

# LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

November 13, 2009

Texas' Premier Outdoor Newspaper

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**Warden's big buck**  
A North Texas game warden has a story to tell about his latest buck. **Page 6**

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Congratulations to William H. Laub of Houston. Laub won the *Lone Star Outdoor News* reader survey drawing and will receive a \$100 gift card to Academy.  


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## High duck numbers reported

Hunters reach limits on variety of birds on opener

By Thomas Phillips  
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Stan Fogg of Amarillo and two friends all shot limits of ducks near Childress the opening morning of waterfowl season. They took an unconventional bag, however, Fogg said.

In the mix were redhead, several gadwall and wigeon and a couple of green-winged teal.

"What was strange was there wasn't any (other) divers on the lake," Fogg said. "Generally at that time we've got some scaup and bufflehead and hooded mergansers and that type."

The next day a few more hunters joined their party. Although they did not shoot limits, they had a successful hunt.

"I think we ended up with 14 birds, and it was a totally different mix on that," Fogg said: two gadwall, two wigeon, five or six bufflehead, a scaup and "some smiling mallards."

"All in all, I was pretty pleased with it," Fogg said.

The Panhandle hunters saw a few snow geese up

### INSIDE

■ **Duck dining:**  
Waterfowl eat a mixed bag of aquatic plants.  
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**BUSY GIRL:** Waterfowl season started with reports of good hunts around Texas, making busy days for duck dogs like Copano, shown here with a drake redhead near Rockport.  
Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.



## Lead weight in bass points to cheating

Garland angler may face charges

By Bill Miller  
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Beneath the surface of Lake Ray Hubbard swims a 9 1/2-pound bass that was returned to the water recently after a 16-ounce lead weight was squeezed from its belly out its mouth.

But game wardens don't believe the bass swallowed the sinker by accident.

The lead chunk was removed Oct. 24 during a weigh-in at the Bud Light Trail's First Annual Big Bass Tournament at Lake Ray Hubbard.

Wardens believe contestant Robby Rose of Garland stuffed the fish with lead to improve his chances to win the \$55,000 prize. They have since been consulting

with prosecutors in Rockwall County to determine which charges to bring against Rose.

The veteran professional angler, contacted by phone, politely declined to be interviewed for this story.



Rose

"Believe me, I'd like to," Rose said, adding that he was counseled not to discuss the investigation.

He noted, however, that he was voluntarily cooperating with investigators.

Rose, in recent years, won hundreds of thousands of dollars at bass tournaments throughout Texas.

He had not been arrested or charged by Nov. 10, although thousands of comments

See **WEIGHT**, Page 20

## Angler catches 11-pound mystery fish at Lewisville barge

Man, witness say it attacked his finger

By Mark England  
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Piranha or pacu? That's the question being asked around the Lewisville Fishing Barge at Lewisville Lake.

A state biologist who saw a photograph of the 11 1/2-pound fish caught by Joe Barnes, a barge employee, believes it was a pacu.

Barnes and the middle finger on his

right hand beg to differ.

"I put my hand in his mouth to hold him up like you usually do, and he almost took the tip of my finger off," Barnes said. "This sucker had two rows of teeth."

"He ain't no pacu. He's a piranha."

Or was.

Barnes gave the fish to a friend who

See **MYSTERY**, Page 15

## Corn poisoned in Eastland County

Hunters warned about eating deer

By Bill Miller  
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Deer hunters are being warned to avoid a state-ordered "hot zone" in southwestern Eastland County where corn seed was recently tainted with a powerfully toxic pesticide.

State agriculture and wildlife officials were scrambling in the days leading to the Nov. 7 general season opener to warn hunters of the poisonous situation involving the chemical, Temik, around some peanut fields south of Cisco.

See **POISON**, Page 24



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# Fort Hood still open for hunting after shooting

## No changes made to regulations, access for permit holders

By Thomas Phillips  
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Hunting season at Fort Hood is still under way after 13 people died in a mass shooting there earlier this month, a spokeswoman in the Army base's public affairs office said.

"Nothing's changed," said the spokeswoman, who declined to give her full name.

A gunman fatally shot 13 people and wounded dozens more Thursday at the Central Texas post. Investigators said Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan walked into a building on base where soldiers are processed before deploying and opened fire.

Hasan, a military psychiatrist, had not been charged as of Tuesday. He was shot four times during the attack by a police officer who responded to the scene.

Hunting at the Central Texas base is open to military personnel and civilians. Hunters are required to hold a permit, which is issued at the base's Sportsman's Center.

Tight restrictions govern hunter access to the base, which is controlled by an additional permit.

The base was locked down for several hours after the shooting, and it was at a heightened level of security in the days afterward, the spokeswoman said. As of Nov. 9, no hunting regulations had been changed, and no changes were planned, the spokeswoman said.

"Nobody has mentioned anything," she said.

Access restrictions have remained the same because of where the shooting originated, the spokeswoman said.

"The outside didn't come in and shoot," she said. "The inside shot."



**STILL HUNTING:** Permit holders may continue to access Fort Hood to scout for scrapes and hunting spots after a shooting rampage there left 13 people dead Nov. 5. Photo by Thomas Phillips, LSON.

She added that the public was welcome to attend the memorial service Nov. 10, at which President Barack Obama spoke.

At the Sportsman's Center, manager Judy Johnson declined to comment on the record, saying she was not authorized to. She said she would answer questions for hunting permit holders.

Fort Hood covers 340 square miles in Bell and Coryell counties. Permit-holding hunters may pursue all legal game, and fishing is available.

Guided and unguided hunts are available, though only guided hunters may shoot rifles.

Hunters do not need to register their firearms with the base unless staying overnight, the public affairs spokeswoman said.

The Killeen police officer hailed as a hero for ending the attack, Sgt. Kimberly Munley, shot Hasan four times. Hasan survived and was recovering in a military hospital in San Antonio.

Munley, who was also shot in the attack, was described by *The New York Times* as having "a fierce love of hunting," though it was unknown whether she participated in hunting at Fort Hood.

# Quail Unlimited in financial straits

By Thomas Phillips  
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Quail Unlimited is experiencing "major financial challenges" and recently furloughed employees and put its 88-acre South Carolina headquarters up for sale, a board member from Texas said.

"It's got some major financial challenges, and I wouldn't attribute all the challenges to the economy," said the board member, Tim Connolly of Wichita Falls. "I think it's not symptomatic of what we see in the economy (as much) as a series of bad decisions has led to the situation they're in today."

Revenue from advertising sales and banquet auctions was down this year, Connolly said, and several debts weighed on the nonprofit. Financial burdens weighing on QU include commitments to employee retirement plans, loans for holding national events over the last four or five years and the mortgage on the headquarters, in addition to paying the staff of 24 employees, Connolly said.

"Dealing with those is difficult in any business but even more difficult in a 501(c)3," he said.

The staff was relieved of duty for two weeks "in an attempt to bridge or hold expenses until (the board) can determine what direction the organization will take," Connolly said. A board meeting was scheduled for Nov. 13.

The organization is also without leadership on its staff. President Rocky Evans resigned in March, and the interim president, Craig Alderman, was asked to step down in mid-September. Another QU staffer, Donnie Buckland, was offered the president position, but Buckland left to take a job with the National Wild Turkey Federation, which is also based in Edgefield, S.C.

"At this time, the chairman of the board and the board treasurer have been providing leadership on a day-to-day basis," Connolly said.

A split last summer between QU and its Dallas-based Park Cities chapter had no impact on the national organization's bottom line, Connolly said. The chapter was noted for its high fundraising, but most of that money stayed in Texas, he said. The chapter was dissolved, but members formed a new nonprofit, Park Cities Quail, in its place in July.

As for QU's future, Connolly said, the organization might also be dissolved but the work of quail conservation would continue.

"It may just not happen under a Quail Unlimited banner," he said.



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## HUNTING

# A warden and a hunter, too

## Kaufman County game cop bags big deer with bow

By Kyle Carter

FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Eric Minter's hand was shaking as he tried to fill out his game tag, and he wasn't 100 percent sure why.

All he knew was an hour earlier he had killed a buck that, without seeing the full picture, he'd already described as "really big" and "huge"

to his friend and Kaufman County lease partner, Chris Calvin.

Minter waited in his stand an hour after dropping the buck with his bow. Then, he climbed down and slipped out the backside of the woods so he would not disturb the rest of the deer for the other guys hunting the same lease on the morning of Oct. 19.

Minter, 44, had been texting and whispering on his cell phone to Calvin and Calvin's stepson, Chase Harper, since the kill, and they were waiting for him at his truck. They wanted to know more, but all Minter could tell them was

he caught a glimpse of the rack and heard a grunt that shook Mother Nature.

"I have never heard a deer grunt that loud," he said. "It was almost like a kid blowing a grunt call. It was just that loud. All the birds and the squirrels got nervous, and the deer under my stand all kind of scattered."

"I saw it was a big-bodied deer, and I could tell he had a big rack, but I couldn't tell just how big he was."

Harper ran ahead of the group,

See **WARDEN**, Page 15



### BADGE AND BOW:

Eric Minter did not know how big his buck was until an hour after he shot it. He could not clearly see its antlers when he drew on it.

# Full moon, full bellies for deer



**FULL FALL:** Hunters of white-tailed deer reported seeing less movement during opening weekend, with many attributing the lower turnout to high food availability, high temperatures and a full moon. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

## Deer lay low for opening weekend, hunters say

By Thomas Phillips

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Acorns and astronomy were not working in hunters' favor the opening weekend of white-tailed deer season earlier this month.

Hunters around the state reported a slow start and laid blame on the full moon and an abundant crop of acorns. Warm weather also meant less movement by many of Texas' deer.

"There was just no activity in the morning or evening," said Todd Graham, who hunted near New Boston, in northeastern Texas.

The temperature hit 79 degrees for Graham and three other hunters at the low-fenced property.

"We probably had about 28 hours of hunting time between the four of us, and no deer were seen," he said.

The balky start might typify the conditions many hunters saw around the state. But their outlook is unfazed.

Some saw no deer, but others passed on smaller bucks in hopes of taking bigger ones later in the season.

Jack Green had a favorable report from Madisonville.

"Everybody saw deer," said Green, of Rockwall. "I think it was one of the better opening weekends that I've seen in the last five years."

See **DEER**, Page 26

# Croton, other weeds step up with help from rain

## Precipitation falls in time for plants to drop seeds, providing food

By Thomas Phillips

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Southern Texas had its share of drought troubles during the two years before dove season began this year. The landscape was burned to a crisp, dry, dusty and lacking much green vegetation.

By mid-September, however, rain started falling, and plants perked up. Croton, also known as dove weed, and native sunflowers were among the plants boosted.

In turn, dove season was not the bust some saw coming. The croton and sunflowers dropped seeds in time to feed the birds.

"Some of the fields, it just looked like you planted dove weed," said Dennis Hale, the Texas AgriLife Extension agent for Wilson County.

