

Louisiana

SPORTSMAN[®]



NOVEMBER 2021

www.LouisianaSPORTSMAN.com

**THE TAXIDERMIST
KNOWS BEST**

**GOOSE, GOOSE,
DUCK!**

**WMA DUCK
FORECAST**

**HUNTING
MARSH BASS
MONSTERS**

**TOPWATERS
FOR BIG TROUT**

**TRY FROGS
FOR REDFISH**

**PICTURE-PERFECT
DEER HUNTS**

\$3.99 NOVEMBER 2021



HYPER-LIFT H190 BAY



PAD HULL XCITEMENT FOR THE BUDGET MINDED SPORTSMAN

The H190 Bay is the ideal option for anyone looking for a high-performance, beautifully styled, economically priced 19' bay boat. Built on the foundation of our Hyper-Lift Hull with the same DNA as the number one selling bay boat, the Xpress H20 Bay, this entry-level dream craft packs performance, fishability, and comfort into one amazingly cost-effective boat. Thin water or rough seas, you will not find a better solution for the price. Whether this is your first bay boat or making this the last bay boat you intend to buy, the Xpress H190 Bay will satisfy the need! Visit us online at xpressboats.com or contact your local authorized dealer for more information. There is only one "original" in a sea of me too's.

H190B

Shown w/optional Appearance Pkg.

SeaDek
MARINE PRODUCTS

Available option on the H190B



 **xpress boats**[®]
we build xcitement

199 Extrusion Place, Hot Springs, AR 71901



xpressboats.com



CHEVROLET



SERVICE

CHEVROLET | CADILLAC

IS



#1 LOUISIANA'S
CHEVY
DEALER

7 YEARS
IN A ROW!



SERVICE

CHEVROLET | CADILLAC

337-234-9411
ServiceGM.com

FIND NEW ROADS™



Breaux & Daigle Marine

in Pierre Part, LA

BREAUX & DAIGLE MARINE, INC.

985-252-6411 | HWY. 70, PIERRE PART, LA

www.breauxdaiglemarine.com

20 XB | SPECIFICATIONS

- Length 20' 1"
- Beam 97"
- Transom Height 20"
- Max Horsepower 200 HP
- Side Height 24"
- Bottom Width 69"
- Approximate Draft 11"
- Aluminum - 5052 Gauge 0.125
- Approximate Boat Weight 1,594 lbs
- Fuel Capacity 32 Gallons*
- Divided Livewell 25 Gallons
- Aft Storage Boxes 50 Quarts Each
- Forward Insulated Cooler/Day Box 37 Quarts
- Persons and Total Persons Weight 4/750 lbs
- Max Weight Capacity 1760 lbs



AVID
BOATS

BOAT DEALER!

23 FS | SPECIFICATIONS

- Length 22' 7"
- Beam 97"
- Transom Height 25"
- Max Horsepower 200 HP
- Side Height 24"
- Bottom Width 69"
- Approximate Draft 12"
- Aluminum - 5052 Gauge 0.125
- Deadrise @ Transom 13°
- Approximate Boat Weight 1,580 lbs
- Fuel Capacity 34 Gallons*
- Forward Livewell/Baitwell 13 Gallons
- Aft Livewell 21 Gallons
- Bow Fish Box 100 Quarts
- Persons and Total Persons Weight 8/1157 lbs
- Max Weight Capacity 2030 lbs



ALL
POWERED
BY



YAMAHA



Together,
we're going to get through this.



"I think the road to recovery is just like the Rhythm of Louisiana. It shows the strength of not only this community, but the state. We're going to celebrate. We're going to eventually get back to where we were. It's not going to be easy, but with support and help, we will make it.

I'm always going to be grateful for the help that I received after the storm from Shell and my fellow employees, who also lost so much. This storm touched everyone. Together, we're going to get through this, and we're going to come out of it better."

MATTHEW LOOSEMORE

Production Team Lead, Shell Norco

Pictured with daughters Adrienne (left) and Allie (right) in his hurricane Ida damaged home in Norco

THE *Rhythm* OF LOUISIANA

#MakeTheFuture | www.shell.us/louisiana



Louisiana CONTENTS

Volume 41 | Number 11 | November 2021

FEATURES:

29 ANTLERS 'R' US

This Ragley taxidermist has learned plenty about deer hunting from his successful customers.

> By Kinny Haddox

37 SMILE, MR. BUCK

Lessons from photography: how one outdoors photographer gets up close and personal to trophy deer and how it can help hunters.

> By Will Martin

48 2021-22 WMA DUCK SURVEY

Public-land hunters have plenty of good options around Louisiana, even after Hurricane Ida's game-changing visit.

> By Don Shoopman

61 GOOSE, GOOSE, DUCK!

Take advantage of those times when Louisiana's goose seasons match up with duck season. The big birds can provide some great action and even save some mediocre duck trips.

> By Kinny Haddox

67 HOP TO IT, REDS!

Soft-plastic frogs, a staple among freshwater bass fishermen, can put a hurting on redfish, too. Here are some places to fish them, and how.

> By John N. Felsher



37

SMILE,
MR. BUCK

76 POP THE TOP FOR FALL TROUT

Hungry specks will jump on topwater plugs in November; they're hungry enough to eat anything that moves, and these baits move just right.

> By John N. Felsher

91 MONSTERS OF THE MARSH

Bass are showing up, getting established and growing larger in areas where you would have found only redfish and trout a decade ago. Here's how to target them.

> By Keith Lusher

102 THE PLIGHT AND FIGHT OF GRAND ISLE

> By Colleen O. Orfanello

FISHING HOTSPOTS:

73 Biloxi Marsh

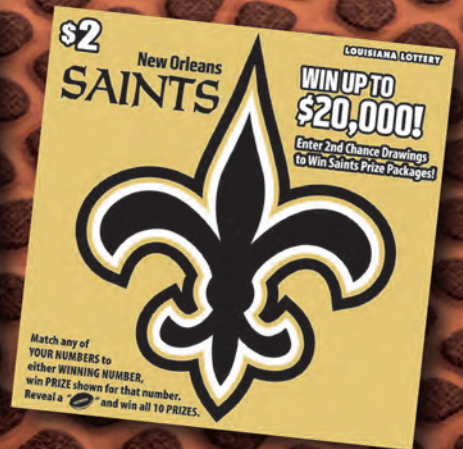
98 Toledo Bend bass

88 Pontchartrain trout

100 Red River slabs

89 Sabine flounder

LET'S GET GAME READY!



Second-Chance Drawings!
Enter \$10 in nonwinning SAINTS scratch-offs
to win Saints Game Day Experiences!
Visit louisianalottery.com/saints for complete details!



For second-chance prizes and drawing schedule, scan with your mobile device.

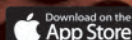
Saints marks and logos used with permission of the New Orleans Saints.

louisianalottery.com



Play Responsibly Must Be 21 To Purchase. Gambling Problem? Call 877-770-7867.

Scan to Download
Your FREE Lottery app.



48

2021-22
WMA DUCK SURVEY



Louisiana
SPORTSMAN

www.LouisianaSPORTSMAN.com

PRESIDENT: Lisa Lottinger Cuccia

PUBLISHER: Jonathan Menard

MANAGING EDITORS: Alicia LaFont, Dan Kibler

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER:
Desiree P. Lewis

ART DIRECTOR: Kevin Orgeron

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:
Jeff Cashio, Alissa Zeringue

ADVERTISING SALES:
Mark Hilzim (National Sales), Asa Faulkner,
Mark Boyd, Burton Angelle, Peter Church
and Bret Holten

CONTROLLER: Juanita Guidry

LEGAL ADVISOR: Dean Church

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:
Patrick Bonin, Brian Cope, Darren Digby,
John Flores, Bill Garbo, Kinny Haddox, Capt.
Steve Himel, Chris Holmes, Keith LaCaze,
Dora Lambert, John E. Manion IV, Will Martin,
Joel Masson, Todd Masson, Jon Miller, David
Moreland, Sammy Romano, Don Shoopman
and Rusty Tardo

OUTDOOR UPDATE:

**10 BIG BUCKS, BIG BASS,
CRAPPIE WINNERS, HUGE
GATOR, CWD REGS, MEN-
HADEN REGS DULARGE
RESTARTING, AWARDS**

PLUS

**26 NOVEMBER'S
RUT REPORT**



91

**MONSTERS
OF THE MARSH**

COLUMNS:

42 GRUNTS&GOBBLES By David Moreland

44 STICKS & STRINGS By Sammy Romano

82 PADDLES 'N PUDDLES
By Chris Holmes

86 MARSH MAN MASSON
By Todd Masson

90 SPECIES SPOTLIGHT By Brian Cope

95 LURE REVIEW By Don Shoopman

ON THE COVER:



Hunter Brown of Stonewall arrowed this 140-inch, 12-point buck in Bienville Parish the afternoon of Oct. 2, after passing up a morning hunt the previous day because the wind direction was wrong for his stand.

DEPARTMENTS:

36 Hunting Regs

60 Sportsman Showcase

96 Bass Class

108 Sportsman Astro Tables

109 Sportsman Tide Guide

110 Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook

114 Sportsman Classifieds

115 Advertiser Index

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:

advertising@LouisianaSportsman.com
985.758.7217

CIRCULATION INQUIRIES:

985.758.7217

**SUBSCRIPTIONS OR
SUBSCRIPTION ISSUES,
CALL 1-855-223-3599**

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

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

P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, LA 70039-1199
800.538.4355

Volume 41 | No 11

PARISH TRACTOR SELLS KUBOTA

Hattiesburg | Poplarville | Meridian



M60 series



OUTDOOR UPDATE



Timmy Dillard's huge Webster County buck weighed 265 pounds and carried a 158-inch rack.

WEBSTER PARISH PRODUCES GIANT COTTON VALLEY ARCHER TAKES BUCK, DISTRACTED BY DOE, AT 8 YARDS

T By Glynn Harris

Timmy Dillard, a 38-year-old Cotton Valley employee in the petroleum industry, was afraid the big buck he had been after since last season was about to spoil his plans once again — when it walked to within eight steps of his stand.

This time, however, a passing doe diverted the buck's attention long enough for Dillard to draw his bow and send an arrow through the vitals of the 10-point, 158-inch, 265-pound buck.

"Last season, I had trimmed a couple of limbs in the way, but instead of dragging them away and out of sight, I let them lay where they had fallen," Dillard said. "When the big buck made an appearance, he sensed something wasn't right; he stared at the newly cut limbs on the ground for 10 minutes, turned around and left. That was the only time I saw him in daylight, and he became nocturnal from then on."

The Webster Parish buck that Dillard was targeting was a dandy that first appeared on his game camera in December 2019 as a mature buck that he and his son nicknamed Brutus. Dillard's goal was to stay after this deer until he could lay claim to the big-bodied, heavily antlered buck.

"In September, just before season opened this year, I saw him on camera several times, but then one day as he was at the protein feeder, three big boar hogs came in and ran him off," Dillard said. "I felt my best bet was to try and eliminate the hogs, so I got in my box stand with my rifle planning to shoot some hogs. The hogs didn't show up that day, but the big buck did, so I watched him feed and eased out of the stand after he left."

Opening day of bow season was not a good day, with warm temperatures along with wind from the south and showers. Since Dillard's lock-on stand favored a north wind, he passed up the chance to hunt, hoping that the weather would improve.

"On Saturday, Oct. 2, I watched the weather and was relieved to see that the wind that afternoon had started to switch directions,

coming out of the northeast, so I decided to get on my stand late that afternoon. My stand sits about 27 yards from my protein feeder, and the wind was in my favor," he said.

At 6:15, a doe came from a direction that allowed her to pick up his scent and, according to Dillard, the doe stopped, stared in his direction and began snorting and stomping.

"I figured the hunt was over, with the doe telegraphing to other deer in the area that they should stay away," Dillard said. "However, the doe left after 10 minutes, and I decided to sit tight, although in my heart, I felt like the hunt was blown."

Shortly after the doe left, Dillard heard another deer approaching, crossing a dry creek and headed toward the feeder.

"When the deer stepped into the clearing, I didn't pay attention to the rack so much as to the big body. Instead of walking to the feeder, the big buck started walking in my direction and stopped eight steps from me. My heart began racing to the point I was afraid the deer could hear it beating," said Dillard, who was unable to move with the deer so close. But then, another doe walked out behind him, and the buck watched the approaching doe, giving Dillard time to ease his bow off the hanger and draw.

"With the deer so close, when I looked through my sight, all I could see was brown hair, and it was troubling to find where I should aim," he said. "I thought I had it just behind his shoulder, released the arrow and heard a loud 'Whack!' letting me know I had hit the shoulder blade. The deer squatted and then took off with the arrow sticking out, letting me know I didn't get much penetration."

After calling friends for help in the search, Dillard's brother found the buck 60 yards from where it was shot. Incredibly, the Swacker broadhead had gone through the shoulder blade and the tip penetrated the heart.

The buck was estimated to be five or six years old, with an inside spread of 17¾ inches and a green score of 158%. ■



BIENVILLE BUCK MAKES HUNTER FORGET ABOUT BAD WEATHER

By Glynn Harris

The opening of archery season in Louisiana came with weather that, in a word, stunk. The rain, wind out of the south and warm temperatures on Oct. 1 helped Hunter Brown, 36, of Stonewall, decide to stay in camp and do clean-up work instead of hunting in unfavorable conditions.

Then, a ping on his cell phone made him wonder if he'd made the right decision; a shooter buck was standing in front of his stand at 7:15, and when his phone pinged again at 7:40 — showing another good buck in front of his stand — it was decision time.

"My dad had gone squirrel hunting that morning," Brown said. "I told him what had shown up on my phone, and in spite of the bad weather, I was going hunting that afternoon."

Brown, who works in the oil and gas industry, hunts on a combination of family property and leased land totaling around 3,000 acres in Bienville Parish.

"I got on my lock-on stand that afternoon, and the only deer I saw was a little spike," he said. "However, I made my plans to be back on my stand the following afternoon."

Brown shares his hunting land with two friends, Levi Madden and Harmon Carson, and he told them what his phone had revealed.

"After talking with them, they said it would not be wise to get in my lock-on stand that was set up to favor a northwest wind," he said. "They suggested that I hang the new Saddle stand I had purchased on the opposite side of the feeder to take advantage of the south wind, so that's what I did."

Using climbing sticks and the unique stand — which allows you sit in a fabric saddle and move around the tree if need be — Brown set the afternoon of Oct. 2 about 22 feet above ground, giving him an ideal view of the feeder without the wind creating a problem.

"At 6:44, a buck walked out, and at first I thought it was the one I had seen at 7:40 yesterday morning,"

Brown said. "However, I determined that it was a different deer, but a shooter for sure. I put the sight pin on him at 35 yards and released the arrow. I knew it was a good hit. I watched him run about 30 yards when he tipped over."

Last year, Brown, a full-time bowhunter, decided to shoot his recurve bow. He took a couple of does and hogs, although he missed two good bucks and had a couple more a little too far for the recurve.

For this season, he switched back to his compound bow, a Hoyt, shooting Victory arrows tipped with Rage Hypodermic points.

The buck was a 12-pointer determined to be 4½ years old. The rack was 16⅞ inches wide inside, with 20-inch main beams and 4-inch bases, weighing 172 pounds. Putting the tape on the rack, the measurements were right at 140 inches of antler mass.

"As much as I love to hunt, I really get more satisfaction in working with the Dream Hunt Foundation, where we take kids between the ages of 12 and 18 who have a handicap and who have never hunted or taken an animal," said Brown. "This is the highlight of my year, as far as hunting goes."

However, Brown had to be a little more than excited after listening to the advice of his buddies, taking advantage of the wind to collect a fine trophy buck. ■



Hunter Brown's big Bienville Parish buck showed up in front of his stand the morning of Oct. 1, when Brown had stayed in camp because of bad weather conditions. He killed him the next afternoon after setting up to take advantage of the wind.

Reynolds, long-time LDWF duck boss, takes new job within agency

By Will Martin

Larry Reynolds, the waterfowl program manager the past 13 years for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, has a new job.

"I have accepted a position overseeing Rockefeller Refuge, White Lake Wetland Conservation Area, the alligator and fur program, and the wildlife diversity program," Reynolds said.



As waterfowl program manager, Reynolds supervised LDWF biologists responsible for managing migratory waterfowl and other wetland-dependent birds and their habitats. Other responsibilities include proposing and directing research funding, collaborating with universities and non-governmental organizations, performing aerial waterfowl surveys and making recommendations for annual waterfowl hunting seasons.

Reynolds' departure is only the latest change at the waterfowl section at LDWF.

"Paul Link left the North American waterfowl management coordinator position in April to become the research supervisor at Rockefeller Refuge," Reynolds said, "so with my departure, the waterfowl section has been mostly vacant for over 6 weeks."

Reynolds has maintained duties in both jobs pending the filling of his old position.

LDWF advertised nationwide to fill Reynolds' old position, recruiting on well-known job boards and at Mississippi Flyway meetings. ■

Nathaniel Street's 13-pound Vernon Lake bass hit a plastic worm on Oct. 14.

JUST FISH! LEESVILLE MAN GETS 13-POUND REWARD



S By Kinny Haddox
ometimes, you just want to go fishing, even if things aren't exactly going according to plan.

Once in a while, however, things work out in the form of a huge bass, a 13-pounder.

Nathaniel Street of Leesville wanted to go fishing the morning of Oct. 14. He lives on Anacoco Lake in Vernon Parish, but the lake is in its 7-year maintenance draw-down and unfishable right now.

Early that morning, Street had to put off fishing off to get some new tires for his wife's car, so he didn't get to go early. But

he was able to finish up, load up his boat and go to nearby Vernon Lake about 5 miles away. He finally started fishing at about 10:30.

Street didn't have great expectations of catching anything, even though he had caught a few small bass in the past couple of days. And a neighbor had gone earlier and told him to forget it; they just weren't biting.

So Street eased out into the lake, rested his 14-foot aluminum boat up against a stump because the wind was blowing pretty hard, and he cast out a 5-inch, watermelon black/green plastic worm.

"I was just piddling around, to be honest," said Street, 30, a drilling rig manager. "I was fishing pretty shallow water, and all of a sudden, I felt a tug. I set the hook, and the bass took off heading the other way. I just kept tension on the line and held on. I didn't have any idea what it was, but I knew it wasn't one of those 1½- pounders I had been catching.

"She dove down, then swam back up toward the surface. She did that two or three times. She never did break the water, and I'm glad she didn't or I would have probably lost her.

"The first time I saw her was when she came up right by the boat," Street said. "I was trying to hold on to the rod with one hand and grab the dip net with the other hand. When she slipped in the net, it was something else. Man, I've never seen a fish anything near like that."

Street didn't have a scale with him, nor did he have any way to keep the fish alive, so he put the big bass in the ice chest and decided to head home. He said later he had to quit fishing because the fish filled up the whole ice chest.

He weighed it once on his digital scale at 12.95 pounds; his neighbor's scale showed 13.20 pounds, so he just split the difference and called it 13 pounds. He is saving the fish to have it mounted.

"I gotta be honest; it was just luck, but I'll take it," he said. "You need a little luck every once in a while, and you can't get lucky unless you just get out there and fish." ■

ADVANTAGES OF A METAL ROOF

- More strength than shingles
- Excellent heat reflectance
- High savings on energy costs
- Better weather resistance
- Longer warranties
- It looks great



CALL CUSTOM CORRUGATED FOR A FREE QUOTE ON A METAL ROOF SYSTEM.

2727 W. PARK AVE, GRAY, LA
985-876-2555

 **CUSTOM
CORRUGATED
& SUPPLY**

BLUE WAVE BOATS

Since 1992



Introducing... 2600 Makaira

LOA: 26' 10" | BEAM: 9' 1" | FUEL: 90 GALS | MAX HP: 450 | WEIGHT: 3,700 LBS

Meet 2600 Makaira... the newest model in the Blue Wave Boats Hybrid Series.

2600 Makaira is based off the wildly popular 2800 Makaira and shares many of the same features like rod lockers built into the cap, flip-up aft bench seat, bow seating, and a tempered glass windshield. Topping it all off there is plenty of room to fish in the cockpit or bow!

The Makaira is now standard with a d-tube t-top that is form-fitted into the console making for a generous walk-thru from/to bow or cockpit.



405.382.0349 | www.bluewaveboats.com

Ricky Sharbeno put off a Sept. 22 deer-hunting trip because of hot weather. The heat didn't bother this 12½-pound Vernon Lake bass



CANCELLED HUNTING TRIP WORKS OUT; ANACOCO MAN SCORES HUGE BASS

When Ricky Sharbeno, a 37-year-old oilfield worker from Anacoco, woke up on the morning of Sept. 22, his first thoughts were of bucks, not bass. He planned to go deer-hunting that morning with a friend, Cody Knippers.

As Sharbeno crawled out from under the covers, the 12½-pound monster largemouth bass he would catch later in the day was nowhere in his mind.

But the thoughts of a hot, sticky day in the woods with insects pestering them constantly, Sharbeno and Knippers eventually decided that it was just too hot to go hunting, so they chose to go fishing at Vernon Lake on a lark.

At 8:10 a.m., Sharbeno and his friend had fished for two hours without luck. The sky was overcast and dull; they began to think the day was a failure, and they were prepared to head home.

But when they came to a point that extended into the lake, it looked too good to pass up. An old homeplace occupied the point. Concrete beams were submerged in the water — probably the remnants of an old pier — and crushed concrete lay strewn along the shore. In about 11 feet of water, a bush stood on its own, inviting Sharbeno to cast. He did, then waited for his lure to sink.

"I was fishing with a green pumpkin magic Baby Brush Hog, Carolina-rigged with a 2-foot leader," Sharbeno said.

When his lure reached the bottom, he gave it a tug.

"When I pulled that first time, my line moved, so I set the hook," Sharbeno said. "But I didn't feel (a fish), so I thought I was hung on that bush somewhere."

Assuming he'd made a mistake, Sharbeno continued to reel in his line. He thought he was cranking some of the bush to the surface, not a fish — certainly not a fish.

"When I got about halfway to the boat, I felt the first couple of little jerks," Sharbeno said. "So then, I thought that I was hung on a limb and had a fish on, because that had happened to me before on the lake."

"When it finally came to the water's surface, my heart started racing," Sharbeno said. "She fought a little when she came to the top and swam back down, but I mean, it was an adrenaline rush from there."

The tension cranked up a notch when Sharbeno and Knippers realized that they didn't have a net.

"We're going to lose it!" Sharbeno said at the time. "I didn't know if I had her hooked well, because nothing had gone as planned. There had never been a bite, so I was worried about it. She never put up a fight. She never tried to come up and out of the water or anything like that."

Each time Sharbeno brought the huge bass to the surface, she dove again.

"I actually had (Knippers) lip her," Sharbeno said. "I didn't want to take the risk of getting too much slack in the line and losing her."

"It took about three attempts before she stayed (on the surface) long enough for him to get a hand on her," he said, "but we finally got her in the boat. I probably had the shakes for 10 minutes after we got her in."

It took the men an hour to find a store with certified scales.

"The women in the store thought I was coming in to weigh something small," Sharbeno said. "But when we got there, they came inside and took pictures of the fish."

"LDWF doesn't keep official lake records anymore, but a game warden from Alexandria called and said that an 11.8-pound bass was the largest they had on record," Sharbeno said. "He said if anything bigger than our 12.50-pound bass had been caught in the lake, it wasn't reported."

After weighing and measuring the huge bass, Sharbeno released it back into Vernon Lake. ■

OVER 1,000,000 ACRES SOLD!



- Mississippi
- Louisiana
- Alabama
- Arkansas



SOUTHERN
STATES REALTY

View All Land For Sale
SouthernStatesRealty.com
601.250.0017

HESSMER ANGLER CLOSE TO DAUTERIVE RECORD WITH GIANT BASS

T By Will Miller
he sun was low and bright, but the air was unseasonably cool and pleasant. It was a Thursday evening: 7:15 on Sept. 23 to be exact.

Two fishermen had been on Lake Dauterive since about 5 o'clock. Neither man had reason to suspect that a 9-pound, 13-ounce bass would soon turn a leisurely, after-work, fishing trip into a moment in life to celebrate.

Dillion Bordelon, a 25-year-old fisherman from Hessmer, had suggested to his friend, Johnathan St. Germain, an aircraft mechanic from New Iberia, that they go fishing. St. Germain had been on Bordelon's mind in the preceding days for a couple of reasons.

First, his friend's home had been wrecked by Hurricane Ida. St. Germain lived on the bayou in a fishing camp he'd turned into a residence. During the storm, the first floor of the house had been wiped out by floodwaters.

"The kitchen and other downstairs rooms are gone," St. Germain said. "All the windows upstairs are blown in, and half the roof was taken off—it's basically a total loss."

Second, Bordelon knew that it was his friend's 24th birthday. He'd guessed a few hours of fishing would be welcome. After all, it had been a turbulent month for St. Germain.

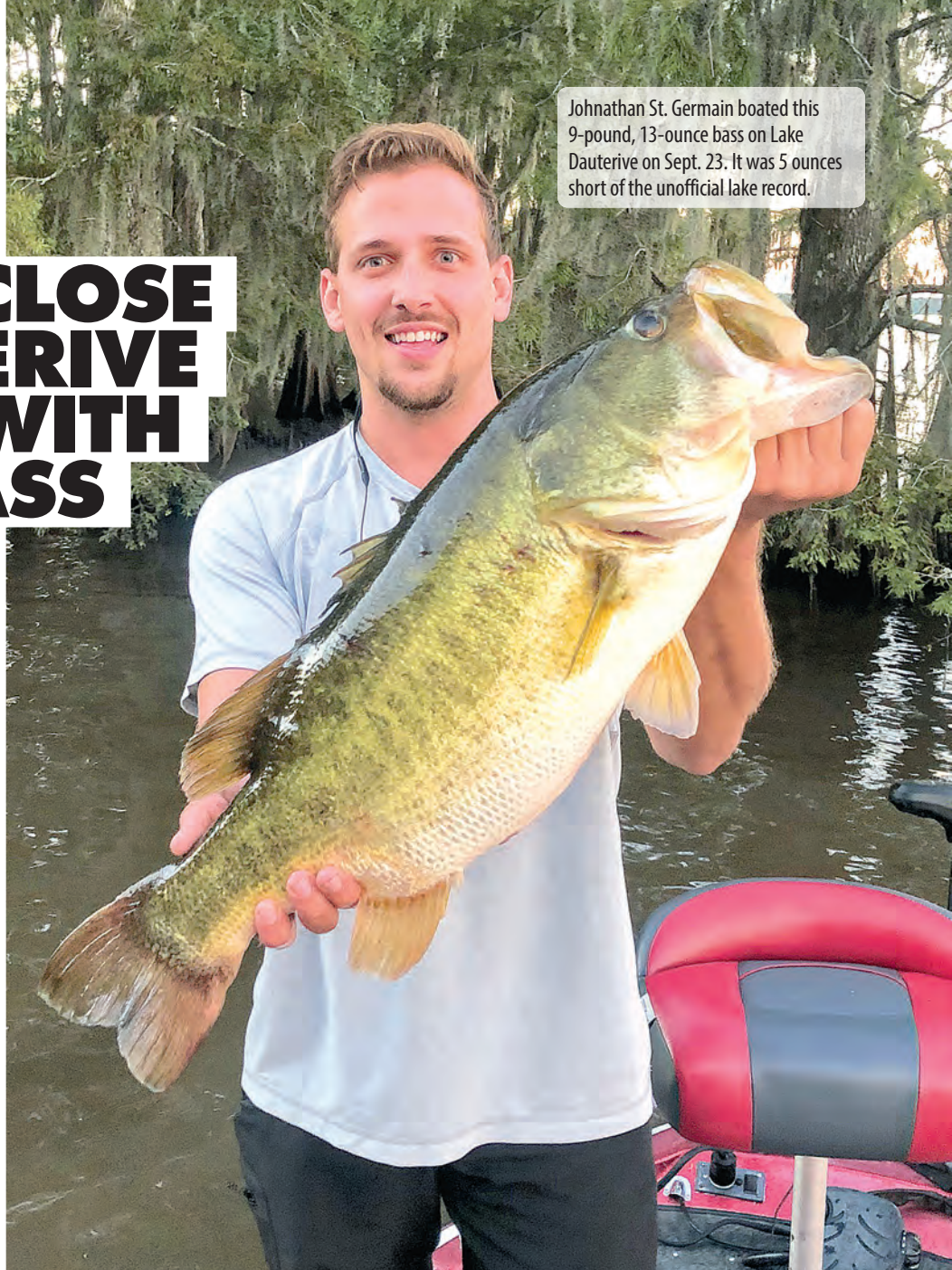
The men had caught a few bass earlier in the evening at the mouth of a large cove full of laydowns that stretched away from the main lake along a creek channel. But the bite had slowed, and then stopped, as they'd moved deeper into the cove.

