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GRAND (ISLE) MASTER



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TIME TO SEE RED



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CIRCULATION INQUIRIES:
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Monday thru Friday, 6 am to 11 pm
 Saturday & Sunday, 8 am - 5 pm CST

LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN (USPS665390) is published monthly by Louisiana Publishing, Inc., Allen J. Lottinger, Founder, 14236 Highway 90, P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, LA 70039. Mailed at periodicals postage rates and paid at Baton Rouge, La., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Louisiana Sportsman, P.O. Box 433294, Palm Coast, FL 32143. All rights reserved. Reproduction of contents is strictly prohibited without permission of Louisiana Sportsman. **EDITORIAL:** Louisiana Sportsman uses free-lance writers throughout the state. Call (985) 758-7217 for information on submitting articles and photos. Louisiana Sportsman is not responsible for the loss of queries, manuscripts or other materials.

P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, LA 70039-1199
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ON THE COVER:



Louisiana anglers can head into the Gulf this month in search of red snapper. For how long? Who knows? Bennett Irby (left) caught this big red last summer in 40 feet of water out of Grand Isle. Photo by Michael Irby



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Outdoor UPDATE

Michael Landreneau was fishing in his brother Patrick's pond in Sunset on May 15 when he caught this black bullhead.



LAFAYETTE ANGLER LANDS ENORMOUS BLACK BULLHEAD

SMALL POND IN SUNSET PRODUCES FISH THAT'S 3 POUNDS HEAVIER THAN EXISTING ALL-TACKLE WORLD RECORD

As By Will Martin
Michael Landreneau prepared to cast a lure along a grassline at the edge of his brother's pond in Sunset on Saturday, May 15, the tip of a catfish pole he'd set up down the bank began to bounce, indicating a fish on.

But there are fish, and there are record-breaking fish. Who would have imagined that one of the latter lurked the waters of this small pond? Certainly not Landreneau. But as he ran towards the bouncing catfish rig, he was mere steps away from catching an 11.3-pound, potential world-record, black bullhead, a fish that appears to shatter the previous record by pounds.

Landreneau, a 47-year-old petroleum landman from Lafayette, had already proved the rumors of big catfish living in the little backyard pond to be true.

"My brother (Patrick) had heard a story that somebody had hooked a big catfish and missed it," Landreneau said. "This was 10 years ago, so I was thinking: 'Well, let me see if there are any catfish in there.'"

The answer came quickly when, to Landreneau's surprise, he'd hooked a large catfish that broke his line.

"I was not expecting to catch one, and I wasn't prepared for it," he said, "and when it came up to the bank, it popped the line. So I went back the following week, which was this weekend, and did the same thing."

SOMETHING SPECIAL

This time, Landreneau was anticipating the bite. He used the

same catfish setup from the previous weekend, a No. 7 circle-hook on a 4-inch wire leader fished from a Penn, open-faced, spinning combo he'd bought for fishing the beach in Florida.

"The pond was dug in 2003," Landreneau said. "I imagine they may have stocked bream and bass at some point, but it's pretty much a 20-year-old pond that hasn't been fed or anything."

After he landed the big black bullhead, he knew that he'd caught something special.

Black bullheads are lumped into a group of several species of catfish known, colloquially, as "mudcats." They are a catfish suited for hard times, able to thrive in warm, turbid, oxygen-poor water, and can also survive in brackish conditions.

"It was a surprise for sure," he said. Landreneau sent a picture of the catfish to *Louisiana Sportsman*, which put him in touch with the International Game Fishing Association (IGFA).

If certified by the IGFA, Landreneau's fish will take the top spot from an 8-pound, 2-ounce black bullhead caught in New York in 2015 that is the all-tackle world record. ■



GIANT BLUEFIN BOATED DURING BILLFISH CLASSIC

A By Will Martin
683.5-pound bluefin tuna was the highlight of the May 2 Louisiana Gulf Coast Billfish Classic weigh-in at Grand Isle's Hurricane Hole Marina.

The crew of the *Devotion* — captained by Jason Hallmark of Destin, Fla. — caught the behemoth and went 4-for-4 on blue marlin hookups, winning the competition. A video of the giant fish as it was weighed at the marina became something of a sensation on social media last week.

"(Bluefin) tuna don't count in the tournament," said Robbie Carter, director of the event. "They are weighed as a courtesy to the competitors and for the benefit of the spectatorship. People love it. I mean, these things were absolutely enormous."

Three other teams weighed tuna during

the tournament.

Although Carter said he is used to seeing big tuna, he enjoys the excitement that they bring to the crowds at his events.

"It's always cool to see people encounter these things for the first time up-close, especially the kids," he said, "for them to see just how massive these things are up close and personal."

A SOLO BATTLE

The boat that caught the sensational tuna is relatively new as a competitive unit. The owner, Josh Tice of Orange Beach, Ala., acquired the boat from Texas in October 2020, but the crew had only logged about 2 months in the craft before the big win.

"We only fought (the tuna) for an hour

and 45 minutes," Hallmark said. "The owner hooked it and got it in all by himself. Most of the time, the mates hook the fish, then walk the rod over to the chair, but he did it all himself; that was pretty cool."

Devotion was fishing live bait for blue marlin when it hooked the bluefin.

"We got a bite on one rod, but before we could wind the other rod up all the way to the boat, we had another one on," Hallmark said. "So we decided we were going to go after the one that had the most line on the reel still."

Eventually, the second fish broke off.

"It was probably for the best," Hallmark said. "Trying to deal with two of those things of that size is almost impossible, so it worked out for us."

"It was pretty neat," he said. "The owner wanted to get the fish mounted, so he sent it to Oklahoma City to a place called Skulls Unlimited to have a bone mount done of it," Hallmark said. "This will be the second (sporting bone mount) of a bluefin ever done in the world." ■

Josh Tice of Orange Beach, Ala., landed this 683.5-pound bluefin tuna during the Louisiana Gulf Coast Billfish Classic on May 2.



Photo courtesy/Tommy Vidrine

On Saturday, May 1, Woodrow "Boggie" Colton of Knight landed a 10.36-pound largemouth bass at Toledo Bend.

TOLEDO BEND LUNKER: 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING

On May 1, a milestone 50 years in the making was reached at Toledo Bend, when 69-year-old Woodrow "Boggie" Colton of Knight landed a 10.36-pound largemouth bass that earned him the 25th spot in this season's Toledo Bend Lunker Bass program.

Colton was on the water by 6 o'clock that morning, bringing with him a long history of "almost 10-pounders" at Toledo Bend. It had become something of a mission in life for Colton to break the 10-pound mark.

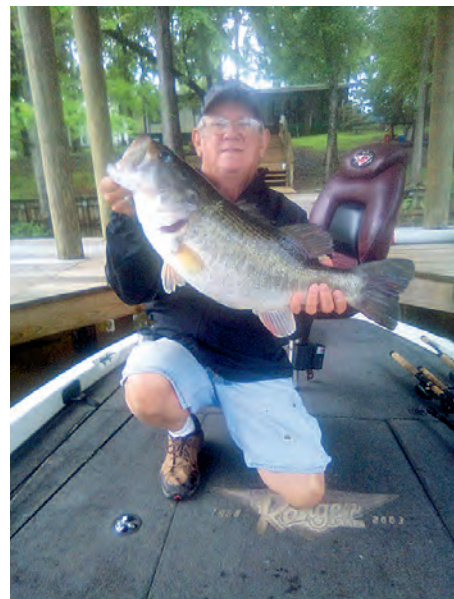
"I've caught an 11.25-pound bass (on

another lake), and several over 9 pounds on Toledo," he said. "A couple of years ago (on Toledo Bend), I caught a 9.85-pound bass — just shy of being a 10-pounder — and four or five over 9 pounds, and 7s and 8s."

He'd never been able to break the 10-pound mark, but as Bob Dylan said, "The times they are a-changin'" — at least where Colton's status on Toledo Bend is concerned.

FISH THE STRUCTURE

Colton was fishing a point in Toro Bay, using an 8-inch Zoom lizard in water-melon candy, Carolina-rigged, on the



end of a 7-foot-2 Lew's rod-and-reel combo spooled with 17-pound line and a 12-pound monofilament leader.

"It's a stiff rod, heavy duty. It ain't no wimpy thing; I call it the 'Black Mamba,'" he said. "I use a 12-pound leader because I get more bites that way."

Although plenty of fishermen have told him that he doesn't need the lighter leader, Colton is adamant that a fisherman

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should understand how to use drag.

He pulled the lizard around the edges of a long point that stretches out into the deep water. A couple of young cypress trees grow there, but other than the topography of the point itself, there isn't much structure.

"There ain't no hydrilla," Colton said. "You've got to fish what structure there is on the bottom now, and there's not much of it anymore."

BATTLE TO THE BOAT

Yet, as Colton made a slow pass of the point, he saw a log on his depth finder that was 17 feet deep, and by the log, he saw a single fish.

"I was just easing along," Colton said, "and just about the time my bait was at the log, (the bass) thumped. I said, 'There it is! Hey!' and I set the hook.

"The fish pulled and tugged, and it went down, taking drag three or four times," he said.

The fish moved steadily away from the boat until, suddenly, it reversed course, and headed straight back towards Colton.

"It went under the boat," he said, "and it had my rod down in the water."

He began to worry that the fish would break his line.

"Then, all-of-a-sudden, I heard something," he said, "and I looked, and the bass was behind the boat out of the water."

Colton said, "Holy lordy," and he laughed.

Finally, the bass came to the boat, but it made two or three more pulls towards the bow before it turned on its side. Colton hadn't had time to grab his dip net, but luckily, the fish was spent.

"I lifted it, and threw it in the boat," he said. "That's just the way it went."

FISH OF A LIFETIME

"I caught the fish at 8 o'clock that morning," said Colton, who weighed the bass on a scale he had in his boat. It read 9.66 pounds. He didn't think that was correct, so he headed to his camp and woke his wife.

"I got one near 10 pounds, I think," he said, telling her about the 9.66-pound scale reading.

His wife convinced him to weigh it again, and when he did, the scale read 10.25 pounds. She told him that if he didn't get it officially weighed, he would regret it "for the rest of your life."

Colton had no choice but to head across the lake to the Texas side to have it weighed; his other options were too far away, and he worried about the health of the fish.

"So I took it across the lake, and put it up on the scales," said Colton, whose bass was 24 inches long, with a girth of 20 inches. "It weighed 10.36 pounds. Thank the Lord for that."

He finally had his elusive 10-pound Toledo Bend bass.

"I've been fishing Toledo since 1970," he said. "So it's been a long time coming; it seems it took a lifetime. . . . But I'm just getting warmed up." ■



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Ollie Pruett Slaughter (right) of Prairieville caught this 11.82-pound bass at Toledo Bend on May 2.

PRAIRIEVILLE MAN SCORES 11.82-POUND TOLEDO BEND LUNKER



At By Will Martin
about 10:30 a.m. on Friday, May 2, the sun finally peeked above the trees that skirt Toledo Bend Reservoir near 6-Mile Marina.

It was beginning to feel a little warmer after being 38 degrees earlier that morning, and 69-year-old Ollie Pruett Slaughter of Prairieville wondered how the late cold snap of the previous few days would affect the fishing.

He was right to wonder; the cold would make the fishing slow for Slaughter, his 12-year-old great-nephew, Brayden Zeller, and Brayden's father, Brad Zeller — who joined him in the boat — but the wonder and worry would only serve to make the next few minutes of his life that much more special.

Slaughter was about to catch an 11.82-pound largemouth bass, the kind of fish men dream of, a fish that would qualify

for the Toledo Bend Lunker Bass Program.

"We were mid-lake near 6-Mile," said Slaughter, who likes to use a 7-foot, medium-action rod and a reel with dependable drag when he fishes Toledo Bend.

"I like to fish Toledo with 12-pound-test, Big Game fishing line," he said, "because the water is so clear. I feel like you miss a lot of strikes by not fishing clear line there."

THE RIGHT SPOT

Slaughter was fishing a wacky worm in about 4 feet of water. He chose to fish a spot where a few logs were bunched near the bank.

"I usually fish depth," Slaughter said. "That's what I was doing, fishing that 4½- to 6-foot depth of water on the outside of those logs."

Slaughter was retrieving the lure when a bass hit, and it was big.

"The fish made a run back up underneath the boat, of all places," said Slaughter, who could only lessen the drag to take the pressure off the line and rod as he headed to the stern.

"Once I got (my rod) around the motor, I tightened the drag," Slaughter said. "I thought, 'If I can keep it tight, and the fish in the water, we're good.'"

He was right. By the time he reached the back of the boat, he didn't have to play the fish long. The bass was out of gas, and its future was no longer in question.

After he caught the fish, Slaughter had it weighed at Toledo Town and Tackle in Many. Afterwards, the fish was released back into Toledo Bend Reservoir in accordance with Toledo Bend Lunker Program rules. Slaughter will receive a replica fish to commemorate his achievement.

"You know, if that fish hadn't already spawned, she would have been (more than) 13 pounds," Slaughter said. "I caught her as she was heading back out. But it's a good story. It was one of those things where, what could have gone wrong, didn't." ■



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BROTHER, SISTER, FRIEND TAG-TEAM TO VICTORY IN PREP FISHING TOURNEYS

Landin and Taylor Chatham, a brother-sister high-school bass-fishing pairing, found themselves one member short for the First LHSAA Inaugural Regional high school bass tournament at Caney Lake on March 27. Taylor Chatham, the sister, had a scheduling conflict; she catches for her high-school softball team and had two games scheduled the day of the tournament.

Luckily, the Chatham crew didn't have to look far for a solution to their problem; looking out their back door, they saw Ben Ramsey, a friend of Landin's, out on the lake fishing.

Despite the last-minute change in roster, Chatham and Ramsey won in the tournament with a weight of 31.10 pounds. Chatham also caught the biggest bass of the tournament, 10.06 pounds, a new record.

"I was able to watch the weigh-in and make it back to Taylor's game to watch them win against Byrd High School, all on the same day!" said Landin Chatham's mother, Jeannie Chatham.

Refusing to allow her brother to hoard all the fishing glory, Taylor Chatham joined Landin two weeks later in another tournament on Caney Lake, a Northeast Louisiana High School Tournament. The Chathams took first place with 22.68 pounds, and Landin Chatham again scored the biggest bass with an 8.71-pounder.

"We were so happy Taylor got to experience this also," Jeannie Chatham said. "We love Louisiana fishing and sports, and I'm so glad high school kids have this opportunity!" ■



Landin Chatham (left) and Ben Ramsey joined forces to win the inaugural LHSAA Regional high school bass tournament at Caney Lake on March 27.



Landin and Taylor Chatham teamed up to win another tournament on Caney Lake, with Landin scoring the biggest bass.



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Katie Purvis Johns was fishing along the Bonnet Carré Spillway with her husband and daughter when she caught a 19-pound leucistic blue catfish.

DENHAM SPRINGS WOMAN LANDS BLUE CATFISH THAT'S ALL WHITE

NEW FISHING SPOT NEAR BONNET CARRÉ SPILLWAY GIVES UP 19-POUND, LEUCISTIC BLUE CATFISH

K By Will Martin
atie Purvis Johns of Denham Springs, her husband, Eric, and Sophia, their 5-year-old daughter, were looking for a new spot to fish along the Bonnet Carré Spillway on April 24. They settled on a place just below the spillway that looked deep, with plenty of underwater cover for fish.

"We were fishing a control structure," Johns said.

Fishing on the bottom, maybe 8 feet deep, with cut bait, time ticked by without a bite, and she began to question if fishing the new spot was the right move.

"We're not catching anything," she said. "Then, out of nowhere,



without a single bite, the fish just took off with (my bait)."

UNDERWATER OBSTACLES

Johns was fishing in an area where a row of concrete pillars stretched across the water on her side of the spillway, like a row of gray teeth jutting above the surface of the brown water.

"I let her wear herself out for a little while," Johns said, "but I really didn't want to fight her too much around the concrete needles, because I really didn't want her to break off."

Johns successfully navigated the fish away from the hazards and muscled it to shore. She knew she had a blue catfish on her line, but something about it looked strange.

"I finally got it all the way up," Johns said, "and then we realized it was white."

She landed the ghostly looking fish, and after taking some pictures, they measured it. The fish weighed 19 pounds and was 35 inches long.

"And I'm five months pregnant," Johns said, laughing. "So I was pretty excited to be reeling in anything that big, too."

CURIOUS CATFISH COLOR

Johns and her husband didn't know what to make of the coloring of the fish.

"We initially thought it was an albino," Johns said, "but then we realized that it didn't have pink eyes. They were blue."

Curious about the strange fish, she called the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

"We found out that it is an all-white, leucistic blue catfish," Johns said, "which is a pretty rare catch."

An LDWF official informed her that albino catfish are more common than all-white, leucistic catfish. They said that pie-bald catfish, which are partially white, are routinely caught in the Mississippi River, but a true, all-white, leucistic fish was a once-in-a-lifetime catch.

"We are pretty excited about it," Johns said. "I'm having a replica made of her." ■

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YOUNG HUNTER KILLS OPENING DAY BIRD FOR 3RD-STRAIGHT SEASON

H By Will Martin

ayden Johnson comes from a family of turkey hunters. For the past three years, the Johnsons have established a tradition whereby 7-year-old Hayden, his father, Michael, and his grandfather, Mark, trek into the woods on the first day of youth turkey season and emerge with big smiles and a respectable-sized tom.

Hayden Johnson is 3-for-3 on opening day. This year's tom, taken March 27, sported an 11-inch beard and 1½-inch spurs.

Just before daylight, the Johnsons, who live in Union Parish but have a hunting camp in Jackson Parish, crept through the trees to their blind. They'd already scouted the area for turkey sign and had set up their blind a few hundred yards from what they thought to be the roost of a big tom.

The three huddled in the blind as the sun came up, sharing in

the anticipation of the first hunt of the season.

"It got daylight, and we never heard (the tom) gobble," Michael Johnson said, "so we decided to sit down and call and wait."

THE STREAK LIVES

After an hour-and-a-half of waiting, they had neither seen nor heard anything from the tom and were worried that Hayden Johnson's opening day streak might be broken.

Suddenly, a tentative gobble erupted beyond the trees ahead, and in an instant, the mood inside the blind swung from creeping disappointment to electric. Without a sound, the turkey had followed their call for a hundred yards, and by Michael's estimation, was within a hundred yards of their blind — halfway there. He'd gobbled on his own, and he was coming.

"So we got my little boy ready," Michael Johnson said, "and (the turkey) came in like he was on a string."

The tom continued toward the blind. When it was 25 yards away, Hayden Johnson shouldered a .410 shotgun and took careful aim. He squeezed the trigger, the gun fired and the tom fell.

The three Johnsons were ecstatic.

"We call Hayden a lucky rascal since he's gotten a turkey on opening weekend the last three years in a row," said Sarah Johnson, Hayden's mother. "He loves turkey hunting more than anything else."