The rain that fell in August and September helped the plants that were already grow-



**GREEN ACRES:** Dove fly over a field covered in croton, or dove weed, a staple in the birds' diet. Late-season hunting was hot over many fields of the plant. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.

ing. It prompted them to finish maturing and drop their seeds, Hale said. The surviving older plants that made it through kicked out a bumper crop of seeds, leading to the boom

and feeding the birds at the same time.

"When we got the rain, they went ahead and set seeds," he said.

The croton — and other weeds — that

came up during dove season did not go to seed, Hale said. The maturation process for sunflowers takes 110 days, and for croton it is 140 days, said Jim Cathey, a researcher with Texas A&M University and Texas AgriLife Extension.

With South Texas so dry for so long, the plants that had survived were stressed. Because of the stress, they put out a bumper crop of seeds, Hale said.

"I think that's just a lot of nature's way of ensuring the survival," Hale said.

The plants do not require much rain, Cathey said, and they are programmed to go without. When they receive the needed precipitation, "they bust out of the ground," he said.

"It's rare when you do get the rainfall," Cathey said. "But there's always going to be some that make it through."

What will further ensure survival is for the wet trend of this fall to continue through winter, as predicted, Hale said.

"That's going to allow all of the species, that would be livestock and wildlife, to benefit," he said.

See **DOVE WEED**, Page 14

# Waterfowl season dates

## Ducks

### High Plains Mallard Management Unit

- Oct. 24-25; Oct. 30-Jan. 24
- Youth-only season Oct. 17-18

### North and South Zones

- Oct. 31-Nov. 29
- Dec. 12-Jan. 24
- Youth-only season Oct. 24-25

Hunters will have a six-duck limit per day in the aggregate, with the following species and sex restrictions: five mallards (of which only two may be hens), three wood ducks, two scaup, two redheads, one pintail, one canvas-back, and one "dusky duck" (mottled duck, Mexican-like duck, black duck and their hybrids).

Mottled ducks could not be harvested before Nov. 5 in the North and South Zones and Nov. 2 in the High Plains Mallard Management Unit.

The bag limit on mergansers is five daily, of which only two may be hooded mergansers, and the daily bag on coots is 15.

## Geese

### Western Goose Zone

- Nov. 7-Feb. 7
- The daily bag limit is 20 light geese in the aggregate and four Canada geese and one white-fronted goose. Possession limit is twice the daily bag for dark geese and none on light geese.

### Eastern Goose Zone

- Oct. 31-Jan. 24 for light and Canada geese.
  - Oct. 31-Jan. 10 for white-fronted geese.
- The daily bag limit is 20 light geese in the aggregate and three Canada geese and two white-fronted geese.

### Light Goose Conservation Order

- Feb. 8-March 28 in the Western Goose Zone.
  - Jan. 25-March 28 in the Eastern Goose Zone.
- No bag or possession limits.

### Sandhill Crane

- Zone A: Nov. 7-Feb. 7. Daily bag limit: three.
  - Zone B: Nov. 27-Feb. 7. Daily bag: three.
  - Zone C: Dec. 19-Jan. 24. Daily bag: two.
- Possession limit is twice the daily bag limit.

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## FISHING



# When the bloom bites

Fish not the only organism affected by algae's toxin

By Thomas Phillips  
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Flu-like symptoms are all the rage on cable news these days. The so-called swine flu pandemic is sweeping the world.

But down in South Texas, something else is causing the coughing, sneezing, wheezing, runny nose and watery eyes: red tide.

The unpredictable, though not uncommon, bloom of algae releases a toxin that causes respiratory distress in humans and kills fish by the thousands. The algae is suspended in the water.

Humans contract the toxin while swimming and while breathing air near the water. The toxin becomes airborne from crashing waves or other disturbances.

Robert Holmes wore a cloth mask over his mouth and nose while fishing the north jetty at South Padre Island.

"Some people are more sensitive," Holmes said.



**RED DEATH:** Dead fish litter the Boca Chica Beach near Brownsville. All fish are affected by the toxin released by the algae that causes red tide, though some are more susceptible than others. Photos by Thomas Phillips, Lone Star Outdoor News.

Holmes, a North Texas resident who was visiting the coast, purchased the mask at a drug store and wore it while catching mangrove snapper on the beach side of the jetty.

John Martinez was susceptible to the tide too, though he wore no mask at the jetty.

"It could be worse," Martinez said. "We could be at work."

It was worse for some: the fish. Of the thousands of fish washed up

on the beaches, most are mullet and hardhead catfish, said Alex Nuñez, a member of Texas Parks and Wildlife's Kills and Spills Team.

The fish are filter feeders and have modified gill rakers that take in more of the red tide toxin.

"I seems like the need to feed is greater than common sense," Nuñez said.

See **RED TIDE**, Page 18

# Schmidt headed back to Classic

Olney angler wins Federation Nation spot

By Kyle Carter  
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

A year ago, Bryan Schmidt of Olney was just one of thousands of BASS Federation Nation anglers plugging away at local-level tournaments.

In February, he'll fish his sec-

ond consecutive Bassmaster Classic, which is guaranteed to win him \$10,000 and put him over \$100,000 in winnings for the previous calendar year.

"This year has been something you dream about but that you know will never happen," Schmidt said.

He started his hot streak in 2008 by qualifying for the Federation Nation Championship through one of the toughest of its six divisions — Central

See **SCHMIDT**, Page 14



**BIG WINNER:** Bryan Schmidt of Olney will appear in his second Bassmaster Classic next year. Photo by ESPN Outdoors.

# Strike King's new lures are all the Rage

More baits join Rage Tail soft plastics

By Alan Clemons  
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Strike King's newest baits have finally arrived after the fanfare showered on them at the annual summer ICAST tackle trade show, and additions to an already strong lineup should easily find a space or two in anglers' tackle boxes.

New baits this year include several in the Rage Tail series of soft plastics, which have a lipped tail or appendages that aid in a unique swimming action during the fall or retrieve.

Among them is the Smokin' Rooster, a creature bait with a flat body, two short arms and a long, curled tail. It can be rigged as a pitch bait for fishing around wood or grass, but it may find a place as a hybrid swimbait because of its weedless characteristics.

"I think it will be better for swimming," said Mark Menendez of Kentucky, who caught several bass with the Rooster during a recent trip to Blue Bank Resort on Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee. "With a weightless setup, the way



**BASS RIGS:** Innovations from Strike King will make the company's lures more attractive to fish, professional anglers said. Photo by Alan Clemons, for Lone Star Outdoor News.

it comes over grass and through sparse grass is pretty hot."

Another hot swimbait will be the 10-inch Thumper worm, which has a short, curled tail with the Rage lip. Unlike thin-tailed worms used for swimming through sparse vegetation, the Thumper's short tail moves a lot of water. The addition of a slight score allows anglers to clip the tail to create a "cut-tail" version

See **NEW LURES**, Page 21



# Off-season time for inspections

Several items can wear out during a summer on the water

By Dan Armitage  
FOR LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Whether you are a four-season boater or your rig is in storage for the winter, this is a great time of the year to give your boat, motor and trailer a close inspection. The boat is probably seeing less use than at other times of the year, and anglers are more likely to take the time to give it a good going-over and make the time to fix what needs fixing.

For example, perhaps a boat's prop briefly touched bottom shortly after launching at an unfamiliar ramp last summer. The quick contact probably registered as a harmless "tick."

The episode was forgotten until the end of the season when the minor bump manifested itself in a bent blade tip that had probably robbed the boat of performance for the balance of the season.

The prop should also be inspected for snagged fishing line. A tight noose of line wound around the shaft could cut into the seal and compromise the lower unit.

The integrity of trailer tires is easy to take for granted, but they can deteriorate over time from the UV rays of the sun and the ozone in the air. In addition to checking air pressure and tread, sidewalls should be examined for cracking, bulges, leaked grease and other obvious signs of wear or damage.

Wheels and hubs could have loose or missing lug nuts or excessive rust.

Dock and anchor lines and the winch cable or strap can also wear out in sunlight. Polypropylene is popular as rope material aboard boats, but it degrades quickly from the sun's damaging UV rays. Splinters, or fraying, can form on poly rope.

Boat batteries can also be checked for charge. Whether stored onboard or off the boat, the batteries should be charged



**BOAT CHECK:** The off-season is a good time to give your fishing rig a visual inspection, when you have time to make the repairs needed to get things shipshape in time for the boating season. Photo by Dan Armitage, for Lone Star Outdoor News.

## Swab the decks, mate

The end of the season is a good time to give a boat a thorough cleaning. Below are a few tips for putting a shine onboard.

- **Carpet:** A power washer might be the best way to pull dirt from carpet. Wet-dry vacuums can do the trick too.
- **Livewells:** Harsh chemicals should not be used when cleaning livewells. After all, the livewell is where fish live, albeit temporarily, but nothing should leach into the water that can harm them. Bass Pro Shops recom-

mends baking soda and hot water. A scouring pad can help scrape away buildup.

■ **Bilges:** Products specifically formulated for cleaning greasy, grimy bilge pumps are available.

■ **Consoles:** Much like a car's dashboard, a boat's console can have nooks and crannies that fill with dust and water deposits. Window cleaner and a soft towel can clean most of it. A cotton swab will take care of the rest. A mild solution of vinegar and water might be better for sensitive electronics.

at regular intervals or attached to an automatic trickle charger to maintain power during the off-season, and to keep them in peak condition and ready for action in the spring.

Navigation lights and trailer lights might have burned a bulb during a summer of fishing. Replace burnt-out bulbs or fuses

and schedule time to fix the wiring if needed. Aboard the boat, give the bilge pump a test too; that's one item that must work when called upon, and you can't always determine its condition by looking at it. It doesn't take long for a bilge pump to look like a mess, but good ones will serve reliably for years despite their worn appearance.

## Fishing News in Brief

### Amberjack season closed

The National Marine Fisheries Service closed recreational amberjack fishing Oct. 24 after announcing the recreational quota of 1.368 million pounds had been reached. The closure will remain in effect through the end of the year.

Although amberjack fishing remains open in state waters, anglers holding federal permits for amberjack are required to adhere to the federal closure, according to Texas officials.

— Texas Parks and Wildlife report

### Redfish Cup canceled for '10

The Redfish Cup saltwater fishing tournament circuit has been closed, citing economic woes, according to The Fishing Wire.

"You've heard correctly — the Redfish Cup will not be moving forward with a 2010 season," said Cama Poffenberger, spokesperson for Career Sports and Entertainment, which operated the Redfish Cup circuit.

The Redfish Cup is the latest major tournament trail to be shuttered in the last two years. FLW Outdoors ended its saltwater tournaments after last season, and the In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Trail was closed in 2008 also.

— Staff report

### Field set for 2010 Classic

The field of 51 anglers has been set for the 2010 Bassmaster Classic, with James Niggemeyer of Van the last Texan to make the cut.

Niggemeyer double-qualified for the Classic — first through the Bassmaster Elite Series — and his Classic qualification will come from the Opens, opening the way for Mark Tucker of St. Louis, Mo., to move into the championship based on his position in the 2009 Toyota Tundra Bassmaster Angler of the Year standings.

