

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

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Make it mullet

When the seasons change, it's time to change bait — redfish want mullet.
Page 10

INSIDE FISHING



Bass named spot

It's a mystery why some bass have black spots on their bodies.

Page 10

Cooler days for redfish

The chill of an early winter has blown across the Texas coast.

Page 10

HUNTING



Pheasant days may change

Pheasant season might open earlier next year — to include Thanksgiving weekend.

Page 8

A new retriever king

Two Rivers Lucky Willie claimed the throne at the National Retriever Championship last month.

Page 8

CONSERVATION

New fish flourishing

A newly discovered fish species is doing well, says the biologist who discovered it.

Page 4

Light goose rules expand

New regulations make it easier to kill light geese in more areas. Large populations are damaging nesting grounds.

Page 4

NATIONAL

And the top callers are ...

Ryan Nolan thought for sure he was out of the 2008 World's Championship Duck Calling Contest.

Page 6

INDEX

Classifieds	Page 23
Crossword	Page 18
Game Warden Blotter	Page 12
Fishing Report	Page 15
Heroes	Page 14
Outdoor Datebook	Page 16
Products	Page 20
Weather	Page 18
Wild in the Kitchen	Page 18

When to harvest your doe

Experts say early season is better

By BILL MILLER

A hunter in DeWitt County downed a female whitetail a couple seasons back, happy to have filled a special doe tag assigned to the ranch.

But while field dressing, there was something he hadn't seen before: a milky-white sack containing a tiny creature not much bigger than a kitten.

Finding the deer fetus made the hunter realize he hadn't killed one deer but two.

Had he just robbed the ranch of a future trophy?

Other questions followed.

Were last season's fawns weaned before hunters on the ranch started filling doe tags?

And is it even necessary to harvest female deer?

Deer experts in Texas say yes, absolutely.

"Does are overlooked simply because they are not a glamorous

See **DOES**, Page 29



DOE DILEMMA: Although hunters know harvesting does is necessary, they wonder about the best time to take the shot. Most management experts recommend the beginning of the season. Photo by David J. Sams.



MOVING WATER: Currents from wind affect fishing. Many fishermen think wind pushes shad and other baitfish to the windy shoreline, but it's the plankton that drift toward the shore, and the baitfish follow.

Follow wind, currents to better lake fishing

Wind, rotation of planet, discharge from dams bring changes for anglers

By JOHN N. FELSHER

Everyone can see how current pours down a river. However, the water flow in a reservoir depends upon wind direction, the rotation of the Earth or a release through the dam.

In Texas, the most common current cause an angler deals with is wind.

"Wind blowing from one direction for extended periods of time creates current called surface drift," said Dr.

Dan Daugherty, a fisheries biologist at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Center of the Hills Fisheries Science Center. "However, the rotation of the Earth affects subsurface currents differently. Water currents below the surface move at progressively greater angles to the wind as depth increases. In deep lakes and reservoirs, subsurface currents at the deepest depths may even flow in the opposite direction to the wind."

Winds pushing waves across the surface generally only affect water down to about 10 feet, but they could theoretically drive water all the way across a large reservoir such as Toledo Bend or Sam Rayburn. Although imperceptible to the human eye, water "stacks up" along windward shorelines. For example,

See **CURRENTS**, Page 24

Deer hunting goes on at Chaparral after fire

From 'moonscape' to 'sea of grass'

By MARK ENGLAND

After a wildfire in March consumed 95 percent of the Chaparral Wildlife Management Area southwest of San Antonio, there was concern hunting might have to be curtailed to allow whitetails to rebound.

Nature, however, came to the rescue, said David Synatzske, the Chaparral's manager.

"The deer are probably in better condition than they were last year," he said. "Anyone who has been on the place is amazed by how fast the country came back. After the fire, there were places that looked like a moonscape. Now it's a sea of grass everywhere you look."

A study done by Synatzske and the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville found no evidence of a die-off of whitetails after the fire. In

fact, circumstances conspired to not only allow them to maintain their health but, in most cases, to thrive.

For all its destructiveness, the wildfire made one food source readily available to whitetails: prickly pear cactus.

The fire burned off the plant's spines.

"We found in the study that the deer were able to sustain their body condition by consuming the prickly pear," Synatzske said. "Basically, it's all they had. It's not a good protein source. It's high in carbohydrates, a high-energy food, which is exactly what they needed after the fire."

Thanks to a fortuitous spring rain, grass and forbs soon returned and filled out the deer's diet, said David Hewitt, who holds the Stuart W. Stedman Chair for White-tailed

See **CHAPARRAL**, Page 29

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CONSERVATION

Newly discovered fish species thriving

Community comes to animal's aid, boosts population

By Craig Nyhus

When biologists, business and cities work together, good things can happen for all — even threatened species. That's how Gary Garrett, Texas Parks and Wildlife fisheries biologist at Heart of the Hills Fisheries Science Center, describes the recovery of a fish species he discovered.

The fish, *Gambusia clarkhubbsi*, was discovered in the San Felipe Creek in Del Rio. The creek begins with one of Texas' largest springs located on the

San Felipe Country Club in the city limits.

"We had been working there for 25 years," Garrett said. "The Devil's minnow is in the creek, too."

A big flood in 1998 totally flushed the creek out and flooded many homes.

"It caused a lot of damage," Garrett said.

But after the flood, Garrett began noticing a different-looking fish.

"It was in the mosquito fish family and guppy-sized," he said. "But it was different from the other *Gambusia* species we knew of."

The next step was to take it to the lab.

"We found out it was a new species," he said. "I got to name it — that



LITTLE FISH: Fisheries biologist Gary Garrett began noticing *Gambusia clarkhubbsi*, which he named, after a flood spilled through Del Rio in 1998. Photo by Gary Garrett.

was pretty cool."

Garrett named the fish after his mentor, Clark Hubbs, whom he described as the most famous fisheries

biologist in Texas.

The new species, with the small creek being its only known home, was extremely rare. Garrett worked with the city and the golf course to improve the stream habitat.

The changes were simple and economical.

"We modified the fertilizing and mowing," Garrett said. "They were mowing right up to the edge of the creek with the runoff from the parking lot and golf course going straight to the creek — every year there were big algae blooms. We agreed to set a 10- to 20-foot buffer."

The city made some changes as well. The city was lining the banks of the creek with concrete like the San Anto-

nio River Walk," Garrett said. "We got them to agree to back off of that and create some no-mow zones. Also, after the flood some land that had flooded was granted to the city by FEMA and the city created a greenbelt."

Garrett said the changes helped immensely to manage the runoff to the creek, and the population of the fish he named took off.

"They expanded and exploded on their own," he said. "I had worked there for 25 years and never saw one — now you see them regularly."

Working together, the groups all received benefits, Garrett said. "The benefit is a clean, healthy creek," he said. "The fish is what we call an indicator species — it tells you when things are going well — and the creek looks great."

Light goose hunting rules expanded

Conservation Order spreads to Atlantic Flyway

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently finalized rules allowing the use of expanded hunting methods and implementation of a conservation order to increase light goose harvest.

The regulations have been in place in the Central and Mississippi Flyways on an interim basis since 1999. The final rule makes the regulations permanent in those flyways and also makes Atlantic Flyway states eligible to implement them.

"The overabundance of light geese is harming their fragile arctic breeding habitat," said H. Dale Hall, director of the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service. "The damage to the habitat is, in turn, harming the health of the light geese and other bird species that depend on the tundra habitat.

"Returning the light goose population to sustainable levels is necessary to protect this delicate habitat and every species dependent on it."

During the last few decades, populations of greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese have grown to historic highs. The breeding population of mid-continent light geese likely exceeds 5 million birds, an increase of more than 300 percent since the mid-1970s.

Since implementation of the conservation order in 1999, the harvest of mid-continent light geese has more than doubled, and the population growth rate as measured by the mid-

winter index has been reduced. The management goal is to reduce the number of mid-continent light geese by 50 percent and to reduce the greater snow goose population to 500,000 birds.

The final rule authorizes the use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns to harvest light geese. These regulations are allowed during a light-geese-only hunting season when all other waterfowl and crane hunting seasons, excluding falconry, are closed.

The rule also authorizes states to implement a conservation order to allow the harvest of light geese outside of traditional hunting seasons. The conservation order also allows shooting hours to continue until one-half hour after sunset and removes the daily bag limit for light geese.

— U.S. Fish and Wildlife report.

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NATIONAL

Okie wins calling crown

Winner thought miscue in finals cost him the contest

Ryan Nolan won the 2008 World's Championship Duck Calling Contest on Nov. 29 in Stuttgart, Ark.

Blowing a Betts Game Call, the 24-year-old from Roland, Okla., won \$8,000, a championship ring and roughly \$7,000 worth of duck hunting equipment.

"I'm on top of the world right now," Nolan said. "I've put in countless hours of work toward this."

It was a championship Nolan thought he let get away at the end of the third round. After posting the best score in round two, 259 out of 270, Nolan went into the third and final round in a tie for the lead and with a boost in confidence.

His third round call was going as smoothly as his second until the last 15 seconds, when there was a hint of a squawk. When Nolan finished, he threw his arms down in disgust, because in his mind, he had just given away the championship.

"I was nervous because I knew that wasn't my best," Nolan said. "You don't want to leave anything out there. It turns out it wasn't as bad as I thought was."

It was good enough to spark a call-off against Jesse Blom of Sioux Falls, S.D.,



WINNERS: Left: Ryan Nolan of Roland, Okla., competes during the World's Championship Duck Calling Contest, which he won last month in Arkansas. Right: Shelby Free of Stuttgart, Ark., won the Women's World Championship. Photos by Larry L. Towell.

who finished as the first runner-up.

Nolan started calling competitively in 2002 and qualified for his first championship in 2003. He'd been hovering around 10th for five years, and he attributed his experience and practice for the breakthrough this year.

Kent Cullum of Lake Cormorant, Miss., finished in third place, followed by David St. John of Conway, Ark., and

Todd Copley of Des Moines, Iowa.

In the Women's World Championship, 16-year-old Shelby Free of Stuttgart, Ark., beat Brittany Sorenson of Memphis, Tenn., for the title.

In the first-ever Senior World competition, Craig Guillaume of Council Bluff, Iowa, topped Curt Scheuneman of Minnekota, Minn.

— *ESPNOutdoors report.*

Bacterium found to control mussels

Toxin in patented cells kills zebra, quagga species

Dr. Daniel Molloy, a New York State Museum researcher, has invented and patented a natural bacterium to control invasive mussels that have fouled water supplies across the United States.

The fouling caused by zebra and quagga mussels represents billions of dollars in economic damage and has a major negative impact on freshwater ecosystems. To find an environmentally safe control method, Molloy's lab screened more than 700 bacteria before identifying a strain of the common bacterium *Pseudomonas fluorescens* as being lethal to these mussels when ingested.

Museum scientists also discovered that dead cells of this strain were equally as lethal as live cells, providing clear evidence that the mussels died from a natural toxin in the cells, not from infection. This means future commercial formula-

tions may contain dead cells, thus further reducing environmental concerns. Testing at the lab also revealed the extraordinary selectivity of the bacteria in killing zebra and quagga mussels without killing other aquatic organisms, including fish and other species of freshwater clams and mussels.

