

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS



Buck's best friend
Deer benefit from modern hunters, a management expert says. **Page 6**

July 10, 2009 Texas' Premier Outdoor Newspaper Volume 5, Issue 22
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INSIDE HUNTING



Sweet Samurai

Not so popular when they were new, old Suzuki Samurais have new life.

Page 6

On crossbows

They may be easier to use than vertical bows, but crossbows still require practice and close proximity to targets.

Page 6

Duck numbers up

Estimates show a 13-percent increase this year in the U.S. duck population.

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FISHING



Light-tackle kings

Part of the year, anglers usually bound to the bays can chase deep-sea kingfish.

Page 9

Red River stripers

Striper fishing below Lake Texoma is seeing better days than the recent past.

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CONSERVATION

Issues of wildlife

Experts see a mix of notable issues affecting Texas wildlife.

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World's top bass caught in Japan?

Largemouth shy of 22 pounds, 5 ounces; could be tied with record

A Japanese angler may have landed the largest certified bass ever — by 1 ounce.

Manabu Kurita reportedly landed a 10.12-kilogram largemouth from Japan's Lake Biwa.

The weight converts to slightly less than 22 pounds, 5 ounces, and the

fish was nearly 29 inches long. Unconfirmed reports said the fish was caught on live bait, Japanese koi.

The world record largemouth, weighing 22 pounds, 4 ounces and caught by George Perry in Georgia, has stood since 1932.

Lake Biwa, the largest lake in Ja-

pan, covers about 259 square miles and is said to be the world's third oldest lake. It is surrounded by mountains and renowned for its beauty and deep (more than 300 feet), crystal clear waters.

Largemouth are considered an invasive species in Lake Biwa, and all

bass caught there must be kept. Officials contend native fish species are declining in the lake because of black bass and bluegill. In 2002, catch and release of those fish was prohibited at the lake.

See RECORD?, Page 25



A deep, blue blast

Offshore season in full swing

Capt. Cody Carruthers guides offshore clients out of Freeport but took a pleasure trip July 1 with friends in his 33-foot Pro-Line.

"We finally got a nice week of calm seas," he said. "It was as flat as it could be."

The group of five made a stop about 45 miles out for snapper and limited quickly using squid.

"Five people can catch two keeper fish each in two drifts usually," he said.

"The snapper have been great this year past 40 miles, but inside 30 miles it has been tougher to find keeper fish."

The group then moved out to about 50 miles seeking ling on sardines and picked up three.

OFFSHORE OBSESSION
■ Tournament blitz: Matagorda Bluewater Challenge. **Page 8**

See BLUE, Page 23

FROM THE DEPTHS: Anglers are plumbing the depths for deep-sea fish in blue water. Koby Fulks holds a 15-pound dorado caught in the Gulf of Mexico. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Future looks good for South Texas quail

Nesting habitat key to increasing populations

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

A 10-year study of South Texas quail has yielded dramatic results.

Lead researcher Fidel Hernandez of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute presented the highlights of the South Texas Quail Research Project last month at the Texas Wildlife Association state convention.

"We looked at things that influence quail," Hernandez said.

"Weather, land use, habitat and predators. Most management decisions have been based on short-term studies. This was a long-term application."

The study in Brooks County used radio telemetry to follow quail and trail cameras to watch the nests.

"We used nest cameras to look at predation," he said. "In Texas, coyotes are the main predator."

Comparatively, in Georgia and Florida, snakes are No. 1 on the predator list for quail eggs.

In the South Texas study, coyotes accounted for 33 percent of nest predation, followed by skunks (24 percent), fire ants (15 percent) and badgers (12 percent).

See QUAIL, Page 15



TRAILING QUAIL: Researchers finished a 10-year study on quail, using transmitters to study predation, relocation and nesting success. Photo by Fidel Hernandez, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute.

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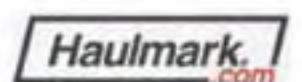
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CONSERVATION

Panel: Public education one of biggest issues facing wildlife

Urban growth ranks highly, too

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

At the Texas Wildlife Association annual convention last month in San Antonio, a panel of wildlife managers, enthusiasts and professionals was asked a simple but difficult question.

“What is the most important issue for wildlife in Texas, and why?”

Here are their responses.

David Morris
Tecomate Wildlife Systems

“Fragmentation and managing wildlife on smaller properties.”

Larry Wieshuhn of Uvalde
TWA co-founder

“The urbanization of Texas. More people don’t understand the value of the land and hunting.”

Irvin Welch of Hebronville
Ranch manager, Wagner Ranch

“Preserving rural values and ways of life. Most of the representative leaders are from urban areas.”

Greg Simons of San Angelo
Wildlife Systems

“Educating the public and the people that shape the regu-

latory policies that we deal with that 90 percent of state wildlife budgets come from hunting and fishing.”

Ty Bartoskewitz
Technical guidance/biologist,
Management Plans

“Fragmentation and the interruption of travel corridors for wildlife. Co-ops for managing wildlife and cattle grazing helps.”

Charles Davidson
President, TWA Foundation

“The human connection and making sure the things we care about are relevant to all Texans.”

Clayton Wolf
Big game program director,
Texas Parks and Wildlife

“Educating the public that what we do is relevant and involves things like the water that comes out of the tap.”

Brian Murphy
Executive director, Quality Deer
Management Association

“We can educate but we also have to use marketing and advertising to inform the public. In Colorado, there is 75 cents added to the license fee for marketing to promote hunting and fishing in the state.”



LONG-RANGE STRATEGY: Many wildlife experts said increased public education is one of the biggest issues facing wildlife in Texas. Photo by David J. Sams, LSON.

Conservation News in Brief

House passes record funding for wetlands

The U.S. House of Representatives is making a record investment in wetlands conservation by approving more than \$52 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Since its inception in 1989 as an implementation arm of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, NAWCA has conserved more than 24 million acres across the continent. NAWCA requires a \$1 match in local funds, private funds or both for each \$1 in grants from the federal government, but projects generally attract \$2 to \$3 for each \$1 in federal grants.

“Since it is so widely supported, a \$52 million investment from the federal government could mean a \$200 million return for wetlands conservation — that’s a lot of habitat acres on the ground,” said Scott Sutherland, director of governmental affairs for Ducks Unlimited.

— Ducks Unlimited report

Rare palms moved from border fence

The Nature Conservancy of Texas and Audubon Texas are working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Border and Customs Protection to save about 300 rare sabal palm trees that would otherwise be felled by continued construction of the U.S.-Mexico border fence.

The trees, some more than 100 years old, belong to one of the last remaining tracts of sabal palm forests in the country.

The palms are located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge and on private lands upon



TREE TRANSPLANT: Sabal palms are being relocated away from the border fence to protect the rare species in South Texas. Photo by Paco Felici, The Nature Conservancy of Texas.

which the fence will be built.

The trees will be replanted out of harm’s way within the refuge.

“These trees are an integral part of the living natural heritage of South Texas,” said Laura Huffman, director of The Nature Conservancy of Texas.

The relocation of the sabal palms is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the border fence project.

“Sabal palm forests provide outstanding habitat for a number of rare, threatened and endangered species,” said Max Pons, manager of the Conservancy’s Southmost Preserve. “On occasion, ocelots and jaguarundis have been reported at our Southmost Preserve.”

The trees are being removed from a 13-mile section of the border fence that runs along the northern reach of a levee built by the International Boundary and Water Commission.

— Nature Conservancy of Texas report

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HUNTING

Rebirth of an old warrior

Suzuki Samurais transformed into hunting vehicles

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Hunters get creative when it comes to their equipment, even vehicles. Although many use gas, diesel or electric four-wheelers, some have chosen another option — the much-maligned Suzuki Samurai.

The low-priced vehicle did well in America at first in the 1980s, but its ride was a little rough for city dwellers.

"It will beat you to death on the highway," said Mark "Woody" Wood, a mobile tool business owner and weekend guide at The Big Woods Hunting Resort near Palestine.

The vehicle was sold in the U.S. from 1985 to 1995, but rollover claims alleging a too-narrow wheelbase were its death knell.

"Lawyers killed the Samurai," Wood said.

Wood stumbled into his first Samurai and then started a trend.

"I started the whole mess," he said. "I was looking for a Jeep. I took a customer deer hunting, and it was supposed to rain in West Texas. I told the guy I didn't have a four-wheel drive and asked him to bring his pickup. He said, 'Why don't I bring my Samurai?'"

It poured the whole weekend.

"The thing went everywhere, and it had street tires on it," he said.

Wood soon owned a Samurai.

And the way he came into one was untraditional, too.

"The guy said he needed a toolbox," he said. "I traded him a \$2,000 toolbox for the Samurai."

The work took off from there.

"I put a folding windshield on it," Wood said. "And it needs the right

roof, too. Super mudder tires are about \$100 each. Then I got a welder to build some high racks on it."

Other owners trick it up to another level. Mark Warner of Dallas discovered the Samurai when he went hunting with Woody.

"We hunted in a predator tournament out of one," he said. "I started hunting for one after that — it's like a mobile hunting blind."

Warner's has a folding windshield, lift kit, big tires, lower gears at the front and the rear, and a locker in the front differential. A roofing contractor, Warner used roof paint in greens, gray and brown to camouflage it. He plans to add a rack on the front for game.

"The field-dressed game on the back rack gets dusty when you're driving," he said.

The thing went everywhere, and it had street tires on it.

— Mark "Woody" Wood, hunting guide

See SAMURAI, Page 23



TRICKED-UP HUNTING MACHINE: Jess Pinckard shows some of the accessories added to a 1986 Samurai at his business, Big D's Truck and Trailer. With the additions, he has spent about \$4,000. Photo by Craig Nyhus, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Rise of 'modern' hunter good for deer

Hunters better informed, more committed

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Brian Murphy, executive director of the Quality Deer Management Association, offered the organization's thoughts on the future of white-tailed deer populations and hunting in Texas and across the country.

"There is a lot of good news and a little bad news," Murphy said. "From the perspective of deer populations, we have more and more quality management of deer, more cooperatives between landowners, more good habitat and increased hunter success rates."

The good old days of deer hunting are now, Murphy said.

"There are large populations of whitetails in most states, along with strong public support for deer hunting."

Another positive has been a rise in the "modern deer hunter."

"The modern deer hunter is more knowledgeable about the deer, the land and management," he said. "He or she is more engaged in land management and conservation and is more concerned about the future of deer and deer hunting."

So what is the bad news?



KNOWLEDGE IS KEY: Many of today's hunters are better informed and more committed. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

See MODERN, Page 12

Going sideways in September

Crossbows: the other archery equipment

By Dan Armitage
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

"There's always a 'but,'" said Otte Snyder after pointing out the positives of Texas hunters' opportunity to pursue deer with a crossbow this season. After expounding on all the usual attributes offered by the pro-crossbow hunting clan, Snyder gives fair warning.

"The high-powered rifle hunter who thinks he's going to buy a crossbow and use it to knock down a whitetail at 100 yards better try it out at the store," he said. "Otherwise, he'll be returning it."