The remaining Texas anglers headed to the Classic are Todd Faircloth of Jasper, Alton Jones of Waco, Kelly Jordon of Mineola, Gary Klein of Weatherford, Takahiro Omori of Emory, Bryan Schmidt of Olney and Byron Velvick of Del Rio.

The 40th edition of the Classic will be held Feb. 19-21 on Lay Lake out of Birmingham, Ala.

Other big names in the field are Kevin VanDam and Pam Martin-Wells, who scored the second berth ever for a female angler.

— ESPN Outdoors report

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## GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

### CAN'T SLEEP, CAN'T HIDE EVIDENCE

A man was seen skinning a white-tailed deer behind his residence. Upon Hardin County Game Warden Mike Boone's arrival, he saw the man running under a vapor light in the direction of the residence. Moments later, the man appeared from behind his house sweating from head to toe. He told Boone that he had been in bed trying to get some sleep and denied he had been hunting. After receiving consent to search, Boone noticed fresh drag marks into the woods. Boone recovered a freshly killed deer that the man had tried to conceal after hearing the sound of a vehicle entering the neighborhood. Cases pending.

### KISS AND TELL FOR THIS STINKER

A man called to report that a woman had been bitten on the nose by his pet skunk. Upon arrival, the man told Grayson County Game Warden Dale Moses and a Grayson County animal control officer that the woman was bitten by his pet skunk while trying to kiss it. Moses cited the man for possession of a live fur-bearing animal. The skunk was seized by the animal control officer and was to be sent off for rabies testing. Case pending.

### PULLED OVER WITH EVIDENCE INSIDE

Hillsboro Police Officer Justin Girsch made a traffic stop and observed fresh antlers in the vehicle. Girsch called Hill County Game Warden Mark Hammonds, who interviewed the driver and inventoried several pieces of evidence, including a spotlight, a flashlight with blood splatter, a .243-caliber rifle and a camera. The camera revealed several photos of the driver and other out-of-state residents who took part in poaching activities at night. Ham-

### Minors fall for deer decoy

Red River County Game Wardens Daniel Roraback and Benny Richards teamed up with Bowie County Game Warden Shawn Hervey to work the decoy deer Sure-fire. About 12:30 a.m., a pickup drove past the decoy, slammed

on the brakes and reversed back toward the deer.

The passenger aimed a rifle out the window and fired at the decoy. The truck tried to run but was soon caught by the wardens. The rifle was thrown in the ditch

along with several beer bottles while fleeing the scene.

The truck was occupied by five minors. Two were arrested, and the others were released but cited for possessing alcohol. Cases pending.

monds called other game wardens who had recently come across deer with the heads and backstraps missing. All three officers will be following up on more leads as a result of this stop; cases pending.

### FINE EXCEEDS \$7,000 IN DOUBLE-DIPPING CASE

Atascosa County Game Warden Derek Iden recently checked up on several cases that he and Game Warden Michael McCall filed on eight poachers for double-dipping on dove. All pleaded guilty or no contest, and the total fines and court costs amounted to \$7,050. Civil restitution is also pending on all seized dove.

### TRACTORS CAN'T PULL THEM OUT OF THIS SITUATION

Opening day of antelope season found Hudspeth County Game Wardens Ricky May and Chad West starting their day when they heard a radio call for a deputy to respond to a ranch close to their location. They also responded and found that two men had slid off a road into an irrigated field and become stuck. They "borrowed" and stuck two large tractors before being discovered. They also had 45 dove in their possession. Cases pending.

### BRAGGART IS THE SOURCE OF HIS OWN INFORMATION LEAK

An anonymous caller reported that a Cass County man said he would start the gun deer season early. Game

Warden Dan Hill went to a property that was owned by the man's uncle. About 10 p.m., Hill noticed lights coming from the backside of the property toward the gate. As the suspect came through the gate, Hill pulled up in front of him. The suspect had a spike deer in his vehicle that he had shot earlier in the day.

### BULLET THROUGH LEG BECOMES JEWELRY

A 22-year-old man was hunting hogs with an SKS and a .45-caliber pistol in his pant pocket. While reaching into his pocket for the pistol, it discharged, entering his upper thigh and lodging near his knee. The hunter was taken to a hospital, where medical personnel removed the bullet. Smith County Game Warden Chris Green cited the man for not having a hunting license or hunter education. The injured hunter said he was going to drill a hole in the bullet and wear it around his neck.

### FISH OVERBOARD — ARE THEY FLOUNDER?

When contacted by game wardens, a commercial flounder fisherman began throwing numerous flounder back into West Matagorda Bay. The person later told Matagorda County Game Warden Aaron Koenig and Wharton County Game Warden Chris Bird he was throwing out barracuda that he had giggered. The person was also in possession of seven undersized flounder and was operating a vessel with

improper navigational lights. Cases pending.

### THEY MIGHT KEEP FLYING, BUT SHOOTING MUST STOP

Frio County Game Warden Mike Morse checked a group of dove hunters who were having a very successful hunt one morning. Later that day, Morse located the same group of hunters hunting at a different location. After being investigated, eight hunters were found to be over the limit. Citations were issued and 33 birds seized.

### VIDEO SHOWS WAYWARD HELICOPTER HOG HUNTER

An e-mail containing a link to a YouTube video arrived in Game Warden Ryan Peacock's inbox. The video showed a helicopter company taking pigs from the air. Upon further investigation, it was clear that in one of the scenes a pig was being shot at as it ran down a county road. After the exact location of the county road was found, the pilot was interviewed and revealed the identity of the gunner. The gunner was interviewed and received a citation for shooting across a public road. Case pending.

### MARINA DRIVE-OFF WAS FIRST MISTAKE

Grayson County Game Warden Jim Ballard spent several days investigating what began as a simple case of someone leaving a local marina without paying. It then turned into an

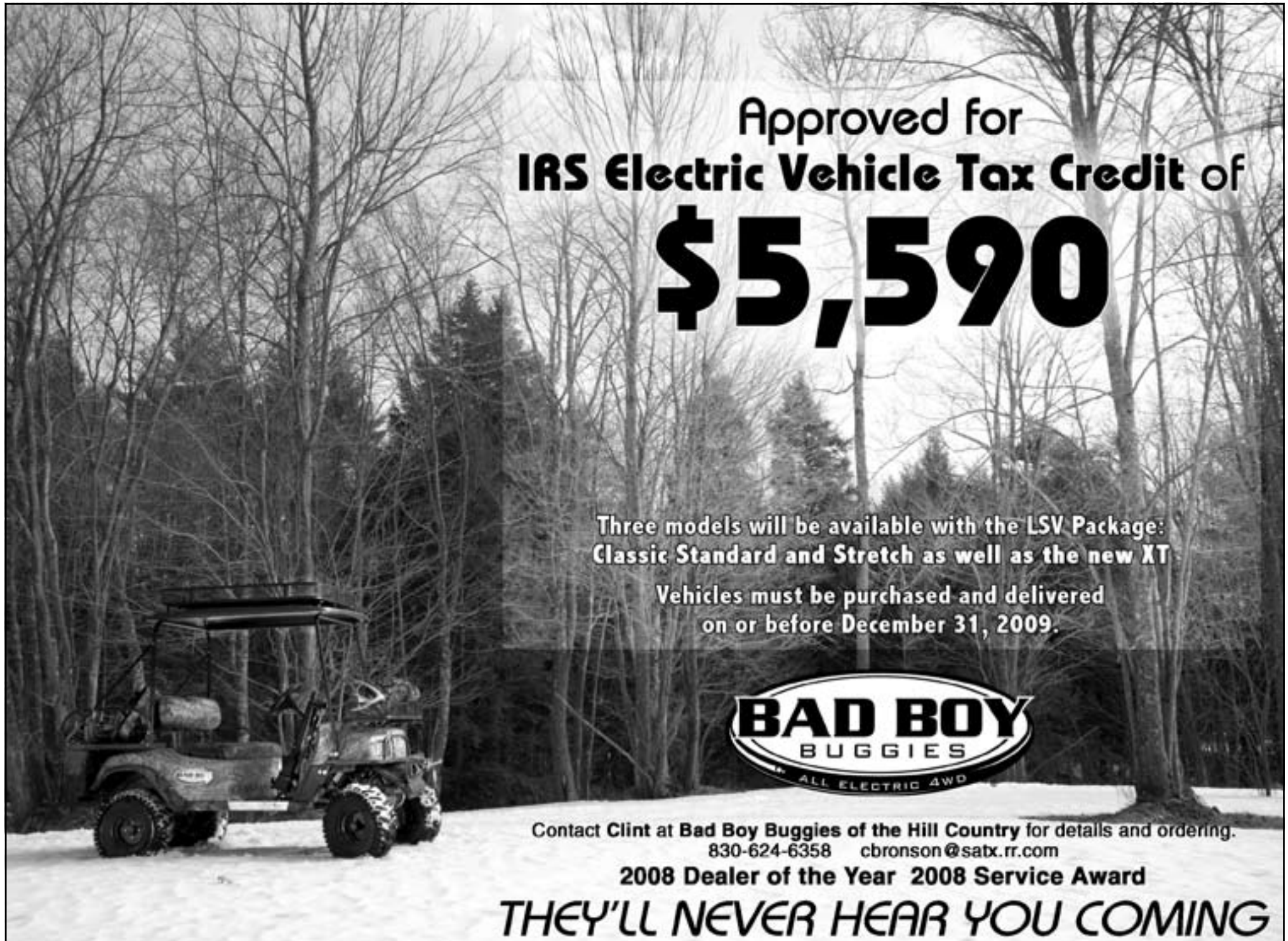
in-depth investigation with Rockwall County Sheriff's Office, Game Warden Investigator Ned Nichols, Texas Parks and Wildlife dispatcher Irma Sanchez and the Grayson County Sheriff's Office. The person is accused of stealing a \$200,000 36-foot Carver boat. Charges pending for theft over \$100,000, unauthorized use of a motor boat and theft of services.

### DEER TOO SMALL, UNTAGGED, NO HUNTER SAFETY ...

Poachers were reported for shooting deer in the Cypress Lakes Resort near the Trinity River in Liberty County. Game Wardens Gary Cain and Daniel Diaz contacted the poachers at Cross Bayou Camp in Cypress Lakes and found blood and fresh deer horns in a truck bed and more blood in their boat, but no deer. The people said they did not kill the deer in the resort but on the nearby Page tract of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Trinity River Refuge and then transported it by boat to Cypress Lake where they were camping. The USFWS agent was called, and citations were issued for illegal entry into the refuge. Their hunting permits for the refuge were confiscated. Citations for state charges of untagged deer and not having hunter safety were issued, and a warning was issued for taking a buck deer under 13 inches.

### GAME CAMERA CATCHES BAD BROTHERS

A landowner contacted Jasper County Game Warden Justin Eddins and turned over a picture from his game camera. The photo showed two men carrying a shotgun and rifle during the archery-only deer season. Eddins recognized both of the men as brothers and soon obtained two confessions that the brothers had shot a deer on the landowner's property. They were blood trailing the deer when the photo was taken. Cases pending.



