

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

December 11, 2009

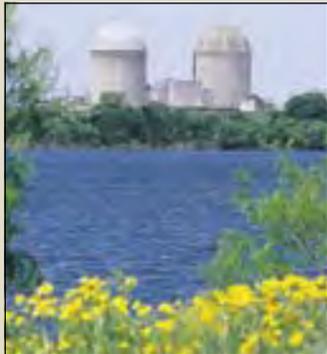
Texas' Premier Outdoor Newspaper

Volume 6, Issue 8



West Texas muley
Mule deer season continues with successful hunts. **Page 6**

Inside



■ FISHING

Squaw Creek fishing

The lake at a North Central Texas nuclear power plant will reopen to anglers.

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Lighter four strokes

Yamaha recently lightened its outboard motors, which makes for faster boating.

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■ HUNTING

Woodcock ways

A migratory bird gives East Texas hunters a chance to test their dogs.

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■ LSONews.com



LOOKING FOR A FIGHT: A new study confirms that whitetail bucks respond more to aggressive — loud — rattling techniques. Photo by Lili A. Sams for Lone Star Outdoor News.

Pump up the volume

Study: Bucks respond best to loud rattling

By Ralph Winingham
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Kicking up the volume by putting a little elbow grease into rattling horns appears to be one key to success for Texas deer hunters, according to a recent study by the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research

Institute.

In what is being described as the first definitive research into the effects of attracting bucks by clicking antlers together, sequences involving “long and loud” and “short and loud” sessions brought out more bucks than any other method.

Mickey W. Hellickson, a wildlife biologist at the King Ranch, reported on the findings in the December edition of the institute’s Deer Associates eNews. Hellickson wrote that the three-year study was conducted at the Welder Wildlife Foundation Refuge, just north of Sinton, with four rattling se-

quences randomly tested during the pre-rut, rut peak and post-rut periods.

“Each rattling sequence was tested at one of 17 observation stands and included two people,” Hellickson wrote. “One person watched deer respond to the rattling from the top of the stand, recorded data and videotaped each buck with a camera. The second person performed the rattling upwind of the stand in the nearest clump of brush.”

See **RATTLING**, Page 14

Mexico hunting, fishing lodges take another hit

Group of dove hunters assaulted and robbed

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Mexican hunting and fishing lodges were dealt a blow over the past few seasons from tourists’ fears of border violence, the economy and the H1N1 virus.

But crimes against the 17,000 or so hunters, many from Texas, who travel south each year were virtually unheard of — until this year. This fall, a group of 20 whitewing hunters, nine from Houston, were attacked by about a dozen armed gunmen. The hunters were forced to the



HUNTER SAFETY: Quail are still abundant in Tamaulipas, Mexico, but hunters are not. Fears of violence are keeping them home. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

See **MEXICO**, Page 24

Outdoors from an armchair, in front of a screen

New video games bring hunting, fishing to living rooms, pockets

By Thomas Phillips
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

When the weather is too ugly or other plans interfere, a host of new video games that came out in 2009 can fill the outdoors void in a hunter’s or angler’s life.

Many new games are available for the big-hitter home systems such as Nintendo’s Wii, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3. But more and more games with a hunting or fishing angle are being published for

See **VIDEO GAMES**, Page 16

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NATIONAL

Kellogg's out as sponsor of FLW tour and team

Wendlandt, Tutt looking for a replacement

Kellogg's is ending a 10-year relationship with FLW Outdoors, leaving four anglers, including two Texans, scrambling to find a title sponsor two months before a new season.

One of the top names in bass fishing and reigning FLW Tour Angler of the Year, Clark Wendlandt of Leander, will be coming off a career year without one of his top sponsors. Jim Tutt of Longview, who was with Kellogg's for all 10 years during the company's affiliation with FLW, is also left looking for a title sponsor, along with Dave Lefebre of Pennsylvania, Alvin Shaw of North Carolina, and Greg Bohannon of Arkansas.

When reached by phone, Kellogg's corporate communications did not comment on why the company terminated its relationship with FLW. It said in an e-mail, "We have enjoyed our partnership with the FLW, and wish the team and players continued success."

Kellogg's is the most recent corporation that has bowed out of the FLW. Land O'Lakes and Pure Fishing ended their sponsorships earlier this year, and Castrol reduced its role with the fishing tour.

All this is happening in the same year that Genmar, the country's second largest boat manufacturer,



BACKER WANTED: Clark Wendlandt of Leander, left, gives an interview in an FLW Outdoors file photo. Wendlandt and other pro anglers recently lost Kellogg's as a sponsor.

filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, leaving many anglers and fishing tours concerned about the future.

FLW spokesman Jeff McCoy said the company does not comment on its corporate negotiations, and FLW is looking forward.

"Kellogg's has been a longtime sponsor, and we were proud to be affiliated with them for several years and proud of the relationship we had with them through corporate and the anglers," McCoy said. "We're continuing to market our tournaments and promote fishing to the world."

Wendlandt was in Mexico fishing and was not reachable by phone. Tutt told BassFan.com it was a "huge disappointment" and that "it feels like losing your job." But he mostly had good things to say about his relationship with

Kellogg's. He said he is not sure yet which FLW tournaments he will fish this season.

Lefebre issued a statement on his Web site titled "I'll Miss Kellogg's." In the statement, Lefebre praised Kellogg's for the relationship that was and announced that he will be sticking with the FLW. But like many, Lefebre is on shaky ground with his sponsors.

"Usually I have all my contracts signed by now, and I'm going over final graphics for my next boat and RV, this year I haven't signed a single contract, everything is word of mouth, but I have faith," the statement said. "Almost everyone is in the same boat. All we can do is wait and see what happens."

The FLW Tour's first event in 2010 is Feb. 10-13, in Shreveport, La. — Staff report



DEER DEBATE: Although usually in favor of expanding opportunities for hunting, Whitetails Unlimited opposes Wisconsin's plan to have a 16-day firearm season for deer during 2010. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

Whitetails Unlimited against Wis. deer season expansion

Observers not agreeing on herd numbers

Whitetails Unlimited recently sent a letter to members of Wisconsin's Natural Resources Board opposing an expanded 16-day gun deer hunt in Wisconsin in 2010.

"There is always tension between hunters and DNR regulators, and we understand that," said Whitetails Unlimited President Jeff Schinkten. "But the results of the 2009 gun deer season show that hunter numbers were down in Wisconsin, and the number of bucks killed was at a 25-year low for the second straight year. Until we can get a handle on the true deer population in Wisconsin, we need to hold off on the 16-day gun season."

Schinkten also pointed out that car-deer accidents have had a dramatic and steady decline for the last five

years, and a survey of Whitetails Unlimited members showed a large gap between opinions of Wisconsin hunters and the opinions of policymakers.

It wasn't a surprise, but the numbers still are eyebrow-raising: Hunters during the nine-day gun season killed 195,647 deer, a 29 percent decline from last year. The numbers are preliminary and based on deer registrations and included 86,251 bucks and 109,396 antlerless deer.

DNR officials said they anticipated the decline because of changes in season structure that reduced the antlerless deer harvest. They also said there was lower fawn production and tough weather conditions.

"... we don't want to see the number of hunters drop, and when those numbers drop in Wisconsin, where deer hunting is a passion, we get concerned," Schinkten said. "DNR policy can have a huge effect on hunter satisfaction, and we just want a common-sense approach."

— Whitetails Unlimited report

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CONSERVATION

Four up for Bud's top Conservationist

Budweiser and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation recently nominated three men and a husband-wife team for its 2010 Budweiser Conservationist of the Year honor.

The nominees are Bill Lyons of Modesto, Calif., Jim Range of Washington, D.C., Guy and Judy Gardner of Fuquay, N.C., and John French of Ketchum, Idaho.

Lyons works with federal agency for improving water and air quality, according to NFWF.

Range, who died earlier this year, cofounded the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and served on the boards of Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

The Gardners helped form the North Carolina chapter of the Quality Deer Management Association and work in other areas of educating people about wildlife.

French focuses his conservation work on helping Silver Creek in Idaho. He also serves on the board of Wood River Land Trust and works with The Nature Conservancy and The Yosemite Institute.

The annual Budweiser Conservationist of the Year program recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the outdoors and conservation. Each year, a committee selects four conservationists as finalists from dozens of outstanding nominees. Adult consumers 21 and older from across the country vote in an open-ballot process on Budweiser.com. The 2010 Budweiser Conservationist of the Year will be announced in January.

The honoree selects a conservation organization to receive a \$50,000 grant from Budweiser and the NFWF. The three runners-up each direct a \$5,000 grant to a conservation orga-

nization of their choice.

"Volunteers can have a powerful impact on conservation efforts. By recognizing outstanding individuals each year through this program, we hope to inspire others to follow in their footsteps," said Jeff Trandahl, executive director of NFWF.

George Dunklin Jr. of Stuttgart, Ark., an active proponent for wetland and habitat conservation, was honored as the 2009 Budweiser Conservationist of the Year.

— *Budweiser report*

Kershaw sings for Whitetails Unlimited

Whitetails Unlimited, a conservation group well known in some northern states but fairly new to Texans, recently held its Concert for Conservation in Waco, featuring country music star Sammy Kershaw.

"After hearing about our organization and the things we do to get young people involved in the outdoors and in hunting, Sammy was impressed and agreed to do the concert," said WU Field Director Kevin Greb.

WU is developing local chapters across the state, with an eye toward keeping money raised by the chapters in the local communities.

"They guarantee that at least 50 percent of the money raised stays with the local chapter to be used in the community," said Abilene chapter head Steve Freeman. "We hold youth hunts and get involved with the local 4H groups. We have to get the kids involved to continue the hunting tradition."

Other performers included Randy Hass, an avid deer hunter from McAlester, Okla., and the chairman of the local WU chapter. Hass was quick to point out the size of the deer in the state to the north.

"I killed a big eight-pointer with

my muzzleloader," Hass said. "I've seen lots of deer, but I'm waiting for a monster."

The Bo Phillips Band of Stillwater, Okla., also made up of hunters, took the stage before Kershaw.

Kershaw, an avid hunter and angler, grew up in Louisiana and now lives outside of Nashville. He has an interest in getting young people involved in the outdoors. His father died when he was 11 years old.

"Getting outdoors gives you time to get away from it all," he said. "Everyone should have that chance."

— *Staff report*

At DSC show: Do you hate whitetails?

Hunting and fishing authorities are scheduled to speak on a variety of topics in seminars Jan. 7-10 at the Dallas Safari Club Convention and Sporting Expo.

Notable speakers on the list include Larry Weishuhn, Craig Boddington and Chris Dorsey.

Weishuhn will ask seminar attendees one off-the-wall question: Do you hate white-tailed deer yet?

Other seminar highlights will include the following topics:

- Building Your Trophy Room — design and construction with Tom Julian
- Cooking Wild Game — with Chef David Gilbert
- Could You Be a Survivor? — survival techniques with Peter Kummerfeldt
- Fishing Idaho — with Mike Lawson
- Long Distance Shooting — with GreyBull
- Safari Planning and Travel Tips — with Terry Blauwkamp and Anne Gaines-Burrell
- Safari Rifles, Loads, Optics and More — with Craig Boddington
- Secrets of Making Outdoor TV — with Chris Dorsey

• Sometimes "Buck" is More Than a 4-Letter Word — with Larry Weishuhn

• South African Hunting — with Peter Flack

• Survival Myths and Misconceptions — with Peter Kummerfeldt

• The Nearly Perfect Safari Rifle — with Larry Potterfield

• Whitetails and/or White Tales — with Larry Weishuhn

• Whitetail Questions and Answers (and Then Some) — with Larry Weishuhn

Seminar times and room numbers

can be found at www.biggame.org. The event at the Dallas Convention Center also will include more than 1,100 exhibits featuring top outfitters and professional hunters from around the world.

Gun makers, optics and gear companies, artists, jewelers, clothiers, furrers and others, all considered best in their field, will spread over more than 300,000 square feet.

Also during the convention, DSC will present its 2010 Peter Hathaway Capstick Hunting Heritage Award to international conservationist, naturalist and hunting rights advocate Hubert Thummler of Mexico City.

"Hubert Thummler once said, 'Hunting and conservation are not only compatible but also inseparable,' and he has used this heartfelt philosophy to influence wildlife policy and sporting traditions on a global scale," said Ben Carter, DSC executive director. "His sustained commitment and significant contributions not only benefit today's sportsman and women, but those of future generations as well."

In the evenings, convention registrants can enjoy gala banquets featuring celebrity speakers, awards, entertainment and auctions for world-class hunts, firearms and more.

The annual event, this year called First Light, is the primary fundraiser for the Dallas Safari Club

— *Dallas Safari Club report*

LONE STAR
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HUNTING

Mule deer season rolling on — despite misfires

Hunters fill tags after being granted second chances on bucks

By Thomas Phillips
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Hunters found their mule deer during the early portion of the season, but for a couple, bagging the bucks came with firearms frustration.

Eric Clark was aimed at a six by five buck and ready to fire Thanksgiving morning in Gaines County. With “my heart beating out of my chest,” Clark pulled the trigger.

But nothing happened. The gun, his grandfather's .30-06 from the Korean War, dry fired.

