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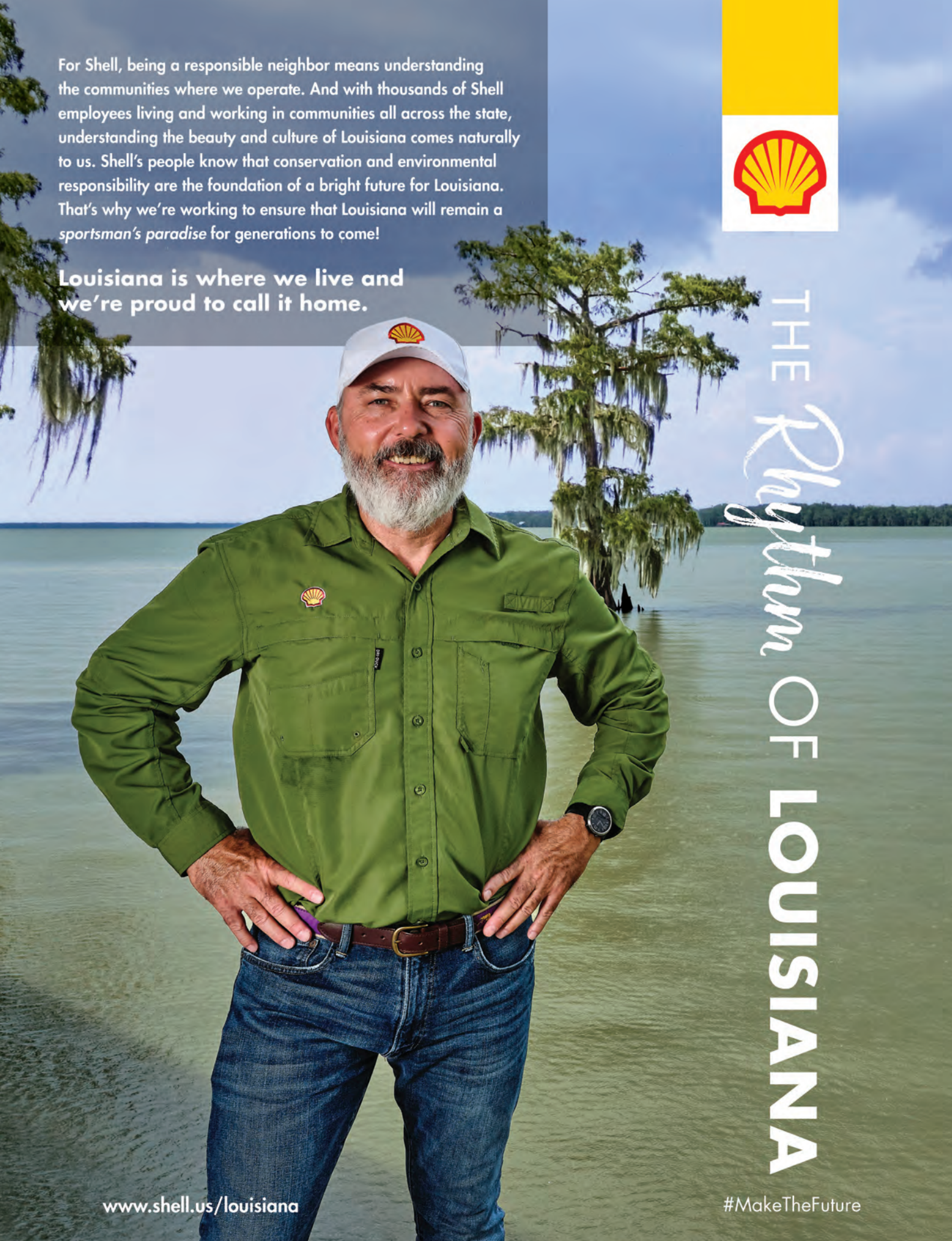
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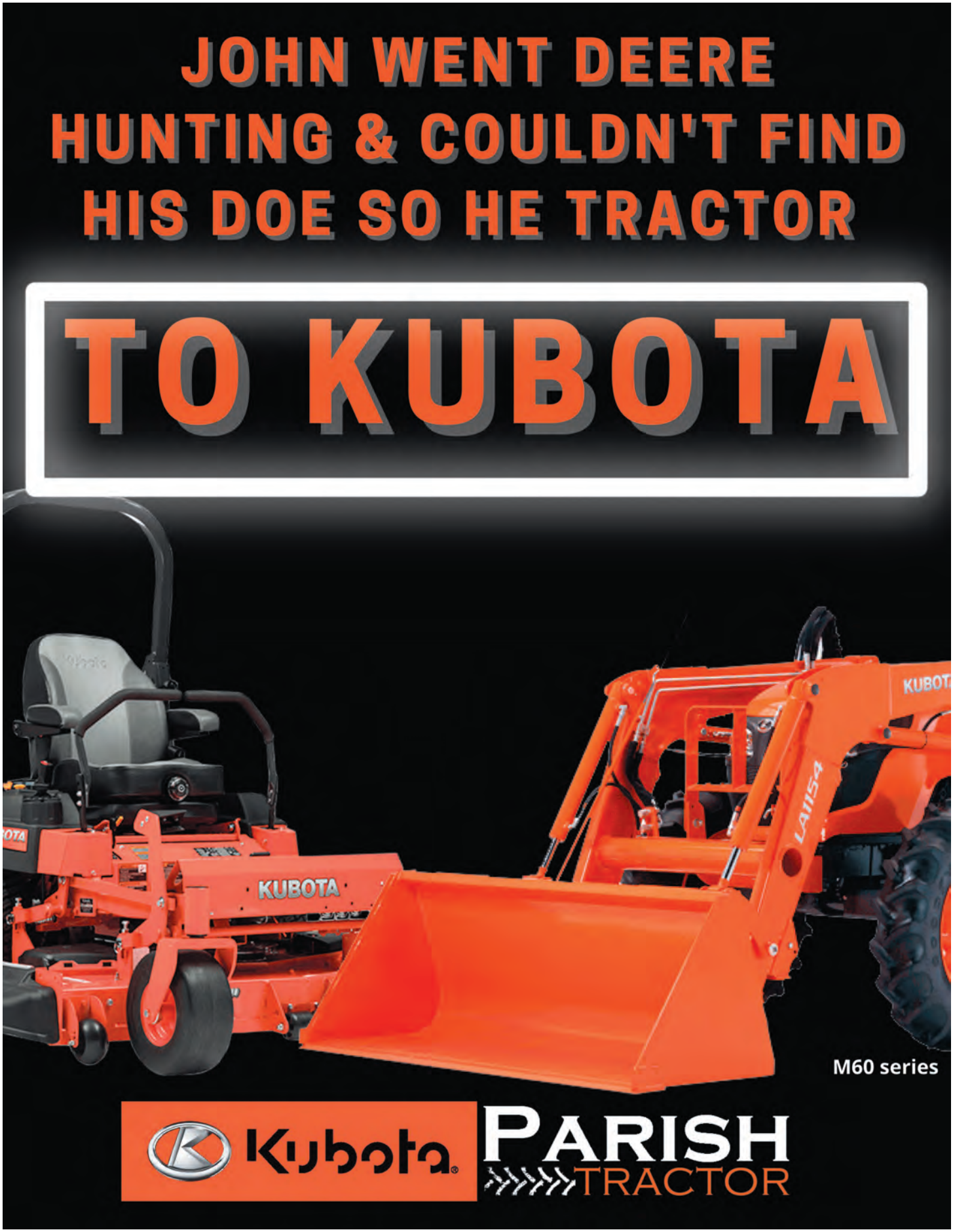
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HUNTING, FISHING LICENSE FEE CHANGES COMING IN 2022

By Will Martin

On June 14, Gov. John Bel Edwards signed HB 691 into law, changing fees for hunting and fishing licenses for recreational and commercial users and adding many "additional privileges" to basic licenses.

All new license fees will go into effect on June 1, 2022.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Tony Bacala (R-Ascension), brings license fees in Louisiana more in line with other southeastern states and provides additional funding to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Under the legislation, the cost of a basic freshwater fishing license will increase from $9.50 to $17, and a basic saltwater license will increase from $13 to $15.

Included in a basic freshwater license will be privileges for recreational wire nets, pipes/drums, cans/buckets, hoop nets, crawfish traps and slat trips, previously costing between $10 and $20.

In comparison, a similar fishing license costs $30 in Texas, $17 in Florida, $14.50 in Alabama, and $10 in Mississippi.

Included in a basic saltwater license will be privileges for recreational trawls and oyster tongs. Those fees were previously $5 to $80.

By comparison, similar licenses cost $40 in Texas, $32 in Florida, $23.35 in Alabama, and $20 in Mississippi.

Crab trap permits will continue to be sold separately for $15.

A basic hunting license will go from $15 to $20, and a big-game permit will increase from $14 to $15. However, archery and primitive firearms stamps will be included with the big-game permit. Turkey hunters and waterfowl hunters will pay $12 for their additional privilege stamps, an increase from $5.50.

For a complete breakdown of the changes to hunting and fishing licensing, visit: https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/. ▪

LDWF CLARIFIES NEW LIFETIME LICENSE STRUCTURE

From News Reports

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) received a large volume of calls regarding the future of its lifetime licenses in the wake of the recent legislative session.

Act 356-HB 691, recently signed by Gov John Bel Edwards, does not eliminate all lifetime licenses; rather, it consolidates them licenses into three types:

1. Resident (including youth 17 and under): $500
2. Resident Lifetime Senior (65 and older) : $100
3. Non-Resident Lifetime: $4,000

The new licenses will streamline and consolidate the previous lifetime license structure and will include recreational hunting, fishing, and gear privileges.

These new licenses will go on sale June 1, 2022.

The current individual lifetime licenses — e.g. Resident Lifetime Fishing Only ($300) and Resident Lifetime Hunting Only ($300) — available through the current license structure will no longer be offered after May 31, 2022.

All current lifetime license holders will keep their existing privileges; they will not be converted into one of the new licenses.

To help explain the new license structures for hunters, anglers and commercial fishermen, LDWF has created a webpage with several handouts and facts at: https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/understanding-our-license-fee-changes. ▪









Hunter Meche's peculiar orange alligator gar caused quite an internet explosion after he posted photos of the fish, arrowed on July 10.

COLORFUL GAR SETS ARCHER'S INTERNET SOCIAL MEDIA ON FIRE

By Will Martin

What makes a fish worthy of being called a trophy?

That's a question that requires a nuanced answer. Many factors must be considered. Is the fish a record-breaker or a personal best? Was the catch symbolic for the angler? Does it serve as a token of remembrance for a spectacular fight or a special time or event in life?

In addition to any other exceptional qualities the fish may have, a trophy fish must be unique in some way, and uniqueness is rare. Many times, a fish is a trophy solely for its rarity.

On July 10, Hunter Meche, a 19-year-old bowfisherman from Arnaudville, killed a trophy gar that became a sensation on social media. You'd think he'd landed a blue whale based on the attention the fish got, but the fish was only 18 inches long and 3 inches in diameter.

"Wait, didn't you say it was a trophy?" Absolutely. This particular gar was bright orange, some might even call it golden. Nuance.

FIND CLEAR WATER

Meche and a friend, Jake Brasseux, were on the water by 6 a.m., excited about a day of bowfishing in Henderson Swamp, a popular part of the Atchafalaya Basin. But their spirits sank quickly. The water was muddy, an obstacle for most types of fishing, an end-of-days scenario for bowfishing.

The week before, they'd scouted areas they planned to fish, but conditions were dramatically different.

"The water level had dropped," Meche said. The swamp was soupy with mud. "We spent half the day searching for clear water holding fish."

At spot after spot, however, the fishermen found murky disappointment.

"None of the spots where we'd spied carp was fishable with a bow," Meche said. "The water was too muddy; it really put a damper on things."

STRANGE WATER

Eventually, Meche and Brasseux decided to head to an area that had produced for them last year.

"When we got there (at noon), we saw immediately that the water was clearer," Meche said.

They were on a main lake in the swamp. Ahead, a point jutted towards them where two small canals cut away to the left and the right into the woods. They trolled the bank into the canal to the right of the point.

"I saw some small gar, but I held back, waiting for a shot at something larger," Meche said, hoping for a carp.

As the boat edged around a little bend, Meche saw something: a light-colored, pinkish anomaly in the shadow of cypress trees and low clumps of willow, 12 yards from where he stood on the boat's bow.

About the time Meche realized what he was seeing, the gar must have sensed what was afoot. It started to spook.

"Man, I think that's an albino," Meche said. "Man, that's an albino gar!"

The muscles beneath the gar's bony armor flexed. Its head jerked.

Brasseux yelled across the boat, "Shoot it!"

Meche lifted his bow, an RPM Nitro outfitted with a MegaMouth reel. He drew, anchored at full draw and aimed.

Now, when bowfishing, you've got to account for the water's effect on the trajectory of the arrow. The deeper the fish, the more adjustment you've got to make to your aim.

"I find myself aiming 6 feet below a fish sometimes," Meche said, "but to kill this fish, I only had to aim about 2 or 3 feet low."

The bright, orange gar wasn't terribly deep, but it was a small target. There was very little room for error.

"So… I swung an arrow at it and smoked it," Meche said. "Jake and I were excited when we got the fish to the boat; we knew we'd landed something very uncommon. At that point, it was clear that it wasn't an albino."

A little digging on his phone confirmed it was a rare fish. He removed the arrow as gently as he could and put the strange gar into a bucket.

"Jake and I high-fived and continued to shoot fish," he said.

GONE VIRAL

Had Meche not posted pictures of the fish on Facebook, the story would have ended with the wacky colored gar in the bucket, but the tale of the orange fish was not over. In the end, landing it was only the beginning of the story.

"We were cleaning fish over at Jake's house when Facebook blew up," Meche said. "I'd posted pictures of the gar on a couple of Louisiana fishing pages just before we got started, and the reaction was almost instantaneous."

Once it got going, it didn't stop. Meche's phone was set to vibrate, and he thought it might blow up.

"I had to turn off notifications from Facebook. Everybody was freaking out, liking it, commenting about it, sharing it.… I watched 'like' after 'like' roll in; everyone was amazed by the fish, and they told me how special it is."

Meche is having the unique orange fish mounted. He should. It was a rare and special kill — a fish of a lifetime and a trophy by any definition. ▪



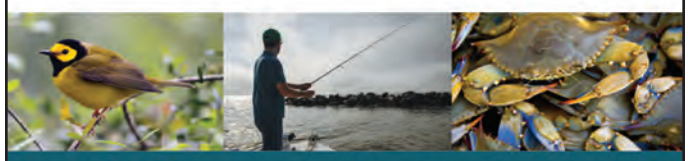


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LOUISIANA MAN BREEDS TURTLES TO BOLSTER LOCAL POPULATION OF SNAPPERS



Ben Naquin has been breeding alligator snapping turtles in captivity to help replenish he wild population.

By Will Martin

Ben Naquin of Ascension Parish operates the Louisiana Alligator Snapping Turtle Foundation, a non-profit organization based in St. Amant, dedicated to breeding captive alligator snapping turtles and releasing their young into the wild.

The foundation's mission is the conservation of a pressured species, but more than that, it is a labor of love for Naquin, 47, who started raising the turtles in 2005.

It's an inconvenient truth to some that sportsmen and sportswomen do more for conservation than anybody in terms of dollars, time and the real-world education that takes place at our camps and dinner tables.

And Naquin is no thin-veined environmentalist; he is an outdoorsman with an abiding fascination for giant turtles that has become a passion and mission, not only for himself, but for his wife, Codi, and their four children.

"One year, I caught a 90-pound turtle that I decided not to kill and eat, which led to the program," he said. "I still enjoy catching the turtles and seeing them, but I don't kill them anymore."

But this is not a hunter-sees-the-light story, as Naquin is quick to point out.

"I'm still a big hunter — I get alligator tags and I deer hunt — it's just that these turtles have become threatened to the point where I, personally, don't want to kill and eat them anymore."

In true, put-your-money-where-your-mouth-is gusto, Naquin built a 1-acre pond on his property for breeding alligator snapping turtles. Later, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pitched in to help build a fence around the operation to protect the turtles and their nests. And just like that, Naquin was the head of a foundation working to replenish the number of alligator snapping turtles in Louisiana's lakes, bayous, and river systems.

"LIFE FINDS A WAY..."

The project has grown over the years, and it continues to test Naquin's ability to keep up with all the nature taking place in the enclosure on his 4-acre property.

"In the past, we were digging up three or four nests and releasing maybe 70 turtles in a year," Naquin said.

But as more turtles have reached sexual maturity — a process that can take up to 20 years — those numbers have multiplied.

"Right now, I have 96 adult turtles, and I've dug up 715 eggs this year," he said. "This is a big project."

Naquin raises the turtles for two years before releasing them into the wild.

"A hatchling turtle can be eaten by so many things," he said. "But once they reach 4 to 5 inches long, they have a much better chance of reaching adulthood; that's why we keep them for 2 years."

But before the 2-year-old turtles can be released, the LDWF must give its blessing.

"The LDWF comes out to weigh them, measure them and tag them," Naquin said. "A veterinarian checks (their) health to make sure we're releasing healthy individuals that won't cause sickness in the wild population, and then they gives me a permit so that I can release them."

PROTECT THE SPECIES

Naquin is working with a local high school to place baby turtles in classroom aquariums so students can learn about the life cycle of one of Louisiana's most secretive creatures.

It's their elusive nature that makes handling one, or even seeing one, such an extraordinary gift, because they are almost completely aquatic.

"You just don't get to see them under normal circumstances," Naquin said.

Protecting Louisiana's alligator snapping turtles is as much about preserving regional traditions and the giant turtle's status as a culinary delicacy as it is about protecting the species from extinction. After all, to preserve the culture that celebrates the veal-like taste of the turtle, you've got to protect the reptile.

Naquin said the next step is to build a natural, free-flowing water system for the baby turtles. It will require water to be pumped from a canal on his property into an indoor rearing facility where the juvenile turtles are kept. Manual water changes in the rearing tubs are no longer adequate, he believes. Naquin and the USFWS would like to see the hatchlings kept in a more controlled environment now that hundreds of individuals are being cared for each year. ▪

Visit the Louisiana Alligator Snapping Turtle Foundation's Facebook page for more information.


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VENICE CAPTAIN SETS RECORD IN BILLFISH CLASSIC, FOR $300K



The crew of the Tails-Up Sea Cruiser pose with their state-record swordfish at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Billfish Classic.

Photos courtesy Donnie Jackson, Jr.

By Will Martin

It had been a 5-hour fight in stand-up gear, a grueling battle that had tested the resolve of every man on the boat, and Donnie Jackson, Jr., a 32-year-old charter captain from Metairie, panted on-deck as he looked down at the massive, 309.9-pound swordfish he'd just landed on June 12, the final day of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Billfish Classic, several hundred miles west of Biloxi, Miss.

He knew it was a Mississippi state-record, worth $300,000 in the Classic if he could get it back to Biloxi Marina by 6 p.m.

Jackson checked the time. Noon.

Despite the 200-gallon fuel bladder he'd brought along, he knew that he'd need to stop in Venice to refuel. Not enough time.

Jackson was joined in the tournament by his father, Don Jackson, Sr. of Metairie, Russel Webb of Biloxi and Alabama residents Mitch Bronson and Whitney Barron.

There had been plenty to keep them worried during the catch. "The fish kept doing these violent head shakes," Donnie Jackson said. "We'd get him up a little, and then he'd go right back down to the bottom."

Again, and again, they'd fight the fish to a few hundred feet, and he'd remain at that depth or dive.

"We thought that he was done after 2½ hours," Jackson said. "It was just a big, big fish."



FISH IN THE BOAT

It took all five members of the crew to muscle the huge swordfish through the tuna door onto the deck of the *Tails-Up Sea Cruiser*.

"We had three gaffs in her and a tail rope to bring her in," Jackson said.

But at least the fish was onboard. That part of the mission was complete. All the money he'd spent preparing his boat, the work, the time, and the discomfort and stress of spending three days and two nights aboard his vessel. It was worth it.

Almost.

They were already an hour behind. Earlier, Jackson had calculated that 11 o'clock was the latest they could depart for Biloxi and make the 6 p.m. cutoff. So, as the triple 425s of his Contender 39 roared to life, he said a silent prayer.

"Usually, I don't run my boat wide-open," he said, "but with so much on the line, we did; we ran that boat wide-open."

Venice was 200 miles away, so the crew iced the fish even as the boat reached speeds topping 60 mph.

RUNNING ON FUMES

Jackson estimated that they had enough fuel onboard to make it to Red Pass, but he hadn't considered that they'd be running the motors so hard. The late catch of the record-breaking fish had changed everything.

"When I got about 3 miles from Red Pass, the engines started missing and the fuel lights were flashing; the boat came to a halt," Jackson said. "We were out of fuel in our big tank."

Doubt began to set in.

"We were heartbroken," he said. "Luckily, I remembered that I saved 9 gallons of fuel in one of my side tanks for this reason.

"I switched the tanks, pumped the fuel bulbs, and we were back in action," he

said. "I had to creep up Red Pass at 30 mph to (stretch) our left-over fuel enough to make it to Venice Marina, which was about a mile closer than my home-port marina, Cypress Cove."

Jackson put everyone on the bow to make sure the boat planed through the water as they made it through the pass.

"There were a few boats in front of us, but I explained to a buddy of mine what was going on, and he let us get fuel before him and use his pump; so, we were able to get 160 gallons of fuel in 10 to 15 minutes," Jackson said.

Once refueled, Jackson and his crew sped for Biloxi, 90 miles away.

"We couldn't have one issue happen for us, and make it," he said. "I ran the boat wide-open from Baptiste Collette to Ship Island on pins and needles, going 64 mph for the last 90 miles."

JUST IN TIME

Jackson and his crew arrived at Biloxi Marina with 5 gallons of fuel and 8 minutes to spare.

"Luckily, we had good weather conditions," he said. "Without the 1- or 2-foot seas, there's no way we could have made it, because we wouldn't have been able to run as hard as we did."

Jackson is ecstatic about what this big victory will mean for his business and family, not to mention the well-earned pride that landing a record-breaking fish brings.

"You know, to catch one 309 pounds in stand-up gear is a huge accomplishment," he said. "I've fished out of Louisiana my whole life and haven't got one close to that big.

"And it couldn't have come at a better time," he said. "It was a great family thing, too. I'm a father of two with a fiancé, and my kids were a part of it. I got to do it with my dad, who's getting older…. It was just very meaningful. 'Just a great story.'" ▪

NEW NORTH CAROLINA STATE RECORD BLUE CATFISH



Rocky Baker of Four Oaks, N.C. caught a 127.1-pound blue catfish while fishing in the Roanoke River on July 10, 2021. The fish has been certified as the new North Carolina state record. Baker's fish is also the third largest blue catfish state record ever caught on rod and reel in the United States.







LOUISIANA'S 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS TEAM WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Kaeli-Gracyn "KG" Bourgoyne of Assumption Parish competed with the Louisiana National Air Rifle team. **BELOW:** Louisiana's 4-H shooting sports team won the national title for the second time in 3 years.

By Will Martin

Louisiana 4-H Shooting Sports has won the 4-H Shooting Sports national championships for the second time in three years, with the tournament having been cancelled last year due to COVID concerns.

Louisiana competitors placed in the top four in six of nine team categories in the championships, which were held June 20-25 at the Heartland Public Shooting Park in Grand Island, Neb.

4-H youth from across the country competed in compound archery, recurve archery, air rifle, air pistol, .22 rifle, .22 pistol, shotgun, muzzleloader and hunting skills.

"We knew we had a good team going into the competition," said Adam Hubbell, 18, of Lafourche Parish, who finished first in two compound bow categories and second overall in the compound bow division. "It felt good to be out on the national field, knowing that we were the best of the best, and that we were all fighting for the same thing."



"It was awesome to meet so many new people," said Kaeli-Gracyn "KG" Bourgoyne, 14, of Assumption Parish. "It has made me a lot more confident, and it gives me a better understanding of how to focus, especially in school."

Bourgoyne competed with the Louisiana National Air Rifle team, finishing seventh as an individual on the team, which placed second overall.

Reese Burnett, 16, of Assumption Parish, also on the air rifle team, said that she had a wonderful time at the championships.

