com](http://www.hfontova.com).

Every buck is a trophy when it comes to filleted backstrap on the grill, venison fajitas or any of a number of other dishes.



find this fresh sign in an area we'd left untouched. "Of course," Dad answered, "shoulda figured we'd find the freshest sign around here — this terrible-looking thicket near the logged-out bottom." The place had several rut-like trails leading in and out of it.

Yep, we had our spot, especially since it was about 40 to 60 yards, mostly out in front of the water oak where we placed the stand, upwind (given a north wind) of the two trails the intersected at the "who-ee!" rub line.

A hundred pounds of corn spread very widely in the open area of the thicket and along the three trails leading to it sweetened the setup. I set up my climber in a small pine on the edge of the thicket about 300 yards away from Dad.

The hunt was still a week away and the 5-day forecast said a front was on the way. Ideally it would barrel through a day or two before the hunt; we always do best in that situation. But when frosty, we spot better movement late in the morning, from 9:30 to 11:30, after the frost has melted off from the sun.

The front barreled through exactly on schedule. Our hopes were high as we crunched through frost to our stands.

By 10:25 a.m., with the sun high, I was shrugging off the hunt and giving deep thanks for the simple blessing of a gorgeous winter morning in the woods with my 93-year-old dad.

"Is that movement through the pines on my left?" I gasped to myself. Sure is. Is it another blue jay going after the corn? Or another crow? Or another squirrel?

NOPE! It's actually a deer, with another one close behind it. My heart started hammering. The does were maybe 70 yards out, crossing through a sage clearing, barely visible through the select-cut pines. My legs felt rubbery. My knees started knocking, my jaw quivering.

"Surely there's a buck chasing them?" I thought to myself as the shakes started big-time. Hope I can keep the crosshairs steady by resting against a strategically growing tree-branch. I peered through the fogged-up scope, trying desperately to steady it while holding my breath. It's now or never...now or never....

"BLAM!"

The shot shocked and jolted me as I trembled in the climbing stand. Good thing I was harnessed up good and tight.

But the shot wasn't mine. "Musta been Dad!" I thought to myself. "Nobody else is out here this morning. Wonder what he shot at?" Meanwhile the does picked up speed and entered the thicket with white flags bouncing crazily.

"Better keep my rifle up," I thought. "A buck's gotta be following."

For 10 minutes, I kept the gun up and aimed. Finally, my convulsions subsided — just as the iPhone buzzed.

"Nice buck DOWN!" Text read. "I can SEE him!"

"Be RIGHT THERE!" I replied. So that's what he shot at, I whooped!

I almost killed myself unharnessing and humping it down the tree with trembling hands and knocking knees. I hit the ground stumbling and continued stumbling the 300 yards through the thicket. I saw it from 50 yards off. What luck! A shaft of sunlight penetrated through the gums and water oaks and hit the antlers perfectly, illuminating them. They'd be no great shakes in Texas or the Midwest. But to us, they were GLORIOUS!



Well-worn trails through heavy cover are a dead giveaway of up-to-date deer use.



A line of fresh rubbed trees is the kind of late-season sign that will set a deer hunter's heart to beating swiftly.

That "WHOOOO-EEE!" from the beginning of the story, was 20 decibels louder this time, and accompanied by some long and mighty "abrazos" — bear hugs. ■

**TIPS FOR JANUARY WHITETAILS >**

Mickey Greer of Calhoun killed this big buck on Jan. 10, 2019, while hunting with his wife in Madison Parish. The 10-point green-scored 157 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

## 7 TIPS FOR JANUARY WHITETAILS

### HOW TO SCORE AS HUNTING SEASON WINDS DOWN

It's the last full month of deer season, and you're tired. You've spent untold hours sitting in stands since the season opened in October, and you're finding it difficult to keep your passion.

But were the season is still open, this could be the best time of the year to ambush a wall hanger.

So what's the key to being ready when that deer finally steps out?

Lloyd Dempster, who killed a 200-inch Mississippi buck in 2014, is one of the die-hards who hunts every chance he gets, from opening day to the last minute of the season.

And he provided late-season hunting tips to help prepare for your meeting with that mature buck you've been watching on trail cams all season.

#### NO STAND ODOR

"It requires patience and hard-core dedication to sit and wait things out," Dempster said. "So make sure going to your stand you don't sweat too much. I always dress very light, base layering and carry all my heavy clothing strapped to my backpack. I would rather be a little cold walking to my stand and avoid heavy perspiration.

"It will help you control your scent and your body temperature once you climb up into your tree or blind. And you will be way more comfortable by letting your core temperature come down, and then layering as body temp cools down."

#### HUNT THE WEATHER

Winter in more-northern climes and winter in the Deep South are different animals.



In the South, hunters expect cold weather to be sporadic much of the season.

And when it warms up between fronts, rutting activity usually goes to zero — at least during hunting hours.

"So if your schedule allows, pay close attention to the weather forecast and capitalize on the good days," Dempster said. "Wait for the weather to get right. Spend as much time as you can on good days, and stay out your best hunting spots on not-so-ideal weather conditions.

"And remember, the rut runs through late season here; that always gives me motivation to spend as much time I can in the woods when conditions are right."

#### GO TO BED

Hunting pressure and a long season combine to push most mature bucks to nocturnal activity by the time January rolls around. But Dempster said that doesn't mean you can't kill one of these beasts.

"They move mostly before sunrise or after it sets, so that's why I hunt close to bedding areas," he said. "A deer's appetite makes it possible to catch them moving during hunting hours.

"Find food and bedding areas, and hang out in these areas as long as you can."

#### WIND WINS

Some hunters don't give the wind much thought and still kill some nice bucks. But Dempster said he's come to believe it's critical to take wind into consideration when deciding where to hunt.

"It took me a long time and lots of mistakes before I truly understood just how important the wind is," he said. "A white-tail deer can smell you — trust me — so much so that you will never know what is around your hunting stand if you don't figure out the wind direction.

"I always look to hunt some type of north wind or adjust my set when I absolutely know which direction the deer are coming or going. I see so much new scent-control gear coming out each year — I believe in using things that are proven by experience. But the best of all scent control is wind direction."

#### GET THE PICTURE

"If you have never used a trail camera, please start," Dempster said. "There is no better way to scout your potential hunting areas. I base pretty much all my hunting efforts from the results I receive from my trail-cam pictures. It covers the four Ws: when, what, where and why.

"But I treat checking trail cams in my

stand locations with as much caution as I do when I go in to hunt. Study your pictures and make sure you pick times that when you are highly likely to avoid deer activity. I don't like spooking deer from my stand location — ever."

## HUNT THE DOES

If deer in your area are still rutting, that doesn't mean you should ignore does. In fact, Dempster said you should look for the female variety of deer and understand how they act.

"Understand that the older doe comes into estrus during the first rut, and she is smart," he said. "She will stay in covered areas and move only when necessary, making the buck following her harder to kill, in most cases.

"But in the second part of the rut phase — the late season — is when the younger does come into estrus. They follow traditional patterns and use the same food sources. And all a buck wants is another chance to breed, dropping his guard by following the pretty young thing wherever she goes."

## NEVER GIVE UP

Okay, so this a simple concept, but Dempster said gutting it out until the end can pay big dividends.

"If the season is still open and you love to hunt, than get out there," he said. "There's nothing more rewarding than tagging a buck on the last day of the season." ■

**LATE-SEASON SCRAPES, RUBS ➤**

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The author used this late-season rub to identify where a mature buck was still cruising around.



Photo by Bill Garbo

# LATE-SEASON SCRAPES, RUBS

## READ THE SIGN, KNOW WHY IT'S WHERE IT IS

By Bill Garbo

**A**s we transition from the Christmas holidays into the New Year, deer hunters find ourselves entering the fourth quarter, so to speak, of the season.

According to where you are geographically, the rut is either full on or is just beginning to wind down.

This can be a puzzling time if you are not keenly aware of what makes your local deer population tick during January.

In my neck of the woods, the first week of January is what I would call the "immediate post-rut" period, where most of the breeding is over but mature bucks are still moving around as they search and compete for the last receptive does from the main rut cycle.

It is now the toughest time of year for your deer herd, as it competes for the waning supply of natural food.

Cold weather will have deer seeking out and hammering food plots, especially ones that have been properly fertilized and cared for.

Your does will reappear at these food sources, and bucks will once again be freshening rubs and scrapes.

So this is a great time to have some of your trail cameras trained on communal ruts and scrapes to see what bucks are actively moving around.

### SCRAPE UP SOME INTEREST

Once the peak of the rut arrives and full-blown breeding begins, most scrapes are abandoned. But you might still see scraping activity in areas near doe hangouts and bedding areas.

During the "immediate post-rut" time period, one strategy that might work under the prevailing conditions is to hunt scrapes on the downwind side of doe-heavy areas, and to use estrous scent and doe bleats to help reel in a mature buck.

Some deer hunters would call the next phase, often referred to as the "post-rut," the doldrums phase or maybe the "What happened to the bucks?" phase.

Breeding is, for all intents and purposes, over for now. As a result, tired, run down and hungry, bucks retreat into familiar core areas and feed on prime food sources.

Under these conditions, you just might catch a mature buck out feeding in a food plot during daylight hours, especially in really cold weather.

### DOE TO BUCK: IT'S ME AGAIN

Again, depending on where your hunting property is, the secondary rut can continue into late January.

Unbred does come back into estrous approximately 28 days after their initial cycle during the primary rut.

Also, doe fawns and yearlings born early come into estrous for the first time.

Suddenly, mature bucks are back on their feet and might

re-open scrapes. These active post-rut scrapes are somewhat isolated but are well worth your trouble to locate.

When you find a good one, set yourself up within shooting distance and try using doe bleats, tending grunts and snort-wheezes to pull a buck into range.

Bucks under these conditions can often be aggressive, since they are actively competing for the few remaining estrous does. Mature bucks will also be seen chasing does and fawns near winter food sources.

### CHECKING WITHOUT SCRAPING

Before we move on to rubs, let's spend a moment going over what constitutes and qualifies as an active late-season scrape.

We have all seen scrapes that were just being hammered constantly by buck activity but then seemingly go cold all of a sudden.

Well, this is exactly why I harp off-and-on about keeping trail cameras trained on major communal scrapes all season.

Lack of apparent soil disturbance in a scrape is not always a reliable indicator of whether or not a particular scrape is being used regularly. The camera won't lie.

I have documented with cameras on numerous occasions, multiple bucks continuing to check a scrape that had been previously been "hot as a firecracker" on a regular basis, and yet not one of the bucks pawed the dirt.

Instead, they only used the "licking branch" or just scent-checked the scrape from downwind.

If a buck is in a hurry or is skittish during daylight hours, he might just do a drive-by downwind from nearby cover.

So, don't give a scrape up for dead until you are absolutely certain.

### HERE'S THE RUB

Now, regarding buck rub lines, let's take a quick look at deciphering late-season rubs and rub lines.

Buck rub lines are both a means of finding increased-odds hunting locations and a learning tool for understanding buck travel patterns.

It has been my experience that buck rub lines most frequently occur along or near habitat edges, woods roads and trails.

Look for rubs in areas that contain young sappy trees with aromatic bark, such as pine and cedar.

Yes, bucks do most of their rubbing during the early pre-rut and seeking phase, but keep your eyes peeled for fresh rubs during the late season when some testosterone is still flowing and unbred does are cycling back into estrous.

If you do find some, it just might be the key you need to home in on and bag a late-season whopper. ■

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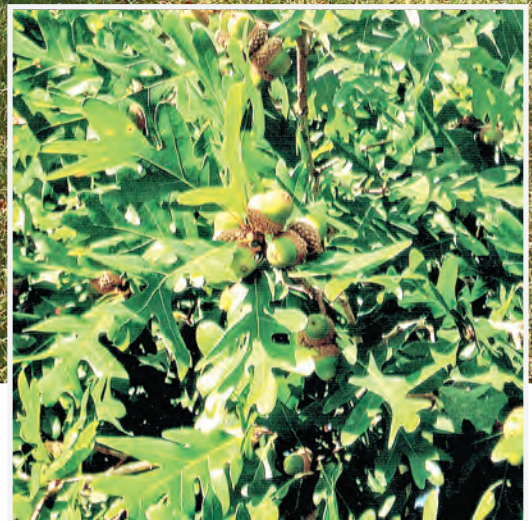
## GRUNTS & GOBBLES

David Moreland

This row of 2-year-old cow oak trees were planted from acorns; tree planting is a long range management program. **INSET:** Among the fruit of hardwood trees, there may be none as important for deer and wildlife as white oak acorns.

# PLANT TREES FOR YOUR DEER

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**F**or many years, Louisiana's northwestern parishes have had the highest deer harvest in the state. The common factor responsible for this is timber.

These rural parishes have a forested landscape that is intensely managed, thus always providing deer with habitat, food and cover. Louisiana's deer herds are a reflection of the forest; intensely managed pine forests generally produce bucks that are low on antler mass and body weights; the bottomland hardwood forests produce bucks with heavy antler mass and large body weights; forests with a good hardwood component mixed in with the pine timber produce quality bucks, better than a dominant pine forest but not quite as good as the bottomland tracts.

Consequently, landowners who want to improve their deer habitat should take a close look at their forest landscape. Does the forest contain the desirable hardwood species that benefit deer?

Basically, there are three groups of

hardwood trees that provide nutrition for deer. All hunters are familiar with the hard-mast species: oaks, pecans and hickories. The soft-mast species include those trees that produce fruit, such as pears or black cherry. Many of these species are also important as woody browse. The third group would include the light-seeded species such as ash, elm or maple. This group provides browse when the trees are young.

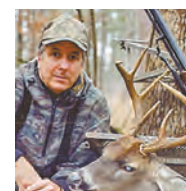
### A DIVERSE FOREST

A good forest survey or inventory will tell you what trees make up your forest and what species you might want to plant. Species diversity is a must and will provide the maximum benefit to deer. From the hard-mast standpoint, oaks and their acorn production are very desirable. Red oaks and white oaks are the two main groups. On our small property, we had plenty of water oaks, willow oaks and a few cherrybark oaks, but no white oaks. Consequently, my focus is on planting white oaks and getting these

trees on the landscape. A wildlife biologist or forester can help you determine what you might want to plant to enhance the habitat.

The white oak group includes cow oaks, white oaks, post oaks and overcup oaks. Cow oaks and white oaks are the best for whitetails and are the two species I am planting. The red oak group contains many desirable species, including water oak, cherrybark oak, obtusa oak, willow oak, striped oak and sawtooth oak.

Water oaks are generally not lacking on the landscape. Cherrybark oak acorns are readily eaten by deer, and it is a good timber tree. Sawtooth oaks have been planted for years, and although they drop acorns early, they will pull deer onto the property. Sawtooths do best in



**David Moreland** is the author of the new book *Louisiana Whitetails*, which explains how to grow big deer and where to hunt them. The book is available at [www.SportsmanGear.com](http://www.SportsmanGear.com) and at Amazon.com.

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an orchard setting. Pecans are good, but they also do best in an orchard setting.

A new player on the scene is the chestnut tree. Dunstan chestnuts have been highly promoted for many years. The American chestnut was once an important wildlife tree but was wiped out by the chestnut blight. The Dunstan variety is blight resistant and produces early. I have two trees that have produced chestnuts for several years, but it does not seem to get the deer excited like sawtooth oak acorns.

## SOFT-MAST TREES

The best soft-mast trees that deer seem to relish include pears, black cherry, crabapple, red mulberry, blackgum and persimmon. I would rate the attractive power of a pear tree at the top of the list, but persimmons are not far behind. Wild persimmons come in male and female trees, so one has to have both to have fruit. The grafted ones are probably the best to plant.

Mayhaws are a good tree to have with its fruit production, but again, I have many mayhaws, and deer just don't seem to get real excited about the fruit. This tree seems to be a drawing card on areas with a high deer population where the competition for food is high. Red mulberry is a great wildlife tree for both animals and birds. The leaves are high in calcium and readily eaten by deer.

The light-seeded mast trees, such as ash, elm and maple, provide browse for deer, and unless you are lacking these in your forest component, they are not too often planted unless one is planting a large, clear-cut site. The fruit of these trees is important to squirrels and birds.

Late winter is the best time to do your tree planting. This provides time for the root system to become established, which is important should drought conditions set in during the late spring or summer. Unless you have the ability to water trees, late spring or early summer plantings may have problems.

## TREE PROTECTION

With trees such as red mulberry or pears, it is probably best to cage the trees and eliminate browsing by deer. The fact is, deer will browse any newly planted tree, and if the browsing is heavy, it will really reduce your tree growth and set you back a year or two.

Commercial tree tubes are available to protect seedlings, but I prefer a wire cage. Bucks will also rub antlers on young trees and can kill them if they cut into the cambium layer. Monitor your plantings and look for damage, and if the damage is high, caging may be the only way you will ever grow a tree.

Woody shrubs can also be planted on the landscape to increase the desirable shrub species that deer browse. Elderberry, arrowwood and deciduous holly are very desirable. Timber thinning will enhance shrub and small tree growth and keep one from having to do any planting. Once a shrub is on the landscape and producing fruit, the seed source is available for new plants. Timber cuts will also enhance the desirable woody vines that provide nutrition for deer. The hunting season is on, but now is the time to do this work. ■



### TREE TUBE:

Seedlings can be protected using commercial tree tubes such as this one. This is a Mayhaw tree encased in a commercial tree tube to protect it from rabbits.