Introduced from Europe in the 1980s, zebra and quagga mussels are tiny, fingernail-sized mussels that foul freshwater ecosystems and clog the intake pipes of industries that draw water from infested lakes and rivers. Although populations have been widespread in the Great Lakes region and Midwest for almost two decades, these mussels were only found for the first time west of the Rockies in the last 18 months, specifically in regions of Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado and California. Power plants and other raw-water dependent facilities have been using chemicals to reduce these mussels.

The biological pesticide will be sold by Marrone Organic Innovations, the museum's commercial partner.

— *New York State Museum report.*

Genmar aims to re-popularize boating by making it affordable

Genmar Holdings, the parent of 13 boat brands, including Ranger, Stratos, Triumph and Champion, plans to create Genmar Retail Financing to allow dealers to offer customers low-interest financing on new boats.

"I feel we no longer have the option but to create Genmar Retail Financing," Genmar Chairman Irwin L. Jacobs told *The Outdoor Wire*. "It's a challenging economic time, but having the ability to offer our detailers the opportunity to offer 0-, or

1-, 2- or 3-percent financing gives us the ability to do promotions our competitors simply can't do."

Affordable financing, Jacobs said, is key to revitalizing the boat industry — and getting people back on the water. Once people become boaters, they generally stay boaters, he said.

The date when the service will be operative has not been set, but Jacobs said the project will move forward quickly.

— *The Outdoor Wire report.*

New reg conserves large catfish

Alabama has enacted a catfish regulation similar to one proposed on three lakes in Texas.

In an effort to maintain high quality catfish fishing in Alabama, only one catfish longer than 34 inches may be harvested each day by an angler. Live blue catfish or flathead catfish longer than 34 inches cannot be transported out of Alabama without approval in

writing from the commissioner of conservation and natural resources.

Alabama does not have a limit on the number of smaller catfish that may be kept.

Texas has proposed a 30- to 45-inch slot limit for blue catfish at Lewisville Lake, Lake Waco and Richland-Chambers Reservoir.

— *Staff reports.*


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HUNTING

Bucks poached in Houston, Wichita Falls parks

Reward offered for 'Mr. Buck'; municipal worker suspended over 200-class deer's death

The temptation of a big buck — even a tame one — can be too much for some. And the results can taint the reputations of those who hunt legally and ethically.

At Bear Creek Pioneers Park in Harris County, poachers did the unthinkable, taking Mr. Buck, a buck so tame children would scratch his chin through the park fence. And at Lucy Park in Wichita Falls, an impressive 200-class

buck wandered into the park within the city limits near the Wichita River and was shot.

Park rangers said the 10-year-old Mr. Buck, one of two white-tailed deer kept on a wildlife sanctuary at the park, was killed during the night, and his head was taken as the prize.

The perpetrator cut the park's chain link fence and used a bolt cutter to enter the gate of the deer's enclosure.

A Crimestopper tip led to the poacher, a 23-year-old Houston man. When arrested, the man needed to be taken to the hospital for medical care after being gored by the buck.

Although Mr. Buck was docile with visitors on the other side of the fence, inside the enclosure was a different story.

"He was dominant in his territory and protective of his area," said a park spokesperson. "The guy got more than he expected."

The 2,100-acre park occupies part of a federally protected reservoir system. Because the

See **BUCKS**, Page 17



ATYPICAL: The Lucy Park buck carried a 200-class set of antlers before his death, apparently at the hands of a poacher. A city worker has been suspended in connection with the killing.

Pheasant change proposed



Season off to a good start in the Panhandle

By Craig Nyhus

Pheasant hunters filled Panhandle fields for the Dec. 6 season opener. Next year, the busiest weekend of the year for the Amarillo airport may be a week earlier.

Although hunters had mixed results on opening day, most saw good numbers of birds.

Mike Marshall of Lubbock hunted Conservation Reserve Program land and lake bottoms on public lands near Sterley with a group of eight hunters. At noon, the group lunched at Nielson's Café in Floydada.

"We saw quite a few birds on the plots," he said. "We're trying to get the young guys some shots — they are 14- and 15-year-olds — they didn't shoot too well. But they are having a blast — they'll calm down and do better this afternoon."

Marshall said the adults in the group did well, although the calm weather had the birds wild.

"They're acting like they've already been hunted," he said. "A lot are jumping up 50 yards ahead of us."

Marshall said some of the groups around them limited on opening morning.

"There are a lot of hunters — and a lot of shooting going on," he said.

Another area hunter let the birds come to him.

"We slept in and let the hunters chase them out of the grain fields," said Kyle Smith of Floydada, who hunted with his son, Connor. "We went out around 10 and walked the grass and got

See **PHEASANT**, Page 16

OPENING DAY: A proposed shift in the pheasant hunting schedule would give hunters Thanksgiving weekend. Photo by David J. Sams.

Texas dog wins retriever championship

Handler Rorem takes seven dogs to finals

By Craig Nyhus

Two Rivers Lucky Willie, a black Labrador retriever owned by Brady Oman of Austin and handled by Dave Rorem, won the 2008 National Retriever Championship last month.

"This has been the passion of my life for a long time," Rorem said. "It's like winning the Super Bowl. It's a dream come true. It's the best feeling there is in the world."

The competition took place Nov. 9-15 in Montgomery between 105 qualifying retrievers.

Oman has called the relationship between Rorem and Willie magical. Rorem, who divides his year between a home near La Grange and International Falls, Minn., agreed.

"There's something about that dog and me," he said. "We're on the same wavelength. He's a great athlete, very coachable, and loves to work for me. I know what he's going to do, and he knows what I'm going to do before we do it."

Rorem had seven of the dogs he professionally handles qualify for the event, and three other dogs became finalists. But it was Willie, recovering from a shoulder tendon injury, who came out on top.

"He hurt his shoulder over a year ago while competing," Rorem said. "He jammed it real bad."

After an extensive rehabilitation and rest the shoulder improved, just in time for nationals, the top performance event for retrievers in the American Kennel Club.

"He missed a lot of practice time," Rorem said. "But once he got through a few runs, he hit his stride."

For years, Rorem passed up competing in the National Retriever Championship because it occurred during November,

See **RETRIEVER**, Page 17



CHAMPION: Dave Rorem plays with Willie, the black Lab that won the 2008 National Retriever Championship last month. Photo by Vickie Lamb.

Gun sales excellent after election

Purchases of guns, ammo up 8 to 10 percent in 2008

Cash registers at gun stores have been ringing while other retail outlets have moaned the blues since early November. Purchases of firearms and ammunition have risen 8 to 10 percent this year, state and federal data indicate.

Sales are especially brisk for semi-automatic rifles, often with magazines that hold lots of ammunition. The day after the election, when

Barack Obama won the presidency, the gun store Cheaper Than Dirt! in Fort Worth sold \$101,000 worth of merchandise, shattering its prior single-day sales record, store owner DeWayne Irwin said.

About half of the sales were guns, mostly military-style rifles and other accessories that buyers worry could be banned under the new administration.

But Dave Ferguson, who manages an outdoor retail superstore, isn't sure hype over the election is warranted.

"You always have the fear factor when there's the uncertainty of a new president," he said. "A lot of

people scare themselves because of that, but you know, even if something were to happen, it would take six to eight months before anything is introduced."

But among the gun-purchasing crowd, the willingness to wait and see what happens isn't there. Gun shops from the East Coast to the Rockies have reported record sales since Nov. 4.

"With most of the tactical-style rifles or military-based firearms — we've been cleaned out," said August Crocker, fine gun manager at Sportsman's Finest in Austin. "We don't have them anymore, and we're not known for selling them."

Crocker said the increase hasn't been seen in the upper grade shotguns and rifles.

"We've taken a lot of them in trade, though," he said.

President-elect Obama has said he respects Americans' Second Amendment right to bear arms, although he favors "commonsense" gun laws. Gun enthusiasts want to remind him of his campaign statement:

"I will not take your shotgun away," he said. "I will not take your rifle away. I won't take your handgun away."

— **Chasiti Kirkland Jackson**, *realtree.com* report.

Deer smugglers from Texas, Minn. sentenced

Men headed to federal prison for illegally moving trophy animals

A Texas man and a Minnesota man were both sentenced Nov. 24 to federal prison terms for illegally transporting white-tailed deer across state lines.

Federal District Judge Richard A. Schell in Plano sentenced Robert Eichenour, owner of Circle E Ranch in Grimes County, to 18 months in federal prison.

Eichenour must also serve 36 months of probation after his release from prison and pay a \$50,000 fine.

Brian Becker of Minnesota was also sentenced to 33 months in federal prison and 36 months of probation after his release.

The two men were caught Oct. 22,

2006, in a smuggling sting operation conducted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Special Operations Unit and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agents.

Eichenour and Becker were caught smuggling 14 white-tailed deer bucks from Minnesota to Eichenour's ranch in Grimes County.

Investigators say the plan was for Eichenour to bring in hunters and sell hunts for the trophy Minnesota bucks. After a lengthy investigation it was determined that, over a four-year period, Becker and Eichenour had smuggled in about \$300,000 worth of white-tailed bucks.

During the probation period, neither man will be allowed to sell deer. The equipment used by both during their illegal endeavor was also forfeited.

Both men were convicted of felony violations of the federal Lacey Act, which prohibits the transportation of illegally captured or prohibited animals across state lines.

— *Texas Parks and Wildlife report.*

Waterfowl hunters hope for influx of new birds

Duck hunters in most of Texas anxiously await the opening of the second split of the season, beginning Dec. 13. Dry and warm conditions hampered hunters in November, but reports of birds moving into the state as the first split of the season closed are raising optimism for the remainder of the season.

High Plains Mallard Management Unit

Goose hunting has been better with the cooler temperatures. Lots of Canada geese have been decoying, but many of the concentrations are spread throughout the region because of the abundance of water. Sandhill cranes have decoyed well when the wind blows.

Best hunts have been in plowed ground and corn. Outfitters report lots of ducks on playas, but with the abundance of water, ducks have many

places to go.

Hunters are hoping for colder weather to freeze the shallow playas and congregate the ducks on open water.

North Zone

The first split ended at sunset Nov. 30, and the first 30 days of the season were fair at best. Many hunters in traditional mallard counties did not see many. Gadwalls and wood ducks were the most prevalent birds harvested on lakes and reservoirs.

The region could use rain to fill sloughs and backwaters. Canvasbacks are building on Toledo Bend and Lake O' The Pines. The second split opens Dec. 13.

South Zone

Duck hunting along the coast improved during the last weekend of the

first split.

Stiff north winds seemed to disperse bluewings and greenwings, which helped marsh hunters and prairie hunters.

The most consistent hunting during the first 30 days occurred in Wharton County near Wharton and East Bernard.

Outfitters said hunter numbers were down by about 30 percent on the coastal prairie.

Hunters near Port O'Connor and Rockport saw fair hunting with waves of birds arriving as the first split closed.

Goose hunters enjoyed steady shooting for snow geese and specklebellies over fresh-cut rice fields. A strong hatch of juvenile snows has helped decoying action. The second split of duck season opens Dec. 13.

— *Texas Parks and Wildlife report.*

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FISHING

Winter redfish patterns start early

Fishing remaining steady after cold fronts blow over coast

By Danno Wise

In stark contrast to recent years on the Texas coast, 2008 has seen winter weather actually beat the calendar. From Port Isabel to Port Arthur, cooling winds of change began to blow during early fall. By the time winter officially arrives Dec. 22, most inshore species will have been in a "winter pattern" for more than a month. This is not, however, to say there won't be plenty of good fishing. In fact, fishing has been fine and getting better along the Lone Star State's coastal curve — particularly where redfish are concerned.