"I learned a lot of things, and I met a lot of really great people," said Burnett, who placed ninth in silhouette, her favorite air-rifle category. "I definitely want to go back."

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Hubbell, Bourgoyne and Burnett are experienced hunters.

"When I was 16 or 17, I went on my first deer hunt by myself," Hubbell said, "and I killed a doe the second day I sat in my stand that weekend; it just sort of exploded from there, and now I'm hooked on it."

Bourgoyne and Burnett have each harvested a buck in recent years.

"I began shooting when I was in the fourth grade," Bourgoyne said. "I started rabbit hunting when I was about 8 … and last year, I killed my first deer, a button buck, with a bow."

Danette Bourgoyne, Kaeli-Gracyn's mother, said, "I'm very proud of all the hard work that KG and all the other shooters have put in to make their dreams a reality. They've done well. Our scores showed that, and Louisiana has won the national championship two years in a row. We're very proud of all of them.

Bourgoyne and Burnett will be eligible to represent Louisiana at next year's tournament. Hubbell will compete on the ASA Pro/Am Tour.

"Shooting has taught me to be humble," Hubble said. "You go into an event to shoot, knowing you're one of the top guys there, and you've got to remain grounded to keep yourself composed if you're going to shoot well." ▪

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MEET THE HOPEDALE 'HAT LADY'

COLOR PALETTE OF FEMALE ANGLER'S HEADGEAR HAS BECOME HER PERSONAL CALLING CARD



Sharon Hartzog caught this redfish on June 12 in Bay Eloi in St Bernard Parish.

By Will Martin

If you happen to see a woman wearing bright-colored clothing, a big, flower-festooned sun hat and possibly some goofy sunglasses while fishing near Hopedale, be sure to sound your horn or wave, "Hello."

You've sighted the "Hopedale Hat Lady," known off the water as Sharon Hartzog, who has become a local personality over the years in Hopedale.

"I love to fish, and I love to fish in style," she said, providing a useful glimpse into her spicy personality.

"At the marina in Hopedale, people know me as the 'Hat Lady,'" Hartzog said. "They'll always say, 'Oh yeah, I remember the hat,' because I'm always posting on the fishing blogs; it's kind of funny."

If you run into her at the marina, ask her about her accoutrement. She'll tell you that her vibrant and outgoing color palette is her personality writ large for all the world to see — and you'll believe her.

When she's not on the water radiating cool, Hat Lady vibes, Hartzog is a semi-retired dental assistant living in Bogalusa with her husband, Jon "Bull" Hartzog, a retired Louisiana state trooper.

"I can talk my husband into matching (my clothes) except for the hat and flowers," Hartzog said, chuckling.

The Hartzogs fish once a week when the weather allows it.

"The marina is actually about three hours from our house," Hartzog said, "but we get up early and we go; we love fishing."

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SUMMER FISHING

The Hartzogs target mostly speckled trout and redfish during summer, but as far as Sharon Hartzog is concerned, a fight with just about any species is welcome, as was the case on June 24 when she caught a big jack crevalle in Lake Borgne.

"We went round and round in the boat," she said. "It was one of those times where I thought, 'That's a giant fish, and I have to get him in this boat and get a picture with him.'"

The Hartzogs fish live shrimp under popping corks for specks and redfish.

"A lot of times, if we pull up somewhere and they're hitting the live shrimp, we'll quickly turn to plastics," Hartzog said. "We'll put plastics on there because (the fish will) go for anything if they're hitting, and it's easy to fish with plastics.

"We love the speckled trout, but the redfish love the speckled trout, too, so sometimes you're going to catch a redfish, even though you're looking for speckled trout.

"But we love both."

So, will the famous Hopedale Hat Lady ever hang up her big, colorful, hat? Posed that question, her laughter seemed to cry out, "Never!" It's become something of a totemic object to her. The hat has evolved season upon season to the present.

"Through the years, my hat has had flowers added (to match) all the different color shirts that I have (worn), and now it kind of matches them all," Hartzog said. In doing so, it has evolved to match or mirror her, too.

"It's really funny how people pay attention to that hat," she said. "I'm the Hat Lady; that's what they call me." ▪



Sharon Hartzog caught and later released this jack crevalle on June 24, 2021, in Lake Borgne.

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BROWN, DYING GRASS AT LAKE CATAOUATCHE REJUVENATES OLD FEARS

By Will Martin

Anglers have reported seeing brown and dying aquatic grass at Lake Cataouatche, which is a cause for concern given the lake's history.

According to reports, the afflicted grass is concentrated along the canal from Pier 90 to the main lake and in the tank pond, where a proliferation of gas bubbles was seen erupting on the surface.

However, a study conducted in June by biologists with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries into the health of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAVs) showed continued improvement, suggesting that the reported die-off is isolated. Recent LDWF efforts to clear the boat launch at Pier 90 and the canal of water hyacinth, as well as natural, cyclical processes appear to be the causes of the brown vegetation and gas bubbles reported in the tank pond.

A HISTORY OF HIGHS AND LOWS

Lake Cataouatche, in Jefferson and St. Charles parishes, has seen its fair share of highs and lows in the past 30 years. In the 1990s, talk about the lake centered on a bygone era of abundance and the salt-water intrusion that ruined it all. But the early 2000s saw a change in Cataouatche's fortunes, beginning with the completion of Davis Pond, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project to bring freshwater from the Mississippi River into the lake.

The change was immediate. By 2007, the fabled grass that old-timers saw back in the 1950s had returned. The lake saw an explosion of aquatic vegetation with some reports suggesting more than 90% coverage.



Photo courtesy Knapper Tim

Lake Cataouatche's turn-around culminated in 2011, when bass pro Kevin VanDam won his fourth Bassmaster Classic on the lake, but by then, the epic grass beds had probably already peaked and begun



to decline.

Shortly before VanDam's win, the USACE completed alterations to the diversion system that increased the amount of water moving through it, allowing muddy water to pass into the lake without going through the sedimentation pond, eventually killing off the hydrilla and other aquatic vegetation by denying it adequate sunlight.

Although the reasons given for the die-off of the hydrilla are pure speculation, it did occur, and those world-class grass beds became the stuff of legend once again, which brings us to the present.

THINGS ARE LOOKING UP

Gary Vitrano, a biologist with LDWF, shared an overview of the situation at Lake Cataouatche.

"We did a survey last week for the SAVs, and it looked pretty good," Vitrano said, "especially compared to the last survey (2017).

"You've got some pretty good coverage in the Netherlands and in the tank pond," he said, "and then there is a fringe of submerged aquatic vegetation along the edge of the lake in certain areas; coverage is up since our last survey."

Overall, he said things are looking better at Lake Cataouatche.

"Let me put it this way," Vitrano said, "it's not where it was back in 2007, when there was just this explosion of vegetation — it hasn't been like that in a while — but it is definitely better than it was in 2017, so (coverage) definitely seems to be increasing."

Many factors affect the growth of aquatic plants in a body of water as complex as Lake Cataouatche.

"There is the turbidity factor from the diversions," Vitrano said, "and turbidity does inhibit the growth of submerged vegetation, and that's why we do the surveys.

"In the past, we've very rarely treated submerged vegetation (with herbicide). We've done it on two occasions, but right now we don't treat any (SAV) in open water bodies. However, we do treat water hyacinth and alligator weed, which tends to block navigation."

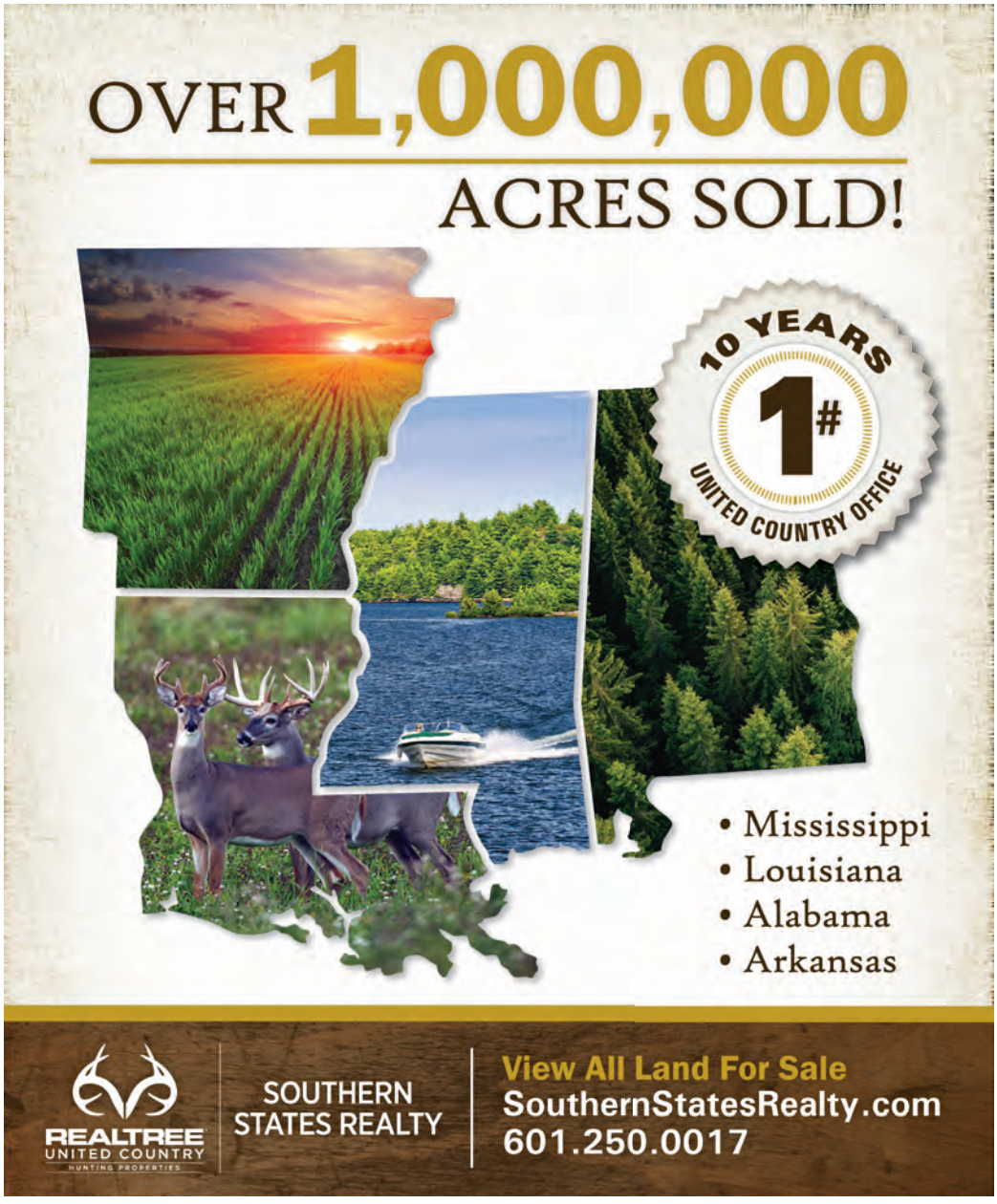
ALLAYING FEARS

Vitrano said that LDWF often gets calls to come out to Pier 90 to spray the water hyacinth that blocks the ramps and quickly becomes a hassle for everyone trying to fish the lake.

"In the past couple of months, we've sprayed once over there," he said, "but we generally do not spray in Lake Cataouatche and the tank ponds that often."

Vitrano said that what people are probably seeing is the result of efforts to control water hyacinth and alligator weed in the canal; perhaps that, and some natural cyclical die-off. The bubbles are nothing to worry about.

"Generally, when we see (bubbles), it's gasses being released by the decomposition of organic material," he said, explaining them as parts of natural, cyclical processes. ▪





VETERAN LOUISIANA OUTDOOR WRITER BERZAS LOSES BATTLE WITH CANCER

By Will Martin

Louisiana's outdoor community lost a companion and champion in Chris Berzas, an outdoor writer for *Louisiana Sportsman* who passed away peacefully on July 1, 2021, in Opelousas. He was 67.

Berzas, who lost a battle with cancer, possessed a powerful voice and infectious enthusiasm that permeated both his work as an outdoors writer and his relationships, where he was valued as a workmate and occasional coconspirator.

Todd Masson, editor at *Louisiana Sportsman* from 1994 to 2012, said, "Chris Berzas was one of the few writers who preceded my tenure at the *Sportsman*, and I remember being a bit intimidated the first time I met him. He was a larger-than-life figure with a booming voice that might make any man swallow hard.

"What I didn't know that day, however, was that Chris was one of the best dudes on the planet. He had an infectious laugh that made him a pleasure to be around, and I enjoyed every moment I spent with him on a boat or swapping stories around a deer-camp bonfire."

A TURKEY HUNTING FANATIC

Berzas enjoyed just about every flavor of outdoor pursuit available in the Bayou State. From bullfrogs to snapping turtles, there wasn't a topic he didn't cover, but he especially loved wild turkeys. Something about the big birds resonated with his soul, and he thought about big gobblers year-round.

Friend and outdoors writer Glynn Harris reflected on his time with Berzas.

"When a friend passes on, you flip through the pages of your memory to recall why that person was a friend," he said. "Chris Berzas was a big 'teddy bear' with a gruff voice that belied his gentle nature.

"He and I shared a love for the outdoors, especially when it involved hunting wild turkeys. He was as passionate about it as I am, and when I had the good fortune to waylay a gobbler, I'd let him know, and the reverse was also true. I loved to hear him tell me about a hunt in his thick Cajun brogue.

"Chris loved writing about hunting and fishing ventures, which he handled very well. His death means that the outdoors world has lost a special friend and advocate of all he held as a sacred trust."

RETIRED SCHOOL WORKER

According to his published obituary, Berzas earned his bachelors and masters degrees at the University of New Orleans. He went on to work as a school psychologist and retired after 30 years of service with the St. Landry Parish School Board. He was also a part-time professor at LSU-E in Eunice, La.

His work appeared in numerous publications, including the *Daily World*, *Louisiana Sportsman*, *Louisiana Game and Fish*, and *Bayou Catholic*. He served a term as President of Louisiana Outdoor Writers' Association. ▪



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By Don Shoopman

LATE SUMMER IS PRIME TIME TO CATCH BULL REDS AT A POPULAR REEF IN VERMILION BAY.

EMPTYING THE BOXCAR

How ravenous are the bull reds that live around Boxcar Reef on the western edge of Vermilion Bay near Southwest Pass?

Gerrit "T Blu" Landry of Patoutville remembers one night several years ago when the bull reds' voracious appetite even surprised him. He was fishing with a buddy, Dusty "Chop" Davis of Lydia.

"One fish ate my mullet, then swam over and ate Chop's mullet," Landry said. "There's a picture of (the bull red) on the floor with both hooks and lines in its mouth. We both fought it at the same time."

If a fish eating two baits was going to happen, it wouldn't have been a surprise that it was at Boxcar Reef, which has been notorious for giving up huge redfish for at least the past 40 years.

AUGUST IS PRIME TIME >

George Beckwith

AUGUST IS PRIME TIME

Fishing for bull reds starts getting good in July and should be even better in August, according to Landry, a third-year charter captain who has been fishing the area his entire life. He knows from experience that nighttime is the right time, although he and many other fishermen never rule out daytime hours.

Boxcar Reef was the place to catch award-winning bull reds during the heyday of the now-defunct Acadiana Redfish Association. Acadiana's top fishermen were in that organization in the 1980s and 1990s, and many of them tapped the reef's redfish population at night.

Landry, 40, joined the ARA 20 years ago when he had his first boat, but he didn't know about the reef at first.

"No, actually, I didn't start fishing the Boxcar until I joined (ARA)," he said. "When I first started fishing Acadiana, we were fishing the Nickel," he said, referring to Nickel Reef, a small reef a few miles off the eastern end of the Marsh Island, almost 12 miles south/southwest of Point Chevreuil.

"All of a sudden, they started showing up at the Boxcar. My fourth or fifth year in Acadiana, we started hearing about it. Everybody switched over. It was closer," Landry said, adding that fishermen had fewer concerns about high seas or dangerous weather conditions by staying in Vermilion Bay instead of heading well into the Gulf.

Landry, lead production operator at Weeks Island's Texas Petroleum facility, has learned plenty about it since then and has caught countless bull reds off the reef. While he doesn't fish it as much now, nighttime or daytime, he'll target the reef if clients want to catch 25-plus pound redfish or he takes his daughter, Faith, during the Iberia Rod & Gun Club Saltwater Fishing Rodeo every July 4 weekend.

GOOD TIMES AT THE DEEP REEF >



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.*

Bull redfish show up around the Boxcar Reef in July, but the fishing in August is much better, even during daytime hours. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Faith Landry shows off a big, bull red that came from the Boxcar Reef in Vermilion Bay.

Brian Carroll





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Gerrit "T Blu" Landry has been carrying his daughter, Faith, to the Boxcar Reef for years, especially around the July 4 holiday.

GOOD TIMES AT THE DEEP REEF

"Oh, yeah, we've had some good times on it, for sure," he said, catching and releasing 20 to 30 huge redfish a night at Boxcar Reef.

Landry catches bulls on the Boxcar Reef proper, and on a part of the reef that extends westward toward land and is higher, the Crown, beginning in July. The best fishing is a little later, and the reds will stay through November. He believes they spawn from July through September.

"My best months are September and October," he said.

The legendary reef is shaped, according to Landry, "Like a big circle. Like a big 'O.' "

The reef starts at the first red buoy where the western side of Vermilion Bay meets the eastern end of Southwest Pass, then makes a loop and ends at the green buoy approximately 100 yards away from the red buoy, Landry said.

GPS coordinates for the Boxcar Reef are N29°37.776 and W91°59.884. GPS coordinates for the Crown are N29°37.247 and W92°00.439.

According to Landry, Boxcar reef was named after the late Roy Derise of Lydia, whose nickname was "Boxcar."

"I've always known that," Landry said. "That's the background. (Derise) used to fish 'slot' redfish. It wasn't known for bull reds. He was one of the few people that fished it that knew and fished it. He ran everything to compass. If you'd run through the bay, you wouldn't know the reef was there. It's deep. You won't hit it."

Landry, who owns Gotta Have Faith Charters, said fishing pressure there is less than it once was when there might be 30 to 40 boats around the reef at sunrise.

"There's really not too many who fish it anymore now. They all fish it for the Fourth of July, and they still have CIFA," he said, referring to the Cypremort Invitational Fishing Association redfish/speckled trout tournament that begins the first week of July and ends in October.

By-catch includes bull drum and gar.

"One fourth of July rodeo a long time ago, we caught 44-, 42- and 40-pound drum, the biggest drum I've ever caught," Landry said.

A CLEAN TABLE SET >



Vermilion Bay's Boxcar Reef regularly produces catches of multiple big redfish on summer trips.

George Beckwith

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A CLEAN TABLE SET

Boxcar Reef hasn't silted up over the years because of its close proximity to Southwest Pass, where current rushes in and out with the tide. It's a hard reef, Landry said, one that necessitates an anchor with sharp points or blades that dig into the bottom. He uses a homemade anchor.

Landry targets the ditches and valleys in the reef. He said the natural bait selection is the key to enticing bull reds to bite, especially at night, when he rigs two battery-powered Q-beams to shine on the boat's stern and also uses a 12-volt LED light.

The Q-beams illuminate the fishing rods he fastens in rod-holders on the stern.

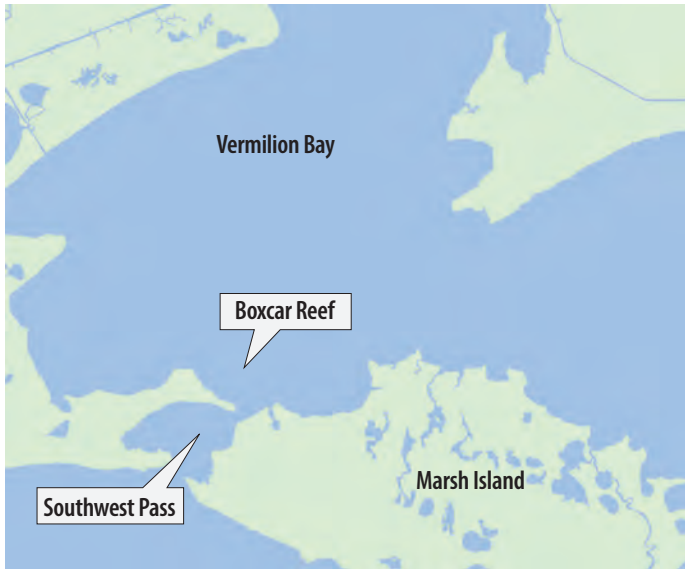
Landry's go-to baits are 7- to 8-inch mullet, Carolina-rigged. Any smaller, and the gafftop catfish will go to town on them.

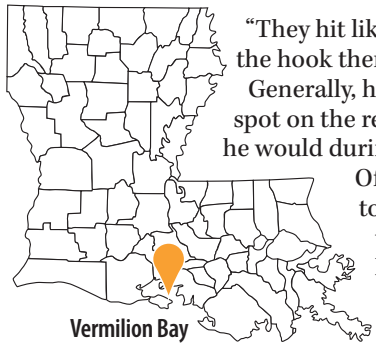
"Most people's problem when they try to fish it, they go over there with shrimp or finger mullet. You need BIG baits," he said.

Another favorite bait is a live croaker. Cracked crab is a no-no because of the gafftops and other undesirables, but Landry said he does use a whole crab with everything in it, and bull reds like that just fine.

Landry's fishing tackle includes 310 Penns or Calcutta 700s, both spooled with 120-pound braid tied to a swivel under a 2-ounce weight. A 6/0 "J hook," which features a wider gap, is his choice.

Landry doesn't engage the reel's clicker, as others might. Instead, he has the drag screwed down tight.





"They hit like a freight train. They set the hook themselves," he said.

Generally, he said, he'll give a likely spot on the reef a little while longer than he would during the day, say, 1½ hours. Often, fishermen don't have to wait very long at all for the reds to get bullish at Boxcar Reef. ▪



LET LAFITTE BECOME YOUR JUMPING-OFF POINT IN AUGUST FOR NICE REDFISH

By Will Martin

Whether you've lived in the Sportsman's Paradise for a lifetime or you're a visitor with dreams of striking that postcard-worthy bull redfish off your bucket list, Lafitte is a great choice for turning fantasies into photographic evidence.

For one thing, Lafitte is easy to get to. It's hard to beat a 40-minute drive from downtown New Orleans, or an even shorter drive from the airport.

But even if time and distance are not considerations, the fact that Lafitte is at the northernmost point of the Barataria estuary, one of the most productive estuaries in the United States for redfish, should point you in that direction.

When people talk about fishing in Lafitte, they mean the waters, roughly, from Barataria Bay to Lake Salvador, a huge geographical area full of great places to fish.

August can be a deceptively tricky month to target trophy fish, however, and even if you are targeting eating-size redfish, you'll need to know where to find them.

August is a time when concerns about water temperature come to the forefront. Late-summer, prespawn, redfish are drawn to cool, deep water during long, hot days, but they will venture out of these areas during cooler hours to feed.

It follows that in August, you'll find redfish in or near the coolest available water most of the time.

The pros at Griffin Fishing Charters in Barataria explained how they handle the unique challenges that August brings.

"The fish in August typically hang in the deeper areas with moving water," said guide Colby Creppel, who recommends fishing the deeper waters of the Pen, Little Lake, Lake Salvador and the Rigolets.

Think of cool, deep, water as an essential resource in August. The more resources a given area offers in addition to deep water, the greater the likelihood of a strong redfish presence. But you've got to account for the variables that affect water temperature, because conditions change throughout the day. The time of day and tidal ebb and flow are crucial considerations.



Guide Colby Creppel (right) put Ben Andrews on this nice Lafitte redfish.

"The key to summertime fishing is to get out on the water early morning or late evening," Creppel said. "Typically, the bite is for 1 to 2 hours in the morning, or right before dark in the evening."

"And always look for tide movement, especially in the summer," he said. "It's hot, and the fish are hot, too; moving water (is cooler water), and that's where the fish will tend to be."

Creppel recommends-tried and-true baits for August redfish: dead shrimp and a gold spoon.

