



LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

December 26, 2008 Texas' Premier Outdoor Newspaper Volume 5, Issue 9
www.LSONews.com



Myth proven
Frio County hunter Terry McDonald bagged a unicorn (sort of) earlier this season.
Page 8

INSIDE FISHING



Remarkable red

A redfish caught recently sported a deformity that raised more than a few questions boatside.

Page 10

So long, Red River

Pro anglers Alton Jones and Kelly Jordan recently took their last tour of the Red River before February's Bassmaster Classic.

Page 10

HUNTING



A shot at Ike

Hurricane Ike upended a group of coastal duck hunters' lives, but it didn't completely ruin their duck season.

Page 8

Grayson Co. deer

A scoping meeting is set for proposed rifle hunting rules in a North Texas county.

Page 8

CONSERVATION

Prairie chicken aid

A new federal program boosts habitat for lesser prairie chickens.

Page 4

NATIONAL

27-point doe

A Kansas hunter shot a 27-point deer that turned out not to be a buck.

Page 6

INDEX

Classifieds	Page 16
Crossword	Page 18
Game Warden Blotter	Page 12
Fishing Report	Page 17
Heroes	Page 14
Outdoor Datebook	Page 19
Products	Page 22
Weather	Page 18
For the Table	Page 18

Rut right on time

Bucks making their moves in South Texas



LOOKING FOR LOVE: For many South Texas deer hunters, the Christmas season signals the peak of the white-tailed deer rut. The rut is in full swing in much of the area. Photo by David J. Sams.

By CRAIG NYHUS

John Barnes of Dallas hadn't seen much rutting activity on the ranch he hunts in Maverick and Zavalla counties. Until a mid-December cold front, that is.

"When the front hit Monday morning (Dec. 15), the bucks really started chasing the does," he said. "They are rutting very hard right now — the front really kicked them off, and the bucks are acting stupid."

Barnes said they had seen some activity starting Dec. 1, but the warm weather seemed to slow the pursuit. "There had been a full moon, but I think the weather down here has as big an influence as anything,"

The annual ritual of the South Texas

bucks led several to the hunters on the ranch.

"I shot a really pretty deer Tuesday (Dec. 16)," Barnes said. "It was a main frame 11-pointer that scored 164. But that night, one of our guys shot a 23-inch wide 10-pointer that scored 170 — that was a fantastic deer."

Near Sabinal and Uvalde, the bucks were moving, too. Kurt Kaiser of Sidney, Neb., said that he saw all of the classic signs.

"They were really moving," Kaiser said. "The bucks would come out, feed, chase a doe and feed again."

"At every single set we saw bucks fighting, posturing, chasing does, grunting, wheezing and making

See RUT, Page 24

In a rut

While the rut in South Texas may be hot and heavy, peak times for breeding are over in most of the state. But breeding behavior continues because does not bred during the peak enter another cycle. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife studies, the rut could extend to the following dates:

- Post Oak Savannah . . . Jan. 16
- Pinewoods Jan. 5
- Rolling Plains Dec. 30
- Edwards Plateau Jan. 30
- Trans-Pecos Jan. 4
- South Texas Plains . . . Feb. 1

Fees as high as the planes

Traveling with hunting gear costs even more

By MARK ENGLAND

If you spy Gray N. Thornton aboard an airplane wearing hunting boots, don't assume he's trying to save time once he reaches his destination.

Like many Americans, Thornton is

merely coping with the golden age of baggage fees.

"They absolutely affect how you treat your luggage," said Thornton, president of the Wild Sheep Foundation. "They've

See TRAVEL, Page 25

Dallas Cowboy nets big catfish

Nose tackle boats 55-lb. fish, learns of Pro Bowl nod

By CRAIG NYHUS

Jay Ratliff, nose tackle for the Dallas Cowboys, doesn't let cold weather keep him from his favorite hobby — fishing.

On the chilly morning of Dec. 16, while Metroplex drivers slipped and slid on icy roads and bridges, the four-year, 298-pound pro still went fishing at Lake Lewisville with his "little" brother, Willie.



Ratliff

"His brother isn't so little. He weighs about 400 pounds," said fishing guide Steve Schiele.

Ratliff has fished with Schiele 50 or 60 times.

"He's a die-hard," Schiele said. "You had to be to go out that day. It was 24 degrees at 9 a.m. when we went out."

The anglers didn't like the boat ride to the fishing area, though.

"They both had tears coming out of their eyes from the cold," Schiele said.

The tough group, using cut perch for bait, got off to a good start.

We caught six in 1 1/2 hours," Schiele said.

"A few were in around 20 pounds. Willie caught one in the 20s and was all excited. He said it was the biggest fish ever. I told him it was just a baby."

A few minutes later, the big one

See CATCH, Page 21

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CONSERVATION

New program benefits lesser prairie chicken

Conservation agreements created for leaseholders on federal lands

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management recently launched a new conservation program that encourages landowners, energy companies and ranchers to help restore and protect habitat for the lesser prairie chicken in southeastern New Mexico.

The agencies and the Center of Excellence for Hazardous Materials Management will administer voluntary Candidate Conservation Agreements for oil and gas lease holders on federal lands and Candidate Conservation Agree-

ments with Assurances for state and private landowners to benefit the species.

Lynn Scarlett, deputy secretary of the Department of the Interior, helped launch the effort.

"Today, we're showcasing the future of conservation — a future that involves agencies, landowners, industry, conservation groups and communities working together to recover rare species of wildlife."

Partners can now proactively take actions to reduce or eliminate threats to the lesser prairie chicken on all land ownership types. In return, private landowners will receive assurances that their operations will continue regardless of whether the species ever comes under the protection of the Endangered Species Act, and operators on federal lands will receive a greater degree of certainty that their operations will not change.

A CCA was signed at the Rio Grande Nature Center by the agencies and Marbob Energy Corp. of Artesia, N.M. Marbob will minimize surface disturbance within a lease in Lea County by reducing and relocating the number of wells it plans to drill and by constructing infrastructure in locations that avoid habitat for the lesser prairie chicken.

Lea County rancher Chris Brininstool signed a CCAA covering the operation of 1,280 acres of private lands within her ranch. Brininstool will mark fences to prevent mortality in pre-dawn flights to the birds' "booming" grounds, construct escape ramps in livestock tanks for birds and other wildlife to exit safely and maintain habitat so the lands can be used for future reintroductions of lesser prairie chickens.

— U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report.



BIRD PROTECTION: Private landowners will work with the federal government under a new program to improve habitat for lesser prairie chickens. Photo by Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Texans urged to help stop invasive plants

Several species are common in yards, can spread widely

Experts are urging Texas residents to try to identify invasive species and avoid spreading their impact to protect the state's wildlife and restore the state to its original beauty.

During the fall and winter, several invasive plants flourish and are easy to recognize. Most are non-native and can cause problems for native plants and animals. Some people may unwittingly contribute to the problem by buying the plants and adding them to their landscape.

The problem has given rise to the Pulling Together Initiative. The group behind it has created www.texasinvasives.org, which contains a large plant database to help people identify and control them.

The initiative is launching a new program called Invaders of Texas, a volunteer campaign to help detect and report invasive

species. It also offers free workshops to train participants.

Sales of Texas horned lizard license plates are helping pay for the Texas Invasives Web site and the Invaders of Texas program.

Kelly Bender, Texas Parks and Wildlife urban wildlife biologist, said three species to look out for this season are:

● **Chinese tallow** — an exotic tree with leaves that change to bright red in fall. Chinese tallow was originally brought to the region for soap production and ornamental purposes. Areas that were once coastal meadows are now completely covered in dense stands of tallow trees.

● **Ligustrum** — an evergreen often used in home landscaping, this large shrub completely replaces the understory by shading out all other plants, especially in woodlands near water. Among other negative results, it causes increased erosion that can turn clear springs into murky waterways.

● **Giant cane** — a tall grass that can choke waterways, originally introduced for erosion control and ornamental use.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report.

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NATIONAL

Cabo study generates action in Mexican Senate

Law would set aside billfish species for sport fishing only

An economic study commissioned by The Billfish Foundation on the billion dollar-plus annual impact sport fishing brings to Mexico's greater

Cabo San Lucas-Los Cabos region has caught the attention and responsive actions of two of Mexico's senators.

Sens. Luis Coppola Joffroy and Humberto Andrade Quezada placed upon the floor of the Mexican Senate a resolution to use sport fishing as an economic development tool for all of coastal Mexico. The Cabo-Los Cabos area is a major North American tourist destination driven by its world-class

striped marlin fishery.

The proposal to amend Mexico's fisheries law states marlin, sailfish, swordfish, rooster fish and dorado are to be used exclusively for sport fishing and that these species may not be sold, even if taken as by-catch by commercial fisheries.

Attempts by Mexico's fisheries agency to establish liberal by-catch allowances for billfish, dorado and other species drew sharp criticism from sport fishing

and conservation organizations.

The resolution passed Dec. 5, but errors in wording require that it be redrafted.

The new proposed measures will include: prohibiting the use of live bait on longlines, establishment of a 30-mile zone from Quepos south where longlines cannot be deployed from January through March, prohibiting the export of sailfish and prohibiting removing sailfish from the water to

take photographs before release.

In 2007, 354,013 mostly international visitors fished in Los Cabos. While there they spent an estimated \$633.6 million dollars for lodging, charter boats, food, transportation, tackle, fuel and more. These expenditures created 24,426 jobs, \$245.5 million in local and federal tax revenues and \$1.125 billion in total economic activity.

— *The Billfish Foundation report.*

Kansas hunter shoots 27-point doe

Antlers measure about 179 inches; full-body mount planned

Mike Smith of Clay Center, Kan., walked up to the 27-point deer he shot Dec. 3 expecting it to be the buck of a lifetime. But when it came time to load it in the truck, he discovered it was a doe.

"I'm normally a bowhunter," Smith said. "But I had seen another big typical buck on camera and felt it was worthy of carrying my rifle that day. And a friend who drives by the area said he had seen a non-typical around."

While Smith was sitting on a stand next to an alfalfa field on the opening day of the Kansas deer rifle season, the 27-pointer came out at 100 yards. Smith immediately noticed the strange rack and thought of the non-typical his friend had seen.

"I knew the deer was in velvet," he said. "I thought maybe it had been injured while its antlers were growing."

His shot was true, and the doe's rack was measured at about 179 inches.

Although antlered does are rare, they are seen or harvested several times each year



BIG BEAUTY: Mike Smith poses with his trophy doe. He shot the 27-point animal on the opening day of deer rifle season in Kansas.

across the country. But antlered does of this size are almost unheard of.

Unfortunately, no records are specifically kept for antlered does.

Smith plans to have a life-sized mount of the deer made with the velvet still on the antlers.

— *Staff report.*

National News in Brief

New York closes state-run pheasant farm

New York Gov. David A. Paterson said a state pheasant farm had become too expensive to run in announcing its closure recently.

The Reynolds Game Farm is supported by money from hunting licenses, but closing it will save the state \$750,000, Paterson said.

Paterson ordered the state to donate nearly 8,000 of the pheasants to needy families.

— *Staff report.*

Elk Foundation protects 2,800 acres in Wyoming

Opened for hunters, protected from developers — permanently. A new conservation easement has accomplished that on the 2,800-acre Flying A Ranch in the Big Horn Mountains northwest of Casper, Wyo.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation recently teamed with two other funding partners — the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program and the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust Account Board — led by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to establish

the easement.

