

Louisiana

# SPORTSMAN



APRIL 2022



**BASS LOVE**  
**SOFT PLASTICS**

**TOLEDO BEND**  
**STATE PARKS**

**CRAPPIE WARDENS**

**SPOON-FED REDS**

**BOWHUNTING**  
**TURKEYS**

**SPRING SHED**  
**HUNTING**



**SPECK**  
**EDUCATION**

**APRIL**  
**TROUT MENU**

\$3.99 APRIL 2022

LouisianaSPORTSMAN.com

# Get Your Shine On!

**\$1** LOUISIANA LOTTERY

## Ruby 5's

Match any of YOUR NUMBERS to the WINNING NUMBER, win prize shown for that number. Reveal a "5" symbol, win DOUBLE the prize shown!

Win Up To **\$5,000!**

YOUR NUMBERS

Prize Prize  
Prize Prize

WINNING NUMBER

**\$2** LOUISIANA LOTTERY

## Sapphire 7's

Match any of YOUR NUMBERS to either of the WINNING NUMBERS, win prize shown for that number. Reveal a "7" symbol, win DOUBLE the prize shown!

Win Up To **\$20,000!**

Win up to **10 Times!**

YOUR NUMBERS

Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize

WINNING NUMBERS

**\$5** LOUISIANA LOTTERY

## Emerald 8's

Match any of YOUR NUMBERS to any of the WINNING NUMBERS, win prize shown for that number. Reveal a "8" symbol, win DOUBLE the prize shown! Reveal a "8" symbol, win TRIPLE the prize shown!

Win up to **\$100,000!**

Win up to **15 Times!**

YOUR NUMBERS

Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize

WINNING NUMBERS

**\$10** LOUISIANA LOTTERY

## Diamond 10's

Match any of YOUR NUMBERS to any of the WINNING NUMBERS, win prize shown for that number. Reveal a "10" symbol, win DOUBLE the prize shown! Reveal a "10" symbol, win TRIPLE the prize shown!

Win up to **\$200,000!**

Win up to **20 Times!**

YOUR NUMBERS

Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize  
Prize

WINNING NUMBERS



**LOUISIANA LOTTERY CORPORATION**

[louisianalottery.com](http://louisianalottery.com)



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

Scan to Download Your FREE Lottery app.



CHEVROLET



# THE 2022 CHEVROLET SILVERADO

**AVAILABLE NOW AT**



**SERVICE**

**CHEVROLET | CADILLAC**

**337-234-9411**  
**ServiceGM.com**

**FIND NEW ROADS™**

# BREAUX & DAIGLE MARINE & TRAILER, LLC

985-252-6411 • 3424 HWY 70 S, PIERRE PART, LA 70339

[www.facebook.com/breauxanddaigle](http://www.facebook.com/breauxanddaigle)

## INTRODUCING... DIAMOND CITY TRAILERS



### 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



**Breaux & Daigle**  
Marine & Trailer  
in  
Pierre Part, LA

ALL  
POWERED  
BY



# YAMAHA



# We need our community more than ever right now.



MELISSA PERRIER

Fourth Generation Norco Resident,  
Campaign and Marketing Manager for United Way of St. Charles

*Pictured in front of her hurricane damaged home in Norco*

“We truly are all in this together.

We’ve always known we have something special here in St. Charles Parish, and this is our chance to show the world how we can come together. Living through this experience makes you realize that you need the community you live in. So, when someone steps in and offers to help, you take it and say ‘thank you.’

In the immediate aftermath of Ida, Shell was in Norco, handing out meals, handing out water, handing out ice. In the first couple of weeks after Ida, Shell showed up with huge truckloads of supplies – plastic totes, bleach, battery operated radios; items that the community needs.

Shell recently announced a **\$750,000** contribution to the United Way of St. Charles. And what I know firsthand, from seeing the people who are hurting right now, is that this money will be used in the upcoming months and years to help people rebuild. We truly are all in this together.”

> **\$5M**

## HURRICANE IDA RECOVERY



- Meals + Supplies
- Fuel Donations
- Employee Assistance
- Base Camps for Electrical Workers

**\$750,000**  
Capital Area  
United Way

**\$750,000**  
United Way  
of St. Charles

**\$750,000**  
United Way for  
South Louisiana

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, Shell will contribute more than \$5 million in combined community and employee relief and recovery initiatives.



63

GUARDIANS OF THE CRAPPIE WATERS



# Louisiana CONTENTS

Volume 42 | Number 4 | April 2022

## FEATURES:

### 43 PLASTIC MAKES PERFECT

There's no better way to catch April bass than on soft plastic lures.

> By Kinny Haddox

COVER STORY

### 63 GUARDIANS OF THE CRAPPIE WATERS

Team Stewart has found the keys to catching monster crappie.

> By Kinny Haddox

### 72 LOUISIANA'S STATE PARKS AROUND THE BEND - IT'S A BIG LAKE WITH TWO STATE PARKS

This month's featured stops: North Toledo Bend and South Toledo Bend

> By Kinny Haddox

### 81 SPECK EDUCATION

Research Center provides a wealth of information about speckled trout.

> By Jon Miller

### 93 SPOON FED SPOT TAILS

Don't overlook this simple tried and true lure for big redfish.

> By John N. Felsher



93

SPOON FED SPOT TAILS

### 103 TURKEY SLAYER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Becky Nicosia shares her tips for calling in and harvesting turkeys with a bow.

> By Mike Giles

### 109 FALLEN CROWNS

With deer season over, the spring hunt for trophy sheds is on.

> By Dave Moreland

### 116 LEGENDS OF THE OUTDOORS WARREN WOMACK

His detailed documentation helps others improve deer tactics.

> By Kinny Haddox

## FISHING HOTSPOTS:

52 Bussey, Caney and D'Arbonne bass

58 Toledo Bend bass

91 Biloxi Marsh trout

100 Calcasieu reds, specks

# BLUE WAVE BOATS

*Since 1992*



## *Introducing... 2600 Makaira*

LOA: 26' 10" | BEAM: 9' 1" | FUEL: 90 GALS | MAX HP: 400 | WEIGHT: 5,050 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](http://www.bluewaveboats.com)

103

TURKEY  
SLAYER  
EXTRAORDINAIRE



Louisiana  
**SPORTSMAN**

www.LouisianaSPORTSMAN.com

**PUBLISHER**  
Jonathan Menard

**EDITOR**  
Kinny Haddox

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Alicia LaFont

**ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
Desiree P. Lewis

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Kevin Orgeron

**GRAPHIC DESIGNERS**  
Jeff Cashio, Alissa Zeringue

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Mark Hilzim (National Sales), Asa Faulkner,  
Burton Angelle, Peter Church,  
Bradley Hulin and Stephen Loper

**CONTROLLER**  
Juanita Guidry

**LEGAL ADVISOR**  
Dean Church

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Bryan Beatty, Brian Cope, Darren Digby, John Flores, Kinny Haddox, Chris Holmes, Nick Judice, Keith Lusher Jr., Chris Macaluso, Joe Macaluso, John E. Manion IV, Joel Masson, Todd Masson, Jon Miller, David Moreland, Sammy Romano, Don Shoopman, Rusty Tardo and Jason Thornton

OUTDOOR UPDATE:

**12** OUT-OF-CONTROL GAS PRICES, YOUTH LICENSE CHANGES, LOUISIANA'S NEW NO. 2 WHITE CRAPPIE, TROPHY BASS & MUCH MORE!

PLUS

**78** GROW YOUR OWN BAIT

ON THE COVER:



Dawn Lipscomb with a huge bass caught on a Googan Baits 10-inch Mondo Worm. Photo courtesy of Sammy Romano.



**72**  
AROUND THE BEND

COLUMNS:

- 10** DOWN ON THE DOCK  
By Joe Macaluso
- 50** LURE REVIEW  
By Don Shoopman
- 70** HOW SPORTSMEN COOK  
By Jason Thornton
- 86** MARSH MAN MASSON  
By Todd Masson
- 88** PADDLES 'N PUDDLES  
By Chris Holmes
- 102** SPECIES SPOTLIGHT  
By Brian Cope
- 128** TODAY'S A GOOD DAY  
By Kinny Haddox

DEPARTMENTS:

- 42** Sportsman of the Month
- 53** Sportsman Showcase
- 99** Fishing Regulations
- 118** Sportsman Astro Tables
- 119** Sportsman Tide Guide
- 120** Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook
- 130** Sportsman Classifieds
- 131** Advertiser Index

Louisiana Sportsman is published monthly by  
**LOUISIANA PUBLISHING INC.**

**FOUNDER**  
Allen J. Lottinger

**PRESIDENT**  
Lisa Lottinger Curcia

LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN (USPS5665390) is 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 37030, Boone, IA 50037. 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.

**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

14236 Highway 90  
P.O. Box 1199, Boute, LA 70039-1199  
800.538.4355

**Volume 42 | No 4**



# A legacy of conservation and collaboration

Through our subsidiary, The Louisiana Land and Exploration Company LLC (LL&E), ConocoPhillips is the largest private wetlands owner in Louisiana. We are proud to be on the front lines driving habitat-enhancement projects with key partners to promote coastal resiliency and sustainability.

To learn more, visit [conocophillips.com/louisianalegacy](https://conocophillips.com/louisianalegacy)



© ConocoPhillips Company, 2022. All rights reserved.



# LSU'S WOODWARD FINDS HIS WAY HOME

TO EAT, FISH AND SLEEP IN "GOOD WATERS"

**S**cott Woodward, the fisherman, is so into all things Louisiana that he's been known to head out to cash in on a limit of speckled trout in the morning, then hitch a ride to snare a couple of red snapper that same afternoon.

Scott Woodward, the hunter, is like most of his ilk who can't wait for a run at migrating waterfowl during the continuing run of 60-day duck seasons.

So, you would be right to think of Scott Woodward as an outdoorsman first — well, second to being a family man — and all else would come in a distant third.

'Cept Scott Woodward has one of the most high-profile jobs in his home state.

See, he's the LSU AD, as in Athletics Director. But you probably already know that.

Woodward came home three years ago — to LSU and Baton Rouge and Louisiana, that is — after spending four years in Texas and, previously, at University of Washington. Those are the places where he cut his professional teeth in running a big-time college ath-

letic department. No point in listing successes in those places, because you can search the web for that.

After two years surveying the LSU landscape, Woodward made his move pretty much the same as he does when he goes fishing.

## PRETTY BIG FISH

Within the span of eight months, he landed three "pretty big fish" to the LSU livewell, adding three-time NCAA Women's Basketball champion coach and south Louisiana native Kim Mulkey, then highly respected coaches Jay Johnson and Brian Kelly to take over LSU's historic baseball and football programs.

"I guess there are parallels there," Woodward said amidst a laugh. "Never thought of it like that.

"I like to fish in good waters, and I was fishing in good waters. I approach hiring a coach like I do fishing."

Amidst those decisions searching for leaders in LSU's three most visible sports programs, Woodward, like tens of thousands of his fellow Louisianians felt the

sting of Hurricane Ida.

Even when he was far off in Washington and Texas, Woodward had a place in Pointe Fourchon, the upscale fishing community between Leeville and Grand Isle.

"We're OK there. There was some water damage (to his place) from the storm, but I made out better than some others," he said. "We're in the midst of repairs and, hopefully, the camp will be ready for the trout season in April and May.

"But, Pointe Fourchon is far from being ready as a community, and it's going to be a slow road to get back to where it was before the storm."

In the intervening days between football coach Ed Orgeron's agreeing to step down and hiring Kelly, a handful of head coaches across the country received raises and contract extensions when



*Joe Macaluso is a native of New Orleans, but has lived most of his life in Baton Rouge with his wife Cheryl. He is a well-known outdoor editor and writer.*

other ADs realized Woodward was on the prowl.

If Woodward could've doubled as an agent for those coaches, he would've had more than enough to repair his Pointe Fourchon digs, and more than enough to hire fishing guides. He said he fishes often with charter skipper Aaron Pierce, likes fishing Terrebonne Basin waters and his favorite lure is the Matrix Green Hornet.

No matter. Woodward said he's overjoyed to be back home.

## BACK ON THE BAYOU

"When opportunity knocks, well, it was like old Bear Bryant leaving Texas A&M and going back to Alabama because 'Mama is calling.' It was a hell of an opportunity to get back to the place that transformed my life," he said.

Woodward's first step into the world of higher education came when Mark Emmert was named to head LSU. Woodward was one of Emmert's vice presidents.

"I learned an enormous amount from Mark Emmert, that you always aspire to what's possible when combined for my love for LSU — it's my university — and he was a guy who saw so much potential and greatness here," Woodward said. "It's dealing with people and problems versus the way we're doing it, and what could be, a vision for what's possible."

While he's positive about the direction of LSU's sports programs, he said he's worried about Ida's effects on his fishing landscape and said he first feared that lots of fish were killed.

"But I have a friend who's a crabber and he updates me on what's down there," Woodward said. "From what he says, it's bordering on the spectacular. He's seeing a ton of trout, and the lack of (fishing) pressure while everyone is trying to recover

will have a benefit of a good (fishing) season."

That's when he stopped, thought a second, and said, "You know technology helps me do the two things I love," and intimating cell phones and laptops allow him to keep in touch 24-7-365.

"My love of the outdoors and love of LSU are intertwined," he said. "Fishing and hunting help keep life balanced. There's a peace you find on a boat and in a duck blind."

There's another parallel: "It's like what we have in Louisiana's outdoors," he said, "...that LSU is so strong, the people are so strong in their support, and both are so special that it's hard to screw it up." ■



**““”** My love of the outdoors and love of LSU are intertwined.

— Scott Woodward

**#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**

## OUTDOOR UPDATE

Regular

429 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>10</sub>

Plus

444 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>10</sub>

Premium Diesel

499 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>10</sub>

# OUT-OF-CONTROL GAS PRICES CUT CHARTER CAPTAINS, GUIDES DEEP

**S**ometimes the effect of political policies are debatable, but controversial economic deci-

sions on national and international scales have left inflation at record levels. There is no debate on that. And while it hits everybody, every day, sportsmen are really feeling the pinch when it comes to fishing.

The worst thing is skyrocketing gasoline prices. And it's predicted to get worse. For the record, inflation was at 7.5% just in

January compared with last year, continuing inflation's fastest pace in 40 years according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics. The national average price for regular unleaded gas in early March of 2021 was \$2.06. The same month in 2022 it is hovering over \$4.00 and heading up. Nobody knows how far it will go.

All this piles up on top of many south Louisiana parishes still reeling from the destruction borne by

Hurricane Ida late last summer, especially those who make their living off fishing.

"It's just ridiculous. I don't get it. How did this happen? I mean, we've talked about it and we are just going to have to do what we can do," said Kenny Heikamp of Bentrod Fishing Charters, whose home port is Bridge Side Marina in Grand Isle. "Grand Isle was hit so hard most folks aren't even up and running yet, but we are getting close. Now with this, we just don't know what's going to happen. We'll just have to roll with it."

## TRAVEL COSTS SOAR

Heikamp said the problem isn't just boat fuel for the fishing trips or the lack of rebuilt facilities on the island, but also the fact that people come from all over the United States to Grand Isle and other points in south Louisiana to fish. Their cost of fuel will double or possibly triple for them to even get here to fish.

"We have some diehards who are going to come no matter what and we are thankful for them, but it's a question of how many people have deep enough pockets to do it this year," he said. "If it comes to spending money at the grocery store or going fishing, you know what most people have to do."

Heikamp and many other charter captains burn 90 to 115 gallons or more on offshore trips, which is his main business. If gas is up from last year's \$2 a gallon to predicted \$5 or \$6 a gallon levels, even higher at marinas on the water, he's facing at least \$500-600 for fuel per trip. And everything else from sinkers and equipment to bait is going up as well.



Big fishing rigs like this one often have two 25-gallon tanks, plus another 30 for the tow vehicles, which at current prices ring up \$300+ in fuel charges for a single fill up.

## INSHORE GUIDE HOPES CUSTOMERS UNDERSTAND

The gas hit won't be quite as hard on inshore trips, such as those headed up by Capt. Ricky Watts of Gotta Go Fishing Charters, also in Grand Isle. But it still stings.

"We are just starting to book a few trips and hope to really get going in April, but it is going to hit hard," he said. "We fish mostly inshore and we don't burn as much fuel as offshore. Normally it was around \$60 a trip last year, but that's going to at least double. The offshore guys are really going to be hurting, especially on top of everything else."

Watts does feel like most customers will understand what's going on and what's happening with gas prices and they'll be fair to their fishing hosts from one side of the state to the other as far as gas prices impact go.

Freshwater fishermen aren't exempt, either. They can fish using a lot less gasoline on most lakes, but the fees for freshwater trips are also generally lower.

## FRESHWATER GUIDES HIT

Freshwater guides on some smaller lakes don't have to burn a lot of gas normally, but with the fish on the move in the spring, it takes some moving around to find fish. On big waters like Toledo Bend, it isn't unusual to burn up 30-40 gallons of boat gas a day. Louisiana's touring bass and crappie pros travel hundreds of miles to fish in events, filling up trucks and big rigs for practice and tournament days.

Wesley Miller of Big Sasquatch Outdoors is a freshwater guide and also a tournament fisherman. A trip from his home in northwest Louisiana to fish a tournament in Mississippi this week will be costly.

"Literally, by the time I get home from this tournament, I will have spent \$700-800 just on fuel," he said. "I'm going to have to finish in the top 10 just to make money

to cover that. Back home, I'm having to go up \$50 a day on guide trips to cover fuel... just for now. I'm going to say something about any guided trip you take, freshwater or saltwater. Guides depend on tips, especially in times like this, to make ends meet. If you feel like your guide gave you a good day, tips help them cover these increased costs. I don't think some people even know they need to do that."

Unless something is done about this in the next few months, there is going to be a recession and a lot of people really hurting, Miller said. ■

Capt. Kenny Heikamp and customers with a varied catch from one of his offshore trips.



# YOUTH LICENSE CHANGES

LOUISIANA HUNTERS  
OF ALL AGES NOW  
REQUIRED TO HAVE  
VALID LICENSE

**T** By Kinny Haddox  
he 2021 Louisiana Legislature approved major changes in licensing fees for the state's sportsmen, mainly designed at bringing in more revenue to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. But part of House Bill 691 involving young hunters escaped most residents.

Starting June 1, 2022 hunters under the age of 18 must have a valid, original "youth license" to hunt deer and turkeys in the state. The license is \$5 and comes with deer and turkey tags. The new requirements also affect eligibility for youth lottery hunts on as many as 12 wildlife management areas during the next season. The license is not needed for youth hunting squirrels, rabbits or woodcock. Those youth who already have a lifetime license are not affected.

You can see a video of LDWF Undersecretary for Management and Finance Bryan McClinton explaining some of the changes on the LDWF Facebook page in "Conservation Minutes" posted Feb. 21. It is important that young hunters and their parents understand and follow the new regulations.

"Yes, the youth license was developed as part of house bill 691," McClinton told Louisiana Sportsman. "It is only required for youths who are deer and turkey hunting and require deer and turkey tags."

Unlike adult hunters, young hunters won't need an ID to buy the license. For years in the state, the state's hunters 15 years old and younger didn't have to have any type of license.

"There is no proof of residency requirement," he said. "This license does not require an ID."



Young deer hunters like this one will need a youth license for deer hunting in Louisiana moving forward.

Photo courtesy Gray Worthey

## FEDERAL FUNDING

The purpose of the change was to take advantage of federal dollars based on the number of licensed hunters in Louisiana.

"The number we used in the fiscal note was an estimated 10,000 new hunters," McClinton said. "That would generate approximately \$350,000 more in federal wildlife restoration funding. Louisiana averages about \$35 per licensed hunter."

The new licensing requirements do not affect the state's young fishermen. In fact, the new law actually pushes back the age that a fisherman needs a license. Starting June 1, the license age requirement is going from 16 and under to 18. Therefore a youth will not require a fishing license until 18, McClinton said.

McClinton also said in the video that

youth sitting in a stand with friends or family without a gun who are just spectators with no intent to hunt do not need a license.

There is another change in the law that will help some fishermen. The Legislature established a nonresident native son/daughter fishing license to go along with the long-established hunting license covering the same anglers. This new license is good for 10 days and will cost \$17 each for basic and saltwater licenses. There's also a new \$5 license that covers fishing and crabbing from the bank.

Forty other states have youth hunting license programs, McClinton said. ■



# 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



## Rick's CABARET INSHORE FISHING TOURNAMENT JUNE 11TH, 2022

- CASH PRIZES FOR 1ST, 2ND & 3RD PLACE
- COMPLIMENTARY BEER AND SPIRITS
- GOODIE BAGS, T-SHIRTS, KAYAKS WELCOME!

20% OF ALL PROCEEDS DONATED TO WISH TO FISH FOUNDATION

REGISTER YOUR TEAM AT EITHER LOCATION: RICK'S CABARET OR PUGLIA'S SPORTING GOODS

### FISHING SHOES & BOOTS BY

GRUNDENS XTRATUF DRYSHOD

MEN'S • WOMEN'S

- GRUNDENS SEA KNIT BOAT SHOE #60013**  
RED ORANGE, ANCHOR, METAL.....**SALE \$79<sup>99</sup>**
- 12" DECK BOOT #60014**  
MONUMENT GRAY.....**SALE \$89<sup>99</sup>**
- FREE BOARD CHUKKA #60016**  
ANCHOR.....**SALE \$99<sup>99</sup>**
- DEVIATION 6" ANKLE BOOT #60015**  
CAMO, CAPERS, OVERCAST.....**SALE \$94<sup>99</sup>**
- DECK BOSS 6" ANKLE BOOT #60008**  
DEEP DEPTHS, GRAY.....**SALE \$79<sup>99</sup>**
- WOMENS DECK BOSS 6" ANKLE BOOT #60011**  
SAGE GREEN, PARISIAN BLUE.....**SALE \$79<sup>99</sup>**
- XTRATUF WOMENS XTRATUF 6" ANKLE BOOT #XWAB-201**  
NAVY, BLACK CAMO, KELP.....**SALE \$89<sup>99</sup>**
- DRYSHOD DRY SHOD SLIP NOT 6" ANKLE BOOT #SLN-MA GREY, NAVY**.....**SALE \$89<sup>99</sup>**

### AMERICAN ANGLER PRO SERIES (110 VOLT) ELECTRIC FILLET KNIVES



INCLUDES 1 8" BLADE, CARRY BAG  
MODEL #AEK-OB-DS-003-1

**SALE \$109<sup>99</sup>**



INCLUDES CARRY BAG & 5 DIFFERENT STYLE BLADES  
MODEL #AEK-OB-DS-008-1

**SALE \$179<sup>99</sup>**

### TURKEY SEASON IS HERE DIAPHRAGM CALLS BY



SLATE CALLS BY PITTMAN, PRIMOS  
BOX CALLS BY PITTMAN, PRIMOS, LYNCH  
LOCATOR CALLS BY PRIMOS, LYNCH, FLEXTONE (OWL & CROW)

### SUMMER FISHING CLOTHES NOW IN STOCK!

MEN'S • WOMEN'S • YOUTH'S

AFTCO • HUK • GRUNDENS • FISH MONKEY

SHIRTS • SHORTS • HATS • VISORS  
GLOVES • SUN MASK • BUFFS



**PRIMOS ROCKER VEST #65718**.....**SALE \$139<sup>99</sup>**

**HUNTER SPECIALTIES STRUT VEST #HS-STR-100172**.....**SALE \$59<sup>99</sup>**

**FLEXTONE THUNDER CHICKEN #FLXD4315 UPRIGHT HEN**.....**SALE \$46<sup>99</sup>**

**FLEXTONE THUNDER CHICKEN #FLXD4314 FEEDING HEN**.....**SALE \$46<sup>99</sup>**

**FLEXTONE THUNDER CREEPER #FLXD316 FULL STRUT**.....**SALE \$56<sup>99</sup>**

**PRIMOS PHOTOFORM JAKE TURKEY #69069**.....**SALE \$99<sup>99</sup>**

**GRUNDENS SEA DECK BOSS SANDAL BRINDLE & MONUMENT GRAY**.....**SALE \$49<sup>99</sup>**

**SEA DECK HAND SANDAL BRINDLE & MONUMENT GRAY**.....**SALE \$34<sup>99</sup>**

**OLD TIMER 8" STAINLESS STEEL BLADE 110 VOLT ELECTRIC FILLET KNIFE #1140755 REG \$49.99**.....**SALE \$34<sup>99</sup>**

Shane Hodge with his 3.65 slab  
white crappie from Bussey Brake.

# LOUISIANA'S NEW NO. 2 WHITE CRAPPIE

## HODGE HAS A DREAM DAY WITH BUSSEY BRAKE SLAB CRAPPIE

**F** By Kinny Haddox  
or Shane Hodge, Sunday afternoon, Feb. 27, was just one of those days crappie fishermen dream about. The sun was shining. The temperature warmed up and he got to go fishing. And while he was fishing, he caught some crappie. Some big crappie.

The slabs were biting at Bussey Brake. And the Farmerville angler caught the second largest white crappie ever landed in Louisiana. When certified, his big 3.65 slab will move into the



## SCOPING OUT A RURAL RETREAT

We'll make it happen. Louisiana Land Bank's loans are designed to make your dream of owning recreational land a reality.

**If you want a little piece of the country for hunting, fishing or farming, contact us today.**

 *Louisiana*  
LAND BANK



SCAN FOR MORE INFO



1-877-648-5263 | [LouisianaLandBank.com/recreation](https://LouisianaLandBank.com/recreation)

second spot in the state record book. Ironically, that spot had been held by another Bussey crappie caught just one year ago, a 3.60 pounder caught by James Anthony Griffin of Bastrop.

The afternoon started with several big crappie biting the 1/16-ounce black and white hair jig that Hodge ties himself. That included a 2.86 pounder that was Hodge's personal best. But not for long. A few minutes later, he landed the 3.65 pound crappie.

"This was one of those days that you dream of," Hodge said. "Catching my personal best twice in one day, that was awesome. And to be able to weigh it and find out it was almost a state record. That's something. But there was a whole lot more to this story. That just makes it all the more fun."

## MORE TO THE STORY

The rest of the story includes how Hodge even ended up fishing at Bussey on this day to start with. Missouri professional fisherman Matthew Rogers had been in the area for a tournament and stayed over to fish Bussey with Justin Bailey of Farmerville. When they started catching fish, they texted fellow pro Steve Adams of Farmerville, he called Hodge and off they went to join the fun.

It didn't take them long to get in the action. Adams and Hodge were taking turns on crappie they were spotting on their live sonar and Adams was up front. Adams actually hooked the big fish and brought it right up to the top and it came off. Hodge didn't see it because he was reaching for the net, but Adams said it was a whopper.

After adjusting to what happened for a few seconds, they began scanning the area with the electronics and saw the big fish swimming back slowly toward the bushes.

"Steve threw a bait at him again, but it didn't bite, so Steve told me to cast at it and I flipped my jig out there and he ate it," Hodge said. "We knew it was a big one, but had no idea how big until it came up and rolled on its side. Steve scooped it up with the net and we stopped and weighed it on his scale. It weighed 3.63 on his portable scale. We put it in the livewell and we knew we needed to come get it weighed officially. But we had a hard time leaving because the big fish just kept biting."

## BIG FISH FEEDING

Hodge said it was pretty apparent what the big fish were doing. "They are up that thick, thick brush getting ready to spawn and it's hard to get a boat up in there where they are," Hodge said. "It's also hard to even get a bait up in there. If you make too much noise trying, you spook the fish off. But what was happening Sunday is that the big fish decided to feed. They would swim out in the open water and chase shad, then swim back up into the cover. We actually saw several of them swim out, grab bait and then swim back in the thick stuff. That's how we caught fish. We were able to get a bait in front of some of them before they went back in the cover."

They took the fish all the way back home to Farmerville to get it weighed, where Bailey opened up K&M Coffee Corks and Camo to use the certified scales. The Louisiana State record white crappie weighed 3.80 pounds and was caught by Tim Ricca on Lake Verret in May, 2010.

Bussey has become a catch-and-release lake for most bass and crappie anglers. It does have strict limits since re-opening. For anglers keeping crappie, that is 25 fish with a 10-inch minimum length. ■

**ITX**  
SPINNING REELS

**INSPIRED BY  
VERSATILITY**

ITX Carbon Spinning Reels are light-weight, compact, & constructed using C-40X long strand carbon fiber. This C-40X process is 25% stronger than standard graphite reels & is featured in the body, side plates, & rotor of the ITX, making it perfect for your freshwater & inshore needs.

Available in 1,000, 2,500, 3,000 & 4,000 sizing.

**okuma**  
INSPIRED FISHING  
www.okumafishingusa.com

# ANOTHER BUSSEY BRAKE SLAB CRAPPIE

ADAMS GETS SECOND CHANCE, PUTS  
3.57 CRAPPIE IN THE LIVEWELL

**C** By Kinny Haddox  
rappie fisherman Steve Adams got the monkey off his back. Or, to be more specific, he got the record crappie in his livewell.

Adams had been fishing with friend Shane Hodge just a day before when Adams hooked a huge crappie that got off. He and Hodge saw the big fish swimming off on their live sonar. Hodge flipped a jig back to the fish and it bit. Hodge landed it and the slab weighed 3.65 pounds, good enough for No. 2 spot in the state record book.

## BACK FOR MORE

Adams knew there were more like that and he went back on Monday, Feb. 28, to give it another try. He was rewarded by catching a 3.57 pound white crappie, which will move into fourth place in the state record book.

"I fished around where we had caught fish the day before and caught a couple of good ones, but nothing to bring to the scales," Adams said. "It was kind of slow to tell the truth. I fished up and down the same stretch where we had seen so many big fish the day before, but there weren't as many. But then, about 100 yards from where Shane caught his, I saw this big fish. I positioned the boat where I could drop the bait right down to him and stopped it just inches from him."

Then he felt the thump. The fish bit. Adams said the fish definitely put on a fight and when he saw it come up and roll on the surface, he took his time with the fish and managed to get it into his dip net.

"I thought it might have been a three pounder, so I took my time," Adams said. "But it definitely made me nervous, especially after what happened yesterday. I stood up and worked it to the net and after I got it in the boat, all the wind was out of me. I had to sit down and look at it for a minute."

Adams caught the fish on a jig with a shiner. Actually, the first time he offered the bait to the fish, it hit the lure hard and knocked the shiner off, but did not get hooked. Adams put another shiner on and made a second offering.

"He nailed it," Adams said. "Man, that was great."



Steve Adams shows off his 3.57-pound  
Bussey Brake crappie.

## MOVING TOWARD THE SPAWN

Adams said while the fish have been moving out into the open areas to feed with the water temps in the low 50's, the water is warming up fast. He said the fish are already starting to ease up onto the shallower flats and get in the bushes to spawn. If it stays warm a few more days, he said the spawn will be on. He also said when he saw groups of fish on his sonar, there were mostly small to medium fish there. The big ones were all spotted swimming alone. That's another sign the spawn is about to begin.

Only in its second year after being reopened, Bussey Brake will be the owner of three of the top four white crappie in the state record books maintained by the Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association when the catches are certified. ■

# 2022 NAUTIC STARS NOW IN STOCK



**211 HYBRID**



**215XTS**



2021 Best Boating Dealership  
for Terrebonne Parish

[WWW.DAGATES.COM](http://WWW.DAGATES.COM)

[www.LouisianaSportsman.com](http://www.LouisianaSportsman.com)

FACTORY TRAINED TECHNICIANS TO SERVE YOU!

1128 BARROW ST, HOUMA

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM

**985.872.4181 • 985.868.7534**

POWERED BY



**YAMAHA**



April 2022 | Louisiana Sportsman



# BEAR SEASON PROPOSED

STATE BILL WOULD ALLOW LDWF TO MANAGE GROWING POPULATIONS

**T** By Kinny Haddox  
 Three Louisiana legislators pre-filed a bill for the upcoming legislative session to allow a state bear hunting season by providing the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission authority to properly manage rapidly growing black bear populations in some areas of the state.

Senate Bill No. 86 was filed Monday, Feb. 28, sponsored by Sens. Stewart Cathey and Jay Luneau and Rep. Neil Riser.

## THE BILL

The legislation states, "Beginning 2023 and every year thereafter, the commission shall establish a bear season. The commission shall define the dates, times and area for hunting bear and may use any of the following methods to manage the bear population: (a) Limit the number and sex of bears that can be taken; (b) Prohibit taking bears outfitted with a radio collar; (c) Prohibit the use of dogs or bait; (d) Establish a lottery system for the issuance of tags and for the opportunity to participate in the season. (e) Any other limitation the commission finds useful or necessary to manage the resource.