Use "dead shrimp for fishing the bottom or gold spoons for sight-fishing the marsh," Crepel said. ▪

PADDLES 'N PUDDLES >





Down to lightweight sun gloves, this angler has every inch of skin protected from the hot and harmful August sun. Newer, technical fabrics allow anglers to stay cooler and wear long pants and long sleeves with no need for messy sunscreen that sweats off and needs to be reapplied to stay effective.

Chris Holmes



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

SUMMER KAYAK FISHING = HOT FUN

TAKE PRECAUTIONS, MAKE YOUR TRIP A SUCCESS

Kayak fishing can be a bit strenuous. Whether pedaling or paddling, the exertion can quickly cause your body to overheat. However, with a little planning, you can safely and comfortably fish at the peak of the hot Louisiana summer and catch some great fish, too.

Kayaks offer no protection from the elements. Be it rain, cold, heat or glaring sun, you are exposed and need to plan accordingly. Overexertion and sunburn are big, potential problems with summer kayak fishing. To avoid both, planning your trips for early mornings, late evenings and even at night makes them safer, comfortable and more productive. Comfort and safety are foremost; however, the fish are also more active at these cooler times of the day.

Dress properly. Kayaks sit low to the water, and the sun's glare/reflection is enhanced. If any skin is exposed, sunscreen is a necessity. It is messy and sweats off, and it must be regularly reapplied in order to be effective. However, long pants in a good, technical fabric, a long-sleeve shirt and other items offer UPF sun protection without the mess. Many kayakers think wearing short pants and short sleeves is more comfortable in summer, but they are wrong. Specialty fabrics wick moisture and actually have cooling properties. Lightweight gloves and socks also keep hands and feet protected from the sun. Do not overlook your face and head. A good hat or cap, especially a ventilated, wide-brimmed hat, and a quality face shield works wonders. Quality, polarized sunglasses should always be worn.

Hydration is a key to staying healthy and comfortable on hot days. If you know you are going fishing in a day or so, pre-plan and increase your water intake beforehand. On the day of the trip, make sure to drink plenty of water. Mixing in a couple of sports drinks also helps to add electrolytes to your system and is better than drinking sports drinks alone.

Night trips are also good, especially on small ponds or areas where you are not likely to encounter powerboats in the dark. Make sure you have the required hand-held flashlight for signaling other boaters to your presence. An additional, 360-degree white light is good to have for added visibility. Bug spray is always a good idea. The temperatures will be cooler, and you likely will have the area to yourself.

>

As always, reliable communication equipment should be carried. Cell phones are not always reliable, and it is good to also carry a quality, waterproof hand-held VHF radio. Leave a float plan with a member of your family or a friend to let them know where you are going and your expected return time. This can save valuable time by narrowing an area to start looking for you if needed.

You've done the proper preparation, now let's get to the fishing.

Plan to start your fishing as early as possible. Suitable fishing light can be as early as 5 a.m. That means you can fish for 5 hours and be off the water by 10 a.m. while the heat is still bearable. Mornings are cooler, and before the sun gets up high, fish are generally more active. This is also a great time for some topwater action. Whether you're bass fishing or chasing speckled trout and redfish, work topwater lures close to any cover, structure or the shoreline and prepare for an explosion. If the cover is heavy, weedless topwaters like frogs and sunfish work equally well in fresh and saltwater.

Early mornings, fish are more scattered. Make sure to cover the water all the way around the kayak. However, as the sun starts to rise, they tend to seek cover and shade. Shade comes in the form of logs, docks, grass beds, trees, reeds and overhead branches. Look deep into the grass beds and cast farther back under docks and anywhere cover provides shade.

Once the sun is up, consider punching heavy cover with a weedless setup. The same rigs you use for bass also catch redfish.

One mistake often made fishing summer evenings is heading out too early; 3 p.m. is still the doldrums, and all you'll do is sweat and make empty casts. Wait until about 5 p.m.; it will be cooling off some, and the fish will get active again. This still allows several hours of quality fishing before dark.

Summer is also a great time for catching bull redfish as they school in and near deep, coastal passes. Live bait, dead bait and scented soft plastics like Gulp! work great on bulls, which are typically not finicky.

A depth finder is great help in locating large schools of bull redfish that travel together through the passes; this is much more productive than blindly picking a spot. Keep a lure out and slowly troll along, keeping one eye on your screen and the other peeled for any surface activity. Of course, the trolled lure may get hit without you seeing a thing. However, once you locate a school, the action can get fast and furious. These fish are hard fighters and provide great sport in a kayak.

Bull reds are not great table fare, and although Louisiana regulations allow you to keep one longer than 27 inches per day, once landed, the best practice is to spend some time making sure the fish is properly revived and released. A lip-grip is a great way to slowly pull the fish alongside the kayak to get some water moving over its gills. If you don't have one, hold the fish by the tail, and move it back and forth in the water. As the fish revives, you will feel it get stronger and know when it is good for the release.

The weather is hot, but so is the fishing. Adjust your fishing times and spend the hottest part of the day indoors in air conditioned comfort. By taking a few precautions, you can have some great summer fishing during the most-comfortable parts of the day or night. ▪



For fish caught in hot weather, take a little extra time to revive then before releasing. Slowly towing them next to the kayak or gently holding by the tail while moving back in forth in the water gets water moving over their gills for revival. The tail of this bull redfish shows it was adequately recovered and ready to swim away.

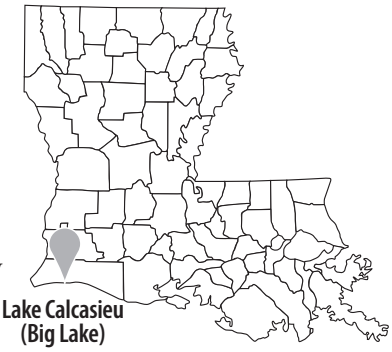


By Will Martin

BIG LAKE, BIG TROUT

WADING FOR SPECKLED TROUT IS A GREAT TACTIC ON LAKE CALCASIEU, AKA BIG LAKE, AND IT EVEN WORKS DURING AUGUST'S HEAT. HERE'S HOW ONE EXPERT DOES IT.

Wade-fishing for trophy speckled trout during the summer can be a TOUGH PROPOSITION.



Catching them in August is more challenging than in fall and winter, when fish stay in shallow water, but most fishermen welcome the challenge. If they wanted to make things easy, they'd stay in the boat. Wade-fishing is the angling equivalent of bowhunting for deer: the challenge is the point.

To be successful, wade-fishermen must employ some big-picture knowledge about what fish are doing in summer.

Jonathan Fisher of Opelousas has been a serious wade-fisherman for about 10 years. Apart from having one of the coolest last names an angler could have, he's got some of that big-picture knowledge that will help you be successful this month.

Fisher got his start as an acolyte of Bruce Baugh, a well-known Louisiana angler, and like Baugh, Fisher can usually be found waist-deep in Lake Calcasieu in Cameron Parish.

STALKING TROPHY TROUT

"I like to wade-fish for big trout," Fisher said. "Although some of the bigger trout come into shallow water to feed when it's hot, they'll move to deeper waters afterward where you can't really get to them wade-fishing."

To be clear, fall and winter are your best chances for catching big trout, especially when you are not using live bait, which Fisher never does.

Trophy trout can be caught during summer, but you've got to be smart. You've got to catch them when they're moving from shallow areas where they are feeding to deeper, cooler areas where they are most comfortable — or vice versa.

Specks behave differently during summer, so even when they are shallow, they aren't in areas you would typically find them in fall or winter.

"In winter, they're in thick mud," Fisher said, "so in the summer, we try to fish more on sand flats — or anywhere that's sandy — where the water seems to be cooler.

"And we are always looking for oyster bottoms, little oyster reefs."

But not all oyster reefs and sandbars will hold trophy specks. Remember, apart from salinity, water temperature is the core consideration when wade-fishing in August.

"Take Lake Calcasieu as an example," Fisher said. "It's got a big, deep channel that runs in the middle of it, so sometimes, we try to target reefs that are not far from the ship channel or from a deep canal where they can stay in cooler water *and* come up to the flats to feed."

It pays to treat access to deep, cool water like any other resource, but one resource is not enough, not when you're betting on catching speckled trout on the move.

"If we pull up to an area, and we don't see bait moving," Fisher





Look for concentrations of baitfish when you're wade-fishing for trout; specks won't leave the shallows if they aren't going to feed. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Fished early in the morning or just before dusk, a big topwater bait can be a great way to fool a big speckled trout.

said, "we won't even stop; we've got to see signs of life."

Trout won't leave cool water during summer for the sake of adventure.

"Where the bait is, that's where the trout are going to be," Fisher said. "We like to see good-sized mullet jumping. We're not looking to fish under feeding birds so much. A lot of school trout will be under the birds, but the big trout aren't going to mess around in that so much; they're independent."

But how do you find these resource-rich spots?

"Experience," Fisher said. Even after years of wade-fishing, "sometimes we've got to look at an area, jump out and walk, learn it.

"I feel like you learn the land better when you wade-fish, because you're actually feeling it," he said. "You know where the shell is, where it's not. And that could be a 10-yard difference. You've got to just get out there and do it."

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BIG LAKE, BIG TROUT

Jonathan Fisher reaches big specks while wading by being able to make long casts with a long rod with a sensitive tip.



GEAR

"I'm throwing a topwater (lure) probably 80% of the time," Fisher said. "The rest of the time, I might throw a Fat Boy or a Corky; sometimes I'll throw a (soft-plastic) tail as it gets a little warmer, maybe just trying to spark a bite. But my go-to this time of year is topwater."

"I like the Super Spook, the Super Spook Jr., and the Heddon One Knockers. Those are my favorites. To get some of those big trout to strike, I find you've got to throw a big bait, and topwater.... They're usually feeding on the top."

Plenty of acceptable options for rod and reels are available, and like most anything fishing-related, you can spend as much as you want. The rod is the important element where wade-fishing is concerned.

"You want a rod that can make long casts and cover a lot of ground," Fisher said. "You've got to think of why you're wade-fishing. You're doing it because big trout get spooked easily; You're so cautious about not spooking them that you're not running boats near them."

The rod also must be sensitive enough to work a lure. That's why you don't see fishermen wading with surf-fishing tackle. There is a balance between range and control.

"I use what's called 'The Green Rod,'" Fisher said. "It's sold by Fishing Tackle Unlimited, and it's a 6-foot-6 rod that's got a flexible tip that's great for working a topwater lure.

"I use a Shimano reel, and I always use braided line with a 1½- to 2-foot Seaguar leader. I like to employ a 20-pound leader when-

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YAMAHA



Big Lake specks are within range of wade fishermen, even in the heat of August.

JONATHAN FISHER'S TIPS FOR AUGUST WADE-FISHING SUCCESS

- Fish early mornings and late evenings;
- Target oyster reefs and sand bars;
- Treat areas that offer cooler water as a resource;
- Never fish an area with one resource when you can fish an area with two resources;
- Throw a big topwater bait to catch big trout;
- Balance range and control when making your rod choice;
- Use the right leader for the job;
- Wear good, quality footwear. ▪

ever I can, but when I'm in a shelly area, I will throw a 30-pound leader, just in case a fish dives and tries to cut the line on shell."

OTHER ADVICE

Fisher believes the key to success in any type of fishing is experience.

"You've got to get out there and do it, learn the land, talk to people who know more than you, read about where people might be catching fish. In a nutshell, you've got to get out there and learn from experience."

Fisher had other advice for fishermen who want to add wading to their arsenals.

"Have good footgear," he said. "You want to make sure you've got good wading boots, because there are things in the water. In the summer, you don't need waders, but you've got to have a good pair of boots."

Fisher wears wading boots by Bart's Bay Armor, after wading in $60 Frogg Toggs wading boots for years.

"They go midway up the shin, and they're made of a material that's stingray proof," he said. "If you are just getting into wade-fishing, or you want to do it every now and then, a boot like that is all you need." ▪

DELACROIX TROUT >



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





FISHING GETS TOUGH AS WEATHER HEATS UP

Stay in big, outer bays for trout, reds, but look in deeper water most of the time

By Rusty Tardo

In previous years, Jack Payne at Sweetwater Marina in Delacroix Island would point August customers in the direction of Black Bay. That big bay has numerous islands, large and small, and structures that have produced trout for decades. Many an old salt has great memories of incredible catches at landmark hotspots like Stone Island, Lonesome Island, the Wreck, the Black Tanks, Iron Banks and Battledore Reef. Those spots were loaded with trout every summer and consistently produced hefty fish and plenty of them.

"Unfortunately, it's just not like that anymore," said Payne (504-453-8382). "Most of the time, the water is muddy out there from the river, and even when the water is clear, the salinity is low, so most trips outside have ended in disappointment this year.

"On top of that, we've had a tough time getting shrimp this year, so our live shrimp supply hasn't been as consistent as we want it to be, but for some reason, every marina is facing that challenge right now."

Despite the summer challenges, Payne remains upbeat.

A best-case scenario is a low river, southerly winds and salty water from the Gulf, myriads of shrimp coming in with the tides and trout along with them.

"I still point my customers to the big outer bays for both reds and trout," Payne said, "from Four Horse Lake on out through Lake Pato Cabello, Lake Campo, Lake Robin and the deeper bayous that run in out of them. Reefs, points and grassy islands can hold specks and reds, and if you fish pockets and coves and points along the shorelines of those same fringe bays, you should find some nice reds. Live shrimp is always the best bait when you can get it, but reds will also inhale market shrimp, and gold spoons and spinner-jigs have produced fish as well."

SUMMER SUCCESS: 3 TIPS

- Get out of the muddy water and find cleaner water. If it looks stained, it's still fishable, and many a fish has been flung across the gunwale in stained water. But if it's muddy, look elsewhere.
- Leave the dock early and quit early. "The fishing gets harder as the weather gets hotter," Payne said, "so get an early start." Sometimes the fish will stop biting once the sun gets blistering hot.
- Fish deeper water. Instead of beating the shorelines in shallow water for specks, try fishing the bottom of deeper bayous and channels, in 6 to 8 feet of water. Fish will still feed when the tide is moving at the mouths of bays and bayous, but they're hanging deeper this year than usual, probably due to the heat.

Payne said deeper canals and bayous can hold redfish as well, and live or market bait fished on the bottom, or even soft plastics like H&H Sparkle Beetles in chartreuse, clear, motor oil or glow, fished in tandem off the bottom, should produce.

"I just follow the normal procedures; I want to find clean water, moving water, current lines around points or any signs of bait," he said. "That's where the fish ought to be." ▪

POGIES ON THE MENU >

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POGIES ON THE MENU

KEEP 'EM ALIVE, AND YOU'LL CATCH LOTS OF SABINE TROUT

By Adam Jaynes

As the heat continues to take its toll, speckled trout can be much more difficult to fool into biting a lure. An often overlooked and under-utilized live-bait option is the menhaden, aka pogey.

Many of us associate pogies with the putrid odors from processing facilities or from rafts of floating by-catch more than putting one on a hook; however, they can make an excellent bait choice when chasing speckled trout, among other species. They make for a much-cheaper alternative than throwing live shrimp or croaker and are generally rather easy to locate and catch in a cast net.

The key to pogey fishing is keeping them alive. Many anglers will load a livewell full of great baitfish only to find them floating belly up a short time later. Pogies are susceptible to meeting an early demise in the livewell, typically due to overfilling. An easy way to help keep your pogies alive is to reduce the number you put in the livewell. Often, it only takes one throw of the cast net to catch way more than you will need. Depending on the size of your livewell, I recommend keeping six dozen or so. They will still catch fish as fresh, dead bait, but they are definitely much better alive.

There are probably more ways to rig a live pogey than there are to skin a cat, but these two are my favorites: just in front of the dorsal fin and just forward of the tail.

I fish it hooked just in front of the dorsal the majority of the time. Rigging the baitfish this way seems to give it plenty of action, keeping the pogie very lively and generating a lot of vibration that can be felt through the line. I believe the placement helps to increase hookups with short-striking fish as well. Hooked in the tail, just forward of the anal fin, the pogey seems to swim down and away. I like this method when fishing for fish that are deeper in the water column.

Both of these techniques generally keep the pogey very lively and make it easier to cast. Pogies also seems to stay on the hook better than hooking it through the nose.

I like to use bigger pogies, at least the length of the palm of my hand. Big baits for big fish, right? Depending on current and depth, I may fish them weightless or add on a small split-shot to get to the desired depth. The large rock piles on the east Sabine jetties are a great place to cast one. There are a handful of these piles on



Capt. Brian Windsor is no stranger to catching solid speckled trout.

Photo courtesy Capt. Brian Windsor

the jetties, sandwiched between areas of a longer, relatively flat and shorter jetty. With a stronger current the outside or Gulf side is better, and vice versa with a slack or slow-moving current. Exercise caution when fishing in the channel with the ship traffic. Large wakes have been known to cause boats to end up on top of the jetty — or even worse. If you are anchored, pull it up before their wakes get to you and get on the big motor or trolling motor to maneuver over their wakes. If it is calm enough, try your luck at the short rigs; those trout out there especially love those larger pogeys. Free-lining them from the upcurrent side back toward the rig is the ticket. ▪

For information on fishing Sabine Lake or Lake Calcasieu with Capt. Adam Jaynes, visit justfishsabine.com.

FLORIDA POMPANO >



Brian Jaynes showing off just how large some of these bull reds are that cruise along the Sabine jetties. They provide a heck of a fight for some great entertainment.



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope



Florida pompano are a surf fisherman's dream fish: aggressive, hungry and a good test on light tackle. Just don't cast too far.

Brian Cope

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: FLORIDA POMPANO

SMALLEST MEMBER OF POMPANO FAMILY IS SURF-FISHERMAN'S DELIGHT

Despite their name, Florida pompano, *Trachinotus carolinus,* are found in many areas outside of Florida. They are part of the jack family and are the smallest of pompanos, being dwarfed by African and Cayenne pompanos.

Florida pompano have very flattened or compressed bodies and very short snouts. Their bodies vary in color from silver to yellow, and their dorsal areas can be any combination of blue, green or silver. Their bellies are usually yellowish. They are found all along the Atlantic Ocean and in the Gulf of Mexico.

Florida pompano spend most of the late summer months very close to shore, so close that many anglers fishing from the beach cast far beyond their reach.

They primarily feed on mole crabs, which are often referred to as sand fleas or sand crabs. Anglers sometimes catch them "by mistake" when reeling in their surf-fishing rigs and letting them rest in extremely shallow water while preparing other rigs for the next cast.

The white, foamy suds that form after a wave crashes are prime areas to find Florida pompano. This water is usually not much more than ankle deep, so inexperienced surf anglers overlook it. But those targeting these fish are keen to make short casts with small hooks baited with mole crabs, small pieces of shrimp, and commercially available Fishbites. Very small, split-shot weights are added to get the bait on the bottom while allowing it to wash around in the surf.

FAST SWIMMERS

Most Florida pompano caught in the surf weigh less than 3 pounds and are between 12 and 17 inches long, but fish heavier than 8 pounds and longer than 26 inches are sometimes caught.

These fish are fun to catch on light tackle. Many anglers who fish with bigger rods and cast past the breakers for other species also keep a smaller rod handy just to target these fish.

Nicknames for Florida pompano include pompano, pomp, little pompano and surf pompano. They are sometimes confused with permit, which have a similar shape but generally grow much larger.

Florida pompano are schooling fish, so when an angler catches one in the surf zone, it's a sure bet that more are nearby. They are fast swimmers and have sharp teeth. They will often pick at one piece of bait for an extended time before fully eating it. During winter, they leave the surf zone and head offshore.

Louisiana's state-record Florida pompano weighed 8½ pounds and was caught by Buddy Pons in December 1969. Mississippi's state-record pompano weighed 4 pounds, 15.7 ounces. Jack Alexander caught this fish on Feb. 9, 2002. ▪



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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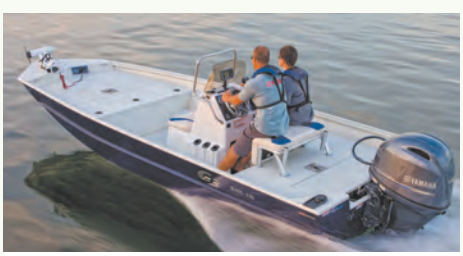
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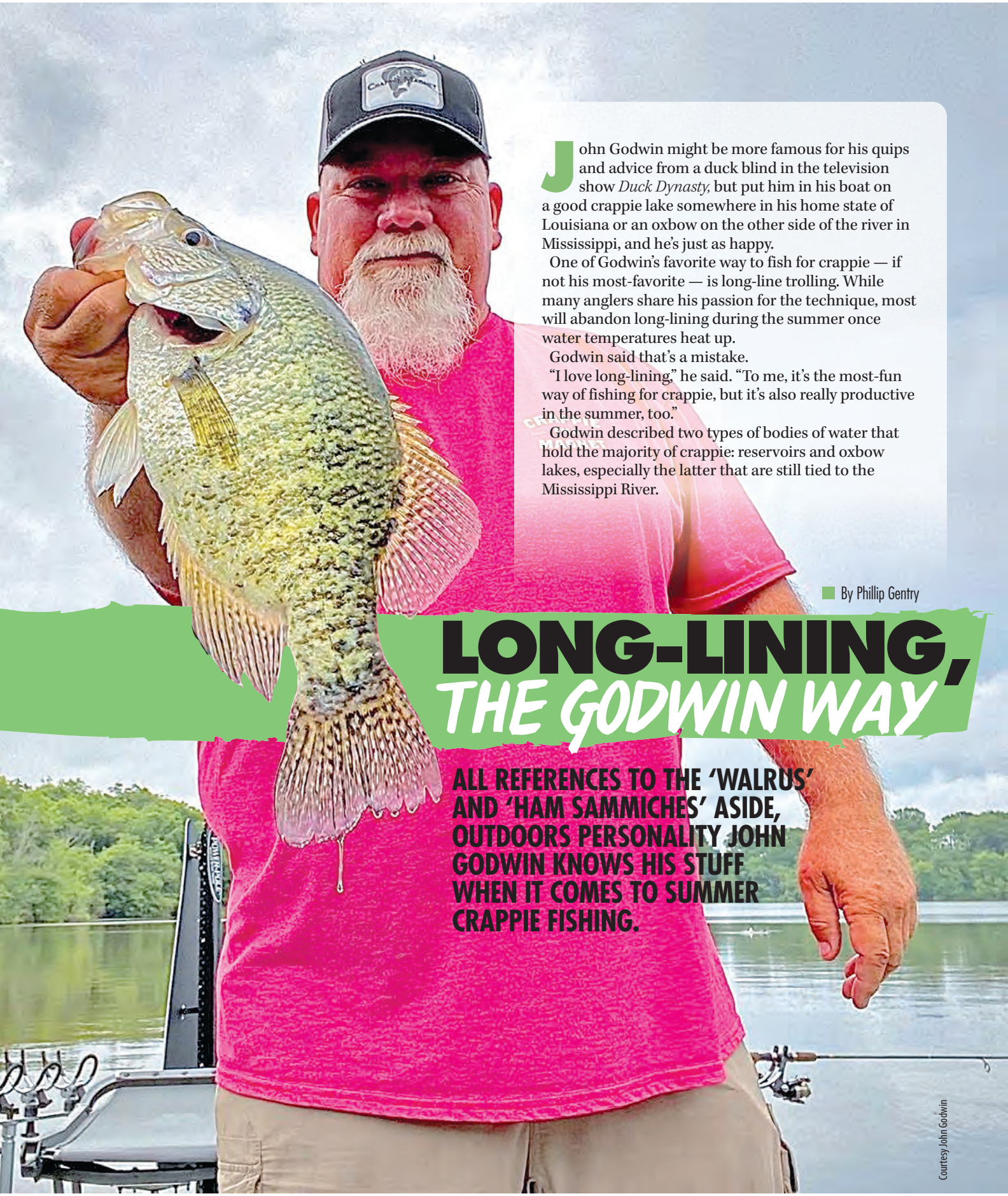
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John Godwin might be more famous for his quips and advice from a duck blind in the television show *Duck Dynasty,* but put him in his boat on a good crappie lake somewhere in his home state of Louisiana or an oxbow on the other side of the river in Mississippi, and he's just as happy.

One of Godwin's favorite way to fish for crappie — if not his most-favorite — is long-line trolling. While many anglers share his passion for the technique, most will abandon long-lining during the summer once water temperatures heat up.