"This was a special project because the written agreement with the landowner ensures public hunting access from September through December each year," said David Allen, RMEF president and CEO.

Biologists estimate 300 elk consistently use the property, and about 100 calves are born there each year. About half of the ranch is considered crucial winter range.

— *Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation report.*

Gray wolf to be delisted as endangered — again

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will remove the gray wolf from the Endangered Species list in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and the eastern third of Washington and Oregon because the population no longer meets listing requirements.

The recovery goal of wolves has been exceeded every year since 2002. The wolf population in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming exceeds 1,500 with more than 100 breeding pairs.

USFWS said wolves may be hunted after delisting if states set hunting seasons and regulations to maintain the population at agreed levels.

— *U.S. Fish and Wildlife report.*

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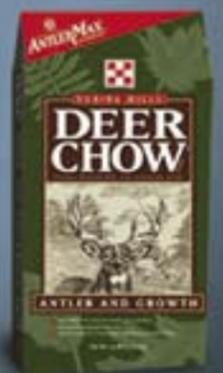
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HUNTING

'Unicorn' doe shot at Frio County ranch

Deer with single spike was not the only animal hunter harvested

By CRAIG NYHUS

Who says there are no such things as unicorns? Don't tell Terry McDonald of San Antonio after an unusual week of hunting in November. He shot a unicorn — and it was a doe.

McDonald hunts on family-owned land in Frio County.

"The land (1,700 acres) has been in the family since 1917," he said.

This week he saw something he hadn't seen in all his years of hunting.

"I hunted on a Wednesday," he said. "I had seen a nice buck so I was hunting it. This funny looking deer came out at about 110 yards."

McDonald eyed the deer for some

time and noticed the single antler protruding from the center of its skull.

"I've hunted from South Texas to Canada and have never seen something like this," he said. "You couldn't put the antler any closer to the center of the skull. I decided to pass on it because I was hoping the buck would come out."

McDonald returned home and told his friends what he had seen.

"They said I was crazy for not taking it since it was so unique," he said. "I thought about it for a while and then decided to go back."

Being semi-retired from the construction business, he had time to return — and he's glad he did.

"I went back that Friday," he said. "That night I got the buck that rough-scored 170. I shot the doe on Saturday morning — of course I didn't know it was a doe until she was on the ground."

Both animals are being prepared by McDonald's nephew, a Kerrville taxidermist.

"We've given him a lot of work over the years," McDonald said.

So did anyone give him a hard time? "Some of the kids are superstitious," he said. "They think it means good luck."

Considering the big buck and the unusual doe with the one horn, maybe they were right.



MYTHOLOGY: Terry McDonald of San Antonio poses with his "unicorn" doe. McDonald shot the single-spike deer and a buck that scored about 170 last month.



SCANNING THE SKY: During from their layout blinds to search for ducks. Photo by Craig Nyhus.

Ike's kids shoot again

By CRAIG NYHUS

T.C. Landry, English teacher at Hampshire-Fannett High School in Jefferson County, had seen his students recover from the devastation of Hurricane Rita in 2005. Hurricane Ike came and hit them again.

A hunter, Landry knew many of his students hunted as well. Their opportunity, and, in many cases, their hunting equipment was gone.

"My district is full of kids who enjoy hunting ducks and geese as much as I do," Landry said. "Time every Monday is spent telling stories of the weekend hunts."

Landry's classroom has a "trophy board" where students post pictures from their hunts.

"I've even had kids show up late for school in waders from a morning hunt."

Ike changed all that for his students.

"They came home to destroyed homes,

contaminated water, mud, gators and snakes," Landry said. "Many of the students have relocated."

Landry noticed an ad for Avery Outdoors in his Ducks Unlimited magazine about youth hunts put together for the Avery Youth Field Staff.

"Our kids weren't on the field staff but they are as passionate about waterfowling as anyone."

Landry penned a letter and e-mailed it to Avery Pro Staffer Derek Rambo.

"This passionate group of duck hunters has no place to hunt," he wrote. "Their camps and the marsh and refuges were destroyed."

Rambo sent the e-mail to Doug Jones, a Ducks Unlimited volunteer, and the two took it from there.

"It didn't take much convincing after reading the kids' stories," Jones said.

See HUNT, Page 16

Some of their stories

Jeff Laughlin (12th grade)

"I've been duck hunting since I was 5 years old. Our hunting area was ruined by saltwater.

"We had 8 feet of water in our house and our 4x4 Chevy was completely submerged. We lost most everything. Our guns were rusted but we got them cleaned before they were ruined, but I lost my grandpa's bow that he gave me."

Justin Laden (11th grade)

"Our house is 6 feet off the ground and still had 3 feet of water inside. We had to start over from scratch. My gun and rifle were ruined. I'll have to buy all new gear for fishing and hunting. It'll take awhile — but I can do it."

Tommy Wendling (9th grade)

"We put our guns in the floorboard of our Suburban to protect them from anything falling. Our house — it was just a repeat of Rita, with water everywhere. My duck lease didn't turn out so well either. It's about 2 miles from the Intracoastal Canal with crops on the bayou side of the reservoir. All that is left now is the water. All the grass is gone from our hunting area."

Chris Myers (9th grade)

"Our house was not affected as bad as some of my friends but still pretty bad. We were living in a doublewide trailer because we lost our house in Rita. The hurricane shook the trailer so bad that cracks formed all over."

See STUDENTS, Page 16

Six arrested for illegal deer trapping, sale

Three men were part of breeding operation; fines, incarceration possible

State wildlife officials recently arrested six men on charges of illegally trapping and buying or selling white-tailed deer.

Three of the men are involved with permitted deer breeding facilities and are believed to have brought wild deer into the permitted facilities.

Deer breeding is a legal and growing business in Texas, estimated by one breeder organization to be worth about \$650 million per year for the state economy. It is illegal to capture or obtain wild deer and place them into breeding facilities.

Breeders must obtain captive, pen-raised deer from other permitted breeders. Texas' 1,099 permitted deer breeders keep 86,989 deer in 1,161 facilities.

Numerous Class B misdemeanors (fines up to \$2,000 and up to 180 days confinement) have been filed on the men for violating state trap, transport and transplant regulations relating to white-tailed deer.

The arrests, made by the Special Operations Unit of Texas Parks and Wildlife's Law Enforcement Division, were part of Operation Texas Shuffle, a year-long investigation into the black market deer trade in Texas.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report.

Scoping meeting set for Grayson Co. deer hunting

Change would allow rifle hunting in addition to bow hunting

A proposal to open a general firearms deer season in Grayson County has caused a stir in the county's hunting community, as covered extensively by Lone Star Outdoor News.

To gather feedback, a public scoping meeting will be held Jan. 8 at Grayson County College's Center for Work Place Learning Auditorium near Sherman.

The auditorium will open at 6 p.m., and the public meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

Grayson County Judge Drue Bynum has been invited to open the meeting and Texas Parks and Wildlife Executive Director Carter Smith will facilitate the remainder of the meeting, which will include a short presentation on TPW's regulations process and the rationale for contemplating a gun deer season in Grayson County.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report.

Hunting News in Brief

New guide out for rice growers

The USA Rice Foundation, working with Ducks Unlimited, recently sponsored a publication for its rice growers called "Conservation in Ricelands of North America."

"The rice agriculture and conservation communities have a mutually beneficial and long-lasting relationship with shared interests in habitat management for wetland-dependent birds, sustainable rice production and conservation of natural resources such as soil and water," said Scott Manley, Ducks Unlimited's director of conservation programs, the publication's author.

DU was one of the first organizations to work with farmers to flood harvested rice fields for waterfowl. These fields provide valuable habitat for waterfowl while helping rice growers improve their working farms to benefit the environment.

Flooding the fields helps control weeds and prevents erosion, which reduces farmers' chemical use and conserves soil.

In the Gulf Coastal Plain, Mississippi Alluvial Valley and Central Valley of California, the crop is critical to the regional economy and waterfowl.

— Ducks Unlimited report.



RESCUING RICE: Flooded rice fields serve as a haven for waterfowl and also help control weeds and prevent erosion. Photo by Curt Wilson, Avery Outdoors.

al opening date for pheasant season in the Panhandle, the first weekend in December.

"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 Bevill, TPW game bird program director.

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

Any change to pheasant season could take effect Nov. 27 or be delayed until Nov. 26, 2010, to give hunters and outfitters ample time to make travel plans.

Pheasant Scoping Meetings

- Jan. 12, 2009 — Dimmitt — Dimmitt City Hall
- Jan. 13, 2009 — Dalhart — First National Bank
- Jan. 14, 2009 — Amarillo — Texas A&M University Agricultural Research & Ex-

tension Center

● Jan. 15, 2009 — Spearman — Hansford County Courthouse

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report.

Wildlife Forever receives award

Wildlife Forever recently received an Honor Award from the U.S. Forest Service in recognition of its invasive species Threat Campaign.

"Through partnership with the Eastern Region, Wildlife Forever launched the Threat Campaign, effectively spreading the anti-invasive species message to recreational users," said U.S. Forest Service Regional Forester Kent Connaughton.

The award recognized the campaign's efficiency. Wildlife Forever and partners generated more than 382 million impressions of exposure, reaching 1,000 people for every \$1 invested.

— Wildlife Forever report.

Pheasant input meetings set

Texas Parks and Wildlife is asking for public input on possible changes to the tradition-



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FISHING

Anglers take last look at Red before Classic

River is off-limits for 2 months ahead of bass fishing tournament

By KYLE CARTER

The cutoff for Bassmaster Classic practice on the Red River was Dec. 15, and with \$500,000 on the line, the 51 anglers in the tournament didn't waste any time becoming familiar with the layout.

"With this group of guys, everybody does their homework," said Alton Jones, the defending Clas-

sic champion. "The hard part is fast-forwarding your brain from early December to late February."

The pros won't get to touch the body of water again until three days before the tournament starts Feb. 20. With that in mind, Jones, of Waco, didn't make a single cast on his trip in October or during his time on the water a few days before the cutoff.

"It's fruitless to spend any time fishing right now because the fish are going to change com-



Jones

pletely," said Jones, who spent six days on the river looking around. "You want to learn the personality of the river and get a feel for what type of habitat is out there — what areas have the most potential to hold fish for three days."

Kelly Jordon, who will be fishing in his seventh Classic (third consecutive), said he's fished several tournaments on the Red River, but the last one was in 2001 with BASS, when he finished 47th.



Jordon

Jordon, of Mineola, also didn't wet a line in his trip to the river, but he was looking more for changes over the last few years.

"The timber is a lot more broken down than it used to be," Jordon said. "It looks different, and it's not as easy to tell where you're going. There doesn't seem to be near as much grass as there was, and the water is a lot higher."

Both anglers liked what they saw. Jordon said he sees a lot of potential for flipping shallow water, which he considers to be one of his strengths. Jones said he also likes shallow water and wouldn't mind muddy water where he can

See CLASSIC, Page 19

Redfish caught with 1 gill plate

Biologists mixed on cause, say it could harm, help

By CRAIG NYHUS

When a Texas angler brought the smallish redfish to the boat in coastal Louisiana, he commented how it fought like a 30-incher.

After three solid runs, the third being over a shell reef, the fish was finally landed. But the fishermen were more puzzled by what they saw once the fish was in the net.

Not sure of what they were looking at, the group on the boat stopped and gazed at the strange-looking hole where the gill plate would normally protect the exposed gills from the elements.