The belief that a crossbow is "nothing more than a silent .30-06" is one of many generalities that have been proven wrong over the past three decades. More than a dozen states' wildlife agencies consider crossbows as archery equipment. This year Texas joins many of the nation's largest hunting states, including Pennsylvania and Michigan, by allowing crossbows to be used alongside vertical bows during the deer archery season.

"What crossbows represent to Texans who hunt deer is a significant addition-

See CROSSBOWS, Page 17

HORIZONTAL HUNTING: Crossbow hunting has helped recruit younger hunters to the sport, crossbow enthusiasts said. But those thinking it is easy might be in for a surprise. Photo by Ohio Department of Natural Resources.



Dove, teal seasons set

State gives 70 days for dove hunting

Texas will have a statewide 70-day dove season and 15-bird daily bag limit, and teal season will last 16 days.

Federal officials recently approved the state's plan for the 2009-10 dove and teal seasons, which also include moving the Texas South Zone dove season opening to Sept. 18 this year.

Texas dove season in the North and Central Dove Zones will run Sept. 1 through Oct. 25 and Dec. 26 through Jan. 9, with a 15-bird bag and not more than two white-tipped doves.

The South Zone dove season will run Sept. 18 through Nov. 3, reopening Dec. 26 through Jan. 17 with a 15-bird bag and not more than two white-tipped doves.

The possession limit is twice the daily bag for all migratory game birds except light geese,

which does not have a possession limit.

The Special South Texas White-winged Dove Area will open to white-winged dove afternoon-only hunting the first two full weekends in September — Sept. 5-6 and 12-13 — and reopen when the regular South Zone season begins. The Special White-winged Dove Area season takes four of the allowable 70 days, so when the regular season opens, this area must close four days earlier than the rest of the South Zone. The daily bag limit is 15 birds, not more than four mourning doves during the first two weekend splits and two white-tipped doves. Once the general season opens, the aggregate bag limit will be 15.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also allowed Texas Parks and Wildlife to adjust a portion of the boundary of the Special White-winged Dove Area. This change would remove portions of Jim Hogg and Starr counties.

Texas' 16-day September teal season will run Sept. 12-27.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report

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FISHING

Into the Bluewater Challenge

Tournament puts anglers in search of deep-sea trio

By Kendal Larson
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

In the pre-dawn darkness, the crew of the Bleedin' Green anxiously waited inside the Matagorda jetties for first light. It was 5:20 a.m. — well after the starting time for the Matagorda Bluewater Challenge — but larger than expected seas kept them waiting.

The calm was broken by the crackle of their radio, the voice of a neighboring captain announced to another nearby boat, "You can follow us out if you want. We have radar and night vision here."

Several minutes later the same captain returned over the radio: "We've lost an engine, and we're stuck on a sand bar."

Bleedin' Green captain Clint Green radioed back, "We're close here — we'll come pull you off the bar," which they did as dawn reached out across the sky.

After their good deed, the crew had hopes that karma might be their friend. Although they had some good hookups, it was not to be for them this year in the Challenge last month.

Fifty teams competed for the top Calcutta prize this year. The crew of Boogeyman came out on top, taking home about \$20,800 for their winning combination of three fish. Their ling weighed 36.7 pounds, their dolphin 32.3 pounds, and their kingfish a measly 10 pounds — and was ridiculed by rival teams at the weigh-in. Boogeyman's captain, John Thomas Dusek, laughed and explained, "It's a three fish tournament, and it doesn't matter if you have a 30-pound kingfish and a 10-pound dolphin, or vice-versa as we did. It's the combined weight that matters."

Individual accomplishments included a



A DOUBLE: Paula Green, left, and Shanna Louis fight fish during the Matagorda Bluewater Challenge last month off the Texas coast in the Gulf of Mexico. The tournament has anglers competing to boat the heaviest combination of dorado, ling and kingfish. Photo by Kendal Larson, for Lone Star Outdoor News.

37.4-pound amberjack caught by 9-year-old John Reeder Jr., who fished with team On the Take, crewed by members of the San Marcos Police Officers Association.

"It took me more than a half an hour to

reel it in," Reeder said.

The first place Lady Angler award went to Pam Arnett, who caught a 47.9-pound amberjack as a member of team Cha Ching.

Asked if his catamaran handled the rough

seas well, Cha Ching crewmember Jett Brannen said, "First spot we got to we were the first boat there, and four boats showed up be-

See **BLUEWATER**, Page 18



LINING THE ROCKS: Anglers of all types are casting, wading and sometimes hoping for water to be released from Denison Dam on Lake Texoma, causing stripers to become active. Photo by Shannon Drawe, for Lone Star Outdoor News.

Stripers hot below Texoma dam

Release pushes fish through dam

By Shannon Drawe
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

The fireworks started early at Denison Dam on Lake Texoma.

Late spring rains in North Texas and along the Red River triggered a dramatic rise in lake levels. Floodgates at the Denison Dam were dumping not only water but a fresh supply of striped bass and baitfish into the Red River below the dam.

Paul Hastings, an avid fly-fisherman from Wylie, said he has been catching so many fish from the

rocks in the middle of the river that he usually loses count.

"There aren't a lot of really big ones, but it's good to see there are a few in here," he said.

At times in May the gates measured water released at 30,000 cubic feet per second. The gates were shut down in June after the flood pool was lowered and the lake hit the top of the conservation pool level.

In the meantime, fish that survived the ride through the gates found themselves in a new home in the Red River below the dam.

Closing the gates and returning them to a somewhat normal routine of daily water releases to generate electricity left an abundance of stripers, most on the small side

by Texoma standards, hungry and easy targets for anglers.

The last time these factors combined to create a feeding phenomenon was after the historic flooding in 2007. The floods also sent water over the spillway.

Hastings fished as often as three times a week below the dam after the floods of 2007. "This isn't nearly what 2007 was, but right now I am trying to get out here at least once a week even though it's 1 1/2 hours from my house," he said.

Hastings, originally from Billings, Mont., is no stranger to a fly rod, and once he saw the potential of locating and catching striped bass, he

See **DENISON**, Page 14

Truth to tell: Lie detectors rule

Tournaments rely on polygraphs to check legitimacy of catches

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Ty Howard of Richmond landed a tagged redfish June 13 from his kayak. Being registered for the CCASTAR tournament, he knew that meant a boat — and maybe even a truck.

The celebration paused when one word entered his mind — "polygraph."

"I knew I was legal but I was 10 kinds of nervous," said Howard, a police officer with the Fort Bend Independent School District. "The guy (polygraph examiner) was a real professional, and he asked stuff mostly about that day."

But some questions were unusual.

"He asked questions like, 'Have you ever wanted to cheat in a tournament and/or break any fish and game laws?'" Howard said.

The examiner may be assuming the answer to that question will be less than 100-percent truthful.

"That's called a comparison question," said polygraph examiner Mike Boyd, who conducts the examinations at his Houston office for STAR's tagged redfish and has performed exams at freshwater tournaments.

Another common comparison question is, "Did you ever lie to get

out of trouble?"

Boyd said the comparison questions are necessary to examine the truthfulness on the relevant questions about the specific fish, as it is assumed everyone has lied to get out of trouble at some point.

"It comes down to what is the person most concerned about," Boyd said. "If the psychological reaction is stronger to the comparison questions, it is more likely the person is being truthful about the relevant questions about the fish. If the person is not being truthful,

they will be more concerned about the two to four questions about the fish."

What about being nervous?

"There is always apprehension throughout the test — it doesn't affect the test results," Boyd said.

Howard said anglers should make sure they are staying within the law on any day in case they catch their prize.

"There was a question about how many fish I had kept that day," he said. "So if you were in your kayak and had three dead reds in the cooler and you caught the tagged one, you'd be illegal and over the limit."

Polygraph exams became fixtures

There is always apprehension throughout the test — it doesn't affect the test results.

— Mike Boyd, polygraph examiner

See **POLYGRAPH**, Page 13

From reds to light-tackle kings

Anglers usually bound to bay take kingfish during migration

By Brandon D. Shuler
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

A fleet of small skiffs and bay boats ply through the relative safety of the jetties and into the deep blue as blue water pushes in close to the beach. Gravid female kingfish move in with it to propagate the species, and the small-boat armada is there to greet them.

But instead of being armed with heavy-duty deep-sea gear, the boats are often armed with the same arms they use in the bays for reds and trout — plus a few wire leaders.

The ensuing battle scenes are tight and filled with battles that leave the combatants bruised, sore and full of well-seasoned war stories.

“During the summer I rig two types of topwaters,” said Capt. Pete Martinez of Port Mansfield. “My everyday treble hook Spooks and Spook Jrs., but I also rig another set of the same topwaters with single 3/0 hooks and wire leaders.”

Martinez starts the days early on the beachfront looking for tarpon, bonito and kings before moving into the bay for trout and reds.

Capt. Ted Springer also chases the fighting fish.

“The kings are easy to find,” Springer said. “I like to look for a color change where the water goes from a chocolate brown to offshore blue.”

Kingfish work the water edges — along Springer’s blue-brown line — and also edges formed between different types of baitfish, looking for easy meals.

The captains look for birds work-



CLOSE-IN KINGS: The toothy kingfish move closer to the beach with the blue water, opening up an opportunity for fishermen in smaller boats using conventional trout and redfish tackle. Photo by Brandon D. Shuler, for Lone Star Outdoor News.

ing the edges, especially birds that are working high and moving along the color line.

As for tackle, they prefer topwaters. “I watch a lot of guys throwing cut ribbon fish, spoons and jigs, and they get frustrated,” Springer said. “They start moving and repositioning, looking for fish and switching bait almost every other cast. Topwater — topwaters are the only way to go.”

Typically, predator fish such as kings and bigger jacks, unless they have a tightly packed baitball trapped on the surface, stay low and prowl for larger baitfish deeper in the water. That’s the reason for the high-flying birds — imagine the vi-

sual acuity a casting or polling platforms affords anglers; it’s the same for a bird.

Anglers casting a jig or spoon and cut bait may also miss one of the key components for attracting fish: noise. A large topwater makes a big noise, and once an opportunistic predator such as a king senses and keys in on an injured prey, the visuals and battles begin.

To the captains, few things are as rewarding as catching a 35-pound kingfish on their favorite trout rod. Besides the fun, it also teaches how to maximize the use of your reel and the rod’s fighting capabilities — like heavyweight training for the upcoming trophy-trout season.

Highway robbery — in the parking lot

Tow company accused of gouging at Padre parking lot

By Mark England
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Lee Love doesn’t believe in big government. She’ll make an exception, though, when it comes to the towing industry.

Her husband, Dan, and several other anglers made headlines when they were charged \$2,500 each to reclaim their vehicles after they were removed from the Padre Island National Seashore park over the Memorial Day weekend.

That’s why the Loves cheered Gov. Rick Perry’s recent signing of a bill aimed at predatory towing operators. The state will set the maximum towing fee allowed once the law takes effect.

Towers will also be required to accept debit cards, credit cards and electronic checks as payments. Towing companies that violate provisions could be hit with a Class B misdemeanor punishable by six months in jail and a fine up to \$2,000.

“I think regulation should be done city by city and county by county, honestly,” Lee said. “But in this case something had to be done.”