Godwin said that's a mistake.

"I love long-lining," he said. "To me, it's the most-fun way of fishing for crappie, but it's also really productive in the summer, too."

Godwin described two types of bodies of water that hold the majority of crappie: reservoirs and oxbow lakes, especially the latter that are still tied to the Mississippi River.

By Phillip Gentry

LONG-LINING, THE GODWIN WAY

ALL REFERENCES TO THE 'WALRUS' AND 'HAM SAMMICHES' ASIDE, OUTDOORS PERSONALITY JOHN GODWIN KNOWS HIS STUFF WHEN IT COMES TO SUMMER CRAPPIE FISHING.

Courtesy John Godwin

WHITE CRAPPIE: ON THE MOVE

"On reservoirs in the summer, white crappie will roam around and chase bait," he said. "If you want to catch a black crappie, you gotta troll across the tops of the brush piles, but white crappie stay more out in the open."

Godwin theorized that by August, thermoclines have set up, holding baitfish higher in the water column. It's not unusual, he said, to go out first thing in the morning or late in the evening and see schools of baitfish dimpling the surface. He said crappie will often suspend below the baitfish, and long-lining lets him put his baits between the baitfish and the crappie.

"The fish are shallow, so I'm not going to use anything heavier than a 1/16-ounce jighead, and a lot of times, I'll even use a 1/32-ounce jighead," Godwin said. "I like the Fin Spins for long-lining in the summer; that extra flash from the blade really helps the bite."

Godwin sets up his Sea Ark boat with eight rods. On each side of the boat, he will start with the shortest rods toward the stern and the longest rods closer to the bow. He uses a 10-foot B'n'M Duck Commander trolling rod closest to the stern, followed by a 12-footer and a 14-footer after that.

"It seems like with the fish so shallow, you tend to push them out to the sides of the boat. That's why I like the longer trolling rods," said Godwin. "I even started using a 16-footer all the way up. It's a B'n'M Prostaff trolling rod. It seems like those outer rods end up catching all the better fish."

Godwin looks for places that are showing bait on the surface, but he also has some spots that he fishes because it seems like they always hold baitfish in the summer. He said there's no real rhyme or reason to it, but he likes to know the bait is there or he won't catch many crappie.

"It's hard to see the bait on the graph; they're so high up in the water," he said. "The 1/32-ounce jigs will get down to about 3 feet when you pull them at one mile per hour, and the 1/16-ounce jigs will get to about 6 feet at one mile an hour. That's using 6-pound test line."

Godwin said his top pick of baits are Crappie Magnet's Slab Curlies, and that his color choices are typically based on water clarity. His favorites in clear water are purple/chartreuse and a color called "sho nuff" that he describes as the "monkey milk" color with a chartreuse tail.

Godwin said river lakes are still high this year, and as they heat up, the shad will also come to the top.

"I don't understand why," he said. "They don't form thermoclines like the reservoirs, but the bait will be right on the surface, so I fish those lakes the same way I do the reservoirs."

Godwin generally targets flats that may be 14 feet deep on some lakes and deeper on others.

DEVELOPMENT OF LONG-LINING >



Courtesy John Godwin

John Godwin said crappie will suspend just below bait on the surface in many thermocline reservoirs and oxbow lakes, and to be careful not to troll under the fish.

DEVELOPMENT OF LONG-LINING

It's hard to argue about when long-lining first came into existence. Fishermen have been trolling hooks behind their boats for ages. Long-line trolling probably came about with the advent of long rods to space out offerings and give crappie a variety of baits in the wake of the boat.

When long-lining for crappie became popular, Godwin fell in love with the tactic and points to it as his go-to tactic any time crappie are suspended and chasing baitfish.

"Long-lining works best when fish are holding near the surface," Godwin said. "Long-lining also works better when crappie are relating to roving schools of baitfish than when specifically relating to structure."

Like slow, vertical trolling, aka tight-lining, long-liners may follow a contour line but most likely would be trolling the expanse of a flat. This allows an angler to cover more water as the normal boat speed is twice that of tight-lining.

"Crappie will follow a contour line, like a creek channel, and that's a great place to look for them, but active, feeding fish are often all over a flat chasing baitfish. That's the best situation to find crappie when you're long-lining," Godwin said.



Phillip Gentry *is a freelance outdoor writer and photographer who says that if it swims, walks, hops, flies or crawls he's usually not too far behind.*

TROLLING VARIABLES >

Phillip Gentry





Courtesy John Godwin

Long-line trolling specifically targets suspended fish that are chasing bait high in the water column. **ABOVE:** Godwin's choice of rods are B'n'M Duck Commander trolling rods. He said the further out to the side of the boat you can get, the better the big fish like it.





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TROLLING VARIABLES

For those not familiar with long-lining, the depth a bait is presented is a function of boat speed, the amount of line out, the weight of the jighead and line diameter. Each factor plays a part in how deep jigs will swim and whether you reach the level at which crappie are suspended.

Taking a page from Long-Lining 101, a good rule of thumb is to suggest trolling a 1/16-ounce jighead on 6-pound line the distance of an average cast — 40 to 50 feet — behind the boat. The remaining variable then becomes boat speed. Speeding up will bring the bait up in the water, and slowing down or momentarily stopping the boat will cause the jigs to fall.

Courtesy John Godwin



Godwin said to catch black crappie, he'll troll across the tops of brush piles, while white crappie prefer to be more out in open water.

Similar results can be achieved by making sharp turns when trolling instead of just running straight lines back and forth across a stretch of water.

"To be good at depth control means you spend a lot of time pulling jigs," Godwin said. "It's also gonna work different on my boat than it does on someone else's boat, so you need to figure out what works best on your boat."

His advice was to find a 10-foot deep flat with a level bottom and experiment with different variables to find what combination will put you occasionally skimming bottom, then work from there on getting your boat dialed in for the line you use, the rod holder setup you have, and the various jigheads and baits you pull.

Godwin admits there might be one thing he likes better than long-lining for summer crappie.

"I like eatin' em," he said, grinning. ▪

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Phillip Gentry

You might be surprised at the variance in actual weights of jigheads compared to what's stated on the package. A gram scale can show the differences.



WEIGHING IN

Crappie anglers are familiar with using jigs that weigh considerably less than typical bass jigs. Popular jig weights for crappie include 1/32-, 1/16-, and 1/8-ounce, but those weights can vary considerably from one manufacturer to another, sometimes even one jig to another.

"I've seen jigs marked 1/16-ounce that weighed anywhere from 1.5 grams to 2.1 grams," said tournament angler Kent Driscoll. "That's why I also ways carry a gram-scale with me and measure each jig individually before I put it in the rotation."

Driscoll said what may seem to be a negligible difference in weight can make a lot of difference in the depth that jig will swim when it's pulled behind the boat. Add to that the weight and buoyancy of the jig's body, and most anglers have no real clue what depth they're fishing.

"The best water for long-line trolling is going to be stained, which means reduced visibility," he said. "A crappie may only be able to see the bait at a distance of about 2 feet. Another factor — and any good angler knows — is a crappie always feeds in an upward position and will completely ignore a bait that passes just 6 inches under its nose."

Using a gram scale, which can be found at most hardware stores that sell precision tools and equipment for around $15, instead of having only three or four choices of jig weights, he can broaden that range to around a dozen. The subtle weight difference allows him to hone his swimming depths to get around a foot of depth tolerance, which can and has made a huge difference in the number of bites he gets. ▪

SPORTSMAN OF THE MONTH >

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HUNTER OF THE MONTH

John Kilpatrick

John Kilpatrick of Arcadia killed this double-banded greenhead in Lincoln Parish on Jan. 31, 2021. The duck was banded in Wisconsin in August of 2019, and one of the bands was a reward band worth $65. It was retrieved by Kilpatrick's 10-year-old, 3-legged black Lab, Bet.

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Photo taken pre-pandemic

ANGLER OF THE MONTH

Mallory O'Brien Talley

Mallory O'Brien Talley had an awesome Memorial Day weekend catching red snapper out of Port Fourchon in her family's 32-foot Gaudet catamaran. It was a great trip to open up the season.





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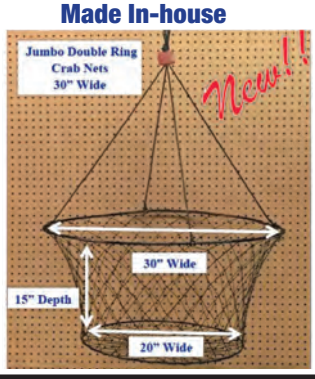
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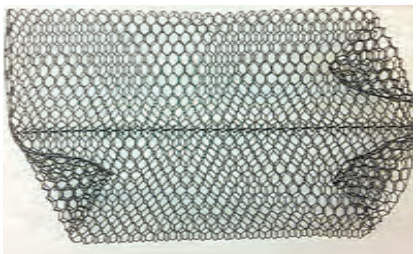
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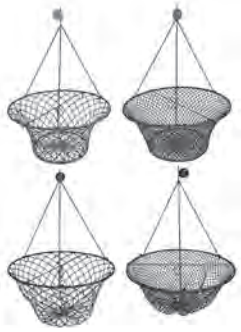
Trawls



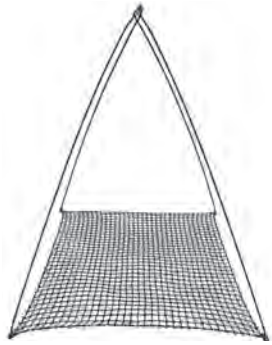
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KEEPING BAIT OR FISH ALIVE IN A BAIT TANK OR LIVEWELL CAN BE A CHORE DURING THE HOT SUMMER, BUT THERE ARE WAYS THAT ANGLERS CAN PUT THE ODDS OF SURVIVAL IN THEIR FAVOR.

Whether the fish you're trying to keep healthy are in the bait tank or in the livewell, there are several tricks that you can use to keep them alive — or at least tasty if the final destination is the table — and they all boil down to one thing: increased oxygen levels.

Once you understand how to control and manipulate oxygen levels in your livewell or bait tank, you can increase the fish's intake of oxygen, which will keep them alive longer.

Here are seven ways to help control and maintain oxygen levels in your holding tanks.

OXYGEN TANKS >

By Phillip Gentry

LIVE OR LET DIE?

OXYGEN TANKS

Higher water temperatures in summer reduce the dissolved oxygen that fish need to survive. By inducing concentrated oxygen into the water rather than just air, which is only 16% oxygen, higher dissolved-oxygen levels can be maintained.

Supplied oxygen systems work through the use of a compressed air tank, a gas flow regulator and an air stone to disperse the oxygen in the water.

A portable oxygen system can be obtained online through retail tackle warehouses or bought at some high-end bait and tackle stores. Oxygen refills can be obtained at welding supply houses, medical supply stores or these same tackle shops.

"A lot of anglers are scared of using oxygen bottles because they believe there is a risk of fire or explosion," said crappie pro Kent Driscoll, "but there's no need to be. My portable tank has kept bait alive through the hottest summer days as well as fish in the livewell during a tournament."

WATER AERATION

Almost everyone who fishes has seen portable air pumps that hang on the side of a cooler or minnow bucket and make bubbles in the water. While these devices work in more-comfortable temperatures, they don't offer a lot of assistance when the air and water temperatures are above 80° F.

Part of the problem with the "bubbler" is that the air bubbles are too large to allow much oxygen transfer to the water. In order to saturate water with oxygen, especially warmer water, those bubbles must be smaller and suspend longer in the water.

Several companies that manufacture baitwells and livewells make air venturi systems that can be retrofitted to your livewell or built-in bait tank. The venturi systems both circulate water and, in creating a vacuum to move water, are able to suck air into the pump and finely mix the air with the water as it is pumped.

This mixing process produces exponentially more and much smaller bubbles, meaning more surface area for the transfer of oxygen between the air and water. The pumping process also creates a water flow that holds the tiny bubbles suspended in the water for longer, allowing more time for the transfer.

INSULATION >

A well aerated, circulating livewell can be conditioned to keep bait or your catch alive and healthy, even on the hottest days.



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INSULATION

Several years ago, the cooler market was saturated with products offering denser insulating properties. The goal was to keep items stored in the cooler at colder temperatures for longer periods of time.

The same insulation principle can greatly assist with keeping livewells and baitwells designed to hold either bait or fish working at higher efficiency.

To check the insulating properties of your livewell or bait tank, you need to get a peek behind the well. In some cases, there may be no insulation at all. This problem will be compounded if the material used to construct the well is metal rather than plastic, due to metal's ability to transfer heat. An uninsulated, metal livewell on a 90-degree day offers little more than a way to slow-cook your catch as soon as it's deposited in the tank.

A fiberglass repair shop may be able to add insulation to your built-in livewell or bait tank by inserting a nozzle into an opening behind the well and injecting some expandable insulation behind the walls of the tank.

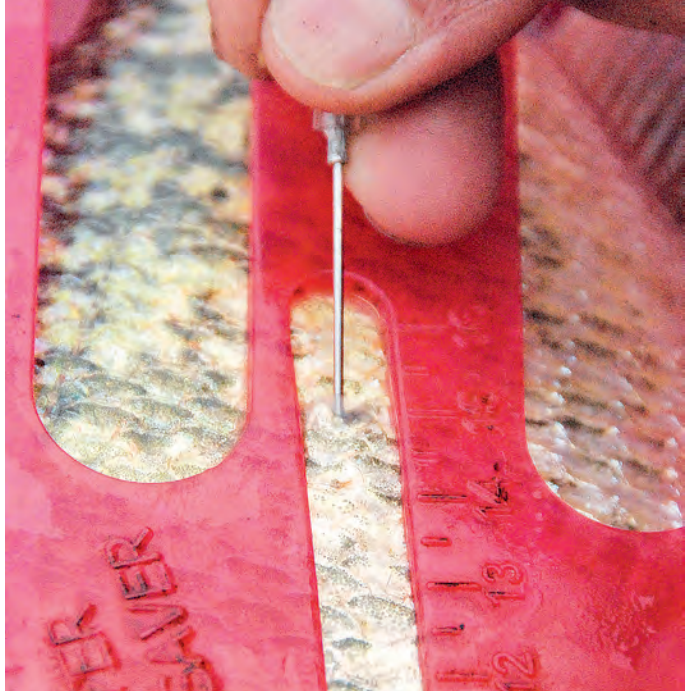
Another, albeit more-expensive option, is to replace your livewell tank with one offering better water-insulating qualities.

FIZZING

Often, fish caught during the summer are rapidly retrieved from deep water before their air bladders have time to adjust. "Fizzing" a fish will allow it to orient itself upright in the livewell rather than floating on its side, where only one gill can reach the water. Fizzing involves mechanically ventilating the air bladder, releasing the excess pressure so that the bladder will work normally without being inflated to the point of bursting.

Ronnie Capps, a crappie pro, designed a measuring device,





Using B'n'M's Crappie Saver and a hollow needle to deflate the swim bladder of a fish caught from deep water will help the fish stay alive in the livewell or after being released. **OPPOSITE:** Fish soaking in warm water on a hot summer day in an uninsulated, metal livewell will turn great tasting meat into mush. Come prepared by bringing extra ice and bring fish to be kept straight from the water to a cooler full of ice.

now made by B'n'M Poles that shows the angler where to insert a needle in order to ventilate a crappie's swim bladder. It's called the Crappie Saver.

"Take the fish and place it head first into the Saver," Capps said. "There's a sliding scale near the head that shows where you would insert the needle. You can get these hollow needles at most veterinary supply places.

"Going in from the tail side, slide that needle under the scale at a 45-degree angle and go straight down. You'll see bubbles come out the other end of the needle, and you can even hear the pressure release. Just let the pressure equalize for about 8 seconds, remove the needle and then you can release it or put it in the livewell, knowing he'll survive until weigh-in."

FIN WEIGHTING

Before fizzing or venting became an available practice for the average angler, a few industrious anglers made fin weights to counterbalance the effect of the overinflated swim bladder. Fin weights are made by wiring an alligator clip to a 2- to 4-ounce sinker. The weights are clipped to the fish's pectoral fins, making it ride upright in the live well.

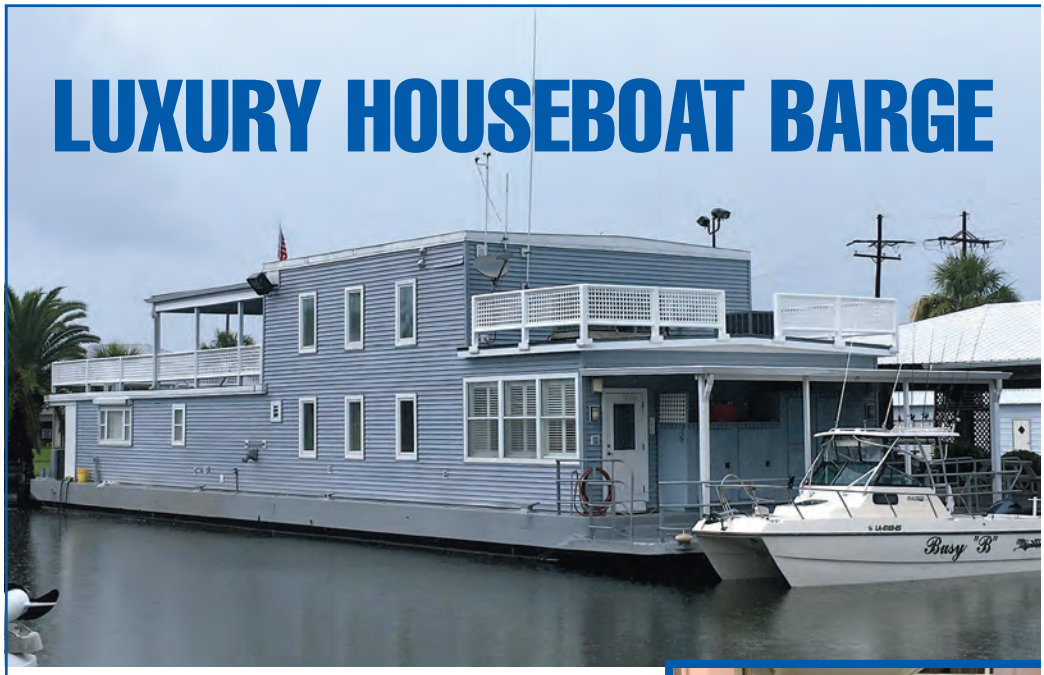
"If you're not comfortable with fizzing, or don't have the needle and stuff, this is a cheap and quick way to keep crappie caught from deep water alive and healthy till weigh-in," said Wilson Roberts, a Mississippi angler. "We used to do it all the time. I probably still got a couple of them rolling around in the bottom of my livewell for those times when I catch a good, deep-water fish.

ADD ICE >



Phillip Gentry *is a freelance outdoor writer and photographer who says that if it swims, walks, hops, flies or crawls he's usually not too far behind.*

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ADD ICE

It's a proven fact that colder water will hold more dissolved oxygen than warmer water. Warm water holds less dissolved oxygen than cold water because the molecules are moving faster, allowing oxygen to escape from the water. Adding ice cools the water in the bait tank or livewell and helps it hold more dissolved oxygen.

"When adding ice, don't use store-bought or any other ice made from chlorinated water, which will only remove oxygen, not add it," said Brad Taylor, an angler from Greenville. "Lake or well water frozen beforehand in milk jugs or 2-liter bottles is a good way to make your own chlorine-free ice."

Another good idea is to purchase a floating pool thermometer to monitor the water temperature. Adding too much ice too quickly can cause temperature shock and kill fish or bait. The ideal water temperature range in a livewell should be between 65° and 75° F. The closer you get to 80°, the higher the mortality rate of fish or bait.



Fish often regurgitate stomach contents or defecate after being caught, keeping tabs on the conditions of your livewell can help your catch stay healthy all day.

STRAIGHT TO THE COOLER

Putting fish in a cooler on ice is not for bait or tournament fish that should be released, but by putting crappie you intend to eat directly on ice, and lots of it, the fish will chill faster and not marinate all day in a warm soup, making the meat much tastier on the table.

"You can tell when fish have sat in a hot live well all day," said John Harrison, who guides crappie fishermen on Mississippi's Grenada Lake. "The meat gets mushy, and the guts will start turning. That gives the fish a really strong taste, and it's a waste of some good-eating fish. All it takes is a little planning to bring some extra ice and put your summer time fish right in the cooler." ▪

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LIVEWELL ADDITIVES

BELOW: Chemicals that can be added to a livewell or bait tank to insure that fish remain healthy typically work by strengthening the protective slime coat and reducing the release of toxins, which calm fish down.

A number of additives are available to assist with keeping fish alive and healthy in your livewell. Before you consider using an additive, make it a point to regularly clean your livewell. Fish often regurgitate and defecate after being caught, in addition to releasing other toxins. If these are allowed to remain in the livewell between uses, they can create bacteria that can quickly harm even healthy fish.

A good, hard rinsing with clean water after every use is the best way to maintain a livewell, with periodic scrubbing using a biodegradeable soap.

Additives typically try to achieve two primary goals: increasing a fish's slime coat and reducing the release of toxins. Increasing slime coat is done by adding electrolytes to the water, which is a fancy way of saying salt. Reducing the release of toxins is a way of calming fish that is done with several different chemicals. Salt still plays a major role, but additional antiseptic compounds are also used.

At the end of the day, a good, clean, well-maintained livewell that has adequate insulation and circulation is hard to beat, but including additives in your bait tank or livewell can help address fish stress levels that tend to compound during hot weather. ■

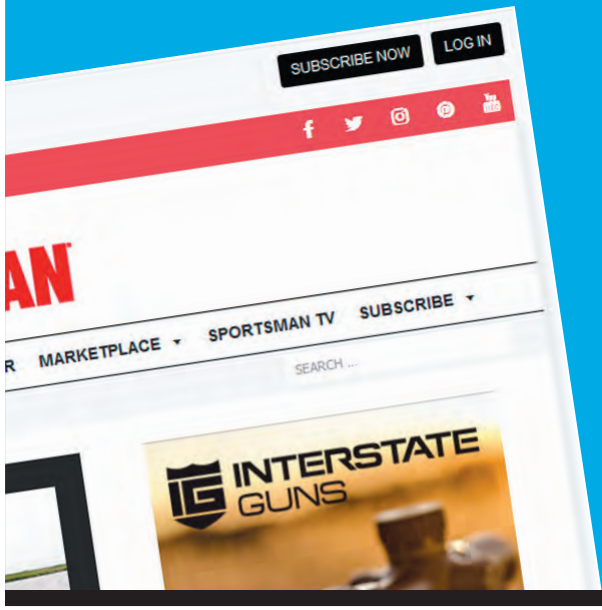


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Harrison Williams caught this bream on the Tchefuncte River recently throwing a Beetle Spin.

TARGET BREAM ON TCHEFUNCTE IN AUGUST

Cover a lot of water, and cast to a lot of cover, for a mess of tasty, summer panfish

By Joel Masson

Long boat rides, 3 a.m alarms, expensive live shrimp and short feeding periods can make targeting speckled trout in August almost feel like work rather than fun.

Instead of fighting all that, catching bream is extremely productive and far more relaxing.

The Tchefuncte River is a great place to target these tasty panfish, and local angler Jeff Bruhl, having fished the place all his life, knows the river like the back of his hand.

Bruhl targets the bream in the main river since the spawn is mostly over.

"You might be able to find some bream beds left, but usually by then, they're pretty much done," he said. "Stick to the main river. It usually has more current, and the water is a little cooler."

With the ridiculous heat of August, fishing in direct sunlight is one of the worst things you can do when trying to catch bream.

"You want to fish under shade, like under a dock or big cypress trees," Bruhl said. "You can fish tree tops and laydowns, especially any kind of tree that has limbs on it that are pretty thick. They'll be in stuff like that too."

Because the majority of the spawn is finished, Bruhl finds fish to be more scattered.

"You're not going to sit up on a bed somewhere and catch a big mess off of one spot," he said. "You're going to have to move and pick off isolated fish."

Bruhl recommends fishing a 1/16-ounce Beetle Spin with a black or green grub trailer. He slow-rolls it around the shady cypress trees or docks.

