

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

March 12, 2010

Texas' Premier Outdoor Newspaper

Volume 6, Issue 14



Deer management
Researchers convened March 5 to discuss new information on deer. **Page 6**

Inside



HUNTING
Hunter surveys in
Responses are back in Texas Parks and Wildlife's annual bird hunter survey. **Page 6**

Whitetails Unlimited
A national organization for boosting deer recently canceled a show planned for Waco. **Page 6**



FISHING
White bass moving
White bass have begun their annual spawning run upriver on Texas lakes. **Page 8**

Lake Fork water
Dallas says it will consider bass anglers when using water from Lake Fork. **Page 11**

CONTENTS

Classifieds	Page 28
Crossword	Page 22
Fishing Report	Page 10
For the Table	Page 22
Game Warden Blotter	Page 12
Heroes	Page 15
Outdoor Datebook	Page 20
Outfitters and Businesses	Page 23
Products	Page 14
Sun, Moon and Tide data	Page 22

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A cool start for bass season



DEDICATED FISHING: Pro angler Kevin VanDam fished cold water three days to win the 2010 Bassmaster Classic last month. Texas bass anglers are also catching fish in colder water this time of year. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Weather creates challenges, but fish are biting

By Kyle Carter
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Weird weather patterns, high winds and lingering cold temperatures have made the bass fishing transition from winter to spring difficult on some of Texas' most popular lakes.

Cold nights have delayed the spawn and, in many cases, from a fisherman's perspective, confused the bass.

But it hasn't kept people from showing up or catching huge bass on Falcon Lake — if they can find the right combination of water temperature and structure.

Barrett McClendon, who recently spent a weekend on Falcon, said it was crowded and windy, but there were still plenty of bass to be caught.

"We caught some fish up shallow in less than 2 feet of water, but the majority of our fish came in 8 to 10 feet," said McClendon, who caught an average of two bass an hour in the 3- to 5-pound range. "We were just flipping brushy points, throwing Senkos and Brush Hogs."

Ken Wilkins of Round Rock also recently spent a weekend throwing a Brush Hog on Falcon and had better success. At one point late one evening, Wilkins and couple friends

INSIDE

Purtis Creek:
Twenty years later, bass are good. **Page 8**

See BASS, Page 25

Drought ends, salinity returns to normal

Lots of rain, but no need for alarm

By Kyle Carter
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Two years of drought gave way to floods on the Texas coast this winter, and it has some anglers concerned with the salinity of the saltwater and the effect it could have on the fishing.

But Mark Fisher, science director for the Coastal Fisheries Division of Texas Parks and Wildlife, said the rain has only moved the salinity levels back to normal and there's no cause for alarm.

See SALINITY, Page 26



SALT SITUATION: With as much rain as Texas has received in the last few months, salinity levels have returned to normal on the coast. Photo by LSON.



COMING OF AGE: If conditions are right, these turkeys, photographed in 2008, should have 9- to 10-inch beards this year. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Good crop of longbeards

3-year-old jakes finally mature

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

After a banner hatch of male turkeys three years ago, hunters are hoping to see a lot of good gobblers with 9- to 10-inch beards.

Based on what many hunters and landowners are seeing and saying, they could be right. Many have been pleasantly surprised with the numbers

INSIDE

Turkey regs:
Season dates and bag limits. **Page 19**

See GOBBLERS, Page 19

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| 12 p.m. Spring Blue Gill Fishing | 1 p.m. |
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- | | |
|---|---------|
| 10 a.m. Fly Tying Basics | 10 a.m. |
| 11 a.m. Getting Your Kids Started in Fishing | 11 a.m. |
| 12 p.m. Fishing and Marine Knots | 12 p.m. |
| 1 p.m. Basics of Boating and Water Sport Safety | 1 p.m. |
| 2 p.m. Tying Bass Flies | 2 p.m. |
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HUNTING



WHAT SAY YOU? Bird hunters recently threw in their two cents worth of opinion for a survey by Texas Parks and Wildlife. Topics covered in the survey included zones for quail and turkey regulations. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

Survey says ...

In TPW questionnaire, bird hunters favor quail zones, other changes

By Bill Miller
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

It has been said around many a campfire, bait shop, taxidermy shop and deer processor across the state: "If I ran Texas Parks and Wildlife, I would"

Fill in the blank with your own answer. Maybe you'd adjust the beginning of dove season or limit the bag limits for bobwhite quail until their populations had a chance to rebound from years of

harsh drought.

Perhaps you think there shouldn't be just north and south zones during the spring season for Rio Grande turkey, but also a third zone — just for the Texas Panhandle.

These are all ideas being studied by Texas Parks and Wildlife, thanks to a game bird survey completed last fall in a random sample of the state's hunters of dove, quail and turkey.

Nothing has been settled, how-

ever, and it could take as much as three years for any of these ideas to become realities. That's because of TPW's regulatory cycle, said Vernon Bevill, the agency's small-game program director.

"We do not plan any major regulatory changes prior to 2012 or, possibly, 2013," Bevill said. "Then, more survey work will need to be done if any of these ideas have legs at all.

"But, given the drought we've been in, we felt like getting some

good databases in place would be good."

Bevill, who retires at the end of March, said he hoped that the complete survey results will be posted on the TPW Web site in the spring.

Agency staffers planned to present the findings to various small-game advisory committees during the second week of March.

Bevill, meanwhile, shared some

See SURVEY, Page 29

With deer, no such thing as a sure-shot answer

Researchers convene to discuss factors affecting herd management

By Ralph Winingham
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

"It depends" appeared to be one of the most common responses to questions March 5 during a Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute symposium on white-tailed deer studies in San Antonio.

Although the researchers offered some hedged responses to questions by about 120 people at the annual Deer Associates Meeting, they also covered a multitude of issues and provided a volume of information to seminar attendees.

Findings about deer density; deer population impact on South Texas vegetation; the connection between nutrition and antler-body development; and guidelines on how many buck fawns and does are needed to create a stable of trophy bucks were covered by researchers who have been examining white-tailed deer issues for decades.

"The implications of the number of deer in an area, the density of the animals, can have a



HOW MANY? Timothy Fulbright discusses habitat and carrying capacity of white-tailed deer at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute annual Deer Associates Meeting in San Antonio. Photo by Ralph Winingham, for LSON.

profound effect on all wildlife," said Dr. David Hewitt, chairman of white-tailed deer research at the institute.

Sparking the most interest at the four-hour

symposium was a presentation by Stuart W. Stedman, a South Texas landowner and

See DEER, Page 24

Whitetails Unlimited cancels Waco show

Full-time position for Texas rep also eliminated

By Mark England
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

A national hunting organization's uncertain hold in Texas became more tenuous with the dismissal of its state field director and the cancellation of an expo set for Waco this summer.

The moves by Whitetails Unlimited, which has 90,000 members nationwide and more than 120 chapters in its home state of Wisconsin, left its five Texas chapters in limbo. However, plans call for hiring a part-time field director by July, said Dave Hawkey, vice president of field operations.

"I don't consider this a step back," Hawkey said. "I'd describe it as putting the operation into neutral until we can get someone in there and get it going again."

A Texas chapter chairman, though, believes the moves are detrimental.

"By letting the regional rep go, they've basically declared that what they've got in Texas is all they want," said Steve Freeman, who heads the Big Country Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited in Abilene. "They put themselves on a tether, saying, 'We're not going any farther.'"

Hawkey said the faltering economy played a part in the decision to cut back from a full-time to a part-time field director for Texas, who is responsible for chapters in Oklahoma and Louisiana as well.

"Basically, we're downsizing," Hawkey said. "There's a lot of expense involved in maintaining an office."

Releasing its Texas field director led Whitetails Unlimited to cancel its hunting and fishing expo and gun show set for June in Waco.

"Without a full-time individual in office there, we decided it was best to put the event on hold," Hawkey said.

Freeman said the cancellation cost the organization a chance to build its brand.

"If you did a poll, I don't even think most hunters would say, 'Yeah, I've heard of Whitetails Unlimited,'" said Freeman, who was drawn to the organization's pledge to let chapters keep 50 percent of money raised to use in their communities. "In my book, any publicity you get, such as holding an expo, would be great for the organization."

Hawkey insisted Whitetails Unlimited's moves aren't a precursor to pulling out of Texas, calling the state vital to the organization's growth.

"It's not only the size of the state, but the number of hunters," Hawkey said. "Texas has a rich hunting tradition and shares a lot of the values of the hunters in the other states where we have chapters."

A second Texas chapter official, however, questioned how a part-time field director will help build the organization.

"Texas is so vast," said John Oswalt, co-chairman of the East Texas Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited. "It's hard to cover for one individual, especially when he's part-time and you throw Oklahoma and Louisiana into the mix."

See WHITETAILS, Page 29



ALTERNATIVE ENERGY: One suggestion for reducing quail losses to hawks and other birds of prey is to provide another food source for the attackers, such as pigeons. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

Hawk fighter No. 1: pigeons

If raptors are terrorizing quail, change their menu

By **Ralph Winingham**
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Birds of prey that bring death from above present particular challenges for Texas landowners and outfitters attempting to maintain wild or pen-raised populations of bobwhite quail and other upland birds.

The raptors are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which makes it illegal for people to kill or injure them, and they often ignore any tactics designed to scare them out of an area.

However, at least one possible solution to the quail-depredation problem has been suggested by master falconer and veterinary technician John Karger of the Last Chance Forever Bird of Prey Conservancy in San Antonio.

"Nothing you can do will scare hawks away, so the best ammunition in that fight is to provide them with an alternate food source," Karger said.

His suggestion for giving raptors a better meal opportunity than quail is for landowners and outfitters to consider raising slow-flying, fast-multiplying and easy predator prey — pigeons.

"Putting up a pigeon loft will give Cooper's hawks (the main raptor predators of quail) easy prey," Karger said. "Hawks are opportunists and will take the easiest route to a meal."

"They are actually doing the landowners a favor by taking out the sick, injured or slow birds in a covey," he said, adding that pigeons are even slower and easier to catch than weak quail.

Karger, who offers more than 30 years of knowledge to landowners dealing with raptor problems, said the main periods that avian

See **HAWKS**, Page 23

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FISHING

At Purtis Creek, a tale of fish, grass, flood

Recovery work under way at little lake

By Thomas Phillips

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Purtis Creek Lake held on to its reputation as a high-quality fishery longer than most.

Many lakes will rise and fall in fishing quality. They are the talk of the town one spring and forlorn two years later.

For Purtis Creek, a tiny speck of a reservoir in East Texas, the fishing bonanza lasted almost 20 years.

Texas Parks and Wildlife built the lake and opened it in 1988 to

be a top-notch fishery. It covers 349 acres and is inside Purtis Creek State Park. Largemouth bass are managed under a catch and release only strategy. Only 50 boats may be on the water at one time, and they are restricted to idle speed.

Although anglers still say the fishing is good — it's a place they know they can consistently catch big bass — some say it has fallen off in the last few years.

"I would say for the first 10 or 15 years it exceeded the potential," said David Nichols of Brownsboro, who owns the lure company Brass n' Blades.

Back when it first opened, Nichols and his fishing buddies were, to put it mildly, excited about fishing at Purtis Creek.

"We'd get out of church, and

boom, couldn't wait to get over to Purtis Creek," he said. "We wouldn't even eat lunch."

But the last time he fished there was two or three years ago. He fished until noon and caught zero fish.

"I don't think we ever got a bite," he said.

In about 2003 or 2004, Nichols said, the lake's quality started to decline in quantity and quality of fish.

Part of the problem could have been the aquatic vegetation in the lake.

About that time, hydrilla in the lake began to spread, said Richard Ott, TPW's district fisheries biologist who oversees the lake from a biological standpoint.

See PURTIS CREEK, Page 24



CHANGED LAKE: Anglers fish March 7 at Purtis Creek Lake. Grass carp at the lake recently reduced its aquatic vegetation to 1-percent coverage. Photo by Thomas Phillips, LSON.



UP A CREEK: White bass in some parts of the state have begun their move from lakes upstream to spawn. Anglers are reporting limits of 25 fish in some waterways, but anglers in North and Central Texas are still waiting for the run to hit its full stride. Photo by Thomas Phillips, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Whites running at some lakes

Anglers limiting, sometimes quickly, in southern waters

By Thomas Phillips

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Lake levels are back up in Texas, and the state's white bass are on the run.

Yegua Creek above Lake Somerville might be the epicenter of this year's action. There, anglers are reporting good catches of females full of eggs.

"It's better this year, I believe," said Bruce Burnett, a park ranger at the Nails Creek Unit of Lake Somerville State Park. "The lake right now is about 3 1/2 feet above normal."

The water level and temperature are key to a good white bass run. The fish, also called sand bass, or sandies, wait until the water temperature reaches between 55 and 60 degrees before spawning. They also like flowing water in the creek or river.

At Yegua Creek, the water is flowing, and so are the people, Burnett said.

"We've been seeing just a whole lot of people, even during the week," he said.

Tommy Snow, a state park law enforcement officer at Somerville, counted 70 vehicles at Irwin Bridge, about 8 creek miles up from the lake, one day.

While Snow checks anglers for their fish sizes and numbers, he also talks to them. They are catching white bass on quarter-ounce chartreuse roadrunners, he said.

"As long as it's got chartreuse on it," he said.

At Somerville, Snow said, the run began early this year, with males moving up the creek in December. He also predicted it would last into late March before beginning to taper off.

At Canyon Lake, the run did not start that early.

"It was like they went upstream overnight," Travis Smith at The Tackle Box said, referring to one day during the last week of February.