The Loves’ troubles started af-

ter Dan returned from an “amazing” fishing trip, his wife said. He caught the Texas grand slam: speckled trout, redfish and flounder. It was what got away, though, that claimed his attention once he returned to shore. His truck and trailer were missing.

The parking lot at Padre Island National Seashore had been full when her husband arrived, Lee said, and Dan and other latecomers parked along the road outside the lot. He didn’t notice a no-parking sign. A park ranger ticketed the vehicles and had them towed.

Dan Love, whose ticket was later dismissed, and the others were about to learn a valuable lesson — private property tows in Texas are not always regulated.

“To me, \$200 is real money,”

Lee said. “\$2,500? That’s devastating. Could you afford that? Could most people?”

Tow companies in parts of Texas operate in a virtual no-man’s land. No one has jurisdiction over them. At Padre Island National Sea-

shore, for example, no federal law regulates vehicle towing. And the park sits in Kleberg County, which also doesn’t regulate the industry.

That can lead to an open season on wallets. Help is on the way, but it could be as late as Sept. 1, 2010, before statewide towing rates are set.

The Commission on Licensing

To me, \$200 is real money. \$2,500? That’s devastating.”

— Lee Love, whose vehicles were towed

See TOWING, Page 13



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GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

CAGED CRITTERS ONLY PART OF PROBLEM

While on his way to Possum Kingdom Lake, Palo Pinto County Game Warden Cliff Swofford was flagged down by Palo Pinto County sheriff's deputies, who had people stopped with a couple of raccoons in a cage in the back of their truck. Swofford helped the deputies, and ultimately four people were interviewed and arrested. The charges include theft of cattle, burglary, felon in possession of a firearm and four counts of hunting without landowner consent.

ROWDY SWIMMER MAKES SPLASH AT JAIL

Eastland County Game Warden Zach Havens and Brown County Game Wardens Jarrett Barker and Travis Allen received multiple complaints from fishermen and campers at the Lake Leon Dam. The complaints were in reference to an intoxicated individual who was cursing the fishermen and making lewd remarks to some of the women in the campground. When the wardens arrived, the man was staggering up the boat ramp after swimming across a cove at the lake. The man was arrested for public intoxication and placed in the Eastland County Jail for safekeeping.

PESKY FISH KEEP INTERFERING

Boaters told Taylor County Game Warden Roy Johnson they kept undersized fish to get them out of their way while they were fishing at Fort Phantom Lake. As Johnson approached a boat at the creek, he noticed a small box trap with a raccoon inside. The people in the boat were questioned on why they had the animal, and one occupant said they were having problems with raccoons killing their chickens, had caught this one at the coop and were going to release it at the creek. When Johnson, noticing a cast net in the

Dead deer, Operation Game Thief sign discovered

A doe deer carcass found in a pasture prompted an investigation. The investigation led Houston County Game Warden Eddie Lehr to a residence, where he located

the head of a buck deer in velvet under the carport and an Operation Game Thief billboard hanging in a pine thicket on the man's property. Lehr recognized the sign

as one that was displayed on the loop in Crockett. Lehr obtained a written confession to the theft of the sign and to the taking of a doe and buck deer out of season.

bottom of the boat, asked if they had fish onboard, one person said no, that they had been netting bait. But in the bait bucket, a 7-inch bass, 4-inch and 9-inch crappie and sunfish were found. When asked what they were doing with the undersized fish, one occupant said they were just getting them away from where they were fishing so they wouldn't catch them. A citation was issued.

STRING OF POACHING INCIDENTS UNCOVERED

Bell County Game Wardens Billy Champlin and Justin Valchar responded to a call from a Williamson County deputy who had detained four people with a deer on a ranch near Jarrell. The wardens determined the four people had started out hog hunting but killed two deer the night before. One of the deer had been processed, and the other was discarded. Three men were booked into the Williamson County Jail on multiple charges. During their investigation, the wardens found that two other deer were killed and dumped by a man who had already left the ranch. This information was turned over to Williamson County Game Warden Turk Jones. Jones questioned the individual about two more deer that were shot and left for waste on a Williamson County ranch. It was found there were three more individuals involved in this case. The end result was 13 warrants, including failure to keep deer in edible condition, hunting white-tailed deer at night, hunting white-tailed deer with artificial

light, no hunting licenses and no hunter education. The owner of the ranch is also considering felony cases for hunting without owner's consent.

NO NOODLING AT LAKE WHITNEY

Hill County Game Warden Mark Hammonds cited a man for grabbing a 18-pound and 20-pound catfish from Lake Whitney around an old underwater concrete slab.

THREATENED PADDLEFISH KEPT AT LAKE TEXOMA

While working Lake Texoma, Grayson County Game Warden Dale Moses received a call from a fisherman on the Texas side of the Red River below Denison Dam describing a man who had caught a paddlefish and put it on a stringer. Because Moses and his partners were on the lake, Moses called Eisenhower State Park Peace Officer Ben Herman who was only a couple of miles away from the dam. Herman, Peace Officer Bob Bean and Eisenhower Manager Paul Kisel went to the river and found the man and a dead 20-pound paddlefish and several other rough fish on a stringer. The man was cited for possession of a threatened species and no fishing license. Cases and restitution are pending.

BURIED FISH MAKES BAD BAIT

Nueces County Game Warden Cres Caro and San Patricio County Game Warden Neal McCarn saw a shark fisherman on the Gulf of Mexico

beach baiting his lines with something he was digging out of the sand. When the wardens made contact, they discovered the fisherman was baiting with pieces of an oversized red drum that he had buried.

LARGE GROUP NOT UNNOTICED WHEN TRESPASSING

While working the San Jacinto River area, Harris County Game Warden Tim Holland noticed 25 to 30 individuals crawling under a fence that belonged to a coastal water authority. He approached and found what appeared to be a fishing party. Several charges were filed for fishing without landowner consent and everyone was escorted off the property.

BOATERS BUSTED ON LAKE TEXOMA

Two boaters with blood alcohol levels more than twice the legal limit were taken off the water at Lake Texoma. Grayson County Game Wardens Jim Ballard and Randolph McGee were patrolling the lake when they stopped a vessel that had three young children not wearing life jackets dangling their feet from the bow of the boat. The boat operator was arrested for boating while intoxicated and transported to the Whitesboro Police Department. There he submitted a breath sample indicating a blood alcohol level of .184. Ballard then received a call requesting assistance from McGee with another BWI suspect in custody. When McGee stopped the vessel, the operator fell out of his seat. The man submitted a

breath sample indicating a blood alcohol level of .214. Cases pending.

BOAT CAPSIZES ON LAKE THOMAS

A sudden thunderstorm hit Lake Thomas with winds gusting up to 70 mph. Scurry County Game Warden Mel Reed and Lake Patrol Officer Neal Humphrey were watching to make sure everyone left the lake safely and noticed a boat having a difficult time in the high winds. It began filling with water from the waves and soon capsized. The winds pushed the boat toward the dam, and both occupants were wearing life jackets and clinging to the boat. The rescuers told them to make sure their life jackets were securely attached and to swim to the shore. Reed and Humphrey went to the bottom of the dam and helped the occupants to Reed's pickup. The boat was retrieved the next morning.

FARMER COULDN'T WAIT FOR NUISANCE-DEER PERMIT

A farmer took matters into his own hands in fighting a destructive deer. The man called Lavaca County Game Warden Kerry Peterson earlier in the week to complain about deer getting into his cornfield and inquired about a depredation permit. Later that day, a neighbor called to report the same man shooting at deer in the field.

REFUSING TESTS DIDN'T WORK THIS TIME

Results from blood-alcohol analysis on a sample taken Memorial Day weekend helped arrest a Garza County boater. Game Warden Brent Tucker and the new Garza County attorney filed the first blood search warrant for boating while intoxicated. The boater refused all field sobriety testing and was surprised when Tucker advised him of the blood search warrant he had obtained. The results from the blood test showed an intoxication level of .22.

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GROWING UP: Land management for deer and cooperation between landowners is becoming more common and helps preserve and build a quality deer population. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Modern

Continued from Page 6

"Hunter numbers are declining," he said. "That results in decreased funds for state agencies."

Murphy said the decline of the large Texas ranch is also a negative for deer management.

"The 500- to 2,000-acre ranches are disappearing at 250,000 acres per year," he said. "Now 80 percent of all farms and ranches are less than 500 acres — there is a gap between the agricultural value and the market value of land in Texas and elsewhere."

And hunting access is a concern in Texas.

"There is a gap between the haves and the have-nots," he said. "Texas land is more than 95 percent privately held. Texas is 46 out of 48

states that allow deer hunting in overall hunting land access."

Overall, Murphy is encouraged by the amount of land management and the increase of landowners working together for the betterment of the deer.

He would like to see more avenues opened up to the young hunter, though, in the form of bringing back small game hunting.

"Most of us started by hunting squirrels or rabbits with our dads," he said. "I think it would be wise to open places up. Good deer habitat is good small game habitat — and it has been shown that hunting rabbits or squirrels doesn't move deer off of the property."

"I got back into squirrel hunting with my daughter this year. I forgot how fun it was."

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Towing

Continued from Page 9

and Regulation will set the maximum rates after studying towing rates across the state, said Steve Bruno, the agency's government relations officer.

"There's probably not going to be one number for the whole state," Bruno said. "Pecos is different from downtown Dallas. We're going to take regional factors into consideration."

Ironically, one of the big boosters of the CLR setting the rates is the Texas Towing and Storage Association.

"We know we've got problems," said Jeanette Rash, legislative chairwoman of the TTSA. "We're hoping that this law will resolve most of the problems in the industry."

Rash said her group wants to give consumers remedies to use against "bad towing operators."

"Frankly, we're hoping the ones causing the problems will go find something else to do besides towing," she said.

Anglers leery of suffering the Loves' fate at Padre Island National Seashore, until the

new state law comes onboard, should receive welcome news soon. Kleberg County Judge Pete De La Garza expects commissioners to cap the towing rates in about a month.

De La Garza said he looked at towing rates in neighboring counties and took input from the towing operators themselves.

"They flooded our courtroom," he said. "We have about nine of them. I was very direct with them. I told them that one or two of them are gouging."

The incident at Padre Island National Seashore sparked the proposed change, De La Garza said.

"We want to avoid that type of abuse," he said. "Our rates, when set, will apply to any lands inside the jurisdiction of Kleberg County, and it just so happens that a small part of the park is inside Kleberg County. So the rates are going to apply to them."

Park Superintendent Joe Escoto said Padre Island National Seashore will abide by whatever towing rates Kleberg County sets.

Even so, it will be awhile before the Loves return to the park as anglers.

"Those were very expensive fish," Lee said. "Trust me."



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Polygraph

Continued from Page 8

at bass fishing tournaments beginning in the 1970s, when Bassmaster prizes started to grow. The FLW Tour went without a polygraph rule for a decade but adopted it in 2005 after a Georgia angler was banned for life from FLW events amid widespread allegations of cheating.

Mike Kernan of Dallas has won three Bass Champs events and multiple Federation Nation tournaments, and has taken seven polygraph exams.