"We turned the boat around, and went back to the mouth of the cove," Bordelon said. "The mouth opens up into the main lake, and there are some big cypress trees there; we'd caught most of our fish right where the cypress trees stopped, and the laydowns that litter the cove started."

The current was strong at the mouth of the cove. A large stand of cypress trees protected the point, and Bordelon suspected shad were schooling there.

"So, I tied a (white) spinnerbait onto his line, thinking 'Let's go hit

Johnathan St. Germain boated this 9-pound, 13-ounce bass on Lake Dauterive on Sept. 23. It was 5 ounces short of the unofficial lake record.



this stuff with an action bait and see what we do," Bordelon said. "On the second cast, (St. Germain) threw to the left of a cypress tree, and I threw to the right."

"As I'm reeling in my line, I hear some water splashing, and when I look back, his rod is bent all the way to the handle," Bordelon said. "Based on the way the rod was acting, my first thought was that he'd set his hook on a tree stump."

"You've hooked up on an alligator or a stump," Bordelon said, taunting his friend.

"I swear I've got a fish on," St. Germain said. "It might have wrapped me up, but it's on."

Suddenly, a giant bass exploded from the water's surface, shaking its head violently.

"I've been fishing my entire life, and it was the largest bass I've ever seen," Bordelon said. "I was beside myself, watching him reel this thing in like a tuna — I thought he was in sit-down gear."

The drag on St. Germain's reel was set for the 15-pound line he

was using, and he struggled to gain on the big fish. He put his thumb on the spool to slow the line ripping from his reel. Both anglers worried that they would not be able to get the fish to the boat.

Bordelon grabbed the net, and yelled, "Keep the rod tip down. I'm going to go as fast as I can towards this thing with the boat and try to scoop him up."

"We basically ran the fish over with the boat," Bordelon said, laughing.

But the last-ditch move worked. He was able to scoop the big bass into their craft.

"Once we put our hands on the fish, all of the emotions came out," Bordelon said. "I had such an adrenaline rush; we had to sit down; I was shaking."

"It was the most beautiful fish I've ever seen," St. Germain said. "I've never seen a bass that big in my life. I mostly fish inshore for redfish and trout; I fish almost every single day after work. But man, when I tell you ... a bull red ain't nothing compared to pulling in a nearly 10-pound bass."

Later, Bordelon contacted the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

"A biologist told me that it was the second-largest bass recorded in their notes on Lake Dauterive," Bordelon said. "The biologist said that previously someone had caught a 10-pound, 2-ounce bass in the area." ■



MIKE GERALD'S #15 TRAILER DEPOT

OVER 25 ACRES OF TRAILERS IN STOCK!

\$1,275



Entry - 5x10-13 Utility Trailer

Heavy Duty Truck Accessories

WE RENT TRAILERS!



\$1,699

1516-13





"BUILT FOR THE LONG HAUL"

• Boat • Cargo • Utility • GN • Custom Built Trailers •

6800 Airline Hwy.
(Across from Don's Seafood)
Baton Rouge, LA

Mon-Fri 7:30 - 4:30
Sunday we go to church,
we pray your boats float!

16815 Florida Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA

225-275-0000
Mon-Fri 8:00-4:30
Sat 8-2 • Sun-Closed

• Trailer Brake Experts • Galvanized Axles • Truck Hitches • Tool Boxes •

www.mikegeraldstrailerdepot.com

LET'S GO FISHING!

2015 ALUMAWELD



GREAT FINANCING AVAILABLE!

JUST ARRIVED!

PRICED TO SELL!



7113 HWY. 1 • SOUTH ADDIS, LA
225-749-5001 • 877-396-8365
CAJUNOUTBOARDS.COM



OUTDOOR
UPDATE



MISSOURI DUO ARE CRAPPIE MASTERS

Alex and T.J. Palmer of Clinton, Mo., won the Crappie Masters national championship on Lake D'Arbonne with a 2-day catch of 14 fish weighing 24.66 pounds.

FATHER/SON TEAM WIN NATIONAL TITLE ON D'ARBONNE

It By Kinny Haddox
was a dream come true just for T.J. Palmer and his son, Alex, to be standing on the weigh-in stage and even be in the top 10 of the Crappie Masters National Championship on Lake D'Arbonne in Farmerville Saturday afternoon. But when it came down to only one more team that could beat them, it was almost too much for the Clinton, Missouri duo.

They nervously watched the final team — first-day leaders Richard Bowling and Gary Lee, also of Missouri — weigh in their fish and come up just a few ounces short. Then reality set in. The Palmer's were the champions and claimed the \$30,000 check that came with their newfound title.

"Oh my gosh. Whooooaaaaa!", T.J. Farmer said. "I'm just speechless. I never thought in a million years I'd be standing here right now. Alex and I are very, very blessed. I mean... I can't even talk. I don't even know if this is real," he said as he put his hand on his son's shoulder.

But it was real.

The duo weighed in two 7-fish tournament limits totaling 24.66 pounds. They also captured the biggest slab of the event, a 2.55-pounder that actually propelled them to the win, mentally and at the scales.

"We caught that big fish at about 11 a.m. Friday, and up to that point, we didn't have anything," Alex said. "We knew that was something special, because the weights aren't that good this time of year. So we put our heads down and got to work to catch big fish. It wasn't easy. We had a hard time finding big fish. They were just scattered everywhere.

The fish on D'Arbonne are just starting to get out of their summer slump and begin feeding for the fall. Most of the anglers caught fish scattered on flats or near contour lines in 12 to 16

feet of water fishing about 10 to 11 feet deep. With 139 boats in the event and lots of local anglers out, the fish were skittish due to all the pressure, the anglers said.

The Palmers are the first-ever adult/youth team to claim a national championship. Alex is a 16-year-old junior in high school, but he played a bigger part in the win than just catching fish. One of their key baits were Palmer Stinger jig tails, a creation of his. The blue pearl/chartreuse tail was key, with the single tail catching the most big ones.

"I started Palmer's Custom Baits in my garage when my school was quarantined when I was 15, just to keep me busy, and just making them for us," he said. "People started wanting to buy them from me, and it just kicked off for me. We used them for a lot of our fish in the championship, and it paid off!"

The team of Clay Gann and Todd Froebe from Lindale, Texas, moved into second with 24.38 pounds. Defending national champion Eric Cagle of Tallassee, Ala., fishing by himself, took third with 24.38 pounds. Bowling and Lee slipped to fourth with 24.09.

Anglers Wes Barmore of Dubach and Mark Theodos of Choudrant were the top Louisiana finishers in fifth place. To say the finish was close is an understatement. The top five spots were separated by only .82 of a pound. D'Arbonne locals Chris Fields and Jared Riser of Farmerville were eighth and Wesley Miller and Justin Smart from the Minden area were 10th, followed by Heath Rogers of Farmerville and Lance Bilberry of Ruston in 15th.

Matthew and Bruce Rogers took Team Of The Year honors and placed sixth with a weight of 23.72 pounds. More than \$125,000 in cash and prizes were handed out to the winners at the end of the two day tournament Saturday, Sept. 26. ■

504-682-5252

www.tims-marine.com

Powered by



YAMAHA

FOR OVER
41
YEARS

Tims Marine

MODELS
AVAILABLE FROM
20-26'

SPECIFICATIONS

Beam	8 ft 6 in
Deadrise	16 deg
Draft	13 in
Fuel capacity67 gal
LOA	24 ft 09 in
Maximum HP	350 hp
Weight (approx. w/ engine) ..	3,500 lbs (w/ F300)



PATHFINDER

2500 HYBRID

The most comprehensive family of bay boats on the planet. Perfect balance of performance, stability, shallow water capability, and comfort. All the models are designed for the family angler that wants to retain shallow water capabilities but does not want sacrifice ride quality.



G3 Boats

The Bay Series is all-aluminum and all-welded. These models feature wide, deep hulls, exceptional handling and top-end performance, and all of the fishing features that anglers have come to expect from G3 and Yamaha.



SPORTSMAN

The Masters Series Bay Boats have the perfect balance of performance, stability, shallow water capability, and comfort. All the models are designed for the family angler that wants to retain shallow water capabilities but does not want sacrifice ride quality.



Triton BOATS

Countless options available on models from 22 to 26'.

Cody Stelly and Matt Aymond tagged this 11½-foot alligator, along with two others, in a lottery hunt on Sherburne WMA.

SHERBURNE ALLIGATOR LOSES OUT IN LOTTERY

T By Will Martin

he morning of Sept. 10, around 10:30, Cody Stelly of Plaisance and his friend, Matt Aymond, gazed into the murky water beside their boat.

What they saw was both a blessing and a challenge.

On the one hand, they had at least one alligator on a line in their 6-line set. The taut line they'd spotted during their approach had made that clear, even before they'd reached the gator.

But on the other, there was an 11½-foot alligator on the end of their line, and they wondered how they would ever haul the massive reptile onto the boat.

This is the first year that Stelly, 29, entered the lottery hunt at Sherburne WMA, and he felt fortunate to have been picked. The previous day, he'd set six lines on Big Alabama Bayou and was eager to get back on the water this morning. The huge alligator was on the first line of the set.

The battle with the big lizard went as smooth as butter until the crack of the coup-de-grace gunshot echoed off the trees and the gator spun up the set line like a yo-yo onto the bank. What would have been high drama on the History Channel was for Stelly and Aymond a Jurassic-sized problem, like a scaly puzzle wrapped in rope on the muddy bank.

"We weren't expecting to deal with something like that," Stelly said.

After each man tried and failed to pull, drag or roll the beast into the water, they decided to introduce a little bayou, can-do to the situation.

"We tied the alligator to the boat with a rope and yanked on it until it fell into the water," Stelly said. "Once it was in the water, we were able to manhandle it onto the boat; it was an operation, for sure.

"We were worn out, and ready to go to the house," Stelly said, laughing. But the two men had five more lines to check before then.

As they made their way from set to set, they discovered three more taut lines, though one alligator got off before they could lug it to the boat. Despite the good luck of that particular crocodylian, Stelly had a nice haul, consisting of the 11½-foot alligator and two others, each more than 7 feet long.

"With the alligators in the boat, it took us about 30 minutes longer to get back to the launch than it had taken us to get out that morning," Stelly said. "We were so loaded down."

But as Stelly and Aymond neared the launch, they realized that they had another problem: How were they going to get the huge gator out of the boat



"I had to call around to find (a friend) with a forklift or a tractor who could help me get it out of the boat," Stelly said.

Luckily, he found one, and the alligators are in his freezer — halfway to delicious.

Stelly plans to enter the lottery again next year.

"It's an awesome experience," he said, "and if you've never put in for the lottery, it's something to definitely try; maybe get your kids into it, too." ■

LWFC ADDS MENHADEN BUFFER ZONES

T From News Reports
he Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission adopted a Notice of Intent (NOI) to add coastal buffer zones to Gulf menhaden harvest regulations.

The proposed changes would modify the existing rule regarding where in Louisiana waters commercial harvest of gulf menhaden may occur.

The proposed changes would implement a coastwide buffer from the established inside-outside line — the line that separates Louisiana's inshore waters from offshore waters — of ¼-mile, including the waters of Breton and Chandeleur Sounds, with certain exceptions.

The area beginning at the eastern shore of Belle Pass to the eastern shore of Caminada Pass would require a 1-mile buffer, the area from the eastern shore of Caminada Pass to the eastern shore of Barataria Pass would require a 3-mile buffer, and the area from the eastern shore of Barataria Pass to the eastern end of Grand Terre Island would require a 1-mile buffer.

This NOI was brought forward due to user conflicts between recreational and charterboat anglers and the commercial menhaden fishery.

The Gulf of Mexico stock of menhaden is not overfished and is not undergoing overfishing. Scientific studies have estimated the

amount of by-catch of recreationally important species such as red drum and spotted seatrout are minimal, irrespective of the status of those populations.

Interested persons may submit comments relative to the proposed rule to Jason Adriance, Fisheries Division, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 or via email to jadriance@wlf.la.gov before Thursday, December 2, 2021. ■



STATE CHANGES EITHER-SEX DEER SEASONS ON 4 WMAS

T From News Reports
he Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission passed a declaration of emergency reducing the number of either-sex deer hunting days for the 2021-22 season on Joyce, Maurepas Swamp and Salvador/Timken Wildlife Management Areas during its Oct. 7 meeting in Baton Rouge.

The action came due to the impact of Hurricane Ida, which made landfall on Aug. 29, on those WMAs. It is intended to mitigate the anticipated reduction in fawn survival and subsequent lack of recruitment into the deer herds.

The declaration changes either-sex deer harvest on Joyce and Maurepas Swamp WMAs to bucks only during firearms season, Nov. 26-28, and primitive firearm season, Jan. 8-9 and Jan. 24-30. Either-sex deer hunting will be allowed during youth firearm season, Nov. 6-7, and archery season, Oct. 16-Feb. 15.

On Salvador/Timken WMA, either-sex deer harvest is amended to bucks only during firearm season, Nov. 19-21, and primitive firearm season, Dec. 20-26. Either-sex deer hunting will be allowed during archery season, Nov. 1-Jan. 31 and youth firearm season, Oct. 9-10, Oct. 16-17, Oct. 23-24 and Oct. 30-31.

To see the complete declaration of emergency, visit <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/resources/category/commission-action-items> ■



FOR SALE +/- 495 acres
Evangeline Parish

Bottomland hardwood areas and natural pine area containing gently rolling to steep terrain in uplands and relatively flat creek bottom areas.

Baker Agri-Forest Properties
A Limited Liability Company
318-473-8751

bakeragproperties.com

Dularge anglers are catching plenty of speckled trout and reds, two months after Ida's arrival.



Horsemen corks, has been his go-to formula for success since resuming operations.

"And we left the bull reds biting today," LaCoste said. The recovery process continues in Dularge, as it does across coastal Louisiana.

On Aug. 29, Hurricane Ida made landfall at Port Fourchon, about 40 miles from Dularge as the crow flies. Dularge fared much better than nearby Houma, where storm damage was more extensive.

With sustained winds reaching 150 mph at landfall, Hurricane Ida tied 2020's Hurricane Laura as the hardest-hitting hurricane to make a Louisiana landfall. Only Hurricane Katrina in 2005 was more costly in terms of life and property.

On Sept. 17, RMS, a leading catastrophic risk solutions company, estimated that the total onshore and offshore United States insured losses from Hurricane Ida was between \$31 billion and \$44 billion. ■

DULARGE FISH BACK ON TRACK, GUIDE BUSINESS UP, RUNNING

GLANCING BLOW FROM IDA COST LOCAL ECONOMY, BUT FISHING IS REBOUNDED

E By Will Martin
ntering the third month after Hurricane Ida's landfall on the Louisiana coast, Marty LaCoste of Absolute Fishing Charters in Dularge is back to doing what he does best: catching limits of trout and making customers smile.

"We made out extremely well in Dularge," LaCoste said. "Our camps and boatsheds were untouched."

But that is not to say that Dularge made it through the storm unscathed. Debris clean-up is ongoing, and the area went without electricity for a month. Still, Dularge took a glancing blow, and the fact is not lost to local fishermen now able to return to work.

Electricity was restored on Sept. 28, and LaCoste took his first post-Ida guide trip on Oct. 2. Now that utilities have been restored, he said, Absolute Fishing Charters is "back to fishing full force."

Sportsmen from across the state want to know how they can help their fellows in areas affected by the hurricane — in the case of Dularge, at least — LaCoste believes that the best way to help is to book a fishing trip.

"The bite has been getting better each day," he said. "We caught our limit of specks today on double rigs."

Matrix Shad in shrimp creole, double-rigged under Four

EXCEL 220 BAY PRO IN STOCK!

SOUTHERN OUTDOORS & MARINE LLC

2268 GRAND CAILLOU RD., HOUMA, LA 985-873-7731

1308 CANAL BLVD., THIBODAUX 985-447-4156

YAMAHA

MIGHTY LIKE A PRO



Tackle this Hunting Season in a rugged but comfortable GMC Sierra.

COURTESY 
 **BUICK**  

LAFAYETTECOURTESY.COM
4750 JOHNSTON ST. LAFAYETTE, LA 70503

GMC WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE

2021 LOUISIANA LEGENDS HALL INDUCTS SIX; PRESENTS THREE SPECIAL OUTDOOR AWARDS

S By Kinny Haddox
ix prominent Louisiana outdoor personalities with outstanding legacies of contributions to the outdoors were inducted into the second class of the Louisiana Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame at an awards banquet Oct. 16 at Tunks Cypress Inn on Lake Kincaid near Boyce, and *Louisiana Sportsman* received one of three special awards.

The 2021 class of inductees includes Warren Coco of Baton Rouge, founder and owner of Go Devil Boats; Bo Dowden of Natchitoches, former BASS Masters Classic champion and owner of a marine dealership; noted deer hunter and woodsman Warren Womack of Bluff Creek and Joe Macaluso of Baton Rouge, veteran outdoors editor of the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate* and one of the founders for "Hunters For the Hungry" in Louisiana. Also inducted were Dale Bordelon of Effie, the owner of Bayou Beast Duck Calls, a decoy carver and outdoor history preservationist; and freelance outdoor writer/broadcaster Glynn Harris of Ruston.

Louisiana Sportsman, based in Boutte, was presented with the Legends Legacy Award in recognition of the business as well as the many contributions of the magazine. Leon Stillely of Albany, a tireless relief volunteer working and veteran turkey hunter, received the Louisiana Sportsman of the Year award, and Hogg Boss Gates of Bastrop was honored with the Manufacturer of Excellence Award.

The National Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame was established in 2002. The Louisiana chapter, managed by Peyton McKinney of Marion, is the first to initiate a state program along national guidelines.

The first class of the Louisiana Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame was chosen in 2019, however, the 2020 process was postponed due to COVID-19.

Here's a look at this year's inductees:

• **WARREN COCO:** An avid duck hunter, at 22, he founded a company destined to become one of the most-important and influential members of the waterfowl industry. He founded Go-Devil with about \$1,000 capital and a handful of garage equipment. The first version of the Go-Devil motor weighed nearly 200 pounds. Today, the company maintains more than 30 full-time employees with more than 52,000 square feet of high-tech buildings turning out at least 1,000 engines annually.

• **BO DOWDEN:** Willis P. "Bo" Dowden of Natchitoches is one of two Louisiana residents to win the prestigious Bassmaster Classic, winning on New York's St. Lawrence River in New York in 1980. He is a former marine dealer and now real estate agent. He competed in Classics, finishing in third in 1982. ESPN Outdoors and B.A.S.S. named him among the 35 greatest anglers of all-time in 2004. He is also a member of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

• **WARREN WOMACK:** Warren Womack has had countless endeavors in the outdoors, but he has drawn the most



notice for his harvesting and journaling the details of 387 whitetails. The logging of each successful hunt is what has made his name one that many hunters have come to recognize. The written descriptions of successful hunts are littered with facts and methods that have helped him hone his craft into something quite special. Today, his attention to detail has helped many hunters searching for ways to improve their hunting and his tactics and strategies have been featured in magazines and podcasts.

• **JOE MACALUSO:** Best known as the veteran outdoors editor of the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*, he has won numerous awards, including the Louisiana Governor's Conservationist of the Year in the Communicator category and the Arthur Van Pelt Lifetime Achievement Award from the Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association. In 2014, he was presented the Distinguished Service Award in Sports Journalism by the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame. He has been awarded/recognized more than 90 times for stories in state, regional and national organizations. He also wrote the Louisiana section of the *World Encyclopedia of Fishing* and conceived the idea, then was director/co-host for the award-winning *Paradise Louisiana*, a ground-breaking, one-hour outdoors magazine TV show. In 1994, he was one of a group of local hunters who helped establish "Hunters For The Hungry".

• **DALE BORDELON:** The owner of Bayou Beast Duck Calls, Bordelon carries on a family tradition of making duck calls that dates to the 1870s when calls were made from river cane. In addition to hand-making duck calls, he still hand-carves all of his many different types of decoys from cypress. He still hunts with his Winchester Model 1897 in his dugout pirogue hand-carved from a 5,000-pound cypress log. Bordelon incorporates tradition into every hunting or fishing trip. He makes pillows from duck feathers as his ancestors did.

• **GLYNN HARRIS:** A noted freelance outdoor writer and radio-show host, Harris has spent most of his life enjoying the outdoors. He was in on the ground-breaking coverage of tournament fishing in north Louisiana and big whitetail bucks statewide. He writes a weekly outdoor column for several north Louisiana newspapers, has magazine credits in a number of magazines and has a weekly outdoor radio show. He has won more than 50 writing and broadcasting awards during his almost 50-year career. ■

OPPOSITE PAGE: Inductees and special award winners at the 2021 Louisiana Chapter Legends of the Outdoors banquet held Oct. 16. Left to right: Kinny Haddox, Glynn Harris, Joe Macaluso, Bo Dowden, Warren Coco, Cory Gilbert, Scott Hall, Lisa Cuccia, Dale Bordelon, Peyton McKinnie, Leon Stilley, Johnny Wink, Warren Womack, Dan DeWitt and Ronda Johnson.



Lisa Cuccia (right) accepted the Louisiana Chapter Outdoor Legends Hall of Fame Legacy Award on behalf of her father Allen Lottinger (left) and the Louisiana Sportsman.

LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN WINS LEGACY AWARD

Louisiana Sportsman Magazine was presented the 2021 Outdoor Legends Hall of Fame's Legacy Award in recognition of its ongoing commitment to Louisiana's outdoor resources and people as well as the many contributors to the magazine over the years.

Lisa Cuccia, *Louisiana Sportsman's* president accepted the award for the Lottinger family, which publishes the magazine.

"We are so very happy to accept this award, and we are very appreciative," said Cuccia. "I would like to accept on behalf of my father, Allen Lottinger, who founded *Louisiana Sportsman* magazine, and everyone who has contributed to its success over the years."

Cuccia called the family's camp in Grand Isle the birthplace of the magazine and cited the importance family played in getting the magazine started.

Allen Lottinger was the journalist of the family; he began *Louisiana Sportsman* as a tabloid. In 1985, *Louisiana Sportsman* was switched to a magazine format. He served as publisher and also wrote the *Coastal Erosion* column. His wife, Colette, sold advertising and penned the *How Sportsman Cook* column.

The magazine was a true family affair from the beginning.

Colette Lottinger's father, Al Moreau, wrote a fishing column called *Allons a la Peche*, while Cuccia ran the magazine's production department. Ann Taylor, Lisa's sister, was instrumental in the magazine's editorial development and direction, while her husband, Tony, sold advertising. Another of Allen Lottinger's daughters, Lauren, worked in graphic design.

"It's come a long way since then. Ida took our camp in Grand Isle, but hopefully, we can keep the legacy alive," Cuccia said.

When Allen Lottinger retired, the Taylors took over the day-to-day operations of the company. Cuccia took over as president in June 2020. The magazine has maintained a commitment to covering the great resources and people in the Louisiana outdoors. The magazine's audience includes 45,000 monthly readers, plus 360,000 monthly web visitors and 180,000 social media followers. ■

NOVEMBER RUT REPORT

T By David Moreland
 he arrival of November means primitive firearms and rifle season gets under way in most areas of the state. In southwest Louisiana (Areas 3, 7, 8, 10), bucks will have finished up their second scraping period on Oct. 19, with the second breeding period forecast to take place from Oct. 20 through Nov. 3.

Area 2 bucks will be wrapping up their first scraping period around Oct. 19, with the first breeding period running from about Oct. 20 through Nov. 3. The second scraping period will begin immediately thereafter, running through about Nov. 18. The second breeding period runs Nov. 19 through Dec. 3.

Deer in Areas 4 and 9 will be in pre-rut through about Nov. 3, with the first scraping period lasting from Nov. 4 through Nov. 18, with the first rut starting immediately thereafter and lasting through Dec. 3.

In Areas 1, 5 and 6, deer will be in pre-rut beginning Nov. 4 all the way through about Dec. 3. ■

NOVEMBER 2021 Areas 3, 7, 8 & 10

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

NOVEMBER 2021 Area 2

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

NOVEMBER 2021 Areas 4 & 9

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

NOVEMBER 2021 Areas 1, 5 & 6

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

WONDERING IF NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO SELL?



BLAKE CHARLES
Agent, East Central LA
(337) 945-4061



CONNOR CAMP
Agent, North LA
(318) 458-7563



CADE TAYLOR
Agent, Southeast LA
(225) 719-0495



CLINT WOOD
Agent, Northeast LA
(318) 348-0675



WESLEY MCCONNELL
Agent, North LA
(217) 371-9094

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL LAND SPECIALIST TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BUYING
AND SELLING HUNTING, RANCH, FARM AND TIMBERLAND.



WHITETAIL PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE

HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER



WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM

Whitetail Properties Real Estate, LLC DBA Whitetail Properties. In the States of Nebraska & North Dakota DBA Whitetail Trophy Properties Real Estate LLC. Licensed in IL, MO, IA, KS, KY, NE & OK - Dan Peraz, Broker. Licensed in AR, CO, GA, MN, ND, SD, TN & WI - Jeff Evans, Broker. Licensed in FL, OH & PA - Jefferson Kirk Gilbert, Broker. Licensed in TX & NM - Joey Bellington, Broker. Licensed in IN - Bill Minor, Broker. Licensed in AL, GA, LA, & MS - Sybil Stewart, Broker. Licensed in TN - Tim Burnette, Broker. Licensed in TN - Bobby Powers, Broker. Licensed in AR - Anthony Chrisco, Broker. Licensed in NC, SC, VA - Chip Camp, Broker. Licensed in NC - Rich Baugh, Broker. Licensed in MI - Edmund Joel Nogaski, Broker. Licensed in MD, WV - Debbie S. Laux, Broker. Licensed in MT, ID, UT, WY, OR - Aaron Milliken, Broker. Licensed in NY - John Myers, Real Estate Broker.



LOUISIANA STRONG!

#SURVIVEDHURRICANEIDA



MEET OUR SALES TEAM



MELVIN PORTER
SALESMAN



TIM BILELLO
SALESMAN

CALL OR STOP BY TODAY!

6161 W PARK AVE • HOUMA

SALES: 985-303-1589 • SERVICE: 985-303-1594 • PARTS: 985-303-1581

SOUTHLANDDODGECHRYSLERJEEP.COM

THIS TAXIDERMIST HAS LEARNED
PLENTY ABOUT DEER HUNTING FROM
HIS SUCCESSFUL CUSTOMERS.

ANTLERS 'R'US

■ By Kinny Haddox

It's every deer hunter's dream,

to be surrounded by big bucks, staring them right in the eyes.

It's heart-pounding, looking at not just a trophy of a lifetime, but dozens of them. No, make that hundreds of them.

Fortunately for Chancy Lee Frith, he gets to live that dream every day, and he's not even in the woods. He's in the main shop at K&K Taxidermy in Ragley, a small city an hour north of Lake Charles. Frith takes in around 450 trophy deer to mount every year, and last year, that number climbed to 550. That keeps him and his family, plus five full-time employees, busy year-round.

Also, Frith loves to hunt deer himself, and that sometimes makes it tough. As folks bring in their trophies, he can't help but think about the big ones he is seeing on his lease in Louisiana and his family land that borders the Homochitto National Forest north of Woodville, Miss.

"Oh yes, that's pretty tough," he said, "but taking care of our customers always come first. One of the worst cases for me was a couple of years ago; I was after a big 10-point on our lease pretty heavy. I had daylight deer-cam pictures of him and was ready to take him, but I couldn't slip off. The next day, another hunter on our lease came to the shop and told me to come outside and see what he had. It was the big 10-point. I was happy for him, but not for me. I did get to mount him, but that's tough when it's one I wanted so badly."

Frith not only has his own personal knowledge of deer hunting, but he also gleans information from the hundreds of hunters who bring him their trophies. From that, he's come up with some things that can help any hunter be more successful.

"You can find big deer almost anywhere, but to be consistent, I guess the most important thing about finding trophy bucks is management," Frith said. "Two of my regular repeat customers are Trent and Erica Buxton; I've learned so much from them. They always come in and show us pictures of 2- and 3-year-old deer they are watching grow. As they get older, they even give them names. When you keep up with deer like that until they are late 4- or 5-year-old deer, you are going to have some good ones. Throw in minerals and food plots, and you've got consistent big bucks to hunt."



The sheer numbers of trophy racks hanging from the ceiling in Chancy Lee Frith's taxidermy shop in Louisiana is mind-boggling.





STIHL IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

GEAR UP FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Find the outdoor power equipment you need to take on the outdoors and the expertise to back it up at your authorized local STIHL Dealer. Not sold at Lowe's® or The Home Depot.®

Real STIHL. Find Yours at [STIHLDEALERS.COM](https://www.stihldealers.com)

Lowe's® and The Home Depot® are trademarks of their respective companies. ©2021 STIHL/SSW

Frith is also a big believer in trail cameras. “Some people don’t use them, but trail cameras can give you so much information, like what trails deer are using, what time they are in certain areas and how many bucks and does are using that area,” he said. “It’s especially important when your time in the woods is limited.”