"They are being caught all over the Galveston Bay system," said Tiki Island resident and avid angler Rick Vidock, who said he has also been able to boat good catches of speckled trout on artificials. "Bulls are being caught at the jetties and in the surf. A lot of slot-size and rat reds are being caught in East Bay, Trinity Bay, Galveston Bay and lower West Bay.

"I use only artificial lures. But most people who are targeting redfish specifically are using finger mullet, mud minnows or shrimp."

As good as the redfish action is along the Upper Coast, it is just as good or better along the Middle and Lower coasts.

"Everybody's catching redfish around Port O'Connor," said Dennis Lala of Victoria.

See REDS, Page 16



COOL CATCH: As winter sets in, redfish action is heating up along the Gulf Coast in Texas.



BAIT WATCH: Anglers change bait tactics in winter along the Texas coast. Redfish and speckled trout will primarily feed on mullet in winter.

Make room for mullet

Trout, redfish change diet in winter

By Danno Wise

A big share of coastal anglers seek redfish and speckled trout in summer and fall by probing the bay waters with live shrimp. Artificial lure anglers did much the same thing — throwing primarily shrimp-imitating soft plastics.

But in winter, the majority of a bay system's shrimp population has left for the open Gulf, forcing predator species such as redfish, speckled trout and snook to turn their attention to finfish. And although shrimp will continue to catch some fish all year long, anglers hoping to consistently hookup with quality fish on the winter flats are best served using mullet and mullet-imitating lures.

"The key to finding fish this time of year will be mullet," said Sabine Lake guide Capt. Randy Foreman. "That will be about the only bait left in the lake. So you find mullet, you'll find fish."

"If you're throwing artificials, you need to throw lures that look like baitfish. There won't be any shrimp left, so the fish will be keying on baitfish. The lures you throw need to look like what they're eating."

Switching from shrimp-imitating lures to mullet-imitating lures is something that will be happening up and down the coast, according to Matagorda guide Capt. Tommy Countz.

"By this point in December, all of the shrimp are gone — they've left the



Mullet should replace shrimp as the primary bait for redfish during winter.

bay. The fish will be feeding on mullet.

"So we'll switch to mullet-imitating baits. Personally, I'll be throwing a lot of bull minnows during December."

Artificial lure fishermen won't be the only ones swapping shrimp for mullet. Many bait fishermen will be trading in their kicking crustaceans in favor of live or dead mullet.

"On warm winter days, I'll get up on the flats to fish for redfish," said Port Mansfield guide Capt. Bob Lany. "You can catch them on plastics and spoons, but I'll mostly be fishing mullet. I'll drift over the flats with either cut or live mullet. During this time of year, mullet are their primary food source. That's the main bait item on the flats, so that's what I use."

"I'll also be fishing for black drum quite a bit during December and January. A lot of people use dead shrimp for drum, but I prefer to use cut mullet."

In addition to the lure-for-lure and bait-for-bait swaps, many bait fishermen will pick up artificials during the winter because finding mullet-imitating lures is often easier than finding mullet to use as bait.

See MULLET, Page 16

Bass blotches a mystery

What causes the rare black spots on bass?

By Kyle Carter

When world-record bass hunters Mac Weakley and Jed Dickerson caught a 21-pound, 11-ounce bass out of Dixon Lake in California, they named her Dottie because of a small black dot on her gill.

It was foreign to them, and something that, aside from its unusually large size, made this bass unique. As it turns out, there are Dotties all over the United States, and nobody's sure why. Unfortunately, they are not all world-record size.

Theories outnumber answers when it comes to explaining why some largemouth develop black blotches on their skin and occasionally lose them.

"Nobody knows what causes them," said Dr. Paul Bowser, professor of aquatic animal medicine at Cornell University. "It's more or less considered an oddity."

Bowser, who has obtained continuous funding throughout his 23 years at Cornell to study diseases of fishes and strategies for fish health manage-

ment, said he put a bass with a spot under microscope a few years back to see if it was a disease — if it was something that could spread.

"We don't see anything that would indicate that there is any kind of a disease process going on," he said. "As far as we can tell, it's just an abnormal coloration on them."

Some reports indicate the spots started showing up on fish in the Hudson River in the 1980s and have been working their way south. Bowser doesn't buy that philosophy.

"I don't know if it's correct to say that it's spreading from north to south," he said. "I'd say it's probably people have heard about it, and now they are looking."

"I don't know that there is any information out there that suggests it occurred in one place and now it's moving somewhere else."

Jim Matthews, the hatchery manager at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, has observed the spots for years. "It's just on the skin," he said. "It's probably the pigment in the skin (melanin) — almost like a birthmark."

Matthews said he has seen the spots year-round, although in some aquarium fish he has seen them disappear over time.

"I don't know why they are observed more in



BEAUTY MARK: Why some bass wear black spots on their bodies is a mystery. Here a bass with a spot on its gill plate is displayed at Lake Fork. Photo by David J. Sams.

the winter," he said. "They may be more noticeable then, or people may have just caught more of the fish with spots in the winter."

Ralph Manns wrote an article posted on the Bass Fishing Home Page suggesting the spots might be from stress to the fish. Since the spots started be-

ing noticed in the 1980s — about the time catch and release became popular — he guessed that a lot of what's been seen over the past two decades were from people handling the bass and putting

See BLOTCHES, Page 16

Ready for rainbows



TROUT TIME: Anglers fish on the Brazos River below Possum Kingdom Lake. The state plans to release 9,000 rainbow trout into the tailwaters this winter. Photo by David J. Sams.

Trout stockings underway throughout state

Winter rainbow trout fishing in Texas is increasing in popularity and opportunity. From the avid river fly-fisherman to families at a city park with a can of corn for bait, the hatchery-reared fish usually cooperate. The state began stocking 119 sites with more than 260,000 rainbows Dec. 3, and the stocking continues until mid-March.

Catching the hungry fish can be easy, making the experience ideal for novice anglers and children. The fish bite almost immediately after stocking and will take a variety of baits, from corn or commercial soft baits to artificial flies and small spinners.

Fishing gear can be as basic as an inexpensive spincast rod-and-reel combo, a small plastic bobber, a fishing weight and a hook.

Among the winter trout stocking sites are 13 Neighborhood Fishin' locations in city suburbs across the state. These spots receive trout every two weeks in the winter, and catfish are stocked there in the summer. Money donated from the Toyota Texas Bass Classic is used to support the program.



RAINBOWS: Texas will stock more than 260,000 rainbow trout in a variety of water types over the next four months.

Other popular fishing holes such as the Guadalupe River below the Canyon Reservoir Dam and the Brazos River below the Possum Kingdom Lake dam

See Trout, Page 29

Rainbow releases

Stocking Location	City	Total	Dates
Blanco State Park #4	Blanco	4,000	Dec. 30, Jan. 15, 29
Blue Hole Park Lake	Georgetown	2,500	Dec. 10, Jan. 14
Bob Sandlin State Park	Mt. Pleasant	2,000	Dec. 18, Feb. 1
Brackenridge Park	San Antonio	2,000	Dec. 17, Jan. 14
Buescher State Park	Smithville	2,000	Dec. 23
Canyon Tailrace			
(Guadalupe River)	New Braunfels	16,741	Dec. 12, 19; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Fort Boggy State Park	Centerville	1,000	Jan. 27
Fort Richardson State Park	Jacksboro	2,725	Dec. 14, Jan. 18, Feb. 15
L.B.J. State Park	Stonewall	533	Jan. 21
Lake Corpus Christi	Mathis	1,500	Feb. 1
Lewisville Tailrace			
(Elm Fork Trinity River)	Lewisville	3,756	Dec. 19, Jan. 16, Feb. 27
Meridian State Park	Meridian	2,000	Jan. 7
Palmetto State Park	Luling	574	Jan. 18
Possum Kingdom Tailrace			
(Brazos River)	Graford	9,000	Dec. 30, Jan. 13, Feb. 5, March 3
River Park			
(Clear Fork Trinity River)	Fort Worth	2,700	Jan. 8, Feb. 3
South Llano River State Park	Junction	2,078	Dec. 15, Jan. 15
Trinity Park			
(Clear Fork Trinity River)	Fort Worth	2,900	Dec. 17, Jan. 14
Tyler State Park	Tyler	4,230	Jan. 24

For the complete list of stocking locations, visit www.LSONews.com.

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GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

CROSSING BORDER TO HUNT BRINGS CHARGES

• Two illegal aliens with rifles were taken into custody by the U.S. Border Patrol in Big Bend Ranch State Park. Game Warden Zach Moerbe of Presidio County learned that this was their third trip this year and that they had come on three trips last year, killing three aoudads and two mule deer. Federal and state charges are pending.

THIEVES CAUGHT DISASSEMBLING AIRPLANE

• Wise County Game Warden Chris Dowdy received two phone calls regarding a person being dropped off in a creek bottom. The witness said the person was going to a barn where several things had been stolen over the past 18 months. Dowdy waited on a hill and could hear people working on something. Two men exited the barn and checked the area for ranch hands. When backup arrived, the two attempted to make their escape on foot. Dowdy apprehended the men and took them into custody. Interviews by the sheriff's office revealed the location of several items stolen from the property. On this day, the men were disassembling an airplane. Several thousand dollars worth of property had been removed or destroyed. Cases pending.

DRUNK WORKERS HARASS HUNTERS

• Palo Pinto County Game Warden Cliff Swofford received a call from the sheriff's office about trespassers on a deer lease. Swofford arrived at the deer lease at 7:45 a.m. to find five intoxicated men who had been asked by the landowner to come to his house for day labor. Instead, the men arrived at about 4 a.m. at the paid hunters' camp. At sunrise, four of the five men drove to a deer stand occupied by one of the paid hunters. The men were asked to leave and did but returned a few minutes later racing the car around the area. Another man walked to

TEXT MESSAGES LEAD TO 20 CHARGES

• While inspecting a deer camp on the Louisiana state line, Marion County Game Wardens Rick Lane and Robb Furlow checked a Louisiana resident.

The man was found to have a Texas resident license even though he was a Louisiana resident. The wardens also found fresh deer meat

in a cooler.

A second hunter was still in the field, so the wardens asked if he could be contacted by cell phone.

The Louisiana man gave Furlow his cell phone to call the second hunter.

Furlow noticed several new text messages from the second hunter.

Furlow texted back and forth with the man in the field who admitted to several offenses, including taking the untagged deer found in the cooler.

Six deer had been illegally killed with two transported across state lines resulting in 20 cases being filed on three men.

another blind and stood about 30 yards from it. The men cursed the hunters and drove all over the hunting areas on the lease. One man stated that they didn't want anyone to shoot a deer because it was mean. The four were arrested, and 11 charges, including public intoxication, minor in consumption of alcohol, making alcohol available to a minor, possession of marijuana, felon in possession of a firearm and hunter harassment, are pending.

PRANK LEAVING DOE CARCASSES ON DOORSTEP GOES AWRY

• Comal County Game Wardens Michael McCall and Brent Satsky responded to a call involving the dumping of two doe deer carcasses on the front step of a home. The wardens found the deer, which had been shot in the head. The resident identified three teenagers as the likely culprits of the prank. After locating the juveniles, the wardens obtained confessions. Cases are pending.

BRAGGING EMPLOYEE OVERHEARD BY SHOPPING WARDEN

• While off-duty and shopping in Lufkin, Nacogdoches Game Warden Audie Ham overheard an employee tell another that he killed an old buck on his farm with a .22 mag. Hamm identified himself to the employee and notified Angelina County Game Warden Tim Walker. The employee was cited for taking white-tailed deer by illegal means.