"He's been hunting for three seasons in a row — he's seven now," Michael Johnson said, "and he's killed one every opening day. It's pretty impressive." ■

Hayden Johnson killed his third turkey on opening day of the youth season in late March. His turkey, from Jackson Parish, had an 11-inch beard and 1½-inch spurs.



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■ By John E. Phillips

TIME TO SEE RED

WHEN SNAPPER SEASON FINALLY OPENS IN THE GULF, HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO PUT THOSE TWO BIG REDS IN THE COOLER EVERY TIME OUT.

DON'T GO OUT AND BUY ANOTHER FREEZER FOR THE RED SNAPPER YOU EXPECT TO CATCH THIS SEASON.

When the news was released at the end of March that three times as many red snapper were living in the Gulf of Mexico as had been previously reported, anglers thought that the season would be lengthened and bag limits increased this summer.

It doesn't look like that's going to happen, however. The daily creel limit remains two fish per angler.

Due to the many storms in the Gulf since the past snapper season, some artificial reefs and wrecks may have moved or been covered up. You may not be able to find some of your favorite structures to fish. However, when you do locate snapper, here are some ways to catch them.

LIGHT LINE, SMALLER HOOKS

After the first two weeks, snapper will have wised-up to heavy sinkers and line and dead bait. Fish with smaller-diameter line, hooks and sinkers and live bait like pinfish, shrimp and whatever is in a shrimper's by-catch that you can purchase.

CAROLINA OR SOW RIGGING

On your main line, place a slip sinker from 1-ounce (light

current) or as heavy as 3 to 5 ounces (strong current). Below the slip sinker, tie a No. 5 or 10 barrel swivel with 4 to 6 feet of monofilament. Tie on a No. 4/0, 5/0 or 6/0 hook. Bait with either large dead bait or live bait like whole pogeys, whole blue runners or whole vermilion snapper. While falling to the bottom, the slip sinker will slide down the line and arrive at the bottom first. Then, your bait will be far enough off the bottom to stay above the smaller snapper but within easy eating distance of bigger fish.

DOWNRIGGING

An angler friend of mine has two downriggers mounted on the back of his boat. Once he spots schools of red snapper holding above or near a reef, he would bait up with live pinfish, croakers or cigar minnows. His baits would be 6 to 10 feet behind the downrigger ball when he lowered the ball to the depth where the fish were feeding and started trolling. This strategy works when a strong current in an area makes fishing on or near the bottom almost impossible.

Catches like this of red snapper may not be a thing of the past, but maybe not yet a common occurrence.

COOKING MACARONI >



COOKING MACARONI

For bait, you can choose live croakers, live pinfish or dead cigar minnows, but also make sure to chum using macaroni that's been boiled. Add a can of tuna and allow it to sit all night to create a strong smell to chum up snapper.

You also can throw out the tuna-scented macaroni into the water to chum.

JIGGING

Anglers can fish 30-pound main line, an 8-ounce lead sinker, a black barrel swivel, 50-pound leader and either a No. 4/0 or a No. 6/0 hook. To the end of the leader, tie a 1- to 2-ounce jighead with a dead shrimp tail, and lower the rig and jig this setup to various depths.

The by-catch from shrimp boats makes great bait for red snapper: live croaker, menhaden, pinfish or shrimp, or fresh-caught, dead versions of same. Fish them on a Carolina rig, a jighead or troll behind a downrigger ball.

REEF FISHING

In reefs in 60 to 80 feet of water, fish menhaden, bonito strips packed in rock salt and frozen, live pinfish, live croakers and dead cigar minnows. A favorite reef bait is golden croakers.



For more than 45 years, **John E. Phillips** has been a fulltime outdoor writer who travels throughout the South, gathering information on hunting and fishing and other outdoor pursuits.

USING WD-40 OIL >



2021 RED SNAPPER SEASON

By Will Martin

The 2021 red snapper season will begin on May 28 in both state and federal waters and will remain open until landings approach or reach Louisiana's annual private recreational allocation of 832,493 pounds.

Fishing is limited to Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, plus two Mondays: Memorial Day (May 31) and Labor Day (Sept. 6). The daily creel limit is two fish per person, and there is a 16-inch total length minimum size limit.

Red snapper is an important resource for residents of Louisiana, who love the thrill of the catch and the taste of good fish, to say nothing of the many families who depend on the influx of recreational fishermen to earn a living.

Because snapper is such an important part of what makes Louisiana the Sportsman's Paradise, federal and state regulations are often the source of much grumbling when they are released annually. In particular, the two fish creel limit remains controversial.

"I wish I could get the person responsible for (quotas) out of their office and onto my boat and show them the amount of snapper and fish that we have down here; it's incredible," said one fisherman, who requested anonymity.

Despite unhappiness with the bag limit, most fishermen are ready to welcome the opportunities that snapper season brings.

"June and July are normally booked solid for snapper trips," said Katie Duplass of Pelican Charters in Venice. "Even when tuna is tough, you can always count on big snappers to come in."


Duplass is one of many fishermen happy with the length of the 2021 season.

"At least we get two months to fish them this year," she said. "I remember a couple of years ago, we only got a week or two."

The 2021 Red Snapper regulations are posted in their entirety on the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries website, www.wlf.la.gov. ■

Resident and Non-Resident Recreational Anglers:

Must possess valid Louisiana Basic and Saltwater Recreational Fishing Licenses as well as a Recreational Offshore Landing Permit (free of charge) to fish for or possess red snapper, as well as other offshore species. Anglers can obtain a ROLP via the ROLP website or smartphone application (Google Play or iTunes). Once you have registered, save an electronic copy on your mobile device, or print a copy of your ROLP indicating your valid ROLP and carry it on your person along with applicable licenses while fishing offshore.



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Big red snapper are likely to become a little shy of heavy line and weights after a couple of weeks of the season.

USING WD-40 OIL

I saw an angler fish a ½-ounce jighead with a dead menhaden he had sprayed with WD-40 oil. He let the jighead fall halfway to the bottom, jugged it up and down and was the only fisherman to catch snapper.

DOWNRIGGING A CHUMSICLE

Some anglers call this “popsicle on a downrigger.” First, freeze a chum bag filled with crawfish and chum. When it’s time to fish, he takes the chum out of the bag and put it in a 5-gallon bucket, which is attached to a downrigger or a rope. As the chum melts, it filters down through the water, creates a feeding frenzy. One fisherman said he’s seen 100 yards of snapper come up when he’s brought the chumsicle up to the surface.

DRIFTING

Hook a cigar minnow through the head and let it drift behind the boat with no weight.

FISHING TUBE BAITS

You can fish a saltwater tube jig infused with menhaden oil and a small slip-sinker up the line. After being cast, the sinker reaches the bottom before the tube jig that’s falling more slowly. By using a circle hook with the tube jig, the snapper’s bite sets the hook itself. ■



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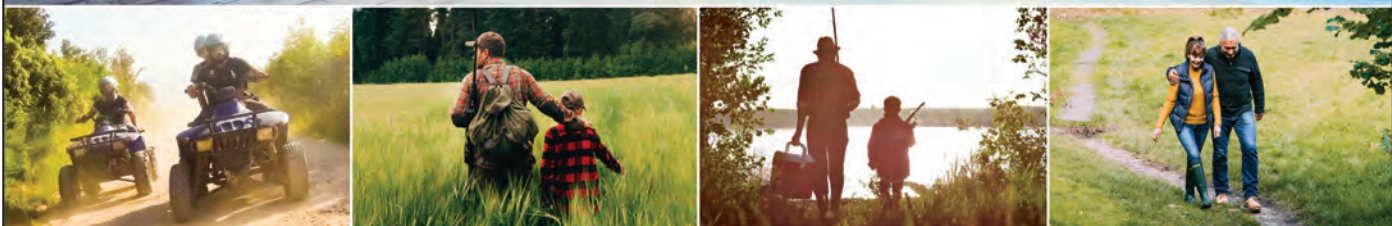
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KEEP IT SIMPLE FOR JUNE

■ By Kinny Haddox

REDS, SPECKS

LOOK FOR CLEAN, MOVING WATER, AND YOU'LL FIND PLENTY OF INSHORE TARGETS AS SUMMER APPROACHES. IF BAIT IS AROUND, SO MUCH THE BETTER.

Chris Bell of New Orleans and Taylor Valois of Slidell both love fishing for **SPECKLED TROUT AND REDFISH.**

They both love promoting fishing on Instagram and sharing what they learn about the sport.

They also share something else. Both have the same No. 1 tip for catching early summer speckled trout and redfish:

Find clean, moving water, if you can.

That's where the fish like to be, and this time of year, you often find speckled trout and redfish in the same areas when you mix that good water with an abundance of bait. It's a double-whammy bonus for anglers.

Moving water is pretty easy to understand.

"You want water that is moving, that has some current in it," Bell said, "but you don't want it so fast that the fish have a hard time holding in it or that you can't keep your bait in front of the fish. I love a falling tide for catching specks and reds."

Now, what exactly is "clean" water in areas like Lake Pontchartrain, Hopedale, Venice and Shell Beach?

"That's a good question, and anglers may differ a bit on it, but I think of clean water as water where you can look in the water and have five to 10 inches of visibility," Bell said. "In the marsh, the water will have a greenish tint, but as you move further out toward the

islands, it will have a more bluish tint. But the key is, you can see a bit below the surface. When you are in your boat, you should be able to see your trolling motor head. If you can't see the trolling motor head, it may not be the best place to fish."

Of course, there are always variables, but that's a good place to start. Sometimes the wind is bad and none of the water is clean, so you just have to make do. Both anglers also agree that one solution is to fish darker colors and concentrate on the right spots to be in.

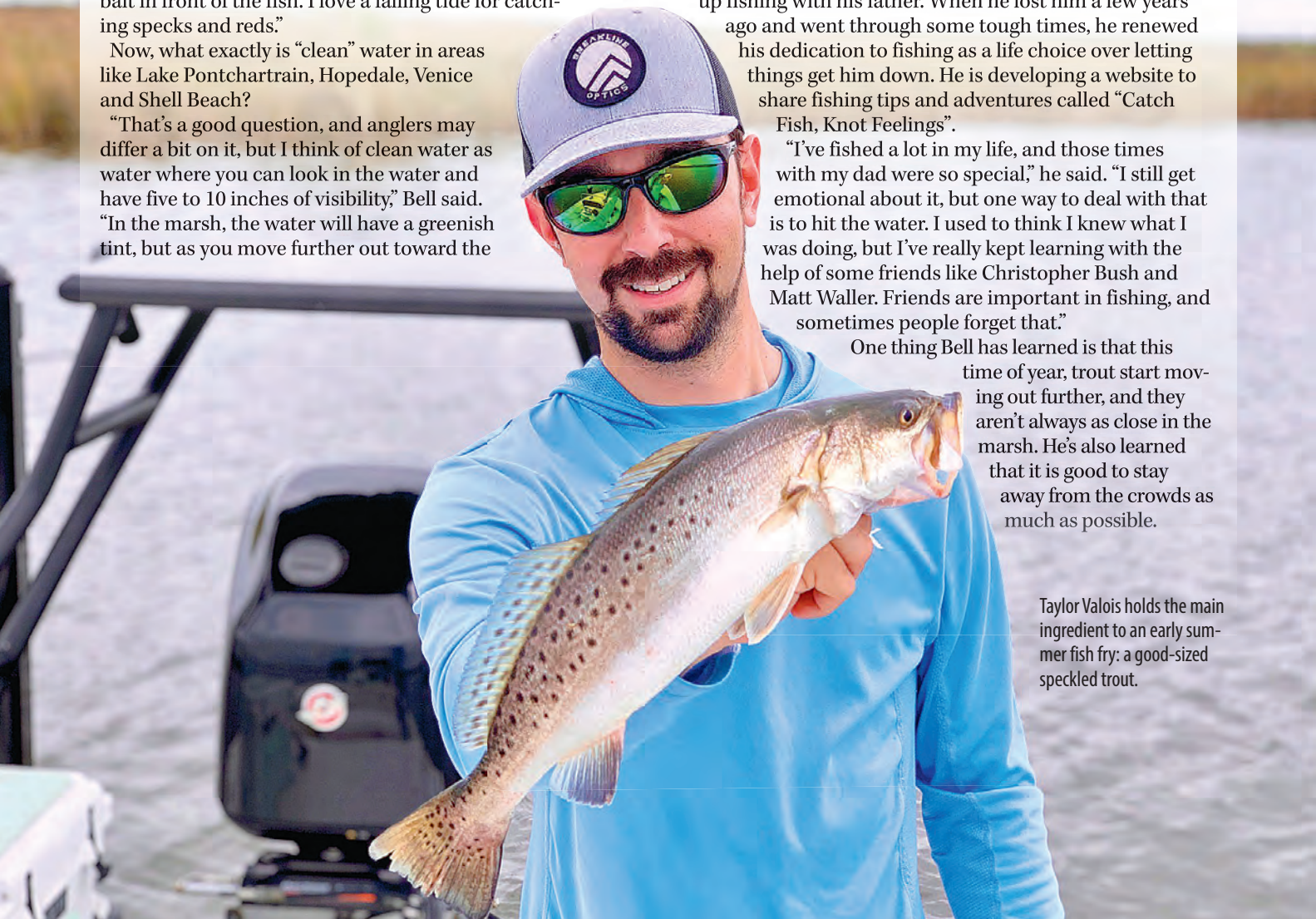
A WAY OF LIFE AND RENEWAL

Fishing has always been a way of life for Bell, who grew up fishing with his father. When he lost him a few years ago and went through some tough times, he renewed his dedication to fishing as a life choice over letting things get him down. He is developing a website to share fishing tips and adventures called "Catch Fish, Knot Feelings".

"I've fished a lot in my life, and those times with my dad were so special," he said. "I still get emotional about it, but one way to deal with that is to hit the water. I used to think I knew what I was doing, but I've really kept learning with the help of some friends like Christopher Bush and Matt Waller. Friends are important in fishing, and sometimes people forget that."

One thing Bell has learned is that this time of year, trout start moving out further, and they aren't always as close in the marsh. He's also learned that it is good to stay away from the crowds as much as possible.

Taylor Valois holds the main ingredient to an early summer fish fry: a good-sized speckled trout.





Chris Bell caught these nice, slot-sized redfish, using a popping-cork rig.

“Some of the best catches we’ve ever made were made in areas where we didn’t see anybody else. The fish had time to gather up, get comfortable and not be spooked by a bunch of other fishermen,” he said. “If you can find a spot like that, it’s great.”

Bell targets redfish more in the marshy areas in June. He will run out to Venice and go several miles out into the Gulf to fish the Breton Island area. He’s looking for that clean, moving water. If the water is stained and he thinks fish are there, sometimes he’ll just move out a little further from the shore to fish.

“Venice is good anytime, really,” he said. “There are big trophy fish out there — and numbers. I like fishing under a cork for specks, but I’ve also caught bigger trout using a quarter ounce jighead. My favorite tail is a 4-inch, Bass Assassin in opening night (color). It’s got insane action. Every spot is different. As a rule of thumb, I just love using a popping cork in the Hopedale area with about a 2-foot leader; I fish it about 2 feet deep.”

Bell’s favorite retrieve is to work it with some type of rhythm. He tries different cadences until he finds one the fish want. If they bite is good, it doesn’t take long to pattern how they’re hitting — whether they’re hitting it on the pause or the fall. If they hit it on the “pop,” that tells him they are not deep, because the bait is rising.

There’s another thing that he keys on: bait in the water.

“I generally target redfish and trout in the same areas, just often a little bit different on the structure,” he said. “I look for grass beds and baitfish flipping on the water. When I see a lot of birds working areas around me, I know there is a reason they are there, so I try to watch them. Birds can be a fisherman’s best friend.”

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AIRBORNE DEPTH FINDER

Bell has developed a unique approach for seeing what is going on in the area around him without having to crank his outboard. He often takes a drone with him — a Unique Q500 4K — and he won't hesitate to put it in the air to check things out.

"If I see a bunch of birds diving or even hanging out in another pond close to me across the marsh, it doesn't hurt to put the drone up and check things out," he said. "I can put the drone up and check out a lot of water. It's like a depth finder in the air. You can see the grass. You can see where the birds are feeding. When the water is right, you can even see big redfish in the shallows. It works best when it's calm, but it can handle the wind. It does make my heart flutter sometimes when I'm landing that thing on the deck of the boat, but it is definitely a great tool for covering water."

IDENTIFY THE BAIT

Valois likes to fish around Lake Pontchartrain and the Shell Beach area, and he finds the areas outside the Biloxi Marsh

productive in June. Trout are moving out of Pontchartrain as they look for water with a higher salinity level, but there are still some specks left in the lake.

"The key for me is to not only find the good water, but to figure out what bait is most common for the fish in that area," he said. "I have a bass-fishing background, and you know bass fishermen have a thousand lures. I don't have that many for saltwater, but I have a lot, so I can match the hatch. I think a lot of fishermen know that, but they get on the water and forget. Typically, you will catch more fish if you can match what they are feeding on naturally that day."

Some of his favorite lures are the Cajun Mad Minna, MirrOlure Heavy Dine and Sixth Sense Whale swimbait. Shad colors and those with silver and green tint are his favorite colors.



Kinny Haddox has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 45 years. He publishes a daily website, lakedarbonnellife.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.

TWO-IN-ONE BARGAIN ➤



Chris Bell uses this drone to scout ponds and areas of the marsh close to where he's fishing, looking for birds, bait and other signs of feeding fish.

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Keep it simple for June reds, specks

This big redfish fell for a 4-inch matrix shad, one of Taylor Valois's favorite early summer lures.



TWO-IN-ONE BARGAIN

A common approach for looking to catch redfish and specks in the same place is simple for Valois. "Here's the key difference that separates the two fish this time of year," Valois said. "You can catch them on the same baits in the same places, but with the redfish, they will always hold closer to the bank. They roam the bank, staying close to the grass and moving up into the pockets. They'll feed on baitfish moving out of the grass. Specks, on the other hand, will find points and current out in a little deeper water. Specks can't tolerate hot water. Redfish can stay up in a foot of water to feed even up into the summer. "A typical scenario for catching them both would be working down a shoreline fishing for reds, then coming to a point with water coming around it. What I would do there is move off the shoreline and cast out to where the tide line is on the edge of deeper water to catch the trout. You can repeat that over and over again if you are in an area with good water and good bait." ■

Check out Chris Bell at <https://www.instagram.com/catchfish-notfeelings504/>. You can also follow Taylor Valois on Instagram and see his latest fishing information at https://www.instagram.com/taylor_solommarsh/

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Tommy Vidrine of Baton Rouge describes himself as “a rock fishing fool,” but he’s really a speckled trout guru in the waters around Grand Isle who regularly shows up on YouTube fishing videos.