Fishermen, being inquisitive folks, immediately started asking questions while they released the fish. How could this happen? How does the fish survive with this? Won't the piggy perch and other small fish or parasites attack the exposed gills?

After viewing images of the fish, experts didn't exactly reach the same conclusion either.

Vince Guillory, a marine fisheries biologist with Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries, speculated the initial cause of the damage was injury.

"It could have been from a fish or it could even have been hit by a prop," Guillory said. "But it healed perfectly."

Guillory said he had not seen this type of injury, but he expected the exposed gill would be attacked.

"The gills are fairly sensitive," he said. "This would be exposed to injuries, parasites and infection."

Jeff Kaiser, research scientist at the Uni-



SOMETHING MISSING: A gill plate was missing from this redfish landed by a Texas angler in coastal Louisiana. The most likely cause is thought to be a gill cover deformity or birth defect. Photos by David J. Sams.

versity of Texas Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas, said he had seen this phenomenon before.

"It looks like an operculum or gill cover deformity — not a hole that was done by something," he said. "We see them time to time in various fish — the fish can still live since the gills function fine, they're just not protected as much."

Dr. Larry McKinney, executive director of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico studies, said he couldn't tell for sure.

"It could be a very old (juvenile) injury or a birth defect," he said. "My guess is the latter. If there were more occurrences of like or similar conditions then environmental issues is a possibility — I have seen similar effects in freshwater situations."

Kaiser agreed the exposed gill would be subject to attack but said attacking the fish carries an associated risk.

"You just never know how nature can cope with deformities, he said. "If they (the little fish) get too close, it's a meal for the red."



New junior state record caught

13.07-pound bass landed during tournament on Lake Conroe

Kyle Nitshke of Willis landed a 13.07-pound largemouth bass Dec. 13 in the Ignition Bass Tournament at Lake Conroe that should qualify as the new junior angler state record by 0.01 pound.

Nitshke was fishing with friend Tyler Goetzman, who holds the former record from Lake Conroe, caught Jan. 13.

"We had a limit by 8:40 and started culling," Nitshke said. "We caught 14 keepers."

"She hit a crankbait in six feet of water about 12:30."

The fish was 21.5 inches in girth and 25 inches in length.

Nitshke and Goetzman won the tournament with a bag of 32.85 pounds of fish.

The fish qualified as ShareLunker No. 456.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report.



BIG BASS: Kyle Nitshke of Willis displays his 13.07-pound largemouth bass, which he caught using a crankbait on Lake Conroe. Photo by Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Rainbows stocked in Uvalde County

The Texas Hill Country River Region, as part of its annual Trout Days, will stock thousands of rainbow trout at various locations on the Nueces, Frio and Sabinal rivers in Uvalde County for the event from Jan. 9-11.

Several fish in the 2- to 5-pound range will be stocked at Park Chalk Bluff on the Nueces River.

Prizes will be awarded for anglers catching rainbows during the Trout Days tournament at Park Chalk Bluff.

Contest divisions are offered in youth, fly-fishing-only and open-tackle divisions.

Pre-registration for the Trout Days event provides eligibility for a drawing for a free weekend at Park Chalk Bluff.

— Texas Hill Country River Region report.



RAINBOWS: A private group will release rainbow trout in Uvalde County next month as part of a fishing tournament.

Stay warm on the water

A few ideas for heating up a winter day

By DAN ARMITAGE

Some of the hottest fishing and hunting takes place during the coldest part of the season, when getting anywhere by boat boosts the wind chill factor, and staying warm and comfortable takes considerable effort. It's no secret that more than half a body's heat can be lost through the head, and hats and caps are standard attire for hunters and anglers no matter the air temperature. But this time of year, when Texas temps can be downright frosty, it's wise to trade in the traditional "gimme" ball caps for something more substantial.

In addition to an insulated cap or hat, when underway aboard their boats, anglers can don ski goggles, bubble shields, face masks or snowmobile helmets to protect them from sub-freezing wind chills generated by their fleet forward progress through the cold air. Chemical heat packs may be employed under the headgear as well, stuffed under caps and ear bands, and you'll often see winter anglers saving face by wearing heat-exchanging masks, such as those from Polar Wrap that "recycle" exhaled air to help keep the face and body warm, while boating between fishing holes or hunting blinds.

The brain's first line of defense when the going gets so cold it threatens the core body temperature is to restrict blood flow to the expendable extremities and concentrate its life-sustaining warmth on the more essential internal organs. That's why ears, fingers and toes are the first to feel the chill and suffer the consequences of bone-chilling temperatures.

Cold-weather anglers know to buy boots a size larger than their shoe size to allow room for a liner and a thick wool sock while allowing their toes to wiggle to keep that blood flowing. Some tuck a chemical heater pack in each boot, placing it between the liner and the primary sock so it's not directly against the skin, for an additional, external heat source. Grabber offers pairs of sole-shaped heater inserts, called the Foot Warmer, that are popular and warm the entire foot

from the bottom up.

Electric socks containing heating elements are a toe-warming option as well. Battery-powered socks are available from a variety of sources, and at least one company offers socks that can be powered from your boat's 12-volt electrical system. The problem with portable, battery-powered socks is that, unless they have an adjustable thermostat, the heating elements typically offer too much heat at first — and too little later — to offer consistent, long-term toe comfort.

Fingers are the digits most important to fishermen, and keeping them warm yet available for tying knots, baiting hooks, cranking reel handles and operating a boat in frigid temperatures is a challenge. Fingerless gloves work well when lined pockets or external heat sources are handy, but those that combine a flip-over mitt, such as the glomitt, are better. Because they keep the fingers together to share their generated heat, mittens are warmer than gloves, so the combo-convertible styles offer the best of both worlds by keeping fingers warm yet instantly accessible.

So does a muff or hand warmer, worn around the waist, in which you can place chemical heater packs to complement the insulation. The Firepod takes that one step further by offering a fleece-lined muff that contains two electric hand warmers that can be recharged or powered directly off the boat's 12-volt accessory receptacle.

The Firepod isn't the only 12-volt-powered heating device available to cold-weather boaters. Electrically heated outdoor apparel from Gerbings Outdoors such as socks, gloves, mitts, vests and seat warmers can be inter-connected and plugged into a boat's 12-volt system. Most popular among extreme cold weather anglers is Gerbing's Element Edge suit, which includes a jacket and bibs that are plugged into a boat's 12-volt receptacle. For the do-it-yourselfer, Gorix heated cloth is woven with a 12-volt-powered heating element and can be used to make custom-heated boat seats, apparel and accessories.

Heat Sources

- Cabela's Windstopper glomitt
- Carhartt Extremes coverall
- Grabber Foot Warmer
- LaCrosse Extreme PFT pac boots
- Coleman SportCat catalytic heater
- Fish Hedz helmet
- Polar Wrap Heat Exchanger II mask
- Gerbing Element Edge heated jacket
- Gorix heated cloth
- Firepod Sportsman hand warmer
- Under Armour ColdGear



SAVING FACE: A boater dons a Fish Hedz helmet to help keep warm on a frigid winter fishing trip. Photo by Dan Armitage.

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GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

Tangled bucks roped; survivor freed

In Sonora, two bucks were attached at the antlers by a large entanglement of wire. One deer was alive, and the other was dead from being gored by a third buck.

Sutton County Game Warden Will Allison and a Sonora police officer responded. The pair roped the head of the living deer, and Allison roped the hind feet.

The wire was cut from the bucks' heads.

The surviving buck was last seen jumping a fence and leaving town.

waited to see if the shooter would attempt to pick up the deer, but he never returned. Stuman seized the deer, a bucket of corn and a scent stick hanging on a cedar bush near the dead deer. Stuman later contacted the shooter, who said he wanted to consult his attorney before speaking. Charges of hunting without landowner's consent and failure to retrieve game are pending.

DEER LEFT ON SCHOOL ROOF; BLOOD IN PICKUP TARGETS SHOOTER

• Houston County Game Warden Eddie Lehr received a call from the principal at a high school advising that some students saw a deer on top of the school. Lehr responded to find a dead deer on top of the high school. A search of the parking lot revealed a truck with blood in the back. The truck owner was questioned and confessed that he and a friend killed the deer from the roadway the night before and placed it on top of the high school. Cases and restitution are pending.

PATIENCE PAYS OFF TO CATCH MAN WITH EXTRA MULEY

• Briscoe County Game Warden Clint Hunt received a tip that an untagged mule deer was hanging in a barn. After going to the barn he found a mule deer buck hanging without a tag. Hunt remained in the barn until dark, when a man pulled up to the barn on a tractor with a pickup following. Hunt surprised the two men and found another mule deer buck in the pickup. The driver of the pickup had shot both deer. Cases and restitution are pending.

STUNG SELLING DEER MEAT ON INTERNET

• Nancy Carroll at the Texas Parks and Wildlife law enforcement office received a call inquiring about the legality of selling deer meat. The caller forwarded a posting on craigslist.org of a man attempting to sell a deer he had at a processor. Dallas County Game Warden Sergio Bazaldua arrived at the processor before the exchange took place and parked in the back of the building. Bazaldua then cited the seller for illegal sale of white-tailed deer meat and had the seller wait inside until the buyers arrived and observed the purchase of the meat. Bazaldua then cited the buyer for illegal purchase of white-tailed deer meat. The deer meat was seized.

SPOTLIGHTERS SPOTTED SHOOTING DEER FOR PARTY

• While watching for road hunters, Walker County Game Warden Stephen

Ingram observed a truck moving slowly in an adjacent pasture with a subject shining a spotlight. Ingram observed the men shoot and heard them celebrate killing a deer. The men loaded the deer and began traveling across the pasture towards a house. At the house, about 30 teenagers were having a party. Ingram radioed for Walker County deputies for aid. The nine-point deer, .30-06 rifle and spotlight were located. Several cases pending.

TRESPASSERS SNEAK IN BUT NOT OUT

• A hunter in Titus County was sitting in his deer stand waiting for a large deer he had seen when he heard a gunshot from another section of his property. The hunter later found a man trespassing and standing over the big deer he had been hunting. The 19-year-old man had snuck into the ranch from an adjacent property and had previously been warned about trespassing. While the hunter was dealing with the poacher, three more trespassers drove up on an ATV to see what their friend had shot. Just as Titus County Game Warden Ash arrived, he caught two more men coming off the edge of the property. One large eight-point buck was seized, three men were cited, and numerous trespassing citations were issued.

SHOOTERS MISS DEER BUT BAG TICKET

• Milam County Game Warden Mike Mitchell, while on a large tract near the Little River, observed a pickup truck and two individuals enter the area before sunset. He crept in and checked out their camp, heard their shot and then confronted them on their way out

of the area. The man and his friend were cited for hunting without hunting licenses, hunting without hunter education and criminal trespass. Their shots had missed.

GAME CAMERA CATCHES MAN IN HIS LIES

• Shots were reported being fired at night in Liberty County. Game Warden Melissa Brown investigated. When she reached the area she observed a 10-point buck on the ground. The man said he had shot the deer at 5:30 that evening and that it had run away and he had been looking for it ever since. He said he found the deer a little while ago, and it was still alive and he shot it again. Brown took the man with her to follow the tire tracks from the riding lawnmower that was used to move the deer to where the deer was killed. Brown noticed a game camera on the tree and took the memory chip out of it. A light pole was above the corn feeder. Brown followed the extension cord from the light across the yard to where it went into a bedroom window. She then put the camera chip into her camera and looked at the photos. One showed the deer eating, in another the deer was on the ground and the final photo showed the man standing over the deer with a gun. Each photo had the date and time stamped on it. Charges pending.