The deer did not flee. It stared at Clark from 250 yards away as he reloaded and prepared to shoot again.

This time, he exhaled on the scope. But when he aimed and fired, his shot was true.

“I'm still living on cloud nine,” said Clark, of Lubbock. “I keep the rack in my pickup so I can show everybody.”

The buck, Clark's first mule deer, had a 28-inch spread with 5-inch bases. It had a gross score of 177 1/8, he said.

Clark was hunting in one of the hottest counties in Texas for mulies. The county produced the top three mule deer in the state last

See MULE DEER, Page 25



MIGHTY MULEY: Eric Clark shot his first mule deer in Gaines County on Thanksgiving Day. The six-by-five buck weighed about 300 pounds, Clark said.

Way of the woodcock hunter



POINT AND FETCH: Woodcock hunting enthusiasts say hunters are missing the boat by not pursuing the small migratory bird. The birds also provide a good workout for young dogs, some say. The season opens Dec. 18. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Birds offer East Texas hunters practice for dogs

By Ralph Winingham
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

In all the years that retired wildlife management professor Dr. Monte Whiting has been hunting woodcock throughout East Texas, he has never bumped into any woodcock hunter not in his group.

“About two years ago, I heard some shots,” said the 71-year-old Whiting, whose reputation as the state's leading woodcock expert has followed him since he retired seven years ago from Stephen F. Austin University.

“It can be very hard hunting,” Whiting said. “Not many want to come back after that first time.”

Woodcock are considered one of the most underutilized migratory birds sought by Texas hunters. The birds, slightly smaller than a quail with a long pointed beak used to probe the ground for earthworms, begin migrating into the state in late November.

The biggest concentrations are in the thick pine and hardwood creek bottoms of the Pineywoods ecological region in the far eastern part of the state. Birds are also found in the Post Oak Savannah region, with some hunting success in the Black-

See WOODCOCK, Page 20

Former guide returns to industry with custom calls

Side job takes Texan to top of market for waterfowl callers

By Bill Miller
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Joe Briscoe estimates he'll end this year having made about 300 custom goose and duck calls, but he has a regular job, too.

So if you try to reach him near the end of the year, it might be while he's trying to squeeze a hunt into his busy schedule.

That was the case Dec. 2 when he answered his cell phone in a deer blind near the boundary of Liberty and Chambers counties.

“Hang on a second,” Briscoe whispered, adding that an eight-pointer just stepped into view. “Oh, dang it!

He went back into the trees ...”

That's OK with Briscoe, because this entrepreneur is eager to take your phone call.

Customer service, he said, is the foundation of JB Custom Calls, which began in 2006 at his home in Mont Belvieu.

Briscoe, 44, is a former goose guide and team roper who saw his custom call business vault from a year-long struggle to build a prototype to 100 orders soon after product launch.

New customer David Sohr, a high school teacher, coach and goose guide from Tomball, used Briscoe's products this year to win numerous waterfowl calling contests.

“In the real duck and meat duck contests, I've won first and second places using Joe's calls,” Sohr said. “But I'm not a duck hunter; I'm a goose hunter.”

“And I promise you, I couldn't pick up a call off the shelf and do that.”

Briscoe's regular job is managing a company that provides painting services for Houston-area refineries. When he's not doing that, he's spending time with his wife, Ami, and their 8-year-old daughter, MacKenzie.

Nearly the rest of his time is spent in his backyard shop making water-

See CALLS, Page 22



CRAFTY CALLER: Joe Briscoe makes waterfowl calls by hand and customizes them for hunters in his Mont Belvieu shop. To customize a call, Briscoe will listen to the hunter use it and make the appropriate adjustments.

Hunting News in Brief

Lots of ducks, geese and water in Texas in 2009

Texas waterfowl hunters generally have plenty of birds, but some are dealing with high water levels, too.

In the High Plains Mallard Management Unit, outfitters said the pre-Thanksgiving cold front pushed more geese to the High Plains. Goose hunters enjoyed better decoying action near Dumas, Spearman and Amarillo. Specklebellies and Canadas continue to work in Knox and Haskell counties.

Duck numbers continue to build in the Panhandle, with more mallards showing with the cool front. Lots of water has scattered ducks throughout the region, with the exception of the Knox City area, which could use more rain.

Sandhill crane hunters enjoyed great decoying action.

In the North Zone, the first split of duck season ended at sunset Nov. 29, and results across the region ranged from poor to fair. Lack of ducks in Texas was not the problem, rather, too

much water and flooding put a kink in efforts. The good news is more mallards have shown with the fronts, and receding water should make backwater sloughs and rivers prime when the second split opens Dec. 12.

Biologist Jared Laing said most of the mast crop was washed away with the flooding, but sloughs and river bottoms have been attracting good numbers of wood ducks.

Gadwalls and wigeons have been taken in shallow coves of lakes and reservoirs.

South Zone duck hunters along the coast enjoyed the best duck hunting in the state during the first split. The coast continued to produce steady duck shoots on the prairies, marshes and bays.

Gadwalls, wigeons, shovelers and pintails and pintails were taken on the coastal prairies.

Large wads of green-winged teal were absent, but that should change with the strong cold front blowing through the state this week.

The brunt of the snow goose population finally arrived on the prairie in late November. Snow goose hunting has been difficult.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report

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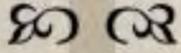
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FISHING

Weight loss means more speed, efficiency for new Yamahas

LIGHTER LOAD:

Freshwater anglers have been slower to jump on the four-stroke bandwagon because of the weight of the motors. Yamaha's new lighter motors may change that. Photo by Yamaha.



Quicker acceleration also added when more weight was subtracted

By Alan Clemons

FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Yamaha has broken the lower-weight barrier with its latest line of four-stroke outboard motors.

On a recent trip on the water, Phil Dyskow was pointing out a few of the weight-reduction measures in the new SHO V-MAX four-stroke outboard when he mentioned noise dampening in the cowling.

With carbureted two-stroke engines, noise and vibration dampening is needed. With the much quieter four-strokes, anglers have to remember not to turn the ignition key a second time because the engine is so quiet.

"Without the noise we didn't need the

dampening in the cowling," said Dyskow, Yamaha Marine Group president. "We didn't need a muffler. We used a composite engine pan and changed or took away some other things here and there. It may not sound like much but, overall, it adds up."

It adds up to almost 35 pounds of saved weight. With the new 4.3-liter SHO engines in the 200-, 225- and 250-hp setups, the subtracted weight means an increase in fuel efficiency and power.

For 2010, Yamaha introduced new four-strokes from the small "portable" outboards, mid-range and the large engines for bass and inshore boats.

Holeshot is noticeably quicker to get on plane, as well as impressive acceleration without any lag at higher rpm. For Dyskow's demonstration day, Yamaha had the new engines rigged on redesigned Skeeter boats, which have a new hull, pad, internal buoyancy and torque-transfer system through the

See **MOTORS**, Page 24



CAUGHT: Gill nets are illegal for use by the public in public waters, but state officials use them for studying fish populations. The nets are especially useful in salt-water fish surveys, where electrofishing — the common method in freshwater — is less effective. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

Fight brewing over proposed cut at East Matagorda

Commissioner wants to reduce flooding; opponents concerned habitat might change

By Mike Price

FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Eddie Douglas was fishing on the south side of East Matagorda Bay, about a mile from the proposed Southwest Cut, and looked out across the bay.

"I see bait working off the point, and there is some bait moving in the gut," Douglas said. "The sun is about to touch the horizon. It all feels right, and I think a fish will hit soon." Shortly thereafter a large speckled trout leaped out of the water with Douglas' lure in its mouth. After putting the trout on his stringer, Douglas gazed at the bay and marsh and said, "Look at this bountiful nature. We are so fortunate to have this."

Members of East Matagorda Bay Foundation fear that if the Southwest Cut is opened, the spot where Eddie was fishing will be covered with silt, have a high salinity or not have water at all. They consider East Matagorda Bay the most pristine bay on the Gulf Coast

See **MATAGORDA**, Page 28

Got 'em by the gills

Nets illegal in public waters but still legal in private

By Craig Nyhus

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Most Texas anglers know gill nets are illegal in the state. But sellers of the nets are still out there, and they say the nets have sensible and effective uses — in private waters.

In public waters, mostly along the Gulf Coast, game wardens and other law enforcement officials seize miles and miles of illegal nets.

"No gill nets are permitted in public wa-

ters in Texas, saltwater or freshwater," said Jeffery Parrish, Texas Parks and Wildlife's assistant chief of marine enforcement.

Monofilament gill nets were banned in Texas in 1979, said Mark Lingo, TPW ecosystem leader for the Lower Laguna Madre.

"The total ban came in 1988," he said. "But gill nets are still legal in several states for various applications."

A quick Web search reveals where gill nets are available for purchase. One seller of small gill nets markets them for aviation wilderness survival, although the site notes that the nets are outlawed in most states and should be used for survival applications only.

"They also are used some in pond management on private waters," Parrish said. "For example, people may use a net with a

4-inch opening to remove larger fish from a pond and leave the smaller ones to get the pond going again."

Leslie Heinsohn operates Heinsohn's Country Store in New Ulm, where they sell gill nets among other products at the store and online.

"Most of the sales are to pond owners," Heinsohn said. "That's the most sensible use. We had a tank where we fed catfish, and they quickly got to 7 or 8 pounds — they started to taste a little rank."

Heinsohn said he and other customers use the nets to remove the larger fish or to catch the smaller ones when they can't be effectively removed by hook and line.

"The gill nets catch fish by entanglement

See **GILL NETS**, Page 25



CUT QUANDRY: Farm-to-Market Road 2031 passes by the proposed location for the Southwest Cut at East Matagorda Bay. Photo by Mike Price, for LSON.

Winter pattern settles in for coastal fly anglers

Weather, fish more predictable during colder months

By Thomas Phillips
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Redfish are biting for fly anglers as the fish and fishermen begin a predictable winter fishing pattern.

Winter can be an easier time to plan trips for redfish, guides said recently. Cold fronts are easier to see coming than spring and summer storms, and the fish follow similar movement patterns.

"Days when it's cold shouldn't scare people away," said guide Ethan Wells.

During winter, Wells looks for changing temperatures to move fish. When the water

warms, redfish will move to shallower water.

On days when the difference between the low and high temperatures are not great, the fish do not move as much, Wells said.

When they move, he targets creeks draining estuaries as the tide goes out.

As for timing, he finds more success during the two or three days after a cold front when the weather is clear.

Winter usually means clearer water on the Texas coast, and Wells adapts by choosing natural colors for his fly patterns. He throws shades of black, olive and brown this time of year, and he stays away from bright colors.

"There's nothing swimming around in that depth of water, that clarity of water that's bright hot pink," Wells said.

Finding redfish this time of year also depends on the sun, Wells said. During a trip earlier this month, the fishing was fine until

See **PATTERN**, Page 24



LOCATION: Fly anglers can look for redfish in water moving in or out of tidal ponds during winter under clear skies. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

Fishing News in Brief

Elite Series signs its youngest angler for 2010

Bradley Roy of Lancaster, Ky., celebrated his 19th birthday Nov. 2 and signed up days later for the 2010 Bassmaster Elite Series. Now he is the youngest angler at the sport's highest level of pro competition.

"I know I'm young, but this has been my lifelong dream," he said. "This is what I want to do as a career, so this is a great opportunity, a jump start on my career."

Before Roy, the youngest Elite rookie had been Texas' Corey Waldrop, who turned 20 early in the 2008 Elite season. Other young anglers included Luke Gritter of Kalamazoo, Mich., who was 22 when he competed in the 2009 season, and Elite pro Casey Ashley of Donalds, S.C., who at 23 was the youngest on the 2007 Elite roster.

Roy was still 18 when he qualified Oct. 24 for the Elite Series by finishing fifth in points in the 2009 Bassmaster Southern Open trail. Only the

top seven qualified.

Of the hundreds of 2009 Bassmaster Open anglers, only 21 earned invitations for the 2010 Elite season (seven from each of three Open divisions). Some anglers try for years to be among those who move up, but Roy advanced after his first Open season.

But Roy has been something of a wunderkind in BASS competitions. At age 13, he was the 2004 Bassmaster Junior World champion in the 11-14 age group.

At age 17, he outperformed many other Kentuckians to be the sole representative of his state in the 2008 BASS Federation Nation Championship.

In the Elite Series, Roy knows the game will become considerably tougher.

"Obviously, I'm going to make a lot of mistakes, but I try to learn from my mistakes," he said. "Hopefully I can learn, then adapt quickly."

Another new challenge will be handling a grueling, eight-event regular-season schedule.

— BASS report

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GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

WARDEN ISN'T GULL-IBLE ON THIS ONE

At a private pond, Grayson County Game Warden Dale Moses checked a duck hunter he had contact with last year. A year ago, the man had trespassed and "hopped" a pond that happened to have a hunter on it. This time, everything was in order, and Moses left. An hour and a half later, Moses was driving down the same road and noticed that a second vehicle had shown up. At the same time, Moses heard a shot and saw a bird fall from a flock above the pond he had checked earlier. When Moses looked at the flock with his binoculars, he saw they were sea gulls. Moses saw a sea gull in the road that had been shot and had apparently made it to the road before dying. Moses entered the property just as it began to rain heavily to contact the four youths hunting and found another crippled gull. The group admitted to killing two more gulls, and eight total Franklin's gulls were recovered. While checking the youths' licenses, Moses noticed that one had killed a doe in Grayson County the day before. Unfortunately, the last day to take does in Grayson was Nov. 6. The three other hunters told Moses they had told the original hunter that it was illegal to kill the gulls but were told, "The game warden already checked me; he won't be back." Several citations were issued for taking the gulls and one for taking a doe in closed season.

