

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS



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Network hooks up
with tarpon on Web



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INSIDE HUNTING



Game wardens are teaming up to cook fundraising fare at Lone Star events. The teams have fed up to 2,000 people at a gathering.

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To hunters, it compares to the Super Bowl, World Series and Stanley Cup — it's the Grand Hunting Retriever Championship.

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FISHING



When anglers miss an interested fish on the first cast, a different lure is usually at hand. Switching from fast-moving baits to slow, and vice-versa, can bring the bass aboard.

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The wrath of nature

Tragedy strikes on Texas waters

BY BILL MILLER

A favorite fishing rod becomes a lightning rod in certain weather conditions, and the results can be deadly.

Ronald Jake Ingram, 23, of Cameron was killed by lightning May 1 in Central Texas while fishing on a stock tank in Milam County.

And the following day, lightning killed Melissa Brinegar, 28, of Waco in the parking lot of a boat ramp at Tradinghouse Creek Reservoir.

National Weather Service officials report that lightning kills an average of 66 people and injures about 300 others in the United States.

Lightning forms through the

See STORMS, Page 12



WEATHER WOES: A coastal fisherman makes a good decision by coming in before a large thunderstorm gets too close near Port O'Connor. Photo by David J. Sams.

Spreading like saltcedar

Invasive plant 'drinking' up ponds, lakes

BY CRAIG NYHUS

The saltcedar, an invasive plant, is becoming an increasing problem.

Texas ranchers, fishermen and hunters have noticed the plant for years, especially along or near ponds, streams and rivers, but its spread has brought its negative characteristics to the forefront.

Saltcedars are shrubs or small trees with reddish-brown bark and small, scale-like leaves on slender stems. The plant is usually five- to

20-feet tall, and can grow nine feet in one season. Flowers are pink to white with five petals.

The plants, all species of tamarix, are native to

Southern Europe and parts of Asia. They were introduced in the U.S. in the 1820s as an ornamental, although some were used for erosion control, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Estimates have the plant covering more than two million acres in the U.S. While most of the original

See SALTCEDAR, Page 12

'One plant can use several hundred gallons of water per day.'

— KELLY DUFFIE



CLEARING THE WAY: Duck hunters cut saltcedar that took over their decoy area.

Potholes offer versatility

Circular areas serve as a buffet for predators

BY KYLE TOMEK

A gold spoon retrieved cleanly across the top of a pothole is downright deadly, according to Danny Neu.

Neu, a lower coast guide who fishes the endless grass flats of the Lower Laguna Madre, said one of the areas he loves to fish most appeals to a variety of fishing styles.

These circular, sandy breaks surrounded by vegetation are easily visible, especially with a pair of polarized sunglasses. These crop circle look-alikes are one of the best structures for capturing passerby baitfish — setting the stage for exciting fishing possibilities.

See POTHOLE, Page 21

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NATIONAL

Fishing surpasses basketball as No. 1 for eye injuries

Hooks, sinkers, lures send anglers to ERs

Eye injuries from fishing have surpassed eye injuries from basketball as the No. 1 sports-related eye injury.

Since 1982, emergency rooms and clinics across the nation have reported all eye injuries to a U.S. Eye Injury Registry at the Birmingham-based Helen Keller Foun-

datation.

Data from the Helen Keller Foundation show that fishing injuries now make up about 9 percent of all sports eye injuries.

A hook to the eye makes up about 38 percent of those injuries, while 44 percent come from a sinker or the

body of a lure striking an eye.

According to a study of fishing-related eye injuries conducted by the American Journal of Ophthalmology, 79 percent of the cases were male patients, and the average age was 37.

Corneal laceration and globe rupture were the most

common diagnoses.

Significant visual loss was often the result, with 38 percent of the injured patients having visual acuity less than 20/50, and 21 percent having visual acuity of less than 20/200.

Compiled from staff reports.



SAFETY SHIELD: Eye protection is a key to avoid becoming a fishing-related eye injury statistic.

Authorities bust six-figure 'caviar' ring

Paddlefish eggs lucrative worldwide market

Most would not view the Hoosier homeland as the base of an illegal six-figure-per-year seafood operation, but that's what Indiana Conservation Officers found on the tributaries of the Ohio River, in Vevay.

Undercover officers posing as illegal fishermen for 1 1/2 years infiltrated the ring, the members of which were illegally harvesting and selling "caviar" from the river's paddlefish.

Twelve arrests were made on a combined 39 felony charges. A charge of "illegal sale of a wild animal" was included in each individual's list of charges.

Officers also confiscated four boats, three vehicles, processing equipment, fishing equipment and records. Illicit drugs and large sums of cash were also taken from some of those arrested.



'MOST WANTED' LIST: Paddlefish eggs in the U.S. have similar characteristics to the high-priced caviar eggs of the sturgeon.

Technically, caviar is sturgeon eggs; however, there is a shortage of sturgeon in the Caspian Sea, the main source for the culinary delicacy.

That has created a lucrative worldwide market for paddlefish eggs, which have a similar

taste, look and consistency to the real thing.

One paddlefish can yield \$600 to \$800 in eggs. Annual income for illegal harvesting is \$100,000 to \$400,000 per year per fisherman.

Paddlefish can be legally harvested by commercial fishermen in the main stream of the

Ohio, but all tributaries, where much of the fishing is taking place, are protected because of the heavy concentrations of spawning fish there.

Violators use snag hooks and nets to catch paddlefish, which are found mostly in the large river systems of the Mississippi River Basin.

The fish are long-lived (males, 7-9 years; females, 10-12) and reach large sizes. The Indiana State Record weighed 106 pounds, 4 ounces.

Paddlefish are not believed to be endangered; however, due to their elusive nature, researching them is difficult.

Paddlefish numbers are believed to be dropping, although the fish are frequently seen in large groups, especially below dams, and are highly mobile.

After the Indiana arrest, two Boone County, Ky. men were charged with illegally selling 21 paddlefish carcasses and 12 1/2 pounds of paddlefish eggs after an operation conducted by Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources conservation officers, U.S. Marshals and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents.

The carcasses and eggs seized April 23 have a street value of approximately \$1,100.

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IN THE HUNT

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Ranger Cup pays out \$3M in cash awards since 2000

Ranger Boats announced its Ranger Cup Program has paid more than \$3 million in cash awards to the highest-finishing Ranger Cup participants at fishing events since 2000.

Ranger said the program has paid out more cash than all the other major manufacturer contingency programs combined.

Being a part of the Ranger Cup Program is open to any registered Ranger boat owner.

To qualify, owners need to fish from their Ranger, register for the program and meet clothing and decal requirements.

In 2006, events sponsored by 80 different tournament organizations for multiple species qualified

for Ranger Cup money. There are no minimum boat field requirements.

With the Ranger Cup Program, the year or model of Ranger boat doesn't matter. As long as the angler runs a Ranger boat — whether 1-year-old or 40 — he or she is eligible.

See rangerboats.com for infor-

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CONSERVATION

Network hooks up with tarpon on Web

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Coastal Fisheries Division is developing a web-based Tarpon Observation Network that will reside on the TPW Web site.

The design is simple. Anglers who land, hook, observe or otherwise come into contact with tarpon will be asked to enter various aspects of the observation into the Web site input device.

Known information (e.g. time, date, location, length, weight, water temperature, etc.) will be gathered and entered.

After the data has been verified, the information will be graphically displayed in various formats, such as a map with that particular observation indicated by an icon along with past observations in an easy to use design.

"Tarpon are a unique species and we don't know as much about them as we'd like. This gives us more information to use in our management practices," said Art Morris, coastal fisheries outreach specialist. "We see tarpon from the mouths of creeks to 20 miles offshore. People net juveniles in bar ditches, and we hear reports of tarpon from all over.

"This will give us a database to work from that organizes all that information, and because it's web-based, researchers from all over the world can use it."

The site is expected to be running by the end of June.

A TPW report.



TARPON DATA: Anglers who land, hook, observe or otherwise come into contact with tarpon will be asked to enter various aspects of the observation into a Web site input device, establishing a tarpon database.

Briefs

Wigeons featured on duck stamp

A pair of wigeons will be featured on the 2007-2008 Federal Junior Duck Stamp.

The design for the new stamp, painted by 18 year-old Paul Willey of Conway, Ark., was chosen by a panel of judges at the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest held at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.

The mixed media entry — entitled "An Elegant Pair," which previously won the Arkansas State Junior Duck Stamp Contest — was judged the top entry among the Best-of-State entries from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and American Samoa.

Proceeds from Junior Duck Stamp sales are used to support environmental education efforts and awards for contest winners.

A USFWS report.

Gulf shrimp season to close May 15

The Gulf of Mexico commercial shrimp season for both state and federal waters will close 30 minutes after sunset on Tuesday, May 15, until an unspecified time in July.

The closing date is based on samples collected by the Texas Parks and Wildlife's Coastal Fisheries Division using trawl, bag seine and other information gathered from the shrimping industry.

Typically, once the shrimp reach about 3-1/2 inches long, they begin their migration back to the Gulf of Mexico.

"The closure is designed to allow these small shrimp to grow to a larger, more valuable size before they are vulnerable to harvest," said Larry McKinney, TPW's Coastal Fisheries Division director.

The Texas closure applies to Gulf waters from the coast out to 9 nautical miles.

A TPW report.

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HUNTING

WARDENS GAME FOR COOKIN'



BATTER UP: Working the deep fryer with practiced skill, Game Warden Kevin Stancik of Jackson County helps prepare 300 pounds of fried catfish that was served to participants at the Operation Game Thief benefit.

Teams' fundraising fare tasty treat at Lone Star events

BY RALPH WININGHAM

About any animal, fish or fowl known to man can be found in the Lone Star State and falls under the watchful care of the small cadre of Texas game wardens.

In some cases, that care just might include a little kitchen time.

"Water buffalo, zebra, alligator — you name it and we've probably cooked it," said Senior Game Warden Marvin Wills of Gatesville, who is head of one of five regional cooking teams that have been serving up outdoor fare for more than 20 years.

The teams fan out across the state each year to prepare meals at charity and fund-raising events, and to offer the public a sample of the fine table fare available from native and exotic species throughout Texas.

Most of the dining delights are donated to the teams by landowners or hunters with excess meat, fish or fowl, with the task of preparing the dishes left up to the creativ-

ity of the cooking teams.

"These teams are a big attraction at the events and they give the public a chance to sample some great game," said Col. Peter Flores, division director of Texas Parks and Wildlife's Law Enforcement Division.

"This is just a really good way for the public to see and meet the wardens in a fun and enjoyable situation."