"The first time, I was very nervous," he said. "With some of the questions, I wondered why did they ask that? After the first one, though, it was no problem."

Exams last about an hour, Boyd said, including the pre-test interview. Results provided are either "truthful," "deception indicated" or "inconclusive." Accuracy is about 98 to 99 percent.

"Examinations at the weigh-in sites are more difficult," he said. "Usually they are in a trailer, and the people want them done fast."

One tournament angler who did not want to be identified experienced just that.

"I was in the front seat of a van in the parking lot, and the examiner was in the back," the angler said. "They wanted to get me in and out. At the end, he said I had failed."

The angler paid to have a re-test, passed and got his prize.

Sometimes, STAR — the State of Texas Anglers Rodeo, a fundraiser for the Coastal Conservation Association — allows a re-test if the person requests it, Boyd said.

"And we'll use a different examiner in those cases," Boyd said.

Polygraphs are a double-edged sword to some anglers.

"Are they 100 percent accurate? No," the twice-tested angler said. "But I wouldn't fish a circuit that doesn't have them — if there is money involved, people may cheat."

Nerves aside, for most winners the exam is well worth the trouble.

For Howard, the truck-boat packages had all been won by the time he caught his tagged red. Instead, he won a new 23-foot Haynie Bigfoot Bay Boat, Mercury 150 EFI motor and trailer.

"It was a cool experience," Howard said. "I can see how someone would easily fail had they not been telling the truth."

"I hope I have to do it again someday."

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PROBLEM 3: ETHANOL FUELS BREAK DOWN QUICKLY

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PROBLEM 4: ETHANOL CAUSES LOST POWER PERFORMANCE AND DECREASED FUEL ECONOMY.

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Duck numbers rising in U.S., survey indicates

Double-digit increases over last year estimated

Federal wildlife officials estimate the number of ducks is 13 percent greater than last year's estimate and 25 percent better than the previous five decades, according to an annual survey.

The preliminary estimate of total ducks from the 2009 Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey was 42 million, 13 percent greater than last year's estimate and 25 percent greater than the 1955-2008 average, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The survey samples more than 2 million square miles of waterfowl habitat and estimates the number of ducks on the continent's primary nesting grounds.

Overall, habitat conditions for breeding waterfowl in 2009 were better than 2008. The total pond estimate (in prairie Canada and the United States combined) was 6.4 million. That number is 45 percent above last year's estimate of 4.4 million ponds and 31 percent above the long-term average of 4.9 million ponds.

Species estimates from the survey in the north-central United States, south-central and northern Canada and Alas-

ka include:

- Mallards: 8.5 million birds, a 10-percent increase over last year's estimate of 7.7 million birds and 13 percent above the long-term average.
- Gadwall: 3.1 million birds, similar to last year's estimate and 73 percent above the long-term average.
- Blue-winged teal: 7.4 million birds, the second highest estimate on record.
- Green-winged teal: 3.4 million birds, an all-time high.
- Northern pintail: 3.2 million birds, 23 percent more than last year but 20 percent below the long-term average.
- Redhead: 1 million birds, similar to last year and 62 percent above the long-term average.
- Canvasback: 662,000 birds, 35 percent more than last year's estimate and similar to the long-term average.
- Northern shovellers: 4.4 million birds, 25 percent more than last year and 92 percent above the long-term average.
- Scaup: 4.2 million birds, 12 percent greater than last year but 18 percent below the long-term average.

— U.S. Fish and Wildlife report



TAKING OFF: Better breeding habitat caused by a wet winter and spring in the duck's breeding grounds has resulted in duck numbers spiking up 13 percent from last year.

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Denison

Continued from Page 8

was hooked on the area below the Dam.

"Lake Texoma is just so large, you don't know where to go," he said. "At least down here it's not as intimidating as the lake."

Lake Texoma guide Scott Bridgess said the location of the fish at the time of a flood contributes to the success below the dam.

"Large concentrations of stripers need to be in the dam area in order for them to pass through the flood gates," he said. "This year most of the fish were located mid-lake during most of the flood."

Bridgess has been spending most of his time on the lake.

"The lake is loaded with fish, a lot in the 16-24 inch range, and a few running 24-32 inches," he said. "If they move into that area while the gates are open, it could spice up the river a bit."

Texas Parks and Wildlife District Biologist Bruce Hysmith said two factors cause the increased striper activity below the dam.

"Fish pass from the lake through the dam, and the second reason fish show up there is the

big flows (like the recent release) trigger fish to relocate, or be moved, from their habitat downstream and move up in a feeding and spawning behavior," he said.

"The river is a dynamic creature," said Hysmith. "You can't always depend on old holes to produce like they have in the past. The flood releases move debris, gravel and rocks around, sometimes filling old holes and creating new ones."

Weekends bring a crowd to the rocks below the dam. Some use surf rods armed with weighted corks to increase casting distance. Others throw lures or sink live bait. They all watch for big changes when the gates are opened for part of the day to generate electricity — the water can rise 4 to 5 feet quickly — covering areas cherished by wade fishermen but often improving success for those on the banks.

Although many anglers concentrate on the area near the dam, many fish can be found downstream, where plenty of holes and habitat hold big fish, including largemouth and smallmouth bass and catfish.

"Anything you find in the lake will be in that river," Hysmith said.

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Quail

Continued from Page 1

Surprisingly, feral hogs accounted for no predation.

Raptors prey on adult birds and can affect populations, especially in winter, Hernandez said.

"In the summer, we saw five raptors in a 10-mile stretch," he said. "In winter, there will be 100 to 120 in the same stretch. The predation is worse in dry years."

"The herbaceous cover is lower. It impacts the birds' vulnerability to raptors."

What about predator control? Hernandez said attempts to control predators would most likely be futile.

"Where there is poor habitat, it won't help," he said. "And where there is good habitat, you don't need it."

What will help?

"Nesting cover," Hernandez said. "The fall density of birds is dependent on the percentage of hens nesting and the nesting rate," he said. "Being a wild quail is a tough life. They need good habitat and good habitat management."

Being a wild quail is a tough life. They need good habitat and good habitat management.

— Fidel Hernandez, quail researcher

The study also looked at brush management in an attempt to determine the impact of woody cover, such as mesquite, on the quail population.

"We studied three pastures with 10 percent, 20 percent and 30 percent woody cover and compared the survival of the quail," Hernandez said. "The quail did best with about 20 percent woody cover."

Nest success and clutch size remained about the same.

"We found that a 20- to 30-percent mix was the best — the quail density was better, up to 25 percent annual survival."

Overall, the study showed the future for South Texas bobwhites is good.

"It's a boom-and-bust population model," Hernandez said. "But the probability the populations will persist for 100 years is 92 percent."

The fall density of quail — the most important time for quail hunters — is the key and the study showed a wide variation in populations.

The findings were that in 62 percent of the years, the populations will be average. In 25 percent of the years the numbers will be poor and in 13 percent of the years the numbers will be excellent.

Hernandez said that in some cases, expectations for a great hunting year might be a little high.

"Don't expect banner quail hunting every year," he said. "One in every 10 years will be excellent."

For landowners and leaseholders, determining the number of quail to target for harvest is a common question.

"A bag limit doesn't protect against overharvest," Hernandez said. "But most areas aren't over-hunted. Of

your fall population, about a 20 percent harvest is sustainable."

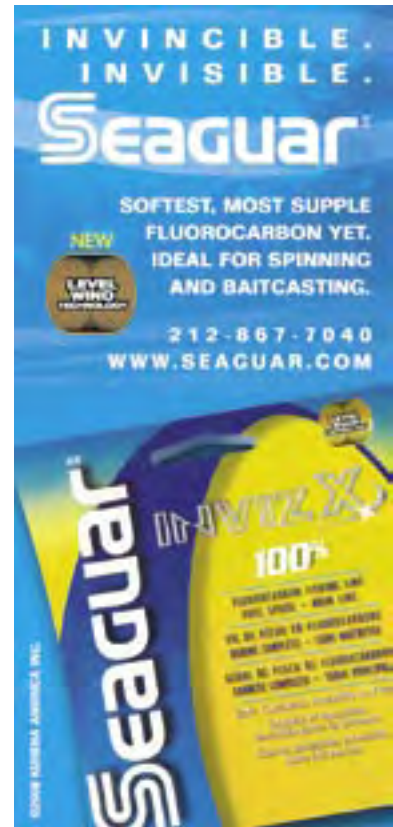
Figuring the fall population is more difficult, though. Line counts can help, and so can watching for birds along a road or listening for calls.

But most don't do that, and an easier tip may help.

"In a good year, the fall density is about one quail per acre," Hernandez said. "In an average year it is about .6 to .7 quail per acre and in a poor year it is less than .5 per acre."

Landowners can determine, based on rainfall and the birds they are seeing, whether it is a good, average or poor fall population, calculate the estimated population and target around 20 percent of that number for harvest.

"It's not perfect," Hernandez said. "But it provides a fair estimate."



Does relocation of quail work?

As part of the South Texas Quail Research Project, researchers captured and moved quail to an area void of quail to monitor their performance.

"We trapped and moved quail from Frio and Atascosa counties and moved them to a 1,500-acre site in Central Texas (Fayette and Caldwell counties)," Hernandez said. "The Central Texas site was mixed pasture and agriculture — we had disked and burned the site to improve the habitat."

What did the quail do after they were released?

"Some stayed and others dispersed after five weeks," he said. "They settled about two miles away after nine weeks, although one quail traveled 26 miles."

The survival rate of the new residents was not good.

"After 148 days, there was a 25 percent survival rate," Hernandez said. "That's a lower rate than resident birds in other areas."

Only 36 percent of the quail nested, and none of the birds nested more than once.

"Resident birds will nest at an 80 percent rate," Hernandez said.

Nest success was similar to resident birds, but 100 hens producing 600 chicks is about half of the performance of resident birds.

The research came to a grim conclusion when it comes to relocating birds.

"It's not an effective restoration tool," Hernandez said. "There are probably no quail left there now — the numbers aren't enough to sustain a population."

Hernandez said he also is often asked about whether pen-raised birds can be used to establish a population of wild birds.

"They have tried and tried — that's been studied since 1910," he said. "It just doesn't work."

So how can a landowner interested in quail develop a population?

Provide good nesting cover, Hernandez said, and wait for the birds to disperse onto the property over time.

"You need habitat management," he said.

— Craig Nyhus

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HEROES



AIDAN FLANNERY, 4, SCOTT FLANNERY, WILLIAM OSTEEN, 4, and CLINT OSTEEN (not shown) of Plano hold a few of the crappie they caught on Lake Gladewater with minnows.



DAVID DEVENY of Farmers Branch shot this turkey with a 12-gauge in Travis County.



AARON JONES, 12, of Marble Falls, killed this eight-point buck with a score of 119 5/8 in Stephens County in November.



KATIE SEBESTA, 14, of Cat Spring caught and released this 50-inch, 45-pound black drum in the Land Cut while fishing with her father, Carl, during the 2009 spring break on a guided trip with Capt. Kyle Johnson.



KYLER DE LEON, 5, from San Benito landed this 24-inch redfish out of Port Mansfield.