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# HEROES



**COLE STENHOLM**, 14, of Fort Worth, right, holds a striped bass caught on Lake Texoma while fishing with his uncle, **Cal Hamilton** of San Antonio.



**BOB BARNETTE** recently harvested this elk using a bow.



**ETHAN HANSFORD**, 3, right, and his grandfather, **STEVEN BRATCHER**, hold a 10-pound largemouth bass they caught in a tank in Smithville.



**CRAIG SMITH** of Argyle poses with the 48-inch moose he recently harvested near Quesnel, British Columbia.



**CARSON HORAK**, 10, of Wylie poses with his first dove. Horak shot the bird on his first dove hunt, which was Oct. 10 in Archer City.

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**DANIELLE GUTIERREZ**, 12, of San Antonio shot this buck at her uncle's ranch in South Texas using a .223 rifle. For more about Danielle's hunt, visit [LSOnews.com](http://LSOnews.com).

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**Dove weed**

Continued from Page 6

In addition to the seeds providing food for dove, the rainfall also boosted the amount of cover and water supplies.

All three, food, cover and water, kept the birds around and made for a better bird season, Hale said.

Randy Shearrer, a hunter and feed mill operator in Jourdanton, had dove feeding in his fields of weeds.

He shredded them in October.

Conditions were so poor, Shearrer said, that he does not know what the dove were feeding on during the summer. He said he suspects birds were concentrating in towns and at water troughs.

"Things were bad," he said.

But conditions were not so bad that the dove season was ruined. Their food supply is intact, and the plants are prepared for many more months of drought, if it happens, Shearrer said.

"There'll be seed there for 10 years," he said.

**Schmidt**

Continued from Page 8

— which includes Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri and Kansas.

Then he out-fished a field of 55 of the Federation's finest from all over the country to win a grind-it-out battle on Milford Lake in Junction City, Kan., which not only won him nearly \$70,000 in cash and prizes but qualified him for his first Classic. The Bassmaster Classic, which has a top prize of \$500,000, reserves six of its 51 spots for the top finisher in each of the six Federation Nation regions each year.

"When I joined the Federation Nation in 2000, I thought it was so cool that I might have a chance to fish the Classic," he said. "It only took a couple years to realize that was probably not going to happen. The region was too tough."

He backed up his Federation Nation championship with a \$22,000 sixth-place finish in the 2009 Classic in February, where he beat most of the top names in the sport, including Kevin VanDam, Alton Jones, Kelly Jordon and Rick Clunn.

"I just wanted to finish in the top 25," Schmidt said. "It's safe to say I over-achieved."

Because of his Federation Nation championship, Schmidt was invited to fish the Bassmaster Elite Series — one of the top bass fishing tours in the country.

But the initial financial investment was too much (the Elite Series costs more than \$30,000 just in entry fees), so Schmidt decided to keep his job as planner for Air Tractor Inc., and he went back to fishing at the

local level.

That didn't keep him from becoming a small-time celebrity in Olney, population 3,396.

"I'd walk around town, and people would say that I was famous," Schmidt said. "It's all a joke, but it's a lot of fun. I do have a lot of people from Olney following me now, checking results from all the tournaments I fish to see how I did. It's actually added a little bit of stress knowing people are paying attention."

Stress and all, Schmidt continues to deliver for his hometown fans. He again defied the odds and qualified for the Federation Nation championship, which was fished on the Harris Chain of Lakes in Florida on Oct. 28-30. Although he didn't win the whole thing this year, he came from behind to win the Central division and qualify for the Classic.

"I really didn't fish well in the championship this year," he said. "On the first two days, I missed fish after fish. But a couple guys ahead of me slipped on the final day, and you can't do that. Boy, was I glad to see my name on top when it was over."

The 2009 Classic was on the Red River in Shreveport, La., a six-hour drive for Schmidt. The 2010 Classic is on Lay Lake in Birmingham, Ala., a 12-hour drive to a body of water he's never seen.

"Last year, I drove to the Red River almost every weekend," he said. "I can't go 12 hours. I have a job. I'm just going to have to study a lot of maps."

"But I will feel a lot more comfortable having been there before. It's still just about catching fish, and hopefully I'll be able to do it again."

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## Mystery

Continued from Page 1

ate it — making it impossible to say conclusively what species the fish was.

Whatever he caught, Barnes had his eye on the fish for several weeks.

"I'd been watching it come in for a month and a half," he said. "I thought it was a big ol' buffalo."

He had suspicions, though, that he might not be giving the fish enough credit.

"One of the customers had a string of crappie," Barnes said. "He had it tied in the water. He pulled it up, and it wasn't nothing but a bunch of heads."

Barnes caught the fish almost by accident. People at the barge had targeted it. One man practically had a whole slice of bread on his hook trying to lure it. Barnes removed most of the bread, leaving only enough to bite, and threw the line back into the water. And got a bite. Twice.

The second one convinced him he was dealing with a piranha.

"When he started chomping on my finger, I thought he might be a piranha," Barnes said. "This one had pointed teeth — like a pyramid on top."

Piranha became famous in America af-

ter Teddy Roosevelt traveled to the Amazon. He wrote in "Through the Brazilian Wilderness" they were the "most vicious fish in the world." Roosevelt recounted the story told by adventurer Col. Candido Rondon of a donkey coming into his camp minus its rider. Rondon's party backtracked and found the man's skeleton in the water, "his clothes uninjured but every particle of flesh stripped from his bones."

Although some biologists argue Roosevelt and Hollywood exaggerated the fish's ferocity — they normally don't attack people — there's no arguing piranha have razor-sharp teeth. South American natives use them to make tools and weapons.

Pacu, which are related to piranha but are thought to be herbivorous, turn up far more often in this country than piranha, which are illegal in most states, including Texas. There have been documented cases of piranhas being caught in the U.S., however, including at the Lake of the Ozarks. When temperatures drop much below freezing, though, so do piranha.

"They don't handle the cold very well," said Courtney Moore, a hatchery biologist at Sea Center Texas. "That's why you can find dealers for them in some northern states where they're not an illegal species. The states aren't

afraid of them becoming an invasive species."

Moore examined a photo of the fish Barnes caught at Lake Lewisville and proclaimed it most likely a pacu.

"The red-belly piranha looks similar, but it doesn't get that large," Moore said. "Also, pacu are flat. Piranha have a shine to them. It looks like someone sprinkled specks of gold and silver on them."

If Barnes did catch a pacu, it was a state-record one.

According to Texas Parks and Wildlife's records, the current record for a red-belly pacu is 8.95 pounds. It was caught March 14, 2006, on the San Marcos River by Joni Frazier with a red wiggler.

Barnes, however, still believes he caught a piranha. He notes, anecdotally, that fishing near the Lewisville Fishing Barge picked up after his catch.

"When we got him out of the water, the fish started biting again," Barnes said. "We started catching crappie and catfish. It was on."

A witness to the catch doesn't claim to be an expert on piranha but offered his opinion.

"This one had sharp teeth," said Billy Chambers, an angler and a preacher. "He cut Joe pretty bad. I had never seen a piranha before, but I can tell you this one was a flesh eater. There's no doubt about it."



WHAT IS IT? Joe Barnes holds the fish he caught at Lewisville Lake, which he believes is a piranha.

## Warden

Continued from Page 6

and Minter pulled out his game tag to start filling it out. It was at that point, for the first time since he took the shot, he started to become nervous.

Harper came back with big eyes and told the men he had counted 24 points. That news sent both Calvin and Minter running toward the buck.

"I have never seen a deer like this," said Minter, who has been a game warden for Texas Parks and Wildlife for 12 years. "I've seen pictures and mounts that were similar, but nothing like that."

His mainframe eight, nontypical trophy had 31 scoreable points, with a gross green score of 212 3/8 Boone & Crockett, 205 2/8 net.

Minter wasn't even planning on having it scored, but was talked into it by a co-worker who saw the photo and told him it might be a record.

"I've never been big on scores for deer simply because if you shoot a good animal, and it's a trophy to you, then what does it matter what number someone wants to put to it?" he said. "If you look at him and you get your hopes up and start thinking you want him to be 180 or better, and they come back and tell you he's 160, I'm disappointed when I would have been happy with 140."

"This deer was too great to be let down by a score."

It was Minter's first buck in his seventh year as a bow hunter. He'd hunted with rifles his entire life and picked up bowhunting as a chance to spend another 30 days a year scouting for when he could put down the bow and grab a gun.

"It worked for a little bit, just scouting with a bow in my hand, but after a while, you get hooked," he said. "I killed pigs every year with a bow, and this was the first year I took a deer, and it was a doe."

His low buck count wasn't for a lack of opportunity. Before he took his buck at 9 a.m., he saw 8- and 7-point bucks and plenty more "young deer that might be really good later."

He and his four lease partners, all in their first year in this lease, had agreed to only take mature bucks and the occasional doe because, as he put it, "If you shoot everything you see, then you stop seeing things."

His nontypical prize was something none of them had ever seen despite extensive scouting since August by all four and game cameras all over their 400-acre open-range lease. And Minter thinks it's something he'll never see again.

"I was fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time to actually get to see that deer from my stand," he said. "It was once in a lifetime."

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# FISHING REPORT

## HOT BITES

### LARGEMOUTH BASS



**BELTON:** Good on spinnerbaits and topwaters.  
**BUCHANAN:** Good on Rat-L-Traps, white spinnerbaits and white/chartreuse back crankbaits in 8-20 feet. At midday, switch to skirted craws on jigheads, root beer drop-shot worms on drop-shot rigs and grape worms along deepwater creek ledges.  
**CEDAR CREEK:** Good on drop-shot rigs, jigs and Texas rigs.  
**GRANBURY:** Good on chartreuse spinnerbaits, crankbaits and soft plastics off points.

### WHITE, HYBRID, STRIPER



**PROCTOR:** Striped bass are good on silver/blue Rat-L-Traps.  
**ARROWHEAD:** White bass are good off rocky points with some surface action.  
**GRAPEVINE:** White bass are good on slabs.  
**JOE POOL:** White bass are good on slabs and Humdingers.  
**RAY HUBBARD:** Hybrid striper are good on 2-ounce slabs and live shad.  
**WALTER E. LONG:** Hybrid striper are good on minnows and cut bait.

### CATFISH



**BASTROP:** Channel and blue catfish are excellent on hot dogs and stinkbait.  
**CADDO:** Good on prepared baits and shrimp.  
**CALAVERAS:** Channel and blue catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp, cheesebait and shad near the railroad bridge and 181 Cove.  
**FALCON:** Channel and blue catfish are excellent on cut bait up the river.  
**LEWISVILLE:** Good on nightcrawlers.  
**WRIGHT PATMAN:** Catfish are good on prepared baits and chartreuse (use Worm-Glo) nightcrawlers.

### CRAPPIE



**RAY ROBERTS:** Excellent on jigs and Road Runners over brush piles.  
**WEATHERFORD:** Good on minnows and jigs in the crappie house and over brush piles.