Demonstrating their talents recently at an Operation Game Thief sporting clays shoot and fund-raiser in Buda, Wills and his team cooked up 300 pounds of

'Water buffalo, zebra, alligator — you name it and we've probably cooked it.'

— SENIOR GAME WARDEN MARVIN WILLS

farm-raised catfish, 60 pounds of alligator, 150 pounds of French fries and 100 pounds of hush puppies for the hungry crowd.

"We try to keep everything simple and have never run out of food — we have come close," Wills said.



FRIED GATOR: Deep fried and ready to tempt taste buds, a batch of fried alligator tails is served up by Game Warden Ronnie Yates of Waco, one of the volunteers with the Texas Game Warden cooking team. Photos by Ralph Winingham.

"After doing this for years, we can tell how much food we will need depending on the time of day people will be eating and who will be at the event. Men eat more than

fryers, preparation bins and tables, plus the other necessary equipment for handling large groups with hearty appetites.

Menu items are prepared in a

events, helping organizations such as sheriff's departments, fire departments and other groups raise donations," Wills said.

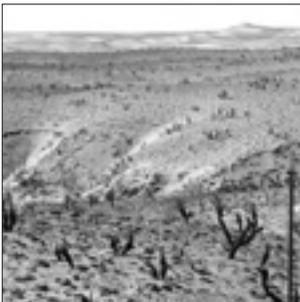
In order to handle picky eaters who may not savor buffalo, zebra or other exotic meats, he said the menu often includes what would be considered standard fare such as fish or shrimp.

Concerning where they developed their culinary talents, Wills said working around game, fish and fowl and being able to cook just seem to go hand in hand.

"Most of the game wardens are good cooks and like to cook — and you can tell that a lot of them don't ever miss a meal."

Panhandle rebirth

Wildlife, landscape recovering after big blaze



A total of 907,245 acres were scorched in the Panhandle in March, 2006.

One year after the biggest wildfire in Texas Panhandle history, the area's land and much of its wildlife has shown a remarkable recovery.

According to the National Interagency Fire Center in Idaho, wildfires east of Amarillo burned 907,245 acres in late March 2006.

Now, ranchers, wildlife biologists and university researchers look out on a changed landscape.

The fires were tragic for many Panhandle residents.

"The fire was a very bad thing for ranching operations, fences, structures, people and livestock," said Jeff Bonner, a wildlife biologist in Pampa. "But for wildlife and habitat, it will be good in the long run."

Fire has a way of rejuvenating almost every plant on the prairie, Bonner said. It increases plant diversity, with a corresponding response

from wildlife in terms of abundance and diversity. He cautions this is all rainfall-dependent. The big fires were followed by months of continuing drought before good rains began to fall last autumn.

"But with the moisture we've had in most of the area this past fall through the spring—we've have five inches just in March—this country's really loaded and in the chute to jump out this year," Bonner said.

This spring, rolling prairie hills that looked like the Sahara Desert last March show lush green again. The grasses are coming back, and the yucca, and woody plants like wild plum.

The hurt that may take longest to heal is the larger trees, especially big cottonwoods along creeks and rivers that provide important roosting habitat for turkeys.

"The big cottonwood trees were probably



One year after the wildfire, the plants on the prairie have rejuvenated. Photos by TPW.

See BLAZE, Page 21

Retrieving recognition

Nine dogs have Grand showing at elite event

By CHUCK UZZLE

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word grand means "having more importance than others, having higher rank than others bearing the same designation." It's even bigger than that for those participating in hunting retriever sports.

The 42nd Grand Hunting Retriever Championship was held recently in Maud. To hunters, it compares to the Super Bowl, World Series and Stanley Cup all rolled into one. Nine dogs added their names to the list of Grand Champions.

For more than 20 years, this prestigious event has brought together the best dogs in the country. The Grand has been run 42 times and nearly 7,000 dogs have tried to pass this difficult five-day test. A total of 355 have earned the Grand Champion crown.

The event is made up of five tests with hunting retrievers participating in one each day. Dogs passing the daily test move on to the next day's new test.

Once a dog passes all five days they earn "1 pass" towards the Grand title. In order to get a title of

Grand Champion, the dog needs "2 passes." Upon completing two passes, the dog is a Grand Champion and keeps that title forever.

There is no overall winner because the dogs compete against the course and not against one another.

Each test is a simulated hunting situation where a dog must make several marked retrieves and several blind retrieves.

A panel of judges closely critique the dog and handler, watching for the slightest mistake. "Man, you have eight different judges looking at you over a five-day period" said Darren Hearn of Bridge City. "If you make one false step these guys are going to catch it and you are done."

Hearn first took his yellow lab, Charlie, in 2004 to the Grand in Bowie, where Charlie, only 2 1/2-years-old, passed all five tests.

In 2005, the story was much different in Burlington, Wis.—Charlie failed on the first day. "The ride to Wisconsin was 1,300 miles there and felt like 13,000 miles home," Hearn said. "That was a tough one to take."

Hearn and Charlie eventually succeeded in passing the Spring Grand in 2006 and received the Grand title.



ALL BUSINESS: Both dogs and trainers are all business at the Grand Hunting Retriever Championship. Photo by Chuck Uzzle.

One avid dog trainer who has seen the Grand from all sides is Jimmy Nealy of Houston. He has run dogs in five Grands and has been a judge in two more.

"The Grand is the ultimate for hunting dogs," Nealy said. "The Hunting Retriever Club of America sets up the most realistic test there is in which to evaluate these beautiful animals."

"I have had two dogs pass the Grand and the feeling is incredible. I have also had dogs fail on the first day and I have had dogs fail on the fifth day and that feeling is equally disappointing."

The dogs are expected to show the highest degree of control at all times. The control factor is stressed for several reasons with the most

important being safety. Nobody wants to get in a boat or in a blind with a dog that doesn't mind, Nealy said.

Underneath the titles and ribbons associated with Grand Champions is time, effort and money. Trainers spend hours day after day preparing for the big day.

Longtime trainer Dow Anderson of Bridge City took off a week early to get to the area where the Grand would be held so his dogs would be acclimated to the area. "I have run a bunch of hunt tests in my lifetime, but nothing comes close to the pressure and excitement you feel at the Grand," Anderson said.

"All those days in the field setting up simulated tests can't compare to

what you feel when you get to the real thing; it's incredible."

The spring Grand had a total of 42 dogs from the field of 377 pass all five days.

Three dogs from Texas passed the Grand:

•Johnsons Flooded Timber, owned by Michael and Cheryl Johnson and handled by Michael Johnson, recorded her sixth. The dog has passed 30 tests at the Grand Level;

•Eba's Cotton Pickin Lotsa Go, owned by Sherry and Austin Cowan and handled by Grant Huff, and;

•Casey Harley To Go, owned by Charles and Diane Smith and handled by Charles Smith.

The next Grand is set for fall in Webberville, Mich.



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FISHING

Quick anglers get a second chance at bass

Keeping another lure at hand may hook success

By JOHN N. FELSHER

Every angler who ever touched a fishing rod can remember a "big one that got away," but more prepared anglers talk about the lunker they landed if they reacted quickly after a fish rises.

"If people are ready to follow up when a bass strikes, they can put more fish into the boat," said Kenyon Hill, a professional bass angler from Norman, Okla. "When tournament fishing, one extra fish could mean the difference between winning and not winning."

When a fish strikes at and misses a bait, many people immediately throw that same lure back into the spot again. Sometimes, that works, but, usually, it doesn't. Instead, follow up with something completely different. For example, if a bass swirls at a fast spinnerbait, flip a soft plastic bait behind it.

"It's very difficult not to throw the same thing back into a hole where a fish struck, but bass very seldom hit the same lure twice," said Peter Thliveros, a professional bass angler from Jacksonville, Fla.

'It's very difficult not to throw the same thing back into a hole where a fish struck, but bass very seldom hit the same lure twice.'

— PETER THLIVEROS

"There are endless numbers of things to throw back into a pocket for a second opportunity at a bass, but the key is being prepared to do it. I'll drop what I'm throwing and pick up something different every time."

Both Hill and Thliveros recommend keeping a soft plastic temptation tied to a second rod for a follow-up bait. A fluke, wacky worm or other slow sinker stays in the strike zone longer, tantalizing fish. Jerkbait, Texas-rigged worms and jigs also make excellent second-chance baits.

If a bass strikes at a fast-moving crankbait or spinnerbait, slow down the presentation. Perhaps throw a popper and let it sit for a while or toss in a smaller suspending jerkbait.

"When something strikes at a topwater bait and misses, I immediately follow up with a fluke," Hill said. "It slowly sinks like a dying shad and stays in the strike zone longer. To a bass, there's nothing more tasty than a shad. I keep it unhooked off the reel and ready to throw."

Although anglers typically go from aggressive to subtle baits for second chances at bass, the opposite sometimes works.

If a bass strikes at a fluke or other soft-plastic bait, but doesn't inhale it, perhaps it wants something different.

"If a bass wants to eat something, anglers can't keep it away because it's such an efficient predator," Thliveros said. "If a bass misses a bait, it's not

See **SECOND**, Page 16



BAIT AND SWITCH: Steve Daniel, left, and Alton Jones trade casts while fishing at Lake Fork. Photo by David J. Sams.

Snook still a spring fling

Warm tides send sportfish into bay system

By DANNO WISE

Although the winter sees perhaps the densest concentration of snook, most Lower Laguna Madre linesider chasers are more than happy to see spring roll around.

While the fish aren't stacked as thick in any one area as they are in the Brownsville Ship Channel during the grip of winter's chill, spring's warming tides tend to flush the fish into the bay system and, eventually, into the Brazos Santiago Pass.

And, after months of banging jigs off of fuel docks and barge fenders, many anglers are glad to be chasing Texas' most tropical sportfish in more aesthetically pleasing locations.

"There are a lot of spots where you can find snook in the spring," said Capt. Steve "JR" Ellis. "As the water temperature gets around 75 degrees, those fish start leaving the (Brownsville) ship channel and coming into the bay. A lot of those fish will eventually wind up



SNOOK ON A HOOK: Guides say there are many spots where an angler can find a snook in spring waters.

at the jetties.

"But they all feed on the flats on the south end of the bay as they are transitioning from the channel to the jetties. And some of the fish stay in the bay all summer long."

"This should be a good spring for snook," Ellis said. "Based on

what we saw last year, our snook are expanding their range in the bay. They were caught as far north as Cullen Bay last year and I expect them to go back to some of those same spots this year."