Share an adventure

Want to share hunting and fishing photos with the **Lone Star Outdoor News** family? E-mail or mail them to us with a phone number and caption information.

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BRAEDON KRAMER, 7, of Corpus Christi didn't feel comfortable with a rifle on his first deer hunting trip so he stalked these rabbits with his new BB gun. For video of Braedon's hunt, visit LSOnews.com.

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Texas Gun Shop
4518 South Padre Island Drive
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Crossbows

Continued from Page 6

al hunting opportunity," said Snyder, a lifelong bowhunter from Ohio. As a spokesman for Ohio-based Horton Manufacturing, makers of the Horton line of crossbows, Snyder travels across the nation teaching bow hunting seminars and includes crossbow skills in his presentations.

"We all say we need to recruit more hunters into the field to protect our sport," Snyder said. "Crossbows have proven to be the No. 1 link not only to getting women and children involved in archery hunting, but recruiting firearms hunters as well.

"Think about it: A crossbow is held and shot with the same technique as a shoulder-held firearm. So it's a natural for a rifle hunter to convert. And in Texas, where there is an archery-only (deer hunting) season, a rifle hunter can purchase a crossbow and expect an easy conversion; with practice they can start shooting arrows in a tight

group quickly and extend their season by two weeks."

That's where the "but" comes in. "A crossbow is a bow and arrow set turned sideways and shot with a trigger, nothing more and nothing less," Snyder said. "That's why they are included in so many states' archery equipment regulations.

"But crossbows do have their limits, and you do need to practice to become proficient in their use.

"You're also going to have to bone-up on your stealth and stalking skills. For most of your shots are going to come well within 40 yards. Between the tip of the broadhead to the flank of a deer, there is nothing different between shooting a vertical versus a horizontal bow.

"If you don't practice basic archery hunting tactics including scouting, scent control and limiting movement, you may as well wait until rifle season, for the chances of you getting within 20 yards of a mature deer are downright slim."

Crossbow rules for Texas

In Texas, crossbows with minimum draw weight of 125 pounds, a mechanical safety and a stock that is 25 inches or longer are legal during the general season and archery-only open seasons except in Grayson county, where traditional archery equipment only is permitted.

Myths vs. facts

The American Crossbow Federation has compiled what it believes are myths and the facts about crossbows. Here are a few:

Myth: Crossbows are unsafe.

Fact: Based on 30 years of statistical data, accident rates involving crossbows are identical to those of vertical bows. When considering hunting hours involved and numbers of hunters, crossbows are among the safest forms of hunting.

Myth: A crossbow is much more efficient than a vertical bow.

Fact: A modern 150-pound draw weight compound crossbow delivers the same speed and stored energy as a 65-70 pound compound vertical bow. The crossbow requires twice the amount of draw weight because the



power stroke (draw length) is half as long as that of the compound bow. Both types of bows launch the same weight arrow at the same speed.

Myth: Crossbow hunting will wipe out the deer herd.

Fact: In states with generous crossbow seasons, the success rates of crossbow hunters and vertical bow hunters are nearly the same.

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STAR tournament leaderboard

Results are pouring in at the summer-long CCA STAR tournament, with a record number of tagged redfish being landed. But a few boat packages and many other contests remain. The contest fundraiser ends Labor Day, and dozens of tagged reds are still available.

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| ■ Ronald Scheck | |
| ■ Keith McLaren | |

Starkids Scholarship Division

Ages 6-10

- \$50,000 Scholarship**
- **Flounder:** 5 pounds, 5 ounces
Kendall Karasek, 8, of Orange Grove
 - **Sheepshead:** 9 pounds
Rodolpho Ibarra III, age 9, of Dayton
 - **Gafftop:** 7 pounds, 8 ounces
Jeremy Chessher, 10, of Warren

Academy Sports & Outdoors Starteens Scholarship Trout Division (Ages 11-17) 6-pound min., \$20,000 scholarship

- **Speckled trout Upper Coast:** 8 pounds, 11 ounces
Cory Cobler, 16, of Lake Jackson
- **Speckled trout Mid-Coast:** 7 pounds, 14 ounces
Jeremy Patrick, 13, of Corpus Christi
- **Speckled trout Lower Coast:** 7 pounds, 14 ounces
Kristina Anderson, 12, of Port Mansfield

Time Warner Cable Starteens Scholarship Inshore Division (11-17) \$20,000 Scholarship

- **Flounder:** 5 pounds, 13 ounces
Matthew Denson, 12, of Houston
 - **Sheepshead:** 9 pounds, 4 ounces
Nicholas Pantoja, 16, of Highlands
 - **Gafftop:** 6 pounds, 8 ounces
Bryce Darder, 16, of Nederland
- Ford / Tilson Home Corp. Leader Board
- **Speckled trout Upper Coast:** 9 pounds, 2 ounces
Harold Riley of Webster

■ **Speckled trout Mid-Coast:** 8 pounds, 14 ounces Wade Allen Brown of Brazoria

- **Speckled Trout Lower Coast:** 10 pounds, 7 ounces
Robb Sherron of Corpus Christi
- **Kingfish:** 52 pounds, 12 ounces
Jeffery Wagen of Seabrook
- **Dorado:** 46 pounds, 2 ounces
W. R. Trey Buford III of Harlingen
- **Ling (cobia):** 79 pounds, 3 ounces
Steven A. Richards of Porter
- **Flounder:** 6 pounds, 14 ounces
Joseph Jackson of Corpus Christi
- **Sheepshead:** 9 pounds, 10 ounces
Steve Ocanas of Baytown
- **Gafftop:** 7 pounds, 11 ounces
Amanda Darder-Hebert of Nederland

Results are as of July 6. For more information, including a list of weigh-in stations and registration locations, visit www.ccatexas.org. Proceeds from STAR go to CCA Texas and its conservation programs.

Bluwater

Continued from Page 8

hind us, and they were all catamarans."

Anglers found green water within the first mile of the beach, with dark blue showing in the first few miles, and bright blue within 20 miles of shore. Teams reported having a tough time making bait in the bright blue water.

"We just never catch blue runners when the water is too blue," said Kevin Louis, a crewmember of the Bleedin' Green. After running out of bait, they had to move closer to shore and into darker waters to make bait again.

The tournament rules allow anglers to depart from any port, including Freeport, Sargent, Port O'Conner and Matagorda, but boats going to weigh in fish were required to have rounded the corner of the Matagorda harbor breakwater by 7 p.m.

"It was a great tournament," said Tournament Director Mark Holland. "We're already making plans for next year. When you're done, you're physically drained, and you're mentally drained, but it's worth it."

2009 Bluewater Challenge Winners

Kingfish

- 49.6 pounds**
Team Bills Deal
- 27.9 pounds**
Team XXX

Ling

- 49.1 pounds**
Team Reelin and Rockin
- 36.7 pounds**
Team Boogeyman

Dolphin

- 32.3 pounds**
Team Boogeyman
- 17.6 pounds**
Team Big Daddy

Red snapper

- 17.0 pounds**
Team Flatlined
- 16.3 pounds**
Team Hot Rod

Heaviest non-category fish

- 49.4-pound amberjack**
Team Hot Rod

First place lady angler

- 47.9-pound amberjack**
Team Cha Ching

Junior anglers

- 37.4-pound amberjack**
Team On The Take
- 35.3-pound kingfish**
Team Outcast
- 11.7-pound red snapper**
Team Cha Ching

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BROWNWOOD: Excellent on frogs, buzzbaits and spinnerbaits over grass flats and among stickups and on redbug and watermelon red worms with chartreuse tails around docks and near the rocks.

ALAN HENRY: Good on white spinnerbaits along brush and grass lines and on black/blue soft plastics and jigs worked in brush.

AMISTAD: Good on watermelon seed, watermelon red and green pumpkin crankbaits and soft plastics in 18-20 feet.

WHITE, HYBRID, STRIPER



RAY HUBBARD: White bass are excellent on 1.5-ounce slabs and small topwaters.

CEDAR CREEK: White bass are very good on Humdingers and slabs.

TEXOMA: Striped bass are good on live shad in 25-50 feet.

COOPER: White bass are good on slabs and Rooster Tails.

GRAPEVINE: White bass are good on topwaters, Humdingers and slabs.

GREENBELT: White bass are good on live bait and chrome crankbaits.

MEREDITH: White bass are good on live bait.

CATFISH



BRAUNIG: Channel and blue catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp, cut bait and cheesebait near the dam and the hot water discharge.

CADDO: Catfish are excellent on trotlines set with earthworms.

CALAVERAS: Channel catfish are excellent on liver, cheesebait and shad near the railroad trestle. Blue catfish are excellent on liver and cut bait.

BUCHANAN: Yellow and blue catfish are very good on jugs and trotlines baited with goldfish and perch upriver above the falls.

CRAPPIE



LIVINGSTON: Excellent on minnows.

RAY ROBERTS: Very good on minnows and jigs over brush piles-sunny days are best for finding concentrated fish.

ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 80 degrees; 0.01' low. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on live bait.

AMISTAD: Water clear; 85 degrees; 0.83' high. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Catfish are good on trotlines and jugs baited with live perch.

ARROWHEAD: Water lightly stained; 79 degrees; 5.40' low. Black bass are good on crankbaits, chatterbaits or jigs off rocky points and rip-rap. Crappie are good on jigs suspended 7-12 feet. White bass are good trolling and casting towards rocky points in Sailboat Cove area. Blue catfish are good drift fishing with cut shad or cheese bait on flats at 12-15 feet and on jugs with shad.

BELTON: Water clear; 84 degrees; 2.40' low. Black bass are fair trolling Rat-L-Traps. Hybrid striped are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows in 20 feet at night. Channel and blue catfish are good on nightcrawlers.

BOB SANDLIN: Water stained; 85-88 degrees; 0.19' low. Black bass are good on Carolina rigs, drop-shot rigs and topwaters. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs around structure. Catfish are fair on cut bait and nightcrawlers.

BRAUNIG: Water stained; 82 degrees. Black bass are fair on crankbaits and dark soft plastic worms in reeds and near the jetty and dam. Striped bass are fair on liver and shad near the pier and down-rigging silver and gold spoons near the jetty and dam. Redfish are excellent on perch, shad and spoons and down-rigging near the jetty and dam.

BROWNWOOD: Water stained; 83 degrees; 6.46' low. Hybrid striped are good on shad in Hybrid Alley. White bass are excellent on Li'l Fishies and crankbaits off lighted docks at night. Crappie are good on minnows and Li'l Fishies in 8-14 feet. Channel catfish are good on trotlines baited with live bait in 8-12 feet. Yellow catfish are good on trotlines baited with live bait.

BUCHANAN: Water clear; 83 degrees; 19.67' low. Black bass are good on Texas-rigged grape worms, flukes and watermelon topwaters along stumps on sloping island points and secondary points of pockets in 5-15 feet at daylight. Striped bass are fair on crankbaits from Lighthouse Point to the dam on the surface at daylight. White bass are slow to fair trolling Shad Raps and jigging artificial minnows and Tiny Traps over rock piles in 20-30 feet. Crappie are good on minnows and crappie jigs over brush piles. Channel catfish are good on live bait and dip bait.