DUMPED BUCK IS TOO SMALL

A group of hunters contacted Coryell County Game Warden Andrew Alexander to report a poacher had shot a white-tailed buck that did not meet the antler restrictions and hurried home with it when they confronted him. Alexander interviewed the man, who showed Alexander where he dumped the carcass, which had an inside spread of 9 inches, on a state highway. The man then took Alexan-

Brothers-in-law, and outside it

A landowner reported a poacher on his property to Kimble County Game Warden Lee Morrison. The landowner confronted the trespasser, and when the person refused to wait for the game warden, the landowner followed the vehicle, giving information to Morrison. Morrison requested assistance, and the vehicle was stopped on Interstate 10 by state troopers with Morrison close behind. The person admitted to hunting without consent and was transported to the Kimble County

Jail. The man's brother-in-law was the driver, and, after questioning, he was released at the scene. Morrison and Gillespie County Game Warden Scott Krueger traveled to the ranch after the man was booked to gather evidence for the investigation.

They found an area where it appeared two deer had been shot and dragged back across the fence line. Morrison called the brother-in-law, who had said earlier he would be picking his relative up at the jail. Instead, the brother-

in-law was on his way back to East Texas, leaving his partner in jail. The man in jail told Morrison his brother-in-law had killed two deer on the property. Morrison contacted Hardin County Game Warden Mike Boone for assistance, and Boone obtained a confession from the brother-in-law to hunting without landowner consent and to killing two eight-point bucks. The original person arrested pleaded guilty during his release hearing and cooperated against his brother-in-law. Cases pending.

hundreds of hunters asking questions and wanting to know the status of the poisoned, baited field in the area. People were so concerned about avoiding the area that both wardens' cell phones were flooded with calls, and hunters would flag them down as they were driving to obtain information.

MESSY CAMP MEANS MORE TROUBLE

Hunters at one camp had dumped guts of a deer on another person's property. Terrell County Game Warden Kenneth Stannard instructed them to pick up the guts and dispose of them properly. After returning the next day, Stannard located the carcass of a yearling doe that was untagged, with only the hams taken. After the hunter was confronted about the doe, he admitted his friend had shot it and dumped it there. After a phone interrogation, the person admitted to killing and dumping the doe and was cited for waste of game and not tagging the deer.

WRONG NUMBER ON MLDP LEADS TO POACHER

While checking hunting camps, Game Warden Gene Fernandez came across a walk-in cooler and checked some deer with Managed Lands Deer Permits tags. On four of the permits, the hunters had entered their driver's license numbers. Fernandez learned that one of the individuals did not have a current hunting license. Cases pending.

WOMAN TELLS NEW VERSION OF DEER STORY

A caller told Tom Green County Game Warden Cynde Aguilar a deer that had been shot on the wrong side of the fence. Contact was made with the poacher, and after a short conversation and tracking the blood trail, the woman admitted that she had not seen the deer jump the fence onto her property. A charge of trespassing by projectile was filed, and a short class on hunter ethics and laws was held.

der to his brother's house, where Alexander found him cutting up the fresh venison. The meat was confiscated, and the man received several citations.

POACHER WAS JUST TRYING TO FEED THE MASSES

La Salle County Game Warden Ryan Johnson noticed fresh tire tracks leading onto land that is not usually hunted. Upon inspection of the property and the camp house, an individual was caught by surprise butchering a white-tailed doe he had shot that morning. After multiple attempts to come up with an explanation, the individual confessed to starting deer season a day early so he could provide meat for his soon-to-arrive friends.

ALMOST 8,000-FOOT FALCON GILL NET SEIZED

Zapata County Game Wardens Jacob Philley and Stevan Ramos were spotting from the top of a hill overlooking Falcon Lake when they observed a vessel enter Texas waters from Mexico. Philley and Ramos watched the occupants of the vessel set gill net along the brush line and decided to launch their boat and pursue it. The occupants spotted the patrol boat and fled

into the nearby brush. Philley and Ramos seized the boat, the motor and about 7,920 feet of gill net.

JAVELINAS MUST BE EATEN, TOO

Two people recently received citations for waste of game of three javelinas. Frio County Game Warden Michael Morse found the javelinas in a garbage bin beside a commercial cold storage facility.

BIG BUCK SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAGGED

La Salle County Game Warden Ryan Johnson observed a vehicle exiting a small ranch at sundown. The sight of a game warden waiting at the gate sent the hunter scrambling for his wallet, license and tags. After a short scramble, the hunter finally realized it was too late. An untagged 12-point buck was found in the bed of the truck.

POTENTIAL POACHER MISSES DEER IN ROAD

A caller reported possible road hunting eastern Mason County. Upon arrival, Game Warden Cody Hatfield received the license plate number of the suspect vehicle and a .30-06 shell

casing. After a short search of the area, Hatfield located the individual, who admitted to shooting twice at a buck in the county road. The man said he did not hit the deer. Hatfield issued the man a citation for hunting white-tailed deer from a public road.

SOMETHING'S FISHY WITH WRONG TAG ON DEAD DOE

While checking deer camps, Game Wardens Rick Snitkin and Sean Reneau located a camp where a doe was tagged with a redfish tag. After a short investigation, a 10-point buck was located, and it was determined that a Louisiana resident killed it and tried to use a friend's resident tag. The deer was seized and cases pending.

CORN CONCERN SWAMPS WARDENS' OPENER

After thinking the opening day of deer season would be filled with the usual calls from hunters and complaints about hunters, Eastland County Game Warden Zach Havens and Callahan County Game Warden James Brown were in for a surprise. After attending hunter appreciation lunches at Cisco and Cross Plains, respectively, the wardens were bombarded with

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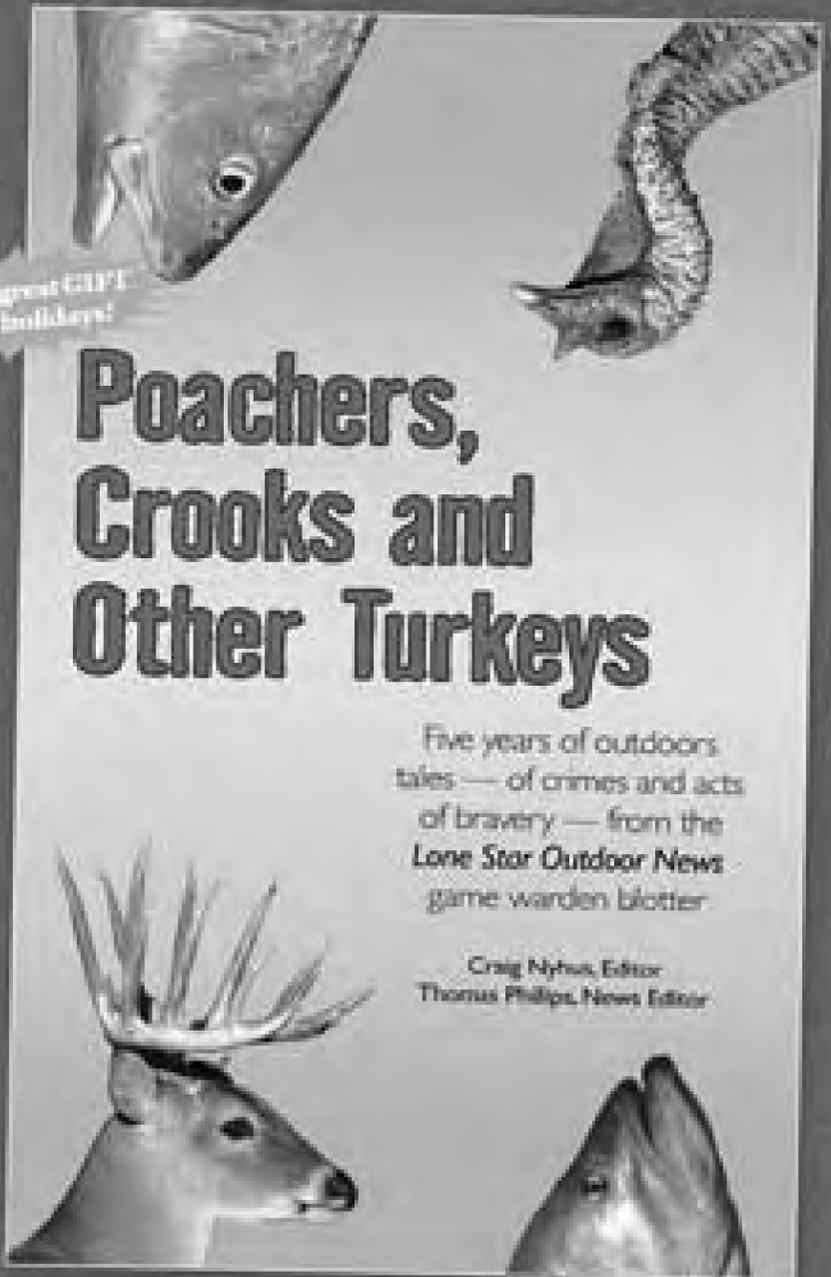
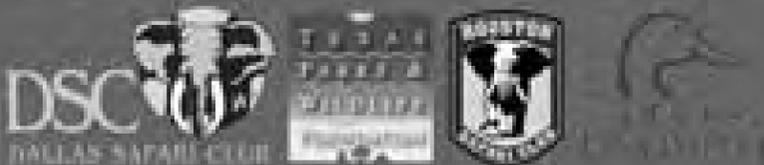
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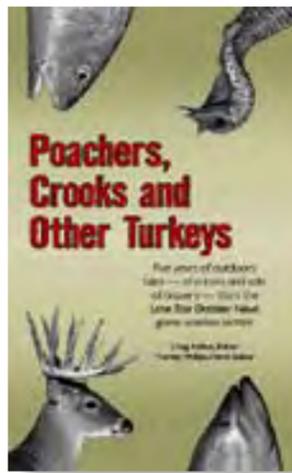
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If you want to give a loved one a laugh for Christmas, give him this true-crime book compiled by the editors of **Lone Star Outdoor News**. The 272-page paperback contains five years worth of Game Warden Blotter. One of readers' favorite features, the blotter contains Texas game wardens' stories about the funny, stupid and strange behavior that lands lawbreakers in hot water. A portion of the proceeds from the \$14.95 book will benefit the families of Justin Hurst, Teyran "Ty" Patterson and George Harold Whatley Jr. The three men were game wardens who died in the line of duty since 2004, the year *Lone Star Outdoor News* began publishing.

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This all-purpose **Browning** knife is good addition to her collection of hunting gear. This knife is available in both a fixed or folder version. It pays homage to the popular white-tailed deer. It can be used for myriad outdoor chores. The folder model features a 3 3/4-inch folding, locking liner design with a blade made of 440C stainless steel and a mesquite burl wood handle. It sells for about \$100.

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ELITE SUNDOME TENT

She can use this spacious tent from **Coleman** to take the family camping or on a weekend hunt with the girls. The Elite series comes in various models, with configurations to accommodate up to eight people. The Sundome tent, shown, is a two-room tent designed for six people. It has such features as self-rolling windows, shock-coded poles to make setup simple and an interior gear pocket. It also has a battery-operated 350-lumen light. The Sundome sells for just under \$200.

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Rattling

Continued from Page 1

Sequences included "short and quiet," "short and loud," "long and quiet" and "long and loud." They began with a 10-minute segment that included one or three minutes of rattling followed by seven to nine minutes of silence. The pattern was repeated twice over the next 20 minutes.

Hellickson said the most productive sessions involved loudly clashing the antlers together to start the rattling sequences.

As part of the "loud" sequences, the antlers were clashed together as loudly as possible, in addition to breaking nearby branches, rubbing the bark on trees and scraping the ground trying to make as much natural noise as possible.

During the two "quiet" sequences, both elbows were held against the body to avoid loud antler clashes.

At the conclusion of the study, the team had rattled up 111 bucks, with the two loud sequences performed 85 times and attracting 81 bucks. That success rate was nearly three times as many bucks as the two quiet sequences, which were performed 86 times and attracted 30 bucks. The response rates were 95 percent for the loud sequences and 35 percent for the quiet sequences.

As a side note, the morning rattling sequences seemed to be the most productive, with 60 of the 111 bucks seen during the study making their appearance between 7:30 and 10:30 a.m.

The results of the study track well with the observations of veteran Hill Country rancher and wildlife biologist Bob Ramsey, who is considered a pioneer of Texas deer rattling and is author of "How to Rattle Up A Buck," published in 1966.

"The greatest thrill in hunting, for me, is to rattle up a really big buck, and watch him come from a distance of 600 yards to within 30 feet, every hair standing straight up and fire in his eyes," Ramsey wrote.