Snook guide Capt. Allen Salinas agreed with Ellis' assessment. "This is one of the best times of

the year to catch a really big snook," Salinas said. "Those big fish spend most of the year up in the Brownsville Ship Channel. But in spring you can find a lot of those big ones in South Bay. And they're real comfortable in there right now. There isn't a lot of boat traffic and the temperature is right

where it needs to be to get them up on the flats to feed."

"But during spring don't get too caught up in casting at mangrove shorelines," Ellis said. "Snook are really sensitive to cool water and that shallow water stuff just won't be happening yet. Instead, concentrate on knee- to waist-deep areas close to channels."

When trying to tempt spring snook, Ellis prefers lures that have a "high wobble factor. Big soft-plastics with a lot of swimming action — like the Wedgetail Minnow — or 'wobble baits' like a swimming jig are great for covering a lot of water and locating snook."

Salinas, on the other hand, just wants something that "looks natural. That's why I like the TNT Tandem Rig so much. I feel like it imitates a pair of baitfish moving through the water. I like to just walk it along the surface, then let it sink down in the potholes. It's real obvious by the way those fish hit it that they think it's the real deal."

Yamaha's 350 hp four-stroke outboard tested

BY DAVID J. SAMS

Running down a river at 70 mph with over a thousand horses pushing a 36-foot boat is only a dream to most fishermen. But this week, 41 members of the boating industry's media got the chance to feel the power of Yamaha's new F350 four-stroke motor on the Tennessee river.

Three motors were rigged on a 36-foot Contender for the test drive. Other dual and single motors were also attached to some of the best boats on the market.

After Pro staff and Yamaha employees gave careful instructions on a check ride, the media members were allowed to take over the helm.

"The biggest V-8 outboard yet demonstrates strong hole shot and remarkable midrange punch on a variety of craft; four-strokes keep getting better," said Tom Eldridge, editor of *Trailer Boats*.

"The F350 will allow our boat builder partners to make outboard-powered boats that could reach 40 feet or more in length," said Phil Dyskow, Yamaha Marine Group president. "At the same time, it's a great power solution for a lot of existing boats. The F350 will be the choice for anyone who ever wished for more off-shore outboard power and thrust."

When asked what he thought of the new motor, Larry Thompson, founder of *Fishing World.com*, said it was "Three hundred and fifty screaming and quiet horses."

Producing 350 prop-shaft rated horsepower, the F350 is designed to provide massive thrust for the heaviest offshore outboard-powered boats. At the same time, displacement means the engine makes 350 horsepower without the strain and internal pressures found in high-output, small displacement engines.

Yamaha has deliberately raised the standard with the F350. For example, it is more resistant to the



BLOWING AND GOING: A 36-foot Contender boat was used for testing the triple application of the F350 four-stroke motors. Photos by David J. Sams.

potential for water intrusion. It also uses a number of new technologies, including: ionic combustion sensors that constantly monitor combustion conditions and adjust spark timing; a dimpled outer cylinder sleeve to reduce oil consumption; the new Enhanced Ultimate Corrosion Protection System with additional sacrificial anodes; an innovative internal paint process and new-generation head gaskets; and Yamaha's Command Link® Digital Electronic Control system with redundant electronic engine control, automatic multi-engine synchronization and electronic throttle and shift.

Pro staffer George Mitchell said,

"the new digital electronic controls simplify the throttle system and having only two bars, not three, (on a three engine set-up) is a much better deal. The trolling feature will take the fudge factor out of it and help better control the multiple baits we set."

The Yamaha F350 provides up to 45 percent more thrust than 250-hp class outboards. The design is a 60-degree V8 with 32 valves (four valves per cylinder) and double overhead cams. It uses variable camshaft timing to optimize the engine's torque at low and mid-range rpm. With sequential, multi-point fuel injection, it has eight long intake tracks in the induction

system to optimize power. In addition, it features in-bank exhaust with dual power surge chambers, a system that relieves pressure in the exhaust ports.

The F350 was designed from the beginning to power offshore boats. However, it employs a number of new features designed to even further enhance its offshore capabilities. A component of the Ultimate Corrosion Protection System is an industry exclusive paint process for the proprietary Yamaha aluminum alloy engine block. It combats corrosion both inside and out, protecting the cooling passages and other key components. In addition, the outboard uses an "Ultra-

Tough" gear case with dual water inlets for improved cooling. Inside the lower unit are hardened gears and enhanced bearings and surfaces for greater durability. Forged motor mounts and an oversized mounting bracket also add to the F350's portfolio of toughness.

Jim Hutchinson from *The Fisherman* summed up the trip. "As our jet was taxiing down the runway, I kinda yawned — pretty anticlimactic after roaring down the Tennessee river in front of a trio of 350hp Yamahas to start my morning!"

Yamaha plans to begin deliveries to boat builder and dealer partners by the summer of 2007.

F350 Specifications

Block configuration V8 60 degree
 Displacement 5.3 Liter (5330 cc) (325 ci)
 Prop shaft horsepower 350 @ 5500 rpm
 Cylinder heads DOHC / 32 valve with variable camshaft timing (VCT)
 Compression 9.6:1
 Full throttle RPM range 5000-6000
 Fuel induction sequential multi-point electronic fuel injection
 Fuel type regular unleaded (Minimum Pump Octane 89)
 Exhaust in-bank dual exhaust with power surge chambers
 Intake electronic throttle valve with 8 individual long intake tracks
 Ignition system 32-bit ECM with integrated coil-in-cap ignition design
 Alternator output 50A (40A @ 1000rpm)
 Lubrication wet sump gear ratio 1.73:1
 Controls Command Link® - Digital Electronic Controls
 Multiple outboard synchronization
 Auto sync throttle control with twin and triple applications
 Trolling throttle adjustment +/- 50 rpm increments (600 - 1000 rpm range) via Command Link System
 Weight 25-inch shaft / 804 pounds
 C.A.R.B. 3-Star
 Limited warranty: 3-year pleasure, 3-year government, 1-year commercial
 Specifications are subject to change without notice.
 For more information, call (800) 88-YAMAHA or visit <http://www.yamahaoutboards.com>



THREE OF A KIND: Yamaha's three F350 V-8 four-stroke motors pushed the test boat to 70 mph.



FIRST TRY: Francisca Santillan shows her 34-pound ling caught on her first offshore trip.

LING SCHOOLS IN SESSION

Cobia clashes climb with the new season

BY PETER YOUNG

Whenever a springtime party boat customer yells "look at that shark," deckhands grab the ling rod and bait and run for the rail. At first glance, these brown and white fish often seem shark-like in both appearance and behavior.

Known as ling, cobia, lemonfish, or crabbeaters, these inquisitive fish are known for their innate curiosity and will nosily circle just about everything from boats, gaffs, hooked snapper, spinning props or just about anything shiny as if determining the object's edibility.

According to a species profile written by marine biologists Jeffery B.

Kaiser and G. Joan Holt, Cobia inhabit both coastal and continental shelf waters, and adult fish have been found in bays and estuaries and at depths of 3,900 feet.

Temperature appears to be the primary factor in determining their range. They appear to prefer temperatures above 68 degrees. During cooler months, they either migrate to

warmer water or move farther offshore to deeper water.

Cobia have elongated bodies and grow to 6.5 feet and 135 pounds, and live up to 15 years. The opportunistic carnivores eat many species of fish — crab, shrimp and squid — but prefer crustaceans, and particularly portunids (swimming crabs), according to

See LING, Page 22

GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

TOP STUDENT 'FLUNKS' TRESPASSING RULE

•Walker County Game Warden Zak Bengé and Anthony Corcoran participated in a Hunter Education Class in Huntsville. After going over rules and regulations concern-

ing hunting, fishing and trespassing, they went to the Trinity River to patrol for violations. Approximately 45 minutes later, they apprehended an individual for tres-

passing to fish along the Trinity River. The person was one of the students from the Hunter Education Class, who had made a 100 on the final test. Case pending.

TURKEY TALK COOKS UP TROUBLE

•Edwards County Game Warden Cody Hatfield heard rumors that a local individual had been bragging about killing seven turkeys. Hatfield went to the man's house and found him outside cooking and having a beer party. After a short interview, the man admitted to killing three turkeys over his limit and gave a statement concerning his activities. The hunter received three citations for exceeding the limit and one for minor in possession. Cases and restitution on three turkeys are pending.

CAMP HOUSE BURGLARS NET CHARGES

•Palo Pinto County Game Warden Cliff Swofford, while checking turkey hunters, apprehended two individuals burglarizing a camp house. The individuals possessed methamphetamine and also were charged for taking game fish by illegal means (net). Cases are pending.

MAN FACES FELONY CHARGES IN GUN THEFT

•Young County Game Warden Brent Isom received a request from the Young County Sheriff's Office to assist with the investigation of a burglary of a hunting camp. An individual had stolen 13 long guns, two handguns and four knives. The equipment was located after the person gave a full confession. Drug paraphernalia and marijuana plants were seized from the house. First-degree felony charges were filed.

MAN RUNS BOAT AGROUND, CAN'T STAND FOR SOBRIETY TEST

•Jasper County Game Warden Phillip Wood received a call regarding a boat accident on Sam Rayburn Reservoir. After arriving on the scene, he discovered that the driver had run the boat aground at the Twin Dikes boat ramp. The man was unable to stand or perform any field sobriety tests. After statements were received from witnesses who had observed the man driving the boat, he was placed under arrest for BWI and transported to Jasper Memorial Hospital and a blood sample was given. The man had

been arrested a month earlier by Wood for hunting deer at night and possession of marijuana. Cases pending.

GATOR IN MAN'S AQUARIUM STIRS UP CITATION

•Jefferson County Game Warden Robbie Smith received a call regarding a subject in possession of a live alligator in his residence. Smith made contact with the man and he agreed to show the alligator he had in an aquarium. The man said he caught the alligator in a local bayou and thought it was cool. The subject was issued a citation for illegal possession of an alligator.

COMMERCIAL FISHERS JUMP BOAT IN PURSUIT

•Zapata County Game Warden Jesse Garcia seized a commercial fishing vessel from Mexico while patrolling Falcon Lake. After a short pursuit, the commercial vessel lost its motor, and its occupants jumped in the water and swam to the Mexico side of the river. Garcia seized the boat and approximately 1,500 feet of gill net.

CAMPERS RECEIVE SURPRISE VISIT FROM WARDENS

•Coleman County Game Warden Randall Brown and Terrell County Game Warden Dan Waddell observed a spotlight working in a subdivision in Terrell County. After a couple of hours, no shots were heard and the light went out. The wardens decided to check the area and discovered a hunting camp at the location where the light was last observed. All was dark and quiet as the wardens cautiously approached the camp. Upon arrival, the wardens found several dead turkey vultures in the bed of a pickup. The occupants of the camp had just

gone to bed and were surprised to see the wardens. Appropriate citations were issued.