CADDO: Water off-color; 85-93 degrees; 0.29' high. Black bass are good on soft plastic frogs and Texas-rigged worms fished around pads. Crappie are fair on minnows along the river channel. White bass are good in the river channel. Bream are fair on crickets and red wigglers in the shallows.

CALAVERAS: Water stained; 82 degrees. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are fair on spoons and striper jigs between the dam and the crappie wall in 15 feet and on chicken livers and shad along the shoreline. Redfish are excellent down rigging silver and gold spoons and live bait along the crappie wall and the dam in 10-20 feet on live perch and tilapia along the shoreline and on live bait along the crappie wall.

CANYON LAKE: Water clear; 82 degrees; 13.36' low. Black bass are fair on crankbaits and flukes upriver along shorelines. Striped bass are slow drifting live bait and trolling crankbaits. White bass are slow. Smallmouth bass are good on root beer grubs and craws, chartreuse plastic crickets and watermelon red tubes. Crappie are fair to good on crappie jigs and live minnows. Channel catfish are slow. Yellow and blue catfish are very good on jug and trotlines.

CEDAR CREEK: Water lightly stained; 86-89 degrees; 0.38' low. Black bass are fair early on topwaters, midday switching to flukes around grass. Hybrid striped are fair on Sassy Shad early. Crappie are fair on minnows over brush piles. Catfish are very good drifting cut shad.

CHOKE CANYON: Water clear; 85

degrees; 7.74' low. Black bass are good on deep-running crankbaits and white/chartreuse spinnerbaits. Crappie are slow. Drum are fair on nightcrawlers. Channel and blue catfish are fair on cut bait and punchbait. Yellow catfish are good on jugs baited with perch.

COLEMAN: Water clear; 84 degrees; 7.96' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red and watermelon green spinnerbaits and soft plastics. Hybrid striped are fair on live shad. Crappie are fair on minnows over brush piles in 20-30 feet. Channel and blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with live perch.

COLETO CREEK: Water stained; 83 degrees (91 degrees at discharge); 3.36' low. Black bass are fair on soft plastics and topwaters. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are slow.

CONROE: Water murky; 0.79' low. Black bass are good on Carolina-rigged soft plastics, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. Striped bass are fair on minnows and silver striped jigs. Crappie are good on

points and Texas-rigged soft plastics in the shallows. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs over brush piles and under docks. Catfish are fair on nightcrawlers and live shad.

GREENBELT: Water stained; 77 degrees; 28.91' low. Black bass are good on shad-colored crankbaits, white spinnerbaits, watermelon red soft plastic plastics, live bait and topwaters. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. Smallmouth bass are good on live bait and white spinnerbaits. Walleye are good on live bait and chrome/blue jerkbaits. Catfish are good on live bait and cut bait.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water clear; 90 degrees; 0.24' low. Black bass to 4 pounds are fair on watermelon red and June bug red flake 10" soft plastic worms near the subdivisions and on the south side of the lake near the dam in 12-16 feet. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on live minnows over brush piles near the pump station and in coves near the dam in 20 feet. Bream are good

degrees; 12.26' low. Black bass are good on live bait, white spinnerbaits, black/white jigs and soft plastic jerkbaits worked around timber and brush. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on live bait. Smallmouth bass are good on live bait. Channel catfish are good on live bait.

OAK CREEK: Water lightly stained; 77 degrees; 5.31' low. Black bass are fair on white spinnerbaits and live bait. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on live bait.

PALESTINE: Water lightly stained; 85-90 degrees; 0.99' low. Black bass are fair to good on spinnerbaits, Texas-rigged black/blue worms and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs over brush piles. Hybrid striped are fair on live shad. White bass are good on topwaters and Humdingers. Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers and cheese bait.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Water stained; 80 degrees; 4.54' low. Black bass are good on watermelon soft plastics and chrome Rat-L-Traps or crankbaits on mid-lake points. Crappie are fair on minnows and yellow jigs in Rock Creek. White bass are good on chrome Rat-L-Traps and jigging spoons. Striped bass are good on silver spoons and crankbaits. Catfish are good on live shad and cut liver.

RAY HUBBARD: Water fairly clear; 85-91 degrees; 0.16' low. Black bass are fair to good on Carolina-rigged Brush Hogs, drop-shot-rigged finesse baits and spinnerbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Hybrid striped are good on slabs burned through the schools. Catfish are fair on prepared bait.

RAY ROBERTS: Water clear; 85-92 degrees; 0.01' high. Black bass to 7.5 pounds are good early on Booyah spinnerbaits, later switching to Carolina-rigged soft plastics in 10-15 feet. White bass are good-schooling early on the main lake. Catfish are good on prepared bait over holes baited with sour grain.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: Water off-color; 86-92 degrees; 3.14' low. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, Texas-rigged lizards or worms and medium diving crankbaits. White bass and hybrid striped are fair to good on Humdingers, topwaters and live shad. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on cut shad and prepared baits.

SAM RAYBURN: Water murky; 84 degrees; 2.36' low. Black bass are fair on minnows and watermelon soft plastic worms. White bass are fair on minnows. Crappie are good on minnows and blue/black tube jigs. Bream are fair on nightcrawlers. Catfish are very good on trotlines baited with live bait and cut bait.

STILLHOUSE: Water clear; 89 degrees; 1.81' low. Black bass are good on watermelon red and green pumpkin soft plastics. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are good on doughbait, chicken livers and chicken bloodbait.

TAWAKONI: Water stained; 85-91 degrees; 0.75' low. Black bass are fair on 3" Sweet Beavers with a 1/8-ounce weight, Texas-rigged lizards and chatterbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair to good on slabs and topwaters. Striped bass and hybrid striped are fair on live shad. Catfish are good on prepared and cut bait.

TEXOMA: Water off-color; 84-89 degrees; 0.06' low. Black bass are fair on Carolina rigs, medium diving crankbaits and Texas rigs. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers and prepared bait.

TOLEDO BEND: Water murky; 84 degrees; 1.40' low. Black bass are good on watermelon soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits and Rat-L-Traps. Striped bass are fair on minnows and white striper jigs. White bass are fair on silver spoons. Crappie are good on minnows and chartreuse tube jigs. Bream are good on crickets and nightcrawlers. Channel and blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with live bait and stinkbait in 30 feet.

WHITNEY: Water stained; 9.56' low. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. White bass are fair on minnows. Crappie are fair on minnows and chartreuse tube jigs. Catfish are good on bait shrimp, stinkbait and liver.

HOT SPOT



South Sabine

Trout are fair to good under birds and pods of shad. Trout are good at the jetty on live bait and topwaters. Trout are good while drifting scattered shell on plastics. Fish have been feeding on top from the Causeway Reef to Coffee Ground, reported guide Dickie Colburn. The reds are mixed in with the trout, and topwaters are producing fewer but larger trout.

minnows and fair on blue tube jigs. Catfish are good on stinkbait, chicken livers and nightcrawlers.

COOPER: Water lightly stained; 84-88 degrees; 0.55' low. Black bass are fair on drop-shot rigs, Rat-L-Traps and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair to good on jigs and minnows. Hybrid striped are fair to good on Sassy Shad and live shad. Catfish are fair on nightcrawlers and prepared bait.

FALCON: Water stained; 87 degrees. Black bass are fair on shallow running crankbaits on the north end of the lake. Striped bass are slow. Crappie are good on jigs. Channel and blue catfish are good on frozen shrimp under birds.

FORK: Water lightly stained; 85-94 degrees; 0.09' high. Black bass are fair to good on topwaters early and late, later switching to Senkos, drop-shot-rigged finesse worms and Carolina-rigged watermelon/red Brush Hogs. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs under the bridges and over brush piles. Catfish are good on prepared baits.

GIBBONS CREEK: Water clear. Black bass are fair on soft plastic worms and crankbaits. Crappie are good on minnows. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers, cut bait and chicken livers.

GRANBURY: Water clear; 2.37' low. Black bass are fair on Carolina-rigged soft plastics and on shad-colored crankbaits. Striped bass are fair on minnows. White bass are fair on minnows and silver spoons. Crappie are fair on minnows. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers, chicken livers and frozen shrimp.

GRANGER: Water murky; 83 degrees; 2.68' low. Black bass are slow. White bass are fair trolling crankbaits along roadbeds. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs in 10-15 feet. Blue catfish are good on jugs.

GRAPEVINE: Water off-color; 84-92 degrees; 2.16' low. Black bass are fair on crankbaits off main and secondary

on live worms off piers and grass beds. Channel and blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with perch in 12-20 feet.

HUBBARD CREEK: Water lightly stained; 78 degrees; 5.72' low. Black bass are good on white spinnerbaits and watermelon red soft plastic lures worked along trees and stickups. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. White bass and hybrid striped are good on live bait. Catfish are good on live bait.

JOE POOL: Water off-color; 85-91 degrees; 0.51' low. Black bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps, spinnerbaits and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair on Humdingers and topwaters. Catfish are fair on cut and prepared baits.

LAKE O' THE PINES: Water stained; 85-91 degrees; 1.3' high. Black bass are fair on topwaters, drop-shot rigs and spinnerbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers and cheesebait.

LEWISVILLE: Water off-color; 85-92 degrees; 0.31' low. Black bass are fair on chatterbaits, spinnerbaits, Texas rigs and Bandit 100 crankbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs over brush piles. Catfish are good on prepared bait.

LIVINGSTON: Water fairly clear; 85 degrees; 0.28' high. Black bass are fair to good on spinnerbaits and crankbaits. White bass are excellent on pet spoons, trolling tubes and slabs. Striped bass are slow. Blue catfish are very good on cut bait and shad.

MEREDITH: Water stained; 77 degrees; 70.12' low. Black bass are good on live bait, black/brown jigs, watermelon/chartreuse soft plastic worms or lizards. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. Smallmouth bass are good on live bait and crankbaits. Walleye are good on live bait and bottom bouncers. Channel catfish are good on live bait.

O.H. IVIE: Water lightly stained; 77

SALTWATER SCENE

NORTH SABINE: Trout are good in the river on live shad. Trout are fair to good under birds and pods of shad on soft plastics. Redfish are good under rafts of shad on topwaters.

BOLIVAR: Trout are good on the south shoreline on Bass Assassins, Trout Killers and Sand Eels. Trout are good at Rollover Pass.

TRINITY BAY: Trout are good for drifters working pods of shad and mullet on Bass Assassins, Trout Killers and Sand Eels. Trout, redfish and flounder are good at the spit.

EAST GALVESTON BAY: Trout are good for drifters working shell on limetreuse and plum plastics. Trout are good on the south shoreline on Catch 5s, MirrOlures and Catch 2000s.

WEST GALVESTON BAY: Waders have taken good trout on topwaters in the afternoon. Sheepshead, redfish and black drum are good at the jetty on shrimp and crabs. Trout are good in the surf on topwaters, MirrOlures and live shrimp.

TEXAS CITY: Trout are fair to good on the reefs and in the channel on live shrimp and croakers. Redfish and sand trout are fair to good in Moses Lake on shrimp.