In his rattling guide, Ramsey also recommends making a great deal of racket when first knocking the antlers together — rolling rocks, fighting nearby brush with an antler and scraping the ground with the tines.

He suggests a sequence of five seconds of rattling, starting with a loud clash of the antlers; wait a minute, grate the antlers together for about five seconds; wait another minute; and then click the tips of the antlers together for



SOUND CHECK: A common and successful method in Texas is to rattle from a vehicle, enticing deer to come out of the brush. A new study out of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute indicates rattling in the morning had the highest response rate. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

only two or three seconds. Wait for about three minutes, touch the tine tips together lightly, and then wait for another three minutes before pounding the ground twice with the base of one antler.

The routine can be repeated about every five minutes, omitting the initial loud rap of the antlers. If no bucks approach, move to a different spot and start again, Ramsey recommends.

A final tip from the rattling master: "Know that the instant you first clash the horns together, every buck within hearing has your location pinpointed to a spot the size of your dining room table. He can come to that exact spot, unerringly, although you make no other sound."

Results

95%

Rate at which white-tailed bucks responded to loud rattling. The rate is based on 81 bucks responding during 85 attempts.

35%

Rate at which white-tailed bucks responded to quiet rattling. The rate is based on 30 bucks responding during 86 attempts.

Methods

Rattling sequences included "short and quiet," "short and loud," "long and quiet" and "long and loud." They began with a 10-minute segment that included one or three minutes of rattling followed by seven to nine minutes of silence. The pattern was repeated twice over the next 20 minutes.

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HEROES



BOSS poses with a few gadwall he retrieved opening weekend in East Texas. His owner, Jeff Rader of Dallas, was hunting with his friend Ron Gard.



CHARLIE WILLIAMS shot this deer in Panola County on a low-fenced ranch.



BRIANA VILLARREAL, 9, of Brownsville holds her first dove. She shot the bird opening weekend along the Rio Grande River.



CHANCE RICE holds a 10.4-pound carp he caught at Lake Lavon.



DARRYL HANSON of Round Rock caught this bass on Lake Baccarrac in Mexico. The fish weighed 10 pounds, 2 ounces and was 26 inches long with a 19.75-inch girth.

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GUS WHEELER shot his first turkey during a spring hunt in Atascosa County. The gobbler's beard measured 9 3/16 inches, and Wheeler shot it with a 12 gauge at 25 feet.

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Video games

Continued from Page 1

cell phones.

Some games take the outdoors seriously, with top-notch graphics and believable hunting scenarios. Others take a more light-hearted approach (think: using Mahjong tiles as fishing lures).

Hunting games

On the hunting side, game developers released titles in 2009 that let hunter-players chase a variety of game — and bad guys.

In "Remington Great American Bird Hunt," one to four players can swing the Wii controller on ducks, geese, pheasant and grouse. Bonus game birds pop out too: bobwhite quail and woodcock. But beware, illegal fowl fly across the screen, too. Players lose points for shooting pheasant hens, blue jays, ospreys and other protected birds.

In addition to its annual update of "Cabela's Big Game Hunter" line, the retailer also published "Cabela's Legendary Adventures." "Adventures" sends the player throughout North America in pursuit of more than 40 species, with about a dozen methods to choose from.

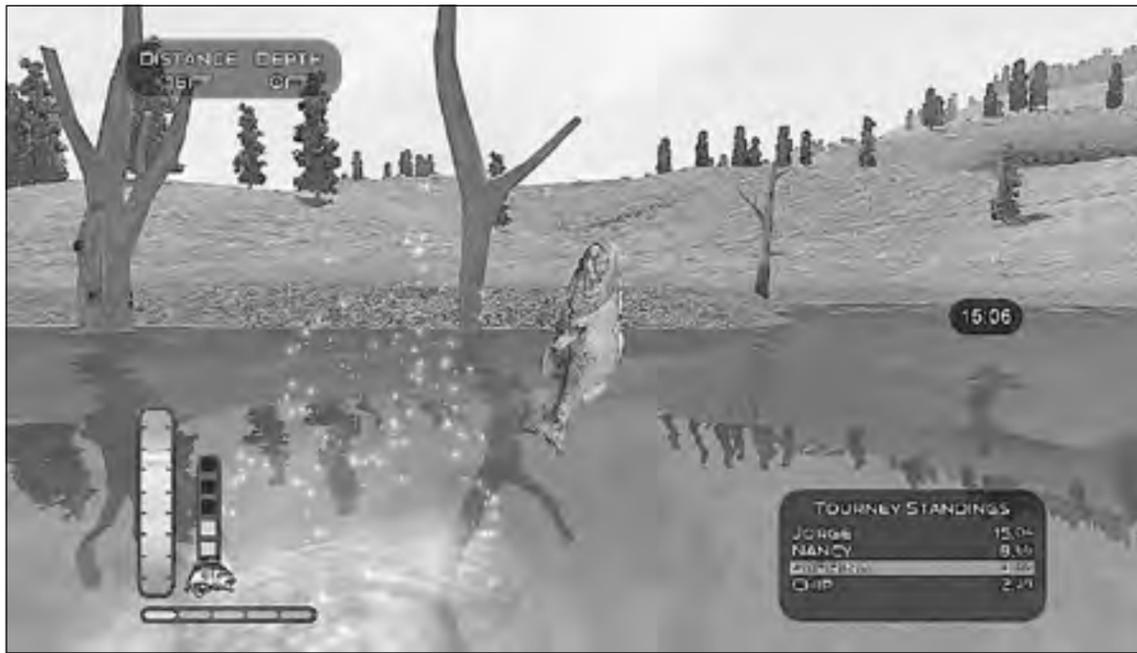
"Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2010" let's the player hunt around the world, and it tests the player's survival skills.

For iPhone gamers, dozens of new titles are out this year for hunting and fishing.

On the hunting end, games include "Deer Hunter 3D," which puts players on the trail of deer, bears, moose and other animals in 3D environments. Players have to bag animals to gain access to more firearms and methods.

"This is easily not only Glue's most attractive iPhone game, but the best-looking hunting game on iPhone," said IGN.com, a gaming Web site.

For waterfowlers, "Deek's Duck Hunt" gives players three types of virtual ducks, with different sizes and



DIGITAL TROPHIES: Screen shots show "Bass Pro Shops: The Strike," above, and "Remington Great American Bird Hunt." The games send players on outdoors adventures and are two titles on a long list of hunting and fishing video games that came out in 2009.



In "3D Hunting," players choose their method — firearm or bow — track animals and add big game to their trophy rooms. Hunting grounds are pulled from North America.

"3D Hunting Grizzly" is a hybrid hunting game and first-person survival game. The scenario has the

hunting guide mauled by bears, leaving the hunter to make his way to the hunting cabin past bears, landmines and other hazards. Weapons for fighting back include a Colt pistol, lever-action rifle, grenade launcher and chainsaw.

"3D Hunting: Alaskan Hunt" de-

votes more time to taking shots than tracking game. Hunters can watch their harvests as they happen through the automatic bullet cam and then map the blood marks on their animal.

Fishing games

Angers have no less variety in video games.

"Bass Pro Shops: The Strike," available for Wii, Xbox 360 and PC, has three different play modes: Quick Fish, Career and Bass Pro Shops Invitational Tournament. Like the hunting games, players can choose from a mix of species to pursue and locations.

With "The Strike" and similar games, such as "Shimano Xtreme Fishing," the focus is on matching reality.

"Xtreme" lets players use a variety of techniques and methods. In addition to rod and reel scenarios, players may use a bow and spear.

"The Strike," with the Bass Pro Shops theme, makes use of 111 BPS lures and nine different boats.

Also for Wii, "Fishing Master World Tour" takes anglers around the world in pursuit of more than 200 species of fish.

"Wii Hooked! Real Motion Fishing" puts anglers on virtual water to let them "enjoy the thrill of catching fish without the mess of cleaning them," according to gamefaqs.com. The game has an online element that lets players compete against other "Hooked!" anglers.

A boatload of fishing games came out in 2009 specifically for iPhone. Titles include "3D Power Fishing," "Bass Fishing Battle," "EZ Fishing," "Finger Fishing," "Fish Frenzy," "Match the Fish" (a memory game), and "iFishing Saltwater Edition."

Some strive for realism. Some strive for laughs.

"Mahjong Fishing" is a fishing game for grandmothers. Players use tiles from the ancient Chinese game to catch other tiles.

Not into Mahjong? "Pai Gow Fishing" is similar.

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Feral hog prices steady, big buyer says

Population booming, but prices are not dropping for trappers

By Ralph Winingham
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Any hunter who has ever faced down a mean and nasty boar feral hog tipping the scales at more than 250 pounds might want to offer a silent “thank you” to upper crust diners in the U.S. and Europe.

The wild pigs — particularly big boars — that rule the brush and have spread across Texas like a plague are valued as fine table fare at many high-dollar restaurants, and the demand for feral hog meat is helping to chip away at the Lone Star State’s population.

“The demand has remained pretty steady,” said Allen Gilbert, sales manager of Frontier Meats in Fort Worth. “This is really the busy time of year because a lot of hunters are out in the field and are catching the hogs. We are seeing some that are in real good shape and others that are in real poor shape — it just depends on the range conditions.”

Just like any other market, the price for live feral hogs fluctuates with the economy. Estimated prices for the live hogs starts at about \$5 per head for animals that weigh from 50 to 59 pounds (nothing under 50 pounds is accepted); about 13 cents per pound for those in the 60 to 79 pound range; and about 25 cents per pound for hogs weighing 80 to 99 pounds.

Processors pay a premium of about 35 cents per pound, plus a \$5 to \$10 per head bonus, for hogs weighing 150 to 249 pounds; and any boar or sow topping 250 pounds brings in about 45 to 50 cents per pound plus at least a \$10 per head bonus.

Gilbert said that Frontier Meats collects the feral hogs from trappers and hunters across the state and has them shipped to the processing station in Fort Worth.

“We get them from all over. It just depends upon the weather because they are all over the state,” he said.

Although state officials estimate the Texas feral hog population is about 2 million animals, Gilbert said he believes the number is well above that, and many hunters and trappers are taking advantage of the wild-swine market.

“The prices now are not quite as good as they were several years ago,” said Charlie Brown of Kenedy, who traps hogs when he is not working as a catfishing guide at Choke



Pork prices

Weight in pounds	Price
50 to 59	\$5 per pig
60 to 79	13 cents per pound
80 to 99	25 cents per pound
150 to 249 pounds	35 cents per pound plus a bonus of \$5 to \$10
250 and heavier	45 to 50 cents per pound plus a bonus of \$10

GOING TO MARKET: Hog trappers can turn in their pigs for profits by selling them to buyers in the state. The Texas Animal Health Commission lists almost 90 approved hog-buying stations on its Web site at www.tahc.state.tx.us. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

Canyon Reservoir.

“At one point in the past, feral hogs were bringing more than domestics,” he said. “The (processing plants) were paying 45 cents per pound for smaller hogs and 60 cents per pound and a bonus for everything over 200 pounds.”

Brown said that although his recent trapping efforts have been for his own consumption, one of his associates has gathered and shipped more than 400 hogs for sale this year.

Although wild hog meat is similar to domestic pork, the cuts are darker in color and much leaner, with a slight gamey taste popular with many hunters who harvest the hogs as bonus animals during hunting seasons.

“The meat from the big ones can be pretty strong,” Brown said. “I think people have to be a little crazy to eat something from a big boar unless it has been really doctored up a lot.”

Frontier Meats is one of the main processing centers for feral hog meat in Texas and

has been purchasing wild swine on the hoof for about 20 years. The animals are inspected by state and federal officials, butchered and then the meat is distributed to domestic and foreign markets. Unlike domestic beef, feral swine meat is not graded with scores such as “prime,” “select” and “choice.”

Texas Parks and Wildlife lists feral hogs as unprotected, exotic, non-game animals that can be hunted year-round with no bag limits. A hunting license and landowner’s permission is required to hunt wild swine.

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Woodcock

Continued from Page 6

land Prairie Region near Dallas.

The best hunting areas are where forest management practices of small-scale clear-cutting, thinning and burning have created good woodcock habitat. Prime spots include young pine plantations thick with briars and other low growth that provide overhead protection from raptors next to open ground for feeding.

The Texas woodcock season this year begins Dec. 18 and ends Jan. 31, with a daily bag limit of three birds and a possession limit of six birds.

Veteran hunters such as Whiting will attest that each woodcock that finds its way into a game bag will be the result of good dog work and a lot of time busting through "the thickest brush that you can make yourself go into."

"The last couple of years have been the worst hunting that I have ever seen," Whiting said. "We had extremely bad winters after two hurricanes, primarily because of the drought."

Whiting, who has introduced hundreds of hunters to the sport but now prefers to hunt by himself, said he managed to collect 41 birds over his dogs last year. During the prime hunting seasons in the 1970s, his annual bag total was more than 200 birds.

"There are just a lot fewer places to go now," he said, pointing to a lack of clear-cutting and brush-burning efforts, in addition to thousands of acres that have been leased for exclusive use by deer hunters.

Bob Staton, a former avid woodcock hunter and part-time hunting guide living in Lindale, said he braved the brush for the elusive birds for more than 40 years.

"I enjoyed hunting good bird dogs, and woodcock will hold really well," said Staton, who is also 71 years old. "They are excellent birds to turn puppies on for training."