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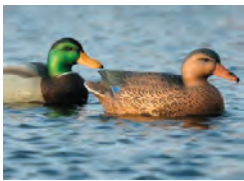
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## HUNTER OF THE MONTH

### Jordan Branch

Jordan Branch has been in the Navy for nearly 10 years and has been overseas for the past three years. She finally had the opportunity to return to Claiborne Parish and made what she called "the shot of a lifetime."

Branch was hunting one of the best stands on her family's property in Lisbon when she heard a crashing sound. She dialed her scope back, flipped the safety off and finally caught a glimpse of a buck. As soon as she had a clear shot, she squeezed the trigger and ended up with a true, 205-pound Claiborne Parish hoss.

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## ANGLER OF THE MONTH

### Myles Acosta

Myles Acosta, 8, has been an avid fisherman since he was 5 years old. His mother, Kellie, said that Myles dreams of fishing, constantly watches YouTube videos and spends a lot of time outside practicing different casting techniques with his fishing rod and cast net.

His dream is to become a professional fisherman and fish in tournaments. His mother has created an Instagram page, @fishing\_with\_myles, so that Myles can share his love of fishing with others.



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**T**hat thin sliver of land defying the Gulf of Mexico is Louisiana's southernmost land mass. Most people just call it Venice.

That simple name hides a tremendous amount of outdoor diversity. There is so much to Venice, you could do an entire magazine just on the variety of the game and fish there. If Louisiana is the Sportsman's Paradise, then Venice is the microcosm.

Aside from world-renowned offshore angling and nationally highlighted inshore angling for both freshwater and saltwater species, Venice is a waterfowl mecca.

But Venice covers a lot more geographic area than a duck lease. There is a ton of privately owned and/or leased duck hunting land on the east and west sides of the Mississippi River. A substantial amount of land owned by Plaquemines Parish is available for hunting. A word of warning about the parish property, usually referred to as "School Board Land" — it is a complex situation of "Who owns what?" and "Where's the line?" Hunters should be informed before rolling out to hunt. Visit [www.plaqueminesparish.com/265/Permits](http://www.plaqueminesparish.com/265/Permits)) to get your ducks in a row.

Then, there is the Venice that covers public land downriver. First, near Main Pass, the Delta National Wildlife Refuge is more than 48,000 acres. Defined sections to the north and south of this refuge allow hunting. This area is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, so the regulations are more stringent than state Wildlife Management Areas. Take a look at those regulations at [www.fws.gov/refuge/delta/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/delta/) before taking the boat ride.

Last but not least, the jewel of Louisiana's WMAs is Pass-a-Loutre. It covers more than 115,000 acres of huntable area and feels like the last place on earth. It's a haul to get down there, but there are multiple tent-only campgrounds — because you can't do just one hunt anyway. PAL provides world-class duck hunting when its right, plus, the place is also full of rabbits, hogs and deer.

Duck hunting is allowed 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset. Mudboats are effective tools, but they are restricted after 2 p.m. A pirogue works well, too, and 1.6% of the WMA is a Limited Access Areas for non-mudboat hunters. Take some time to check rules: [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/passaloutre](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/passaloutre).

**THE RIVER >**



■ By John Manion

**FISHING IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE GREAT, BUT IN JANUARY, IT'S DUCK HUNTING THAT SETS THE WORLD ON FIRE ON PASS-A-LOUTRE WMA AND IN THE SURROUNDING MARSH THAT'S OPEN FOR BUSINESS.**

# THE ALLURE OF VENICE

## THE RIVER

What gives Venice its rich life is also its biggest barrier. The Mississippi River is literally the source of life for the entire estuary: inshore and offshore areas. It can be as calm and serene as a bayou stream and as turbulent and rough as a storm in the Gulf. Every year, die-hards run the river in mudboats, and every year, photos circulate of a swamped or sinking mudboat.

Older and wiser than he was in his 20s, George Cox of Slidell pilots his 24-foot boat downriver. Gear for three other campers, including Tre' Haydel of Baton Rouge and Evan Graham of Lafayette, is packed into all the available spaces, along with Deke, the 6-year-old Lab who does most of the retrieving. With an 18-foot mudboat in tow, Cox is rolling on the river.

Playing slalom with freighters typically pegs out the anxiety meter. Once underway, Cox intensely studies the water and tries to discern to port or starboard as what seems like a 5-foot mound of water bubbles from the depths, caused by a freighter's wake. The water raises and lowers the entire boat as it eases over. The mudboat dances around like a puppet on a string, momentarily disappearing in the splashing white water.

Emerging from the wheel wash, Cox announces, "We good. We good. No, we're good." Albeit a little damp from the spray, he's back on the throttles and headed to camp.

## THE CAMPING

Thanks to funds received as a result of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, the campsite Cox pulls up to has 50 feet of brand-new dock space. Before, there were only two small docks at the Loomis Pass camp. That usually meant a big boat got dock space, and you'd have to fight the mud getting in and out of the mudboat.

Anxiety flips to excitement when Evan advises, "We have the birds!"

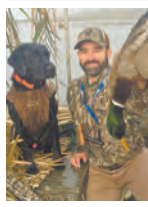
A large, open bay sits right behind the camp. In lean years, there might not be a bird in that place. But in the good ol' days, you could walk across that bay and not get your feet wet because of all the ducks. This year is good, mostly poule d'eau, but there are wads of big ducks dropping in. After 25 years of



hunting, this bay, known to the group as Bullfrog Bay, is the barometer for duck numbers in the WMA downriver.

The group rushes to get gear unloaded and camp set up. Most heavy items were hauled in the mudboat for better

tacking downriver, because a light boat bounces like a cork. It must be unloaded to go check the hunting spots. In Pass-A-Loutre, everything looks like a duck hole, because everything is a duck hole, which is why Cox and friends are there. Kidding aside, birds' roosts change year to year, particularly this year with the incessant tropical weather. Locating a flyway or even a legit feed is really the difference in getting the chance at a limit or just shooting a few.



**John Manion** has been writing about the Louisiana outdoors since 2009. He grew-up hunting and fishing the marshes of south Louisiana and lives in Slidell with his wife and two daughters. He can be reached at [jemanion4@gmail.com](mailto:jemanion4@gmail.com).

**THE DUCK HUNTING >**



The Loomis Pass campground is the jumping-off point for George Cox's hunting and fishing adventures.

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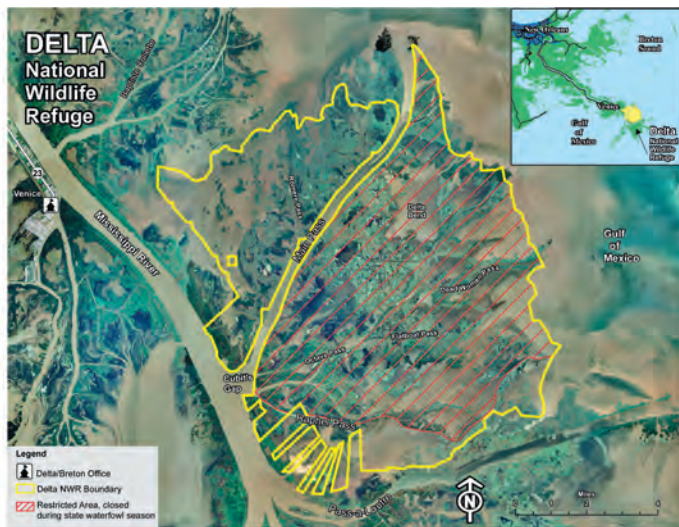
## THE DUCK HUNTING

Finding a concentration of huntable birds might be the secret to hunting PAL, but it isn't a secret to the duck hunters. Everyone's looking for that "X" — it's why mudboats are overused and limited on the WMA; the practicality is finding multiple locations to hunt. With tens of thousands of acres, there isn't a need to set up near other hunters, but that's public land. Two good-looking spots were located, one close and another a longer boat ride away from camp.

Friday morning started early. With coffee being such a precious commodity to this group — George brings a generator and large coffee maker — we weren't on the water 3 hours before shooting time. The public-land competition is high, and rolling into the first hole, Graham announced over the engine, "They're already in the island. Guys are already hunting it."

Option No. 2 was next: a larger, open bay with a handful of small, roseau cane islands. The average depth was a couple feet, and somehow, the bay had survived the wrath of Hurricane Delta. Visible aquatic vegetation was spotty throughout. Unfortunately, it also came with a thousand poule d'eau, which are much better duck attractors than plastic decoys.

Cox's group went big, with a full arsenal of around 14 dozen decoys set up around one of the islands, with decoys on both



sides and behind, leaving the middle of the spread open for birds. Throw in a Mojo on each side, and the hunting was on.

"Right there. Right there," Haydel whispered as four ducks bucked the north wind to sail from outside the decoys toward our blind. They were greeted with reports from four shotguns. The sound of ducks slapping the water was too much for Deke, who launched toward them.

The morning hunt continued in that manner. The birds all seemed to start on the outside of the decoy spread. Some would break closer to present a shot, but others saw too much and preferred the safety of rafts of poule d'eau. The bag was mostly greys and a few widgeon and pintail, with green-winged teal mixed in for limit filler.

Cox, a fisherman at heart, called the hunt finished. "Y'all ready to go catch some fish or what?" he asked.

## THE FISHING >













Deke, a 6-year-old Lab, returns to the blind with a duck during a morning hunt in Venice. **ABOVE:** The extensive marshes offer hunters plenty of public-land, duck-hunting opportunities; scout and have multiple spots picked out.



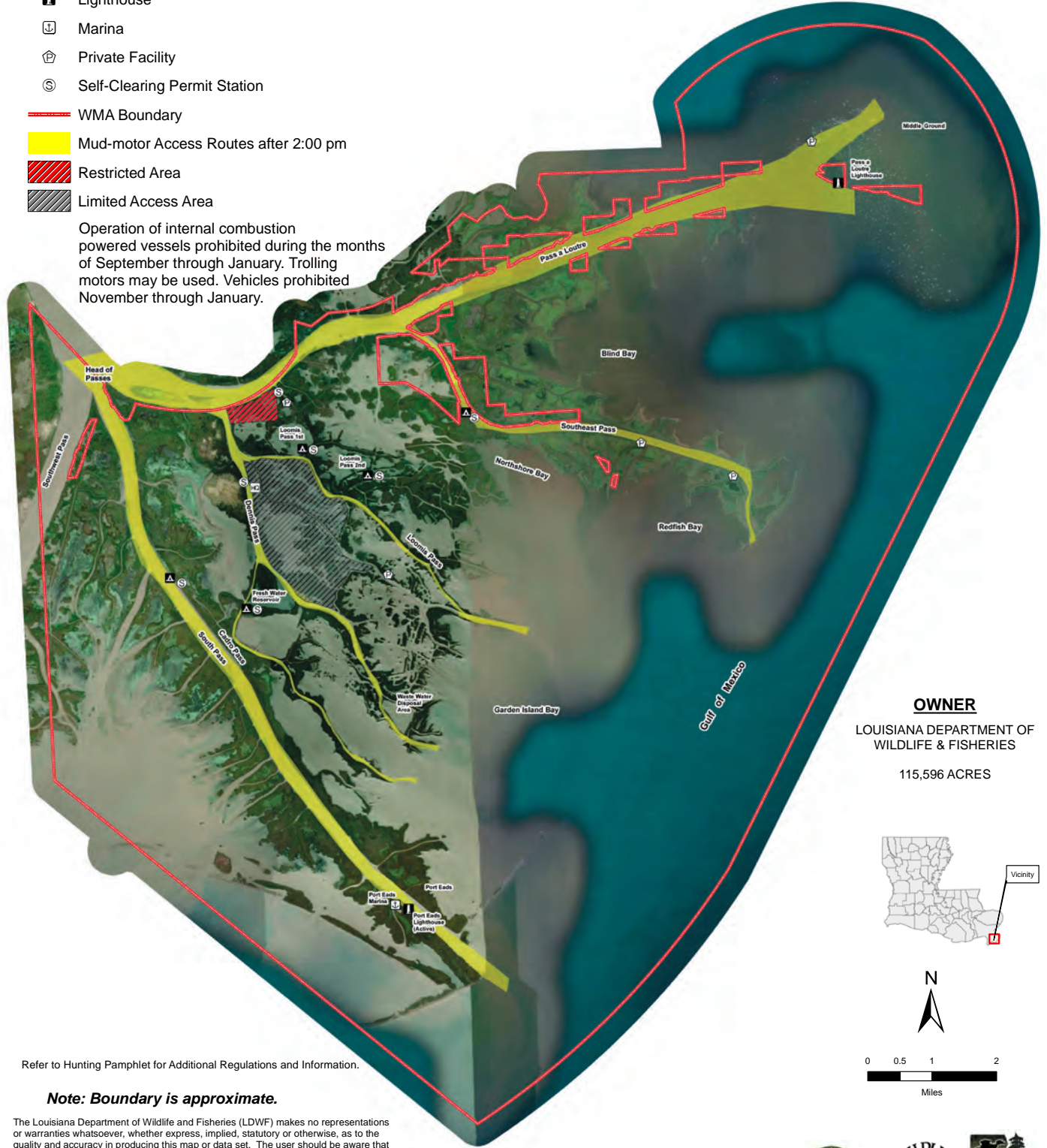
# PASS-A-LOUTRE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

JUNE 2020

-  Camping
-  Headquarters
-  Lighthouse
-  Marina
-  Private Facility
-  Self-Clearing Permit Station

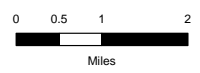
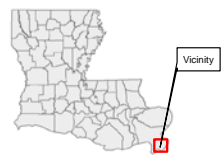
-  WMA Boundary
-  Mud-motor Access Routes after 2:00 pm
-  Restricted Area
-  Limited Access Area

Operation of internal combustion powered vessels prohibited during the months of September through January. Trolling motors may be used. Vehicles prohibited November through January.



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Refer to Hunting Pamphlet for Additional Regulations and Information.

**Note: Boundary is approximate.**

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Afternoon fishing trips provide plenty of food for hungry duck hunters camping around Venice.

## THE FISHING

Fresh, fried fish is hard to beat, so the group was looking to put fish in the box; take-home fish is just lagniappe. The quality of inshore fishing is again dependent on the river; less mud means more fish. A few spots near the campsite are deeper holes, usually marked with rock structure produced. The first fish were bass and channel cats, way too fresh.

Cox made the call. "We gonna go hit South Pass rocks." After meandering the boat around too many sandbars to count, he made it to the jetty and clearly greener water. Three boats where already fishing the west side of the Pass. The group went old-school: market shrimp on the bottom, so it had to bounce around to find a pocket of fish.

Haydel's passion is picking up 14 dozen decoys; second is rigging bottom tackle. He did plenty of that, but once a group of fish was found, it turned into an easy box. Plenty for dinner and plenty enough for Cox to take home for his ceviche.

## DO IT AGAIN TOMORROW

With the sun disappearing behind the horizon, the day ended with supper on the camp stove followed by a few after-dinner drinks around the campfire.

The "No. 1" tip for PAL? Bring firewood, cause you ain't camping without a fire.

That was just Friday. Cox and Co. still had to wake up and do it all over again on Saturday.

Shoot 'em up. ■



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 A close-up of a Garmin GPSMap 62st handheld navigation device showing a topographic map on its screen.