He doesn’t back off from his love of fishing mostly jetties and rocks, but fill up your tank and get ready for a 16-mile tour of the best speckled trout fishing Grand Isle has to offer — from his point of view.

Imagine a good-natured, “Do-you-like-catching-fish-or-not?” shoulder shrug from Vidrine as you read his recommendations; you’ll have an idea of the breadth of his knowledge, as well as a feel for his personality.

QUIET CAMINADA PASS JETTIES >

■ By Will Martin

**VIDRINE PREDICTS
TOP GRAND ISLE
SPOTS FOR SUMMER
SPECKS. TAKE HIS
TOUR FOR TROUT.**



GRAND (ISLE) MASTER

QUIET CAMINADA PASS JETTIES

The jetties at Caminada Pass didn't produce much early in the spring, and that's been a blow to Vidrine, who has long praised the spot as his favorite.

"Big trout love to hang out there," he said. "It's like a food trough; the currents come in and push the (baitfish) into those rocks, and the trout just sit behind them and eat all they want."

Seventy-five yards from the jetties, the beach was recently raised by 8 feet with dirt dredged from the Gulf. Vidrine suspects the sediment from that rebuilt beach has filled the cracks and spaces between the rocks where the trout had waited for food.

"I've been (there) with some big, live shrimp," he said. "I've been there with some poegeys, some plastic; I've tried it at least 15 times, and haven't caught one trout (since December)."

"That was my favorite spot, but maybe it will change. We're hoping and praying."

CAMINADA PASS BEACHES

"Grand Isle Beach holds some fish," Vidrine said, "but Elmer's Island is more remote; people get out there and wade-fish and pull out limits on stringers," he said.

Vidrine recommends parking at Elmer's Island Beach.

"My understanding is that (Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries) has hired someone to drive fisherman to wherever they want to fish on the island," he said.

Go all the way east to the point at Caminada Pass where a sandbar creates what Vidrine calls the "Gorilla Hole."

"Get there early in the morning," he said, "and fish where the waves are breaking. Those waves are throwing shrimp and croakers around."

WEST OF ELMER'S ISLAND >

Fishing the beaches of Elmer's Island will produce plenty of specks during the summer. **INSET:** The 'Gorilla Hole' near the mouth of Caminada Pass attracts trout that feed on croaker and shrimp that are disoriented by the action of waves breaking on a sandbar.





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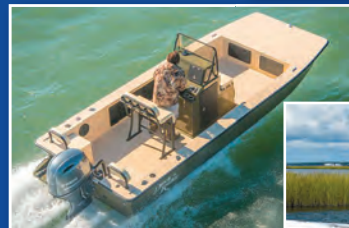


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WEST OF ELMER'S ISLAND

The fishing will be good near Fourchon at “the Barges” and Belle Pass.

“A little farther west (from Elmer’s Island), you’ll come to a great spot where some old barges have been sunk and covered with rocks,” Vidrine said.

The water is about 12 feet deep on the Gulf side of the rocks, and there are fish.

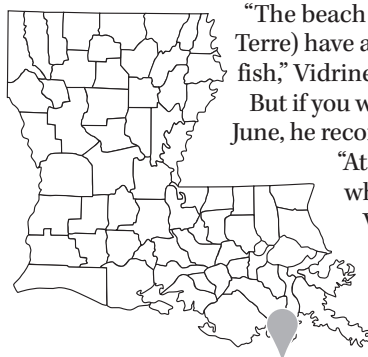
“But behind the piled rocks,” he said, “there are some rocks under the water, and there are trout and redfish in there like crazy.”

The jetties at Belle Pass stretch more than 400 yards into the Gulf. There are plenty of places to fish, and you’ve got structure at different depths, which gives you choices.

“What happened at Fourchon,” Vidrine said, “is that Hurricane Zeta pushed some rocks from the piles into the water, scattering them. In June, people will be fishing in those rocks and catching many trout and redfish.”

You’ll want to fish the Barges and the Belle Pass rocks from late May through mid-June. As the summer progresses, undesirables will become more of a problem, especially if you are using shrimp. Fish with pogeys or croakers to target specks.

EAST OF GRAND ISLE



“The beach and the back side of (Grand Terre) have a lot of structure that’s good to fish,” Vidrine said.

But if you want to fish east of Grand Isle in June, he recommends Four Bayous.

“At Four Bayous, there are places where people built camps,” Vidrine said. “The rocks that they spread around there are great to fish; you’ll see some nice fish coming out (there) this year.”

Grand Isle

GULFSIDE STATE PARK ROCKS >



One of the best spots to catch a limit of specks in the Grand Isle area is at the west end of Elmer’s Island near the mouth of Belle Pass.



Will Martin is an adventure writer based in New Orleans. He pens fiction and nonfiction stories, and is a staff writer at Louisiana Sportsman. He can be reached at willm@lasmag.com.



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GULFSIDE STATE PARK ROCKS

Now that Vidrine has given you his favorite spots for Gulfside fishing around Grand Isle — covering 16 linear miles of coastline — you may be wondering what spot he thinks will be the most productive this year.

Because of the trouble at the Caminada Pass jetties, Vidrine has had to rethink his strategy for June. He thinks that the best fishing will be near Grand Isle State Park.

“In front of the state park, there’s a bunch of rocks that protect the beach, and (they) go pretty far out into the Gulf,” Vidrine said. “The water gets about 8 feet deep, and those rocks produce a lot of trout — and nice ones, too.”

“In June, that will be the spot to be.”



A Hyper Minnow swimbait in the salt-n-peppa color was a favorite of Tommy Vidrine’s this spring around Grand Isle.

BAIT

During the spring, Vidrine used a swimbait called a Hyper Minnow in the salt-n-peppa color to great effect. He recommends using the lure with a 1/8- or 1/4-ounce jighead, depending on the current.

“The speckled trout have been liking it jigged real hard,” said Vidrine, who used the lure through April to catch limits of trout ranging from 12 to 15 inches.

“Beginning in June, I don’t recommend fishing with plastics,” Vidrine said. “(In June), there is just bait everywhere at Grand Isle: pogeys, big mullets, finger mullets. Fishing with an artificial bait is not near as effective in the summer as it is in the winter and spring.”

“At Elmer’s (Island), put a Carolina rig on with a 1/4- or 1/2-ounce weight above a small swivel, and about 2 or 3 feet of the leader of your choice with a 1/0 or 2/0 Kahle hook,” said Vidrine, who recommends using croakers or shrimp, and not to free-line, because the wind will be in your face.

“Another thing ... is, never forget that the trout is a predator, like a lion, and in most cases, he isn’t interested in something dead. If it’s dead, change it out,” he said.

To get more life out of your pogy, free-line it by inserting the hook into its open mouth and pulling it out right between its eyes.

“They can breathe better that way,” he said. ■

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INTIMIDATE THOSE FISH

■ By Kinny Haddox

BURAS GUIDE SAID YOU SOMETIMES HAVE TO STRONG-ARM SPECKS, REDS INTO BITING. HE KNOWS HOW.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GET SPECKLED TROUT AND REDFISH TO BITE.

You can entice them with shrimp. You can excite them with lifelike soft plastics under a popping cork. Or you can just flat out intimidate them into hitting your bait.

That's how Capt. Ron Price, who operates Fish Intimidator Lodge and Guide Service out of Buras, does it. He not only puts his clients on good fish, he does everything he can to make sure the fish bite — even if it means strong-arming specks and reds to get in his boat.

"Typically, there are two places we find speckled trout most of the time in June," Price said. "They are usually off the beach or around the shallow rigs. Those seem to be the hotspots. The rigs east of the river toward Breton Island and Main Pass hold trout, as does the Black Tank area.

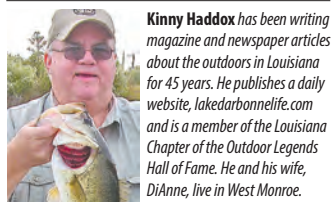
"Some of the better trout fishing is also out toward Grand Isle and out from Venice if the river is high for a long time. It seems like Mother Nature is keeping us with a high river every year. When I first started guiding, I didn't know what a high river was. Now, it seems like the norm."

A high river lasting through spring usually moves the best fish out further, and that's where Price's approach pays off.

"It's all about the pretty water when you want to catch good fish and good numbers," he said. "I'm known for not staying on a spot long if the fish aren't biting. I'm not afraid to burn some gas to go looking for them. Of course, with the price of gas this year, I may have to develop some more patience."

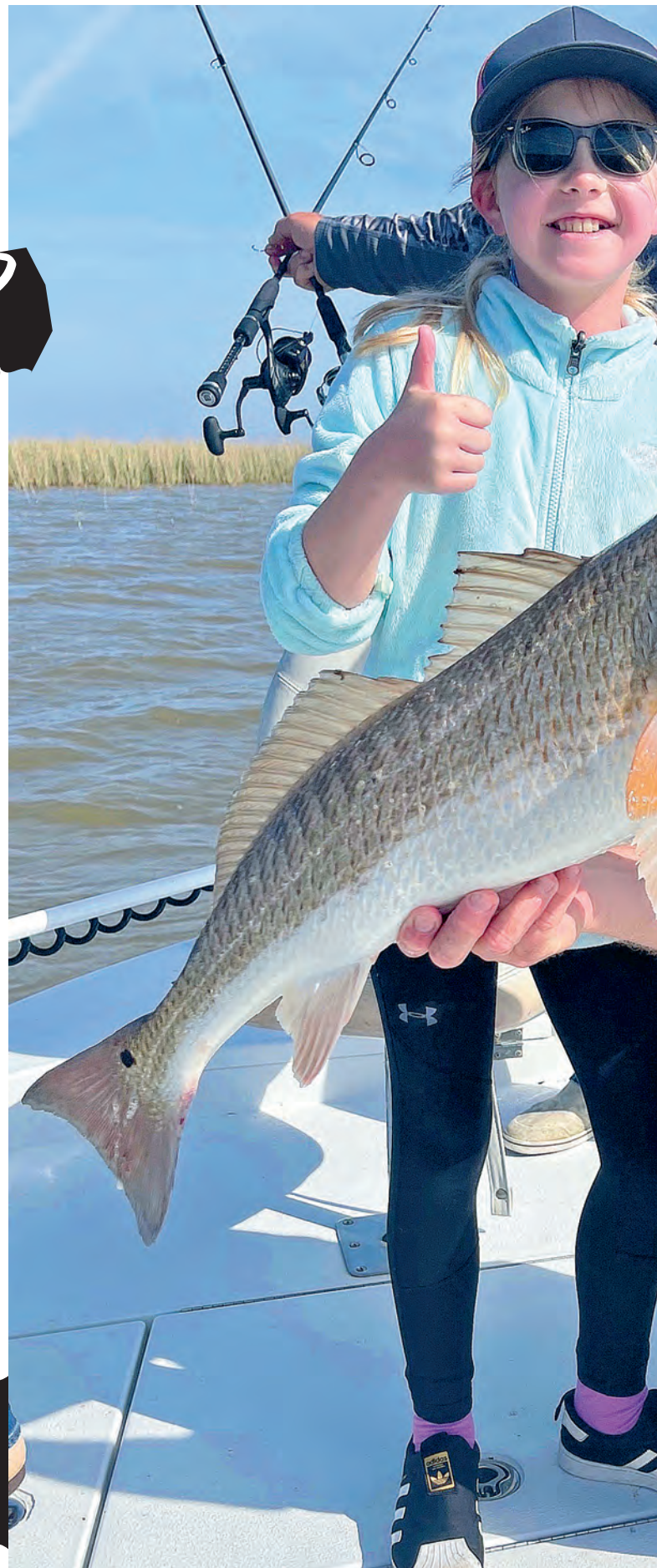
One of Price's favorite lures in the summer is the Norton Sand Eel, especially when he's targeting bigger trout. He loves fishing the eel in black and chartreuse colors on a 3/8-ounce jighead. Sometimes, he will fish with a slip cork, but most of the best fishing around the rigs is just tight-lining.

"On the rigs, typically, the fish will hold on the current line on the backside of the rig," he said. "That's where we try first. The rigs may be in 10 to 15 feet of water, but the big ones like to suspend 2 to 3 feet below the surface of the rig. I like to go to a smaller jighead if the current and wind will allow and let it sink slower. They like that."



Kinny Haddox has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 45 years. He publishes a daily website, lakedarboonnellife.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.

Guide Ron Price (right) puts big smiles on clients' faces, old and young alike, when they land big redfish like this one.





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While speckled trout may be a bit tougher to find in June, Price said redfish are pretty much all over the place. They stay tight to the shoreline on a falling tide; that's his favorite time to catch them. If he can plan a trip for specks in the morning, then find redfish on the falling tide later in the day, that's about as good as it gets.

"You can't beat live shrimp for redfish," he said. "We fish them under a popping cork about 18 inches to 2 feet below the cork, up near the bank. I love to catch them on a falling tide coming out of the canes. They are super active then and lots of fun to catch."

Actually, when it comes down to it, Price admits the fish and Mother Nature can do some pretty strong intimidating of their own.

"Between the hurricanes and the pandemic last year, we took a beating," he said. "Those are things we can't control, but we are getting back to normal. We've got a lot of making up to do."

When June arrives, Ron Price moves out of the marshes and does most of his trout fishing off the beaches.



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The best redfish bite is usually on a falling tied; Ron Pierce stays tight to the shoreline to catch the most reds.



Price has had to dodge some intimidation in the past, too. He had been guiding part-time but decided to quit his job at a chemical plant to build his lodges and guide full-time. In fact, one of his co-workers kidded him about “intimidating” one of his former bosses, so when he looked for a unique name for his guide service, he thought that would be a good one. But the tide turned on him.

Two months after he went full-time, Hurricane Katrina wiped him out. Then, there was the BP oil spill. The tough times make him understand even more how important it is for his clients to get away from it all and be able to go catch fish. ■

For lodging on Redfish Lake and fishing in the Buras area, contact Capt. Ron Price at bigtroutmasterbve@yahoo.com or www.fishintimidator.com.

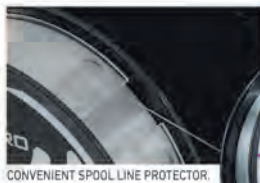
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MARSH MAN MASSON

Todd Masson

Hard plastic baits with a red color scheme have been working for Marsh Man Masson this spring.



HARD-PLASTICS MAKE JUNE AN EPIC MONTH

Photos by Todd Masson

TOPWATER, TWITCHBAITS, CRANKBAITS PRODUCE BIG SOW TROUT BETTER THAN SOFT BAITS

Some anglers cast with one hand; I almost always cast with two, particularly when I'm trying to sling a hard-plastic lure as far from the boat as possible.

So, with my right hand gripping the rod near the reel, my left hand took its position near the butt. Working in opposite motions, they sent the SB-57 crankbait on a long journey to the other side of the marsh pond I was fishing.

The lure landed with a small splash, and I engaged the reel to begin rhythmic cranks and twitches.

Those twitches are essential, but the fish almost never hit on them. Rather, they wait until the pause that follows and usually hit with such fury, the rod is in danger of being extricated from your grip.

That's what happened here. A 3-pound speckled trout, the largest I'd encountered in a few weeks, slammed the SB-57 and rose to the surface to protest being fooled after I set the hook.

It was a valiant — if fruitless — attempt to earn its freedom, and after a sporty fight, the fish succumbed to a rubber-coated landing net. Normally I release 3-pound trout, but this one's destiny was to star in a Marsh Man Masson video showing how to prepare whole, boneless stuffed speckled trout, a dish that tastes even better than it sounds.

HARD-PLASTIC HITS

That the crankbait produced the largest speckled trout of the day wasn't the least bit surprising. For whatever reason, hard-plastics tend to deliver bigger specks than soft-plastics on average, and that's particularly true in June.

It's a great time to target big sows who still carry plenty of weight from their spring gorge and haven't yet fallen into the summer doldrums, when the water becomes just too warm for them to feed frequently during daytime hours.

As a general rule, topwaters like Matrix

Mullets or MirrOlure She Dogs thrown onto beaches or over coastal grass flats during rising tides are most productive first thing in the morning. Surf-holding fish will be between the first trough and the sand, so literally, the best casts are those that plop down on terra firma.

The action during the first 30 minutes of daylight can be epic, and often, that's when the biggest fish of the day hit.

That changes, though, as soon as the sun peeks over the horizon. The fish tend to pull back and become more suspicious of topwater plugs. That's when twitchbaits, like MirrOdines, SoftDines and Paul Browns, or crankbaits, like the aforementioned SB-57, become irresistible.



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

Each of these types of lures has its place, with twitchbaits producing well when winds are light and crankbaits shining in moderate breezes. It's challenging to work a twitchbait effectively when winds push the line and keep the lure in perpetual motion. Remember, it's those pauses that drive the fish crazy.

COLOR SPECTRUM

As far as colors go, I like bone topwaters in the early morning when the sky is still waking up and darker colors when clouds make it opaque. For subsurface plugs, I've been having great success this year with an assortment of reds, particularly the SB-57 in Rayburn red craw

What could a speckled trout possibly be feeding on that's red? Nothing I can think of, but I know it works.

When I fished with Capt. C.A. Richardson in Florida back in April, he caught a number of fish on a MirrOlure with a red head and mustard body. He said most Floridians feel every detail of a lure must look exactly like the prey the fish are feeding on, but Richardson likes colors with contrast that get the attention of the fish.

It's just confirmation that "matching the hatch" isn't nearly as important as getting noticed. ■

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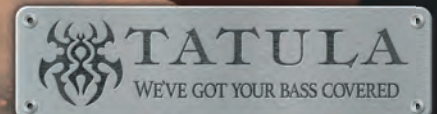
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GUIDE SAYS TROUT BITE IS LATE THIS YEAR

Long Rocks will likely be an early summer hotspot after long, cold winter season

T By Rusty Tardo
he kickoff of the annual trout frenzy is running about a month behind schedule this year, according to Capt. Eric Olsen of New Orleans' Saltwater Therapy Charters, probably due to multiple factors.

"The unusually long, cold winter really dropped the water temperatures, and that, along with all the fresh water we dealt with, put the kibosh on the winter shrimp," said Olson (504-715-3006). "Even into May, the shrimp trawlers were finding the bait small and scarce."

"The last few years, we had no winter cold to speak of, and we were able to get live shrimp all winter. Not this year. We even had some cold weather in April, so all of that got us off to a slower start than usual."

"But by June, everything changes. The heat is back, the water temperatures are up, and shrimp should be showing up everywhere — and that means trout action busting loose all over. I expect all the usual May hotspots to be red hot in June, everything running about a month behind schedule."

One of the perennial June hotspots is the Rocks at the end of the MRGO, which always seems to be one of the first places trout show up to kick off summer. Olsen said trout are already there and have been showing up in spurts since late April. With live shrimp available, anglers should be able to put some nice fish, and good numbers, in the boat with more consistency.