"Everybody in the county had bird dogs 50 years ago, and hunting woodcock was something incidental with quail hunting. Now all the quail are gone, and there are so few bird dogs left in East Texas that not many go out for woodcock."

According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife small game harvest survey, an estimat-

ed 635 hunters sought woodcock during the 2006-07 season, the latest figures available.

The estimated harvest during that season was 6,032; a figure that Whiting believes is greatly exaggerated.

"If hunters kill 1,000 to 2,000 woodcock a year, I would be very surprised," he said.

According to the TPW survey, the number of hunters since 1987-88 has ranged from a low of 635 in the 2006-07 season to a high point of 4,328 when the surveys were first conducted. Normally, about 1,000 to 1,500 hunters take advantage of the short season.

The small harvest of birds can be attributed more to the rugged hunting conditions rather than a lack of woodcock. TPW officials do not conduct surveys or attempt to determine the number of birds that migrate to this state every year.

Jason Hardin, an upland gamebird specialist and former student of Whiting's, said the habitat that attracts the woodcock is not conducive to game surveys and requires dedicated and determined hunters.

"You have to use close-working dogs and be willing to take a few scratches (from close encounters with thick brush)," he said. "The birds hold really well until you are right on top of them, then they bust out a lot like quail."

"Primarily, you will find them as singles or doubles. They don't form coveys like quail."

Hardin agreed with his former professor about a lack of hunting areas limiting access to the birds.

"They don't do as much clear-cutting as they used to; that was good habitat for the birds," he said. "But there are still a lot of good places in East Texas to hunt them."

Among the public places suitable for woodcock hunting are four East Texas wildlife management areas: Moore Plantation WMA in the Sabine National Forest; Alabama Creek WMA in the Davy Crockett National Forest; Bannister WMA in the Angelina National Forest; and the Sam Houston National Forest WMA.

Woodcock hunters should note that these areas are also used by deer hunters during most of the bird season, and hunting safety measures are highly recommended.



IN DEEP: Woodcock hunters routinely prowl through thick cover when looking for the birds. The birds also hold to cover well, giving young dogs good practice at pointing. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

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Calls

Continued from Page 6

fowl calls — usually from cocobolo, bird's-eye maple or bois d'arc.

Reeds are made of Mylar plastic. Some of the calls are wooden barrels with acrylic inserts — but not all of them.

"Everything that I don't like about acrylic in a duck call is perfect in a goose call," Briscoe said. "You get a lot of slap and volume.

"I want it to be loud, I want it to carry, and I want some pop to it."

Cajun origins

Briscoe's calls, he said, result from his love for woodworking and the outdoors, and he credited his father, Calvin, for starting him in both.

Calvin, now a retired Houston-area chemical plant worker, was also a musician from Louisiana who used his carpentry skills to make Cajun accordions.

He not only showed his son how to hunt, but also how to turn wood into useful things.

"Dad and my uncles would take me quail hunting in southern Louisiana when I was just 3," Briscoe said. "When I was tired, they'd take turns piggybacking me. Really, that's how it all began."

Briscoe's first test was back home in Texas, where he formed lifelong friendships with "guys I hunt with still to this day."

Together, Briscoe said, they "got broke in" scouting and hunting prime waterfowl spots near Anahuac.

"Way back then there were three different calls that we'd buy," Briscoe said. "But they were either tuned too high or tuned too low.

"So we'd take them apart and tinker with them. We'd take this piece from Company A and this piece from Company B and put them together to see what worked.

"We knew what we were looking for," he said.

Briscoe attended Texas Tech University but returned home to become a top-flight goose guide. Later, he tried team roping.

"I got a roping horse that was just phenomenal," Briscoe said. "He'd make you look really good. I won quite a bit of money, (and) I did it about four or five years, but my mother passed away in '97.

"I said, you know, 'It's time to worry about the family now.'"



BIGGEST CRITIC: Joe Briscoe tests one of his custom calls. Briscoe often works one-on-one with a customer tuning a new call to fit the calling of the hunter who is buying it.

Briscoe, meanwhile, began to enjoy golf, but an elbow injury forced him off the links.

"I was bored to tears," he said. "But one day, my dad needed some kind of tool for something he was making, and I went with him to a specialty store.

"I came out of there with a lathe, thinking I was going to make a bunch of wooden pens for Christmas presents."

But, while turning out tiny wooden barrels for the pens, Briscoe had an epiphany.

"I thought, 'Hey, this must be how they

make duck calls,'" he said. "Well, that's how that all started."

Secret in the sawdust

Making his first call wasn't easy.

"It took me a year to develop the shape," he said. "The secret is in the sawdust. You got to tear some stuff up to get it right."

Briscoe knew he was getting into a competitive field. He said the market has plenty of custom call makers, and he is a big fan of a lot of them.

But he also knew he'd be successful if his products found their way into the hands of the right people — waterfowl guides like he used to be — guys whose livelihoods depended on quality gear.

The strategy worked.

"The word," he said, "got out in late '06 and early '07: 'Joe's back in the hunting business!'

"I sold 100 calls in the first 90 days. I thought, 'Oh man, what have I done? I started a hobby, and now they're going to kill me!'"

Customizing for the customer

The calls sell for about \$50 to \$110, but Briscoe is not interested in mass production.

Instead, he wants to be known as a customizer who fits a call to the hunter who will use it.

"Basically, you're playing a musical instrument," he explained, "and you have to present the air correctly to make it sound right.

"If you're able to come to the shop, I'm going to tune the call to you while you sit there. I might open the bore up a little bit, sand a little here, sand a little there. Adjust the reed ...

"I've been known to do that for a couple hours until we get it right."

Sohrt said that's a big deal, because Briscoe also shows the customer how to use the call.

"A lot of people, this day and age, don't have time for that," Sohrt said, "but Joe will coach you up.

"Now, Joe is blunt — he's not afraid to hurt your feelings — but I want him to be blunt. It's a learning experience."

If, after all the tuning, a call still doesn't work for a customer, Briscoe will refund the money.

"I'm making the call that someone is going to use to put meat in the freezer," he said. "If I didn't put my all into it, it's going into the trash.

"It won't leave the shop unless I would hang it on my own lanyard."

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Sun | Moon | Tides

Texas Coast Tides

Sabine Pass, jetty

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 12	5:45 a.m.	-0.7L	2:08 p.m.	2.5H	7:49 p.m.	1.8L
Dec 13	6:22 a.m.	-0.9L	2:58 p.m.	2.5H		
Dec 14	6:58 a.m.	-1.1L	3:41 p.m.	2.5H		
Dec 15	7:33 a.m.	-1.1L	4:21 p.m.	2.5H		
Dec 16	8:09 a.m.	-1.1L	4:58 p.m.	2.3H		
Dec 17	8:43 a.m.	-1.1L	5:35 p.m.	2.1H	9:04 p.m.	2.0L
Dec 18	9:18 a.m.	-0.9L	6:12 p.m.	2.1H	9:14 p.m.	1.8L
Dec 19	12:29 a.m.	2.0H	9:52 a.m.	-0.7L	6:46 p.m.	2.0H
Dec 20	12:45 a.m.	2.0H	10:25 a.m.	-0.5L	7:15 p.m.	2.0H
Dec 21	10:58 a.m.	-0.2L	7:39 p.m.	1.8H		
Dec 22	11:31 a.m.	0.0L	7:59 p.m.	1.8H		
Dec 23	12:05 p.m.	0.4L	8:13 p.m.	1.6H		
Dec 24	3:45 a.m.	0.5L	9:20 a.m.	1.1H	12:47 p.m.	0.9L
Dec 25	3:52 a.m.	0.2L	11:31 a.m.	1.3H	1:56 p.m.	1.1L
Dec 26	4:14 a.m.	-0.4L	12:49 p.m.	1.6H	4:30 p.m.	1.4L

Galveston Bay entrance, south jetty

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 12	6:11 a.m.	-0.6L	2:55 p.m.	2.0H	8:15 p.m.	1.4L
Dec 13	6:48 a.m.	-0.7L	3:45 p.m.	2.0H		
Dec 14	7:24 a.m.	-0.9L	4:28 p.m.	2.0H		
Dec 15	7:59 a.m.	-0.9L	5:08 p.m.	2.0H		
Dec 16	8:35 a.m.	-0.9L	5:45 p.m.	1.9H		
Dec 17	9:09 a.m.	-0.9L	6:22 p.m.	1.7H	9:30 p.m.	1.6L
Dec 18	12:46 a.m.	1.7H	9:44 a.m.	-0.7L	6:59 p.m.	1.7H
Dec 19	1:16 a.m.	1.6H	10:18 a.m.	-0.6L	7:33 p.m.	1.6H
Dec 20	1:32 a.m.	1.6H	10:51 a.m.	-0.4L	8:02 p.m.	1.6H
Dec 21	11:24 a.m.	-0.1L	8:26 p.m.	1.4H		
Dec 22	11:57 a.m.	0.0L	8:46 p.m.	1.4H		
Dec 23	12:31 p.m.	0.3L	9:00 p.m.	1.3H		
Dec 24	4:11 a.m.	0.4L	10:07 a.m.	0.9H	1:13 p.m.	0.7L
Dec 25	4:18 a.m.	0.1L	12:18 p.m.	1.0H	2:22 p.m.	0.9L
Dec 26	4:40 a.m.	-0.3L	1:36 p.m.	1.3H	4:56 p.m.	1.1L

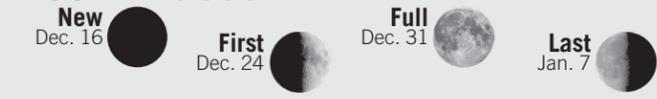
San Luis Pass

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 13	7:44 a.m.	-0.4L	4:15 p.m.	1.2H		
Dec 14	8:20 a.m.	-0.5L	4:58 p.m.	1.2H		
Dec 15	8:55 a.m.	-0.5L	5:38 p.m.	1.2H		
Dec 16	9:31 a.m.	-0.5L	6:15 p.m.	1.1H		
Dec 17	10:05 a.m.	-0.5L	6:52 p.m.	1.0H	10:26 p.m.	0.9L
Dec 18	1:16 a.m.	1.0H	10:40 a.m.	-0.4L	7:29 p.m.	1.0H
Dec 19	1:46 a.m.	0.9H	11:14 a.m.	-0.3L	8:03 p.m.	0.9H
Dec 20	2:02 a.m.	0.9H	11:47 a.m.	-0.3L	8:32 p.m.	0.9H
Dec 21	12:20 p.m.	-0.1L	8:56 p.m.	0.9H		
Dec 22	12:53 p.m.	0.0L	9:16 p.m.	0.9H		
Dec 23	1:27 p.m.	0.2L	9:30 p.m.	0.8H		
Dec 24	5:07 a.m.	0.3L	10:37 a.m.	0.5H	2:09 p.m.	0.4L
Dec 25	5:14 a.m.	0.1L	12:48 p.m.	0.6H	3:18 p.m.	0.5L
Dec 26	5:36 a.m.	-0.2L	2:06 p.m.	0.8H	5:52 p.m.	0.7L
Dec 27	6:08 a.m.	-0.3L	2:56 p.m.	0.9H		

Freeport Harbor

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 12	6:08 a.m.	-0.4L	2:17 p.m.	1.7H	8:12 p.m.	0.9L
Dec 13	6:45 a.m.	-0.5L	3:07 p.m.	1.7H		
Dec 14	7:21 a.m.	-0.5L	3:50 p.m.	1.7H		
Dec 15	7:56 a.m.	-0.5L	4:30 p.m.	1.7H		
Dec 16	8:32 a.m.	-0.5L	5:07 p.m.	1.6H		
Dec 17	9:06 a.m.	-0.5L	5:44 p.m.	1.5H	9:27 p.m.	1.0L
Dec 18	12:08 a.m.	1.5H	9:41 a.m.	-0.5L	6:21 p.m.	1.5H
Dec 19	12:38 a.m.	1.4H	10:15 a.m.	-0.4L	6:55 p.m.	1.4H
Dec 20	12:54 a.m.	1.4H	10:48 a.m.	-0.3L	7:24 p.m.	1.4H
Dec 21	11:21 a.m.	-0.1L	7:48 p.m.	1.2H		
Dec 22	11:54 a.m.	0.0L	8:08 p.m.	1.2H		
Dec 23	12:28 p.m.	0.2L	8:22 p.m.	1.1H		
Dec 24	4:08 a.m.	0.3L	9:29 a.m.	0.7H	1:10 p.m.	0.5L
Dec 25	4:15 a.m.	0.1L	11:40 a.m.	0.9H	2:19 p.m.	0.5L
Dec 26	4:37 a.m.	-0.2L	12:58 p.m.	1.1H	4:53 p.m.	0.7L