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**HUNTING SEASONS**

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT	
<b>DOVES+</b>	(South Zone) Sept. 5 - 16 Oct. 17 - Nov. 29 Dec. 19 - Jan. 21	(North Zone) Sept. 5 - 27 Oct. 10 - Nov. 15 Dec. 26 - Jan. 24	15	45
	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31		3	9
<b>TEAL</b> (blue-winged, green-winged, cinnamon)	Sept. 12 - Sept. 27	6	18	
<b>RAILS*</b> King & Clapper Sora & Virginia	Sept. 12 - 27	Nov. 14 - Jan. 6	15	45
	Sept. 12 - 27	Nov. 14 - Jan. 6	25	75
<b>GALLINULES*</b>	Sept. 12 - 27	Nov. 14 - Jan. 6	15	45
<b>SNIPE</b>	Nov. 2 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Feb. 28	8	24	
<b>QUAIL</b>	Nov. 21 - Feb. 28	10	30	
<b>RABBIT</b>	Oct. 3 - Feb. 28	8	24	
<b>SQUIRREL</b>	Oct. 3 - Feb. 28	8	24	
	May 1 - 23**	3	9	

\*An extended falconry season for ducks, rails and gallinules will take place from Nov. 4 - Jan. 31. ^An extended falconry season for woodcock will be Nov. 2 - Jan. 31. +An extended falconry season for mourning doves will be Sept. 17 - Oct. 3. \*\*Spring squirrel season is CLOSED on the Kisatchie National Forest, some National Wildlife Refuges, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property and some Wildlife Management Areas. (Check WMA season schedule)

**WATERFOWL SEASONS**

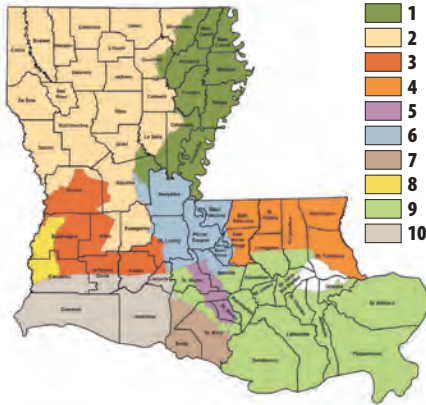
	EAST ZONE	WEST ZONE	COASTAL ZONE
<b>DUCKS*, COOTS &amp; MERGANSERS</b>	Nov. 21 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Jan. 31	Nov. 14 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Jan. 24	Nov. 14 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Jan. 24
The daily bag limit for ducks is 6 and may include no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 females), 3 wood ducks, 2 canvasbacks, 2 redheads, 1 mottled duck, 1 black duck and 1 pintail. Only 1 scaup may be taken for the first 15 days of the season with 2 per day allowed for the remainder. Daily bag limit for coots is 15. Daily bag limit for mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be a hooded mergansers. The merganser limits are in addition to the daily bag limit for ducks. Possession limits for ducks, coots and mergansers is three times the daily bag limit. Youth only: EAST - Nov. 14 & Feb. 6. WEST - Nov. 7 & Jan. 30. COASTAL - Nov. 7-8.			
<b>GEESE</b> (snow, blue, Ross & white-fronted [specklebelly])	<b>NORTH ZONE</b> Nov. 7 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Jan. 31	<b>SOUTH ZONE</b> Nov. 14 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Feb. 7	Nov. 14 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Jan. 24
The daily limit for light geese (snow, blue, Ross) is 20, with no possession limit. The daily bag limit for white-fronted geese is three, with a possession limit of nine.			
<b>CANADA GOOSE SEASON</b>	<b>NORTH ZONE</b> Nov. 7 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Jan. 31	<b>SOUTH ZONE</b> Nov. 14 - Dec. 6 Dec. 19 - Feb. 7	The daily limit for Canada geese is one per day, with a possession limit of three.
<b>CONSERVATION ORDER FOR LIGHT GEESE</b>	<b>NORTH ZONE</b> Dec. 7-18 Feb. 1 - March 7	<b>SOUTH ZONE</b> Dec. 7-18 Feb. 8 - March 7	No bag or possession limit. See pamphlet for more detail.



Only snow, blue and Ross geese may be taken under the terms of the conservation order, which allows the use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns, and eliminates the daily bag and possession limits. Shooting hours begin one-half hour before sunrise and extends until one-half hour after sunset.

**DEER SEASONS**

**2020 - 2021 Deer Hunting Areas**



AREA	ARCHERY (Either-sex)	PRIMITIVE FIREARMS (All either-sex, except as noted)	STILL HUNT (No dogs allowed) (All either-sex, except as noted)	WITH/WITHOUT DOGS (All either-sex, except as noted)
1	Oct. 1 - Jan. 31	Nov. 14 - 20 Jan. 25 - 31	Nov. 21 - Dec. 11 Jan. 4 - 24	Dec. 12 - Jan. 3
2	Oct. 1 - Jan. 31	Oct. 24 - 30 Jan. 18 - 24	Oct. 31 - Dec. 9	Dec. 10 - Jan. 17
3	Sept. 19 - Jan. 15	Oct. 10 - 16, Jan. 4 - 10	Oct. 17 - Nov. 29	Nov. 30 - Jan. 3 (certain areas)
4	Oct. 1 - Jan. 31	Nov. 14 - 20 Jan. 25 - 31	Nov. 21 - Dec. 11 Jan. 4 - 24	Dec. 12 - Jan. 3
5	Oct. 1 - 15 (bucks only) Oct. 16 - Feb. 15 (either-sex)	Nov. 14 - 20 (either-sex) Jan. 25 - 31 (bucks only)	Nov. 21-22, Nov. 27-29 (either-sex) Nov. 23-26, Nov. 30 - Dec. 11 (bucks only)	Dec. 12-13, Dec. 19-20 (either-sex) Dec. 14-18 (bucks only) Dec. 21 - Jan. 24 (bucks only)
6	Oct. 1 - 15 (bucks only) Oct. 16 - Feb. 15 (either-sex)	Nov. 14 - 20 Jan. 25 - 31	Nov. 21 - Dec. 11	Dec. 12 - Jan. 24
7	Sept. 19 - Jan. 15	Oct. 10 - 16 Jan. 4 - 10	Oct. 17 - Nov. 29	Nov. 30 - Jan. 3
8	Sept. 19 - Jan. 15	Oct. 10 - 16, Jan. 4 - 10	Oct. 17 - Nov. 29	Nov. 30 - Jan. 3
9	Oct. 1 - 15 (bucks only) Oct. 16 - Feb. 15 (either-sex)	Nov. 14-20 (either-sex) Jan. 25 - 31 (bucks only)	Nov. 21-22, Nov. 27-29 (either-sex) Nov. 23-26, Nov. 30 - Dec. 11 (bucks only)	Dec. 12-13, Dec. 19-20 (either-sex) Dec. 14-18 (bucks only) Dec. 21 - Jan. 24 (bucks only)
10	Sept. 19 - Jan. 15	Oct. 10 - 16, Jan. 4 - 10	Oct. 17 - Jan. 3	



**DON'T LEAVE VOCALIZATION OUT OF YOUR BAG OF TRICKS WHEN IT COMES TO HUNTING WILD HOGS.**

# **CALLING** **ALL HOGS**

■ By Andy Douglas

# WILD HOGS.

The phrase makes the masses cringe. Hated and hunted by farmers, landowners, deer hunters and many others. Hunting hogs day and night has become extremely popular and necessary to keep the population in check.

They are smart, secretive, adaptive and, due to their rapid breeding, they have become probably the greatest emerging wildlife challenge the Southeast will face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Can a hog be called? Some say yea; others say nay. It does work and creates another aspect to hunting wild hogs. Calling is one more tool hog hunters can add to their arsenal of tactics to help battle the increasing swine population.

“It’s absolutely true that you can call in hogs,” said Joel “Hans” Miller of the HansETX YouTube channel. “I have been doing it successfully for the last 10 years and do it most every night.”

## WHEN TO TRY

Hog calling can be done during daylight or after-dark hours with success. It can be done throughout the year. Anytime hogs can be hunted, hogs can be called.

Incorporate calling into your hog-hunting routines. Whether you check agricultural fields by day or are a night hunter equipped with thermal and night vision, give calling a try before ending the hunt or moving to other ground.

“It’s not going to replace traditional spot-and-stalk hunting, but rather complements it,” said Miller, who is from Ben Wheeler, Texas.

## HOW IT WORKS

After a hog hunter has exhausted all other tactics, whether it is spotting and stalking or still-hunting over bait, calling should be given a chance. Calling hogs is similar to the way coyote hunters target their quarry.

A few hand calls like the Primos Hog Squealer or a grunter like Knight & Hale’s Wild Hog Call can get the job done. An electronic caller is more expensive but a better option, as many hog sounds are available to pair with the call for realistic sounds. Some of these sounds are actual recorded live hog sounds.



Joel “Hans” Miller said that calling has given him many more opportunities to take wild hogs than he would had without calls.

**OPPOSITE:** The hog that usually responds to calling is the more-dominant hog, like this alpha sow taken by the author using hand calls at close range with a pistol.





## TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

Target areas where you find hog sign or where you have seen hogs. Fields or food plots with wallows, open areas next to bedding thickets, logging trails near swamps and along waterways are good places to start.

Miller offers a little advice.

“I always commit to giving it least 15 minutes to work,” he said. “I start out with a low volume and a non-aggressive type call like Convergent Game Calls’ ‘sound the rally.’ If that doesn’t work, I will move to something more aggressive, like ‘sow in distress’ or ‘aggressive boar’ and with more volume.”

Hogs are not naturally nocturnal animals, but they quickly turn nocturnal when pressured or close to human activity. This has made thermal and night-vision hog hunting very productive, and this includes calling them in.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

There is no silver bullet when it comes to calling in and killing hogs. As a matter of fact, hunters are just as likely to scare away hogs as they are to attract them.

“You are more likely to call in a lone boar or an aggressive sow. It’s usually the alpha hog in a group that will respond to calling,” Miller said. “You can easily scare off a group of adolescents, but if there is an alpha in the group, the whole sounder will usually follow the dominant one.”

## CONCLUDING

When targeting wild hogs give calling a try before leaving. You could call in a hog you never knew was there or you may call in a hog from other properties that you can’t hunt.

“Calling hogs has given me many shot opportunities that otherwise I would have never had,” Miller said.

Sometimes you will have success, and sometimes you will not. In one sense it’s a lot like calling predators or turkeys, it works best when strategically used in areas with lots of hogs. However, the times when it does work, the results are incredible. ■



Place electronic calls no more than 30 or 40 yards away. Try some of the tactics below and start calling.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Hogs have an exceptional sense of smell. When setting up to call, wind direction should be considered. Set up and call where you think the hogs will approach from either upwind or crosswind. Hunt the wind just as if you were hunting deer.

It’s a myth that hogs can’t see. Their eyesight is very similar to humans. Hide well to avoid being seen, especially during daytime, and tuck away in the shadows at night.

Wild hogs hear well, too. Be quiet while entering an area, as they will be less likely to respond if they have heard a loud truck, an ATV, or human voices.



**Andy Douglas** is an outdoor writer and photographer from Brookhaven. A native of Lincoln County, he’s chased deer, turkeys, bass and most anything else the past 35 years. He lives the outdoor lifestyle and is passionate about sharing that with others through stories and photos.



Calling not going to replace traditional spot-and-stalk hunting, but rather complement it.

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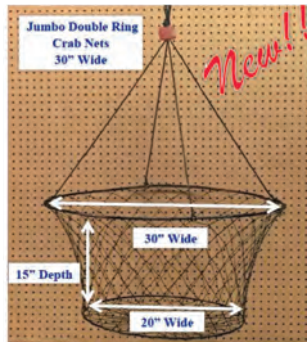
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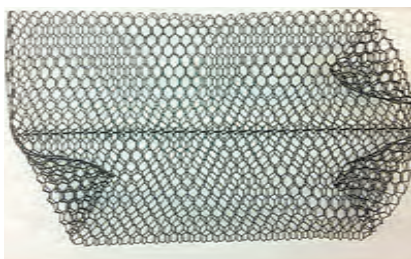
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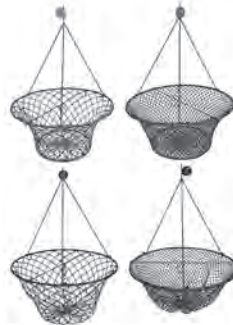
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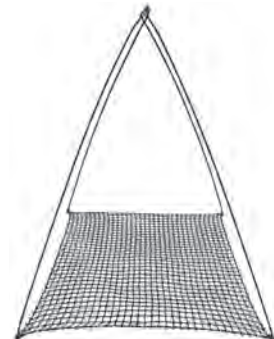
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## 2021 BLACKJACK 256 BAY

The BlackJack 256 Bay is the flagship of the BlackJack line. With its larger size, you can take the 256 Bay into bigger, rougher water and still get the exceptionally smooth and dry ride that's come to be expected from the BlackJack brand.

The 256 Bay comes loaded with many standard features, such as LED lights, custom upholstery and gas shocks on all hatch lids. The console has a large door in the front, making it big enough to house multiple batteries and extra storage space. The large dash has plenty of real estate for aftermarket electronics. The

hull itself is a work of art, with a subtly more aggressive styling, while still maintaining BlackJack's beautifully unique look. When you drive a BlackJack, you drive a boat that makes everyone take notice.

<b>Length</b> 25'6"	<b>Beam</b> 8'6"	<b>Capacity</b> 10	<b>Max HP</b> 400
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[www.blackjackboats.com/our-boats/blackjack-256](http://www.blackjackboats.com/our-boats/blackjack-256)

# 2021 BLACKJACK 224



The BlackJack 224 represents the ultimate blend of prowess and performance, all wrapped together in a sleek and striking design from legendary boat builders Bill and Gary Kenner.

From the smooth, dry ride of the “Carolina flare” bow to its classic “tumblehome” transom, the BlackJack 224 blends tradition and technology like no other boat on the market. Her hand-laid hull and deck are heavy-duty but lightweight. Reverse-angle, spray-reduction chines deflect the water with authority.

<b>Length</b> 23' 1"	<b>Beam</b> 8' 3"	<b>Capacity</b> 10	<b>Max HP</b> 300
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[www.blackjackboats.com/our-boats/blackjack-224](http://www.blackjackboats.com/our-boats/blackjack-224)

# 2021 BLACKJACK 256 COASTAL

The BlackJack 256 Coastal is the newest addition to the BlackJack line that combines offshore and bay boat elements to give you a boat that lets you decide how you want to fish on any given day.

Its three-piece design, deeper casting deck and open aft deck give you the ability fish comfortably in bigger waters without sacrificing inshore fishability. Add the optional removable forward seating, and the Coastal quickly converts to a day cruiser perfect for family trips to your favorite sandbar or island.

The BlackJack 256 Coastal has the versatility you need with the style and performance you've come to expect from BlackJack Boats.



<b>Length</b> 26' 6"	<b>Beam</b> 8' 6"	<b>Capacity</b> 10	<b>Max HP</b> 400
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## AV26

The Avenger AV-26 has an overall length of 26-foot-2 and a beam of 8½ feet built with the serious fisherman in mind. This stable fishing platform is complimented with standard equipment like two live release and one baitwell, dual lockable rod storage boxes, and an anchor locker built to accommodate both bow and stern anchors. The Avenger AV-26 is rated for a single engine of up to 400 HP and features an 89-gallon capacity fuel tank, making your favorite fishing spot easily and quickly accessible.

<b>Length</b> 26' 0"	<b>Beam</b> 8' 6"	<b>Capacity</b> 8	<b>Max HP</b> 400
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[www.avengerbayboats.com/av26.html](http://www.avengerbayboats.com/av26.html)

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## AV24

The Avenger AV-24 has an overall length of 24-foot-8 and a beam of 8½ feet .... built with the serious fisherman in mind. This stable fishing platform is complimented with standard equipment like two live release and one baitwell, dual lockable rod storage boxes, and an anchor locker built to accommodate both bow and stern anchors. The Avenger AV-24 is rated for a single engine of up to 300 HP and features an 89-gallon capacity fuel tank, making your favorite fishing spot easily and quickly accessible.

<b>Length</b> 24' 8"	<b>Beam</b> 8' 6"	<b>Capacity</b> 8	<b>Max HP</b> 300
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# 2021 BLUE WAVE MAKAIRA

Can one boat really do it all? Maybe... meet Makaira. Since 1992, Blue Wave Boats has ruled the bay... now the blue is in their sites. Makaira is an offshore hybrid. Built for offshore fishing with a shallow draft for those days when you want to stay nearshore.



Based on the wildly successful 2800 Pure Hybrid platform, Makaira provides the boat the marketplace has been begging for; offshore ability with nearshore capability.

NEW for 2021... Makaira is equipped with the standard features you need and has new options you want. Noteworthy standards for 2021 include: Garmin electronics, deluxe captains seats on a tackle station, compass, 3-sided tempered glass windshield, freshwater washdown, swim platform / ladder and a T-top with a finished edge. New optional equipment includes a second station and marine head.

Makaira has a spacious cockpit that seriously rivals that of traditional centers yet manages to keep a legit aft platform largely thanks to the no-splashwell build utilized on all Blue Wave Boats that keep the aft decks huge on the entire line-up.

Forward features wrap around seating that quickly and easily transforms into a casting platform or u-shaped seating. And yes, the forward pitch-well of the 2800 Pure Hybrid is literally front and center on this model too. This smart design has an optional quick stow and easy access table and base unseen in larger boats.

Even more surprising features include lockable rod storage built into the gunwales, both port and starboard, that can accommodate up to ten 8' rods with reels. Additionally, these compartments do double duty as dry storage.

<b>Length</b> 27' 2"	<b>Beam</b> 9' 2"	<b>Capacity</b> 11	<b>Max HP</b> 600
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# 2021 BLUE WAVE 2400 PURE BAY



Get to know 2400 Pure Bay, AGAIN. Totally reinvigorated for 2021, the Pure Bay Series has a redesigned helm station capable of accepting a 16-inch GPS, new helm seating and standard features that are sure to catch the eye of any angler. What hasn't changed? The legendary ride!

More casting space, more livewell, more dry storage on a hull built to perform as well in the shallows as open water. Generous, insulated fish boxes give you the room needed to earn bragging rights when you hit the docks. When it is time to give those fish a break, 2400 Pure Bay is equipped with plenty of amenities to keep the entire family happy for a day at the beach or sandbar. The rear casting platform quickly converts to comfortable seating while the forward platform is the perfect spot to work on a tan.