FREEPORT: Trout are good at San Luis Pass on shrimp, MirrOlures and soft plastics.

Trout, redfish, trout and sheepshead are good on live shrimp on the reefs in Christmas Bay. Trout are good early in the morning at the jetties on live shrimp.

EAST MATAGORDA: Trout are good for drifters on live shrimp over mid-bay reefs. Redfish are good in the middle of the bay on live shrimp near slicks.

MATAGORDA: Trout are good on sand and grass humps on soft plastics and topwaters. Redfish are good on topwaters and live shrimp at the mouth of Oyster Lake. Trout are good in the surf on live bait.

PORT O'CONNOR: Trout and redfish are good on topwaters and live bait over sand, grass and shell in San Antonio Bay. Trout and redfish are at the mouths of the back lakes on the outgoing tide. Trout are good in the surf and at the jetty on live bait.

ROCKPORT: Trout are fair in the guts and channels on free-lined shrimp. Trout are fair over grass drifting live shrimp. Redfish are fair to good in the guts with low tides.

PORT ARANSAS: Trout, redfish and sheepshead are fair to good at the jetty on shrimp and croakers. Trout are good in the surf on topwaters and croakers. Offshore is good for red snapper, kingfish and ling.

CORPUS CHRISTI: Trout are fair to good on the edge of the spoils on Gulps and live shrimp. Redfish are good in the potholes on shrimp. Trout are fair to good on the edges of the guts near Shamrock Cove.

BAFFIN BAY: Trout are good on topwaters around rocks and grass. Trout are fair at night in the Land Cut on live shrimp. Trout are fair to good while drifting grass around spoils on soft plastics and topwaters.

PORT MANSFIELD: Trout are good on topwaters on the edge of the channel and around sand and grass. Redfish are fair to good while drifting pot holes. Offshore is good for red snapper, kingfish and ling.

SOUTH PADRE: Tarpon are showing at the pass. Trout are good on shrimp and DOA Shrimp while drifting grass beds. Spanish mackerel and snook have been taken at the jetty.

PORT ISABEL: Trout and redfish are fair to good on the flats on live shrimp. Redfish are hanging in the guts with low tides in the morning.

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NATIONAL

National News in Brief

Another Swann breaks N.C. kokanee record

The Swanns of Swannanoa, N.C., are keeping it all the family when it comes to breaking freshwater fish state records.

Ashley Swann reeled in a record-breaking 3-pound, 9-ounce kokanee salmon from Nantahala Lake on June 20, nearly two years after her father-in-law, Mark Swann, accomplished the same feat — twice in one month — by reeling in a 2.48-pounder on Aug. 3, 2007, and a 3.07-pound fish Aug. 28, 2007.

"I had no clue that I had broken his record until I reeled it in, and he said 'You just beat my record,'" Swann said. "I had no intention of breaking his record — but I did."

Unlike her father-in-law, however, this was her first time landing a big fish. What's more, it was her first time fishing on a boat.

"I've only fished in creeks before and just caught little fish," Swann said. "This was my first time ever fishing for big fish."

Nantahala, a 1,065-acre lake in Macon and Clay counties, is the only body of water in North Carolina that supports a kokanee salmon fishery.

— N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission report



SALMON KING: Ashley Swann, of Swannanoa, holds up the newest freshwater fish state record, a 3-pound, 9-ounce kokanee salmon. Photo by N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

N.Y. brook trout record tops 5 pounds, 21 inches

Tom Yacovella of Utica, N.Y., reeled in a new state record brook trout June 7 while fishing Raquette Lake in Hamilton County in the heart of the Adirondack Park. Caught on a Rapala lure, the brook trout weighed 5 pounds, 4.5 ounces and measured 21 inches, surpassing the previous state record set in 2006 by 5 ounces.

— New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Georgia urban deer plan ready, supports hunting

A new plan for managing urban deer in Georgia recommends hunting as the top method.

Hunting is effective money well spent, and alternatives are expensive and ineffective, according to the Urban Deer Management Plan. Other approaches will have to be used, such as habitat modification and exclusion, but wildlife managers say predator reintroduction and contraception are not recommended because they are neither feasible nor suitable.

Regulated hunting has reduced Georgia's estimated statewide deer population from a high of 1.4 million deer in the 1990s to the current statewide estimate of 1 million deer, according to state wildlife managers. Despite a successful reduction in the statewide deer population through hunting, Georgia has areas of overabundance in urban and suburban settings. Rapid human pop-

ulation growth and development has limited the efficacy of hunting in these areas, resulting in a variety of management challenges.

— Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources report

Plan completed for Lake Mead's quagga mussels

Two years after invasive quagga mussels were first detected in Lake Mead, scientists from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, estimate that nearly 3 trillion adult and juvenile mussels live in the lake's Boulder Basin alone. The mussels clog water pipelines, attach to boats and lake structures and profoundly impact the lake's ecosystem.

To lessen the impact of the rapidly reproducing species on the lake, the researchers, the National Park Service and other groups developed the first standardized quagga mussel monitoring plan to track mussel size, abundance and distribution at more than 50 sampling sites throughout the lake.

Strategic monitoring will help lake managers better understand quagga mussel populations and the adverse impact they have on the lake, and it allows for better coordination of remediation strategies among partnering agencies, said UNLV Research Assistant Professor David Wong.

"In a large ecosystem like Lake Mead, it's impossible to fully eradicate quagga mussels," Wong said. "Strategically monitoring quagga mussels, however, will help us identify how they behave given the lake's unique temperature, food sources and existing biodiversity. We can then develop appropriate ways to minimize their substantial environmental and monetary impact."

The mussels can reproduce year-round at Lake Mead because of warmer water temperatures. Annual costs for maintenance of water intakes, marine structures and watercraft exceed \$1 million.

— UNLV report

La. opens \$23 million, sturdy lab in Grand Isle

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries officially opened its new state-of-the-art Fisheries Research Lab in Grand Isle on June 30.

Scientists will get the information needed to

manage and conserve the state's marine resources at one of the finest marine labs in the country, department Secretary Robert Barham said.

The 32,000-square-foot structure is made of reinforced concrete to be as hurricane proof as possible. The core structure is built to sustain 300 mph winds, and the facility has its own power generator.

— Staff report

Fishing grants help Minn. educators teach children

A program in Minnesota provides free fishing gear to educators and anglers willing to teach children to use it.

Thirty-three fishing instructors — teachers, Scout leaders, 4-H leaders and anglers — won the grants this year. They put 976 new rods and reels in children's hands. Their grant package included complete rod-and-reel combos, a tackle box with starter tackle, a pair of fishing vests for instructors and a safety bag containing personal floatation devices, a rescue bag and a first aid kit.

The program, administered by MinnAqua, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' angling and aquatic education program, aims to introduce children to fishing.

— Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources report

Record deer harvest in South Dakota last year

South Dakota hunters saw the state's highest deer harvest in 2008, the ninth consecutive year the deer harvest increased in the state.

State Game Harvest Survey Coordinator Corey Huxoll said an estimated 74,000 white-tailed deer and 18,000 mule deer were harvested during the 2008 hunting seasons, an increase of more than 4,000 deer from 2007 and nearly double the 46,000 deer harvested in 1999.

The buck harvest estimate remained similar to 2007, while the doe harvest increased by nearly 4,000 whitetails and mule deer. Mule deer comprised about 20 percent of the total harvest.

Overall harvest success of 48 percent remained unchanged from 2007.

— South Dakota DNR report

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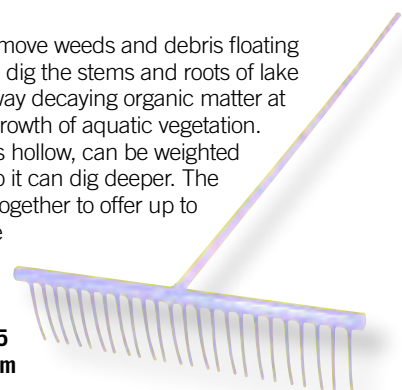
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www.lock-n-haul.com

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This single point suspension net by **Mombasa Outdoors** is treated with an odorless Insect Shield insect repellent to further protect the user from those creepy, crawly — and sometimes disease-carrying — diminutive visitors. The mosquito net sets up easily and quickly and can be used indoors or outdoors. Made of polyester, it fits all bed sizes and is 8-feet 2-inches high with a circumference of just over 41 feet. Suggested price is \$45.

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Samurai

Continued from Page 6

Others go way over the top in dressing up their Samurais.

At Big D Truck and Trailer in Dallas, three older vehicles are undergoing added modifications for the season.

"We built blinds on top; the platforms are 5-by-3 on one, 4-by-3 on another and 5-by-9 on another," said Jess Pinckard, one of the owners of the shop. "One has a bench seat. The others have individual seats. One has a ladder on the back and we used digital camo — they're pretty tricked up."

Wenches, green lights for night varmint hunting, gun holders and racks help finish out the machines.

"I picked one up (a 1986 model) for \$500, but it needed a lot of work," Pinckard said. "But we have the luxury of being able to fix most anything — we have about \$4,000 in it now."

Anyone thinking these guys are on to something might find the aging vehicles tough to locate.

"They were fuel-injected starting in 1991," Wood said. "Those are hard to find. You can find the older, carbureted ones. You can pick one up for \$2,500 to \$3,000, and less if they need a lot of work. Look for the original mud flaps, then you'll know it



GETTING READY: Bigger tires, green paint and other accessories equip this Suzuki Samurai for hunting. Photo by Mike Warner.

didn't spend all of its time off-road."

The hunters gave two reasons other than price why the like the Samurai: comfort and quiet.

"They are real quiet," Wood said. "You can sneak up behind someone on a 4-wheeler and give them a little bump. It gets their attention, especially at night."

Mark Croysdale of Duncanville uses the Samurai to hunt hogs at night on a lease near Aspermont.

"You can drive up to the feeder without spooking them," Croysdale said. "We have a gun rest over the folding windshield."

"It'll go about anywhere," Warner said. "And the good thing is it's street legal, although you don't want to go too far on the highway."

The hunters tow their vehicles to their leases.

The narrow frame may have led to the vehicle's demise, but the hunters like it.

"It gets places a pickup or a Jeep can't," Warner said. "We hunt out of it — and the air conditioner still works — we've had turkeys come within 30 yards when we turned it on to run the A/C for a few minutes to cool off."

Blue

Continued from Page 1

"There were more, but they made just one pass, and then they were gone," Carruthers said.

The next stop was for amberjack on hardtails.

"We lost some but managed to get two to the boat," he said. "The guys fishing squid got broke off."

The last stop, about 32 miles out, was for kingfish.

"The kingfish are all over," Carruthers said. "We caught nine kings in two drifts, plus another ling."

Anglers in the South Texas Big Game Fishing Club tournament July Fourth weekend tagged one blue marlin and one sailfish. Their catch may not show it, but the fishing has been good, said Charles Sheldon, captain of the Bessie Belle.

"It was kind of off this weekend," Sheldon said. "We had a rough day because of the weather."