The Long Rocks are an 8-mile stretch of rock jetty protruding into Breton Sound, and for decades, anglers have lined up along them to catch trout, redfish, sheepshead, flounder and any number of other species from jacks to Spanish mackerel,

Capt. Eric Olsen caught this big trout on live shrimp while fishing a Carolina rig in Bay Eloi.



sharks, pesky catfish and lad fish. But the main targets are trout and reds.

On weekends, there are often so many boats lined up along them that locals nicknamed the area, "the Parking Lot."

Olsen said you can try your luck anywhere along the rocks, but he always looks for bait activity.

"I look for shrimp jumping, minnows, mullet, anything that trout eat, and wherever I see that, I'll give it a try," he said.

Olsen said a moving tide — rising or falling — is essential. He likes to fish live shrimp on a 3-foot leader under a popping cork.

"I always catch more fish on a longer leader," he said.

In addition to the rocks, Olsen said the oyster reefs in Lake Anastasia should be productive, using live shrimp and lime or chartreuse plastics under a cork, and all the structures in Bay Eloi should be turning on.

"Big reds and drum and big sheepshead and trout like to hang around the wellheads and structure in Bay Eloi, and live shrimp fished on a Carolina rig should put a serious bend in your pole out there this month," he said. ■

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KAYAK ANGLER HAVING GOOD SPRING FLOUNDER SEASON

F By Will Martin
lounder fishing along Louisiana’s coast has been a mixed bag for many anglers this spring, but one southwest Louisiana fisherman is making it look easy. On April 18, Tony Menard of Iota, fishing from a kayak, caught a beautiful 18-inch flounder in West Cove Marsh near Hackberry.

“I was fishing along a grass-line in the marsh,” Menard said, “using a tandem rig with a 1/8-ounce jighead on the top and a 1/4-ounce jighead on the bottom.”

Both jigs were made by Down South Lures. One was pearl-colored with a chartreuse tail and the other was “Purple Rain” — purple with silver flake and a chartreuse tail.

“I was just bouncing them along the grass line because I saw some baitfish scattering like something was chasing them,” he



Tony Menard of Iota landed this nice flounder from his kayak on April 18. He was fishing near Hackberry in West Cove Marsh.

said, “and sure enough, I ended up snagging the flounder right where I was tossing along the grass line.”

Although West Cove Marsh is a popular fishing spot, there were only a few other kayak fishermen and a boat or two on the water when Menard caught the fish.

Menard recommends using a sensitive rod and braided line when targeting flounder.

“When you are anticipating that bite from a flounder, and you feel that bump, it’s much easier to feel it with a sensitive rod paired with a braided line,” he said.

Menard caught the fish using a 13 Fishing reel on a medium-action, fast-tip, Falcon rod.

Happy with his latest catch, Menard said he caught his personal best last year: two 4½-pounders caught on back-to-back days. ■



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Vince Theriot of Grand Chenier, right, who owns Coastal Guide Service, helps hoist a big redfish caught near Grand Chenier.



JUNE: PRIME TIME FOR REDS IN MERMENTAU RIVER'S UPPER MUD LAKE AREA

GUIDE BELIEVES LATE-WINTER FREEZE WILL HAVE LITTLE LASTING EFFECTS ON AREA'S REDS, TROUT

By Don Shoopman
late May and June, Vince Theriot knows where salinity should be just about right for fair to good redfish fishing in the upper Mermentau River basin.

Theriot, a Grand Chenier resident who owns Coastal Guide Service, points saltwater fishermen to the upper Mud Lake area along the Mermentau River. The area covers 200 to 300 acres where the river meets with Little Pecan Bayou on the eastern shoreline in Cameron Parish.

Redfish from "rat red" size to 28 inches will be there for the catching in June.

Theriot, who has been guiding since 1997, believes the area will recover from localized fish kills after the region's deep freeze in late February. The river system, he said, has enough deep water to offer refuge for finfish.

Many of the dead fish he saw while retrieving duck decoys soon after the freeze were in the Hog Bayou area, where they couldn't escape, and lower Mud Lake.

"I think where we're at, we're going to recover," Theriot said. "The river's going to start getting pretty in the upper part of the river — good green, clean water."

Theriot's more than ready for redfish to chomp on Egret Baits' Mambo Mullet soft plastics and Strike King Redfish Magic spin-nerbait he loves to fish with in the upper Mud Lake area. If the

water's dingy, he'll use a black/chartreuse Mambo Mullet, but when it's clear, he'll rely on a clear or glow Mambo Mullet.

"What I'll be targeting is sand flats around the upper Mud Lake area," he said. "The thing to key on is oyster shells, all those sand flats with oyster shells along those banks. That's where the redfish will be."

Redfish should be in water 3 inches to 3 feet deep, according to Theriot, who also said a strong tide helps the bite.

"Get on the trolling motor 30, 40 feet off the banks. Redfish will be cruising the bank," he said.

Three underwater islands in that area hold redfish that feast on food available on oyster reefs. When the tide's low, it's easy to spot the islands as the water flows over them, he said.

Another top-notch area, he said, is where the Grand Chenier ridges meet up with the Mermentau River. Look for baitfish, and you'll find the redfish working the ledges.

Closer to Grand Chenier, Theriot often starts along the coast at the Old Jetties before heading up to upper Mud Lake. Speckled trout and/or redfish usually are teeming there or nearby along the beach, he said, pointing out they can be caught on "green hornet" Matrix Shad soft plastics.

"Fish around the rocks," he said. "If you see baitfish, a lot of times the trout will be there and redfish mixed in, bigger redfish." ■

CRACKED CRAB IS KING ON LOWER MERMENTAU RIVER

If By Capt. Adam Jaynes you are interested in getting a big pull on the end of your line, you may want to visit the lower Mermentau River this summer. This small river, which runs 72 miles from just south of Grand Chenier to the Gulf of Mexico, may appear to be a muddy, murky mess the overwhelming majority of the time, but don't let that keep you from experiencing the fishery.

Most of my fishing early on in life was done on the Mermentau. Going to visit my grandparents usually involved an adventure, more often than not on the river; they had a camp just a bit north of the causeway bridge.

At that age, all I cared about was getting a bite and catching a fish; it didn't matter much to me what was biting. I would set my alarm before sunrise just to soak dead shrimp off the dock. There was the occasional redfish, black drum and whiting, but the catch was primarily hardhead catfish and croakers. Depending on how much freshwater was coming down the river, channel catfish were at times the primary fish caught.

The bait of choice for fishermen other than kids was cracked blue crab. Depending on size, anywhere from half the crab to just a quarter was used. I learned to tear off all the legs — except the back leg — close to the body, before putting the crab on the hook. We would lightly stomp on the claws and use those for chum, but it's debatable whether that played much of a role in catching fish.

Most fish were caught when the river had an influx of salty, green water. Tide was another significant factor. If the current was too swift, the bite fell off drastically. Your best chance of hooking a big, bull redfish and monster black drum was right at the beginning or end of either the incoming or outgoing tide.

It doesn't take a fancy boat or expensive tackle to land some huge fish on the Mermentau. Many times, we would catch crabs, slide my grandfather's 12-foot aluminum boat into the water, crank the 9.9 hp Johnson outboard and catch redfish and drum so big that they would tow that boat around — even with the anchor out.

It was key to match the right



Mary Ann Jaynes lifts a bull red caught on cracked crab fishing the Mermentau River.

amount of lead to the crab to avoid getting hung up on rocks or oyster shell. If the current was slack or extremely slow, we would fish the cracked crab weightless. As the current increased, we would use ¼- to ¾-ounce jigheads. You definitely did not want to cast upcurrent; that would almost guarantee getting hung up on the bottom.

Although we did not necessarily catch many redfish that were small enough to keep, I would not trade my sore arms and memories for fish in the ice chest. ■

Capt. Adam Jaynes can be contacted at justfishsabine.com.

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BILOXI MARSH REDS WILL BE ON THE FEED

June is great month, with consistent water conditions, good weather

C By Joel Masson
 apt. Justin Bowles of JB Fishing Charters spends many days in June targeting redfish in the Biloxi Marsh, and for good reason: it's loaded with hungry fish that seem to be in almost every crease.

"You can fish them on the shoreline of the open bays," Bowles said. "You can fish the shoreline of Lake Borgne, and you can also catch them up in the skinny bayous and in the ponds. You can kind of pick whatever you want to do in June."

Bowles finds conditions, which have been inconsistent since the winter, to be a lot more stable.

"Normally speaking, I find in June you get a bunch of south or southeast wind, and it pushes that good water in," he said. "You don't have to worry about any of those low-water issues."

When entering the vast Biloxi Marsh, Bowles keeps an eye out for a few key factors.

"I look for a good grass line along the edge of the pond, and I also look for bait and clean water," he said. "If you're fishing strictly artificial, I think water clarity is a lot more important than if you're fishing shrimp under a cork."

Bowles' strategy is also heavily influenced by which direction the tide is moving.

"I find with a rising tide, the reds push back as far as they can go, so you may catch them in the back ends of ponds or pockets," he said. "With a falling tide, it seems like they get more in the current or out off of points where they can let the bait be pulled out the marsh to them."

The redfish certainly are not picky, and Bowles has a variety of baits at the ready to chunk at the reds.



Photo courtesy Justin Bowles

Capt. Justin Bowles said redfish can be caught along the shorelines of marsh ponds this month.

"You definitely don't need the (live) bait," he said. "It really depends on the skill level of who's fishing, but you can catch them on really anything in June: spinnerbaits, spoons, Texas-rigged craws and swimbaits."

Bowles (985-969-2036) said redfish in Biloxi Marsh range anywhere from generally anywhere from 16 to 26 inches this month.

"Those are the kind you want to catch and cook anyway," he said.

The great part about June is it isn't extremely hot, so the fish are more prone to feed later in the day.

"In June, they'll bite throughout the day unless you have abnormally warm temperatures," Bowles said. "When it gets into July, you need to leave earlier and do your damage in the morning." ■

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MIX IT UP IN HOPEDALE

FRESHWATER INTRUSION HAS CHANGED THIS GREAT FISHERY, MAYBE FOR THE BETTER

There are many areas in southeast Louisiana that have become more brackish as a result of freshwater diversions and other post-Hurricane Katrina coastal protection projects. With easy kayak access to prime fishing areas, Hopedale is a great area to target for a wide variety of species.

On a recent trip, several different species were landed, saltwater and freshwater, and there is little doubt that a few more could have been found. With its proximity to Lake Borgne, and with the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) providing a straight run to the Gulf, Hopedale was almost strictly for saltwater fishing for many decades. However the post-Katrina installation of the rock dam across the MRGO just east of Bayou LaLoutre, levee enhancements and other flood-protection measures in the Pontchartrain Basin have greatly changed the hydrology and salinity in surrounding areas.

Hopedale has reverted to a brackish system and seen an influx of freshwater species, including largemouth bass, freshwater catfish, bream and a first on a recent trip: white bass. No doubt there are other freshwater species swimming around the area. However, the good news is that all the normal saltwater species — redfish, speckled trout and flounder, etc. — remain and are co-mingled.

While the rock dam is porous and tidal water still flows through it, there is no doubt about the salinity changes. The surrounding marshes are supporting vast areas of submerged aquatic grass and are home to a mixed bag of both saltwater and freshwater species.

There are two main launch points for kayak anglers in Hopedale.

There is an honor box and a concrete ramp at the site of the old Pip's Place on Hopedale Highway. There are no facilities or supplies available: launch and parking only. This launches into Bayou LaLoutre and a short paddle/pedal through Hopedale Bayou and into Hopedale Lagoon and the surrounding marsh complex and Lake Ameda. Typical marsh fishing abounds, and it is a great area for kayak anglers to explore.





Capt. Eric Muhoberac tricked this nice red and others while drifting a plastic cocahoe tail under a popping cork. As the lure floated along the outside edge of the grass bed, the fish came out of the grass for the strike.

PADDLES 'N PUDDLES

continued

A few miles further down the highway is Hopedale Marina. It has a dedicated, kayak-specific launch that makes getting in the water quick and easy without having to contend with powerboats at the regular back-down ramp. It is a full-service marina with ice, fishing supplies and restroom facilities. From the launch, you can simply cross Bayou LaLoutre into the spoil canal and access the surrounding marsh. Also, as short paddle/pedal north puts you directly into the MRGO near the rock dam. You can fish the MRGO up to and all around the dam. A few adventurous 'yakers regularly transport their kayaks up and over the rocks to fish the east side of the dam. If you plan to do this, travel as light as possible and use caution. The rocks can be slippery, they often move, and you can easily twist an ankle or worse. Another option is to head west in the MRGO, fish the rock jetties along the shoreline and then enter into the

vast Lena Lagoon marsh area.

Now, the good part. All of these areas contain the same, multiple, mixed fish species. On a recent trip with Capt. Eric Muhoberac, we ended the day with five: redfish, largemouth bass, blue catfish, speckled trout and white bass. Did we do anything special? Nope. We fished as we regularly do with artificial lures. All of these species were caught using the same lures and the same techniques.

Fishing near the dam produced trout and bass with a plastic cocahoe jig/tail under a popping cork. I switched to the same plastic jig/tail tight-lined on the bottom and put a big blue catfish in the kayak. As the wind picked up, we left the MRGO and pedaled back past Hopedale Marina to get a little protection in the marshes around the spoil canal. The grass is already thick in the area and will get thicker as the summer heat wears on.

Fishing the grass can be frustrating, but a little change in lures or technique makes it productive. If it is calm, try weedless topwater frog-type lures and work the tops of the grass. Pay particular attention to any holes or breaks in the grass. Always pause the lure in these areas and twitch and pop while trying your best to keep in the same place for a while. The explosive strikes can nearly scare you out of the kayak. However, the strong wind this day made it impossible to stay out in the open ponds.

Next, it was back to the popping cork and working the plastic jig/tail down the outside edges of the grass along canal banks. Using the wind and current to drift the bait slowly along while imparting a few random, but stout pops, the redfish couldn't resist. Also, a first time fishing this area, two white bass fell for the same technique.

Be it shallow ponds, lagoons, rock jetties, small lakes, or even a 40-foot deep former shipping channel, the kayak-fishing habitat in Hopedale is as diverse as the available species. ■

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Hopedale is filled with a mix of fresh and saltwater fish, all in the same areas. By the end of the day, speckled trout, bass, redbfish, white bass and a blue catfish were all landed.



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HUNTER OF THE MONTH

Victoria Fonda

Victoria Fonda had this bronze phase turkey on camera all deer season and she knew it was the turkey she wanted to kill. She hunted him on the opening morning, but he was late to fly down and went straight to his hens. The morning of April 3, she set up and he gobbled on the limb and then never said a single word once he was on the ground. The big bird came in with two hens and went straight to the decoys. Fonda shot him at 25 yards with her Beretta A400 20 gauge. The gobbler had a 10-inch beard and weighed 20 pounds.

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Photo taken pre-pandemic

ANGLER OF THE MONTH

Casey Forshag

Casey Forshag caught this beautiful 28-inch redfish with a radiant orange color and blue tail on fly off the Intracoastal Waterway. He stuck a tag in the red for someone else to enjoy its beauty!



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LAFAYETTE ATTORNEY HAS THE NUMBER OF COUNTLESS CHINQUAPIN AND BREAM IN LAKES WITHIN THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN, PARTICULARLY COW ISLAND LAKE. HERE'S HOW HE FILLS HIS FISH COOLER.

■ By Don Shoopman

BAGGING BASIN BREAM

CATCHING BREAM IN A BREATHTAKINGLY SCENIC AREA of the Atchafalaya Basin conjures up golden memories for James “Jimmy” Domengeaux of Lafayette.

Domengeaux sees himself as a young boy fishing with his father, the late Judge Jerome Domengeaux, eagerly watching each time for a cork to tremble and sink below the surface of Cow Island Lake under the weight of a hand-sized panfish. His father, who was chief judge of the Louisiana Third Circuit Court of Appeals, took him there often, and the boy who grew into an attorney and father himself is oh-so-thankful he did.

There are plenty of breathtakingly scenic areas to catch bream anywhere in the nation’s last great overflow swamp. When Domengeaux takes a spring and early summer break from bass fishing, which he loves for fun and competition, he points the bow of his boat to Cow Island Lake to target bream and chinquapin, aka shellcrackers, redear sunfish.

IMPRESSIVE CATCHES THE NORM

He usually leaves with 15 to 40 bream and/or chinquapin if he’s alone, 50 to 75 if he has a guest, taking with him a renewed sense of peace from the outdoors he cherishes and photographs.

“Even though I do bass fish a majority of the time year-round, bream and chinquapin fishing in the spring and summer brings back so many good memories of when I was fishing with my father and brother,” Domengeaux said in early April, which is about the time chinquapin begin bedding throughout the Basin.

Cow Island Lake is a hidden treasure. It’s easily accessible when the Atchafalaya River stage at Butte La Rose is above 15.3 feet, but an adventure, to put it mildly, when the river stage is below 15.3.

Domengeaux, 62, doesn’t “pull over” the weir on the lake’s lower end like he did when he was younger, but he does go reg-

ularly — make that religiously from April through June — when the water level’s high enough to drive in with his aluminum Hanko boat, albeit carefully.

Domengeaux’s father, who was Lafayette’s mayor in the late 1950s, introduced his young sons to pure bliss on the water when he took them fishing in his 18-foot aluminum boat, which he kept in a stall at the old Robin’s Landing, a private boat ramp along the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee. They fished Henderson Lake, of course, but also Cow Island Lake and other hotspots in the spillway. And when the bite was tough in other areas, the little lake was and remains the place to be.

Domengeaux still prefers to use red/white corks when he’s fishing with worms or crickets. Catalpa worms, on which he caught so many panfish as a boy, generally are hard to get. He sees that boy again in his mind every time the cork goes under.

The red/white corks, he confided, strictly are for “nostalgic purposes.”

Domengeaux said after the chinquapin run in April and May, bream heat up around the 445-acre lake that’s about 9 miles southeast of Henderson and west of the Atchafalaya River.

“Those chinquapin, they’re fun,” he said. “They also fight harder than bream. I like to fish chinquapin, which I believe spawn earlier, in April or May.”

Domengeaux recommended keeping a natural or artificial bait in the water to keep chinquapin action fast and furious once they start biting.

“When you catch one, you’ve got to keep fishing fast because they frenzy up. Keep throwing in the same area,” he said.

BREAK OUT THE FLYROD ➤

Cow Island Lake’s beauty overwhelms you as much as its great bream and chinquapin fishing in April, May and June.



Terrebonne Parish President Gordon Dove (right) tours the Ducks Unlimited Island Road marsh terracing project on LL&E land with ConocoPhillips Coastal Wetlands Director John Harrington.