WARDEN RESCUES THREE FROM CAPSIZED BOAT

•Matagorda County Game Warden David Janssen received a call saying a female and teenage boy were in a broken-down boat in Matagorda Bay. While en route, the individual called back saying his friend phoned and said the boat was taking on water due to a strong north wind. A few minutes later, he called again saying they were capsized and hanging on to the keel. Janssen, along with the boater's friend, located the capsized boat and rescued all three without injury.

BLUE HERON EGGS TAKEN TO ZOO AFTER NEST DESTROYED

•Taylor County Game Warden Steve Medford received a call from Austin Communications about a report of a local utility company and/or a private contractor destroying occupied great blue heron nests in south Taylor County. Medford started an investigation and retrieved some eggs that same evening. The eggs were taken to the zoo for care, and the company has agreed to reimburse the zoo for expenses. Medford is coordinating the investigation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

RECKLESS DRIVER STEERS HIS WAY INTO ARREST

•Freestone County Game Warden John Thorne stopped a reckless driver at the request of the sheriff's office. The subject was arrested and charged with driving while license suspended, possession of methamphetamine and Xanax and reckless driving. When asked why his truck was in such bad shape, he said he had

intentionally run over four deer because one of his friends needed the meat. The man later gave a videotaped statement about two of the four deer and implicated two other people. The man also made a statement to the jailer about throwing a bag of marijuana when stopped. Thorne returned to the scene and located the marijuana. An additional felony charge of tampering with evidence was filed. The investigation into the deer continues. The man had been stopped and issued a speeding ticket by a trooper 20 minutes prior to being stopped by Thorne.

DIP NET, NO LICENSE SCOOPS UP ARRESTS

•Freestone County Game Warden John Thorne arrested three individuals on Chambers Creek for catching crappie by illegal means (dip net) and having no fishing license.

GATOR GETS IN THE WAY OF WORK

•San Patricio County Game Warden Sam Harris got a construction crew back to work after an alligator took up residence at the site, stopping the workers from reaching their equipment. The alligator was captured and released to the wild.

MAN SHOOTING FROM TRUCK LEADS TO TALK WITH BOSS

•Harris County Game Warden Derek Spitzer received a call from a concerned citizen who witnessed a man shoot a rifle twice from his dump truck window, exit the truck, and proceed into the brush, where he shot three more times. The complainant approached the man as he got back into his truck. Startled, the man told the complainant that he was just shooting at some birds, and quickly left. Spitzer arrived at the scene and located a dead doe in

the brush. Spitzer found the man's supervisor, who was on the property. The man was called by his supervisor and, after a brief discussion with Spitzer, came back to the scene with his rifle in tow. Cases pending.

ANGLERS BUST THE LIMIT IN A BIG (BAG) WAY

•Harris County Game Warden Derek Spitzer worked the San Jacinto River for fishing violations. Spitzer caught four individuals with 13 undersized crappie and two with 18 white bass over the daily bag limit. Later that night, two more people were caught hiding fish in plastic bags located in the hull of their boat. A tally of their fish revealed 14 crappie over the limit and 21 undersized crappie. Cases pending.

ANTLERS IN TRUCK POINT THE WAY TO NO TAG INCIDENT

•Harris County Game Wardens Jarrod Bryant and Javier Fuentes were checking the Sabine River boat ramp around 9 p.m., and noticed a vehicle with an empty boat trailer. Bryant shined his flashlight in the back seat of the truck and observed deer antlers. The wardens concealed themselves and waited. After a short wait, they saw the fisherman arrive. Upon interviewing the fisherman, they determined that the man killed an 8-point buck in Cass County last season, but did not tag the deer. Cases pending.

WARDEN DISCOVERS STOLEN PICKUP TRUCK

•Montague County Game Warden Trent Herchman and Wise County Game Warden Chris Dowdy were launching their patrol boat on Lewisville Lake when Herchman observed what he thought was a Chevy pickup submerged at the end of the boat ramp in approximately 17 feet of water. With the use of the 987CI imaging sonar and the assistance of the fire department and local police, a 2004 Chevrolet pickup stolen in 2005 was recovered.

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Saltcedar

Continued from Page 1

infestation was in the South and Southwest, the USDA now shows the plant in at least 19 states. In Texas, saltcedar is a problem in at least 62 counties.

Experts describe two primary problems with saltcedar — water consumption and soil changes. “One plant can use several hundred gallons of water per day,” said Kelly Duffie, a herbicidal specialist with Estes Inc., a herbicide distributor. “And, they don’t give it back — they release the moisture into the atmosphere.”

The thirsty plant colonizes in wet areas, and replaces willows and cottonwoods. Tests reveal that the plants secrete salt and form a crust above and below the ground that inhibits other plants. “The plant has the unique means of making the environment more suitable for itself and less tolerable for everything else,” Duffie said.

The effect on a river system or pond, whether used for livestock, fishing or hunting, can be devastating. “They can make a huge difference in a pond’s level,” said Chad Fikes, a pond management consultant with Pond Boss. “Especially in the summer when the pond is losing water to evaporation. And they spread like wildfire.”

“Just looking at the math,” Duffie said, “there are 326,000 gallons in an acre-foot of water. Just one plant could decimate an acre-foot of water in not much more than 1,100 days. You can imagine what a cluster of the plants could do.”

Attempts at controlling saltcedar have been made for decades. “The plant keeps re-seeding and the seeds float downstream or to other areas,” said Tom Yeater, an extension agent in Howard County working on studies to control the plant.

Cutting or plowing the plants has not been effective, nor has burning the plants. “The tap root goes way down, and the plant just re-sprouts,” Yeater said.

“They (saltcedars) do multi-stem sprouts after being cut,” Duffie said. “The plant will send two to five sprouts from each place where it is cut.”



THIRSTY THICKET: Experts say saltcedar needs to be controlled as soon as possible since one plant can consume 200 gallons of water per day.

Even goats were tried, and while they ate the leaves, the plants survived.

Water inundation works, but the plant’s base must stay underwater for more than 24 months. “That’s obviously not an option in West Texas,” Fikes said.

Herbicides have been effective at managing the problem. “Products with the active ingredient Imazapyr control saltcedar,” Duffie said. A brand called Arsenal is the most commonly used, and generic products are available, but neither are approved for use over or near water. “The Texas Department of Agriculture has made an exception for emergency use in some areas,” he said.

Yeater said spraying with Arsenal has been effective near Big Spring. “We sprayed a whole

bunch, but we still have plenty,” he said. “I don’t know that we’ll ever control it.”

A new aquatic-labelled herbicide, Habitat, is now available. “It works on willows, but I don’t know if it’s effective on saltcedar,” Fikes said.

Herbicidal controls can be expensive, however, especially since larger applications are usually sprayed by helicopter. “A 250 dollar-per-acre estimate for the product and application is probably about right,” Duffie said.

A study in West Texas and other western states began in 2004 using saltcedar leaf beetles to control the plant. “The beetles eat only saltcedar and can potentially suppress the growing problem,” Yeater said. Scientists hope the beetles can be used where herbicides cannot,

and also as a follow-up to herbicide treatment to slow reinfestation.

“Saltcedar beetles are a natural enemy of this invasive plant in its native European and Asian home,” described Allen Knutson, an extension entomologist in Dallas.

The study is scheduled to end in 2008, but some results are in. “We now have 18 acres controlled from a site that was preliminarily one acre,” Yeater said. The plants still spread, however. “We’re hoping the beetles spread with them,” he said.

This past winter saw beetles overwinter at five sites in Texas along the Pecos River and the Colorado River basin. “We’ve had some good success,” Dr. Knutson said. “And we hope to expand the sites to include the Big Bend area and areas along the Rio Grande that are

choked with saltcedar.”

The beetles have also defoliated saltcedar trees over five-acres in test areas. But the survival of the beetles from year-to-year has been a concern. “The biggest problem has been predation due to fire ants,” Yeater said.

“We don’t expect to have success planting the beetles in areas from Abilene east due to the fire ants,” Knutson said.

The experts agree that controls are needed when the plants are discovered. “Kill it as quickly as possible,” Fikes said.

The herbicidal controls must be applied by licensed operators or by persons under their direct supervision. The scientists recommend contacting the local county extension office if saltcedar plants are discovered or suspected.

TOO BUSY WITH THE OUTDOORS TO MEET THE RIGHT WOMAN?



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HEADING IN: A bass fisherman on Lake Fork heeds the weather warning.

Storms

Continued from Page 1

merging of electrical charges from the earth and clouds. But these forces can travel tremendous distances before they meet, said Joe Harris, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Fort Worth.

“The anvil of a cloud can be 4,500 to 6,000 feet high,” he said. “You can get a strike out of that from 20 miles away.”

And this deadly connection between earth and sky can be quite insidious.

Harris said electrons, unseen to the human eye, cling to whatever will form a bridge to the clouds.

“So,” he added, “they’ll climb up flag poles, telephone poles and, yes, even that fishing pole — anything higher than the surface of the earth.”

“And they will climb up your legs

to get to the tip of that fishing pole.”

Harris said people frequently can’t see what’s about to happen, although one warning signal can occur as they become so charged with electrons, their hair stands on end.

Saltwater anglers might experience similar phenomena when high points on their boat start to glow. Old time seaman, who saw this on their mastheads, called it “St. Elmo’s fire.”

“The electrons start glowing up there and they form a sort of plasma,” Harris said.

According to news accounts, Ingram and two friends were packing up fishing gear during a severe storm, but two lines were tangled. Ingram was struck while trying to free the lines with a steel knife, the reports said.

Although metal is a known conductor of electricity, Harris reminded that a raised fishing rod will dan-

gerously attract lightning.

And that brings up some safety tips from the weather service, the most basic being: Heed the forecast; don’t go out in stormy weather.

But if a storm comes up suddenly, stay away from tall, isolated objects.

Seek shelter, but if it’s too far away, crouch down, cover your head with your hands and rest on the balls of your feet, but don’t lay flat; that could create a wider target. Weather service officials also noted most lightning deaths on the water occur on small boats with no cabins.

If a vessel is uncovered and thunderstorms are forecast stay ashore, the officials said.

“We always tell people that if you can hear thunder, or see a lightning flash, it’s time to seek shelter,” Harris said. “Because if that’s happening, you’re too close.”