DEER DECOY LEFT ALONE, BUT NOT LIVE DOE NEARBY

• As Nueces County Game Wardens Jimmy Lindsey and Les Casterline and San Patricio County Game Warden Kevin Mitchell were setting up a decoy operation, a vehicle approached causing them to take cover before closing

the gate. The occupants of the vehicle stopped and closed the gate. The wardens set up their decoy, and hours passed with no takers. As the wardens were taking down the decoy, the same vehicle came by, stopped at the gate and the wardens heard, "Oh good, the gate is locked now, they must be gone." The vehicle moved a short distance down the road and shot a doe in front of the wardens. Cases filed.

NIGHT-FISHING GROUP NABBED WITH 37 UNDERSIZED TROUT

• Kleberg County Game Warden Matt Robinson and Kenedy County Game Warden Matt Strauss checked a group fishing in the backwaters of Baffin Bay at about 3 a.m. The group had 37 undersized speckled trout. Cases pending.

SHOOTING PRACTICE LEADS TO STOLEN GUN CHARGES

• While patrolling Hidalgo County for game violations, Game Warden Will Plumas came upon five men along a road bordering a piece of federal refuge property. Three possessed shotguns. The men said they had been target practicing on the empty field across from the refuge. It was discovered that all three firearms were stolen from a home invasion in Iowa. Cases pending.

MAN CHARGED WITH SHOOTING DEER FROM BACK PORCH

• Bexar County Game Warden Kathleen Stuman responded to a complaint in a subdivision. The caller said his neighbor had just shot a deer from the back porch across the fence line. Stuman located a 10-point buck that had been shot about 10 to 15 yards from the neighbor's fence. Stuman

TRESPASSER FORGETS BACKPACK WITH ID

• A man trespassed to hunt but left his backpack on a ranch leased by two other hunters. Inside the backpack were his hunting license and hunter education card. McLennan County Game Warden Kurt Slaughter located and interviewed the man, who was cited for not filling out the harvest log and not properly tagging an eight-point buck. The trespassing charges are pending.

SALES TAG IN BOX WITH DEER REMAINS IDS SHOOTER

• Wheeler County Game Warden Robert Greenwalt found deer remains in a box dumped on the side of a country road. The box also contained a sales tag with names attached. Charges were filed on the identified man for exceeding the bag limit on whitetail bucks.

PHOTOS SNAPPED OF FISH SNAGGERS

• Bell County Game Warden Billy Champlin received information two men were snagging fish on Nolan Creek near the county jail. The pair was observed long enough to obtain photos and a good fish count. Multiple charges filed.

TRESPASSER DIDN'T KNOW ILLEGAL TO KILL DEER AT NIGHT

• A report was received of shots fired, trespassing and night hunting in a large-acre subdivision. Chambers County Game Warden Bobby Jobes responded and proceeded to a camp on a 60-acre tract. Jobes found a freshly killed doe covered with a tarp. The violator said he did not know it was illegal to kill deer at night. Case pending.

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HEROES



HUGO FLORES, 11, shot this axis buck near Utopia. He used the .25-06 rifle of his mother, **Bebe Flores**, and shot it at about 175 yards.



WAYNE STRAUSS displays four red snapper he caught Oct. 26 in Texas waters.



COLTEN MOORE shot a nine-point buck while hunting with his father, **Bryan**.



KYLE SMITH of Floydada shot this rooster on opening day of pheasant season.



BOBBY HERNANDEZ of Dallas took this pronghorn antelope near Cimarron, N.M.

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Hunt

Continued from Page 8

Rambo helped Landry organize the group, and Jones secured the hunting area — a duck hunter's paradise near Buckeye owned in part by former DU state chairman Bill Ansell.

The group left after school and made the two-hour trek to Ansell's unnamed hunting area. There they were treated to dinner, followed by safety instructions, and had the chance to share their stories.

Morning, though, came early for the excited hunters, who decided video games and talking were better ideas than trying to sleep the night before a much-anticipated duck hunt.

Broken into four groups assisted by guides Rambo, DU Regional Director Tim Soderquist and DU volunteers Scott Lassila, Ron Geels and Damron Henson of Frisco, the youngsters and two adults, along with their guides, managed 52 ducks, primarily green-winged teal and shovelers with a few gadwall, scaup, fulvous whistling ducks and pintail.

Two young hunters shot their first duck. Chris Myers shot a drake blue-winged teal worthy of mounting, and a shoveler was Rhett Williamson's first success.

After the hunt, photos were taken and lunch was served. DU Manager of Conservation Programs Todd Merendino gave a presentation on the effects of Ike on the marshes, including how the marshes can ultimately benefit after a hurricane though people and their property don't.

Then the tired students and their teacher headed back home, but memories of Ike were fresh on their minds.

"It just happened to be the opening day of teal season when Ike came to visit, said Caleb Verret, a 10th-grader.

"A week before the storm we scouted, and there were 1,500 teal and big ducks flying over and roosting in the reservoir," he said. "Talk about excited!

"Instead of hunting we are cleaning up the mess it left behind. He was not a very good guest and won't be invited back."

But there is good news. "Recently, some of the salt grass and native grasses are coming back," he said. "We have seen ducks in the ponds, and a few snow geese. Hopefully by this time next year we'll be shooting 'em down and eating mom's duck gumbo."

The teacher said the students had a great time. "They have all talked up the trip with teachers, students, principals and anyone and everyone who would listen," Landry said. "There are two guys that will never forget the hunt because they are now as addicted as I am. Hopefully this hunt could be repeated with other deserving schools."

Students

Continued from Page 8

Phillip Williams III (10th grade)

"My basketball goal was bent in half but a friend gave me an old portable goal with a bent rim. I removed the backboard and rim from it and replaced it with my original. No problem — I'm shooting hoops."

"I hunt with my dad during duck season. Saltwater destroyed most of the vegetation, and Ike blew out the mottled ducks that usually stay all year."

Andrew Sleet (12th grade)

"My dad and I live in a travel trailer — we were about to build a house. When we evacuated, we grabbed our shotguns and a deer rifle and left everything else."

"When we came back we had to take a boat to get to the house. My dad lost everything he had ever worked for."

Rhett Williamson (9th grade)

"We had 3 feet of water in the house. I had a nice deer and it was mounted and on my wall. It fell in the water and ruined."

Caleb Verret (10th grade)

"My dad is a ranch manager, and we live on the ranch. Ike destroyed 6 homes on the ranch. They lost 900 cattle, barns, equipment, tractors and all of the hunting equipment."

"When we went by boat to look at the house, we couldn't find it. All that was left was the slab and two bathtubs."



BACK IN ACTION: Above, English teacher T. C. Landry, left, smiles with 10 students from Hamshire-Fannett High School who participated in a youth duck hunt sponsored by Avery Outdoors and Ducks Unlimited. Bill Ansell, right, former DU state chairman, hosted the event. Left, Brett Theis and Rhett Williamson show their morning limits of teal and shovelers. Photos by Craig Nyhus.

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FISHING REPORT

HOT BITES LARGEMOUTH BASS



BROWNWOOD: Excellent on spinnerbaits, craw jigs, crankbaits and artificial baby rattle snakes along the shorelines of creeks and off points in coves in 1-5 feet.

CANYON LAKE: Very good on Texas-rigged drop shot worms, watermelon red Brush Hogs and tubes on jigheads between fronts in 10-15 feet in the stickups and along bluffs.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Very good on Texas-rigged worms.

WHITE, HYBRID, STRIPER



RAY ROBERTS: White bass are excellent on 3/8- and 1/2-ounce jiggging spoons — drop to the bottom, crank once and keep them still.

BELTON: Hybrid striper are good on live shad.

BOB SANDLIN: Whites are good on slabs.

O.H. IVIE: Whites are good on live baits.

CATFISH



FALCON: Channel and blue catfish are excellent on frozen shrimp and stinkbait.

GIBBONS CREEK: Catfish are good on shrimp and nightcrawlers.

GRANBURY: Catfish are good on shrimp, stinkbait, and live minnows.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Catfish are good on live shad, cut baits and liver in the Rock Creek area.

SAM RAYBURN: Catfish are good on stinkbait, shrimp, and minnows.

CRAPPIE



CADDO: Crappie are excellent on red/white or red/green jigs in the pads along deeper creeks.

ARROWHEAD: Crappie are good on jigs fished deep off the derricks.

BREAM



WEATHERFORD: Bream are good on worms.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Bream are good on live worms near grass beds.

ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 50 degrees; 0.21' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored chatterbaits, black/chartreuse jigs or minnows worked in trees. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on live baits.

AMISTAD: Water clear; 64 degrees; 1.29' high. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, crankbaits, soft plastics, topwaters, and jigs. Striped bass are fair on slabs and jiggging spoons. White bass are fair on slabs and jiggging spoons. Catfish are good on cheesebait, shrimp, and nightcrawlers in 20-90 feet. Yellow catfish are fair on trotlines and droplines baited with live perch.

ARROWHEAD: Water lightly stained; 46 degrees; 6.14' low. Black bass are fair on chatterbaits and shallow-running crankbaits off secondary points.

ATHENS: Water stained, 45-48 degrees; 0.62' low. Black bass are fair on 4" Yum Dingers, chatterbaits and jigs. Crappie are fair on live minnows. Catfish are fair to good.

BASTROP: Water lightly stained. Black bass are fair on chartreuse/blue and chartreuse/white soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and Rat-L-Traps. Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait, chicken livers, and frozen shrimp.

BELTON: Water clear; 64 degrees; 2.41' low. Black bass are good trolling Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are good on minnows under lights at night. Channel and blue catfish are good on shrimp and frozen shad.

BOB SANDLIN: Water stained; 45-49 degrees; 0.35' low. Black bass are fair on wacky rigs, Rat-L-Traps and spinnerbaits. White bass are good on slabs. 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; 68 degrees. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are fair on live shad and silver jiggging spoons. Redfish are good on live perch and shad near the dam. Channel catfish are good on liver, frozen shrimp, and cut shad. Blue catfish are good on cut bait and shad.

BRIDGEPORT: Water fairly clear; 46-49 degrees; 7.72' low. Black bass are fair on chrome/blue back Rat-L-Traps, crankbaits and jigs.

BROWNWOOD: Water stained; 53 degrees; 4.73' low. Hybrid striper are slow. White bass are excellent on Li'l Fishies and crawdad crankbaits. Crappie are excellent on Li'l Fishies and tube jigs. Channel catfish are slow.

BUCHANAN: Water clear; 64 degrees; 15.45' low. Black bass are good on Texas-rigged worms, watermelon red curl tail grubs on jigheads, and suspending blue back shads along ledges and points in 10-20 feet. Striped bass are good drifting live shad and jiggging swim baits and minnows around Garrett Island in 25-40 feet. White bass are fair.

CADDO: Water off-color; 45-49 degrees; 0.57' high. Black bass are fair on jigs, white spinnerbaits and Texas-rigged Senkos (with a light weight). 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; 68 degrees. Black bass are fair on small crankbaits. Striped bass are fair on live shad. Redfish are fair on live perch and shad in 15-30 feet. Channel and blue catfish are good on liver, frozen shrimp, and

nightcrawlers.