**ALAN HENRY:** Water lightly stained; 63 degrees; 2.71' low. Black bass are fair on white spinnerbaits and black/chartreuse ringtail soft plastic worms along grass and tree lines. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on live bait.

**AMISTAD:** Water clear; 68 degrees; 2.34' low. Black bass are good on topwaters, spinnerbaits, crankbaits and soft plastics. Striped bass are good on slabs. White bass are good on slabs. Catfish are good on cheesebait, shrimp and nightcrawlers over baited holes. Yellow catfish are fair.

**ARROWHEAD:** Water lightly stained; 65 degrees; 6.59' low. Black bass are good on crankbaits near rocky structures and submerged vegetation. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows suspended off the derrick. Blue catfish are fair.

**ATHENS:** Water fairly clear, 62-69 degrees; 0.47' high. Black bass are fair to good on Texas rigs, Carolina rigs and jigs. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows over brush piles. Catfish are good on prepared baits nightcrawlers (use Worm-Glo). Bream are fair on red wigglers.

**BASTROP:** Water clear. Black bass are good on watermelon worms and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on live minnows and white tube jigs. Yellow catfish are fair.

**BELTON:** Water clear; 67 degrees; 6.55' high. Hybrid striper are good on live shad. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are good.

**BOB SANDLIN:** Water murky; 63-68 degrees; 0.05' high. Black bass are good on Carolina-rigged Baby Brush Hogs and Texas-rigged worms. White bass are fair. Catfish are good on prepared bait.

**BRIDGEPORT:** Water fairly clear; 61-67 degrees; 8.42' low. Black bass are good jigs and Texas-rigged soft plastics. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. Hybrid striper are fair. Catfish are fair on chartreuse (use Worm-Glo) nightcrawlers. Bream are fair on crickets and red wigglers.

**BROWNWOOD:** Water stained; 66 degrees; 7.40' low. Black bass are fair on buzzbaits, worms, frogs, crankbaits and redbug and watermelon red worms on 3/16-ounce jigs along docks, around rocks and over brush piles in 8-15 feet. Hybrid striper are slow. White bass are fair on crankbaits. Crappie are slow. Channel catfish are fair.

**BUCHANAN:** Water clear; 67 degrees; 26.36' low. Striped bass are good on plastic swimbaits and drifting or free lining live bait. White bass are slow to fair. Crappie are good on pink/white or chartreuse crappie jigs and live minnows. Channel catfish are good on liver, minnows and cheesebait. Yellow and blue catfish are good on live shad.

**CADDO:** Water murky; 62-68 degrees; 5.1' high. Black bass are fair to good on Texas rigs, Senkos and jigs. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs.

**CALAVERAS:** Water stained; 68 degrees. Black bass are fair on dark soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits and crankbaits around reed beds, near the dam and in Granny's Cove. Striped bass are slow. Redfish are good on live bait and down rigging spoons. Crappie are slow.

**CANYON LAKE:** Water clear; 64 degrees; 11.62' low. Black bass are fair to good on drop-shot rigs, watermelon red wacky rigs and Texas-rigged 6" pumpkin worms along main lake bluffs in 12-25 feet and on white spinnerbaits in standing timber in 4-8 feet. Striped bass are slow to fair. White bass are slow. Smallmouth bass are fair on smoke grubs and 3/16-ounce pumpkin jigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and crappie jigs upriver. Channel catfish are slow. Yellow and blue catfish are good on trotlines and juglines.

**CEDAR CREEK:** Water stained; 63-67 degrees; 0.01' high. White bass are fair to good on slabs. Hybrid striper are fair on live bait and slabs. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait and chartreuse nightcrawlers (use Worm-Glo).

**CHOKE CANYON:** Water clear; 68

degrees; 9.25' low. Black bass are good on soft plastic lizards and large worms in heavy grass in 12-20 feet. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows. Drum are fair on live worms. Channel and blue catfish are good on punchbait in 2-7 feet. Yellow catfish are fair on live perch and goldfish.

**COLEMAN:** Water clear; 67 degrees; 9.96' low. Black bass are good on chartreuse crankbaits and watermelon red soft plastic worms. Hybrid striper are good on live minnows. Crappie are fair on live minnows and blue tube jigs over brush piles. Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait, shrimp and liver.

**CONROE:** Water stained; 0.29' high. Black bass are good on watermelon red and watermelon gold soft plastics, spinnerbaits and topwaters in 10-20 feet. Striped bass are fair on live minnows and green striper jigs. Crappie are good on minnows and blue/white tube jigs. Catfish are fair on stinkbait, frozen shrimp and nightcrawlers.

good on live worms off piers and over grass beds. Channel and blue catfish to 3.5 pounds are good on shad and perch off piers on the south side of the lake.

**JOE POOL:** Water off-color; 62-67 degrees; 3.23' high. Black bass are fair to good on drop-shot-rigged finesse baits and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair to good on cut and prepared baits.

**LAKE O' THE PINES:** Water stained; 63-68 degrees; 14.89' high. No report available due to high water conditions.

**LB:** Water stained; 69 degrees; 0.30' low. Black bass are good on clear swim baits, buzzbaits and watermelon/purple flake soft plastics along seawalls and creek points in 2-12 feet at daylight. Striped bass are good at night. White bass are fair to good. Crappie are fair on crappie jigs and live minnows. Channel catfish are good on minnows and liver.

**LEWISVILLE:** Water stained; 63-67 degrees; 3.38' high. Black bass are good on jigs, drop-shot rigs and Bandit

**PROCTOR:** Water stained; 67 degrees; 7.55' low. Black bass are good on black and purple soft plastic worms. White bass are good on cut shad. Crappie are fair on minnows. Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait, shrimp and shad. Yellow catfish are good on live bait.

**RAY HUBBARD:** Water fairly clear; 62-67 degrees; 0.26' low. Black bass are good on jigs, Texas rigs, drop-shot rigs and crankbaits. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on slabs. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers and prepared bait.

**RAY ROBERTS:** Water murky; 61-64 degrees; 2.51' high. Black bass are fair on Texas-rigged Yum creature baits. White bass are excellent on jigging spoons under the birds with occasional surface schooling. Catfish are excellent.

**RICHLAND CHAMBERS:** Water off-color; 63-68 degrees; 0.71' high. Black bass are fair to good on jigs, medium running crankbaits, Carolina rigs and Rat-L-Traps. White bass are fair to good on slabs. Hybrid striper are fair on large slabs and live shad. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs over brush piles. Catfish are good on prepared baits, cut shad and nightcrawlers.

**SAM RAYBURN:** Water stained; 69 degrees; 0.60' low. Black bass are good on topwaters, soft plastic worms and spinnerbaits early. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on live minnows. Bream are fair on worms. Catfish are good on punchbait.

**SOMERVILLE:** Water murky; 65 degrees; 2.34' high. Black bass are slow. Hybrid striper are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are slow.

**STILLHOUSE:** Water clear; 64 degrees; 6.70' high. Black bass are good on minnows, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. White bass are slow. Crappie are good on minnows in 40 feet. Channel and blue catfish are good on minnows, hot dogs and nightcrawlers.

**TAWAKONI:** Water fairly clear; 63-68 degrees; 2.19' high. Black bass are good on spinnerbaits, jigs and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs over brush piles. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers and cheese bait. White bass are fair on Humdingers and slabs. Striped bass and hybrid striper are fair on live shad and slabs.

**TEXOMA:** Water off-color; 62-67 degrees; 1.99' high. Black bass are fair to good on jigs, Texas rigs, Carolina rigs and medium- to deep-diving crankbaits. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs around bridges and over brush piles. Striped bass are fair to good on slabs and live shad. Catfish are fair to good.

**TOLEDO BEND:** Water stained; 68 degrees; 0.90' high. Black bass are good on watermelon red soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits and topwaters early and later on redbug or black/blue worms off points. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows in 20 feet. Bream are good on nightcrawlers. Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait.

**TRAVIS:** Water stained; 66 degrees; 33.77' low. Black bass are fair on topwaters, dark worms and crankbaits in 5-15 feet. Striped bass are fair on white grubs and jigging spoons in 30-40 feet. White bass are fair on chrome jigging spoons and minnows in 25-38 feet. Crappie are fair on minnows and white tube jigs in 15-30 feet. Channel and blue catfish are fair on nightcrawlers and fresh cut bait in 28-42 feet.

**WALTER E. LONG:** Water stained; 67 degrees. Black bass are good on minnows and cut bait. White bass are slow. Crappie are good on minnows near the dam. Channel and blue catfish are good on nightcrawlers and shrimp.

**WEATHERFORD:** Water lightly stained; 62-68 degrees; 2.62' low. Black bass are fair to good on medium diving crankbaits, Texas rigs, spinnerbaits and Rat-L-Traps. Channel catfish are fair to good on worms, liver and cheese bait. White bass are slow to fair on slabs. Bream are fair.

## HOT SPOT

### Braunig

Water stained; 68 degrees. Black bass are fair on crankbaits and dark soft plastic worms in reeds and near the jetty and dam. Striped bass are good on liver and shad near the pier and at Dead Tree Point, and on silver and gold spoons and marble spinnerbaits near the jetty and dam. Redfish are good on perch, shrimp, shad, tilapia, and silver spoons, and down rigging spoons near the jetty and dam. Channel catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp, cut bait, and cheesebait near the dam and the intake. Blue catfish are good on cut bait.



**COOPER:** Water murky; 61-66 degrees; 2.49' high. Black bass are good on Texas rigs and jigs. Crappie are good on jigs and minnows over brush piles. White bass are good on Humdingers and slabs. Hybrid striper are fair to good on slabs and live shad. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait.

**FALCON:** Water clear; 70 degrees. Black bass are good but mostly small on spinnerbaits and large Brush Hogs in 5-8 feet. Striped bass are slow. Crappie are slow.

**FAYETTE:** Water clear; 68 degrees. Black bass are fair on watermelon gold, watermelon red and chartreuse pepper Carolina-rigged soft plastics along outside edges of grass in 6-10 feet. Red ear perch are good on worms in 4-10 feet. Channel and blue catfish are slow.

**FORK:** Water murky; 62-68 degrees; 0.31' high. Black bass are fair to good on Carolina jigs, heavy jigs and spoons. Crappie are good on live minnows and jigs around bridge columns. Catfish are good on prepared bait.

**GRANBURY:** Water stained; 0.45' low. Striped bass are fair on live minnows. White bass are fair on minnows.

**GRAPEVINE:** Water off-color to murky around the creeks; 62-67 degrees; 3.72' high. Black bass are fair to good Texas rigs, drop-shot rigs and medium diving crankbaits. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs over brush piles. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait.

**HOUSTON COUNTY:** Water clear; 70 degrees; 0.36' high. Black bass to 8 pounds are good on 10" plum apple worms near the island in 16 feet and on silver Rat-L-Traps near the dam. Crappie are good on live minnows near the subdivisions and on the south side of the lake in coves and off points. Bream are

200 crankbaits. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on slabs. Hybrid striper are fair on slabs.