"I have just heard from so many farmers, hunters, landowners and other citizens who have had countless issues with personal property damage and crop damage caused by the growing number of bears," Sen. Cathey said. "The bears have become a real nuisance and have turned into a safety issue on both sides. It's getting so a lot of fathers and grandfathers don't feel safe taking their children and grandchildren in the woods because of encounters with bears. We already face enough challenges passing the legacy of hunting and enjoying the outdoors to our youth. Bears have no natural predators in Louisiana and they have little fear of human contact. They are growing in size and numbers. It's not a healthy situation.

"This is also for the safety of the overall bear population," he continued. "We have to create a legal method for managing their numbers just like we do other wildlife."

## BLACK BEAR SIGHTINGS

The issue has been gaining attention for several years now. When a Louisiana Black Bear report Facebook page was established during this past hunting season, it quickly grew to more

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** A mother bear and two cubs finish off destroying an empty deer feeder in the pine woods of north Louisiana.

than 10,000 members around the state. The page states it's purpose as "a place to report Black Bear sightings in Louisiana. We as hunters want LAWLF to use this information to hopefully open a black bear season Louisiana."

The proposed legislation is bi-partisan, Sen. Cathey pointed out. He is a Republican while Sen. Luneau is a Democrat. Rep. Riser is a Republican. Sen. Cathey represents District 33 (Clai-borne, Lincoln, Morehouse, Ouachita, Union, West Carroll); Sen. Luneau represents District 29 (Bienville, Grant, Jackson, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Rapides, Winn) and Rep. Riser represents District 20 (Caldwell, Catahoula, Franklin, LaSalle, Tensas). Those include some of the areas where nuisance bears are numerous.

"Look, this does not tell the LDWF how we should hunt bears or how many," Sen. Cathey said. "It allows them to take a reasonable approach with responsible laws for proper management, just like with everything else in our outdoors. We can't continue to ignore this issue." ■



# MIKE GERALD'S #15 TRAILER DEPOT

OVER 25 ACRES OF TRAILERS IN STOCK!



Heavy Duty Truck Accessories

Entry - 5x10-13 Utility Trailer

CALL FOR PRICE



WE RENT TRAILERS!

1516-13

CALL FOR PRICE





"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



The **FIRMINATOR**  
By Ranew's Outdoor Equipment®

# MAKE YOUR DIRTWORK



G3 ATV MODEL



G3 MODEL

MADE IN USA

Expect more from your food plot equipment.

The Firminator G-3 models feature 16-inch or 18-inch ground turning discs, a seed hopper featuring the precision Accurate Seeding System, and a true agricultural-grade, cast-iron cultipacker. The G-3 is available in a compact ATV unit and 4-foot, 5-foot, 6-foot or 8-foot tractor units for premium results.

678.544.4400

THEFIRMINATOR.COM

WYANCY@RANEWS.COM

# IT'S BACK!

## LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN SHOW & FESTIVAL SET FOR FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND

**L**ouisiana's oldest and largest fishing and hunting show is back! And the timing couldn't be better!

Mark your calendars for June 17-19, 2022, when the 42nd annual Louisiana Sportsman Show & Festival will be held at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales. It's Father's Day weekend and what better way to celebrate than to bring Dad to check out all the latest in outdoor gear and adventures.

"It's so good to be back after missing the past two years because of the pandemic and supply chain issues," said Lisa Cuccia,

President of Louisiana Publishing. "We look forward to seeing you there.

"It's time to get back out there with the family and celebrate our great Louisiana outdoors!"

More details and features of the show will be announced nearer to the three-day event's actual dates. This year's show is sponsored by Shell. Don't be confused by other shows. This is the one-and-only Louisiana Sportsman Show.

The show will be open from noon-7 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday; and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission will remain

the same as in the past. Tickets will be \$12 for adults, \$6 for kids ages 5-12 and kids under five are admitted free.

There are numerous hotels in the area and two RV lots onsite at the Expo Center for those wanting to make a weekend of it. For more information about the show and vendor information, call 1-866-238-5639 or email [showservices@louisianasportsmanshow.com](mailto:showservices@louisianasportsmanshow.com). ■



# POWERFUL & EYE-CATCHING



**COURTESY**   
 **BUICK**   **LAFAYETTE**

**LAFAYETTECOURTESY.COM**  
4750 JOHNSTON ST. LAFAYETTE, LA 70503

**GMC** WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE



Photo courtesy Friends of Bayou Lafourche

# THE NEXT CHAPTER OF BAYOU LAFOURCHE

RECONNECTING BAYOU IS GOAL OF MASSIVE RESTORATION EFFORT

**B**y Chris Macaluso  
 Bayou Lafourche has been largely disconnected from the Mississippi River for almost 120 years, threatening freshwater drinking supplies to several South Louisiana communities and adversely affecting fisheries and coastal wetlands.

For more than a decade, the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District has worked with the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the Corps of Engineers, community leaders and residents to invest \$180 million in a host of restoration projects to

reconnect the bayou to its historic headwaters.

Cleaning and dredging from Donaldsonville south to Belle Rose is complete. Bridges have been widened to allow for 400 cubic feet per second of water to be pumped into the bayou at Donaldsonville without flooding low-lying areas while flood control structures have been removed and renovated.

## SEEKING BIDS

The Freshwater District is now seeking bids to build a new \$77 million pump station at Donaldsonville designed to reliably move up to 1000 cubic feet per second. In May 2021, the District also removed a 50-year-old weir in Thibodaux built to ensure high enough water levels to provide drinking water, but now obsolete thanks to increased water flows.

Additional dredging will begin from Napoleonville to Thibodaux upon completion of the new pump station.

Primarily, the work aims to provide reliable drinking water to more than 300,000 residents in Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. Stagnant water, invasive vegetation and siltation has led to bacteria blooms in the wakes of hurricanes and saltwater intrusion has contaminated the bayou over the last century.

An added benefit is increased access for boaters, anglers and kayakers as well as a continuous source of freshwater that can help keep saltwater intrusion at bay while benefitting swamps and wetlands in parts of Lafourche and Terrebonne Parish.

Bayou Lafourche is a popular boating area for residents, and continuing improvements are going to make it a special place for visitors from all over.



all designed to expand opportunity to fish, paddle and spend time on the bayou," Perque said. "As much as we can, we want to bring the bayou back to what it was before it was cut off from the Mississippi River in the early 1900s, which we know will help slow coastal land loss and improve the health of the lands in lower Lafourche and parts of Terrebonne."

Swamps and freshwater marshes adjacent to the bayou near Larose and Cut Off sustained severe damage during Hurricane Ida last August. Restoring freshwater flows into those swamps and marshes can help restore some of the damage from the storm and increase resiliency.

"This is another infrastructure win for South Louisiana," said Congressman Garret Graves in

a statement released in January. Graves was the chairman of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority when the cleaning and dredging projects began on the bayou in the wakes of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008 and has worked to expedite permitting and construction while in Congress. "This project helps improve the connection of the Mississippi River and the Lafourche basin — helping restore the health of the bayou and adjacent communities. People have been talking about improving freshwater flows for decades. We are excited this next component is moving forward." ■

Few South Louisiana anglers know Bayou Lafourche supports a large population of bass, catfish and other popular freshwater species. Improving water quality will improve that fishery.

Ryan Perque is the Executive Director of the Friends of Bayou Lafourche, a non-profit that works with the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District to enhance recreational opportunities along the bayou and organize and promote events that highlight the restoration efforts.

## NEW LAUNCHES

"Over the last few years we've built floating docks and kayak launches along the bayou in Thibodaux and in Napoleonville and we are planning a new boat launch and recreational park in Thibodaux,

# OVER 1,000,000 ACRES SOLD!



- Mississippi
- Louisiana
- Alabama
- Arkansas



SOUTHERN STATES REALTY

View All Land For Sale  
[SouthernStatesRealty.com](http://SouthernStatesRealty.com)  
 601.250.0017



Photo courtesy Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

# MIMICKING NATURE

## RESTORATIVE POWER OF MISSISSIPPI RIVER COULD REJUVENATE SWAMPS

**O** By Chris Macaluso  
ptimizing the sediment, fresh-water and nutrients in the Mississippi River is one of the primary tasks for scientists, engineers and policy makers charged with restoring Louisiana's coastal wetlands.

The goal of the often-debated Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton sediment diversions south of New Orleans is to capture as much sediment suspended in the river's currents as possible, primarily in the late winter and early spring, and use that sediment to rebuild coastal marshes lost over the last century. The diversions are designed to mimic the natural land-building ability of the river prior to levees and jetties blocking water and sediment

from discharging into adjacent wetlands.

Recently, researchers at Tulane University and the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority have been examining how the restorative power of the Mississippi can be used upstream of New Orleans. The hope is to rejuvenate and sustain swamps that have been cut off from the river by the same levees that isolated coastal marshes.

In the process of restoring those swamps, researchers have also found a way to reduce the use of the Bonnet Carré Spillway in lessening river flooding that threatens New Orleans.

"The sediment, water and nutrients that come out of the river when we open the Bonnet Carré Spillway aren't being utilized as much as possible when the spillway dumps straight into Lake Pontchartrain," said Dr. Ehab Meselhe, Tulane professor of River Coastal Science and Engineering. "But, if we route some of that water coming through Bonnet Carré into swamps on the east and west side of the river, we can use the sediment and nutrients to keep those swamps alive."

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Meselhe is leading the team of researchers analyzing the potential benefits of increasing flows into the Maurepas Swamp near the town of Union east of the Mississippi River about 40 miles north of the Bonnet Carré. They are also looking at routing the river into the upper Barataria Basin west of the river near the town of Ama in St. Charles Parish.

The swamps in both basins are suffering. A combination of sinking land due to subsidence and a lack of sediment input plus saltwater intrusion from hurricanes and sea level rise along with stagnant water and invasive vegetation is gradually killing the cypress and tupelo gum trees. As the swamps die, their wildlife and fisheries production decreases along with the natural protection provided to nearby communities.

Eventually, the swamps will convert to floating marshes, called flotant, that can easily become open water over a few decades or when powerful hurricanes make landfall. Hurricane Ida tore apart

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** The power of the Mississippi River can be key in restoring swamps in south Louisiana.

approximately 106 square miles of marsh in all, most of it flat in the northern Barataria Basin.

"A big part of the Coastal Master Plan is reconnecting the Mississippi River to its historic floodplain," said CPRA Executive Director Bren Haase. "Connecting the river back to the Maurepas Swamp can protect and rebuild the swamp for fish and wildlife and for the surrounding communities."

The Bonnet Carré Spillway has been opened seven times in the last 14 years after being used just eight times from 1937-1997. Each time the spillway opens, between 90,000 and 250,000 cubic feet per second rushes through the gates into a narrow swamp that separates the river from Lake Pontchartrain.

Mountains of sediment pile up in the swamp during each opening but have limited direct benefit in building land as they spread out into the lake.

Relatively small freshwater flows from the Mississippi River, like those from the historic natural crevasse at Bonnet Carré prior to the spillway's construction, help encourage submerged vegetation and marsh and swamp growth along the rim of Lake Pontchartrain and spur populations of forage fish like pogies, mullet and white shrimp.

However, too much freshwater can cause algae blooms and disrupt the basin's fresh-saltwater balance. During the 2019 opening, Bonnet Carré flowed for 122 days, affecting the Pontchartrain Basin and areas as far away as coastal Mississippi.

## REDUCING SALINITY IMPACT

Routing the floodwaters through coastal swamps east and west of the river would slow the water, reducing the impacts to salinity. It would also allow trees to absorb the nutrients, leading to fewer algae blooms while sediments help elevate soils, offsetting subsidence and allowing the swamps to return to a natural drying cycle in the late summer and fall, according to Haase.

The team has modeled flows in the two proposed diversions at rates of 25,000cfs to 100,000cfs to determine how much water can be directed into the swamps and the resulting reduction in the volume and the duration of a Bonnet Carré opening. According to Messelhe's team, operating the Union and Ama diversions could reduce Bonnet Carré's volume by as much as 60 percent as well as reduce the length of the openings.

Modeling will continue to be refined to determine how

much water can be safely routed into the Maurepas Swamp and the northern Barataria swamps and the impacts on existing infrastructure like roads and levees.

Refining the engineering and moving into the design and permitting is a process that could take a decade for the two proposed diversions. CPRA is still considering the best areas to locate the diversions as well, with the potential for Ama Diversion to move farther west near Hahnville.

While those projects continue to evolve, CPRA is planning to begin construction on a smaller, 2000cfs diversion into the Maurepas Swamp near Garyville in the next year that will help rejuvenate the swamp near the Blind River. Haase said CPRA will also have details of a smaller diversion in the Upper Barataria Basin in the upcoming 2023 Coastal Master Plan, designed to revive the swamps and improve water quality in and around Lac Des Allemands.

Messelhe said additional modeling showed the operation of the Morganza Spillway, a sparingly-used flood control structure in Point Coupee Parish that routes floodwaters into the Atchafalaya Basin, could further reduce Bonnet Carré's flows and diminish the impact of the Ama Diversion on the lower Barataria Basin.

"That would take a rethinking of how we manage the river," he said. "I think it's time." ■

## TROPHY BASS ➤



**CALL US TODAY!  
337-824-2176**

**PIT BLINDS! PIT BLINDS! PIT BLINDS!**

**HUGHES  
MANUFACTURING**

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

f YouTube | www.hughesmfg.net



# BIG 10.57 BASS NO SURPRISE FOR VETERAN TOLEDO BEND GUIDE

**M** By Dan Kibler  
atthew Loestcher wasn't surprised when a great big bass loaded up on his lipless crankbait on Saturday, Feb. 19.

"It didn't surprise me one bit to catch a big one this time of year," said Loestcher, who guides for Living a Dream Guide Service out of Many. "I prefer winter fishing. The fish are more predictable, and they are at their heaviest in late winter."

But did he expect a 10.57-pound monster? Well, not until the big bass made its second pass close to his boat shortly after he hooked her at about 1 p.m. That's when he knew the fish had a chance to qualify for the Toledo Bend Lake Association's Lunker Bass Program.

"I knew it was a good one right off the bat, but I didn't know how big," Loestcher said. "She came by the boat on one side and I got a glimpse of her, but I didn't know she was a 10. When she came by close to the trolling motor a second time, I knew she was likely 10 pounds."

## FIRST BITE IS A BIG ONE

Loestcher had a guide trip that day, and he and his party were headed to their second spot, in the mid-lake area on the Louisiana side of the lake.

"We had fished all morning and had a good morning – quite a few fish over 4 pounds," he said. "I usually don't fish when I'm guiding, but we were easing back into an area where I'd found some fish a couple of days earlier. I was just casting on the way in, to see where we'd start finding them. She was the first bite we got."

"The fish was heading in to spawn, moving in that direction. She wasn't on the nest, but she was headed that way. I assume she'll spawn sometime over the next month."

Loestcher was fishing a gold, lipless crankbait on a 724F Douglas rod – designed, he said, for lipless baits – with a Daiwa Tatula reel with a 7-to-1 retrieve ratio spooled with 16-pound fluorocarbon.



Matthew Loestcher who guides for Living a Dream Guide Service out of Many landed a 10.57-pound bass at Toledo Bend on Feb. 19.

"She hit pretty hard, pretty aggressive, which is typical of pre-spawn females who are feeding aggressively," he said. "I took my time with her, didn't get in a hurry. She ran me all over, and I chased her with the boat."

When Loestcher finally got her next to the boat, he reached down and lipped her.

"I don't have a net in my boat, but as big as her mouth was, there was plenty of room for my fingers," he said. "And I don't mind getting a hook in my hand for a 10-pounder."

Loestcher took the fish to Keith's Toledo Bend Tackle and had it weighed and certified for the lunker program. The fish was the 11th to qualify since the 2021-2022 "season" began last May and the first since Dec. 11. ■

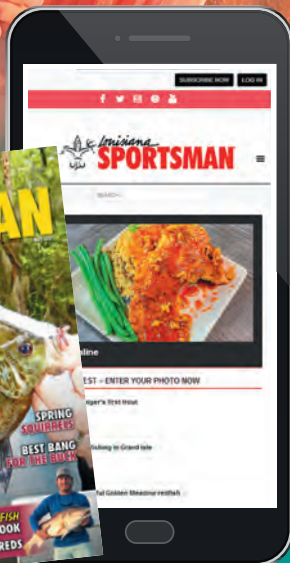


# BECOME A MEMBER

Get FULL web access on all your smart devices *and* our monthly print magazine

**\$2.99** PER MONTH

VISIT: [WWW.LOUISIANASPORTSMAN.COM/SUBSCRIBE](http://WWW.LOUISIANASPORTSMAN.COM/SUBSCRIBE)





# SEAGO'S FAMILY FISHING TRIP HIGHLIGHTED BY 10.13 LUNKER LARGEMOUTH

By Dan Kibler

Right about now, Buncy Seago of Orange, Tex., would like to convince the folks at Zoom Bait Co. to make more lizards and worms in their hard-to-find "gourd green" color.

Seago likes it, because on Sunday morning, Feb. 20, a 10.13-pound Toledo Bend largemouth liked it – a lot.

"The fish had moved up to 5 feet a couple of days before the cold front hit, and that pushed them back out. Most of them were staging off points in 6 to 8 feet of water. We saw some young buck bass going up, but most of the bass we found were on one side of a creek channel or the other," said Seago, who was fishing with his sons, Jerrod and Shayne, in the Six Mile area of the sprawling Louisiana-Texas reservoir.

## CATCH STARTS OUT AS A MYSTERY

The three Seagos had caught close to a dozen fish, including a 4-pound, 6-ounce fish and another 4-pounder, mostly on watermelon red Senkos. But Seago had tied on a Texas-rigged, gourd green Zoom lizard on a Daiwa Tatula rod and reel spooled with braided line. He made a cast and thought he'd gotten hung up in some moss.

"At first, I thought it was in a bunch of moss, because there was some moss around there. When I picked it up, I could feel the weight, then I could tell it wasn't moss and I set the hook," Seago said. "We were fishing in a 24-foot, center-console boat, and she went all the way around the boat and pulled line three times.

"At first, she never showed at the surface, and my son said it was pulling like a catfish. Then, she came up close to the surface and side-swirled, and I knew it wasn't a catfish. It seemed like it took 10 minutes to land her, but it was probably only a couple of minutes. But she kept pulling string out.

Buncy Seago was fishing with his sons, Jerrod and Shayne, in the Six Mile area of Toledo Bend when he caught a 10.13-pound bass on Feb. 20.



"I finally got her up, and Shayne was saying, 'Don't push her, don't push her, take it easy.' When I got her to the boat, she wouldn't open her mouth. He had both hands on her, but he tried three times before he got his fingers in her mouth and brought her into the boat. I think the boys were more excited than I was."

## GETTING THE BIG FISH WEIGHED

Seago had one tackle shop in mind to weigh the fish, but it was closed, so he put his boat on the trailer, made sure the livewell was full of water and pumping, and he headed to Fairmont General Store, where the fish weighed 10.13 pounds on certified scales and taped out at 24½ inches long and 19 inches in girth. It was the 12th bass of the 2021-22 season to qualify for the Toledo Bend Lake Association's Lunker Bass Program.

"This was my best fish ever on Toledo Bend," Seago said. "I've caught an 11-pound fish from Falcon." ■

Jordan Hollingsworth caught a 10.27-pound Toledo Bend bass on Feb. 24.

# A CHANGE OF BAIT CHANGES LUCK FOR 10.27 POUNDER

**J**y Dan Kibler  
Jordan Hollingsworth was spoon-feeding some small, Toledo Bend fish on Thursday, Feb. 24, when he felt like offering something a little bigger might change his luck.

Did it ever, like 10.27 pounds bigger.

"I found a school of fish in 30 feet of water, a big school of fish, and I was catching 'em on a War Eagle jiggging spoon," Hollingsworth said. "But everything was 2-pound bass, plus some white bass, yellow bass, even a couple of crappie.

"I picked up a V&M football jig, threw it out there and got a bite. It felt like a small one. On my next cast, same thing, but when I set the hook, I knew it wasn't a small one. It felt like I was pulling up a two-by-four."

Hollingsworth had worked Wednesday night, gotten off work, hooked up his boat and headed to his camp on the Texas side of the southern end of the lake. He spent about 90 minutes just riding around, graphing fish, until he found a school that looked promising.

"That first place I stopped, I couldn't get that school to bite," he said. "I went another 100 yards and found another school, and I started catching those 2-pounders, some white bass, yellow bass and even a couple of crappie. They were on a creek channel in about 30 feet of water, moving up and down a ledge.

"I got that jig, turned around and cast back to a place where I'd seen a couple on the graph. It was probably about 26 feet deep."



## HE KNEW IT WAS A GOOD ONE

The hookset told him he had a big fish on the blue shadow jig and green pumpkin Zoom chunk trailer.

"If you have one 8 pounds or better, you pretty much know it right after you set the hook," he said. "She came to the top, made a big swirl, and I knew she was a 10-pounder. I reached around for the net, but I'd left it at my camp, so I finally lipped her, grabbed her and flipped her in the boat. I put her on the scale, and she was over 10. I called Fins & Feathers and found out they weren't weighing fish (for the Toledo Bend Lunker Program), so I drove to Buckeye Landing and weighed it."

The 10.27-pound lunker was 26½ inches long and 19½ inches in girth.

Hollingsworth caught her on a Shimano X-Pride rod, Daiwa Tatula reel and 20-pound Seaguar fluorocarbon line.

"For fish that come from that deep water, I usually have to fizz them (puncture the swim bladder), but because of the cold water, she was so healthy," he said. "She was really doing good, and now she's swimming back in the lake."

Hollingsworth landed a 10.73-pound lunker in 2018 that qualified for the Toledo Bend Lunker Bass Program. He said bass fishing is about to break wide open.

"There were some fish moving up shallow; I caught some two weeks ago in 8 to 10 feet of water," he said. "And I'm fishing the southern end. There are probably some fish already moving up on the northern end." ■

# IN STOCK



## TOHATSU

Feel the Wind™

**SOUTHERN OUTDOORS & MARINE LLC**

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



# FIVE BASS, 37.94 POUND CANEY LAKE STRINGER

BAD WEATHER MEANT GOOD FISHING FOR CHATHAM'S HEATH KENNEDY

**G** By Kinny Haddox  
etting off from work early is usually a good thing, but on Thursday, Feb. 24, it was an absolutely great thing for 33-year-old Heath Kennedy of Chatham. The 32 degree foggy rainy weather conditions were a little too bad for work on the Amethyst Construction project he was on, so he knocked off work about 10 a.m. and went home. But they weren't too bad to fish in.

So he decided to do just that. He loaded up and went to Caney Lake near his home. It was a good decision. After four hours of fishing, he had not only caught a 10.27 pound whopper, but also a 9-pounder and a best-five stringer weighing 37.94 pounds. That's a 7.5 pound average.

"It was pretty amazing," he said on Thursday night after getting home and collecting his thoughts. "I fish on Caney several days a week and when I hooked up about 1 p.m., I started to go to D'Arbonne. But I remembered they were having a big pro crappie tournament there and I didn't want to get in the middle of that. So I just went to Caney.

## IT WASN'T EASY

It wasn't an easy day fishing. In fact, Kennedy said he only got a bite on about one out of every 30 casts. That may not seem bad, but consider this. Kennedy located the fish in one small area and he spent four hours casting his 3/4-ounce Peanut Butter & Jelly Strike King Structure jig in the same small area. Over and over and over again. He uses a "structure" jig for grass because it has a pointed head, unlike the oblong head on a football jig, which hangs more in the grass.

"I knew the fish were there, but I couldn't see many of them on the electronics," he said. "But when one of the smaller ones would



chase the jig, I could see bigger ones moving up off the bottom. They were literally laying with their belly on the bottom. The last two I caught were so tight down there they had mud on their bellies even after I reeled them in."

He caught quite a few fish, including a 6-pounder before 2 p.m. and the nine pounder at 3:11 p.m. He actually loaded up the fish in the livewell and took it to Robert Albright, who runs the Caney Creek Bass Club, and weighed it on his boat dock on certified scales. He then returned to the same spot, put his trolling motor on spotlock and caught another almost 8-pounder at 3:45. In the next hour, he caught a couple more under 4 pounds and then one he thought was 10 pounds, but ended up 9.23. He then ended the day an hour later with a 10.27 whopper right at 5 p.m. Again, he headed to the certified scales to make sure of the weight. The exact weights of the top five he caught during the afternoon were 6.10, 7.51, 4.80, 9.23 and 10.27 pounds. All told, he said he caught around 20 bass. Not a bad afternoon of bass fishing.

## BACK IN THE WATER

Kennedy released all of his fish. And with each big fish, he weighed them, took a picture and returned them to the water immediately to fight another day.

"A few days ago, the water temperature was up to 57 degrees

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Chatham's Heath Kennedy had his personal best day on Caney in horrific conditions on Feb. 25. The top prize? This 10.27 lunker largemouth.

and those fish were moving up to the shallower grass and staging to get ready to move in for the spawn," he said. "I knew where they were. But we had a brutal cold front blow through Wednesday and the temperature dropped significantly. Today water temp was about 51 degrees. I started shallower, but didn't do any good, so I dropped back out into the 15-foot grass and found them in this one tight spot. The reason there were so many bass stacked right there is that there is a little drain with a hard bottom right on the edge of the grass and timber. They were just holding waiting to go back up more shallow.

"I could not get them to react to anything moving, so I just put on the jig and fish it as slow as I could. I stayed there because ever once in a while those smaller fish would react and big ones would rise up off the bottom, but not hit it. Then the wind came up and that is a big deal. It helps to get the big bass biting because they aren't quite as spooky. By the time I caught the biggest one, the waves were whitecapping."

After a catch like that, you'd think he might take a day off from fishing, too. But no. He was on the lake again Friday. Who could blame him? ■



**MADE FOR HUNTERS BY HUNTERS**

**QUIRK'S WELDING**  
**(337) 826-9353**  
 george@quirkswelding.com  
 3712 LA-10, Washington, LA  
 @quirkswelding quirkswelding.com

# LOUISIANA'S #1 CUSTOM BOAT BUILDER



1872V ^



2072V INNOVATOR 11 >

**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





# KING, LAGROUE LAND "WELL HOOKED" HAMMERS AT CANEY

**T** By Kinny Haddox  
hey say the third time is the charm. For Lake Charles fisherman Jared King and Denham Springs angler Michael LaGroue, it was the second time that counted when it came to landing 10-pound-plus Caney Lake largemouths Saturday, Feb. 26.

King and LaGroue traveled with the south-Louisiana based Well Hooked Bass Club up to Caney and they were both rewarded with their personal best bass. It was the second trip to the lake for both anglers.

## KING'S GIANT BASS

King landed a monster 13.01-pound bass and LaGroue landed a 10.77-pound lunker during the tournament. Both fish were caught in areas where the bass were staging for spawning and the key to catching them was fishing slow and near the grass.

"It was very exciting to say the least," said King of his 13-pounder. "It was my second time to fish the lake, so we had some idea of what we wanted to do. I caught the fish at 8 a.m. on the dot and it was not easy knowing she was in the livewell all day long before I got to weigh her."

King, the owner of Southland Environmental, a consulting firm in Lake Charles, said he must have checked on the fish two dozen times to make sure she was doing well.

"I didn't want to lose her, that's for sure," he said, noting that the club released every fish caught over the weekend back into the lake in good condition. "We preach doing everything we can to keep the mortality down. If somebody wants to catch some smaller fish and eat, that's fine, but with a big one like that, we need to put it back in for somebody else to catch."

The monster bass was 27 inches long and had a 21 ½-inch girth. It was caught on a green pumpkin color Jackhammer Chatterbait in about eight feet of water with scattered grass. King gave special thanks for his big day to his dad, Tommy King, who taught him to love fishing.



## LAGROUE'S BIG FISH HELPS GET WIN

LaGroue, a realtor for Covington & Associates in Denham Springs, said he didn't know that he would catch his personal best on Feb. 26, but when he and his partner Danny Walker went fishing, he felt like it was going to be a special day.

"I was expecting big bites because it was just one of those days," he said. "We found some fish in practice on Thursday and shook them off. We went back there and ran up into the back of a creek and just shut it down there. We worked up and down a hundred yard stretch of the creek in the grass and just fished as slow as we possibly could."

They won the event with 21.07 pounds and were dead-sticking Senkos to catch their fish. LaGroue also landed his bass early Saturday morning and had a grueling wait to bring the trophy to the scales. He said the big ones were an obvious thrill, but the bite was tough for the most part.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Jared King was all smiles with his personal best 13.01-pound behemoth largemouth that he caught from the waters of Caney Lake. **RIGHT:** Michael LaGroue shows off his 10.77 pound Caney Lake lunker, also his personal best bass catch.

LaGroue said that even though the weather is tough on fishermen, days like Saturday with temperatures in the low 30's all day long and steady rain in a north wind are good for big bass bites.

"I really believe that you have a good opportunity to catch a big one in conditions like that," he said. "It's a good opportunity to fool a big fish. I guess we proved that."

## WELL HOOKED

Well Hooked Bass Club was started in 2012 and is comprised of members from throughout Southwest Louisiana and beyond. The club fishes nine regular season tournaments a year, a Tournament of Champions for the top 10 in AOY points, and a 2-day tournament in the fall on Toledo Bend. You can check out their Facebook page to find out more about the club. ■



# NO WHERE TO HIDE

Designed by Aaron Martens, Gamakatsu has developed the G-Power Flip and Punch Hook. A step up from the G-Finesse Heavy Cover Hook, for serious flipping and punching with heavy fluorocarbon and braid. The Tournament Grade Wire hook, paired with its welded eye, make this one of the strongest hooks in Gamakatsu's G-Series lineup. Ideal for larger baits and weights, punching through grass mats and flipping into heavy timber. G-Power Flip and Punch ideally matches to all types of cover and able to withstand extreme conditions.



**AARON  
MARTENS**

**Gamakatsu**

GAMAKATSU.COM



Dusty Nomey shares the moment of catching his monster 13.21-pound largemouth from Caney Lake with his son, Cruz.



# CANEY LAKE YIELDS MONSTER BASS DURING TOURNAMENT

## NOMEY'S GLAD HE TALKED HIMSELF INTO GOING FISHING ONE MORE TIME

**D** By Kinny Haddox  
usty Nomey fished in a bass tournament Saturday, Feb. 26, at Lake Claiborne in just awful conditions — rain, freezing cold, wind. And an awful bite. He decided that afternoon he was not fishing the Media Individual tournament Sunday down the road on Caney like he had planned.

But then he thawed out and at dinner, he talked himself into it. It wasn't long into the day Sunday when he realized he made the right decision.

"Man, it was a great day," he said.

Yes, it was. On his third cast, he hooked into a 13.21-pound monster that was the biggest of his life and it propelled him to win the tournament. He caught the fish on a Strike King chatter-bait that he had swapped a skirt out for one from another lure to basically give it a little different look.

"Those fish like this one, they've seen no telling how many baits over and over and she's probably been caught before, so I wanted something a little different," he said.

He caught the fish in a spot that was a "memory hole," one he has fished many times.

"I got whipped in this spot one time last year," he said. "I spent a whole tournament sitting there watching those fish on the bottom in a little drain, but they never came up on the ledge and they never bit. But when I pulled up Sunday, oh my gosh, they were up on the ledge. I knew that meant they were feeding."

## THE FIGHT IS ON

On his third cast, he found out he was right. The big fish grabbed his bait and pulled like a ton of bricks, he said.

"She never came up and then she rolled and I just knew I had hooked a big blue cat," Nomey said. "I even quit being serious about getting her in for a minute or two and just kept tugging on her. Then when she did come up and roll on the surface, I went nuts. I thought it might be the state record she looked so big."

Nomey had a set of scales, but they had been weighing a bit light. When he put her on the scale, it read 13.6, so he immediately felt like he might have a 14 pounder. He wanted to stop and celebrate, but then he remembered something that most

experienced Caney anglers know.

"These fish can be pretty cantankerous," he said. "If you get a big fish to bite and you get the school fired up, you better stay on top of them because when they settle back down, you just about can't do anything to get another one to bite. So I had to get right back in there."

He did. And on his next cast he landed a 6-pounder. Then a couple more casts and he hooked another bass that pulled just like the 13 pounder.