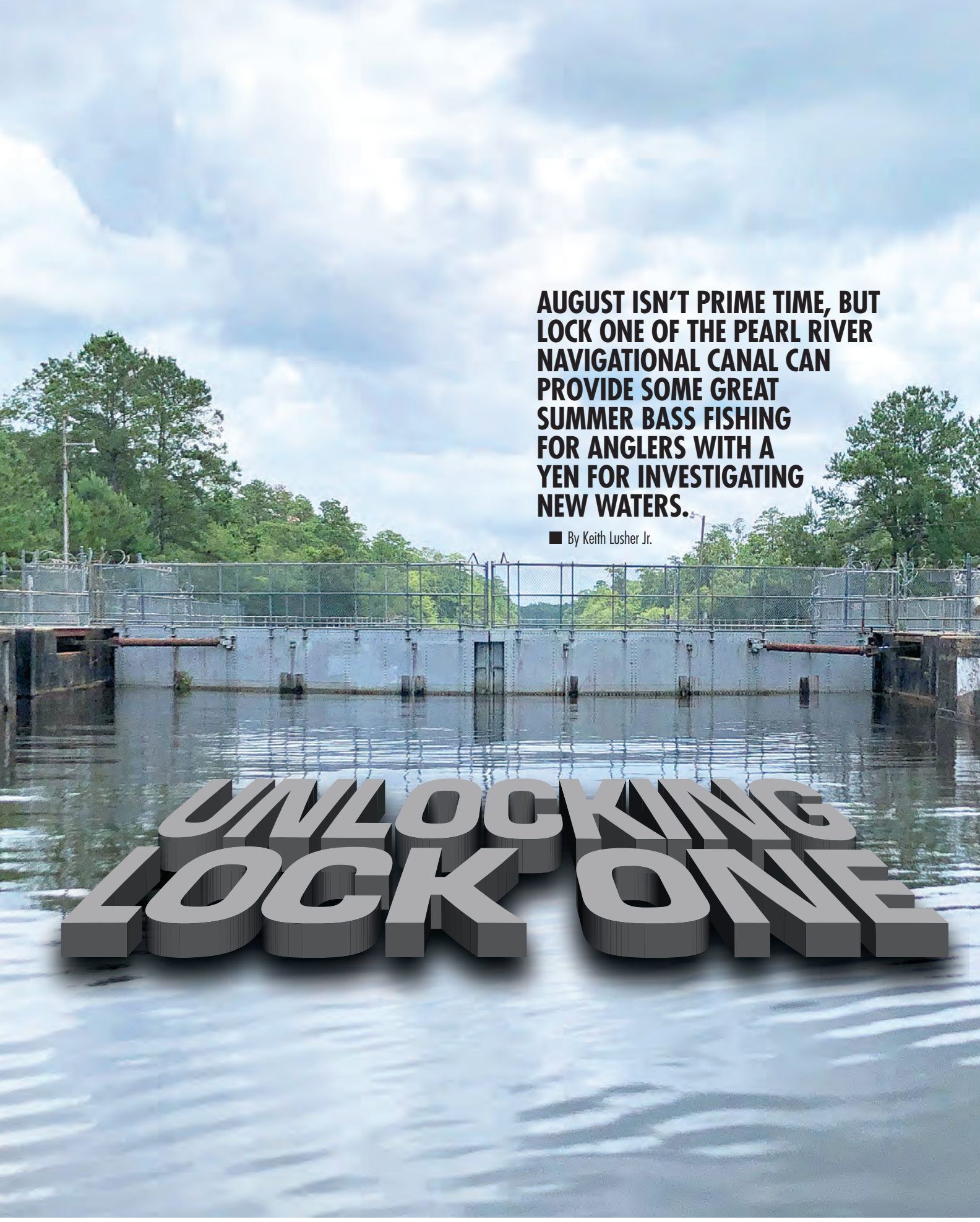
"They still like crickets that time of year, but the problem is, if you don't know where a good concentration of fish are, you'll drown your crickets before you get any bites," he said.

Bream aren't the only things eager to hit a Beetle Spin, according to Bruhl.

"With those Beetle Spins, you'll catch a lot of little bass that time of year, because you've got a spawn April or May, and those bass that have spawned will already be 4 to 6 inches by August," he said. "They grow pretty quickly."

Another great thing with targeting bream this month is that anglers can sleep in.

"I think bream bite all the time," he said. "You do want to have the water moving. That always helps." ▪



UNLOCKING LOCK ONE

AUGUST ISN'T PRIME TIME, BUT LOCK ONE OF THE PEARL RIVER NAVIGATIONAL CANAL CAN PROVIDE SOME GREAT SUMMER BASS FISHING FOR ANGLERS WITH A YEN FOR INVESTIGATING NEW WATERS.

By Keith Lusher Jr.

WHEN IT COMES TO DIVERSITY OF FISHABLE WATER,



Louisiana has a variety of tributaries, lakes and swamps that's second to none, no doubt one of the reasons bass fishing is so popular. Fishermen across the state have been gifted with unique waterways where they can target their favorite fish.

Leading the way in terms of being unique is the Pearl River Navigational Canal, a 20-mile, machine-dug channel originally designed to make it easier for ships to transfer goods from Bogalusa to the West Pearl River. Now solely used for recreational purposes, it comes complete with dams, sand pits and even a shallow waterfall that flows over a sill at its northernmost section near Bogalusa.

The canal is divided into three sections by locks that are used to regulate water levels.

Chad Hartzog of Bush has been fishing the canal for more than 35 years. He is a tournament director for the Liars and Lunkers Club, a group of bass anglers that has been fishing the East Pearl River and Lock One area for years and is partially responsible for the bass population in the canal. After fishing tournaments on the East Pearl River, some fisherman would transport bass back to the Lock One section and release them. Over the years, Hartzog has seen the 12-mile stretch between Lock One and Lock Two develop into one of the best bass-fishing destinations in South Louisiana.

Because the section is "locked," the water flow is minimal, and the clarity resembles trophy reservoirs familiar to bass anglers that fish north Louisiana. While the clarity is a plus to anglers, the still water can pose a problem in August's raised water temperatures and the lack of moving water.

While Lock One can be a challenge to fish in summer, there are some adjustments anglers can take advantage of that will all but guarantee fish.

FIND VEGETATION

When breaking down Lock One, anglers will notice one thing right away. The southern end is loaded with grass, a result from the soft substrate that makes up the bottom. As you head north, the bottom becomes more sandy — less beneficial for aquatic growth.





Angler Chad Hartzog has been fishing the Pearl River Navigational Canal since the mid-1980s. He likes the specific challenges the waterway offers. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Chris Basey battles a largemouth bass in the Lock One section of the canal.

WIND+RAIN=TIDE

Anglers who fish southeast Louisiana will tell you that tidal movement plays a crucial role in stirring up bait, which in turns gets the fish biting. In the case of Lock One, however, there is no tidal movement. The only current comes from the wind or the rain. Keeping this in mind will pay huge dividends.

"It makes a world of difference," Hartzog said. "If there's a little breeze blowing or an afternoon shower it breaks up the surface of the water and makes the fish more aggressive. Nine times out of 10, the side with the ripples on the surface is going to produce more fish," Hartzog said.

FISH HEAVIER >



Keith Lusher Jr. *owns and operates NorthshoreFishingReport.com. He is the outdoor writer for the Slidell Independent Newspaper and host of the Northshore Fishing Report on WWL Radio. Lusher can be reached at Keith@NorthshoreFishingReport.com.*

"On the southern end of the canal there's a lot of vegetation. Matted up coontail, hyacinths, duckweed and lily pads are all growing thick around this time of year," Hartzog said. "This forms canopies that the bass like to get under and cool off a bit."

His favorite way to target fish hunkered down under grass mats and lilies is to pitch a craw or beaver-style lure. Hartzog prefers green pumpkin or black/blue baits with a 1-ounce tungsten sinker pegged above a 5/0, straight-shank flipping hook on 50-pound braid.

"I like to be able to outmuscle these fish, and the braid comes in handy when ripping them out of the grass," Hartzog said.





FISH HEAVIER

Fishing deeper is a no-brainer for anglers targeting August bass. Getting your lure to the bottom is more important than in spring or fall. As the day wears on and temperatures rise, Hartzog recommends fishing heavier, but don't make the mistake of associating heavier with bigger. Hartzog likes to use smaller, more-finesse baits like a Zoom Fluke Jr. — with a bit of south Louisiana ingenuity.

"After threading the bait onto the hook, I insert a small finishing nail right alongside the hook to give it extra weight," he said.

The head on the nail serves as an anchor that keeps it embedded in the plastic. The added weight allows the lure to sink faster, and Hartzog is able to cast farther without having to use a larger lure.



FISH DEEP

Avoiding the urge to beat the bank is a psychological problem for which some bass anglers are still in therapy. Hartzog said as much as you want to cast up onto the bank, don't.

"I like beating the bank as much as the next guy, but the fact is, these fish aren't going to be right up against the bank when the water temperature is 90 degrees,"

OPPOSITE PAGE: To reach bass holding under heavy surface vegetation, Chad Hartzog will pitch or flip a soft-plastic lure Texas-rigged with a 1-ounce, tungsten sinker.

said Hartzog, who positions his boat twice as far from the bank as normal, then makes long casts near the shoreline.

"Pay attention to where you catch your first fish, then hone in on what depth the bass are holding," he said.

After doing this, Hartzog positions his boat over that depth range so he can make long, parallel casts off the front of his boat, maximizing the time the bait is in the strike zone.

While the majority of the canal averages 8 to 10 feet deep, Hartzog said there are holes more than 20 feet deep in certain spots. It's these holes that can make a huge difference when locating bass that are in search of cooler water. When fishing the deep holes, Hartzog uses a chartreuse/blue Bandit 200 crankbait.

If you've never fished Pearl River Navigational Canal, Hartzog recommends try it at least one time. While August doesn't rank high on most bass fishermen's lists, taking these tips into account should make a difference in at least a few bass when fishing Lock One. ▪

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LEAVE THE LIGHT ON FOR CANEY LUNKERS

Night-fishing is the ticket to connect with lake's biggest largemouth bass

By Kinny Haddox

The legend of Caney Lake's spring lunkers is well known. Cold water, spawning bass roaming the shallows and lots of fishermen on the lake leads to a steady stream of big bass coming to the scales. But in the heat of summer, things are different.

You might say as different as night and day.

The best way to sneak up on Caney's double-digit bass now is to catch them when the bright light of the summer sun dips below the treeline, the water cools and the fish decide a good moonlight dinner is in order.

"There's no question about it; the best time to catch a big fish on Caney in the summer months is at night," says veteran angler Sontus Mitchell of Ruston. "The fish may not even want to even move during the day, but when it gets dark, they'll get into feeding mode."

Because of the night bite, the Jackson Parish lake has become home of almost weekly night tournaments. It usually takes a pretty big bass and stringer to cash in, according to Mitchell, who recently landed a 10.61-pound largemouth to win the big-bass pot in one of those events.

When it comes to fishing at night and big bass in August, Mitchell said the most important thing to note is that often the fish don't necessarily go anywhere at night, especially if food is available their daytime hangouts.

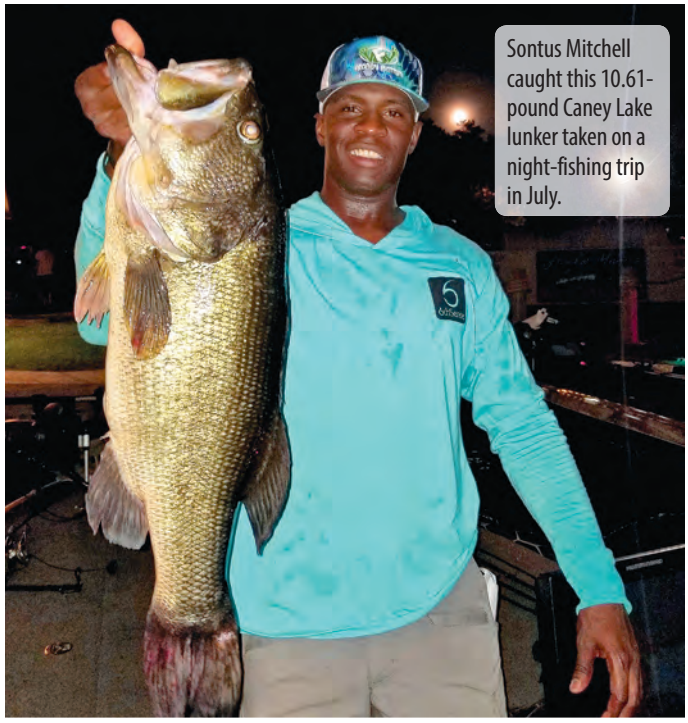
DON'T IGNORE DAYTIME SPOTS

"You can catch big bass at night on the same humps where you may see them on your electronics but can't catch them during the day," he said. "They will get on the tops of the humps in brush piles or around grass. If there is food there, the main difference at night is, they are not so lethargic, and they'll feed. But the big ones don't feed every day or night in this heat."

Some of the big bass that aren't far from shore might swim up and feed in shallower grassbeds. On occasion, anglers will land big bass close to the bank chasing shad. That's especially true around a boat dock with a bright light and plenty of grass, Mitchell said. You'll find lots of smaller bass there, too, but remember, a "small bass" on Caney is a 5-pounder.



One of Sontus Mitchell's main weapons for Caney Lake's August bass is a Zoom Ol' Monster worm in junebug red.



Sontus Mitchell caught this 10.61-pound Caney Lake lunker taken on a night-fishing trip in July.

GO BIG WITH LURE CHOICES

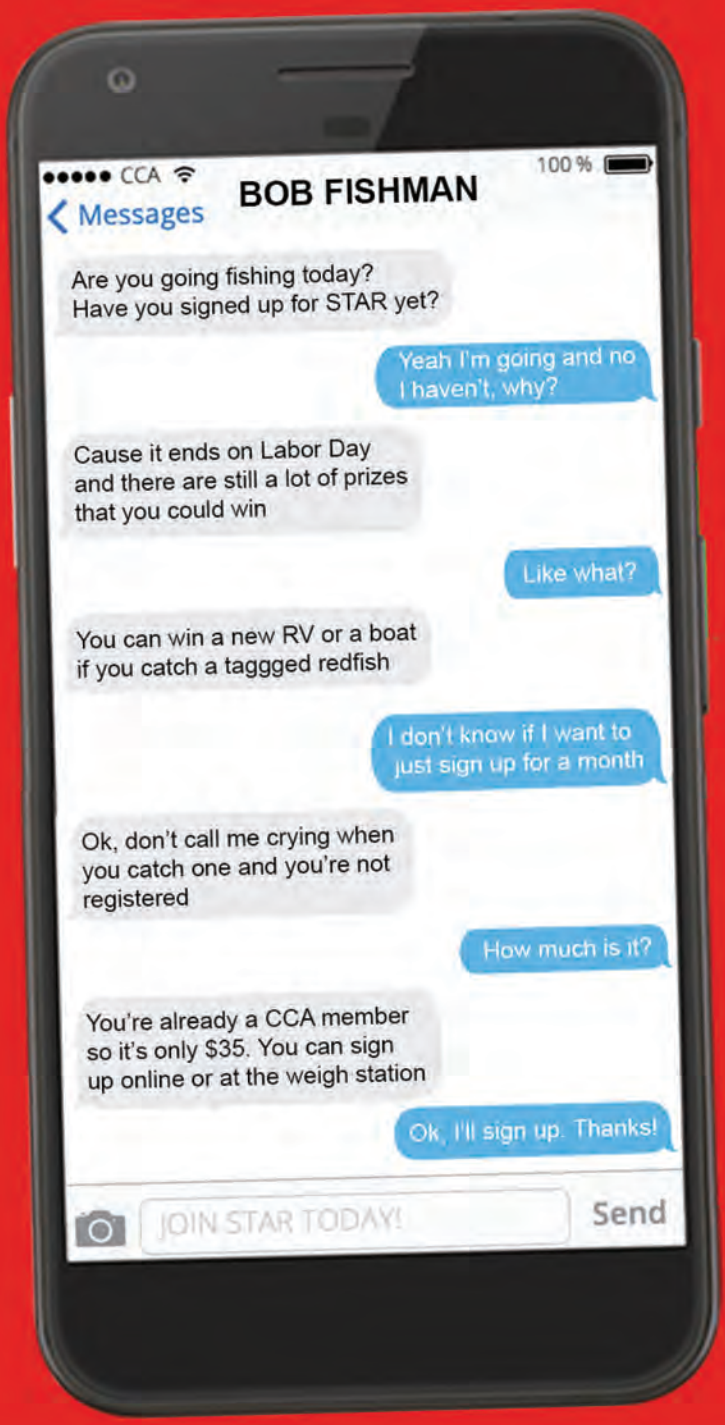
Mitchell's go-to August baits are big, plastic worms, but he also catches bass on crankbaits, spinnerbaits and bladed jigs. The one thing they all have in common is color — he fishes dark colors, with the exception of extremely bright, moonlit nights. Then, he will fish a white crankbait then because there is enough light in the water to give the bait some flash.

His No. 1 choice is a Zoom Ol' Monster worm in black or dark junebug. Other favorite worms include the Strike King Rage Tail and 6th Sense Ridge Worm. He also fishes a black bladed jig like a 6th Sense Jack Hammer or the Strike King Thunder Cricket. Each of those lures gives off a distinctively different sound in the water, and it can make a difference on different days. He also uses a black Stroker spinnerbait.

Mother Nature can help or hurt your night-fishing at Caney in August. If it is dead still, the bite is tougher. With a little wind and chop on the water, it seems to bring the lake to life, Mitchell said.

Boating safety is a must when night-fishing. Mitchell reminds anglers that you don't just need your boat lights on when the motor is running, but at all times. Since the lake is basically an open-water lake, anglers often run fast from point to point across the lake using landmarks or GPS. If you are sitting out on one of the mid-lake humps and don't have lights on, the result could be tragic. Mitchell also recommends using a headlamp so you have a light available without having to get up and look for it. Anglers should also keep their boats well organized and free of clutter to prevent tripping and falling into the lake. He recommends setting up all your tackle and gear before it gets dark so you can find it easily. ▪

TOLEDO BEND >



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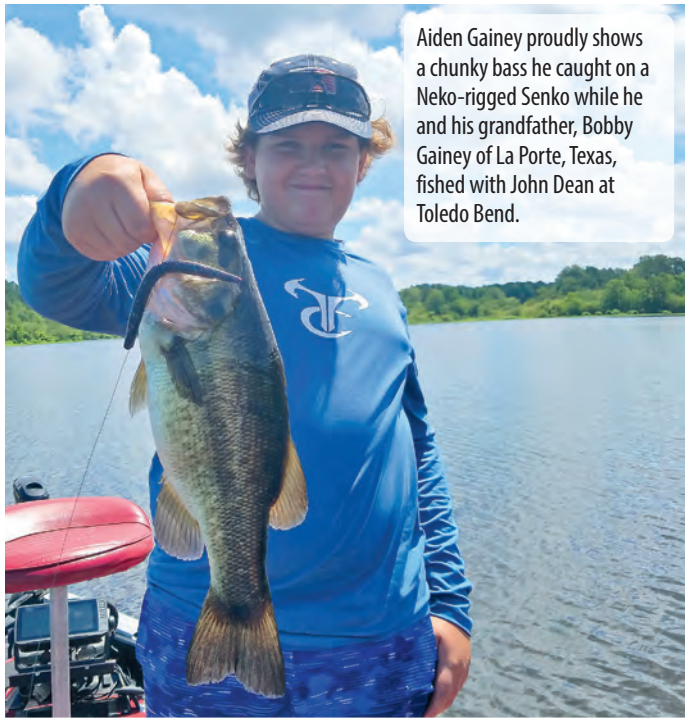
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HIGH WATER LEVEL PUTS TOLEDO BEND LARGEMOUTHS IN SHALLOW COVER



Aiden Gainey proudly shows a chunky bass he caught on a Neko-rigged Senko while he and his grandfather, Bobby Gainey of La Porte, Texas, fished with John Dean at Toledo Bend.

By John Dean

Normally at this time of year, I'd be talking up targeting deep water for a consistent bass bite at Toledo Bend. But this has been anything but a normal year, and heck, what's been normal for nearly two years? Coronavirus pandemic concerns aside, this year, there's been an ice storm that pushed back the bass-fishing calendar 1 to 1½ months, tornadoes, floods and heavier than usual, torrential rains.

The combination has left this great border lake just 4 inches below full pool in July. That's pretty much unheard of, the lake being 99.4% full now, for goodness sake.

I don't mind a bit. What that does is add something to the playing field for late July and, I'm sure, August, because heavy rains seem to be with us for the unforeseeable future. The tropical forecast was for an active season, and that brings more rain.

Why don't I mind if the water stays above full pool, which is 170.0? That means I can fish like I prefer to fish, even though it's late summer. Sure, it's hard to predict, but I'm going to go out on a limb and say the rainfall and any tropical system should keep the lake up. That means I'll be targeting the new, expansive, healthy grass that's growing in 6-foot depths and less, early and late, certainly, and depending on conditions, resorting to flipping that matted vegetation I call alligator grass.



MIXED GRASS BONANZA

On a recent trip, I found plenty of hydrilla and milfoil thick in the Blue Lake area. That mixture is available in many areas in 6- to 7-foot depths, but none that I've seen in the main lake so far.

Bream and other baitfish should be in that alligator grass in 4- to 6-foot depths. If bream and baitfish aren't around, don't even bother fishing there (same as offshore). With the water up, well, you know, fish follow water. Bass will be there if the food and underwater vegetation are there.

I'm a shallow-water fisherman. If I can catch them shallow, I'll stay shallow, stay tied to vegetation 3, 5 or 6 feet deep. I'll stay there as long as Mother Nature lets me. It's prime time for plastic frogs, Neko rigs, Tokyo rigs, Senkos and bladed jigs. Top soft-plastic colors for Neko rigs and Senkos are redbug, junebug and plum.

As for plastic frogs, you know how much I love my creation, the Stanley Top Toad. There are times, like recently, when it's been imperative to match the hatch. The baitfish on that recent trip were about 1 to 1½ inches long, so I went to a small SPRO frog in sexy shad with chartreuse stripes along each side. On my fifth cast, a nice one smoked it, and the fun was on. That got my attention real quick.

Tokyo rig? Yeah. I'll put a black/red Speed Craw on and drop it in holes the size of a beer can in the matted grass. I started doing that and catching fish consistently in early July and got broken off by a big 'un in 5 feet of water. I'll flip or punch that Tokyo rig with a ½-ounce tungsten weight on an EWG 3/0 hook.

BIG FISH DEEP, NOT CONSISTENT

Don't get me wrong. I believe the opportunities for bigger bass are in 18- to 25-foot depths around structure. Tournament anglers who rely on their marine electronics know that, but they also realize that they can be over a wad of bass and never get a bite for an hour, come back two hours later, and the dinner bell rings. Out there, it's hard to beat a shad- or bream-colored and chrome deep-diving crankbaits, Carolina-rigged soft plastics, drop-shotted soft plastics and spoons. My priority would be a drop-shotted soft plastic. The same colors — redbug, plum and junebug — apply for the soft plastics.

Crappie fishing is fair to good but it takes a bit more effort to get big numbers, like 50 to 60. Successful fishermen are needing to hit multiple brush piles in 18- to 22-foot depths with artificial jigs, but more and more fish are being caught on minnows, according to some guides. ▪

To set up a guided trip with John Dean, a longtime Toledo Bend guide, call 936-404-2688.

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G.A. CUT PROMISES GOOD AUGUST BASS

Cover, moving water attracts plenty of fish

By Don Shoopman

One person's watery highway can be another's bass fishing hotspot.

Countless boaters use the G.A. Cut to travel from Myette Point boat landing north to Grand Bayou and Bayou Benoit boat landing, and vice versa, to various fishing destinations in that area of the Atchafalaya Basin.

The G.A. Cut, identified on most maps as Lake Fausse Pointe Cut, basically parallels the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee before emptying into Grand Lake west of the Atchafalaya River just past Myette Pointe. As the crow flies, the area is between 25 and 30 miles long.

That makes it a heckuva long bassing hotspot for Damein Clements of Abbeville, a native of Franklin who doesn't mind sharing proven methods to catch bass along the G.A. Cut. Clements started DCFishing in August 2020 and guides in the Atchafalaya Basin and at Toledo Bend.