MAN CAUGHT TRESPASSING TO TAKE DOE

• Cherokee County Game Warden Brian Bearden received a call from a hunter who had witnessed two men load a doe in a truck on property where they did not have permission to hunt. The next morning, Bearden located the vehicles in the same spot. Blood and deer hair samples were taken from the bed of one of the trucks. When confronted, one of the three men admitted to shooting the doe the day before. The deer was seized, and trespassing charges were filed. Cases pending.

COUPLE TEAMS UP TO KILL DEER ON HUNTING CLUB PROPERTY

• Polk County Game Wardens Chuck and Suzanne Cotton responded to a call from a local hunting club member who heard a shot on his lease and then observed a man retrieve a large buck from the lease property. Blood evidence was located to corroborate the man's statement. The next day, a woman confessed to shooting the 10-point buck across the property line. Her husband had retrieved the deer for her. Cases pending. The deer scored 137 1/8.

MAN SHOOTS BUCK DURING DOE OR SPIKE HUNT

• An 8-point buck was found on the Richland Creek WMA with the head cut off. Freestone County Game Warden Craig Hernandez and Henderson

County Game Warden Shawn Smith, after talking with staff members from the WMA, discovered that the man assigned to hunt in the area where the deer was found had failed to check out on the last morning of the special drawn hunt for spikes and does only. After locating the man, a confession and the head were secured. Charges pending.

MAN CAUGHT TAKING TWO BUCKS WITH GUN DURING BOW SEASON

• Houston County Game Warden Zak Bengé investigated the poaching of a trophy buck during bow season on private property. Bengé and Angelina County Game Warden Heath Bragg contacted the shooter and learned that two large bucks had been killed on the property. The man claimed to have permission to hunt, but the landowner disagreed. A 15-point non-typical buck scoring 155 2/8 and a typical 10-point scoring 125 6/8 were confiscated. Citations were issued for improperly tagged deer, take deer by illegal means and methods (gun during bow season), and hunting without landowner consent. Cases and restitution pending.

TRAIL CAMERA CATCHES MAN ON WMA WHEN CLOSED

• After a recent special permit deer hunt on Richland Creek Wildlife Management Area, the WMA staff downloaded pictures from a trail camera and found photographs of a man on an ATV with

a deer stand and bow entering and leaving the WMA when it was closed. With help from the staff, Freestone County Game Warden John Thorne was able to identify the man. Hood County Game Warden Deshanna Creager secured a confession and written statement from the man. Cases pending.

SPOTLIGHTERS TRY TO HIDE IN PICKUP BED

• Hardin County Game Warden Mike Boone observed a truck spotlighting from a county roadway. He stopped the vehicle and observed two men attempting to conceal themselves in the bed of the pickup. The men were lying on two high-powered hunting rifles. Four men were cited for hunting white-tailed deer in closed season.

MEN RESCUED 1 MILE FROM CAPSIZED BOAT

• Matagorda County Game Wardens Clay Shock and Arthur Lawrence rescued two fishermen from the waters of East Matagorda Bay. The men were caught in the open bay by a strong cool front that passed through and their boat capsized after it took on water due to the strong winds. The two men were wearing personal flotation devices and had grabbed and hung onto a large empty ice chest. One of the men called for help on his cell phone. Shock and Lawrence located the men about 1 mile from their overturned boat. By the time they were picked up by the wardens, the men had been in the water for about 45 minutes and were already showing signs of hypothermia.

FEED STORE CAUGHT SELLING LIVE WILD TURKEYS

• Guadalupe County Game Warden Tracy Large investigated a local feed store that was selling live Rio Grande turkeys. The feed store was cited for possession of live Rio Grande turkeys and one individual cited for trapping and possession of live Rio Grande turkeys.

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HEROES



TANNER WINN, 4, shot his first javelina Thanksgiving week near Pleasanton. He made a 70-yard neck shot with a .30-30. His father, **Todd**, said his son made a great shot without assistance.



GARY COOPER of San Antonio shows his first Texas pronghorn.

SHARE AN ADVENTURE

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TOM HARRIS of San Antonio took this mule deer in Hudspeth County while hunting with **Gary Leah** of the HH Ranch.



HUNTER LUTTO, 12, hunting with **Mike Nischalke**, shot his first bobcat outside of Marfa with an AR rifle.



JOHNNY GUTIERREZ caught and released this 6.4-pound smallmouth at Lake Meredith.

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FISHING REPORT

HOT BITES LARGEMOUTH BASS



CANYON LAKE: Very good on Rat-L-Traps and plastic stickbaits over flats and along break lines creeks and bays in 2-10 feet, and on green pumpkin Whacky Sticks on jigheads and Texas rigged blue flake worms on shaky head jigs along bluffs inside secondary points.

LBJ: Very good on buzzbaits, Bleeding Shad Rat-L-Traps, and wacky rigged green pumpkin Whacky Sticks in 2-6 feet.

WHITE, HYBRID, STRIPER



RAY ROBERTS: White bass are excellent on chartreuse slabs and jiggling spoons.

AMISTAD: Striped bass are good on Rat-L-Traps and slabs. White bass are good on Rat-L-Traps and slabs.

BOB SANDLIN: White bass are good on slabs and Rooster Tails.

O.H. IVIE: White bass are good on live bait.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: White bass and hybrid striper are fair to good on live shad and white/chartreuse slabs on main lake humps.

TEXOMA: Striped bass are good on slabs, Sassy Shad and live shad.

CATFISH



AMISTAD: Good on cheesebait and night-crawlers over baited holes in 15-35 feet.

BRAUNIG: Good on chicken livers, shrimp, and cut shad. Blue catfish are good on cut bait.

CHOKE CANYON: Good on punchbait in 2-7 feet. Yellow catfish are fair on live perch.

CRAPPIE



MONTICELLO: Good on minnows and jigs over brush piles.

PROCTOR: Good on minnows and chartreuse tube jigs in 15 feet.

BREAM



HOUSTON COUNTY: Good on live worms near grass beds.

ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 55 degrees; 0.11' low. Black bass are fair on shad colored spinnerbaits, black/chartreuse jigs and minnows. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on live bait.

AMISTAD: Water clear; 67 degrees; 1.15' high. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, crankbaits, soft plastics, and jigs.

ATHENS: Water lightly stained, 53-58 degrees; 0.62' low. Black bass are fair on shad pattern chatterbaits, crankbaits and 3/8 oz. black/blue jigs. Crappie are fair on live minnows. Catfish are fair to good on Redneck's Catfish Bait.

BASTROP: Water lightly stained. Black bass are good on chartreuse and chartreuse/white soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows. Channel and blue catfish are very good on stinkbait, chicken livers, and nightcrawlers.

BELTON: Water clear; 68 degrees; 2.12' low. Black bass are slow.

BOB SANDLIN: Water fairly clear; 52-57 degrees; 0.54' low. Black bass are fair on wacky rigs, Rat-L-Traps and Senkos. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs around the Hwy 21 bridge columns a few cranks off the bottom. Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers and cut bait.

BRAUNIG: Water stained; 70 degrees. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are fair on live shad. Redfish are fair on live perch and shad near the dam.

BRIDGEPORT: Water fairly clear; 52-57 degrees; 7.21' low. Black bass are fair on chrome/blue back Rat-L-Traps, crankbaits and jigs. Catfish are fair on stinkbait and cut shad. White bass are fair on jiggling spoons and minnows.

BROWNWOOD: Water clear; 69 degrees; 4.54' low. Black bass to 3 pounds are fair on black/blue jigs, Persuader crankbaits, and shaky heads with redbug and watermelon red worms along docks, around rocks, and over brush piles in 8-15 feet. Hybrid striper are slow. White bass are fair on Li'l Fishies and crankbaits from lighted docks at night.

BUCHANAN: Water clear; 68 degrees; 15.12' low. Black bass are good on 1/4 oz. Bleeding Shad Rat-L-Traps, Texas-rigged weightless watermelon/blue flake Whacky Sticks, pumpkin/chartreuse jigs, and smoke/red flake grubbs on stump flats in 2-8 feet.

CADDO: Water off color; 52-58 degrees; 0.59' high. Black bass are good on jigs, white spinnerbaits and flukes fished around vegetation. Crappie are excellent on red/white or red/green jigs in the pads along deeper creeks. White and yellow bass are good on small spoons and tailspinners.

CALAVERAS: Water stained; 70 degrees. Striped bass are fair on live shad. Redfish are fair on live perch, shad, and spoons in 15-25 feet. Channel and blue catfish are very good on chicken livers, shrimp, and cut shad.

CANYON LAKE: Water clear; 67 degrees; 10.47' low. Crappie are good on minnows and chartreuse tube jigs. Channel and blue catfish are fair on stinkbait, night-crawlers, and frozen shrimp.

CHOKE CANYON: Water lightly stained; 70 degrees; 4.89' low. Black bass to 5 pounds are good on watermelon and pumpkinseed soft plastic worms in heavy grass and in 12-20 feet. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Chan-

nel and blue catfish are good on punchbait in 2-7 feet.

CONROE: Water murky; 1.06' low. Black bass are good on watermelon red soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and Rat-L-Traps in 20-30 feet.

FALCON: Water clear; 72 degrees. Black bass are fair on football jigs, large soft plastic worms, 7" Carolina-rigged Senkos, and slow rolling spinnerbaits in 14-18 feet. Channel and blue catfish are excellent on cut bait and doughbait.

FAYETTE: Water clear; 70 degrees. Black bass are fair but small on electric blue Carolina-rigged worms in 10-16 feet, and on spinnerbaits along the outside edges of grass.

FORK: Water lightly stained; 53-58 degrees; 0.63' low. Black bass are fair on black/blue jigs, crawdad pattern Rat-L-Trap and spoons. Crappie are good on minnows and small jigs in 22-26 feet under

fair on slabs.

LAKE O' THE PINES: Water stained; 53-58 degrees; 0.04' low. Black bass are good on spinnerbaits, crankbaits and black/blue Power Worms. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs in 20-25 feet

LAVON: Water stained; 52-57 degrees; 4.56' low. Black bass are fair on crankbaits and Texas rigged worms fished around rip-rap. Crappie are good on minnows in 20-30 feet.

LBJ: Water stained; 69 degrees; 0.19' low. White bass are fair vertically jigging Pirk Minnows under birds. Crappie are good on crappie jigs and live minnows over brush piles in 12-15 feet.

LEWISVILLE: Water off-color; 53-57 degrees; 4.05' low. Black bass are fair on chrome Rat-L-Traps, crankbaits and Carolina rigs. Crappie are fair on minnows.

LIVINGSTON: Water fairly clear;

chartreuse soft plastic worms and crankbaits. White bass are good but small on minnows, small Rat-L-Traps, and roadrunners.

RAY HUBBARD: Water stained; 52-57 degrees; 1.18' low. Black bass are fair on white/chartreuse spinnerbaits, firetiger jerkbaits, Carolina rigs and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs over brush piles.

RAY ROBERTS: Water stained; 52-58 degrees; 2.03' low. Black bass are fair on drop shot rigged Baby Ring Frys and Yum Dingers. Crappie are good on jigs in the creeks in 3-5 feet.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: Water off-color; 53-58 degrees; 3.8' low. Black bass are fair to good on crankbaits, Texas rigged purple worms and jigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs around deep-water trees.