The other major factor that determines success on big bucks is the rut.

“If there is a time you can target big bucks during the season, when you have a good shot at seeing one during daylight hours, it’s the rut,” Frith said. “Look, deer move around fairly freely, but when the first week of bow season hits and the activity in the woods picks up, those deer go nocturnal again — especially older, wiser bucks.

“The one time when you can get them to slip out during daylight after that is when the rut is on and they are chasing does. Keeping up with the rut is about as important a thing as you can do.”

Frith said many deer hunters even schedule vacation during the rut; it shows in his business. About half of the big deer that come into his shop arrive during the rut. The good thing is, if you hunt in more than one area, you can catch the rut more than once.



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.

“The rut down here where I live is usually late October and on up into November through Thanksgiving,” he said. “When it slacks off here, we can go up into Mississippi, and the rut there is mostly December and



Besides mounting hundreds of trophy bucks every year, taxidermist Chancy Lee Frith has learned a little about deer hunting himself.

Don't 'short-cape' your trophy buck

Too much is better than not enough. That applies to a lot of good things in life, and one of them is preparing your trophy deer to take to the taxidermist.

“One of the worst things you can possibly do when you have a trophy deer to be mounted is to not leave enough cape,” taxidermist Chancy Lee Frith said. “So many times, hunters cut the cape off short, and it makes us have to really stretch the skin to cover the form. Even worse, we have to order a smaller form, and the deer looks smaller. Nobody wants that.”

Most people skin their deer head down, hanging by the feet. When you do that, all the weight is hanging down and the deer is stretched tight. If you cut it too short, what looks like enough will slide up toward the head and not be enough. To be safe, he tells hunters to make a ring cut almost all the way back of where the stomach meets the hindquarter.



When getting ready to take a deer head to the taxidermist, make sure you leave as much of the cape as possible.

Rule No. 2 — or really 1A, according to Frith — is to keep your deer cool and covered. Letting the deer get hot makes some of the hair fall out. Letting direct sunlight hit it also deteriorates the quality of the hair and skin within a matter of hours, which both affect the best outcome of the mount. ■

sometimes up into January. Within a half-day drive in several directions, you can find deer rutting activity in different places at different times.”

Learning from others is also important. It has been key to success in business and in hunting for Frith.

“My dad had to work a lot and didn’t get to hunt much, but my uncle Johnny taught me all about deer hunting when I was 15 years old,” Frith said. “He taught me everything I knew about deer hunting.

“The same thing happened when we got into the taxidermy business. I was working construction and fighting a jackhammer all day. My wife, Melanie, and I wanted to have our own taxidermy business. We were honestly a bit scared when we saw how much went into it, but a federal game warden in the area who did taxidermy on the side took time to teach us how to do it right. After about a year of helping him, he told us to get some business cards, that we were ready to go out on our own. It’s been a blessing from God to be able to do this and to meet and work with so many fine people and make sure their outdoor trophies are prepared the right way at a reasonable cost. Our son works with us today, and one day it will be his to continue.” ■

BORDER BUCKS >



Chancey Lee Frith mounts hundreds of deer heads every year; he said about half of them are taken during the rut, when bucks occasionally let their guard down.



**MADE FOR HUNTERS
BY HUNTERS**



QUIRK’S WELDING

(337) 826-9353

george@quirkswelding.com

3712 LA-10, Washington, LA

@quirkswelding

quirkswelding.com



R. Schexnayder & Sons, LLC.

3100 Poydras Bayou Erwinville, LA

225 627-6806

**WE HAVE WHAT
DEER WANT
AT THE BEST PRICE!**

50 lb. Bags (one bag or 100 bags)
& Bulk Available

Deer Corn • Soybeans • Rice Bran
Crushed Roasted Soybean Mixes

Oats, Wheat, Rye Grass,
Austrian Winter Peas, Arrow Leaf Clover,
Crimson Clover, Chicory, Rape Seed

Supplements, Salt, Minerals, Protein Pellets

Deer Food Plot Mix, Custom Blend Plot Mixes

SUPER BAGS: Corn, Soybeans, Food Plot Mix,
Oat Seed, Wheat Seed, Rye Grass

Bucks along the big, muddy border

Louisiana and Mississippi share a common border — the mighty Mississippi River. They also share good numbers of big-racked deer.

But as a hunter who spends a considerable amount of time in the deer woods of both states, taxidermist Chancy Lee Frith said there are some pretty obvious differences in the way many hunters in the two states hunt.

Frith said one thing that is important in hunting two states is to keep up with all the different rules and regulations, especially specific ones for public lands.

LOUISIANA

Where we hunt here in Louisiana, Frith said, it is mostly around pine forests with a few hardwoods. The terrain is flat, and deer lay up in the thickets pretty much all day.

“The obvious things we look for are trails, scrapes and rubs. If you can find fresh tracks on the trails, obviously that’s a good place to hang your stand,” said Frith, who hunts a private lease in Beauregard Parish. “Hunting in the pine woods means you usually have to get pretty close to the deer, either getting a shot on a trail or where they cross a woods road.

“This terrain also makes it a good place to hunt with a boy. The only shots long enough to require a gun are on the edge of clearings or cutovers, that sort of thing. Also, the rut in our part of Louisiana is pretty early, usually around the end of October into November.”

MISSISSIPPI

Frith said the terrain in Mississippi where he hunts is all hardwood ridges with lots of open ground and big winding creeks. The ridges offer a hunter the chance to sit with his or her back up against a big tree and see long distances below them, just like being in a big stand.

“When we say ‘creek’ in Louisiana, it’s usually something you can walk across, but in Mississippi there are long, wide stretches of creek with sandbars and crystal-clear water. I love to target those,” he said. “The deer come out and cross those areas or just come to into the open there. It seems like the deer there move better and are a little bit more likely to move all day, not just at daylight and dark.”



Central Louisiana's Premiere Show Up & Shoot Hunting Lease

- 4000+ acres of true sportsman hard wood river bottom paradise.
- 40+ spacious box stands with feeders and food plots.
- 15+ brushed duck blinds in cypress lakes with decoys.
- 4 Private lakes with maintained boat landings. Excellent Bass, Bream and Crappie fishing.
- 8 point or better deer management in place.
- Exceptional flocks of turkeys.
- RV and Mobile Home Lots available overlooking the lakes.



COST

- Hunting & Fishing Lease \$6,250
- Fishing Lease \$1,750
- RV Lot Lease \$1,200
- Mobile Home Lot Lease \$3,000

LOCATION

Southern Portion of LaSalle Parish on the banks of Little River. 16 miles south of Jena, LA



SCOTT OGLE

office: 318-992-4867
phone: 318-308-7521
e-mail: kc_outfitters@yahoo.com

CONTACT INFO

See us on
FB @ Kitterlin Creek
Outfitters or web @
kitterlincreek.com



Frith hunts there mostly with a rifle and has taken some deer out to 200 to 250 yards, especially on the edge of the creek. He said if you are doing that kind of hunting, make sure you gun is sighted in and you are prepared for that shot.

The Homochitto National Forest covers 191,839 acres; Frith hunts the national forest and family land that borders it. He said it's amazing the number of big deer that you see moving in that area. The rut there is usually a bit later, around December and sometimes into January. ■

How is hunting in Mississippi different from Louisiana? In Mississippi, creeks are real waterways.

HUNTING REGULATIONS >



WE'LL GUIDE YOU TO LAND OWNERSHIP

Louisiana Land Bank's loans are designed to make your dream of owning a little piece of the country a reality. We have over 100 years of experience financing rural and recreational land.

Hunting for land? We can help, contact us today.



SCAN FOR MORE INFO



1-877-648-5263 | LouisianaLandBank.com/recreation


Not an official document. Refer to LDWF's official hunting regulations pamphlet or www.wlf.louisiana.gov

HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
DOVES+	(South Zone) Sept. 4 - 18 Oct. 16 - Nov. 28 Dec. 18 - Jan. 17	(North Zone) Sept. 4 - 26 Oct. 9 - Nov. 14 Dec. 24 - Jan. 22	15 45
	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31	3	9
TEAL (blue-winged, green-winged, cinnamon)	Sept. 11 - Sept. 26	6	18
RAILS* King & Clapper Sora & Virginia	Sept. 11 - 26 Sept. 11 - 26	Nov. 13 - Jan. 5 Nov. 13 - Jan. 5	15 25
	Sept. 11 - 26	Nov. 13 - Jan. 5	15
GALLINULES*	Sept. 11 - 26	Nov. 13 - Jan. 5	15
SNIPE	Nov. 2 - Dec. 5 Dec. 18 - Feb. 28	8	24
QUAIL	Nov. 20 - Feb. 28	10	30
RABBIT	Oct. 2 - Feb. 28	8	24
SQUIRREL	Oct. 2 - Feb. 28 May 7 - 29**	8 3	24 9

*An extended falconry season for ducks, rails and gallinules will take place from Nov. 2 - Jan. 31. ^An extended falconry season for woodcock will be Nov. 2 - Jan. 31. +An extended falconry season for mourning doves will be Sept. 15 - Oct. 1. **Spring squirrel season is CLOSED on the Kisatchie National Forest, some National Wildlife Refuges, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property and some Wildlife Management Areas. (Check WMA season schedule)

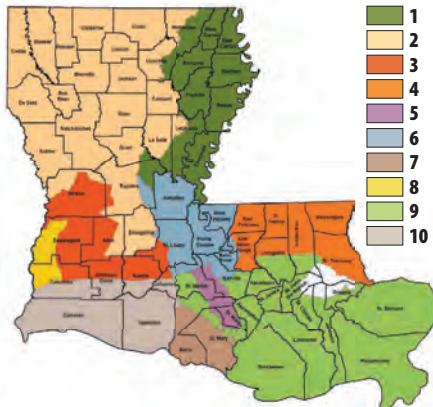
WATERFOWL SEASONS

	EAST ZONE	WEST ZONE	
DUCKS*, COOTS & MERGANSERS	Nov. 20 - Dec. 5 Dec. 18 - Jan. 30	Nov. 13 - Dec. 5 Dec. 18 - Jan. 2, Jan. 10-30	
The daily bag limit for ducks is 6 and may include no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 females), 3 wood ducks, 2 canvasbacks, 2 redheads, 1 mottled duck, 1 black duck and 1 pintail. Only 1 scaup may be taken for the first 15 days of the season with 2 per day allowed for the remainder. Daily bag limit for coots is 15. Daily bag limit for mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be a hooded mergansers. The merganser limits are in addition to the daily bag limit for ducks. The possession limit on ducks, coots and mergansers is three times the daily bag limit. Youth and Veterans only: EAST - Nov. 13 & Feb. 5. WEST - Nov. 6-7.			
GEESE (snow, blue, Ross & white-fronted [specklebelly])	EAST ZONE Nov. 6 - Dec. 5	WEST ZONE Nov. 6 - Dec. 5	Daily bag limit for light geese (snow, blue, Ross) is 20, with no possession limit. The daily bag limit for white-fronted geese is three, with a possession limit of nine.
CANADA GOOSE SEASON	Dec. 18 - Jan. 30	Dec. 18 - Jan. 2 Jan. 10 - Feb. 6	The daily limit for Canada geese is one per day, with a possession limit of three.
CONSERVATION ORDER FOR LIGHT GEESE	EAST ZONE Dec. 6-17 Jan. 31 - March 6	WEST ZONE Dec. 6-17 Jan. 3-9 Feb. 7 - March 6	No bag or possession limit. See pamphlet for more detail.

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

DEER SEASONS

2021 - 2022 Deer Hunting Areas



AREA	ARCHERY (Either-sex)	PRIMITIVE FIREARMS (All either-sex, except as noted)	STILL HUNT (No dogs allowed) (All either-sex, except as noted)	WITH/WITHOUT DOGS (All either-sex, except as noted)
1	Oct. 1 - Jan. 31	Nov. 13 - 19 Jan. 24 - 31	Nov. 20 - Dec. 10 Jan. 3 - 23	Dec. 11 - Jan. 2
2	Oct. 1 - Jan. 31	Oct. 23 - 29 Jan. 17 - 23	Oct. 30 - Dec. 7	Dec. 8 - Jan. 16
3	Sept. 18 - Jan. 15	Oct. 9 - 15, Jan. 3 - 9	Oct. 16 - Nov. 28	Nov. 29 - Jan. 2 (certain areas)
4	Oct. 1 - Jan. 31	Nov. 13 - 19 Jan. 24 - 31	Nov. 20 - Dec. 10 Jan. 3 - 23	Dec. 11 - Jan. 2
5	Oct. 1 - 15 (bucks only) Oct. 16 - Feb. 15 (either-sex)	Nov. 13 - 19 (either-sex) Jan. 24 - 31 (bucks only)	Nov. 20-21, Nov. 26-28 (either-sex) Nov. 22-25, Nov. 29 - Dec. 10 (bucks only)	Dec. 11-12, Dec. 18-19 (either-sex) Dec. 13-17 (bucks only) Dec. 20 - Jan. 23 (bucks only)
6	Oct. 1 - 15 (bucks only) Oct. 16 - Feb. 15 (either-sex)	Nov. 13 - 19 Jan. 24 - 31	Nov. 20 - Dec. 10	Dec. 11 - Jan. 23
7	Sept. 18 - Jan. 15	Oct. 9 - 15 Jan. 3 - 9	Oct. 16 - Nov. 28	Nov. 29 - Jan. 2
8	Sept. 18 - Jan. 15	Oct. 9 - 15, Jan. 3 - 9	Oct. 16 - Nov. 28	Nov. 29 - Jan. 2
9	Oct. 1 - 15 (bucks only) Oct. 16 - Feb. 15 (either-sex)	Nov. 13-19 (either-sex) Jan. 24 - 31 (bucks only)	Nov. 20-21, Nov. 26-28 (either-sex) Nov. 22-25, Nov. 29 - Dec. 10 (bucks only)	Dec. 11-12, Dec. 18-19 (either-sex) Dec. 13-17 (bucks only) Dec. 20 - Jan. 23 (bucks only)
10	Sept. 18 - Jan. 15	Oct. 9 - 15, Jan. 3 - 9	Oct. 16 - Jan. 2	

Have you ever opened a magazine and wondered how photographers capture such perfect images of trophy game? How do they get so close to wise, old bucks without alerting them? And look at that perfect broadside shot....

Jordan McEntyre of Pineville, who specializes in outdoors photography and videography, knows a thing or two about getting close to wildlife. Whether he's in the woods with a rifle or a camera, putting himself in the right place at the right time is par for the course.

November brings the joys of the deer hunt, and to that end, some old tricks never go out of style. But a cutting-edge hunter is always willing to incorporate new information into his process. Improvement in any discipline — including hunting — often requires outside-the-box

thinking and a willingness to mine knowledge from the experiences of other players on the field.

The photographer's perspective is unique. In addition to locating game, he or she must be concerned with other factors, like light and composition, that don't often figure into a hunter's planning.

Here are a few things McEntyre thinks about when planning a hunt, whether he'll be in the woods to capture stunning photographs or to fill his tags.

SCOUT EARLY >

LESSONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHY: HOW ONE OUTDOORS PHOTOGRAPHER GETS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL TO TROPHY DEER AND HOW IT CAN HELP HUNTERS.

■ By Will Martin



SMILE, MR. BUCK

SCOUT EARLY

“Do the bulk of your scouting in late-summer,” he said. “The earlier the better, really. If you can find the natural travel patterns of the deer, you’ll produce greater success in November and December, a time when everything is kind of falling off and the squirrels and other animals have gotten to the feed..”

“The timing will depend on the acorn crop this year, but if you can really focus on natural travel, you won’t be dependent on food.”

Key in on trails between thickets and resources, especially water. Deer adapt to seasonal conditions, food availability and hunting pressure, but they are also critters of habit, and like humans, they tend to choose the path of least resistance when not pressured to do otherwise. This means that many trails will be used throughout the year. Scout these areas early and limit your activity to the use of game cams in the weeks leading to your hunt.

USE PRESSURE

“Everybody wants to start hunting in November, because it’s not as miserable to be in the woods,” McEntyre said. “And as more hunters enter the woods, the pressure on the deer population increases. Deer naturally gravitate to areas of low pressure and then lock down during these times, especially during pre-rut.”

Remember, wildlife doesn’t live in a vacuum. From a deer’s perspective, hunters are an environmental hazard, and it’s good to think of hunters the way the deer do. Just as you must consider resources and cover when planning a hunt, you should consider where deer are likely to encounter pressure from other hunters.

“Under pressure, they won’t move as much, especially in pre-rut, and they are more likely to get active at night,” McEntyre said. “So you’ve got to get in close, in their house, so to speak.”

Determine what areas are likely to be hunted heavily and predict where the deer safe spaces will be. Lean on the scouting that you did earlier in the year, so you don’t disturb these areas.

“You should know the terrain and resources in the vicinity from the work you put in early,” McEntyre said. “If you’ve put out a game cam, let it be your eyes; limit boots on the ground.”

HUNT THE WIND

During the scouting phase of your hunt, come up with a game plan for dealing with the wind. Choose contingency hunting locations for different weather conditions. Many hunters remain loyal to a particular stand when they should be promiscuous.

“If the wind is not right for hunting a stand, it’s counterproductive to go anywhere near it,” McEntyre said. “You may think you’ve got to hunt there, but you really need to hunt the wind.”

Hunt where the wind helps you. It’s true that wind direction can change while you’re in the woods, but never go to a stand





when you know that wind conditions may not be favorable. You may get a deer there, or you may not, but you run the risk of alerting deer to human activity right where you want them most comfortable.

“If you fail to scout multiple locations and game-plan for wind conditions, you’ll be stuck in whatever spot looked good a week before the hunt, McEntyre said. “Conditions change, and you’ve got to be able to take advantage of what nature gives you, not (handicapped by it).”

FOOD SOURCES

It never hurts to set up on an active food source in an area free of other hunters. If acorns are falling, deer will be interested in eating them.



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.

TAKE BETTER PHOTOS >

Have stand locations to take advantage of winds from different directions so you’ll never be downwind of an approaching buck. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Do plenty of scouting before the season to help build a game plan for hunting at different times and under different circumstances.



Boiling Pots, Pit Blinds & more!

GREAT Gift IDEAS

5min BOILER

HUGHES MANUFACTURING

1300 AIRPORT RD. | JENNINGS, LA. 70546 | 337-824-2176
www.hughesmfg.net

TAKE BETTER PHOTOS

The proliferation of smart-phone technology has put a capable digital camera in everyone's pocket and made professional-quality digital cameras less expensive. These developments have democratized photography, expanding the Average Joe's ability to capture great images.

But smart-phone cameras and editing software can only do so much. What can you do to improve your pictures? Here are McEntyre's tips for better wildlife photography.

"It all comes down to knowing how to use your equipment before you enter the woods," McEntyre said. "When the time comes to photograph a deer — or any other animal — you'll often have a split-second to get the shot."

A deer won't wait for you to fumble with your settings.

Learning the settings on your camera will also lead to better quality pictures straight from the camera. This means you'll only have to make small adjustments in post-production.

"You want to capture an image that's true to the eye," he said, "and the way to do that is to control the light sensitivity of your camera."

People can spot a poor image that's been edited into a cartoon.

"One day, you'll be photographing beneath an overcast sky, and the next, you'll be working beneath bright, blue-eyed skies with the sunlight beaming straight down," McEntyre said. "You have no control over lighting in the woods, so it's all about knowing what camera settings are required to produce the



Discover the BEST Inland Fishing in the South



- Close to New Orleans
- Great Fishing
- Duck Hunting
- Gated
- Pool
- Private Launches
- Protective Covenants
- Close to Marina (Bait/Fuel)
- Best Time to Buy
- Lawn Maintenance Included



Call Hunter Cazes at 985-226-3106
www.FortBMarina.com

Monster Timber & Millworks



- Complete Line of
- TIMBERS ▪ LUMBER ▪ HARDWARE
 - POLES ▪ PILINGS

(All Materials for Raising Houses & Camps)

Vinyl Sheetpiling Manufactured by Tidewall

Monster Timber & Millworks

4546 Hwy. 357
Opelousas, LA 70570
(337) 948-3601

Charlie Hebert
Jamey Kelly
Keith Quibedeaux

Keep records of the deer photos you take so you'll understand what went right and wrong in different set ups. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Whatever camera you use for hunting photos, learn it thoroughly so you'll be better prepared to use it when a big buck appears, dead or alive.

best picture in whatever light nature gives you to work with.

"So, you've got to spend as much time behind the camera as you can," McEntyre said. "Get out in the woods and photograph in different light conditions."

Keep a record that includes a description of the light present during a given shoot and the camera settings for each photograph you take. The record will give you a sense of what works and what doesn't.

"You'd be surprised how often a photograph captured with my iPhone is shared more on Instagram than photographs I've taken with my (professional equipment)," McEntyre said. "It can be humbling when it happens, and it just shows that opportunity and a grasp of the fundamentals can matter more than equipment."

"Trust your eye."

People have a natural sense of composition. We have been bombarded with media since birth, and all of it is arranged to suit the eye: the TV shows we watch, the advertisements we see, and the layout of this article in the magazine. Don't be afraid to trust your instincts.

"And post on Instagram every day if you can," McEntyre said. "Pay attention to what gets noticed and what doesn't."

Ditch what doesn't work in favor of what does. ■

GRUNTS & GOBBLES >



**BUY WITH CONFIDENCE
SELL WITH SUCCESS**



**LAND - HOME
GETAWAYS**

McComb Office: 601-249-3400

Tylertown Office: 601-876-3317

DougRushingRealty.com



09:12PM 09/13/2021 0047

SHOOTERS OR MEAT BUCKS?

FEW BUCKS HAVE TROPHY POTENTIAL. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE OUT THE OTHERS

If you have ever watched the MeatEater television program, you have heard Steve Rinella use this terminology.

As the title of the show implies, Rinella likes to hunt, harvest game and eat the meat. When he is out deer-hunting, it generally doesn't matter what kind of headgear a buck has; he is looking for supper, and a buck with a small rack, particularly a young 1½-year-old, is just fine. Thus, the term "meat buck."

But there are those occasions when he spies a buck with a nice rack, and he will say those words we all know: "That's a shooter," hence a shooter buck. But the meat of that buck with a good rack will wind up on the table. So, one has to ask, is there really a difference?

The trend in deer hunting nowadays is to kill a shooter buck. The infatuation with big racks continues to be an obsession with deer hunters. Because of this, the average age of bucks harvested — not only in Louisiana but across the Southeast — has increased. The harvest of young bucks, 1½-year-olds, has dramatically declined from what it was in the 1970s and 1980s. Clubs and landowners are passing up these young bucks

with the hopes they get older and bigger.

Of course, the key to this is the nutrition of the habitat, and for the most part, habitat quality has greatly declined across this state. Because of this, a 130-inch buck is a shooter in my book; in fact, the reality is that a 130-inch buck is a top-end buck for most of the habitat in Louisiana.

Would I mount a 130-class buck? No, but on the habitat I hunt, a 130-inch buck is a 4½ years or older, and that qualifies as a shooter in my book, regardless of the score.

TROPHY POTENTIAL

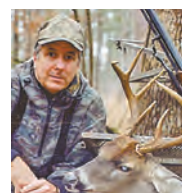
Many hunters think that all young bucks have the chance to grow and become trophy class, but that simply is a dream. A recent study from New York that looked at the age of bucks harvested and their Boone & Crockett score pretty much tells the tale of the tape.

In the 1½ age class, two-thirds of bucks scored less than 70 B&C, and more than half scored less than 50. In the 2½ age class, two-thirds of bucks scored less than 100, and only 7% scored between 120 and 150. In the 3½ and older classes, two-thirds scored less than 120, and only 1% scored 160 or better. If you're in a club

or are a landowner managing for trophy class bucks, 160 or better, your buck harvest is going to be pretty low. Most adult bucks will probably die from disease, an accident or natural mortality.

It is readily apparent that only the top-end bucks in each age class have the potential to become a real shooter buck. The key is to keep good records of your deer harvest and learn to identify those bucks that have this potential, then pass them up while harvesting the low-end bucks in each age class. After you do this, it's time to really take a close look at your habitat conditions and do the work needed to provide the herd with quality nutrition.

From the New York study, it appears that only about one-third of the bucks in each age class have the potential to become shooters, so why not harvest those low-end bucks, providing more meat bucks for hunters, while lowering



Dave Moreland is the author of the new book *Louisiana Whitetails*, which explains how to grow big deer and where to hunt them. The book is available at www.SportsmanGear.com and at Amazon.com.

your deer density? Of course, you should also keep harvesting does as part of the deer-management program, and this will really keep the herd in balance with the habitat.

MAKE HAY WITH THE NUMBERS

In my opinion, the numbers from this New York study are right in line with what happens in Louisiana. In each age class, about one-third would be top-end bucks with good antlers and good body weight. These are the ones that should be passed up and allowed to get older. Of course, it all depends on nutrition, and if the nutrition is not there, desirable body growth and antler development will not happen.

I would suggest that hunters pass up 1½-year-old bucks with four to eight points or 6-inch or greater spikes, weighing 125 or better. Yearling bucks with 3-inch or less spikes weighing 100 or less — a friend of mine calls them piney woods goats — are not going to become 130-inch or better bucks. Don't worry about mistakes; collect the data and learn. Make adjustments to the program as your knowledge of herd growth increases.

In the 2½-year age group, I would pass up the good bucks with eight or more points, a 10-inch or greater inside spread, and 14-inch or longer main beams and with good body weights of 150 pounds or better. Everything less would qualify as a meat buck. Hunters need to learn to age deer by body characteristics. Use your trail-camera photos to identify these bucks.

From a quality or trophy standpoint, the 3½-year age group is the group to take a close look at in the field. My suggestion is to pass up 3½-year-old bucks with 10 or more points, 14-inch or better inside spread and 16-inch or longer main beams. These bucks would score 110 to 130, and if you have good nutrition on the landscape, they will have the best chance of growing larger.

For more than 10 years, I worked with the deer herd on a property in Desoto Parish, mixed pine/hardwoods, and during that time, there was only one 3½-year-old 10-pointer that scored an estimated 130 and became a true 160-class deer as a 4½-year old. That is why managing for true Boone & Crockett deer is best done in a very controlled situation. It is also why I'm not concerned with shooting 3½-year-old 8-pointers, because most of them simply become 4½-year-old 8-pointers the next year.

NO OLD SURVIVORS

It is my opinion that all mature bucks 4½ or older should be on the harvest list, regardless of what they look like. But in a very controlled environment — where there is maximum nutrition — those on the high end should grow larger, but the risk of natural mortality is high. Keep the scores of all the mature bucks harvested so you have data showing the quality of bucks your habitat is producing. If it is not what you desire, the chief culprit would probably be nutrition, and that would be the place to start looking first.

This should be a good deer season, and I suspect there are more shooter bucks on the landscape than normal due to the abundant rainfall. But remember, all bucks are meat bucks, so share your harvest with those who have needs. ■

STICKS & STRINGS >



Only about 1% of all bucks have the potential to reach 160 inches or true trophy status. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Keep up with your bucks through trail-camera photos over a period of years. The buck at left is a 4½-year-old, and the buck on the right is 7½ and likely on the way down.

STIHL IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

— GEAR UP FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Find the outdoor power equipment you need to take on the outdoors and the expertise to back it up at your authorized local STIHL Dealer. Not sold at Lowe's® or The Home Depot.®

Real STIHL. Find Yours at STIHLDEALERS.COM

Lowe's® and The Home Depot® are trademarks of their respective companies. ©2021 STIHL/SSW



BE YOUR BEST WITH BOW IN HAND

PRACTICE, BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR BOW AND YOUR SHOOTING

Unless you are shooting competitively, archery is much like golf in that you are only competing with yourself.

This is one of the great things about our sport; it allows everyone to feel successful on some level, boosting self-esteem and providing an individual experience. The drawback, however, is that it leaves the results open to individual interpretation.

In today's world of participation and instant gratification, this has led to an epidemic of many archers subconsciously skewing the results in their own favor. Not only does this lead to mediocrity in their shooting, but on some level, it also leads to a lack of confidence in their own ability to make the shot when it counts.

Shooting at a target at exactly 20 yards on an indoor range does not properly

prepare someone to shoot a quartering animal from an elevated stand in heavy cover. Neither does "rationalizing" the fact that the arrow that flew 6 inches out of your group was a "fluke." This leads to many missed opportunities or worse, wounded animals each fall.

PRACTICE MORE

Consistently successful bowhunters practice often. Read that last sentence again. Nothing else prepares you for the moment of truth like proper practice. If you practice regularly, muscle memory takes over, allowing your subconscious mind to run the shot sequence. This frees up your conscious mind to aim and focus on proper shot placement.

Archers who practice often are more confident in their ability to make the shot when it counts. They know they

can do it because they have done it hundreds of times in practice. Confidence breeds success and helps to eliminate any thoughts of missing, thereby keeping target panic at bay.

We all know a guy who says, "I'm not really good shooting at a target, but I shoot really well when there's fur in front of me."