For even more information, go to www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

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May 25

9:00 Exhibits open
10:00 Kids Camp opens
10:00 Seminars Begin hourly
11:30 Door Prizes Awarded
5:00 Exhibits Close
6:00 Social Volunteers & Exhibitors

May 26

9:00 Exhibits open
10:00 Kids Camp opens
10:00 Seminars Begin hourly
11:30 Door Prizes Awarded
5:00 Exhibits Close

May 27

9:00 Exhibits open
10:00 Kids Camp opens
10:00 Seminars Begin hourly
11:30 Door Prizes Awarded
5:00 Exhibits Close

EXHIBITORS

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aflac • All Star Archery • Bad Boy Buggies • Bait Saver • Bass Pro Shops • Big Brothers Big Sisters • Boaters World • Budweiser Share Lunker Program • Christian Outdoor Adventures • Colorado Outfitters Association • Dallas Arms Collectors Association • Dallas Safari Club | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dallas Woods & Waters Club • Duck Masters Boats Inc. • Elk Ivory Jewelry Center • Ennis 4-H Woods & Metal Club • Foxy Huntress • Hand Made Metal Artistry by Blu Dorman • Hunters Headquarters • King Bros RV Ranch • Lone Star Bowhunters Association • Lone Star Outdoor News • Lone Star Outfitters • Lone Star Emporium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mule Deer Foundation • National Wild Turkey Federation • Operation Game Thief • One Shot Adventures • Outdoor Connection • Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation • Sharper Cut Enterprise • Spring Creek Ranch • SportEar • Sportsmen's Warehouse • Team Bow Masters • Texas Brigades | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Deer Association • Texas Parks & Wildlife • Texas Sporting Journal • Texas State Rifle Association • Texas Wildlife Association • Texas Youth Hunting Association • Trinity Outfitters • The Camp Cook • The Flagg Group • Your Eyes / Fish Eyes |
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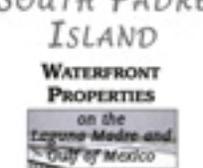
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SHARELUNKER NO. 440: Larry Scarbrough of San Antonio caught this fish at Choke Canyon Reservoir on April 25. It was 13.33 pounds, 25.75 inches with a 20-inch girth. He was using a Zoom plastic worm.



SHARELUNKER NO. 441: Nathan King of Lubbock shows a 13-pound, 25.5 inch, 20.5-inch girth bass he caught April 27 at Lake Alan Henry using a Never Winter Jig with a Madman Craw.



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Patented lure out-fishes live bait 3 to 1; could be banned.

Automatically simulates movement of a live worm
Effectiveness may spur regulation against it.

VERO BEACH, FL—In a bare competition near the Florida coast town, a veteran fishing guide used an imitation lure and humbled another veteran guide who used live bait. Both guides fished from the same boat. The imitation lure caught three times more bass than the live bait.

The winner now aims on the lure to attract his clients catch fish. To prove its effectiveness, he challenged the President of a large Bass Masters Club in Florida to a goal of 100 bass in one fishing day using the lure exclusively. They caught the 100 by 2:50 PM.

The lure is great news for anyone who loves fresh-water fishing, but because bass tournaments are getting richer and richer, a new issue arises. Should such a lure be allowed in competition where prizes can reach several thousand dollars? Most tournaments already prohibit live bait, and this lure out-fished live bait three to one.

I asked a spokesman for the company who makes the lure why it was so effective, and how it might fare if it were banned from tournaments.

"Well, we would sure love a lot of free publicity if it was banned. We have heard of some incidents, but so far it hasn't happened on a large scale. Let me explain how it works.

The key to winning—constant movement

"First, fish love worms more than any other food. (The lure is a plastic worm.) Worms are scale-less and easiest to digest than other live bait. But it must be a live worm, and that means it must constantly move. If it stops moving for a moment, as regular plastic worms do, fish smell a rat. They know it's either dead or a fake. Even if the poor creature moving when a fisherman reels it in, it's too late. Their mind is made up.

"Ichthyologists—a fancy word for a fish expert—say that constant movement evokes a predatory response in a fish. Constant movement is so overbearing a temptation it triggers larger, less aggressive fish to strike, even fish that have just fed. They can't help it. Nature programmed them to eat live things.

"The Walking Worm®'s genius (the lure's name) is a patented, multi-fiber construction that traps air between several tail segments, causing the lure to constantly wobble, as if it were stroking across the bottom, or through middle or top water. To a bass or other predatory fish, this constant curling is an omen. They go berserk.

John Fry, Two Time National and World Bass Fishing Champ, holds a 12 and 15-pound bass he caught with the Walking Worm®. He refers to the lure as catch #1.

"I was down in Alabama where I saw three imitation lures—a crank bait, a plastic worm and the Walking Worm®—dropped in a large fish tank with bass in it. They swam right by the other two, then



Patented lure constantly curls like a live worm. Some say it should be banned from tournaments.

dated for the Walking Worm®. Why? Well, the crank bait was moving, but it wasn't a worm. The other plastic worms looked tasty, but it stopped moving for awhile when it hit bottom and apparently convinced the fish it was dead. The Walking Worm® was a juicy live worm, and the bass went for it hook, line and snapper liberally.

"Yes, I suppose the Walking Worm® could cause some regulation. The money is big now. A young team we know who is just starting as a pro, but name's Preston Clark, used it in a 2005 Classic, his first large competition, and caught his limit in 15 minutes. But he better move fast. Anyone fishing for dollars would be foolish not to use it."

The Walking Worm® can be Texas or Carolina rigged. It comes in six colors.

lure bag, and shad/green deck, pumpkin seed, motor oil, charrnose, green/pumpkinseed. There are 10 worms of one color in a box. One box costs \$19.95, two to five cost only \$19.00 each. A Super-Pack of all six colors cost only \$79.95, about a \$40.00 savings. Shipping is only \$7.00 no matter how many boxes you order.

To order the Walking Worm®, call the distributor direct at 1-800-870-4415 or click www.sportsmansfinest.com anytime or day and have your credit card ready. Or mail your name, address, check or M. O. (or your cc number and exp. date) to: NOC Sports (Dept. W-304), 69 Church St., Waterville, CT 06490. Specify the color(s) you want. CT add 6% sales tax. There's a money-back guarantee, if you return your purchase within 30 days.

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OUTDOOR DATEBOOK

HAVE AN EVENT?
E-mail it to
editor@lonestaroutdoornews.com

May 16: The Dallas Safari Club monthly meeting will be held at the Dallas/Addison Quorum Marriott. Steve Davis will be the guest speaker on Mozambique Safaris.



May 17: The Metrocrest Addison DU dinner will be held at the Addison Convention Center. Contact Rob Gokey at (972) 234-3933 or rob@triplefoods.com for information.



May 17: The Dripping Springs DU dinner will be held at Creekside Pavilion in Driftwood. For information, call Pete Edquist at (830) 833-1734.

May 17: The Blunt Spurs NWTF dinner will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Palestine. Contact James Woolverton at (903) 549-3462 or ewoolverton@airmail.net for information.

May 17: The Austin CCA banquet will be held at Austin Music Hall. For information, call (800) 626-4222.

May 18: The Bay Area CCA banquet will be held in Clear Lake. For location and information, call (800) 626-4222.

May 18: The Navarro County Limbangers NWTF dinner will be held at Star Hall in Corsicana. Contact James Moore at (903) 875-8146 or jameswmoore76@yahoo.com for information.

May 18-19: The Aransas Bay CCA chapter will hold the 8th annual Babes on the Bay fishing tournament in Rockport. For information, visit www.babesonthebay.com or contact Karol Scardino at (361) 729-5353 or dakglobal@earthlink.net.

May 19: The Pioneer Chapter of Northeast Texas NWTF's annual Women in the Outdoors event will be held at Rusty Lowe's ranch north of Clarksville. Events feature hands-on activities for women wanting to learn about and enjoy the outdoors. For information, call Jackie Williams at (903) 427-0285 or Angie Bishop at (903) 249-1466.



May 19: The Lake Whitney Longbeards NWTF banquet will be held at the Meridian Civic Community Center. For information, call Barbara Stockstill at (254) 622-3030.

May 19-20: Cabela's in Buda will give a presentation on choosing the right binoculars at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. For information, visit www.cabelas.com.

May 24: The Southeast Texas NWTF chapter dinner will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Beaumont. For information, call Greg McGowne at (409) 656-1401.

May 24: The Laredo CCA banquet will be held at the Laredo Civic Center. For information, call (800) 626-4222.

May 25-27: The Lone Star Sportsmen's Show will be held at the Arlington Convention Center. For information, visit www.lonestarss.com or call (512) 273-2129.

May 25-26: The Willacy County Young Farmers 21st annual fishing tournament benefiting Teach the Children will be held at Port Mansfield. Registration is at the chamber of commerce on May 25. For more information, visit www.wcyf.org.

May 26: The Texas Big Game Awards Edwards Plateau (Region 4) banquet will be held at the Galloway Hammond Center in Burnet. Pre-register only by calling David Brimager at (800) 839-9453, ext. 114.

May 26: The NWTF North Texas Regional Training banquet will be held at Main Events in Childress. Contact Michael Thornton at (903) 759-5397 or nwtfmike@sbcglobal.net for information.

May 26-27: Cabela's in Buda will

present Intro to GPS at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. For information, visit www.cabelas.com.

May 31: The Best Southwest DU banquet will be held at the Desoto Holiday Inn. Contact Bonnie Espree at (972) 230-0000 or Bonnie@GovRep.com for information.

May 31: The Dallas CCA fundraiser will be held at the Frontiers of Flight Museum at Dallas Love Field. Call Rick or Sandra at (972) 272-9502 for information.



June 1-2: NWTF's Women in the Outdoors will hold its Texas State Skeet, Trap and Sporting Clays Shoot at the Houston County 4-H Shooting Sports Facility in Crockett. For information, call Annette Williamson at (936) 544-5356.

June 2: The Huxley DU chapter's Fun Night will be held at Robinson's Lodge on 376 in Huxley. For information, call Mark Robinson at (936) 368-2211.

June 2: The Houston RMEF Big Game Banquet will be held at the Westchase Marriott at Briar Park and Westheimer. For information, visit www.rmeffhouston.com or call (281) 497-1775.

June 2: The 2 of Us Couples Tournament will be held at Lake Pat

Mayse. For information, call (972) 754-2458 or visit www.fishingworld.com/TwoofUs.

June 2-3: Cabela's in Fort Worth will hold a concealed handgun license class. For information, visit www.easychl.com or call (817) 430-0300.



June 4: The Kilgore DU dinner will be held at the Kilgore College Student Center. Contact Richard "Doc" Harrison at (903) 983-8224 or texasduckdoc@cableynx.com for information.

June 5: The first Rains County DU dinner will be held at the Heritage Center Building in Emory. For information, contact Randy Duncan at (903) 474-9524 or randall.l.duncan@L-3com.com.