The run came on strong, Smith said, and anglers are catching limits in 30 minutes. Females have moved in, and anglers are catching 2-pound fish now.

The action is happening downstream from an area known as the rapids on the Guadalupe River.

Lures of choice are roadrunners, crankbaits and small rattletraps, Smith said. Minnows are popular, too.

The surface temperature on the lake is about 57 degrees, and it is slightly warmer upstream, at 59 to 60 degrees, Smith said.

The lake level, hit hard by drought last summer, is back up also.

"It's a far cry from last year, because last year, you couldn't even get up the river," he said.

On the Guadalupe, Smith said, a few striped bass have moved in with their white cousins. In addition to catching 15-inch sandies, he said, anglers are also hooking into 12-pound striper.

Shelly Hoff, one of the owners of Canyon Bait House, had also heard good reports from below the rapids. The day before she spoke with *Lone Star Outdoor News*, two men reported a catch of 48 keepers, Hoff said.

The Colorado River at Colorado Bend State Park, above Lake Buchanan, is also turning on.

Todd Fleming and other anglers with San Antonio-based Alamo Fly Fishers scouted the park Feb. 21 for the club's annual David Young Memorial White Bass Extravaganza, to be held in mid-March.

They "jumped the gun" in going so early, Fleming said. But they caught fish — mostly smaller males with a few females.

See WHITE BASS, Page 24

Sheepshead down on lower coast

Cool weather could be keeping fish numbers low

By Antonio Vindell

FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

It's often said that whenever the white flowers of the yucca trees are in full bloom in the lower part of the Rio Grande Valley, sheepshead are biting.

The legend isn't holding up this year. Anglers are reporting few sheepshead catches although the yuccas are in full bloom, and some are already starting to drop their petals.

Anglers, bay fishing businesses and tackle shops from South Padre Island to Port Mansfield are reporting a slower-than-usual season, putting the blame on the weather.

Area temperatures have been on the cool side so far this year, averaging 45 degrees during early morning and evenings up to the first week in March.

Tom Schwan, a retiree from South Dakota who has been coming to South Texas for the last six years, reported one strong catch of the tasty fish.

"A friend of mine caught almost his limit fishing in Port Isabel," he said.

Other anglers were not doing so well.

"Bay fishing has been kind of lousy," said Ramona Murphy, with South Padre Island-based Murphy Charter Services Inc. "It has been a little too cool in the morning. The sheepsheads aren't here yet."

She predicts that as soon as waters start warming up and the weather

See SHEEPSHEAD, Page 27



PATIENCE: Lauro Roman of Mission caught his first sheepshead after four hours of fishing at the South Padre Island jetty last week. Photo by Antonio Vindell, for Lone Star Outdoor News.

Researchers: Some prop scars healing faster than predicted

Some bounce back in as little as 4 months

By Thomas Phillips
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Some prop scars cut into sensitive coastal seagrass apparently heal faster than biologists once suspected, two state biologists said earlier this month.

Texas Parks and Wildlife began a major study of underwater prop scars in 2005, and the best research at the time said the scars — cut by boat propellers — could take two to seven years to heal, said Faye Grubbs.

But about 80 percent of the scars Grubbs and Perry Trial studied healed in less than a year. The fastest healing took four months, they said.



WARNING: Boaters are warned not to damage coastal seagrass in one area under study. Photo by LSON.

“What we’ve seen already is some pretty rapid recovery with some of the scars we’re following,” Trial said.

Their study took place in Redfish Bay, near

See PROP SCARS, Page 23

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TEXAS FISHING REPORT

HOT BITES

LARGEMOUTH BASS



AMISTAD: Good on Senkos, spinnerbaits, crankbaits, nightcrawlers and soft plastic lizards in 3-25 feet.

BASTROP: Good on red/white spinnerbaits, crankbaits and Rat-L-Traps.

COLEMAN: Good on chartreuse soft plastics, spinnerbaits and crankbaits.

WHITE, HYBRID, STRIPER



BROWNWOOD: White bass are excellent on L'il Fishies, Rat-L-Traps and shad crankbaits.

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

POSSUM KINGDOM: White bass are good on silver jiggging spoons and live bait. Stripers are good on silver spoons and shad-colored crankbaits along southern lake points.

RAY HUBBARD: White bass are good on slabs and spoons.

BUCHANAN: Striped bass are good drifting live bait in 25-35 feet and trolling white/chartreuse striper jigs and crankbaits.

CATFISH



BELTON: Channel and blue catfish are good on shrimp and stinkbait.

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

CALAVERAS: Channel and blue catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp and cheesebait near the railroad trestle.

COLEMAN: Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait, shrimp and cut bait.

GRANBURY: Good on frozen shrimp, liver and stinkbait.

LEWISVILLE: Good on prepared bait and chartreuse (use Worm-Glo) nightcrawlers.

O.H. IVIE: Channel catfish are good on live and cut bait.

STAMFORD: Good on live bait.

CRAPPIE



SOMERVILLE: Excellent on minnows and on green/black jigs.

LIVINGSTON: Very good on minnows.

SWEETWATER: Good on minnows and jigs.

ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 44 degrees; 1.24' low. Black bass are fair on live bait and black/blue jigs suspended in trees. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on live bait.

AMISTAD: Water clear; 51 degrees; 1.87' low. Black bass are good on Senkos, spinnerbaits, crankbaits, nightcrawlers and soft plastic lizards in 3-25 feet. Striped bass are good on slabs, crankbaits and Sassy Shad. White bass are good on slabs, crankbaits and Sassy Shad. Crappie are fair on minnows. Catfish are good over baited holes.

ARROWHEAD: Water lightly stained; 47 degrees; 5.65' low. Black bass are slow on crankbaits or black/blue jigs in shallows off rocky points. Crappie are good under the east side bridges. White bass are fair. Blue catfish are fair.

ATHENS: Water fairly clear; 43-49 degrees; 0.43' high. Black bass are fair on shaky-head rigs, Rat-L-Traps and crankbaits. Crappie are fair. Catfish are fair.

BASTROP: Water stained. Black bass are good on red/white spinnerbaits, crankbaits and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair. Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait, liver, shrimp and minnows.

BELTON: Water stained; 50 degrees; 4.24' high. Black bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps and crankbaits. Hybrid striper are fair. White bass are slow. Crappie are good on minnows at night under lights.

BOB SANDLIN: Water stained; 43-50 degrees; 0.06' high. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on live minnows and jigs. White bass are fair. Catfish are fair on prepared bait.

BRAUNIG: Water clear; 51 degrees. Black bass are good on crankbaits and dark soft plastic worms in the reeds and near the jetty and dam. Striped bass are good on liver and shad. Redfish are slow. Blue catfish are good on cut bait.

BRIDGEPORT: Water fairly clear; 43-49 degrees; 2.79' low. Black bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps, Texas rigs and drop-shot rigs. Crappie are fair. White bass are fair. Hybrid striper are fair. Catfish are fair.

BROWNWOOD: Water stained; 51 degrees; 6.71' low. Black bass are fair on tomato-colored spinnerbaits, craw jigs, black/blue jigs, perch and craw-colored crankbaits and chrome/blue Rat-L-Traps. Hybrid striper are slow. Crappie are fair. Channel catfish are slow.

BUCHANAN: Water murky; 50 degrees; 14.41' low. Black bass are fair on jerkbaits, 1/8 oz. and 1/4 oz. pumpkin jigs and Carolina-rigged lizards along break lines and bluff ledges. White bass are fair. Crappie are fair. Channel, yellow and blue catfish are slow.

CADDO: Water murky; 43-51 degrees; 2.13' high. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs and jigs. White bass are fair. Yellow bass are fair. Catfish are fair.

CALAVERAS: Water clear; 51 degrees. Black bass are good on dark soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits and crankbaits in reed beds and near the dam. Striped bass are good on spoons and jigs near the dam and the crappie wall in 15-20 feet. Redfish are slow. Crappie are slow.

CANYON LAKE: Water murky; 57 degrees; 0.45' high. Black bass are fair on jerkbaits, black/chartreuse hair jigs and Texas-rigged worms on shaky jigheads in 20-25 feet. Striped bass are fair. White bass are fair. Smallmouth bass are good on smoke/red flake tubes, tomato red curl tail grubs and tomato red drop shot worms over rock piles in 12-25 feet. Crappie are fair. Channel catfish are slow. Yellow and blue catfish are slow.

CEDAR CREEK: Water stained; 44-51 degrees; 0.04' high. Black bass are fair on crankbaits, jigs and Texas rigs. White bass are good on slabs. Hybrid striper are fair. Crappie are fair. Catfish are fair.

CHOKE CANYON: Water stained; 51 degrees; 8.77' low. Black bass are fair on soft plastic worms and lizards. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Drum are slow. Channel and blue catfish are fair. Yellow catfish are fair on live perch.

COLEMAN: Water murky; 47 degrees; 8.63' low. Hybrid striper are good on silver and chartreuse striper jigs. Crappie



are fair on minnows and blue tube jigs.

COLETO CREEK: Water stained; 51 degrees (68 degrees at discharge); 0.10' high. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair. Channel and blue catfish are fair. Yellow catfish are fair.

CONROE: Water fairly clear; 0.23' high. Black bass are fair on watermelon red and dark red soft plastics, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. Striped bass are fair. Crappie are fair. Catfish are fair.

COOPER: Water off-color; 44-50 degrees; 0.42' high. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, crankbaits and shaky head rigs. Crappie are fair. White bass are fair. Hybrid striper are fair. Catfish are fair on nightcrawlers and prepared bait.

FAIRFIELD: Water fairly clear; 56-87 degrees. Black bass are fair on Senkos, spinnerbaits and split-shot-rigged Ring Frys. Redfish are fair to good on live bait.



near drop offs around points and coves near the dam in 5 feet. Crappie are slow. Bream are slow. Channel and blue catfish are fair on stinkbait.

HUBBARD CREEK: Water lightly stained; 52 degrees; 7.22' low. Black bass are fair on live bait and black/blue jigs worked slowly along grass lines and timber. Crappie are fair. White bass are fair on live bait. Catfish are fair on live bait.

JOE POOL: Water off-color; 43-49 degrees; 1.19' high. Black bass are fair on drop-shot-rigged finesse worms, crankbaits and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair to good on minnows and slabs. Catfish are fair on cheese bait and nightcrawlers.

LAKE O' THE PINES: Water stained; 43-50 degrees; 3.37' high. Black bass are fair on Texas-rigged Baby Brush Hogs and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on stink

HOT SPOT



Falcon

Water murky; 56 degrees. Black bass are good on soft plastics and spinnerbaits in shallow areas. Catches have been reported from pitching Senkos and Brush Hogs in brush in 8 to 10 feet of water. Channel and blue catfish are excellent on frozen shrimp and cut bait.

FAYETTE: Water stained; 48 degrees. Black bass are fair on watermelon red, green pumpkin and redbug Carolina-rigged soft plastics off deep points. Channel and blue catfish are fair on juglines baited with shad.

FORK: Water stained to murky; 44-51 degrees; 0.38' high. Black bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps, crankbaits, Carolina rigs and heavy jigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on nightcrawlers and stinkbait.

FORT PHANTOM HILL: Water clear; 51 degrees; 5.30' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on live bait.

GIBBONS CREEK: Water clear. Black bass are fair on watermelon and chartreuse soft plastics, spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and pink tube jigs. Catfish are fair on frozen shrimp, hot dogs and stinkbait.

GRANBURY: Water clear; 0.43' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon and pumpkinseed soft plastics and on chartreuse Rat-L-Traps. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows and green tube jigs.

GRANGER: Water clear; 48 degrees; 1.09' low. Black bass are fair on black jigs in timber along the river channel. White bass are fair near Dickerson's. Crappie are slow. Blue catfish are fair on prepared baits in 6-15 feet.

GRAPEVINE: Water stained; 44-50 degrees; 6.16' high. Black bass are slow to fair on crankbaits, Rat-L-Traps and drop-shot rigs. Crappie are fair. White bass are fair to good on slabs. Catfish are fair on stink bait and Worm-Glo nightcrawlers.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water stained; 51 degrees; 0.85' high. Black bass to 4 pounds are fair on green/red flake 6" worms, pearl swimmers and Rat-L-Traps

bait and chartreuse (use Worm-Glo) nightcrawlers.

LAVON: Water stained; 44-51 degrees; 3.42' high. Black bass are fair to good on crankbaits, Texas rigs and drop-shot rigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on prepared bait.

LBI: Water stained; 50 degrees; 0.31' low. Black bass are slow. White bass are fair jiggging 1/4 oz. jigs and artificial minnows. Crappie are slow. Channel catfish are slow. Yellow and blue catfish are slow.

LEWISVILLE: Water stained; 43-51 degrees; 1.26' high. Black bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps, medium diving crankbaits and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair to good on slabs. Hybrid striper are fair on slabs and Sassy Shad.

LIVINGSTON: Water stained; 48 degrees; 0.19' high. Black bass are good on crankbaits, spinnerbaits and soft plastics. Striped bass are fair on soft plastics and spec rigs upriver. White bass are good on soft plastics and spec rigs upriver. Blue catfish are very good on shad.

MACKENZIE: Water lightly stained; 30 degrees; 79.32' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass and striped bass are slow. Smallmouth bass are slow. Walleye are slow. Catfish are slow on live bait.

MONTICELLO: Water fairly clear; 55-84 degrees; 0.66' high. Black bass are fair to good on Rat-L-Traps, flukes and crankbaits. Crappie are fair. Catfish are fair on prepared bait.