I'm going to call BS on this statement 99% of the time. There are exceptions to every rule, but most people do NOT perform better under pressure. If they can't hit the bull's-eye when it doesn't matter,



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: Practice may not make perfect, but not practicing will put bowhunters behind the 8-ball when a buck steps into range. Regular practice can result in tight groups on the range (right) and accuracy afield.

what would make them think it will happen at a crucial moment? A majority of people who say this are effectively kidding themselves, and deep down on some level, they know it. When the moment of truth arrives, they are often disappointed with the results.

A lot of people take their bow out the week before the season and fling a few arrows downrange, and they are satisfied with a 5-inch group at 20 yards. If your bow is shooting a 5-inch group at a stationary target in the wide open, you can just about double it in a hunting situation, which will put you right on the edge of the animal's vitals. That doesn't leave any margin for error or movement by the animal. This is a wounded animal waiting to happen. Sadly, this is easily avoidable, but it happens far too often.

BE HONEST, FOR A CHANGE

This lack of self-honesty can apply to both the tune of the bow and the shooter's form. There is no exception for a properly tuned bow. It will shoot field points and broadheads to the same point of impact and is fairly easy to sight in. Continuing to shoot arrow after arrow and telling yourself the next arrow will be better rarely solves any problems. If your bow is inconsistent or excessively difficult to sight in, take it to a pro shop immediately to have it checked out. Remember, Albert Einstein defined insanity as continuing to do the same thing and expecting different results.

With deer season already well underway in most places, this advice may be a little late for many. Even so, it would be wise to remember for next year. Be honest with yourself about your equipment and your shooting ability. Always strive for perfection, especially when it comes to hunting. Develop a scoring system and keep score, even when you are shooting at an animal target. This way, you can measure your own progress. Be accountable for your results; accountability leads to better performance in the future. After all, we owe it to ourselves and especially to the animals we hunt to shoot as well as we possibly can. ■

HUNT THE RAIN >



Sammy Romano

BLANCHARD'S

Our Customers Are The Coolest®

NO HUNTIN' OR FISHTIN' CAMP SHOULD BE WITHOUT ONE OF THESE!

Manitowoc

300 LBS ICE MAKER \$3277 / 150 lbs for \$2178

with a 290 lbs. Storage Bin

CALL US TODAY TO ORDER YOURS!

MENTION THIS AD AND RECEIVE A FREE INSTALL KIT WITH THE PURCHASE OF AN ICE MACHINE (Valued at \$75)

See Our Selection

BLANCHARD'S REFRIGERATION

314 S. Hollywood Rd., Houma, LA
888-656-2823 • 985-868-8945
www.coolestcustomers.com

Don't wait until the rain stops to get into your stand; deer will be moving before you leave your truck or camp. Be there before the rain stops.



HUNTING THE RAIN AND WEATHER CHANGES

BE ON STAND BEFORE THE RAIN STOPS AND DEER MOVE

Most hunters don't like hunting during the rain, but it can be a good and productive time to go. You must be prepared and dress for the occasion, or it will be unpleasant. Plan to hunt inside shooting houses or blinds; tree umbrellas work well for tree stands.

Vegetation and leaves on the ground will be wet, so your walk in will be silent. The rain will wash away any scent you leave behind entering hunting territory. What you'll discover is that the deer, for the most part, will lock down during the rain.

"I think deer normally bed up during the rain," said hunter Preston Dean of Monticello, Miss. "However, that being said, I do believe on occasion and specifically

during the rut, bucks will move in the rain."

There will be minimal movement, especially if the rain is heavy. But once the rain breaks, deer will be on the move — especially if skies clear. It's one of the best times to be in the field. If you're sitting at camp and wait until the rain stops before getting on your stand, you've waited too long. You'll bump deer on the way in. You've got to be there and wait it out.

"While hunting a few seasons ago, I noticed a spot where I hunt that always had fresh tracks after a rain. One day while hunting, it started to rain, and I headed for that spot. The deer were already there and saw me — I was too late. I think after the rain is best," said Dean.

Plan your hunt with the current weather forecast, and plan to be in the stand when

the rain is predicted to end. Many times in the fall of the year, the rain precedes cold fronts, and a strong, cold front after a rain can yield great results.

One more thing to remember in relations to approaching fronts: it's great hunting after the front has passed and it has turned cooler — it can be just as good before the weather front.

Deer sense oncoming drastic changes in weather, and it triggers a feeding frenzy.

Whitetails will feed like crazy right before a front moves through, then they bed down during any wind and rain, and they'll come out quickly when the front passes. Plan your hunts with this in mind, and you are sure to be successful. ■

**LARGEST
STOCKING
GATOR TAIL
DEALER IN THE
STATE!**




JERRY'S MARINE

YOUR FISHING BOAT HEADQUARTERS

HWY. 27, SULPHUR, LA
1/4 MILE OFF I-10
M-F 8-5:30; SAT 8-12

Let Our Over 40 Years
In Business Help Find
The Right Boat For You

337-583-4088
www.jerrys-marine.com



Dreaming of a public area for duck hunting with superb habitat, teeming with waterfowl migrating to Louisiana?

Russell Sage Wildlife Management Area is the answer. The 38,213-acre WMA has it all, no doubt. It “showed out” again in 2020-21 by giving up nearly 12,000 ducks on 6,229 hunter efforts. Expect more of the same when the season opens Nov. 20 in the East Zone.

“We’re setting up pretty good,” said Mitch McGee, a veteran biologist with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries who has worked Russell Sage in the Monroe Region since 2016. “We’ve got greentree impoundments, moist soil, every kind of habitat you can find in this state besides coastal.”

McGee pointed out that 13 waterfowl management units encompass 7,550 acres on Russell Sage.

Of the 11,911 ducks killed on the WMA last season, he said, “Half of those were probably killed on Wham Brake. It’s probably our best area.”

Wham Brake covers 4,000 acres that have been enhanced for 2021-22. McGee oversaw an aerial herbicide application that allowed underwater plants a chance to grow without competition from invasive plants but still leaving concealment for waterfowlers.

Ducks and duck hunters love Wham Brake.

“It can be crowded on weekends, but it’s a big area, and they can disperse. It’s not too bad,” McGee said.

There are many more viable duck hunting areas for the public to enjoy in Louisiana. LDWF biologists shared their insight and harvest numbers recently.

HAMMOND REGION ➤

Photo by Kaleb Sessions



■ By Don Shoopman

PUBLIC-LAND HUNTERS HAVE PLENTY OF GOOD OPTIONS AROUND LOUISIANA, EVEN AFTER HURRICANE IDA'S GAME-CHANGING VISIT.

2021-22 WMA DUCK SURVEY

HAMMOND REGION

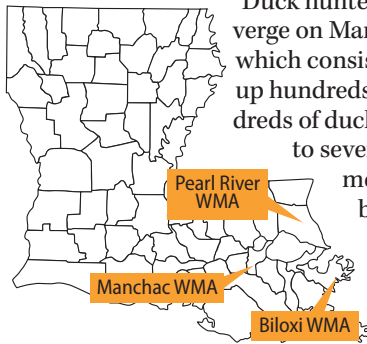
TOP 2021 WATERFOWL HARVEST NUMBERS

Pearl River WMA: 1,604 ducks reported, 2,025 hunter efforts (0.8 ducks per hunter effort)
Manchac WMA: 1,046 ducks reported, 802 hunter efforts (1.3 ducks per hunter effort)
Biloxi WMA: 752 ducks reported, 325 hunter efforts (2.3 ducks per hunter effort)

Hurricane Ida, which smashed into Louisiana on Aug. 29, left much of the lower part of the state in shambles and the fate of WMAs in the Hammond region unknown, even weeks later as the “big duck” season drew nearer.

Brad Breland said Hammond biologists haven’t had a chance to assess the condition of WMAs in the region post-Hurricane Ida. Before the hurricane’s landfall west at Port Fourchon, there was plenty of prime waterfowl habitat, which typically results in high harvest numbers.

Pearl River WMA historically is the place to be during duck season. The 8,328-acre WMA is split into two zones, with the area south of US 90 in the West Zone, where the majority of successful duck hunting takes place. The area usually has brackish marsh with submerged aquatic vegetation, including widgeon grass.



Duck hunters also converge on Manchac WMA, which consistently gives up hundreds upon hundreds of ducks. Thanks to several control methods implemented by LDWF, there has been a reduction in giant salvinia coverage, the scourge of duck hunters anywhere. “Hopefully, this trend will hold and the submerged aquatic vegetation will flourish as it has in the past,” said biologist Jillian Day of LDWF.

Day advised duck hunters to make sure their boats, trailers and other equipment are cleaned and free of salvinia to prevent spread to other areas. She also noted the area has experienced an increase in water hyacinths that block waters, but timely herbicide application should allow easier access.

ABOVE: Biologists expect most Louisiana WMAs to offer great waterfowl habitat this fall. Hurricane Ida may have damaged some areas.



COASTAL LAFAYETTE REGION

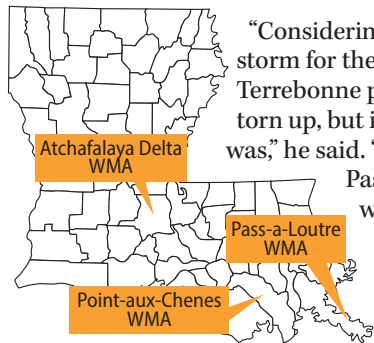
TOP 2020-21 WATERFOWL HARVEST NUMBERS

Pass-a-Loutre WMA: 4,195 ducks reported, 1,077 hunter efforts (3.9 ducks per hunter effort)
Atchafalaya Delta WMA: 7,134 ducks reported, 2,554 hunter efforts (2.79 ducks per hunter effort)
Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA: 2,857 ducks reported (2.19 ducks per hunter effort)

Pass-a-Loutre and Pointe-aux-Chenes WMAs felt the brunt of Hurricane Ida. Surprisingly, the aftermath wasn’t all gloom and doom for duck-hunting prospects on those WMAs, according to biologist Vaughan McDonald of LDWF.

“I think we’re going to be OK. As far as habitat, I don’t see a lot of issues,” McDonald said soon after he flew on a mid-September aerial survey.

Did Ida tear up the WMAs?



“Considering the magnitude of the storm for the marshes in Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes, I’m sure they got torn up, but it’s not what I thought it was,” he said. “I would say probably for

Pass-a-Loutre, some issues will be access, because some boat launches aren’t open in Venice.”

Any significant loss of submerged aquatic vegetation can be a major

concern. However, SAV presence was widespread on the Atchafalaya Delta WMA in St. Mary Parish after Ida and before teal season opened Sept. 11. The opening day harvest was off the charts, a good omen for the rest of 2021-22.

“Atchafalaya Delta probably averaged five ducks per hunter. That’s a really good number for any opener. The past few years they’ve been getting 3½, 4 birds per hunter,” he said.

“With the passage of Hurricane Ida impacting Pass-a-Loutre WMA, there is some question whether or not adequate forage will be available, but history has shown that Pass-a-Loutre is a resilient WMA, and waterfowl seem to make their way down there. Atchafalaya Delta is looking good for habitat and forage-wise and should hold waterfowl if they show up. Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA has been gaining in popularity and hunter success over the past several years.”

Blue-winged teal, green-winged teal and gadwall are the most-common species harvested on coastal WMAs. Typically, hunting success is higher toward the end of the first split and into the second split on Pass-a-Loutre

WMA, he said. Hunters usually fare better during the first split, although it can be good throughout the season on Atchafalaya Delta WMA and Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA.

LAFAYETTE REGION ➤

“” *I think we’re going to be OK. As far as habitat, I don’t see a lot of issues.*

BLACKWELL'S

Work, Play HUNT

2021 LandStar L3



SEVERAL AVAILABLE



\$6500



Made in the U.S.A.



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.

www.blackwellsoutdoor.com

106 Market Street | Hammond, LA 70401 | 985-542-7702

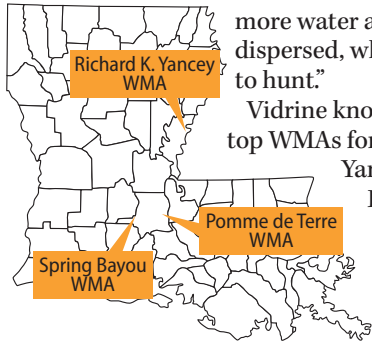
LAFAYETTE REGION

TOP 2020-21 WATERFOWL HARVEST NUMBERS

- Spring Bayou WMA: 2,474 ducks reported (1.5 ducks per hunter effort)
- Richard K. Yancey WMA: 2,112 ducks reported (1.1 ducks per hunter effort)
- Pomme de Terre WMA: 953 ducks reported (1.5 ducks per hunter effort)

Duck hunters who haul their shotguns to a handful of WMAs in the Lafayette region hope there isn't an exceptionally rainy fall and winter in 2021-22.

"Rainfall during the hunting season does create a problem for hunters," said biologist Tony Vidrine of LDWF. "The more rainfall we get, the more surface water is available for ducks to utilize and feed in those areas. With more water available, ducks are more dispersed, which makes it more difficult to hunt."



Vidrine knows from experience that the top WMAs for waterfowl are Richard K. Yancey, Spring Bayou, Grassy Lake and Pomme de Terre. The region was spared damage from hurricanes last year, and WMAs had far less flooding from spring and summer rainfall this

year compared to the last few years, he said. To be sure, one of the most-popular areas for ducks is the expansive Richard K. Yancey WMA, which features ideal habitat and sits on the river system along the flyway for ducks: wood ducks, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal and gadwall. When conditions are right and ducks make it all the way to Louisiana, Richard K. Yancey offers endless opportunities. Spring Bayou WMA boasted the top duck harvest last season. It features backwater lakes and tributaries, plus flooded timber areas, a perfect combination to attract ducks. Grassy Lake WMA and Pomme de Terre WMA also provide plenty of action, as recent duck harvests attest.

Vidrine reported the best times to hunt those four WMAs are opening weekend of the first split and the entire second split, the latter getting better and better with the passage of each cold front through the state. He noted the best time to bag ducks is from the break of daylight until about noon. Some areas are better during mid-morning hours when ducks return to feed or rest.

LAKE CHARLES REGION

TOP 2020-21 WATERFOWL HARVEST NUMBERS

- Sabine Island WMA: 15 ducks reported, 19 hunter efforts (0.8 ducks per hunter effort)



Photo by Victor Monsour



Best times to hunt WMAs in the Lafayette Region are first weekend of the first season segment and the entire second segment.

Woods ducks, anyone? Sabine Island WMA in Calcasieu Parish has them in an upland region featuring little to no waterfowl hunting. Sabine Island is accessible by boat only. Most of the area's users launch at Niblett's Bluff Park at the end of Niblett Bluff Road.

On Sabine Island, wood duck hunting success is mostly jump shooting, according to biologist Wendell Smith. "Occasionally another species of waterfowl will be taken, but for the most part it's wood ducks," he said. "The island topography has ridges with sloughs surrounding them. Wood ducks feed in the sloughs and sometimes can be taken when they take flight."

He noted the island's waters are tidal-influenced, which means duck hunters must be careful if they motor up a bayou when the water's up, because their boats may be high and dry during low tide when they return.

EXCEL BOATS



Photo by Lifetime Decoys

EXCLUSIVE
GORE™ OPTIFADE™
CONCEALMENT



SHALLOW WATER

F4

Plane quickly, and turn on a dime.
Get to where the ducks want to be.

WWW.EXCELBOATS.COM



NEW TIMBER KING

Unprecedented control and maneuverability
in tight timber.



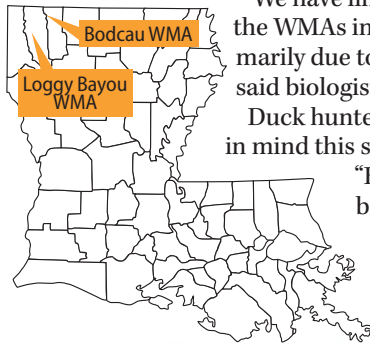
801.352.1458

MINDEN REGION

TOP 2020-21 WATERFOWL HARVEST NUMBERS

Bodcau WMA: 195 ducks reported (0.7 ducks per hunter effort)
Loggy Bayou WMA: 185 ducks reported (0.8 ducks per hunter effort)

The Minden Region's WMAs are known more for deer hunting and small-game hunting, but duck hunters aren't totally left out in the cold.



“We have limited waterfowl hunting on the WMAs in this part of the state, primarily due to limited waterfowl habitat,” said biologist Jeffery Johnson.

Duck hunters should keep two places in mind this season.

“Based on last year’s numbers, Bodcau and Loggy Bayou WMAs are the best choices. Those two WMAs are also the ones with the most (duck) hunting available,” Johnson said.

Mother Nature spared the region significant impacts from flooding or tropical weather systems, he said.

Duck hunters can expect to get mostly wood ducks and mallards on Bodcau and Loggy Bayou.

When to go during the season? That depends on water levels, weather conditions, etc.

During the day, go early in the morning for a good chance at downing some wood ducks. Sometimes during midday hours there are more big ducks around for the taking.

MONROE REGION

TOP 2020-21 WATERFOWL HARVEST NUMBERS

Russell Sage WMA: 11,911 ducks reported, 6,229 hunter efforts (1.9 ducks per hunter effort)

Bouef WMA: 5,284 ducks reported, 3,036 hunter efforts (1.7 ducks per hunter effort)

There’s more to the duck hunting heaven that is Russell Sage WMA than Wham Brake, a partially natural impoundment less than 45 minutes from Monroe. Acquired by LDWF on June 1, 2013, Wham Brake is levied most of the way around and even-

Mallards and wood ducks make up most of the duck-hunting fare on Bodcau and Loggy Bayou WMAs.

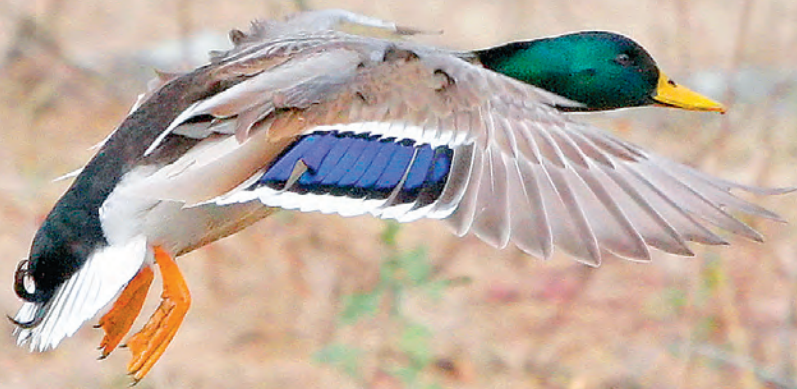


Photo by Chris Ginn



Russell Sage and Boeuf WMAs give up a variety of ducks every season, headed by mallards, wood ducks, teal and gadwall.

tually drains into Bayou Lafourche.

Russell Sage WMA features 500 acres of flooded agricultural fields, 4,500 acres of moist-soil management units and 2,550 acres of greentree impoundments.

McGee, the region's biologist, said, "The most-popular areas are Wham Brake and the greentree reservoir. South of Highway 15, you have Pintail Alley and the flooded bean field. Also, there are scattered moist-soil units on the management area."

Hunters need to be aware the greentree reservoir, as well as the bean field and Pintail Alley, are flooded artificially, and that depends on the water level of Bayou LaFourche Canal, McGee said. All infrastructure is ready long before duck season starts, but

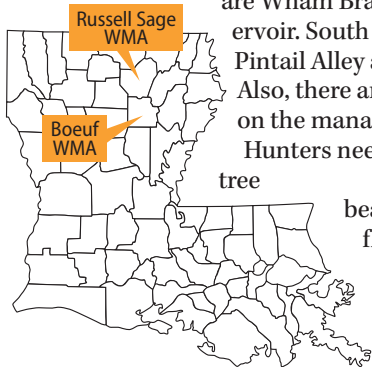
the canal dictates when and how much water goes into the impoundments.

Boeuf WMA has a 1,920-acre greentree reservoir, plus two shallow-water and moist-soil areas totaling 3,875 acres known locally as Crow Field and Topan.

Russell Sage and Boeuf give up mostly wood ducks, green-winged teal, gadwalls and mallards, the latter more so late in the season.

McGee said the best time to hunt ducks in this region is early in the season, but some years, a push comes in January. The best time each day is in the first hour, although some hunters have rapid-fire action at midday.

"On Boeuf WMA in the Crow Field, I have seen hunters with very few birds until noon and limit out by 2 p.m.," he said.



PINEVILLE REGION ➤

DON'T GET BUSTED BY THE DHH
(DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOSPITALS)

LUS-75 CAMP UNIT
5 YEAR FACTORY WARRANTY

COMES COMPLETE
READY FOR YOU TO INSTALL
SALT, FRESH, OR BLACKWATER
INSTALL ABOVE OR BELOW GROUND
A LICENSED PLUMBER **NOT** REQUIRED

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Phone: 337-330-4408
Email: sales@houseboatoutlet.com

VISIT US ONLINE:
www.houseboatoutlet.com
www.facebook.com/aheadsanitationsystems

BRING THIS AD WITH YOU FOR A \$100 DISCOUNT

Sizzling Hot Deals From Suzuki's Summer

SPLASH
Sales Event

REPOWER FINANCE
SUZUKI MARINE THE ULTIMATE OUTBOARD FINANCE

REPOWER FINANCE
RATES AS LOW AS 5.99%
ON NEW SUZUKI OUTBOARDS ON
APPROVED CREDIT. (60 MONTHS)

5 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY

Tims Marine **504-682-5252**
www.tims-marine.com

PINEVILLE REGION

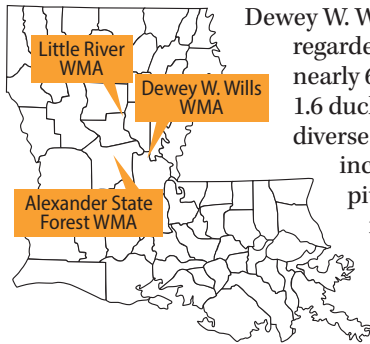
TOP 2020-21 WATERFOWL HARVEST NUMBERS

Dewey W. Wills WMA: 5,872 ducks reported (1.6 ducks per hunter effort)

Alexander State Forest WMA: 102 ducks reported (0.8 ducks per hunter effort)

Little River WMA: 52 ducks reported (0.4 ducks per hunter effort)

Another public duck-hunting mecca year-in, year-out is a north Louisiana WMA that gives up most of its ducks during the second split when temps and availability of floodwater are more favorable.



Dewey W. Wills WMA, also highly regarded for its deer herd, gave up nearly 6,000 ducks, an average of 1.6 ducks per hunter, in 2020-21. Its diverse and rich waterfowl habitat includes sloughs, borrow pits, flooded oak flats and impoundments. Ducks flock there by the hundreds. Wood ducks, gadwall, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal and



Photo by Darren Digby

LOUISIANA'S #1 CUSTOM BOAT BUILDER



2072 DUAL CONSOLE



24' CUSTOM ALUMINUM BAY BOAT

Scully's
CUSTOMIZED
Aluminum Boats

1015 STEPHENSVILLE RD., MORGAN CITY, LA 70381
985-385-1323 • FAX 985-384-5146 • TOLL FREE 1-866-238-8353

WWW.SCULLYBOATS.COM

EMAIL: INFO@SCULLYSALUMINUMBOATS.COM





Dewey W. Wills WMA gives up plenty of teal to duck hunters in a variety of excellent habitat types.

mallards are the primary species.

Biologist Cliff Dailey recommended that duck hunters at Dewey W. Wills set up before legal shooting time and try to hunt until at least 9 a.m. A wood duck flight will last about 20 minutes, followed by the arrival of the remaining dabbling species. Waterfowlers must be off the area by 2 p.m.

The main threat to the WMA's quality habitat has been the introduction of giant salvinia, which chokes waterways. Giant salvinia can blanket once-open waterways completely after it gets established, making it impossible for ducks to swim and forage for food.

Fortunately, Dailey said, prolonged, sub-freezing temperatures last winter killed most of it on Dewey W. Wells. But, he said, it's only a matter of time before the invasive species returns during a backwater period. ■

SPORTSMAN OF THE MONTH, SPORTSMAN SHOWCASE >

KENT CARTRIDGE



THE MIGRATION ENDS HERE



KENT CARTRIDGE
Fasteel²⁰
PRECISION PLATED STEEL

NON-TOXIC
25 ULTRA HIGH PERFORMANCE SHOTSHELLS

12 GA 3 1/2"



- **Precision Plated Steel**
Provides superior patterns & corrosion resistance
- **High-Performance Base-wad**
Optimizes cycling in semi-auto firearms
- **Nickel Head**
Resists corrosion
- **Premium Wads**
Delivers uniform patterns in all conditions
- **CX2000 Primer**
For ultra-reliable ignition
- **Custom Blended Double-Base Powder**
Ensures consistent velocities in all conditions

Scan now to learn more



www.kentcartridge.com

SPORTSMAN

#1 **XPRESS DEALER**
in LOUISIANA
XPRESS BOATS
WE BUY USED BOATS



YAMAHA

Certified Master
Yamaha Technician On Site

Boats Unlimited

7035 AIRLINE HWY.
BATON ROUGE
225.357.3118

www.BoatsUnlimitedLA.com



HUNTER OF THE MONTH

Austin Cruse

Austin Cruse killed this 10-point buck with a bow in Area 3 on Oct. 4, 2021. The big buck came out to a grunt call on his hunting lease in Merryville, La.

ARE YOU A SPORTSMAN SUBSCRIBER?

THEN YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER...



SIMPLY LOG IN TO GET FULL WEB ACCESS ON ALL SMART DEVICES AND OUR MONTHLY PRINT MAGAZINE



GO SPORTSMAN:
LOUISIANASPORTSMAN.COM

OF THE MONTH

ConocoPhillips
Coastal Wetlands

A legacy of conservation and collaboration

For decades, ConocoPhillips has supported the restoration of coastal wetlands through our subsidiary, the Louisiana Land and Exploration Company LLC (LL&E). We are proud to be part of the effort driving habitat-enhancement projects with key partners to promote coastal resiliency and sustainability.

To learn more, visit conocophillips.com/louisianalegacy
© ConocoPhillips Company, 2021. All rights reserved.



ANGLER OF THE MONTH

Mason Gary

Mason Gary, 7, loves redfish, speckled trout, sac-a-lait and bass fishing. On Oct. 3, he caught a 49-inch redfish that weighed more than 30 pounds near the mouth of Boston Canal. He baited his own hook, made the perfect cast and set the hook on this monster all by himself, while his father coached him. But he brought it all the way to the boat, then handed his father the rod so he could get the net and net the fish himself.



Louisiana
SPORTSMAN DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS
LOUISIANASPORTSMAN.COM



MILLENNIUM GB-100 BUCK BLIND

If a tree stand isn't your deer-hunting cup of tea — or if you've got a great spot without suitable trees — Millennium Outdoors may be able to solve your problem with its GB100 Buck Blind, a comfortable, roomy ground blind that will fit any hunter, bow or gun.

The GB100 weighs in at 83 pounds; it can be held in place with ground stakes or secured to a platform. The blind is 7-foot-3 by 4-foot to accommodate multiple hunters, and numerous windows can be configured for hunting with a gun, a crossbow or a standard compound bow.

Black windows and an all-black interior provide great concealment. Even the entry door in the back doubles as a window to check out your backtrail.

The frame is strong, welded steel, with the a heavy duty, water-resistant outer shell that comes with loops for brushing it up to break up the outline.

MSRP: \$427.99

For more info, visit: millennium-outdoors.com.



BIG&J POUR-IT-ON MOLASSES

Corn is tough to beat as a food for hunters running bait sites or feeders before and during deer season, but with a splash of Big&J's Pour-It-On Molasses, corn is actually better for the bucks you want to attract.

Pour-It-On Molasses combines a nutritional benefit and intense aroma that pulls deer in and keeps them in the area. It has a total digestible nutrition level that is higher than most premium feeds. It provides amino acids that are key building blocks for proteins, so deer realize a greater nutritional value; less

protein is passed through the body and excreted as waste.

It has organic zinc, copper, magnesium and manganese, along with trace minerals that help promote antler growth and proper body function.

Pour-It-On-Molasses mixed with corn is a great attractant in fall, but its nutritional benefits really start in the post-rut and winter months when nutrition is often scarce.

MSRP: \$12.99

For more info, visit: bigandj.com.

OKUMA DTR CUSTOM INSHORE RODS

Venice, La., is really "down the road" so when Okuma designers worked with a Venice-based captain to design a series of inshore rods, it named the series "DTR."