<b>Length</b> 24' 6"	<b>Beam</b> 8' 6"	<b>Capacity</b> 9	<b>Max HP</b> 350
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[bluwaveboats.com/boats/2021-purebay--2400](http://bluwaveboats.com/boats/2021-purebay--2400)

# 2021 BLUE WAVE 2800 PURE HYBRID

Meet 2800 Pure Hybrid, it is just as comfortable fishing the shallows as fishing blue water. This is the evolution of a new species of boat from the Parks family, who have been leading the charge in innovation since 1992.

NEW for 2021... 2800 Pure Hybrid is equipped with the standard features you need and has new options you want. Noteworthy standards for 2021 include: Garmin electronics, deluxe captains seats on a tackle station, compass, 3-sided tempered glass windshield, freshwater washdown, swim platform / ladder and a t-top with a finished edge. New, optional equipment includes a second station and marine head.

The unique hull design of 2800 Pure Hybrid delivers a soft and comfortable ride with enough Carolina flare to stay dry in most conditions. The double-stepped hull gets on top of the waves immediately for peak fuel economy and nimble performance.

The boat's impressive size assures space for everything you need for a day of fishing or fun in the sun. Fishing is at the forefront of this boat's purpose-built design. One standard pressurized livewell aft holding 35 gallons of live bait and a 10-gallon pitchwell forward, are standard. An additional seventy-five gallons of livewell is optional. Spacious platforms with insulated fish boxes and lockable rod storage all drain overboard and keep the deck dry. The console is large enough for twin screens at the helm and a spacious step-down compartment has ample room for a marine head. A comfortable jump seat and optional seat cushions for the bow turn this fishing machine into a sandbar champ.



And to top it off you can easily fill 'er up thanks to fuel fills port and starboard. The transom is Kevlar reinforced to accommodate up to 600 HP in a single or twin set-up. Truly, no species is safe.

<b>Length</b> 27' 2"	<b>Beam</b> 9' 2"	<b>Capacity</b> 11	<b>Max HP</b> 600
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JANUARY BASS ARE STARTING TO STIR IN LOUISIANA LAKES. THIS MONROE PRO/GUIDE HAS THE TICKET TO CELEBRATE WHILE TURNING THE CALENDAR OVER TO 2021.

■ By Kinny Haddox

# NEW YEAR, SAME OLD BASS



# Many people catch fish to eat.

Hunter Freeman, a bass pro and guide from Monroe, catches fish to help pay his bills, so he can't depend on luck or on conditions being just right. His approach to consistently catching bass — especially big bass — can help others do the same, especially in cold weather.

Freeman fishes all over the country, but nothing is more fun for him than spending a few days back on Louisiana lakes in search of chunky, prespawn lunkers. And they don't get much more fun or chunky than in January.

But as Charles Dickens said in "A Tale of Two Cities," it can be the best of times; it can be the worst of times. But the upside makes it worth giving it a shot on a regular basis, Freeman said.

"The best thing is that, in January, even though the big bass seem to spread out and not really be aggressive, they are still going to feed every day unless something unusual is going on," Freeman said. "They will find a spot like a hump or a hard bottom or a couple of big stumps close to bait, and they will set up there to feed. It's all about timing. You have to locate those fish

there when they are going to eat, and then get the bait to them where they don't have to chase it."

Freeman said you'll sometimes pull up on a spot like that and see big fish, maybe catch one, and then come back again and they are gone. Often, when they aren't in a feeding mood, they will pull off the cover and suspend in deeper water nearby. When they do, you aren't going to catch them.

"As the weather warms a bit and the fish move into prespawn at the middle or end of January, then you will always find them around the food," he said. "They haven't bunched up yet and may not bite all the time, but they won't be far from the food. It's funny, because a lot of times, you'll hear about crappie fishermen catching 40 crappie and hanging a 10-pound bass. That's because all the fish are hanging around the food."

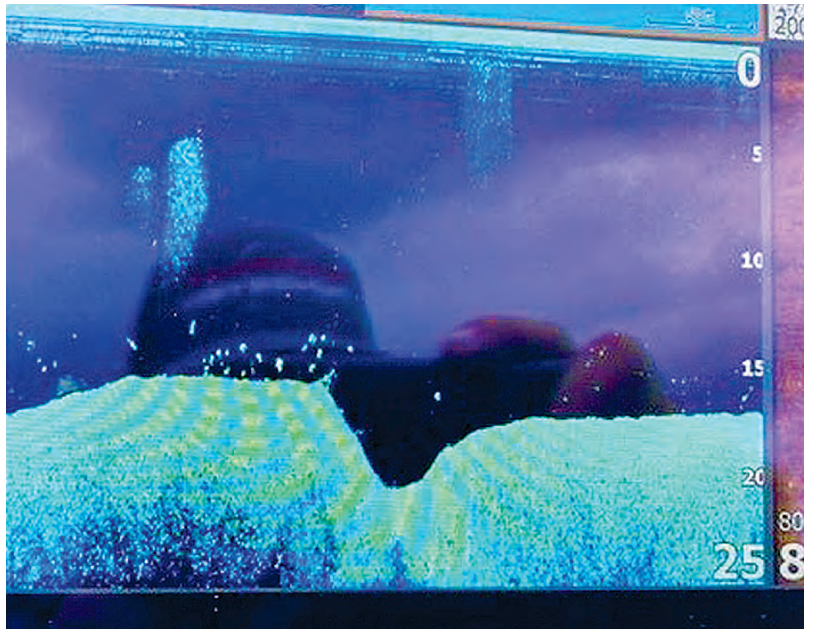
Freeman said you can take three basic lures and cover any situation for cold-water bass. One thing they share in common is the ability to get deep where winter bass like to stay.

## DEEP-DIVING CRANKBAITS >





Fish here! This shot of an electronics screen shows a school of shad (upper left), a group of large bass (white dots) suspended on an underwater hump just off an old creek bed, waiting for just the right bait to come by



# HAPPY NEW YEAR, *BASS* FISHING STYLE

Did you miss the New Year's party? It's not too late if you are a bass fisherman. In fact, if you are easing down the lake and see this — it's a New Year's party — bass-fishing style.

"Actually, that's about as good as it gets when you see this," said bass pro Hunter Freeman of Monroe. "You've got some big bass (the small white dots), a school of shad or baitfish, and they are set up on a hump right off the edge of a creek channel."

While the fish shown here aren't actually chasing the shad, the fact that they are up off the bottom and not grouped tightly together means they are ready and willing to eat. It's a great spot to back off, cast out a deep-diving crank bait and reel it right past them.

Then wait for the bite, reel them in and grab the net. Happy New Year. ■



**Kinny Haddox** has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 45 years. He publishes a daily website, [lakedarbonnelife.com](http://lakedarbonnelife.com) and is a member of the Louisiana Chapter of the Outdoor Legends Hall of Fame. He and his wife, DiAnne, live in West Monroe.

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**OPPOSITE:** Bass pro Hunter Freeman likes three baits in January: a Carolina-rigged soft plastic, a deep-diving crankbait and a jig.



When fishing a soft-plastic bait on a Carolina rig, you have to slow down your presentation and use a longer leader.

## DEEP-DIVING CRANKBAITS

“With the fish spread out, there’s no better way to cover an area that you see big fish in than with a big, 20- to 25-foot, deep-diving crankbait,” he said. “It’s the most-aggressive approach and the best way to get more than one of them to bite. Almost without exception, that crankbait is going to pull out the biggest fish first. If the big fish has any thoughts of feeding, it will get that bait first. It’s a dominance thing.

“A lot of people start on a spot with a crankbait, but I take a different approach. I like to throw a plastic rig first and try to catch a couple, then go back with the crankbait and try to get the big ones,” he said. “Some good crankbaits for this are the Strike King 10XD, ZeeBoss 25 or Sixth Sense Cloud Nine C25.”

## CAROLINA-RIGGED PLASTICS

Fishing a Carolina rig is the least-aggressive way to approach cold-water bass, he said. It’s important to get the bait right in front of the fish, and the slow presentation allows more time to trigger a strike.

“When the fish are lethargic, you can still make them bite, but you have to slow it down,” he said. “I also like to use a longer leader, sometimes 3 to 4 feet long, to let the bait dangle in front of the fish longer.”

## JIGS WITH PLASTIC TRAILERS

Jigs are a cover bait, Freeman said.

“This is a lure that you put right on the cover: brush piles, stumps, a defined target,” he said. “You have to put the bait right in front of the fish, just like the Carolina rig, but it is also a more-active presentation. Sometimes, the bigger profile of a jig with a big trailer works. Sometimes, you have to cut it down and try that. The key is to be versatile and see what it is



the bass want.

Regardless of the lure, it’s important to not give up too quickly on winter bass. Try the spot from different angles, and if you know fish are there, come back later, and maybe you’ll find them in a better mood. And always pay attention. You never know when you’ll get that little bitty ‘tick’ of a big old bass taking your lure.” ■

*Hunter Freeman guides on Caney Lake when he’s not fishing tournaments. He can be reached at @hunterfreemanfishing or hunterfreemanfishing@gmail.com.*

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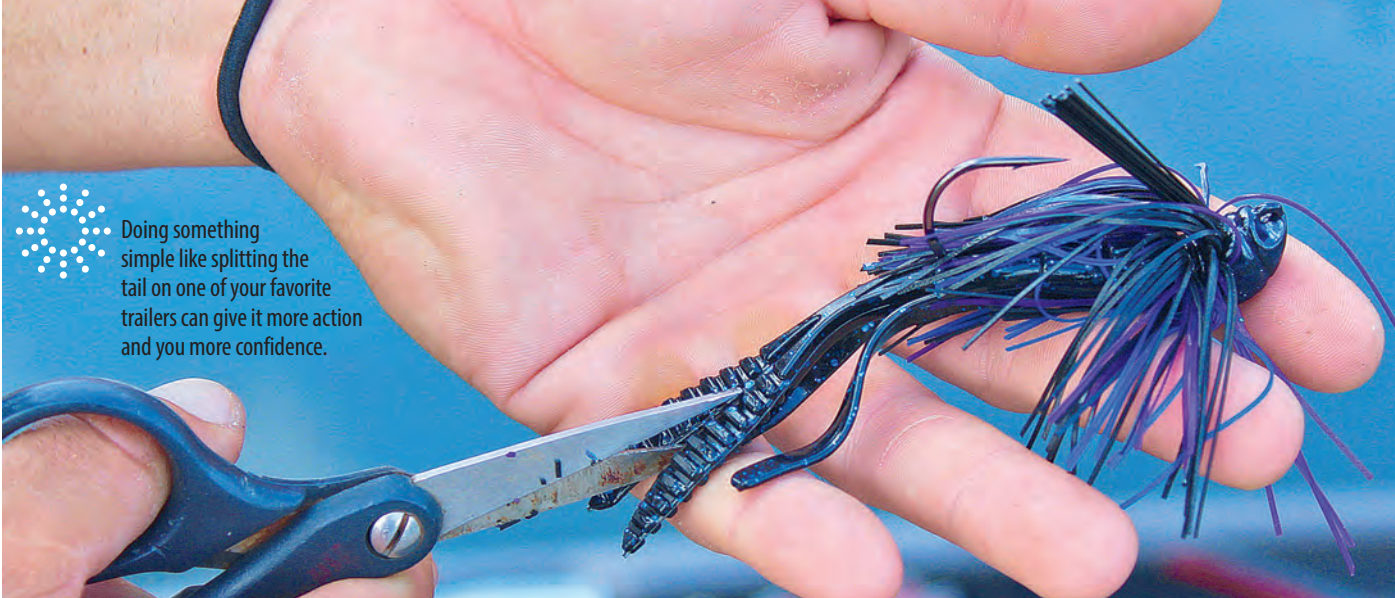
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## EVEN THE BEST JIG CAN USE LITTLE HELP

There are dozens of really good jigs on the market, and bass pro Hunter Freeman packs a lot of them. They come in all sizes, colors, weights and especially, skirt lengths. His go-to combo is a black/blue, ½-ounce Bryant's Custom flipping jig with a trimmed-down Zee Bait Bamboo Bomber as the trailer.

"I've got some that are 3 inches long and some that are just an

inch or so, but one thing I like to do in the colder water is often add a little bit of my own touch to the jig," he said. "That starts with a trailer to give the bait a little more bulk, a little more action and slow it down on fall."

There are two other tricks that Freeman adds. First, he likes to trim the skirt a little bit so the trailer shows and has a good action. Trimming it takes just a few seconds; he keeps a small pair of scissors in his tackle box for the task. He also likes to often split his trailers to give it more swimming action.

"It's just a little trick to make the bait a little bit different, and it also gives me confidence when I see the bait look even better in the water," he said. ■

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# ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL

Four pros pick artificial jig as the top bait for January

By Don Shoopman

Four bass pros who live in different regions of the Sportsman's Paradise were in agreement on the bait they rely on the most to put fish in the boat during January.

A jig was their go-getter for this time of year. It was a unanimous decision by Colby Miller, Hunter Freeman, Brett Preuett and Greg Hackney.

Naturally, each of them has his own personal favorite. The bottom line, though, is that fishing in cold water and cold weather is most effective with a jig.

They took the opportunity recently to talk about the plusses and reasons behind their choices.

## PACEMAKER FLATLINE JIG BOOSTS JANUARY CATCHES FOR MILLER

**A** bass pro and Toledo Bend fishing guide who recently completed his first year on the FLW Pro Circuit at age 21 knows what he will throw the first month of 2021.

Colby Miller's choice is a V&M Pacemaker Flatline jig. He prefers to tie on a 5/8- or 3/4-ounce model to the business end of his line.

"My reason for throwing the football jig in January? Those big suckers are, like, laying around isolated wood and other structure," he said. "A jig has always been my confidence bait for getting a big bite, you know?"

Miller, who hails from Elmer but now lives on Toledo Bend, has plenty of experience with the V&M Pacemaker Flatline Pacemaker jig, having caught plenty of fish on it.

"It's just what I've thrown for several years. I've thrown a jig for so long. I have so much confidence with it," he said.

Fishing Toledo Bend with that football jig is a must in January. How and where does he throw it?

"It just depends," he said. "Each year is a little bit different."

Typically, he said, he casts it in 12- to 18-foot depths.

"I like to feel something. I like to fish a hard, clay bottom, big stumps or logs or even a big brushpile," he said.



Photo courtesy Curtis Niedermier/FLW



“A jig has always been my confidence bait for getting a big bite.”

Miller uses the 5/8-ounce model when the structure, such as wood, is “super thick” in an effort to avoid hang-ups. Sometimes, he’ll downsize to a 1/2-ounce model if the bass are just pecking at the heavier model and don’t seem to want to eat it. He’ll slow the fall with a larger, soft-plastic trailer.

The heavier jig is for when the bass seem to be active and want to move around a lot.

“I’ll throw a big jig down there, and they’re going to swallow it,” said Miller, whose favorite colors are black/blue and sneaky snake.

Miller fishes the jig on a 7-foot-3 MH G-Loomis rod with a Shimano Curado K reel loaded with 18-pound K9 fluorocarbon. He uses 60-pound braid when he’s flipping around thick cover such as bushes or grass in shallower water. ■

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## FROM COLLEGE TO PRO RANKS, FREEMAN CATCHES JANUARY BASS ON BRYANT'S CUSTOM JIG

**Y**ears ago, it didn't take long for a young Hunter Freeman of West Monroe to discover the artificial lure that consistently puts bass in the boat in January.

A jig from Bryant's Custom Jigs has been Freeman's go-to bait from his outstanding collegiate bass fishing days at Louisiana-Monroe to his current spot on the FLW Pro Tour.

He's looking forward to fishing with his favorite jig combination in January.

"I really like a ½-ounce Bryant's Custom jig. It's just always a staple," he said. "It's a versatile bait. It can catch a big one in 2 foot of water or 25 foot."

He loves to flip it offshore because it doesn't get snagged as much, especially around heavy cover.

"I love fishing in the wintertime," he said. "It's so exciting. There's always a wad of big fish to be found. The jig can be used to get a big bite out of a bunch of fish."

Freeman, 24, favors a black/blue model with some purple in the strands. His second color choice is green pumpkin. He fishes it with a Zee Bait soft-plastic trailer, the Bamboo Bomber.

Freeman still relies on sage advice from a bass angler a long



Photo courtesy Hunter Freeman



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time ago. The man told him, "Ya gotta tease 'em."

So he soaks the Bryant's Custom jig to this day, every time he's out in January, even February.

"I drag it until I hit a piece of cover. I'll put it in one spot and give it some twitches," he said.

The jig has a vertical line tie plus a lot more features that impress Freeman. Each jig is hand-poured, sanded, chemically washed and cleaned, powder painted and baked during a three-day process. Each one is armed with a Trokar hook of appropriate size: 3/0 for 1/4- and 3/8-ounce, 4/0 for 1/2-ounce, and 5/0 for a 3/4-ounce model. The weed guards are fastened with epoxy and silicone skirts are wrapped with hand-tied copper wire.

Freeman fishes the jig tied to 17-pound fluorocarbon line with a 7-foot-3 Falcon Amistad rod and a reel with a fast retrieve. ■



**“***I drag it until I hit a piece of cover. I'll put it in one spot and give it some twitches.***”**

Photo courtesy Bryant's Custom Jigs

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## PREUETT RELIES ON HIS CAJUN BUG TO BOAT BASS DURING JANUARY

It's easy for Brett Preuett to remember the name of the football jig he swears by to catch bass in January. After all, it's named after the 30-year-old pro bass angler from Monroe. It's the Preuett Cajun Bug.