## MORE TO COME

"Oh my gosh," he said. "I just knew I had another monster. And I did. The bass was well over 10 pounds and after fighting it a few minutes it tried to run around my outboard motor. I tried to pull it away from the motor and the hook just came out of its mouth. When I got back up front and settled down, I saw on my electronics that those fish were all swimming back down off the shelf and to the bottom. I knew it was over. It was almost like that big one that got off swam back down there and told the rest of them that it was a trap."

He moved around and caught a few more smaller bass, enough to put together a five-fish limit weighing 28.88 to win the event. But he couldn't hardly stand the wait to get to the weigh-in with his catch of a lifetime in the livewell.

It was a special thrill for Nomey to be able to have his wife, Brea, and son, Cruz, at the weigh-in. He said he wished his grandfather, Larry Pardue, could have been there because he taught Nomey not only how to fish, but how to love the sport. He hopes to pass that down to his son. Seeing catches like this one will certainly help the cause. ■

A yellow Hobie Mirage Outback pedal fishing kayak is shown on a calm lake. The kayak is fully loaded with fishing gear, including three fishing rods mounted on the deck, a motor, and various accessories. The background features a scenic view of mountains and a clear sky reflected in the water.

# Hobie

## TIME TO GET REEL

# MIRAGE OUTBACK

**THE WORLD'S #1 PEDAL FISHING KAYAK**

**ONLY THE BEST MAKE IT OUT HERE.** This fully-loaded fishing machine is built for every conceivable fishing expedition, whether you're prowling the ocean for monster gamefish or stalking bass in your favorite freshwater fishing hole. Powered by the MirageDrive 180 with Kick-Up Turbo Fins, this fine-tuned angling vessel is highly versatile, fast, quiet, and exceedingly nimble. Combating drift and navigating tough waters has never been easier.

[hobie.com](http://hobie.com)



# ONE LAST HOOK HOLDS JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR BAKER'S 11.65 POUNDER

**P** By Dan Kibler  
aul Norwood figured the jig was up — if you understand he was fishing with a crankbait — not a jig when he hooked an enormous bass at Toledo Bend on the afternoon of March 2.

"The odds of me getting her in the boat were unreal," Norwood said. "When we got her in the boat, she had one hook left — in the back of her head."

"She" was an 11.65-pound largemouth that Norwood, from Baker hooked at about 1 o'clock after a morning spent catching smaller fish.

In the boat with fishing buddy Henry Boudreaux of Baton Rouge, Norwood had a baby bass color Bandit 200 crankbait tied on 12-pound test line when he cast up close to an underwater stump in the Slaughter Creek area, fishing in water that was about 60 degrees.

"I was fishing about two or three feet of water and threw up next to a stump, and something came out and 'ticked' the line," Norwood said. "I told my buddy that I'd gotten a hit. I threw in again, and something ticked it again. Then, the line went heavy, and I set the hook."

## NERVE-WRACKING BATTLE

A big bass on the other end of his line came up and swirled near the surface, offering Norwood a brief look and the realization that he had the fish of a lifetime hooked up.

"She wasn't hooked that good," he said. "She went under the boat three times, and I told Henry, 'We've got to get her in the net the next time.'"

"The first time she came around the back of the boat and went under the boat, then she went to the motor, and I couldn't stop her. She was hung up on the motor for a second — the line went slack — then she must have reversed course, and the line got tight and she came on out. I told Henry, 'If she goes under the boat again, we've got to get her in the net.'"

Paul Norwood of Baker was fishing at Toledo Bend on March 2 when he caught an 11.65-pound largemouth bass with a Bandit 200 crankbait.



Boudreaux was up to the task, swinging the net under the big fish and putting her in the boat.

"I couldn't believe it," Norwood said. "I couldn't believe we got her in the boat. If he hadn't netted her, I don't think I get her in the boat. She just had one barb on the back hook in the top of her head. I think she'd probably had the front hook in her mouth at one point."

"I was lucky she didn't break off. She never took any drag, but I couldn't control her. She was in control the whole time. When she would go under the boat, I'd stick the rod down as far as I could, so I wouldn't put any strain on the line."

## GIANT BASS

Norwood put the big bass on a set of scales he had in the boat and the fish weighed 11 pounds, 2 ounces. He and Boudreaux picked up and ran to Buckeye Landing to get an official weight, and the bass tipped the scales at 11.65 pounds — 11 pounds, 12 ounces. She was 27 inches long and 21 inches in girth, the 15th fish of the 2021-22 season to qualify for the Toledo Bend Lunker Program.

"Once you get her in the boat, the feeling was unbelievable. It took me 45 years to catch one and 10 minutes to land it, but the adrenalin doesn't end there. I was still shaking an hour later," he said. "My best one ever before this one was probably 7 or 8 pounds."

The bass was in perfect shape, a green brute full of eggs but nowhere near spawning.

"I thought she had just come out of deep water, because we were fishing close to deep water," Norwood said. "She was so full of eggs, and her tail was not torn up at all. I think she just hit the bait because it came past her." ■

# MARTIN'S GLAD HIS 10.58 WASN'T THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY!

**C** By Dan Kibler  
 atching big bass is a fun pastime for Mitchell Martin of Washington, but they're not an obsession.

"I've been fishing 51 years on Toledo Bend, since I was 16," Martin said. "If I hook a fish, I let him run and play and jump. If I get a fish in the boat, it's okay, but if I don't, it's okay, too."

But he's mighty glad he got a certain fish in the boat on Thursday, March 3. It was a 10.58-pound brute that hit a watermelon red Senko in the San Miguel area.

The big bass was in about 4 feet of water when she picked up Martin's Senko and headed for parts unknown at around 9 a.m.

"She just picked it up, and it got heavy," Martin said. "She wouldn't let it go."

But she came to the boat pretty quickly, coming to the surface to try and jump twice, before Martin's fishing partner netted it and brought it into the boat.

"I've had 4-pound fish fight three times as hard as this one," he said. "It jumped twice. The first time, my young partner said it was an 8-pounder. The second time she jumped, he said it was a 10 and to get it in the boat. It really didn't last long enough to be exciting."

"When he netted it, my partner said if we'd been tournament fishing, we'd have never caught it. It was just hooked in the skin inside its mouth."

## BIGGEST BASS YET

Martin, who caught the fish on a Denali rod and Lew's reel spooled with 15-pound Big Game, had the fish weighed at Keith's Toledo Bend Bait & Tackle, where it tipped the scales at 10.58 pounds, measured 24 inches long and 18½ inches in girth. It was entered

Mitchell Martin of Washington was fishing at Toledo Bend on March 3 when he caught a 10.58-pound bass on a watermelon red Senko.



in the Toledo Bend Lunker Program – it was the 16th fish of the 2021-22 season to qualify – and released back into the lake.

"She had just moved up," he said. "She didn't appear to be spawning. Her tail wasn't red or anything."

The fish was the biggest in Martin's 51 years on Toledo Bend.

"I've caught an 8-15 and several 8s, but I've never topped the 9-pound mark before," he said. "The last 4 or 5 years, I've caught four or five fish over 8 pounds." ■

# BLANCHARD'S

Our Customers Are The Coolest®




**300 LBS ICE MAKER**  
with a 290 lbs Storage Bin

**NO HUNTIN OR FISHIN CAMP SHOULD BE WITHOUT ONE OF THESE!**

**ICE MAKERS Starting at \$2310**

**CALL US TODAY TO ORDER YOURS!**

**150 LBS ICE MAKER**  
with a 90 lbs Storage Bin Starting at



Larger Models Available Upon Request

**BLANCHARD'S REFRIGERATION**

**314 S. Hollywood Rd., Houma, LA**  
**888-656-2823 • 985-868-8945**  
[www.coolestcustomers.com](http://www.coolestcustomers.com)



# BREAK FROM CRAPPIE FISHING NETS DEQUINCY ANGLER 10.93 BASS

ABOVE: Caleb Hollingsworth of DeQuincy was bass fishing at Toledo Bend when he boated a 10.93-pound lunker on March 4.

**C** By Dan Kibler  
 aleb Hollingsworth of DeQuincy wasn't exactly on a mission while bass fishing at Toledo Bend Reservoir, but hey, you can't let your brother get one up on you, right?

Hollingsworth boated a 10.93-pound lunker bass on Friday, March 4, while taking a break from targeting white perch with his 8-year-old son, Cooper, and another fishing buddy.

The fish not only qualified for the Toledo Bend Lunker Program as the 17th fish of the 2021-22 season, but it put him back on top in the battle of the brothers. You see, Hollingsworth's brother, Jordan, had boated a 10.27-pound Toledo Bend bass eight days earlier, on Feb. 24.

"We'll both get replicas at the Big Bass Splash (in May). That will be pretty cool," Caleb Hollingsworth said. "We've got a

wall in camp that we want to fill up."

Hollingsworth said he, his son and his fishing buddy had caught a few white perch when they decided to take a break at about 10:30 a.m. and go bass fishing.

"We caught three or four real quick, and then the giant hit," he said. "It was pretty amazing."

## WHAT WORKED

Hollingsworth was fishing a deep-diving jerkbait on 12-pound Seaguar fluorocarbon, on a Daiwa Tatula reel and Dobbins Fury rod. He was working a creek channel drop where the bottom fell away from 10 to 15 feet, in 58-degree water.

"She hit it about 20 feet from the boat; she short-lined me," Hollingsworth said. "She jumped three or four times at the boat. Everybody in the area heard me when we put her in the boat. I went

berserk. I lost my mind. You don't know how long I'd waited for that bite."

Hollingsworth immediately carried the big bass to Fins & Feathers, where it was officially weighed, measured, entered in the lunker program and released. The fish was 26½ inches long and 19 inches in girth.

And now, the interesting part.

"I'm pretty sure she had spawned out," he said. "Her belly was hollow, and her tail was a little bloody. She wasn't blown up, not swollen up. If I'd caught her before she spawned, she'd have been 11½, but I just wanted to break that 10(-pound) mark."

Hollingsworth didn't waste any time after the fish was released getting back to fishing – this time for white perch.

"We went straight back to white perch fishing. My boy, he wanted to catch 'em," he said. "He wound up catching 13, reeling them in by himself." ■

# LAKE MARTIN LARGEMOUTH

## TIMING IS EVERYTHING FOR KIDDER'S RECORD 11.1-POUND BASS

**L**y Jason Thornton  
afayette City firefighter Brandon Kidder knew that he only had the morning to fish on March 7, 2022. A mid-day front was scheduled to push through and he knew that it would seriously diminish the fishing prospects at Lake Martin for several days. His son and regular fishing buddy had school that morning, so Kidder set out alone for the fishing trip.

He had been on the water fishing since daybreak. It did not take him long to get into the fish, having fished Lake Martin many times in the past. Pitching a Super Bug colored Missile D-Bomb plastic to a cypress tree was the strategy on this day. Having landed several bass already, Kidder was in for the fish of a lifetime at 9 a.m. that morning. At first he thought that he was hung up, then the behemoth of a largemouth bass made a run from left to right. Knowing that he had a good fish on the line, Kidder was careful to work his Lew's rod and Cabelas Pro Qualifier baitcasting reel in a professional manner so as not to lose the fish. On the first completely airborne jump, Kidder noticed that he had a good set on the hook deep in her mouth. That made him relax a bit. Then, after completing two more aerial displays, the bass was quickly brought alongside his boat.

Not wanting to retrieve his landing net from the stern of the boat and risk something going awry, Kidder confidently lip grabbed the bass, hoisted it into the boat and completed the landing process. That is when he realized that he had a truly special fish, his first 10-pound-plus largemouth bass. A quick confirmation on his personal fish scale revealed that the fish was in excess of 11 pounds.

### KEPT ON FISHING

Not wanting the fishing trip to stop there and to take full advantage of a stress free morning away from the endeavors of firefighting, Kidder pressed on and kept fishing. He knew that he only had a couple of hours remaining before the barometric pressure changed with the front, effectively shutting down the fishery. Three more bass were landed for a total stringer of 10 fish that morning that included an additional 7-pound bass, a trophy unto itself. Kidder even admitted missing several strikes post landing of the fish citing a lack of concentration as the issue. But who could blame him knowing what he already had in the boat.

After making several exciting phone calls and sending



Brandon Kidder was fishing on March 7 at Lake Martin when he hooked this bass that weighed 11.1 pounds.

pictures to friends and family, a friend suggested that he may have a special fish in his possession. That got Kidder's interest peaked. A call to Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologist Brad Layney led to the suggestion that he might indeed have a lake record. While no official records are kept for Lake Martin, the previous lake record is believed to be 9.1 pounds.

Kidder busted that record wide open. On a certified scale owned by Kidder's taxidermist, the bass officially weighed 11.1 pounds. The bass measured an impressive length of 26 ½ inches and an even more impressive girth of 22 inches. A truly magnificent representation of the species and trophy of a lifetime.

Fishing Lake Martin and Chicot State Park regularly, Kidder believes that the lack of hurricane activity and natural fish kills are contributing factors to the increase in the local fish size. His best advice for anyone fishing the lake is "when you find the fish, slow down."

Good advice for all of us. ■

# EXCEL BOATS

### 203 BAY PRO



### 220 BAY PRO





**SOUTHERN  
OUTDOORS**  
& MARINE LLC

2268 GRAND CAILLOU RD., HOUMA, LA  
**985-873-7731**  
1308 CANAL BLVD., THIBODAUX  
**985-447-4156**



**YAMAHA**

# SPORTSMAN OF THE MONTH

#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](http://www.BoatsUnlimitedLA.com)



## HUNTER OF THE MONTH

### Kade Sheets

Kade Sheets took this 230-pound, 12-point buck that scored 148 inches on Dec. 11, 2021 on private property along Boeuf River in Franklin Parish.

## ANGLER OF THE MONTH

### Cameron Willis

Cameron Willis, an 11th grader at Pine Prairie High School, is the only girl on her school's fishing team and she recently beat the boys! Her Chicot State Park bass was only 1.9 pounds but it was the biggest.



# Yone FISHIN'

THERE'S NO BETTER WAY TO CATCH APRIL BASS THAN ON SOFT PLASTIC LURES.

By Kinny Haddox

**PLASTIC  
MAKES  
perfect**



## Back a half century ago,

young Bill Dance busted on the scene of bass fishing like a bull in a china shop. His main weapon of choice in landing huge stringers of largemouths was a simple plastic worm. In fact, he knew so much about it he wrote a book, “Bill Dance — Techniques of Bass Fishing.”

“Well, I guess there are about as many ways to fish a worm as there are to cook potatoes,” he said in the book. “Without a doubt the finest way I’ve ever seen is the old Texas rig. I learned this method four years ago and in my experience, it’s the only way to rig and fish a worm.”

Dance wrote that in 1971. I bet if he read that today, he’d chuckle so hard his Tennessee cap would fall off. In those days, anglers had about four choices of worms to choose from — Fliptails, Mister Twister Phenom, Creme Wiggle Baits and Cordell’s Tattletail. Colors? If you got lucky, you could find the whole range at your local tackle dealer — black, purple and blue. That’s pretty much it.

Pro angler and fishing guide Homer Humphreys of Minden was around then and he remembers those good old days fondly. He also knows the amazing transformation to the variety of sizes, shapes and colors that are available today and the whole range of techniques to fish them.

Today, most soft plastic lures aren’t even worms. They are Beavers, Brush Hawgs, Turbo Fattyz, Hella Crawz, Bunker Hawgs, Wild Thang Craws and the like. They fall into a category called “creature” baits. They crawl out in all shapes and sizes and fishermen have discovered that different plastic lures are perfect for different times of year and fishing situations.

You can still fish a regular or curly tail plastic worm just about any time. But when it comes to plastic baits, early season bass seem to like big and healthy creature baits. As spring wears on and the spawn leaves fish a little more picky, it’s time to consider downsizing and getting creative as well. That’s where drop shots, finesse worms, wacky rigs, shaky heads, Carolina rigs and smaller lure presentations can help you add to your daily catch.

Unless you are a full-time fisherman, there’s no way to learn or fish it all. So to get a little help deciphering all those choices today, we turn back to that experience that Humphreys has gained in his year’s of fishing through the plastic transformation as a guide and professional competitive angler.

“There is no doubt about it, the choices today can be overwhelming,” Humphreys said. “Even people that have fished a long time can’t decide what color or action of soft plastic to fish with. But the ones that catch fish usually end up going back to what they know and that’s what keeps them in the action.”



Homer and a recent client had good success using a variety of soft plastics to land good bass like this one.



Star brite  
**STAR★TRON**®

**Enzyme Fuel Treatment**

**START  
RUN  
STORE**

**WITH STAR TRON  
THE #1 MULTI-FUNCTIONAL  
FUEL TREATMENT**

Star brite  
**STAR★TRON**  
**Enzyme  
Fuel Treatment**  
For All Gas Engines  
Stabilizes Fuel • Improves Performance  
Cleans Fuel Systems & More  
TREATS  
ALL  
FUELS

**WWW.STARTRON.COM**  
**PROTECTION + PERFORMANCE**

**H**umphreys said if you are a newcomer to the sport, there's a simple rule of thumb to follow that you can't go wrong with.

"Get you a couple of varieties of soft plastics that you know people are catching fish on at the lake you fish and give them a try first," he said. "Don't try to get every color in the world. Seriously, if you stick with some basic watermelon and watermelon red colors and then get black or plum type colors, you can catch fish in just about any type of cover or water."

The old Texas rig is still the go to for most anglers, Humphreys said. You can rig straight tail or curly tail worms that way and you can even rig creature baits that way.

A secret that many pros don't share is that picking what type of plastic to fish often comes down to the simple fact of what temperature the water is.

"Those bass know that the bait they are going to eat is cold blooded just like they are," he said. "If the water is cold and they are sluggish, they know the baitfish is cold and sluggish, too. If they see a big curly tail lure coming through the water and it's 50 degrees, they know that isn't natural. Fish smaller, straight tail lures when the water temperatures are in the 50's. Fish a swimming tail worm when the water is in the 60's. As the water warms up, the bass get more aggressive and the bait gets more active, too. So it's a natural matchup."

At one time, anglers after big fish used a "jig and pig" setup with great success. But today the creature baits are more popular than the big football jigs with big pork rind trailers. Anglers still fish jigs, but with a more bulky critter type trailer.

"I'll tell you, I've done a lot of jig fishing in the past, but today I've gone to more of just using a creature bait rigged Texas," Humphreys said. "It's simple, a Texas-rigged creature bait with the weight pegged can go right down in the thickest of brush and not hang up. I know there are weedless jigs, but if they are weedless enough to keep you from snagging brush, they probably are hard to snag bass on."

"There's another benefit to bigger soft plastics here. You don't disturb the cover as much with it. With a jig bouncing around, it knocks on the limbs and can spook the fish. If you fish a top without a bite with soft plastic, you can come back to it and maybe they'll hit it the next time."

One way to fish soft plastics effectively is over grass, not just in it, Humphreys said.

"When you've got a lot of grass like hydrilla and it's too thick to throw a buzz bait, you can rig a speed worm and buzz it right across the top of the grass and if there is a bass in there, he'll explode on it," he said. "You can fish with a weightless worm in the same situation and just pull it across slower. Then when you come to a hole in the grass, let it drop down in the opening. They'll nail it."



There's no better lure to work offshore cover in open water than a plastic worm or creature bait. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Homer Humphreys with a nice lunker largemouth taken on a soft plastic lure.



In addition to all the choices for lures, anglers also have a variety of bait scents at their disposal today. Humphreys said he has fished with a lot of them, but doesn't today. If they are going to bite it, they are going to bite it, he said.

"If I were going to use a scent on the lure, I'd stick with either shad or crawfish smells," he said. "Those are the most natural."

Learning to fish plastics is the hardest of any type of bass fishing, Humphreys said. If you want to learn how, or if you know the basics but want to get better, he has some simple advice.

"Go fishing for the day and leave everything else at home," he said. "Take a variety of your favorite soft plastics and commit to fish them all day long. Do that more than once. The amount of time you spend, the better you'll get. You'll learn to feel the difference between a limb and a bite. You'll learn that little ones tend to peck at it and the big ones tend to get it and just swim off with it. Sometimes you don't even feel the bite. There's so much to learn, no matter which plastic you choose."

Are soft plastics the best lure to fish for bass?

"I can't say that for sure, but this should answer the question," Humphreys said. "When everybody is down and out and can't get a bite any other way, they are going to put on the soft plastics and grind it out. It's not the easiest thing to do, so some people don't want to. But when you've got to put a fish in the boat, that is what you'll throw." ■



**Kinny Haddox** has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 47 years. He and his wife, DiAnne, live in West Monroe.

**WHY DO BASS LOVE SOFT PLASTIC LURES? ➤**

**SEAARK BOATS**

**WE HAVE A BOAT FOR ALL OF YOUR NEEDS!**

Hemel Marine

REAL DEAL MARINE

Goldman MARINE

CAJON OUTBOARDS

Visit your local SeaArk Authorized Dealer today!

**YAMAHA**

The Boat Shop

www.seaarkboats.com

# Spring Into Savings



## MEET OUR SALES TEAM



**CALL OR STOP BY TODAY!**

**6161 W PARK AVE • HOUMA**

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

**SOUTHLANDDODGECHRYSLERJEEP.COM**

# WHY DO BASS LOVE soft plastic lures?

So far, no outdoor writer or fisherman that I know has been able to actually get a straight answer out of a largemouth bass on why they love soft plastic lures so much, so all we can do is speculate.

Of course, the main thought is that bass are hungry a lot of the time and when they see a slow moving plastic lure bouncing in front of their face, it's an easy meal. Plus, the various action on the lure makes it look like it is alive. Worms don't really mimic any natural food that bass eat, unless it is baby snakes, but they sure love them.

One of the top theories is simply that bass don't like anything in their personal space, so when a plastic worm or creature invades their living room, they smash it — even when they aren't hungry. Those are called reaction strikes — when the bass just sees it and eats it. Kind of like when a fisherman walks through the kitchen and sees a Little Debbie on the counter.

A third theory is that the reason they are so effective is, unlike hard plastic lures with three sets of treble hooks, bass like the way they feel. When they bite on, it doesn't bite back until the angler sets the hook. Then, it's too late. ■

**LURE REVIEW >**



These Beaver lures don't really look like any kind of natural fish food, but largemouths love them. Only the bass know why.



BALLISTIC MQLT

## TOUGHER AND LIGHTER THAN BEFORE

BALLISTIC MQ raises the bar in spinning performance.

Watch the videos then check them out at your nearest Daiwa dealer.

### BALLISTIC MQ

- » ZAION MONOCOQUE® (MQ) Frame
- » MAGSEALED® Frame
- » ZAION AIR ROTOR® & AIR BAIL®
- » DIGIGEAR™
- » Advanced Tournament Drag System (ATD)

For more info visit: [Daiwa.us](http://Daiwa.us)



SCAN HERE TO SEE BALLISTIC MQ VIDEO

Ike's Mini Flip Jig catches bass in cover and away from cover.



# IKE'S MINI FLIP JIG

Photos courtesy missilebaits.com

CREWS' MISSILE BAIT CAN BLOW INTO A BIG BASS'S COVER QUICKLY

**W**hen well-known pro bass fisherman Mike "Ike" Iaconelli wanted a jig with a smaller profile built for flipping, he got in touch with his good buddy and fellow Bassmaster Elite Series pro John Crews of Salem, Virginia. Crews had started Missile Baits in 2012, two years before Iaconelli, a Bassmaster Classic winner from Pittsgrove, New Jersey, talked with him about building a compact flippin' jig.

Crews obliged and Iaconelli used prototypes of the lure to win a Bassmaster Elite Series tournament on the Delaware River in 2014, speeding up the process of lure development. It took four to five months to design and tweak the lure, but today the Ike's Mini Flip Jig is a favorite among bass fishermen. You can count Iaconelli and Crews, plus many other touring bass pros and regular anglers, among those who have made it a go-to bait.

"I use it a lot. It's one of those baits I've always got tied on. I fish this bait pretty much all year," Crews said. "In your area (Louisiana-Mississippi-Texas) for sure. It's real good around cypress trees because it doesn't get hung up. You can drop it around those roots (cypress knees) because again, it doesn't get hung up."

"From its name, the Mini Flip, is good for flipping in bushes and around docks, but it also excels as a skipping bait. Plus, I'll cast it and fish points, and road beds because it comes across cover. I'll fish it out 15 to 18 feet deep, too. It's a real versatile jig."

## NO BRAID NECESSARY

A notable aspect of the Mini Flip Jig is that it doesn't have to be tied on braided line. Flourocarbon line or monofilament line in the 20-pound range is perfect for getting bass to bite.

"If you call 20-pound test 'light line,'" Crews said. "But a lot of flippers do call 20-pound test light line. I use Sunline Shooter Flourocarbon line, 18 or 20 pound test, most of the time and I have real good success with that."

Since its introduction approximately seven years ago, no changes have been made to the original design of the flippin' jig. It continues to do its job, which is to trigger bass bites.

However, Missile Baits is adding five colors to the original eight colors.

"We've got new skirt colors coming out this year," he said. "It's taking a while to get the skirts in," he said about the new



**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.

colors. “They are brown craw, black neon, Ike’s secret (smoke purple/green pumpkin/black blue), bluegill and larvae craw (red/orange/black). Ike’s secret, it’s a neat color. Bluegill, it definitely looks like a bream.”

## IT’S “FROG HAIR”

The skirts are special, too. The material is a silicon material called “frog hair,” or fine cut, as he described it, that helps the jig breathe a little easier and gives it more of a finesse look, he said.

Ike’s Mini Flips are available in ½, ¾ and 1¼ ounce sizes. Each is armed with a black 4/0 VMC hook.

“What’s unique for the Mini Flip is it has a weight forward design centered around the hook shank. It falls straight and it falls fast. It goes in and out of cover because of that,” Crews said. “The jig design is all about balance. That’s what we like about it, the balance of that jig.”

Crews uses a Missile Baits Baby D-Bomb for a soft plastic trailer on the Ike’s Mini Flip, which features a cone-shaped weedguard. He pinches a third off the 3.65-inch twin tail, ribbed creature bait, which is the baby brother of the Missile Baits D-Bomb.

The Ike’s Mini Flip’s weedguard is designed in such a way it enables it to get in and out of the heaviest cover 99 percent of the time, he said. Crews very rarely trims or otherwise modifies the weedguard. Neither does anybody else he knows that fishes it.



Ike’s Mini Flip Jig has become a staple for Missile Baits Co.

“Not usually, because it’s the right weedguard at the right angle and not too thick,” he said. “It’s the perfect size for a good hookset.”

For more information about the Ike’s Mini Flip and other Missile Jigs products, go to [www.missilebaits.com](http://www.missilebaits.com) or call 855.HOOKSET. ■

## BASS HOTSPOTS ➤



**NEW J-FLUORO SAMURAI MAIN LINE**

# THE BEST LINE YOU WILL NEVER SEE

100% Fluorocarbon line is super stealth and is available in 2 spool sizes (all line weights): 220 Yard Filler Spools and 1,000 Yard Bulk Spools.




CONVENIENT SPOOL LINE PROTECTOR.

**J-FLUORO LEADER**

100% Fluorocarbon leader material. Featuring convenient spool band for easy line management. Available in 2 spool sizes: 100 yard spools (2lb–20lb) and 50 yard spools (25lb–80lb).



CONVENIENT SPOOL BAND WITH LINE THROUGH HOLE FOR EASY LINE MANAGEMENT.

**J-BRAID GRAND x8**

Our most abrasion resistant braid yet, made with smooth and strong “IZANAS” material.




x8 GRAND DARK GREEN x8 GRAND GRAY LIGHT x8 GRAND ISLAND BLUE

**J-BRAID x4**

4 inter-woven strands. Strong, tough and abrasion-resistant. Excellent knot tying braid.




x4 DARK GREEN x4 CHARTREUSE x4 ISLAND BLUE

[www.JBraid.com](http://www.JBraid.com)

# A PRO APPROACH

Top bass anglers share April tips for Bussey, Caney and D'Arbonne

*Louisiana hosted the 2022 season opening Major League Fishing Bass Pro Tour event with anglers fishing three lakes — D'Arbonne in Farmerville, Caney in Chatham and Bussey Brake in Bastrop. Louisiana Sportsman caught up with champion Bradley Roy of Lancaster, Ky., and fellow pro anglers Jared Lintner of Covington, Ga., and Jacob Wheeler of Harrison, Tenn., to get exclusive fishing reports on how they would fish here this month.*

## BUSSEY BRAKE

Subtle depth differences on this small lake are a big deal

By Kinny Haddox

The first key to finding and catching bass this month here is water temperature. It's hard to pinpoint an exact day or week when bass spawn, but Bradley Roy said the bass spawn will still be going on at this 2,200 acre lake in April. That means a lot of them will be in shallow protected waters, or hanging close by right after the spawn.

One thing Roy points out quickly about Bussey is that it is mostly a shallow lake and even the slightest depth changes can be one of the keys to finding and catching largemouths.

"There's one thing that there is plenty of at Bussey and that's good springtime cover," he said. "But that also gives you the problem of trying to figure out which cover is best. I think it simply comes down to trying two approaches. First of all, if the bass are still spawning, they need sunlight to do that so they will be in the shallower bushes. If it is cloudy or they are hanging out right after the spawn, they'll be on the deeper bushes. Now that may not be a lot deeper, but instead of 2-3 feet deep on the spawn, maybe 3-5 feet deep after the spawn. One good thing is there is not much water level fluctuation on this lake, so fish can hold steady."

Roy said bait options are many. Pitching and flipping bulky soft plastics like Beaver type baits deep in the bushes would be the top choice. That's how he took home the \$100,000 first prize recently and he said it will still work. But there are plenty of bushes to run a spinnerbait past when the fish are aggressive.

"I know one thing," he said. "I would not go to Bussey this time of year without a swim jig tied on. Anything could work from a Beaver or Brush Hawg type bait to a straight tail plastic worm."

Jared Lintner agrees with Roy's assessment of the structure and reminds fishermen that trying to find areas near some sort of

Bradley Roy battles a big bass on Bussey Brake.



Photo courtesy MLF/Garrick Dixon

dug out area or ditch is important this time of year.

"Late season cold snaps can drive them to deeper water, so the closer you can find spawning areas to deeper spots, the more likely you are to find good numbers of fish," Lintner said. "One thing I wouldn't pass by is a horizontal laying willow where you can pitch back up in there at the base of the tree in shallow water."

Lintner said if the fish aren't in the thick stuff, you can get them to blow up on a buzzbait or some sort of frog fished around the edges. His favorite color pick for Bussey would be black or a dark pattern.

Jacob Wheeler likes the frog idea, too.

"There are just so many targets here and with the lake at the stage it is at, those shallower bushes are going to be the top target," he said. "And the fish can get way up in the cover. All those lily pad stems are a great place to look for fish in the spawning period. You could even get the aggressive fish to hit there on some sort of stick type topwater if the plastic bite is not on."

One thing Wheeler saw at Bussey that could help you catch more bass is to watch water depths, much like Roy said. He saw three zones that he would target and when he caught one in a "zone," he'd stick with that depth. Of course, he said, that can vary from day to day.

"In lakes like this without a lot of defined depth change, it's important to lock in on subtle hints as to where the bass are," he said. "At Bussey, there are scrubby willows in 1-3 feet of water; bushes and tops in 4-5 feet of water and deeper trees and shade lines where fish can hang out in 5-7 feet of water. Find the right depth and concentrate on it. And later in the day, look for isolated bushes the same depth, especially for the big fish." ■

**CANEY LAKE** ➤

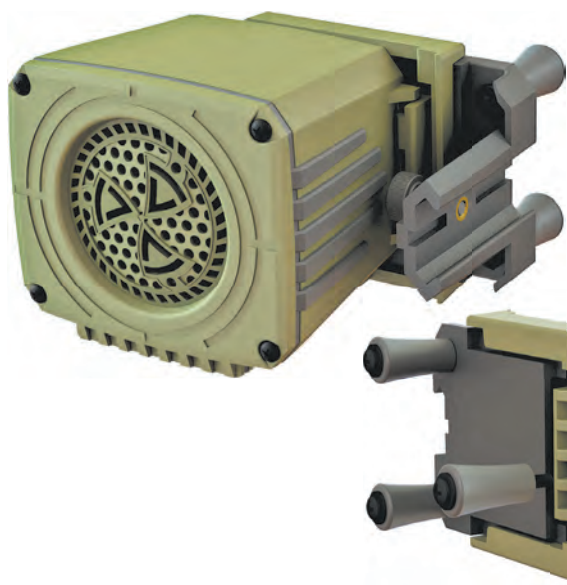
## FIELD PRO TURKEY SEAT

Deer hunters and anglers have long known how comfortable Millennium's stands and seats are. Fortunately for turkey hunters, the company now makes the Millennium Field Pro Turkey Seat. It gets hunters' rumps completely off the ground, and their backs away from barky tree trunks.