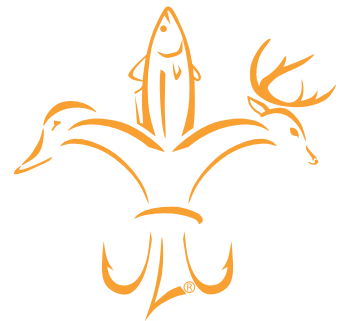
Okuma is offers 11 models, six spinning and five baitcasting, in 7-foot and 7-foot-2 lengths with split or single-piece, cork handles, 24/30-ton, low-resin carbon rod blanks featuring Okuma's Ultimate Flex Reinforced tips, SeaGuide XO series angled, stainless steel guides with zirconium

inserts for fishing braid or mono, a Fuji skeleton reel seat with a woven carbon insert and a precision-placed, stainless steel hook keeper.

Rods are technique-specific, built for topwater, Carolina rigs, popping corks, jig/jerbaits and spoon/spinner/bladed jig. They run from medium-light to medium-heavy actions.

MSRP: \$119-\$129

For more info, visit: okumafishingusa.com



■ By Kinny Haddox

Goose, goose, DUCK!

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THOSE TIMES WHEN LOUISIANA'S GOOSE SEASONS MATCH UP WITH DUCK SEASON. THE BIG BIRDS CAN PROVIDE SOME GREAT ACTION AND EVEN SAVE SOME MEDIOCRE DUCK TRIPS.



Sure, duck hunting is fantastic, but while the number of ducks may vary, there's been a more-consistent game in town the past few years.

Large numbers of geese are almost always in the harvested agriculture fields of northeast Louisiana. Early goose season dates give hunters great opportunities for these early arrivals. And all-season long, geese can fill in, providing action for waterfowlers no matter where they hunt.

The change also means that geese don't always get second billing. Sometimes, they are the headliners. An increased daily bag limit of three per hunter for whitefronted geese, aka specklebellies, moves them up even higher on hunter's radar.

"I think that forever, it has been a matter of people going duck hunting, and if some specks show up, that's just a bonus," said guide Maddie Wiggins of Monroe. "But now that duck hunting is getting harder and the numbers of birds isn't always what we hope for, specks are getting a lot more attention."

Wiggins, a partner in the Mallard Crossing Guide Service,

hunts ducks and geese across northeast Louisiana. Another expert, Cole Barthel of Rayville, co-host of Simmons' Sporting Goods' All Things Hunting TV show on the Sportsman Channel, has the same opinion.

"I'll be honest; I'm a duck man at heart, and I'm deer hunting a lot during the early goose season, but man, I've got lots of friends who go goose hunting every day," Barthel said. "We certainly spend more time on specks now than we used to. It's a lot of fun, and when the specks are right, it's just as exciting as duck hunting. During the regular season, there are a lot of days when geese make the duck hunting worth it.

"A lot of times, specks will work just like ducks. That's one thing that makes them exciting. They will actually work and come over you. Snow geese and blues are like wood ducks. They know where they are going, and there's nothing you can do to change their mind. But specks are fun, and they are also some fine eating, right up there with teal and mallards."

WIGGINS ALWAYS HAS A PLAN >

WIGGINS ALWAYS HAS A PLAN

“If you ask 10 different guys what’s most important for killing geese, you may get 10 different opinions,” Wiggins said. “We have found that it is important to go find the geese the afternoon before you are going hunting. It is our experience that when the specks leave at dark to go roost, the next day, they will typically end up going to the last place where they left off the next morning. It’s important when you go in there that you don’t spook them. We will wait ‘till they leave, then go put out our blinds and brush them.”

Wiggins has gone more to hunting out of layout blinds because he can move with the ducks. He recommends brushing the blind on the levee where you are going to hunt with materials from that field. Sometimes, brush and stubble from fields don’t all look the same, and based on how long they have been harvested, they can even be different colors.

“Specks may be slower, but they are so much smarter than people give them credit for,” Wiggins said. “They pick up on everything, and if you mess up, they’ll let you know with a little high pitch murmur that means, ‘I see you down there. Better luck next time,’ and they are gone.”

He also brushes his layout blind in the field, because if you do it at camp and bring it with you, if there is a frost on the levee and field, and your blind doesn’t have frost on it, it sticks out like a sore thumb. By the same token, he always puts his decoys

out as late as possibly the morning of the hunt.

“If your decoys sit out there in a frost and get a gleam on them, the geese are going to flare,” he says. “You want to keep it real. And real geese don’t gleam.”

“We are fortunate to have some great duck holes, and we are always after ducks during the season,” he said. “But we never go to the field without our goose calls and decoys. Some days when hunting for geese is good, that’s all we focus on. I find more and more people who we take hunting would just as soon limit out on three big specks as they would on six little ducks.”

Wiggins also uses another little trick to keep the geese from spying him before it’s too late. He will often set up the spread, then set up the layout blinds to the side where the geese won’t be flying straight into the hunters.

“We kind of try and set up where they aren’t coming right down the pike looking at us,” he said. “For instance, if we set up the spread to try and drag them in from the north or south, we’ll try to position ourselves a little to the east or west.”

Wiggins hunts regular pit blinds when they are working and said there are several brands of great layout blinds for an alternative. He is left-handed and has always shot a Benelli shotgun because, at one time, they were the only major gunmaker that made an automatic shotgun for lefties. His favorite is a Benelli Super Black Eagle. He shoots Winchester DryLok Super Steel High Velocity Waterfowl No. 2 shells for geese.



Goose, goose, duck . . . When specks and ducks are flying, it’s not going to get any better than that.



Sheer numbers of geese vs. the hit-or-miss numbers of ducks, are shifting hunters attention to the bigger, more plentiful birds.

BARTHEL'S BEST TIPS

According to Barthel, the main things with goose hunting are the same things that matter most with ducks.

"You've got to find a place where they want to be," he said. "We call it 'Being on the X.' In other words, this is the spot they want to come to, whether it is for food or where they fly just out of instinct. Most of the time, they will respond to decoy spreads, and we always have out a few goose decoys — you need to do that. But if they aren't coming to the spread, you need to do a little scouting and go to where they want to be. That can be another blind or just hidden in some natural cover along the edge of a field."

Barthel said many times geese will respond to a call better than to decoys. If they are flying nearby and you call correctly, you can get them overhead. The key is to pay close attention

to what they want and make sure you don't overcall. He uses Singleton Game Calls for geese.

Barthel said his experience has taught him that if geese are approaching the spread, you need to shut down the spinning-wing decoys. Geese don't seem to like the spinning wings the way ducks do.

Since he's hunting ducks and geese at the same time, he likes to shoot No. 2 Browning shells in his 3½-inch Browning Maxus II shotgun. They are good for ducks and can reach out and get geese, too. If he's just goose hunting, he goes to a slightly larger shot, Double BB. It's a dependable gear combo for him and rugged enough to handle a long season.



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

Another speck headed for the lanyard. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The first split of Louisiana's goose season lasts about a month. Secondary splits in both the East and West zones give hunters another six weeks of action.

It isn't uncommon to see literally thousands of geese in the waterfowl areas of the state, especially in large agricultural areas. Barthel said if you pay attention, though, the snow geese and the specks don't hang out a lot together. Snows will usually bunch up, and specks will be on the outside perimeter unless a huge field of geese get stirred up. When that happens, the sky can literally be covered in geese, and it can almost sound like a jet airplane taking off.

Barthel mentioned that specks are great-tasting dinner fare. Many times after a successful hunt, they'll come in to camp, breast out the geese, butterfly them and just cook them in a hot skillet in butter with salt and pepper. They also like to marinate them when they have time and put them on a grill. Unlike ducks, they don't wrap them in bacon or stuff them. They just eat them plain. ■



**LIMITED QUANTITIES
WHEN THEY'RE GONE,
THEY'RE GONE!**

Louisiana
SPORTSMAN
BACK ISSUES

shop.sportsmannetwork.com/collections/louisiana-sportsman



GOOSE BY THE BOOK

Louisiana's 2021-2022 goose season opens Nov. 6 and runs through Dec. 5 in both the East and West zones.

A second split in the East Zone runs Dec. 18 through Jan. 30, 2022. Two secondary splits are open in the West Zone: Dec. 18-Jan. 2, 2022 and Jan. 10-Feb. 6, 2022.

The daily bag limit is three white-fronted (specklebelly) geese, one Canada goose or 20 light geese (snow, blue or Ross).

"Conservation Order" hunts for light geese open later in the year, with no limits, legal use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns. Check your regulations book for more details.

Migratory game bird schedules and regulations can be found on pages 29-32 in the Louisiana 2021-2022 Hunting and WMA Regulations pamphlet.

These conservation seasons are allowed to try and control overpopulation of these geese. ■



LOW PROFILE. HIGH POWER.



Lowboy II



LowboyPro

Adequate, convenient power is a must. Don't gamble on anything less than the proven performance of Kubota. GL Series generators deliver impressive power in a low-profile design for countless applications. Depend on Kubota, and count on low emissions, one-side maintenance and your choice of receptacles, terminals or both, depending on the model.

THE GENERATOR OF SUCCESS



Call (800) 925-4966 for discounted pricing.
Visit gulfengine.com for unit specifications.



AUTHORIZED DEALER
ENGINES | GENERATORS | PARTS

2306 Engineers Road, Belle Chasse, LA 70037 • (504) 393-1701 • gulfengine.com



JOIN THE CLUB

Read more. Learn more.

Become a member and get FULL web access on all your smart devices and our monthly print magazine

\$2.99 PER MONTH

VISIT: WWW.LOUISIANASPORTSMAN.COM/SUBSCRIBE





Hunkered down in thick cover, a large, pot-bellied fish tracked the silhouette of a frog flitting across matted grass just two feet above its head, waiting for an opportune time to strike its prey.

The creature briefly rested atop the grass and then slid into a tiny pocket of open water. It remained momentarily motionless before slowly sinking. Quivering as it descended, it regained its composure and climbed over another grass clump.

The hungry predator could stand it no longer. The fish opened its mouth and lunged. As if a dynamite charge exploded beneath the surface, water erupted and spewed frothy weeds across the shallow flat. The enraged beast gulped the frog and a chunk of vegetation in the process. However, instead of slurping a succulent frog steak, the surprised redfish sucked down a mouthful of plastic, imbedded with hooks.

Redfish live in brackish to saltwater. Frogs normally prefer sweeter environments. The two species rarely meet in nature. Although spot-tailed marsh marauders seldom intentionally pursue live frogs, a hungry redfish won't pass up a potential meal.

"Frogs are not on the everyday menu for redfish, but a redfish will eat just about anything," said Mike Gallo of Angling Adventures of Louisiana, who fishes the marshes surrounding

HOP TO IT,

REDS!

SOFT-PLASTIC FROGS, A STAPLE AMONG FRESHWATER BASS FISHERMEN, CAN PUT A HURTING ON REDFISH, TOO. HERE ARE SOME PLACES TO FISH THEM, AND HOW.

■ By John N. Felsher

Lake Borgne. "If a redfish sees a frog and gets a chance to eat it, it will. Redfish don't necessarily know what it is. They just think it's something to eat. If something fits into its mouth, a redfish will eat it."

BASS, REDFISH SIMILARITIES >

BASS, REDFISH SIMILARITIES

Soft-plastic frogs look and feel like natural prey. In brackish waters, like the deltas of the Pearl, Sabine or Mississippi rivers, anglers might catch largemouth bass and redfish in the same areas, using the same frog. Like largemouths, redfish commonly ambush prey rather than running it down in open water like speckled trout. Also like bass, redfish regularly seek the thickest cover they can find along marshy shorelines. Few other baits can go over matted vegetation like a soft-plastic frog.

“One time, I watched a redfish hide in the grass as a frog approached it,” Gallo said. “As the frog steadily came toward it, I could see the redfish lower itself in the water so it could tilt its head upward and look behind him, because it could hear the lure coming. A Stanley Ribbit frog puts off great vibrations. The redfish waited for the frog to pass over it and then attacked it from behind.”

Frog lures are most productive for redfish when fished around aquatic vegetation of many kinds in brackish areas.

Some plastic frogs float, and others slowly sink. Some floating frogs come with upturned hooks so they can easily slip over the thickest grass mats. Rig slow-sinking frogs with a hook inserted into the soft-plastic body to make it weedless.

Some floating frogs look like traditional topwater poppers with blunt or concave noses. Fish these baits the same way as a hard surface plug, but over the most-entangling cover. Cast it to a likely spot and let it sit a few moments or just twitch it a bit. Then, vigorously pop the frog so it jumps a foot or two and let it sit again. This simulates a live frog splashing on the surface. Sometimes, redfish blow up on these baits with incredibly vicious strikes.

Other lures look more like live frogs with kicking legs. Buzz these baits across the surface with a steady retrieve, an excellent tactic when targeting aggressive fish. Hold the rod tip high to keep the lure on the surface with the legs churning up a commotion.

FROGGY WENT A COURTIN’

A steady, surface-buzzing retrieve not only elicits powerful strikes, but it creates a great way to search for redfish. Even if fish don’t strike the bait, they might reveal their locations. If





Guide Mike Gallo unhooks a redfish he caught on a frog while fishing in the Bayou Biloxi Marshes south of Lake Borgne.

so, follow up with more subtle offerings like a weightless soft-plastic fluke or similar bait.

In scattered, weedy cover, pull a frog across the surface in short, quick hops like a live frog. Occasionally, let it sit on the surface or a grass clump for a while. When the frog rests atop matted grass, fish can still see the lifelike silhouette against the bright sky and line up for a devastating strike.

In the thickest weeds, “crawl” a sinking frog over grassy mats. At the edge of an open pocket, pause a few seconds. Then, pull the frog over the edge so it plops into the open water and starts to sink. Like bass, redfish sometimes follow prey in cover, waiting for a chance to strike. Spotting prey slithering into the water could prove too irresistible for a hungry redfish.

A sinking frog also works when fished around submerged vegetation. Cast it beyond the cover and pull it steadily toward the grass bed. Periodically pause to let it sink down to the grass tops. As the frog slowly sinks, its appendages quiver, driving redfish nuts. Big reds habitually slurp frogs as they fall. If not, pull the lure back to the surface and continue the retrieve.

“I really enjoy the versatility of frogs,” Gallo said. “I can run a frog across the surface like a topwater bait or let it sink to the bottom. I’ve even fished frogs under popping corks in the grass when the water is high. Since it’s weedless, it’s the perfect bait to use in thick grass. That’s where the bait hides.”

DON'T WEIGH ME DOWN >

FISHING OR HUNTING... IT DON'T MATTER



PRO-DRIVE
SHALLOW WATER-OUTBOARDS

WE GOT YOU COVERED

5196 HWY. 311 • HOUMA
985-876-7821



MON-FRI 8AM-5:30PM
SAT 8AM-NOON

HOP TO IT, REDS!

DON'T WEIGH ME DOWN

Whenever possible, try to throw a frog with no weight. On windy days, stiff breezes can rip across the treeless Louisiana marshes, making casting difficult. If necessary, add a split-shot or two to the line above the frog. Anglers can also rig frogs with keel-weighted hooks to add extra casting heft. Weighted frogs typically work best in open water or places with submerged vegetation where anglers need to make long casts.

Frogs can attract redfish anywhere, but they work especially well in lush, brackish marshes with abundant plant growth, such as around the freshwater diversions in places like Caernarvon, the Lake Salvador area or river deltas. The copious influx of freshwater promotes vegetation growth. Besides grass, anglers can also fish frogs around oyster reefs, fallen trees, flats, dock pilings, jetties — places redfish hide to waylay bait. In some places, anglers can cast frogs over obstructions to fish rarely touched in deeper pockets behind them.

BILOXI MARSH MADNESS >

Weedless, soft-plastic frogs make excellent temptations for redfish hunkered down in thick grassy cover. **BELOW:** A hooked redfish fights for freedom at the side of the boat after striking a soft-plastic frog rigged with hooks inserted into the plastic to make it weedless.



John N. Felsher is a professional freelance writer and photographer with more than 1,700 articles to his credit. He worked as the outdoors editor for several Louisiana newspapers and currently co-hosts a weekly outdoors radio show on WNSP 105.5 FM in Mobile, Ala. You can contact him at JohnNFelsher.com.



CYPRESS COVE BOATING CENTER

WE HAVE
INVENTORY



PONTOON BOATS, KEY WEST,
SCOUT, CAROLINA SKIFF,
ANGLER QWEST FISH PONTOON



ANGLER QWEST



POWERED BY



MERCURY MARINE



3663 PONTCHARTRAIN DR.
SLIDELL, LA 70458
985-643-6668

1306 S. HAUGH AVE, STE. A
PICAYUNE, MS 39466
601-798-4700





BILOXI MARSH MADNESS

Gallo frequently fishes the Biloxi Marsh along the southern shoreline of Lake Borgne. Reachable only by boat makes the remote area less pressured than more-accessible areas. Gallo often crosses Lake Borgne from his lodge in Slidell. Others can launch at Shell Beach or Hopedale in St. Bernard Parish. Some people run across open water from Waveland, Miss., to fish what they call “the Louisiana Marsh.” Although due south of the Mississippi coast, the entire area sits in Louisiana.

“The Biloxi Marsh is a special place, with some of the best redfish habitat in the nation,” Gallo said. “The fishing is a lot more consistent than some other areas. Because it’s so remote and inaccessible, I don’t see a lot of boats in the marshes. Even on a major holiday like the fourth of July, I might only see 15 to 20 boats. When I go out fishing during the week, I usually don’t see anyone. I might see crabbers working or shrimpers dragging their nets, but I typically don’t see many other recreational anglers.”

Also called the Bayou Biloxi Marsh, the area juts eastward between Lake Borgne and Chandeleur Sound. These wetlands spread across about 600 square miles of marshy bayous, shallow ponds and canals. The Biloxi Wildlife Management Area, a fabled duck hunting spot, reserves 35,644 acres of the marshland. Several grassy islands dominate the extreme eastern edge of the area along Chandeleur Sound. Anglers commonly catch giant bull reds around the islands in deeper water at the edge of the mainland marsh,

Fishermen add weight to frog baits a number of different ways to make them more castable.

Plastic frogs can work whenever redfish might hit topwater baits, or at any time except the coldest months. As winter approaches, reds gorge themselves to prepare for the coming scarce times, so they hit more aggressively before seriously cold weather hits. Some better places to fish in the Biloxi Marsh include the mouths of any bayous feeding into Lake Borgne, but just about any shoreline in that vast area could produce good redfish action.

“The grass starts to die out in late summer and into the fall and winter and grows back in the spring,” Gallo said. “The areas where the grass dies out last in the fall are the areas that grow back first in the spring. Those main bayous all have a lot of duck ponds near them. All the duck ponds are redfish havens. Redfish like those shallow ponds where they can root around on the bottom looking for crabs, shrimp and mussels to eat.”

Although seldom the first choice for redfish, plastic frogs can put more spot-tails into the boat under the right circumstances. When fishing nearly impenetrable grass canopies, catch the buzz and tempt reds where others can’t even fish ■

For more information about Mike Gallo of Angling Adventures of Louisiana, call 877-4AAOFLA or visit www.aaofla.com.

BILOXI MARSH READY FOR NOVEMBER FUN

Trout, reds are cranking up as fall arrives

S By Rusty Tardo

al Fontana of "Gotcha Hooked" Guide Service predicts that anglers will be "burning up the trout" this month in the Biloxi Marsh.

"Not only is it going to be good, but the action has already started," he said, pointing to areas like Lake Maroon, Cut Off, Pete's Lagoon, Brick Lagoon and Goose Flat, which are already producing specks and are only going to get better.

"Really, the action gets good starting in Stump Lagoon and moving on up throughout the northeast section of the Biloxi Marsh," he said.

"Surprisingly, we're catching trout in Black Bay again, and with the river as low as it is, we're even seeing trout showing up over towards Pointe a la Hache," he said. "And as long as we don't get a deluge of freshwater, the fishing over there should be like back like old times."

Fontana said with so many fish showing up spread over so many places, November should be fantastic.

"And it doesn't matter whether the tide is rising or falling, as long as you fish moving water," he said.

Fontana said soft plastics will produce just fine, fished about 30 to 36 inches under a popping cork.

"The tandem-rigged H&H Glass Minnows are dynamite. The Matrix in lemonhead, and VuDu shrimp in glow, those are my best producers, and I always carry the live stuff with me for those days when the trout are finicky," he said.

Fontana said you always have to be opportunistic.

"Rather than just fishing particular spots, I look for current lines around points, and I look for any sign of bait activity," he said.

"Even if it's just minnows in the water or a shrimp jumping; I fish where I see bait, and I fish where I see birds."

Fontana said redfish prowl the shorelines in the same waters, but he expands his search for the bronzes into Lake Borgne around Proctor's Point; the Pointe a la Hache shorelines where he said the reds are bigger and more numerous, and down to the MRGO Rocks for genuine bulls.

"I don't particularly like fishing dead shrimp because they come off your hook so easily, so for reds, I mostly fish H&H plastics in the black/chartreuse

Capt. Sal Fontana caught this 13-pound redfish on a Gulp swimming mullet in a bayou draining from a bay.



color, or Berkley's curlytail Gulps! in the orange color, about 2 feet under a popping cork. The redfish can't resist them," he said. ■

You can reach Capt. Sal Fontana's "Gotcha Hooked" Guide Service at 504-812-7773 or www.gotchahooked.com.

BLUE WAVE.
**20, 2300 & 2400
PureBay IN STOCK**

**SOUTHERN
OUTDOORS
& MARINE LLC**

1308 Canal Blvd • Thibodaux
985-447-4156

YAMAHA



PUGLIA'S SPORTING GOODS

1925 VETERANS BLVD. METAIRIE, LA

504-837-0291

Monday-Saturday 9am-6pm

WE SHIP ANYWHERE

Phone Orders Taken

www.pugliasnola.com

NOW IN STOCK!

- LACROSSE** **LACROSSE BOOTS GRUNGE** #150040 **\$72⁹⁹**
- BURLY CLASSIC** #266040 **\$79⁹⁹**
- WOMENS ALPHABURLY PRO** 800 GRAM REALTREE EDGE #376028 **\$144⁹⁹**
- ALPHABURLY PRO 800 GRAM** OPTIFADE ELEVATED #376035 **\$144⁹⁹**
- ALPHABURLY PRO 1600 GRAM** OPTIFADE ELEVATED #376018..... **\$159⁹⁹**
- ALPHABURLY PRO 1600 GRAM** OPTIFADE WATERFOWL MARSH #376037 **\$159⁹⁹**
- ALPHABURLY PRO OPTIFADE** WATERFOWL MARSH #376010..... **\$139⁹⁹**
- ALPHABURLY PRO OPTIFADE** ELEVATED #376033..... **\$139⁹⁹**
- ALPHABURLY PRO 1000 GRAM** MOSSY OAK BREAK UP #376029.. **\$149⁹⁹**
- ALPHABURLY PRO MOSSY OAK** BREAK UP COUNTRY #376027 **\$139⁹⁹**

- MUCKSTER II LOW** #M2L-300..... **\$69⁹⁹**
- EXCURSION PRO MID** #FRMC-900..... **\$99⁹⁹**
- MUCKSTER II ANKLE** #M2A-300 AVAILABLE IN BARK & MOSS GREEN **\$79⁹⁹**

- LACROSSE** **HIP BOOTS**
- BIG CHIEF** #154040 **\$119⁹⁹**
- MARSH** #156040 **\$124⁹⁹**

- BANDED WADERS RED ZONE 2.0** **BREATHABLE INSULATED** #B1100015-HA **\$349⁹⁹**
- DRAKE WADERS EQWADER** **BREATHABLE 1600** #DF2301-022 **\$299⁹⁹**

- LACROSSE** **LACROSSE YOUTH MALLARD II** **WADER** #700320..... **\$159⁹⁹**
- LACROSSE WETLANDS INSULATED** **BREATHABLE WADER** #736121 **\$259⁹⁹**

- EVERY DECOYS** **NOW IN STOCK!**
- GREEN HEAD GEAR LIFE SIZE BLUE WING TEAL** 1/2 DOZ **\$34⁹⁹**
- PRO GRADE BLUE & GREEN WING TEAL** 1/2 DOZ..... **\$39⁹⁹**
- WOOD DUCK** 1/2 DOZ..... **\$49⁹⁹**
- PRO GRADE GADWALL & WIGEON** DOZ **\$59⁹⁹**
- COOTS** 1/2 DOZ..... **\$49⁹⁹**
- PRO GRADE PINTAIL** 1/2 DOZ..... **\$64⁹⁹**

- ALPS** **MARSH SEATS** **NOW IN STOCK!**
- ALPS** #9200234 **\$49⁹⁹**
- BANDED SLOUGH STEEL** #B08393. **\$79⁹⁹**
- ALPS** #9200239 **\$89⁹⁹**
- EVERY** #90321 **\$69⁹⁹**

- HUNTING CLOTHES** **15% OFF**
- SITKA HUNTING CLOTHES**
- DRAKE HUNTING CLOTHES**
- BROWNING • BERETTA**
- EVERY • BANDED**
- NEW DUCK CAMP**
- HUNTING CLOTHES**

- MOULTRIE FEEDERS**
- DEER FEEDER PRO II TRIPOD** - HOLDS 150# OF CORN - INC SPIN PLATE, FUNNEL, HOUSING, FEED LEVEL ESTIMATOR, BATTERY INDICATOR & POWER PORT, DIGITAL TIMER UP TO 6 TIME/DAY, 1-20 SEC LONG
- REG. \$129.99 **\$99⁹⁹**

- WISE** **SHELL BUCKETS** **NOW IN STOCK!**
- WISE** **OUTDOORS** #5613-246 **\$54⁹⁹**
- ALLEN** **VANISH** **BUCKET** #5831. **\$39⁹⁹**



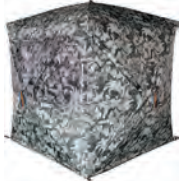
- R10 PREDATOR CAMO..... **\$1279⁹⁹**
- R20 PREDATOR CAMO..... **\$1669⁹⁹**
- R26 PREDATOR DUSK CAMO..... **\$1939⁹⁹**
- R29X CROSSBOW **\$2499⁹⁹**
- R29X SNIPER PREDATOR DUSK CAMO **\$2799⁹⁹**

GROUND BLINDS



2 PERSON GROUND BLIND
#HME-S575

\$79⁹⁹



INFINITY 3 GROUND BLIND
2 PERSON, 65"X65"
#MUD-INFBLIND3

\$279⁹⁹

NEW TITAN 3D LEAFY SUIT

- MOSSY OAK COUNTRY DNA CAMO
- SOFTEST & QUIETEST IN THE INDUSTRY
- WATER REPELLENT
- DOES NOT SNAG OR PICK UP DEBRIS
- ZIPPERED POCKETS ON JACKET & PANTS
- TITAN 3D LEAFY BLIND COVER 5FT X 8FT
- 3D LEAVES - TWO SIDED PRINTING
- NYLON STRAPS



\$99⁹⁹



Benelli

FREE BENELLI FLOATING MAX5 CAMO SHOTGUN CASE #94000 PLUS BENELLI MAX5 BLIND BAG #94040 WITH PURCHASE OF BENELLI SHOTGUN WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

SUPER BLACK EAGLE III
12GA, 26" OR 28" 3 1/2" CAMO,
LEFT OR RIGHT HAND **\$1799⁹⁹**

B.E.S.T. SUPER BLACK EAGLE III
12GA, 26" OR 28"
3 1/2" BLK SYN..... **\$1999⁹⁹**

SUPER BLACK EAGLE III
20GA, 26" OR 28" 3" CAMO **\$1599⁹⁹**

BLACK **\$1499⁹⁹**



TREE STANDS

- L220-2 MAN LADDER**
103LBS CAP 500LBS CAP 18' **\$469⁹⁹**
- L110 SINGLE MAN LADDER**
92LBS 300LBS CAP 17' **\$359⁹⁹**
- M100**
14.5LBS 300LBS CAP **\$259⁹⁹**
- M300 TREE SEAT**
4LBS 300LBS CAP **\$79⁹⁹**
- T360 TRIPOD**
155.8LBS 300LBS CAP 16' **\$429⁹⁹**
- G100 SHOOTING CHAIR**
8.5LBS 400LBS CAP **\$199⁹⁹**
- L-105SL - 1 MAN LADDER**
91LBS, 300LB CAP, 18' **\$249⁹⁹**
- M60 ULTRALITE LOCK ON**
13LBS, 300LB CAP..... **\$229⁹⁹**
- M240-00 STEEL HANGON CLIMBING STICKS**
4PACK..... **\$59⁹⁹**
- T100 10' UNLTRALIGHT TRIPOD**
36LBS 300LB CAP 10' **\$419⁹⁹**

THE DUKE
300 LBS CAP
79 LBS
20' TALL



\$239⁹⁹

PURSUIT TRIPOD
300 LBS
12' TALL



\$179⁹⁹

TITAN SD
350 LBS CAP
25 LBS
#SU81118 **\$389⁹⁹**



VIPER SD PRO
22LBS
300LB CAP
#SU81139 **\$409⁹⁹**

SUMMIT SU81573
20LBS
300LB CAP **\$299⁹⁹**



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY HELLCAT #HC9319B
9MM 3"BBL BLK/SYN
REG. \$529.99
SALE \$489⁰⁰



WINCHESTER 5.56 62 GRAIN 3060FPS FULL METAL JACKET GREEN TIP 420ROUNDS
REG. \$399.99

SALE \$349⁰⁰



HUNGRY SPECKS WILL JUMP ON TOPWATER PLUGS IN NOVEMBER; THEY'RE HUNGRY ENOUGH TO EAT ANYTHING THAT MOVES, AND THESE BAITS MOVE JUST RIGHT.