June 7: The Fort Worth DU Raffle Night will be held at the Alpine Gun Range. Contact Aric Head at (817) 832-8694 or aric.head@c-b.com for information.

June 7: The Plainview Father's Day DU Raffle Night will be held at 1001 Ebling Drive in Plainview. For information, contact Danny Glenn at (806) 685-1891 or dannyg@asbonline.com.



Second

Continued from Page 8

because it couldn't see it or catch it. If a fish misses a fluke, it's because it didn't want it. If a fish misses a slow bait like a fluke, I follow up with a fast bait like a Rat-L-Trap and run it aggressively through the same area."

Changing colors or shapes can sometimes help. Anglers usually

go from brighter colors to more shad-like subtle hues and from larger baits to smaller ones to catch second-chance bass.

However, a bigger fish might actually want a bigger, more aggressive bait or a brighter color.

In addition, an angler might target several fish in the same hole instead of just the one that struck at the first bait. If the first fish doesn't hit, one of the others might.

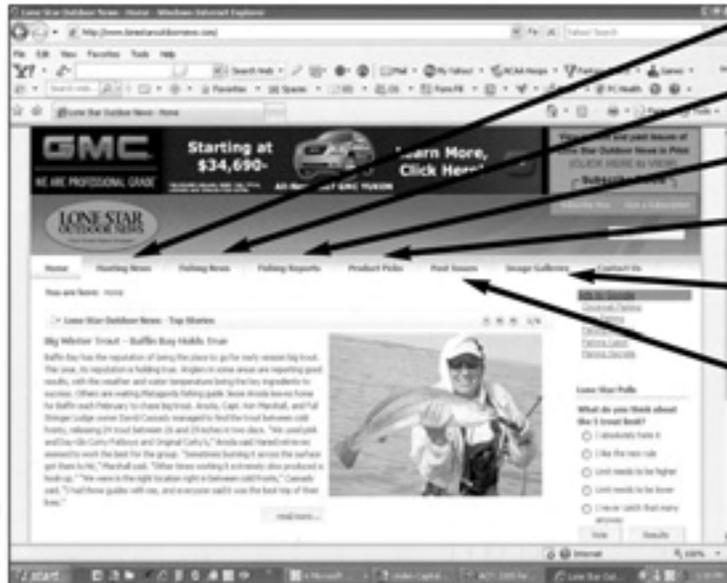
Sometimes, occupying the

same hole makes bass more aggressive so they can beat their brethren to the food. During those times, bigger, brighter baits might tempt the more aggressive, frequently larger fish.

In any situation, the angler who observes what happens nearby and reacts quickly to opportunities usually catches the most fish. Be prepared with several options to throw at anything that rises to the occasion.

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CENTRAL CONTROL SYSTEM:

The **CannonLink System Module** from Humminbird

allows anglers to control up to six downriggers from one central system. They can deploy or retrieve downriggers, use the Bottom Track setting to maintain distance off the bottom, set to Cycle to continuously move the downriggers between two depths, plus more. The module is designed to work with Cannon Mag20 DT, Mag 20 DT/HS or Mag20 DT/TS downriggers and the 900 Series, 700 Series or Matrix Series Fishing Systems (registered owners of these systems can upgrade software to add compatibility at www.humminbird.com). The CannonLink costs about \$200. For more information, visit Humminbird's Web site or call (800) 633-1468.



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Among **SHE SAFARI'S** new line of **Realtree** and **Advantage** camouflage pieces are these **Pro Series Pants**.

Designed for the female form, these pants fit just below the waist and come unhemmed to ensure proper length. They feature deep hand pockets, cargo style leg pockets and two rear pockets. They are available in the Realtree AP HD, the Realtree APG HD and Advantage MAX-1 HD. The Pro Series Pants cost \$55. For more information, visit www.shesafari.com or call (936) 756-7169.



ALL-PURPOSE TOOL:

The **Resolve** by **GerberGear** is a butterfly-opening multi-plier that contains not only a pair of spring-action needlenose pliers, but also wire cutters, a can opener, small and medium flathead screwdrivers, scissors, a serrated blade, a saw, a crosspoint screwdriver and a fine-edge knife. The 6-inch stainless steel tool (4 inches long when closed) features ergonomically contoured titanium gray handles plus a component locking system. The multi-pliers cost about \$64. For retailers, visit www.gerbergear.com or call (800) 950-6161.



HANDHELD GPS UNIT:

Lowrance's iFinder Hunt C boasts a brilliant color display and 16-channel GPS precision. Features include hunting-specific graphic icons for marking treestands, ATVs, etc.; a built-in electronic compass;

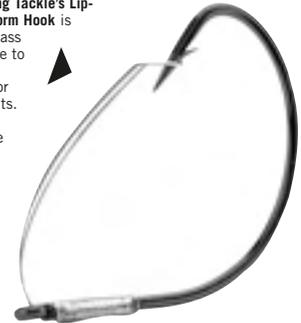
barometric altimeter with weather alerts; MP3 player; and microphone for recording voice notes. Its "Scout Mode" allows users to mark area perimeters, plus users can save up to 2,000 waypoints. It has a built-in map of the continental U.S. and Hawaii, plus optional mapping accessories are available. It costs about \$360. For retailers, visit www.lowrance.com.



HOOK THEM AND HOLD THEM:

Northland Fishing Tackle's Lip-Stick Wacky Worm Hook is

designed for bass anglers who like to fish with soft plastic worms or Senko-style baits. The weighted worm hooks are molded with a Mustad Ultra-point blood red hook and feature a weedless wire weedguard. The hooks are available in No. 1/0 and No. 3/0. They cost \$3.40 for pack of three. To order, visit www.northlandtackle.com or call (800) 786-3474.



RELIABLE RAIN GEAR: Cabela's

Guidewear Parka is constructed with a 500-denier shell and a GORE-TEX membrane for waterproof, breathable protection.

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BUZZ OFF: Skeeter Beater camo window coverings by **Timco Industries** will keep those annoying bugs at bay. The water-resistant magnetic window coverings allow air to flow freely through a vehicle's open windows while keeping mosquitoes, gnats and other bugs out. Each \$19.95 package includes one pair of Skeeter Beaters for right and left windows. Available in three sizes, they can be folded to fit any vehicle. To order, visit www.theskeeterbeater.com or call (314) 504-8883.



NEW DVD: Muzzy's

"Bad to the Bone

Bucks 6" showcases 20 whitetail bow hunts across North America, from early season hunts in Texas to rut hunts in Kansas to frigid, late-season hunts in Saskatchewan. Tag along with professional hunters Tom Miranda, Pat Reeve, Greg Miller and more as they test their wits against monster whitetails and share techniques when hunting various weather conditions and terrain. The DVD costs \$9.95 at www.muzzy.com; for more information, call (800) 222-7769.

FISHING REPORT

HOT BITES

LARGEMOUTH BASS



BROWNWOOD: Black bass are excellent on watermelon/white and watermelon red spinnerbaits and Rat-L-Traps.

PROCTOR: Black bass are excellent on minnows.

ARROWHEAD: Black bass to 10 pounds are good on crankbaits and chatter baits in 4-7 feet.

CHOKO CANYON: Black bass to 12 pounds are good on blue/white deep crankbaits and watermelon red Carolina rigged soft plastic worms and lizards.

WHITE/HYBRID/STRIPER



RAY ROBERTS: White bass are excellent on jigging spoons, with surface activity starting.

WICHITA: White bass and hybrid striped bass are excellent on artificial lures, minnows or live shad and bobber north side and near dam.

BRAUNING: Striped bass are very good on liver and perch near Dead Tree Point, and down rigging spoons near the dam and jetty.

CATFISH



BRAUNING: Channel and blue catfish are excellent on shrimp, cheese bait, cut bait, and liver.

CALVERAS: Channel catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp, cheese bait, and shad.

COLORADO RIVER: (At Colorado Bend State Park) Catfish are excellent on trotlines baited with perch.

LIVINGSTON: Blue catfish are excellent on shad.

CRAPPIE



TAWAKONI: Crappie are good on minnows and jigs.

TOLEDO BEND: Crappie are good on minnows and chartreuse jigs.

WHITNEY: Crappie are good on minnows.

BREAM



HOUSTON COUNTY: Bream are good on live worms off piers.

SAM RAYBURN: Bream are good on nightcrawlers and crickets.

ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 74 degrees. Black bass are good on along brush lines on shad-colored spinnerbaits and crankbaits, dark jigs and watermelon pepper soft plastics in brush. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs.

AMISTAD: Water clear; 70 degrees. Black bass are good on Senkos, spinnerbaits, and topwaters. Striped bass are good on silver stripers. Catfish are good on cheese bait, liver, and shrimp in 15 - 30 feet.

ARROWHEAD: Water lightly stained; 67 degrees; 4.9' low. Crappie are good on minnows in shallows and jigs near state park, Henrietta Bridge and other riprap areas. Crappie are spawning. White bass to 17-inches are good on shad-imitation lures off deeper points and trolling. Catfish are good along upper west side on punchbait or juglines baited with cut shad or carp.

ATHENS: Water clear, 69-75 degrees; 0.38' high. Black bass are fair to good on at-L-Traps and Texas rigged 7" black/blue worms. Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers and cut shad.

BASTROP: Water stained. Crappie are good on minnows and chartreuse tube jigs. Channel and blue catfish are very good on live bait, frozen shrimp, and stinkbait.

BELTON: Water murky; 60 degrees; 0.48' high. Hybrid stripers are good on minnows. White bass are good on minnows at night. Channel and blue catfish are good on minnows at dusk.

BOB SANDLIN: Water clear; 70-75 degrees; 7.84' low. Black bass are good on shad-colored crankbaits, black/blue jigs and live bait. Crappie are good on jigging spoons in 20-24 feet.

BRIDGEPORT: Water off color; 69-74 degrees; 7.75' low. White bass are good on slabs. Channel catfish are good on nightcrawlers and cut bait.

BROWNWOOD: Water stained; 64 degrees; 2.08' low. White bass are good on L1 Fishies and live minnows. Channel catfish are good on frozen shrimp, stinkbait, and shad.

BUCHANAN: Water clear; 70 degrees; 17.26' low. Black bass are good on white spinnerbaits, Bleeding Shad 'Traps, and weightless wacky rigged green pumpkin Whacky Sticks along break lines of flats with flooded grass in creeks and pockets 5 - 15 feet. Channel catfish are good on live bait and cut bait.

BUCKLE: Water stained; 68 degrees; 1.15' low. Black bass are good on brown/orange jigs and Senkos. Crappie are fair on jigs and minnows in the creek channel bends. White bass are good on Humdingers.