CANYON LAKE: Water clear; 64 degrees; 10.79' low. Striped bass are fair jiggging minnows and trolling on down riggers. White bass are fair but small on blade baits. Smallmouth bass are very good on tomato red grubs, smoke/red flake tubes on jigheads and smoke drop shot worms.

CEDAR CREEK: Water stained; 45-49 degrees; 2.32' low. Black bass are fair on jigs, spoons and Texas rigs. White bass are fair to good on chartreuse/white slabs. Hybrid striper are slow to fair on live shad and Sassy Shad. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers and cut shad.

CHOKE CANYON: Water lightly stained; 67 degrees; 5.18' low. Black bass to 5 pounds are good on heavy jigs and large soft plastic lizards in the grass, and fair on crankbaits. Crappie are slow but

and drop-offs. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Channel catfish are good on live and cut baits.

HUBBARD CREEK: Water lightly stained; 50 degrees; 2.71' low. Black bass are fair on slow-rolled white spinnerbaits along secondary points and timber.

JOE POOL: Water off-color; 45-49 degrees; 2.47' low. Black bass are good on drop shot rigs and crankbaits in 6-10 feet. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs around bridge columns and brush piles.

LAKE O' THE PINES: Water stained; 45-48 degrees; 0.43' high. 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; 45-49 degrees; 4.58' low. Black bass are fair on crankbaits and Texas-rigged worms fished around riprap. Crappie are good on minnows in 20-30 feet.

LBJ: Water stained; 65 degrees;

and drop-offs. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Channel catfish are good on live and cut baits.

OAK CREEK: Water lightly stained; 49 degrees; 2.15' low. Black bass are fair.

PALESTINE: Water lightly stained; 45-49 degrees; 0.21' low. Black bass are fair to good on Carolina-rigged watermelon lizards, chatterbaits and jiggging spoons.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Water stained; 53 degrees; 2.51' low. Black bass are fair on brown jigs along creek channels bends in 12-18 feet depth.

PROCTOR: Water stained; 65 degrees; 4.48' low. Black bass are fair on black/purple and chartreuse soft plastic worms. Crappie are good on minnows and chartreuse/black tube jigs. Channel and blue catfish to 4 pounds are good on frozen shad.

RAY HUBBARD: Water stained; 45-49 degrees; 1.43' low. Black bass are fair on white/chartreuse spinnerbaits, Carolina rigs and Rat-L-Traps.

RAY ROBERTS: Water stained to murky; 45-48 degrees; 2.33' low. Black bass are fair on XCaliber jerkbaits and 3" grubs. White bass are excellent on jiggging spoons—drop to the bottom, crank once and keep them still. Catfish are good on prepared bait under the cormorant roosts.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: Water off-color; 45-49 degrees; 4.22' low. Black bass are fair to good on crankbaits, Texas-rigged purple worms and jigs.

SAM RAYBURN: Water lightly stained; 67 degrees; 6.89' low. Black bass are good on tequila sunrise soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits.

SOMERVILLE: Water fairly clear; 2.87' low. Black bass are good on silver spinnerbaits.

TAWAKONI: Water lightly stained; 44-49 degrees; 3.88' low. Black bass are fair on white/chartreuse spinnerbaits, flukes and black/blue jigs.

TEXOMA: Water off-color; 45-50 degrees; 1.93' low. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, chrome crankbaits and Carolina rigs. Striped bass are good on slabs, Sassy Shad and live shad.

TOLEDO BEND: Water clear; 67 degrees; 3.39' low. Black bass are fair on soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and Rat-L-Traps.

TRAVIS: Water clear; 65 degrees; 24.89' low. Black bass to 4 pounds are good on lavender shad crankbaits, black worms, and smoke grubs in 10-24 feet.

WALTER E. LONG: Water clear; 66 degrees. Black bass are slow.

WEATHERFORD: Water lightly stained; 45-49 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. Channel catfish are good on minnows and dough bait. Yellow catfish are good on live sunfish.

WHITNEY: Water clear; 9.69' low. Black bass are fair on green pumpkin and tequila sunrise spinnerbaits, crankbaits, and Rat-L-Traps.

WICHITA: Water lightly stained; 44 degrees; 0.91' low. Crappie are fair on minnows or live shad near the dam and pavilion poles.

WRIGHT PATMAN: Water lightly stained; 45-50 degrees; 4.43' high. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, flukes and jigs.

HOT SPOT



Lake Conroe

Water murky; 1.10' low. Black bass are good on watermelon red and watermelon gold soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and Rat-L-Traps in 20-30 feet. Striped bass are good on live minnows and green striper jigs. Crappie are good on minnows. Catfish are fair on stinkbait, liver, and shrimp.

some large ones caught on minnows. Channel and blue catfish are good on punchbait in 2-7 feet.

COLEMAN: Water clear; 66 degrees; 5.58' low. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait, liver, and frozen shrimp.

FALCON: Water clear; 63 degrees. Black bass are fair on slow-rolled spinnerbaits and on large worms with light weights in 12-18 feet.

FORK: Water lightly stained; 45-50 degrees; 0.63' low. Black bass are fair on slow-rolled spinnerbaits, spoons and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on prepared baits and nightcrawlers.

GIBBONS CREEK: Water clear. Black bass are fair on tequila sunrise soft plastics, spinnerbaits, and crankbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows.

GRANBURY: Water clear; 2.00' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red and pumpkinseed soft plastics.

GRAPEVINE: Water off-color; 44-49 degrees; 6.96' low. Black bass are slow to fair on crankbaits, spinnerbaits, drop shot rigs and finesse jigs.

GREENBELT: Water lightly stained; 44 degrees; 27.92' low. Black bass are slow on black/blue jigs or live baits along tree lines. Walleye are fair on live baits and crankbaits.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water clear; 53 degrees; 0.53' high. White bass are slow. Crappie are good on live minnows off piers on the north side of the lake. Channel and blue

0.10' low. Black bass are good on pumpkin drop shot worms, jigs and green pumpkin tubes on docks and seawalls.

LEWISVILLE: Water off-color; 45-49 degrees; 3.97' low. Black bass are fair on chrome Rat-L-Traps, crankbaits and Carolina rigs.

LIVINGSTON: Water fairly clear; 63 degrees; 0.25' high. Black bass are good on soft plastics and crankbaits. Crappie are good on minnows. Blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with shad.

MACKENZIE: Water lightly stained; 45 degrees; 76.32' low. Black bass are slow on live baits.

MEREDITH: Water lightly stained; 44 degrees; 73.21' low. Black bass are slow on shad-colored crankbaits and minnows along secondary points and channels.

MONTICELLO: Water fairly clear; 76-90 degrees; 0.35' low. Black bass are good on topwaters early, later switching to wacky rigs, Rat-L-Traps and chatterbaits. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs over brush piles.

NASWORTHY: Water lightly stained; 51 degrees. Black bass are slow on live baits.

NAVARRO MILLS: Water stained; 58 degrees; 2.81' low. Black bass are good on Rat-L-Traps. Channel and blue catfish are good on shrimp and doughbait.

O.H. IVIE: Water lightly stained; 52 degrees; 11.89' low. Black bass are fair on black/blue jigs and live baits worked along points near channels

SALTWATER SCENE

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

SOUTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell and pods of shad. Bull redfish are good at the jetty.

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 while working slicks and pods of mullet. Redfish are fair to good around the spillway and in the marsh on natural baits.

EAST GALVESTON BAY: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell in 4-6 feet of water on soft plastics. Redfish are good in the cuts and sloughs leading to the marsh. Rising tides have pushed redfish in the back waters of the marsh.

WEST GALVESTON BAY: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell and mud. Bull redfish and sharks have been taken at the jetty.

TEXAS CITY: Sand trout and croaker have been taken on fresh shrimp around the rocks and in the holes. Redfish are fair to good in Moses Lake on mullet.

FREEPORT: Bull redfish are good at the jetty on shrimp and crabs. Trout are fair.

EAST MATAGORDA: Trout are fair to good while drifting over shell. Trout are fair to good on the south shoreline. Best fish have come over mud.

MATAGORDA: Trout are fair to good while drifting mud and shell on Gulps under popping corks. Redfish are fair on the south shoreline of West Bay in the guts and cuts. Rising tides have pushed redfish into Oyster Lake.

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. Redfish are good in the back lakes.

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 edges of the Estes Flats.

PORT ARANSAS: Redfish are fair to good on the East Flats with the high tides. Bull redfish are good at the jetty and on the edge of the Intracoastal on crabs, finger mullet, cut-bait and fresh table shrimp.

CORPUS CHRISTI: Redfish are good on shrimp and Gulps on the edges of the spoils in the Intracoastal and in the Humble Channel.

BAFFIN BAY: Redfish are fair to good at Yarbrough on soft plastics and gold spoons. Trout are good soft plastics under corks around rocks, on sand and on grass.

PORT MANSFIELD: Trout are good around pods of bait on soft plastics and suspending baits. Redfish are good around East Cut on mullet and other natural baits.

SOUTH PADRE: Rising tides have pushed fish on the flats in the afternoon. Trout, redfish and black drum are fair to good on the edge of the flats in the morning.

PORT ISABEL: Trout are fair to good while drifting the flats on Gulps, shrimp and plastics. Redfish are good around the spoils.