O.H. IVIE: Water lightly stained; 50 degrees; 21.71' low. Black bass are fair on slow-rolled white spinnerbaits, Carolina-rigged watermelon blue soft plastics and live bait worked along channels and drop-offs. Crappie are fair. White bass

are fair. Smallmouth bass are fair.

OAK CREEK: Water lightly stained; 47 degrees; 7.41' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on live bait.

PALESTINE: Water lightly stained; 44-50 degrees; 0.67' high. Black bass are fair on crankbaits, Rat-L-Traps, Carolina rigs and jigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Hybrid striper are fair. White bass are fair to good on slabs and minnows. Catfish are fair on prepared bait and chartreuse nightcrawlers.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Water stained; 51 degrees; 5.10' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red soft plastics, black/chartreuse jigs and shad-colored crankbaits off points. Crappie are fair. Catfish are good on live bait.

PROCTOR: Water murky; 47 degrees; 2.97' low. Black bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are fair.

RAY HUBBARD: Water fairly clear; 43-49 degrees; 0.01' high. Black bass are slow on red Rattle Baits and Yum lizards.

RAY ROBERTS: Water stained to muddy; 42-48 degrees; 2.03' high. Fishing reported generally slow. A large threadfin shad die-off has taken place.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: Water off-color; 43-50 degrees; 0.26' high. Black bass are slow. White bass are fair to good on slabs. Hybrid striper are fair on slabs and live shad. Crappie are fair. Catfish are fair.

SAM RAYBURN: Water stained; 50 degrees; 0.20' high. Black bass are fair on tequila sunrise and pumpkinseed soft plastics. White bass are fair. Crappie are fair. Bream are fair on worms. Catfish are fair.

SOMERVILLE: Water murky; 50 degrees; 3.29' high. Black bass are slow. Hybrid striper are slow. White bass are slow. Channel and blue catfish are fair.

STAMFORD: Water lightly stained; 49 degrees; 3.67' low. Black bass are slow on live bait and Carolina-rigged pumpkin/chartreuse soft plastics. Crappie are fair. White bass are fair on live bait.

STILLHOUSE: Water murky; 49 degrees; 0.22' high. Black bass are slow. Hybrid striper are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair. Channel and blue catfish are fair.

TAWAKONI: Water fairly clear; 44-50 degrees; 0.74' high. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair. Striped bass and hybrid striper are fair. Catfish are fair on stink bait.

TEXOMA: Water off-color; 43-49 degrees; 1.78' high. Black bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps, drop-shot rigs and crankbaits. Crappie are fair. Striped bass are fair to good live shad and large Road Runners. Catfish are fair on cut and live shad.

TOLEDO BEND: Water stained; 49 degrees; 0.01' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon and June bug soft plastics and on watermelon spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair. Bream are fair. Channel and blue catfish are fair.

TRAVIS: Water murky; 53 degrees; 3.89' low. Black bass are good on brown jigs, smoke grubs and crawfish pattern crankbaits in 8-20 feet. Striped bass are fair. White bass are fair. Crappie are fair. Channel and blue catfish are slow.

WALTER E. LONG: Water stained; 49 degrees. Black bass are fair on minnows and chartreuse soft plastics. Hybrid striper are fair. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair. Catfish are slow.

WHITNEY: Water murky; 1.56' low. Black bass are fair on jerkbaits and Carolina-rigged soft plastic lizards along break lines in 10-20 feet. Striped bass are fair drifting live bait in 25-35 feet and on striper jigs and crankbaits. White bass are fair on artificial minnows and slabs. Crappie are fair on minnows over brush piles in 20-25 feet. Catfish are slow.

WRIGHT PATMAN: Water stained; 42-48 degrees; 20.55' high. Black bass are fair to good on Texas rigs, shaky head rigs, Rat-L-Traps and crankbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on shad and prepared bait.

SALTWATER SCENE

NORTH SABINE: Trout and redfish are fair while drifting mud and shell. Waders have taken better trout on the Louisiana shoreline on slow-sinking plugs.

SOUTH SABINE: Redfish are fair on the edge of the channel on mullet. Sheepshead and black drum are good at the jetty on live shrimp.

BOLIVAR: Trout are fair to good on the south shoreline on slow-sinking plugs. Black drum and redfish are good at Rollover Pass.

TRINITY BAY: Trout are fair to good for drifters working pods of shad and mullet on the east shoreline on Bass Assassins, Trout Killers and Sand Eels. Redfish are good at the spillway on crabs and mullet.

EAST GALVESTON BAY: Trout are fair to good on the north shoreline on Corkies and pink MirrOlures. Whiting and sand trout are good on the edge of the Intracoastal on fresh shrimp.

WEST GALVESTON BAY: Waders have taken trout in the mud and shell on MirrOlures and Corkies in the afternoon. Sheepshead, redfish and black drum are good at the jetty on shrimp and crabs.

TEXAS CITY: Redfish are fair in Moses Lake on shrimp and crabs. Pier anglers have taken sand trout and mangrove snapper on fresh shrimp.

FREEPORT: Sand trout and sheepshead are good on live shrimp on the reefs. Redfish are fair to good at San L. pass on cracked blue crabs. Red drum are at the mouths of drains on Gulps and shrimp.

EAST MATAGORDA BAY: Trout are fair for drifters on live shrimp over humps and scattered shell. Trout are fair to good in 3-4 feet of water for waders tossing slow-sinkers. Redfish are fair on the edge of the Intracoastal and at the mouths of drains on jigs tipped with shrimp.

WEST MATAGORDA BAY: Redfish are fair to good on the south shoreline in the guts and bayous. Trout are fair in the guts. Sheepshead are good at the jetty.

PORT O'CONNOR: Trout and redfish are fair for drifters working the back lakes with live shrimp and topwaters. Redfish are good at the mouths of drains in streaky water.

ROCKPORT: Trout are fair on the edge of the ICW on glow DOA Shrimp. Redfish are fair to good in California Hole on mullet and shrimp. Trout are fair on the shell in Copano Bay on slow-winking plugs.

PORT ARANSAS: Redfish are fair to good on the ledges of the channel on mullet. Sand trout are good on shrimp in the channel. Sheepshead are good at the jetty.

CORPUS CHRISTI: Trout are fair to good on the edge of the flats on live shrimp, Gulps and DOA Shrimp. Redfish have been found in the guts running parallel to the shorelines.

BAFFIN BAY: Trout are fair to good in mud and grass on Corkies and Catch 2000s. Trout are fair to good in the guts along the King Ranch shoreline on Corkies. Redfish are fair around spoils on live bait.

PORT MANSFIELD: Redfish are fair to good on DOA Shrimp and Gulps under a popping cork around grass holes. Trout are fair to good on mud along the edge of the ICW. Sheepshead are fair at the jetty.

SOUTH PADRE: Trout and redfish are fair to good on the edge of the Intracoastal and at Gas Well Flats on DOA Shrimp. Redfish, black drum and mangrove snapper are fair to good in the channel on shrimp.

PORT ISABEL: Trout are fair on the edge of the flats on soft plastics under popping corks around Cullen Bay and Laguna Vista Cove.

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PUMPED UP: A new water pump station at Lake Fork cost the city of Dallas more than \$200 million, including the pipeline connecting the station. Photo by the city of Dallas.

Dallas ready to pump, but says it understands Fork's importance

City has right to 70 percent of water, writing plan for use

By Thomas Phillips
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

The city of Dallas recently finished its water pump station at Lake Fork, and the city is making plans for how it will use the water. But anglers need not worry about the thirsty city draining one of the state's top bass lakes, a city administrator said.

"Dallas does care," said Charles Stringer, the assistant director of Dallas Water Utilities.

The city is "cognizant" of Lake Fork's preeminence in the world of largemouth bass fishing, Stringer said, a statement supported by the

lake's manager, the Sabine River Authority. "They're very understanding of that fact," said Butch Choate, a regional operations manager with SRA.

Bass anglers, too, are not worried about Dallas menacing one of their beloved lakes.

"Nobody's really worried about it," said Cameron Burnett, who runs Lake Fork Marina with his family.

If anything, Burnett said, anglers would not mind the lake lowering some. That would make the fishing easier by concentrating them and revealing structure more, he said.

Although the city is aware of Lake Fork's popularity among anglers, Stringer made it clear that the city has a right to the water.

"Keep in mind Lake Fork is a water supply lake, and if situations warrant, we'll have to use whatever we need," Stringer said.

See LAKE FORK, Page 24

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GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

LICENSES STILL REQUIRED AT MLDP RANCH

A camp in Terrell County that appeared to be occupied had a fresh gut pile. Upon further inspection by Game Warden Saul Aguilar, the quarters of three deer were discovered in a cooler and proper documentation was missing. After making contact with the group, Aguilar discovered that the hunters had harvested several deer, which were located back at camp. Two of the hunters on the property, which had a Managed Lands Deer Permit, did not have their hunting licenses and claimed they did not need one because they had MLD permits. Citations were issued, and evidence was seized.

PLENTIFUL WHITE BASS STILL HAVE LIMITS

Tarrant County Game Wardens Clint Borchardt and Chelle Mount checked six fishermen in two boats along the West Fork of the Trinity River. The first boat had four anglers, and the section behind the last seat was filled to the top of the transom with 122 white bass. The second boat had two anglers and 64 white bass in their ice chest. All six anglers received citations for being over the limit of white bass.

SHOOTING QUAIL FROM ROAD BRINGS FINES

Wharton County Game Warden Chris Bird filed charges on three residents for hunting quail from a public roadway. Bird seized 27 bobwhite quail, and restitution is pending.

TRUCK IN RIVER BRINGS IN HOMICIDE INVESTIGATORS

Dimmit County Game Warden Gene Fernandez was checking anglers and working water safety on the Nueces River when he noticed something in the water. He took a closer look and realized it was a pickup truck submerged in the river. He recalled

Life jacket was hiding little crappie

Several boats were taking advantage of the crappie biting up Kickapoo Creek. While making contact with three people who were wrapping up their trip, Polk County

Game Warden David Johnson conducted a water safety inspection.

When a personal flotation device was pulled from below the front deck, Johnson noticed a holding

basket full of crappie. The basket yielded many crappie that were undersized. Several citations were issued for possession of undersized crappie and no fishing license.

an anonymous tip from two months earlier that a truck was apparently in the river but never located. Fernandez contacted the sheriff's office to bring out a wrecker, and soon afterward he received a call from a Texas Ranger, who had a few questions about the situation. After several hours, a late model, full-size, extended cab, four-wheel-drive pickup truck was retrieved from the river. Once the water had emptied out of the cab, the inside of the truck was examined. No one was in the truck. It appeared that someone had tried to burn the inside of the cab but was unsuccessful. The license plates led authorities to persons to be questioned. The pickup and the investigation were turned over the Dimmit County Sheriff's Office.

BOAT UNREGISTERED; OCCUPANTS TRY TO HIDE

Henderson County Game Warden Dustin Balfanz and Freestone County Game Warden John Thorne patrolled Caney Creek and Cedar Creek Lake and filed charges on a boater for displaying a fictitious registration decal. The people onboard tried to hide when they saw the wardens' boat but were unsuccessful.

LOJACK SIGNAL DETECTED BY DPS HELICOPTER

A Department of Public Safety helicopter detected a LoJack transmission coming from a 90,000-acre ranch in Webb County. Responding to the call, Game Wardens Michael Hummert and Colt Gauden entered the ranch and spoke with the land-

owner. A DPS helicopter was hovering in an area where the landowner said a camp was located. The wardens entered the camp and found a stolen Ford F-250 four-door truck. The truck had been painted camouflage from its original white, an elevated deer blind had been installed, and fictitious plates had been put on it.

LITTER LEAVES A CLUE TO HUNTER'S ID

A rancher called Gillespie County Game Warden Scott Krueger to report a dumped blackbuck antelope carcass and large bag of trash in the ditch near the rancher's residence. Krueger located the trash first thing the next morning and began looking for evidence. At the bottom of the trash bag, he found a Fredericksburg store receipt. Scott met with the store's loss prevention director, who began a records search. In a few minutes, video was found of the customer checking out and entering his vehicle. The man had paid with a credit card, so Krueger was able to obtain his name, and quick check in the phone book gave Krueger an address. After a brief introduction, Krueger told the suspect the reason for the visit. The suspect quickly confessed. A citation was issued, and the trash was cleaned up.

SNAGGING POACHERS TOOK MIXED BAG AT COOPER

Delta County Game Warden Bobby Apple caught fish snaggers two days in a row below Cooper Lake. On the first day, he found three men snag-

ging fish at the spillway. They were seen taking several white bass, buffalo and blue catfish with large treble hooks. The next day, he saw two men attempting to snag fish from the spillway. When checking their ice chest, Apple found 25 fish (white bass, hybrid bass, crappie and freshwater drum), all of which had markings of being snagged and no holes in their lips. Several of the hybrid bass were undersized.

BOYS PAY FOR POACHING DOE DEER

Titus County Game Warden Jerry Ash completed an investigation on two boys who shot two doe white-tailed deer with a .22-caliber rifle and left them to rot on a ranch. The parents and grandparents of the boys were informed of the investigation. At the parents' request, both juveniles were issued a citation that they will have to pay off themselves.