Skids keep the seat from sinking into soft ground, the seat and backrest provide ultimate comfort, and the adjustable carry strap makes it easy to carry in and out of the turkey woods. It's available in Mossy Oak Obsession and Mossy Oak Bottomland patterns.

**MSRP: \$105**

**For more info, visit: [millennium-outdoors.com](http://millennium-outdoors.com)**



## SIDEWINDER GAME CALL

Mounted to your firearm, this electronic call is hands-free. It incorporates predator calls available for download on your cell phone, which mounts to the rear of the call. If you're going after coyotes or other predators, this call and your favorite firearm is all you need for a successful hunt. The speaker is crystal clear, the battery is good for 5 hours, and its compact design won't weigh you down.

**MSRP: \$149.95**

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

## ARBOGAST HULA POPPER 2.0

The Arbogast Hula Popper 2.0 gives new life to one of the oldest lures on the market. This update is a great addition to any bass angler's tackle box.

Keeping the traditional deeply-cupped mouth which creates havoc that surface-feeding bass can't resist, this upgraded version adds a high definition crackle paint job, upgraded hook hangers and replaces the rear skirted treble with a feathered one, offering a more lifelike profile.

This 2-inch, 3/8-ounce lure is offered in numerous colors. It's a must-have for spring bass fishing trips when the topwater bite is just getting cranked up.

**MSRP: \$7.99**

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



# CANEY LAKE

## Figure out the spawn pattern here and land the bass of a lifetime

**C** By Kinny Haddox  
 aney Lake is Jacob Wheeler's kind of lake. The tournament results prove that. A lot of open water with underwater points and creek bends all leading up to shallow water with plenty of grass. Wheeler caught nine bass totaling 43 pounds, 7 ounces in his first day to ever fish the lake. Among those were a 7-11, 7-6, 6-5, 6-0, and 4-15. Those were just five of his nine bass.

"It was jerkbait fishing 101 for me," Wheeler said. "I figured it out through the day and it gave me the best day of fishing as a professional in my life. I have a friend who lives near here that has told me to come fish this place for a while now and this is my first time. I tell you what. I'll be back."

Wheeler, the reigning MLF Angler of the Year, said a jerkbait will still work this month, although the fish will be heading up more shallow than where he caught earlier.

"It is a time of transition," he said. "They may be still spawning or they may be transitioning from shallow to try and get staged up to move to their summertime haunts. I'd concentrate on secondary points and anywhere there is an outside bend in a channel that is closer to the spawning areas."

Throw a hard jerkbait on the edges of the grass or some sort of soft jerkbait near the emergent grass like a Fluke or some sort of wacky worm, he said. As the day goes on, try the outside grass lines even as far as 10-12 feet deep.

Roy said the key is the grass and calls Caney "a different animal" this time of year. He said a lot of the fish will spawn in the grass and around the boat docks.



Photo courtesy MLF/Josh Gassman

Bass like this one made Caney Lake one of Jacob Wheeler's favorites and he said this is a great month to catch a bunch here.

"I would start out looking for spawning areas on the northern end up the creek arms," he said. "I'd start with a 5-inch stick worm and rig it wacky with the hook in the middle. That makes it fall slow and a good twitch will make a bass smash it. It hangs in front of their face longer."

His favorite colors for this type situation are green pumpkin if it is sunny or dark green or brown on a cloudy day.

Jared Lintner said the pockets and flatter creeks down by the dam would be his favorite spot right now.

"Those bass will migrate in there to spawn in the grass and once the weather is stable, they will stay near there a while even after they spawn," he said. "Once you find fish, you have options from chatterbaits, vibrating jigs and swimbaits. Everybody concentrates on the big ones, but it's a great lake to just go catch bass using a wacky worm or Senko around the boat docks and laydowns. If it's a big one you want, don't be afraid to throw a big 5- to 9-inch swimbait. If you've seen the mouths on those huge bass, you know they can eat it with no problem." ■



a smarter  
 more exciting  
 boating experience

2.5hp- 250hp



**TOHATSU**

Feel the Wind™



[www.tohatsu.com](http://www.tohatsu.com)

**LAKE D'ARBONNE >**



the NEW  
**MFS140**

outstanding torque and increased durability  
at an optimized weight of only 392lbs



◀◀ **SCAN ME**

Take our survey to receive your  
FREE Tohatsu promo item!

[www.Tohatsu.com/marine/na/](http://www.Tohatsu.com/marine/na/)



[www.tohatsu.com](http://www.tohatsu.com)

Jared Lintner grabs a big bass by the belly after it hit a purple worm drop shot rig beside a boat house on Lake D'Arbonne.



Photo courtesy MLF

## LAKE D'ARBONNE

Score big by hitting the bullseye on this target-rich lake

By Kinny Haddox

Jared Lintner owned Lake D'Arbonne during the MLF tournament and even though a frigid cold front hit the day before practice and left 20 degree temperatures, he figured out how to catch them. He said the same techniques will work now and he'd love to come back and try the lake under better conditions this month.

"I don't think we even touched the potential of this lake, but it was good for me," he said. He caught 11 bass on Lake D'Arbonne totaling 47 pounds, 5 ounces. His top bait was a 5-inch straight tail purple worm drop shot rig worked slowly around several different types of cover.

"I like the main lake area mainly because I'm stubborn and like to fish like I fish," he said. "I don't like being around a lot of people. I know the northern creeks have a lot of bass, but I like the main lake and the pockets. The fish move up in there and spawn and then stage right out from where they spawn. That Stowe Creek area is a prime example. I would work it and other pockets like that one with a swim jig and flipping little craws and creature type baits up in the brush.

"One thing you have to plan for here this time of year is the wind. Have a plan to be able to fish where you can find some protection on one side or the other."

The fish will probably be in the spawn and a lot of the backwater areas off those creeks is where I'd look, Lintner said.

"Look more toward the shoreline cover and figure out what they like," he said. "If the water is up and you can get a bait in the bushes, go as shallow as you can. If they aren't there, back off a little bit."

That also applies to boat docks, grass lines or cypress trees, he said. He noted there is a lot of brush around boat docks and out in front of them that hold bass.

"This is a target rich environment and the hardest thing is concentrating on what the fish want to be by, not what you think they should be beside," he said. "Flippin and pitching soft plastics is the best way to go here. If it warms up considerably, then moving baits like a slow-rolling spinnerbait or vibrating jig in shad color will work."

Roy has some good advice for figuring out the cypress tree pattern.

"A couple of things you have to remember when it comes to bass and cypress trees this time of the year," he said. "Besides the tree trunk and the roots on the tree, you've also got those cypress knees growing off the bottom all around the tree. Some of them you can see, some you can't. There are also hard clean, hard bottoms around the tree in many cases and that attracts spawning bass. When it's bright sunny, the fish will be right on the tree. When it's early or late or cloudy, those fish will hang out on the shade line a little bit off the tree. Honestly, you have to catch one or two and when you do that, pay attention and just

## BONUS TIP:

During the tournament, Randy Howell from Guntersville, Ala., set the MLF record big bass at Caney Lake with a 10-pound, 11-ounce bass on Wednesday. Then he broke the record again Thursday at Bussey with a 12-pound, 14-ounce bass. It was a catch of a lifetime... twice. His main advice for the big bass havens, Caney and Bussey?

"When you are fishing a big bass lake like these, never give up and always pay attention. Every cast is important," he said. "Both Bussey and Caney have the potential for you to put a double digit bass in the boat anytime you fish there."

"Make sure your gear is ready. And no matter how you fish there, my best advice is to just keep on fishing. Catching those two big ones was like a dream. I mean, did I dream this happened? Fishing keeps us coming back for more because you never know what that next bite could be!" ■



Photo courtesy Randy Howell Fishing

Randy Howell with his Bussey hawg, a 12-pound, 14-ounce lunker that was big bass of the tournament, his personal best and a new Bussey Lake record.

**TOLEDO BEND ➤**

keep doing the same thing."

Wheeler said the shallow flats and areas in the backs of pockets that he refers to as "marshy areas" are prime for spawning fish.

"When you catch fish shallow early, then you can move out to the edges of those spots as the day moves on," Wheeler said. "That's what the bass will do. The key is also to keep up with the bait. Bass will go pretty close to where the bait is. If you get into the shad spawn, any type of shad colored or white frog, drop shot or crankbait will put fish in the boat." ■



### 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

## 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

# PRIME TIME AT TOLEDO BEND

## Shallow cover is key to boating bunches of big bass

**A** By John Dean  
 pril is going to be good for catching bass at Toledo Bend. Mark that down. This is their time of year, prime time, if you will.

I'm ready. I'm more excited by the warmer water than anything — temps in the 70s, perhaps low 80s — after so long with it in the 50s, or lower. That warm-up assures male and female bass will be doing their thing.

What we still haven't had through the winter and into the spring is something badly needed — more water in the pond. Toledo Bend has been holding around 169 feet for a couple months, about three feet below pool. It doesn't look like we're going to get to full pool (172) but it should start climbing if the region gets ample rainfall in late March and April.

The unseasonably low water presents a challenge to bass anglers acclimated over the years to flippin' and pitchin' in and around flooded bushes and vegetation. But there is plenty of cover that just might pay off — the numerous docks up and down the lake. In many places it's the only thing sticking in the water, especially shallow.

### DOCKS AND MORE DOCKS

More and more bassers are concentrating their efforts on those docks, of which there are so many more as they're being built at a mushrooming rate. Most of them have brushpiles for white perch around them, sometimes as many as 20 to 30 brushpiles. Bassmaster Elites and MLF BPT guys have shown the way in various tournaments livestreamed the last few years, skippin' and flippin' docks and their brushtops.

To me, April has always been the strong, most dominant month for springtime bass fishing success. It's a transition month, a different ballgame from the chunk-and-wind of late February and March. The beds are made and it's time for bass to be on them.

It's a time for plastics, plastics and more plastics and the majority of mine will be Carolina-rigged with my favorite old grub or dark-colored Fluke. I'll also have a Rogue tied on, just because, and a wacky rig setup, usually with a Senko.

My Carolina-rigged soft plastic will be thrown on all braid, i.e., no flourocarbon or monofilament leader. It's that time of year, my friend, when double-digit bass historically are caught on this lake.

For that reason, I ain't taking chances! I'll have 40-pound green Power Pro braided line all the way, including a 2 ½ to 3-foot leader under a ½ or ¾-ounce weight on an 8-foot Heavy action fishing rod. I want No. 4 real bad. I really do need No. 4. By that, I mean my personal fourth 10-plus-pound bass. That 40 is perfect for the job.

### HIT THE DITCHES AND RIDGES

I feel I'll have my best chance at a double-digit bass again this

This 8-pound-plus bass fell for a Carolina-rigged Fluke on Alexandria bass angler Jack Godfrey's last cast while fishing with John Dean on Toledo Bend.



month in 7- to 8-foot depths along ditches and ridges near breaklines. I believe the majority of bigger bites will be outside, although there are some big mamas in the 3 to 5 foot depths. Sure, there are bass in the backs of creeks and drains and along the banks, but those areas are getting hammered. I try to get out as much as I can by myself or with customers, away from the crowd but still with a good chance to get bit.

It wasn't long ago this time of year that I had a chance at No. 4, one I estimated in the 12-pound class. It clamped down on the skin-hooked Fluke I was throwing on a C-rig while fishing a ridge away from Bassmaster Elite Series anglers pre-fishing in May 2016. Most of them were beating the banks but, luckily for me, the bass showed up on that ridge. Apparently the bass clamped its jaws tight on the Fluke, never getting hooked and ejected the soft plastic on its third head shake. I'll never forget that fish.

Heading into the spring, we are seeing some scattered areas of hydrilla in Blue Lake above Pendleton Bridge on the Louisiana side and in the back of Housen. It's some short stuff that I've been seeing predominantly in drains only.

Most of the cover actually in the water, aside from docks old and new, is far north in and around Circle Drive, where flippin' has been successful for weeks. Other than that and the aforementioned grass, there is very little to throw at bushes or vegetation wise. So what's a bass fisherman, or bass fisherwoman, to do? Best bet is find a ditch or drain that serves as a migratory route close to a breakline. Start in the deeper part of the drain and fish toward the breakline, keeping an eye on your marine electronics.

Like I said, I'll throw a Carolina-rigged grub or Fluke most of the time when I'm targeting outside waters, staying in 7- to 8-foot depths for bites from bigger bass that tend to be a little deeper.

Put these on the top shelf of your tackle box. Senkos. Trick worms. Fluke-style baits. Tie them on. Watermelon/red, green pumpkin/red, June bug and black are the most popular colors now.

I've been guiding on this lake most of my life and you're welcome in my boat. April should offer a good chance to catch some really nice Toledo Bend bass and especially a bragging-size bass. Give me a call at (936) 404-2688. ■

**BASS CLASS >**

# WIN BIG AT THE

# BIG-BASS SPLASH

Benefitting  
St Jude Children's Research Hospital®



## SAM RAYBURN, TX April 22-23-24, 2022

### \$550,000 GUARANTEED CASH & PRIZES

HOURLY CASH PAYOUTS,  
PHOENIX BASS BOATS  
POWERED BY MERCURY,  
RAM TRUCKS AND MUCH MORE!

**\$2,500**  
HEAVIEST BASS  
15 Places Paid  
Each Hour



Prizes awarded may not be identically awarded as pictured.

## LAKE TOLEDO BEND, LA May 20-21-22, 2022

### \$500,000 GUARANTEED CASH & PRIZES



LOWRANCE



SHIMANO



OFFICIAL ENGINE

Learn More @ 888-698-2591 (M-F 9-5 CST) Register @ sealyoutdoors.com



## DENHAM SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL ANGLERS ARE AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME

**S**enior Blake Verberne and sophomore Caleb Roblin of Denham Springs High School have established themselves as heavyweights in high school fishing in Louisiana.

They are cruising down the stretch of their second and last year teaming together in Louisiana High School B.A.S.S. Nation and MLF High School Fishing.

Verberne, whose parents, Ricky and Mindy Butler, are his biggest supporters, began fishing mostly redfish with his dad, occasionally bass in brackish marsh.

"That's what I did. There wasn't any redfish tournaments but there are bass tournaments," he said. He focused on learning how to fish for bass.

"Everything I know is self-taught. I spent many, many hours throwing jigs in red solo cups," he said.

His interest didn't wane one bit after his first tournament experience.

"My very first tournament, me and my dad got stuck on a

Denham Springs High School's Caleb Roblin, left, and Blake Verberne, right, catch bass and collect winnings much of the time when they're with their veteran captain, Roblin's "Paw Paw" Randall Richardson of Denham Springs.

sandbar practice day AND the day of the tournament. I've been hooked ever since," he said.

His skills and talents improved after his first year of competitive bass fishing.

"My freshman year I was new to the tournament scene and trying to figure it all out," he said.

Verberne, 18, learned how to fish the bayous, lakes and swamps around the family camp on Belle River, then ventured to the Manchac area, Henderson Lake, Bayou Segnette and Toledo Bend.

Highlights followed as he qualified for state tournaments as a sophomore and a junior. His accomplishments led to learning other waters such as Lake Chicamauga, Harris Chain of Lakes and Lake Cumberland, which he likened to fishing in a bathtub because of its gin clear water, among others.

When Verberne started fishing high school bass tournaments for DHS, he said, "I took it as pretty much a job. I'd take off work, I'd take off everything I could. I gave it my all. I either failed miserably or I'd succeed, no matter the conditions."

Now he's working part-time selling trolling motors at Bass Pro Shops and enjoying his senior year fishing tournaments with Roblin. What about his future? He pretty much decided that last December.

"Two months ago I actually said, 'Yeah, I plan on getting a life

insurance license and sell life insurance.' But if I do get a full ride (to college) I might as well," he said, noting he also has been getting his feet wet on Major League Fishing's Toyota Series circuit.

The first two-man team from Denham Springs High School to qualify for a national tournament, after triple qualifying for the state tournament, Verberne and Roblin fished nationals at Lake Chickamauga in July 2021. Roblin also qualified for nationals in the Junior Division in 2017 and 2020.

With two regular-season tournaments remaining on the LHSBN schedule for 2021-22, Verberne and Roblin already qualified for the state tournament April 30-May 1 on the Ouachita River out of Monroe.

Verberne, whose favorite artificial lure is a watermelon/red Zoom Speed Craw, closely followed by spinnerbaits and drop-shotted soft plastics, likes their chances because they complement each other.

"I tell you what," Verberne said. "Caleb's the best frog fisherman I ever met. It's inhuman the way he can fish a frog. It's crazy. He catches giant fish."

How giant? Roblin slammed home the steel while setting the hooks of a plastic frog skipped far under a dock along Belle River to boat an 8.63-pounder in 2021 during a Junior Southwest Bassmasters of Denham Springs tournament out of Amelia. It smashed the record for biggest bass in the club's storied history.

The respect for each other's skills and talents is mutual.

Roblin said about Verberne, "That sonuvagun right there, I've had a lot of partners over the years, he's the best one I ever fished with. He's somebody I can count on. We've been like brothers. We fish really, really good together."

Their chemistry is evident with each bass dropped in the livewell. If one of them might be struggling, the other's stroking the bass, Roblin said.

Roblin, the son of Mike and Danielle Roblin, plans to go to college and, perhaps, focus on business and finance, he said.

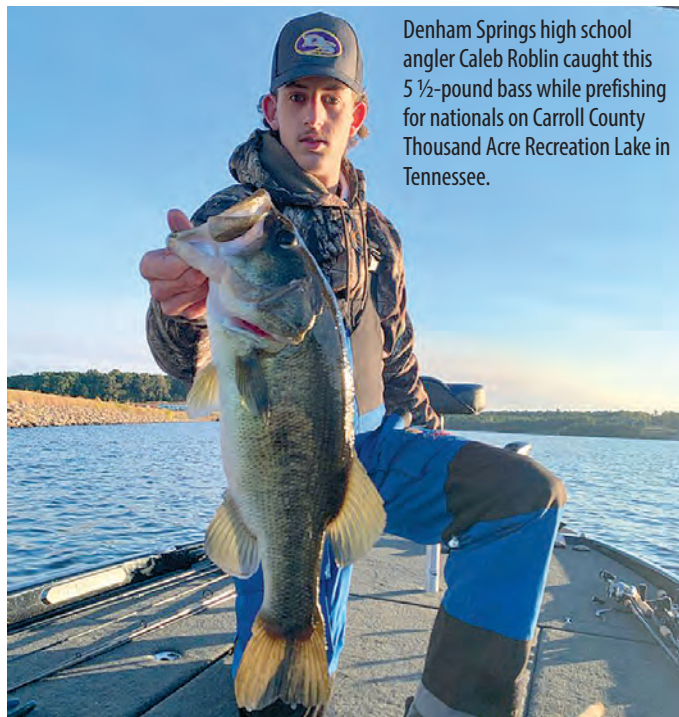
"If I get a fair enough scholarship, I'll probably fish," he said. "(But) I'm going to be focusing on things to do the rest of my life, making a living,

"I'll try to fish (Bassmaster) Opens and what not. Try to make it fishing."

And why not?

"Fishing. That's all I do, what I live and breathe. Turkey hunting, deer hunting and bass fishing, that's all I do," said the three-time King Fisherman in the Junior Southwest Bassmasters of Denham Springs. He won those titles at ages 9, 12 and 15.

Denham Springs high school angler Caleb Roblin caught this 5 1/2-pound bass while prefishing for nationals on Carroll County Thousand Acre Recreation Lake in Tennessee.



Roblin's bass fishing history goes back to his early boyhood days fishing with his "paw paw," Randall Richardson of Denham Springs. Richardson has captained his grandson and Verberne the past two years.



# Covers Unlimited

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

**Custom Pool Covers**

**Proud Distributor of Eagle Carports**

**LOUISIANA'S CUSTOM CANVAS LEADER**

225-261-4057

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



Good friends and fishing buddies Blake Verberne, left, and Caleb Roblin of Denham Springs High School are one of the top bass fishing teams in the Sportsman's Paradise.

"I grew up fishing with him," Roblin said. "I started fishing tournaments when I was 8. I've been fishing my whole life. I first had a rod in my hand when I was about 1 ½ and caught my first fish at age 2 or 3.

Roblin, who celebrated his 16th birthday on Feb. 16, was in a boat long before that.

"Paw paw tells me the story I was 10, 11 months old and he took me across the lake (Lake Verret) to the Crackerhead," he said.

How'd he get so proficiently "froggy" with his bassin' game?

"To be honest with you, every year we'd have a two-day tournament at Lake Concordia. The first two years I was terrible," he said.

A friend, Hanson Chaney of Walker, consistently "smacked" bass on a plastic frog by skipping it under docks and branches while pre-fishing around Lake Concordia. Roblin tried it one day while his grandfather was taking a nap and caught a 3 ½-pounder. But he never got another bite until he went out with his paw paw on a sunny day and skipped the bogus frog under cover to coax a 4 ½-pounder to bite and a little later got his hands on a solid 3.

"The tournament comes around and I found the reeds had shad on them," he said. "In the first hour we had 18 pounds, a 5-4 and a couple of 4s. After that I was hooked on it (catching bass on a plastic frog, either a Spro Dean Rojas Signature Series or a Jackall Kaera Frog)." ■

## ADVANTAGES OF A METAL ROOF

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



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

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



■ By Kinny Haddox

**TEAM STEWART  
HAS FOUND THE  
KEYS TO CATCHING  
MONSTER CRAPPIE.**

# GUARDIANS OF THE CRAPPIE WATERS



## WHEN IT COMES TO CATCHING CRAPPIE,

very few have a better command of the situation than Terry Stewart, an angler with “home” ties to Louisiana and Mississippi and both of the state’s famous big crappie waters.

Stewart, like most people, started out bass fishing and he loved it. But shortly after moving to Clinton, Miss., he found out about the monster crappie in Ross Barnett and other lakes in the region. After catching a bunch and frying them up, he changed teams. And he also loves to fish on Lake D’Arbonne near his former hometown, West Monroe, La.

Stewart has been crappie fishing for about 20 years. He has done it for fun (and supper). He has guided dozens of others on successful trips. And in recent years, he has teamed with rotating family members — wife Tonya, son Cole and daughter Terra — to take home more than his share of professional tournament trophies. In fact, you could say that Team Stewart has command of many events they fish.

That should be no surprise. “Stewart” is an old Scottish surname meaning “guardian” or “warden” and their fishing prowess keeps them locking up livewells full of crappie consistently. They not only catch crappie on a regular basis, but they catch monster slabs others only dream of.

### TWIN 3.83 SLABS

The best example of that was in a tournament on Lake Grenada where they weighed seven fish totaling 21.17 pounds, including twin 3.83 pound slabs. Yes, two of them.

If catching big crappie is on your bucket list, Terry has some good advice, especially if you are fishing big reservoirs in this region this time of year.

“The main thing about fishing this time of year is don’t get locked in thinking all the crappie are in one depth of water or one type of water,” he said. “D’Arbonne and other lakes in northeast Louisiana are a prime example of that. Fish will be out on the edge of the channel in 20 feet of water. They’ll be on the flats in 10 feet of water. And they’ll be up staging in five or six feet of water or even still in two feet of water around the cypress trees. And here’s the key. Some will be in all those spots on the lake on the same day. They don’t all do the same thing at the same time.”



**RIGHT:** Most people never catch a 3.83-pound crappie in their lives, but Terry Stewart caught two on the same day at Grenada Lake. **BELOW, RIGHT:** Stewart with the kind of slab crappie that should make anyone pay attention to his advice. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Terry Stewart, left, and daughter Terra caught these slabs on Crappie G jigs on Lake D'Arbonne.



Stewart is a firm believer that even in the best days of the spawn, fish move in and out from staging areas to the beds. And while some people think the spawn is over by now, he said that isn't the case.

"Sure, most of the females have probably laid their eggs by now in most of the lakes, but it varies," he said. "But the males will be up in there guarding the nests until the fingerlings hatch and get out of there. And it happens over a three-month period. After they lay their eggs, females may still hang out near the shallow water nests as well."

## A UNIQUE LESSON

One of the most unique things Stewart has learned from personal experience and from talking to other experts is the fact that sometimes the males will move in shallow and make the nests. Then they will go out and find the big females and escort them to the nest. That makes sense, he said, because how else would they find it? He said he and others have seen on their sonar units smaller males swimming toward the shallows with large females right behind them.

Learning more about crappie every year helps them stay consistent in their catching. And he suggests the same for others.

"Never think you know everything about it or it will keep you from catching a lot of fish," Stewart said. "Keep learning. Do what you know how to do best. But also try new things."

Stewart fishes with all kinds of baits. He used to rely mostly on shiners, but also used a lot of jigs with plastic tails. He still does. But his new favorite has become hair jigs. If he could only take one lure with him, it would be the Crappie G hair jigs made by Greg Davis in Tullos, La. He doesn't have one favorite color, but likes silver or dark gray jigs sometimes and darker jigs with green sometimes. He even has Davis make up some special order jigs from time to time when he thinks a certain color will work.

And Stewart said just like with the "where" in crappie fishing, you shouldn't get locked in on the "how" either.

"Seriously, when the bite is good, a kindergartener can drop a bait down there close to one and catch it," he said. "But most of the time it isn't that way. There's usually something going on this time of year that can tend to slow the bite up. It can be a lot of rain, wind, a cold front...anything. Lure presentation has as much to do with it as anything else. Sometimes you can ease the jig slowly over a crappie's head and he'll nail it. Sometimes you have to bounce it

around a little bit and then other times, you just have to hold it as still as possible while it makes up its mind to bite or not."



*Kinny Haddox has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 47 years. He and his wife, DiAnne, live in West Monroe.*

## LISTEN TO THE FISH >

## LISTEN TO THE FISH

More than once, Stewart said he has been schooled by other anglers in the boat because they were doing something different and he was slow to catch on. That also applies to the size of a bait. If you fish a certain lure or technique without a bite for 30 minutes or they are hitting short, switch up. Change colors. Change size. Or change the way you present it. A good rule of thumb is that when fish are sluggish, go smaller and slower with the lure and presentation.

“It’s like any kind of fishing,” he said. “You can fish the way you want to and hope to catch some. Or you can present it to the fish the way they want it and catch them. Those who let the fish show them what they want usually are the ones with fish in the livewell.”

## CHOOSING A ROD

There are now more crappie rods on the market than ever before in the history of the sport. And Stewart thinks that picking the right one for your fishing is ultra important.

“A lot of people are going to rods with stout backbones where they can just boat flip two pounders in the boat,” he said. “That may work, but I’ve seen a lot of those same people lose fish on the way up because they are pulling them too hard. I love to fish B’n’M poles because they have enough backbone, but they also have good action throughout the rod and you aren’t going to pull so hard you lose them. The limber part of the poles



allows for a lot of feel. That’s huge in crappie fishing.”

The Stewarts are sponsored by B’n’M poles, Thump Crappieco, Crappie G jigs, Palmer Custom Baits, Elite Optical, Pro Built and Garmin Fish & Hunt. ■

Crappie G hair jigs like these are Stewart’s go-to lure for big crappie this time of the year.

## SOME THINGS CHANGE; SOME DON'T >



**CRESTLINER  
XF 189**

**GREENWELL SPRINGS**  
*Marine*

225-273-4853 • Fax 225-273-4762  
12014 GREENWELL SPRINGS RD  
BATON ROUGE  
MONDAY - FRIDAY: 8 AM - 5 PM





**STIHL**

# TAKE CHARGE OF THE OUTDOORS

---

## STEP INTO THE SEASON WITH STIHL

Whether you are prepping for a duck blind or clearing space for a deer stand, you can find the tools you need for a successful season at your authorized local STIHL Dealer.

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

Always wear the proper protective apparel as shown in your instruction manual when operating STIHL equipment. ©2022 STIHL/SSW

## SOME THINGS CHANGE; SOME THINGS DON'T

Terry Stewart runs the lab for Elite Optical, so vision is part of his everyday life. And so is what he sees in the world of catching crappie: Some things change. Some things don't.

"There's no doubt that the new electronics has changed the crappie fishing game more than anything else," Stewart said. "Live sonar is an absolute necessity to compete in crappie tournaments unless something really odd is going on. I'm not saying you can't catch fish without it, but if you are just keying on seven big fish, it's the only way to go."

The live sonar also lets anglers see what fish are doing even when they won't bite. Another thing that has changed is the new anglers that are crappie fishing and really, the two are tied together.

"We used to consider it an old man's sport, but it is not anymore," he said. "There are a bunch of young guns out there who are so good with the electronics that it's just like they are playing a video game. They don't have the history of fishing like guys like me, but they have the knowledge to catch them with the new technology. And they are hard to beat."

The number of crappie fishermen has changed, too. Stewart said there's no way to even estimate what the percentage of increase is, but it's tremendous. And there are new folks taking up the sport every day.

So what hasn't changed?

"That's an easy one. Mother Nature," he said. "Just about when we think we are in charge, she proves different with all kinds of curve balls. If you just get to fish on the weekends this time of year, it's a matter of whether she's going to let you or not. Wind is the biggest problem along with late cold fronts."

Another thing that hasn't changed is the part that patience plays in catching crappie. Many say it's a lost virtue, but you better find it for crappie fishing.

"I've fished half a day and not caught enough to fry for supper, then found a spot the last hour and caught fish as fast as I could," he said. "The key is to have patience. Even if you are on fish and they won't bite, come back later and give them another try." ■

Terry Stewart, right, and Cole Stewart with a set of Lake D'Arbonne slab crappie.



### HOW SPORTSMEN COOK >



## Sizzling Hot Deals From Suzuki's Summer

# SPLASH

### Sales Event





5 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY\*



REPOWER FINANCE

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



**504-682-5252**

[www.tims-marine.com](http://www.tims-marine.com)

\*REPOWER FINANCE is a financing program for the purchase of new, registered 2021 outboard motors only. Subject to credit approval. Rates as low as 5.99% are subject to credit review. Interest rates are based on financing terms, credit score, and other factors. See dealer for details. 5 Year Limited Warranty is based on financing terms. See dealer for details. © 2021 Suzuki Marine, Inc. All rights reserved. Always wear your seat belt and drink responsibly. Always wear your seat belt and drink responsibly.

## FOR SALE: 80 ACRES

# Winn Parish

Great access. +/- 31 acres pine plantation with remainder in bottomland hardwood, located south of Winnfield, LA.



**Baker  
Agri-Forest  
Properties**

A Limited Liability Company  
318-473-8751

[bakeragproperties.com](http://bakeragproperties.com)

## **FRIED FISH CAKES**

USE YOUR FAVORITE FRESH FISH FOR A TWIST ON THIS TRADITIONAL DISH

**T**hese cakes are similar to crab cakes. They make for either an excellent appetizer or even a main course meal. I typically serve these cakes over a bed of lettuce with a side of dipping sauce. Your normal crawfish dipping sauce will work or if you prefer, a remoulade or tartar sauce each work very well. On occasion, I will make sandwiches with these cakes. Just add mayonnaise and lettuce on the bun of your choice to finish it off. Since the fish is already cooked through poaching, you only need to fry to your perfect color. No need to worry about cooking it throughout.





## INGREDIENTS:

- 12 medium fish filets (sac-a-lait, redfish, or speckled trout)
- 3 cups of water
- 1 cap full liquid Zatarains crab boil
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons HuntChef seasoning
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon plain bread crumbs
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- 2 cups vegetable oil

## SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Cast iron skillet for frying
- Large mixing bowl
- Paper towels

### TIP!

Crab, shrimp, or crawfish can also be substituted for the fish.

Just looking at these fish cakes cooking in the cast iron skillet is enough to make anybody hungry.

## PREPARATION: Serves 2

1. Poach fish filets in simmering water and crab boil for 4 minutes.
2. Remove the fish from the water, pat dry with paper towels, and allow to cool to room temperature.
3. Using two forks, shred the fish fillets into manageable lumps.
4. Combine fish, mayonnaise, mustard, egg, plain bread crumbs, and seasoning in a large bowl.
5. Form 4 patties using a handful of fish mixture.
6. Layer the panko bread crumbs in a shallow dish.
7. Coat each fish cake by gently patting them into the panko crumbs.
8. Refrigerate the cakes for 20 minutes so that they come together.
9. Heat vegetable oil to 350 degrees in cast iron skillet.
10. Cook each cake until golden brown.
11. Remove and place on paper towels to let drain.