The jig's hook angle is "just right" for a solid hookset, according to Preuett, who gives credit for that to Tim Harmon of Treeshaker Tackle Co. in Lexington, S.C.

Preuett, a veteran guide on Toledo Bend and Caney Lake, will be ready with a Cajun Bug tied on when he gets his new boat for the 2021 season.

"I've caught fish with it in our tournament in February at Lake Cherokee and at the (2015) Classic in February. I throw it year-round, but it does well in January," he said. "I work it real slow in January. If I hit a hard spot or something, I shake it, I soak it, in January. I fish it real slow."

"I can't overemphasize the fishing slow and shaking part," he said.

Preuett will pull the football jig he designed slowly across brush, ledges and rocks and around cypress trees. His favorite color is mud bug. The soft-plastic trailer he uses is a watermelon/red Crème Craw.

Preuett's Cajun Bugs are available in three sizes:  $\frac{3}{8}$ -,  $\frac{1}{2}$ - and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce and in 10 colors.

Two of its most outstanding features, according to Preuett, are the unique sonar Rattler Ballzz and the special screw lock.

Preuett ties the jig to 16-pound Sunline Shooter fluoro-carbon line loaded on a Shimano Curato DC fastened to a 7-foot-3 Shimano Expride. ■



“I work it real slow in January. If I hit a hard spot or something, I shake it, I soak it, in January. I fish it real slow.”



Photo courtesy Treeshakertackle.com

## HACKNEY'S HACK ATTACK FLOURO FLIPPING JIG HOOKS 'EM THIS MONTH

**G**reg Hackney has just the artificial lure to stick with patiently during one of the coldest months in Louisiana.

His No. 1 choice is the Strike King Hack Attack Flouro Flipping Jig, to which he adds a Strike King Rage Craw trailer.

"January, for me, is going to be a jig month. It's my favorite month of all to catch them on a jig. I catch the biggest fish I catch all year in January," Hackney said. "They bite a jig just so much better in January. I fish it thoroughly and slowly. That's the way to catch big ones."

Hackney, a bass pro from Gonzales and host of *Sportsman TV*, said he designed the jig to specifically be used with fluorocarbon line.

The 3/8-ounce model will be a major player in January, he said. Hackney uses the 3/8-ounce model most of the time because he prefers to use the lightest jig he can get away with when fishing light cover like cane and wood. The slower fall is effective then.

Heavier models — the 1/2- or 3/4-ounce jigs — are ideal for punching, he said. However, wintertime punching with the jig is different than other seasons, as the matted vegetation has died down, so slipping the jig through cracks in the mat is more efficient.

"That jig has a zero-degree line tie. It's almost like a worm weight. It goes through cover real well," he said.

The zero-degree line tie also provides a direct, in-line transfer of energy for improved hooksetting capabilities with less line stress, he pointed out.

Hackney's two favorite colors are black/brown/amber and black/blue. He adds a California craw color for the former and a blue bug or blue sapphire color for the latter, although he does experiment with different colors.

He fishes the jig on 25-pound Gamma fluorocarbon line with either a 7-foot-6 Lew's Flippin' Stick for the 3/8-ounce model or a 7-foot-11 Flippin' stick for the heavier models. He also throws it on 50-pound Gamma Torque braid. ■

### TOLEDO BEND >



“They bite a jig just so much better in January. I fish it thoroughly and slowly. That’s the way to catch big ones.”

# TIME TO 'TRAP' TOLEDO BEND BASS

## Rat-L-Traps come to the forefront as January bass begin fattening up

Important things to remember about bass fishing at Toledo Bend in January stuck out in my mind during Thanksgiving week.

Sure, I was in a deer stand a few mornings and got a deer, but I had plenty of time to think about what's on tap bass fishing-wise after New Year's Day. It's the time to throw a lipless crankbait like a Rat-L-Trap, as it has been for the past three or so decades. It's a time when bass that bite can be a 2-pounder, a 10-pounder — or heavier.

What really jogged my memory about the pending big bass bite was a 10.25-pound bass caught in late November by a buddy of mine, Keith Woods of Many. He weighed the hawg at Keith's Toledo Bend Tackle on State Highway 21 E, a few miles from the western shore of Toledo Bend.

I can tell you based on so many past years, many more of those big girls will show up in January. Those potbellied sows will be on the move and working their way to the shallows along with other transitioning bass for the pre-prespawn or prespawn period.

I have some great memories of catching bass and vivid recollections of people who made a difference in the sport way back when. I'd like to share a couple of those before writing about the best way to catch Toledo Bend bass in late December, January and early February.

Bill Lewis and Jack Smithwick, the Louisiana men who made the difference in catching bass during the winter and later winter, would meet at our family's Pendleton Harbor Marina. Each would go out and catch bass on the Rat-L-Traps and Rogues their respective companies produced. There was a friendly rivalry. Those Rat-L-Traps and Rogues are still major players at the lake more than 30 years later.

Ah, Traps in January. They are deadly. Personal experiences and past major tournaments tell the tale. Thank you, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Smithwick.

About 25 years ago, I took two clients to the Indian Mounds and Housen Bay, where I had been mopping up on a pattern that works to this day in January. I was fishing a narrow, open-water ridge and raking the bass on crawfish-colored Rat-L-Traps. That was my first stop. I got to it, we didn't get a bite and we moved on.

We got plenty of casting practice with no results before returning to Indian Mounds. They weren't thrilled about going back, but I connected on my first and second casts and got five bass on almost consecutive casts. They got off the bench seat, and before we called it a day, we had hooked and boated nearly 30 bass on Rat-L-Traps.

That's how it goes in January. If you're there and they aren't,

Nick Terry of Kansas City lips a fat 4-pound bass that bit a Carolina-rigged Super Fluke while fishing in 3 feet of water in late December. Terry and the author caught 18 bass that day.



John Dean

that's what happens. When bass move up to feed, hang on.

There was a time when Bassin' Bucks team tournaments were wildly popular in January and February. I'll never forget the 25- to 28-pound limits, always caught on Rat-L-Traps, regardless the weather.

Things haven't changed. Except for the fact that bladed jigs, like Delta Lures' Thunder Jigs, have found a niche in successful game plans this time of year.

In early December, the lake's pool level was at 167.80. With seasonal deluges sure to pass through the region before New Year's Day, Toledo Bend should rise, so there's more to throw at than dirt spots, but we'll see. We're getting quite a bit of rainfall now.

No matter whether the water temperature is in the 50s or lower, it's time to throw a red or orange Rat-L-Trap or a black/blue, chartreuse/white or golden bream bladed jig.

As for Rat-L-Traps, ½-ounce models are the "bread-and-butter," so to speak, to catch numbers and some quality bass. However, the ¾-ounce model has proven to be the cat's meow for putting bigger bass in the livewell, a plus at bass tournament time, whether a bass club tournament or a major derby.

This isn't a time to drift the flats and fish. It is chunk and wind time, though, prime time to work over the shallow ridges in 5- to 7-foot ridges near 15-foot depths or deeper. It works consistently in January, believe me. Concentrate on the hard break of contour lines. ■



John Dean has been guiding on Toledo Bend most of his life. If you'd like to join him on a trip, give him a call at (936) 404-2688.

**LURE REVIEW >**

## SHIMANO SARAGOSA REELS

Make no mistake about it. These are big-fish reels.

Shimano's Saragosa series of spinning reels has added two sizes and now offers anglers fishing for big fish with eight different reels.

The 14000XG and 18000HG reels, introduced at last summer's ICAST show, are great for casting or jigging up big fish, featuring Shimano's cold-forged HAGANE gears for lasting durability and smoothness, an ultra-durable, waterproof HAGANE body, the Infinity Drive feature and waterproof Cross Carbon drag.

The 14000XG is ideal for casting pencil baits and deep jigging. It pulls in 53 inches of line per turn of the handle. The spool capacity is 315 yards of 65-pound test PowerPro or 260 yards of 20-pound mono. The 18000HG, returns 51 inches of line per crank with its 5.7:1 gear ratio and it holds up to 440 yards of 65-pound test PowerPro or 340 yards of 25-pound mono.

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## TENZING HANGTIME BACKPACK

Deer hunters nowadays take so much more stuff into the woods than even just a decade ago, and fanny packs often won't do the job; backpacks have become a regular sight, but they don't come without the problem of how to access all their nooks and crannies while sitting in a lock-on, ladder or climbing stand 15 to 20 feet above a well-travelled deer trail.

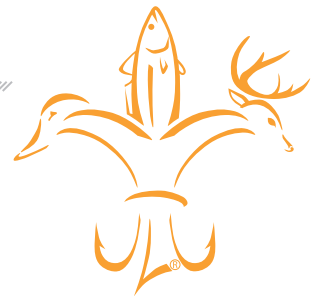
That's where Tenzing's new Hangtime Backpack comes into play. It's designed to be removed once you're in your stand and hung on a device like a bowhanger, so hunters can easily access the myriad pockets to get out their scent products, rangefinders, cell phones, even an extra sweatshirt. The pack's rigid frame makes it

easy to search for your gear, and oversized zippers make opening pockets easy.

Weighing less than 2 pounds empty, the Hangtime Backpack has seven compartments and 15 pockets, including SD card pockets on the shoulder straps, a removable, ambidextrous bow carrier and a fold-out bow- and gun-carrying boot for the walk or ride in. There's even a base compartment that holds an included Plano® utility box so you can store smaller items for easy access.

**MSRP: \$199.99.**

**For more info, visit: [tenzingoutdoors.com](http://tenzingoutdoors.com)**



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- Gorilla Grip MAX Fingerless gloves give your hands protection while allowing your fingers to work, unfettered, while delivering a supreme grip while wet.
- Gorilla Grip + ANSI Level 5 Cut Protection cloves provide extreme flexibility and protection in wet and dry situations — perfect for

cleaning fish and throwing a cast net for baitfish or shrimp.

- Gorilla Grip + ANSI Level 5 Cut Protection + RhinoFlex have a tough, outer polymer skin for impact and abrasion protection that is flexible enough for natural movement.

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## LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Zach Dubois with his new Bayou Bug 2.0 attached to a bass.

# BAYOU BUG 2.0

CAJUN LURES GIVES ONE OF ITS MOST-POPULAR LURES AN UPDATE

One of the soft-plastic lures that launched Cajun Lures six years ago has a new look for 2021.

Founder and artificial lure designer Zachary Dubois of Nunez, a rural community near Kaplan in Vermilion Parish, wanted more action from the body of the lure, and he got it with improvements made to the original Bayou Bug. Bayou

Bug 2.0 has arrived, and it is catching bass like the 8-pounder Dubois boated last March at Toledo Bend.

Dubois, 28, got the bug, so to speak, for tweaking the bait at the beginning of the year, liked the direction the physical changes were headed and refined them from there to create the newest version. He eliminated the bulbous “arms” and replaced them with flat arms featuring

a flair, added ribs to the lower portion of the body to aid in “skin hooking” and, most important, in his opinion, added an extension to the upper of the body to give



**Don Shoopman** fishes for freshwater and saltwater species mostly in and around the Atchafalaya Basin and Vermilion Bay. He moved to the Sportsman's Paradise in 1976, and he and his wife June live in New Iberia. They have two grown sons.

it more “meat at the top” where the hook is inserted.

“I wanted some improvements on it. Getting a big mold for my machine gave me the opportunity, and now we have a new one,” Dubois said.

As for the improvement, mission accomplished, he believes. “Guys I’ve given it to test it out and review all like it,” said Dubois, a 28-year-old Louisiana-Lafayette graduate. “I have a feeling once more people get it in their hands and start using it, it’ll be the favorite flipping bait for a lot of guys.”

Lucas Ragusa of Gonzales, who fished the Bassmaster Opens from 2013 to 2018, is one of the growing number of believers in the Bayou Bug 2.0. He fished with Dubois when the lure designer took it for a test drive at Henderson Lake.

Dubois, who has been manufacturing lures full-time in a small shed next to his house since 2016, said they caught some good-sized bass on the baits, fresh out of the new mold. He found out what he was hoping to learn.

“What I really wanted to see was how the fish reacted to it,” he said. “When I’d flip, a lot of fish bit on the fall or when I popped the bait. That tells me the arms generated the bite. I was happy about that.”

Ragusa later nailed a 5-pounder on the Bayou Bug 2.0 at Henderson Lake.

The changes made the soft-plastic creature bait even more appealing, according to Dubois.

The extension at the top gives it a little more tip to use when a fisherman runs the hook into it, plus helps “nudge it up there and keep it up there so it lasts longer,” he said.

The small appendage on each side at the lower end of the body gives the lure a little more vibration as it falls, he said.

The new ribs over the small cavity in the middle allows an angler to tuck the barb of the hook in to keep it weedless, he said, but won’t interfere with the hooksetting capability of the Bayou Bug 2.0.

The revised bait is about 4 inches long and available in 14 colors, with the most popular being black/blue, junebug, Okeechobee craw and boudin, a color Dubois cooked up that is brown pumpkin on top, light tan on the bottom with black/blue flake. ■

For more information about the Bayou Bug and other Cajun Lures LLC products, go to [cajunlures.com](http://cajunlures.com).

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## SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope

Unbroken horizontal lines along their sides distinguish striped bass from other bass species.



Photos by Brian Cope

# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: STRIPED BASS

**S**triped bass, *Morone saxatilis*, have two distinct, naturally occurring populations. One strain is native to the Atlantic coast, from Canada down to the St. John's River in Florida. The second is scattered along the Gulf of Mexico's northern coast from Florida's Suwannee River to Louisiana's Lake Pontchartrain.

These fish began their existence as true anadromous fish, meaning they live the bulk of their lives in saltwater but migrated to freshwater to spawn. A huge population still lives that way. However, striped bass have also been successfully introduced into freshwater lakes and reservoirs across the United States, even in landlocked states with no access to saltwater. Fisheries biologists have also stocked them along the Pacific Coast with great success.

Striped bass have long bodies and range in color from green to steel gray to dark gray and almost black on their backs, with silver to dark gray sides. Between

seven and eight distinct horizontal lines run from their gill plates to their tails. One always follows the fish's lateral line.

They have two parallel tooth patches on their tongues and two sharp spines on the back edges of their gill plates. One big difference between the Atlantic and Gulf populations is in the number of dorsal fin rays. They also have a different configuration of lateral line scales, but fisheries biologists still consider both strains to be the same species.

### ON THE MOVE

Atlantic striped bass also travel the open ocean much more so than the Gulf strain. Atlantic stripers migrate as far as from the Carolinas to Nova Scotia, and from Florida to at least Virginia. Gulf stripers rarely migrate out of saltwater river systems.

On some occasions, Atlantic strains of striped bass have been caught in the Gulf, but this is probably from striped bass stocked in freshwater impound-

ments with access to the Gulf.

Striped bass go by many nicknames. Among these are: stripes, stripers, linesiders, rockfish, rock bass, rocks, silversides and squidheads. In some areas of the country, males are called bucks or jacks, while females are referred to as cows.

Despite their name, striped bass are not in the same family as largemouth or smallmouth bass. Those fish are in the black bass family, while striped bass are members of the temperate bass family.

These fish have huge appetites and will eat just about anything. Smaller fish make up the bulk of their diets, but they also eat squid and eels, and those in saltwater eat shrimp and crabs. They



**Brian Cope** of Borden, S.C., is a retired Air Force combat communications technician. He has a B.A. in English Literature from the University of South Carolina and has been writing about the outdoors since 2006. He's spent half his life hunting and fishing. The rest, he said, has been wasted.

Striped bass are targeted by thousands and thousands of anglers, either in saltwater from the Gulf to New England, or in landlocked reservoirs where they have been stocked by state agencies.

feed throughout the entire water column, and anglers can draw strikes from them 60 feet or deeper and on topwater lures — and anywhere in between — on the same day.

Male striped bass reach sexual maturity at the age of two, when they are about 6.8 inches long. Females reach it by age four when are typically 17 inches long. All spawning occurs in freshwater, upstream of nursery areas near river mouths. The females release thousand of eggs that the males fertilize, then the eggs must float freely, hatching within a few days.

Louisiana's state-record striped bass weighed 47.50 pounds. James L. Taylor caught the fish at Toledo Bend in August 1991. Mississippi's state-record striper weighed 39.6 pounds and was caught by Rocky Rawls in the Pascagoula River in February 2016.

The world-record striped bass came from Long Island Sound off of Westbrook, Ct. Gregory Myers caught the 81-pound, 14-ounce fish in August 2011.

The world-record landlocked striped bass came from the Black Warrior River in Alabama and weighed 69 pounds, 9 ounces. James Bramlett caught the fish in February 2013. ■



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# TRAVELLING TROUTING

LOUISIANA SPECKS WILL BE IN ONE OF TWO PLACES THIS MONTH, DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER. HERE'S HOW TO KEEP UP WITH THEM.

■ By Todd Masson



Inform someone from, say, Wisconsin that Louisiana is in one of the earth's subtropical zones, and they might assume we walk around every day in shorts and flip-flops with umbrellas in hand to shield us from the unblinking, broiling sun.