VEHICLE LINKED TO KIDNAPPING FLEES IN MCMULLEN COUNTY

While on routine patrol, McMullen County Game Warden Bubba Shelton observed a vehicle headed eastbound crossing the Nueces River Bridge. After crossing the bridge, the vehicle turned its lights off then back on. When the vehicle passed Shelton, the warden pulled in behind it. A dispatcher told Shelton the vehicle was stolen at gunpoint in a robbery and kidnapping out of Austin. Shelton initiated a traffic stop by turning on his red and blue lights and siren, but the vehicle did not stop. After a pursuit

of about 16 miles, the vehicle ran through a fence and onto a ranch. It traveled about 1 1/2 miles through the brush before it was abandoned by an unknown number of occupants, who fled before the vehicle was found.

SLOW ROLLING, THE BACK-ROADS WAY

While on patrol, Palo Pinto County Game Warden David Modgling approached a truck that was driving slowly down back roads. When the driver noticed Modgling's truck, he sped up and threw beer cans in a ditch. The driver was cited for DWI.

CELL PHONE PHOTOS CARRY INCRIMINATING DATA

Upon investigating the remains of a mule deer carcass, Brewster County Game Warden Matthew Bridgefamer found an undated mule deer tag. The tag belonged to a man on the neighboring property. Bridgefamer spoke with the man and his brother, who were cooperative with the investigation. They showed cell phone pictures of the deer, but their recollections of when the deer was killed were not consistent with the date and time stamp on the pictures. The shooter confessed to killing the deer four days before purchasing his license and not having hunter education.

JEEP CAN'T HANDLE WATER ON NUECES

A caller reported that a Jeep was stuck in the bed of the Nueces River near Chalk Bluff campground. When Uvalde County Game Warden Henry Lutz located the Jeep, the owner had removed the vehicle and parked it on the riverbank with two flat tires and a piece broken on the transmission. The tires were still damp, and moss was in the radiator. The owner admitted to driving in the water. One citation was issued for operating a motor vehicle in a state-owned riverbed.

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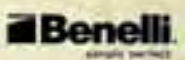


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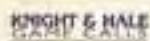


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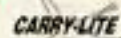


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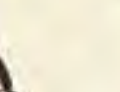


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This scouting camera from **Day 6 Outdoors** uses time-lapse high-definition video to allow hunters to record about seven days of activity in their favorite hunting spots. Unlike trail cameras that trigger on short-range motion, the PlotWatcher TLV does not rely on motion detection. Instead, it records deer activity at a much greater distance so hunters can determine animals' movement patterns. The camera's software also has MotionSearch, a horizontal movement tracker that aids in detecting game activity. It sells for about \$220.
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HEROES



BONNIE L. BAUER, 15, of Dripping Springs, left, needed help holding up a 47-pound black drum caught at Port O'Connor.



EDDY MADRIGAL of San Antonio caught this 33.5-inch redfish at Braunig Lake using a swimbait.



JAMIE MENDOZA, 11, of Arlington harvested her first buck, an eight-point white-tailed deer, this season in Archer county.



BRADLEY BROWN of Karnes City harvested this five-by-five mule deer near Cortez, Colo.



STAN GERZSENYI of Del Rio holds two largemouth bass caught recently at Lake Amistad.



TONY JUAREZ harvested a non-typical buck white-tailed deer near Poth that had 13 points. Three of the points were drop tines.

Share an adventure

Want to share hunting and fishing photos with other Lone Star Outdoor News readers? Send them to us with contact and caption information.

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HUNTER ARNETTE, 9, of Athens shot this seven-point buck on the last weekend of the season on the Bomer Ranch in Coleman County. He shot the buck at 100 yards with a Tikka .308. Hunter has been hunting since he was 6 years old.

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CONSERVATION

TPW to wrap up dove lethality bird collecting

Cost, effort to bag more not worth it for study, TPW says

State officials said this week they have enough dove — 1,360 birds — collected during two years of field research, to accurately compare the effectiveness of lead and non-lead shot for doves.

The goal of the dove lethality study was to collect between 1,050 and 1,500 one-shot-kill doves under real hunting conditions. The benchmark for a study of this type is 1,500, but the researchers say they will forego a third collection effort this year after preliminary statistical evaluations and discussions with ballistic and university consultants.

“Statistical analysis of the existing data indicates that one more year of dove collection will not significantly enhance our understanding derived from the data collected thus far,” said Corey Mason, Texas Parks and Wildlife’s dove program leader. “Additionally, given the cost and effort needed to obtain a couple hundred more samples, we feel that further collections are not warranted.”

The study parameters call for between 5,000 and 7,000 shots fired. After two years of collection, TPW has recorded about 6,300 shots taken by 58 volunteer shooters.

Five hundred dove are being studied using x-ray and necropsy, and about 360 previously collected birds will be examined in 2011. TPW anticipates publish-



BAG LIMITED:

Harvesting more dove is not necessary for a study to gauge lethality of lead vs. non-lead shot, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife. Photo by TPW.

ing its findings in summer 2011.

Public concern about the incidence of lead in the environment is growing. This issue has been discussed by the Central Flyway migratory bird managers for five years. It is conceivable that non-lead shot requirements could be proposed for the hunting of all migratory game birds, including dove, at some future date. This could have considerable impact in Texas, which boasts the nation’s largest dove population at an estimated 20 to 25 million breeding birds and a rich hunting tradition that sees from 300,000 to 350,000 hunters take to the field each fall. Texas hunters harvest about 6.4 million doves annually or roughly 30 percent of all doves taken nationally.

The situation also has an economic

consideration. Based on a 2005 survey conducted for the U. S. Census Bureau and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service by Southwick and Associates, Texas dove hunting has an economic impact of \$316 million annually. Texas dove hunting produces 3,145 jobs in the private sector and \$21 million in sales tax revenue.

TPW’s study was designed by an internationally recognized shotgun ballistics expert, who has designed more than a dozen similar studies involving waterfowl and upland game birds. The research is supported by many organizations, including the Central Flyway Council, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Wildlife Management Institute.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report



HONORED: Bob Carter, left, is the 2010 recipient of the T. Boone Pickens Lifetime Sportsman Award, named after the famed businessman, right. Photo by Thomas Phillips, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Park Cities Quail honors Dallas hunter with Pickens award

Park Cities Quail honored its 2010 recipient of the T. Boone Pickens Lifetime Sportsman Award at a VIP reception Feb. 17 and was to formally present the award at its banquet March 11.

The recipient is Dallas businessman Bob Carter. The gathering in February was held at the Beretta Gallery in Highland Park so sponsors could meet him and Pickens.

Carter owns Panda Energy and, with his wife, Janice, the Circle J&B Ranch in Baylor County. He traces his interest in wildlife and conservation to his boyhood in northern Georgia.

“Quail hunting and bird dogs reigned supreme,” he said of those early years. “When I was 13, my dad gave me an old 1938 Buick, which I promptly converted into a bird hunting machine, whereupon I began terrorizing the local quail population.”

The award was created by PCQ in 2006 to recognize sportsmen who “have distinguished themselves by living a life of adventure, love of the outdoors, respect for natural resources and, most of all, those who have demonstrated a spirit of giving back,” according to a press release from PCQ.

Carter has worked to improve his ranch for all wildlife and has developed a successful business as a white-tailed deer breeder.

“It is a great honor to be chosen for the T. Boone Pickens Lifetime Sportsman Award,” said Carter. “I hope to encourage other hunters to help Park Cities Quail in their efforts to support vital research and stem the tide of the diminishing quail population.”

— Park Cities Quail report

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NATIONAL

Hautman named DU Artist of the Year

Wildlife artist James Hautman of Chaska, Minn., is the Ducks Unlimited 2011 Artist of the Year. His painting, "First Light — Canvasbacks," earned him the top honor.

"It is a great honor to be named DU artist of the year," said Hautman, who credits DU with providing him a valuable stage for his work. "It is particularly satisfying to have my artwork chosen by people who really know their ducks and are passionate about the outdoors. I feel very fortunate to be able to do what I do, and I want to thank DU not only for their conservation work, but also for exposing so many people to the world of wildlife art."

Hautman was first exposed to wildlife art from duck paintings on the covers of DU magazine covers. "I'm sure that without the knowledge that there was an audience out there for this kind of art, I would have chosen a less interesting and less rewarding career."

"James' piece brings a quintessential waterfowl scene to life in a beautiful way," said Randy Graves, chief executive officer of DU. "The DU art program affords us the opportunity to interact with and recognize many of the top wildlife artists. These talented men and women are responsible for helping raise more than \$250 million for DU's conservation mission. I congratulate James and look forward to the future success that this art program will garner for our conservation mission."

This is the fifth year the public chose the winner through an online vote on www.ducks.org. More than 20,000 votes were tallied, an increase from last year's 16,000. The voting numbers continue to grow as the wildlife artists and their paintings become more popular with outdoor and art enthusiasts.

— Ducks Unlimited report



TOP BRUSH: James Hautman's painting "First Light — Canvasbacks" pushed him to the top of Ducks Unlimited's 2011 Artist of the Year candidates.

Pneumonia killing Nevada wild sheep

Nevada biologists continue to find bighorn sheep that have died from complications brought on by pneumonia in the East Humboldt Range and in the Ruby Mountains.

"We have found 61 dead bighorn sheep in the East Humboldt's and 18 in the Ruby Mountains for a total of 79 sheep over the last three months," said Caleb McAdoo, Nevada Department of Wildlife big game biologist. "In other words, we have observed mortalities of 31 percent of the herd in the East Humboldt's and 11 percent of the herd in the Ruby Mountains."

The full extent of the effects of the outbreak won't be known until later in the spring when aerial surveys of sheep populations are performed. Biologists anticipate that the magnitude of the die-off may be much greater than presently known.

Other states around the west, including Washington, Montana and Utah, have also experienced die-offs in their

wild sheep populations from the effects of pneumonia. During the winter of 1995-1996, the Ruby Mountain sheep herd lost about 80 percent of its population to pneumonia, though the 2010 outbreak is the first major disease event in the East Humboldt's since bighorns were reintroduced there 18 years ago. Recently, 95 percent of the Hays Canyon herd in northwestern Nevada was likely lost to a pneumonia outbreak.

"Unfortunately, there is no known cure, treatment or protocol for pneumonia in bighorn sheep," said McAdoo, "but we are going to use the data collected from this disease event which may help in future outbreaks."

NDOW biologists and veterinarians have been performing a number of tasks, setting the stage for future study. This includes tagging and putting radio telemetry collars on sheep in both herds, taking biological samples from both live and dead sheep, and administering Draxxin, a broad-spectrum antibiotic to more than 60 sheep. Soil and forage samples are also being taken to explore what effect forage

quality and trace minerals in the forage may have on both diseased and healthy animals.

Over the next few years NDOW biologists will follow the collared and tagged animals observing overall health, lamb recruitment and herd growth in an effort to understand the long-term effects a major disease event has.

Biological samples taken from deceased animals will be compared to those taken from healthy animals to see if minerals, forage quality or even genetics may play a role in determining which animals may live and which may die.

— Wild Sheep Foundation report

West dominates elk calling contest

Amateur and professional elk callers from California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington earned medals March 6 in the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation/Leupold World Elk Calling Championships for 2010 in Reno, Nev.

The competition was part of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's 26th annual Elk Camp & Hunting, Fishing and Outdoor Expo.

In the competition, amateur-level callers have 30 seconds to mimic cow elk sounds, followed by bull sounds. Professionals are required to make specific calls such as barks, whistles and screaming bugles. Most callers blow across a latex reed placed inside the mouth. In the natural-voice division, no reeds are allowed. A variety of plastic tubes are used like megaphones, giving the sounds realistic resonance. Judges score each competitor anonymously.

The event helps raise awareness of elk, habitat and conservation initiatives of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Winners, listed below, received prizes and cash ranging from \$500 to \$2,500.

Professional Division

1. Joel Turner, Eatonville, Wash.
2. Rockie Jacobsen, Kamiah, Idaho
3. Bryan Langley, McMinnville, Ore.

Men's Division

1. Thomas Diesing, Loveland, Colo.
2. Dirk Durham, Moscow, Idaho
3. Greg Hubbell, Belmont, Calif.

Women's Division

1. Misty Waggener, Priest River, Idaho
2. Amy Morris, Payson, Utah
3. Brittani Currier, Montrose, Colo.

Natural Voice Division

1. Greg Hubbell, Jr., Belmont, Calif.
2. Gavin McKittrick, McAllister, Mont.
3. Michael Hatten, Elko, Nev.

Youth Division

1. Ross LeValley, Hotchkiss, Colo.
2. Brayden Langley, McMinnville, Ore.
3. Austin Durham, Moscow, Idaho

Pee Wee Division

1. Colton Crawford, McMinnville, Ore.
2. Morgan Priest, Reno, Nev.
3. Matthew Bertero, Reno, Nev.


— Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation report

Strong Columbia R. chinook forecast

Forecasts for strong chinook salmon returns to the Columbia River this summer could lead to improved fishing in the river and Washington's ocean waters. Fishing prospects also are looking up for some rivers in Puget Sound, where coho salmon are expected to return in increased numbers.

Forecasts for chinook, coho, sockeye, pink and chum salmon mark the starting point for developing 2010 salmon-fishing seasons in Puget Sound, the Columbia River and Washington coastal areas.

— Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report

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ON THE HUNT: An abundance of jakes born three years ago should be mature for hunters now. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

Spring turkey season dates and bag limits

North Zone (101 counties) Apr. 3-May 16
 Special Youth Season* Mar. 27-28, May 22-23
 South Zone (54 counties) Mar. 20-May 2
 Special Youth Season* Mar. 13-14, May 8-9
 1-Turkey Bag Limit (11 counties) Apr. 1-30

EASTERN TURKEY+ Spring-only season

East Texas (43 counties) Apr. 1-30

*In all counties that have an open season for those species. + Rio Grande and Eastern Turkey may be hunted in these counties.