■ By John N. Felsher

Pinned into a pocket along the shoreline, the mullet never stood a chance, as they futilely leaped for safety. They couldn't escape the vicious, toothy predators slashing at them from all sides. With black/silver and green/silver Top Dogs tied on, we cast into the maelstrom from an extreme distance. Our hefty topwater baits splashed down in the strike zone and barely twitched before they disappeared in a frothy storm of exploding spray as we both hooked up with speckled trout in the 4- to 6-pound class.

"It sure will make the hair stand up on the back of your head when you get a big hit on top from a speckled trout," said guide Scott Simpson of Impulsive Charters in Long Beach, Miss. "It's an explosive strike that will bring you out of your shoes if you aren't paying attention."

Besides creating heart-palpitating strikes, large topwaters consistently catch bigger speckled trout than most other natural or artificial baits, with the possible exception of live baitfish. Of course, working smaller topwaters will provoke more action but generally catch smaller trout. Use bigger baits in choppy water and smaller lures in calm conditions.

POP THE TOP FOR FALL TROUT

GO BIG OR GO HOME

“For big trout, I like throwing topwater baits,” said Ronnie Daniels with Fisher-Man Guide Services in Pass Christian, Miss. “Anglers can catch big trout on many baits, but topwaters tend to draw strikes from larger fish. They have larger profiles, so smaller fish won’t hit them as much.”

To find big trout that might hit a topwater bait, first look for what specks want to eat. Until a trout reaches about 3 pounds, it mostly eats shrimp. Of course, no trout will resist a live shrimp swimming enticingly past its nose, but giant trout want a big meal without expending too much energy to catch it. They want fishy meals and look for mullet, croaker or menhaden, aka pogies, and other finned prey. A 5-pound trout can easily gulp down a 12-inch mullet and still smack a 6-inch topwater bait with vengeance. Imagine what a 10-pounder can swallow.

“Topwater baits are great to throw when trout prey upon mullets,” said Charlie Thomason of Bayou Charters and Silver Sides Lodges in Hopedale. “Speckled trout know that mullet hang on the top of the water. When you throw anything that kind of looks like a mullet, a trout will attack it.”

FIND BAIT FIRST

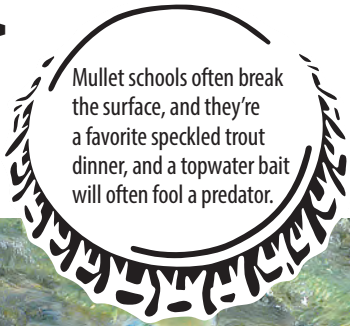
When looking for big trout, first find the prey, particularly agitated or nervous baitfish. Then, offer the trout something that

looks like the prey. Many topwater enticements closely resemble mullet, which often thrust their heads above the water. To a hungry trout, a struggling mullet looks like fillet mignon.

“Go where the bait is,” said Erik Rue with Calcasieu Charter Service in Lake Charles. “Bigger trout survive more on mullet, pogies, pinfish and similar prey. Look for big wads of mullet — that’s where the big trout will be — and throw topwaters at them. A speckled trout is a very aggressive fish, especially around other trout.”

Diving birds can mean schooling trout feeding near the surface, although monster specks normally hunt alone or with just a few of their large brethren. Feeding trout also make slicks on the water. When feeding on oily baitfish, snaggle-toothed specks rip their hapless prey apart. The fish oil floats to the surface, forming a sheen that looks a bit like gasoline spilled in the water. For the best results, look for small, emerging slicks because these indicate trout actively feeding on oily baitfish. Since slicks drift with the wind or tides, determine the direction of the flow and get ahead of the slick to intercept the fish.

PICK YOUR POISON ➤



Mullet schools often break the surface, and they’re a favorite speckled trout dinner, and a topwater bait will often fool a predator.



PICK YOUR POISON

Fishermen can throw many different floating lures, but most saltwater specialists like “walking” or “walk-the-dog” baits.” With brisk wrist flicks of the rod, make the bait “walk” with a scintillating, side-to-side action that mimics a wounded baitfish. Tie walking baits with a loop knot rather than cinch a knot down on the eye of the hook or use a split ring so the bait can zigzag more freely.

“Mullet spend a lot of time on the surface, and big trout key on that,” Daniels said. “Trout have a predatory instinct. When looking at a topwater bait, they see a profile that resembles a larger prey fish like a mullet. An injured fish is typically going to be up near the surface, swimming with an erratic motion, not in a straight line. A walk-the-dog type bait imitates that struggling baitfish action.”

Most people work walking baits with a constant, zig-zag motion, but the biggest trout might want something different. Try working a bait several feet, then pause so it sits motionless a few seconds. Try different retrieves and speeds to see what

works best that day.

“When working a topwater bait, find out what the fish want,” Daniels said. “Sometimes, they want it run fairly quickly, with almost non-stop movement. Some days, fish are a little more sluggish and want a slower bait, especially when the water turns a little cooler. When working a walking bait, sometimes I make it wobble widely from side to side and work it slower. Sometimes, I pause frequently and let it sit still for a second or two. I experiment with different retrieves and colors to find out what they want. My all-time favorite color is a bone with a slight silver pattern to it.”

GO LONG

Heavy, large-profile baits can be cast long distances, essential for catching giant specks. Strikes from the biggest trout usually occur at the extreme end of a cast. That also makes these lures excellent search baits since they cover so much water.

“Get the bait as far away from the boat as possible and keep quiet,” Rue said. “The person who can cast the farthest will probably get the most bites and biggest fish. Use the wind to make longer casts and for drifting into position. Don’t overuse the trolling motor. People need to be in stealth mode to catch bigger trout. It’s almost like hunting, to an extent.”

Diving birds such as sea gulls will readily give away the position of trout feeding on schools of baitfish or shrimp.



John N. Felsher is a professional freelance writer and photographer with more than 1,700 articles in more than 117 magazines to his credit. He worked as the outdoors editor for several Louisiana newspapers and currently co-hosts a weekly outdoors radio show on WNSP 105.5 FM in Mobile, Ala. You can contact him at JohnNFelsher.com.



Big speckled trout will blast a topwater plug they mistake for a baitfish that's wounded and struggling at the surface.



Anglers can also fish popping plugs, which displace water with curved blades or noses. When jerked, they create quite a surface commotion. Work poppers slowly. Cast one to a good spot and let it rest a while, then pop it. Keep repeating this retrieve. These baits work best for eliciting opportunity strikes from non-aggressive feeders.

Big fish will often follow a lure quite a distance without striking. Most people who spot a fish would naturally slow down or pause the retrieve to let the fish catch up, but a trout doesn't need help running down prey. A baitfish fleeing for its life with a gnarly-toothed speck hot on its tail kicks in turbo mode and starts swimming erratically. Nothing infuriates a hungry predator more than "fast" food trying to get away. Speeding up your retrieve could provoke incredibly violent strikes.

BE PATIENT >

Covers Unlimited

- Boat Covers • Bimini Tops • Full Enclosures
- Bow & Cockpit Covers • Marine Upholstery & Repair
- On Site Marine Work • Guaranteed Workmanship

Proud Distributor of Eagle Carports

LOUISIANA'S CUSTOM CANVAS LEADER

Custom Pool Covers

225-261-4057

13140 Hooper Rd • BR, LA 70818
www.coversunlimited.net



Speckled trout are suckers for a big, walk-the-dog style topwater bait retrieved erratically across the surface.

BE PATIENT

When a fish blasts a topwater lure, resist the temptation to set the hook. Trout don't always connect when attacking, particularly when chasing a fast-moving lure. Yanking the rod prematurely could pull the lure out of a fish's mouth. Wait to feel the fish on the line. If the speck doesn't make solid contact the first time, keep moving the bait. That fish didn't go away; it might hit again, or perhaps another spotted predator will take a shot.

"Working a topwater bait requires patience," Simpson said. "I've had fish hit a topwater seven or eight times on a single cast. When a big trout blows up on a topwater bait, it sometimes knocks it completely out of the water. When a fish strikes and misses, I pause the bait so the fish thinks it wounded or stunned the baitfish. After 2 or 3 seconds, I start twitching it again and work it a few more feet. Then, I might pause it again. That might entice another strike."

Anglers can fish topwaters around any shallow cover, including marshy shorelines, jetties, sandbars, oyster beds, artificial reefs, sunken wrecks and grass flats. They can even work around structure in deeper water, including bridge pilings, docks, vertical bulkheads and similar places because specks and baitfish both commonly suspend near the surface.

Beaches can also provide outstanding action. Waves sculpt parallel sandbars separated by troughs. Bait congregates in deeper troughs.

Small channels separating bars allow predators to enter these deeper spots to bushwhack baitfish. In addition, many Gulf Coast beaches have accumulated considerable debris deposited by countless storms over the years. These structures can also attract trout.

"Throwing topwater baits is not only a very effective way to fish for big trout, but in my opinion, the most enjoyable way," Daniels said. "Topwater fishing is the only form of fishing where missing a fish is just as exciting as catching one."

Fishing large topwaters takes patience and perseverance, but any cast could produce the speck of a lifetime. Just make it a long cast to stay on top of the action. ■

For information about Scott Simpson with Impulsive Charters in Long Beach, Miss., call 228-669-6204 or visit www.captainscottsimpson.com.

For information about Ronnie Daniels with Fisher-Man Guide Services in Pass Christian, Miss., call 228-323-1115 or visit msfisherman.com.

For information about Charlie Thomason of Bayou Charters and Silver Sides Lodges in Hopedale, La., call 504-278-3474 or visit captaincharlie.com.

For information about Erik Rue with Calcasieu Charter Service in Lake Charles, La., call 337-598-4700 or visit calcasieucharters.com.

PADDLES 'N PUDDLES >



a smarter
more exciting
boating experience

2.5hp- 250hp



TOHATSU

Feel the Wind™



www.tohatsu.com



Feel the Wind™

a smarter, more exciting
boating experience

2.5hp - 250hp



www.tohatsu.com

www.LouisianaSportsman.com

PADDLES 'N PUDDLES

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.

GET LIVE SHRIMP READY

NOTHING ELSE CAN RAISE A SPECK'S HACKLES AS MUCH

Fall has arrived, and so have the speckled trout. Areas where they were scarce in the summer are now jam-packed. Intermittent cool fronts keep trout assembling in the interior marshes within easy reach of kayak anglers.

There is no easier way to get on a limit than using live shrimp.

Of course, the hot summer months are generally thought of as live-shrimp season. Several years ago, live shrimp wasn't even available until May. However, a change in the regulations allows bait dealers to catch shrimp year-round. Depending on the weather, live shrimp are sometimes available into December and start back up again in early spring.

Like many other features usually found on larger fishing vessels, a livewell is a common item found on many kayaks. Whether simple floating bait buckets or sophisticated wells with full water-exchange plumbing, it is easy to take live bait along in your kayak.

However, these small set-ups can still be difficult for kayak anglers to keep shrimp alive during summer's heat. That's what makes fall a perfect time to give it a try. The cooler air and water make it much easier to keep your shrimp lively.

No doubt, kayak anglers catch some specks all year-long, but as the summer wears on, the trout are on the coastal edges and islands that are generally too far for most kayakers to reach. However, that all changes as the trout gather on their way to the interior marsh. The schools build as the fronts become more frequent and the water temps cool. Limits come easy, sometimes within sight of your favorite launch.

FEED 'EM LIVE SHRIMP

Whether fished on the bottom or under a popping cork, live shrimp are killer when those trout schools go on a ravenous feed. Anglers fishing in a boat can generally mix it up, with some anglers fishing plastics while others fish live shrimp. However, fishing solo in a kayak, it is much easier to keep the bite turned on by continuously using shrimp. There are days when nothing but plastics do the trick, but those usually come later in the years as the shrimp get scarce.





This nice November speckled trout went for the wrong live shrimp: one with a hook hidden in the shell. Live shrimp can't be beat for thrilling days fishing for speckled trout, especially as the water cools and fall progresses.

PADDLES 'N PUDDLES

continued

A simple bottom rig with a dropper hook a few inches above the weight is one of the easiest and most inexpensive to use. Stay away from the pre-made, wire-leader types that come with beads and snap swivels. They are unnecessary, the snaps are cheaply made, and they are not as effective as those you can make on your own. If the fish are holding deep, try to anchor where your 'yak sits so you can vertically drop. This drastically increases the hookup ratio when you get a bite. If you have to cast out too far, the horizontal angle from sitting so close to the water doesn't transmit the hookset efficiently. Also, a small treble hook also increases hookups over that of a typical J-hook or Kahle hook.

Under a popping cork, the choice of hooks is not as critical, and some anglers prefer to use a light jighead in case they want to switch to an artificial tail without having to re-tie.

TWEET-TWEET, HERE THEY ARE

Fall is for the birds, too. While birds diving in summer is a sure-fire clue that there are fish underneath, it also works in the fall. The flocks may not be as large, but keep an eye peeled for gulls diving in a particular area, and chances are there will be fish underneath. Though not always trout, schools of ladyfish also spark bird activity. Ladyfish may not be good to eat, but their impressive leaps and hard fights offer great sport in the kayak.

Although not as critical as in a power boat, try to ease into casting distance of the bird activity with as little paddling or pedaling



**AMERICA'S #1-SELLING COMPACT TRACTOR
IS IN STOCK IN BOTH OF OUR SHOWROOMS.**

HENDERSON

LAKE CHARLES: 337.436.4366 | ABBEVILLE: 337.893.1451 | HENDERSONIMPLEMENT.COM



as you can. If possible, use the wind or current to quietly get you into position. Water this time of year is generally clearer, and fish are easy to spook. Stay with the school as long as you can. The frenzy can end at any minute, so don't dally between fish. Get it off the hook and cast again as soon as possible.

Whether fishing birds or sitting on anchor, resist the urge to abandon the area if the action slows. The fish may have moved on or they may have simply just quit eating. Give it a few minutes to see if the action picks back up, but also keep an eye on surrounding water. Watch for nervous bait or current breaks that may have developed. Often, these schools only move a short distance and may still be nearby.

Start your fall trips by setting up where larger waters lead to the interior marsh. Be it lakes or lagoons, the funnel areas where they neck down are where these transition trout are going to stage. Top or bottom, toss out a live shrimp and be prepared for a bag full of speckled trout. ■

**MARSH MAN
MASSON >**

With careful use of a livewell or floating bait bucks, a kayak angler can take enough live shrimp into the marsh this month to produce a limit of speckled trout.

#1 BlackJack boats DEALER IN AMERICA

BlackJack boats 224

BlackJack boats 256

2104 FRONTIER

Bay Pro 203 EXCEL

TURNER BOATWORKS

(504) 341-4852

3028 4TH STREET
HARVEY, LA 70058
WWW.METORBOATING.COM

GO BOLDLY WITH MERCURY

MARSH MAN MASSON

Todd Masson

When frenzied trout are feeding on shrimp, they can seldom resist a TKO.



Todd Masson

BEFORE DAYLIGHT SAVINGS DEPARTS, IT'S TROUT WEEK

COOLING WATER, MOVING SHRIMP, LATE SUNRISE MAKE NOV. 1-6 A DON'T-MISS SPECK TIME

Being a fan of sleep, I'm also a fan of Daylight Saving Time, since it allows me a few extra winks before getting up and getting on the water before the sun has climbed above the horizon.

This year, Daylight Saving Time comes to a close on Nov. 7, which is nice, because it's the latest date that the nation can move to Standard Time under current regulations. It's been my lifelong wish that we'd end this time-changing silliness and stick with DST year-round, but until our politicians see the light, we'll have to see it ourselves earlier during the winter months.

In New Orleans, sunrise will occur on Nov. 6 at 7:17 a.m., and it's even later for anglers in the western part of the state. In Lake Charles, for instance, sunrise that morning is 7:30.

DST YEAR-ROUND! Let's make it happen.

Regardless, the extra sleep is only one reason Nov. 1-6 is likely to be my favorite

fishing week of the year. The others include the typically delightful weather and the fact that fall speckled trout fishing is so easy even a caveman can do it.

A FATAL WEAKNESS

Speckled trout are cunning, clever and notoriously temperamental, and that's why we love them, but they have one weakness that, for them, is often fatal. Namely, speckled trout love shrimp the way 12-year-old boys love pizza.

And it's certainly not a coincidence that specks move back into the marshes during the same season that white shrimp are emerging from the backwaters. The fish get remarkably stupid as they binge-eat their favorite crustaceans, hoping to put on as much fat as possible before temperatures drop and the shrimp move outside and out of reach to complete their life cycle.

Anything that looks remotely like a shrimp will get inhaled if the water is

clear and moving and there are any specks around. That's particularly true in one certain scenario.

This time of year, I try to plan all my trips to coincide with a falling tide. Water pulling out of the marshes yanks white shrimp with it, and specks wait alongside the conveyor belt for the food to be brought to them.

TROUT PINCH POINTS

Specks can set up absolutely anywhere to enjoy the feast, but the most predictable locations are at the mouths of major bayous, where they intersect with large lakes and bays. Because it's constricted, the water flowing through



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



Todd Masson

Just because speckled trout this month are feeding on shrimp, you don't necessarily have to bring them along to be successful.

the bayou itself will be moving at a rapid pace relative to that in the lake or bay. But once it meets the bigger body of water, it becomes diffused, and the bait tumbles and twists with the vertical and horizontal eddies. That's when the trout swoop in for their easy meals.

Often, the trout push the shrimp to the surface, attracting the attention of sea gulls, but even if no birds are present, wise anglers check the mouths of major bayous on falling tides in the fall.

Depending on depth, my favorite setups to target these fish are a Versamaxx Bolt Pro-Series or Knocker cork above an H&H TKO Shrimp or a Matrix Shad teamed with a 3/8-ounce Deathgrip jighead. Colors for each depend on water clarity, but if it's good, I go with red ice on the TKO and shrimp creole on the Matrix Shad.

This phenomenon can occur throughout the fall, but it's most predictable in October and November, when the first cool fronts with a little bit of muscle push through the region.

Autumn weather, extra sleep and non-stop speckled trout action. Yep, it's almost a cinch that Nov. 1-6 will be my favorite fishing week of the year. ■

BEAT PONTCHARTRAIN CROWDS >



Captain Paul's G.P.S. Systems™

For the Best Advice & Hands on Instruction in this New High Tech Navigation System

CAPTAIN PAUL'S FISHING EDGE of GPS WAYPOINTS are available at shop.sportsmannetwork.com

For information on PRIVATE GROUP SEMINAR RATES INDIVIDUAL TUTORING • SCHEDULED SEMINARS Call Captain Paul@ (985) 847-0536 e-mail: captainpaultgps@gmail.com

COME GET YOUR POWER TODAY!




SOUTHERN OUTDOORS & MARINE LLC

2268 Grand Caillou Rd., Houma, LA 985-873-7731



BEAT PONTCHARTRAIN CROWDS

Get away from the Trestles and still catch plenty of specks

By Joel Masson

There are few places to fish in south Louisiana this month more popular than the Lake Pontchartrain Trestle, and although Chas Champagne, the owner of Matrix Shad, does quite a bit of that, the popularity can have him looking for other areas to catch speckled trout in the Pontchartrain estuary.

"When they show up on the Trestle for that first run, it's only the regulars out there — just a handful of people, and you get, like, a week on it before the word gets out," Champagne said. "The crowds can slow the Trestle down, and typically you can find (trout) somewhere else."

One of Champagne's favorite tactics once the crowds get too bad is fishing the beat-up camp pilings on the eastern end of the lake.

"You'll go like 10 camps and never catch a fish, and then this one particular camp will hold them every year," he said. "Nobody messes with them too badly. You can go over there and catch 10 beautiful fish with nobody bugging you when there are 100 boats on the Trestle."

At the pilings, Champagne throws a variety of colors of Matrix Shads on jigheads, but he also loves throwing the Matrix Minnow jerkbait.

"I like jerkbaits a lot when the tide isn't moving really hard and the water is crystal clear," he said. "You can entice some bites on those suspending jerkbaits that a jighead won't. When you get into that November, December, January time, they like jerkbaits for some crazy reason."

Another thing Champagne looks for when fishing Pontchartrain this time of year are birds. However, it's not typical bird fishing for a variety of reasons, he said.

Chas Champagne of Matrix Shad catches big Lake Pontchartrain trout this time of year by getting away from the crowds of people on the Trestle.

"Those birds will pop up, and it'll be those 2- and 4-pound (trout) underneath them," Champagne said. "It's not regular bird trout; it's big Lake Pontchartrain trout."

In many places across south Louisiana, it's very realistic to catch a limit of trout in less than an hour under birds. However, Champagne said super-fast action under birds isn't common in the big lake.

"It's not every cast like it can be in other estuaries around," he said. "A lot of times, the birds will be hovering or swooping down, and you literally have to throw it where a shrimp were to jump or a bird were to pick something up."

Champagne also frequently runs into redfish under the birds.

"If it's all redfish birds, they move really fast, and the school doesn't sit there for a long period of time," he said. "You just run up in the birds like a wild banshee, and you make sure everybody in the boat casts out. If somebody hooks one, everybody throws right where that one is hooked."

No matter if it's trout or redfish under them, Champagne casts 3/8-ounce jigheads tipped with Matrix Shads at the fish.

Last November, Pontchartrain's water got extremely clear, and whenever Champagne sees that, he knows the importance of line size and line type.

"When you can see, like, 3 feet, is the magic number when you need to start worrying about the line you use and how thin it is," he said. "When your average fish is like an 18-incher and you've got 2 to 4 feet of visibility, those fish are smart."

Champagne said fluorocarbon, which is nearly invisible to fish, is essential; he throws Matrix fluorocarbon in 15-pound test. ■

FLOUNDER RUN HAS SABINE, CALCASIEU ANGLERS READY

Ry Adam Jaynes

regarded by many as the tastiest inshore saltwater species in southwest Louisiana and southeast Texas waters is the southern flounder, *Paralichthys lethostigma*. Flounder are a flatfish that spend most of their time lying or swimming along the bottom. Both eyes in adults are on the upper or left side of their bodies.

Growing rapidly over the first year, young flounder may reach 12 inches quickly. Females far exceed their male counterparts in growth, reaching 25 inches or even longer; males rarely exceed 12 inches. With the arrival of fall, adult flounder will begin their migration out of Sabine Lake and Calcasieu Lake and the surrounding estuary to enter the Gulf of Mexico, where fish 2 years and older will spawn. Flounder are easiest to catch during this massive migration that takes place from November into December, depending on the weather.

When it comes to catching flounder, the saying, "There's more than one way to skin a cat" is true. One of the most popular is to use 3- or 4-inch Gulp! shrimp and a 3-inch Gulp! swimming mullet rigged on a 1/8- to 1/4-ounce jighead. Many anglers will use mud minnows or finger mullet to catch their share of fish. My preferred method during the fall run — or any time, for that matter — is a white Mister Twister curlytail grub. A single-tail or double-tail both work great. I rig the grub on a jighead, the weight depending on the depth of the water I am fishing and the speed of the current, typically either a 1/8- or 1/4-ounce. I always tip the grub with a small piece of dead shrimp when fishing for flounder. For me, this is the best way to catch both numbers and quality fish.

During their exodus from the lakes, fishing the channels that lead to the Gulf most easily targets them. Since flounder follow the contour of the bottom to a large degree, fishing bulkheads, points and edges of the channel are key areas. Anglers will line the banks, either in their boats or wading, casting over and over to essentially the same spot hoping to entice a flounder to bite while it makes its way out to the spawning grounds.

If you are planning on fishing Texas waters for the flounder run this year or leaving from a Texas landing, you may want to check the new regulations. In an effort to increase the number of female flounder reaching the Gulf of Mexico to spawn, the Texas Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has closed the harvest of flounder from Nov. 1. to Dec. 15.

Two things are for certain, no matter which side of the debate you are on for the new regulation: there will be more flounder that make it to the Gulf to spawn, and there will be more Texas boats leaving out of Louisiana to fill an ice chest. ■

Capt. Adam Jaynes guides on Sabine Lake, Lake Calcasieu and surrounding waters. He specializes in light tackle with artificial lures in the year-around pursuit of speckled trout and redfish. He can be contacted at justfishsabine.com



This nice, sow flounder was caught during the November flounder run at Sabine Lake. Big flounder like this put a smile on anyone's face.



Big flounder like these tend to get deboned and stuffed with plenty of crabmeat.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope

Spanish mackerel are a pleasing addition to any nearshore fisherman's November catch.



Dan Kibler

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: SPANISH MACKEREL

SMALLER COUSIN OF THE KING MACKEREL, SPANISH ARE PEPPY INSHORE BATTLERS

Spanish mackerel, *Scomberomorus maculatus*, are long, slender fish with deeply-forked tails and sharp teeth. Their bodies present greenish backs, silver sides and belly and numerous yellow spots on each side. They have distinct lateral lines that gently curve toward the tail of the fish, and they are covered in very tiny scales.

As Spanish mackerel mature, the yellow spots sometimes fade, especially in bigger fish. Because of this, big ones are often misidentified as small king mackerel, a larger cousin to the Spanish. This can cause big problems for anglers, since the two species have different size and creel limits in most states.

One of the easiest ways to distinguish the two subspecies is by paying close attention to the lateral line, which stands out visibly for both fish. This line on king mackerel has a very sudden drop, unlike those on Spanish, which drops more gradually, and more slightly.

HEARTY EATERS

Spanish mackerel spend much of their lives in open waters, and are spread out from New England to the Yucatan Peninsula. They migrate with water temperatures between those two extremes. They are voracious eaters and will eat pretty much anything small enough to fit in their mouths. Numerous species of smaller fish make up the bulk of their diet. They also eat their share of squid and shrimp.

Their travels often take them close to shore — even into the mouths of rivers throughout their range. They spawn in the open ocean from May to September and begin spawning at around 2 years of age.

WORLD-CLASS SPEED

Anglers catch Spanish mackerel from piers, boats and even from beaches in some areas. One of the most-popular lures is the Got-Cha plug. Shiny spoons are also very effective, as are colorful

jigs retrieved very quickly. These fish are fast and will ignore slower lures to chase down faster ones. Anglers often catch large Spanish while trolling live baits for king mackerel.

These fish rarely grow bigger than 37 inches long or heavier than 12 pounds. Most never make it to 18 inches or 3 pounds. The Louisiana state record weighed 10.56 pounds and was caught by Mike LeBlanc in August 1972. Ron Dillistone caught Mississippi's state record, an 8-pound fish, in 1984. The world record weighed 13 pounds. Robert Cranton caught this fish in North Carolina's Ocracoke Inlet in November 1987. ■



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.

It's no secret that the marshes of southeast Louisiana have been going through change via freshwater diversions, storm surge and spillway openings.

The increase in freshwater has taken its toll on areas that were once labeled as saltwater fishing destinations. While this may have speckled trout and redfish anglers grumbling, bass fishermen are grinning from ear to ear.

Patrick Engerran of Ponchatoula finds himself venturing into the marsh to target bass more and more. Engerran is a tournament angler who primarily fishes on the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain. With every year that passes, he finds himself running farther south to take advantage of bass that have taken up residence in what looks like speckled trout and redfish country.

"We've really seen the bass push farther south in the last couple of years, even into areas where you wouldn't think they'd be," he said.

Locally referred to as marsh bass, marsh pickles and tater chips, Engerran thinks they need a new name, because what was thought of as a nuisance fish or by-catch is making itself at home and thriving, turning into something worthy of attention.

"I think we need a new name for the marsh bass around here, because these things are monsters now," he said. "Five years ago, there's no way I'd be fishing the marsh for quality bass. The only way I'd be heading south was to fill out a limit, but now there are kickers in the marsh."

WHAT'S A MARSH BASS? >

MONSTERS OF THE MARSH

By Keith Lusher

BASS ARE SHOWING UP, GETTING ESTABLISHED AND GROWING LARGER IN AREAS WHERE YOU WOULD HAVE FOUND ONLY REDFISH AND TROUT A DECADE AGO. HERE'S HOW TO TARGET THEM.



WHAT'S A MARSH BASS?

In order to home in on what is happening to the marshes of southeast Louisiana, we need to take care of a common misconception folks have about marsh bass. We need to look at a study done in 1988 by biologists at the LSU School of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries. The study took bass from False River, which is freshwater, and from a brackish pipeline canal in Cut-Off that had a salinity level of two parts per thousand.

Biologists concluded that a marsh bass shares the same DNA as a typical, freshwater bass. The only difference is that the water they inhabit over time has an affect on their growth in numerous ways.