**LIVINGSTON:** Water murky; 68 degrees; 0.70' high. Black bass are good on spinnerbaits, buzzbaits and soft plastics. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are good on minnows. Blue catfish are good on shad.

**NASWORTHY:** Water lightly stained; 63 degrees. Black bass are fair on live baits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Redfish are fair on live bait. White bass and striped bass are fair on live bait.

**NAVARRO MILLS:** Water murky; 65 degrees; 8.02' high. The boat ramp near the swim beach is open. The boat ramp near the marina is closed. The marina fishing dock is open. Crappie Point is closed. Black bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair but small on minnows. Channel catfish are fair on stinkbait and shad. Blue catfish are good on juglines baited with goldfish and shad. Blue catfish are slow.

**O.H. IVIE:** Water lightly stained; 61 degrees; 20.41' low. Black bass are good on shad-colored crankbaits, Rat-L-Traps and live bait worked around timber. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs. White bass are good on live bait and chrome crankbaits. Smallmouth bass are fair on live bait. Channel catfish are good on live bait.

**POSSUM KINGDOM:** Water stained; 64 degrees; 4.64' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored crankbaits and live baits. Crappie are fair on live bait and jigs. White bass are good on silver jigging spoons and small crankbaits near Costello Island. Stripers are good on topwater lures, silver spoons and Rat-L-Traps along the Gaines Bend points. Catfish are fair on live bait.

## SALTWATER SCENE

**NORTH SABINE:** Trout are good under birds and pods of shad on soft plastics. Redfish and flounder are good in the marsh.

**SOUTH SABINE:** Trout are good under birds and pods of shad. Redfish are good at the jetty on live bait and cracked crabs.

**BOLIVAR:** Trout, black drum, sand trout and redfish are good



at Rollover Pass. Trout are fair to good while drifting shell on plastics. Bull redfish are good.

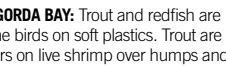
**TRINITY BAY:** Trout are good for drifters working pods of shad and mullet on Bass Assassins, Trout Killers and Sand Eels. Trout are good under birds on soft plastics.

**EAST GALVESTON BAY:** Trout and large Gulf trout are good for drifters working deep shell on plastics and fresh shrimp. Redfish and flounder are fair to good in the marsh around drains on shrimp. Trout and redfish are good.

**WEST GALVESTON BAY:** Bull redfish and flounder are good at San Luis Pass on shrimp and shad. Sheepshead, redfish and black drum are good at the jetty on shrimp and crabs. Trout are good under the birds.

**TEXAS CITY:** Bull redfish are good in the channel on shrimp and crabs. Gulf trout are good in the channel on fresh shrimp. Birds are working on the outgoing tide.

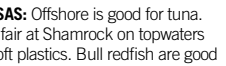
**FREEPORT:** Trout are good on reefs on shrimp and DOA Shrimp under corks. Redfish are fair to good on the reefs in Christmas Bay and Bastrop Bay. Bull redfish are good.



**EAST MATAGORDA BAY:** Trout and redfish are fair under the birds on soft plastics. Trout are fair for drifters on live shrimp over humps and scattered shell. Trout and flounder are fair to good on muddy shorelines on soft plastics for waders working the edges of reefs.

**WEST MATAGORDA BAY:** Trout are fair on sand and grass humps on soft plastics and topwaters. Redfish are fair on live shrimp at Shell Island, Oyster Lake, Crab Lake and Mad Island. Trout are fair under birds.

**PORT O'CONNOR:** Black drum are good on the shell near the Victoria Barge Canal. Bull redfish are good at the jetty on crabs, mullet and shad. Trout are fair to good on the reefs.



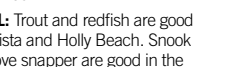
**ROCKPORT:** Trout are fair in St. Charles Bay on Corkies while working reefs. Redfish are good in Redfish Bay on mullet and crabs. Bull redfish are good in the Lydia Channel on shrimp and crabs.

**PORT ARANSAS:** Offshore is good for tuna. Redfish are fair at Shamrock on topwaters and plum soft plastics. Bull redfish are good at the jetty and on the beachfront.

**CORPUS CHRISTI:** Bull redfish are good in the surf on mullet and shrimp. Trout are fair for waders working mud and grass on small topwaters and Corkies. Redfish are good in the holes on natural baits.

**BAFFIN BAY:** Trout are good on topwaters and plum plastics around rocks and grass. Trout are good while drifting deep rocks on plum plastics. Redfish are fair to good on gold spoons around spoil islands.

**PORT MANSFIELD:** Trout have been found on the edge of the Intracoastal in 3-5 feet of water. Redfish are good while drifting pot holes on topwaters and soft plastics under a popping cork. Trout and redfish are fair.



**SOUTH PADRE:** Trout are fair to good while drifting grass and mud on plastics and live shrimp. Redfish are good on DOA Shrimp and plum or roach plastics. Some tarpon have shown at the jetty with calm winds.

**PORT ISABEL:** Trout and redfish are good at Laguna Vista and Holly Beach. Snook and mangrove snapper are good in the Brownsville Ship Channel.

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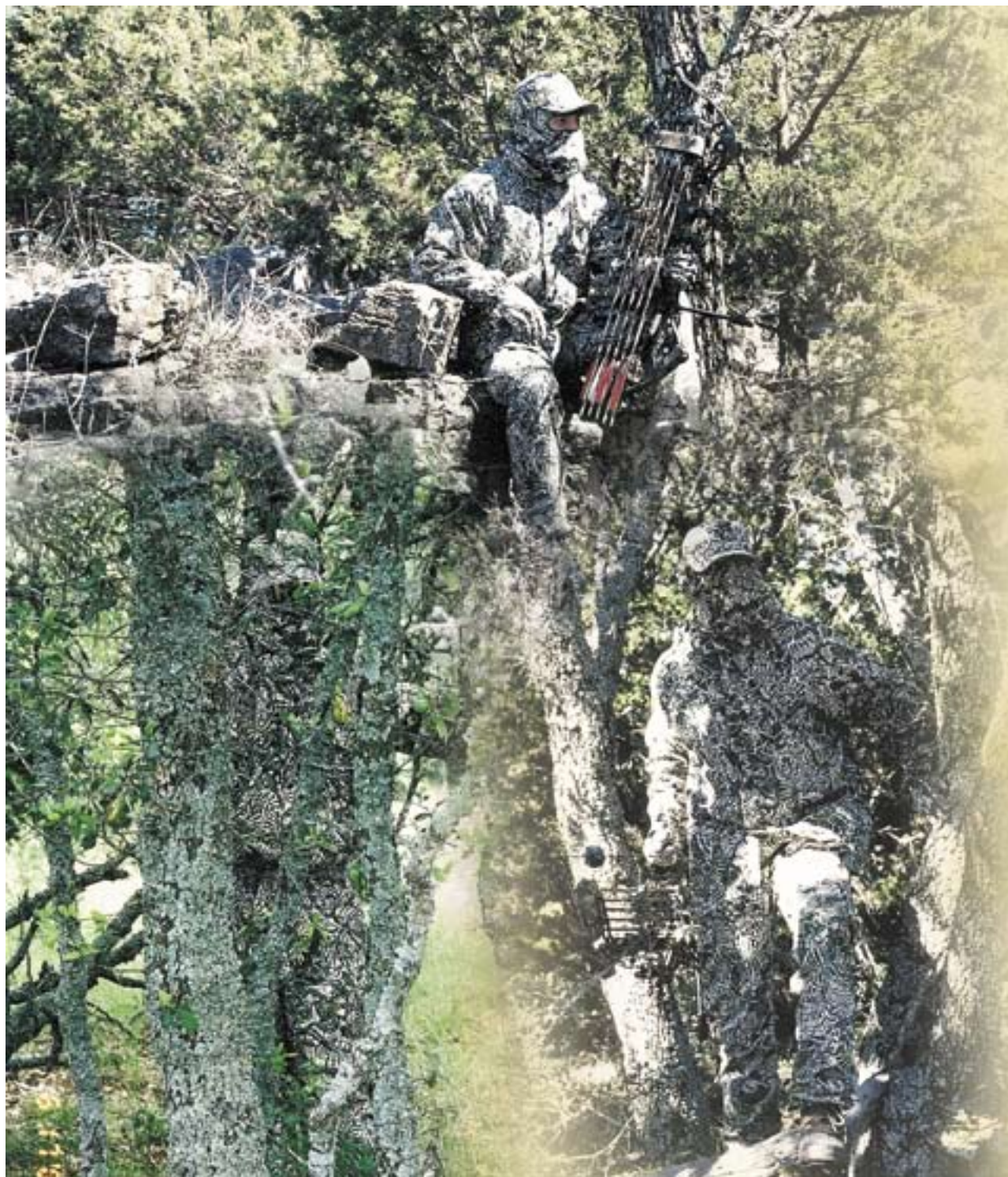
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# Stories from the blotter

A new **book** out this fall compiles five years of the **Game Warden Blotter** from *Lone Star Outdoor News*.

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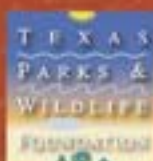
## Poachers, Crooks and Other Turkeys

Five years of outdoors tales — of crimes and acts of bravery — from the *Lone Star Outdoor News* game warden blotter

Craig Nyhus, Editor  
Thomas Phillips, News Editor



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## Waterfowl

Continued from Page 1

high on Sunday, Fogg said.

"Of course, they never came down," he said. "They caught the jet stream and were hauling butt."

The Panhandle has not seen much goose activity yet, Fogg said, and hunters are waiting for big ducks, too.

A friend in Denver gave Fogg a good report, saying the Front Range was covered up with birds, so Fogg is waiting for their arrival.

South of Lubbock, David Biddle had a slower start, as predicted.

Biddle and two other hunters harvested six birds Saturday morning on a playa lake outside O'Donnel.

They also did not see many geese, though opening weekend was probably too early to see high numbers, Biddle said.

"They must just be holding north of us," he said.

Hunting in North Texas, J.J. Kent bagged three mallard drakes, three drake wood ducks and a Canada goose over the weekend.

"There was a whole bunch of wood ducks," Kent said. "I wouldn't say hundreds, but there was quite a few."

The mallards he saw were migrants, not local birds, and they came in pairs. He also saw redheads.

"There was literally thousands of red-heads headed south," he said.

Then the calendar changed.

"Sunday, the numbers were down tremendously," Kent said.

He saw more migrant flocks of mallards and pintails, but only managed to take one mallard drake.

Several hunting camps on the coast around Rockport reportedly had poor hunts Saturday but phenomenal shoots Sunday.

Even farther south, the season started slowly, as outfitter Jim Onderdonk expected.

Onderdonk took a handful of hunters out on Baffin Bay.

His hunters that day were redfish anglers who wanted to go.

"They did pick up a few birds," Onderdonk said. "They were more than happy."

## Red tide

Continued from Page 8

The red tide affects all fish and shellfish, Nuñez said. Oysters and shrimp are susceptible, too.