BAG LIMIT

Four turkeys, with only one being an eastern turkey.

Gobblers

Continued from Page 1

of birds on their properties.

"At least in the southern part of the state, we're looking at two years of poor production," said Robert Perez, upland game program director with Texas Parks and Wildlife. "There's not a lot of young birds. Fortunately, turkeys can outlive bad weather where quail cannot."

Numbers of older birds are still good, though, after the jake explosion of a few years ago.

Near Archer City, Abby Abernathy said the mature toms will make or break the season.

"We did not kill a lot of birds last year," Abernathy said of his Seven Bar Ranch. "They were very difficult to call and seemed to be henned up a lot."

Abernathy said another year on the toms could be a bonus.

"We had a big crop of jakes three years ago, so this year they are all good gobblers to shoot," he said, adding that on one of his spots he knows there are seven or eight toms with 9- to 10-inch beards.

Hunters near Goliad and George West are seeing large num-

bers of turkeys, and ranchers that had some water in what was the parched Uvalde area saw the birds make it through.

"It was our worst drought ever," said TPW biologist David Rios. "I didn't see a poult last year."

J.D. Cox outfits hunts near Brackettville, and the bird numbers are still strong.

"The year before last we had all kinds of jakes, so it should be good this year," Cox said.

Some hunters feel the cool winter might delay the gobbling and mating.

"But it doesn't take them long to get excited when it warms up," Cox said.

In the Hill Country, Rio Grande turkeys seemed to weather the long drought, and hunters believe the turkeys held up well.

"I pretty much hunt in the Hill Country, and it looks really good this year," said Brent Scherer of Austin and a regional director for the National Wild Turkey Federation. "The rains helped and kept the fire ant population down."

Scherer said other hunters in the area are excited.

"Everyone is impressed with

what they are seeing," he said.

The Panhandle might be the hot spot this year, having dodged the nearly statewide drought.

"We had a real strong hatch, and the summer was good," said Jason McAnally of Canadian, who hunts all over the eastern Panhandle. "We're seeing large numbers of birds."

The area received good moisture the past few years, and the population is booming.

"It's been good up here since 2006," McAnally said. "Our predation levels are high, but the hatches have overshadowed it."

And after a winter filled with snowstorms, McAnally is ready for spring — and spring turkey hunting.

"We're excited about the opener," he said.

Although most Texas hunters might be working harder for the older birds, the work could well pay off in terms of beards and spurs.

And after a wet winter, more good news is the conditions.

"We expect a flurry of forbs and insects this spring," Perez said. "The conditions are great — if you aren't in standing water."

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March 19-21
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 Outdoor Expo
 Bass Pro Shops, Grapevine
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 info@scinorthtexas.com

March 20-21
Cabela's Bass Days
 Seminars and other activities centered on fishing.
 Fort Worth (817) 337-2400
 Buda (512) 295-1100



March 13
Texas Parks and Wildlife
 Fly Fish Texas
 Introduction to fly-fishing
 Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens
 (903) 676-2277

March 18
Dallas Safari Club
 Annual meeting, with speaker Michael Lewis, Texas Bighorn Society auction winner of desert bighorn sheep hunt
 Westin DFW Airport, Irving
 (972)980-9800
 bkimmel@biggame.org



March 23
Dallas Chapter of CCA
 Barbecue at Tailwaters Fly Shop
 (800) 626-4222



March 25
Whitehouse Ducks Unlimited
 Fundraiser
 Lake Tyler Petroleum Club, Tyler
 (903)316-6833



March 26-27
Alamo Fly Fishers
 Encore White Bass Outing
 Colorado Bend State Park
 (210) 479-3062
 info@alamoflyfishers.org

March 27-28
Bowhunter education
 Farmersville
 (214) 358-0174

March 27
Clean Shores Association
 Spring Clean Event
 Cleaning Port O'Connor fishing areas
 (361) 564-7032
 captlowtide@airmail.net

National Wild Turkey Federation
 Women in the Outdoors
 Cuthand United Methodist Church
 (903) 632-4616

Texas Deer Association
 Hicks Whitetail Production Auction
 Embassy Suites, San Marcos
 www.texasdeerassociation.com

April 9-10
Federation of Fly Fishers
 Gulf Coast Council Expo
 New Braunfels Civic Center
 Guest speaker Chico Fernandez
 www.gulfcoastfff.org

April 17-18
Bowhunter education
 Pottsboro
 Pre-registration required
 (214) 358-0174

April 17-19
Women in the Wild
 Deadline to register is April 1.
 Rockport
 (361) 790-2611
 www.townrockport.org

April 22-23
Operation Game Thief
 Clay Stoppers Shootout
 Texas Disposal Systems
 Wildlife Ranch, Austin
 (512) 332-9880
 gnevents@austin.rr.com



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 with 30" or 60" Protein Adapter
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 • 500# & 1000# capacities

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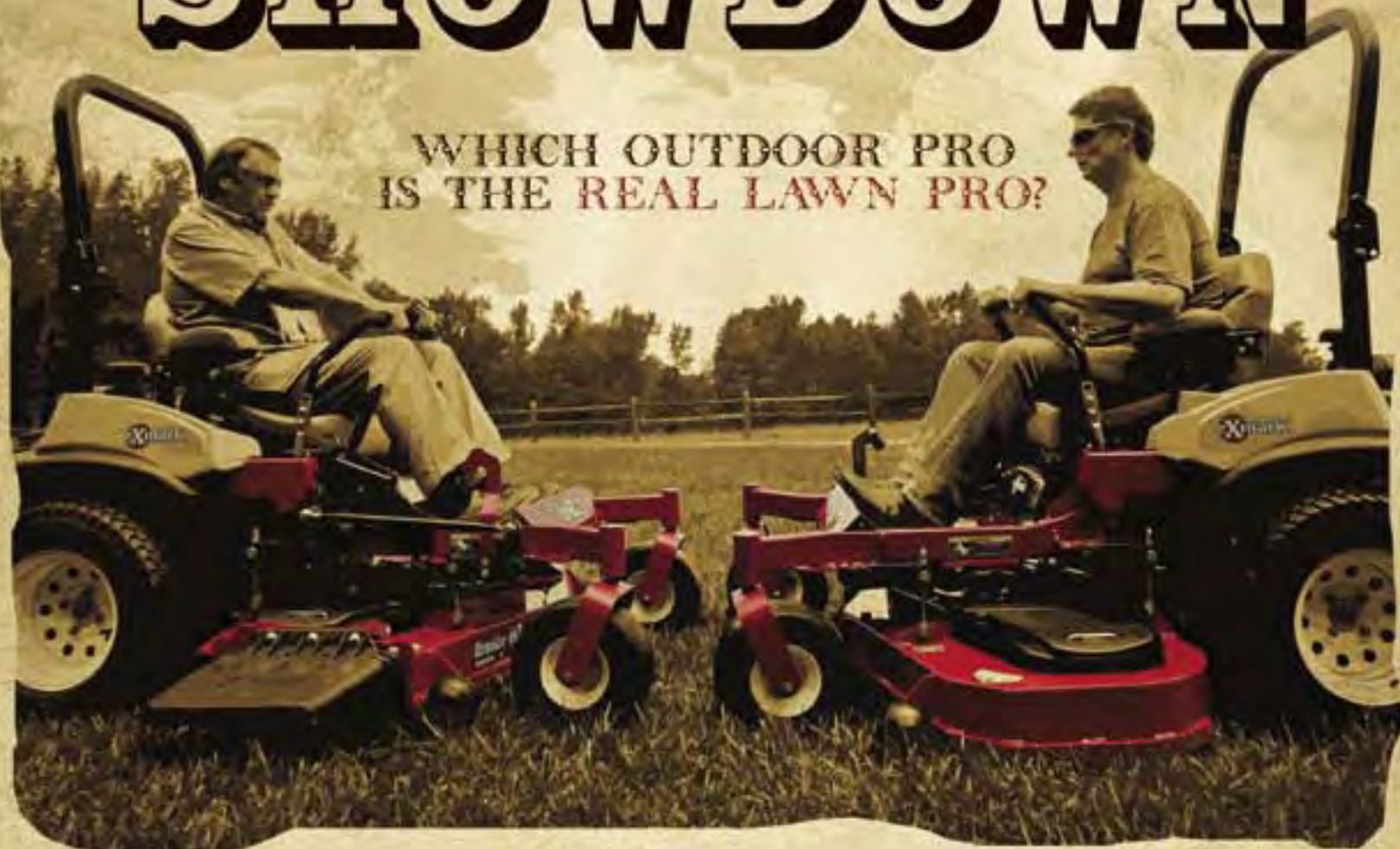
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Texas Coast Tides

Sabine Pass, jetty

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 12	6:57 a.m.	0.0 L	2:22 p.m.	1.8 H	7:16 p.m.	1.4 L		
Mar 13	12:16 a.m.	2.0 H	7:29 a.m.	0.2 L	2:24 p.m.	1.8 H	7:32 p.m.	1.3 L
Mar 14	1:15 a.m.	2.0 H	8:56 a.m.	0.4 L	3:32 p.m.	1.8 H	8:56 p.m.	0.9 L
Mar 15	3:12 a.m.	2.0 H	9:24 a.m.	0.7 L	3:41 p.m.	1.8 H	9:24 p.m.	0.7 L
Mar 16	4:08 a.m.	2.0 H	9:53 a.m.	0.9 L	3:50 p.m.	1.8 H	9:55 p.m.	0.4 L
Mar 17	5:06 a.m.	2.1 H	10:25 a.m.	1.3 L	3:56 p.m.	1.8 H	10:27 p.m.	0.2 L
Mar 18	6:05 a.m.	2.1 H	10:59 a.m.	1.4 L	3:53 p.m.	2.0 H	11:03 p.m.	0.0 L
Mar 19	7:09 a.m.	2.1 H	11:34 a.m.	1.8 L	3:41 p.m.	2.0 H	11:44 p.m.	-0.2 L
Mar 20	8:23 a.m.	2.3 H	12:08 p.m.	2.0 L	3:29 p.m.	2.1 H		
Mar 21	12:33 a.m.	-0.4 L	09:49 a.m.	2.3 H	12:40 p.m.	2.1 L	3:33 p.m.	2.3 H
Mar 22	1:32 a.m.	-0.4 L	3:51 p.m.	2.3 H				
Mar 23	2:42 a.m.	-0.4 L	4:08 p.m.	2.5 H				
Mar 24	3:59 a.m.	-0.4 L	1:26 p.m.	2.3 H				
Mar 25	5:15 a.m.	-0.2 L	1:45 p.m.	2.3 H	6:17 p.m.	2.0 L	10:34 p.m.	2.3 H
Mar 26	6:25 a.m.	0.0 L	2:02 p.m.	2.1 H	6:53 p.m.	1.6 L		

Galveston Bay entrance, south jetty

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 12	12:00 a.m.	1.6 H	7:23 a.m.	0.0 L	3:09 p.m.	1.4 H	7:42 p.m.	1.1 L
Mar 13	1:03 a.m.	1.6 H	7:55 a.m.	0.1 L	3:11 p.m.	1.4 H	7:58 p.m.	1.0 L
Mar 14	3:02 a.m.	1.6 H	9:22 a.m.	0.3 L	4:19 p.m.	1.4 H	9:22 p.m.	0.7 L
Mar 15	4:59 a.m.	1.6 H	9:50 a.m.	0.6 L	4:28 p.m.	1.4 H	9:50 p.m.	0.6 L
Mar 16	5:55 a.m.	1.6 H	10:19 a.m.	0.7 L	4:37 p.m.	1.4 H	10:21 p.m.	0.3 L
Mar 17	5:53 a.m.	1.7 H	10:51 a.m.	1.0 L	4:43 p.m.	1.4 H	10:53 p.m.	0.1 L
Mar 18	6:52 a.m.	1.7 H	11:25 a.m.	1.1 L	4:40 p.m.	1.6 H	11:29 p.m.	0.0 L
Mar 19	7:56 a.m.	1.7 H	12:00 p.m.	1.4 L	4:28 p.m.	1.6 H		
Mar 20	12:10 a.m.	-0.1 L	09:10 a.m.	1.9 H	12:34 p.m.	1.6 L	4:16 p.m.	1.7 H
Mar 21	12:59 a.m.	-0.3 L	10:36 a.m.	1.9 H	1:06 p.m.	1.7 L	4:20 p.m.	1.9 H
Mar 22	1:58 a.m.	-0.3 L	4:38 p.m.	1.9 H				
Mar 23	3:08 a.m.	-0.3 L	4:55 p.m.	2.0 H				
Mar 24	4:25 a.m.	-0.3 L	2:13 p.m.	1.9 H				
Mar 25	5:41 a.m.	-0.1 L	2:32 p.m.	1.9 H	6:43 p.m.	1.6 L	11:21 p.m.	1.9 H
Mar 26	6:51 a.m.	0.0 L	2:49 p.m.	1.7 H	7:19 p.m.	1.3 L		