**Jason Thornton** was born and raised hunting, fishing, trapping, foraging and gardening in south Louisiana. His personal belief is that all of nature's ingredients are better if you have to work for them. He can be found at [EdibleOutdoorsCook.com](http://EdibleOutdoorsCook.com).



**LOUISIANA'S  
STATE PARKS**

■ By Kinny Haddox

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Louisiana's State Park system is vast and varied like the Sportsman's Paradise itself. This is one installment in a Louisiana Sportsman series showcasing their facilities and appeal. Learn more at <https://www.lastateparks.com>.

# AROUND THE BEND

IT'S A BIG LAKE WITH TWO STATE PARKS

**THIS MONTH'S FEATURED STOPS:**

NORTH TOLEDO BEND  
AND SOUTH TOLEDO BEND

**E**ven in their wildest imaginations, when Texas Governor Price Daniel and Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis dipped shovels into the sandy bottom at the Toledo Bend ground breaking ceremony in 1961, they couldn't have pictured what the massive lake would be like one day.

There was already water creeping up in the lake then, waters which would in a few years swell to 185,000 acres. Tons of fish have been caught. Hundreds of thousands of hours of fun have been had. And the party is still going on.

Two good places to enjoy this magnificent man-made treasure on the Louisiana - Texas border are at the North Toledo Bend State Park near Zwolle and the South Toledo Bend State Park near Anacoco.

Toledo Bend is the largest man-made body of water in the South, and the fifth largest in surface acres in the United States. From the dam site, the reservoir extends 65 miles upriver to Logansport. It's got wide open water, stumpy flats, quiet, shallow coves and everything in between for any kind of fishing and boating activity.

Camping in the piney woods along the shores is about as peaceful a place as you can find. Fishing here is world renowned, not only for recreational anglers, but for professionals who gather from around the country and fish in big-money tournaments here almost all year long.

## NORTH TOLEDO BEND

North Toledo Bend State Park covers 900 acres and is located west of the town of Zwolle, Louisiana at the end of La. Hwy. 3229.

A boat launch with a double ramp, a large parking lot, boat rentals, and a fish cleaning station, provides access to the reservoir. Fishing, swimming, boating, hiking, picnicking, and relaxing — all of these activities and more are yours to enjoy at North Toledo Bend State Park.

Campers love the quiet, woody camping area. There are camping sites, cabins and more than 60 RV pads in the park. Available day-use facilities include a meeting room which can be reserved for group functions, a full size swimming pool with restrooms for the summer season, and a laundry with all the conveniences for a long or short stay in the park. Nearby are entrances to two hiking/biking trails — a 1.5-mile loop and a more demanding 4-mile loop.

## BEAUTY AND PRIVACY

Mixed pine and hardwood forest covers most of the park. It is widely recognized as one of the best state park designs in the system because of the beauty and privacy offered in the

Getting away from it all means different things to different people, but a chance to just sit and relax at a Toledo Bend North campsite in the state park is hard to beat. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Big bass like these lunkers landed on a Living the Dream Guide Service trip keep anglers coming back to Toledo Bend.



**STATE PARKS:  
NORTH TOLEDO BEND, SOUTH TOLEDO BEND**

RV area.

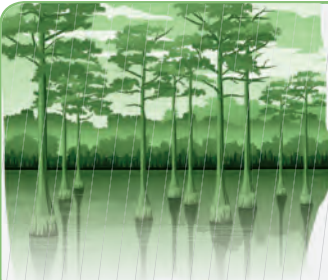
But it is the fishing that brings most folks to Toledo Bend and the state park. One person who knows the lake from one end to the other is lake resident Jerry Thompson of Living the Dream Guide Service.

“Toledo Bend is one of a kind for bass and crappie fishing,” he said. “We have people from all over the country come here and fish. The lake has just about anything anyone wants as far as fishing. The north end is more shallower water and some flatter areas. The river channel and the deep creeks are there, but the coves and flats offer some of the best fishing.”

Thompson said fishing is good all year long here, you just have to vary where you go and what you fish with. He also said cat-fishing is good over the entire lake.



**SOUTH TOLEDO BEND >**



**NORTH TOLEDO BEND STATE PARK**

2907 N Toledo Park Rd.  
Zwolle, LA 71486  
318-645-4715  
toledobend@crt.la.gov

**SOUTH TOLEDO BEND STATE PARK**

120 Bald Eagle  
Anacoco, LA 71403  
337-286-9075  
southtoledobend@crt.la.gov

**YOUR SKEETER HEADQUARTERS!**

**IT'S FISHING TIME!**

**2022 Skeeter ZXR 20**



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

**CAJUNOUTBOARDS.COM**



## **SOUTH TOLEDO BEND**

The South Toledo Bend State Park is located off La. Hwy. 191 south of the town of Negreet, about 30 miles north of Leesville. Located on the big open portion of the lake, it has several small bluffs that extend over and into the reservoir offering a scenic, waterfront view. While the reservoir is nationally recognized as a destination for bass fishing tournaments, visitors to the park can also enjoy other outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, cycling, birding, camping and enjoying the many forms of wildlife in the area.

One important notice for those who plan to visit here. The South Toledo Bend park has been closed since the first of the year for much-needed maintenance and road repair. It will reopen sometime in late May, 2022, according to park officials. Make sure and get the latest updates before planning your trip here.

Camping is a favorite activity here as well. One interesting camping experience here is “glamping.” That is a combination of “glamorous” and “camping” — sleeping in a big tent, but one

with a real bed, heater, fan and all kind of amenities. There are several “glamping” sites in the park as well as cabins, regular campsites and more than 50 RV sites, many with views right on the water.

### **EAGLES AND MORE**

The area is a common nesting ground for bald eagles. Fish like largemouth bass, catfish, bream and crappie (white perch) are also popular here as well. Fishermen can set out onto the reservoir at the two-lane boat ramp area and come home with a freshly-caught dinner.

Again, we turn to Thompson for some expert fishing advice. “The fishing actually picks up early in the year a bit sooner on the south end because if the weather does change, the fish have quicker access to get back to deeper water;” he said. “The fishing is just as good here as it is on the north end. It’s just different.



**Kinny Haddox** has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 47 years. He and his wife, DiAnne, live in West Monroe.



You just have to concentrate more on deep water areas like points and dropoffs. We used to have a lot of grass, but the lake is going through a cycle right now where there isn't much. They are working on getting that back."

The park is also popular with those who enjoy riding on off-highway vehicles. An exceptional OHV trail is available for visitors at an additional fee.

Two parks is always better than one and if there's any place in the state that could use them, it's the massive Toledo Bend. The two parks are actually 30 miles away from each other as the crow flies (much further by road) and, while they are similar in their facilities and habitat, there are also differences. Check them out and see which one would be best for you to visit. ■

### GROW YOUR OWN BAITS >

Taking a leisurely bike ride lets campers see all kinds of woods and wildlife while spending a quiet weekend at the lake at Toledo Bend South.



**“** The fishing actually picks up early in the year a bit sooner on the south end because if the weather does change, the fish have quicker access to get back to deeper water.

## 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**

**TAKE CHARGE OF THE OUTDOORS**

— STEP INTO THE SEASON WITH STIHL

Whether you are prepping for a duck blind or clearing space for a deer stand, you can find the tools you need for a successful season at your authorized local STIHL Dealer.

Real STIHL. Find Yours at [STIHLDEALERS.COM](http://STIHLDEALERS.COM)

Always wear the proper protective apparel as shown in your instruction manual when operating STIHL equipment. ©2022 STIHL/SSW

Catalpa worms are gold for fishing. Little ones are just right, but you just need to pinch off a piece of a big one for bream or crappie. **INSET:** This wiggly nightcrawler is destined to go bream fishing and is one of the best baits you can find.



# GROW YOUR OWN BAITS

THE FISH LOVE THEM AND YOU WILL LOVE DOING IT, TOO.

**W** By Bradley G. Williams  
hen it comes to catching fish, nothing works consistently quite as well as live bait.

This comes as no surprise to most of us. Artificial baits are, in a word, "artificial." If we know that, sometimes the fish do, too.

Everyone has been on those fishing trips when the fish could be caught on just about any bait thrown in the water. Those are good times. More often than not, however, fish are selective and kind of picky about what they put in their mouths. That brings us back to using live bait.

For those occasions when live bait is the only thing the fish are biting, you have a couple of options. Grab your wallet and visit the local bait shop or plan ahead and grow your own bait! Growing your own bait is easy and really doesn't require much effort. Save yourself time and money on your next fishing trip.

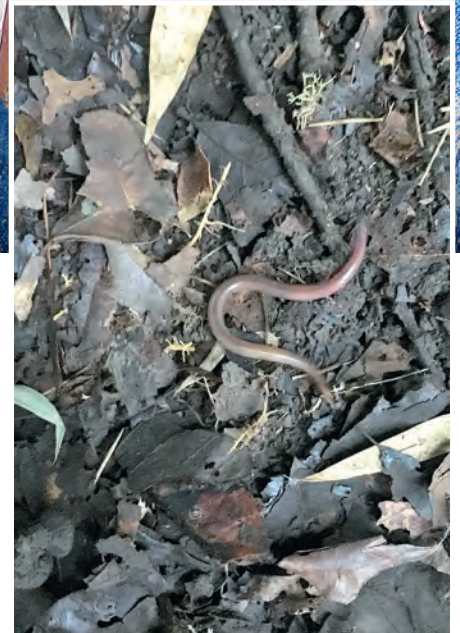
First and foremost, every angler needs a worm bed. Let's be clear, I'm not suggesting that you build one to help the worms sleep better. This is in reference to a

compost pile on the edge of your yard or in a shaded area where the ground stays moist. If done right, native earthworms will naturally take up residence in your compost pile.

## GIVE THEM A GOOD START

With that said, you always have the option of giving them a head start by placing some good quality worms in the compost pile so that they will multiply. Either way you will have worms.

So what makes good compost material? Leaves, corn shucks and vegetable scraps from the garden all make excellent compost. Just keep in mind that worms like damp, moist places so locate your worm bed accordingly. Also, your compost material should be placed thick enough so that as the material begins to decompose, it creates a layer adjacent to the natural ground that is cool, moist, and rich in organics. This organic layer next to the natural ground is where you will find most of your worms.



Secondly, every serious angler needs a catalpa tree of his own, or at least one he has access to. The catalpa tree and its resident worms are a wonder of nature as far as I'm concerned.

As participants in an annual ritual, these hungry yellow and black worms emerge from the ground and appear on the tree leaves. These worms gorge themselves until all of the leaves are completely gone, becoming big, fat and juicy in the process. Remember, don't wait too long to collect your bait from the tree. When all the leaves are gone, these weary participants will return underground to begin the cycle again.

Bradley Williams checks a streamside catalpa tree to see if the worms are on the leaves yet.



## A PINCH WILL DO

Most knowledgeable bream or white perch (crappie) fisherman can tell you about this kind of bait. If you haven't tried fishing with catalpa worms, you have missed out. Because these worms grow to a fairly large size, all you may need is a pinch off of a worm to catch a fish. Although they are very messy and your hands will be green with the juice they will squirt on you, it will be well worth your while when you are pulling in fish after fish. The best way to obtain a catalpa tree is to find a young catalpa tree in the woods, perhaps on the creek bank, and dig it up. Don't forget to protect the root ball and keep it moist until you can set it out on your property.

Catalpa worms can be used for bream, crappie and catfish.

Finally, if you have the time or the inclination, much bait can be found in the wake of a passing lawnmower.

Crickets, grasshoppers, and katydids are all excellent bait for bream, bass, and white perch. All you need to grow these insects is grass. If you live in the country or have a big yard, have someone follow the lawnmower or bush hog with the cricket cage. I normally do not discriminate as to what kind of bait I collect when following the mower.

Crickets work well for bream. With regard to grasshoppers, be a little more selective. I only keep the tender green ones. Most fish don't care much for a tough brown grasshopper. For big bass, don't pass up the chance to catch a big green katydid. Putting a big green katydid on your hook almost certainly means hauling

in another nice sized bass. They just can't stand it! The katydid will flutter its wings and struggle as it sinks below the water. Most bass will not pass this up, so be ready.

So when the fishing gets tough this summer don't forget about the opportunities that you have to collect bait right around your house. Having a variety of live bait at your disposal will certainly help you catch more fish especially when nothing else will work. ■

# LOCKED & LOADED

Gear up for slabs with Millennium Marine's Spyderlok Rod Holders and Transport rack. Millennium's Spyderlok Rod Transport Rack keeps up to eight fishing rigs separated, secure, and ready for action. Spyderlok Rod Holders provide for ultimate rod position customization to keep you in the zone.



R-100 GEN2/R-200 SINGLE  
**SPYDERLOK**



R-300 ROD  
TRANSPORT RACK



MILLENNIUMMARINE.COM

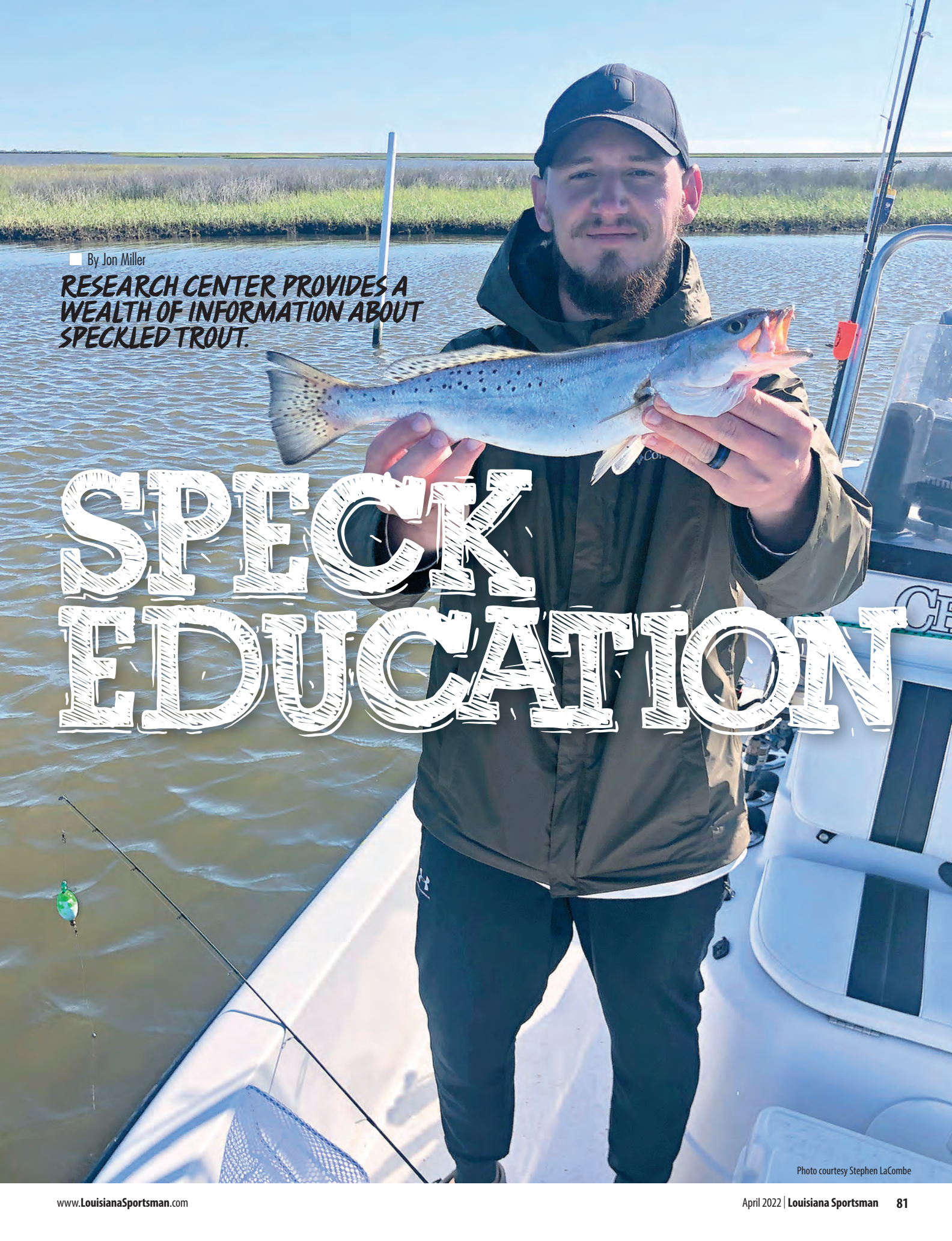


## Explore the outdoors at Louisiana State Parks

“Whether you enjoy hiking the trails at Fontainebleau, kayaking at Chicot, cycling and horseback riding at Bogue Chitto, Louisiana State Parks has something for you. Go to [www.LaStateParks.com](http://www.LaStateParks.com), to start planning your Louisiana Staycation today.”

– *Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser*





■ By Jon Miller

**RESEARCH CENTER PROVIDES A WEALTH OF INFORMATION ABOUT SPECKLED TROUT.**

# SPECKLED EDUCATION

Photo courtesy Stephen LaCombe

# Good fishermen are always eager to learn.

Recently my buddy and fellow speckled trout enthusiast, Don Balius, and I went to the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory of the University of Southern Mississippi in Ocean Springs, Miss., to see what else we could learn about speckled trout.

At the lab, we met Hatchery Manager Angelos Apeitos, a fisheries biologist who can divulge speckled trout knowledge like water from a firehose. Angelos is also an avid speckled trout angler, so he was uniquely positioned to expand our knowledge about Louisiana's favorite fish.

The GCRL is a modern facility not uncommon in appearance to many industrial facilities. Its buildings are filled with dozens of large tanks, which are roughly the size and shape of above ground swimming pools. Standing like sentinels alongside each tank are engineered systems which regulate the water quality and guard the fish from sickness and death. These GCRL developed systems recirculate the tank water through devices to remove oils, ammonia, nitrates, and toxic compounds, add oxygen, kill harmful micro-organisms and regulate water temperature.

In these ideal waters, they can breed, incubate and grow out

fish and other aquatic organism, including spotted sea trout, red drum, tripletail, flounder and blue crabs. At another campus on Davis Bayou, we toured their oyster hatchery, where they breed oysters and sell the larva when it is ready to attach itself to hard surfaces like reefs. These pediveliger stage oysters are sold to the DNR for coastal restoration and to private oyster farms.

## FISH LAB

This facility is not an aquarium. It is a laboratory for developing mechanical, chemical and biological processes. This knowledge is transferred to private aquaculture companies so that the fish species we like to catch and consume can be farm raised and bought in the supermarket, thus protecting the wild fish. In a perfect world, this type of high quality aquaculture would take commercial harvest pressure off of the wild fish stocks and leave more fish for anglers to catch. In the case of Louisiana, this seemed particularly obvious to me as I interacted with a very friendly red snapper living in the lobby's



GCRL develops aquaculture systems that allow inshore species to be grown in tanks. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Biologist Bradley DeLeon showing oysters bred and grown at the Davis Bayou campus which are sold to private farms and to the DNR for coastal restoration.



demonstration tank.

If you are wondering how healthy a trout or redfish would be having been raised in a swimming pool, let me assure you that we saw some impressive specimens gliding around in the tanks. At the bull redfish tank, we were warned away from getting our hands near the surface of the water, and a few pieces of cut bait thrown in left me and my camera gear drenched with saltwater. The tank for the oversized speckled trout held fish larger than 99% of us will ever pull over a gunnel. Angelos estimated that one of them could be 16 pounds, thus raising my only real criticism of the tour. Angelos did not let us fish in the trout tank.

The GCRL also serves as a hatchery for restocking programs along the Gulf Coast. They can take brood trout from anywhere, breed them, and in 25 days can produce half a million 1 inch fry from a tank of 20 brood fish. The restocking programs typically release trout that are 1 inch in length, so the hatchery could produce millions of stockers in one summer from just one tank.

### SPECKLED TROUT SPAWNING >



Jon Miller is an engineer, lifetime fisherman, and host of the YouTube channel Jon Miller Fishing.

# ENTER TO WIN A 2022 VEXUS AVX1980CC BOAT



\$50 PER TICKET!

ENTER NOW AT [WWW.LPB.ORG/BOAT](http://WWW.LPB.ORG/BOAT)  
OR CALL OR TEXT "RAFFLE" TO (888) 769-5000

LPB PBS




## SPECKLED TROUT SPAWNING

The people at GCRL are experts in breeding speckled trout, so they have knowledge that could not be reasonably captured by observers of wild trout. One of the topics Angelos talked about was the spawning patterns of speckled trout.

“Sea trout spawn at dusk, or one hour after dusk,” he said. “In the GCRL tanks, the lights are shut off at night and if we have a good spawning tank, and you come in at 9 p.m., you can hear the males drumming, especially the males that are 18 inches to 20 inches. It sounds like a pump that is drawing in air. In the wild they do the same thing.”

It is helpful for anglers to understand speckled trout spawning behaviors. For instance, they feed aggressively before spawning and will school up in a particular area. Angelos explained that in the GCRL tanks, “the trout spawning tank water temperature is kept in the 80’s. If they don’t start spawning after being added to the spawning tank, we can get a spawning response by upping the intensity of the artificial lights in the tanks, upping the water temperature, and then dropping both conditions. This can cause the trout to start spawning.”

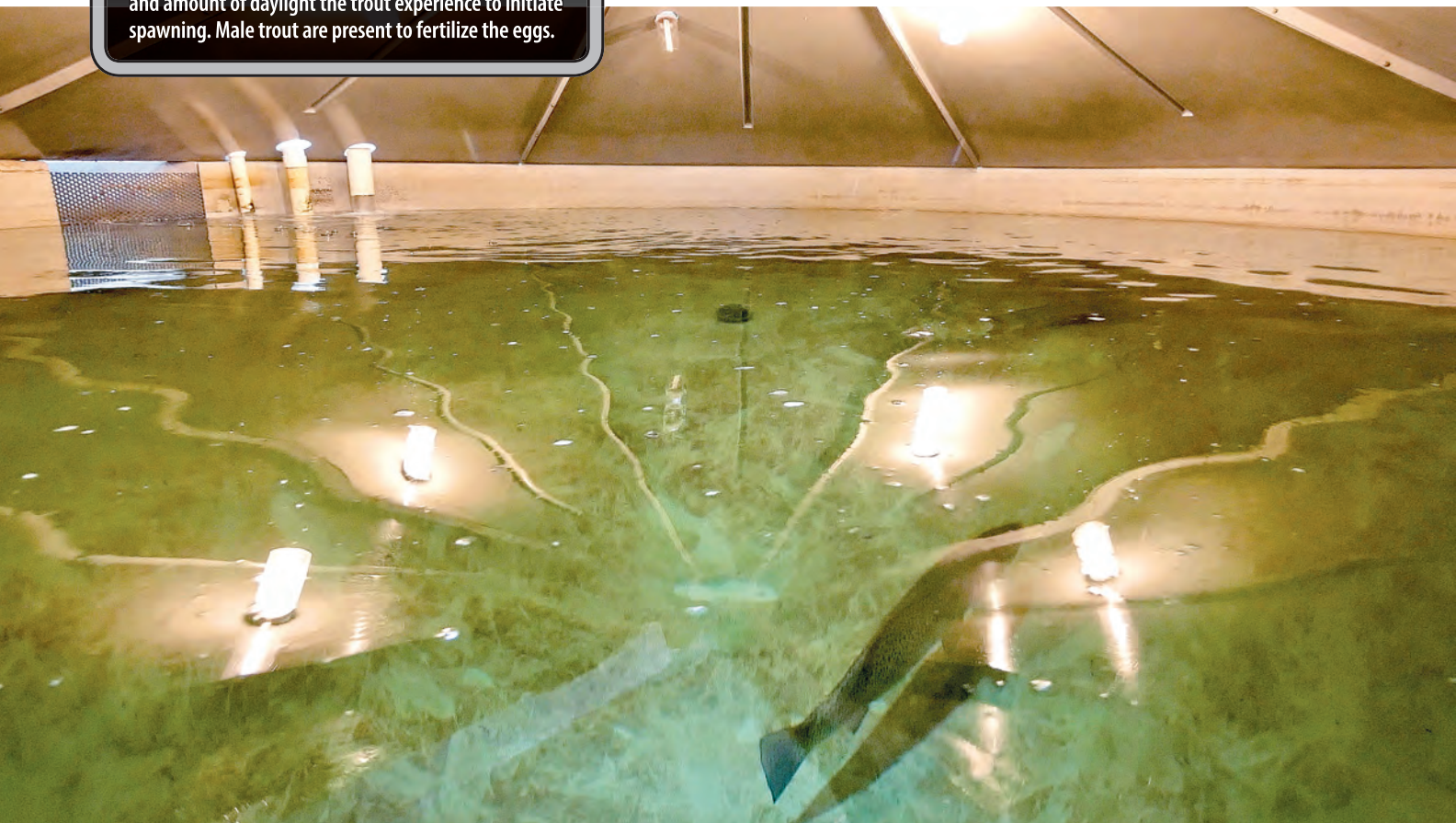
The tanks control water quality, water temperature, and amount of daylight the trout experience to initiate spawning. Male trout are present to fertilize the eggs.

In regard to the spawning capability of various sizes of trout, Angelos explained a trout of 15.5 inches to 18 inches can output 200,000 to 300,000 eggs per day of spawning, and so can produce 600,000 or more eggs in 60 days. A 10-pound trout is capable of giving 2 million eggs, but there is no predictability to when the big trout spawn.

For the big gator trout, who typically lives a solitary life, producing a lot of eggs is not the same as producing a lot of offspring, as Angelos explained.

“If you have a big trout that is 10 pounds, the first thing that trout wants to do is feed that 10 pound body,” he said. “She has no concern about reproducing. If a male even gets close to her that is half her size, she will eat it. Plus, the older a fish gets the more the quality of the eggs it produces degrades. Only two drops of sperm will fertilize a huge batch of eggs, but it only has 10 seconds to fertilize an egg once it hits the water. Not all eggs get fertilized in the wild or in our tanks. We come in the morning and pull out 1.5 million eggs, and maybe only 80% are fertilized. So if I am a male trout, I am more effective swimming around in a school of 200 trout than swimming around a big solitary fish.”

Angelos said that in the wild spawning happens from May to September in a bell shaped curve. There are a few spawners at the start and at the end of the curve, but peak spawning occurs at the top of the curve. In Mississippi, August is the peak of the speckled trout spawn.





The GCRL aquaculture systems are able to grow massive speckled trout, as seen in this tank where trout up to 16 pounds are swimming.

## SALINITY AND SPECKS

I had to ask Angelos about water salinity and speckled trout behavior, because in my opinion, success in Louisiana is tied strongly to salinity.

“Sea trout have a broad tolerance for salinity,” he said. “In Texas they live in 30 ppt but in the Pascagoula River, Graveline Bayou area you find them in 5 ppt to 6 ppt. Trout have little tolerance for completely fresh water, especially if it is a sudden burst of fresh water, with salinity going from 8 ppt to 0 ppt. That is not good for them. Too much shock, and they get stressed. If they can, they will run away from that. If we change the salinity rapidly in our tanks, the trout will go belly up with too much cortisol built up in their muscles and they can’t ever recover.”

Angelos said that they keep the salinity in their spawning tanks at greater than 20 ppt, so the eggs float and enter into the tank’s recirculation system, where the eggs are concentrated in an area where they can be collected. But he also said that in the wild, he wouldn’t be surprised if they spawn in 5 ppt to 6 ppt, because of the broad range of salinity that sea trout tolerate.

I was very interested in Angelos’ conservation perspectives, because he is both an avid angler and an expert in speckled trout biology and reproduction.

This is what he told us. “I don’t take females larger than 17 inches, males up to 18 inches, because males grow slower and reach a smaller maximum size. If you are catching a 5 to 6 pound trout and putting it back strictly for conservation, great, but biologically that trout is going to spawn likely less frequently than the trout that are smaller. So, if you are letting go of the 15 inch, 16 inch, or 17 inch fish, those are your kick ass spawners. For me, I take two or three fish home and

they’re all 3 to 4 pounds.” (Keep in mind that the legal length for Mississippi speckled trout is 15 inches and the daily creel limit is 15.)

“My advice if you want to help the fishery recover, don’t keep everything you catch, target the larger fish and let more of the smaller fish go, then over time you have more fish recruiting into the larger sized fish,” he said. “Understand the consequences of harvesting certain fish. If you don’t understand, then you can’t make good choices for yourself and for the next generation of anglers.”

I was very impressed with the high degree of science and engineering that GCRL has developed to make aquaculture economical, sustainable, and environmentally friendly, while expanding the choice of species for consumers beyond catfish, tilapia, and rainbow trout.

“Here we develop technology to try and culture sea trout so you don’t have to commercially fish them in the wild anymore,” Angelos said. “When you have a stabilized harvest in the ocean and decreasing fish stocks, there is a huge deficit formed. With the push for healthier protein, especially seafood protein, there has to be a mechanism to accommodate that deficit created in the wild fish harvest. At GCRL we produce enough protein per unit of water that economical aquaculture is possible, and we are just waiting for the next person who is going to come in with an investment.

“Louisiana and Mississippi are aquaculture friendly states, so they not only promote the culture of anything, they also incentivize it. We just need the people to start tuning in.” ■

**MARSH MAN MASSON ➤**

The birds know where the easy pickings are when it comes to shrimp. And speck fishermen know the trout are not far from the shrimp.



Photos by Todd Masson

## TROUT ORDER LUNCH

“YES, I’LL HAVE THE DELICIOUS BROWN SHRIMP OFF THE BUFFET, PLEASE”

**F**or winter-weary speckled trout, the month of April is like an oasis to a desert-dweller. During the previous months, the fish spent most days trapped in deep holes, occasionally sampling the relative crumbs — maybe a glass minnow here or a finger mullet there — that remained in Louisiana’s marshes.

But mostly they just went hungry. In April, however, it’s like Mother Nature unlocks the door to the estuarial version of Golden Corral, and for Louisiana speckled trout, that buffet is almost entirely stocked with brown shrimp.

These endearing crustaceans have been thick in Louisiana’s marshes for weeks, but in their larval and post-larval form, they haven’t mattered much to mature speckled trout. They just haven’t been big enough to even get noticed.

Not only that, but they cling to marsh edges, flooded grass and aquatic vegetation, out of view of the prying eyes of predators.

### GROWING QUICKLY

But larval and post-larval brown shrimp are eating machines, feasting on plankton and decaying organic matter. Because of that, they grow quickly, causing their dining habits to change and that puts them on a collision course with emaciated speckled trout.

According to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, brown shrimp move into deeper water and become more bottom-oriented as they grow. They also become more predatory, feasting on insect larvae as well as small marine invertebrates.

For them, that would be all fine and

dandy — if they weren’t the rabbits of the sea. Just about every predator that exists in Louisiana’s estuaries LOVES brown shrimp, and that’s especially true of speckled trout.

In April, the shrimp aren’t even of a size yet to allow the LDWF to open the inshore harvest season, but they’re plenty big enough to get noticed by speckled trout. And the fish take advantage of the suddenly abundant resource by feasting every day.

This presents an opportunity for anglers, and makes April one of the most produc-



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

The author took advantage of specks' love of shrimp to fool this hefty one into biting.

tive inshore fishing months of the year, especially for those more interested in taking home fillets rather than wall-hangers.

Even though the shrimp may be only 80 to 100 count in size, the specks will find them and feast on them, pushing the shrimp to the surface, where they are also easy pickings for seagulls. April begins the "bird-fishing" season for speckled trout anglers, and since the inshore trawl season isn't yet open, water clarity is typically much better than in May.

## WHERE TO LOOK

The best areas to look are large lakes and bays, especially near the mouths of main bayous that act as conveyor belts carrying the shrimp from the internal marshes to bigger water. Those shrimp that survive the gauntlet will move offshore, where they will spawn, lay eggs and die.

Trout feasting on shrimp in April aren't particularly selective since they're typically in frenzies, so a variety of artificial lures work well. If I'm just looking to have fun, I might throw a small topwater, like a Pop-R, which creates a commotion on the surface, mimicking a fleeing shrimp.

But if I really want to put some fish in the boat, my go-to is a red ice-colored TKO Shrimp under a Versamaxx Knocker cork, which allows me to adjust the depth of my lure. If I'm looking for bigger fish below the school, I'll go with a Limbo Slice (charreusse/blue) Matrix Shad on a 3/8-ounce Deathgrip Jighead and I'll hop it off the bottom.