SAM RAYBURN: Water lightly stained; 70 degrees; 7.45' low. Black bass are fair on tequila sunrise soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits, and on watermelon red topwaters in 20-35 feet. White bass are good on minnows.

STILLHOUSE: Water murky; 63 degrees; 4.09' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are slow.

SWEETWATER: Water lightly stained; 53 degrees; 1.59' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs.

TAWAKONI: Water lightly stained; 53-57 degrees; 3.88' low. Black bass are fair on white/chartreuse spinnerbaits, flukes and black/blue jigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs over brush piles.

TEXOMA: Water off-color; 53-58 degrees; 1.93' low. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, chrome crankbaits and Carolina rigs. Crappie are slow on minnows and jigs.

TOLEDO BEND: Water clear; 70 degrees; 3.85' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red and watermelon gold soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits. White bass are good on minnows and silver spoons. Crappie are fair on minnows over brush piles.

TRAVIS: Water clear; 67 degrees; 24.50' low. Black bass to 6 pounds are good on crawfish crankbaits, watermelon worms, and jigs in 15-38 feet. Crappie are fair on minnows and pink tube jigs in 20-40 feet.

WALTER E. LONG: Water clear; 70 degrees; 3.85' low. Black bass are fair on minnows and worms. Crappie are fair on minnows.

WEATHERFORD: Water lightly stained; 53-56 degrees; 5.29' low. Black bass are good on finesse worms, jerkbaits and spinnerbaits around docks and on rocky points. Crappie are good in the fishing barge and boat slips on minnows and green/chartreuse with pink head jigs.

WHITNEY: Water clear; 8.99' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon, watermelon red, and watermelon gold spinnerbaits, crankbaits, and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are good on minnows.

WICHITA: Water stained and clearing; 48 degrees; 0.69' low. Crappie are fair on minnows and live shad around the dam and pavilion poles. Hybrid striper and white bass are fair on minnows or live shad around the dam and pavilion poles.

WRIGHT PATMAN: Water lightly stained; 52-58 degrees; 4.19' high. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, flukes and jigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs.

SALTWATER SCENE



NORTH SABINE: Trout and redfish are good in the river on live shad. Trout are fair to good under the birds in the middle of the lake on soft plastics and topwaters.

SOUTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell and pods of shad. Bull redfish are good at the jetty on crabs and shrimp. Flounder are fair to good around the cuts and bayous leading to the lake.

BOLIVAR: Redfish are good in Rollover Pass on natural baits. Flounder are fair to good on the shorelines on jigs tipped with shrimp.

TRINITY BAY: Trout are fair to good in 4-7 feet of water while working slicks and pods of mullet. Redfish fair to good around the spillway on natural baits. Birds have worked on the north shoreline when the wind allows.

EAST GALVESTON BAY: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell in 4-6 feet of water on soft plastics. Birds have worked on the north shoreline.

WEST GALVESTON BAY: Trout have been caught while drifting shell and mud. Bull redfish and sharks have been taken at the jetty on natural baits. Bull reds and red snapper are good in state waters.

TEXAS CITY: Flounder are fair along the edge of the channel on mud minnows. Bull reds and sand trout are good on shrimp.

FREEPORT: Bull redfish are good at the jetty on shrimp and crabs. Flounder fair to good at San Luis Pass on soft plastics tipped with shrimp and mud minnows.

EAST MATAGORDA: Trout are fair to good while drifting over shell. Waders have taken better trout over shell and mud.

ROCKPORT: Trout are fair to good over shell and mud for waders working topwaters and soft plastics in Copano Bay. Redfish are good on live shrimp under a cork while drifting the Estes Flats.

PORT ARANSAS: Sand trout and redfish are good at the jetty on shrimp. Redfish are fair to good around East Flats and Dagger Island on Gulps and shrimp. Bull redfish are good at the jetty on crabs, finger mullet, cut-bait and fresh table shrimp.

CORPUS CHRISTI: Redfish are good in the channels and deep holes on natural baits. Trout are fair to good from the piers at night on live bait.

BAFFIN BAY: Good catches of trout have been taken under lights at night in the Land Cut on live shrimp and glow plastics. Trout and redfish are good on the edge of the channel on soft plastics.

PORT MANSFIELD: Trout are good around pods of bait on topwaters and soft plastics. Redfish are good in the surf around East Cut on natural baits.

SOUTH PADRE: Redfish are good on the flats on DOA Shrimp and Gulps. Snook are good in the Brownsville Ship Channel on shrimp and DOA Shrimp.

PORT ISABEL: Trout and redfish are good on the edge of the Intracoastal as tides recede. Redfish are good around the spoils on live shrimp, Gulps and DOA Shrimp under popping corks. Trout are fair to good over sand and grass on the same baits.

HOT SPOT



PORT O'CONNOR

Bull redfish are good at the jetty on crabs, finger mullet and live shrimp. Trout are good over shell and mud in San Antonio Bay on soft plastics and topwaters. Trout are good on shrimp while anchored over reefs near deep channels.

main lake bridges and around brush piles. Catfish are good on prepared baits in 22-24 feet along creeks.

GIBBONS CREEK: Water clear. Black bass are good on watermelon red and watermelon gold soft plastics and Rat-L-Traps.

GRANBURY: Water clear; 1.74' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits. Striped bass are fair on minnows and chartreuse striper jigs. White bass are fair on minnows and small spinnerbaits. Crappie are good on shrimp, stink-bait, and live minnows.

GRAPEVINE: Water off-color; 53-58 degrees; 6.51' low. Black bass are slow to fair on crankbaits, spinnerbaits, drop shot rigs and finesse jigs.

GREENBELT: Water lightly stained; 49 degrees; 27.54' low. Black bass are slow on shad colored crankbaits along secondary points, and on black/blue jigs and live bait along tree lines. Walleye are good on live bait and crankbaits. Catfish are good on minnows and prepared baits.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water clear; 54 degrees; 0.54' high. Black bass to 5 pounds are good on black/blue J's Zone 27 in 13 feet. Crappie are good on live minnows off piers on the north side of the lake.

JOE POOL: Water off-color; 53-58 degrees; 2.25' low. Black bass are good on drop shot rigs and crankbaits in 6-10 feet. White bass are

68 degrees; 0.07' high. Black bass are good on spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Blue catfish are good on shad.

MEREDITH: Water lightly stained; 48 degrees; 71.91' low. Black bass are slow on shad colored crankbaits and minnows along rocky points.

MONTICELLO: Water fairly clear; 74-90 degrees; 0.35' low. Black bass are good on topwaters early, later switching to wacky rigs, Rat-L-Traps and chatterbaits. Catfish are fair to good on cut shad and nightcrawlers.

NAVARRO MILLS: Water murky; 70 degrees; 2.63' low. Black bass are good but small on minnows. White bass are slow.

O.H. IVIE: Water lightly stained; 56 degrees; 11.72' low. Black bass are fair on black/blue jigs and live bait worked along points and drop-offs. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Smallmouth bass are fair on live bait.

OAK CREEK: Water lightly stained; 53 degrees; 2.01' low. Black bass are fair.

PALESTINE: Water lightly stained; 53-58 degrees; 0.22' low. Black bass are fair to good on Carolina rigged watermelon lizards, chatterbaits and jiggling spoons.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Water stained; 55 degrees; 2.56' low. Black bass are fair on secondary points.

PROCTOR: Water stained; 70 degrees; 4.36' low. Black bass are good on black/purple and

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OUTDOOR DATEBOOK

Dec. 20-21: Fly-casting lessons will be held at Cabela's in Fort Worth. Call (817) 337-2400 for details.

Jan. 2-11: The Houston Boat Show will be held at the Reliant Center. Call (713) 526-6361 for information.

Jan. 8-11: The Dallas Safari Club Convention will be held at Dallas Market Hall. Call (972) 980-9800 or visit biggame.org for information.



Jan. 9-11: Trout Days will be held on the Nueces River including a trout tournament at Park Chalk Bluff near Uvalde. For information, call (800) 210-0380 or visit thcrr.com.

Jan. 10: The National Wild Turkey Federation Southwest Texas Leadership Conference will be held at Lady Bird Johnson Park in Fredericksburg. For information, contact Tony at (830) 990-2070 or fbgtx@yahoo.com.

Jan. 15-18: The Austin Boat Show will be held at the Austin Convention Center. Call (512) 494-2238 for information.

Jan. 16-18: The Houston Safari Club Convention will be held at The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel. Call (713) 623-8844 or visit houstonsafariclub.org for details.



Jan. 17-18: The Challenged Outdoorsmen Youth hunt will be held at Lake Wright Patman,

Clear Springs area. For information, contact Dearil at (903) 748-2437 or dearilw@aol.com.

Jan. 17: The Rotary Club of Port Aransas will hold a Casino Night and Fish Fry. Visit rotaryporta.com for information.

Jan. 17: The Bass Champs South Region tournament will be held at Lake Amistad. Call Joy at (817) 439-3274 or visit basschamps.com for information.

Jan. 22-25: The Coastal Bend Marine Dealers 52nd Annual Boat Show will be held at American Bank Center. Contact Carol at (361) 643-2258 or portlandmarine@aim.com for information.

Jan. 22: The Graham Ducks Unlimited dinner will be held at The Arena in

Graham. Call Matt at (940) 521-0985 for information.

Jan. 24: The Texins Archery Club banquet will be held at Brookhaven Country Club in Dallas. Call Doug at (972) 998-9480 for information.

Jan. 24: The Bass Champs East Region tournament will be held at Sam Rayburn. Call Joy at (817) 439-3274 or visit basschamps.com for information.

Jan. 24: The Cypress Creek National Wild Turkey Federation dinner will be held at the Gilmer Civic Center. Contact Marvin at (903) 238-3006 or wtbigdade@yahoo.com for information.

Jan. 24: The Big Thicket Ducks Unlimited dinner will be held at the Cleveland Civic Center. For information, contact

Brenda at (281) 592-5495 or Brenda_burns@sbcglobal.net.

Jan. 29-Feb. 1: The San Antonio Boat Show will be held at the Alamodome. For information, call (512) 481-1777 or e-mail staff@sanantonioboatshow.com.

Jan. 31: The Hill Country SCI dinner will be held at the YO Hotel in Kerrville. Contact Ward at (830) 896-6714 or ward@omniglobal.net for information.

Jan. 31: The Texas Hill Country RMEF Big Game banquet will be held at the Community Center in Georgetown. Call Aaron at (512) 260-3003 for information.

Jan. 31: The Gulf Coast NWTF dinner will be held at the Charles T. Doyle Convention Center in Texas City. Call Troy at (281) 534-2890 for information.



CHANGING SEASONS: The state is collecting comments on proposed changes to the pheasant season. Photo by David J. Sams.

Pheasant

Continued from Page 8

a rooster with a 20-inch tail."

Terry Gray of Collinsville, Okla., his brother Mark of Austin, and his son, Aaron Maass of Dallas, hunted with a group of 12 in Moore County on opening day.

"It was great," Gray said. "There were lots of birds — we all limited by 12:15."

Gray said the birds were more cooperative in the northern Panhandle.

"These held real tight," he said. "We had to walk right up on them — there were more birds in the CRP than in the

pivot corners of fields."

Texas Parks and Wildlife is asking hunters to consider possible changes to the traditional first weekend in December opening date.

"The purpose of this discussion is to gain feedback from hunters and landowners regarding the possibility of opening future pheasant seasons the Friday after Thanksgiving to afford hunters a three-day holiday weekend to enjoy pheasant hunting," said Vernon Beville, TPW game bird program director.