But as those of us who live in the Bayou State know, January can get pretty chilly. In fact, it's our coldest month. In Baton Rouge, for instance, the average nighttime low for the month is 40 degrees.

# Brrrrr.

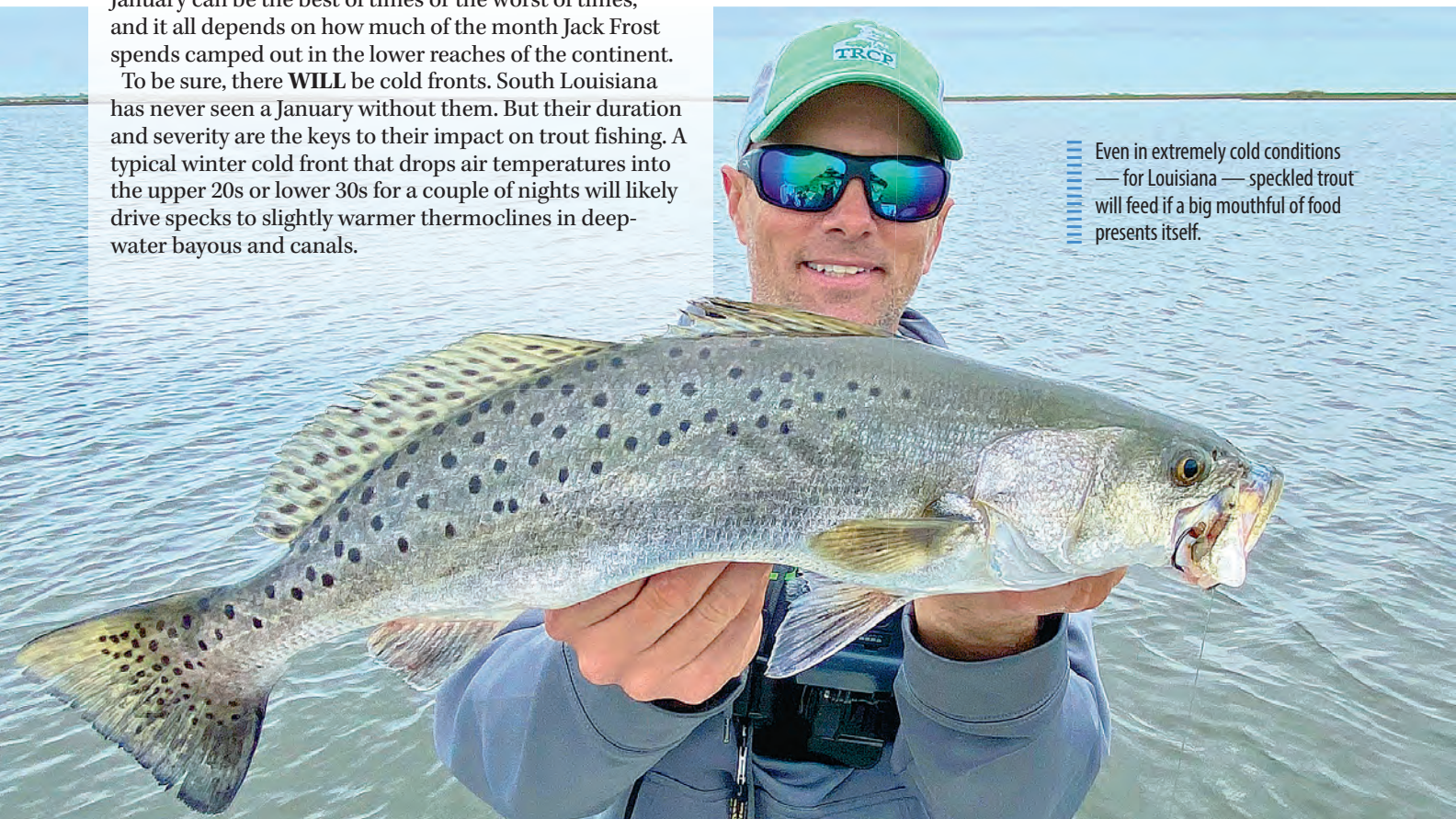
That means it's a page our resident speckled trout surely can't wait to rip off the calendar. Although the species ranges as far north as Virginia, it despises cold water. As a general rule, specks quit feeding in water temperatures below 50 degrees, and when those temps stay in the 40s for an extended period of time, they go belly up and turn into crab food.

So, with apologies to Dickens, speckled trout fishing in January can be the best of times or the worst of times, and it all depends on how much of the month Jack Frost spends camped out in the lower reaches of the continent.

To be sure, there **WILL** be cold fronts. South Louisiana has never seen a January without them. But their duration and severity are the keys to their impact on trout fishing. A typical winter cold front that drops air temperatures into the upper 20s or lower 30s for a couple of nights will likely drive specks to slightly warmer thermoclines in deep-water bayous and canals.

Such areas usually are devoid of baitfish, so the specks don't feed much. They're in pure survival mode, just waiting for better conditions to even consider putting food in their bellies.

That doesn't mean they won't eat if given the opportunity, however. If they're huddled together, and a baitfish comes wiggling through the crowd, it's got no chance of seeing the other side alive. Just one baitfish in the belly of a speckled trout this time of year can mean the difference between surviving the winter and heading up to the great marsh in the sky.



Even in extremely cold conditions — for Louisiana — speckled trout will feed if a big mouthful of food presents itself.

On warm days, specks pull up on shallow flats that have been more quickly heated by the sun. A warm afternoon and rising tide is ideal.



Plenty of fishermen don't believe that specks are available on January days in limit or larger amounts.

That's why fronts that are seasonably cold but not frigid can produce some of the year's best action. An angler who finds where the fish have ganged up to flee the cold water can leave not many minutes later with his limit.

As a general rule, smaller baits, like the H&H Baby Bull Minnow, are more productive in these situations, because the fish don't want to risk expending energy to chase something that's more formidable. Also, baitfish in the marshes tend to be smaller this time of year.

Typically, these fronts will have northerly winds for a day or two, followed by a calm, high-pressure day and then a return flow off the Gulf that will endure until the passage of the next front.

On those return-flow days, water temperatures begin to warm, and it doesn't take the specks long to notice their stomachs are growling. In an effort to fill them, they fan out onto nearby flats, searching for glass minnows, finger mullet, pogies and overwintering white shrimp. This is especially true on warm afternoons with rising tides, when the sun has had all day to heat up the flats.

Flats that are especially productive are those with oysters, clams or patches of grass that hold on through the winter. Baitfish and shrimp don't spend their days out in the open over featureless bottom. They cling to anomalies that offer them cover from predators. Speckled trout instinctively know this, so that's where they focus their hunting efforts. They're like lions waiting at a watering hole for throat-parched zebras to show up.

The same tight-lined soft-plastics thrown to the fish when they were locked in the deep holes will work on the flats, but with the jigheads they're threaded on reduced from 3/8-ounce down to 1/4- or even 1/8-ounce.

Usually, however, an even better strategy is to throw shrimp-imitating lures, like TKOs or Vudu Shrimp, below corks. By January, most shrimp have left the marsh, but specks still love them, so they respond immediately to any they see. Also, lures under corks are necessarily slow-moving, and more accurately imitate cold-blooded bait this time of year.

These productive flats are always adjacent to those deep-water areas, because instincts tell the fish they'll likely need to seek their protection again soon. Specks follow this shallow-to-deep-to-shallow pattern multiple times during a typical winter, especially in January.

No, our weather is seldom as cold as Wisconsin's, but to speckled trout, it can feel downright Nordic. ■



A former editor of Louisiana Sportsman, Todd Masson has published the Marsh Man Masson YouTube channel since 2017.

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## WADE THE GATOR HOLE

### Get ready to target Sabine Lake's big specks

**W**interize your boat? I must admit I do not even know how, or what all that entails. I have waded with painfully numb toes and fingers more times than I care to mention, all the while creating some of my best memories.

It is not always full stringers and pictures of trophy trout. There are, without a doubt, those days mixed in of walking what feels like miles in search of a speckled trout or standing, casting at a reef for hours with nothing to show for it.

I tend to learn much more from the slow days, and they definitely make me appreciate the days full of catching so much more. The popularity of wading on the upper Texas coast and in southwest Louisiana has grown exponentially over the past 15 to 20 years; however there are still many that believe we are flat-out crazy to jump out of a perfectly good boat, especially when the mercury plummets. This is when I believe it is that much more critical to actually be wade-fishing to be successful with those bigger, sow speckled trout.

I used to wear so many layers that by the time I got to my waders, I could not bend well enough to tie my shoes. As I eventually was able to afford higher-quality clothing, the number of layers has decreased; comfort and maneuverability have both improved. A great buddy and fellow guide turned me onto alpaca socks to help prevent my toes from turning into ice cubes. I also wear insulated pants from Simms, paired with some of their fleece layers and an insulated wading jacket, and I am set. Comfort on the water, or in this case, comfort in the water, cannot be emphasized enough.

I have walked many a mile and fished for countless hours around the mouth of the Gator Hole at the southeast corner

An absolutely unforgettable trip to the Gator Hole on a frigid morning with a bluebird sky. The speckled trout and redfish bit much better than we all expected with the post-front conditions of cold weather and high barometric pressure.

of Sabine Lake, targeting gator trout. The Gator Hole is a well-known area among wade fishermen who frequent Sabine. It is the first large cove you run into just south of Madame Johnson Bayou. There are a handful of small drains that connect into the Gator Hole, enhancing the location. The flat to the north of the Gator Hole is much shallower than the area to the south. For the most part, it has a very firm and smooth bottom to walk.

As with most areas on Sabine, the closer to the shoreline, the more difficult it is to walk, as the bottom is very uneven and slick. There is a little shell close by, but not much. I prefer the north flat for an incoming tide.

Keep your eyes peeled for fleeing mullet — and slicks if you are lucky. The south shoreline next to the Gator Hole provides more structure in the form of both shell and fluctuations in topography. However, it does get deeper quite a bit more quickly when walking away from the shoreline than it does on the north side. I prefer to fish the flat south of the entrance of the Gator Hole on an outgoing tide.

Speckled trout in January tend to feed much less frequently and on larger prey. Pay attention to the Solunar tables and make sure you are casting during the major and minor feeding times, not running from spot to spot. I use larger lures such as Super Spooks, Yozuri Crystal Minnows, Corky Fat Boys and MirrOdines. Color is largely dependent on water clarity: darker colors for dirty water and lighter, more natural colors when the water is clear. ■

— Capt. Adam Jaynes



**Capt. Adam Jaynes** grew up fishing Sabine Lake and Lake Calcasieu and surrounding waters. He specializes in light tackle with artificial lures in the year-around pursuit of speckled trout and redfish. He can be contacted at [justfishsabine.com](http://justfishsabine.com)

The Great Wall has helped the waters around MRGO fill back up with trout and redfish, especially in winter.



## DEEP WATER CONVERGENCE MAKES THE GREAT WALL A GREAT WINTER SPOT

The Bayou Bienvenue area has been a speckled trout hotspot for a long, long time. The MRGO funneled salty water straight up from the Gulf of Mexico to converge with the brackish waters of Lake Borgne, Lake Pontchartrain, the Intracoastal Waterway and Bayou Bienvenue, and that convergence of waters produced tremendous underwater highways and habitat for speckled trout, redfish, black drum, sheepshead, flounder and just about everything else that swims in the marsh and in coastal waters.

Unfortunately, the MRGO's salty waters also caused massive erosion and the death of the swamp lands and wildlife that formerly inhabited the area. And it became an interstate highway for massive storm surges to travel when the Gulf brewed something up, as Hurricane Katrina graphically demonstrated.

To remedy the problems, the "Great Wall" was erected as a huge surge barrier, cutting off the MRGO from the Gulf and hopefully preventing further Katrina-like disasters.

Since then, water salinity levels have fallen, and while the speckled trout action hasn't quite returned to its pre-Wall glory, it's still a productive area to fish, and cooler months are its new heyday.

The proof is evidenced by crowded parking lots in all four area marinas, and more boats full of anglers make the run from docks and marinas in the Rigolets area.

The main attraction may be the Great Wall, but that's certainly not the only place to catch fish in this area.

Jimmy Dixon, Jr., at Bait, Inc. said the winter fishing has been great. "Naturally, a lot of people are fishing along the MRGO Wall and around the gate of the ICW and the Wall there, and there's been some good trout action all along the MRGO rocks between the Wall and Violet," he said.

Dixon (504-277-3755) said the water along the Wall is deep, so you'll have to anchor and fish with bottom rigs and heavier weights to get your bait all the way to the bottom on moving



Glen Fallon caught this 22-inch speckled trout using live shrimp on the bottom. The fish was a bit over 4 pounds.

tides, and he pointed to live shrimp as the best bait.

Most anglers fish the side of the Wall where the water is flowing in, dragging bait and drawing fish along. If that has you fishing the backside of the wall, the side with all the support beams, then a sliding cork is the better way to keep off the debris-laden bottom. Otherwise, a sliding sinker or drop-shot rig is the way to go.

Other options to try include the ICW, anywhere from the junction of the MRGO to Michoud Slip and even farther on down to Third and Forth Bayou and Bayou Thomas; or at the washouts and cuts along the way. Try the Bulkhead wall and around the remnants of the castle in Violet, or try both sides of the Bayou Bienvenue Locks. ■

— Rusty Tardo

**OFFSHORE HOTSPOTS** ➤

# JANUARY: VENICE ACTION GOOD IN, OUT

Wahoo, tuna are offshore targets; reds, specks targeted for inshore sight-fishing

**K**atie Duplass and her husband, John, are in their first year running Pelican Charters, but they aren't new to the Venice fishing industry. They have a firm grasp on what the bite is like at any given time.

According to Katie Duplass, January is when the offshore pivots towards migrating pelagic fish such as wahoo and larger yellowfin tuna, while the inshore fishing pushes guides and anglers alike to the interior marshes.

"The wahoo begin to show up sometime in January and early February," she said. "When wahoo are in thick and the bite is on, we try to get them when they are in season."

However, problems can arise when the fronts come through.

"Cold fronts are brought by north winds, coming down and pushing water out from the Mississippi River," Katie Duplass said. "Fishing can be good before a front or a few days after. You have to wait until the water clears up and the dirtier water is pushed back, especially if you are after wahoo."



Capt. John and Katie Duplass, owners and operators of Pelican Charters, say wahoo and yellowfin are the primary focus this time of year around Venice.





## JANUARY'S BULL REDS ARE PRIME FOR FLIES

Pick your days, conditions, and a fly rod can provide excitement in the marsh

By Dora Lambert

**F**ew anglers realize that Louisiana is a flourishing fly-fishing locale for redfish, especially during the winter when the bull reds push into the interior marshes. Avid fly-rod anglers come from all over for the opportunity to present a fly in front of a 30-pounder.

But what is the draw of catching one of these many behemoths that patrol the marshes using fly gear as opposed to conventional gear?

According to Capt. Peter Scafaru of New Orleans, owner of Marsh on the Fly Guide Service, it's the challenge and the sportsmanship that profoundly connects the fly angler to nature.

"With any outdoor pursuit, you can always make it more sporting," Scafaru said. "I believe one of the hardest things to do out there is to sight-fish for redfish and catch them on a fly. However, that's what makes it rewarding. You become more immersed in the process of the chase than you would when blindly tossing a popping cork with shrimp. You have to be on your game at all times, because these fish come into view real quick, and they are gone just as quickly. If you aren't careful, you will miss your chance."

### IDEAL CONDITIONS

With fly fishing, you have to see the fish before you catch it, which makes it similar to sight-fishing with conventional gear.

"One thing I believe people don't realize is that there is really no difference between sight-fishing and fly fishing. You are just using different techniques to catch fish," Scafaru said. "So,

Fly fishermen love Louisiana's waters in January, when bull reds become targets.



Photo courtesy Capt. Peter Scafaru

wherever there is good sight-fishing there is good fly fishing.

"A clear, calm, sunny day is the best time for fly fishing around the marshes. It has to be reasonably calm so the flats don't get blown out. If it is howling and windy, it can be tough controlling the boat and getting the fish that you can see, especially when you are pushing the skiff with a pole all day. Unlike other places, the wind in Louisiana affects the levels of water in the marsh a lot more than the tides do."

### WHAT FLIES TO USE

Scafaru said it's important to judge redfish behavior when deciding on the fly to use and how to present it.

"Occasionally, you may have to present the fly a few times before they eat it," he said. "Sometimes, they are so on fire, they can hear it drop behind them, and they will turn around and whack it, but that's what makes targeting them exciting.

"I usually end up fishing with an attractor pattern with 3- to 5-inch streamers instead of an imitator. An attractor pattern is a

fly that looks like everything, but isn't anything specifically. We often use marabou or strips of rabbit streamers, so the fly has a lot of good motion in the water — anything with a bit of bulk that can push water works."

When it comes to the weight of the fly, Scafuru said it depends on the depth you are fishing.

"If you are fishing with a heavier fly in shallower water, it may drag in the mud too much," he said. "If it is too light, the fish might not notice it. Too much weight can be just as problematic as too little weight. You want the fly to be at the redfish's eye level."