One test revealed that largemouth bass grow longer in freshwater than they do in brackish water. This explains why marsh bass are typically stockier than their freshwater relatives.

But what about the weight of these fish? After examining the stomachs of fish caught in brackish water, scientists con-

cluded that the diet of a marsh bass is far superior to that of a freshwater bass. The stomach contents of marsh bass included grass shrimp, brown shrimp, cacohoes, pogies and shiners, compared to mostly invertebrates for the freshwater bass. This explains the girth and stomach size of marsh bass.

While marsh bass have the same DNA as a typical, freshwater largemouth bass, Engerran said they don't act the same.

"These things are tanks," he said. "There are some times when I think it's a redfish slamming my spinnerbait because of how aggressive they are,

There are numerous theories about why marsh bass are more aggressive. One is that they have more competition for food; if they are slow to chase down bait, they might lose out to another, more aggressive fish like a redfish. Another is that, over time, the behavior of marsh bass starts to mimic surrounding fish that are more aggressive feeders. In any case,

marsh bass are checking all the boxes for tournament anglers who are looking for heavy fish that hit just about anything thrown at them.



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.

Patrick Engerran of Ponchatoula admires a marsh bass caught in an area that was once a haven for redfish and speckled trout, before freshwater intervention.





Once considered to be mostly dinks, marsh-dwelling largemouth bass are growing quite chunky in Louisiana's brackish waters.

LURES AND TECHNIQUE

When fishing the marsh, it's all about vegetation. The submerged grass, often a combination of eel grass and snot grass, can either form a mat on the surface when the tide is low or be completely submerged during high tide.

When the tide is low, Engerran uses a frog on the surface, but his favorite way to fish is running a fast-moving bait over the grass on a higher stage of the tide. He said swimbaits, vibrating jigs and buzzbaits work great over grass. For these baits, he uses braid with a graphite composite medium-heavy rod made by Tangi Rods.

"Marsh means grass, so I like a rod with a good backbone to get the fish's head up quick, but a soft tip to let the fish suck in the fast-moving baits," he said.

Another favorite tactic is to burn a spinnerbait over the vegetation, just under the surface. Engerran prefers a medium-heavy graphite rod and a reel spooled with monofilament.

"I've been known to set the hook a little fast when using a spinnerbait, so the mono helps delay the hookset because of how much it stretches," he said.

PERSONAL-BEST MARSH BASS

Engerran was pre-fishing for a tournament on one of his most-recent trips to the marsh. He was fishing Bayou Liberty in Slidell and headed south towards Lake Pontchartrain. As the brackish lake neared, the trees disappeared, and within seconds, the fresh-water tributary transitioned into marsh, with mullet jumping, schools of pogies scattering across the surface and the calls of seagulls in the distance.

He dropped the trolling motor and started casting a white Z-Man ChatterBait with a green pumpkin crawfish trailer along a sun-soaked shoreline of marsh grass. One cast landed about a foot from the bank, and he started the retrieve, then saw a fish approach from beneath the surface.

"This fish pushed a wake that you dream about," he said, "the kind of wake that leaves no doubt that he's going to commit."

Without hesitating, the fish caught up to the lure and inhaled it. For a few seconds Engerran thought it was a redfish.

"My first thought was, 'Great I just ruined a new ChatterBait,'" said Engerran, whose sense of urgency rose as he saw a bass emerge from the water to throw the hook. He was able to get the fish close to the boat and lip it: the heaviest bass he's ever caught in the marsh, a 6.89-pound chunk.

Engerran continued working through the marsh and was able to put together a 5-fish limit weighing more than 16 pounds.

"That was a deja vu moment for me," he said. "It was that same stretch of grass where I caught a 5-pounder that won the Florida Parishes Bass Anglers tournament a few years ago."

While Engerran fishes the marshes around Lake Pontchartrain, other anglers have reported catching bass upwards of 8



Patrick Engerran dances around his bass boat to get in position to bring a feisty marsh bass aboard.

Capt. Paul's FISHING EDGE



- Gives the fisherman an advantage in getting to & finding fishing spots, moving around, and getting back from some of the more favorite fishing areas in the state
- Downloads directly into various GPS units
- Saves countless hours of manually entering waypoint values into the GPS receiver
- Are files are transmitted as an attachment to an email
- Attachment is IMPORTED into your mapping program and electronically downloaded into your GPS/Computer connection
- You must have an email address that will accept attachments on your incoming email



Only \$24.95

Find at shop.sportsmannetwork.com

Some of the "EDGE" positions are underwater reefs, shoals, structures, and honey holes

Capt. Paul Titus is Louisiana Sportsman's GPS expert. Need to ask him a question? Go to www.louisianasportsman.com

Contains Over 170 Waypoint Locations

- Cocodrie-Dulac-Dularge
- Leeville East
- Leeville West - Terrebonne & Timbalier Bays
- Barataria Bay
- Lake Borgne
- Hopedale to the Mississippi Sound
- Hopedale MRSD to Bayou Terre aux Boeufs
- Delacroix to Point a la Hache
- Bayou Bienvenu
- Port Sulphur
- Lakes Ponchartrain & Mauvegas
- Calcasieu Lake
- Myrtle Grove-Lake Hermitage
- Empire to Bures
- Pearl River WMA
- Lafitte
- The Rigolets
- Vermillion Bay
- Bayou Sauvage NWR
- Big Brans NWR
- MRSD WPS & Dam Routes

pounds, with three confirmed 10-pound bass caught in the ICW, Dike Canal and marsh along the northern section of Lake Borgne.

With no recent fish kills reported after Hurricane Ida, the momentum of the brackish marsh looks to continue for years to come. As long as that happens, Engerran said he'll continue to venture into the marsh as long as these fish continue to grow.

"A 6-pound bass is a 6-pound bass no matter where you catch it," he said. ■

LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Brian Brannum's celebrated crankbait design became Bill Lewis's 1.75 Echo.

ECHO 1.75:

BASS PRO'S IDEA BECAME LURE DESIGNER'S SQUARE-BILL CRANKBAIT PROJECT, WITH BLESSINGS FROM BILL LEWIS LURES

A Lake Sam Rayburn fishing guide's voice oozes pure pride when he talks about a crankbait that's been around six years, with ebbs and flows in popularity. Brian Branum, 57, of Brookeland, Texas, designed the Bill Lewis Echo 1.75 square-bill crankbait from scratch. The Echo 1.75 features an intricate weighting system, plus six rattles made of three different materials to heighten sensitivity, i.e., sound. His was a Dr. Frankenstein-like approach that resulted in a crankbait that impresses thousands of bass anglers to this day.

One of those Echo 1.75 square-bill crankbait admirers is Wes Higgins, president of Bill Lewis Lures, based in Alexandria. Higgins described the Echo 1.75 as "the Colorado blade of square-bills, because it wobbles so wide and can produce lots of action on a slower retrieve. It's incredible around shallow grass and stained waters."

He also said the crankbait that hasn't received much publicity has been a long-time "secret weapon of many Sam Rayburn heavy-hitters."

After all, Higgins pointed out, it was made by Branum, an engineer with several successful, patented inventions behind him, including his first: an eyewear design sold to Foster Grant that was his college senior project at age 24.

Branum, who designed lures for Gambler Baits starting in the early 2000s, has been guiding on Lake Sam Rayburn since 2004. "The Echo was a pretty fun project," said Branum, who fished FLW, Bassmaster and other tournament circuits in the 1990s.

A friend who was a pro bass circuit regular, Andrew Upshaw of Hemphill, Texas, had the idea for a crankbait and put the bug in Higgins' ear. Higgins liked what he heard while talking with Upshaw and Branum during the Rat-L-Trap Open in January 2014 at Sam Rayburn.

CHECK THE BOXES

Later, according to Branum, "Wes said, 'Get with Andrew Upshaw. We're going to build something besides a Rat-L-Trap.'"

Upshaw wanted a crankbait with a square lip. He specified five other must-haves for the crank bait.

- To rattle like at Rat-L-Trap;
- To be flat-sided;
- To have a wide body;
- To run well through hydrilla;
- To dive 2 to 5 feet.



Bill Lewis Echo 1.75



Higgins chipped in with his own requests, which raised the list of boxes to check to 10.

"Wes asked if I had everything I needed. Wes hammered out a few more things about the bait," Branum said.

Upshaw and Branum drew pictures of their creation, and Higgins took notes, instructing Branum to make the prototypes by hand. He did, using body parts from other crankbaits to build three "robot-looking Frankensteins."

Then, a grad student in college was hired to produce a computer assisted design for Bill Lewis.

"He did a fine job," Branum said. "We had eight, maybe 10, 3D-printed by a company in Atlanta that did prosthetic parts."

The last test was to put finished crankbaits in the hands of three of his fishing buddies, who used models X, Y and Z. Each picked their favorite, and it was the same one.

The new crankbait hit the market in spring 2015. Of all the products he has invented or designed, Branum may be most proud of the Echo 1.75. Heck, he nailed a 5-pound bass on his creation before it hit the market.

One of the rattles in a special chamber is zinc-coated copper. Two others are lead, and three are steel alloys. The combination gives it the combination of low-knock and high-frequency rattle like the legendary, lipless Rat-L-Trap.

Those rattles make it different, but so does the weight system. Branum an axis of three rotations that makes it unique. On the cast, the rear weight controls the flight, then, without the lip getting involved, the middle weight takes over on the dive before switching to the front weight based on the angle of the fishing line.

It's armed with two Mustad Triple Grip treble hooks and quality split rings. ■

For more information on the Echo 1.75 visit rat-l-trap.com or call 800- 633-4861.

BASS CLASS >



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.

LSU-S SOPHOMORE CATCHING BASS, NOT FOOTBALLS, TAKES AIM AT PROS

ALREADY GUIDING ON TOLEDO BEND, CROWLEY ANGLER HAS ALL-STATE NODS, ALL-AMERICAN NOMINATIONS FROM HIGH SCHOOL ON HIS RESUME

When a knee injury signaled the end of nights of catching passes for Notre Dame High School's football team, Bryant "Brother" Martin of Crowley continued catching bass.

Martin, a wide receiver for the Pioneers, leapt high and twisted his body to catch a pass, got tangled up with the defender and came down very wrong. His wrecked knee was repaired by extensive surgery.

Martin, who also played two seasons of high-school baseball, shed the crutches many months later to fish the first day of the Bassmaster National High School Championship in 2018 on Kentucky Lake, the first of his three national tournament appearances at the huge lake on the Tennessee-Kentucky border.



Bryant "Brother" Martin of Crowley showed his bass-catching skills early, including hooking up with this nice bass at Toledo Bend.



Crowley's Bryant "Brother" Martin hooked and boated this 9.49-pounder while fishing at Caney Lake.

"Oh, yeah. Perfect. The day I got off crutches was the first day of nationals at Kentucky Lake," Martin said.

He and the knee have done just fine, thank you, standing on the front deck of his Bass Cat. He was named to the Louisiana High School B.A.S.S. Nation All-State Team in 2019 and 2020 and has been a two-time nominee for All-American.

"It's good to go now," said Martin, 20, who is pumped up for his sophomore season at LSU-Shreveport after fishing for East Texas Baptist University as a freshman.

FATHER'S INFLUENCE

Martin has fished with his father, Brian, "all over" — mostly at Toledo Bend but also at Falcon Lake, Sam Rayburn and Lake Somerville, all in Texas; the Atchafalaya Basin, Henderson Lake, Caney Lake, the Mermentau River, Bayou Segnette, Indian Creek and Miller's Lake, all in Louisiana; Kentucky Lake; Priest River in Idaho and Alabama's Lake Guntersville.

Priest River? Idaho? That's where he fished in freezing rain in the Big Bass Zone Junior Championship twice as the back-to-back BBZJC Louisiana state champion in 2019 and 2020.

His best showing last season was a first-place finish in April in the Sabine Bass Busters Open at Toledo Bend. His 9.42-pound "hawg" was the biggest bass.

Other bass fishing highlights? There are plenty. As a high-school freshman in September 2016, Martin won the St. John the Baptist Open's high-school division on the Mermentau River. As a senior, Martin and Grant Schexnailder, who attends South

Louisiana Community College, earned 2020 Anglers of the Year title in the Louisiana High School B.A.S.S. Nation North Division.

GUIDE SERVICE EXPERIENCE

If it seems Martin is always in a boat, fishing, well, he is most of the time.

The Martins have a camp at Toledo Bend, which serves as a base of operations for the family's Martin's Guide Service. Martin and his father guide for crappie and white bass.

"It's fun. I don't know how it's helping my bass fishing, but it's helping my bass-fishing habits," he said.

As a brief bio on the guide service's website reads, "He has been in the boat ever since he could hold a rod and reel." As a boy, he took to competitive fishing like a crawfish to beef melt. He yearned to pits his bass fishing skills against those of others.

"I love fishing tournaments, and I wanted to fish high-school tournaments like everybody else," Martin said.

His father, a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service, has been a guiding force, with an emphasis on bass fishing. Brian Martin was the boat's captain for Martin and Schexnaider all four years on Notre Dame's fishing team. His on-the-water lessons about bass fishing and how to handle any adversity or any success were well-received, appreciated and, obviously, beneficial.

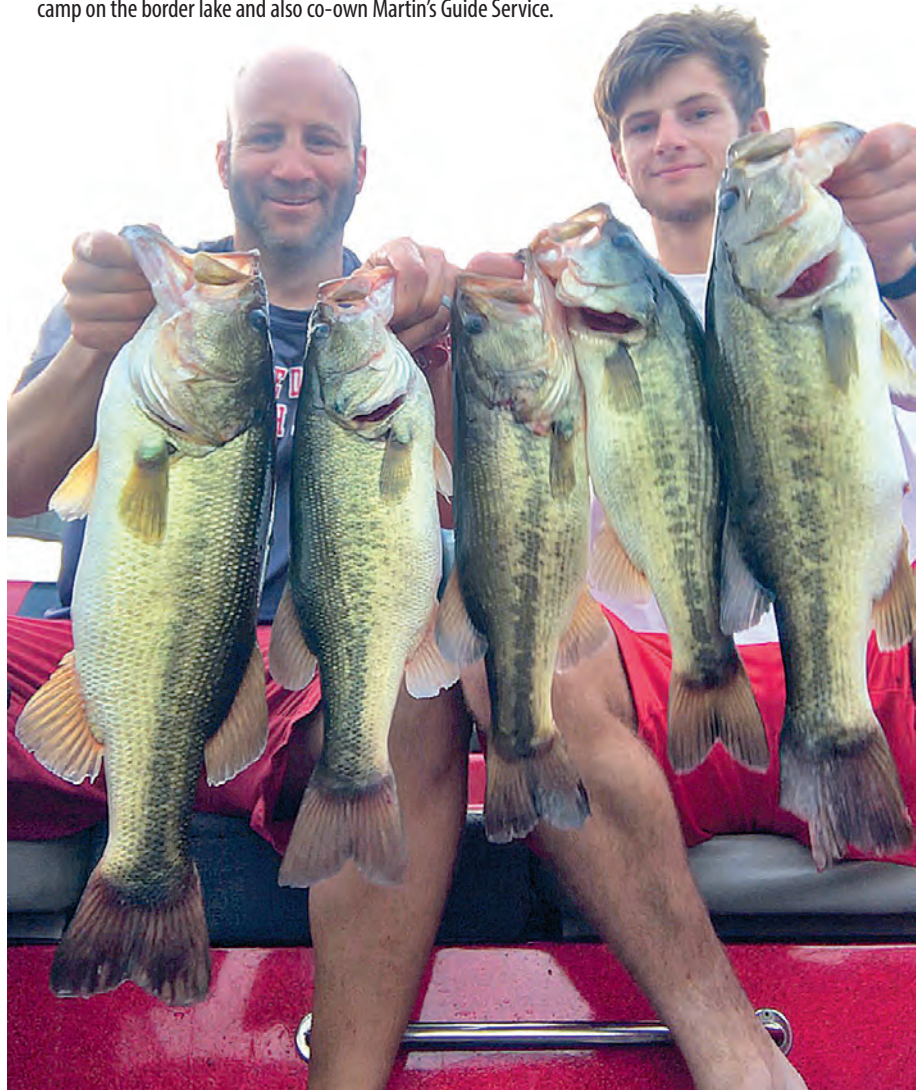
"He'd teach us not to get too down on yourself if a tournament wasn't going too good and to fish as long as we can. Every minute counts," said Bryant Martin, whose goal in college is "to win a tournament and get a 'Happy Gilmore' check. Pretty much win a big college event."

Odds are, it'll be with one of his favorite artificial lures: a ½-ounce Z-Man's Hite's Hot Craw Jackhammer Chatter-bait, or a flippin' Spot Remover.

His post-college future is up in the air. Major League Fishing? B.A.S.S. Which way will he go?

"I don't really know. To be honest with you, wherever the road takes me. I would like to fish" as a pro bass angler, he said. ■

Brian Martin (left) taught his son, Bryant, bass tactics that produce, like they did on this trip together at Toledo Bend. The Martins have a camp on the border lake and also co-own Martin's Guide Service.



TOLEDO BEND >



**BACKED BY OUR
5-YEAR LIMITED
WARRANTY**

**HIGH POWER
FOUR-STROKE
OUTBOARDS**



TOHATSU
Feel the Wind™





DUVIC'S, INC.
3650 Westbank Expwy. Harvey • M-F 8am-5pm
504-341-1654

SERVING ALL
YOUR
BOATING
NEEDS
SINCE 1890





60 75 90 115 150 200 225 250

MORE, MORE, MORE

Toledo Bend's bass get ready to make November a memorable fishing month

M By John Dean
ore bites, more bass and more big bass.

That's three "more" reasons to fish Toledo Bend during November. And, I'll add, there are more windows open to successful bassing this month than the dog days of summer, which typically give up bass early and late in the day.

I feel very strongly we're going to see a consistent bite, quantities of bass as in the spring and a number of good fish — 3s, 4s, 5s, even double-digit bass — as the air cools and the water temperature drops into the low 70s and upper 60s. The lake's bass get energetic and aggressive. They put on the feed bag and try to fill up for whatever winter we do have in this region.

That much is pretty much a given about the water. What's up in the air is how high or how low the pool level will be when November rolls around? On the last day of September, the lake was 4 feet below full pool, but expected rainfall and rain that accompanies future cold fronts will put water closer to the bushes and more water over the wood in November. For sure, it's cut and dried; it'll be a time to get in 10 feet of water or less and go to work with moving baits.



Mark Ray of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, has a firm grip on the lip of a 4-pound bass caught while fishing with John Dean at Toledo Bend. Ray was "dead sticking" a Zoom Super Fluke in 5 feet of water on a cool day, a technique that should put plenty of bass in the boat in November.

Bass migrate from their deep domains and head for shallower water in a transition period that starts in October. It will be time to store away the drop-shots, Carolina-rigged soft plastics and deep-diving crankbaits and basically forget about fishing deep until the deep freeze comes to town.

Concentrate on 5- to 7-foot depths and fish with ½-ounce lipless crankbaits, ½-ounce bladed jigs, ½-ounce swim jigs and jerkbaits, like the gold/orange Rogue. Top color patterns for this time of year are chrome/blue and shad.

Soft-plastic jerkbaits also are effective in November. My favorite is a dark-colored Zoom Super Fluke. Other colors that kick in big time for plastics are watermelon/red and green pumpkin/red.

Fishing in and around vegetation should be productive, but grass isn't all over. There's some up north and some down south, particularly in Housen Creek. If you find it, target it.

Keep in mind, the water cools first in the back end of the creeks, a reversal of spring when the water warms first in those areas. That's where much of the bass catching should be enjoyed until water temperatures fall elsewhere in the lake, a development that makes both the creeks and the main lake fair game.

Fish main-lake flats near deep drains — highways for transitioning bass — but mainly focus on pockets and coves.

It's a great time to fish, because generally there is a lot less fishing traffic. Hunting seasons are in full swing, and outdoorsmen's attention is diverted to the woods.

The bass will be there, so enjoy every minute on this great border lake in November. ■

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



TRACKER OFF ROAD

CLOSEOUT	Reg. Price w/Freight & Options	Discount	DISCOUNTED PRICE
• TO72058	...800SX Crew, Green, Backcountry Kit Included, \$17,219\$2,224	\$14,995
• TO71321	...700ESP, Red, \$8,224\$434	\$7,790
• TO00590	...570 ATV, Timber Camo, \$7,324\$325	\$6,990

NO HASSLE,
NO HAGGLE
PRICING

Bryan's
MARINE

Mississippi-Louisiana's Boating
Headquarters Since 1986

FAMILY
OWNED &
OPERATED

FINANCING
AVAILABLE



4899 HWY 84 WEST VIDALIA, LA

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 8 AM - 5 PM

318-336-9009

www.BryansMarine.com

RED RIVER CRAPPIE ➤

HOLIDAY SUBSCRIPTION SALE!



**74%
OFF**
See details below.

Buy 1 subscription for \$24.99 (12 issues), for yourself or a friend, and give additional gifts at half price - that's just \$12.50 per gift

Toll-free **1-855-223-3599**
or for faster service visit
LouisianaSPORTSMAN.com/holiday

*Savings % based on cover price. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of first issue.

Louisiana
SPORTSMAN

RED RIVER CRAPPIE AWAIT ANGLERS IN OXBOWS; START IN THE BACKS, PRO SAYS

By Kinny Haddox

There's a lot of water in the long and winding Red River in northwest Louisiana. But the key to finding crappie in the Red River this time of the year isn't the river itself. It's the oxbows off the river.

Finding November crappie is pretty simple. Find an oxbow lake off the river, work your way to the back and look for baitfish. If you can find a spot with some deeper water nearby, that's even better.

Then you've found where the crappie will be.

"Between summer and fall, the fish position in these oxbows, in the deeper spots, and then as the water cools, they will push up in the shallows," said crappie pro Justin Smart of Minden. "There's one thing for sure on the Red River. From this time of year on until it gets really cold, you'll find the crappie in the shallower water, and they'll be in the oxbow lakes."

Smart said the best water on the Red River is anywhere between 4 and 8 feet deep, and the fish also like to hang close to the stumps in the oxbows. If there is one thing the river oxbows have, it's plenty of stumps.

"It's like anywhere else," Smart said. "The fish follow the baitfish, and that's where the bait is. I would expect there are some pods of bait out in the river, but we don't even ever look. The river itself fluctuates so much and can get so muddy, it's hard to fish. But the oxbows are full of crappie, and they are pretty easy to catch."

Smart calls the Red River one of his home "lakes", and his knowledge helped him and partner Wesley Miller come in second in the recent Crappie Classic on the Red, where they cashed a \$40,000 check.

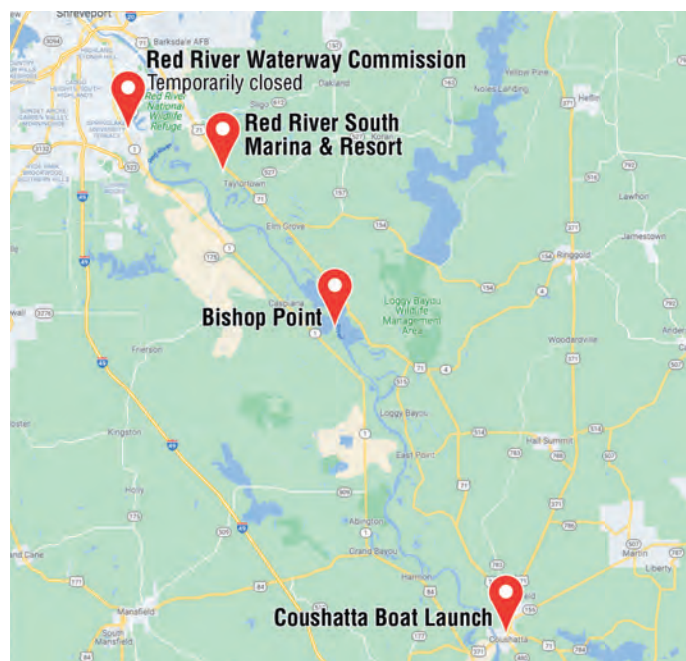
"Fishing did get a little tough then, because there were boats everywhere in the popular places, and the crappie got pounded," he said. "But that isn't a problem on a normal day this time of year. Usually, there aren't that many boats anywhere you fish. For somebody who isn't familiar with the river, I'd suggest just finding an oxbow and learning as much about it as you can. Otherwise, you are going to be running up and down the river, burning expensive gas and maybe never get on top of fish."

The oxbows are not easy to fish from one aspect: they are full of stumps and trash. The flood of 2016 changed the landscape of many oxbows. The huge amount of water and current silted in areas, making them extremely shallow and deposited trash and debris almost everywhere. There are no boat lanes in these lakes, so proceed with caution. Smart usually covers most of the water in the oxbows using his trolling motor only.

Crappie stay near the stumps most of the time, especially on sunny days. When the water is off-color or it's cloudy, fish will often roam with schools of baitfish. As the water gets colder, the baitfish — and crappie — tend to congregate.

Smart said that in today's world of fancy boats and electronics, there's something special about the river oxbows that just still makes people happy.

Justin Smart shows off a Red River slab. Most of the fish in the river oxbows aren't this big, but there are a few well over 2 pounds.



Google

"It's still just really addicting to rig up a crappie pole with a cork and watch it go under. You can do that here," he said. "You can fish bait under a cork and catch fish. It's a great time to just use a minnow for that. Always keep a fresh one on. Having live bait is important."

As you might expect, Smart also loves fishing the hand-tied jigs that his partner, Miller, makes, and he depends on ACC Crappie Stix fishing poles in 11- and 13-foot lengths to feel the bite and boat-flip big crappie. His favorite jig colors are those that mimic minnows: silver, gray and black. If it's muddy, he likes to add char- treuse to the mix.

A map of the river is essential for a newcomer. Fishing is best in Pools 4 and 5; they have great access points. You can launch and fish Pool 4 out of the ramp under the Red River bridge in Coushatta. Popular spots are Red Oak Lake and the Jungle. You can launch and fish in Pool 5 on the Red River South Marina on the Bossier Side or just south of town at Bishop Park on the Shreveport side. Whitehouse is a popular oxbow in Pool 5.

One final piece of fishing advice for the Red.

"Just find you a boat ramp and get in an oxbow, start fishing, and when you find an area with fish, work it steady," he said. "People are scared of the river, but you don't have to be. Just respect it and be careful." ■

G3 Boats 1610 & 1710 IN STOCK



COME SEE WHATS NEW!

SOUTHERN OUTDOORS & MARINE LLC 1308 CANAL BLVD., THIBODAUX 985-447-4156

YAMAHA

SEAL SPORTS TACTICAL

NEW & OPEN!

SPECIALIZING IN PCP AIRGUNS

HIGH PERFORMANCE AIR RIFLES




AIRFORCE AIRGUNS

Crosman

FXairguns

2213 N. Causeway Blvd,
Mandeville, LA 70471
985-674-3088
www.SealSportsTactical.com



■ By Colleen O. Orfanello

THE PLIGHT AND FIGHT OF GRAND ISLE



NESTLED AT THE FOOT OF LOUISIANA'S HISTORIC HIGHWAY 1 LIES A SMALL, CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY OF NEARLY 1,500 RESIDENTS.

Those lucky enough to have visited Grand Isle in recent years have a collective pang in their hearts due to the incredible damage caused by Hurricane Ida across the 7-mile-long barrier island and surrounding areas.

Each hurricane season brings the fear of the unknown to Grand Isle, but the fight outweighs the concern. Mother Nature fought hard; Grand Isle will fight harder.

“As long as there is one grain of sand on Grand Isle, we are

going to plant the American flag,” said David Camadelle, the town’s mayor. “We are not going anywhere.”

Since meteorologists began predicting, recording and archiving tropical storms in the 1870s, Grand Isle has been pummeled by more than two-dozen numbered and named storms. Each time, the island has survived, building smarter, stronger and sturdier structures.

Hurricane Ida’s arrival on Aug. 29 as a Category 4 storm is

Andy Porter stands in the doorway of the laundry room at Bridgeside Marina’s motel where he rode out Hurricane Ida, hiding under a pinball machine. **INSET:** Grand Isle residents are slowly rebuilding and recovering from Hurricane Ida’s visit on Aug. 29.



no exception. The island is abuzz with the hum of machinery, the rumble of engines, the shouts of workers and sadly, the moans of residents and business owners. Restoration has already begun for some; for others, they are still lost in the confusing maze of navigating the insurance process.

Dodie and Buggie Vegas are somewhere in between. Owners of the iconic Bridgeside Marina, they have suffered enormous losses over the past few months. The family matriarch, Elnora Gaspard, passed away 5 weeks before Ida made land-fall, making storm preparations more difficult for the family. Jodie Vegas, Gaspard's daughter, was "numb" about evacuating; after all, Bridgeside is more than the family business, it is a physical reminder of her parents' hard work and commitment to the community.