Moon Phases



Port O'Connor

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 12	8:52 a.m.	-0.2L	8:51 p.m.	0.9H		
Dec 13	9:36 a.m.	-0.3L	9:09 p.m.	1.0H		
Dec 14	10:20 a.m.	-0.4L	9:42 p.m.	1.0H		
Dec 15	11:04 a.m.	-0.4L	10:25 p.m.	1.0H		
Dec 16	11:48 a.m.	-0.4L	11:17 p.m.	0.9H		
Dec 17	12:30 p.m.	-0.4L				
Dec 18	12:14 a.m.	0.9H	1:10 p.m.	-0.4L		
Dec 19	1:10 a.m.	0.8H	1:47 p.m.	-0.3L		
Dec 20	1:58 a.m.	0.8H	2:20 p.m.	-0.2L		
Dec 21	2:37 a.m.	0.7H	2:46 p.m.	-0.1L		
Dec 22	2:57 a.m.	0.6H	3:03 p.m.	0.0L		
Dec 23	2:18 a.m.	0.4H	2:49 p.m.	0.1L	11:40 p.m.	0.3H
Dec 24	11:12 a.m.	0.2L	9:07 p.m.	0.4H		
Dec 25	7:29 a.m.	0.1L	7:48 p.m.	0.5H		
Dec 26	7:42 a.m.	-0.1L	7:46 p.m.	0.6H		

Rockport

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 12	9:29 a.m.	-0.07L	11:26 p.m.	0.32H		
Dec 13	10:10 a.m.	-0.11L				
Dec 14	12:00 a.m.	0.32H	10:54 a.m.	-0.13L		
Dec 15	12:45 a.m.	0.31H	11:43 a.m.	-0.15L		
Dec 16	1:38 a.m.	0.29H	12:35 p.m.	-0.15L		
Dec 17	2:35 a.m.	0.27H	1:27 p.m.	-0.16L		
Dec 18	3:29 a.m.	0.25H	2:14 p.m.	-0.16L		
Dec 19	4:15 a.m.	0.22H	2:53 p.m.	-0.16L		
Dec 20	4:53 a.m.	0.19H	3:22 p.m.	-0.15L		
Dec 21	5:21 a.m.	0.14H	3:42 p.m.	-0.14L		
Dec 22	5:25 a.m.	0.08H	3:52 p.m.	-0.11L		
Dec 23	12:37 a.m.	0.04H	3:48 p.m.	-0.08L	11:38 p.m.	0.04H
Dec 24	7:53 a.m.	-0.06L	11:11 a.m.	-0.05H	2:51 p.m.	-0.06L
Dec 25	7:58 a.m.	-0.12L	10:47 p.m.	0.06H	11:06 p.m.	0.05H
Dec 26	8:25 a.m.	-0.19L	10:42 p.m.	0.08H		

Port Aransas, H. Caldwell Pier

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 12	5:50 a.m.	-0.3L	2:48 p.m.	1.6H	7:54 p.m.	0.8L
Dec 13	6:27 a.m.	-0.4L	3:38 p.m.	1.6H		
Dec 14	7:03 a.m.	-0.5L	4:21 p.m.	1.6H		
Dec 15	7:38 a.m.	-0.5L	5:01 p.m.	1.6H		
Dec 16	8:14 a.m.	-0.5L	5:38 p.m.	1.5H		
Dec 17	8:48 a.m.	-0.5L	6:15 p.m.	1.4H	9:09 p.m.	0.8L
Dec 18	12:39 a.m.	1.4H	9:23 a.m.	-0.4L	6:52 p.m.	1.4H
Dec 19	1:09 a.m.	1.3H	9:57 a.m.	-0.3L	7:26 p.m.	1.3H
Dec 20	1:25 a.m.	1.3H	10:30 a.m.	-0.2L	7:55 p.m.	1.3H
Dec 21	11:03 a.m.	-0.1L	8:19 p.m.	1.1H		
Dec 22	11:36 a.m.	0.0L	8:39 p.m.	1.1H		
Dec 23	12:10 p.m.	0.2L	8:53 p.m.	1.0H		
Dec 24	3:50 a.m.	0.2L	10:00 a.m.	0.7H	12:52 p.m.	0.4L
Dec 25	3:57 a.m.	0.1L	12:11 p.m.	0.8H	2:01 p.m.	0.5L
Dec 26	4:19 a.m.	-0.2L	1:29 p.m.	1.0H	4:35 p.m.	0.6L

South Padre Island

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Dec 12	5:25 a.m.	-0.3L	3:09 p.m.	1.7H		
Dec 13	6:09 a.m.	-0.5L	4:04 p.m.	1.8H		
Dec 14	6:54 a.m.	-0.6L	4:55 p.m.	1.8H		
Dec 15	7:37 a.m.	-0.7L	5:44 p.m.	1.8H		
Dec 16	8:20 a.m.	-0.6L	6:32 p.m.	1.8H		
Dec 17	9:01 a.m.	-0.5L	7:16 p.m.	1.8H		
Dec 18	9:38 a.m.	-0.3L	7:52 p.m.	1.7H		
Dec 19	10:13 a.m.	-0.2L	8:15 p.m.	1.7H		
Dec 20	10:44 a.m.	0.0L	8:22 p.m.	1.6H		
Dec 21	11:12 a.m.	0.2L	8:18 p.m.	1.5H		
Dec 22	11:40 a.m.	0.4L	8:06 p.m.	1.4H		
Dec 23	12:07 p.m.	0.6L	7:51 p.m.	1.3H		
Dec 24	3:29 a.m.	0.7L	9:10 a.m.	0.9H	12:33 p.m.	0.8L
Dec 25	3:40 a.m.	0.4L	7:01 p.m.	1.2H	7:32 p.m.	1.2H
Dec 26	4:08 a.m.	0.0L	2:13 p.m.	1.2H		

Solar | Sun times | Moon times

Houston

2009-10	A.M.	P.M.	SUN	MOON
Dec-Jan	Minor Major	Minor Major	Rises Sets	Rises Sets
12 Sat	1:22 7:34	1:47 7:59	7:06 5:22	3:32a 2:27p
13 Sun	2:06 8:19	2:32 8:44	7:07 5:22	4:34a 3:07p
14 Mon	2:53 9:06	3:19 9:32	7:08 5:22	5:34a 3:53p
15 Tue >	3:42 9:55	4:08 10:21	7:08 5:23	6:31a 4:43p
16 Wed N	4:33 10:46	4:59 11:12	7:09 5:23	7:23a 5:36p
17 Thu >	5:26 11:09	5:51 -----	7:09 5:23	8:11a 6:32p
18 Fri >	6:19 12:07	6:43 12:31	7:10 5:24	8:54a 7:28p
19 Sat >	7:11 12:59	7:34 1:22	7:11 5:24	9:31a 8:24p
20 Sun	8:01 1:50	8:22 2:12	7:11 5:25	10:05a 9:19p
21 Mon	8:48 2:38	9:09 2:59	7:12 5:25	10:35a 10:12p
22 Tue	9:34 3:24	9:54 3:44	7:12 5:26	11:03a 11:04p
23 Wed	10:17 4:07	10:37 4:27	7:13 5:26	11:31a NoMoon
24 Thu Q	10:59 4:49	11:20 5:10	7:13 5:27	11:59a NoMoon
25 Fri	11:41 5:30	-----	7:13 5:27	12:30p 12:52a
26 Sat	12:01 6:13	12:24 6:36	7:14 5:28	1:04p 1:50a
27 Sun	12:44 6:57	1:10 7:23	7:14 5:28	1:43p 2:52a
28 Mon	1:31 7:45	1:59 8:14	7:15 5:29	2:30p 3:57a
29 Tue	2:22 8:38	2:53 9:08	7:15 5:30	3:25p 5:03a
30 Wed >	3:19 9:35	3:51 10:07	7:15 5:30	4:28p 6:08a
31 Thu >	4:20 10:36	4:52 11:08	7:15 5:31	5:38p 7:09a
01 Fri	5:24 11:39	5:55 -----	7:16 5:31	6:50p 8:03a

Dallas

2009-10	A.M.	P.M.	SUN	MOON
Dec-Jan	Minor Major	Minor Major	Rises Sets	Rises Sets
12 Sat	1:28 7:40	1:52 8:05	7:19 5:20	3:44a 2:26p
13 Sun	2:12 8:24	2:37 8:50	7:20 5:20	4:47a 3:05p
14 Mon	2:58 9:11	3:24 9:37	7:21 5:20	5:48a 3:50p
15 Tue >	3:47 10:00	4:14 10:27	7:21 5:21	6:49a 4:39p
16 Wed N	4:39 10:52	5:05 11:18	7:22 5:21	7:38a 5:33p
17 Thu >	5:31 11:15	5:57 -----	7:23 5:21	8:26a 6:29p
18 Fri >	6:24 12:12	6:48 12:36	7:23 5:22	9:07a 7:27p
19 Sat >	7:16 1:05	7:39 1:28	7:24 5:22	9:43a 8:24p
20 Sun	8:06 1:55	8:28 2:17	7:24 5:22	10:15a 9:20p
21 Mon	8:54 2:44	9:15 3:04	7:25 5:23	10:44a 10:15p
22 Tue	9:39 3:29	9:59 3:49	7:25 5:23	11:11a 1

Mexico

Continued from Page 1

ground while robbers stole their guns and upwards of \$50,000 in valuables.

More than one of the hunters were assaulted.

The attack, recently reported in the *Houston Chronicle*, took place near Villa de Mendez, a village about 110 miles south of McAllen.

Although the incident was likely isolated, its effect on hunting lodges may not be.

"I can't decide if it's like being stabbed in the heart or at the top of the brain," said Dicky Norris, who operates Lago Vista Lodge near Lake Vicente Guerrero in Tamaulipas. "We haven't had any trouble — the mafia hasn't been messing with the hunters."

Norris said he felt the gunmen weren't necessarily part of the organized crime syndicate based in the Tamaulipas state.

"I've heard the mafia took care of a few of the crooks," he said.

Others feel the attention and crack-downs on the cartels have caused the lower-tier drug runners to look for other avenues to line their pockets.

Winter hunters may not be as susceptible as the larger groups of dove hunters in the fall. One lodge manager said the dove hunters may be easier to target as they head to the field in large groups in early morning or mid-afternoon, making them easier to pattern.

Norris said winter is an excellent time for bird hunters, although most trips occur in the fall.

"We hunt mourning doves through February," he said. "And the quail hunting is good, too, not to mention the waterfowl and the fishing."

Many of the lodges missed much of the quail season, though. Several lodges closed early this season because of a lack of bookings, and one, Rancho Ala Blanca, is expected to be closed for at least another year.

And for the nine Houston men who were hunting out of Rancho Acazar, a nonprofit lodge founded in the late 1950s by partners from Texas, the expe-



OLD MEXICO: Some hunters believe the sun may be setting on their late summer trips to Mexico to pursue white-winged dove. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

rience was enough.

"Until these guys disappear permanently, it isn't safe," Don Van Wart, 76, who acts as Rancho Acazar's president, told the *Chronicle*. The lodge, with business already down before the attacks, has closed indefinitely.

"I think they wanted us gringos gone and not coming down there," Mark Rand of Houston told the paper. Rand has hunted there for 21 years. "I'm not going back."

It's not just the hunting and fishing lodges that have been affected by the fear of violence. A pastor at a Tamaulipas orphanage had been operating for more than 26 years. After numerous threats to him and his family, they have returned to the U.S.

But farther west in Mexico, at least one outfitter said business has not been

affected.

"We have people coming in every day," said Ray Rushing with Mexico Bass Tours, who books fishing trips to Lake El Salto. "We have the advantage of flights direct from Houston to Mazatlan, and we pick up the fishermen there and take them straight to the lodge."

Rushing said now is the time to go. "We're catching 100 to 110 fish per boat per day," he said.

Other lodge owners are worried, though, especially in Tamaulipas.

"People are negative on Mexico already, and people getting robbed is not going to help," Dean Putegnat, who owns Rancho Caracol, a hunting lodge also near Lake Vicente Guerrero, told the *Chronicle*. "This is the first time in my whole life something like this has happened."

Motors

Continued from Page 8

hull stringers. They also were available for testing on a Ranger 520 and BassCat Puma. Boats were empty other than fuel and two passengers.

Increased speed by 2 to 3 mph on the top end should result in an advantage by anglers getting to fishing areas faster.

That gain may not sound like much, but it can pay off in, literally, the long run.

"There have been times when it definitely would be to my advantage if I'm running a long distance against someone," said Bassmaster Elite Series pro Dean Rojas of Arizona. "At a tournament last season I took off to sight-fish for a 4-pounder and realized I was running against someone going to the same fish. We crossed each other a couple of times, and finally I was able to get in front of him, and I got there first. With the new SHO, that should increase my ability even more to get to where I want to be faster."

Taking a page from aircraft and high-performance autos, Yamaha's engineers used a plasma-fused sleeveless cylinder wall in the SHO lineup, resulting in less friction and gains in power and torque. Intake valves are 14-percent larger and exhaust valves are 10-percent larger.

Another plus with the 4-strokes is not having to change oil as often, resulting in savings and one less thing to worry about.

Pattern

Continued from Page 9

cloud cover rolled in. When he lost the sun, he lost the fish, he said.

Chuck Naiser, another guide, follows a similar routine: casting natural colors in creeks draining tidal ponds after a cold front.

"This year, apparently, we're going to have a real winter and have some temperatures that have some differential to them," Naiser said. "What they're going to have to do is learn to fish after a frontal passage."

Naiser suggested that after a front, anglers should fish when the wind drops and the sun comes out.