Similar to conventional lures, darker color flies work better in the mornings and evenings when the sun is lower. Natural colors work better when the sun is higher

## CONSERVING REDS

Scafuru said there is nothing quite like catching a redfish on a fly that you tied yourself.

"There are over 100 saltwater fly-fishing patterns out there," he said. "Picking one and tying a fly at home, getting out on the water, tying the fly on your tippet and leader, and catching a fish on it. That's what keeps me and others drawn in to the sport.

"Unfortunately, I don't think there are as many bull reds around as there used to be. Many people attribute this, in equal parts, to the menhaden boats and the increase of recreational anglers overharvesting during the pandemic year. My belief is that you don't always have to fill the cooler to have a great trip. We need to preserve our redfish fishery and only take what we can do justice to." ■

**PADDLES 'N PUDDLES**

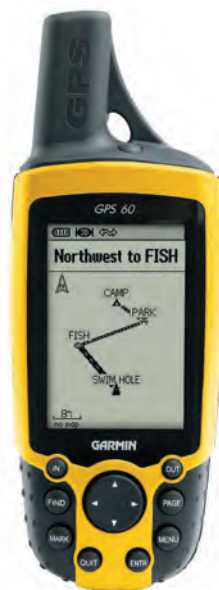
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Chris Holmes has kayak fished in the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and many places in between. He can be reached at [cholmes@att.net](mailto:cholmes@att.net).

## SHEEPSHEAD: DON'T OVERLOOK THESE TASTY FISH

**T**he most-underrated saltwater fish in Louisiana has to be the sheepshead. Even though they are hard fighters and provide delicious table fare, very few Louisiana fishermen target them. Have you ever seen anyone advertising a sheepshead charter?

The good news for kayak anglers is that they are readily accessible, eager to bite and provide consistent action during the winter when more popular species may get a bit picky.

Sheepshead are structure-oriented, and south Louisiana has an overabundance of great sheepshead habitat. Reefs, rock jetties, bridge and camp pilings abound. Look at it this way, the Lake Pontchartrain causeway alone provides about 50 miles of pilings between the north and south spans. Add in the I-10 twin spans, the Highway 11 bridge, the train trestles and the numerous natural and artificial reefs, and the lake's sheepshead opportunities are nearly endless. This doesn't even include all of the camp docks, piers, jetties and many other bridges across the coastal areas.

Kayaks are great platforms for fishing sheepshead close to and in these structures. They can be maneuvered under all areas of bridges to get at the exact point where the fish are holding. No super casting skills are necessary; all it usually takes is figuring out where they are on a particular day. Drop down a live or dead shrimp, and be ready for the strike.

The best spots are usually on the downcurrent sides of pilings. Sheepshead hold where the piling breaks the current flow, laying in wait for a snack to wash around the piling. The slack water makes it easier to keep your bait tight to the piling and also helps better detect bites. However, before moving on, check all sides of the piling in case the fish are in a different mood that day.

Live shrimp are best but are sometimes unavailable in late winter. The next best thing is dead shrimp — either fresh or frozen. Sheepshead are notorious bait stealers. Due to their small mouths and ample dentures, they can clean a hook in a split second. Using small, strong hooks and smaller shrimp or shrimp pieces greatly increases the hook up ratio.

Sheepshead hold tight to any hard structure. In clear, winter water, you can usually see them rooting barnacles and other critters that cling to bridge pilings. In Florida, where they regularly target sheepshead, one particular trick is to chum them up by scraping the pilings. A small floor scraper on a wooden handle is run up and down the pilings just under the surface. This crushes the outer shell and releases the tiny animals inside. These bits drift in the current and attract fish to the area.





Sheepshead are overlooked and under appreciated. However, kayak anglers are finding great sport and delicious meals by specifically targeting them around the many bridges, pilings and jetties across coastal Louisiana.

## PADDLES 'N PUDDLES

continued

Stout rods and heavy line help get quick control over these hard-fighting fish. Heavy braid and a fluorocarbon leader reduce abrasion, a constant issue when fishing close to these hard, sharp surfaces. Use heavy drag to quickly wrestle them out of the structure. Cut-offs are inevitable, but the quicker you can drag them away from the structure, the better chance of getting them in the kayak.

Boat positioning can be key. By sitting up tight to the down-current side of the piling, you can quickly drift or drag the fish backwards into the open water. If you fish a pedal-drive kayak with reverse, keep your feet ready to back away as soon as the fish is hooked. If you're paddling or don't have reverse, keep your paddle across your lap and get in a few quick strokes to get the yak moving away. Sheepshead fight more vertically than making horizontal runs. Therefore, you just need to get a short distance away from the structure to continue the fight.

A classic dropper rig where the hook sits a few inches above the sinker is all you need. Since you will be fishing the bottom, right in the structure, you are going to get snagged, but bottom rigs are simple and inexpensive to make. It is wise to make up a good supply ahead of time so you can quickly re-tie and get back to fishing in the event of a snag or cut-off. Another trick Florida guys use is to tie the section of the bottom rig that holds the sinker with lighter monofilament. The sinker is usually what gets snagged most often, and this allows for it to



Dropping a small live shrimp next to a bridge piling is as sure a fishing bet as you can get. Kayaks offer the ability to quietly maneuver in and out of this structure and put you right where the fish are holding.

break free without losing the hook and rest of the rig. Simply tie on a new sinker and you're back in business.

Fishing so tight to these pilings can be hard on a plastic boat. The barnacles and sharp, concrete edges act like a cheese grater and can quickly do a lot of damage. On calm days with light current, you can simply use your hand to keep the 'yak from hitting the piling. Many bridge regulars use a variety of vinyl buoys, old life jackets, and even a short length of PVC pipe to craft bumpers along the side of the 'yak to prevent contact.

If fishing Ponchartrain, pay attention to weather. Skip days that have high winds and plan to fish according to the direction. Opt to launch on the calm side of the lake, depending on that day's wind direction. On rough days, head into the inner canals and fish seawalls, piers and pilings.

Although you may be targeting sheepshead, the same techniques and locations also produce redfish and black drum.

A final tip learned from some old-timers. Sheepshead dorsal fins will absolutely destroy an ice chest — hard or soft. Carry a pair of small, cutting pliers and clip the spines off before putting the fish on ice. You'll be glad you did. ■

An advertisement for a Yamaha Sportsman 214 Tournament boat. The image shows a black and white motorboat on a lake with two people on board. A large yellow and black logo with the letter 'S' and the text 'SPORTSMAN You CAN HAVE IT ALL!' is in the top left. The text 'NOW IN STOCK!! BEAT THE SPRING RUSH!! BOATS ARE IN!' is prominently displayed in the center. The boat has 'SPORTSMAN' and '214 TOURNAMENT' written on its side. At the bottom, there are logos for Yamaha and Southern Outdoors & Marine LLC, along with the address '1308 CANAL BLVD., THIBODAUX' and phone number '985-447-4156'.

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# DES ALLEMANDS, BOEUF AREAS HOT FOR SAC-A-LAIT

Look for slightly stained water, fish jigs under a cork as fish approach prespawn

**C**anals and other waterways around Bayou Des Allemands and Lake Boeuf are places you'll find one of the most-consistent sac-a-lait anglers targeting slabs in January.

Clyde Folse, a guide and owner/general manager of The Crappie Psychic in Raceland, knows sac-a-lait can be caught around Bayou Black, too, but he'll be on either Des Allemands or Boeuf for the first two or three months of 2021. Both areas are close enough they can be fished in one day, he said.

Sac-a-lait success should be better around each new moon, Folse advised, because fish are less likely to eat at night. Also, he said, just before a cold front and a few days after are some of the most productive periods.

Sac-a-lait transition before the spawn and leave deeper water to get into spawning areas, Folse said. He doesn't rule out stained or dingy water when targeting the fish he loves to catch.

"I look for darker-colored water, what I call 'coffee water,' but not too clear," he said, adding if the jig he's using falls out of sight when it gets a foot to 1½ feet level, that's ideal. Another key is watching the shaft of a white trolling motor, which he has; if he can see 16 inches, he said, "I like that color water; it still has clarity to it. Fish it."

Scouting, putting in time looking for sac-a-lait, is another key unless an angler has the use of marine electronics. "Old school" anglers like Folse put their time in on the water. That way, when the bite isn't on but he knows the fish are there, his patience is rewarded more often than it isn't.

He can remember many times when there's a lull in the action, say, for two hours after 1 o'clock in the afternoon, then the fish turn on after three hours and it's slab after slab coming into the boat.

Folse ties a ¼-ounce Crappie Psychic Hamma Head jighead to 8-pound Trilene XL low-vis green mono, then adds his own black/white Crappie Weapon with a chartreuse Crappie Trailer and chartreuse Crappie Ammo.

Folse prefers to fish for sac-a-lait with a cork, not just any old cork, but a Slab Rattler glow cork, especially during the spawn in late January, February and March, which are the peak times for sac-a-lait around Des

Clyde Folse said sac-a-lait fishing success should be at its best in January in canals around Bayou Des Allemands and Lake Boeuf.



Allemands and Lake Boeuf.

"That rattling cork kind of attracts them," he said.

And cork color matters, something he stresses during his seminars.

"I teach this all across the country. I'll ask, 'How many think what color cork you're using is important?' Maybe I'll get two, three hands showing it matters. It's chartreuse. No orange or red," he said.

How does he feel about fishing for sac-a-lait without a cork?

"You can tight-line; I have friends who do it. They know how to cast to shore and bounce down until they come off a ledge," he said.

When he's hunting for the slabs before the spawn in the canals, he fishes 3 to 3½ feet deep until he finds the dropoff — the deeper water where sac-a-lait stage before moving up. Later, after they move shallower, he fishes a foot deep, even 8 inches.

Folse finds it's easier to locate the ledge with a cork. He casts toward shore and works it out. The cork will lay horizontal until the jighead can't touch bottom, then goes upright.

He can't wait 'til it sinks with the tug of a big, fat sac-a-lait. ■

— Don Shoopman



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Forrest Green slings a sac-a-lait into the boat that he caught in 12 feet of water. INSET: Green caught this sac-a-lait off of a submerged stump in Bayou Lacombe.



## BAYOU LACOMBE BASICS FOR JANUARY SAC-A-LAIT

Fish submerged cover in 10 to 12 feet of water

**T**he Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain is peppered with rivers and bayous that flow south into the lake. Miles of tributary shorelines laden with cypress knees, bulkheads and overhanging brush provide the perfect habitat for sac-a-lait.

While the visible shorelines call out to sac-a-lait anglers: in January, it's all about fishing deep.

Forrest Green of Lacombe has been fishing Bayou Lacombe since he was 10 years old. Since then, he's learned a lot about how colder temperatures affect the crappie bite on the bayou.

January marks the first month on the Northshore where anglers can depend on cold air routinely making its way south. The

average daytime high in January is 62 degrees, with the average low around 40. Green uses the colder water temperatures to eliminate certain areas of the bayou.

"Those sac-a-lait aren't going to be in the shallows in January, so that eliminates a large section of the bayou," he said.

With the shoreline off the table, he focuses on spots with submerged structure in the 10- to 12-foot range.

## DEEP WATER

The first place that the crappie veteran target is the main bayou, because it's where the deepest holes can be found. Green has numerous spots on the bayou where he starts out targeting stumps or the canopies of fallen trees that extend away from the shoreline.

While some anglers prefer jigging straight down into the structure, Green prefers fishing it from a distance.

"Sometimes, these fish can be spooky, so I like to set up about 25 feet off of the spot I want to fish and cast into it," he said.

Green uses an ultralight rod and reel with 8-pound line. His favorite lure is a 1-inch tripletail plastic minnow made by Speck-Drum. He threads it on a 1/6-ounce jighead and slowly works it on the bottom.

"When it's cold like this, you just want to crawl it on the bottom and watch your line for that tick," he said. "If you see your line move up, down, left, or right, set the hook!"

While the bayou offers deep water, one thing Green has noticed is that the crappie don't like moving water.

"Bayou Lacombe white perch don't like a strong current, so if I see that the water is moving too fast in the main bayou, I'll make a move to find still water," he said.

Fortunately the bayou has tons of trenasses and canals that branch off. These offer calmer and often cleaner water for fish looking to escape the turbulent bayou.

## WOODS VS. MARSH

Bayou Lacombe has two distinct areas that are drastically different. Like most rivers on the Northshore, the waterway originates

north of I-12 and offers plenty of woody features including trees, brush, and stumps. As the bayou meanders south, it transitions into marsh approximately a mile before it reaches Lake Pontchartrain. Green said in January, it's the wooded section of the bayou on which you'll want to focus.

"The section of the bayou with trees is where you want to be," Green said. "This area has a combination of deep holes and fallen trees that the southern section of the bayou lacks."

Another deterrent to fishing the southern end of Bayou Lacombe is the proximity to Lake Pontchartrain. Out of all the freshwater species, sac-a-lait are the most sensitive to salinity. According to studies, the highest salinity that crappie where observed in was 1.3 parts per thousand, while bass and perch can survive in water with a salinity reading of more than 8 PPT.

While the sac-a-lait fishing on Bayou Lacombe is great in January, Green said it hasn't always been good in the bayou.

"Katrina did a number on this bayou," he said. "When it came through it pushed in 10 feet of salty water, absolutely annihilating the crappie population in the Bayou."

Since then, the bayou has been slowly repopulating and is now nearly back to what it once was. ■

— Keith Lusher Jr.

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**Winston Lambert**

Winston Lambert, 8, shot his first deer, a 165-pound 9-point, with a Savage .243 in Pike County, Miss.



**Britton Martinolich**

Britton Martinolich got his first deer during the 2020 Mississippi youth hunt.



**Logan Levert**

Logan Levert took his first buck at Big 16 Too Hunting Club in West Baton Rouge Parish while hunting with his dad, Kyle, and paw paw, Paul Levert.



**Sarah Sauvage**

Sarah Sauvage, 16, of Slidell got a solo limit during a Coastal Zone youth hunt in Delacroix with her dad, Rick.



Patrick Gauthier got his first deer on Nov. 24 at his Uncle Nut's lodge near Plaquemine. His little brother, James, and his dad joined him on the hunt, making it even more special.

Nicole Lefebvre poses with her first deer. It was taken with a .300 Win Mag at 128 yards.



Parker Hall caught this redfish in Grand Isle.



Preston Hayes, 7, from Montz, shot his first deer in Waldheim.



Tayler Magliarisi, 9, pulled these bass out of the Atchafalaya Spillway by himself with a baitcaster and crankbaits.



**Astro Tables** is far more effective than "moon tables," because it takes into account critical solar energies as well as lunar.

- The "Best Days" column is based on the ever-changing positions of the sun and the moon, rating each day on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more solar/lunar influence that day is experiencing (see "Value" column or corresponding black bars).
- The two Primary periods (Moon Overhead and Moon Underfoot) vary in length from one hour to three-and-one-half hours, depending on a number of important lunar cycles, such as how close the moon is to the earth that day and how high its orbit is. The solar symbols alert you to when a Primary period overlaps a major solar period (eg: Dawn, High-Noon, and Dusk). The secondary periods of Moonrise and Moonset last about one hour each... 30 minutes before and after the listed time. (See key at bottom of each month for more detail.)

- **Astro Tables** is a quick-reference version of its parent publication, the **PrimeTimes Wall Calendar**, which is recommended for those wishing more complete data on the best days and times to go fishing and hunting for the entire year (see "Available Products" below).

- **PrimeTimes** forecasts are based on solar/lunar research at a leading college of astrophysics and our own research pond/wildlife area. Annual data is supplied by the U.S. Naval Observatory. All times are adjusted to the center of your time zone and for Daylight Saving Time.

**AVAILABLE PRODUCTS:**  
**The 2021 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar.** \$13.95 (plus \$4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2021 with this information-packed, full-color, 11-inch by 17-inch, graphic peaks

and-valleys forecaster. Includes rise and set times for the sun and moon, space to log your catches, "Timely Tips," plus fish and game symbols showing you each month's don't-miss periods. Also includes exclusive summary charts revealing the best and worst days of 2021, the year's best periods, a look ahead at 2022, and more. Comes with FREE 2021 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for \$8.95, plus \$3 s&h.  
**Book: "How to Know When to Go" by Rick Taylor, \$14.95 (plus \$4 s&h).** 100 pages, 43 illustrations. A comprehensive look at the main factors influencing fish and game activity periods, plus how to devise an effective when-to-go game plan using any year's PrimeTimes calendars. Individual assessments of bass, panfish, deer, turkey, and more.

**2021 Ultimate PrimeTimes software for PCs.** \$29.95 (plus \$3 s&h, or no s&h if downloaded from web). The world's best forecaster allows you to fine-tune the peak times to your exact location, quarry, and even weather. Too many features to list here, including making your own App. For more details, please call us or visit our web site (see below).

**SPECIAL PACKAGE OFFERS:**

- #1: **Wall Calendar, Astro Tables and "How to Know..." book...** \$19.95 (plus \$5 s&h).
- #2: **Same as #1, plus Software...** \$47.95 (plus \$6 s&h).
- #3: **Same as #2, minus book...** \$38.95 (plus \$5 s&h).