The current pheasant season framework calls for opening the first Saturday in December for 30 consecutive

days. The length of the season will not change, officials said, possibly resulting in the season being closed a portion of the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

TPW will continue to gather public input through December and will conduct informal scoping meetings in the Panhandle during January before considering initiating a formal proposal.

All rule change proposals will be presented to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission for consideration in January. Any change to pheasant season could take effect Nov. 27, 2009 or Nov. 26, 2010.

Mullet

Continued from Page 10

"Most of the year I fish shrimp under a popping cork," said Rockport guide Capt. Robert Brooks. "But during the winter I'll be throwing either soft plastics or MirroLures."

"I'll also throw some slow-sinking MirroLures. And, if we have a few

warm days and I see a lot of mullet moving around, I'll also throw some big topwaters."

Until the water begins to warm in the spring, big trout, redbreast and other bay species will continue to key on mullet. Regardless of whether you prefer to use plastic or the real thing, this is the time to feed 'em fish instead of shrimp.

Blotches

Continued from Page 10

them back in.

"Blotches also appeared in Texas waters about the same time that special limits began to force anglers to C&R adult-size bass," Mann wrote, referencing Lake Fork and its special slot limits that send the bass back more often than not.

But Bowser didn't buy Mann's explanation. He said at people can theorize all they want, but no scientific data support any of it.

The reason for the spots remains an unknown.

"I don't know why black spots would show up due to stress," he said. "We consider it an oddity but don't think there's anything there that's detrimental to the fish."

Reds

Continued from Page 10

"The water temperature is still in the mid-60s, so there are still quite a few fish along the shorelines and in the back lakes. But there are also a lot of redbreast being caught on the deeper reefs."

"Wherever you are, there have been a lot of small fish. People are going out and catching 30, 40 or 50 redbreast in a day. They may end up catching a couple of limits of slot fish, but they're also catching a lot of undersized fish mixed in."

"But there's a lot of action."

Lala said oversized redbreast are coming in as well.

"Several guys I know and fish with have taken big bulls off the deeper reefs over the past few weeks. Those bigger fish were caught with bait. But,

you can catch the smaller fish — including slot-size fish — on artificials."

Along the Lower Coast, winter often doesn't set in until January — if at all. This year, however, Old Man Winter has been blowing substantially cool air into the Texas tropics since September. This hasn't hindered the redbreast action, though.

"We're catching plenty of redbreast," said Laguna Vista resident Cruz Lamas. "I've caught quite a few fish along the west side. South Cullen Bay and Airport Cove have been good. But I've also caught some really good fish on the east side around Gas Wells."

"I've actually caught a lot of fish fairly shallow — especially between fronts. Some I've caught on fly, and some I've caught on plastics. But on those warm days between fronts, it really doesn't seem to matter. The fish have really been turned on."

Hailed By The Pros.

Bucks

Continued from Page 8

park is on federal property, officials say, the charges could be even more serious.

Crime Stoppers offered a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the poacher's arrest. Also, Precinct 3 Commissioner Steve Radack offered a privately funded \$5,000 reward.

"I'm outraged by this, and obviously a lot of people are outraged as well," Radack told the *Houston Chronicle*. "Any person who goes in and attacks an animal in captivity is just the lowest of the low."

In Wichita Falls, rumors began to spread that a 27-point buck shot Nov. 7 was taken at Lucy Park. The deer was well-known to Game Warden Pat Canan because it was observed for the past two years

through a remote camera west of the park. Canan said the 6 1/2-year-old deer was with a doe when he was shot and speculated the buck had moved east into the park during mating season.

The two poachers were caught after the buck turned up at a local taxidermy shop. They initially claimed they shot it outside the park but later cooperated fully, Canan said. The pair face potential fines and restitution totaling \$20,000 and could face other misdemeanor or state jail felony charges.

Wichita Falls city officials confirmed that a city parks department employee is now suspended from work because of the investigation.

Replicas of the buck's antlers will be placed in Operation Game Thief trailers to be taken around the state for public education.

—Staff reports.



DEER CRIME: Mr. Buck lived in a wildlife sanctuary in Bear Creek Pioneers Park in Harris County. A 23-year-old Houston man has been arrested in connection with his death.

Retriever

Continued from Page 8

when time off from his former job as a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conservation officer wasn't allowed because of the state's firearms deer hunting season.

Roem retired from the job after 27 years in 2004.

Owner Oman was impressed with the team of his dog and handler Roem.

"They are quite a team, and that is what makes winning special," he said. "I think Willie's shown us all he has heart and fortitude — as big as the state of Texas."

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Moon Phases



Tides

Date	2:30 p.m.	6:56 a.m.	---	---
12/10	2:30 p.m.	6:56 a.m.	---	---
12/12	4:36 p.m.	8:31 a.m.	11:31 p.m.	9:35 p.m.
12/14	12:32 a.m.	10:18 a.m.	6:27 p.m.	10:34 p.m.
12/16	2:36 a.m.	12:11 p.m.	7:56 p.m.	---
12/18	6:40 a.m.	3:32 a.m.	8:49 p.m.	2:15 p.m.
12/20	11:39 a.m.	5:13 a.m.	9:19 p.m.	5:33 p.m.
12/22	2:21 p.m.	6:25 a.m.	---	---
12/24	3:42 p.m.	7:29 a.m.	---	---
12/26	4:41 p.m.	8:32 a.m.	---	---
12/28	5:43 p.m.	9:37 a.m.	---	9:26 p.m.
12/30	12:41 a.m.	10:42 a.m.	6:44 p.m.	11:15 p.m.
12/10	5:05 p.m.	7:43 a.m.	---	---
12/12	6:51 p.m.	9:18 a.m.	---	10:22 p.m.
12/14	2:47 a.m.	11:05 a.m.	8:42 p.m.	11:21 p.m.
12/15	3:46 a.m.	12:01 p.m.	9:32 p.m.	---
12/16	4:51 a.m.	12:29 a.m.	10:11 p.m.	12:58 p.m.
12/18	6:26 a.m.	2:34 a.m.	10:41 p.m.	1:57 p.m.
12/20	1:54 p.m.	6:00 a.m.	11:34 p.m.	6:20 p.m.
12/22	4:36 p.m.	7:12 a.m.	---	---
12/24	5:57 p.m.	8:16 a.m.	---	---
12/26	6:56 p.m.	9:19 a.m.	---	---
12/28	1:58 a.m.	10:24 a.m.	7:58 p.m.	10:13 p.m.
12/30	2:56 a.m.	11:29 a.m.	8:59 p.m.	---

Date	2:51 p.m.	6:26 a.m.	---	---
12/10	2:51 p.m.	6:26 a.m.	---	---
12/12	4:37 p.m.	8:01 a.m.	11:32 p.m.	9:05 p.m.
12/14	12:33 a.m.	9:48 a.m.	6:28 p.m.	10:04 p.m.
12/16	2:37 a.m.	11:41 a.m.	7:57 p.m.	---
12/18	6:41 a.m.	3:02 a.m.	8:50 p.m.	1:45 p.m.
12/20	11:40 a.m.	4:43 a.m.	9:20 p.m.	5:08 p.m.
12/22	2:22 p.m.	5:55 a.m.	---	---
12/24	3:43 p.m.	6:59 a.m.	---	---
12/26	4:43 p.m.	8:02 a.m.	---	---
12/28	5:44 p.m.	9:07 a.m.	---	8:56 p.m.
12/30	12:42 a.m.	10:12 a.m.	6:45 p.m.	10:45 p.m.

Date	2:59 p.m.	6:04 a.m.	---	---
12/10	2:59 p.m.	6:04 a.m.	---	---
12/12	4:45 p.m.	7:39 a.m.	11:40 p.m.	8:43 p.m.
12/14	12:41 a.m.	9:26 a.m.	6:36 p.m.	9:42 p.m.
12/16	2:45 a.m.	11:19 a.m.	8:05 p.m.	---
12/18	6:49 a.m.	2:40 a.m.	8:58 p.m.	1:23 p.m.
12/20	11:48 a.m.	4:42 a.m.	9:07 p.m.	4:41 p.m.
12/22	2:30 p.m.	5:33 a.m.	---	---
12/24	3:51 p.m.	6:37 a.m.	---	---
12/26	4:50 p.m.	7:40 a.m.	---	---
12/28	5:52 p.m.	8:45 a.m.	---	8:34 p.m.
12/30	12:50 a.m.	9:50 a.m.	6:53 p.m.	10:23 p.m.

Solunar Table Major/Minor periods

12/10	8:43a/2:28a	6:20p/---	8:49a/2:34a	6:26p/---
12/12	9:40a/3:24a	7:00p/12:49p	9:46a/3:30a	7:05p/12:55p
12/14	10:43a/4:26a	7:41p/1:30p	10:49a/4:32a	7:47p/1:36p
12/16	11:50a/5:33a	8:23p/2:11p	11:56a/5:39a	8:29p/2:17p
12/18	12:20a/6:42a	9:07p/2:54p	12:26a/6:48a	9:13p/3:00p
12/20	1:35a/7:50a	9:53p/3:40p	1:41a/7:56a	1:35a/3:46p
12/22	2:40a/8:53a	10:40p/4:28p	2:46a/8:59a	2:40a/4:34p
12/24	3:38a/9:50a	11:30p/5:17p	3:44a/9:56a	3:38a/5:23p
12/26	4:30a/10:41a	---	4:36a/10:47a	4:30a/6:13p
12/28	5:16a/11:27a	12:45p/6:57p	5:22a/11:33a	5:16a/7:03p
12/30	5:58a/12:09p	1:35p/7:47p	6:04a/12:15p	5:58a/7:53p

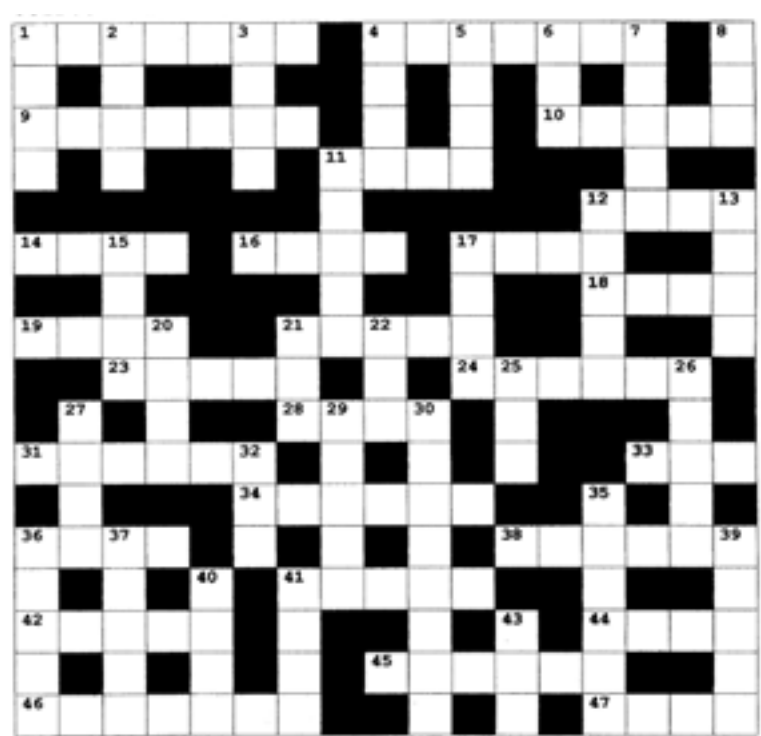
Sun and Moon

12/10	7:06a/5:22p	7:20a/5:22p	7:18a/5:36p	7:45a/5:35p
12/12	7:08a/5:23p	7:22a/5:23p	7:19a/5:36p	7:46a/5:35p
12/14	7:09a/5:23p	7:23a/5:23p	7:21a/5:37p	7:47a/5:36p
12/16	7:10a/5:24p	7:24a/5:24p	7:22a/5:37p	7:49a/5:36p
12/18	7:12a/5:25p	7:25a/5:24p	7:23a/5:38p	7:50a/5:37p
12/20	7:13a/5:26p	7:26a/5:25p	7:24a/5:39p	7:51a/5:38p
12/22	7:14a/5:27p	7:27a/5:26p	7:25a/5:40p	7:52a/5:39p
12/24	7:15a/5:28p	7:28a/5:27p	7:26a/5:41p	7:53a/5:40p
12/26	7:15a/5:29p	7:29a/5:29p	7:27a/5:42p	7:54a/5:41p
12/28	7:16a/5:30p	7:30a/5:30p	7:28a/5:44p	7:54a/5:43p
12/30	7:17a/5:32p	7:30a/5:31p	7:28a/5:45p	7:55a/5:44p