San Luis Pass

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 12	12:30 a.m.	0.9 H	8:19 a.m.	0.0 L	3:39 p.m.	0.9 H	8:38 p.m.	0.7 L
Mar 13	1:33 a.m.	0.9 H	8:51 a.m.	0.1 L	3:41 p.m.	0.9 H	8:54 p.m.	0.6 L
Mar 14	3:32 a.m.	0.9 H	10:18 a.m.	0.2 L	4:49 p.m.	0.9 H	10:18 p.m.	0.4 L
Mar 15	4:29 a.m.	0.9 H	10:46 a.m.	0.3 L	4:58 p.m.	0.9 H	10:46 p.m.	0.3 L
Mar 16	5:25 a.m.	0.9 H	11:15 a.m.	0.4 L	5:07 p.m.	0.9 H	11:17 p.m.	0.2 L
Mar 17	6:23 a.m.	1.0 H	11:47 a.m.	0.6 L	5:13 p.m.	0.9 H	11:49 p.m.	0.1 L
Mar 18	7:22 a.m.	1.0 H	12:21 p.m.	0.7 L	5:10 p.m.	0.9 H		
Mar 19	12:25 a.m.	0.0 L	8:26 a.m.	1.0 H	12:56 p.m.	0.9 L	4:58 p.m.	0.9 H
Mar 20	1:06 a.m.	-0.1 L	09:40 a.m.	1.1 H	1:30 p.m.	0.9 L	4:46 p.m.	1.0 H
Mar 21	1:55 a.m.	-0.2 L	11:06 a.m.	1.1 H	2:02 p.m.	1.0 L	4:50 p.m.	1.1 H
Mar 22	2:54 a.m.	-0.2 L	5:08 p.m.	1.1 H				
Mar 23	4:04 a.m.	-0.2 L	5:25 p.m.	1.2 H				
Mar 24	5:21 a.m.	-0.2 L	2:43 p.m.	1.1 H				
Mar 25	6:37 a.m.	-0.1 L	3:02 p.m.	1.1 H	7:39 p.m.	0.9 L	11:51 p.m.	1.1 H
Mar 26	7:47 a.m.	0.0 L	3:19 p.m.	1.0 H	8:15 p.m.	0.8 L		

Freeport Harbor

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 12	7:20 a.m.	0.0 L	2:31 p.m.	1.2 H	7:39 p.m.	0.7 L		
Mar 13	12:25 a.m.	1.4 H	7:52 a.m.	0.1 L	2:33 p.m.	1.2 H	7:55 p.m.	0.6 L
Mar 14	1:24 a.m.	1.4 H	9:19 a.m.	0.2 L	3:41 p.m.	1.2 H	9:19 p.m.	0.5 L
Mar 15	3:21 a.m.	1.4 H	9:47 a.m.	0.4 L	3:50 p.m.	1.2 H	9:47 p.m.	0.4 L
Mar 16	4:17 a.m.	1.4 H	10:16 a.m.	0.5 L	3:59 p.m.	1.2 H	10:18 p.m.	0.2 L
Mar 17	5:15 a.m.	1.5 H	10:48 a.m.	0.6 L	4:05 p.m.	1.2 H	10:50 p.m.	0.0 L
Mar 18	6:14 a.m.	1.5 H	11:22 a.m.	0.7 L	4:02 p.m.	1.4 H	11:26 p.m.	0.1 L
Mar 19	7:18 a.m.	1.5 H	11:57 a.m.	0.9 L	3:50 p.m.	1.4 H		
Mar 20	12:07 a.m.	-0.1 L	08:32 a.m.	1.6 H	12:31 p.m.	1.0 L	3:38 p.m.	1.5 H
Mar 21	12:56 a.m.	-0.2 L	09:58 a.m.	1.6 H	1:03 p.m.	1.1 L	3:42 p.m.	1.6 H
Mar 22	1:55 a.m.	-0.2 L	4:00 p.m.	1.6 H				
Mar 23	3:05 a.m.	-0.2 L	4:17 p.m.	1.7 H				
Mar 24	4:22 a.m.	-0.2 L	1:35 p.m.	1.6 H				
Mar 25	5:38 a.m.	-0.1 L	1:54 p.m.	1.6 H	6:40 p.m.	1.0 L	10:43 p.m.	1.6 H
Mar 26	6:48 a.m.	0.0 L	2:11 p.m.	1.5 H	7:16 p.m.	0.8 L		

Moon Phases



Port O'Connor

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 11	10:04 a.m.	-0.2 L	08:36 p.m.	0.6 H				
Mar 12	10:54 a.m.	-0.1 L	08:51 p.m.	0.5 H	11:26 p.m.	0.4 L		
Mar 13	2:02 a.m.	0.5 H	11:39 a.m.	0.0 L	8:35 p.m.	0.5 H	10:45 p.m.	0.4 L
Mar 14	5:02 a.m.	0.5 H	1:21 p.m.	0.1 L	8:50 p.m.	0.4 H	11:58 p.m.	0.3 L
Mar 15	6:27 a.m.	0.6 H	2:04 p.m.	0.2 L	7:48 p.m.	0.3 H		
Mar 16	12:22 a.m.	0.2 L	7:45 a.m.	0.6 H	2:56 p.m.	0.2 L	6:25 p.m.	0.3 H
Mar 17	12:52 a.m.	0.2 L	9:09 a.m.	0.6 H				
Mar 18	1:25 a.m.	0.1 L	11:00 a.m.	0.6 H				
Mar 19	2:04 a.m.	0.0 L	3:20 p.m.	0.7 H				
Mar 20	2:49 a.m.	-0.1 L	4:39 p.m.	0.8 H				
Mar 21	3:44 a.m.	-0.1 L	5:36 p.m.	0.9 H				
Mar 22	4:50 a.m.	-0.2 L	6:30 p.m.	1.0 H				
Mar 23	6:07 a.m.	-0.2 L	7:23 p.m.	1.0 H				
Mar 24	7:30 a.m.	-0.1 L	08:16 p.m.	1.0 H				
Mar 25	08:50 a.m.	-0.1 L	09:13 p.m.	0.9 H				

Rockport

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 12	1:14 a.m.	0.12 H	10:56 a.m.	-0.13 L				
Mar 13	2:12 a.m.	0.11 H	11:23 a.m.	-0.09 L				
Mar 14	4:21 a.m.	0.09 H	12:42 p.m.	-0.05 L	6:54 p.m.	-0.00 H	10:03 p.m.	-0.01 L
Mar 15	5:54 a.m.	0.07 H	12:56 p.m.	-0.00 L	6:01 p.m.	0.03 H		
Mar 16	12:13 a.m.	-0.02 L	8:03 a.m.	0.07 H	1:05 p.m.	0.04 L	5:35 p.m.	0.06 H
Mar 17	1:30 a.m.	-0.04 L	11:11 a.m.	0.09 H	12:41 p.m.	0.09 L	5:14 p.m.	0.10 H
Mar 18	2:27 a.m.	-0.07 L	4:59 p.m.	0.13 H				
Mar 19	3:20 a.m.	-0.08 L	5:14 p.m.	0.17 H				
Mar 20	4:15 a.m.	-0.09 L	6:08 p.m.	0.20 H				
Mar 21	5:16 a.m.	-0.10 L	7:23 p.m.	0.23 H				
Mar 22	6:23 a.m.	-0.10 L	8:43 p.m.	0.26 H				
Mar 23	7:32 a.m.	-0.09 L	9:58 p.m.	0.28 H				
Mar 24	8:38 a.m.	-0.08 L	11:10 p.m.	0.29 H				
Mar 25	9:39 a.m.	-0.05 L						
Mar 26	12:25 a.m.	0.28 H	10:31 a.m.	-0.01 L				

Port Aransas, H. Caldwell Pier

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 12	7:02 a.m.	0.0 L	3:02 p.m.	1.1 H	7:21 p.m.	0.6 L		
Mar 13	12:56 a.m.	1.3 H	7:34 a.m.	0.1 L	3:04 p.m.	1.1 H	7:37 p.m.	0.5 L
Mar 14	1:55 a.m.	1.3 H	9:01 a.m.	0.2 L	4:12 p.m.	1.1 H	9:01 p.m.	0.4 L
Mar 15	3:52 a.m.	1.3 H	9:29 a.m.	0.3 L	4:21 p.m.	1.1 H	9:29 p.m.	0.3 L
Mar 16	4:48 a.m.	1.3 H	9:58 a.m.	0.4 L	4:30 p.m.	1.1 H	10:00 p.m.	0.2 L
Mar 17	5:46 a.m.	1.4 H	10:30 a.m.	0.5 L	4:36 p.m.	1.1 H	10:32 p.m.	0.1 L
Mar 18	6:45 a.m.	1.4 H	11:04 a.m.	0.6 L	4:33 p.m.	1.3 H	11:08 p.m.	0.0 L
Mar 19	7:49 a.m.	1.4 H	11:39 a.m.	0.8 L	4:21 p.m.	1.3 H	11:49 p.m.	-0.1 L
Mar 20	09:03 a.m.	1.5 H	12:13 p.m.	0.8 L	4:09 p.m.	1.4 H		
Mar 21	12:38 a.m.	-0.2 L	10:29 a.m.	1.5 H	12:45 p.m.	0.9 L	4:13 p.m.	1.5 H
Mar 22	1:37 a.m.	-0.2 L	4:31 p.m.	1.5 H				
Mar 23	2:47 a.m.	-0.2 L	4:48 p.m.	1.6 H				
Mar 24	4:04 a.m.	-0.2 L	2:06 p.m.	1.5 H				
Mar 25	5:20 a.m.	-0.1 L	2:25 p.m.	1.5 H	6:22 p.m.	0.8 L	11:14 p.m.	1.5 H
Mar 26	6:30 a.m.	0.0 L	2:42 p.m.	1.4 H	6:58 p.m.	0.7 L		

South Padre Island

Date	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height	Time	Height
Mar 12	7:06 a.m.	0.1 L	3:16 p.m.	1.3 H	7:45 p.m.	1.1 L	11:56 p.m.	1.2 H
Mar 13	7:47 a.m.	0.3 L	3:11 p.m.	1.2 H	7:57 p.m.	0.9 L		
Mar 14	1:09 a.m.	1.2 H	9:24 a.m.	0.4 L	4:01 p.m.	1.1 H	9:14 p.m.	0.7 L
Mar 15	3:14 a.m.	1.2 H	10:01 a.m.	0.5 L	3:48 p.m.	1.0 H	9:35 p.m.	0.5 L
Mar 16	4:16 a.m.	1.2 H	10:40 a.m.	0.6 L	3:33 p.m.	0.9 H	9:59 p.m.	0.3 L
Mar 17	5:18 a.m.	1.2 H	11:27 a.m.	0.7 L	3:14 p.m.	0.9 H	10:27 p.m.	0.1 L
Mar 18	6:25 a.m.	1.2 H	12:29 p.m.	0.8 L	2:43 p.m.	0.9 H	11:02 p.m.	-0.1 L
Mar 19	7:43 a.m.	1.3 H	11:45 p.m.	-0.3 L				
Mar 20	09:19 a.m.	1.3 H						
Mar 21	12:37 a.m.	-0.4 L	11:08 a.m.	1.5 H				
Mar 22	1:39 a.m.	-0.4 L	12:37 p.m.	1.6 H				
Mar 23	2:49 a.m.	-0.4 L	1:37 p.m.	1.7 H				
Mar 24	4:04 a.m.	-0.3 L	2:16 p.m.	1.7 H				
Mar 25	5:18 a.m.	-0.2 L	2:39 p.m.	1.6 H				
Mar 26	6:29 a.m.	-0.1 L	2:48 p.m.	1.4 H	7:47 p.m.	1.1 L	11:50 p.m.	1.3 H

Solunar | Sun times | Moon times

Legend: Major=2 hours, Minor=1 hour, Times centered on the major-minor window, F=Full Moon, N=New Moon, Q=Quarter => = Peak Activity. For other locations, subtract 1 minute per 12 miles east of a location, and add 1 minute per 12 miles west of a location.

Houston

2010	A.M.	P.M.	SUN	MOON
Mar-Apr	Minor Major	Minor Major	Rises Sets	Rises Sets
12 Fri	2:34 8:45	2:55 9:06	6:34 6:27	4:41a 3:56p
13 Sat >	3:12 9:22	3:33 9:43	6:33 6:27	5:11a 4:50p
14 Sun >	4:50 11:00	5:10 11:20	7:32 7:28	6:40a 6:43p
15 Mon N				

Prop scars

Continued from Page 9

Port Aransas. It began in 2005, before prop scarring became illegal in 2006, and it concluded in September.

When a boat scars the seagrass, its propeller cuts into the seagrass bed, uprooting the plants and leaving a visible trench.

When they began their study, Trial and Grubbs were going to check the scars once a year. But they soon realized that scars were healing more quickly than anticipated.

They began a new study last spring to check scars monthly.

Over the course of their initial study, they observed a 45-percent reduction in scars.

Trial and Grubbs will present their findings to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission this spring and make a recommendation on whether to keep the regulations.

Although 80 percent of the scars healed quickly, 20 percent took more than a year, Trial said. The fastest recovery rate was four months, but that was not the average.

"We're talking under current conditions," he said. "Let's say conditions change a little bit."

A drop in salinity levels, as was seen during a rainy 2007, can stress seagrass, leading to longer recovery times. Most scars Trial and Grubbs have seen are within dense, healthy seagrass meadows. A scar in a bed of lower quality might not recover as quickly.

Anglers seem to be responding to the regulation.

Craig Lehmann, an Austin pharmaceutical consultant who fishes the area once a month, said they are seeing the signs and taking heed.

"Everybody really enjoys that bay out there, and we need to protect it, but I think the current rules seem to be adequate to do that," Lehmann said.

Anglers are giving seagrass more respect, Grubbs and Lehmann said.

"The people I'm seeing out there are super-cognizant of what's going on," Lehmann said, adding that he has not seen any flagrant violations of the regulation.