The G.A. Cut a prime, deepwater cut with a strong current through the western half of the nation's last great overflow swamp. Nevertheless, the fishing pressure is slight, even in August. Bass fishermen are missing out if they neglect the long waterway, Clements said.

"The first place that comes to mind is the G.A. Cut — all the logjams, deadfalls and cuts, moving water, shaded areas," he said.

CLEARER IS BETTER

Clements catches bass in the waterway starting when the Atchafalaya River hits 12 feet at Butte La Rose all the way to 4 or 5 feet at BLR, no matter whether the water's dirty brown or clearer green. The bite gets better and better, however, as the water clarity improves.

"I'd start focusing around 12 feet (at BLR). The fish adapt to the clarity, and the moving water congregates fish around points and logjams," he said. "I'd definitely start focusing on it in the 8-foot (BLR) range, when the backwater areas start dying and the bass move to moving water."

Depth is important. While the G.A. Cut probably averages 20 to 35 feet deep, even when the river stage is 4 to 6 feet, there still are 8-foot depths just off the shoreline on the east and west sides as well as 2-foot depths right up against the bank.

"Yeah, (depth is) important," Clements said. "The main focus should be on eddies of logjams or deadfalls. The fish could be in 2 feet on the bank, where the current break is. It could be 8 feet right outside that."

When the river is higher and the water is dirtier, Clements loves to flip or pitch a black/blue V&M Pacemaker jig with a Swamp Hog soft-plastic trailer, or cast a chartreuse/white Cajun Tackle House bladed jig or chartreuse/black Strike King Squarebill 1.5 or 2.5 crankbait.

Naturally, Clements has some favorite spots along the G.A. Cut where 3-pound class bass and bigger live and help fill livewells in tournaments.



Damein Clements of Abbeville pulled this chunky bass from the G.A. Cut in the Atchafalaya Basin.

Photo courtesy Damein Clements

"One of the best stretches, in my opinion, is right south of Beehive Chute," Clements said. "There's a cluster of islands right outside Miller's Chute. I wouldn't fish more than 40 yards either side of the points. At any given time, they can give up a 3-pounder doing that."

FIND HARDBOTTOMS

Clements shared some secrets that have paid off handsomely. For example, there are a few shell beds and hard sandbars along the way that often hold lots of bass. There is a shell bed inside Crew Boat Chute on the lower end and east of the G.A. Cut. Another hard bottom is outside Miller's Chute.

And, Clements said, "on the other side of Beehive, going toward Benoit on the left side, there's a point, and where it ends is a hardbottom, a shell and sandy point.

"It's something. You can hit a point and in 20 minutes possibly cull your whole limit before heading to the weigh-in. It can be real rewarding."

Another favorite spot is the mouth of the bayou going to Buffalo Cove, where double-digit catches of barfish (yellow bass) and occasional bassing flurries are common.

PUNCH 'EM OUT

If lily pads are piled up on the waterway's log jams and such, Clements prefers a punching rig with a black/blue V&M J-Bug with the top claws pinched off. Soon, he said, he's going to switch to a C-Craw, a soft-plastic bait designed for punching.

"It's going to be my go-to bait for punching," he said.

Clements said he's getting more bites since downsizing his fishing line.

"I'll go as low flipping as 14-pound test with Sunline FC Sniper" and as light as 12-pound line for squarebill crankbaits and bladed jigs. ▪

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LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman



Kajun Boss spinnerbaits are hanging and ready to go at Kajun Boss Outdoors. A model with an orange Colorado blade and gold Indiana blade is one of the most-popular, according to co-owner Marcus Curry of Centerville.

KAJUN BOSS SPINNERBAITS

LOUISIANA PAIR HAS GONE FROM CATCHING BASS TO HELPING ANGLERS

Kajun Boss Outdoors

What began as a hobby to help Marcus Curry of Centerville and Levi Louviere of Franklin catch bass has turned into a small, but growing business to help others catch bass.

Kajun Boss Outdoors entered the fishing tackle industry in the mid-2010s. At first, Curry and Louviere offered tungsten weights, but they soon started making and selling the spinnerbaits on which they caught so many bass in and around the Atchafalaya Basin. Later, they introduced swimbaits.

"Our main deal is spinnerbaits," Curry said. "It's one of the better ones around here. A lot of people catch (bass) on it.

Two of the best would be the ¼- or ⅜-ounce chartreuse/white models with a gold Indiana blade and an orange Colorado blade, Curry said. That orange blade acts like a dinner bell.

"It's a good, all-around spinnerbait in muddy water and clear water," said Curry, who won't get any complaints from Caleb Sumrall of New Iberia, one of the top bass anglers on the Bassmaster Elite Series. A member of the Kajun Boss pro staff, he relies on Curry's spinnerbaits because of their black-nickel hook, light but durable .032-gauge wire and realistic 3D eyes.

Sumrall said it's his favorite spinnerbait, one that gave him one of his highest finishes as a pro, in 2018 on Table Rock Lake in Missouri. He likes to match the blades to the size of baitfish present in the waters he's fishing.

He prefers a white or white/chartreuse skirt, trying to match the brightness to the color of the water he's fishing. If it's dirtier water, he uses a whiter white or a brighter chartreuse, he said.

His Kajun Boss spinnerbaits get a workout on his home water in the Atchafalaya Basin.

"Yeah, in the Basin, you can throw it around wind-blown trees, wind-blown



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.*



Marcus Curry (right), co-owner of Kajun Boss Outdoors, and bass pro Caleb Sumrall of New Iberia hold some big, thick bass they caught on Kajun Boss spinnerbaits.

points, also laydowns, anything near moving water. Drains will be a good place, anywhere you've got water fluctuating out of a drain," he said.

Curry, 37, prides himself on the fact the spinnerbaits are custom-made in a shed behind his home in Centerville. They can mix or match blades — Indiana, Colorado and willow-leaf — as well as silicone skirt colors.

According to Curry, some popular colors other than chartreuse/white are toxic shad, junebug and bream, but they make any color combination with skirts, which have approximately 55 strands.

"Basically, all the different color skirts we make ourselves. That gives us the advantage of doing custom colors, something different," he said.

Kajun Boss spinnerbaits are made with an R-bend instead of a twist eye for the line tie. The size of the wire is a big plus, Curry said.

"It's a lighter gauge. It's a thin wire. It's basically designed to get more vibration out of it," he said.

Are they durable?

"For a .032-gauge wire, yes, 'til you catch a choupique (aka grinnell, bowfin or mudfish) or something like that," he said, chuckling.

Kajun Boss Outdoors also offers spinnerbaits designed especially for fishing at night — a model with an oversized Colorado blade — and for redfish — a single-bladed model adorned with either a silicone skirt or a soft plastic cocahoe.

The spinnerbaits are racking up bass in areas other than Cajun Country, where they are in six stores. The biggest store is the online website.

"We make baits and do orders all over the country, plus Australia and South America. Basically, we sell them all over the world through our online store," he said. ▪

For more information on Kajun Boss spinnerbaits and other Kajun Boss Outdoors products, visit www.kajunboss.com or call 337-277-3937.

BASS CLASS >





Photo courtesy Khristian Rousseve

Shamar Pierre (left) and Khristian Rousseve, two accomplished "sticks" with West St. John High School's fishing team, proudly hoist a limit they caught in a tournament in late May on Lake Verret.

WEST ST. JOHN ANGLERS BLAZE A TRAIL FOR BLACK BASSERS

ROUSSEVE SETS THE BAR HIGH, EARNING COLLEGE FISHING SCHOLARSHIP TO LSU-SHREVEPORT

By Don Shoopman

Boat 109's bass fishermen carved out a niche in history last Nov. 8, when they won a Louisiana High School B.A.S.S. Nation team tournament at Toledo Bend Reservoir.

Khristian Rousseve, a senior, and Shamar Pierre, a junior, representing the West St. John Anglers, won the tournament with five bass weighing 13.39 pounds to put their high school in Edgard on the bassing map and become the first black anglers to win a high-school bass tournament in Louisiana.

Rousseve further stamped his name in the history books six months later when he became the first black student/athlete from West St. John, the River Parishes and Louisiana to sign a college bass-fishing scholarship — with LSU-Shreveport.



Photo courtesy www.lobservateur.com

Khristian Rousseve of Edgard smiles proudly as he signs a letter of intent to LSU-Shreveport. Rousseve, who graduated from West St. John High School, wraps up his high-school fishing career at a national championship in Tennessee the last weekend in July.

According to available records, Rousseve is the second black bass fisherman in the country to earn a college bass-fishing scholarship. C.J. Guest of Shelby, N.C., who signed in August 2017 to fish at Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Ga., was the first. Guest, who graduated from Crest High School, also was a standout in varsity basketball and soccer, as well as an academic high achiever and artist.

Rousseve, 18, has emerged as another pioneer.

A TRAIL BLAZER

"It means a lot to me, the first person in the River Parishes to sign a scholarship. I felt great about it. I worked hard … all the time I put in practicing and all those things," he said.

Rousseve believes fishing major tournaments, in-state and out-of-state, such as nationals on South Carolina's Lake Hartwell earlier this summer, have prepared him for college bass fishing.

While he's skilled with spinnerbaits, bladed jigs and crankbaits, give him a Texas-rigged Senko and he's in "hawg heaven" in Louisiana and anywhere else in the U.S. Ditto for Pierre.

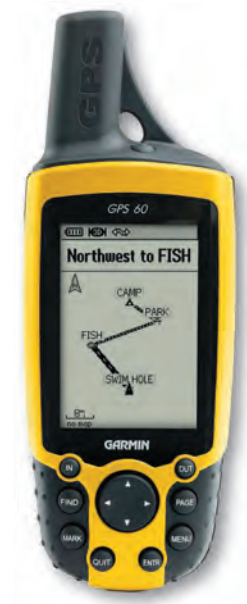
They used Senkos and crankbaits to win the November tournament at Toledo Bend. Rousseve said the teammates got on a pattern late Saturday, the day of the Western Division Fall Qualifier. That pattern — working points with a crankbait — was a winner the next day in the Northern Division qualifier featuring 141 high school teams.

Rousseve and Pierre caught many keepers, including a 3-pound fish, before the mandatory 10-minute lunch break at 11 a.m.

"We were talking that we needed a kicker," Rousseve said. "I caught about a 5-pounder, and that sealed the deal for us."

As a team, it was their lone first-place finish, which they savored.

"It was like the whole (effort) paid off, and we finally got a win. I've been working for that since my eighth-grade year. Hard work paid off," Pierre said.



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Rousseve said, "It was awesome."

Pierre remembers the "adrenalin rush" walking to the scale with their bag of bass.

"You never know if you've won or not," he said.

ONE THAT GOT AWAY

Pierre, the son of Marvin and Shonda Pierre, believes they should have at least one state title to their credit. A big fish that came unbuttoned from his hook cost them that coveted state championship in 2020 at Toledo Bend, he said.

"Literally the last cast of the day, I hooked into a 15-pounder (on a Texas-rigged Senko). I kid you not. He came up and spit the hook. I had him on, I'd say, for a good 6, 7 seconds," he said. "I cried like a baby. We could probably have won that tournament just off that one fish.

> *"It was like the whole (effort) paid off, and we finally got a win. I've been working for that since my eighth-grade year. Hard work paid off.*

"I thought it was a 'goo (gaspergoo, a freshwater drum) at first. Then it came up, and I saw that mouth and said, 'God!' It was a hard time. He (Rousseve) tried to cheer me up. I cried like a baby all the way to the launch. We are fishing against these boys, and there ain't no pushovers. I knew we could have won the tournament."

It would have been one more feather in their caps.

Rousseve, the son of Matthew and Dana Rousseve, signed with LSU-Shreveport the second week of May at the high school's "Class of 2021 Decision Day' ceremony in the school's gymnasium.

Rousseve plans to earn a degree in finance. He has been packing ice, storing ice and delivering ice for years at Duck's Ice, in Edgard, a business opened by his grandfather about 50 years ago.

Brandon Walters, WSJ's athletics director, is oh-so proud of Rousseve, who he said has set the bar high for other local high school anglers.

"He's doing really well. He's really embraced the sport, and he loves it. We're glad to be one of the pioneers in that sport. Bass fishing is an alive-and-running sport at West St. John, and we have some underclassmen still carrying the flag. The future is bright," Walters told L'Observateur, a local newspaper.

Pierre will return in 2021. He wants to be a team leader, like Rousseve. He will fish with Devrin Harper, a junior, in 2021-22.

"We push each other to do our best. I'm happy for him. I know he's going to do good," Pierre said of his partnership with Rousseve. "We learned things from each other. When we first met, we really didn't know much about bass fishing until we met our boat captain, Vernon Silver."

TIP OF CAP TO THEIR CAPTAIN

Rousseve was fishing from shore in a pit called The Crevasse Pond along the Mississippi River levee one day when he met Silver, a former FLW and Bassmaster tournament veteran. Silver gave him red shad Culprits worms, and Rousseve caught an 8-pound, 1-ounce bass on his first cast, Pierre said.

Silver captained the Rousseve-Pierre team throughout its high-school run.

"He's like a second dad to me," Pierre said. "He'll do anything for us, and I'll return the favor. There's never a day I am on the water, never a day with Vernon, that I don't learn something. That's on and off the water."

Pierre and Rousseve, have one tournament left to fish. They qualified for the Mossy Oak Fishing Bassmaster High School National Championship on Tennessee's Lake Chickamauga the last weekend in July.

Rousseve, who considers his home lakes Lake Boeuf and Lac Des Allemands, said he looks forward to his collegiate bass fishing career. After that, his goal is an appearance one day in the Bassmaster Classic.

Pierre's goals include notching more high-school wins and earning a bass fishing scholarship. He plans to study business or engineering after high school. ▪

FIRST-AID ADDITIONS >




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FIRST-AID ADDITIONS

E.R. DOC SAYS INCLUDE ACE BANDAGE, PETROLEUM JELLY IN YOUR ON-BOARD KIT

By Brian Cope

This is a great time of year to walk along an oyster mound in a shallow, inshore creek casting for redfish that are hiding from dolphins. It can also be dangerous. I severed an artery in my leg in such a creek recently, which is a quick way to turn a fun day into a life-threatening one.

Luckily, I was able to stop the bleeding before things got out of hand. Still, it ended my day, required a trip to the emergency room and put me at risk of infection. It also made me vulnerable to vibrio, a flesh-eating virus that is not uncommon in many saltwater creeks throughout the South.

I had gotten out of my kayak to walk along the oyster mound — a mound I'd walked on many times before. The mound sits 3 feet above water at low tide. It's one of those mounds that's solid as a concrete sidewalk. But this time, I stepped on it with my left foot, and the oysters gave way. My left leg sank into the underlying pluff mud all the way to my thigh. My right leg buckled and caught an oyster as sharp as a surgical knife just below my knee.

UNNOTICED WOUND

I didn't even notice the cut right away. Covered in water, salt spray, sunscreen and pluff mud, the blood pouring down my leg didn't register. And wearing dark sun shades and focusing on fishable waters, I also didn't immediately see the blood spurting from my leg with every heartbeat, either. The cut was so clean that I didn't feel a thing.

I'd walked the whole oyster mound, stopping several times to cast, and by the time I looked down to see my injury, the previously sun-bleached, white oyster shell mound now looked like a multi-victim crime scene. A thick, solid line of red marked my journey, and large swaths of crimson showed my every stop. It was bad, and I knew if I didn't stop the bleeding right away, I was going to be in big trouble.

I had a small first-aid kit, but it mostly contained bandages more suited for a child's playground than this. And no matter how much I wiped the blood away before applying the largest bandage I had, it slid away, never making contact with the skin due to the massive amount of blood pumping and pouring from my cut.

A hand towel was stuffed away in my fishing tackle bag. I wrapped it around my leg and held it in place with the lanyard from a pair of fishing pliers. Luckily, this applied enough pressure to stop the bleeding. At this point, I knew the cut was more of an inconvenience than something more serious, but it could have been much worse, and I should have been better prepared.

Once in the emergency room, the doctor gave me a tip I'll never forget. He said most commercially-bought first-aid kits — especially ones that are small enough to fit into a small boat or kayak without taking up too much space — are insufficient for anything more than a headache or a small cut. He suggested two items to always have on a boat that can help you out of most emergencies.

DOUBLE WHAMMY

"An ACE bandage can get you out of most of the trouble you'll run into in situations like this," he said. "Very deep cuts, and ones that result in severed arteries,



Brian Cope

will produce too much blood, too quickly, for any stick-on bandage you'll find in a first-aid kit. But you'll get enough absorption and enough pressure by wrapping that same cut with an ACE bandage almost every time."

He suggested two ACE bandages are better than one. That's in case of multiple cuts, and also, so you can make a bandage out of one and a tourniquet out of the other if necessary. One other item he suggested is petroleum jelly, which is available in thin packages that fit neatly into fishing bags or tackle boxes.

"Petroleum jelly stops the bleeding on some pretty serious cuts. Applying a good dose of that before wrapping will go a long way toward stopping some serious wounds," he said.

STOP THE BLEEDING

He also said for anglers who don't have these items with them if they cut themselves as badly as I did, it's important to stop the bleeding as quickly as possible, with whatever items they have available.

"Any type of absorbent material you can find, like a hand towel or cotton t-shirt or socks will do," he said. "More people than you would imagine will waste time looking for what they consider to be a clean item while they continue to lose blood. Their reasoning is fear of infection from a dirty rag. They need to understand that infection is the least of their worries. We can treat infection. What we can't treat is someone who has lost too much blood to make it to the emergency room in the first place." ▪

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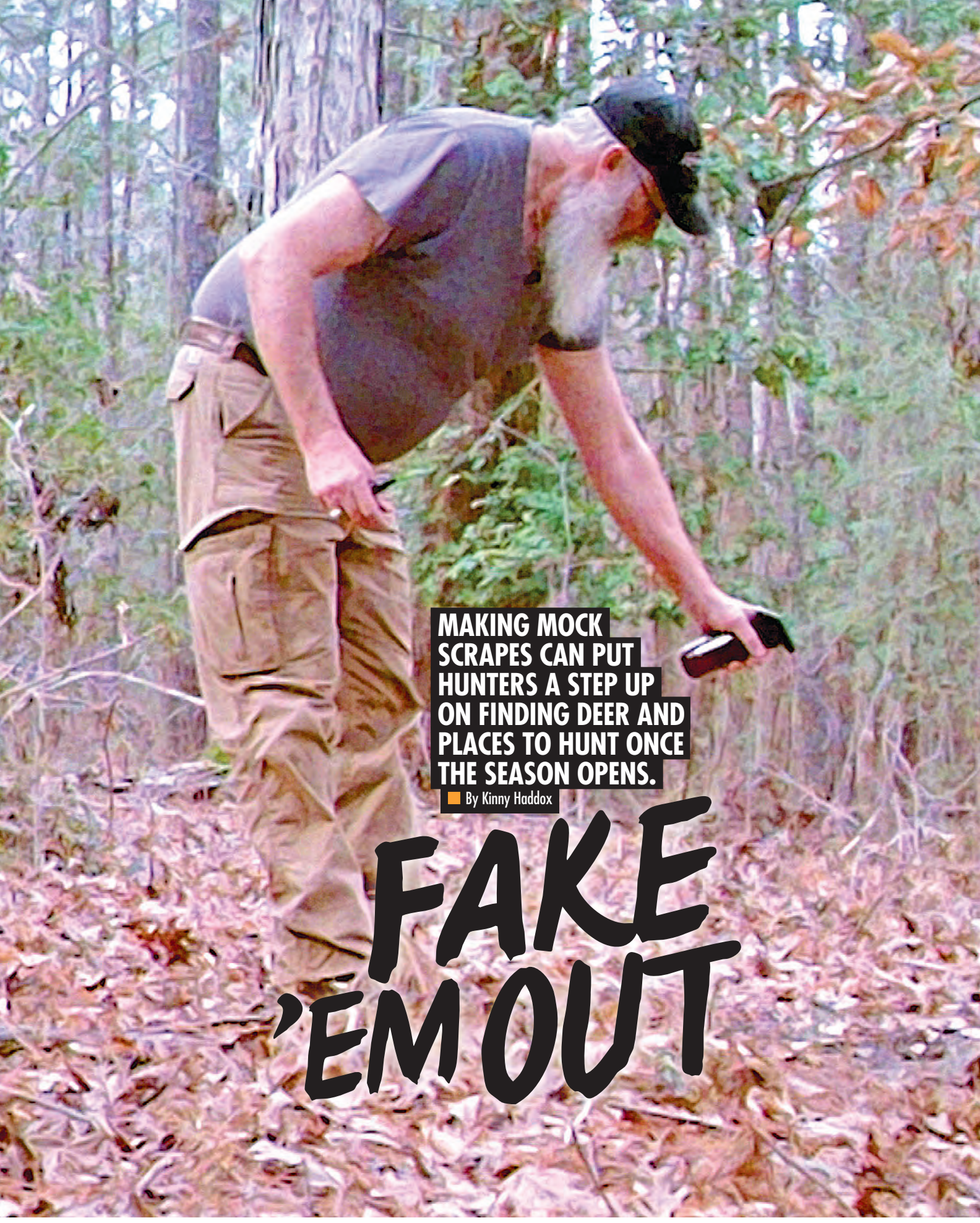
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MAKING MOCK SCRAPES CAN PUT HUNTERS A STEP UP ON FINDING DEER AND PLACES TO HUNT ONCE THE SEASON OPENS.

By Kinny Haddox

FAKE 'EM OUT

EVERY EXPERIENCED DEER HUNTER HAS A FEW GOOD TRICKS UP HIS SLEEVE

to pattern deer and get the best possible action during the season.

Dan DeWitt of Dry Prong is no exception — for the most part. But his tricks are exceptional, especially when it comes to drawing deer out. Among his main tools are mock scrapes.

Why?

"They work," he said. "It's as simple as that."

DeWitt is a master of the outdoors. His father was a full-blooded Creek Indian, hence the name for his approach to deer hunting and the name of his company — Old Indian Tricks — which produces synthetic deer scents.

"I maintain mock scrapes most of the year, but most people don't have time or patience for that because in the spring, they are busy with ball for the kids, fishing or chasing turkeys." DeWitt said. "But that's okay. It's still not too late to use this technique to not only bring more deer into your shooting woods, but to be able to pattern where they are going to come and go."

Basically, making mock scrapes is beating the deer to their own punch. It's a combination of making scrapes and rubs that mimic the same type of trails deer make. DeWitt likes to follow old scrape lines when he puts out mock scrapes because he knows that is an area the deer already like to travel. People think of bucks working scrape lines, but does work them more than the bucks do, except maybe when bucks become more aggressive in the heat of the rut. But they aren't just a "deer season" pattern. Deer use these trails all year because they become comfortable with their surroundings. And scrapes are what DeWitt calls "social arenas for deer" where they come to see other deer and, in the rut, to find a mate.

TWO PARTS >



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

Not only bucks, but does also visit scrapes and deposit scent. Think of them as a whitetail's social media site.



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2012-2020 BEST BROKERAGES

TWO PARTS

An actual scrape consists of two parts — an area on the ground that the buck paws all the debris out of and marks as his territory. It usually comes under a "licking branch" that is anywhere from 4 to 6 feet off the ground, above the actual scrape. Deer chew on these branches and leave their scent by rubbing their preorbital glands on them.

To make a mock scrape, hunters simply take a heavy stick and clear out a 2-foot circle on the ground, put some kind of scent in the scrape and on the limb. A line of these will attract deer.

As DeWitt said, "It works."

But hold on just a second. You can't just go to the woods and start making mock scrapes wherever you feel like it. They have to be deer-worthy.

DeWitt likes to find old scrape lines. Those work best. They are areas deer walk all year, being creatures of habit. Several deer will walk the same lines, although bucks want to be territorial.

"When I find a spot that I like, the first thing I do is make sure it has a good, sturdy, overhanging limb," he said. "I dig out the scrape with a stick and then spray the limb and the actual scrape. I basically am just refreshing what they've already done. They are conditioned to think another deer did it, and they are more likely to come back and visit it more regularly. You can also put in mock scrapes near their old trail lines, and once you get them coming to them, they will become regular paths."