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Moon Phases

New  Dec 27 First  Jan 4 Full  Jan 10 Last  Jan 17

Tides

Sabine Pass				Freeport				Corpus Christi			
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
12/24 3:42 p.m.	7:29 a.m.	---	---	12/24 3:43 p.m.	6:59 a.m.	---	---	12/24 3:51 p.m.	6:37 a.m.	---	---
12/25 4:12 p.m.	8:00 a.m.	---	---	12/25 4:13 p.m.	7:30 a.m.	---	---	12/25 4:21 p.m.	7:08 a.m.	---	---
12/26 4:41 p.m.	8:32 a.m.	---	---	12/26 4:42 p.m.	8:02 a.m.	---	---	12/26 4:50 p.m.	7:40 a.m.	---	---
12/27 5:12 p.m.	9:04 a.m.	11:43 p.m.	9:07 p.m.	12/27 5:13 p.m.	8:34 a.m.	11:44 p.m.	8:37 p.m.	12/27 5:21 p.m.	8:12 a.m.	11:52 p.m.	8:15 p.m.
12/28 5:43 p.m.	9:37 a.m.	---	9:26 p.m.	12/28 5:44 p.m.	9:07 a.m.	---	8:56 p.m.	12/28 5:52 p.m.	8:45 a.m.	---	8:34 p.m.
12/29 12:17 a.m.	10:10 a.m.	6:15 p.m.	10:09 p.m.	12/29 12:18 a.m.	9:40 a.m.	6:16 p.m.	9:39 p.m.	12/29 12:26 a.m.	9:18 a.m.	6:24 p.m.	9:17 p.m.
12/30 12:41 a.m.	10:42 a.m.	6:44 p.m.	11:15 p.m.	12/30 12:42 a.m.	10:12 a.m.	6:45 p.m.	10:45 p.m.	12/30 12:50 a.m.	9:50 a.m.	6:53 p.m.	10:23 p.m.
12/31 1:02 a.m.	11:14 a.m.	7:08 p.m.	---	12/31 1:03 a.m.	10:44 a.m.	7:09 p.m.	11:58 p.m.	12/31 1:11 a.m.	10:22 a.m.	7:17 p.m.	11:36 p.m.
1/1 2:01 a.m.	12:28 a.m.	7:16 p.m.	11:45 a.m.	1/1 2:02 a.m.	11:15 a.m.	7:17 p.m.	---	1/1 2:10 a.m.	10:53 a.m.	7:25 p.m.	---
1/2 4:26 a.m.	1:50 a.m.	7:27 p.m.	12:20 p.m.	1/2 4:27 a.m.	1:20 a.m.	7:28 p.m.	11:50 a.m.	1/2 4:35 a.m.	12:58 a.m.	7:36 p.m.	11:28 a.m.
1/3 7:58 a.m.	2:41 a.m.	7:28 p.m.	1:01 p.m.	1/3 7:59 a.m.	2:11 a.m.	7:29 p.m.	12:31 p.m.	1/3 8:07 a.m.	2:10 a.m.	7:16 p.m.	12:09 p.m.
1/4 10:26 a.m.	3:24 a.m.	7:16 p.m.	1:58 p.m.	1/4 10:27 a.m.	2:54 a.m.	7:17 p.m.	1:28 p.m.	1/4 10:35 a.m.	2:32 a.m.	7:25 p.m.	1:06 p.m.
1/5 12:12 p.m.	4:08 a.m.	6:37 p.m.	3:49 p.m.	1/5 12:13 p.m.	3:38 a.m.	6:38 p.m.	3:19 p.m.	1/5 12:21 p.m.	3:16 a.m.	6:46 p.m.	2:57 p.m.
1/6 1:17 p.m.	4:55 a.m.	---	---	1/6 1:18 p.m.	4:25 a.m.	---	---	1/6 1:26 p.m.	4:03 a.m.	---	---
1/7 2:08 p.m.	5:46 a.m.	---	---	1/7 2:09 p.m.	5:16 a.m.	---	---	1/7 2:17 p.m.	4:54 a.m.	---	---
1/8 2:55 p.m.	6:39 a.m.	---	---	1/8 2:56 p.m.	6:09 a.m.	---	---	1/8 3:04 p.m.	5:47 a.m.	---	---
1/9 3:40 p.m.	7:33 a.m.	10:48 p.m.	8:24 p.m.	1/9 3:41 p.m.	7:03 a.m.	10:49 p.m.	7:54 p.m.	1/9 3:49 p.m.	6:41 a.m.	10:57 p.m.	7:32 p.m.
1/10 4:22 p.m.	8:27 a.m.	---	8:49 p.m.	1/10 4:23 p.m.	7:57 a.m.	---	---	1/10 4:31 p.m.	7:35 a.m.	---	7:57 p.m.
1/11 12:06 a.m.	9:20 a.m.	5:00 p.m.	9:31 p.m.	1/11 12:07 a.m.	8:50 a.m.	5:01 p.m.	9:01 p.m.	1/11 12:15 a.m.	8:28 a.m.	5:09 p.m.	8:39 p.m.
1/12 1:19 a.m.	10:12 a.m.	5:33 p.m.	10:28 p.m.	1/12 1:20 a.m.	9:42 a.m.	5:34 p.m.	9:58 p.m.	1/12 1:28 a.m.	9:20 a.m.	5:21 p.m.	9:36 p.m.
1/13 2:34 a.m.	11:02 a.m.	6:02 p.m.	11:37 p.m.	1/13 2:35 a.m.	10:32 a.m.	6:03 p.m.	11:07 p.m.	1/13 2:43 a.m.	10:10 a.m.	6:11 p.m.	10:45 p.m.

Solunar Table

Major/Minor periods:

	Houston	Dallas	San Antonio	Amarillo
12/24	8:42a/2:30a	4:45p/10:56p	8:48a/2:36a	4:51p/11:02p
12/25	9:07p/2:54p	5:09a/11:20a	9:13p/3:00p	5:15a/11:26a
12/26	9:28a/3:15a	5:32p/11:44p	9:34a/3:21a	5:38p/11:50p
12/27	9:53p/3:40p	5:55a/12:08p	9:59p/3:46p	6:01a/12:14p
12/28	10:15a/4:03a	6:20p/---	10:21a/4:09a	6:26p/---
12/29	10:40p/4:28p	6:44a/12:30a	10:46p/4:34p	6:50a/12:36a
12/30	11:05a/4:52a	7:12p/12:58p	11:11a/4:58a	7:18p/1:04p
12/31	11:30p/5:17p	7:36a/1:20a	11:36p/5:23p	7:42a/1:26a
1/1	11:27a/5:43a	8:06p/1:51p	11:33a/5:49a	8:12p/1:57p
1/2	---	6:07p	8:31a/2:15a	---
1/3	12:22a/6:34a	9:04p/2:48p	12:28a/6:40a	12:22a/2:54p
1/4	12:45p/6:57p	9:31a/3:14a	12:51p/7:03p	12:45p/3:20a
1/5	1:13a/7:24a	10:04p/3:47p	1:19a/7:30a	1:13a/3:53p
1/6	1:35p/7:47p	10:33a/4:16a	1:41p/7:53p	1:35p/4:22a
1/7	2:03a/8:14a	11:05p/4:49p	2:09a/8:20a	2:03a/4:55p
1/8	2:24p/8:35p	11:35a/5:20a	2:30p/8:41p	2:24p/5:26a
1/9	2:51a/9:01a	---	2:57a/9:07a	2:51a/5:56p
1/10	3:12p/9:22p	12:05a/6:22a	3:18p/9:28p	3:12p/6:28a
1/11	3:38a/9:48a	12:36p/6:50p	3:44a/9:54a	3:38a/6:56p
1/12	3:59p/10:09p	1:09a/7:22a	4:05p/10:15p	3:59p/7:28a
1/13	4:23a/10:34a	1:35p/7:48p	4:29a/10:40a	4:23a/7:54p

Sun and Moon

Sunrise/set

	Houston	Dallas	San Antonio	Amarillo
12/24	7:15a/5:28p	7:28a/5:27p	7:26a/5:41p	7:53a/5:40p
12/25	7:15a/5:28p	7:29a/5:28p	7:26a/5:42p	7:53a/5:41p
12/26	7:15a/5:29p	7:29a/5:29p	7:27a/5:42p	7:54a/5:41p
12/27	7:16a/5:30p	7:30a/5:29p	7:27a/5:43p	7:54a/5:42p
12/28	7:16a/5:30p	7:30a/5:30p	7:28a/5:44p	7:54a/5:43p
12/29	7:16a/5:31p	7:30a/5:31p	7:28a/5:44p	7:55a/5:43p
12/30	7:17a/5:32p	7:30a/5:31p	7:28a/5:45p	7:55a/5:44p
12/31	7:17a/5:32p	7:31a/5:32p	7:29a/5:46p	7:55a/5:45p
1/1	7:17a/5:33p	7:31a/5:33p	7:29a/5:46p	7:55a/5:46p
1/2	7:18a/5:34p	7:31a/5:34p	7:29a/5:47p	7:56a/5:46p
1/3	7:18a/5:34p	7:31a/5:34p	7:29a/5:48p	7:56a/5:47p
1/4	7:18a/5:35p	7:31a/5:35p	7:29a/5:49p	7:56a/5:48p
1/5	7:18a/5:36p	7:32a/5:36p	7:30a/5:49p	7:56a/5:49p
1/6	7:18a/5:37p	7:32a/5:37p	7:30a/5:50p	7:56a/5:50p
1/7	7:18a/5:37p	7:32a/5:38p	7:30a/5:51p	7:56a/5:51p
1/8	7:18a/5:38p	7:32a/5:38p	7:30a/5:52p	7:56a/5:51p
1/9	7:18a/5:39p	7:32a/5:39p	7:30a/5:52p	7:56a/5:52p
1/10	7:18a/5:40p	7:32a/5:40p	7:30a/5:53p	7:56a/5:53p
1/11	7:18a/5:41p	7:32a/5:41p	7:30a/5:54p	7:56a/5:54p
1/12	7:18a/5:42p	7:31a/5:42p	7:30a/5:55p	7:56a/5:55p
1/13	7:18a/5:42p	7:31a/5:43p	7:30a/5:56p	7:55a/5:56p

Moonrise/set

	Houston	Dallas	San Antonio	Amarillo
12/24	4:56a/3:10p	5:12a/3:08p	5:08a/3:24p	5:38a/3:20p
12/25	5:22a/3:56p	6:07a/3:54p	6:03a/4:10p	6:34a/4:06p
12/26	6:44a/4:47p	7:00a/4:46p	6:55a/5:02p	7:27a/4:57p
12/27	7:31a/5:42p	7:47a/5:41p	7:43a/5:56p	8:13a/5:53p
12/28	8:14a/6:38p	8:29a/6:38p	8:26a/6:52p	8:54a/6:51p
12/29	8:52a/7:35p	9:05a/7:36p	9:04a/7:49p	9:30a/7:51p
12/30	9:26a/8:32p	9:38a/8:34p	9:38a/8:45p	10:01a/8:50p
12/31	9:57a/9:27p	10:07a/9:32p	10:09a/9:41p	10:29a/9:49p
1/1	10:26a/10:23p	10:34a/10:29p	10:38a/10:36p	10:55a/10:48p
1/2	10:54a/11:20p	11:01a/11:28p	11:07a/11:33p	11:20a/11:48p
1/3	11:23a/none	11:29a/none	11:36a/none	11:46a/none
1/4	11:55a/12:19a	11:58a/12:28a	12:08p/12:31a	12:14p/12:50a
1/5	12:30p/1:21a	12:32p/1:32a	12:43p/1:33a	12:47p/1:55a
1/6	1:11p/2:26a	1:11p/2:40a	1:25p/2:39a	1:25p/3:04a
1/7	2:01p/3:36a	2:00p/3:51a	2:15p/4:48a	2:12p/4:17a
1/8	3:00p/4:46a	2:58p/5:02a	3:14p/4:58a	3:10p/5:29a
1/9	4:08p/5:54a	4:06p/6:10a	4:22p/6:06a	4:18p/6:38a
1/10	5:21p/6:56a	5:21p/7:11a	5:36p/7:08a	5:34p/7:37a
1/11	6:35p/7:48a	6:36p/8:02a	6:49p/8:00a	6:51p/8:27a
1/12	10:54a/11:20p	11:01a/11:28p	11:07a/11:33p	11:20a/11:48p
1/13	8:54p/9:11a	8:59p/9:21a	9:07p/9:23a	9:16p/9:43a