CALVERAS: Water stained; 75 degrees. Blue catfish are good on cut bait and liver near 181 Cove and the railroad bridge.

CANYON LAKE: Water clear; 71 degrees; 1.35' high. Black bass are good on root beer/green flake Baby Brush Hogs along break lines with standing timber, feeder creeks, and deep flats in bays in 8 - 15 feet, and on topwaters and flukes in feeder creeks. Smallmouth bass are good on root beer curl tail grubs, 6in. smoked/lures on ball jigheads, and Bleeding Shad Tiny Traps along main lake points and ledges in 5 - 15 feet.

CDAR CREEK: Water lightly stained; 69-75 degrees; 0.1' high. White bass are good on slabs and minnows. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs.

CHOKO CANYON: Water stained; 69 degrees; 6.36' low. Channel catfish are fair to good on live bait. Blue and yellow catfish are good on cheese bait in 5 - 10 feet.

CONROE: Water stained; 0.07' high. Black bass are good on watermelon red and chartreuse Carolina rigged soft plastics, and on white/green Rat-L-Traps. Catfish are good on stinkbait, shrimp, and liver.

FALCON: Water stained; 76 degrees. Black bass are good on noisy topwaters. Channel and blue catfish are very good on cut bait and shrimp.

FAYETTE: Water clear; 75 degrees. Black bass are good on watermelon, plum, and smokin' shad colored Texas and Carolina rigged soft plastics, flukes, and wacky worms in 2 - 25 feet. Channel and blue catfish are good on shrimp and cut shad in 4 - 8 feet.

FORK: Water clear; 69-75 degrees; 1.09' low. Black bass are fair to good on Texas rigged creature baits, Senkos, Rat-L-Traps and shaly-head rigged finesse baits. There have been reports of fish on beds.

GIBBONS CREEK: Water stained. Black bass are good on watermelon red and plum soft plastics, and on white crankbaits. Crappie are good on minnows and green/white tube jigs. Catfish are good on stinkbait, nightcrawlers, and shrimp.

GRANBURY: Water stained; 0.48' low. Black bass are good on watermelon red and watermelon green soft plastics and spinnerbaits. Crappie are good on minnows. Catfish are good on stinkbait, nightcrawlers, and shrimp.

GRANGER: Water clear; 73 degrees; 0.29' high. Crappie are good on Bass Assassin jigs and minnows in 2 - 12 feet. Yellow catfish are very good on trotlines baited with live perch and goldfish.

GRAPEVINE: Water stained; 69-74 degrees; 1.47' high. Black bass are fair on crankbaits, red Rat-L-Traps and Texas rigged watermelon candy Zoom finesse worms. White bass are fair to good on slabs around humps and points.

GREENBELT: Water lightly stained; 65 degrees; 20' low. Black bass are good on firetrap crankbaits, white spinnerbaits and live bait. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. White bass are good on live bait and chrome crankbaits. Smallmouth bass are good on jerk baits and live bait. Walleye are good on crankbaits and live bait. Catfish are good on live bait.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water stained; 74 degrees; 0.76' high. Black bass to 8 pounds are good on black crawfish, watermelon red, and dark motor oil worms in the cove west of the marina in 4 - 10 feet. Crappie are good on live minnows off piers and over brush piles. Channel and blue catfish are good on cut shad.

HUBBARD CREEK: Water lightly stained; 66 degrees; 13.5' low. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. White bass and hybrid stripers are good on live

baits. Catfish are good on cut and live baits.

JOE POOL: Water fairly clear; 69-75 degrees; 0.23' high. Black bass are fair on Texas rigged pumpkinseed finesse worms, jigs and spinnerbaits.

LAKE O' THE PINES: Water stained; 69-75 degrees; 0.22' high. Black bass are fair on jigs, Texas rigged worms and jerkbaits. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs.

LAVON: Water stained; 70-75 degrees; 3.38' low. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair to good on cut bait and stinkbait.

LBJ: Water stained; 71 degrees; 0.53' low. Black bass to 8 pounds are good on watermelon red flukes, topwaters, and green pumpkin tubes along docks and break lines of flats with slumps or laydowns in 4 - 10 feet. Crappie are good on minnows and white jigs over brush piles in 8 - 12 feet. Channel catfish are good on live bait and dipbait. Yellow and blue catfish are good on trotlines.

LEWISVILLE: Water stained; 69-76 degrees; 0.11' low. Black bass are fair on black/blue jigs with a matching trailer, spinnerbaits and Carolina jigs. White bass are good on jigging spoons in 20-26 feet. Catfish are good on cut bait on main lake points and humps.

LIVINGSTON: Water murky; 66 degrees; 0.39' high. Black bass are good on crankbaits, spinnerbaits, and soft plastics. Striped bass are good on pet spoons, hellbenders, and slabs. White bass are good on pet spoons, slabs, and hellbenders. Crappie are good on minnows.

MACKENZIE: Water lightly stained; 62 degrees; 4.5' low. Black bass are good on white spinnerbaits and live bait. White bass and striped bass are good on live bait. Walleye are good on slabs tipped with minnows. Catfish are good on live bait.

NASWORTHY: Water lightly stained; 68 degrees. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass and striped bass are good on live baits and cut shad.

OH, WIE: Water lightly stained; 68 degrees; 1.9 25' low. Black bass are good on live baits, shad-colored spinnerbaits and crankbaits, and dark jigs along brush lines. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on jerkbaits and live baits. Channel catfish are good on live baits.

OAK CREEK: Water lightly stained; 65 degrees; 2.2' low. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on prepared baits.

PALO DURO: Water lightly stained; 56 degrees; 46.25' low. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. Channel catfish are good on live bait.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Water clear; 68 degrees; 2' low. Black bass are good near Rock Creek and back of Caddo Creek cove on spinnerbaits. White bass are fair near deeper points jigging with silver slabs and trolling with striped bass being caught.

PROCTOR: Water lightly stained; 64 degrees; 3.08' low. Striped bass are good on soft plastic worms on white jigheads. White bass are excellent on minnows and chartreuse soft plastics. Crappie are good on minnows and Texas avocado jigs. Channel and blue catfish are very good on shrimp and shad.

RAY HUBBARD: Water stained; 69-75 degrees; 0.37' low. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on slabs.

SAM RAYBURN: Water clear; 69-76 degrees; 5.22' low. Black bass are good on Carolina rigged Yum Dingers and Bomber crankbaits. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs over brush piles. Catfish are good on prepared baits.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: Water fairly clear; 69-75 degrees; 0.33' low. White bass are fair to good on white or chartreuse slabs. Catfish are fair to good on cut shad and nightcrawlers.

SAM RAYBURN: Water clear; 62 degrees; 0.36' low. Black bass are good on watermelon red Senkos, lizards, and Brush Hogs. White bass are good on spoons. Crappie are good on minnows and tube jigs over brush piles. Catfish are good on trotlines baited with nightcrawlers.

STILLHOUSE: Water fairly clear; 66 degrees; 0.34' high. White bass are good on minnows.

TAWAKONI: Water stained; 70-75 degrees; 6.41' low. White bass are fair to good on white or chartreuse slabs fished close to the bottom. Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers and cut shad.

TEXOMA: Water clear; 68-74 degrees; 1.14' high. Black bass are fair on red Rat-L-Traps, brown jigs and Texas rigged worms. Striped bass are on and off with the weather - both live and dead shad are producing (preferably live). Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers and cut shad.

TOLEDO BEND: Water stained; 65 degrees; 1.02' low. Black bass are good on chartreuse/blue and chartreuse/white soft plastics. Channel and blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with live bait, cut bait, and shrimp.

TRAVIS: Water clear; 70 degrees; 11.04' low. Black bass to 5 pounds are good on chrome topwaters, white flukes, and shad crankbaits in 5 - 18 feet.

WALTER E. LONG: Water clear; 68 degrees. Black bass are good on minnows and watermelon red soft plastics. Channel and blue catfish are good on shrimp.

WEATHERFORD: Water stained; 70-75 degrees; 3.92' low. Black bass are good on soft plastics and spinnerbaits around the marina docks and in the water inlet.

WHITE RIVER: Water lightly stained; 68 degrees; 24' low. Black bass are good on live baits, and black/blue soft plastics or jigs along buck brush, and shad-colored crankbaits along brush and timber. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. Channel catfish are good on cut baits and live baits.

WHITNEY: Water stained; 0.41' high. Striped bass are fair on minnows and stripers jigs. Catfish are good on shrimp and cheese bait.

WICHITA: Water clearing; 69 degrees, full at spillway. Channel catfish are good in shallows along north side on punchbait.

SALTWATER SCENE

NORTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good on the shorelines on Top Dogs, Corkies and Catch 2000s. Redfish are good in the marsh on topwaters and worms.

SOUTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good on the Reef on red shad and fire tiger Bass Assassins and Norton Sand Eels. Flounder are good on chartreuse and glow plastics on the Louisiana shoreline.

BOLIVAR: Trout are fair to good in Rollover Bay on live shrimp and glow/chartreuse Bass Assassins and Norton Sand Eels. Flounder are good on chartreuse and glow plastics on the Louisiana shoreline.

TRINITY BAY: Trout are fair to good while drifting the shell drops on glow and plum plastics. Redfish and Black drum are fair to good on cracked crabs at the Spillway.

EAST GALVESTON BAY: Sheepshead, black drum, trout and redfish are fair to good at the Bacifin HLP Spillway on live shrimp. Trout are fair to good at Todd's Dump on shrimp and plastics.

WEST GALVESTON BAY: Flounder and redfish are fair on the south shoreline on bright-colored jigs. Sheepshead, whiting and redfish are fair to good in the channels on red shad. Black drum are good at the jetty on crabs and mullet.

TEXAS CITY: Oversized black drum are fair to good off the dike on crab and dead shrimp. Sheepshead and whiting are fair to good on shrimp.

FREEPORT: Sheepshead, whiting and sand trout are fair at San Luis Pass. Black drum and redfish are fair at night on crabs and shrimp in the Pass.

EAST MATAGORDA: Trout are fair on the shorelines on red shad. Bass Assassins, Sand Eels, Corkies and topwaters.

MATAGORDA: Trout and redfish are fair on the south shoreline on live shrimp, Bass Assassins, Sand Eels and Trout Killers. Redfish are fair at the mouths of bayous on a falling tide on shrimp.

PORT O'CONNOR: Trout are fair to good on the south shoreline on chartreuse Corkies and glow plastics. Trout and redfish are fair to good in the back lakes on glow spoons and topwaters in the afternoon.