For his go-to fly pattern, Naiser chooses a Borski bonefish slider and clousers. The Borski flies are his favorites this time of year.

"I go through them like candy," he said.

Naiser said he has not fished much lately, perhaps because of the weather. On the day he spoke with *Lone Star Outdoor News*, a cold front battered parts of the coast with snow and sleet. But when he has fished, he generally finds fish in singles, pairs and triples, but not big schools, he said.

Guide Eric Glass takes a slightly different tack during winter.

He looks for tailing fish on flats during incoming tides, he said. But he also casts natural colors.

For Glass, the weather — or lack thereof — is key.

"If the sun's out and the wind's light, you can expect the fishing to be excellent," Glass said.



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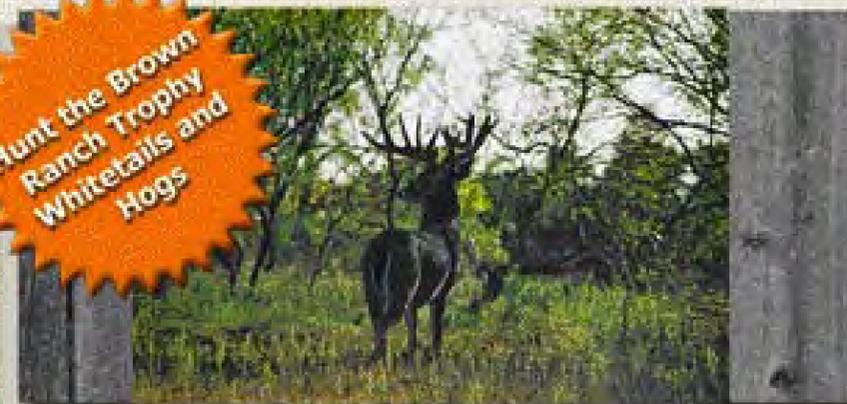



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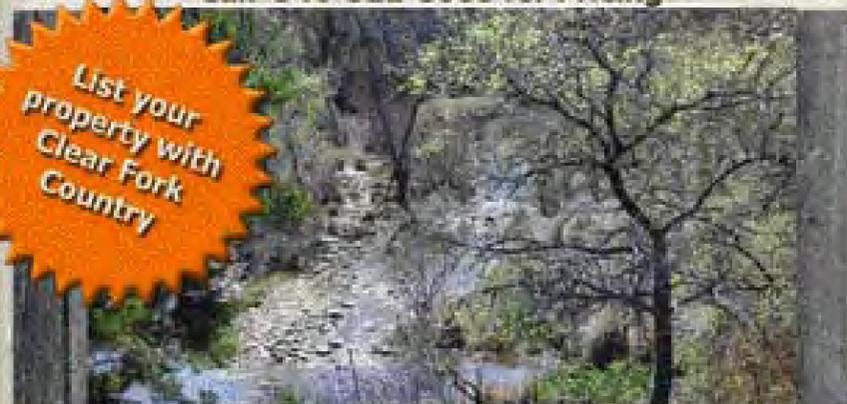


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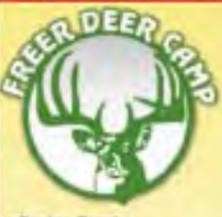
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Jan. 15

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Jan. 23-24

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Jan. 23

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Jan. 27

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Wild Turkey Federation**
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Feb. 5

National Wild Turkey Federation
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Feb. 6

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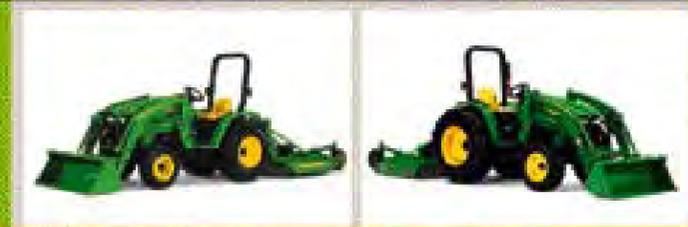


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2009 Hunting Season Dates

DOVE	
North Zone and Central Zone	Sept. 1-Oct. 25, Dec. 26-Jan. 9
South Zone	Sept. 18-Nov. 3, Dec. 26-Jan. 17
Bag limit: 15 birds and not more than two white-tipped doves.	
Special White-winged Dove Area Sept. 5, 6, 12-13, Sept. 18-Nov. 3, Dec. 26-Jan. 13	
The daily bag limit in the SWWDA is 15 birds, not more than four mourning doves during the first two week-end splits and two white-tipped doves. Once the general season opens, the aggregate bag limit will be 15.	
WHITE-TAILED DEER	
Archery-Only Season	Oct. 3-Nov. 6
Special Youth Season*	Oct. 31-Nov. 1, Jan. 4-17
General Season	
North Texas (206 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 3
South Texas (30 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 17
Late Antlerless and Spike	
Edwards Plateau (39 counties)	Jan. 4-17
South Texas (30 counties)	Jan. 18-31
Muzzleloader (57 counties)	Jan. 4-17
PHEASANT	
Panhandle (37 counties)	Dec. 5-Jan. 3
Chambers, Jefferson and Liberty	Oct. 31-Feb. 28
SQUIRREL	
Special Youth Season**	Sept. 26-27
East Texas (51 counties)	Oct. 1-Feb. 7, May 1-31
Other Open counties	Sept. 1-Aug. 31
MULE DEER	
Archery-Only Season	Oct. 3-Nov. 6
General Season	
Panhandle (38 counties)	Nov. 21-Dec. 6
SW Panhandle (10 counties)	Nov. 21-29
Trans-Pecos (19 counties)	Nov. 28-Dec. 13
QUAIL	
Statewide (all counties)	Oct. 31-Feb. 28
RIO GRANDE TURKEY	
Archery-Only Season	Oct. 3-Nov. 6
Fall Season	
Youth Season*	Oct. 31-Nov. 1, Jan. 16-17
North Zone (122 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 3
South Zone (26 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 17
Brooks, Kenedy, Kleberg, Willacy	Nov. 7-Feb. 28

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Matagorda

Continued from Page 8

and they are fighting to keep it that way.

George Deshotels, commissioner for Precinct 2 Matagorda County, wants to open a natural cut leading from the southwest corner of East Matagorda Bay to the natural Colorado River channel, commonly known as Rawlings Cut or Southwest Cut.

One reason Deshotels gives for wanting to open the cut is to prevent flooding of Farm-to-Market Road 2031 after heavy rainfall. FM 2031 is a two-lane road on land separating the cut from the former river channel.

Deshotels' proposed bridge and cut would help drain rainfall runoff from East Matagorda Bay into the channel. In addition to improving tidal flow through East Matagorda Bay, the cut will help reduce the accumulation of silt between the jetties 2 miles away at the mouth of the Colorado River. Another reason to open the cut is to help barge traffic at the intersection of the former river channel and the Intracoastal Waterway. Studies show that opening Southwest Cut will reduce water current at this point.

Ed Stavinoha, a board member of the East Matagorda Bay Foundation, has owned property in Sargent since the early 1970s and has watched the

popularity of East Matagorda Bay as a fishing destination grow over the years.

"The number of people using this resource is unbelievable, and yet, the bay is still highly productive," Stavinoha said. "We don't know what opening a cut on the southwest side would do. If it's not broke, why fix it?"

Texas Parks and Wildlife gill net surveys show that speckled trout and redfish counts are the highest in East Matagorda since records have been kept. Members of the East Matagorda Bay Foundation believe the high numbers are because of a balanced habitat.

They fear opening Southwest Cut will change the salinity, deposit sediment on oyster reefs and damage the ecology of the bay in other ways yet unknown.

Deshotels submitted an application in 2008 to build a bridge and dredge out Southwest Cut. But that application, which did not call for public input, was denied by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. East Matagorda Bay Foundation hired the law firm of Blackburn and Carter, which sent a letter to the Corps of Engineers showing the permit was flawed.

Deshotels submitted a new application in 2009. This application requires a public notice, which should appear on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Web site in mid-January.



CUTTING CLOSE: A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers map shows the proposed location of the Southwest Cut and other nearby landmarks.

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Puzzle solution from Page 23

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FISHING REPORT

HOT BITES

LARGEMOUTH BASS



BASTROP: Very good on watermelon red and watermelon gold soft plastics.

PROCTOR: Very good on chartreuse/black and chartreuse/blue soft plastic worms and Rat-L-Traps.

AMISTAD: Good on crankbaits and soft plastics.

BELTON: Good on spinnerbaits and Rat-L-Traps in coves.

CADDO: Good on Texas-rigged worms and Senkos.

LBJ: Good on 1/8-ounce buzzbaits and wacky-rigged green pumpkin soft plastics along lay downs and stumps in 4-6 feet early and late and all day under cloud cover.

WHITE, HYBRID, STRIPER



RAY ROBERTS: White bass are good to excellent on jigging spoons in 25-40 feet.

COLEMAN: Hybrid striped are good on live minnows and chartreuse Rat-L-Traps.

COLORADO RIVER: White bass are good on minnows.

FORT PHANTOM HILL: White bass are good on live bait and small crankbaits.

AMISTAD: Striped bass are good on slabs, jigging spoons and Rat-L-Traps.

CATFISH



BROWNWOOD: Channel catfish are excellent over baited holes in 5-15 feet.

BRAUNIG: Channel catfish are good on liver, shrimp, cut bait and cheesebait near the dam and the intake. Blue catfish are good on cut bait.

COLETO CREEK: Channel and blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with live perch and worms. Yellow catfish are good on trotlines baited with perch.

GRANGER: Blue catfish are good on prepared baits in 6-15 feet.

LIVINGSTON: Blue catfish are good on shad.

CRAPPIE



ALAN HENRY: Good on minnows and jigs.

CONROE: Good on minnows and green tube jigs.

GRANBURY: Good on minnows.

ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 53 degrees; 1.78' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored crankbaits and black/blue soft plastic lures suspended in trees. Catfish are fair on live bait.

AMISTAD: Water clear; 66 degrees; 2.11' low. Black bass are good on crankbaits and soft plastics. White bass are good on slabs, jigging spoons and Rat-L-Traps. Catfish are good on cheesebait, shrimp and nightcrawlers in 40-80 feet over baited holes. Yellow catfish are good on trotlines baited with live perch.

ARROWHEAD: Water lightly stained; 58 degrees. Black bass are fair on crankbaits or jigs 1-4 feet deep near rocky structures. Crappie are good on black and green plastics. White bass are good off rocky points. Blue catfish are fair on cheese bait while drift fishing anchored in 8-10 feet depth.

BASTROP: Water clear. Crappie are fair on minnows and green tube jigs. Channel and blue catfish are good on liver and stinkbait.

BELTON: Water clear; 65 degrees; 0.47' high. Hybrid striped are good on live shad. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are good on hot dogs and stinkbait.

BOB SANDLIN: Water stained; 52-56 degrees; 0.06' high. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, Rat-L-Traps and jigs. Crappie are fair to good on jigs under bridges and over brush piles in 20-35 feet. White bass are fair on slabs and jigging spoons. Catfish are fair to good.

BRAUNIG: Water stained; 65 degrees. Black bass are good on crankbaits and dark soft plastic worms. Striped bass are good on liver and shad. Redfish are good on bait and silver spoons.

BRIDGEPORT: Water fairly clear; 51-56 degrees; 8.6' low. Black bass are fair to good on Texas rigs, crankbaits and jigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs under bridges. White bass are fair on slabs. Hybrid striped are fair on live shad. Channel catfish are fair to good on punchbait over baited holes.

BROWNWOOD: Water stained; 59 degrees; 7.57' low. Black bass are good on plastic worms, 3/8-ounce spinnerbaits, crawl-colored 5/16-ounce jigs and crawl-colored crankbaits. Hybrid striped are slow. White bass are good. Crappie are good on soft plastics and tube jigs.

BUCHANAN: Water clear; 65 degrees; 24.63' low. Black bass are good on 1/4-ounce Bleeding Shad Rat-L-Traps, topwaters and Texas-rigged weightless silver flake soft plastics at daylight in 8-15 feet. Striped bass are fair. White bass are fair. Crappie are fair.

CADDO: Water murky; 50-56 degrees; 1.67' high. White bass are fair in the main channels on spoons. Yellow bass are fair to good on jigs and small spoons. Channel catfish are good on nightcrawlers and prepared bait.

CANYON LAKE: Water clear; 63 degrees; 10.24' low. Black bass are fair to good on Rat-L-Traps and white spinnerbaits along creeks and ditches in bays in 6-15 feet and on watermelon red soft plastics on jigsheads and Texas-rigged grape worms on shaky head jigs along main lake bluffs and on topwaters, wacky-rigged watermelon red soft plastics and Texas-rigged blue flake worms tight to lay downs upriver. Striped bass are fair. White bass are slow. Smallmouth bass are good. Crappie are fair on minnows.

CEDAR CREEK: Water stained; 51-56 degrees; 0.05' high. Black bass are good on finesse worms, Rat-L-Traps, Carolina rigs and jigs. White bass are fair on slabs. Hybrid striped are fair on live bait and slabs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs over brush piles. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait and cut shad.