Don't just make one. The more mock scrapes you make — without getting carried away — the better chance you have of bringing more deer in and patterning them on a regular basis. When hunting season approaches, you have to see which ones are being used the most and which areas are producing more deer photos on trail cameras.

"When it comes time to hunt, you simply set up your stand near the ones that are the most active. It's just common sense," DeWitt said. "I always like to hunt out of lean-to or climbing stands so I can be flexible. I like to pick spots on the northeast side of where I think I'll see the deer, because we usually have prevailing winds from the southwest until it gets cold."

Sometimes, there are no trees suitable for stands in an area, so DeWitt hunts out of ground blinds when he has to. The most-amazing part of his strategy is that he hunts primarily on public land, including the Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana or the Homochitto National Forest in Mississippi. He reminds hunters to make sure that they are following rules and regulations, even regarding mock scrapes. Some areas do not let you put anything on the ground to keep deer from congregating in one area. In that case, you can use a dripper or other hanging dispenser over your scrape that you can remove when you leave.

DeWitt does not hunt out of box stands. He said box stands can lead to one of the biggest no-no's of deer hunting.

"If you aren't careful, and you hunt out of the same box stand all the time, you can pattern the deer to know that you are there," he said. "I had a group of hunters in Mississippi who were seeing tons of big deer on their game cameras but never saw them out in the green fields or at the feeders when hunting. What I found out was, they drove their side-by-sides to within 30 yards of the stand, got in the stand and hunted and never went anywhere else. The deer had been conditioned to avoid them. But when we got out and walked the perimeter of where they were hunting, we found buck sign everywhere — rubs, scrapes and trails where the deer were literally walking circles around where they were hunting."

FIRST, BE BAD >

PROOF POSITIVE "IT WORKS"

If Dan DeWitt's success hunting deer along mock scrape lines isn't enough to prove it works, dozens of photos from his trail cameras offer proof positive — and not just pictures of deer, but also of bobcats, coyotes and foxes.

"If you know the outdoors, you know that nothing is more scent-wary than a bobcat or a fox," he said. "If Cooter Juice can fool them into walking the exact line you've laid out for the deer, then it can fool any deer. Case closed." ▪



When scent-wary predators like this coyote follow the trail you've laid out for deer without spooking, you know you're on to something.



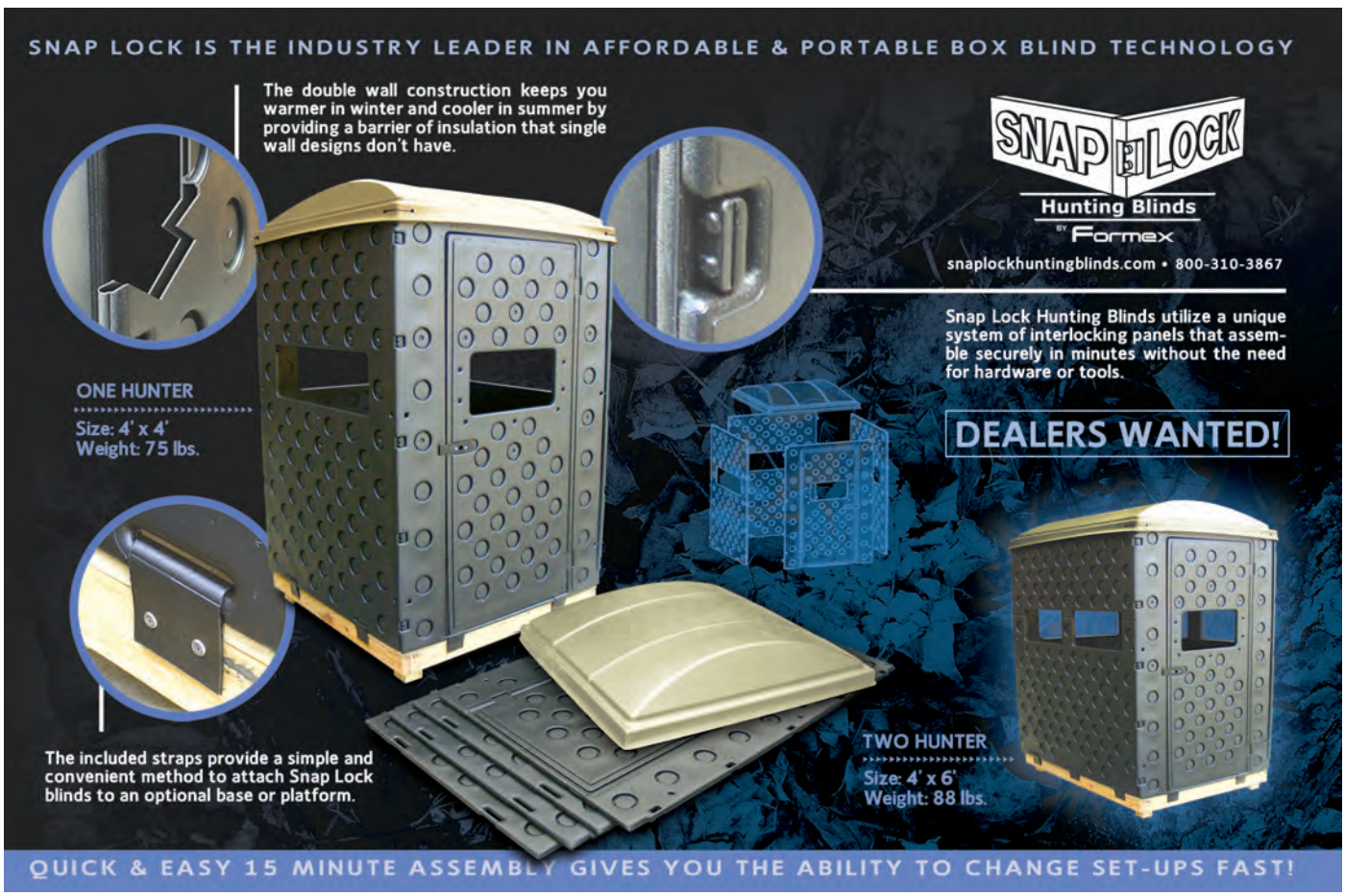
This hunter is proud of her hunting success and "trophy buck," even if it isn't a Boone & Crockett.

EVERY DEER IS A TROPHY DEER

There are folks who won't agree, but Dan DeWitt values deer hunting simply for the experience of being outdoors and the goodness of a useful harvest.

"In my opinion, every deer you kill is a trophy deer," he said. "You spend time preparing and hunting, and you go into the deer's territory. Whether it is a big, old doe or a 6-point buck, it can be a trophy to you. It doesn't have to be a Boone & Crockett.

"It's real simple. When you are blessed with a harvest, fill your freezer with God-given fresh meat and you have met your expectation, it's a trophy. Thank the good Lord for your harvest. If that's a heartfelt blessing, then that is what it is all about." ▪



FIRST, BE BAD

"Reading social media, you might get the impression that there are hundreds of mock-scrape experts out there that just went out and became overnight sensations at it," DeWitt said, "but that is rarely the case. Here's the thing about making and hunting mock scrapes: if you want to become great at making mock scrapes, first, you have to become good at it. And before you can become good at it, you've got to be bad at it. And before you can be bad at it, you have to go out there and try. The short version is the more you put into doing this and learning about it, the more you are going to get out of it."

DeWitt has always known about mock scrapes, but "years of aggravation" finally led him to get serious about them around 10 years ago when he was motivated to develop his own "Cuzz's Cooter Juice."

"I met an old man at an archery trade show who told me synthetics were going to be the future of scents," he said. "I investigated it and started working on a blend that I knew would work, because I tested it over and over again in the deer woods, I started giving it to others, and they found out how good it was and told me I needed to start selling it. So I did. I'm not in it to make a bucket of money. I just want to help people enjoy deer hunting more and be more successful." ▪

You can find out more about Cuzz's Cooter's Juice and DeWitt's other products online at https://oldindiantricksllc.com/ or by following DeWitt on Facebook. You can learn more about mock scrapes on the Mock Scrape Nation Facebook page as well.

DAN DEWITT: A LEGEND



Dan DeWitt

Dan DeWitt isn't just your ordinary, weekend outdoorsman. He won't tell you and doesn't want to talk about it, but the quiet, humble Dry Prong resident is a legend: a member of the inaugural class of the Louisiana Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame.

He has been a professional outfitter and guide for more than 35 years, leading hunters on trips across the globe for deer, turkey, elk, hogs and exotic game. He has been featured on numerous hunting television shows and has taken more than 150 people on their first successful hunts. He directed for 17 years a youth outdoor summer camp and founded Preachers Need Friends, Too, a ministry to carry preachers hunting to help give them rest and relaxation away from their ministries. ▪

STICKS & STRINGS >

Dan DeWitt's success killing deer, like this big buck, along his mock scrape lines is proof positive the tactic works.





HUK ROGUE WAVE FISHING BOOTS

Fishing footware is a huge variable for anglers, but Huk's Rogue Wave fishing boots are made for just about any situation on boat, land or place in-between.

Designed for all-day wear under the worst conditions, they feature an 8mm thick, molded EVA footbed that provides plenty of underfoot cushioning and support. The GRIP-X outsoles deliver unbeatable traction to avoid slips and spills, no matter how slick the deck or dock may become. The rubber and neoprene upper is incredibly durable.

The boots weigh in at 38 ounces per pair, lightweight for fishing boots. They are available in sizes 7-14 (full sizes only) and in three colors: grey, Huk blue and white, and in three camo patterns: Mossy Oak Hydro Standards, Storm and Mossy Oak Bottomland.

MSRP: $85-$95.

For more info, visit: https://www.hukgear.com.

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Great concealment and ease of movement are keys to the camouflage clothing that any bowhunter or turkey hunter chooses, and NOMAD's ¼ Zip Leafy Pullover and Pants certainly fills that bill.

The pullover and pants feature Nomad's 3D leafy fabric in the ultra-realistic Mossy Oak Shadow Leaf® pattern. Quiet and lightweight, they make a hunter virtually invisible in a tree stand or tucked behind bushes waiting for a gobbler to arrive.

The pullover utilizes 4-way stretch construction, allowing for maximum range of movement. Likewise, the pullover features wicking moisture management, and it can easily be stowed away in a pack and is incredibly breathable. It also features an adjustable hood and zip front for custom venting and total coverage, as well as a zip dump pouch for quick access to gear.

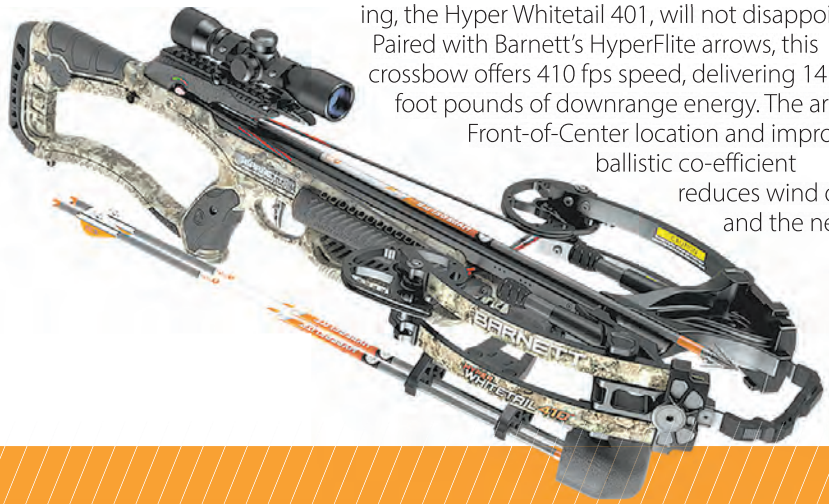
The pants' Ever-Adjust waistband and button closure makes for a comfortable fit, while cargo pockets provide convenient storage for accessories.

MSRP: $100 per piece.

For more info, visit: nomadoutdoor.com



BARNETT HYPER WHITETAIL 410



Barnett has been known for producing quality crossbows at affordable prices, and its latest offering, the Hyper Whitetail 401, will not disappoint.

Paired with Barnett's HyperFlite arrows, this crossbow offers 410 fps speed, delivering 141 foot pounds of downrange energy. The arrow's Front-of-Center location and improved ballistic co-efficient reduces wind drift, and the new capture nock increases string-to-nock engagement by 30% for better accuracy, reduced string wear and longer string life. Combine that with burning arrow speed for a more-accurate shot at that big buck.

The Hyper Whitetail 410's metal-injected, molded trigger comes with a crisp, 3-pound pull for better accuracy, and an Anti-Dry Fire system and nock system ensure correct arrow placement. The bow comes with a Halo 4x32 scope and a premium, side-mount quiver and two arrows. A pre-installed, crank cocking system is available.

MSRP: $649.99

For more info, visit: barnettcrossbows.com



Sammy Romano

PROCESS, NOT RESULTS

ARCHERY COACH SWITCHES SHOOTERS' FOCUS FROM THE ACTUAL SHOT TO THE SETUP THAT PRECEDES IT

As archers, we strive to become better at our sport, always seeking that perfect round where we shoot nothing but bull's-eyes.

We tune our equipment to the best of our ability, then spend countless hours at the range practicing, but with the added pressure of a big buck standing in front of us or standing at the line in a tournament, we often fall short of our expectations.

As human beings, we rarely look to ourselves as the cause of these shortcomings, instead, blaming our equipment or making other excuses. In reality, it is often small defects in our form that lead to much bigger problems on the target.

One man who understands this better than almost anyone is Rod Jenkins. He has won the IBO World Championship three times: once with a compound bow and twice with traditional bows, making him the only person ever to win in both categories. Additionally, he has won 14 national archery championships, a national service rifle championship and is a national pistol champion as well. He is prominently featured on the *Masters of the Bare Bow* instructional DVD series. This man can shoot, and he knows what it takes to win.



Rod Jenkins gives a shooter tips at an indoor archery range as part of a clinic, one of many the 14-time national champion puts on annually.

Several years ago, Jenkins retired from competition to focus his energy entirely on coaching other archers. Not only is he a great shot, but he is exceptionally gifted in his ability to transfer his knowledge of the sport to other archers, having coached 17 world champions.

I was fortunate to attend one of his recent clinics, and he fundamentally changed my approach to the sport.

Jenkins was quick to point out that "Archery is perhaps the only sport in the world where participants constantly scrimmage, but never practice."

DON'T SCRIMMAGE!

He likened this to a football team that never did drills, and instead, only scrimmaged. Without the solid foundation provided by doing drills to establish and reinforce the most-basic skills, it is virtually impossible to succeed when you hit the field for a real game. Much in the same way, increased mental pressure for an archer who hasn't drilled the basics of proper form often causes the shot process to break down, leading to misses and poor performance.

In Jenkins' mind there are only two types of shots: "perfect arrows" and "less thans." Nothing less than a perfect arrow



Sammy Romano *is a lifelong hunter who has worked in the archery industry for more than 25 years. His expertise includes compounds and crossbows. He can be reached at samboka31@aol.com.*

OPPOSITE PAGE: Rod Jenkins lectures a class of archers on the process that goes into making accurate shots, time and time again.

will do. He explained that most archers mistakenly measure their success based on where their arrow impacts the target. Instead, the true measure of success is a perfectly executed shot with the perfect shot process. Once an archer wraps their head around this concept and focuses on the process itself, he or she becomes very difficult to beat, because the focus on the process reduces the mental pressures associated with a critical shot. This process is reinforced through a series of drills where each component of the shot process is broken down and drilled separately. These drills include stance, grip, anchor point, expansion and several others.

Now the archer begins to put in the work, doing 21 days of drills. By doing these individual drills on a blank bale at point-blank range, the archer learns the proper shot process. After 21 days, the archer's mind begins to assimilate these individual shot components into one, solid shot process. Aiming is then reintroduced to the shot process through a bridge method.

IT'S THE PROCESS

With the archer's mind thus retrained to emphasize shot process over results, mental pressure is lowered in the heat of the moment due to increased focus on proper process, leading to more accuracy and consistency.

All of this is assuming, of course, that the archer is drilling with proper form, and this is where an archery coach comes in. A good coach ensures proper form and alignment is followed, giving the archer the tools he or she needs to be successful.

If you are drilling improper form, you are only practicing to fail. The money spent on a good coach will more than pay for itself in time saved and results. I can't say enough about Jenkins' coaching and how much it has helped me, as well as my customers.

Jenkins does shooting clinics all over the world — for traditional archery, compound bows or a mixture of both. For those who prefer online learning, check out *Roots on Push* archery, featuring Jenkins and Jimmy Blackmon who offer this online learning program. I encourage every serious archer to focus on the basics and spend some time with an archery coach to better their shooting. ▪

Rod Jenkins can be contacted via e-mail at rodjenkinsarchery@gmail.com.



TIME TO GO 'WHOLE HOG'



LANDOWNERS, HUNTING CAMPS, FARMERS ARE ALL LOSING THE BATTLE WITH WILD HOGS ACROSS MISSISSIPPI. TWO VETERANS OF THE STRUGGLE SHARE THEIR VICTORIES IN HOPES OF SPREADING THE WORD.

By Andy Douglas

It's man against BEAST, hunters vs. SWINE, landowners battling INTERLOPERS and native wildlife combating an INVASIVE SPECIES.

Wild hogs have become a huge problem across much of the South. They root up hunters' food plots, damage farmers' crops, tear up right-of-ways and compete with wildlife for food. The struggle is real; it's an all-out war against the hated feral hog.

"Wild hogs are no good for the land," said John Haralson of Bogue Chitto, Miss., an avid deer hunter and hog hunter, a landowner who also leases hunting property. "They are fun to hunt, but there is nothing they do that is good; they have nothing positive to add."

LANDOWNERS BEWARE

Many people have seen or heard of the immense damage wild hogs cause row cop and cattle farmers, but they can wreak havoc on any landowner including tree farmers.

"I recently planted some hardwood on our Claiborne County land, and the hogs had a heyday with them. I had to replant 5 to 6 acres; they pulled the young saplings out of the ground and chewed their roots," Haralson said. "I trap them and hunt them anyway I can."

IT CAN GET WORSE >



Trapping isn't the only way to kill big numbers of feral hogs. Jason Robertson demonstrates how an effective hunter can stack them like cord wood at night.

IT CAN GET WORSE

Mississippi has hog problems across the state; it's worse in some places compared to others. A look at Texas shows how bad it can be.

"I live on our 150-acre farm here in east Texas, Nacogdoches County, 30 minutes from Louisiana," said Jason Robertson of Nacogdoches, Texas, who owns Outdoor Legacy Night Vision Optics and has been battling hogs for years. "I have improved pasture for cattle, as well as timber and log roads though the timber. I also lease adjoining acres of timber for hunting. My property is in a large creekbottom, and it is covered up with hogs. They move up and down the bottom following the creek, so there is a constant influx of new hogs all the time.

"I constantly fight hog-rooting damage to my pasture; what a group of hogs or even a single large hog can do in 15 to 20 minutes can take me hours to repair with a tractor and farm implements."

TURN ON THE PRESSURE

Until state wildlife agencies in the Southeast can pull a rabbit out of a hat and come up with a means of controlling wild hogs, hunters and landowners will have to band together to battle these worrisome vermin.

Haralson and Roberson agree that it's critical to keep hunting pressure on them to keep them at bay.

"They don't like pressure. If you keep the pressure on them, they will leave for a short period of time," Haralson said.

Hunting and shooting pressure will leave a big impact on hogs. In most cases, unless all the mature hogs are killed out of a group, shooting at them and killing one or more can have an immediate effect on them not returning to the same place for some time.

"Hogs will never be eradicated, but by keeping constant pressure on them, I can essentially run off groups of hogs that move in; they learn there are easier and safer places to live. This can last for a few days or sometimes, in a best-case scenario, up to a few weeks before more hogs move in," Robertson said.

LIVE CAPTURE

Trapping is an effective way to control wild hog populations; there are many different traps and trapping philosophies. The use of traps with the remote monitoring cameras and cellular-controlled drop gates can catch an entire sounder.

"Larger, corral-type traps work well," Haralson said, "but hogs are smart; once they have seen others trapped, they will avoid the same trap."

Once a trap has caught a few hogs and is no longer productive, it should be moved to another area on a property.

Remember that state laws say that live hogs cannot be transported without a permit. After capture, they should be dispatched.



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.*





Donnie Haralson from Bogue Chitto, Miss., has been at war with wild hogs for years. He traps, hunts them with dogs, and recently has started hunting them at night with thermal optics.

LET THE DOGS OUT

Hunting with dogs is another great way to put pressure on feral hogs. You may not have dogs to do this, but if you are a landowner wanting to control hogs on your property — seek help from a dog hunter.

"Dog-hunting is very effective for farmers with mature row crops and when it's difficult to trap," said Haralson.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Wild hogs have become an epidemic sweeping its way across the South. They have earned their place as the most destructive animal around. Farmers, hunters, and landowners are sick of it and have declared war.

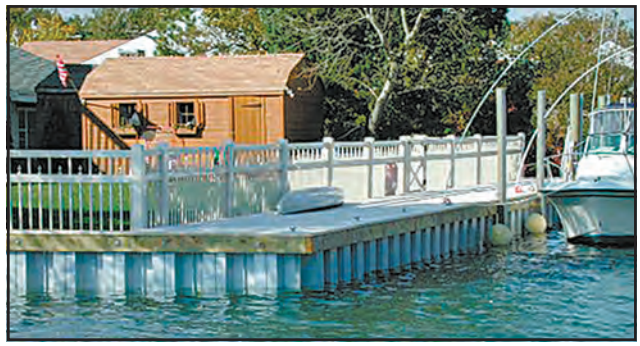
Join the fight: hunt them during the day, hunt them at night, hunt them with dogs, call them, trap them — kill as many as you can as often as you can. ▪

MATCH TACTICS TO SITUATION >



Jason Robertson said hunting hogs at night with thermal optics is the best way to take out the bigger and smarter feral hogs on your property.

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Andy Douglas

Trapping is an effective way to control populations. The use of traps with the remote monitoring cameras makes it even better.

MATCH YOUR HOG-HUNTING TACTICS TO THE SITUATION

Jason Robertson battles feral hogs year-round. The owner of Outdoor Legacy Night Vision Optics, he shares his routines for hunting hogs in hopes that it will help others find more success:

"Since I live on my own land, I hunt mostly by what I call 'opportunity kills,'" he said. "Meaning, I scan my pasture for hogs with a thermal monocular multiple times a night between dusk and 1 a.m. If I see hogs, they are usually rooting and eating and in no rush. I can gear up and then perform a basic spot-and-stalk.

"Another method for places that I can't easily access or see on remote properties is using cellular game cameras that send e-mails or texts when they are triggered and placing them over corn feeders, corn piles or pig pipes. This works well even when I don't have time to go to the location and kill the hogs, because after multiple nights of getting photos, a pattern can often be established. It's not written in stone and the pattern might not last more than a few days or a week, but it is valuable information. If I can only go one night for an hour or two, I'd rather go at a time when I know for a fact hogs have been there recently vs. picking a random time to hunt.

"Calling is another great tool that should be used when you are working off your schedule and not the hogs'. If you have limited time or just don't want to spend hours sitting and waiting, calling is a great technique. It's also excellent when you have smaller pastures or openings that limit how far you can see. By calling hogs, you are effectively extending the range by much further than you can see and you can also reduce the amount of time you have to sit and wait to see if hogs randomly show up in a certain place." ▪



EMPTY AMMO SHELVES GIVE HOG BLASTERS TROUBLES KEEPING UP WITH PIGS

By Will Martin

Shane Kessler, 50, of Pineville, is the owner of Rougarou Hog Control, a feral pig eradication outfit out of Natchitoches that uses thermal optics mounted on suppressed rifles to remove feral pigs from agricultural land at night.

"We generally kill between 1,000 and 1,200 (hogs) each year," Kessler said. "We are not like your regular outfit," Kessler said, "(we are) a select group of guys with military, law enforcement and firefighter backgrounds with a love for hunting these invasive and destructive animals."

And though the world may not see danger on the horizon, Kessler and his crew are on the front line of a battle that is about to rock the agricultural belly of the United States.

Such talk isn't hyperbole. Historically, man has done little better than fight feral hog to a draw, and that's with all of man's tools at his disposal, including traps, dogs and firearms.