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BREAK OUT THE FLYROD

The early summer bream bite can be fabulous. Domengeaux targets them with either the same 10-foot J.B. Salter's graphite Jiggin' Pole he uses for chinquapin or else one of his two fly rods, a 4-weight Wind River model or a 5-weight Temple Fork Outfitters. He also casts a ¼-ounce chartreuse/black or white/red dot Johnson Beetle Spin on an ultralight Zebco rig when he's fishing with natural bait.

The art of fly-fishing hasn't escaped Domengeaux. He has his all-time favorite artificials, which just happen to be highly preferred by hungry bream very early and late in the day.

"My real joy is using fly rods," he said.

His "ammunition," as he calls it, is supplied by friend Michael Norman of Abita Springs, who makes Big Mike's Jigs n' Flies for fly-rod aficionados. Domengeaux's top choices include chartreuse Bluegill Poppers, black/chartreuse Jittabugs and purple 't Jigs.

But it's the hand-tied flies and the bite they trigger — breaking the surface with that unmistakable pop-plop — that he reveres most while bream fishing before or as the sun rises or in the evening.



A black/chartreuse Jittabug is one of Jimmy Domengeaux's favorite bugs for bream fishing.

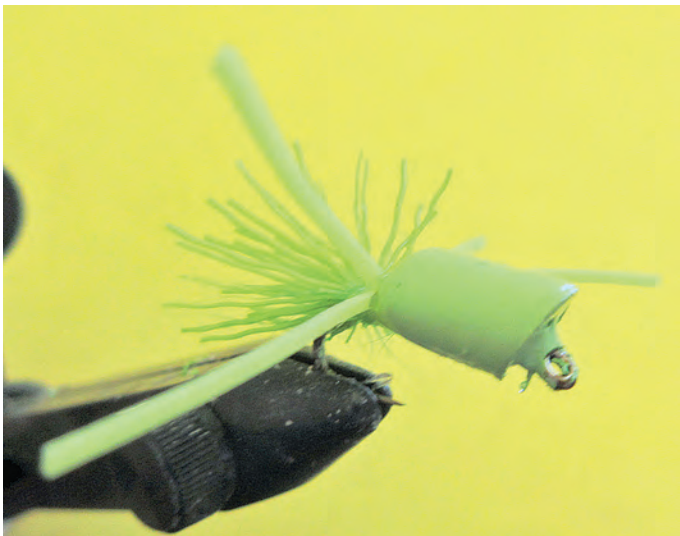


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Jimmy Domengeaux has caught plenty of Atchafalaya Basin bream on a Big Mike's Jigs n' Flies' chartreuse Bluegill Popper.



Domengeaux's third choice to pitch in front of bream is a Big Mike's purple 't Jig.

"Real, real early and late is the best time to catch bream on a fly. There's *nothing* more fun than that," he said.

Cow Island Lake's adult bream are healthy specimens. A few will fill up a frying pan fast.

"The best way I can describe them? I call them bull bream, bigger than your hand," Domengeaux said.

Water clarity usually is prime for fly fishing. Most of the time the lake is clear, particularly on the northern end. He's partial to water with a greenish tint, and he's never seen clear, black water, the color that might suggest "dead water" in there.

PULL OVER WHEN NECESSARY >



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.

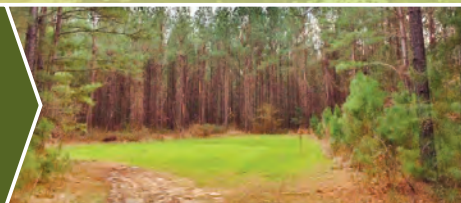
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Jimmy Domengeaux holds a hand-sized bream caught while fishing Cow Island Lake in the Atchafalaya Basin.



PULL OVER WHEN NECESSARY

Boaters get into the lake on the southern side. When the river stage is higher than 15.3, Domengeaux and others drive their boats in, carefully, over a weir. That's where the river enters the lake, right off the Little Atchafalaya River.

Once the water level falls below the weir, anglers determined to feel the thrill of catching bream and chinquapin must physically move, i.e. lift and push, a preferably light, flat-bottom boat over the control structure. There are strategically placed pieces of wood and/or PVC pipe to "roll over" the top.

"I pulled over many times in the old days. The last couple of Junes, I've been able to get in (without pulling over). That's the way I prefer to fish when I'm 62 years old," he said.

Pulling over can necessitate running the bow of the boat up the path until gravity stops it. The challenging next step

involves pulling the boat 7 feet at about a 45-degree angle, and from there, there's a drag up a slight, 40-foot incline, then back down another 40 feet to the cut that takes boaters into the lake.

In an effort to make the portage easier and keep the weight down, anglers often bring a trolling motor, battery, ice chest, fishing tackle and fishing poles and, sometimes, a small outboard motor.

There's a 10- to 15-foot deep pipeline that crosses the length of the middle of the lake, which averages about 5 feet deep. That pipeline gets a lot of Domengeaux's attention when he's hunting bream and chinquapin.

"The whole pipeline's good. You have a lot of good grass, hydrilla," he said.

When the water starts warming and the spawn starts to play out, he believes the fish move out into the middle of the lake, homing in on grass beds. He moves with them to put fish in the boat in early June.

Live cypress trees dot the lake and offer more fishing spots. Many fishermen believe those cypress trees increase the odds of putting the panfish in the ice chest. ■

Jimmy Domengeaux, who has never had professional photography training, chronicles the beautiful scenery of the Basin in a collection of photographs entitled "Jimmy Domengeaux Wetlands Gallery" that can be seen at www.jimmydomengeaux.com.

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SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope

This bluegill was caught in a swampy area off of a major river, a common place to find these fish throughout the south.



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: BLUEGILL

Brian Cope

A FAVORITE AMONG ALMOST EVERY ANGLER, THESE SUNFISH ARE FOUND EVERYWHERE AND REVERED WHERE THEY'RE FOUND

Bluegills, *Lepomis macrochirus*, are one of the most-popular and populous fish in North America. For many anglers, they are the very first fish ever caught. They are known among fisheries experts as “laterally compressed, or flattened sunfish.”

Depending on the water color and quality where they are found, bluegills can range from almost solid black to olive in color with orange or yellow breasts. Their fins are clear, except for a distinguishing black smudge on the bottom of the rear of the dorsal fin. Along with its black earflap, that black smudge is the surest way to identify it from some other members of the sunfish family.

As the name implies, these fish often — but not always — have blue to violet coloring on their gills and throughout the top portion of their bodies. This is most evident among males that are breeding. The bluegill is native to the eastern

United States, but it exists nationwide thanks to stocking programs. They are one of the most-commonly stocked fish in ponds and lakes. They are a favorite among anglers, especially those who like to fish the old-fashioned way, with live bait under a cork.

HOME? ANYWHERE

These fish are highly tolerant of a wide range of habitat. Small ponds, creeks, rivers, swamps, oxbow lakes, retention basins and drainage ditches are all suitable waters. They are usually found close to some type of structure, including flooded vegetation, tree stumps, downed timber, rock walls and sunken debris.

Anglers find their share of bluegills in mostly shallow water during the warm months; few anglers fish for them during winter. Those that do often find them as deep as 60 feet in lakes.

Bluegills aren't too picky about what

they eat. Insects of all sizes, small invertebrates, crawdads, freshwater mussels, grass shrimp and tiny fish make up their diets. Their mouths are fairly small, which limits their choice of potential meals.

Live crickets are among the most-popular baits for bluegill anglers. Live red worms, night crawlers, wax worms, and catalpa worms will also draw strikes. Small crawdads are excellent baits but not widely available at bait shops. Small spinners, tiny crankbaits and artificial flies also work great.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS ➤



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.

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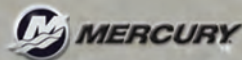


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SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

continued



Even on dark-bodied bluegills, the black smudge on the rear, lower part of the dorsal fin is evident and helps to distinguish these fish from other members of the sunfish family.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Bluegill colonies are often made up of as many as 100 circular nests. Safety in numbers seems to be their motto, as their huge colonies help protect their eggs and fry from predator fish. They spawn throughout many months, as long as the water temperature is at least 75 degrees. In the South, this usually lasts from May through August, sometimes into September.

PROLIFIC SPAWNERS

Females can lay up to 80,000 eggs in a year, and they often deposit them in several different nests. Males, likewise, spray their sperm in multiple nests. The bluegill is the only species of sunfish that does this. The males guard the

colonies until the fry disperse.

Bluegills are often called bream, sunfish, sunny, blue sunfish, coppernose, and blue perch. They are often confused with redear sunfish, aka shellcrackers, and with green sunfish and redbreast sunfish.

Louisiana's state-record bluegill weighed 1.83 pounds and was caught by Timothy Delaney in Iatt Lake in May 2016. The Mississippi state record weighed 3.45 pounds. Gerald Thurmond caught the fish in a farm pond in February 1995. The world record bluegill weighed 4 pounds, 12 ounces and was caught by T. Hudson in Ketchikan Lake, Ala., on April 9, 1950. That fish is not only the world record, but is also the oldest recorded bluegill record from any state. ■

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GRAND BAYOU LAKE IS A 'BUYER'S MARKET' IN JUNE

Crappie fishing should be great in major channels

By Kinny Haddox
Bossier City's Nick DeWolf spent a lot of time selling real estate, so he understands the concept of good times to buy and sell. He's also a crappie fisherman who knows when the time is right to make an offer to crappie on north Louisiana lakes.

Right now, Grand Bayou Lake is a "buyer's market" — a good time to bait your hook and make an offer to some big crappie.

The lake's official name is now John K. Kelly Grand Bayou Reservoir; the 2,700-acre lake is outside of Coushatta, formed when the old Grand Bayou was impounded in 1996. The lake has the old bayou channel and several smaller creeks running off it, and those are good crappie neighborhoods to check out this time of year, especially on the spillway end of the lake.

"We are getting to the time of year when the water temperature is in the high 70s, for the most part, and those bigger fish are going to go as deep as they can," DeWolf said. "At Grand Bayou, they will move down that main channel toward the dam or one of the other deep channels. A lot of times, they will be on the bottom, but if not, they will be pretty close to the edge of that channel. That's the pattern through most of the summer."

DeWolf said that the heat will occasionally start to stress the crappie, and they can be slow to bite, so he switches to smaller jigs and slower presentations.

"If they aren't hitting the regular-size jigs, you have to go smaller," he said. "We have caught them here on 1/32-ounce jigs and like just three strands of hair on the jig in the hotter months when they get finicky. I mean, it's almost like a hook with just a little fuzz on it. I know it sounds crazy, but if they can see it, they'll bite it."

His favorite jig colors are gray or gray with a little touch of



Nick DeWolf's son, Rex, is learning to get it done with Grand Bayou crappie at an early age.

chartreuse or silver. He fishes a J6 jig made by Jeffery Rodrigue in St. James Parish and also an ACC jighead and Bobby Garland plastic trailer in red/silver or chartreuse. He said it needs to look like a little minnow, but be just a little off-color.

Minnows work well on the lake, too, but DeWolf sticks with hair jigs most of the time. He likes a sturdy, ACC Crappie Stix rod that allows him to flip the fish.

All crappie aren't deep on Grand Bayou Lake in June, just most of the big ones. If you just want a mess of fish or don't have fancy electronics, you can fish under boat docks using a slip cork and catch plenty of crappie. DeWolf suggests a slip cork set-up with a hair jig that will stay about 2 feet deep.

Night-fishing is also good on Grand Bayou Lake throughout the summer.

One word of warning for anglers here this time of year. DeWolf said don't play games with thunderstorms and accompanying high winds. The lake is wide open and can get dangerously rough in a short period of time. And if the wind is blowing try to fish the calm end or side of the lake.

Grand Bayou has overnight accommodations and a boat launch at the 84-acre Grand Bayou Resort on Hwy. 784 out of Coushatta. You can reach them by calling 318-932-0066.

You can keep up with DeWolf's fishing adventures on his Wolf Pak Fishing Page; he also has a YouTube channel, No Net Fishing, with one of his fishing buddies, Will Glover.



These are DeWolf's picks of J6 jigs for Grand Bayou Lake's summer crappie.

A man wearing a black cap, sunglasses, and a black t-shirt is standing on a boat. He is holding a large, silver catfish by its mouth with a red worm. The fish is bleeding from its mouth. The background shows a blue lake and a forested shoreline under a clear blue sky. A Yamaha 150 outboard motor is visible on the boat.

DROWN A SPITTING WORM

■ By Kinny Haddox

CATALPA WORMS ARE UNUSUAL BUT GREAT BAIT FOR BREAM AND CATFISH. JUST DON'T LET THEM GET IN THE FIRST "PAA-TOOIEE."

Generations of fishermen have passed on an effective, proven technique for catching more fish no matter what species you are targeting.

Spitting on your bait.

The good use of a good “paa-tooieeee” right on your cricket, worm or crankbait may not be scientific, but it’s a confidence builder and one technique that will probably never go away.

But there is one fish bait – a really great fish bait – that spits back at you.

CATALPA WORMS.

They are a great bait for bream and catfish, but they are ugly, and they are not polite. When you pick one up, they’ll “spit” a brown fluid on you that actually stains your hands but is harmless. They also look fearsome with their little black horns and grabby little feet, but to fish, they look like filet mignon.

“I was introduced to catalpa worm fishing back in the 1960s, so it is just a normal part of my fishing,” said fisherman Ron Manning of Farmerville. “I’ve always loved fishing for catfish with catalpa worms, and they are great for bream, too.”

The worms are best this time of the year, fresh-picked off the leaves of a catalpa tree — if you can find one. Manning has several in his yard and keeps his eyes on them like a bank guard watching a safe.

He suggests fishing them on a small to medium bream hook with a light weight in any good-looking spot where catfish or bream lurk in summer. They are also good to bait yo-yo and trotline devices, but if you are targeting catfish, that is best done at night. If you don’t, small fish will nibble the worms off before the big fish get a chance to find them.

When fishing on a bream hook, you can cut a big worm into two or three pieces and use it for more than one fish. They are tough.

Catalpa worms can also be kept for fishing later, but they can get mushy and can lose their bright colors. The best way to store them is to pick them off the tree, put them in a container of ice water, then seal them in a Zip Lock bag full of corn meal and freeze them. The corn meal helps them keep their consistency. You can freeze them in water, but they often come out mushy, Manning said.

If you are into the science of this traditional bait, you’ll know it isn’t a worm at all. It’s the caterpillar of the catalpa sphinx moth. The females lay thousands of eggs on the underside of catalpa tree leaves. In about two weeks, the eggs hatch into





Catalpa worms work for bream and catfish just about anywhere any other fish bait does: trees, stumps or the edge of grassline. **OPPOSITE:** Catalpa worms like this one hide out on the underside of catalpa tree leaves as they eat them up.

caterpillars. When they hatch, you don't have to look for them; just keep your eyes on the heart-shaped leaves. They will start disappearing at a rapid rate as the worms eat away at them. When the leaves are all gone, the worms will drop down the tree and go underground until time to emerge the next year.

This all happens pretty quickly. Just because you have a crop of worms one day doesn't mean they'll be there the next. When their food supply is gone, so are they. And even while they are there in numbers, they face many challenges. Red wasps love to pick the worms off tree leaves and feed them to their larvae. Birds will also eat the worms, and even red ants will climb the trees and munch on them. If there aren't any affected by that, you can bet a fisherman will find them and put them to good use.

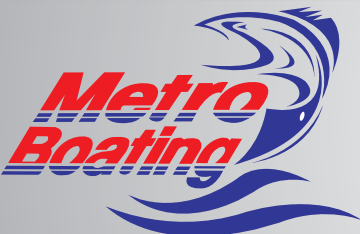
"Fishermen and nature can wipe out the whole crop if you don't manage it," Manning said. "We always let a lot of worms go back in the ground to keep the cycle going."



Kinny Haddox has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 45 years. He publishes a daily website, lakedarbornellife.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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This is a typical catalpa tree leaf. Notice the leaves on the upper left are gone and the worms have moved to the upper right. Picking them off the tree is the first step to a good mess of bream or catfish.

The catalpa tree is also sometimes called a “bean tree” because it produces foot-long beans which are long seed pods. These pods have no use and fall off to the ground. You can try to use the seed to plant a few trees, but most folks that try that report hit-or-miss results.

If you are thinking about growing your own trees, you won't find seedlings at most nurseries, but you can order them online or get a small tree from a friend — a good friend, we might add. Otherwise, hang on to your cricket box for 4 or 5 years while your tree grows large enough to produce and sustain a crop. You can also keep your eyes out in the woods and possibly locate some small seedlings and transplant them. ■

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JOINTED JITTERBUG 2.0

ARBOGAST GOES BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD TO REVAMP A REVERED TOPWATER BAIT THAT'S FOOLED THOUSANDS OF BASS

The Butler did it — with an assist from his friends.

Ethan Butler, who grew up fishing ponds in Iowa, was fresh out of college in July 2019 when he joined an all-star team charged with reintroducing the Arbogast Jointed Jitterbug, a legendary topwater that dated back to 1937. Butler, Frank Scalish, Bill Jarboe and Chad Warner modernized it while keeping the same attributes that made the gurgling, wobbling topwater famous for so long.

Butler was working for PRADCO Outdoor Brands, based in Fort Smith, Ark., when he got the word to launch the Arbogast Jointed Jitterbug 2.0. PRADCO had introduced the Hula Popper 2.0 a few months earlier, even arranging to get them into monthly Mystery Tackle Boxes. “That was a great idea to get Arbogast in the hands of some young anglers,

essentially make it cool again in the eyes of younger kids,” Butler said.

The Jointed Jitterbug 2.0 was a tweak like no other, apparently.

Butler is proud of the upgrades, including ultra-sharp, black nickel hooks, a tantalizing multi-feather tail, a black, anodized aluminum headplate (the famous double-cupped lip), new hook hangers and special “crackle” colors.

“It works as good, if not better, than the original Jitterbug,” he said. “It might look drastically different, but deep down, under the hood, it has got the same action.”

REVISIT EXCELLENCE

The Jitterbug’s reputation as a go-to artificial lure from generation to generation hardly intimidated Butler as he shaped the new model for the 2020s.

“I don’t know if intimidation is the right word, but it was scary,” Butler said.

Warner, PRADCO product manager as well as an avid bass tournament angler, coordinated the project, Butler said, helping with the sourcing after sitting down with the others and bouncing ideas back and forth.

Scalish, a well-known former pro bass angler, topwater expert and lure designer, built the tail feathers, Butler said.

Jarboe, the company’s award-winning product development engineer, came up with perhaps the most-integral part of the new design, according to Butler. He lowered the “pull point” to maximize the sound and action that made its predecessor so popular.



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.



A LONG PROCESS

It took an estimated four prototypes, a couple different types of feathers and 5 months to get what they wanted. Jarboe knew it looked good, but he emphasized making the action top priority.

PRADCO teased the fishing public before its arrival, so some people knew it was coming when the 2½-inch, ⅜-ounce Jointed Jitterbug 2.0 armed with No. 6 treble hooks hit the market last summer. The feedback after its release was rewarding and overwhelming.