At a Coastal Conservation Association meeting in Dallas, Grubbs said, anglers talked of how careful guides were being and how critical they were of other guides who ignored the regulation.

"I don't think that's something we would have heard five or six years ago," she said.



CLOSE LOOK: Researchers snorkel to examine prop scars in the Redfish Bay State Scientific Area. Some prop scars, where seagrass has been uprooted, heal faster than anticipated, research indicates. Photo by TPW.

TPW has undertaken a public awareness campaign to inform boaters about the seagrass and prop scarring. It has spread the word through media, brochures, one-on-one contacts and a constellation of signs in and around the protected area.

The result has been a change in practices by anglers.

The regulations do not prohibit the use of motors in the area. It only outlaws scarring the seagrass. Anglers have started using trolling motors and push poles more often.

One of TPW's campaign slogans has made the point in five words: "Lift, drift, pole and troll."

"I think overall we've seen some really great recovery rates for the habitat," Grubbs said. "But in the end it's really about getting the message out to boaters and what they can do

to protect the habitat."

Seagrass is important to coastal ecosystems for several reasons. It provides food and shelter for other organisms, acts as a biofilter, reduces erosion and oxygenates the water, Trial said.

"If you've got a really healthy seagrass bed, that just continues up the ladder," he said.

After a disturbance by a boat propeller, seagrass scars recover by first filling in with sediment, and then neighboring grass plants grow to fill in the void.

The seagrass observations from Redfish Bay, where TPW has set up a state scientific area for protecting the seagrass and studying it, probably can be applied to the rest of the Texas coast, the researchers said. The conditions and seagrass species are similar from Port Isabel to Sabine Pass.

Hawks

Continued from Page 7

predators move up to the quail buffet are in the early spring and in the fall, when they are migrating through the area.

"Unfortunately, a lot of people have done so much brush control that the only cover is the brush lines along the fences," he said. "These create highways for both the quail and predators and the quail have no place to go and hide or escape."

The migrating raptors will always load up on the easiest prey available to build up their energy reserves as part of their annual migration.

"I've actually seen a hawk come down and eat so many (pen-raised birds set out for hunters) that it just walks around the brush because it is too full to fly," said Milo Abercrombie, who manages the 28,000-acre 74 Ranch and Hunting Resort near Campbellton.

"The hawks will get so bad that they will follow our people driving their vehicles to put out birds for our hunters," he said. "If we don't get the hunters out pretty quickly, the quail will be gone."

"It seems like every hawk in the country comes down here to eat our quail. The problem has really been bad the past five or 10 years."

As part of his hunting operation, Abercrombie puts out about 50,000 pen-raised quail a year — losing a good number of birds to raptors and other predators — and he has observed a distinct decline in the number of wild birds all across the South Texas area.

"Everybody blames fire ants for the reduction in wild quail, but I believe there are more losses from avian predators, including both hawks and roadrunners."

"Every time the quail see a shadow up above they head for the brush. I've seen hawks flush them two or three times, and eventually the quail get weak enough that they can't escape."

Although not in the raptor family, roadrunners are also opportunistic predators and will catch and eat young quail chicks, Abercrombie said.

"If anybody comes up with a good idea on what we can do, I sure would like to hear it," he said.

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WHITE MAGIC: Anglers are finding white bass in tributaries above lakes throughout Texas. The run generally follows the temperature, with places to the south beginning first. Photo by Thomas Phillips, Lone Star Outdoor News.

White bass

Continued from Page 8

"We had to work for them," Fleming said. "During a single day, we caught between 10 and 18, 20, fish each, and there were about five or six of us that were fishing on that day."

They were casting clousers and maribou minnows in sizes 8 or 10 in olive and white. One popular fly for the group, called a Naked Lady, is a sparsely tied, weighted streamer with crystal flash.

The water level at Buchanan is also up, Fleming said. With heavy rains of the last few months, the once-drought-stricken lake has risen 6 to 7 feet, Fleming said.

In low-water years above Buchanan, a sand bar prevented white bass from reaching Colorado Bend, to many an angler's frustration. This year, however, the sand bar is gone or under water, Fleming

said.

The report was not so favorable from Choke Canyon Reservoir.

Jerry Dunn, a former guide at the lake, said the water temperature has been too cold for the fish to start running.

"We need about eight or 10 days of warm days and warm nights to get these fish started," Dunn said.

Anglers above Choke Canyon are catching sandies, but they are not finding high numbers yet, Dunn said. He is hearing reports of people catching four or five fish, caught on roadrunners, but not limits.

"They're catching a few," Dunn said. "It's not like the white bass runs we've had in the past."

Reports from Central and North Texas indicate the male white bass, first to run up the rivers, have been appearing. A warming trend has fishermen expecting the larger females to join them.

Purtis Creek

Continued from Page 8

"It was just way too much of a good thing," he said.

Hydrilla is popular among anglers because it tends to hold lots of bass and is easily fished.

But at Purtis Creek, it grew to cover 70 percent of the lake. An ideal amount would be 10 to 30 percent, Ott said.

Anglers and fish were affected by the extensive coverage. It made boating difficult, and it when it became too thick, Ott said, bass could had trouble catching forage fish.

To fight the plant, TPW introduced sterile grass carp, which eat aquatic vegetation, in 2006 at a rate of five fish per acre of hydrilla. The expectation was that the fish would reduce the amount of hydrilla but not remove it completely, Ott said.

But unforeseen circumstances intervened.

A flood in July 2007 — a year that saw overwhelming rainfall in much of Texas — ripped out much of the lake's hydrilla. The carp, however, stayed put. When they did not have enough hydrilla to eat, they switched to other plants.

Now, Ott said, the lake has 1 percent of coverage by aquatic vegetation.

"We sort of overshot our mark, and we're trying to correct that," Ott said.

To control the grass carp, the state park will host a bowfishing tournament in late April, said the manager, Shawn Greene.

The tournament came with a little wrangling on TPW's part. Because the grass carp were introduced for scientific control measures, the park had to receive special permission to remove them, Ott said.

Visitation was down last year from 2008. Almost 70,000 people visited the park in 2008, and 2009 dipped down to 55,746, Greene said. He said the vegetation is not to blame for the drop. Rather, he said, the numbers are up from the couple of years before 2008, though he did not have the visitation totals for 1988 through 2007.

Beyond controlling the grass carp, other changes in management strategy might also be made, Ott said.

If the grass carp can be brought under control, TPW plans to introduce native aquatic vegetation this summer, Ott said.

At some point, he said, the lake's boldest strategy — catch and release only for largemouth bass — might go the way of the grass carp.

"The potential exists for us to allow some harvest of small fish in the future," Ott said. "But we're not ready to do that."

Lake Fork

Continued from Page 11

The city will be writing protocols this year for how it uses water from Lake Fork, one of five reservoirs in the city's water supply.

Stringer offered no details on the protocols, but he said they will depend on several factors, including the cost of energy to move the water, water availability, demand and environmental issues.

The city is drawing little water from Lake Fork now, given that it is March, when demand is lower. The city might pull more water this summer, Stringer said, but the lake level will probably only be slightly affected.

"I bet you very few of them (anglers) will notice much reduction in volume," he said, adding that it would probably lower the water level a couple of inches at most.

The normal fluctuation on the lake is 2 to 4 feet, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Stringer also said the lake level, at least for now, will probably not be much affected during the largemouth bass spawn in early spring, again when demand is lower.

Dallas has no restrictions on when it can pump water, but Lake Fork's water is the most expensive to use in the city's system, given its distance from Dallas — about 50 miles — Stringer said. The city tries to use the other lakes in its water supply — Lewisville, Grapevine, Ray Hubbard, Tawakoni and Ray Roberts — before using Fork.

A balanced use of the lakes will probably be part of the city's strategy.

"We don't want to overuse our lakes, because we have to be ever-mindful of drought conditions," Stringer said.

The protocols will probably not be the final word on water management at Lake Fork. They are not set in stone and can be adjusted if needed, said Mike Mikeska, another administrator with Dallas Water Utilities.

Dallas has the right to 70 percent of the water at Lake Fork, which was impounded on the Sabine River in 1980. The percentage amounts to about 131,000 acre-feet per year. The other 30 percent belongs to the Sabine River Authority, which sells its share to other municipalities.

The pump station, an electrical substation and 28 miles of pipeline were recently completed, at a cost of \$202 million.

Filling the 108-inch pipeline lowered Fork's water level 1/16th of an inch, Choate said.

Deer

Continued from Page 6

researcher, who told the group that the number of buck fawns on the ground, not age, nutrition or genetics, is the key to producing trophy animals.

"Without buck fawns, you can forget about all that other stuff," he said. "If you triple the fawn survival (based on a density of one deer per 25 acres), you will triple your number of 160-class bucks in five to six years."

If a landowner triples fawn survival and doubles the number of does, the number of 160-class bucks will increase six-fold, Stedman said.

"The whole process takes about eight to 11 years," he added, pointing out that a good program of providing protein supplements to the deer herd is also vital to the creation of a trophy buck population.

Stedman, who was the final

speaker at the symposium, said he went through an extended period of research and number crunching efforts before coming to the realization that producing more buck fawns would result in creating bigger and better deer in all age classes of his deer.

In response to questions from the attendees, he said he devoted about \$38 per acre each year to a supplemental protein feeding on a 1,000-acre study plot to achieve his results.

"Under good nutritional conditions, the number of fawns produced drives the entire system," Stedman said.

In other sessions of the seminar, attendees were presented with details about a number of studies under way in different areas of deer management.

Implications of too few and too many deer

"A deer's greatest competitor is

A deer's greatest competitor is another deer, not a cow or goat.

— David Hewitt, deer researcher

another deer, not a cow or goat," Hewitt said.

While pointing out that the exact carrying capacity for animals would vary with each piece of property — "it depends" — he said slower growth rates, lower reproductive rates, a decline in the immune system and increased losses from predators can occur when the deer population is too high.

Effects of deer density on vegetation in South Texas

"At high densities, deer are degrading habitat," said Dr. Timothy Fulbright. "The number of forbs is reduced, and the composition of the

forbs community is changed."

Destruction of vegetation resources can take up to three decades to repair, he said. In addition, although "it depends" on the particular property involved, no research indicates that supplemental feeding will curb a deer's appetite for palatable plants.

Impacts of nutrition on deer body and antler size

"While deer breeders are making good progress in this area, it is hard to translate (their findings) to wild deer, and they may even be misleading," said Dr. Randy DeYoung.

Charlie DeYoung is Randy DeYoung's father, and both are involved in several areas of white-tailed deer research at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute.

Although "it depends" on which of the more than 30 different subspecies of white-tailed deer is being studied, there have been indications that a good association exists between

soil fertility and antler-body growth rates, Randy DeYoung added.

Managing without density dependence

"If the deer are competing for food, that means they are all not getting enough to eat," said Dr. Charlie DeYoung. "When the weather goes through cycles with wet or dry years, the carrying capacity goes in cycles too."

During dry years when the amount of natural food is declining, the common practice of killing off additional animals has not proven to be effective, he said.

"Killing extra animals is not changing the diminished food supply," DeYoung said, adding that while "it depends" on the conditions, maintaining the population at about 30 to 40 percent of carrying capacity — the amount of deer the land can handle — is considered a good management strategy.

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Bass

Continued from Page 1

ran into some staging bass and caught two 9-pounders, two 8-pounders and two 7-pounders on the same stretch.

"We would catch a male near the bank and drop back into 8 to 14 feet of water and catch the female," Wilkins said. "They'd be stacked down there."

Most of the pre-spawn activity is in shallow creeks, where the water can get into the low 60s in the afternoon.

Lake Amistad has been colder, with the water temperature yet to crack 60 in most places.

Jeff Wade, who often fishes different tournaments around Texas, recently spent a week on Amistad, and his big bass weighed 6 pounds.

Trophy bass are there, as evidenced by Teddy Silcox's 13.02-pounder caught in late February, but the spawn, like on Falcon, is moving slowly.

"The biggest bass were on all the steep drops in the area," Wade said. "I'd be sitting in 100 feet, casting onto main-lake points. I saw a bunch of people on the flats. You could throw a Senko on the edge of the grass and catch fish all day, but the bigger fish were out deep."

Amistad, unfortunately for anglers, has been experiencing days with 25 to 45 mph winds. Some anglers have had to cancel fishing days, and the wind seems unpredictable.

Wind has also been an issue with another popular South Texas lake, Choke Canyon, which is a week or two of warm weather away from the spawn, and the bite, turning on.

"The water's been around 52 degrees, so the spawn hasn't gotten close to happening," said Sylvan Dejarld of Fisherman's Corner, a bait and tackle shop near the lake.

The majority of Choke Canyon bass are still coming onto deep structure in 20-30 feet because the unusually cold nights are keeping the bass from moving up.

Lake Conroe and Lake Fork in East Texas have been fighting the cold and the rain.

Rob Russow, who fishes the Weekend Series at Fork, said after two days on Fork that the fishing was better in the afternoon.

"As the sun warmed the water, the bass moved up shallow, and we were able to land some chunky bass on swimbaits around docks and shallow cover," Russow said. "The few fish we did catch were amazingly fat, gorging on



BITTEN: Bass are biting, but anglers are still waiting for the spawn to begin at many lakes. Photo by LSON.

all the shad that have been dying the past several weeks."

The excess rain has also slowed the bite on Fork because the cold, dirty water has hurt the grass growth. Russow said he tried lipless crankbaits and jigs in the grass without success because most the grass he found was either dead or dying.