No matter how many traps you employ or dogs you run, you can't fight a war without bullets. Because of a year-long run on ammunition, people haven't been doing as much hog hunting as usual. Whether they haven't had the ammunition to do so, or because they've judged the price of ammunition too high to "waste" on hogs, is immaterial.

Fewer hunters means more hogs, and more hogs is bad news.



Kevin Ryan, Shawn Doherty and Shane Kessler use thermal optics to remove feral pigs from agricultural land at night.

EMPTY SHELVES

"Before the big ammo shortage, we were 'running' our own calibers," Kessler said. "My cartridge of choice was (.308 Winchester), simply because of its availability and the fact that you know when a 30-caliber bullet strikes a pig."

But Kessler and his crew have had to adapt to stay in the fight. In many homes, rifles like Kessler's AR-10 have become safe-divas because of the difficulty of finding formerly ubiquitous cartridges like .308 or just about anything else. We are emerging from a world in which people commonly shelled out $1.50 per round for run-of-the-mill, American Eagle, 5.56x45mm FMJ.

In this climate, many trendy cartridges like the 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 Grendel and .300 AAC Blackout have been banished to the dusty ammo can marked "use sparingly," and that's if you can find them to put there. If you've been hibernating since December 2019, you're all caught up.

"If you can find that stuff, it's beyond expensive, especially for what we're doing," he said. "Why would you spend $47 on a box of ammunition that you'll use on an animal you're not going to drag out of the field?"

It's a good question.

GOOD NUMBERS

The one black-rifle ammunition that has been available, consistently, is the ever-resilient 7.62x39mm cartridge, an AK-variant/SKS.

"With the ammo crunch, everybody's going to 7.62x39mm because it's the only thing that we can find with a good amount of availability," Kessler said. "Right now, that's what we're running, 7.62x39mm in hollow-point or soft tip."

But with everyone buying the AK cartridge, can existing stock outlast the shortages that persist in other calibers? Only time will tell. What is clear is that we are beginning to see some of the consequences of the forced frugality brought on by the crisis. ▪

2021

These regulations are unofficial. For official regulations, always check the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries pamphlet and/or the federal pamphlet. www.wlf.louisiana.gov

SALTWATER

STATE REGULATIONS (0-10.357 miles^)

FISH Species	Minimum Length	Bag Limit (per person)
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^ & Black^	24" TL	4/day (aggregate)*
Scamp^	16" TL	
Nassau & Goliath	UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS	
Yellowfin^	20" TL	
Red^	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
Mutton Snapper	18" TL	snapper aggregate
Cubera, Yellowtail, Gray (mangrove)	12" TL	10 in
Queen, Blackfin, Silk, Wenchman	None	aggregate*
Vermilion Snapper	10" TL	
Schoolmaster, Dog, Mahogany	None	None
Gray Triggerfish"	15" FL	1/day in aggregate
Lane Snapper	8" TL	20/person/day
Almaco Jack, Goldface Tilefish, & Blueline Tilefish	None	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.
^ 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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RICK TAYLOR'S
ASTRO TABLES

Astro Tables is far more effective than "moon tables," because it takes into account critical solar energies as well as lunar.

• The "Best Days" column is based on the ever-changing positions of the sun and the moon, rating each day on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more solar/lunar influence that day is experiencing (see "Value" column or corresponding black bars).

• The two Primary periods (Moon Overhead and Moon Underfoot) vary in length from one hour to three-and-one-half hours, depending on a number of important lunar cycles, such as how close the moon is to the earth that day and how high its orbit is. The solar symbols alert you to when a Primary period overlaps a major solar period (eg: Dawn, High-Noon, and Dusk). The secondary periods of Moonrise and Moonset last about one hour each . . . 30 minutes before and after the listed time. (See key at bottom of each month for more detail.)

• **Astro Tables** is a quick-reference version of its parent publication, the **PrimeTimes Wall Calendar**, which is recommended for those wishing more complete data on the best days and times to go fishing and hunting for the entire year (see "Available Products" below).

• **PrimeTimes'** forecasts are based on solar/lunar research at a leading college of astrophysics and our own research pond/wildlife area. Annual data is supplied by the U.S. Naval Observatory. All times are adjusted to the center of your time zone and for Daylight Saving Time.

AVAILABLE PRODUCTS:

The 2021 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar. **$13.95** (plus $4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2021 with this information-packed, full-color, 11-inch by 17-inch, graphic peaks-and-valleys forecaster. Includes rise and set times for the sun and moon, space to log your catches, "Timely Tips," plus fish and game symbols showing you each month's don't-miss periods. Also includes exclusive summary charts revealing the best and worst days of 2021, the year's best periods, a look ahead at 2022, and more. Comes with FREE 2021 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for $8.95, plus $3 s&h.

Book: *"How to Know When to Go" by Rick Taylor.* $14.95 (plus $4 s&h). 100 pages, 43 illustrations. A comprehensive look at the main factors influencing fish and game activity periods, plus how to devise an effective when-to-go game plan using any year's PrimeTimes calendars. Individual assessments of bass, panfish, deer, turkey, and more.

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2021 AUG

BEST DAYS (POOR · FAIR · GOOD · EXCL · VALUE)

LUNAR PERIODS — *TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED*

	BEST DAYS	MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT	
Sun 1	52	12:48 AM	6:08 am - 9:18 am	2:46 PM	6:33 pm - 9:43 pm	
Mon 2	48	1:19 AM	6:47 am - 10:09 am	3:43 PM	7:12 pm - 10:34 pm	Apogee
Tue 3	48	1:55 AM	7:29 am - 11:01 am	4:41 PM	7:54 pm - 11:26 pm	
Wed 4	49	2:36 AM	8:15 am - 11:55 am	5:37 PM	8:40 pm - 12:20 am	
Thu 5	60	3:23 AM	9:06 am - 12:46 pm	6:30 PM	9:31 pm - 1:11 am	High
Fri 6	71	4:16 AM	9:59 am - 1:39 pm	7:19 PM	10:24 pm - 2:04 am	
Sat 7	81	5:15 AM	10:56 am - 2:28 pm	8:03 PM	11:21 pm - Midnight	
Sun 8	85	6:17 AM	11:53 am - 3:13 pm	8:41 PM	Midnight - 2:53 am	New
Mon 9	74	7:22 AM	12:50 pm - 3:56 pm	9:16 PM	12:18 am - 3:38 am	
Tue 10	61	8:27 AM	1:49 pm - 4:35 pm	9:48 PM	1:15 am - 4:21 am	
Wed 11	48	9:32 AM	2:46 pm - 5:12 pm	10:17 PM	2:14 am - 5:00 am	
Thu 12	41	10:37 AM	3:43 pm - 5:49 pm	10:47 PM	3:11 am - 5:37 am	
Fri 13	39	11:43 AM	4:42 pm - 6:28 pm	11:18 PM	4:08 am - 6:14 am	
Sat 14	42	12:51 PM	5:42 pm - 7:08 pm	11:52 PM	5:07 am - 6:53 am	
Sun 15	51	2:00 PM	6:45 pm - 7:53 pm		6:07 am - 7:33 am	Half
Mon 16	40	3:11 PM	7:48 pm - 8:44 pm	12:31 AM	7:10 am - 8:18 am	
Tue 17	35	4:20 PM	8:52 pm - 9:40 pm	1:16 AM	8:13 am - 9:09 am	Perigee
Wed 18	33	5:25 PM	9:54 pm - 10:40 pm	2:09 AM	9:17 am - 10:05 am	Low
Thu 19	42	6:23 PM	10:54 pm - 11:42 pm	3:10 AM	10:19 am - 11:05 am	
Fri 20	52	7:12 PM	11:47 pm - Midnight	4:16 AM	11:19 am - 12:07 pm	
Sat 21	61	7:53 PM	Midnight - 12:45 am	5:25 AM	12:12 pm - 1:10 pm	
Sun 22	68	8:28 PM	12:32 am - 1:48 am	6:33 AM	12:57 pm - 2:13 pm	Full
Mon 23	59	8:59 PM	1:14 am - 2:46 am	7:38 AM	1:39 pm - 3:11 pm	
Tue 24	51	9:27 PM	1:52 am - 3:40 am	8:41 AM	2:17 pm - 4:05 pm	
Wed 25	43	9:54 PM	2:26 am - 4:34 am	9:41 AM	2:51 pm - 4:59 pm	
Thu 26	40	10:20 PM	2:58 am - 5:28 am	10:40 AM	3:23 pm - 5:53 pm	
Fri 27	40	10:48 PM	3:32 am - 6:18 am	11:38 AM	3:57 pm - 6:43 pm	
Sat 28	42	11:18 PM	4:06 am - 7:08 am	12:35 PM	4:31 pm - 7:33 pm	
Sun 29	48	11:51 PM	4:44 am - 8:00 am	1:33 PM	5:09 pm - 8:25 pm	Apogee
Mon 30	60		5:23 am - 8:53 am	2:31 PM	5:48 pm - 9:18 pm	Half
Tue 31	52	12:29 AM	6:08 am - 9:44 am	3:27 PM	6:33 pm - 10:09 pm	

25 50 75 AVERAGE

For more, visit primetimes2.com

ANY LUNAR PERIOD IS ENHANCED WHEN IT OVERLAPS A KEY SOLAR PERIOD. THE BEST OF THESE OVERLAPS ARE DESIGNATED BY THE SUN SYMBOLS: = DAWN = HIGH NOON = DUSK

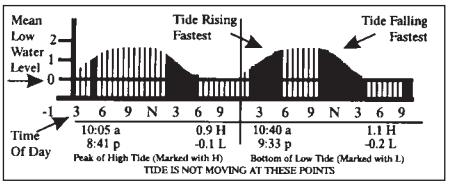
*WHILE THE LESSER **MOONRISE** AND -**SET** OVERLAPS (ABOUT 30 MIN. BEFORE AND AFTER THE LISTED TIME) ARE DESIGNATED BY **BOLD BLACK TYPE**.*



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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

East Point Grand Isle

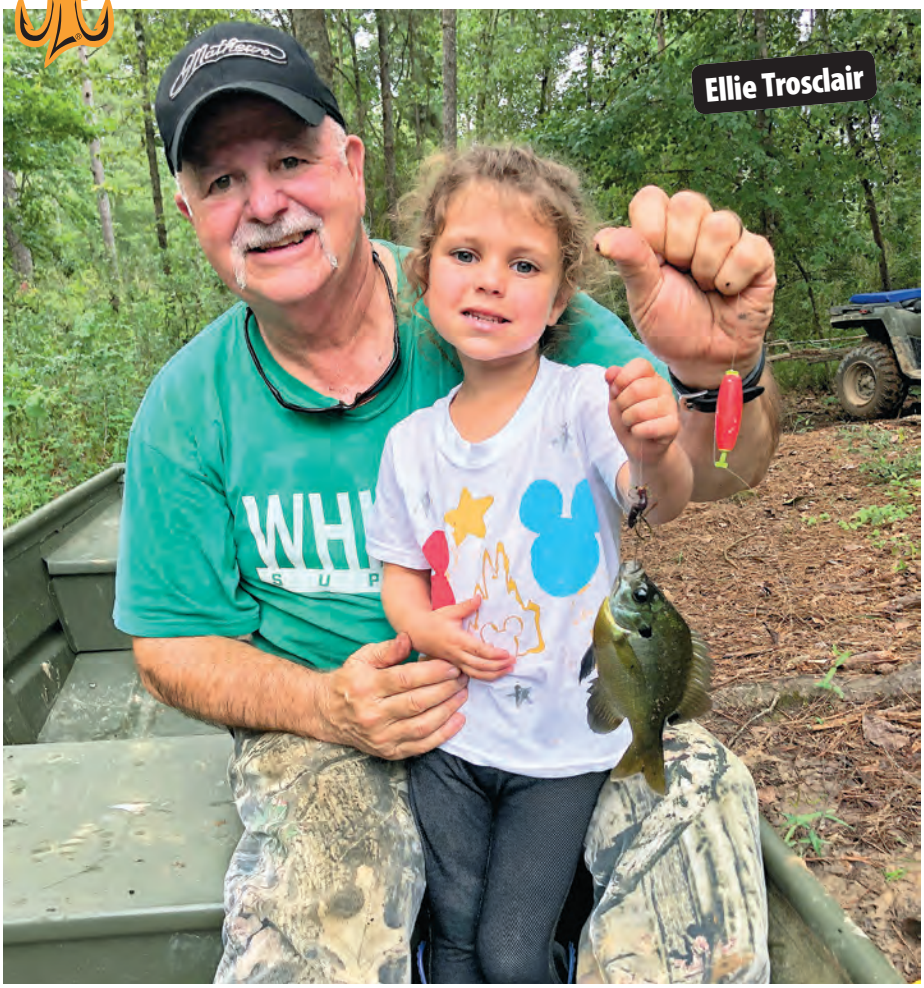
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
5:12 am 1.0 H 4:52 pm 0.2 L	5:42 am 1.2 H 5:26 pm 0.1 L	6:24 am 1.2 H 6:04 pm 0.0 L	7:11 am 1.3 H 6:45 pm -0.1 L	8:01 am 1.4 H 7:26 pm -0.1 L	8:49 am 1.4 H 8:05 pm -0.1 L	9:34 am 1.4 H 8:41 pm -0.1 L
8 NM	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
10:17 am 1.4 H 9:13 pm 0.0 L	10:59 am 1.4 H 9:40 pm 0.1 L	11:42 am 1.2 H 9:58 pm 0.2 L	12:28 pm 1.1 H 9:58 pm 0.4 L	1:26 pm 0.9 H 9:11 pm 0.6 L	3:58 am 0.8 H 11:56 am 0.6 L	3:28 am 1.0 H 2:12 pm 0.4 L
15 FQ	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**
3:47 am 1.2 H 3:17 pm 0.2 L	4:30 am 1.4 H 4:16 pm 0.0 L	5:27 am 1.5 H 5:16 pm -0.1 L	6:33 am 1.6 H 6:14 pm -0.2 L	7:42 am 1.6 H 7:10 pm -0.2 L	8:47 am 1.6 H 8:02 pm -0.1 L	9:47 am 1.5 H 8:49 pm 0.0 L
22 FM	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**
10:42 am 1.4 H 9:27 pm 0.2 L	11:32 am 1.3 H 9:53 pm 0.4 L	12:20 pm 1.1 H 9:52 pm 0.6 L	1:15 pm 0.9 H 8:55 pm 0.7 L	2:46 am 0.8 H 9:11 am 0.7 L 3:18 pm 0.8 H 5:44 pm 0.8 L	2:10 am 1.0 H 12:27 pm 0.6 L	2:22 am 1.1 H 1:54 pm 0.5 L
29	**30** LQ	**31**				
2:52 am 1.2 H 2:52 pm 0.4 L	3:35 am 1.3 H 3:45 pm 0.3 L	4:28 am 1.4 H 4:36 pm 0.2 L				

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Calcasieu Pass Lighthouse Wharf

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
12:58 am 1.7 H 5:39 am 1.5 L 9:01 am 1.6 H 4:59 pm 0.3 L	2:02 am 1.8 H 7:16 am 1.6 L 9:24 am 1.7 H 5:40 pm 0.2 L	2:44 am 1.9 H 6:23 pm 0.1 L	3:20 am 2.0 H 7:05 pm 0.0 L	3:53 am 2.0 H 9:04 am 1.7 L 11:16 am 1.8 H 7:46 pm -0.1 L	4:23 am 2.0 H 9:04 am 1.7 L 12:10 pm 1.8 H 8:25 pm -0.1 L	4:50 am 2.0 H 9:12 am 1.7 L 12:58 pm 1.9 H 9:04 pm -0.1 L
8 NM	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
5:16 am 2.0 H 9:39 am 1.6 L 1:41 pm 1.9 H 9:44 pm -0.1 L	5:40 am 2.0 H 10:16 am 1.5 L 2:25 pm 1.9 H 10:24 pm 0.1 L	6:01 am 2.0 H 10:58 am 1.4 L 3:19 pm 1.8 H 11:05 pm 0.3 L	6:18 am 1.9 H 11:43 am 1.2 L 4:29 pm 1.8 H 11:46 pm 0.5 L	6:33 am 1.9 H 12:32 pm 1.0 L 5:52 pm 1.7 H	12:31 am 0.9 L 6:49 am 1.8 H 1:28 pm 0.7 L 7:39 pm 1.7 H	1:27 am 1.2 L 7:09 am 1.8 H 2:30 pm 0.4 L 10:26 pm 1.8 H
15 FQ	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**
2:55 am 1.5 L 7:35 am 1.8 H 3:31 pm 0.2 L	12:29 am 2.0 H 4:41 am 1.8 L 8:14 am 1.9 H 4:29 pm -0.1 L	1:42 am 2.1 H 6:25 am 1.9 L 9:05 am 1.9 L 5:28 pm -0.2 L	2:34 am 2.2 H 7:23 am 1.9 L 10:05 am 2.0 H 6:27 pm -0.3 L	3:22 am 2.3 H 8:01 am 1.9 L 11:11 am 2.1 H 7:24 pm -0.3 L	4:06 am 2.2 H 8:36 am 1.8 L 12:22 pm 2.1 H 8:16 pm -0.3 L	4:43 am 2.2 H 9:11 am 1.7 L 1:25 pm 2.1 H 9:05 pm -0.1 L
22 FM	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**
5:13 am 2.1 H 9:50 am 1.5 L 2:20 pm 2.1 H 9:52 pm 0.1 L	5:34 am 2.0 H 10:30 am 1.3 L 3:15 pm 2.0 H 10:36 pm 0.3 L	5:47 am 1.9 H 11:09 am 1.2 L 4:18 pm 1.9 H 11:16 pm 0.6 L	5:53 am 1.8 H 11:49 am 1.0 L 5:27 pm 1.8 H 11:53 pm 0.9 L	6:00 am 1.8 H 12:30 pm 0.9 L 6:42 pm 1.8 H	12:28 am 1.2 L 6:12 am 1.8 H 1:17 pm 0.8 L 8:40 pm 1.7 H	1:05 am 1.5 L 6:26 am 1.8 H 2:11 pm 0.6 L 10:36 pm 1.8 H
29	**30** LQ	**31**				
4:25 am 1.7 L 6:30 am 1.7 L 3:08 pm 0.5 L	1:03 am 1.9 H 4:00 pm 0.5 L	1:51 am 2.0 H 4:51 pm 0.4 L				

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Ellie Trosclair, 4, shows off the bream she caught from the pond on her family's lease north of Greensberg. She was fishing on July 2 with her Paw J and big brother Gavin.

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Riley Rousse killed this 11-pointer in Mississippi on Dec. 31, 2019, when he was 9 years old. It scored 143.



Karen Madere was fishing in Toledo Bend when she caught this sac-a-lait, her first fish. Here she is with a guide from SSH Slab Hunter Guide Service.



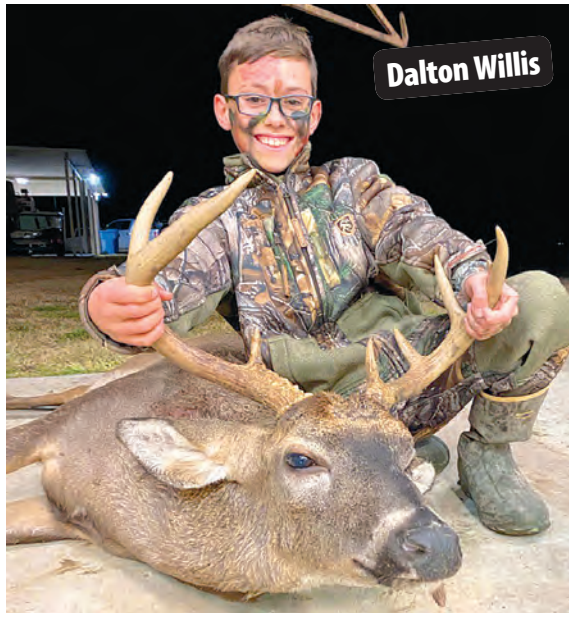
Clay Falcon caught this red snapper out of Grand Isle on July 6, 2019, on his bachelor party weekend fishing trip.



Seth Doiron, 15, bagged this 6-pointer at 190 yards on Dec. 26 during a youth lottery hunt at Richard K Yancey WMA. He was joined by his dad, Shyne, and hunting sponsor, Jody Caze.



Justin Stafford, Ben Nelson and Alan Castro boated these redfish in Lake Pontchartrain.



Dalton Willis, 10, took his first deer while hunting with his father in West Baton Rouge Parish.



Bennett Fisher was fishing at Big Lake on March 26 when he caught this stringer.



Corbin Taylor, 13, of Independence, holds his 6-pound, 9-ounce largemouth bass that measured 22½ inches long. He caught it at Lake Tangipahoa on Percy Quin State Park while fishing with his Pawpaw, Terry Knight.



Haiden Pruitt of Simsboro decided to give bowhunting a shot last fall. On Dec. 23, he killed the biggest buck of his life and his first bowkill. The buck weighed 210 pounds, had 10 scoreable points and a 20-inch spread.



Lex Poindexter shared this photo from his first kayak fishing trip on June 26, 2021. This redfish was hooked on a Z-Man Jerk ShadZ on a Matrix Goldeneye jighead just south of the Pointe Aux Chenes Marina. Pack & Paddle of Lafayette provided the kayak.



Colin Lyons was on a duck hunt with his father in Dularge near Lake Mechant on Nov. 7, 2020.



Chris Russo hooked his first flounder in more than 20 years in the MRGO.



Josh Anderson was fishing at the 9-mile Rigs in the Gulf when he hooked this blue runner, aka hardtail that measured 66 centimeters.



Damon Cazelot, along with and his son-in-law, Johnathon Barrere, caught this albino catfish on a trot line in the Mississippi River in Concordia Parish. They baited lines using some small shad they caught, and the next morning, they found an albino catfish hooked on their line.



Paul Walker recently hooked this beautiful redfish.



Jackson Davis, 6, killed his first deer on a hunt with his father, Justin.



Kelly Derise shows off a big red snapper she caught at Freshwater City on June 13.



Cheryl Spies of Lacombe harvested this 9-point with a 19¼-inch inside spread in Tylertown, Miss.



Kristen Williams, who is starting her second year at LSU medical school, caught this redfish out of Lafitte.



Tyler Mistich of Houma caught these beautiful yellowedge grouper while deep-dropping in Green Canyon.



Christopher Miller hooked and boated this 37-inch, 50-pound drum over Memorial Day weekend.



Emma Suggs, 8, with her first deer, killed Dec. 5, 2020, in Weyanoke.



Bryan Baxter of Long Boat Key, Fla., got on some nice specks fishing with live croakers out in Timbalier Bay.



Ronald Poole Jr. and Lee Gervais Jr. had their own cast-and-blast outing last season.



Sal Guagliardo with a 34-inch red snapper caught out of Grand Isle.

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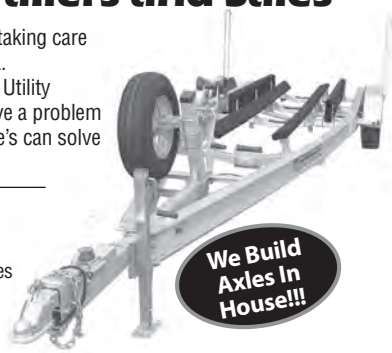
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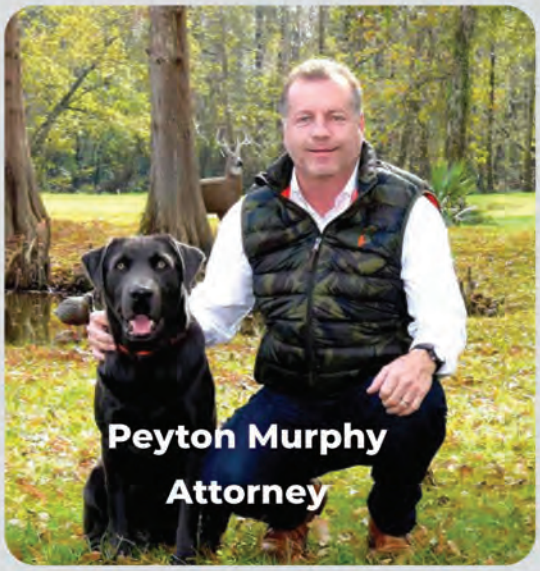
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