“There’s some big differences in the Jitterbug from the new one to the old one,” Butler said. “Obviously, it’s got a black-nickel anodized lip. I like that. I think adding the black lip was a piece of the puzzle to make the new generation of Jitterbugs great.

“And there are no ‘hook hangers.’ It’s got free-swinging hooks that ought to increase the ratio of hookups and minimize the chance of losing a hooked fish as well.”

Unlike the original, it also has a rattle inside.

NEW PAINT PROCESS

Butler, 25, believes anglers will be dazzled by the “awesome” color scheme, the intricate paint job PRADCO calls special

“crackle” colors on the Jointed Jitterbug 2.0. The “crackle” look is created by a paint-drying process, he said. The new version comes in the same colors as the new Hula Popper 2.0 — coach dog, black death, blue kill and white zombie.

Butler said the crowning moment for him was during a photo shoot to film a promo on the water.

“After five minutes, there was a ‘toilet flush’ (a bass engulfing the Jointed Jitterbug 2.0). It hit me that we had something special,” he said.

“I was fortunate to have an input in the design of the Jitterbug. It’s kind of crazy. Talk about a cool project, just getting out of college and working on a project with Arbogast, launching such an iconic product, first the Hula Popper and then the Jitterbug.” ■

For more information about the Arbogast Jitterbug 2.0 and other PRADCO products, visit www.pradcooutdoorbrands.com or call 800-531-1202.

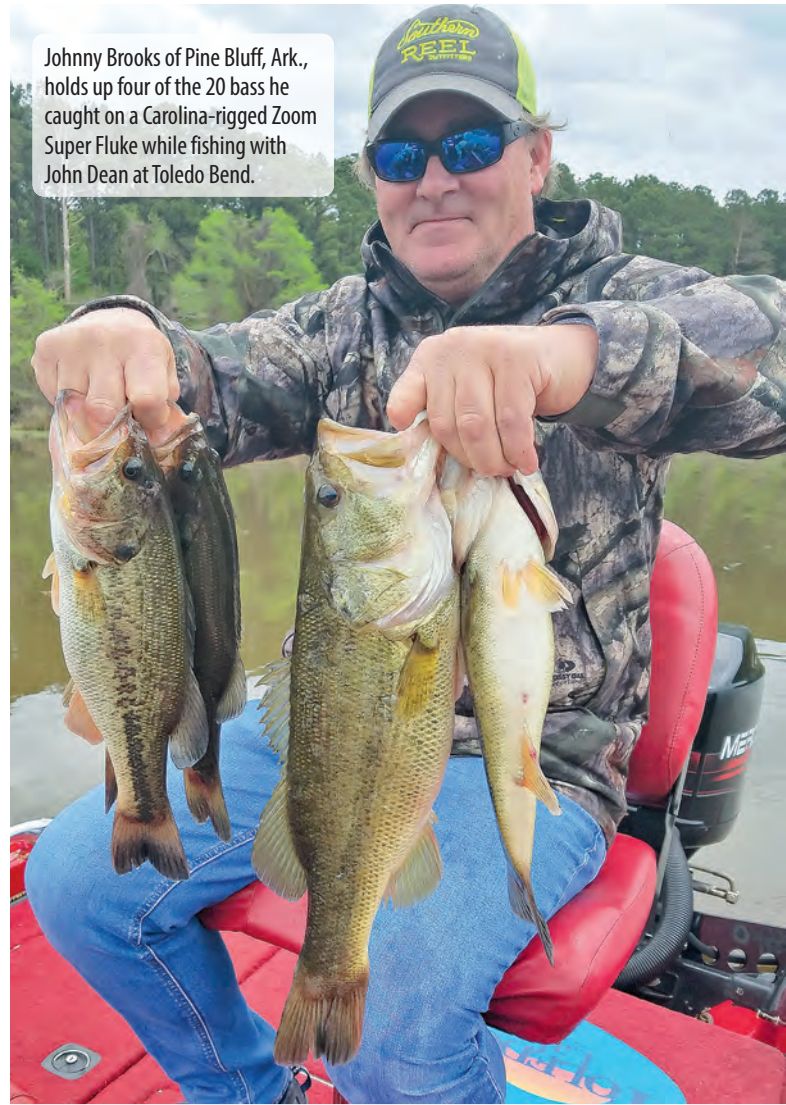


TOLEDO BEND >

TOLDEO BEND BACK TO NORMAL IN JUNE

Bass, finished with late spawn, in transition

T By John Dean
 he three phases of the largemouth bass spawn were pushed back by more than 60 hours of subfreezing temperatures in late February here at Toledo Bend. The fishery's timetable will be closer to normal on this great lake on the Texas-Louisiana border as the calendar turns to June. Toledo Bend rose to nearly full pool in late April. I tell you what,



Johnny Brooks of Pine Bluff, Ark., holds up four of the 20 bass he caught on a Carolina-rigged Zoom Super Fluke while fishing with John Dean at Toledo Bend.

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this lake is beautiful when it's up, when the water's in the bushes, tullies and cypress trees. What's more, it's a shallow-water fisherman's dream. June should offer even more shallow-water fishing, plus fair to good bassing in 12- to 20-foot depths as post-spawn

fish move offshore to the ridges and other high areas.

By June, spring as we know it will be pretty much done. The February ice storm shoved our seasonal spring back, but more sunshine and warmer air temperatures should bring the average water temperatures well into the 70s, perhaps the upper 70s, but I believe it won't touch the 80s until late June.

June's shaping up to be the normal, transitional month it usually is. I think we'll have a moderate to high water levels in June, which should mean continued success in shallower areas, because bedding

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bream will be there. There will be a tremendous amount of shallow-water action this month and, hopefully, the water level still will be up, around full pool of 172.0 feet.

June will be a prime time to work bladed jigs, like a bream-colored, Delta Lures Thunder Jig and, my favorites, plastic frogs, in the shallows, say 6 feet and less. Senkos and wacky style soft plastics also trigger bites in the shallows, as well as out deep.

I'm going to be venturing out to deeper water to target bass on drains and humps near drains, the highways bass use to go into the spawning areas and leave them after the spawn. Those post-spawn bass can be wishy washy, with more fish suspended than not.

My lures of choice will start with suspending jerkbaits, square-bill or deep-diving crankbaits, Carolina-rigged soft plastics and even walk-the-dog-type topwaters. I'll cover some water, but when I find a brush pile, I'll fish it with a 1/2-ounce jig.

Why offshore? I started testing the deeper waters, so to speak, on a Sunday in late April in Housen Bay. I wanted to put a suspending jerkbait to work, and it paid off with a 2 1/2-pounder on my first cast. I had 10 bites, bass up to 4 pounds, on a post-cold front day. It wasn't a very good day, weather-wise, but it was good enough to get bites. I didn't put all of them in the boat but, man, the outing was a precursor for late May and June. ■

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

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LONG FISHING CAREER PAYING DIVIDENDS FOR ROBERTS

LAKE CHARLES TEEN HAS BEEN FISHING TOURNAMENTS SINCE 7

C By Don Shoopman
 oaches from two Louisiana colleges are recruiting line-backer and javelin thrower Wade Roberts of Lake Charles, a junior at Barbe High School.

Roberts, an athletic, lanky, sandy-haired prospect, has caught their eyes after a remarkable three years

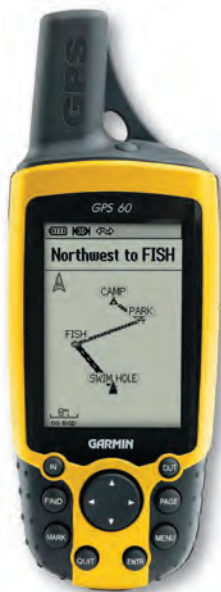
of high-school competition for the Bucs. He has the right touch and moves, temperament, experience and know-how to succeed at the next level.

However, the venue probably won't be the gridiron or the familiar wooden arc in track and field. Roberts is an accomplished angler who



Photo courtesy Dean Roberts

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- Empire to Buras
- Pearl River WMA
- Lafitte
- The Rigolets
- Vermilion Bay
- Bayou Sauvage NWR
- Big Brans NWR
- MRGO WPS & Dam Routes

Wade Roberts was an 8-year-old member of the Southwest Louisiana Junior Bassmasters when he won the 2012 Louisiana Junior State Championship (7-10 age division). He qualified for nationals for the first time as a competitive bass angler.

has fished bass tournaments since he was 7.

"Colleges aren't calling because of track and field. They're calling because of fishing," Dean Roberts, Wade's father, said.

To be sure, Roberts' 17-year-old son is entertaining offers this spring while studying, throwing the javelin and doing what he apparently was born to do: catch bass.

Wade's accomplishments on the water, in the classroom and in the community earned him the distinction of being one of 47 anglers from across the country named earlier this year to the 2021 Bassmaster High School All-State Fishing

Barbe High School's Wade Roberts (right) and Zachary Lambert hold a five-fish limit weighing 22.26 pounds that was good for second place in the Louisiana High School B.A.S.S. Nation 'Hawg' Fest on March 23 at Caney Lake.



Photo courtesy Dean Roberts

Team. To be considered, a student must be an upper-classmen (grades 10 to 12), nominated by a parent, coach, teacher or other school official and carrying a 2.5 GPA.

Wade Roberts and Peyton Matherne of Walker High School were named to the 2021 All-State Fishing Team from Louisiana. Sulphur High School's Hunter Hayes White received an Honorable Mention.

"Last year, I was Honorable Mention. I was really excited and happy when I got All-State," Wade Roberts said.

The son of Dean and Brooke Brossette Roberts, Wade Roberts has enjoyed a dream 2020-21 season. He and teammate Zachary Lambert finished second in the Louisiana High School B.A.S.S. Nation's inaugural "High School Hawg Fest" March 13 at Caney Lake with a 22.26-pound bag anchored by a 7.21-pound bass.

That showing propelled Roberts and Lambert, a freshman, to the 2021 Northern Division Trail Championship. They combined for one Top-25 finish, one Top-20 finish and three Top-5 finishes this season.



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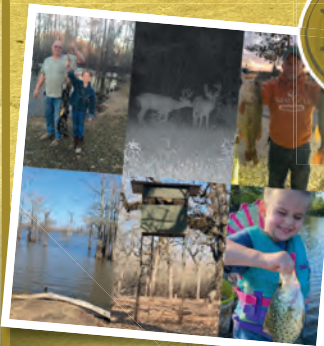
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"These two young men have had an amazing year, not only in the North Trail but in every other trail as well," Tommy Abbott, Louisiana High School B.A.S.S. Nation director, posted on Facebook.

Roberts qualified for his first national tournament by winning a state title at age 8 with the Southwest Louisiana Junior Bassmasters. Riding with his father as captain, he topped the field at Manchac. The next year, competition changed to two-man teams, and Roberts paired up with Kaleb Buller, now in the U.S. Navy, to finish second in a state tournament in April 2014. They won the state title the next year in the Atchafalaya Basin and finished seventh at nationals at Carroll County Thousand Acre Recreation Lake in Huntingdon, Tenn.

In April 2018, Roberts, paired with Blayne Carpenter and finished second in the state juniors and qualified for nationals again. They finished fifth nationally in July 2018 at Carroll County.

As a sophomore, Roberts and partner Andrew Bennett had a fourth-place finish with 15 pounds, 2 ounces, in the B.A.S.S. National Open in January 2020 at Toledo Bend. They also picked up a runner-up finish at the West Trail contest in February 2020 at Toledo Bend. They finished 105th in a 250-boat field in nationals at Kentucky Lake in October 2020.

"(It's) not what they were looking for but was an excellent experience," said Dean Roberts a biologist for Stream Wetland Service who has captained his son's team in every tournament he's fished.

"I had a friend of mine, Kent Buller, telling us about his son fishing the Southwest Louisiana Junior Bassmasters. That's where it

““” *Man, I kind of just started using this bait a couple years ago. I went to a drop-shot. That's my favorite bait.*

all started. What's so unique is he's been doing this so long, and it's started paying off now. It's really been fun, because when he was young, I was coaching verbally, giving recommendations and telling them when, where and how (according to tournament rules).

"What's so neat now is when I'm thinking something, I can see his intuition, making bait switches and adjustments on his own. It's really satisfying as he's grown and matured. It's really cool to watch him verbally coach his partners. Both those young men (Bennett and Lambert) have contributed. He hasn't done it alone."

Roberts' go-to bait is an uncommon one for southwest Louisiana: a Roboworm in morning dawn color fished on a drop-shot rig.

"Man, I kind of just started using this bait a couple years ago. I went to a drop-shot. That's my favorite bait," said Wade Roberts, who threads the worm on a 1/0 hook tied to a 10- or 12-pound fluorocarbon leader attached to 50-pound braided line spooled on a baitcasting reel mated to a 6-foot-10 custom-built MH fishing rod by RWD in Houma.

It was a Zoom Speed Craw, however, that gave him his most fulfilling tournament finish, at Caney Lake in March, Wade Roberts admitted.

"I was bed fishing. That was the weekend before my (17th) birthday," he said. "All the beds were basically in pockets. I was looking in 1 to 2 feet of water and seeing them on the bed. I was flipping a white Speed Craw."

Roberts said he's ready for whatever the future holds. He would love to fish on the collegiate level and, hopefully, later on any of the major circuits.

"But school is first," his father said.

Roberts agreed.

"That would mean a lot to me if I had a scholarship to fish for someone for school," he said. ■

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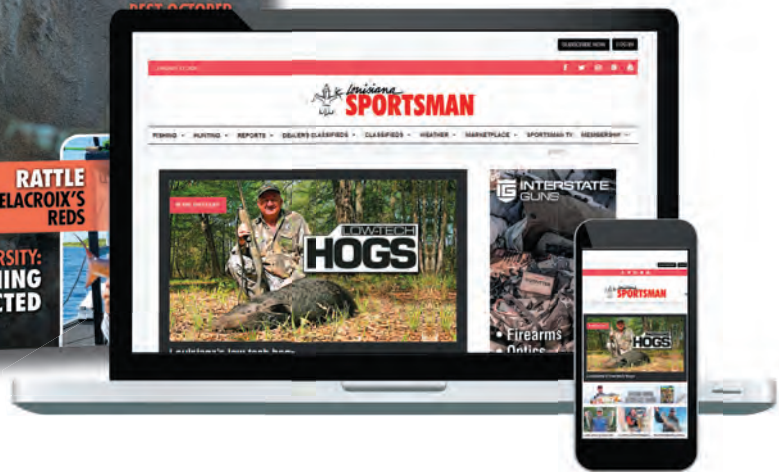
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Photos by Andy Douglas

BAIT SHOP BONANZA

You've seen the sign in a window or fastened to a building.

Live Bait.

Have you ever taken time to stop? What is it, and what's inside? We're talking about bait shops.

There is usually one in every small town and likely one at your favorite lake near the entrance or boat launch. Go inside; there's a variety of things for sale, but some things there cannot be bought.

HOT COMMODITIES

You guessed it: the No. 1 seller at a bait shop is live bait. It can't be beat when it comes to catching fish, and it won't break the bank.

"My best sellers are red worms for bream and minnows for crappie, and we are

selling a lot of crickets too," said Wayne Ashmore, owner of Blue Bayou Bait Shop in Brookhaven, Miss.

In similar shops, you will see big tanks with aerators holding minnows, shiners or goldfish. You will likely hear crickets chirping when you enter. There will be small containers full of black dirt and worms on shelves.

IT'S IN THE FREEZER

The refrigerators and freezers are full of bait too, the kind you won't find in a typical sporting goods store.

"People come in looking for the best catfish bait they can get," said Ashmore, "Skipjack (herring) and rooster livers are what anglers are looking for the most. I have a good supplier for both and keep them on hand."

Frozen catalpa worms, refrigerated chicken livers, shrimp and shad are a few more things that can be purchased. What's found usually depends on the time of year and what fish in the area are biting.

OTHER THINGS

At bait shops, there's usually a variety of things you may need. Many sell gas and ice. Some sell food, drinks and short-order meals. If you need fishing line, you can find it there. If you are at the lake and forgot something — go to the bait shop; they are likely to have something to get you by.

Hooks, weights, leaders, yo-yo's, corks, stringers, fishing poles, reels, frog gigs, nets, paddles and artificial lures are a few more things found here. The list could go on and on.

OPPOSITE: Hooks, weights, leaders, yo-yo's, corks, stringers, fishing rods, reels, frog gigs, nets, paddles and artificial lures are a few things found at bait shops. The list could go on. **RIGHT:** Crickets are a hot commodity for anglers seeking big bluegills. Wayne Ashmore, owner of Blue Bayou Bait Shop of Brookhaven, Miss., loads up a cricket cage.



"I keep a good stock of classic lures like Slater's jigs, Betts Spins, jig spinners, and H&H spinnerbaits; the white H&H is my favorite," Ashmore said.

NOT FOR SALE

The best thing you can find at a local bait shop cannot be bought; it's absolutely free: information and conversation. Often, the one person you see working at bait shops will be the owner — usually a seasoned fisherman or woman. They've been selling bait and can let you know what other anglers have been buying and catching fish with.

"I get people coming in and asking questions like: 'What's the bream biting? What's the best catfish bait? What's the bass doing now?' Or, 'Where can I go to get on some crappie?' I get a few phone calls too, and I will tell them what I know," Ashmore said.

Always be courteous when shopping; this will help you get the info you need.

WHY NOT STOP?

The next time you're riding by and see the **Live Bait** sign, stop in and check it out. It's guaranteed that they could use your business, and it will be appreciated. Whether it's the live bait or the information, either or both will help you catch your creel. ■

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MODERN FISHING LINES 101:

MONO, FLUORO



With many types of fishing line available, filling a reel is a lot more complicated than it used to be. Maybe you're new to fishing, or perhaps you're a fishing veteran who wants to try something new. Here's what you need to know about nylon monofilament and fluorocarbon fishing lines. Braided lines will get their own treatment.

THE BIG THREE

Fishing lines are divided into three major types: nylon monofilament, fluorocarbon monofilament, and braid. Nylon monofilament is commonly shortened to "mono" in everyday speech; fluorocarbon monofilament is often shortened to "fluorocarbon" or "fluoro", and braided lines are called all sorts of things, from Spiderwire to super-line.

Nylon monofilament is the least-expensive option. You can expect to pay between \$2 and \$10 for a spool, depending on the brand. Fluorocarbon lines can cost \$10 and up but are generally less expensive than top-end braids.

MONO VS. FLUORO

If you were to unspool a little of each line, nylon monofilament and fluorocarbon, the first thing you would notice is that the fluorocarbon line is clearer than mono; fluorocarbon was developed in the 1970s as a leader material. Clarity was the point; fishermen think it's more difficult to see.