CHOKE CANYON: Water clear; 66 degrees; 9.41' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon, pumpkinseed and tequila sunrise soft plastics and spinnerbaits in 10-20 feet. White bass are slow. Crappie are good on minnows and white/pink tube jigs. Drum are fair on live worms. Channel and blue catfish are good on

frozen shrimp, liver and stinkbait. Yellow catfish are fair on live perch.

COLEMAN: Water clear; 65 degrees; 10.29' low. Black bass are good on watermelon spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Crappie are good on live minnows. Channel and blue catfish are fair on stinkbait and liver.

COLETO CREEK: Water stained; 67 degrees (81 degrees at discharge); 0.06' low. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow.

COLORADO CITY: Water clear; 58 degrees; 11.86' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are slow. White bass are slow. Catfish are slow.

COLORADO RIVER: (Above Lake Buchanan) Water fairly clear. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. Crappie are good on minnows. Catfish are good on liver, stinkbait and shrimp in deep holes.

CONROE: Water stained; 0.02' low. Black bass are good on watermelon red soft

GRAPEVINE: Water stained; 51-55 degrees; 0.75' high. Black bass are fair to good on Texas rigs, shaky head rigs and medium diving crankbaits. Crappie are fair to good. White bass are fair. Catfish are fair.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water clear; 65 degrees; 0.50' high. Black bass to 6 pounds are fair on tiger-colored deep running crankbaits in the creek channel in 13 feet. Crappie are fair on live minnows near the dam over brush piles. Bream are good on live crickets in 1 foot. Channel and blue catfish are fair on stinkbait and on trotlines baited with shad and perch.

HUBBARD CREEK: Water lightly stained; 57 degrees; 7.79' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored spinnerbaits and soft jerkbaits worked along grass lines and watermelon red soft plastics worms worked along timber. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. White bass are good on live bait. Catfish are fair.

JOE POOL: Water off-color; 50-56 degrees; 0.22' high. Black bass are fair

PROCTOR: Water stained; 65 degrees; 6.98' low. Striped bass are fair on minnows and silver spoons. White bass are good on minnows and jigging spoons. Crappie are good on minnows and green/white tube jigs. Channel and blue catfish are very good on stinkbait and frozen shrimp.

RAY HUBBARD: Water fairly clear; 50-56 degrees; 0.04' high. Black bass are fair to good on Rat-L-Traps, Carolina rigs, crankbaits and drop-shot rigs. Crappie are fair to good. White bass are fair. Hybrid striped are fair. Catfish are fair.

RAY ROBERTS: Water stained; 53-56 degrees; 0.57' high. Black bass are fair on shad pattern crankbaits and jigs. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows over brush piles below 25 feet. Catfish are excellent on cut and prepared baits.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: Water off-color; 52-57 degrees; 0.08' high. Black bass are fair on Carolina rigs, crankbaits and drop-shot rigs. White bass are good on slabs and live minnows. Hybrid striped are fair on large slabs and live shad. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs around bridges. Catfish are fair on prepared baits and nightcrawlers.

SAM RAYBURN: Water stained; 66 degrees; 1.55' low. Black bass are fair on shad pattern crankbaits, spinnerbaits and crankbaits and on watermelon red topwaters in 20-35 feet. White bass are good on minnows. Crappie are fair on minnows and blue tube jigs. Bream are fair on worms. Catfish are good on stinkbait, shrimp and liver.

STILLHOUSE: Water stained; 64 degrees; 1.02' high. Black bass are fair on minnows, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows. Channel and blue catfish are fair on minnows, hot dogs and nightcrawlers.

SWEETWATER: Water lightly stained; 54 degrees; 7.13' low. Black bass are fair on live bait and black/chartreuse soft plastic lures. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on live bait. Catfish are fair on live bait.

TAWAKONI: Water fairly clear; 51-57 degrees; 0.77' high. Black bass are fair on shad pattern crankbaits, Rat-L-Traps and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs around bridge pilings. Catfish are good on live shad and nightcrawlers. White bass are fair. Striped bass are fair.

TEXOMA: Water off-color; 51-56 degrees; 0.23' high. Black bass are fair to good on Texas and Carolina rigs, medium to deep diving shad pattern crankbaits and drop-shot rigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs around bridges. Striped bass are fair on slow-rolled Sassy Shad and live shad. Catfish are fair to good on cut shad and nightcrawlers.

TOLEDO BEND: Water stained; 65 degrees; 0.64' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red and watermelon gold soft plastics, spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Striped bass are fair. White bass are good on minnows and silver spoons. Crappie are fair. Bream are fair on worms. Channel and blue catfish are good on minnows, shrimp and stinkbait.

TRAVIS: Water stained; 65 degrees; 28.56' low. Black bass to 4 pounds are good on chrome crankbaits, red shad worms and grubs in 10-28 feet. Striped bass are slow. White bass are fair on silver spoons, white grubs and minnows in 30-40 feet. Crappie are fair on minnows and blue and white tube jigs in 15-25 feet. Channel and blue catfish are fair.

WHITE RIVER: Water lightly stained; 54 degrees; 25.57' low. Black bass are fair on live bait and slow-rolled spinnerbaits. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. Walleye are fair on live bait and chrome jerkbaits. Channel catfish are good.

WHITNEY: Water stained; 1.37' low. Black bass are fair on chartreuse and chartreuse/white spinnerbaits, crankbaits and topwaters. Striped bass are fair on live minnows and white striped jigs. White bass are fair on minnows. Crappie are good on minnows and blue tube jigs.

HOT SPOT



Calaveras

Water stained; 65 degrees. Black bass are very good on dark soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits around reed beds. Striped bass are slow. Redfish are fair on live bait, and on crawfish and tilapia near the dam. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are good on liver, shrimp, cheesebait and shad.

plastics, spinnerbaits and Rat-L-Traps in 20-30 feet. Striped bass are fair on live minnows. Catfish are fair.

COOPER: Water off-color; 51-55 degrees; 0.95' high. Black bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps, Texas and drop-shot rigs. Crappie are fair on jigs and minnows over brush piles. White bass are fair to good on Humdingers and slabs. Hybrid striped are fair on slabs and live shad. Catfish are fair on prepared bait.

FALCON: Water clear; 67 degrees. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are good on cut bait and shrimp.

FAYETTE: Water clear; 67 degrees. Black bass are good on watermelon gold, watermelon red and plum Carolina-rigged Finesse worms and on topwaters over grass. Channel and blue catfish are slow.

FORK: Water stained; 51-56 degrees; 0.16' high. Black bass are good on 10" Texas-rigged worms, Carolina rigs and heavy jigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs over brush piles and around bridge columns. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait and cut shad.

FORT PHANTOM HILL: Water clear; 59 degrees; 5.11' low. Black bass are fair on live bait and white spinnerbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on live bait.

GRANBURY: Water stained; 0.41' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red soft plastics, spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Striped bass are fair on minnows and chartreuse striped jigs. White bass are fair on minnows and small spinnerbaits. Catfish are good on shrimp, stinkbait and live minnows.

GRANGER: Water murky; 60 degrees; 0.29' high. Black bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow.

to good on Texas rigs, crankbaits and jigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair to good on slabs and live minnows. Catfish are fair on prepared bait and cut shad.

LBJ: Water stained; 66 degrees; 0.32' low. Striped bass are slow to fair trolling crankbaits on downriggers and drifting live shad along the river channel close to the dam. White bass are fair vertically jigging under birds. Crappie to 16" are good on crappie jigs and live minnows over brush piles in 12-15 feet.

LEWISVILLE: Water stained; 50-57 degrees; 0.55' high. Black bass are fair to good on shaky head rigs, jigs, drop-shot rigs, jigs and crankbaits. Crappie are fair to good. White bass are fair to good. Hybrid striped are fair. Catfish are fair to good.

LIVINGSTON: Water fairly clear; 64 degrees; 0.47' high. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. White bass are good on crankbaits. Crappie are good on minnows in creeks.

O.H. IVIE: Water lightly stained; 57 degrees; 21.02' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored crankbaits, black/blue soft plastic lures and live bait worked points. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on live bait and white crankbaits. Smallmouth bass are fair on live bait. Channel catfish are good on live and prepared bait.

OAK CREEK: Water lightly stained; 56 degrees; 7.72' low. Black bass are fair on live bait. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on live bait.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Water stained; 56 degrees; 4.65' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored spinnerbaits and live bait. Crappie are fair on live bait and jigs. White bass are good on silver jigging spoons. Stripers are good. Catfish are fair.

SALTWATER SCENE

NORTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good under birds and pods of shad on soft plastics. Redfish and flounder are good in the marsh on shrimp. Trout are good over mud and shell.

SOUTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good under birds and pods of shad. Redfish are good at the jetty on live bait and cracked crabs.

BOLIVAR: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell on plastics. Bull redfish are good on the beachfront.

TRINITY BAY: Trout are good for drifters working pods of shad and mullet on Bass Assassins, Tro Killers and Sand Eels. Trout are good under birds on the north shoreline.

EAST GALVESTON BAY: Redfish and flounder are fair to good in the marsh around drains on shrimp. Trout and redfish are good under the birds when the wind allows.

WEST GALVESTON BAY: Bull redfish and flounder are good at San Luis Pass on shrimp and shad. Sheepshead, redfish and black drum are good at the jetty on shrimp and crabs.

TEXAS CITY: Gulf trout are good in the channel on fresh shrimp. Flounder are good on the edge of the channel.

FREEPORT: Bull redfish are good around Surfside and at the Quintana jetty on crabs, shrimp and mullet. Flounder are fair to good at San Luis Pass on jigs tipped with shrimp.

EAST MATAGORDA BAY: Trout and redfish are fair under the birds when the wind allows. Trout are fair for drifters on live shrimp over humps and scattered shell. Trout and flounder are fair to good on muddy shorelines on soft plastics.

WEST MATAGORDA BAY: Trout are fair on sand and grass humps on soft plastics and topwaters. Redfish are fair on live shrimp at Shell Island and Mad Island.

PORT O'CONNOR: Redfish are best at the mouths of the back lakes on the falling tide on shrimp and mullet. Bull redfish are good at the jetty on crabs, mullet and shad. Trout are fair on the reefs in San Antonio Bay.

ROCKPORT: Redfish are good in Redfish Bay on mullet and crabs. Bull redfish are good in the Lydia Ann Channel and around Mud Island on shrimp and crabs. Slot redfish are good in California Hole on live bait.

PORT ARANSAS: Redfish are fair at Shamrock Cove and Pelican Island on topwaters and Gulpis. Look for reds to fall to deeper water with the falling tides.

TOLEDO BEND: Bull redfish are good at the jetty and on the beachfront on natural baits.

CORPUS CHRISTI: Bull redfish are good in the surf on mullet and shrimp. Trout are fair for waders working mud and grass on small topwaters and Corkies.

BAFFIN BAY: Trout are good on topwaters and plum plastics around rocks and grass. Trout are good while drifting deep rocks on plum plastics. Redfish are fair on the edge of the Intracoastal.

PORT MANSFIELD: Redfish are good while drifting holes on natural baits under a popping cork. Trout and redfish are fair to good on the spoils on slow-sinking Mirrolures and Corkies.

SOUTH PADRE: Trout are good around Long Bar and on the edges of the ICW on soft plastics. Redfish and trout are good near the Lookout and Stover Point.

PORT ISABEL: Trout and redfish are good at Laguna Vista and Holly Beach on swimming baits and shrimp under a popping cork. Snook and mangrove snapper are good in the Brownsville Ship Channel.

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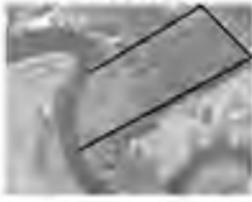
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HOT LAKE: The cooling towers at the Comanche Peak nuclear power station rise above Squaw Creek Reservoir. Photo by Luminant.

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Squaw Creek to reopen

Power company will relax security beginning in 2010

Luminant is developing plans to reopen Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant's Squaw Creek Reservoir on a limited basis to employees, charitable events and eventually to the public for fishing.

"We know that employees and our plant neighbors have been looking forward to the opportunity to fish on Squaw Creek once again, and we are excited to be able to share this great news," said Comanche Peak Site Vice President Mitch Lucas. "While we still have a lot of planning to do and park infrastructure upgrades to make, we will share updates as they are available."

"We've watched as other nuclear facilities have reopened their lakes for fishing. And now, after careful consideration and an extensive review, we have started planning to reopen the reservoir by mid-2010."

As part of its commitment to surrounding communities, Luminant intends to initially provide access to the public through fishing tournaments that benefit charitable organizations. Broader public access beyond this will be decided in 2010.

The company is exploring several angler registration options and regulations for the number of boats that will be allowed on the reservoir. Decisions have not been made on public access fees.

The company closed the lake after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Since then, security precautions have kept anglers off the water at the once-popular lake.

"In the past eight years, we have significantly enhanced our security measures to protect Comanche Peak," the company wrote in a press release. "There has been strong interest from within our company, our community and throughout the state to allow access for recreational fishing at Squaw Creek Reservoir."

Squaw Creek Reservoir, located in Somervell County, is owned and operated by Luminant as the cooling source for two nuclear power units. Its surface area is about 3,200 acres, and it has an average depth of about 46 feet.

— Luminant report



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