Shellfish harvested from waters where red tide is blooming should not be eaten because the consumer eats the whole body, and the whole body can be affected by red tide. Fish caught in red tide waters may be eaten because the whole body is not consumed, and the edible tissue, the meat, remains safe, Nuñez said.

When oysters or other shellfish are affected by red tide, state officials will close or delay the harvest season. The delay gives the animals time to flush the toxin from their bodies.

The easy catch of fish on the beach should be avoided, too.

"We always tell people don't eat the dead fish," Nuñez said.

With all fish being susceptible to red tide, that includes popular sport fish such as redfish and speckled trout.

"You drive enough miles of beach, you find everything," said Jim Tolan, a TPW research scientist in Corpus Christi. "They all succumb to red tide."

All sizes of fish are susceptible, too, Tolan said.

"Everything that you can think of that you want to fish for is washing up on the beach," he said.

Tolan said he does not know how a red tide affects fish behavior, whether they flee from it. He said research on fish behavior during red tide is scarce.

"I don't know that anybody's ever studied fish behavior because it's difficult to predict when a red tide's going to hit, and when it does, it wipes everything out," Tolan said.

Nuñez said he thinks the red tide pushes fish away, "but that's something I really don't know for sure."

So if the red tide is lethal across



**DEDICATED ANGLER:** Robert Holmes dons a mask to protect his nose and lungs from red tide while fishing on the north jetty at South Padre Island. Photo by Thomas Phillips, Lone Star Outdoor News.

so many areas of the ecosystem, how does the ecosystem recover? Tolan said it may be severe on a 50-mile stretch of beach, but beyond that, the wildlife is unharmed. When the red tide dissipates, animals from outside the affected area will move in and join animals that survived.

"You're not going to wipe the Gulf clean," Tolan said.

Red tides are unpredictable, Nuñez said, and they appear to be caused by several factors.

"When they reach a perfect storm, then the blooms just seem to grow in concentration," he said.

No control measures are available for fighting red tide, either.

The red tide affecting deep South Texas has persisted for several weeks, and they generally occur in late summer and early fall.

The current bloom is expected to dissipate soon, Nuñez said.

## Read the tides, know the facts

Harmful algal blooms, or HABs, occur nearly every summer along the nation's coasts. Often, the blooms turn the water a deep red.

Harmful algal blooms occur when colonies of algae — simple ocean plants that live in the sea — grow out of control while producing toxic or harmful effects on people, fish, shellfish, marine mammals and birds. The human illnesses caused by HABs, though rare, can be debilitating or even fatal.

While many people call these blooms "red tides," scientists prefer the term harmful algal bloom. One of the best-known HABs in the nation occurs nearly every summer along Florida's Gulf Coast. This bloom, like many HABs, is caused by microscopic algae that produce toxins that kill fish and make shellfish dangerous to eat. The toxins may also make the surrounding air difficult to breathe. As the name suggests, the bloom of algae often turns the water red.

HABs have been reported in almost every U.S. coastal state, and their occurrence may be on the rise. HABs are a national concern because they affect not only the health of people and marine ecosystems, but also the "health" of local and regional economies.

But not all algal blooms are harmful. Most blooms, in fact, are beneficial because the tiny plants are food for animals in the ocean. In fact, they are the major source of energy that fuels the ocean food web.

— National Ocean Service report



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# Weight

Continued from Page 1

about him have appeared on bass-oriented Internet sites, such as Texas Fishing Forum.

Some forum threads challenged his winnings in earlier tournaments; one even suggested a class action lawsuit could be brought by anglers claiming to have been cheated by him.

"That's a big voice," said Game Warden Capt. Gary Collins, who is in charge of the investigation. "Any time you have 47,000 comments on Texas Fishing Forum in less than two weeks, it's big."

"And this little old tournament on Lake Ray Hubbard was for \$55,000. That ain't nothing to sneeze at."

Wardens in early November were close to figuring out which charge to bring against Rose, Collins said.

"Unfortunately," added Game Warden Tom Carbone, one of the investigators, "the way the current Parks and Wildlife Code is written, it does not address this specific problem — altering a fish."

Instead, Collins said, the charge will

"The problem is, in all these grassroots events, if you win so many times, you're under suspicion. People assume, 'There's no way you can be better than me twice in a row.'"

— Chad Potts,  
president of Bass Champs

probably come from the state penal code, possibly simple fraud or rigging an exhibition, which is a Class A misdemeanor.

Texas Parks and Wildlife will recommend that the Legislature broaden the code to include altering a fish, said Robert Goodrich, assistant chief of fisheries enforcement.

Goodrich said there was another fish altering case under investigation in early November. He declined to discuss it, but said Rose was not involved in it.

The events of Oct. 24 were described a day later in a news release issued by tournament officials.

They thought something was wrong when the bass nearly sunk to the bottom of a hold-in tank.

Rose was in the midst of a routine polygraph test given to all participants who

bring in the biggest fish of the hour, officials said in their news release.

They stopped the test and asked him to remove the fish's stomach contents, which he did.

"The angler then apologized to all who witnessed the removal of the lead weight," the officials said. "No objection or explanation was given by the angler as he left the weigh-in location."

Although some people were angry, others wondered what Rose might have been thinking.

"He has won over \$100,000 through cash and prizes, which would make him one of our top five," said Chad Potts of Haslet, president of Bass Champs Inc., a tournament organizer. "The problem is, in all these grassroots events, if you win so many times, you're

under suspicion.

"People assume, 'There's no way you can be better than me twice in a row.'"

Contestants grumbled, so tournament officials assigned camera crews or observers to accompany Rose, who usually fished alone.

Officials believed the scrutiny would satisfy the critics — to his benefit.

That arrangement was used at Bass Champs' season opener in February 2008 at Lake Travis.

"He didn't weigh in a fish that day," Potts said, "and he hasn't fished with us since."

It was a different story a year earlier when Adrian Barnes of Belton and his partner finished second to Rose in a Bass Champs tournament at Cedar Creek. At stake was about \$22,000 in top prizes.

Barnes said he believes Rose was either "guilty of cheating for a long time, or not guilty at all."

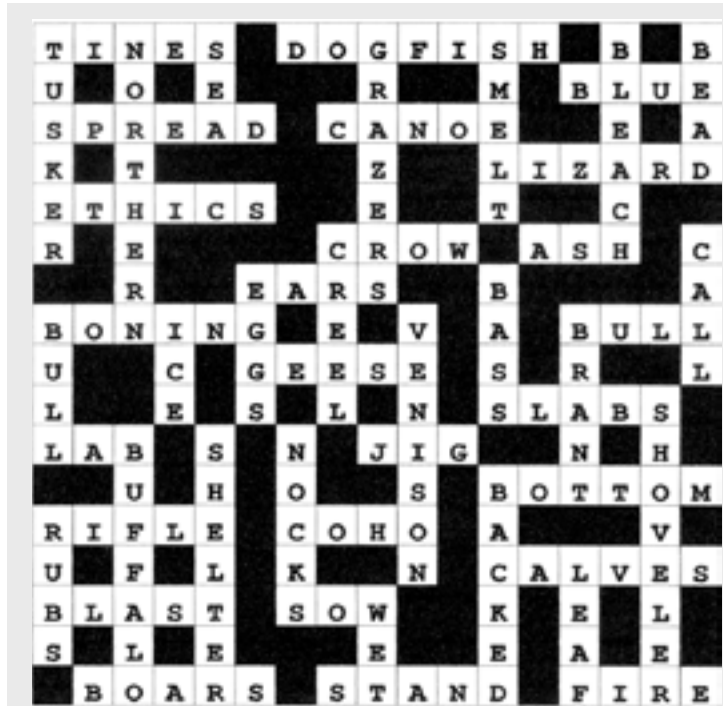
"I will let the evidence and the TPWD decide."

But, he added, "maybe by some off chance I am wrong, and the fish swallowed the weight and then struck his lure in that tournament at Hubbard, but I highly doubt it."

## 2009 Hunting Season Dates



<b>DOVE</b>	
North Zone and Central Zone	Sept. 1-Oct. 25, Dec. 26-Jan. 9
South Zone	Sept. 18-Nov. 3, Dec. 26-Jan. 17
Bag limit: 15 birds and not more than two white-tipped doves.	
<b>Special White-winged Dove Area</b>	
	Sept. 5, 6, 12-13, Sept. 18-Nov. 3, Dec. 26-Jan. 13
The daily bag limit in the SWWDA is 15 birds, not more than four mourning doves during the first two week-end splits and two white-tipped doves. Once the general season opens, the aggregate bag limit will be 15.	
<b>WHITE-TAILED DEER</b>	
<b>Archery-Only Season</b>	
	Oct. 3-Nov. 6
<b>Special Youth Season*</b>	
	Oct. 31-Nov. 1, Jan. 4-17
<b>General Season</b>	
North Texas (206 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 3
South Texas (30 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 17
<b>Late Antlerless and Spike</b>	
Edwards Plateau (39 counties)	Jan. 4-17
South Texas (30 counties)	Jan. 18-31
Muzzleloader (57 counties)	Jan. 4-17
<b>PHEASANT</b>	
Panhandle (37 counties)	
	Dec. 5-Jan. 3
Chambers, Jefferson and Liberty	
	Oct. 31-Feb. 28
<b>SQUIRREL</b>	
<b>Special Youth Season**</b>	
	Sept. 26-27
<b>East Texas (51 counties)</b>	
	Oct. 1-Feb. 7, May 1-31
<b>Other Open counties</b>	
	Sept. 1-Aug. 31
<b>MULE DEER</b>	
<b>Archery-Only Season</b>	
	Oct. 3-Nov. 6
<b>General Season</b>	
Panhandle (38 counties)	Nov. 21-Dec. 6
SW Panhandle (10 counties)	Nov. 21-29
Trans-Pecos (19 counties)	Nov. 28-Dec. 13
<b>QUAIL</b>	
<b>Statewide (all counties)</b>	
	Oct. 31-Feb. 28
<b>RIO GRANDE TURKEY</b>	
<b>Archery-Only Season</b>	
	Oct. 3-Nov. 6
<b>Fall Season</b>	
Youth Season*	Oct. 31-Nov. 1, Jan. 16-17
North Zone (122 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 3
South Zone (26 counties)	Nov. 7-Jan. 17
Brooks, Kenedy, Kleberg, Willacy	Nov. 7-Feb. 28



Puzzle solution from Page 19



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MADE IN TEXAS



# Focus on food: Wet season gives birds options

## Waterfowl feast when the rain keeps falling

By Craig Nyhus  
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Duck and goose hunters in much of Texas had almost forgotten what an extremely wet season was like. Finding good water generally was enough in the two past drought-stricken seasons. But this year, north, east and central Texas were deluged just before the season opener. Ducks and geese are more scattered and have choices galore on where to settle in. More than ever, food sources are the key to successful hunts.

Pondweed, widgeongrass, millet, smartgrass, water milfoil, wild celery, etc. Many hunters don't know the names of what is under the water. They just know the birds like it.