Unlike monofilament, which begins to stretch the moment a load is applied, fluorocarbon stretches only after a specific load is reached, which makes it more sensitive than mono; the angler is more aware of what is happening to the bait. Fluorocarbon's hardness also makes it more reactive than mono; adjustments to the bait made by the angler are immediate and more forceful.

Nylon monofilament lines absorb a small amount of water. Despite this characteristic, they generally float under normal circumstances. By contrast, fluorocarbon lines sink. Neither characteristic is innately good or bad, of course, but they make each line best suited for certain types of fishing.

Whether a line sinks or floats is important. A sinking line gives the fisherman more control over depth, and since there is no bow in the line, it allows a direct connection to the fish.

Sometimes, fishermen may not want their line to sink. Because it floats, Nylon monofilament is great for topwater fishing. Many guides swear by mono when fishing for redfish. Some anglers use mono when fishing crankbaits as well.

An unintended benefit of the stretchiness of monofilament is that it slows an angler's hookset, which may assist those prone to jerking the lure out of the mouth of fish. The stretch slows the action enough to give a trigger-happy angler a margin of error when setting the hook.

LIKE A PRO

"Like to have your cake and eat it, too?" Use a common trick employed by walleye fishermen. Tie a monofilament leader on the end of your fluorocarbon line. The redfish won't know what hit them. ■

MODERN FISHING LINES 102 >



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MODERN FISHING LINES 102: BRAID

T By Will Martin
oday's braided fishing lines offer anglers more choice

in line characteristics than ever. These options in line strength, stiffness, shape and texture have given the modern angler tactical choices that have made traditional tools more versatile and more productive.

Modern, braided lines have the potential to be game-changing innovations for fishermen, but it is necessary to have a little knowledge about the characteristics of the various braids before you walk into the sporting goods store; this basic knowledge will be the difference between a wonderful experience on the water and disappointment. Delving into the basics of braided lines, there is a lot to unpack, so hold on.

Braided fishing line is nothing new. The first fishing lines consisted of braided, organic fibers such as silk and cotton, and the first synthetic braided lines became available back in the 1950s — Dacron fishing lines that your parents or grandparents used. Then came the monofilaments; nylon and fluorocarbon.

The watershed year for braided fishing line was 1987 with the development of ultra-high-molecular-weight-polyethylene (UHMWPE). Marketed as Dyneema and Spectra, multi-fibered polyethylene was used in several applications: body armor and vehicle armor for the military; orthopedic implants; high-tensile strength

cordage for climbing and towing, but more important — at least where we're concerned — UHMWPE was used as a fishing line, gaining popularity throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

WHY BRAIDED LINE?

Braided lines are more abrasion-resistant than mono and fluorocarbon lines, and because they are about one-quarter the diameter of monofilament lines at a given breaking strength, they allow anglers to spool more line onto a reel.

Braided lines have very little stretch; this allows for greater sensitivity and control of the lure, which can increase the percentage of successful hooksets. They

also power — and even cut — through aquatic vegetation better than mono and fluorocarbon.

But braided lines can be unmanageable if used incorrectly. Due to their thinner diameter and shape, braided lines can bite into spooled line on the reel, and because of their composition, they can fray.

BRAID AND CARRIER

The structure of braided fishing line is analogous to the structure of braided hair. When a woman braids her hair, she gathers individual hairs into three clumps that she will weave together, over and under, into a long, single braid. Braided fishing line consists of polyethylene fibers that are clumped together into what scientists



call carriers. These carriers are then woven into a single braid. The number of carriers used to form the braid determines the characteristics of the fishing line.

The most common types of braided line employ 4-carrier, 5-carrier, 8-carrier, and 9-carrier braids. On the fishing line's packaging, the carrier-number will often be described as a strand-number, as in 4-strand, or a number suffix, such as X4 or X9.

SHAPE

A 20-pound, 4-carrier line is the same diameter as a 20-pound, 8-carrier line, which incidentally, is the same diameter as 8-pound mono. The cross-section of the 4-carrier line will show individual carriers that are twice as thick as those of the 8-carrier line. Both are 20-pound lines, and both contain the same number of fibers; they differ only in the size and the number of clumps that form each weave.

The higher the carrier number, the smoother and quieter the line will be; the lower the carrier number, the rougher and more abrasion resistant it will be. Smoother line is less likely to bite into the spooled line on the reel than rough-textured line, and a lower-carrier line will cut through vegetation better than a smoother line.

Lines that are 5-carrier and 9-carrier include an extra strand in the center of the braid, allowing the line to have a cross-section that is rounder than that of 4-carrier and 8-carrier lines. The round shape makes the line more manageable than the other

braids. It will bite into itself less on the reel. This is especially useful on casting reels, because when casting long distances or casting heavy baits, this bite can become a big problem.

LONGEVITY

Unlike Nylon monofilament and fluorocarbon fishing lines, braided line can be kept on a reel for a very long time. In fact, experts aren't sure exactly how long it will last on a reel.

With use, anglers will see discoloration, but this is caused by the dye used to color the naturally-white filament rubbing off; it does not affect the strength of the line in any way.

Minor fraying is okay, too; what you are seeing are little filaments that have broken. Each carrier is made of many of these filaments, so a little fraying won't hurt anything. That said, professional tournament fishermen usually start each tournament with fresh line.

KNOTS

Many fishermen say that the 4- and 5-carrier braids tie better knots than the 8- and 9-carrier lines. This is probably true, due to the rougher surface of the lower-strand braids. When using high-carrier braids, some fishermen leave a slightly longer tag at the end of the knot just in case it slips a little.

Manufacturers recommend tying double-Palomar knots, Berkley braid knots and Trilene knots when using braided line. Other knots can work, but be sure to test them before you have a monster fish on your hook. ■



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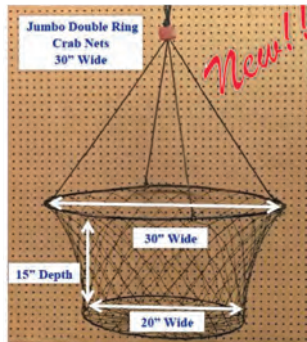
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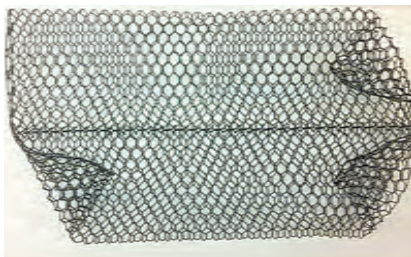
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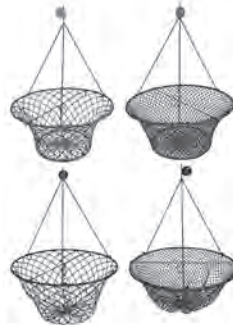
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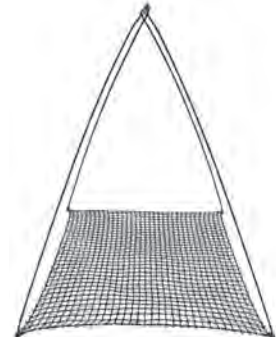
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A man with a grey beard and a baseball cap is kneeling in a wooded area. He is wearing a bright yellow and orange safety vest over a patterned shirt. He is holding the antlers of a deer that is lying on the ground next to him. The ground is covered with dry leaves and some green grass. The background shows a dense thicket of trees and brush.

START WORKING ON GETTING YOUR DEER RIFLE IN SHAPE EARLY THIS YEAR; AMMO, GUN SHORTAGES MAY MAKE IT NECESSARY. HERE ARE SOME STEPS TO TAKE.

■ By Andy Douglas

JUMP THE GUN? NOT THIS YEAR

Summer is in full swing, and June is a month when sportsmen and women are chasing big bass on the ledges, snagging monster bluegills off the beds and noodling for killer cats.

It's hot, alright, and it's not the rising temperatures we're talking about, as outdoor opportunities abound. It's also the perfect time to be thinking about deer hunting, specifically,

YOUR DEER RIFLE. **WHAT TO DO**

Deer season is roughly 5 months out, and that's usually that's plenty of time, but this year we should all wake up and smell the roses: the ammo or the gun you want may not be available thanks to extreme ammo shortages and new guns of choice being hard to find.

Use what you own. If you're a deer hunter, you should already have in possession or access to a deer-killing rifle. It's time to plan, prepare and make your gun more effective.

Here are several ideas, tips and some "outside-the-box thinking" that may help you get past the ammo shortage and improve the capabilities of your favorite rifle this fall.

ACQUIRE YOUR AMMO >

Get your rifle zero'd in with the ammunition you intend to use when deer season arrives.



ACQUIRE YOUR AMMO

How can it be done with empty shelves at big box stores and sporting goods suppliers? It's not going to be easy, so start while other sportsmen are occupied doing other things; you will be ahead of the game.

"Hunters are having to re-sight their rifles based on what ammunition they can find. Precision ammo like Barnes VOR-TX, Hornady Precision, Federal Premium or Nosler is hard to come by, and I don't see it getting better anytime soon," said Tracey Smith of Brookhaven, Miss., who runs the gun counter sales at 601 Sports.

Don't be picky; buy whatever ammo is available for the rifle you plan to use. Pick up any bullets that can be found for any

deer rifle you own.

Check out small gun shops, sporting goods suppliers, pawn shops and gun shows. Check any small town you may travel through; sometimes, local hardware stores will have a small sporting goods section, and it may have ammo. You never know where or when you may strike gold — or in our case, lead and brass.

Be willing to trade. Advertise on social media what you are looking for and what you have for trade. Be ready to give up quality ammo of another caliber for something that will work for you. There are many good folks associated with the hunting community, and after they have what they need they are usually willing "to help a brother (or sister) out."

GET GOOD GLASS

Improve your favorite rifle by upgrading its optics.

"We have sold twice as many scopes this year as opposed to the same time last year," Smith said. "Hunters are spending money on optics since new rifles are hard to get."

Abandon any older scopes and opt for something with better light-gathering ability; most modern optics are designed with this feature. You don't have to spend all your hard-earned money to possess quality optics anymore.

"We still sell some Leupold and other high-end optics, but we are selling a lot of Hawke and a record number of Vortex scopes, in which you get a lot of bang for the buck and excellent light-gathering ability," Smith said.

Acquiring good glass should be No. 1 on the list to make your rifle more effective. It will extend your ability to make longer shots at dusk with confidence and a positive ID of your target when the moment of truth arrives.



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.

If you count two or three deer rifles among the weapons in your cabinet or safe, try to get as much ammo as you can for each one so you have options when the season opens.



THINK ABOUT TRIGGER WORK

Getting a trigger job done is another idea for a superior improvement to your rifle. A professional gunsmith can give you good advice. Sometimes they will “work their magic” and adjust for a light, crisp trigger break. He may suggest a replacement trigger such as a Timney that would be better and more cost-effective.

“Trigger jobs have become extremely popular lately. We don’t do them but will point a hunter to a reputable gunsmith who can take care of their needs,” Smith said. “This will definitely help tighten shot groups.”

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Dry fire practice. If you shoot, save the brass, it’s possible to find someone who reloads. Save ammo by purchasing the same scope as on your hunting rifle and installing it on an alternate rifle, such as a .22, for practice.

If you are already prepared and don’t have to worry about ammo, a backup rifle should be considered. Better yet, help a friend who isn’t prepared. Don’t wait until 2 weeks before the season opener; it will be too late this year. ■



SCOPE MOUNTING DONE RIGHT >

A trigger adjustment or new trigger might enable you to shoot extremely tight groups with your hunting rifle.

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Mounting a new scope on your rifle or your scope on a new rifle isn't a task you need to take lightly; your rifle's accuracy, to a large extent, depends on how the scope, rifle and mounts fit. **BELOW:** Lapping jigs allow you to perfectly align the rings once you have your bases in place.

Photos by Pete Rogers

MOUNTING YOUR SCOPE: HOW TO DO IT RIGHT

YOUR RIFLE'S ACCURACY DEPENDS ON IT SOLID MOUNTING JOB

When it comes to mounting optics on our rifles, a saying from my mother rings as true now as ever, "There is doing it, and there is doing it correctly. Those are two different things."

Proper scope mounting is not difficult, but there is doing it and doing it correctly. You'll need these tools: a torque wrench for inch pounds, reticle level, lapping tools, removable thread locker. Below are the correct steps to follow when mounting a scope to your new rifle.

BASES

It's all in the base. The foundation is critical for accuracy. The best accuracy is achieved with a single Picatinny rail base. Although this not an option for some rifles, a one-piece base is always best. Many hunters and shooters prefer a two-piece base approach, which is fine so long as they are correct for your rifle and mounted correctly. The Picatinny rail offers a more solid platform for the rings to be secured and a stronger, more stable anchor. The most important part of a base, regardless if it is a one-piece or two-piece, is that you have the proper base for

your rifle and scope. Check to verify that you have the proper bases for your make and model of rifle. They are not all the same.

RINGS

When choosing rings, there are three major considerations: scope tube size, height and fit to your bases. If you have a 50mm





Tighten the rings only as much as the owner's manual suggests, and alternate tightening front and rear screws.

objective scope, your rings will need to be made for that scope. If you have a 44mm objective, then the rings need to be made for that size. The height of the scope affects accuracy, because if it is too high, you have to lift your cheek off of the stock to see clearly. Most scopes have tube sizes of 30mm. A few are a true 1-inch, but make certain your rings are designed for the one you have. Last, make sure your rings will fit your base. If you go with a Picatinny rail, your rings will need to be made for that base type and so forth.

OPTICS

Lastly is the scope itself. Suffice it to say, get the best you can afford. The most-important criteria here is getting these three components to fit together perfectly.

MOUNT THE SCOPE

By far, the most common mistake made when mounting a scope to a rifle is improper torque on the screws. I am still surprised to learn that many people don't know there are torque specifications for mounting a scope. "I just turn it as tight as I can" is the typical response.



A torque wrench can measure how much you're tightening the rings' screws.

Improper torque specs are the No. 1 reason for inconsistent accuracy. Every manufacturer of bases and rings has an owner's manual that specifies proper torque for their product. For example, Warne recommends that their bases are torqued to 25-inch pounds. If you have an aluminum receiver on your rifle, check your gun manufacturer specifications before torquing. Torque each screw to 25-inch pounds, alternating screws: one front screw, then one back screw, and another front screw and the last back screw. When done, check them all for proper torque settings.

By far, the most common mistake made when mounting a scope to a rifle is improper torque on the screws.

Once the base is mounted and secured to the proper torque settings, it is time to mount the rings to the base. Set the rings in the base and tighten loosely. With the top of the rings removed, set the scope in the rings and check for eye relief. Make sure the scope is set at the proper distance. Remove the scope and tighten the rings to the base to the proper torque settings.

Warne recommends setting their rings screws to 25-inch pounds. Do not confuse this with foot pounds. Check your manufacturer recommendations before using any thread locker.

Next, it is time to check for perfect alignment between the rings. Setting the lapping jigs into the rings, the points of the jigs should align perfectly. If they do not, you will need to lap the rings to smooth and align the rings perfectly. Using a lapping tool (a round hand-grinding tool), gently run the lapping tool through the rings and level out any imperfections in the rings, periodically checking the jigs for alignment. Once you achieve perfect alignment, you are ready to set the scope in the rings.

After setting the scope in the rings, loosely tighten the cap screws. Place a level on top of the scope and align. Once aligned, tighten the cap screws to the proper torque setting.

Your scope is now mounted and ready to take to the range. ■

HUNT CLUB HONEY DO'S ➤

Don't forget to look at ladder stands; they are not immune to damages from recent storms.

HUNT CLUB HONEY-DO'S

By Andy Douglas

It's that time of the year. Hunting leases are being paid for and clubs are scraping to fill memberships. Hunt club members are showing prospects around leased properties. What's being seen this year is a little "out of the norm" across much of Louisiana.

We've had a lot of rain, severe storms with wind and hail, and an unseasonable ice storm accompanied by extreme cold weather in the past few months. It's wreaked havoc on large portions of hunting land.

Work days are typically in September before archery season. If clubs wait until the traditional time to take care of their leases, it could be overwhelming this fall.

There is no time like the present to get started. Consider these tips and get your hunting land in order.

ACCESS AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS

ATV trails, logging roads and any accesses on hunting clubs are sure to have trees across them. In some areas of Louisiana, there are more than plenty. High winds and storms have caused a lot of timber damage, and it's not only pines. Monster oak trees are being found blown down, blocking rights-of-way. It could take a crew of men a day to clear out one big oak.

Water runoff has taken its toll on travel routes, too. If you've had trouble with certain spots in the past, they're likely going to be washed out again. Scout your land and drive down your trails; make notes of problem areas you find.

FOOD PLOT TLC

Check food plots for blown-down trees and fallen limbs. In pine country where there was ice, hunters are finding big piles

of limbs under larger pine trees. Many food-plot edges have bunches of limbs on the ground 15 to 20 yards out into the plot. A tractor with a bucket will make easy work of it.

Bush-hogging plots is a good idea but should be put off until turkeys have hatched their broods in early June. Spraying is a better choice now, and it will make clipping grass easier in a month.

KILLER FALL FOOD PLOTS

Spray stands of clover now. Use a spray like Hi-Yield Grass Killer, a post-emergent grass herbicide. It's safe to use on clover and kills grasses and weeds; your fall clover field will flourish. If you have used a fall food-plot mix, inspect it. Some have reasonable amounts of clover. If you notice some growth of clover, spray it like a clover field. Give it a try; nothing attracts whitetails to fall food plots like clover.