April trout aren't typically the biggest of the year, and they're



usually pretty skinny, but they're ravenous and a blast to catch. The fuel they get from inshore brown shrimp is what propels them to outside waters, where they'll spend much of the spring and summer creating next year's crop of speckled trout. ■

**PADDLES 'N PUDDLES ➤**

2351 E. McNeese Street | Lake Charles, LA



Chris Holmes

# THE OTHER LIVE BAIT

JUST ABOUT ANYTHING THAT SWIMS WILL  
GOBBLE UP A COCAHOE MINNOW



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

**T**he only thing constant in April is change. The trout are still in the marshes, but starting to move to saltier waters for the beginning of the upcoming spawning season. They are scattered, but if you find them, they are hungry. One way to up your odds is to fish with the other live bait — cocahoe minnows.

A wide variety of hard and soft lures all work well this time of year. However, spring signals the kick-off of the topwater bite and there really is no more exciting way to catch fish, especially in a kayak. Being basically at water level for topwater explosions is a thrill you will not soon forget.

However, if you are looking for limits, live bait is never a bad option. Live shrimp, a popular spring and summer favorite bait works great, but availability is hit or miss until the season gets more consistent come May. Shrimp are also more difficult to keep alive in a kayak without a dedicated live well. Also, early season shrimp are typically quite small.

But there is another and it's a good one!

The venerable live cocahoe minnow is a great live bait for kayak fishing for all inshore species. Reds, trout, drum and flounder can't resist a chunky, feisty, cocahoe. A bonus for those that fish the many coastal areas with a mix of freshwater species, bass and catfish also readily attack live cocahoies.

## EASY TO KEEP

Cocahoies are hardy and require no sophisticated livewell to keep them healthy throughout a long day on the water. A small bucket with a simple battery-powered aerator can keep them alive for a few days. Floating minnow buckets also work well. The buckets can be towed along when slowly fishing, but should be placed in the kayak when traveling as they create a lot of drag that makes paddling/pedaling more difficult. I once kept several cocahoies alive for a couple hours swimming in a cup holder on the 'yak. A friend was heading in and gave me a few he had left from the morning's fishing. One of them was placed under a popping cork and turned into a tournament winning redfish.

Cocahoies can be found year-round at many marinas and bait shops. They are tolerant of a wide range of water temperature and salinities. Also, if you want to catch your own, a funnel-style minnow trap baited with fresh cracked blue crab does the trick.





A bucket of live coahoos was the ticket to building this stringer of nice speckled trout. Fished under a cork or on the bottom, they are almost guaranteed to produce a strike.

Cocahoos work well rigged in a variety of styles. Freelined on a light hook, under a popping cork, or on a Carolina rig bouncing the bottom all produce fish. On a recent trip, out of Hopedale, James Kellum brought along a bucket of cocahoos. Kellum opted to slowly work the minnow on a Carolina rig at various water depths. After several undersized specks, he landed a nice 14-inch keeper trout. Shortly thereafter, he set the hook on a big bull redfish that put up a 15-minute fight on light casting gear.

The morning continued with several more specks, another bull red and a couple of small flounder. Then, there was a mystery beast (likely another big bull or black drum) that found its way into a crab trap line and broke off with no positive identification.

As the wind picked up, the kayaks headed for the protection of a couple of interior marsh canals and the cocahoos continued to attract a couple of keeper slot reds and a few throwback rat reds. One nice fat bass also couldn't resist the wiggly cocahoe.

## FEAST OR FAMINE

While travel distances in a kayak are somewhat limited, moving from spot to spot is fairly simple. Sometimes, moving from one end of a pond to the other can be the difference between feast or famine.

Fishing interior marshes offers access to a variety of water depths. In early spring, fish are found at various depths, moving shallower as water temps start a steady spring rise. However, the

temps can change by a few degrees either way with a few weak straggler cold fronts.

Of course, "deep water" in the marsh is a relative term. Five to six feet in many places is considered deep. This makes it easy to park your kayak with the use of a stake-out pole. The poles are quick and easy to set with virtually no noise. A wide variety of poles are sold by kayak accessory manufacturers and there are also several inexpensive DIY varieties that can be found on YouTube. Power-Pole electric options have also become popular with many kayakers as the simple press of a button deploys and retracts the pole. Use of a pole rather than an anchor makes it quick, quiet, and easy to move and set up on a variety of spots.

If conditions allow, try the cocahoos in all depths of the water column. Laying one next to the bank under a cork is a great way to find reds and flounder. That same set up worked off a point or opening to a small drain may be the ticket to a limit of specks.

My absolute favorite is on a Carolina rig with a light hook. The weight keeps the minnow near the bottom, but able to stay up a few inches and struggle. This distress and vibration is a feeding trigger that fish cannot resist.

Next time you head out for an early spring kayak trip, stop by your local bait dealer and pick up a few dozen live cocahoos. You'll be glad you did. ■

Cocahoos make great live bait for inshore kayak fishing. They are hardy and easy to keep alive for a full day of fishing.



# NO FOOLIN' AROUND

Biloxi Marsh trout are showing up and ready to get the spawn on

**G** By Rusty Tardo  
enerally, February and March are the most challenging and discouraging months for anglers. It's due to the typical winter conditions that dump a combination of obstacles on us like strong northerly winds, cold weather from the constant barrage of cold fronts, low, muddy water and a lack of live bait.

Capt. Eric Olsen (504-715-3006) said we've been dealing with all of that this winter, but there is good news — April is here and it looks a lot more promising.

"April is the turnaround month, when the sunlight is longer, the weather becomes warmer, the tides get better and the trout start showing up in better numbers," he said. "Even with the low water and colder weather we caught trout and reds, but the fish were scattered all over so we really had to hunt for them and they never fell into a consistent pattern. But the good news is there are trout right now in the marsh and this is when the fishing action in the Biloxi Marsh starts getting good.

"I think we'll probably see an early spawn this year because of the warmer weather and bigger trout are already hitting hard baits and soft plastics around the islands out in the Sound. That will only get better unless the river gets high and ruins it. Mid-March and April is when the river rises from all the melting snow up north, so we have to hope it doesn't flood our area with muddy water."

## BETWEEN THE FRONTS

Olsen said we can still get strong fronts in April, though not as cold, so you'll still want to fish between the fronts this month.

"Hopefully we'll be able to get live bait this month, but if not the trout will hit plastics under a cork," he said.

Olsen suggests fishing the lagoons, bays and lakes in the Biloxi Marsh, looking for cleaner water, signs of baitfish or shrimp or current moving around points. Drifting and trolling off a shoreline can also be productive this month.

For reds, Olsen said he'll fish points, pockets, grass-lines and windblown shorelines with live bait if it's available, and dead bait if not.

You can also try the Berkley Gulps when live bait is unavailable. They are messy but will often outperform plain plastic.

And when the weather permits, and you can afford the

Capt. Eric Olsen caught some big trout in the Sound last April and May.



fuel bill, the islands in the Sound could pay off with big speckled dividends. And maybe the best thing about April, is that May is next month! Things will only get better. ■

18 GX BAY BOATS

1610

1308 CANAL BLVD • THIBODAUX  
985-447-4156

# 12 ISSUES OF *Louisiana* **SPORTSMAN**<sup>®</sup>

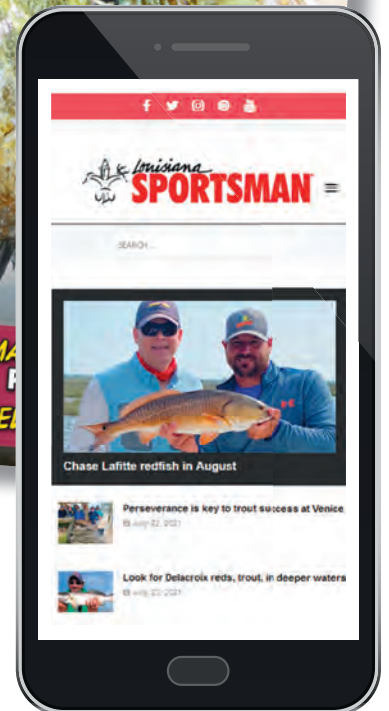
SUBSCRIBE TO LOUISIANA'S TOP SOURCE FOR FISHING AND HUNTING INFORMATION

NEVER MISS  
AN ISSUE

SUBSCRIBE TO GET OUR  
MONTHLY PRINT MAGAZINE  
AND FULL WEB ACCESS ON  
ALL YOUR SMART DEVICES.

- FISHING HOTSPOTS
- HUNTING TACTICS
- LATEST MUST-HAVE GEAR
- EXPERT ADVICE

**\$24.99**  
12 issues



To Subscribe call toll-free

**1-855-223-3599**

or for faster service visit

**[LouisianaSportsman.com/subscribe](https://LouisianaSportsman.com/subscribe)**

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of first issue



# SPOON FED SPOT TAILS

**DON'T OVERLOOK THIS  
SIMPLE TRIED AND TRUE  
LURE FOR BIG REDFISH.**

■ By John N. Felsher

## AS EARLY AS THE LATE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, Scandinavian fishermen hammered metal kitchen spoons into fishing lures.

In the early 19th century, young J.T. Buel dropped his spoon into the water while eating lunch. As he watched it flutter down, a big fish smacked it. Probably when his mother wasn't looking, the youngster swiped another spoon from the kitchen and fashioned it into a fishing lure.

Buel began making more spoon lures and sold them for years before he obtained a patent on the Buel Spoon in 1852, the first patent awarded for any fishing lure commercially sold in the United States. Spoons remain popular today for both fresh and saltwater fishing because they still work.

"A spoon is a tried-and-true classic that's still hard to beat," proclaimed Sonny Schindler with Shore Thing Fishing Charters (228-342-2206, [www.shorethingcharters.com](http://www.shorethingcharters.com)) in Bay St. Louis, Miss. "It's a very simple bait, so it's hard to improve upon it, but

it works so well. There's a sweet spot when a spoon gets moving just right with that constant vibrating. Even the most unskilled fisherman will know when a redfish grabs a spoon."

### THE SILVER MINNOW

One of the most popular spoons today, the Johnson Silver Minnow dates essentially unchanged to 1920 and remains a legendary redfish temptation. Despite the name, the spoon invented by Louis Johnson comes in varied colors, but for many saltwater anglers, only one color matters for catching bayou copper — gold! A metal arm helps deflect weeds and snags so people can fish it in places with thick grass or over oyster beds and other redfish-holding structures without snagging.

"I personally use nothing but weedless gold spoons," said Mike Frenette, a professional redfish angler and guide with The Redfish Lodge of Louisiana (504-782-0924, [Laredfish.com](http://Laredfish.com)) in Venice. "I've used spoons in many different states and different habitats. Some people swear by black in really clear water. Some people like the silver or chrome."

Anyone, even a child or beginner fisherman, can use a spoon to fish from the surface to the bottom and catch reds. With little effort on the part of the angler, spoons naturally create wobbling action and can work at any depth.



John N. Felsher

Capt. Mike Gallo of Angling Adventures of Louisiana and Kendra Maness show off a redfish she caught while fishing near the north shore of Lake Borgne near the Louisiana-Mississippi line. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Dustin Bounds shows off a redfish he caught on a Bomber Who Dat spoon while fishing in the bays south of Venice, La.



John N. Felsher

Crank the reel faster or hold the rod tip higher to make a spoon run closer to the surface. Or barely turn the reel to slow roll the bait just off the bottom.

“The beauty of a spoon is it’s so easy to work,” said Ryan Lambert with Cajun Fishing Adventures (985-785-9833, [www.cajunfishingadventures.com](http://www.cajunfishingadventures.com)) in Buras. “Anybody can catch redfish with a spoon in so many ways. If I have a novice on board who can’t handle certain baits, I always put a spoon on the line for that person. Just throw it as far as possible and reel it in. I’ve seen people catch more than 100 redfish in a day on a spoon. It’s a great lure for anybody to use.”

Lots of anglers don’t need to jerk the rod or add more dynamic action, but some people pause reeling to let the spoon sink a few feet like a dying baitfish before resuming the retrieve.

People can even vertically jig spoons. Some people even cast tiny spoons with fly tackle. All of these ways catch fish.



**John N. Felsher** is a professional freelance writer and photographer with more than 1,700 articles in more than 117 magazines to his credit. You can contact him at [JohnNFelsher.com](http://JohnNFelsher.com).

**IT’S THE WOBBLE** ➤

**BRONZEYE POP 40**

Designed by MLF Angler Dean Rojas, the smaller sized Bronzeye Pop 40 is a perfect lure to throw and can be fished with a variety of techniques. It features Gamakatsu Nano Smooth Coated Superline Double Frog Hooks, which give a weedless presentation, increases hookup percentage, and don't risk bending out. When fish are still looking up but don't want a full-sized entrée, this should be the go-to topwater solution.

**SPRO**<sup>®</sup>  
SPORTS PROFESSIONALS

[WWW.SPRO.COM](http://WWW.SPRO.COM)

## IT'S THE WOBBLE

The wobbling gives off considerable flash and vibrations that fish can see and feel, even while fluttering to the bottom. Many people think the wobbling reminds redfish of a crab swimming through the water with its rounded rear swimmer fins flashing back and forth. A redfish likes nothing better than to crunch a crab.

"I use spoons mainly when the grass is up and the crabs are out," Lambert said. "It's best from May through October when there's a lot of aquatic vegetation in the water and reds are feeding on crabs. When redfish hit a crab, they try to get it in the back of its mouth by their crushers. Look at a crab in a redfish's belly. It's crushed. When reds hit a spoon, they are rocking it!"

When a big redfish grabs a wobbling spoon, it almost hooks itself, especially if it struck a moving bait. For good measure, make a good hook set or two on that rugged fish. Anglers can accentuate the lure's wobbling action by adding a split ring and a swivel to the nose.

"If the bait doesn't already come with one, I recommend anglers put a small split ring on the eye and add a swivel," Frenette said. "That'll keep the line from twisting. If the line starts to twist, people won't be able to cast as far. The great thing about a spoon is it can cast like the dickens. A person can sling them out there and cover a lot of water wobbling the whole

time. If I'm coming up on a point or I know that there are oysters between the point and my boat, I don't want to get in there and disturb the fish so I'll throw a spoon through that area."

Since the heavy, compact baits can sail long distances, they make superb search baits. Generally, the farther from the boat one can cast, the more fish that person will catch. Even if the fish doesn't strike the spoon, it might cause it to move and give away its location. Sometimes, one red might even try to take a bait out of a hooked spot-tailed cousin's mouth.

"My favorite time to throw a spoon is when I'm scouting for fish," Schindler said. "If I'm in an area that I think has redfish, I'll throw a spoon to cover as much water as I can faster than most other baits."

## LET IT SINK

Frequently, big redfish follow baits for long distances before finally smashing them right at the boat. If a redfish follows, but doesn't strike, pause the retrieve to make the bait sink a few feet to imitate a wounded baitfish.

"When redfish just slap at a spoon, slow that retrieve down or stop it for a couple seconds," Frenette said. "Then start slowly retrieving it again because they're looking at it. I've had redfish slap at a spoon two or three times before grabbing it. I had times when I stopped the retrieve to let the spoon fall to the

John N. Felsher



A gold spoon makes an excellent search bait. Sonny Schindler likes to throw one when he's scouting for fish to cover water faster than other baits.



John N. Felsler

Gary Krause shows off a redfish he caught on a Bomber Who Dat Rattling Spinning Spoon. It combines the attributes of a spoon and a spinnerbait.

bottom. Fish pick it up right off the bottom. When they do grab a spoon, reds just about jerk the rod out of someone's hands."

For added enticement and color, sweeten a spoon with a soft-plastic trailer. A split trailer or one with claws mimics a crab works well. Fish a spoon with a trailer over the grass tops like a buzzbait for explosive topwater strikes or reel it steadily just off the bottom. Hopping one off the bottom could imitate a crab.

"I sometimes tip spoons with a chartreuse curly tail to make it vibrate more and cause more of a disturbance in the water," Schindler said. "Usually, I make a slow retrieve to keep it just off the bottom. Most of the stuff we fish has shells or grass on the bottom."

Many anglers work gold spoons through weedy areas like in the Mississippi River Delta. Like the original Johnson Silver Minnow, many spoons come equipped with weed guards so they can easily slip through thick vegetation or over oyster beds. Around oysters and other hard cover, slow roll spoons off the bottom so the metal lure clanks against the objects.

"My favorite way to fish is in the shallow marsh ponds looking for reds," Schindler said. "Most spoons have weedless features. If I'm in a new pond and don't know what's in it, there might be shells, grass or something else in it that can hang up other lures. With a spoon, I can get in and out of it without wasting time and losing tackle."

**FISH THE SHORELINES** ➤

**Kw** **KEY WEST**

MON-FRI  
8AM-5:30PM

5196 HWY. 311 • HOUMA  
**985-876-7821**

**H & H**  
MARINE  
HOUMA, LA



## FISH THE SHORELINES

When fishing marshy shorelines, throw spoons into any pockets or irregularities in the grass and work them out toward the boat. Also run spoons parallel to marshy shorelines, jetties, reef edges or next to bridge or dock pilings and across points. Some spoons come with little plastic covers slipped over the swivel or eye to make them even more weedless and snagless.

If a spoon doesn't already come with a metal weed guard, place a length of monofilament line from the eye to the hook barb. Another way, loop a rubber band through the eye and stretch it back to the hook barb to make a spoon weedless.

Because anglers typically fish spoons around thick weeds or rough objects, throw it on tough 30-pound-test braided line. Tie on about four feet of a 20-pound-test monofilament or fluorocarbon leader to the braid. In murky water, use shorter leaders. For exceptionally clear water, use longer leader. To make the longest casts, throw spoons on a 7 to 7.5 foot medium action rod.

Anglers can catch redfish with spoons anywhere they can find the spot-tailed marauders. Almost overlooked among the plethora of colorful plastics and other baits, spoons look so simple, but they still catch fish and have been for centuries. ■

## LOUISIANA HAS PLENTY OF COASTAL SPOON SPOTS

Blessed with vast coastal wetlands, Louisiana offers anglers some of the best redfish habitat in the world. Even among those marshes between the Pearl River Delta and the Sabine River Delta, the extended Mississippi River Delta from Lake Borgne to Barataria Bay stands out. Nourished by the incredible flow of the Mississippi River, the rich delta holds abundant creatures redfish like to eat. Running out of places like Hopedale, Delacroix, Buras, Empire and Pointe la Hache, people can catch redfish practically anywhere they throw a bait. Many people without boats catch redfish at any cuts or culverts along Highways 23, 300, 46 and 624.

On the north side of Lake Borgne, the marshes of the Pearl River Delta and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin offer excellent redfish habitat. Many people fish the two passes connecting Lake Pontchartrain to Lake Borgne, the Chef Menteur and Rigolets, plus associated waters. People also catch reds in Lake Pontchartrain.



John N. Felsher

**A redfish comes to the boat after hitting a gold spoon.**

“Between the Atchafalaya River and the Mississippi River, people fish the Barataria-Terrebonne area out of places like Grand Isle, Golden Meadow, Fourchon, Leeville, Dulac, Chauvin and Cocodrie,” said Tim Ortego with Louisiana Livin’ Adventures (985-209-1812, Facebook) in Chauvin. “People could continue to the bays in the Atchafalaya River Delta and westward to Vermilion Bay. Besides lakes, bays and marshes, barrier islands in this area could provide good fishing.

“These marshes hold a good number of redfish all year long. All that marsh grass holds an abundance of life. Oyster beds attract an enormous amount of bait. In the summer, redfish hold on flats and points with grass and nearby oyster beds that have good current flow.”

The marshes between Calcasieu Lake south of Lake Charles and the Sabine River on the Louisiana-Texas line can also produce good fishing. Anglers can fish the reefs in the lakes themselves. Bank anglers fish along Highway 27 where it runs through 124,500-acre Sabine National Wildlife Refuge near Hackberry. ■

**CALCASIEU REDS & SPECKS ➤**

**SALTWATER**

**STATE REGULATIONS (0-10.357 miles<sup>Δ</sup>)**

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

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

**FRESHWATER**

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

\* see exceptions in pamphlet. \*\* no more than two may exceed 30 inches.  
 \*\*\* catfish limit is 100 in aggregate; however, 25 fish in aggregate may be undersized.  
 # only one fish may exceed 27 inches. @Shark season is closed between April 1 and June 30.  
<sup>Δ</sup> Closed season for gag grouper Jan. 1 - May 31. Closed season for black, red, yellowfin, yellowmouth&scampgrouperfromFeb.1-March31.-GreateramberjackseasonisopenMay1-31andAug.1-Oct.31.Closed season on gray triggerfish Jan. 1 - Feb. 28 and June 1 - July 31.



## CALCASIEU LAKE REDS AND SPECKS

Head for West Cove and Oyster Lake areas

**C** By Don Shoopman  
harter Boat Captain Vince Theriot's comfort zones range from the Mermentau River that runs right along his hometown of Mermentau west to Calcasieu Lake, particularly West Cove.

The Grand Chenier resident has owned Coastal Guide Service for 25 years, but 2022 is his first year guiding full time after retiring from the oil field business in April, 2021. Like many anglers in south Louisiana in recent years, he's still recovering from the blows to normal life caused by hurricanes. He and his wife have lived in Lake Charles while their home is being repaired following Hurricane Laura in 2020.

Theriot fishes mostly along the upper and lower Mermentau River. The latter area, from the Mermentau River Bridge to the Gulf of Mexico, has been red hot for fishing. Theriot has been able to experience that first-hand throughout the winter.

But he also has beaucoup experience and success at Big Lake, specifically one area in West Cove. And now that spring is here, he's ready to hit those patterns.

Vince Theriot of Grand Chenier, who owns Coastal Guide Service, holds a hefty redfish he caught late last March in the West Cove area of Calcasieu Lake.

### ROAMING THE BANKS

"Redfish roam around on the banks. A lot of times you can see three, four swimming together," Theriot said about the sandy shoreline on the south-west area of West Cove, particularly around the mouth of Oyster Bayou. "Speckled trout and redfish get in there. In April and May, we catch our biggest speckled trout there."

Also, he said, "The area of West Cove doesn't seem to get the pressure like the Cameron Jetties."

Fishing tips can't get much more specific than these. The coordinates for the West Cove area he prefers to fish are 29°50'55"N 93°24'23"W.

Theriot doesn't confine his search for speckled trout and redfish to south-west West Cove, though. Close by are Oyster Lake's shoreline and islands as well as the ponds and reefs of Oyster Bayou.

The coordinates for a prime spot in Oyster Lake are 29°47'53"N 93°23'32"W.

"They've got ponds and stuff in there and oyster reefs," he said.

"When the tide's coming in, redfish come in the ponds and on the reefs."

Speckled trout in early to mid-spring are suckers for MirrOlure's Paul Brown's Fat Boys, Rapala Skitter Walks and other suspending baits by MirrOlure, according to Theriot. There are several popular colors, but his favorites are bone and chartreuse/bone back, he said.

## TOPS FOR REDS

If anglers want to target redfish, the top artificial lures are Green Hornet Matrix Shad on a 1/8- or 1/4-ounce jighead. One of his personal favorites is a Strike King Redfish Magic spinnerbait on either his favorite 1/4-ounce or a 1/8-ounce jighead.

"I've been using those for years for redfish, just like bass fishing," he said. "I fish around the edges of oyster reefs."

What color water is he looking for this time of year?

"Water clarity plays a big part in it," he said. "I like it where it's not so clear you can see the bottom. They get a little spooky. I like it a bit off-colored . . . but not totally off-colored."

Also, look for bait because the fish should be on them like white on rice.

The depth he prefers in that area ranges from 1 foot to the 3 to 4 foot range.

Wade fishermen can have a great day of speckled trout fishing from the mouth of Oyster Bayou to Louisiana 27. Why?

**““”** *Water clarity plays a big part in it. I like it where it's not so clear you can see the bottom. They get a little spooky. I like it a bit off-colored . . . but not totally off-colored.*

"The whole (sandy) bank is what we fish," Theriot said.

As for ideal water temperatures, it should be time.

"They're usually up to par that time of year," he said. "That time of year, April, will be perfect, like in the 60s."

As for the best tidal conditions for fishing the redfish and speckled trout, he said either will work.

"Incoming or outgoing, it doesn't matter," he said. "They get there and feed." ■

## SAILFISH SPOTLIGHT >



**G3 Boats**

**BAY 22 GX**

**GREENWELL SPRINGS**  
*Marine*

225-273-4853 • Fax 225-273-4762  
12014 GREENWELL SPRINGS RD  
BATON ROUGE  
MONDAY - FRIDAY: 8 AM - 5 PM





## SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: SAILFISH

**S**ailfish are members of the billfish family and are related to marlins and swordfish. Along with white marlin, sailfish are among the smallest members of the billfish family. But they are the most easily-recognized thanks to their dorsal fins.

While marlins and swordfish have relatively small and rigid dorsal fins that look very much alike, sailfish have much bigger and flexible dorsal fins, extending almost the entire length of their backs. These “sail” type dorsals give the fish its name.

Fisheries biologists believe sailfish are the fastest swimming fish in the world. They have been clocked at 68+ mph. Their large dorsal fins usually lay folded down limp to one side of their body. But they stand straight up and go rigid when the fish is excited, chasing prey or fleeing from predators.

These fish are long with blue backs and fins, silvery to white bellies, and long bills that are more streamlined than those of marlins and swordfish. They feed primarily in the middle of the water column, but often take prey at or near the surface as well.

Researchers have identified two subspecies of sailfish, Atlantic sailfish and Indo-Pacific sailfish. However, they have found no scientific differences between these two. Their DNA and all other means of identification are identical. Still, fisheries biologists recognize them depending on which ocean they inhabit.

### “LEFT-HANDED” BEHAVIOR

Sailfish grow quickly, reaching four to five feet in length in their first year. Their maximum size, however, is very small compared to blue marlin or swordfish. Very few sailfish have been known to reach 200 pounds or 10 feet in length.

Throughout their lives, sailfish are preyed upon by a variety of larger fish like dolphinfish, wahoo, king mackerel, orcas and sharks. Their primary source of food is squid, jellyfish and smaller fish, which they attack from behind, slashing at them with their bills to injure them. Studies have shown that a percentage of sailfish are “left-handed,” preferring to slash their bills to the left when chasing prey.

Sometimes when hunting, commu-

nicating with other fish or otherwise excited, sailfish change colors. They are dependent on coral reefs and often disappear from areas where reefs have suffered extensive damage.

Nicknames for sailfish include spindle-beak and bayonetfish. They are sometimes misidentified as swordfish, blue marlin or white marlin.

Louisiana’s state record sailfish weighed 96 pounds and was caught by John Lauricella in October 1953. Sailfish are mostly seen in cool weather months off the Louisiana coast. Mississippi’s state record tipped the scales at 62 pounds. Eddie Jones caught that fish in 1963. The world record stands at 142 pounds and was caught out of Lobito, Angola on March 12, 2014 by Marco Couto. ■



**Brian Cope** of Edisto Island, 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.



**BECKY NICOSIA SHARES HER TIPS FOR CALLING IN AND HARVESTING TURKEYS WITH A BOW.**  
■ By Mike Giles

# **TURKEY SLAYER**

## **EXTRAORDINAIRE**

## Becky Nicosia slowly drew her bow back and placed her pin on a wise old gobbler and released the arrow.

# KA-WHAP!

### The broadhead smacked the longbeard in just the right spot and he never knew what hit him.

Calling wise old gobblers within shotgun range is difficult for even the most seasoned hunters, but calling up an old tom and shooting them with a bow and arrow takes it to another level. Becky Nicosia, of Baton Rouge, La., is a talented archer who loves to turkey hunt and call in the wary old birds, and she pre-

fers shooting them with her bow.

Nicosia shoots a Matthews bow and she harvested her first gobbler with a bow in 2000. Nicosia was hunting near Sonora when she harvested that first gobbler in Texas. That first kill was an amazing accomplishment, and it ignited a flame that developed into a burning passion for calling up gobblers and shooting them with her bow.

"It's one thing to shoot deer from a tree stand but quite another calling and harvesting gobblers from a ground blind," Nicosia said. "In the beginning they would see me draw back and spook, so I had to practice sitting in a blind and shooting from ground level. I finally blacked out everything behind me and I usually wear all black too. I would draw my bow back from the side and then shoot through the window when they walked by."

### HUNTING OUT OF BLINDS

Hunting out of a blind is about the only way you can draw back on them, but it really limits your ability to move around.

These days Nicosia usually sets up a Primos Double Bull blind on the edge of fields where the gobblers like to feed and strut and in areas where hens like to be.

"I'll get out and scout the gobblers and then set up in an area that they like to be," Nicosia said. "If I go early, I'll do an owl call with my natural voice to see if I can get a response from any gobblers in the area. I'll try to locate one in that area and if I know that a bird is in there I'll slip in the blind and make some soft calls. I try to get the hens pulled on in near me and usually the gobblers will come in too."

"I used to run and gun with a shotgun, but I don't do that anymore. I'm more successful hunting this way by being patient and calling them in to where I am."

Nicosia loves to bow hunt so much that she knew she could extend her bow hunting into turkey season. Nicosia hunts on family land in Adams County, Miss., and nobody else in her group turkey hunts with a bow. She likes the challenge it presents and there's nothing easy about it.

"I have several blinds near food plots and fields, and I'll use my game cameras to see where they're hanging out," she said. "I've got one or two permanent blinds and four Double Bull Blinds out in various locations."



Becky Nicosia harvested this gobbler with her Matthews bow while hunting out of a portable blind. She turkey hunts almost exclusively with a bow and has harvested many gobblers in the process.

## CALLING THE GOBLERS AND LISTENING TO HENS

Nicosia uses several different box calls like a Primos box and several slates or glass, by Lynch and Woodhaven calls.

You can really get soft on those slates and glass calls too, Nicosia said.

"I'll use little soft calls and do what the hens are doing and mock them," she said. "I'll let them set the pace and go from there. I have stayed with some flocks from daylight until noon. I had one turkey that I hunted for several years and finally named him Booger because he always seemed to booger me and get away."

Old Booger set up in a field one afternoon and spent the day with the hens well out of range. As the afternoon wore on Nicosia knew it was time for a change of pace. Booger disappeared for about an hour giving Nicosia a chance to make a move.

"I slipped out of the blind and circled around and tried to get in front of where I thought they'd go," she said. "I set up on the edge of the field and called the hens up and Booger walked right in front of me, following them, and I shot him."

Sometimes things don't work out like you plan so you have to make adjustments. Sometimes it works and in this case it did."

Old Booger had an 11-inch beard, 1 ¼ inch spurs and he eluded Nicosia for 3 years, but he finally met his match at the hands of an expert archer and turkey caller at 6:30 p.m.

"I use a fixed broadhead, a 3 blade 100 grain Wasp Boss," Nicosia said. "I'll shoot them where the wing touches the body, or through his lower fantail from the rear when looking directly at his back. That's a killing shot, too. But I like to get them as close to me as I can."

**AFTERNOON DELIGHT!** ➤

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black baseball cap and camouflage clothing, is kneeling in a field of green grass and purple flowers. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Next to her is a large turkey with its tail feathers fanned out. A compound bow is lying on the ground in front of the turkey. The background shows a dense line of trees.

Nicosia's patience helped her take this tom with her bow at 16 yards back in 2018.

## AFTERNOON DELIGHT!

“I like to hunt in the fields in the afternoon from 1 to 6 p. m.,” Nicosia said. “I’ve had a lot of success hunting around those fields during mid to late afternoon and it’s much easier to kill one where they like to hang out.”

Fields are excellent spots for hens that like to feed during midday and late afternoon. If the hens are there you can believe that the gobblers will be somewhere close by because they stay on ready during the mating season. They don’t want to waste a minute or a chance at finding a lovesick hen.

Gobblers will follow the hens and keep them in sight even when the breeding is over. If the hens get away to go nest or lay eggs the gobbler might wake up and find themselves alone and it’s a different game. If that old gobbler gets lonely and he’s by himself late in the season, then he’s a lot more vulnerable and is much easier to call up. If he’s looking at hens, he’s not apt to move on to some unseen turkeys, but let the hens disappear and they get desperate and let their guard down many times.

“Those gobblers don’t even know what they’re going to do from day to day,” Nicosia said. “So it’s almost impossible for us to know what he’s going to do except for one thing. He’s going to be in areas where the hens like to be and during the midday hours that’s wherever their favorite feeding, nesting, or dusting areas are. Usually that’s in fields but it can also be on sandbars on creeks, or on sandy roads running through a pine plantation. They will leave their sign including their dusting areas for gobblers and humans to see.”

## PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Nicosia is used to hunting out of tree stands when she bow hunts for deer, so she had to practice regularly with a bow to get the hang of shooting off the ground.

“I started shooting from a chair on the ground first,” Nicosia said. “Then I started shooting from a blind sitting down. Shooting from the ground is different than from a tree because



Becky Nicosia battled this old gobbler she called “Booger” for several years before she harvested him with her bow.

you have a different anchor point and there is no substitute for regular practice. I started off shooting a couple times a week when I first got into hunting turkeys from a blind and then I put a pop-up blind in the camp yard to practice at camp.”

While she killed her first turkey with a bow back in 2000, she’s still been at it and has killed eight with her bow to this point.

“I’ll still hunt with a shotgun occasionally, but I prefer hunting with a bow if I have the opportunity,” she said.

## PATIENCE ➤



**Mike Giles** of Meridian has been hunting and fishing Mississippi since 1965. He is an award-winning wildlife photographer, writer, seminar speaker and guide.



# GEAR THAT HUNTS™

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to pursue their outdoor adventures. That's why we build purposeful gear that is engineered and priced to suit every hunter.



**NOMAD**

[nomadoutdoor.com](http://nomadoutdoor.com)

## TURKEY SLAYER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Becky Nicosia harvested this old gobbler with her Mathews Chill SDX bow and took a selfie with him in celebration.



## PATIENCE

If turkey hunting is your game, then you need a ton of patience. If hunting turkeys with a bow is your preference, then you need patience and a ton of experience. Everything has to go right to be able to harvest a gobbler with your bow.

# BUY WITH CONFIDENCE SELL WITH SUCCESS



## LAND - HOME GETAWAYS

McComb Office: 601-249-3400

Tylertown Office: 601-876-3317

# DougRushingRealty.com

Calling a wise old gobbler to a specific spot is hard no doubt, but to call them to a blind that can't be moved at the spur of the moment makes it harder indeed. That's where Nicosia has an edge over many hunters. She has patience and is also confident in her ability to call a gobbler into range. She also knows that her hours of regular practice will enable her to make a clean kill when the opportunity arises.

## CALLING GOBBLERS IN CLOSE

If you want to call the gobblers in close like Nicosia, then it is a good idea to learn how to master a pot call or box. Yelps, purrs and clucks are all you need to be able to do if you know how and when to use them. Nicosia doesn't use mouth calls, but she prefers these calls and that's all it takes to call in gobblers. Try a few of Nicosia's tips and techniques and you might just become an expert at calling in and harvesting turkeys with your bow. ■



■ By Dave Moreland

# Fallen Crowns

**WITH DEER SEASON OVER,  
THE SPRING HUNT FOR  
TROPHY SHEDS IS ON.**

# Antlers are the “Crowns of Glory” of an adult whitetail buck,

and the search for shed antlers in the spring gives more opportunity for deer hunters to be in the field.

While it's not quite the same as harvesting an adult buck during the open season, finding the shed antlers from the buck once the season is over can be rewarding.

At least the hunter knows that, for now, the buck is alive and well and hopefully will be around next season for the hunter to match his wits against. Searching for shed antlers has become quite popular these days with deer hunters. Keeping hunters connected with the land is a good thing. Some hunters have amassed quite a collection and it's great fun for younger hunters.

With the season having just ended, now is the time to be making plans and getting the habitat ready for the upcoming deer season. On the Moreland/Guidry Estate, I have been spending my time thus far thinning out the three year old Cow Oak

plantings and replanting trees in areas damaged by Hurricane Ida. Perhaps you see the need to put in a new food plot or perhaps move a stand to a new location. Now is the time to be doing the work rather than sitting by the fire waiting for warmer spring weather.

I find it interesting that finally, near the end of winter and with the season well over, we are finally getting the cold weather we were looking for last November and December. Our God does indeed work in mysterious ways!

But back to those shed antlers.

While you are out and about getting ready for next season it is always good to keep your eyes open for shed antlers. You certainly do not want the tractor tire to find them! And it's a great time to learn more about deer and their antlers as well.

## THE ANTLER CYCLE ➤



This picture with four sheds shows the difference between new sheds and old sheds. The old ones are bleached white and have been gnawed on by rodents.

# 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 Perez, 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 Chisco, Broker. Licensed in NC, SC, VA - Chip Camp, Broker. Licensed in NC - Rich Baugh, Broker. Licensed in MI - Edmund Joel Nogaaki, 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.



## THE ANTLER CYCLE

As I go about in the off season doing a few deer management programs, it never fails to find someone who is not aware of the fact that deer lose their antlers every year. By now, one would think everyone knows that members of the Cervid Family grow a set of antlers over the course of a few months and then once winter is over, they fall off the head. Then at some point they grow a new set of antlers for the next season.

Antlers are very rapidly growing bones. Antlers are true solid bone composed of calcium and phosphorous without bone marrow. They grow from the pedicels, the base on which the antlers will grow. A 6-month-old buck, generally referred to as a nubby buck, will have these pedicels covered with skin, and usually will not have antlers at this age. A nubby buck is often called a button buck. The buck will begin to grow its first set of antlers in the spring and summer. Nutrition and age are the factors that determine the size of the antlers and genetics does have a part in the growth and configuration of the rack.

Nutrition is the key. If nutrition is poor, even a mature buck will have a mediocre set of antlers and not develop to its full potential had there been sufficient nutrition during the growing season.

Today in Louisiana, most yearling bucks (1 ½ year olds) on native habitat probably are spikes. If nutrition is good, bucks of this age should have small branched antlers. As they grow older and nutrition is adequate the racks will grow larger as the deer grows older. High deer populations generally will not have adequate nutrition for quality antler growth so it is important to keep the deer numbers in balance with the habitat.

New antler growth begins in the spring a few weeks after the previous set of antlers have been shed. The growing antlers are covered with a soft material called velvet and blood vessels bring the nutrients to the growing bone cells. Antlers are soft and fragile during this stage and damage to the antlers can happen. In the fall as daylight begins to decrease, the testosterone levels in the buck begin to increase and this signals an end to antler growth. The burr at the base of the antler grows and cuts off the blood vessels. The



A wily old buck left a calling card in the woods right beside the deer hunter's stand. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Sheds can be hard to find in tall green fields and that is where a dog comes in handy.



velvet begins to dry up and the mineralization process occurs, creating the solid bony antler.

At the end of winter, daylight begins to increase once again, and the bucks testosterone levels begin to decline. Breeding season is over and a separation layer or abscission layer develops between the antler and the pedicel and the antler will eventually fall off. This is sometimes referred to as casting. This process is similar to a leaf falling off a branch. Thus, the search for shed antlers begins.

## WHEN TO LOOK FOR SHEDS

As just discussed, testosterone levels decline in bucks at the end of the breeding season and the antlers fall off. Louisiana has several different breeding seasons due to the genetic make-up of our deer. These breeding seasons are posted on the LDWF website and that is a good place to start looking. The deer areas in southwest Louisiana have herds with deer that breed early and antlers will fall in December and January. Big Area 2 has November for the peak breeding month and at the end of December antlers will start to fall.

Hunters in this area know that shooting a buck in late January may result in getting a shed antler in your hand when you go to pick it up! In Area 4 and 9 antlers begin to fall in February and in the late rut areas, late February and March are the months when they fall. But it is not uncommon to see an antlered buck in these late breeding areas in April during the turkey season. The spring turkey season is a good time to keep an eye open for sheds. There were many bucks running around on our property in mid February with antlers on their heads based on trail camera photos.

Hunters in this area know that shooting a buck in late January may result in getting a shed antler in your hand when you go to pick it up! In Area 4 and 9 antlers begin to fall in February and in the late rut areas, late February and March are the months when they fall. But it is not uncommon to see an antlered buck in these late breeding areas in April during the turkey season. The spring turkey season is a good time to keep an eye open for sheds. There were many bucks running around on our property in mid February with antlers on their heads based on trail camera photos.

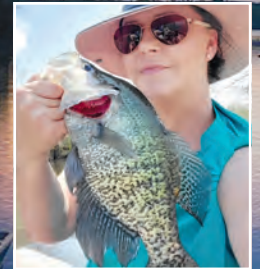
## WHERE TO LOOK FOR SHEDS >



David Moreland is a former wildlife biologist with LDWF, having served as the State Deer Biologist for 13 years and as Chief of the Wildlife Division for three years. He and his wife Prudy live in Baton Rouge and own property in East Feliciana Parish.



## EXCELLENT FISHING FOR BASS, BREAM, CRAPPIE & CATFISH



- 3 private cypress filled lakes
- 1 private river oxbow
- Maintained concrete and rock boat landings
- Maintained roads to boat landings
- Water control spill way
- Excellent bank fishing
- RV and Mobile Home lots
- Fishing Lease: \$2,000 annually
- Hunting/Fishing Combo: \$6,750 annually



### 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

## WHERE TO LOOK FOR SHEDS

The post-rut period begins at the end of the breeding season and deer go back to feeding. At this time of the year, food sources are generally limited due to winter freezes and the fact that most native vegetation is now dormant. Acorns generally are gone, but if there was a bumper acorn crop there may be some mast still on the ground. On lands where supplemental feeding takes place, deer will still be coming to the feeders. I have participated in some post season deer counts using feeding and trail cameras and have found several shed antlers at these feeding sites. Of course food plots and fields are always a place to look for shed antlers. Antlers that lie in the sun for several months will become bleached white in color.

Some hunters use dogs to help in the search for shed antlers. Hunters will specifically train their dogs to find sheds. I have two yellow labs and if there is a bone on the ground somewhere, they are pretty good at finding them. Looking for sheds is a great way to get kids out in the field and away from the video games.

Pine plantations provide thermal cover for deer and deer will lay up in this habitat. These plantations are generally open with good visibility and one can cover a lot a ground in these sites. Deer trails going to and from bedding areas to feeding areas are a good place to look. If you saw a good buck in a specific habitat site during the season that would be a place to go look for those sheds. At the end of deer season one year, I left a small ladder stand on the ground by a creek where deer would travel along. When I went back before the start of the next season a buck had dropped an antler between two rungs of the ladder. The buck may have been leaving me a subtle message that it was still around!

I have to warn you so that you will not be disappointed if your efforts to find sheds come up empty. It is just not easy finding shed antlers in the field. There are a lot of rats, mice and squirrels in the woods and fields and once an antler hits the ground these rodents are on it, gnawing away on the boney material.

Nothing is wasted in nature and these animals know the value of these antlers to their nutritional intake. Nail a rack on a tree and just watch how fast it can disappear. Happy shed hunting this spring and enjoy your time in the field. This would be a good activity to acquaint a novice with our beautiful Louisiana outdoors. ■





A huge rack like this one is what hunter's dream of. Even though the season is over, this big buck will shed those antlers somewhere in the woods.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is one in a series honoring the six most recent inductees into the Louisiana Chapter Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame.

# WARREN WOMACK

**HIS DETAILED DOCUMENTATION HELPS OTHERS IMPROVE DEER TACTICS.**

**W**arren Womack of Clinton just may have put the “W” in woodsmanship. He is not only an accomplished hunter, but he has also documented his activities with the detail of a police investigator putting together the timeline of a case.

Womack's observations and recordings have helped him develop into a highly successful hunter, but even more importantly, they have also helped numerous others. The logging of each successful hunt is what has made his name one that many deer hunters recognize. The written descriptions of successful hunts full of facts and methods are remarkable. His attention to detail has helped many hunters improve their hunting and his tactics and strategies have been featured in magazines and podcasts.

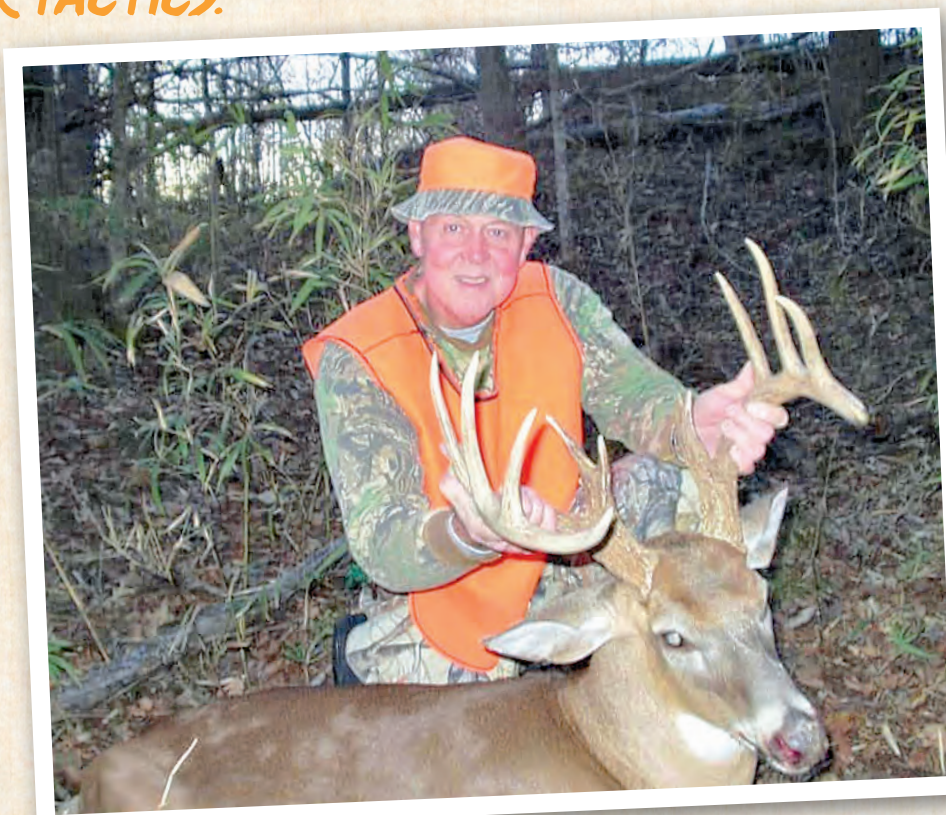
For that reason, he was named to the Louisiana Chapter of the Legends of the Outdoors 2021 class.

## CHASING RABBITS

Womack's lifelong journey in the woods began many years ago chasing after rabbits and squirrels. He developed keen skills and eventually made his name known in the hunting world through deer hunting, killing and documenting nearly 400 total whitetail harvests.

He started deer hunting at 24 years. He killed his first deer in 1968 with a rifle and his first with a bow in 1969. He is proficient with both.

“The knowledge and willingness to help anyone who asks him for advice are what makes the name Warren Womack one that is deserving of induction into the Hall of Fame,” said Greg Hicks, a Buckmasters Whitetail Trophy Records official scorer. “Some people are worthy because they spend their lives selling quality products that help hunters be successful. Warren gives hunters the one thing that, in the end, what we all should be doing. He openly shares his abundant knowledge of the woods and what has made him successful nearly 400 times.”



## IT'S IN THE DETAILS

While the total number of harvests is impressive, the logging of each successful hunt is what has made him unique. The descriptions of each of his successful hunts are littered with facts and methods that have helped him hone his craft into something noteworthy.

It was a family member, his mother's baby brother, who came up with the idea that got him started on his remarkable recording of successful deer hunts. He had seen Womack's love for hunting and told him to write down what he did in the woods and to take pictures. Now Womack even videos his efforts, even with a traditional bow, to show to others. What he has learned has made countless other hunters better at what they do.

Womack's tactics and strategies have been written about in several hunting magazines and have been the focus of many hunting related podcasts.

One of the keys to his success is his ability to cover a lot of ground, even though he's in his 70's, and find the places deer want to be. Despite his success and knowledge, he is also very humble.

"Every time I go in the woods is a learning experience for me," he said. "Anyone tells you that they have it all figured out is either not telling the truth or they have themselves fooled. Over the years I have developed a system that I use, but I think my main thing is, I feel like I've always tried harder than most hunters. The harder I worked the more success I seem to have.

## NOT ABOUT TROPHIES

He isn't about trophy bucks and recognition, either. He's about hunting.

"For me a shooter buck is a state legal buck and I love to shoot does," he said. "I've found the only thing that makes a doe easier to shoot than a buck is they are more active during the daylight hours. I've watched bucks stand like statues for as long as half an hour. They were checking things out. Once they decided to move they never hesitate or look around. In their mind, everything is safe. Now a doe, she is always looking for buggers to jump out and get her. Really, once I make the commitment to try and kill and I do just that, I'm proud of the moment and if it has horns..... that's just a bonus."

He has also said that all hunters are not equal in what they consider success and that deer hunting isn't a one-size-fits-all sport. He said work hard and be happy with what makes you happy. He encourages hunters to spend as much time in the woods as possible, not to expect too much too soon and try to be consistent in your approach.

If he had any advice he'd like to offer people who love the outdoors, what would it be?

"Don't wait to do something that you want to do," he said. "Don't wait for another day or until you retire. Do it now while you can. If you don't, you may never have the opportunity again."

The Legends Hall of Fame was founded by Garry Mason of Springville, Tennessee, in 2002 and the Louisiana Chapter is headed up by Peyton McKinnie of Marion. You can find out more about the groups on their Facebook pages. ■



*Kinny Haddox has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 47 years. He and his wife, DiAnne, live in West Monroe.*



**“** Every time I go in the woods is a learning experience for me. Anyone tells you that they have it all figured out is either not telling the truth or they have themselves fooled.



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

- The "Best Days" column is based on the ever-changing positions of the sun and the moon, rating each day on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more solar/lunar influence that day is experiencing (see "Value" column or corresponding black bars).
- The two Primary periods (Moon Overhead and Moon Underfoot) vary in length from one hour to three-and-one-half hours, depending on a number of important lunar cycles, such as how close the moon is to the earth that day and how high its orbit is. The solar symbols alert you to when a Primary period overlaps a major solar period (eg: Dawn, High-Noon, and Dusk). The secondary periods of Moonrise and Moonset last about one hour each... 30 minutes before and after the listed time. (See key at bottom of each month for more detail.)

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

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

**AVAILABLE PRODUCTS:**  
**The 2022 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar.** \$13.95 (plus \$4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2022 with this information-packed, full-color, 11-inch by 17-inch, graphic peaks

and-valleys forecaster. Includes rise and set times for the sun and moon, space to log your catches, "Timely Tips," plus fish and game symbols showing you each month's don't-miss periods. Also includes exclusive summary charts revealing the best and worst days of 2022, the year's best periods, and look ahead at 2023, and more. Comes with FREE 2022 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for \$8.95, plus \$3 s&h. **Book: "How to Know When to Go" by Rick Taylor, \$14.95 (plus \$4 s&h).** 100 pages, 43 illustrations. A comprehensive look at the main factors influencing fish and game activity periods, plus how to devise an effective when-to-go game plan using any year's PrimeTimes calendars. Individual assessments of bass, panfish, deer, turkey, and more.

**Ultimate PrimeTimes app for web and smartphone. 12 months. \$9.99**

The world's best forecaster allows you to fine-tune the peak times to your exact location, quarry, and even weather. Too many features to list here. For more details, please call us or visit our web site (see below).

**SPECIAL PACKAGE OFFERS:**

- #1: **Wall Calendar, Astro Tables and "How to Know..." book...** \$19.95 (plus \$5 s&h).
- #2: **Same as #1, plus App...** \$28.95 (plus \$6 s&h).
- #3: **Same as #2, minus book...** \$22.95 (plus \$4 s&h).

Send to: PrimeTimes 2022 - Dept. LS - 2487 NW 75th Ave., Ste. 100 - Ankeny, IA 50023

For credit/debit card orders, call **515-964-5516**, or go online to **primetimes2.com** and click **Catalog**.

2022 APR	BEST DAYS				VALUE
	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCEL	
Fri 1					73
Sat 2					64
Sun 3					57
Mon 4					48
Tue 5					44
Wed 6					45
Thu 7					47
Fri 8					53
Sat 9					64

Sun 10					53
Mon 11					47
Tue 12					45
Wed 13					53
Thu 14					63
Fri 15					73
Sat 16					76
Sun 17					64
Mon 18					52
Tue 19					40
Wed 20					33
Thu 21					31
Fri 22					35
Sat 23					46

Sun 24					37
Mon 25					33
Tue 26					35
Wed 27					47
Thu 28					59
Fri 29					71
Sat 30					78

25 50 75  
AVERAGE

For more, visit [primetimes2.com](http://primetimes2.com)

MOON RISE	LUNAR PERIODS TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED		MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT	
	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD				
7:25 am	12:28 pm - 2:58 pm		8:11 pm	12:21 am - 2:27 am	New
7:51 am	1:04 pm - 3:50 pm		9:12 pm	12:53 am - 3:23 am	
8:20 am	1:39 pm - 4:45 pm		10:13 pm	1:29 am - 4:15 am	
8:50 am	2:18 pm - 5:38 pm		11:13 pm	2:04 am - 5:10 am	
9:24 am	2:59 pm - 6:31 pm			2:43 am - 6:03 am	
10:03 am	3:44 pm - 7:24 pm		12:12 am	3:24 am - 6:56 am	
10:48 am	4:34 pm - 8:16 pm		1:09 am	4:09 am - 7:49 am	Apogee
11:37 am	5:24 pm - 9:06 pm		2:03 am	4:59 am - 8:41 am	High
12:32 pm	6:16 pm - 9:56 pm		2:51 am	5:49 am - 9:31 am	Half
1:31 pm	7:10 pm - 10:40 pm		3:34 am	6:41 am - 10:21 am	
2:32 pm	8:05 pm - 11:21 pm		4:12 am	7:35 am - 11:05 am	
3:34 pm	9:00 pm - 12:01 am		4:46 am	8:30 am - 11:46 am	
4:37 pm	9:56 pm - 12:36 am		5:16 am	9:25 am - 12:25 pm	
5:42 pm	10:53 pm - 1:11 am		5:45 am	10:21 am - 1:01 pm	
6:47 pm	11:51 pm - Midnight		6:13 am	11:18 am - 1:21 pm	
7:55 pm	Midnight - 1:47 am		6:42 am	12:16 pm - 2:12 pm	Full
9:06 pm	12:51 am - 2:27 am		7:14 am	1:16 pm - 2:52 pm	
10:20 pm	1:54 am - 3:10 am		7:49 am	2:19 pm - 3:35 pm	
11:33 pm	2:59 am - 3:57 am		8:31 am	3:24 pm - 4:22 pm	Perigee
no period	4:05 am - 4:53 am		9:21 am	4:30 pm - 5:18 pm	
12:43 am	5:11 am - 5:53 am		10:20 am	5:36 pm - 6:18 pm	Low
1:46 am	6:14 am - 6:56 am		11:25 am	6:39 pm - 7:21 pm	
2:40 am	7:09 am - 8:01 am		12:35 pm	7:34 pm - 8:26 pm	Half
3:24 am	7:58 am - 9:04 am		1:44 pm	8:23 pm - 9:29 pm	
4:01 am	8:44 am - 10:02 am		2:52 pm	9:09 pm - 10:27 pm	
4:32 am	9:22 am - 11:00 am		3:57 pm	9:47 pm - 11:25 pm	
5:01 am	9:57 am - 11:55 am		4:59 pm	10:22 pm - 12:20 am	
5:27 am	10:30 am - 12:48 pm		6:00 pm	10:55 pm - 1:13 am	
5:54 am	11:03 am - 1:43 pm		7:01 pm	11:28 pm - Midnight	
6:21 am	11:36 am - 2:36 pm		8:01 pm	Midnight - 2:08 am	New

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

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

For more information and samples of PrimeTimes products, visit our web site: [www.primetimes2.com](http://www.primetimes2.com)



# WORK BOAT SPECIALIST

20' TO 40' BOATS AVAILABLE

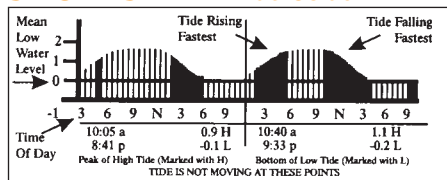


WWW.SCULLYBOATS.COM  
 INFO@SCULLYSALUMINUMBOATS.COM  
 1015 STEPHENSVILLE RD., MORGAN CITY, LA 70381  
 985-385-1323 • TOLL FREE 1-866-238-8353 • FAX 985-384-5146

**Scully's**  
 LOUISIANA'S #1 CUSTOM BOAT BUILDER  
**CUSTOMIZED ALUMINUM BOATS**



How to use the **SPORTSMAN** Tide Guide



Fish feed most actively when the tide is moving. Louisiana Sportsman has made it simple to spot the most-active feeding periods each day in the Tide Guide. Just fish those times indicated in black. To find the best time to fish your favorite honeyhole, find the spot under Tide Corrections that is closest to the area, and add or subtract the time from the corresponding daily prediction.

Tide Corrections

**East Point, Grand Isle** HIGH LOW

Barataria Pass.....	+1:00	-0:10
Bastian Island.....	+0:41	+0:12
Bay Gardens.....	+2:51	+2:44
Bayou BonFouca.....	+9:59	+10:11
Breton Islands.....	+0:54	+0:48
Caillou Boca.....	+0:40	+0:48
Caminada Pass.....	+0:20	+0:12
Chandeleur Light.....	+0:37	+0:34
Chef Pass.....	+5:17	+5:07
Cocodrie.....	+1:22	+1:33
Comfort Island.....	+1:34	+0:54
Delacroix Island.....	+3:42	+3:31
Empire Jetty.....	-1:03	-1:45
Four Bayou Pass.....	+2:18	+0:17
Gardner Island.....	+0:40	+0:47
Grand Pass.....	+1:48	+1:16
Head of Passes.....	-0:48	+0:00
Hopedale.....	+4:17	+4:56
Independence Island.....	+2:29	+1:59
Jack Bay.....	+1:59	+1:28
Joseph Bayou.....	-0:36	-1:37
Lafitte.....	+1:45	+2:51
Long Point, Lake Borgne.....	+2:28	+2:11
Manila Village.....	+2:32	+3:13
Michoud Substation.....	+5:24	+5:02
New Canal (Bucktown).....	+10:34	+10:49
North Pass.....	-0:31	-0:37
Paris Road Bridge.....	+5:53	+5:58
Pelican Islands.....	+2:26	+2:26
Pointe a la Hache.....	+3:12	+3:01
Port Eads.....	-0:17	-1:37
Raccoon Point.....	-0:03	-0:20
Shell Beach.....	+4:32	+4:25
Ship Shoal Light.....	-1:54	-1:50
South Pass, Miss. R.....	-1:13	-1:20
Southwest Pass, Miss. R.....	-0:38	-1:33
Tchefuncte River.....	+10:23	+11:01
Timbalier Island.....	+0:19	+0:23
Wine Island.....	+1:08	+1:02

**Calcasieu Pass, Lighthouse Wharf** HIGH LOW

Cote Blanche Island.....	+4:33	+3:40
Eugene Island.....	+1:49	-0:39
Lighthouse Point.....	+0:58	-0:53
Mermentau River ent.....	+0:20	+0:25
Point Au Fer.....	+1:53	-1:02
Point Chevreul.....	+3:16	+0:30
Rabbit Island.....	+2:01	-0:36
Shell Island.....	+3:08	+0:45
South Point.....	+1:55	-0:33
Southwest Pass, Vermillion Bay.....	+1:42	+0:51
Weeks Bay.....	+3:58	+3:56

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

East Point Grand Isle

Calcasieu Pass Lighthouse Wharf

Order the Tide Guides for over 40 locations throughout Louisiana. Call 1-800-538-4355 or go on line [www.lasmag.com](http://www.lasmag.com)

2.0ft.		1		NM		2	
1.0ft.		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0ft.		2:10 am 0.6 H		10:47 am 0.8 H		8:53 pm 0.1 L	
		6:05 am 0.6 L					
		10:46 am 0.6 L					
		7:39 pm 0.2 L					
		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
		11:11 am 0.9 H		11:42 am 1.0 H		12:19 pm 1.1 H	
		9:55 pm 0.0 L		10:54 pm 0.0 L		11:56 pm -0.1 L	
		11:03 pm 1.1 H		1:03 pm 1.1 H		1:53 pm 1.1 H	
		2:10 am -0.1 L		2:52 pm 1.1 H		3:12 am 0.0 L	
		3:57 pm 1.1 H					
		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
		4:05 am 0.0 L		4:49 am 0.0 L		5:24 am 0.1 L	
		5:07 pm 1.0 H		6:23 pm 1.0 H		7:49 pm 0.9 H	
		5:49 am 0.3 L		5:49 am 0.8 H		5:56 am 0.4 L	
		9:34 pm 0.8 H		11:31 am 0.5 H		4:25 pm 0.5 L	
		11:56 pm 0.7 H		6:14 pm 0.3 L			
		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
		10:09 am 1.1 H		10:44 am 1.3 H		11:30 am 1.4 H	
		8:39 pm -0.1 L		9:49 pm -0.2 L		11:02 pm -0.3 L	
		12:24 pm 1.5 H		12:24 pm 1.5 H		12:18 am -0.3 L	
		1:23 pm 1.5 H		1:34 am -0.3 L		2:44 am -0.2 L	
		2:28 pm 1.4 H		3:38 pm 1.3 H			
		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
		3:45 am -0.1 L		4:35 am 0.1 L		5:09 am 0.3 L	
		4:56 pm 1.1 H		6:35 pm 0.9 H		9:09 pm 0.8 H	
		5:13 am 0.5 L		5:13 am 0.5 L		5:13 am 0.5 L	
		11:20 am 0.6 H		5:34 pm 0.5 L		1:13 am 0.7 H	
		8:04 pm 0.3 L		9:52 am 0.8 H		3:21 am 0.7 L	
				6:46 pm 0.3 L		9:30 am 1.0 H	
						7:37 pm 0.2 L	
						9:41 am 1.1 H	
						8:21 pm 0.0 L	

Order the Tide Guides for over 40 locations throughout Louisiana. Call 1-800-538-4355 or go on line [www.lasmag.com](http://www.lasmag.com)

3.0ft.		1		NM		2	
1.5ft.		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
0.0ft.		3:50 am 1.7 H		4:56 am 1.8 H		10:54 am 0.8 L	
		10:10 am 0.6 L		10:54 am 0.8 L		3:41 pm 1.5 H	
		3:41 pm 1.5 H		3:50 pm 1.5 H		10:52 pm 0.1 L	
		10:16 pm 0.2 L		10:52 pm 0.1 L			
		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
		5:55 am 1.8 H		6:52 am 1.7 H		12:04 am 0.0 L	
		11:34 am 1.1 L		12:11 pm 1.3 L		8:05 am 1.7 H	
		4:04 pm 1.5 H		4:15 pm 1.5 H		12:47 pm 1.5 L	
		11:27 pm 0.0 L		4:02 pm 1.5 L			
		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9		3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
		4:42 am 0.3 L		5:41 am 0.3 L		6:36 am 0.3 L	
		1:42 pm 1.7 H		1:56 pm 1.7 H		2:08 pm 1.7 H	
		7:30 pm 1.3 L		7:32 pm 1.2 L		7:24 am 0.4 L	
		10:56 pm 1.5 H		7:32 pm 1.2 L		2:17 pm 1.7 H	
				7:54 pm 1.0 L		8:24 pm 0.7 L	
						1:23 am 1.7 H	
						8:08 am 0.5 L	
						2:25 pm 1.7 H	
						2:35 pm 1.7 H	
						8:59 pm 0.4 L	
						3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
						4:24 am 2.0 H	
						5:32 am 2.1 H	
						6:44 am 2.1 H	
						8:19 am 2.1 H	
						12:47 am -0.4 L	
						1:51 am -0.3 L	
						3:04 am -0.1 L	
						10:25 am 1.1 L	
						11:19 am 2.1 H	
						12:29 pm 2.0 H	
						3 6 9 N 3 6 9	
						4:17 am 0.1 L	
						5:28 am 0.2 L	
						6:36 am 0.4 L	
						1:21 am 1.8 H	
						2:31 am 1.9 H	
						4:17 am 2.0 H	
						5:17 am 1.9 H	
						6:22 pm 1.5 L	
						7:31 pm 1.0 L	
						8:04 pm 0.7 L	
						2:09 pm 1.7 H	
						2:06 pm 1.7 H	
						9:11 pm 0.2 L	



## 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](mailto:images@LouisianaSportsman.com)

Digital images must be at least 500KB and in jpeg format. Print photos cannot be returned.



**Jeffrey Lupo**

Jeffrey Lupo took this beautiful 178-pound, 8-point with a .260 REM on Dec. 28 in Madison Parish.



**Skylar Chalmers**

On Dec. 12, 2020, Skylar Chalmers of Geismar took this 10-point buck that weighed 175 pounds at 80 yards with an AR-15. The 126-inch buck was taken in Copiah County, Miss.