"Aquatic vegetation makes up about 90 percent of a duck's diet," said Jared Laing, East Texas Wetland and Waterfowl Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife. "With geese, it's more feeds (grains) and tubers. The ducks are after seeds, they need energy and the seeds are high in carbohydrates."

While it is there is a lot of aquatic vegetation in parts of the state, the ducks — and in some cases the hunters — might have trouble getting to it.

### Too deep

Shallow areas of ponds and reservoirs tend to contain the best aquatic vegetation for ducks, especially dabbling ducks like mallards, teal, pintail and wigeon. But the heavy rains put a lot of the vegetation under two feet or more of water out of reach for the upside-down feeding ducks. Div-



**MEAL TIME:** Waterfowl feed on a wide variety of aquatic plants, which make up most of their diet. Photo by Lone Star Outdoor News.

ing ducks like bluebills, redheads and canvasbacks, though, still can access the feast beneath the surface.

"The rain killed my hot spot," one Central Texas hunter said. "It's under 6 feet of water now."

Laing said scouting and looking for concentrations of birds is the key for hunters having to resort to Plan B.

"I would look in non-traditional areas," Laing said. "Take advantage of the new habitat that has been created."

The birds are still scattered, though, Laing said, and not just in East Texas.

"This water extends all the way into Kansas," he said.

### More than just vegetation

It's not just the underwater vegetation that brings the ducks, it's also what comes with it, Laing said. There's a smorgasboard of treats for waterfowl in underwater vegetation.

Ducks like invertebrates, bugs,

snails, aquatic worms, even crawfish, Laing said.

Mike Jolley operates Pintail Farms near Bonham, and said the ducks are eating just about anything.

"One area on our property has hydrilla up to your knees," Jolley said. "The divers are really in there. It's amazing what you see when you spread it apart — there's all kinds of creatures swimming around."

Jolley spends a lot of time watching the ducks and geese, and has seen some surprising things this fall.

"The ducks are chasing little fish, and they really chase the frogs," he said. "I watched a teal chase a frog for 15 seconds or more."

Laing said that phenomenon was not all that unusual.

"The birds are opportunistic," he said. "They're after energy."

Jolley said the millet is still the favorite food, although he estimated that more than 500 pounds of seed

planted were washed away by the rains.

"And they like the flooded rye grass," he said. "They eat the seeds that drop out of the grass — the teal, gadwall, wigeon and pintails are really in there."

### Too late

Coastal hunters welcomed the rains. Since Hurricane Ike more than a year ago, they had barely seen a drop of rain. The increased salinity wiped out much of the aquatic vegetation in coastal marshes and inland ponds.

The rains bode well for the future but may have been come a little too late to be of much help this season.

"It's spotty down there," Laing said. "Some areas have grass, others are short."

Capt. Gordon Spears of South Bay Hunting Club, who guides hunts between Port Aransas and Aransas Pass,

said grass is plentiful for now, and so are the redheads, wigeon and pintail.

"We have a ton of grass," he said. "One lake is solid with grass. It's like most other years, by the time the season is over it will all be gone."

### Don't forget the nuts

While not a big part of their diet, ducks, not just wood ducks, like acorns. And heavy rains mean wooded areas generally dry are holding food-filled water.

Hunters in flooded timber near Sulphur Springs on opening day wondered what subtle noise they kept hearing. As the sky lightened, they realized the sounds were acorns plopping into the water all around them. Their location paid off with limits of wood ducks and gadwall.

In Erath County, Mark Fries of Incoming Guide Services said he looks to the flooded oaks later in the season.

"The mallards like to come in there," he said. "It's protected and there's plenty of food."

Laing said shallow water with acorns is well worth checking.

"Look at what washes in or out of the area," he said. "You might be standing in timber but the acorns may have washed away. Or you might find where acorns have washed into what once was a pasture."

Laing, an avid duck hunter himself, had another acorn tip.

"Look for the ones that sink in 4 to 6 inches of water," he said. "They won't eat the ones that are floating, the ones that sink are the ones they eat."

Duck hunters always hesitate to curse the rain. Just ask hunters around Lubbock where water levels are still low.

Try new areas and scout," Laing said. "Sometimes hunting in what had been a pasture can pay off."

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**Nov. 17**  
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**Nov. 24**  
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**Dec. 3**  
**Amarillo Ducks Unlimited**  
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**Dec. 5**  
**Caddo Lake Ducks Unlimited**  
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**Dec. 9**  
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**Fort Worth Delta Waterfowl**  
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**Dec. 11**  
**Dallas Woods and Waters Club**  
 Christmas party  
 Orvis, Preston Center  
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## Poison

Continued from Page 1

A game warden on Oct. 13 notified the Texas Department of Agriculture that several animals in that area were fatally poisoned by the pesticide, said Bryan Black, TDA spokesman.

"I've heard different accounts, but it's safe to say at least six hogs were killed, one deer and two birds," Black said. "One was a hawk."

Authorities want hunters not to kill or eat deer and feral hogs from within a 5-mile radius around the intersection of U.S. 183 and County Road 173. The directive will last "until further notice," officials said.

But outside that zone, the officials are "encouraging hunters to continue to enjoy hunting elsewhere in Eastland County and surrounding counties," according to a joint news release from the TDA and Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Numerous Internet forums reported that the corn was tainted with Temik to eradicate feral hogs, but Black would not confirm that during an interview Nov. 6.

He said TDA investigators and game wardens were investigating

more than one possible motive.

Eastland County Judge Rex Fields said sheriff's deputies are also investigating, along with the Texas Department of State Health Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"We want to caution all the deer hunters going out this weekend because there's been a lot of rumors out there," Black said. "All I can say is our folks are talking with the people involved, finding out why corn seed (with Temik) was placed around peanut fields."

"There's no way you should ever be treating corn with Temik."

The chemical, a product of Bayer CropScience, is used on a wide variety of crops to battle marauding pests. But, Black said, it must always be "covered with soil, once applied."

Toxicologists say "the likelihood is low that eating game from the affected area will harm people," and "90 percent of the pesticide is naturally eliminated from a live animal's body within 24 hours if it's not a lethal dose," according to the joint news release. But, the release added, "agencies involved cannot state for certain whether game is safe to eat."

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South Bay Hunting Club, an outfitter service, is available to the public and leads waterfowl hunts near Port Aransas and Aransas Pass.

# All in the family at South Bay Hunting Club

Family matters at South Bay Hunting Club — and so do ducks, airboats, redfish and barbecue.

Capt. Gordy Spears and his brother, Jamie, run the operation, a guide service that leads waterfowl and fishing trips around Port Aransas and Aransas Pass. Spears' wife, Kris, oversees the business side of the setup.

Gordy and Jamie have been full-time guides for 16 years, and they picked it up from their father. The elder Spears opened South Bay Hunting Club to the public in 1965, but he too descends from a long line of wildlife outfitters.

Gordy and Jamie are fifth-generation hunting and fishing people in the area.

Under the Spears leadership, hunters and anglers can hunt waterfowl and go fishing on the Texas coast.

"If you like to shoot ducks and catch redfish come on down and see us," Gordy Spears said.

Although the name implies that membership is required, South Bay Hunting Club is a guide service available to the public. Hunters can take birds from 10 blinds on

the open bay and 35 in marshes. Transportation is by one of the club's six airboats.

Blinds are easily accessible, with no walking through knee-deep mud or wading through seawater required. Some blinds are better than others for dogs, though. Spears and his guides know which ones are surrounded by pad-slicing oyster reefs.

"We are very protective of our hunters' dogs," Spears said.

Guides are available for hunters who want help identifying birds on the wing, and most hunts are held in the morning.

"We try to let them poor old birds rest in the afternoons," Spears said.

The club does not provide accommodations, but it can make arrangements nearby for clients.

By the time hunters and anglers return from the water, the barbecue is usually fired up and ready for breakfast or lunch. And the family atmosphere continues.

"We haven't had any sad faces leave our beach," Spears said.

For more information, call (361) 758-1432 or visit [www.castandblast.com](http://www.castandblast.com).





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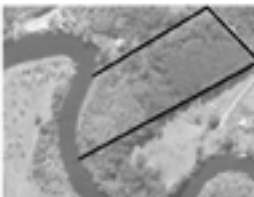
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## Deer

Continued from Page 6

One hunter at Green's lease harvested a six-pointer with a 16-inch spread. Opening morning began foggy for Green. The fog soon burned off and made way for high temperatures.

Early Sunday morning, before daylight, Green saw an eight-pointer with tines that were 20 to 22 inches tall. But the antlers did not spread out past the deer's ears and the 13-inch antler restriction.

"A lot of guys are seeing a lot of small six-pointers, small eight-pointers, just too small to take," Green said.

What Green did not see was much rut activity, he said.

Eric Jones harvested a buck the Monday morning after opening day in Cherokee County, but he too said the rut was not yet in full swing. Jones has seen lots of pre-rut sign, such as rubs and scrapes, at the low-fenced property but not much movement.

"Haven't seen them chasing does," Jones said.

The forecast called for cooler temperatures the second weekend of the season, which should have the deer out and about.

"Deer don't move when it's 75 degrees," Jones said.

Jones' buck was an eight-pointer, and "a pretty decent little deer," but not a trophy for his wall, he said.

"Normally, I would have waited, but the deer aren't moving much right now," he said.

Lane Seaman's season started atypically slowly too, he said.

"Usually, opening day you're going to see something," said Seaman, who lives in Heath and was hunting in Palo Pinto County.

All he saw, however, were two does on Sunday. His father-in-law saw five or six does and a six-point buck opening morning and harvested a doe Sunday afternoon.

"They're obviously there, so I'm planning on kind of keeping an ear out for when the rut kicks in," Seaman said. "When the rut kicks in, I'll typically spend four days out there in the heat of the deal."

For this trip, Seaman took his 6-year-old son. It was his son's first trip as a hunter and more than an observer.

"We had a lot of fun," Seaman said.

For John Preddy, opening weekend was more like a day at the beach. Preddy said he hasn't missed an opening weekend in 24 years and could not remember hunting in only a long-sleeved T-shirt.

"It was hot and windy," said Preddy, who was hunting in Foard County.

Preddy passed on a 140-class buck at the low-fenced ranch he was hunting, he said. He is holding out for something in the 190-class.

"It's still too early," he said.

## Outdoor News in Brief

### Ruger honored by wholesalers

Ruger recently received the Firearms Manufacturer of the Year award from the National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers for the third consecutive year.


The award was presented during the association's 36th annual meeting in Reno, Nev. NASGW wholesaler members evaluated manufacturers on four key criteria — distribution policy; marketing, sales and promotion; logistics and operations; and NASGW and industry support.


"Winning the Manufacturer of the Year award for the third year in a row is a great honor for Ruger," said Ruger CEO Mike Fifer.

"Strong wholesaler support and cooperation are vital to our success as a manufacturer, and we continue to develop new products, marketing promotions and communication tools that will benefit distributors of Ruger firearms," said Vice President of Sales and Marketing Chris Kilroy.

— Ruger report

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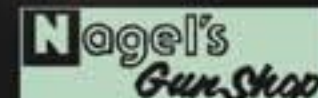
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