Send to: PrimeTimes 2021 - Dept. LS - 2487 NW 75th Ave., Ste. 100 - Ankeny, IA 50023

For credit/debit card orders, call 515-964-5516, or go online to [primetimes2.com](http://primetimes2.com) and click **Catalog**.

2021		BEST DAYS				
JAN		POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	VALUE
Fri	1					50
Sat	2					39
Sun	3					33
Mon	4					31
Tue	5					35
Wed	6					43
Thu	7					31
Fri	8					24
Sat	9					33

Sun	10					40
Mon	11					48
Tue	12					53
Wed	13					43
Thu	14					33
Fri	15					20
Sat	16					
Sun	17					22
Mon	18					24
Tue	19					31
Wed	20					43
Thu	21					34
Fri	22					32
Sat	23					34

Sun	24					37
Mon	25					48
Tue	26					60
Wed	27					71
Thu	28					77
Fri	29					66
Sat	30					55
Sun	31					43

25 50 75  
AVERAGE

For more, visit [primetimes2.com](http://primetimes2.com)

		LUNAR PERIODS				TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED	
		MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT		
Fri	1	7:49 PM	12:25 am - 3:55 am	9:28 AM	12:50 pm - 4:20 pm		
Sat	2	8:55 PM	1:25 am - 4:41 am	10:08 AM	1:50 pm - 5:06 pm		
Sun	3	10:00 PM	2:23 am - 5:25 am	10:44 AM	2:48 pm - 5:50 pm		
Mon	4	11:06 PM	3:22 am - 6:04 am	11:17 AM	3:47 pm - 6:29 pm		
Tue	5		4:18 am - 6:44 am	11:48 AM	4:43 pm - 7:09 pm		
Wed	6	12:12 AM	5:19 am - 7:21 am	12:19 PM	5:44 pm - 7:46 pm		Half
Thu	7	1:19 AM	6:18 am - 8:00 am	12:52 PM	6:43 pm - 8:25 pm		
Fri	8	2:28 AM	7:18 am - 8:44 am	1:28 PM	7:43 pm - 9:09 pm		
Sat	9	3:38 AM	8:22 am - 9:30 am	2:09 PM	8:47 pm - 9:55 pm		Perigee
Sun	10	4:49 AM	9:27 am - 10:23 am	2:56 PM	9:52 pm - 10:48 pm		
Mon	11	5:58 AM	10:31 am - 11:19 am	3:51 PM	10:56 pm - 11:44 pm		Low
Tue	12	7:01 AM	11:32 am - 12:20 pm	4:53 PM	11:57 pm - Midnight		New
Wed	13	7:56 AM	12:27 pm - 1:23 pm	5:58 PM	Midnight - 12:45 am		
Thu	14	8:43 AM	1:18 pm - 2:24 pm	7:04 PM	12:52 am - 1:48 am		
Fri	15	9:22 AM	2:03 pm - 3:21 pm	8:08 PM	1:43 am - 2:49 am		
Sat	16	9:56 AM	2:43 pm - 4:15 pm	9:09 PM	2:28 am - 3:46 am		
Sun	17	10:26 AM	3:17 pm - 5:09 pm	10:08 PM	3:08 am - 4:40 am		
Mon	18	10:53 AM	3:51 pm - 5:59 pm	11:05 PM	3:42 am - 5:34 am		
Tue	19	11:19 AM	4:23 pm - 6:49 pm		4:16 am - 6:24 am		
Wed	20	7:01 AM	4:56 pm - 7:38 pm	12:01 AM	4:48 am - 7:14 am		Half
Thu	21	12:12 PM	5:28 pm - 8:28 pm	12:56 AM	5:21 am - 8:03 am		Apogee
Fri	22	12:42 PM	6:06 pm - 9:18 pm	1:52 AM	5:53 am - 8:53 am		
Sat	23	1:16 PM	6:48 pm - 10:10 pm	2:50 AM	6:31 am - 9:43 am		
Sun	24	1:55 PM	7:32 pm - 11:04 pm	3:48 AM	7:13 am - 10:35 am		
Mon	25	2:41 PM	8:23 pm - 11:59 pm	4:46 AM	7:57 am - 11:29 am		
Tue	26	3:34 PM	9:17 pm - 12:53 am	5:42 AM	8:48 am - 12:24 pm		High
Wed	27	4:33 PM	10:14 pm - 1:46 am	6:35 AM	9:42 am - 1:18 pm		
Thu	28	5:37 PM	11:14 pm - Midnight	7:23 AM	10:39 am - 2:11 pm		Full
Fri	29	6:43 PM	Midnight - 2:36 am	8:06 AM	11:39 am - 3:01 pm		
Sat	30	7:51 PM	12:15 am - 3:21 am	8:44 AM	12:40 pm - 3:46 pm		
Sun	31	8:58 PM	1:14 am - 4:04 am	9:18 AM	1:39 pm - 4:29 pm		

ANY LUNAR PERIOD IS ENHANCED WHEN IT OVERLAPS A KEY SOLAR PERIOD. THE BEST OF THESE OVERLAPS ARE DESIGNATED BY THE SUN SYMBOLS: ☀ = DAWN ☀ = HIGH NOON ☀ = DUSK

WHILE THE LESSER MOONRISE AND -SET OVERLAPS (ABOUT 30 MIN. BEFORE AND AFTER THE LISTED TIME) ARE DESIGNATED BY BOLD BLACK TYPE.

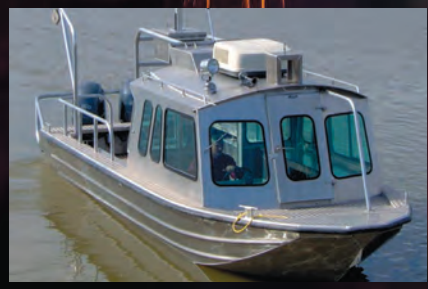
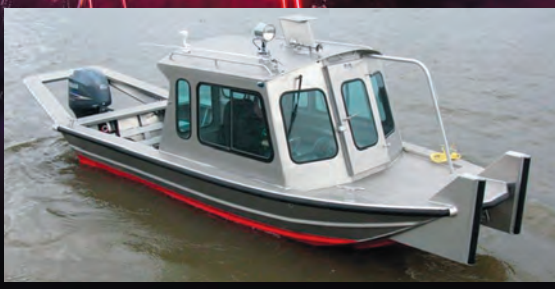
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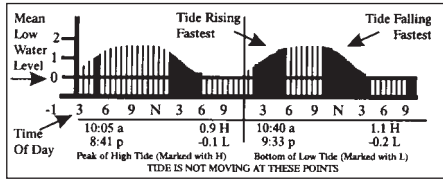
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Fish feed most actively when the tide is moving. Louisiana Sportsman has made it simple to spot the most-active feeding periods each day in the Tide Guide. Just fish those times indicated in black. To find the best time to fish your favorite honeyhole, find the spot under Tide Corrections that is closest to the area, and add or subtract the time from the corresponding daily prediction.

### Tide Corrections

#### East Point, Grand Isle HIGH LOW

Barataria Pass	+1:00	-0:10
Bastian Island	+0:41	+0:12
Bay Gardene	+2:51	+2:44
Bayou BonFouca	+9:59	+10:11
Breton Islands	+0:54	+0:48
Caillou Boca	+0:40	+0:48
Caminada Pass	+0:20	+0:12
Chandeleur Light	+0:37	+0:34
Chef Pass	+5:17	+5:07
Cocodrie	+1:22	+1:33
Comfort Island	+1:34	+0:54
Delacroix Island	+3:42	+3:31
Empire Jetty	-1:03	-1:45
Four Bayou Pass	+2:18	+0:17
Gardner Island	+0:40	+0:47
Grand Pass	+1:48	+1:16
Head of Passes	-0:48	+0:00
Hopedale	+4:17	+4:56
Independence Island	+2:29	+1:59
Jack Bay	+1:59	+1:28
Joseph Bayou	-0:36	-1:37
Lafitte	+1:45	+2:51
Long Point, Lake Borgne	+2:28	+2:11
Manila Village	+2:32	+3:13
Michoud Substation	+5:24	+5:02
New Canal (Bucktown)	+10:34	+10:49
North Pass	-0:31	-0:37
Paris Road Bridge	+5:53	+5:58
Pelican Islands	+2:26	+2:26
Pointe a la Hache	+3:12	+3:01
Port Eads	-0:17	-1:37
Raccoon Point	-0:03	-0:20
Shell Beach	+4:32	+4:25
Ship Shoal Light	-1:54	-1:50
South Pass, Miss. R.	-1:13	-1:20
Southwest Pass, Miss. R.	-0:38	-1:33
Tchefuncte River	+10:23	+11:01
Timbalier Island	+0:19	+0:23
Wine Island	+1:08	+1:02

#### Calcasieu Pass, Lighthouse Wharf HIGH LOW

Cote Blanche Island	+4:33	+3:40
Eugene Island	+1:49	-0:39
Lighthouse Point	+0:58	-0:53
Mermentau River ent.	+0:20	+0:25
Point Au Fer	+1:53	-1:02
Point Chevreul	+3:16	+0:30
Rabbit Island	+2:01	-0:36
Shell Island	+3:08	+0:45
South Point	+1:55	-0:33
Southwest Pass, Vermillion Bay	+1:42	+0:51
Weeks Bay	+3:58	+3:56

### SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

							2.0 ft	1	2
							1.0 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9
							0.0 ft	10:59 pm 1.0 H	11:39 pm 0.8 H
2.0 ft	3	4	5	6	LQ	7	8	9	
1.0 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	10:44 am -0.4 L	11:03 am -0.3 L	12:37 am 0.4 H	10:52 am -0.1 L	5:38 pm 0.4 H	5:18 pm 0.6 H	4:06 am -0.4 L	4:52 am -0.6 L	
2.0 ft	10	11	12	13	NM	14	15	16	
1.0 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	5:44 am -0.8 L	6:38 am -0.8 L	7:33 am -0.9 L	8:26 am -0.8 L	9:15 am -0.7 L	10:38 pm 0.9 H	9:56 am -0.6 L	10:27 am -0.4 L	
2.0 ft	7:11 pm 1.0 H	8:06 pm 1.0 H	9:01 pm 1.0 H	9:52 pm 1.0 H	10:38 pm 0.9 H	11:17 pm 0.7 H	11:17 pm 0.7 H	11:48 pm 0.6 H	
2.0 ft	17	18	19	20	FQ	21	22	23	
1.0 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	10:40 am -0.3 L	12:03 am 0.4 H	8:54 am 0.0 L	5:08 am 0.0 L	3:52 am -0.2 L	4:38 pm 0.3 H	4:05 am -0.3 L	4:35 am -0.5 L	
2.0 ft	10:49 pm 0.2 H	10:49 pm 0.2 H	5:37 pm 0.2 H	4:38 pm 0.3 H	4:38 pm 0.3 H	5:02 pm 0.6 H	5:02 pm 0.6 H	5:40 pm 0.7 H	
2.0 ft	24	25	26	27	28	FM	29	30	
1.0 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	5:13 am -0.6 L	5:54 am -0.6 L	6:37 am -0.7 L	7:19 am -0.7 L	8:00 am -0.7 L	9:37 pm 0.9 H	8:38 am -0.6 L	9:12 am -0.5 L	
2.0 ft	6:25 pm 0.8 H	7:14 pm 0.8 H	8:03 pm 0.9 H	8:51 pm 0.9 H	9:37 pm 0.9 H	10:22 pm 0.8 H	10:22 pm 0.8 H	11:08 pm 0.7 H	
2.0 ft	31	Order the Tide Guides for over 40 locations throughout Louisiana. Call 1-800-538-4355 or go on line <a href="http://www.lasmag.com">www.lasmag.com</a>							
1.0 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9								
0.0 ft	9:40 am -0.4 L								
	11:58 pm 0.5 H								

East Point Grand Isle

Calcasieu Pass Lighthouse Wharf

							3.0 ft	1	2
							1.5 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9
							0.0 ft	1:09 am 1.4 H	1:45 am 1.3 H
								10:01 am -0.8 L	10:43 am -0.7 L
								6:29 pm 1.5 H	7:13 pm 1.4 H
								10:35 pm 1.2 L	11:29 pm 1.1 L
3.0 ft	3	4	5	6	LQ	7	8	9	
1.5 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	2:40 am 1.2 H	12:41 am 0.9 L	1:59 am 0.6 L	2:55 am 0.2 L	3:44 am -0.2 L	3:44 am -0.2 L	4:34 am -0.6 L	5:24 am -0.9 L	
	11:28 am -0.5 L	4:15 am 1.0 H	6:11 am 0.9 H	6:11 am 0.9 H	11:35 am 1.1 H	11:35 am 1.1 H	12:56 pm 1.3 H	1:57 pm 1.5 H	
	7:48 pm 1.4 H	12:19 pm -0.2 L	1:24 pm 0.1 L	2:40 pm 0.4 L	3:59 pm 0.7 L	3:59 pm 0.7 L	5:28 pm 0.9 L	6:39 pm 1.1 L	
		8:10 pm 1.3 H	8:24 pm 1.2 H	8:39 pm 1.2 H	9:01 pm 1.2 H	9:31 pm 1.3 H	9:31 pm 1.3 H	10:10 pm 1.3 H	
3.0 ft	10	11	12	13	NM	14	15	16	
1.5 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	6:14 am -1.1 L	7:03 am -1.3 L	7:51 am -1.3 L	12:38 am 1.4 H	1:24 am 1.4 H	1:24 am 1.4 H	2:12 am 1.3 H	3:07 am 1.1 H	
	2:55 pm 1.6 H	3:48 pm 1.6 H	4:34 pm 1.6 H	8:40 am -1.2 L	8:40 am -1.2 L	9:27 am -1.0 L	10:11 am -0.8 L	10:53 am -0.6 L	
	7:31 pm 1.1 L	8:17 pm 1.2 L	9:01 pm 1.1 L	5:15 pm 1.5 H	5:15 pm 1.5 H	5:53 pm 1.4 H	6:30 pm 1.3 H	7:03 pm 1.2 H	
	10:58 pm 1.4 H	11:49 pm 1.4 H		9:42 pm 1.0 L	10:23 pm 1.0 L	10:23 pm 1.0 L	11:08 pm 0.9 L		
3.0 ft	17	18	19	20	FQ	21	22	23	
1.5 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	12:02 am 0.7 L	1:17 am 0.6 L	2:22 am 0.3 L	3:07 am 0.1 L	3:07 am 0.1 L	3:07 am 0.1 L	4:22 am -0.3 L	5:01 am -0.5 L	
	4:12 am 1.0 H	5:30 am 0.8 H	7:36 am 0.7 H	10:00 am 0.8 H	10:00 am 0.8 H	12:14 pm 0.9 H	1:14 pm 1.1 H	1:55 pm 1.2 H	
	11:34 am -0.2 L	12:16 pm 0.1 L	1:09 pm 0.4 L	2:28 pm 0.6 L	4:15 pm 0.8 L	4:15 pm 0.8 L	6:06 pm 0.9 L	7:04 pm 1.0 L	
	7:30 pm 1.1 H	7:47 pm 1.0 H	7:58 pm 1.0 H	8:11 pm 1.0 H	8:28 pm 1.0 H	8:28 pm 1.0 H	8:49 pm 1.0 H	9:13 pm 1.0 L	
3.0 ft	24	25	26	27	28	FM	29	30	
1.5 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0 ft	5:41 am -0.7 L	6:22 am -0.8 L	7:01 am -0.9 L	7:41 am -1.0 L	12:06 am 1.2 H	12:06 am 1.2 H	12:49 am 1.3 H	1:35 am 1.3 H	
	2:32 pm 1.2 H	3:07 pm 1.3 H	3:40 pm 1.3 H	4:11 pm 1.3 H	8:22 am -1.0 L	8:22 am -1.0 L	9:04 am -1.0 L	9:47 am -0.8 L	
	7:37 pm 1.0 L	7:49 pm 1.1 L	7:55 pm 1.1 L	8:16 pm 1.0 L	4:41 pm 1.3 H	4:41 pm 1.3 H	5:09 pm 1.3 H	5:34 pm 1.3 H	
	9:43 pm 1.1 H	10:30 pm 1.1 L	11:21 pm 1.2 H	8:16 pm 1.0 L	8:51 pm 1.0 L	9:32 pm 0.9 L	9:32 pm 0.9 L	10:18 pm 0.7 L	
3.0 ft	31	Order the Tide Guides for over 40 locations throughout Louisiana. Call 1-800-538-4355 or go on line <a href="http://www.lasmag.com">www.lasmag.com</a>							
1.5 ft	3 6 9 N 3 6 9								
0.0 ft	2:32 am 1.2 H								
	10:29 am -0.6 L								
	5:56 pm 1.2 H								
	11:06 pm 0.5 L								

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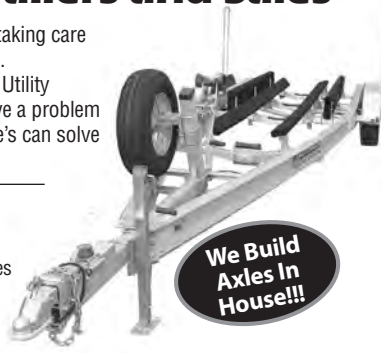
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