ROCKPORT: Redfish are good on cut-mullet on the Estes Flats. Trout are fair to good on the reefs in Mesquite Bay and Copano Bay on Corkies and Catch 2000s.

PORT ARANSAS: Trout and redfish are fair to good on the East Flats on live shrimp under a popping cork. Black drum are fair to good off the piers and on the beachfront on shrimp and sand crabs.

CORPUS CHRISTI: Speckled and sand trout are fair to good around the Oso Bridge on live shrimp.

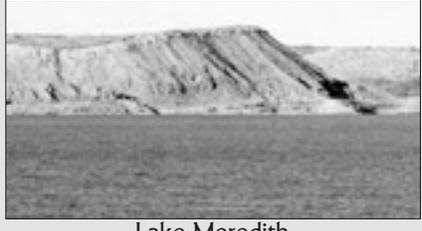
BAFFIN BAY: Trout are fair to good near the rocks of Kleberg Point on live shrimp under a popping cork and Corkies. Trout and redfish are fair along the King Ranch shoreline on live shrimp. Black drum are good on cut-bait and shrimp in the Land Cut.

PORT MANSFIELD: Trout are fair on live shrimp in the channel. Black drum and redfish are fair to good on cut-bait in the Intracoastal. Redfish are fair to good while drifting the Saucer on topwaters.

SOUTH PADRE: Trout are fair on live shrimp at Three Islands. Sand trout are good on dead shrimp in the Intracoastal. Redfish are fair to good on gold spoons and topwaters Cullen Bay.

PORT ISABEL: Trout are fair on live shrimp under a popping cork at the Gas-Well Flats. Redfish are fair to good on shrimp in the South Bay.

HOT SPOT



Lake Meredith

MEREDITH: Water lightly stained; 62 degrees; 30.65' low. Black bass are good on shad-colored crankbaits, black/blue jigs and live bait. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows. White bass are good on live bait and crankbaits. Smallmouth bass are good on crankbaits and live bait. Channel catfish are good on live bait.

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HEROES



CORY PETTIT of Dallas caught this bass fly-fishing at a farm pond in Fannin County.



AVERY KOMAREK harvested her first buck at Wildcat Mountain Resort in Robert Lee County while hunting with her dad, Dale. The buck weighed 161 pounds and scored 117 B/C gross.



GRACIE HIGGINS, 3, and her grandfather, **BUDDY LEWIS**, show a bass she caught. Her father, **WES**, was also on hand for the show.



GENE and **JOANN RUTLAND** caught these kingfish while trolling Rapala Magnum lures just off the South Padre Island jetties.



DEBORAH GUTIERREZ shows her first Russian Boar, shot at Heron Ranch in Ennis. She shot the 235-pound boar with a Winchester .30-06.



WILL HUTCHISON, 12, and the nice 9-point buck he harvested on his grandfather's ranch in Jim Hogg County in South Texas.

SHARE AN ADVENTURE: Want to share your great hunting or fishing photos with the *Lone Star Outdoor News* family? E-mail your photo, phone and caption information to editor@lonestaroutdoornews.com, or mail to: Heroes, Lone Star Outdoor News, 9304 Forest Lane, Suite 114 South, Dallas, TX, 75243.

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Potholes

Continued from Page 1

ities. "A great deal of my fishing takes place while wading or drifting potholes during late spring to early fall," Neu said. Lower coast locations like Port Mansfield boast never-ending flats of entwined grass and, of course, potholes.

Not only does the springtime abundance of bait establish the area as a buffet for predators, the filter power of thick grass keeps water clarity at its best. Often these areas resemble the Florida Keys.

Casey Hardin, a biologist studying salt grass on the lower coast, believes these bald spots are formed due to bottom sediments serving as substrates. "It may be a bottom composed of gravel or perhaps hard sand that does not allow for grass growth; however, it is no question potholes are excellent ambush points for speckled trout and redfish."

Neu said fishing is at its finest when small baitfish infiltrate bay systems. "Piggy perch and pinfish cruise in and out of the pockets and make it easy pickins."

For Neu, locations he begins to wade or drift include places where he can actually see the fish lying on the edge of the grass awaiting prey while motoring by. Setting up the initial location is simple when water clarity is excellent. "Slicks and flee-



POLING POTHOLES: Fly-fishers also take advantage of potholes while maneuvering through the flats.

ing baitfish are other signs to watch for."

Wading and drifting are both productive means to catching fish; choosing an approach boils down to personal preference.

"I prefer to wade when working potholes," Neu said. "I am able to deviate and thoroughly fish each patch of sand before moving to the next one." Neu prefers a wading approach to maintain the position on a group of feeding fish rather

than drifting through the pack.

Hardin has a helpful measure to ensure thoroughly wading potholes. "On the Upper Laguna, some very beautiful shorelines exist; however, potholes appear less often compared to the Lower Laguna," he said. "I have actually grown accustomed to marking potholes I plan to fish on my handheld GPS prior to wading a location to ensure I am precisely fishing each and not passing any up."

Drifting often creates challenges with the influences of wind, but on expansive flats flooded with potholes it may be the quickest way to catch fish as well as find out which potholes are producing more fish.

Options to wade and drift offer flexibility; the ability to use an array of lures provides an additional drop of confidence. "Depending on depth, redfish and trout love the appeal of topwaters,

soft plastics, and gold spoons," Neu said. "I stand by a red and white soft plastic when the weedless spoon fails to draw strikes." Light-weighted jigs and suspending baits also work well to restrain the grass that adores smothering the lure, Neu said.

Captain Mike McBride, another lower coast angler, replaces the grass raking trebles of topwater plugs with single hooks when grass thickens in the summer.

Blaze

Continued from Page 6

the biggest loss," Bonner said. "It's hard to replace a 100 year-old cottonwood, not just in terms of wildlife habitat, but in terms of beauty and aesthetics."

Ground-nesting birds like quail and lesser prairie chickens also took a hit.

"The sheer scale and size of the fire and having a hard time finding a place to build a nest afterward hurt lesser prairie chickens," Bonner said. "This wasn't a patchy fire that burned some places and skipped others—birds would have to fly miles outside the burn area to find anywhere to nest.

Follow that up with a drought, and you have little or no insects for them to eat."

Larger, more mobile animals like white-tailed deer and pronghorn antelope appeared to have fared better.

"We run a 15-mile Gray County spotlight route where we census deer every year, and the entire area had burned along that route," Bonner

said. "One year after the fire, we saw about the same number of deer.

"Pronghorn are real mobile, they have huge home ranges, and are notorious for moving where the groceries are. The best place to find green is in the burn area a year later. All you're seeing there is they moved where the food sources are."

A Texas Wildlife Department report.

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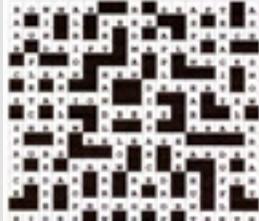
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 20



Ling

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stomach content data. Cobia travel alone or in small schools and are often found near some kind of structure, whether floating or in the water column. In the Gulf of Mexico, anglers target cobia around offshore oil and gas platforms, buoys, artificial reefs or floating debris, and use both lures and live bait to entice them to bite. They often exhibit unusually curious behavior and will readily approach a boat or diver. As spring approaches and water

temperatures rise, Texas fishermen anticipate the "run" of cobia moving northwest along the Gulf of Mexico. Cobia is considered an excellent sport fish that puts up a tenacious fight when hooked. The annual migration, which usually begins in April and hits its peak in May in the northern Gulf of Mexico, has received even more attention in recent years with sport fishing tournaments that target the migrating fish. The ling run has begun in some coastal areas. The charter boats Iced Down and High Bid out of Deep Sea Headquarters in Port Aransas reported catching limits. "We've caught them twice in big schools," Capt.

Aaron Chambers of High Bid said. "And we found some more in shallow. "There were several schools. We saw one school that had probably 30 fish in it, another school had 20 or 30." Patrick Lemire's Saltwater Adventures of Galveston reported ling catches up to 45 pounds. The party boat Osprey out of South Padre also reported ling coming in to view. First-time offshore angler Francisca Santillan of Flour Bluff caught a 34-pound cobia on her first trip aboard the 65-foot Viking Outlaw out of Rockport. "It was exciting, it was really fun, I really liked it, but it wore me out," she said.

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OUTFITTERS

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'We're going full-blast offshore fishing'

Looking for an offshore trophy that will often crop up as the center of conversation? Capt. Scott Hickman of Circle H Outfitters and Charters can help you make it happen. "People like to feel that big fish tugging on the line," Hickman said. And at Circle H Outfitters "that's what we do. Whatever they are looking for, we can fulfill their dreams." Running out of the Galveston Yacht Basin, the action is heating up and it's a great time to jump on board. "We're going full-blast offshore fishing for the next three or four months," said Hickman, who has been at it for 17 years. "I started working on boats in high school as a deck hand. I like being on the water. You can't get enough of it."

What excites the 17-year veteran about this season is the fishing is looking better than he has seen in the past. "Snapper fishing has been great for this early in the season," he said. "We're getting 8- to 15-pound fish within the 20- to 25-mile range. There's more fish in close and they're bigger."

And big they are. "Ling are starting to show up," he said, adding that a recent trip returned with ling up to 60 pounds. "The next six to eight weeks, May and early June, is the best time to catch ling. We average 25 to 40 pounds with a 68-pounder the biggest last year put on a

boat." Aside from snapper and ling, the outfitter specializes in trophy-size kingfish, amberjack and dorado. "We also offer shark and tarpon trips and bay trips for trout and redfish." The trips include everything except for food and drinks. "And we bag and fillet the fish," Hickman said. The outfitter also stays busy entertaining corporate employees. "We often have mini-tournaments, two-boat tournaments," Hickman said of the corporate business scene. Hickman has three boats operating — a 31-foot Stamas Tarpon, a 36-foot Contender and a 34-foot Pursuit — all equipped with private heads, freshwater showers and lots of shade. The trips include: Offshore — Up to 75 miles out. 10 hours. Kingfish, ling, snapper dorado, amberjack, tuna and wahoo (1 to 6 anglers); Shark and tarpon — Fishing along the coast 20 miles from Galveston. 8-10 hours. (1-6 anglers); Bay trips — Fishing the Galveston Bay complex for trout, redfish and flounder. (1-4 anglers) Bluewater trips — 100 miles offshore 24 hours. Nightfish for tuna, amberjack, grouper, snapper and troll for wahoo, dolphin and blue marlin. For information, call (281) 535-1930.



WAHOO WHAMMY: Capt. Scott Hickman, left, and Mike Ross with a wahoo double-header. There's plenty of offshore fishing at Circle H Outfitters and Charters.

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