OUTDOOR PUZZLER

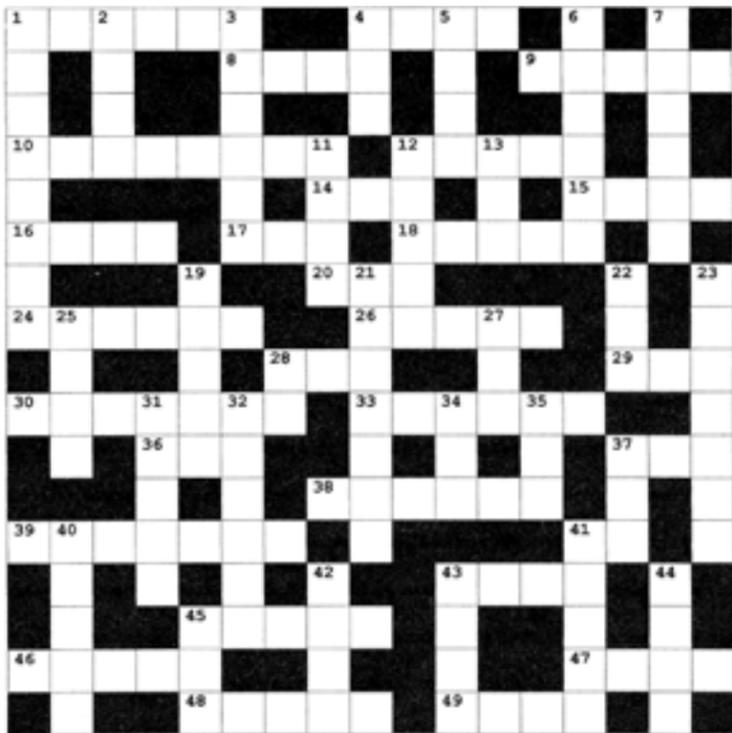
ACROSS

- Worn by fly-fishermen
- Deer markings on tree trunks
- Hunting station, _____ stand
- Game homes
- Game and bird shooter's quarry
- A gobbler's mating walk
- A bear resting place
- Rim of a field area
- Oxidation on gun parts
- A turtle will lay 50 of these
- Iccefishing gear
- Large appendage on a muley
- A grouping of fish
- A hunter's lure
- A very large bass species
- A game pathway
- A fly pattern for bass
- Good wood for arrow shafts
- The line grommet on a fishing rod
- A gun organization
- A wood duck nickname
- Expels a fired cartridge
- Signifies a type bullet
- Term for game fish sighted but not hooked
- Do this to hunting and scouting routes
- A deer food
- The antlers
- Part of the antlers
- A grouping of animals

DOWN

- Natural fishing lures
- A species of sheep
- Act of fish hitting a bait
- Best lure color to attract fish
- This should be insulated
- Worn to keep snow, pebbles out of shoes
- Color worn by hunters for safety
- Outer area of a hunting field
- Trapper's gear

Solution on Page 24



- A deer lure, scent _____
- A grouping of quail
- Permits use of smaller caliber ammo
- A good wood for arrow shafts
- Name given whitetails in Arizona
- Trapped for the fur
- A wild turkey predator
- Signifies a shotgun model
- Fish classed as a roamer
- The kick from firing a gun
- Protects shoulder from gun recoil
- A striper's tail rings determine this
- Brings in a catch
- A nongame bird
- An appendage on a wild turkey
- Name for the Hawaiian goose
- A type of arrowhead used in streams
- The recoil from a fired gun
- The outdoorsman's pest

Outdoor Puzzler
Wilbur "Wib" Lundeen

FOR THE TABLE

Chipotle venison burger

- 1 1/2 pounds ground venison
- 1/4 cup yellow onion, minced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon dried Italian seasoning
- 2 tablespoons chipotle chilies with adobo sauce, minced
- 4 slices pepper jack cheese
- 4 sturdy burger buns or Kaiser rolls
- 4 large lettuce leaves
- 4 slices tomato



Combine ground venison with next seven ingredients and mix well. Form into four patties about three-quarters of an inch thick. Place on a white-hot, well-oiled

barbecue grill, and brown evenly on both sides, about 4 minutes per side. Melt cheese over top before removing from grill.

Place in buns with lettuce, tomato and your choice of condiments.

— Recipe from Scott Leysath, *The Sporting Chef*, huntfishcook.com.

Catfish with crabmeat sauce

- 1 6-ounce can crabmeat
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 cup green onions, sliced
- 1/4 cup shredded carrot
- 2 teaspoons oregano
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 bay leaf
- 3/4 cup milk
- Salt and pepper
- 1 1/2 cup chardonnay or dry white wine
- 4 catfish fillets (or trout, crappie or other mild fish)

ions, 1 teaspoon oregano, garlic and bay leaf, and salt and pepper to taste.

Bring to boil and simmer 5 minutes. Place fish in glass baking dish and pour hot herbed wine over fish. Bake 10 to 15 minutes until fish is flaky.

While cooking, prepare sauce by melting butter in a saucepan and adding the rest of the ingredients, except for cornstarch and milk. Cook until onions are tender.

Mix cornstarch and milk together. Add to saucepan and cook until thickened, then serve over wine-poached fish.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In saucepan, combine wine, juice from crabmeat, 1/4 cup green on-

— Recipe from *Missouri Outdoors*.

OUTDOOR DATEBOOK

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

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



Jan. 8-11: The Texas Fishing, Hunting and Outdoors Show will be held at the Arlington Convention Center. For information, call (469) 549-0673 or visit texasfishingshow.com.

Jan. 8: The Dallas Woods and Waters Club monthly meeting will be held at the Sheraton North Dallas Hotel, with Tim Macmanus speaking about his Africa trip. For information, call (214) 570-8700.

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 Federal 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. For information, call (512) 494-2238.

Jan. 16-18: The Houston Safari Club Convention will be held at The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel. For information, call (713) 623-8844 or visit houston-safari-club.org.



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. For information, visit rotaryporta.com.

Jan. 17: The Eagle Lake Ducks Unlimited dinner will be held at the Eagle Lake Community Center. For information, call Duane at (281) 4114-4597.

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

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

Jan. 22: The Graham Ducks Unlimited dinner will be held at The Arena in Graham. For information, call Matt at (940) 521-0985.



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

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

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

Jan. 24: The Texas Trout Series tournament will be held at Bluff's Landing in Corpus Christi. For information, call (210) 385-3333 or visit troutseries.com.

Jan. 31: The Hill Country Safari Club International dinner will be held at the YO Ranch Resort Hotel in Kerrville. For information, contact Ward at (830) 896-6714 or ward@omniglobal.net.

Jan. 31: The Texas Hill Country Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game banquet will be held at the Community Center in

Georgetown. For information, call Aaron at (512) 260-3003.

Jan. 31: The Gulf Coast National Wild Turkey Federation dinner will be held at the Doyle Convention Center in Texas City. For information, call Troy at (281) 534-2890.



Feb. 5: The Erath County National Wild Turkey Federation dinner will be held at City Limits in Stephenville. For information, contact Daniel at (972) 533-5512 or danoprice86@gmail.com.

Feb. 6: The Dripping Springs NWTFF dinner will be held at Cabela's in Buda. For information, contact Heather at (512) 262-7443 or hruiz@austin.rr.com.

Have an event?
E-mail it to
editor@lonestar-outdoornews.com

Classic

Continued from Page 10

use heavy line and big baits.

Although it's hard to gauge what a river can tell an angler two months before a tournament, Jordon said history shows it's going to fish small, putting the 51 anglers in only a few prime spots. He said there's not a lot of backwater, and that's where the fish will most likely be, preparing for the spawn.

"If you take all three pools that we're going to fish, there are maybe 10 good backwater spots at the most," Jordon said.

Jones said he spent a lot of time trying to remedy that problem, looking for the hard-to-reach spots. He called it spelunking.

"I was looking for every far corner of every single bit of backwater I can find with fish-holding features," he said. "In the three real practice days, you don't want to waste a lot of time idling around looking for this stuff. I want to go to some specific areas so I can either confirm that I'm going to fish it or eliminate it."

Adding to the difficulty of trying to predict a body of water more than 60 days before they fish is the fickleness of water levels in a river. Jones said it could change as much as 4 feet, although he's predicting it will be 1 foot higher.

"It's just as likely to be 10 feet higher and rolling with mud when we get there," said Jordon, who has never fished the river during February.

Jones didn't put a whole lot of emphasis on the water levels or type of fishing he saw on his scouting trip. He said everything he learned and the spots he marked on his GPS serve to make practice easier when it really counts.

"The Classic is going to be won in the three days of practice before the event," he said. "It doesn't mean that I'll be catching fish everywhere I go, but at least I'll have the confidence that I'm in areas that could produce."

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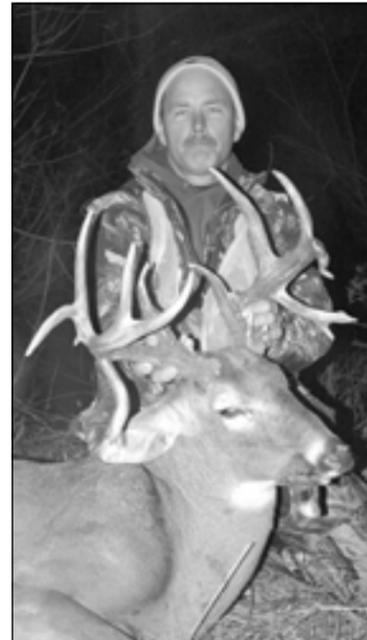
Scott Croner has the best job, ever. How so, you ask? Because he combines his lifelong passion for hunting and extensive knowledge of Nebraska wildlife in his Nebraska Hunting Company.

Croner started the company in 2002 after many years in the outdoors industry; he had worked for Knight Rifles and numerous companies in the outdoor industry. But the real experience and passion for what he would ultimately do for a living began as a young boy walking alongside his father and grandfather.

"When you are outdoors with friends, family and clients, the things that you experience are in your memory forever. I remember the hunts and the moments I have shared with everyone as if they happened yesterday. It is better than any video game or TV show and I get to play them back whenever I want."

Whether he is guiding clients, or not, you can usually find Croner in the field scouting or hunting whatever is in season. For instance, in the fall he leads hunts for trophy white-tailed deer, pheasants and waterfowl. Come spring, he is after snow geese and Merriam's turkey. It is his diligence that makes him a better outfitter, with a keen sense of exactly where to hunt what his clients desire.

"No outfitter can deliver unless they are in the field themselves. This is so much more than just a job. A good outfitter is constantly



afraid himself," said Croner.

Since he is always in the field, Croner has extensive knowledge of Nebraska, which allows the company access to the best outdoor opportunities available. The combination of knowledge and experience lets the company provide an outdoor adventure that hunters will remember for a lifetime. And isn't that why we hunt to begin with?

If turkey is what you're hoping for, none of his turkey hunters has ever gone home empty-handed. If deer is what you're dreaming of, the

deer his clients routinely harvest on NHC hunts score from 140 to 180.

Nebraska Hunting Co. is also booking Super Hunt packages. They are available next Oct. 1-31 in Kenmare, N.D. Hunters can pursue Canada geese, ducks, pheasants, partridge, sharptail grouse, tundra swans and sandhill cranes all on the same hunt.

The company is also leasing hunting land for their Ultimate Hunting Leases. These leases can accommodate groups of four to 10 hunters. Properties that are available range from 400 to 1,500-plus

acres depending on the number of hunters. Cost for these leases start at \$3,995 annually per hunter, which includes two trophy white-tails (archery, rifle, muzzleloader) and a bonus of antlerless deer. Also included in the Ultimate Hunting Lease is lodging, waterfowl hunting, and pheasant hunts.

You may not be able to have Scott Croner's job, but you can live it with him for awhile when you hunt with Nebraska Hunting Company. Call Scott at 402/304-1192 and book your hunt today!

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BIG ANGLERS, BIG CATS: Dallas Cowboys nose tackle Jay Ratliff, right, and his brother, Willie, display catfish they caught recently on Lake Lewisville. Ratliff's weighed 55 pounds, and the professional football player learned he had been chosen to play in the Pro Bowl the same day he made the catch.

Catch

Continued from Page 1

hit, and the battle was on. Jay Ratliff landed the monster weighing 55 pounds, and the celebration began.

While screaming and exchanging high fives, Jay received a text message. He ignored it for a while as photos were taken. But when he checked it, his second Christmas present arrived.