OUTDOOR PUZZLER

Solution on Page 28

- ACROSS
1. A wingshooter's quarry
 4. Term for a tackle-busting bass
 9. A male pheasant
 10. Canada honker
 11. A species of grouse
 12. A large member of the deer family
 14. A name for the sea bass
 16. A game bird
 17. Action to eject a fired casing
 18. A type of sight
 19. To analyze game tracks
 21. A type of fishing lure
 23. A game bird
 24. A species of perch
 28. How ____ do you fish?
 31. The arrow is his ammo
 33. A group of decoys
 34. The name for the expert fisherman
 36. Shot fired without careful aim
 38. Type of big game lures
 41. Trap part
 42. Mammal snared for the fur
 44. The pelt
 45. Worn by outdoorsmen for rain gear
 46. Act of carrying boat overland
 47. They kill many deer every year



- DOWN
1. A sign of deer in the area
 2. A lake bird
 3. Part of fishing gear
 4. A game bird
 5. Hunting and fishing regulation
 6. The wild boar
 7. A pheasant's night-time haven
 8. A nuisance insect to fishermen
 11. A method of hunting
 12. Reel holding the line
 13. Hunter's give these TLC
 15. To insert the ammo
 17. The object of the hunt
 20. A fish species, ____ fish
 21. A deer resting place
 22. Teeth of some game can reveal this
 25. Very large on the muley
 26. Food source for deer
 27. Trapped for the fur
 29. A predator of small game
 30. Hunters call them varmints
 32. A Bowman's association
 35. A style of hunting or fishing
 36. Bucks do this to warn of danger
 37. Do this to your hunting routes
 39. Part of icefishing gear
 40. A compass is useful in strange
 41. A freshwater fish
 43. A rugged kind of fishing

**Outdoor Puzzler,
Wilbur "Wib" Lundeen**

WILD IN THE KITCHEN

Pheasant Enchiladas Ala Blanca

- 4 to 6 pheasant breasts
- White wine for simmering
- 2 10.5-ounce cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 pint sour cream
- 1-4 ounce can chopped green chilis
- 12 flour tortillas
- 3/4-cup onion, diced
- 1 to 2 cups grated cheddar cheese
- 1 to 2 cups grated Monterey jack cheese
- Chopped green onion for garnish

pieces. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix breasts, sour cream and 3 ounces of chilis, and spread thin layer of mixture in bottom of 12x9 pan. Spread equal amounts of mixture down the middle of each tortilla, saving some for the top. Sprinkle each tortilla with chopped onion and cheese, saving some cheese for the top. Roll up tortillas and place, seam side down, in pan. Pour remaining cream mixture over the top and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake 25 to 30 minutes. Garnish with green onion and remaining green chilis.

— Recipe from Rancho Ala Blanca.

Simmer pheasant breasts in wine for 3 hours. Shred or chop breast into small

Smoked Deer-Feral Hog Link Sausage

- 5 pounds of well-trimmed venison
- 5 pounds of lean hog meat
- 5 pounds of hog fat or bacon ends
- 4.5 ounces of Adkins Sausage Seasoning
- 3 teaspoons of Prague #1 powder
- 6 teaspoons of liquid smoke
- 1 quart of ice water
- 2 tablespoons of hickory salt
- 4 tablespoons of red pepper flakes

6 ounces of soy protein concentrate

Grind meat and fat separately. Mix by hand in a large bowl. Add spices in ice water and pour over mixture. Mix by hand and stuff into 1- to 1 1/2-inch diameter casings. Smoke for 6 hours at 165 degrees. Makes 15 pounds of links.

— Recipe from TEXNAT.

Venison Dog Biscuits

- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 cup wheat germ
- 1/2 cup cooked ground venison
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

wet ingredients. Roll mixture out to about half an inch thick. Cut into appropriate shapes with cookie cutters and bake at 350 to 400 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes, or until crisp.

Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer.

— Recipe from Missouri Department of Conservation.

Mix dry ingredients and add to the

A few books for fighting cabin fever

When the season ends or the sun sets, turn the page to one of these

A good number of outdoorspersons have nearly every gadget and piece of equipment imaginable for their favorite outdoor activities. But when shorter days and colder

weather keeps them inside more this time of year, some like to read — and learn — about their favorite activities: hunting and fishing. Here are a few choices from *Lone Star Outdoor News*.

“Hunting The American West”

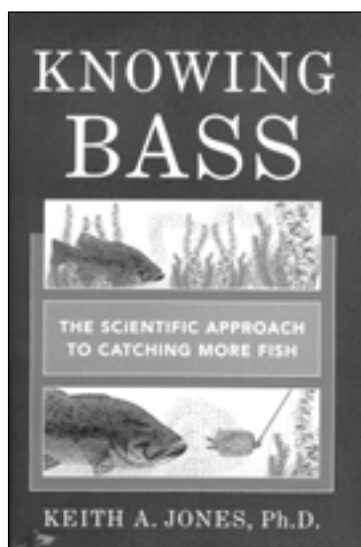
From the Boone and Crockett Club comes this coffee table book that features rich historical photography and tells the story of just how important big game hunting was to the American West. Authored by Richard C. Rattenbury of Edmond, Okla., “Hunting the American West” starts with aboriginal hunters and carries readers into the period where market hunters nearly cleared the plains of wildlife for the sake of fashion and food. It is 412 pages of knowledge with 125 color photos and illustrations from the 19th century.



\$49.95 (\$39.95 for B&C members)
Boone & Crockett, (888) 840-4868

“Knowing Bass”

Bass anglers love to read about bass, but many lack information about the science of bass fishing, especially with emphasis on the fish more than the fisherman. “Knowing Bass” by Keith A. Jones, Ph. D., was written in 2002 and has now been published by The Lyons Press. Jones’ discoveries from more than 20 years in the lab and on the water include what bass see, hear, smell and taste; how smell and taste control feeding behavior; and what factors make bass strike your lures — and what makes them shy away.



\$26.95 in hardcover
amazon.com, Barnes & Noble

“The Gigantic Book of Hunting Stories”

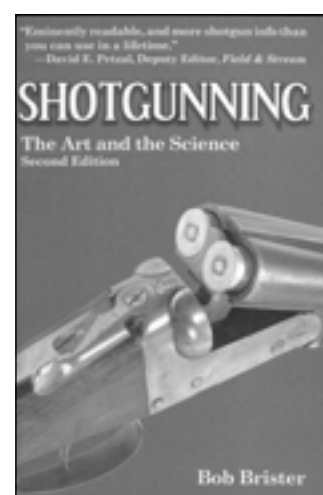
Everyone likes a good story, and hunters tell some of the best. “The Gigantic Book of Hunting Stories” comes from the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership celebrating the 150th anniversary of the former president’s birthday. Edited by Jay Cassell, the stories’ authors read like a list from the hunting hall of fame, with names like Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold, Rick Bass, Zane Grey and even Charles Dickens. And gigantic is right — the book has 782 pages. But don’t let that scare you — there are more than 110 stories, enough for many short sits.



\$24.95, free to those who donate \$35 to TRCP
amazon.com

“Shotgunning: The Art and the Science”

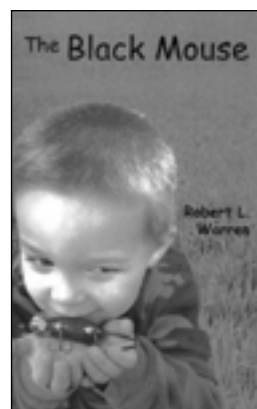
The late Bob Brister served as the outdoor editor at the *Houston Chronicle* for more than 40 years and was the shooting editor of *Field & Stream* for more than a decade. But it was in the shooting sports where he was most known and recognized as one of the top authorities. His book is now available in its second edition. After more than 30 years since its original printing, it remains a must-read for shotgunners. With more than 200 photos and step-by-step instructions on how to master shooting for competition or game, Brister covers topics including cross firing, shotgun kick, gun and trigger fitting, techniques for target and game shooting and choosing chokes and loads.



\$29.95
Skyhorse Publishing, (212) 643-6816

“The Black Mouse”

Long-time outdoorsman and writer Robert L. Warren takes readers through five generations of hunting and fishing stories with a twist — the stories are told in the voices of the kids in his family. In “The Black Mouse,” readers may recognize two of them, twin brothers Alan and Keith, who each host outdoor TV shows. Adventures from short-range misses to a first buck to lessons learned in the field show the importance of adult mentors who connect city kids to the wild.