After 10 days of pleasant weather, the wind picked up Friday night. Several boats slated for the tournament stayed in Port Isabel.

The boat that tagged the blue marlin also caught wahoo and dorado. The Bessie Belle claimed the sailfish, but the crew returned to port Saturday night and did not fish Sunday.

The club has been fishing about 50 miles out in 100 to 300 fathoms,

and the fishing, despite rough weather this spring and early summer, has generally been good.

Sailing out of Corpus Christi, Chris Sessions has been taking grouper, amberjack and wahoo about 85 to 90 miles out. He fishes Baker rig for grouper, Falcon for amberjack and the East Breaks for wahoo.

"I'm running about as far as outboard motors can go," said Sessions, who co-owns a 26-foot Glacier Bay.

He picks up snapper on squid and cut bait (and boated a grouper on squid too, a rare occurrence). For marlin, wahoo and big dorado, he trolls Pakula and Black Bart lures.

He has not caught a marlin this season but will target them in August.

Sessions recently caught a fish that turned anglers' heads: an African pompano. Juvenile African pompanos have long spines on their fins that resemble tentacles.

Other locations are not doing as well, Sessions said. The Candy Stripe area is covered in sharks, which usually chase popular game fish away, and Candy Stripe and Ranzell have no flying fish, which indicate the presence of more popular species.

"Where the flying fish are is where your big predator fish are," he said.

Friends are finding yellowfin tuna 140 miles out, but red snapper are within 10 miles, Sessions said.

— Staff report

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Bountiful exotics at Foyt Game Ranch

Texas spread provides trophies, good times

Hunters can relax in comfort as they pursue a wide mix of species at Foyt Game Ranch, about 12 miles from Del Rio.

"We just try to tend to everybody," said Tony Foyt, who manages the operation.

White-tailed deer, exotics and turkey have the run of two large parcels in the ranch, one 4,500 acres and one 3,500 acres. Only the outside perimeter is high-fenced, with no cross fencing.

"It's a lot of country to cover for hunting," Foyt said.

As with most of the Hill Country, Foyt Game Ranch has a lot of brush, with big trees scattered and open areas. A large stream flows through one parcel.

The exotics may be hunted year-round (summer is prime time for black buck and axis).

For white-tailed deer, hunters have the buck of their choice.

"We have good deer," Foyt said. "We don't have the super monster deer, but we have good hunting. We shoot some 140- to 150-class deer."

In addition to black buck and axis, the ranch also has addax, scimitar-horned oryx and eland.

Although the ranch's whitetails might not be monsters, its exotics are trophies, Foyt said.

Deer may be hunted without a guide, but most exotics are hunted with one. But options are available.

"However they want to do it," Foyt said.

When not hunting, guests can spend time at the 10-person main lodge or reserve a private cabin that sleeps six.

The private cabin is popular among fathers and sons, husbands and wives.

"They can eat at the lodge but have a place to themselves," Foyt



Exotics may be hunted year-round in Texas, and Foyt Game Ranch is booking trips now. Axis and aoudad, pictured here, are popular targets.

said. "We try to cater to people." A small lake on the property holds fish with catch and release

only: "Where it's good for everybody," Foyt said. For more information, call Foyt

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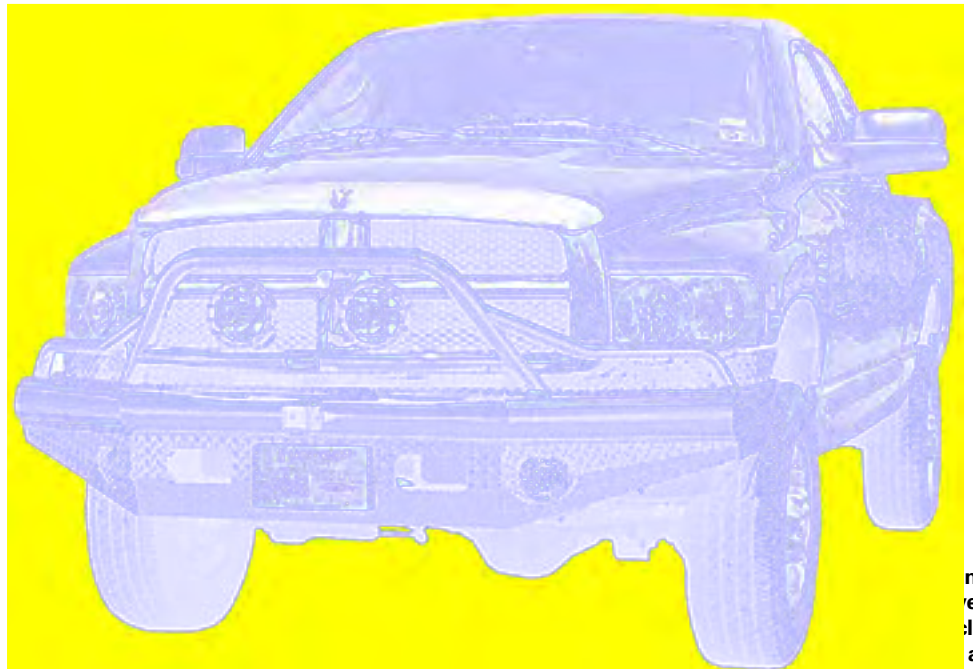
"People know the value of having grille guards or heavy-duty bumpers on their vehicles," McClaugherty said. "They are useful tools and good insurance on today's crowded highways and back roads and from the front gate to the back pasture."

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Record?

Continued from Page 1

Eradication of largemouth bass at many of the nation's lakes has concerned marine manufacturers there and in the U.S. Japan is the second-largest bass fishing market in the world. Recreational anglers contend that habitat degradation is the cause of the decline in native fish, and the largemouth is the scapegoat.

Kurita, an avid bass angler, reportedly caught an 18 1/2-pound largemouth from Biwa on a large swimbait last year.

"I knew it was big, but I didn't think that something like this would come out," Kurita said in a televised interview. "I don't know at all yet if it is a world record."

Another professional fisherman from Japan, Kazumasa Okumura, saw the fish.

"It is just totally amazing — I don't know what to say," Okumura said.

Kurita said he has been fishing for 18 years and will apply for world record recognition to the International Game Fish Association.

The world record largemouth, weighing 22 pounds, 4 ounces and caught by George Perry in Georgia, has stood since 1932.

If Kurita's catch is certified, it would be the biggest legally caught certified largemouth in history, but it would only tie Perry's catch as

IGFA's all-tackle world record.

According to IGFA regulations for record fish weighing less than 25 pounds (such as all of the black bass subspecies), the potential record must weigh at least 2 ounces more than the existing record. The Japanese fish outweighs Perry's fish by less than 1 ounce.

"It's one of my favorite lakes," said Matt Paino, CEO of Optimum Baits, who lived in Japan for seven years. "The north part of the lake, where this fish was caught, is deep and clear with a lot of rock."

Paino said the lake has many bluegill and bass.

"They'll never get rid of the bass there," he said. "A lot of fishermen still release the bass."

The previous Japanese bass record weighed 19.15 pounds and was caught by Kazuya Shimada from Lake Ikehara on April 22, 2003, on a swimbait.

In March 2006, Mac Weakley landed a 25-pound, 1-ounce bass in California's Dixon Lake. The fish was inadvertently foul-hooked, and Weakley did not submit it for record consideration.

Although images of Kurita and the fish are circulating, the Japanese photographer has not released them for publication. A link to the videotaped interview showing Kurita and the fish is at www.LSONews.com.

— Staff report

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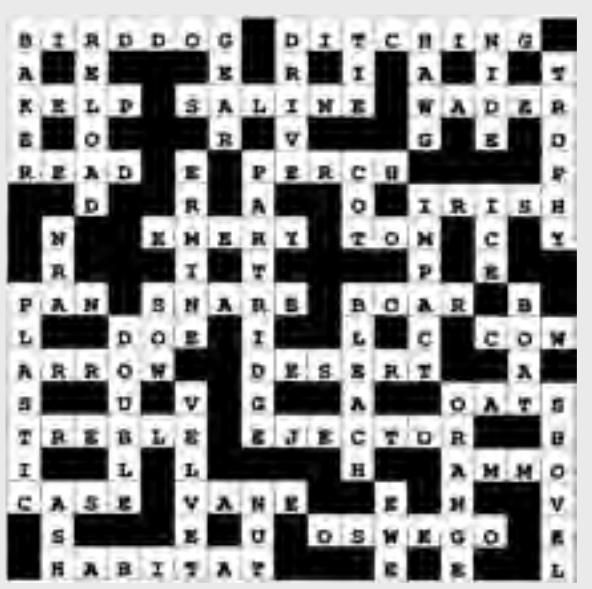
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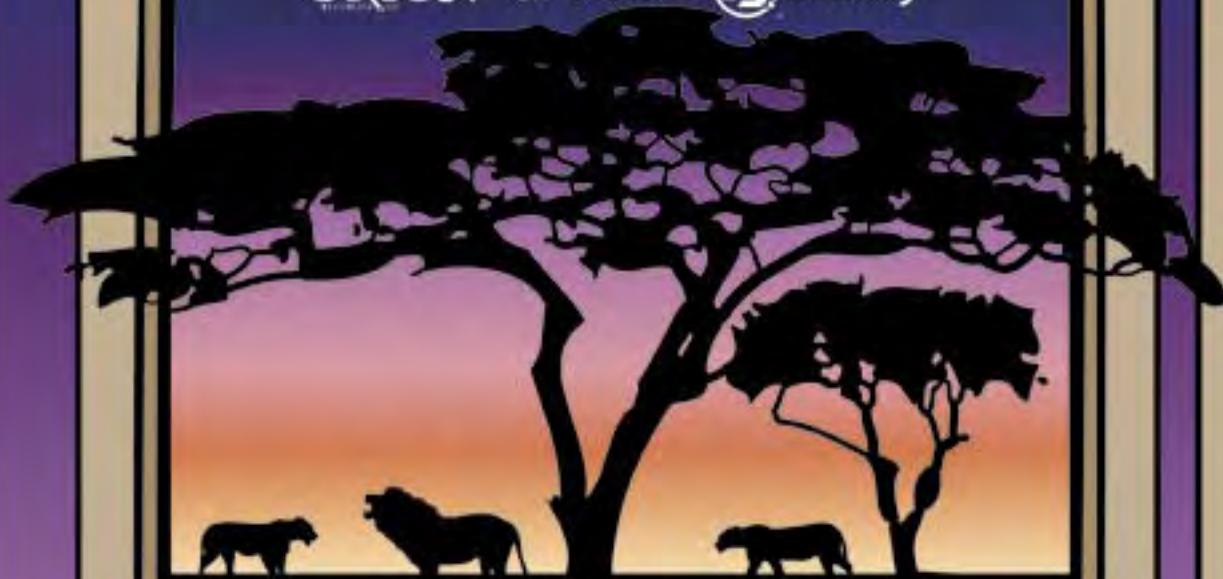


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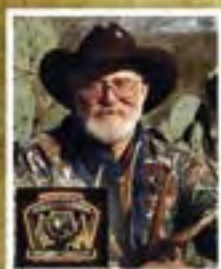


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