He learned he would be a starter in the Pro Bowl.

How did he celebrate?

The next afternoon, Jay, his wife and his little brother were at it again, catching several cats weighing more than 20 pounds, with most of the fish weighing 10 to 15 pounds.

"It's really on," Schiele said. "It should stay like this all winter."

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Dr. Larry Varner, Wildlife Nutritionist, Purina Mills. "Nutrient Availability in Deer Breeder Rations. Recent Field Data Reveals Significant Variations in Utilization"

11:00 AM
Dr. Mike Bringans, Reproductive Physiologist. "The Evolution of Reproductive Science in Whitetail Deer: From A.I. to E.T., In Vitro Fertilization, Cloning and Semen Sexing"

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Inova's palm-sized flashlight offers a stable base. The free-standing flashlight comes with a built-in clip so outdoorspersons can attach the light to their gear or clothing. Using LED technology, it gives users the option of eight light modes (three steady lights, four emergency lights and one locator beacon). This water-resistant flashlight operates in extreme environments and varying temperatures. Available in yellow or olive, the Inova 24/7 sells for about \$70.

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This bass fishing equipment by **Power Tackle** is designed for today's extreme power fishing techniques. The Paragon rods, tested on Lake Amistad, feature such components as double-footed recoil guides and Fuji ACS reel seats with an exposed section of the blank in the seat for maximum feel. The grip has grooves cut into it for each of the angler's fingers. This rod is moderately fast, which means more of the rod bends toward the middle. The increased action enables the rod to load up for a longer cast. More of the rod flexes, instead of just the tip, which enables the fisherman to stay in contact with the fish after the hook set, and keeps an equalized fighting pressure on the fish. The Paragon Rods, depending on model,

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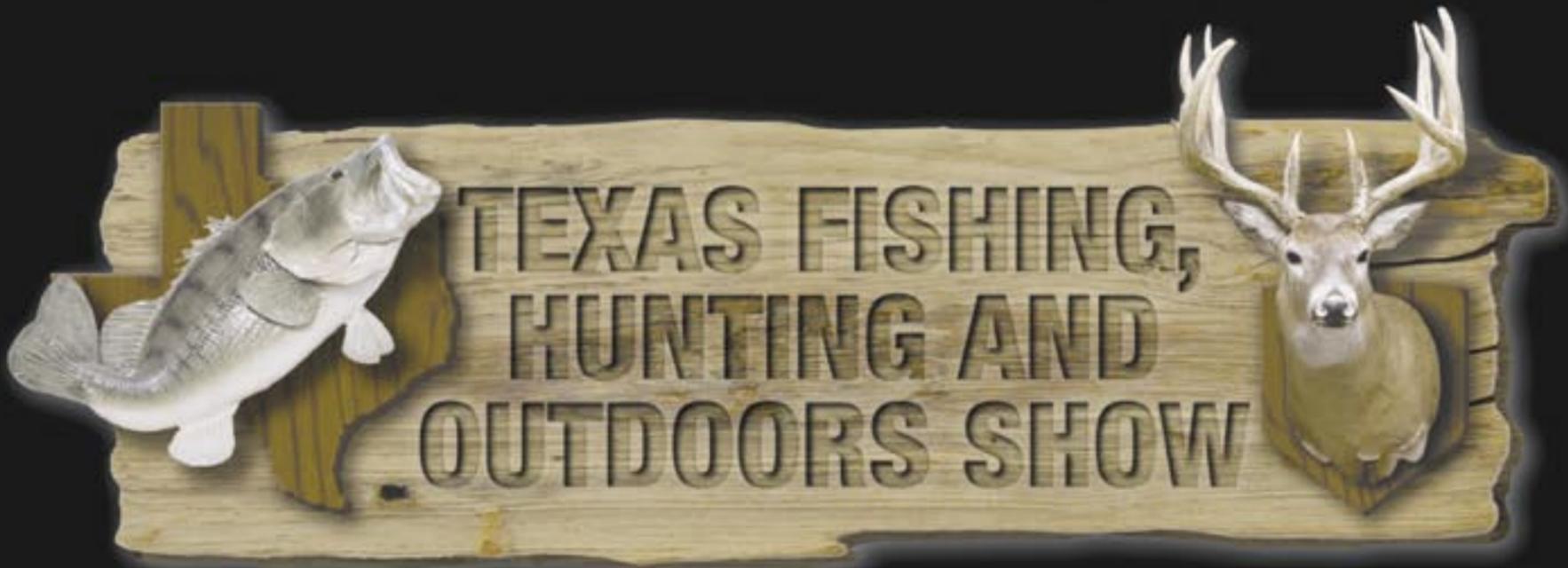


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Waterfowl hunting report

High Plains Mallard Management Unit

Overnight lows dipped down to about 5 degrees near Amarillo and Dumas, helping geese get in a feeding mode.

Strong winds gusting to 40 mph made it tough to decoy birds and keep decoys from blowing away.

More geese are roosting around Etter and Cactus Lake since the temperatures dropped.

Shallow playas are frozen, which has moved ducks to warmer and deeper feedlot ponds.

Knox City hunters have taken wigeons, mallards, gadwalls and teal.

North Zone

More mallards arrived in Northeast Texas during the split, and a round

of rain during the past week helped recharge shallow sloughs and backwaters.

Green-winged teal have been seen on shallow flats on lakes and reservoirs. Mallards have been solid on Lakes Wright Patman, Palestine, Fork, Tawakoni and Cooper. More divers have shown on Toledo Bend, Lake O' the Pines and Lake Fork.

Inland ponds near the coast were fair over the weekend. Mostly teal, gadwalls and shovelers were taken.

Water continues to be a problem near Sealy, Brookshire, Nome, China and Winnie. Lack of rain is drying ponds, and many landowners are not pumping because of the high costs.

South Zone

The second split of duck season

was generally good along the coast. Limit hunts were posted near Wharton, East Bernard, Garwood, Chesterville, Eagle Lake and El Campo.

Ducks flew early, then a little later in the morning because of the full moon. On the east side of Houston near High Island, good hunts for gadwalls and wigeons were posted in the marsh. The Collegeport marsh saw good hunts for greenwings and bluewings.

Hunting was fair to good in the bay near Port O'Connor and Rockport.

Snow geese have decoyed well over rice and some groups are beginning to hit green fields.

Many more Canada geese have hit the coast.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report.

Rut

Continued from Page 1

scrapes. I saw more deer rubbing trees than I've seen in a long time."

Kaiser said he finally chose a heavy South Texas buck that scored 145 with a broken brow tine.

Katharine Armstrong of the Armstrong Ranch in Kenedy County agreed.

"Our rut is in full bore right now," she said. "I think the cool weather that came in sped things up."

A study by Texas Parks and Wildlife of the rut in white-tailed deer indicates that the peak breeding date in the eastern portion of South Texas is Dec. 16, while in the western portion it is Dec. 24.

And if the conditions to the west are like those described by Tony Foyt, who hunts and operates Foyt Game Ranch near Del Rio, the calendar is right on. "We're about one week away," Foyt



RUT BUCK: Kurt Kaiser of Sidney, Neb., right, took this 151 gross buck south of Sabinal during a full rut. With him is Wade Middleton. Photo by Kevin Giesecke.

said. "They're running a little now but there necks aren't real swollen and we're still seeing a lot of does by themselves."

But the bucks are giving signs of a full-blown rut soon.

"We've been doing some rattling, and they're coming pretty quick," he said.

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Frontier	\$15	\$25	\$50
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JetBlue	\$0	\$20	\$75
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Spirit	\$15 online \$25 at airport	\$25	\$100
United	\$15	\$25	\$125
US Airways	\$15	\$25	\$100
Virgin America	\$0	\$25	\$50-\$100

Travel

Continued from Page 1

probably done great business for Tuffpak, which allows you to stuff more than just your firearm in a case. You have to be clever in how you travel these days.”

Last May, American Airlines became the first major airline to charge customers \$15 for the first piece of checked baggage and \$25 for the second.

Except for Southwest Airlines, most other airlines quickly followed suit. Airlines also upped fees for overweight and oversized bags as well as for multiple bags. A third checked bag, for example, can cost fliers as much as \$125 each way.

“I hate to say it, but a rifle case that just holds one rifle can be a wasted piece of luggage,” Thornton said.

Tom Parsons, CEO of bestfares.com, said hunters and anglers must think ahead.

“Once you start checking multiple bags, you can get up to hundreds of dollars per bag,” Parsons said. “You better refinance that home fast.”

Parsons and other travel experts say major airlines hope to maneuver consumers into accepting “à la carte” flying — where such things as baggage, meals, window seats, even blankets, cost extra. The tradeoff is a cheaper base ticket price.

Baggage fees were imposed to offset rising fuel prices. However, don't expect falling fuel prices to do away with them.

“You have to remember, baggage is a pain for everyone, airlines included,” Parsons said.

It takes about 10 people to check in, tag and load baggage, then unload it. And if baggage is lost — which the *Wall Street Journal* reports happens to at least one passenger per planeload — the handling cost mushrooms. But, also, the less baggage carried, the more cargo space there is. And cargo rates are more lucrative than baggage rates.

International fliers escape the brunt of baggage fees, given most airlines allow them to check at least two bags free.

“That's the big difference between international and domestic flying at the moment,” said Stephen Turner, vice



TRAVELING HEAVY:

A gun case moves up a conveyor belt as baggage handlers load luggage onto an airplane before departure. Travel costs have increased for hunters, too, who often carry extra gear — which adds extra pounds and, therefore, extra fees, to their airfare.

president of Gracy Travel International in San Antonio. “For now, hunters traveling internationally shouldn't be charged for their baggage. However, the way things are going, it wouldn't surprise me if that changes at some point.”

Although airlines limit the size of baggage on international flights, Turner said hunters aren't usually penalized for oversized gun cases.

“I'd say 99 percent of all airlines, because the gun case is a special item, overlook it,” Turner said. “Now, if it's oversized and also overweight, they may hit you up.”

Domestic hunters and anglers, though, must fly smarter if they want to save money. Here are a few tips:

Many airlines let people who travel frequently check their bags free, Parsons said. That goes for their friends, too.

“If you're going hunting or fishing, find someone who's an elite frequent flyer,” he said. “Then book your flight

under their record. That way, none of you have to pay for your baggage.”

Thornton said he's talked to many hunters who now leave their firearms at home when traveling.

“They borrow guns at their destination,” Thornton said. “I've done it myself in Africa. It's just such a hassle to travel with firearms these days. A lot of South Africans, in fact, make firearms available as part of their travel packages.”

Parsons recommends fliers always read the “contract of carriage” on airline Web sites before traveling. It gives all the specifics related to baggage charges.

That leads to his last tip — don't travel with dirty antlers.

“Some airlines, in their contract of carriage, say antlers must be as clean as possible,” Parsons said. “I always thought that was funny. But it gets back to this: Make sure you understand the baggage regulations before you get to the airport. Not after.”

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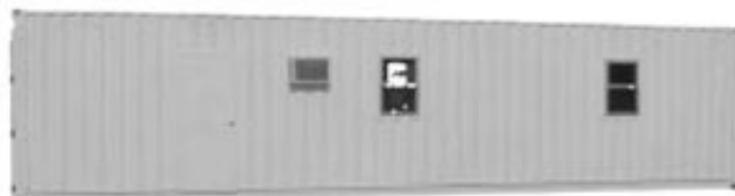


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