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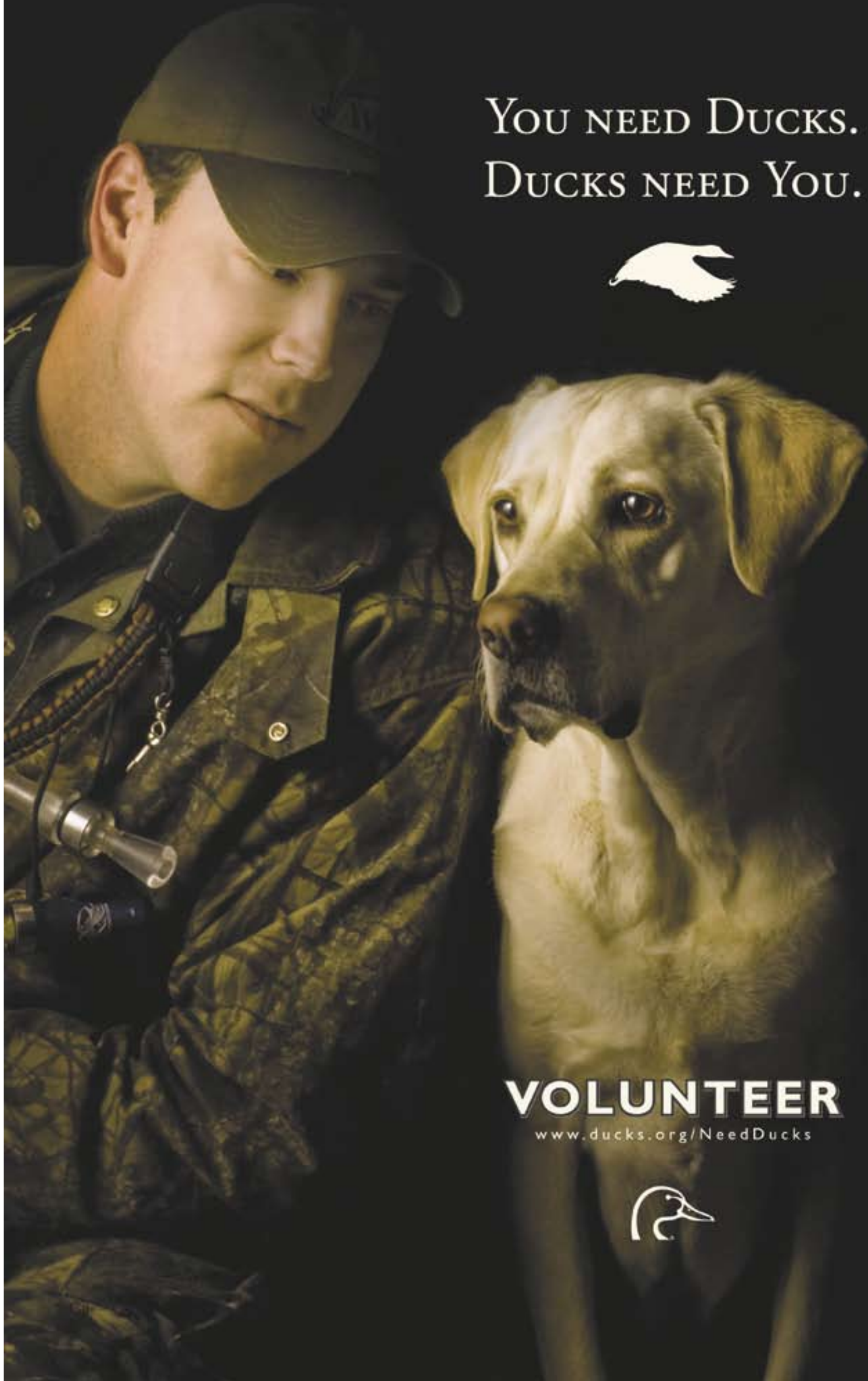
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WINDY WAYS: Wind can be used to anglers' advantage. In a lake, surface currents, which are generated by wind, are different from bottom currents, which are affected by the Earth's rotation.

Currents

Continued from Page 1

north winds could cause water levels to rise slightly in the southern part of a lake and fall in the north.

For fishermen, windward shorelines can produce good action. Waves aerate water by trapping oxygen. Winds and currents also concentrate plankton. Shad, minnows and other baitfish feed upon the microscopic organisms pushed against the windward shoreline.

"Many people think winds blow baitfish against the windward shoreline," said Todd Driscoll, a TPW biologist in Jasper. "That's not true. A shad can swim against the wind current. Instead, winds blow plankton against the shore, where shad eat the plankton. Just like bass, shad will go where they can find food. A concentration of active shad in an area gets bass excited and makes them bite better."

Wind also serves to hide anglers from fish. On calm days, fish can see shadows or outlines silhouetted against the sky. Ripples break up the surface, making objects more difficult to see. Wave noise can muffle sounds made by anglers. In a clear lake such as Amistad, a little wind chop can help anglers sneak up on bass.

"Lake Amistad is so clear; it's not good when the water is flat calm," said Debra Hengst, a professional angler from San Antonio. "I like about 10 to

15 knots, something to break up the water. On a windy day at Lake Amistad, I pick up a big spinnerbait and run from point to point. When the water is up like it is now, I like heavy spinnerbaits, those in the 3/4- to 1-ounce range."

The effect of discharges of water from a reservoir depends largely on its size and the makeup of the river channels. Although people can see water pouring through open gates in a dam, such a release may only cause minimal effect in the large reservoir. But at smaller impoundments like Lake Fork, it's a long-standing theory that when the gates are open, the fish don't bite.

"When a dam opens in a reservoir, it does create slightly more current, but it's mostly localized," Driscoll said. "The effect of the dam opening depends heavily upon the layout of the lake. For instance, when the gates open on a dam in a riverine impoundment, it creates an incredibly powerful current rushing down the channel. In a broad lake with multiple creek channels like Sam Rayburn or Toledo Bend, the effect would be minimal. The current won't be very noticeable a few hundred yards from the dam on either of those lakes."

However generated, current affects fishing by positioning bass, moving more bait around or helping oxygenate water.

Knowing how those currents work could put more lunkers in the livewell.

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Outdoor News in Brief

Ivory smuggling ring foiled; charges brought against 6

Six defendants were arrested in New York, New Jersey, Virginia and Texas for conspiring to smuggle the ivory of African elephants from the Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Uganda into the United States. Charges are pending in a Brooklyn, N.Y., federal court.

The complaint alleges that two defendants paid one trafficker \$15,000 to smuggle a shipment of ivory from Cameroon into the United States. However, most of the defendants' ivory was sent, via parcel, through JFK International Airport, accompanied

by fraudulent shipping and customs documents. When U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Customs and Immigration Enforcement inspectors examined these shipments, however, they discovered ivory coated with clay and resin-like substances to disguise the ivory as wooden musical instruments, statues and snakes. Seized ivory from one shipment was appraised at a market price of \$165,000.

The maximum term of imprisonment for any defendant convicted of smuggling is 20 years.

As set forth in the complaint, illegal trade in African elephant ivory is a cause of declining elephant populations in some areas of Africa. Importation of ivory into the United States has been criminalized since 1976, when the United States became a signatory

to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

— U.S. Fish and Wildlife report.

Sportsman Channel to be on DirecTV beginning in '09

The Sportsman Channel has reached a distribution agreement with DirecTV that will make the network available to DirecTV customers by the end of January. TSC will be available in the Choice Xtra package.

"We are excited to be launching on DirecTV given its position as the premier provider of sports content in the

U.S.," said IMO CEO Jeff Paro.

IMO has shifted all of its programming resources to The Sportsman Channel, including its most popular branded shows such as "Fly Fishing the World," "In-Fisherman TV" and "Petersen's Hunting TV." It is also creating a slate of new shows, including "Tactical Impact" and "Arrow Affliction."

— InterMedia Outdoors report.

Terrell angler lands Grand Slam Championship

Scott Dean of Terrell held on to his lead to win the 2008 Grand Slam Championship recently on Columbus

Pool in Columbus, Miss.

"I'm just relieved that I pulled it off," Dean said. "I thought I had really messed up only bringing in three fish (on the final day). On the first day of the tournament, I used a swimbait, yesterday I used a square-billed crankbait, and today I caught them on a 6-inch worm.

The top 10 tournament professionals and co-anglers from the Southeast and Southwest divisions competed for a share of more than \$100,000 in cash, bonuses and prizes. Dean will take home a boat and motor valued at more than \$50,000.

American Bass Anglers offers more than 1,200 tournaments per year in 41 states that are designed for the weekend angler.

— American Bass Anglers report.

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from Page 18

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Trout

Continued from Page 11

also receive multiple stockings from December into March. The Guadalupe — the only fishable location in Texas where rainbow trout can survive during the summer — will be stocked with almost 17,000 trout this winter.

One public access point on the Guadalupe River has been leased specifically for trout fishing, Camp Hueco Springs.

Special harvest restrictions are in place along a 10-mile stretch of the Guadalupe below the tailrace. In this area, anglers may

keep one trout per day, it must be at least 18 inches in length, and any trout harvested must be caught on artificial lures.

The special regulations zone does not include the area immediately below Canyon Lake Dam. There, as in other Texas waters, the daily bag limit is five trout, and there is no minimum length.

A valid Texas freshwater fishing package is required for trout. Children 16 and younger and all anglers fishing from the bank in state parks are exempt from the fishing package requirement.

The complete 2008-09 Rainbow Trout Stocking Schedule is available at www.LSONews.com.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report.

Does

Continued from Page 1

thing to hunt,” said Bob Zaiglin, a biologist in Uvalde.

“But,” he added, “the old philosophy: ‘If you shoot a doe, where will the next buck come from?’ — that has to go by the wayside.

“A habitat will sustain only so many animals, and once it’s saturated with deer, there’s a problem.”

To illustrate, renowned biologist Al Brothers of Berclair offered some quick math.

“The average mature white-tailed doe will consume five pounds of food a day,” Brothers said. “If the average deer season is 60 days, multiply that by five and that’s 300 pounds of food for that one doe.

“Now multiply that by the number of does you need to take off your property. Say it’s 10; that’s 3,000 pounds of food.

“But if you take those does now, you leave 3,000 pounds of food out there for the deer you want to survive through the winter.”

Brothers, who helped develop the concept of Quality Deer Management in the 1970s, is a co-author of “Producing Quality Whitetails.”

Zaiglin chairs the wildlife management department at Southwest Texas Junior College in Uvalde. He also operates a consulting firm, Zaiglin’s Wildlife Resource Management.

They agreed that doe harvests are an essential facet of deer management.

And it can be done legally in one-buck counties through the state’s Managed Lands Deer Permit program, in which landowners take population



DOE SEASON: Does can eat up to 300 pounds of food that could go to growing bucks if the does were harvested. Photo by David J. Sams.

surveys and send the data to state biologists.

The information is used to form harvest strategies, and doe permits are issued.

But don’t worry about separating last year’s fawns from their mothers’ milk, Brothers said.

Fawns born in late summer, he said, are generally weaned within 12 weeks, just in time for deer season.

“If you take his mamma from him, it won’t hurt him at all,” Zaiglin said.

Brothers said that was confirmed in a study Zaiglin co-authored 20 years ago for Texas Tech University.

The paper resulted from a lengthy experiment in Webb and Dimmit counties in which Zaiglin and colleagues used radio collars to follow a

dozen orphaned fawns until they were 18 months old.

The young deer were harvested, and extensive tests on them showed that they matured at about the same rates as deer who were not orphaned.

Brothers and Zaiglin noted, however, that there are practical ways to pursue a doe harvest.

Both urged hunters to shoot females early in the season to preserve range.

“Why wait for those does to be bred?” Zaiglin asked. “Your bucks will be exerting energy on breeding deer that are going to die in late December or early January.

“Remove them as soon as possible, but, more importantly, remove them whenever you can — even if they have a fetus in them.”

Chaparral

Continued from Page 1

Chair for White-tailed Deer Research at Kleberg.

“The grass began sprouting, and it was high-quality stuff, as far as nutrition,” said Hewitt, who supervised the Chaparral study. “They hit it hard for two weeks to a month and then the forbs came back and the cactus dropped out of their diet. Then some of the plants that had been top-killed grew back.”

Hewitt said students conducting the study saw no deer in poor physical condition. Does harvested for the study demonstrated no signs of abnormal pregnancies. In times of severe physical stress, for example, a doe can absorb a fetus.

Helicopter surveys at Chaparral in late summer showed a 40-percent ratio of fawns to does.

While that number was below the previous year, it was still out-

standing, Synatzske said.

“That’s actually more like 60 percent in a regular year,” he said. “Last year was one of the best years we’ve had, and there are a lot of young does that really can’t be expected to contribute to the population this year.”

Synatzske said antler development is better than last year.

Despite the unexpected turnaround, it was still a close call. If it hadn’t rained when it did, the story at Chaparral might have been far different, Synatzske said.

“We’d be harvesting a lot of deer right now trying to enable the habitat to sustain what’s there,” he said. “Because of the rain, we’ll have better habitat next year and the next. We’ll be able to carry more deer than before. The timing of the rain was perfect. We couldn’t have planned it any better.”

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