**Chris Housey**

Chris Housey caught this 22-inch trout fishing out of a kayak 10 minutes from the launch in Hopedale. He was using live shrimp under a Cajun thunder popping cork.



**Michael, John Kyle & Sam**

Michael Word, Sam Shirley and John Kyle Schwab with sac-a-lait caught on Nov. 26 using ultralight spinning reels and black and white tube jigs 18 inches under a weighted cork. They were fishing on private property in Marksville.



**Sadie Jones**

Sadie Jones, an eighth grade student at Choudrant High School, has been hunting with her dad, Chris, since she was old enough to get in the stand. She had previously killed two deer, but the Thanksgiving holidays were special for her and her mentor as she downed this 215-pound trophy 10-point in Ouachita Parish.



**Darren Ackman**

This 33.75-pound, 40-inch bull red is Darren Ackman's largest redfish yet. He caught it with shrimp bounced on the bottom on a trip with Larry Ackman to Marsh Island on Dec. 22.



**Ayden Maturin**

Ayden Maturin, 13, of New Iberia shot this 213-pound buck with a 23-inch inside spread on Dec. 19, 2021 in Bienville Parish. He used a .270 Browning short mag.



**Michael Brooks Fruge**

Michael Brooks Fruge killed this 10-point on Nov. 6, 2021 at Sabine WMA.



# HUNTING/FISHING SCRAPBOOK



**Dylan DeJean**

Dylan DeJean took this big Tensas Parish buck taken back in January.



**Stewart Haddox**

Stewart Haddox of Baton Rouge shot his first deer, a big Tensas Parish 8-point, on a hunt with his father, Adam Haddox, in January. Stewart dropped the deer where it stood with his 7mm-08 rifle. While they were waiting to make sure it was down for good, a big black bear weighing around 250 pounds also saw the deer and walked straight out of a thicket. It took a lot of loud noise and his Dad getting down from the stand to finally scare the bear away.



**Peyton Landry**

Peyton Landry caught this 31-inch redfish on Dec. 3, 2021 on a lipless crankbait in Vermillion Bay.

## 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](mailto:images@LouisianaSportsman.com)

Digital images must be at least 500KB and in jpeg format. Print photos cannot be returned.



**Kendall Goodly**

Kendall Goodly caught a limit of redfish in Marsh Island using shrimp under a popping cork on Nov. 22, 2020.



**Eric Mitchell**

Eric Mitchell caught these nice reds in the Lafitte marsh on Dec. 5.



**Chris Turner**

Chris Turner caught this bass at his grandparent's pond in Youngsville on a watermelon colored wacky worm. His family held their first annual family fishing tournament on Thanksgiving Day and this was the first fish caught.

BACKED BY OUR  
5-YEAR LIMITED  
WARRANTY

**HIGH POWER  
FOUR-STROKE  
OUTBOARDS**

**TOHATSU**  
Feel the Wind™

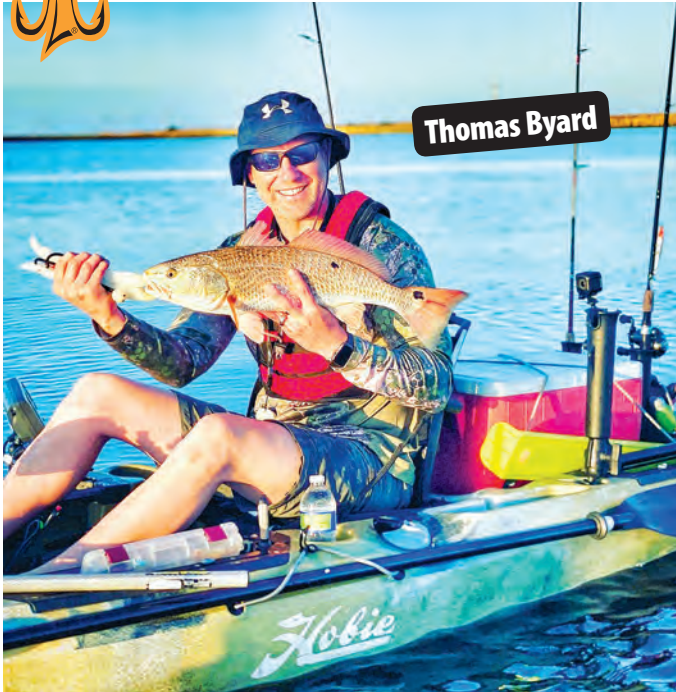
**DUVIC'S, INC.**  
3650 Westbank Expwy. Harvey • M-F 8am-5pm  
**504-341-1654**

SERVING ALL  
YOUR  
BOATING  
NEEDS  
SINCE 1890

60 75 90 115 150 200 225 250



# HUNTING/FISHING SCRAPBOOK



**Thomas Byard**

A nice redfish Thomas Byard caught in the Calcasieu Lake marsh.



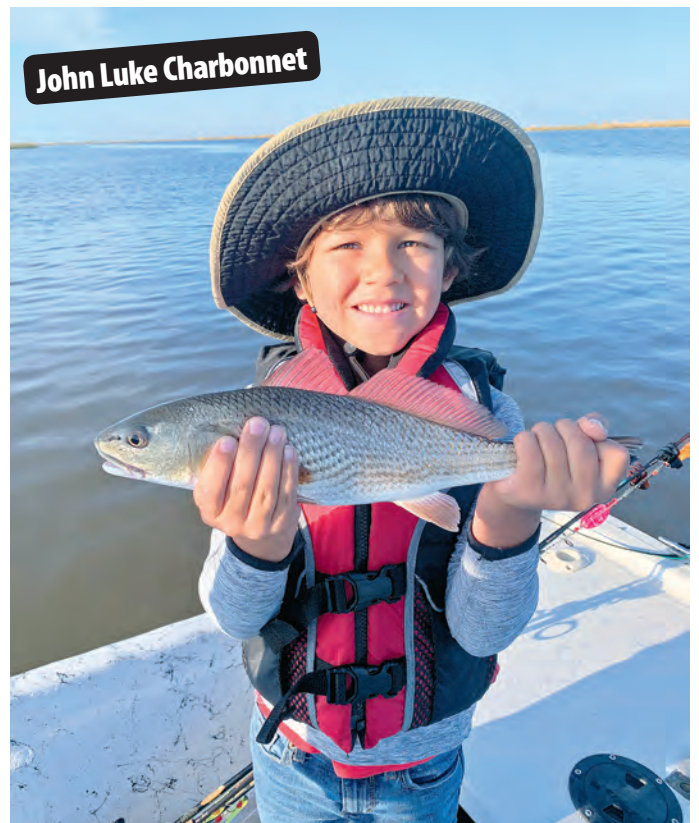
**Tanner Landry**

Tanner Landry, 14, harvested a 4-point with his .243 CVA on Jan. 15 in St. Tammany Parish. This was his second deer of the season after killing a doe on Nov. 20. Tanner is doing a great job helping replace the meat his family lost from Hurricane Ida.



**Trace Thomas**

Trace Thomas, 10, of Hammond got his first buck this past season.



**John Luke Charbonnet**

John Luke Charbonnet's first redfish was caught Nov. 12, 2020 in Lake Borgne. He was fishing with his Grandpa Ernie.



**Kaleigh LaPrairie**

Kaleigh LaPrairie, 14, of Deville killed this buck Thanksgiving evening, Nov. 25, 2021, in Rapides Parish. She killed the deer with the 30-06 passed down to her from her grandfather.



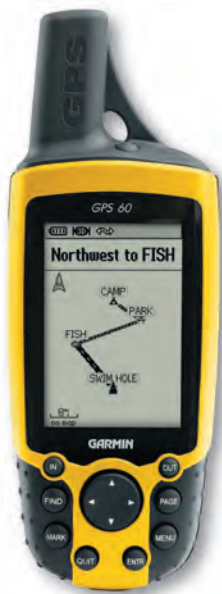
**Dani Boudreaux**

Dani Boudreaux poses with her buck taken in Centreville, Miss., the evening of Dec. 11, 2021.

# 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](mailto:images@LouisianaSportsman.com)

Digital images must be at least 500KB and in jpeg format. Print photos cannot be returned.



## 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 unit via GPS/Computer connection
- You must have an email address that will accept attachments on your incoming email



*Some of the "EDGE" positions are underwater reef's, 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](http://www.louisianasportsman.com)

Find at [shop.sportsmannetwork.com](http://shop.sportsmannetwork.com)

### Contains Over 170 Waypoint Locations

- Cocodrie-Dulac-Dulagne
- Leesville East
- Leesville West - Terrebonne & Timbalier Bays
- Barataria Bay
- Lake Borgne
- Hopedale to the Mississippi Sound
- Hopedale MRGO to Bayou Terre aux Boeufs
- Delacroix to Point a la Hache
- Bayou Bienvenu
- Port Sulphur
- Lakes Ponchartraine & Mauvepas
- Calcasieu Lake
- Myrtle Grove-Lake Hermitage
- Empire to Buras
- Pearl River WMA
- Lafitte
- The Rigoulets
- Vermillion Bay
- Bayou Sauvage NWR
- Big Grans NWR
- MRGO WPS & Dam Routes



# HUNTING/FISHING SCRAPBOOK



**Dakota Huffstutter**

Dakota Huffstutter caught this nice redfish at Delacroix while fishing with his uncle, Dale.



**John Schwegmann**

John Schwegmann landed this 42-pound alligator gar while fishing in Shell Beach at Fish'n Freedom.



**Kate Jans**

Kate Jans, 5, of Sterlington with a redfish caught in Hopedale.



**Rebekah Burcham**

Rebekah Burcham killed her first buck in the stand with her 7-year-old daughter Julia on Jan. 15, 2022. They were hunting on private land in Desoto Parish. Her husband, Eric, and daughter, Ella, 9, were in the stand next to them and watched the shot.



Twins Cameron and Mia Mack of Port Barre both pose with their first fish.



Matthew Russo with a redfish hooked in Alligator Pass in Delacroix.

**20-28 FOOT BAY BOATS IN STOCK & MORE COMING**

**BLUE WAVE.**

**YAMAHA**

1308 Canal Blvd • Thibodaux  
**985-447-4156**

**SOUTHERN OUTDOORS**  
 & MARINE LLC



# AUNT LUCY'S POND

WHERE MY ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS ALL BEGAN

**Y**ou have to be there to know where Kelly is. Usually wordy Wikipedia simply reports, “Kelly is an unincorporated community in Caldwell Parish. It’s ZIP code is 71441.” That’s it. No population given, but I’d guess it at around 18 people, 14 dogs and a horse these days. It never was a lot bigger.

Kelly is where Grandma Romoline and Grandpa George Kinnison used to live. It’s where I learned my first lessons of the outdoors during weekend and summer visits. I feel sorry for kids today who don’t have grandparents in the country.

There were fishing adventures to make Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn jealous, like trips to Aunt Lucy’s pond. Now there was a catch. I had to mow Grandma’s yard before I could go fishing. It wasn’t that big, but she had 86 bushes, some that even nurseries can’t name, planted three feet apart all around the yard. I had to mow around each one, stopping

frequently to take a sip of Dr. Pepper to overcome dizziness.

But then it was off to the pond. It was huge. I saw it later in life and it wasn’t. But it was huge when I was 10.

Grandpa would find an old Folger’s metal coffee can and we’d go next door to see Mr. Lonnie Thomas and his old claw-foot bathtub, located under a shed out back, covered with a piece of rusty tin, containing rich dark soil and red worms from one end to the other. He’d dig around and get as many as he thought we could use. When Mr. Lonnie wasn’t home, we’d have to search under fresh cow patties in Aunt Lucy’s cow pasture for worms. They were a little bit more slimy and wiggly.

I’d hitch a ride out across the highway to Aunt Lucy’s. My grandparents never owned a car. You didn’t really need one in Kelly.

We caught bunches of bream and catfish and grinnel in the pond on cane

poles cut right from the patch by the pond. We used braided line that you could tow a car with. It’s where I unintentionally learned how to dance with a water moccasin. And on another day, how to recover from a heart attack. The latter was provided by a covey of quail flushed with a fury from the fence row we walked to the pond. Here I also learned how to tell mean cows from friendly cows. Aunt Lucy’s cows were all mean.

Back in the woods behind Grandma’s, I learned to never, never, never shoot a hornet’s nest with a .22 rifle, no matter how far away you think you are. Running through the chicken yard and jumping the fence while screaming at the top of



*Kinny Haddox has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 47 years. He and his wife, DiAnne, live in West Monroe.*

my lungs even scared the head rooster. He was mean, too.

But back to fishing. One summer, Dad and I walked into downtown Kelly, which was a block from each city limits sign, down to Tuberville's General Store. I thought we were going to get an orange creamsicle Push-Up. But Dad bought me my very first real artificial fishing lure. It was a Lucky 13. Came in a box and everything. Visions of catching a bass made me almost as dizzy as mowing Grandma's yard. They were in the pond, you know. We had seen them swirl and jump, but they would not hit a red wiggler.

That afternoon, I met my cousin Paul to walk to the pond, right after we ate a few of Aunt Lucy's tea cakes and got a swig of cool well water. On this day, I had my cane pole and my Dad's Zebco 33 rod and reel, my new bait securely tied on.

I can still see it in my mind. I cast my Lucky 13 clear across the pond and into a willow bush. No problem. I jerked as hard as I could and it came right lose. But it flew across the pond faster than a flushed quail and a treble hook buried about a half inch above my right eye. Buried deep.

No worries. Cousin Paul plopped out his trusty single bladed Old Hickory pocket-knife. It was sharp because he used it to clean squirrels earlier that very morning. He spit on it, wiped it on his blue jeans to sanitize it and cut the hook out before I could see enough through my bloody eye to know I should yell "Stop." I think he enjoyed it. He still grins today when he hears the story.

There's more. I killed my first squirrel in the seven-acre woods on the Kinnison homestead in Kelly. It woke up Mr. Pitelli, the next door neighbor, who gave me an awful cussing about hunting in town and so early.

Oh yes, more about the fishing.

Well, you see, there isn't room to keep telling the tales. But if there's one thing this story brings to the forefront, it is that fishing isn't all about fishing. It's about all the stuff that goes on around it. Or hunting. And the stories we tell. Some of them are even true. Never forget that. Because you can never catch enough fish or big enough fish to be totally happy. There's always one more or one a

little bit bigger.

But you can make memories in the simple going of fishing. And telling the tales. And seriously, that's really all that matters in the end. ■

*Dad bought me my very first real artificial fishing lure. It was a Lucky 13. Came in a box and everything. Visions of catching a bass made me almost as dizzy as mowing Grandma's yard.*

# BLACKWELL'S

## Work, Play HUNT

### 2021 LandStar L3



SEVERAL  
AVAILABLE



\$6500



Made in the  
U.S.A.



[www.blackwellsoutdoor.com](http://www.blackwellsoutdoor.com)

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

# GUIDES & CLASSIFIEDS

## Display Ads

1/32 Page ..... \$75/mn  
 1/16 Page ..... \$107/mn  
 (vertical or horizontal)  
 1/8 Page..... \$155/mn  
 (vertical or horizontal)

Up to 25 words **\$19.95/mn** or \$45  
 for 3mns. Add a photo for \$10/mn

To place a classified display ad  
**Call 1-800-538-4355**  
 Mon-Thurs 8-5 • Fri 8-3

## REAL ESTATE

**Camp for Sale** on Grand Caillou Bayou, 5 bd 5 bath with 5 boat sheds with lifts, 2500 Sq ft Living, 6000 Sq ft total \$495,000. (985)209-4386

**\$39,500**

**Lower Bayou Dularge South of Houma** Louisiana waterfront on the bayou 50 feet wide by 285' driveway in place lot is within existing hurricane protection system, campers and motorhomes OK or build a raised camp bulkheads not required \$39,500 only one lot left, call Robert Hale 985-804-7525

## BOAT FOR SLATE



**2020 10' Pelican Bass Raider.** 2020 magic built trailer, 3hp Minn. TM ;15 amp pro marine charger. Fully rigged. Garage kept. Used 3 or 4 times. Please call or text 318-465-3911. 1,900.00

**Bayou Charters**  
**Guaranteed Fish!**  
 Experience Louisiana's Most Professional Guide Service  
 504-278 FISH • www.bayoucharters.com

- Light Tackle
- Fly Fishing
- Redfish
- Speckled Trout

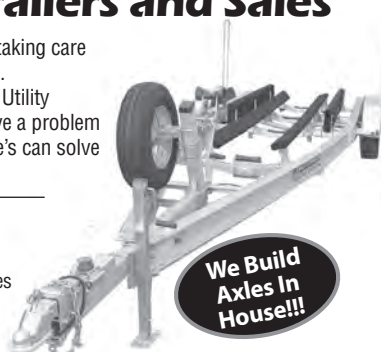
**FISH-N-TELL CHARTERS**  
 CAPT. BARRY SCHEXNAYDRE  
 (225) 938-2419 • FISHNTELLCHARTERS@YAHOO.COM  
 24' BAY BOATS  
**SPECIALIZING IN SPECKLED TROUT & REDFISH**  
 FISHING FROM FOURCHON TO GRAND ISLAND AREA

## TRAILERS

### Claude's Trailers and Sales

Since 1963 Claude's has been taking care of the trailer needs of Acadiana. Whether you need a new Boat, Utility or Gooseneck trailer, Claude's can solve your problem.

No matter where you bought your trailer, no matter what brand, Claude's services them all. We are one of a few service facilities that can build custom axles



**We Build Axles In House!!!**

**6400 Hwy 14  
 New Iberia, La. 70560**

**337-367-1141**

12 ISSUES OF  
**Louisiana SPORTSMAN**

To Subscribe call toll-free  
**1-855-223-3599**  
 or for faster service visit  
[LouisianaSportsman.com/subscribe](http://LouisianaSportsman.com/subscribe)

# 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**



**ADVERTISERS  
INDEX**

ALARIO BROTHERS..... INSERT	FRIENDS OF LOUISIANA PUBLIC BROADCASTING .... 83	PUGLIA'S SPORTING GOODS ..... 15
ASCENSION EQUIPMENT & RENT ALL..... INSERT	GATOR TRAX ..... INSERT	QUIRK'S WELDING LLC ..... 33
BAKER AGRI-FOREST PROPERTIES..... 69	GREENWELL SPRINGS MARINE..... 66, 101	RANews FIRMINATOR ..... 21
BLACKWELL OUTDOOR, INC..... 129	H&H MARINE..... 97	SCULLY'S..... 33, 118
BLANCHARD'S REFRIGERATION ..... 39	HENDERSON ..... 87	SEA ARK BOATS ..... 47
BLUE WAVE BOATS ..... 7	HOBIE CAT ..... 37	SEALY OUTDOORS ..... 59
BOATS UNLIMITED ..... 42	HOUSEBOAT OUTLET ..... 77	SERVICE CHEVROLET..... 3
BREAUX AND DAIGLE MARINE..... INSERT	HUGHES WELDING AND MFG..... 27	SOUTHERN OUTDOORS & MARINE ..... 31, 41, 91, 127
CAJUN OUTBOARDS ..... 75	KITTERLIN CREEK OUTFITTERS ..... 113	SOUTHLAND DODGE ..... 48
CAPTAIN PAUL TITUS..... 57, 125	LEMANN'S FARM SUPPLY, INC. .... INSERT	SPRO CORPORATION ..... 35, 95
CONOCO PHILLIPS ..... 9	LOUISIANA LAND BANK- BBR CREATIVE..... 16	STAR BRITE, INC ..... 45
COURTESY GMC - LAFAYETTE..... 23	LOUISIANA LOTTERY ..... 2	STIHL SOUTHWEST ..... 67, 77
COVER'S UNLIMITED ..... 61	MAROLINA MARKETING, INC..... 107	TIM'S MARINE ..... 69, INSERT
CUSTOM CORRUGATED AND SUPPLY ..... 62	METRO BOATING ..... 11	TOHATSU AMERICAN CORPORATION ..... 54, 55
DAGATE'S MARINE ..... 19	MIKE GERALD'S TRAILER..... 21	UNITED COUNTRY-SOUTHERN STATES REALTY ..... 25
DAIWA ..... 49, 51	MILLENNIUM MARINE ..... 79	WHITETAIL PROPERTIES ..... 111, INSERT
DIANE ALLEN & ASSOCIATES..... 5	MONSTER TIMBER & MILLWORKS ..... 57	XPRESS BY ALUMA-WELD, INC. .... 136
DOUG RUSHING'S ..... 108	MORGAN & COMPANY- LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STATE PARKS..... 80	
DUVIC'S BOATS..... 123, 132	MURPHY LAW FIRM ..... INSERT	
EXCEL BOATS ..... INSERT	OKUMA FISHING TACKLE..... 17	
FIRST SOUTH FARM CREDIT ..... INSERT		

**Subscribe Today and SAVE ..... 29, 92**

# DUVIC'S!

## YOUR #1 RE-POWER CENTER

CELEBRATING  
132 YEARS  
IN  
BUSINESS!



### 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 132 YEARS IN BUSINESS!



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](http://ascensionequipment.com)

[KubotaUSA.com](http://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](http://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](http://WWW.GATORTRAXBOATS.COM)

Louisiana Sportsman April 2022





Ben McDonald  
Former LSU pitcher

It's About  
**LEGACY**



*Let's finance yours.*

“It was important to me to have my own piece of property so I could continue those family traditions with my wife and children. Somewhere we could make our own. And the first step in buying rural real estate is finding the right lender. When it comes to land loans, First South is absolutely who you should call.”



**First South**  
*Farm Credit*

*Let's talk*



800-955-1722 | [FIRSTSOUTHLAND.COM](http://FIRSTSOUTHLAND.COM)

Paid endorsement based on Ben McDonald's actual experience as a previous customer of First South.

# X VALIDATED

## The Original All-Welded Aluminum Makes History at the Bassmaster Classic!

Back-to-back Elite win's in 2021 proved to the boating industry that the original all-welded aluminum boat is capable of competing and winning, at the highest level of bass fishing. Jason Christie's championship at the 2022 Academy Sports + Outdoors Bassmaster Classic presented by Huk will forever be a historic moment for Xpress Boats and the entire bass fishing world. This accomplishment drew the final line in the sand and confirmed to any doubters that Xpress Boats all-welded aluminum can compete and win on the biggest stage of fishing, which has previously been conquered by glass boats. Luckily, you don't have to compete on the Bassmaster Elite Series to reap the benefits of years of engineering refinement built into our Xclusive Pro Bass Series. Whether you have unfinished business or competing in your first derby, welcome to the future!



### XCLUSIVE PRO BASS SERIES

X21PRO / X19PRO / X18PRO

SeaDek  
MARINE PRODUCTS

Available option on all Xclusive Pro Bass Series models

Photo by: Chris Brown



**xpress boats**<sup>®</sup>  
we build xcitement

199 Extrusion Place, Hot Springs, AR 71901



xpressboats.com



LA-22-12756



# MURPHY LAW FIRM

BATON ROUGE OFFICE | SERVING ALL OF LOUISIANA | WE WILL COME TO YOU

## Injury Lawyers for Sportsmen

**ASBESTOSIS?  
LUNG CANCER?  
MESOTHELIOMA?**

**CALL ME, LOUISIANA.**

**1-800-734-6545**

[murphylawfirm.com](http://murphylawfirm.com)



*Don't miss your shot!*  
If you or a loved one  
have been affected by  
Asbestos exposure,  
you may be entitled to

**financial  
compensation.**



Waylon Murphy



Attorney Peyton Murphy

# Alario Bros

Visit our website [www.AlarioBros.com](http://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



### Hard Hat Lights



### Briggs & Stratton Engines



### Crab Tongs



### Crab Claw Crackers



### Pots, Burners, Regulators, Hoses & Paddles



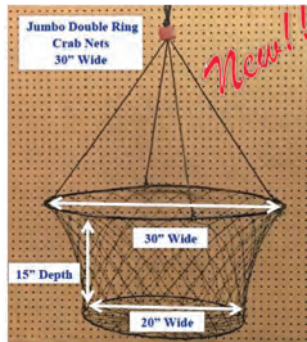
### Cast Nets



### Crab & Bait Holding Cages



### NEW 30" Crab Nets! Made In-house



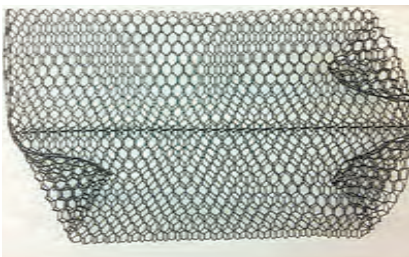
### Crab Traps



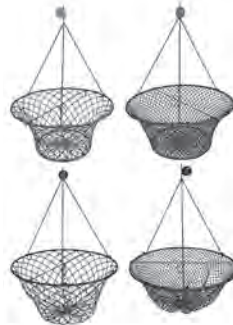
### Trawls



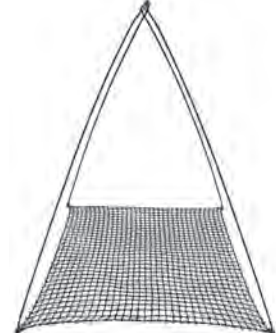
### Crawfish Pillow Traps



### Large & Small Crab Nets Made In-house



### Crawfish Nets Made In-house



**Alario Bros**  
Marine Hardware & Fisherman Supplies

**504.341.1843**

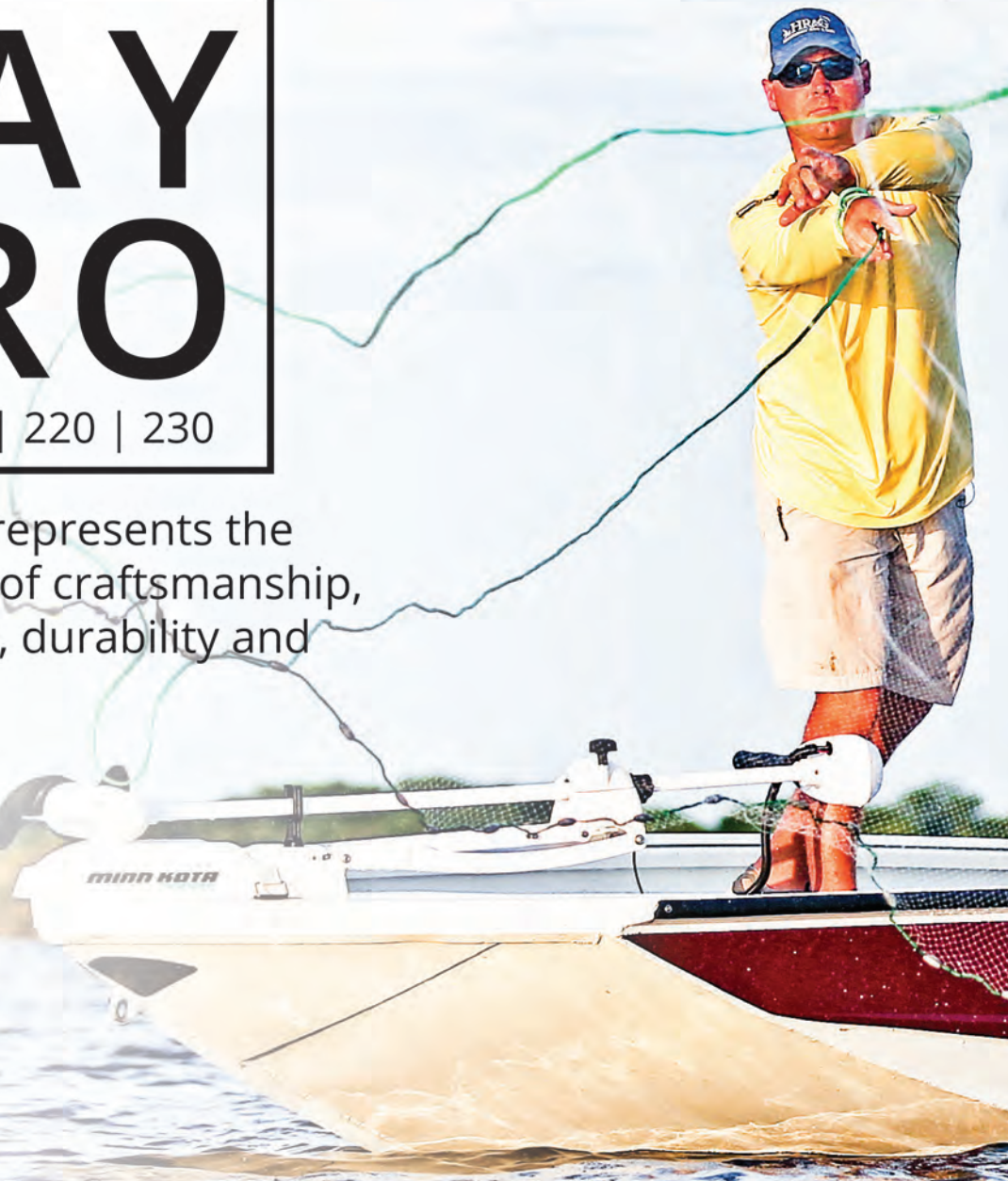
894 Avenue A. Westwego, LA 70094 [www.alariobros.com](http://www.alariobros.com)

April 2022 | Louisiana Sportsman

# BAY PRO

183 | 203 | 220 | 230

The Bay Pro represents the highest level of craftsmanship, performance, durability and fishability.



## YAMAHA

Experience the smooth operation, handling and legendary trustworthiness of Yamaha and an Excel Bay Pro.

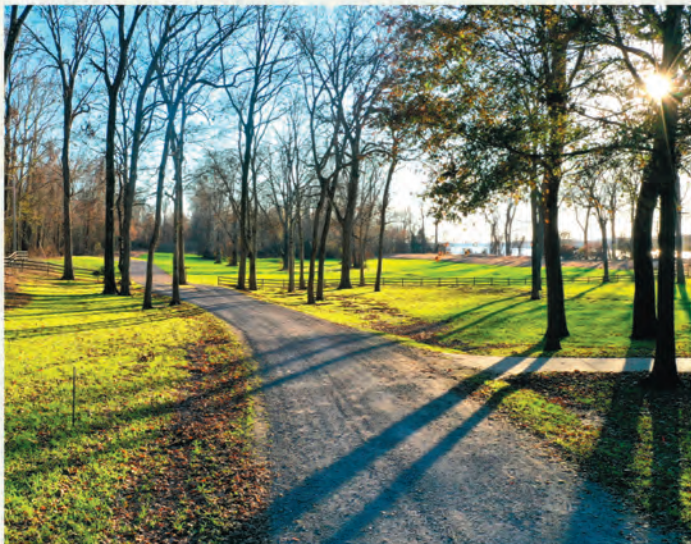
# EXCEL BOATS



Bay Pro 220 w/ Standard .160ga Aluminum

[www.excelboats.com](http://www.excelboats.com)





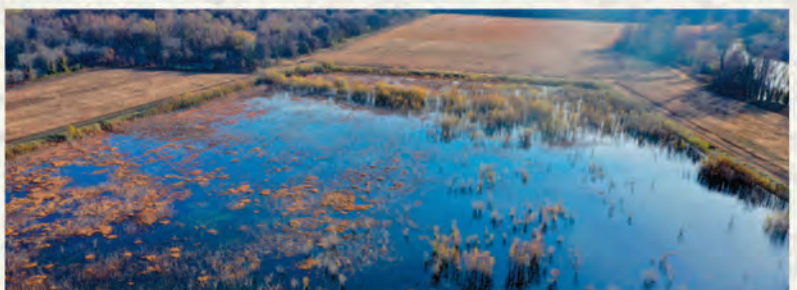
---

## BALESHED

4,000 ± ACRES | ISSAQUENA CO, MISSISSIPPI  
\$13,900,000

Baleshed is a secluded recreational treasure that is now available. The owner of this property has spent the past 24 years building and managing one of the finest properties to be found in the Southern United States. The view from the main lodge is truly special. The owner of Baleshed's main focus was to create a first-class recreational experience for the family and their friends on all levels. This property really does offer the best river experience to be found. You have your own island that is 500 +/- acres and then the main portion being 3300 +/- acres with over 6 miles of MS River frontage. Then you have 400 +/- acres on the outside of the mainline levee that gives the wildlife refuge during high water events. There are no details about this property that haven't been carefully thought out or completed. Call today for more information!

**Contact Brad Farris - (601) 506-1304**



**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 capacity	.67 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'.

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](http://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](http://KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers) and see the posted disclaimer.