Wayne Davis, owner of Wayne's Rod and Reel Repair on Conroe, said the weather has thrown everything out of whack, including the fishermen.

"A lot of my customers haven't really started bass fishing because it's been so tough and weird," Davis said. "Before the rain you could catch them in 2 to 4 feet in some places, but the rain has muddied everything up. We get a new weather system every few days, and you have to start over."

Cold bass tips from Todd

Pro angler Todd Faircloth of Jasper finished third at the Bassmaster Classic last month, catching many fish using a shallow-running, vibrating, lipless crankbait. The water temperature at Lay Lake in Alabama ranged from 42 to 48 degrees.

"Whenever the water is really cold and fish are lethargic, the best way to catch them is with a reaction-type strike, not a feeding strike," said Faircloth. At Sam Rayburn Reservoir near his home, ripping a lipless crankbait over the top of the hydrilla has

become a long-standing tradition.

Here are a few tips from Faircloth for using the lure and other winter tricks.

■ When fishing grass, keep the lure up some. "Because bass are holding in the grass, the best retrieve is one that brings your lure just over the top of it," Faircloth said.

■ If the water warms, use a faster retrieve for bringing reaction strikes from bass.

■ In the cold water of Lay Lake, Faircloth also fished the Flatt Shad almost like a plastic worm, pumping his rod to pull the lure off the bottom and then letting it fall back.

— Yamaha report

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Salinity

Continued from Page 1

"We're back to our typical observed salinities at the moment," Fisher said. "During the drought we were seeing some extremely salty water — hypersaline environments. You only see problems from low salinity in cases of extreme flood, which we've had before, but this is not it."

When the salinity becomes too low, meaning there's not as much salt in the water, it can start a domino effect within the marine life that doesn't finish well for the fish or the anglers.

Recreational anglers along the coast look first to the shrimp because it's a major food source for many of the fish they catch, but Tom Minello, branch chief of fishery ecology at the NOAA Fisheries Galveston Laboratory, said it starts lower on the food chain.

Minello, who has been studying the effects of low salinity with shrimp off and on for 20 years, said the reason shrimp don't do well in low-salinity areas is because their food supply, such as algae and sometimes worms, isn't available.

"You have to consider the system instead of talking about one particular species," Minello said. "There's a real mixed bag of literature on the subject, but we're finding no species of shrimp are using low-salinity areas like they are mid-range or high-salinity areas."

But the levels coming back to normal doesn't make all things even. For some areas along the coast, like Sabine, "normal" means low salinity levels because the Sabine River consistently pumps fresh water into the area. So some areas along the coast should see a drop in shrimp numbers, and some should see a rise.

"It may just shift the salinity zone down to a different part of the coast and make other areas more productive," Minello said. "Instead of showing up and not doing well in low-salinity areas, they just go somewhere else."

Some of Minello's latest research points to oyster reefs as a hot bed for young shrimp to grow up, and Lance Robinson at the Coastal Fisheries Division's Dickinson Marine Laboratory said the nutrients from the freshwater have been helping oysters up and down the coast.

"It's a delicate balance," Robinson said. "Too much either way and things change, but the oysters have been thriving."



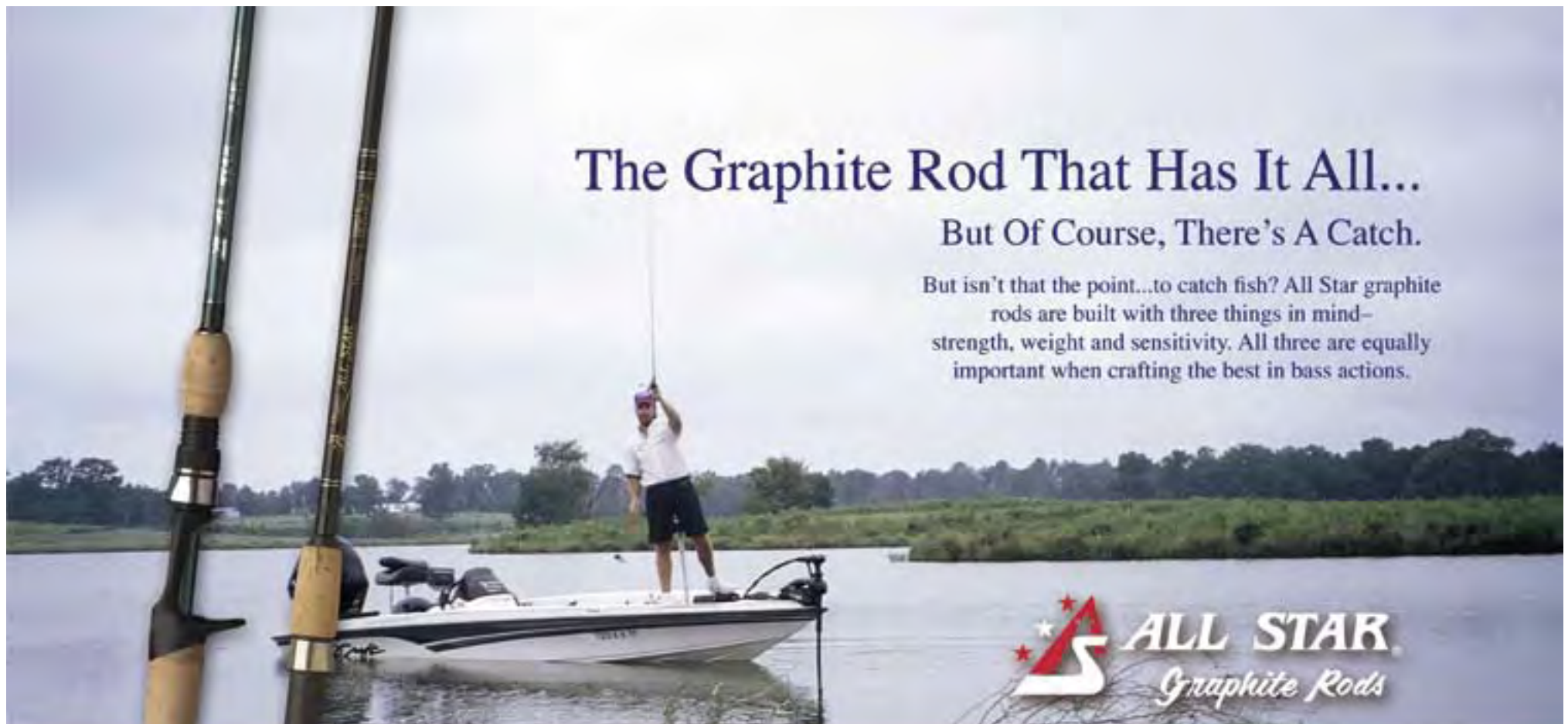
UP THE LADDER: Salinity has different impacts on fish and other aquatic organisms, with lower marine life affected before higher creatures, one biologist said. Photo by Thomas Phillips, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Fisher said there weren't any problems when there was drought, there aren't any problems since the rain, and that the levels of salinity "are not even close" to being dangerously low. He also pointed to the success of oyster beds as an indication of healthy salinity levels.

"In extreme flood events, and we're talking extreme, they can wipe out the oysters because they're fixed in location," Fisher said. "They can handle exposure to pure fresh water for a few days, but longer than that and they start to die. Other animals can swim and find suitable locations when that happens."

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Sheepshead

Continued from Page 8

changes, the sheepshead should be here.

Mikey Herrera, a clerk at the Quik Stop, a live and frozen bait and tackle shop in Port Isabel, echoed similar remarks.

"It has been a little bit cool," he said, "but it should start getting better from now on."

Herrera said some anglers reported catching a few sheepshead.

"They usually stop by the shop and let us know how their day went," he said. "They said they have been catching a few big ones."

Gary Williams of Brownsville said his father and a couple of friends went out fishing recently, and none of them lost a single shrimp to the sheepsheads.

Jim Foley of Michigan said he has never seen a season like this one.

"This is the worst I have ever seen," he said. "We are going back in about two weeks, and I have only caught one keeper."

To be a keeper, a sheepshead has to be 15 inches or longer. The daily bag limit is five fish.

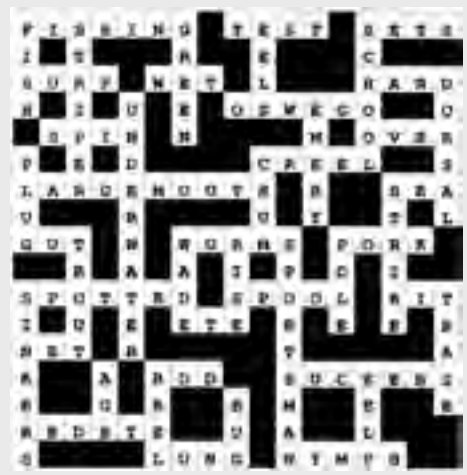
Foley said by this time of the year he generally has a good supply of sheepshead fillets to take home.

"The yuccas are blooming," he said, "but the sheepsheads are not biting."

Elsewhere on the coast, reports are mixed. West Galveston Bay has good sheepshead at the jetty on shrimp and crabs. At Freeport, they are good on live shrimp on the reefs. At West Matagorda Bay, sheepshead are good at the jetty on shrimp.

Sheepshead generally congregate as early as late February, but the bulk of the season takes place from early March through mid-April. It's that time that anglers refer to as the sheepshead run.

Puzzle solution from Page 22



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One day, three giant bass

Three Texas lakes produced big largemouth bass — each in excess of 13 pounds — on Feb. 27: Austin, Amistad and O.H. Ivie.

Carl Adkins of San Marcos led off the action with a 13.1-pounder from Lake Austin. Adkins was fishing near the Loop 360 bridge in 7 to 12 feet of 51-degree water with a soft plastic lure. The catch came at 6:45 a.m.

Texas Parks and Wildlife's Larry Hodge and David Campbell were on their way to pick up the fish for the state's breeding program when the phone rang mid-morning with news of the Lake Amistad catch. Teddy Silcox of Del Rio landed a 13.02-pounder from 28 feet of 52-degree water. He was using a Boudreaux bait.

Fish lightning struck a third time while Campbell was charging the hauling tank with water from Lake Austin. Randy Jackson of Mineral Wells caught a 13.03-pound largemouth from O.H. Ivie Reservoir. He was fishing in 3 feet of 43-degree water with a black and blue Easy Jig.

"At that point David Campbell and I were hoping the phone would ring again and hoping it wouldn't," Hodge said.

Three fish to be picked up hundreds of miles apart presented a problem, but other TPW staff from the A.E. Wood Fish Hatchery and the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center volunteered to help.

By the time the day ended at midnight, the three crews had logged about 1,200 miles.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report



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Whitetails

Continued from Page 6

Freeman said the success or failure of the downsizing will depend on Whitetails Unlimited's definition of "part-time."

"If 'part-time' just means doing banquets, they'll be hard-pressed to make it happen out here," Freeman said. "If part-time extends to attending meetings and pointing people in the direction they need to go and being available when you have questions, maybe it can work. I'm not interested in being the only guy trying to make things work. I need backing."

Hawkey said Whitetails Unlimited will advertise within Texas for a state field director. Interested applicants can call its national headquarters (800-274-5471).

"It will have to be someone with a hunting and fishing background, a flexible schedule

and the capability of having a home office," Hawkey said. "The individual we choose will also probably need some experience working with volunteers."

Oswalt said his chapter plans to stay with Whitetails Unlimited.

"The organization hasn't done us wrong," he said. "They've been very supportive. Unfortunately, the decisions management makes affects those of us on the front line. We'll work through it and see where it takes us."

Whitetails Unlimited's hold on the Big Country Chapter, however, may be as questionable as its foothold in Texas.

"There were people who said we should pull out, get all the money we have coming and donate it to the kids," Freeman said. "We decided to stay at least until they get us a rep we can talk to. But it's left me on edge wondering what they're going to do next."

Survey

Continued from Page 6

of the preliminary information during a telephone interview March 1.

For example, most dove hunters in the survey, about 80 percent, continue to support the regulation that lets them hunt all day, instead of the old rule that only allowed afternoon hunting.

In the South Zone, most dove hunters, about 80 percent, prefer the earliest season opener possible. They also favored the split season that includes a later segment after Christmas.

Some North Zone dove hunters, however, favored a straight 70-day season with no splits.

"We also asked quail hunters about the possibility of creating a north zone and south zone for quail, and we had a surprising response in favor," Bevill said.

That notion is probably linked to a deep concern among the state's upland game hunters.

They lament dwindling bobwhite populations created by habitat fragmentation, and worsened by several years of drought.

The current statewide quail season runs about four months. This season's was Oct. 31 through Feb. 28.

But splitting the season into zones won't be

recommended unless staffers learn that it can benefit quail.

"There is no reason to 'zone' if you're not going to have a potentially different season from one zone to another," Bevill said. "But you first have to have a good biologically strong need to do that, and I think that's something our guys are going to have to consider."

Likewise, turkey hunters indicated in the survey an interest in creating a third zone for Rio Grande turkeys — this one in the Panhandle.

"The reason is because the North Zone is such a huge area, it's hard to be right on the money for best timing of the season all across the zone," Bevill said.

In the Panhandle, he added, the season might end when the breeding season is "heating up" — an excellent time to call in gobblers.

Weather, however, will be a wild-card factor in any survey recommendations that get presented to the TPW Commission.

"I think quail and turkey need wet years back-to-back," Bevill said, "because drought has really hammered habitat, and knocked populations down."

"Assuming the drought is broken, that's really good news. But, I imagine, if it returns this summer, people might be asking why we didn't have (some ideas) in place."



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