

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS



All about boating in 2009
Hit the water this year in a shiny new vessel.
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INSIDE FISHING



Winter reds hitting
It's cool and breezy, but the hunt for redfish is heating up on the coast.
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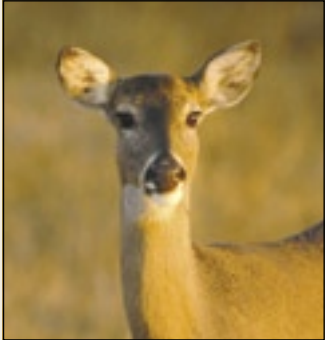


Think spring
Bass in South Texas stock tanks warm up sooner than the rest of the state.
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HUNTING



S. Dakota holdouts
Sub-zero cold fronts have blown through, but some birds still stay up north.
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How old is she?
Follow a few tips for aging white-tailed does on the hoof — before the shot.
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Don't fence me out

How to target certain species at feeder

By CRAIG NYHUS

When it comes to feeding protein to mule deer, Chance Parker has a problem at his ranch in Brewster County. Elk are eating him out of house and home.
“We feed mule deer year round,”

Parker said. “We will fill a 3,500-pound feeder every month or two. But these elk, they'll just camp at it. Now we're filling them every two weeks.”
Thanks to some creative fencing

See FENCES, Page 16



CREATIVE ENCLOSURES:
Landowners often resort to unique fencing options allowing some wildlife to come into feeding areas while keeping others out.

Scaled quail blues

Hunters seeing fewer coveys in Trans-Pecos scrub

By BILL MILLER

Blue quail, by their nature, are elusive.
They'll fly, sure, but they differ from bobwhites because they're apt to run from hunt vehicles, bird dogs and gunners.
And to chase them, you have to meet them on their terms — their habitat — the brushy, cactus-studded terrain of West Texas and some parts of South Texas.
Considering blue quail — also called scaled quail — are so hard to get up on, it seems characteristic that these birds are presenting hunters and biologists with a mystery.

See BLUES, Page 16



LOGGING MORE MILES: A drop in the blue quail numbers in much of the Trans-Pecos region has hunters and their dogs putting in more effort to track down the running birds. Blue quail, right, are harder to find this season. Photos by David J. Sams.



Power plant lakes shine when the weather doesn't

Fishing improves as winter weather conditions decline

By CRAIG NYHUS

When Texas winters become cold and nasty, most anglers stay home. But for bass anglers who target power plant lakes, the nastier the better.
Ken Wilkins of Round Rock fishes Fayette County Reservoir regularly.
“Typically, when it's nasty it coincides with low pressure coming in, and [it] turns the bass on,” he said. “The warmer water has the fish carrying eggs earlier, and the big females are often close to the discharge and feeding aggressively.”
Wilkins prefers heavier baits to battle the current.
“The fluke is our best lure,” he said. “But you have to throw heavier

weights to keep it in contact with the bottom in the winter. We use up to 1 1/2-ounce weights.”
Mike Albertson, president of the Houston Oilman's Bass Club, fishes at Fayette County and Bastrop.
“We've had a January tournament there for years,” Albertson said. “It's a slugfest. And the nastier the weather, the better they bite. Even a big wind doesn't bother the fish.”
Wilkins and Albertson agree that a nice day is bad for fishing on the power plant lakes. “A sunny day in the 70s is the toughest,” Wilkins said.
Albertson's bass club also heads to Fairfield Lake in February — with the unusual hope for bad weather.
“We've had real good luck with the bass there, too,” he said. “And a few years ago we saw fish working the bank, and we ended up hooking three 25-inch redfish.”

See WARM WATER, Page 19



JACKET REQUIRED: Bass anglers facing winter weather head to power plant lakes where warmer water has the fish active.

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Photo by: David J. Sams





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CONSERVATION

DU auction buy brings fun at Rosewood

Three generations of hunters view ducks, geese

By CRAIG NYHUS

At the Dallas Ducks Unlimited auction in October, Bill Langhenry III bought a father-son duck hunt at Rosewood Ranches southeast of Dallas.

When he arrived Jan. 19 with his 71-year-old father, Bill Langhenry II, and his two sons, Billy, 18, and Nathan, 13, they witnessed a wetlands mecca within view of the Dallas skyline.

The development of the ranch (actually six ranches, three near Seagoville that are managed as a team) was the brainchild of the late Bunker Sands, the former executive director of the Rosewood Corp. and the son of Caroline Rose Hunt and Loyd Bower Sands.

Ahead of his time, Bunker Sands developed an interest in wetlands development, both from the perspective of wildlife and habitat, and began restoring and developing wetlands on the ranch in the 1980s.

Since that time, with the help of Kenneth Braddock of the Ennis Ranch and Richard Braddock of the Seagoville Ranch, thousand of acres of new wetlands have been created providing nesting and wintering areas for migratory birds while conserving water.

And the wetlands, once nothing but agricultural fields, are teeming with wildlife. The group of hunters took plenty of shots and retrieved 18 ducks, but the numbers of birds they viewed in the skies caught their atten-



FAMILY FUN: Below, from left, Bill Langhenry II, Nathan and Billy Langhenry and Bill Langhenry III show some of their early morning ducks on a hunt at Rosewood Ranches. Above, 1,350 feet of boardwalk weaves through wetlands at the ranch. The Bunker Sands Wetland Nature Center will be constructed viewing the wetlands and boardwalk. Photos by Craig Nyhus.

The Rosewood Group.