The family has owned Bridgeside since 1976, seeing its share of threatening storms and weighing the risks of remain-

ing on the island or evacuating several times. Usually, they remain, but with Ida predicted to be a catastrophic storm, they packed what they could and evacuated to Cut Off, about 35 miles northwest of Grand Isle.

The family is taking the rebuilding process one day at a time. "We, of course, want to fix everything right now, but we have had a lot of hard decisions to make as a family," Dodie Vegas said, mentioning the lack of insurance on the piers that have provided families many happy fishing experiences, fish cleaning stations that bring anglers and spectators a sense of camaraderie, and of course the docks and over-the-water-infrastructure that provide customers the ability to gas-up their boat, purchase bait, load up their coolers with ice and drinks, browse the store's shelves and fill their bellies with delicacies from the Bridgeside kitchen.



"But just like when Katrina hit us hard in 2005, in 2006, we picked up the sticks and had some amazing years 'till now. So, I guess what we as a family will do, is do it again. It just might take a little longer.

"We absolutely love our customers. They have become family to us. We believe it's a mutual feeling. We want to keep Bridgeside going, but there is so much that we need help with."

The temporary closure of Bridgeside Marina has not only affected the Gaspard and Vegas families, it has also pained several snowbirds of the human variety, who eagerly awaited their migration to Grand Isle this coming winter. Before Ida, Bridgeside's campground played host to dozens of these families; some who have made Grand Isle an annual pilgrimage for decades.

"The campground was completely wiped out," said Dodie Vegas who will miss meeting and welcoming the snowbirds' new guests, since many bring someone new each year, like a cousin, next-door-neighbor or friend.

Like the campground, the marina's motel and cabins were also destroyed. Andy Porter, 64, a marina employee, chose not to evacuate during Ida, taking refuge in a motel room. When the storm proved to be more of a formidable opponent than he could handle, Porter sought safety in the motel's laundry room, hiding under a pinball machine.

All the while, the Vegas family prayed for his safety. Because they were feeling the storm's wrath in Cut Off, they could not fathom what Porter was experiencing — or even whether he had survived.

When the storm had passed, Porter sent Dodie Vegas a photograph of the devastation taken from the porch of the late Elnora Gaspard's residence that flanked the laundry room.

The sight was bittersweet. The photograph meant that Andy survived, but it also meant much of the campus did not. The photograph was the last contact the Vegas family had with Porter until a customer took photographs from his helicopter, one showing Porter standing on the motel's porch. The porch was standing; Porter was standing; the motel was not.

As survivors, Porter and the Vegas family are working diligently to bring Riverside back to life, but for many, progress is slow. Insurance payouts will partially restore the marina and its accommodations, but it will take time.

The Vegas family is not going down without a fight. "We are here for whatever hurricane decides to come along and take stuff away, cause that's all it is — is stuff. We have our health, our families, and friends. What more could you ask for?" Dodie Vegas said.



Andy Porter points out effects of Hurricane Ida from the porch outside the remnants of Bridgeside Marina's hotel. **INSET:** Damage to the marina's "harbor" plus pier and docking facilities is extensive.



After 45 years, Bridgeside is an icon of Grand Isle. It was the brainchild of the Robichaux family, who gave Dudley Gaspard, a barber and the town's school bus driver, and Elnora Gaspard, the motel's caretaker, the opportunity to take over ownership of the marina. The Gaspards accepted and developed the marina into what is was and will be again.

Grand Isle and the devastated communities along Ida's path need help. Consider it a small price to pay for living so close to paradise. Select a non-profit that provides direct assistance to those in need. Donate your time, talents and funds. Perhaps sponsor a displaced family this holiday season. But most of all, patronize the businesses that

were so devastated by Hurricane Ida. What you give will be returned ten-fold.

The sense of community and hospitality bestowed upon the Bayou, River, and Coastal parishes of south Louisiana, is no doubt what contributed to Grand Isle's placement in the New York Times' annual list of places to go in 2020. Camardelle is grateful for this recognition. He hopes that the accolade will continue to bring attention to Grand Isles' plight and fight. ■



Colleen O. Orfanello can be reached at colleen.orfanello@seatow.com



1201 Saint Charles St
Houma, LA 70360

(985) 872-3314



HUNTING/FISHING SCRAPBOOK

GOT PHOTOS? WE WANT 'EM

Send us your photos, and you may appear on the pages of the most widely read outdoor magazine in the Bayou State. Send clean, sharp shots of you with your fish, deer, ducks, rabbits, squirrels, etc. to images@LouisianaSportsman.com

Digital images must be at least 500KB and in jpeg format. Print photos cannot be returned.



Ty Thompson

Ty Thompson, 10, of Bluff Creek took his first deer of the season on Oct. 16. It was his first deer taken with the new crossbow he bought himself. The doe was at 15 steps when he took the shot, and she ran about 50 yards.



Reese Landry

Reese Landry was 6 when she caught this bull bream with her dad on July 4 in the 21-inch canal off of Belle River. She was using live worms for bait.



Grayce Haines

Grayce Haines of Morgan City with a nice redfish she shot on a bowfishing trip out of Leeville.



Rhett Broussard

Rhett Broussard, 7, of Glenmora killed his first deer on Oct. 12 in Area 2 during a youth hunt. He was shooting a Palmetto State Armory/Wise arms .300 blackout.



Austin Cruse

Austin Cruse killed this 10-point with a bow in Area 3 on Oct. 4, 2021. The big buck came out to a grunt call on his hunting lease in Merryville, La.



Sadi & River Louviere

Nick Louviere's wife, Sadi Louviere, and their daughter, River, pose with a gator Nick took during a Sherburne WMA lottery hunt.



Jace Martin

Jace Martin with a Des Allemands toad he caught that weighed in at 5 pounds, 13 ounces. It was caught on a black/blue V&M Adrenaline Pacemaker flipping jig with a Strike King Rage Craw in blue bug color.



Cyrus Snoderly

At his grandparent's camp on Bayou DeCade, Cyrus Snoderly of Charlotte, N.C., not only caught his first redfish, but also got his limit of 5.



Mike Clifton Jr.

Mike Clifton Jr. was fishing with Capt. Mike Guidry of Rippin Lip Guide Service LLC when he got his first bull red and first big smile of the day.



Jeremy Landry

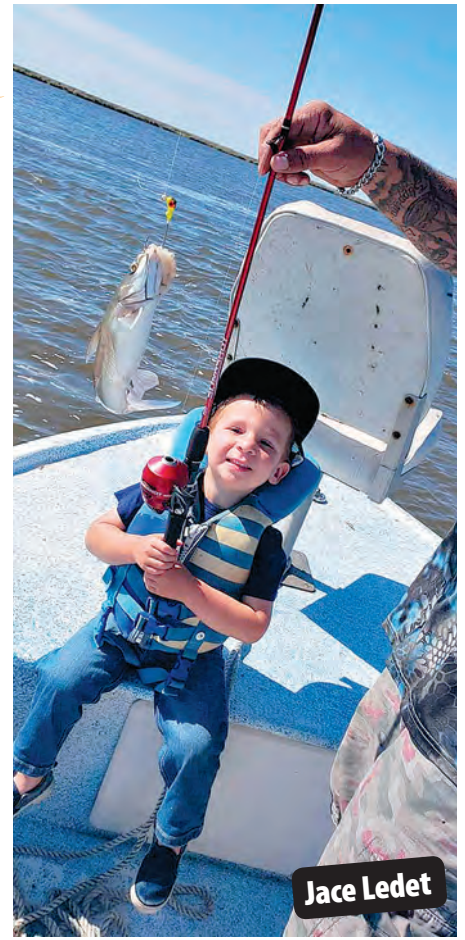
Jeremy Landry caught this 26-inch redfish on live minnows in Cocodrie on Aug. 18, 2018.



HUNTING/FISHING SCRAPBOOK



Melanie Niehaus and her team with the big gator she shot and tagged at Richard K. Yancey WMA.



Jace Ledet poses with the first fish he caught on his own from Bayou Wilkinson in Myrtle Grove.



Travis and Fran Banta of Madison, Miss., caught these fish in Port Fourchon over Thanksgiving 2020 weekend.



Donayle Ashworth poses with a wahoo from Venice.



Wyatt Comeaux

Wyatt Comeaux, 6, killed his first deer at 100 yards on Oct. 9, 2021 during the youth season in Bienville Parish.



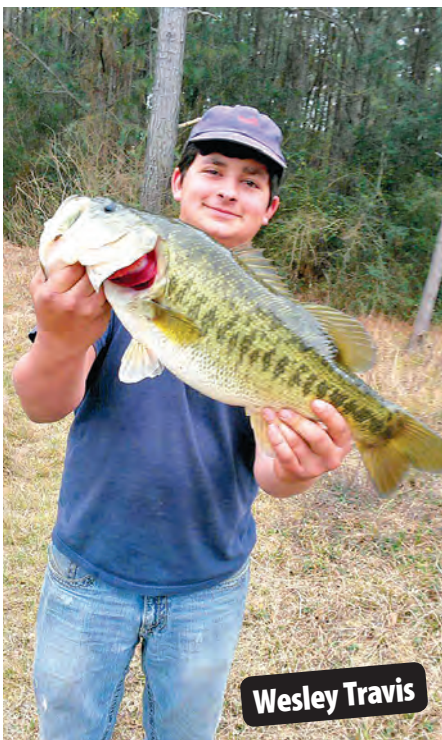
Frankie Roberts

Frankie Roberts with a nice Delacroix redfish.



Trace Ledet

Trace Ledet with one of the nice speckled trout he caught on the edge of Barataria Bay.



Wesley Travis

Wesley Travis of DeRidder holds up a sweet 7-pounder from a private pond.



Harrison Flood

Harrison Flood with his first redfish. It was caught at Slidell's Geoghegan Canal.



Willie Morgan

Willie Morgan caught this nice red from Lake Boudreaux.

ALARIO BROTHERS..... INSERT	FIRST SOUTH FARM CREDIT 119	PEOPLE WHO THINK, LLC 35
ASCENSION EQUIPMENT & RENT ALL 117	FORT BEAUREGARD ESTATES 40	PUGLIA'S SPORTING GOODS 74, 75
BAKER AGRI-FOREST PROPERTIES..... 21	GATOR TRAX 118	QUIRK'S WELDING LLC 33
BLACKWELL OUTDOOR, INC..... 51	GO DEVIL INSERT	R. SCHEXNAYDER & SONS 33
BLANCHARD'S REFRIGERATION 45	GULF ENGINE & EQUIPMENT 65	REALTREE OUTDOOR PRODUCTS 120
BLUE WAVE BOATS 13	H&H MARINE..... 69	SCULLY'S..... 56, 108
BOATS UNLIMITED 58	HENDERSON..... 84	SEA TRAC OFFSHORE SERVICES INSERT
BREAUX AND DAIGLE MARINE..... 4	HOUSEBOAT OUTLET 55	SEAL SPORTS..... 101
BRYAN'S MARINE 98	HUGHES WELDING AND MFG..... 39	SERVICE CHEVROLET..... 3
CAJUN OUTBOARDS 17	JERRY'S MARINE 47	SOUTHERN OUTDOORS & MARINE..... 22, 73, 87, 101
CAPTAIN PAUL TITUS..... 87, 94	KENT-GAMEBORE 57	SOUTHLAND DODGE 28
CONOCO PHILLIPS 59	KITTERLIN CREEK OUTFITTERS 34	STIHL SOUTHWEST 31, 43
COURTESY GMC - LAFAYETTE..... 23	LEMANN'S FARM SUPPLY, INC. INSERT	TERREBONNE MARINE 107
COVER'S UNLIMITED 79	LOUISIANA LOTTERY 7	TIM'S MARINE 19, 55
CUSTOM CORRUGATED AND SUPPLY 12	METRO BOATING 85	TOHATSU AMERICAN CORPORATION 80, 81
CYPRESS COVE BOATING..... 71	MIKE GERALD'S TRAILER..... 17	UNITED COUNTRY-SOUTHERN STATES REALTY 15
DIANE ALLEN & ASSOCIATE..... 5	MONSTER TIMBER & MILLWORKS 40	WHITETAIL PROPERTIES 27
DOUG RUSHING REALTY, INC. 41	MUD BUDDY 53	XPRESS BY ALUMA-WELD, INC. 2
DUVIC'S BOATS 97, 116	MURPHY LAW FIRM INSERT	
EXCEL BOATS INSERT	PARISH TRACTOR..... 9	

Subscribe Today and SAVE66, 99

DUVIC'S!

CELEBRATING
131 YEARS
IN BUSINESS!

YOUR #1 RE-POWER CENTER



THE POWER OF CHOICE

Select Suzuki Outboards Are Now Available In Your Choice of Black or White



BLAZER BAY 2022's to Arrive!!!



2200
w/ 200hp Suzuki, Tandem axle aluminum trailer



2420GTS
w/300hp Suzuki, Tandem axle trailer

Waiting on 2022 Key West Models to Arrive!

Kw KEY WEST



2021 Key West 188BR
w/150hp Suzuki



230 Bay Reef
with 300 Suzuki and hard top



210 Bay Reef
w/ 200 Suzuki

SOUTHFORK 2022 Models in Stock

LET US BUILD THE RIGHT BOAT FOR YOU!



1652



1756



1860

DUVIC'S

CELEBRATING 131 YEARS IN BUSINESS!

Powered By



SERVING ALL YOUR BOATING NEEDS SINCE 1890



3650 WESTBANK EXPWY • HARVEY • MON-FRI 8AM-5PM • 504-341-1654

Built to work hard. To make your job easier.



Construction Lineup

Durable Kubota engines

Upgraded tech & features



Stop by for a closer look at our complete construction lineup.

- The world's #1 selling compact excavator for over 15 years*
- Productivity increasing SSV75 Skid Steer
- Powerful, comfortable new SVL97-2 Track Loader
- Expanded excavator lineup with the new U48-5

Together we do more.®

Ascension Equipment & Rent All

Save More Today & Mow Tomorrow!

13173 Airline Hwy, Gonzales
(225) 647-5881
ascensionequipment.com

KubotaUSA.com

*According to 2019 data from Off-Highway Research including all Kubota Group brand sales.

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2021. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer. For the complete disclaimer, go to KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers and see the posted disclaimer.

FROM
DUCK BOATS

TO
BASS BOATS



CHECK OUT WHAT



CAN DO FOR YOU

FOR A FULL LINE OF GATOR TRAX BOATS, VISIT
WWW.GATORTRAXBOATS.COM

Louisiana Sportsman | November 2021



It's About
SHARING



Let First South share its profits with you.

First South Farm Credit is an agricultural cooperative that has shared more than \$414 million with its borrowers for 26 consecutive years. In 2021 alone, First South borrowers will receive their portion of \$21 million in refunds.

When you're ready to be more than just a customer, let's talk!



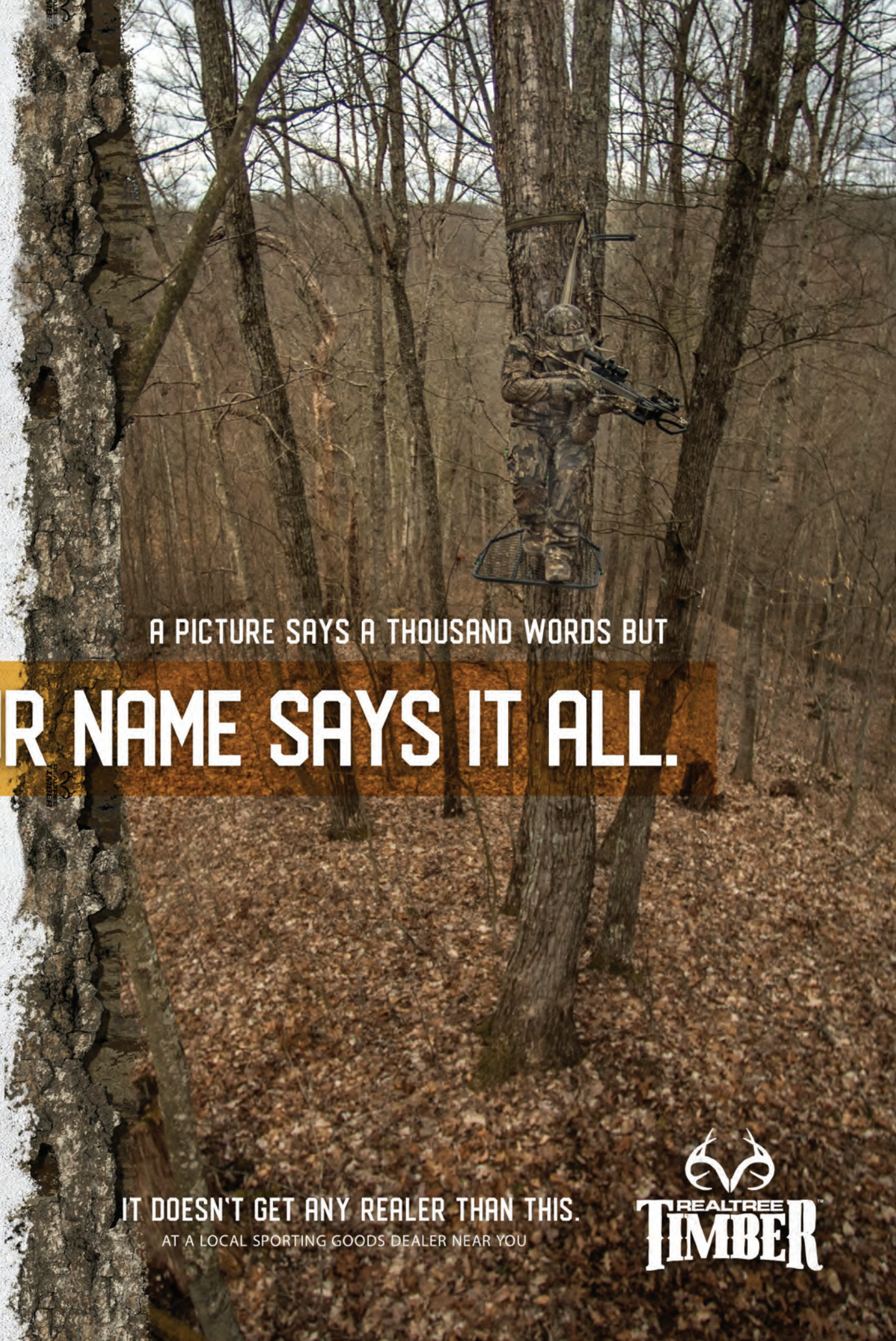
Let's talk



800-955-1722 | FIRSTSOUTHLAND.COM



©2020 RealTree Outdoor Enterprises, Ltd. 2009-201



A PICTURE SAYS A THOUSAND WORDS BUT

OUR NAME SAYS IT ALL.

IT DOESN'T GET ANY REALER THAN THIS.

AT A LOCAL SPORTING GOODS DEALER NEAR YOU





MURPHY LAW FIRM

CALL ME, LOUISIANA


Official Injury Lawyers for Sportsmen

Exposure to Asbestos
can cause the following:

- Asbestiosis
- Lung Cancer
- Mesothelioma

If you or a loved one has
been affected, you may be
entitled to
financial compensation.
Get your free MesoGuide at
www.MurphyLawFirm.com

Common Mesothelioma
Symptoms Include:



- Dry Cough or wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Respiratory Complications
- Chest Pain
- Chills and Fever
- Fluid around the Lungs
- Fatigue and Muscle Weakness



Peyton Murphy
Attorney

FREE CONSULTATIONS

NO FEE UNLESS WE WIN

1-800-734-6545

Main Office Baton Rouge
Serving all of Louisiana
We Will Come To You

Alario Bros



Hard Hat Lights



Visit our website www.AlarioBros.com

Trailer Supplies



Dexter Knives Large Selection in Stock



Gloves



Push Poles



Shrimp Devieners



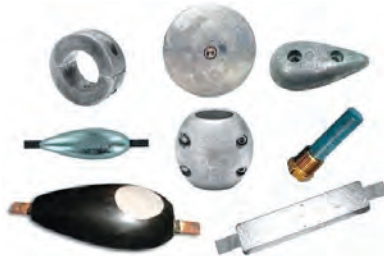
Anchors & Cajun Anchors



Fishing & Alligator Hooks



Anodes



Fishing Leads



Knife Sharpeners



Fishing Line



Crab Knife



Briggs & Stratton Engines



Oyster Openers, Oyster Knives, Oyster Hatchets & Leads



Crab Tongs



Crab Claw Crackers



Pots, Burners, Regulators, Hoses & Paddles



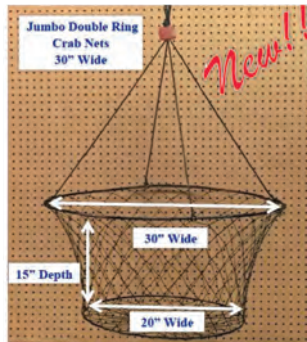
Cast Nets



Crab & Bait Holding Cages



NEW 30" Crab Nets! Made In-house



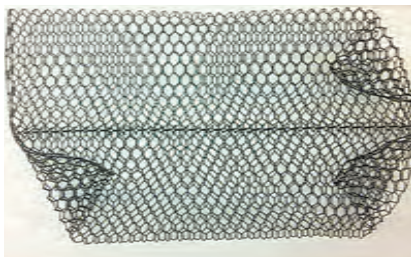
Crab Traps



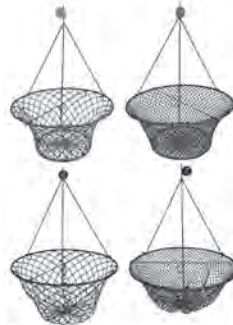
Trawls



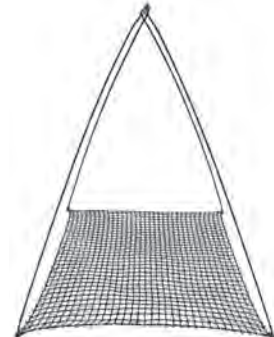
Crawfish Pillow Traps



Large & Small Crab Nets Made In-house



Crawfish Nets Made In-house



Alario Bros
Marine Hardware & Fisherman Supplies

504.341.1843

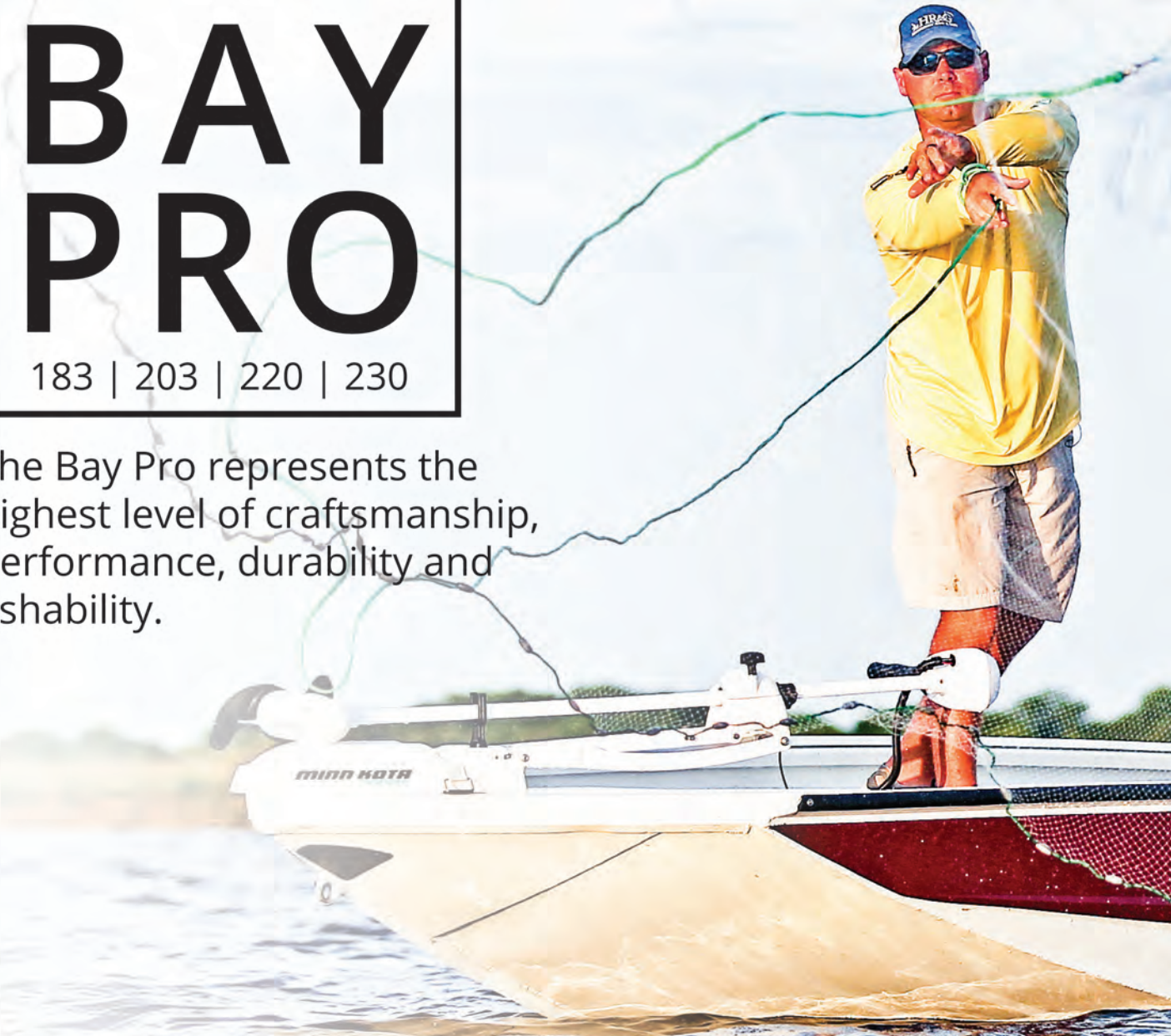
894 Avenue A. Westwego, LA 70094 www.alariobros.com

November 2021 | Louisiana Sportsman

BAY PRO

183 | 203 | 220 | 230

The Bay Pro represents the highest level of craftsmanship, performance, durability and fishability.



Experience the smooth operation, handling and legendary trustworthiness of Yamaha and an Excel Bay Pro.

EXCEL BOATS



Bay Pro 220 w/ Standard .160ga Aluminum

www.excelboats.com



LOWRANCE

www.lowrance.com

NEW ELITE FISHING SYSTEM™



ACTIVETARGET™ LIVE SONAR + ACTIVE IMAGING™ COMPATIBLE

AVAIL



FULL NETWORKING CAPABILITY

PRELOADED WITH C-MAP® CONTOUR+ CHARTS

HIGH RESOLUTION MULTI-TOUCH SCREEN



Marine Electronics

Call Sea-Trac at 504-737-0591 to speak with the experts
**SALES, SERVICE, CUSTOM INSTALLATIONS,
AND MORE**

“Why Settle for Less Than The Best”

Sea-Trac Offshore Services
114 Hickory Avenue,
New Orleans, LA 70123
www.seatracoffshore.com
info@seatracoffshore.com

Room to move.

Go-Devil Open Floor Plan Boat.

Open up on a Go-Devil open floor plan boat. Skim across water with all the deck space you can use for decoys, guns, ammo, cooler, dog, and a buddy - and room to run the boat in the comfort and stability known from standard-model Go-Devils. Even better yet - top it off with a Go-Devil super-trustworthy 40 HP FNR electric trim motor. Same super reliable Surface Drive, same dependability in the face of swamps, stumps, sand bars, rocks, and mud. Comes with high transom, painted frame, solid secure easy-to-grip driver handhold, factory-installed tachometer, 20-50 amp alternator for lights and electrical, pushbutton electric trim, E-shift fingertip control, and direct throttle control—say goodbye to lag in tight spots. The fun part: a faithful 40-horsepower forward-neutral-and-reverse Vanguard motor, electronic fuel injection calibrated to fire up in any weather or elevation, Warner electric clutch and brake shoes for neutral and reverse, idle air control for smooth-as-silk trolling down to 800 rpm, and stainless 3-blade prop and hex driveshaft. Go-Devil open floor plan boat and 40 HP FNR motor...a perfect combination made in Louisiana.



The Toughest Boats & Motors on the Water

18649 Womack Road Baton Rouge, LA 70817 P 225-752-0167 (local) 888-490-3254 (toll free) godevil.com

November 2021 | Louisiana Sportsman

Power and performance
to do the hard work.

Comfort to make
it look easy.



Grand L60 Series 37-62HP Wide Operator Station



Stop by to demo the high-performance Grand L60 Series today.

- Premium comfort
- Performance-matched implements
- Advanced HST plus transmission
- Powerful loader lift capacity

Together we do more.

LFS
LEMANN'S FARM SUPPLY
EST. 1836

**317 Mississippi St
Donaldsonville, LA
(225) 473-7927
www.lemanns.com
Email: sales@lemanns.com**

KubotaUSA.com

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2020. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer. For the complete disclaimer, go to KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers and see the posted disclaimer.