Lime, lime and lime. It's time to do it. To get the full effect of lime, especially pelletized lime, it takes six months. If you keep plots mowed, pelletized lime can be broadcast on untilled ground or can be broadcast and disked. Lime now, and your fall plots will be more attractive than your neighbor's.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Get the jump on work days and hunting club tasks. Check box blinds and tripods; some may have been toppled over by high winds. Inspect ladder stands in secret honey holes too; they are not immune from the same kinds of damages. Do anything you can think of, and spread out the work. This will keep the traditional hunting club experience fun and not like a second job. ■

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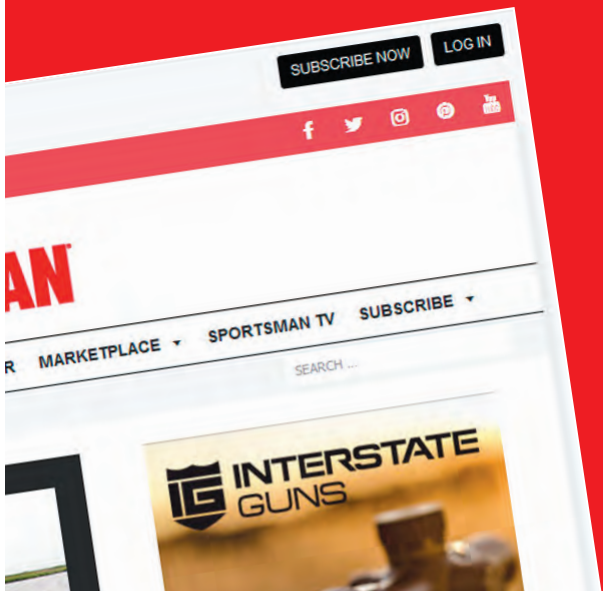
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Greater Amberjack*~	34" FL	1/day*
Lesser Amberjack, Banded Rudderfish*	14-22" FL	5/day (aggregate)
Yellowfin Tuna	27" CFL	3/day
Bluefin Tuna	73" CFL	1 per vessel per year*
Bigeye Tuna	27" CFL	None
Blue Marlin	99" LJFL	None
White Marlin	66" LJFL	None
Sailfish	63" LJFL	None
Swordfish*	29" CL or 33 lbs. DW	5 per vessel per trip
Cobia (ling or lemon fish)	36" FL	2/day
Drum, Black	16" TL	5/day#
Drum, Red (redfish)	16" TL	5/day#
Flounder, Southern	None	10/day
Groupers* Gag ^Δ & Black ^Δ	24" TL	4/day (aggregate)*
Scamp ^Δ	16" TL	
Nassau & Goliath	UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS	
Yellowfin ^Δ	20" TL	
Red ^Δ	20" TL	2 of 4 grouper total
Atlantic Sharpnose & Bonnethead shark@	None	1/day
Shortfin Mako Shark@	Males 71" FL / Females 83" FL	1/day/vessel/aggregate
Other sharks (except prohibited species)@	54" FL	1/day/vessel/aggregate
King Mackerel*	24" FL	3/day
Spanish Mackerel*	12" FL	15/day
Striped mullet	None	100 pounds/day
Black seabass	None	None
Seatrout, Spotted (Speckled Trout)	12" TL*	25/day*
Red Snapper*	16" TL	2/day*
Other Snapper		5 mutton in 10 snapper aggregate
Mutton Snapper	18" TL	
Cubera, Yellowtail, Gray (mangrove)	12" TL	10 in aggregate*
Queen, Blackfin, Silk, Wenchman	None	
Vermilion Snapper	10" TL	
Schoolmaster, Dog, Mahogany	None	None
Gray Triggerfish*	15" FL	1/day in aggregate
Lane Snapper	8" TL	
Almaco Jack, Goldface Tilefish, & Blueline Tilefish	None	20/person/day in aggregate*
Blackline Tilefish, Anchor Tilefish	None	
Tripletail	18" TL	5/day
Hogfish	14" FL	5/day

CFL = curved fork length LJFL = lower jaw fork length CL = carcass length
 DW = dressed weight LJTF = lower jaw to tail fork FL = fork length

FRESHWATER

FISH Species	Minimum Size Limit	Bag Limit (per person)
Crappie	None*	50/day*
Buffalo Fish	16" TL	25/day
Freshwater Drum (Gaspergou)	12" TL	25/day
Channel Catfish	11" TL*	***
Blue Catfish	12" TL*	***
Bowfin	16" TL	None
Flathead Catfish	14" TL*	***
Crawfish	None	150 lbs./day
Paddlefish	30" max LJFL	2*
Shad	None	50 lbs./day
Black Bass (largemouth & spotted)	None*	10/day*
Striped Bass/ Hybrid Striped Bass	**	5/day*
Sturgeon	UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS	
White Bass	None	50/day*
Yellow Bass	None	50/day*
Bluegill (Bream)	None	None*

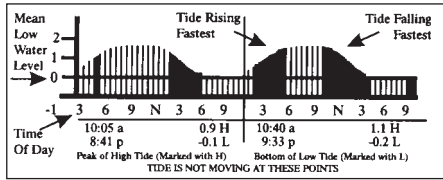
* see exceptions in pamphlet. ** no more than two may exceed 30 inches.
 *** catfish limit is 100 in aggregate; however, 25 fish in aggregate may be undersized.
 # only one fish may exceed 27 inches. @Shark season is closed between April 1 and June 30.
^Δ Closed season for gag grouper Jan. 1 - May 31. Closed season for black, red, yellowfin, yellowmouth & scamp grouper from Feb. 1 - March 31. ~ Greater amberjack season is open May 1-31 and Aug. 1 - Oct. 31. * Closed season on gray triggerfish Jan. 1 - Feb. 28 and June 1 - July 31.



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How to use the SPORTSMAN Tide Guide



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
East Point Grand Isle	1	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	29	30	Order the Tide Guides for over 40 locations throughout Louisiana. Call 1-800-538-4355 or go on line www.lasmag.com		

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Calcasieu Pass Lighthouse Wharf	1	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	29	30	Order the Tide Guides for over 40 locations throughout Louisiana. Call 1-800-538-4355 or go on line www.lasmag.com		



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Tommy Henry

Tommy Henry, 9, and his dad, Lance, went out on the Red River the night of April 30 and set some lines while fishing from the boat. Tommy hooked up with this nice 14-pound spotted cat. He was using an Abu Garcia 6500 with 40-pound test and a 7-foot catfish pole.



Mike Long

Mike Long with a couple of big crappie caught April 29 in Franklinton using a Matrix Mini "Glow" from his Hobie Compass kayak.



Adam & Reese Thompson

Adam and Reese Thompson show off their trifecta of teal, alligators and crabs after a busy hunt in Venice.



Daniel Cambre

Daniel Cambre caught this 19-inch trout at the Trestles on April 25, 2021, fishing with Mike Phelps of Turner Industries.

Corey Harwell



This 10.7-pound Caddo Lake lunker was hooked by Corey Harwell on Jan. 29, 2020.



Viola Cosgrove

Viola Cosgrove of Marrero had a successful hog hunt in Venice.



Reid Caro

Reid Caro (left) with his largest fish yet, a 23.4-pound drum, caught near Venetian Isles on Oct. 4, 2020.



Joseph & Grace Thomassie

Joseph and Grace Thomassie went fishing during Easter weekend with their papa Tom in Grand Isle.



Logan LeBleu

Logan LeBleu, 11, with the opening-week buck he harvested on private land in Vernon Parish on Oct. 20, 2020.



Rebecca Lynch

This buck was taken on Dec. 5, 2020 on private property in the Lake Mary area near Fort Adams, Miss. Matt Lynch and his daughter, Rebecca, 5, were hunting together when she spotted both the buck and a hog for her daddy.



Megan Guidry

Megan Guidry pulled in her biggest bull red, more than 30 pounds, in Leeville.



Hunting/Fishing SCRAPBOOK



Kelsea Watts & Cameron Dworak

Kelsea Watts and Cameron Dworak fought and successfully landed this 110-pound swordfish on Aug. 22, 2020, out of Venice.



Zaidyn Claiborne

Zaidyn Claiborne, 8, shot his first hog using a .243.



Lee Haire

Lee Haire (above) killed an 11-point buck and Jack Haire killed a 7-point in Leflore County, Miss.



Jack Haire



Adam Driskill

Adam Driskill was fishing Caddo Lake on Sept. 28, 2020, when he hooked this 8½-pound bass and himself!



Ayden Cosgrove

Ayden Cosgrove, 18, of Marrero took this 235-pound, 8-point on Jan. 1, 2021 in Natchez, Miss. The 5 1/2-year-old buck was shot at 127 yards with her Savage .308 rifle.



Laura Koch

Laura Koch shot her first turkey after her husband called the gobbler in on their property in Mississippi.



Ian Carmichael

This New Year's Day drake wood duck was killed by 14-year-old Ian Carmichael of Morgan City on public land in St. Mary Parish.



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Levy Delahoussaye

Levy Delahoussaye with a big marsh bass that she hauled in.



Georgia Bonneval

Georgia Bonneval of Raceland killed her first deer while hunting in a ground blind with her father in Tensas Parish.



Joseph Songne

Joseph Songne caught this 1¾-pound sac-a-lait while fishing with shiners at Toledo Bend.



Brayden Brown

On Oct. 18, Brayden Brown, 11, went fishing in his grandparent's pond in Baton Rouge and caught 8 bass, all ranging in size from 1½ to 2 pounds.



Jordan Gleason



Drake & Kylie Mayet

Drake Mayet, 9, and his sister Kylie, 8, of Youngsville, each shot their first deer on Dec. 26, while hunting with their mother and father in Port Gibson, Miss. They were hunting in two different stands and shot 10 minutes apart.

Jordan Gleason with a red snapper caught 38 miles out of Grand Isle on July 31, 2020.



Chase Wainwright

This huge bull drum was hauled in by Chase Wainwright while fishing out of Leeville on Aug. 5.



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Temple Bend is a 278.017 acre recreational hunting property located in the bend of the Old River just north of the Cane River tie-in on Hwy. 1 in Montrose, LA - Natchitoches Parish. This property has over 2400' of Hwy. 1 frontage and is located 13 miles south of Natchitoches and 32 miles north of Alexandria, LA. This acreage was enrolled into a 30 year Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) 1 acre camp area, 24 acres shallow water hole, and many more. So please give me a call today!

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Hunting/Fishing SCRAPBOOK



Alexander S. Vargas

Alexander S. Vargas with a snapper caught July 19, 2020, about 25 miles offshore from Gossier Island.



Kaden Tullos

Kaden Tullos, 13, of Lake Charles caught this beautiful 40-inch bull red fishing the Texaco Cut in Big Lake on March 27, 2021.



Whitney Harris

Whitney Harris hauled in this big red over Father's Day weekend, 2020, while dropping cut bait in the pass near Grand Isle.



Lance Cosgrove

Lance Cosgrove of Marrero killed his first doe in Bogalusa during a youth hunt.



Henry Stefanski

Henry Stefanski with a snapper caught out of Grand Chenier.

G-POWER FLIP & PUNCH HOOK

Gamakatsu, which makes some of the best fishing hooks on the market, has come up with one that is sure to attract the attention of bass fishermen who want a strong hook for flipping heavy cover and punching baits through thick, matted grass.

Bass pro Aaron Maartens helped design the G-Power Flip & Punch hook, which comes in sizes 2/0 through 5/0. The heavy, tournament-grade wire hook features a welded eye and custom tin keeper for better holding soft-plastic baits on the hook,

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**For more info, visit:
www.gamakatsu.com**



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leg and ankle openings and a side zipper that makes for an easy on/off. A light RPM insole makes for comfortable walking, and TempSens technology helps regulate the temperature within the boot — hot or cold — by wicking away moisture from the skin but trapping it in the boot. In addition, Scent Ban anti-microbial scent control helps eliminate odors in the boot. Self-cleaning lugs on the soles help with grip and traction.

MSRP: \$229.99

For more info, visit: irishsetterboots.com.

AVIAN-X G-BLIND

The folks at Avian-X, who brought you some of the most life-like decoys ever made, have gone the extra step to make hiding from the ducks that are checking out those decoys even easier with their new G-Blind.

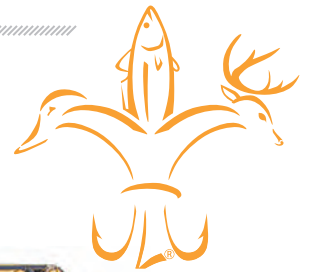
A portable, take-down blind that can seat four hunters and be set up in just minutes, the G-Blind is of the size and shape of traditional permanent blinds, providing overhead cover from ducks and weather, but in a sturdy aluminum frame and a skin of Mossy Oak's all-new Shadow Grass Habitats camo.

The G-Blind is 90 inches long by 60 inches wide, plus 53 inches tall, so hunters can shoot sitting or standing. The exterior has pockets and straps for adding natural vegetation. The G-Blind's real niche may be when you need a quick set up for hunting brush lines, fence rows or pond banks. An

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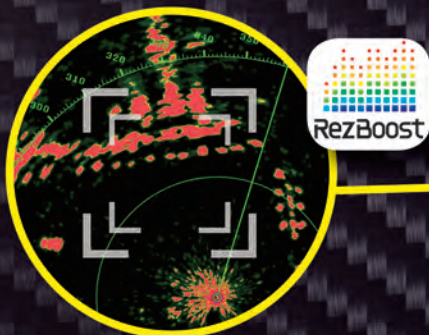
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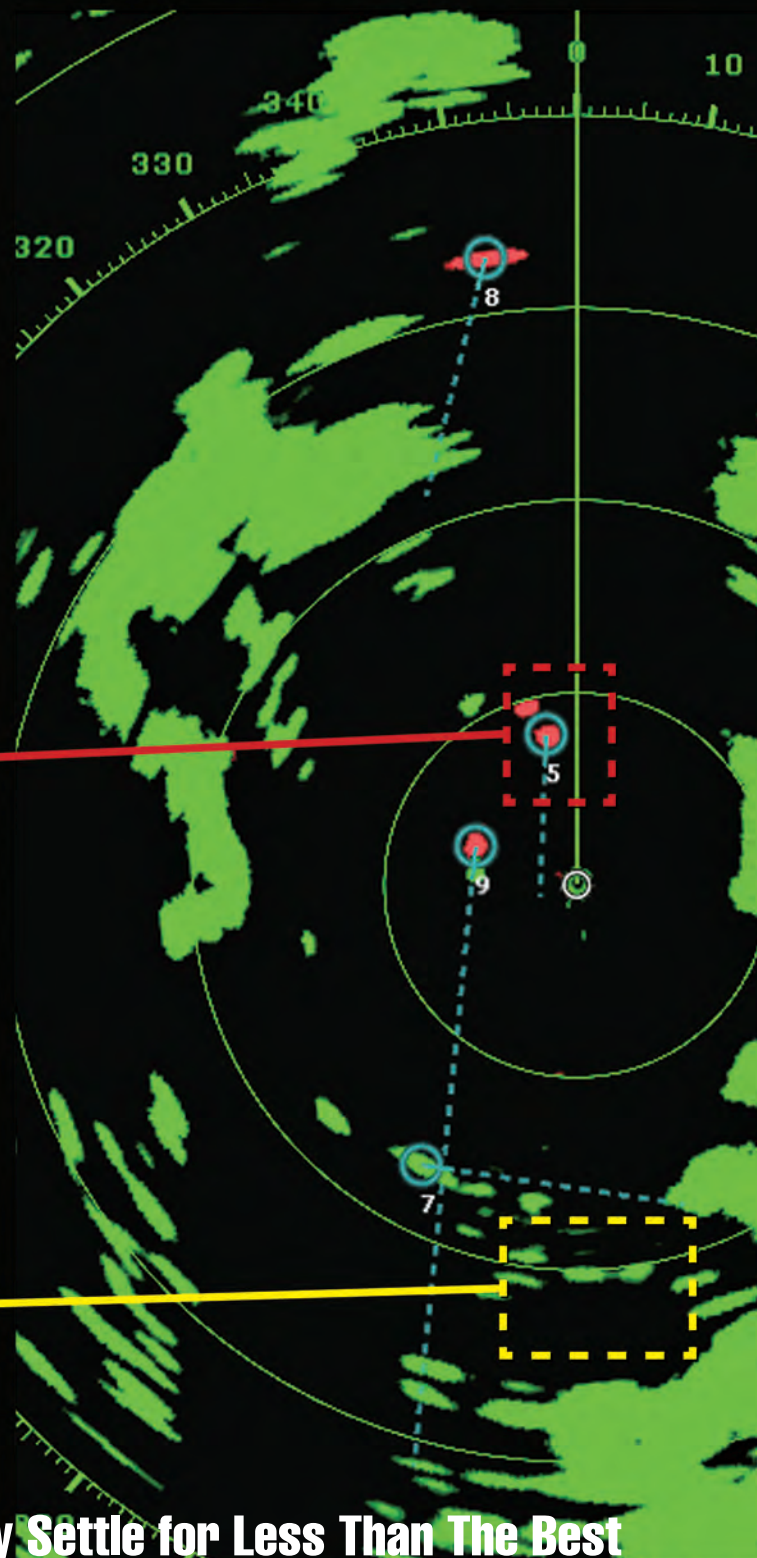
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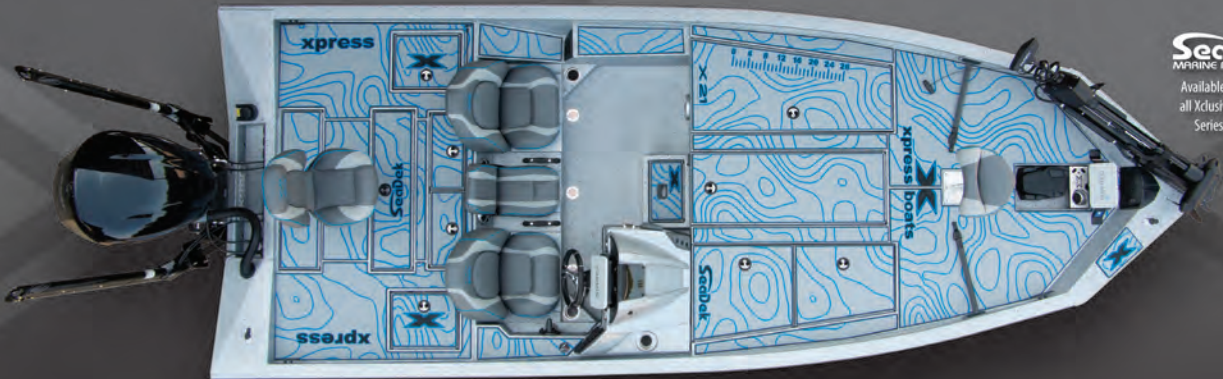


JASON CHRISTIE
Champion at 2021 Guaranteed Rate
Bassmaster Elite at Sabine River

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- ▣ **Asbestiosis**
- ▣ **Lung Cancer**
- ▣ **Mesothelioma**

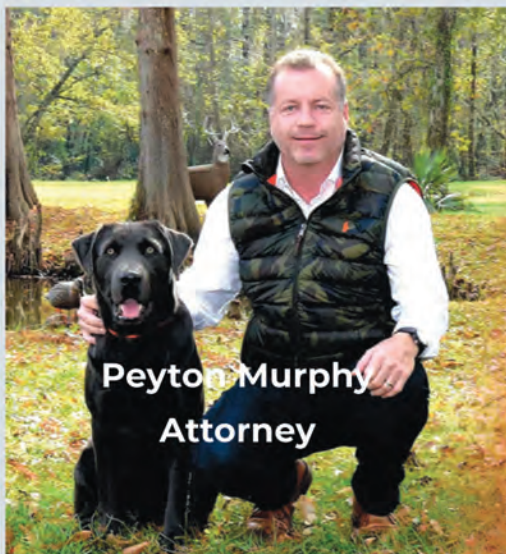
If you or a loved one has been affected, you may be entitled to **financial compensation**.

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Common Mesothelioma Symptoms Include:



- Dry Cough or wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Respiratory Complications
- Chest Pain
- Chills and Fever
- Pleural Effusion (fluid around the lungs)
- Fatigue
- Muscle Weakness



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