Jacob, the son of Bunker Sands, shares his father's passion for wildlife and wetlands, and is an avid hunter. Jacob Sands was heavily involved in more recent changes at the ranch that would make his father proud.

"We entered into a 50-year agreement with the North Texas Municipal Water District," he said. "They take water from the East Fork of the Trinity River, and run it through several of the impoundments on 1,840 acres of the ranch. From there it is pumped 45 miles to Lake Lavon."

It took three years to finalize the agreement.

"It would take 30 years to get a reservoir built, and we can send as much water as a reservoir would hold," he said. "And it helps the wildlife."

The water sent to Lavon helps supply water to 1.6 million North Texas residents, especially in Collin County.

"That area grew so fast they kind of are in catch-up mode," Sands said.

And the hunting, the rights having been retained by Rosewood, has been excellent.

"It was incredible early in the season," said Richard Braddock, a ranch manager. "The place was full of mallards, pintail and teal. On one impoundment, you couldn't throw a rock without hitting a pintail. This last cold front moved out most of the teal, though."

More big plans at the ranch include the Bunker Sands Wetland Nature Center (www.wetlandcenter.com), to be built on the property in view of the wetland impoundments.

"We have 3,500 feet of boardwalk in place," Braddock said. "There have been birdwatchers from the Audubon Society and others — they say they've identified a lot of unusual birds."

Jacob Sands said the ranch is working with Baylor University to provide research and study opportunities for its students.

And an additional 1,200 acres of bottomland hardwood forest with shallow wetlands will be permanently dedicated through the creation of the Bunker Sands Mitigation Bank.

Bunker Sands received The National Wetlands Award and the Lone Star Steward Award in 1996 for the project. With the additions of helping to clean and supply water, providing a mitigation bank, conducting graduate student research and creating the Wetland Center, his legacy remains secure.

Langhenry and his companions are thankful for that.



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Big Game Spenders

NATIONAL

New Okla. center cleans 4,000 paddlefish

Researchers collect data; money from caviar sale helps fund study, access

Oklahomans claim to have the best paddlefish angling in the nation. With the state’s paddlefish research and processing center, the anglers are also contributing to science and funding their own sport.

Last winter, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation opened the center at Twin Bridges State Park. The center collected important biological data, processed paddlefish fillets for anglers and salvaged paddlefish eggs.

More than 4,000 fish were brought to the paddlefish research and processing center by anglers, where their fish were professionally cleaned and packaged. Workers at the center salvaged eggs to sell as caviar.

More than 8,000 pounds of eggs were salvaged, and

income derived from the program is being used to fund continued paddlefish research and improve angler access. The caviar was dispersed throughout Europe and Asia, and more than 45 tons of paddlefish carcasses were recycled into a natural source of heating oil.

The department was able to gather large quantities of useful data for managing paddlefish in Oklahoma. The research and processing center makes it possible to collect data from thousands of fish harvested by anglers. In just a few months, biologists found themselves years ahead of where they were in terms of researching and managing the species.

The success of the paddlefish research and processing center has led the agency to design plans for building a permanent center in 2009 at Twin Bridges on the Neosho River. The program will be expanded to include Fort Gibson Lake in 2010.

The center is open during prime paddlefish snagging months (about Feb. 15 to May 15).

— Oklahoma Department of Wildlife report



STRANGE BEASTS: Paddlefish are popular in Oklahoma and throughout the Mississippi River drainage. The state has started a new program for studying the species and boosting anglers’ access to the pursuit of paddlefish. Photo by Missouri Department of Conservation.

Outdoor News in Brief

Hunters took 605 moose in Vermont

Vermont moose hunters had a successful hunting season, according to the state Fish and Wildlife Department.

“A tally of results shows hunters took 605 moose with 1,251 hunting permits issued for this year’s split season,” said Cedric Alexander, the wildlife biologist who chairs Vermont’s moose management team. “The overall success rate for the season was 48 percent.”

Twelve bull moose weighed more than 800 pounds each. The heaviest bull weighed 926 pounds and was shot in Granby by Nicholas Ott of Sutton.

The department reports that

11,032 residents and 2,807 nonresidents entered Vermont’s moose permit lottery in 2008. Vermont’s pre-hunt moose population was estimated between 4,000 and 5,000.

— Vermont Agency of Natural Resources report

Wyoming monitoring use of underpasses

Motorists using Wyoming 30 in Nugget Canyon, Wyo., may be avoiding potential collisions with hundreds of mule deer and a handful of elk. The animals are using wildlife highway underpasses to migrate to winter ranges.

A private consulting firm is monitoring the use of six highway underpasses as part of a joint project between the Wyoming Department of Transportation and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

The firm is monitoring the number of deer-vehicle collisions before and after the underpass construction. Each underpass has been equipped with an infrared-activated digital camera documents how many deer use each underpass.

Initial photos indicate that groups of deer commonly approach the underpass, become nervous, run away but return soon and move quickly through the underpass.

Green River Wildlife Management Coordinator Mark Zornes said the underpasses are providing opportunities to learn about migration patterns.

— Wyoming Game and Fish report

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HUNTING

Age a doe on the hoof

Three traits to examine to know her age



DISTINGUISHING DOES: While hunting, telling the difference between adult does and yearling bucks can be difficult, and determining the age of a doe is even tougher. Experts suggest studying t

By CRAIG NYHUS

Hunters often have trouble taking older does, and sometimes distinguishing does from yearling bucks, when removing does to maintain population densities in a desired range.

Biologists and outfitters have some tips to make sure the shot taken is at a doe and not a nubbin buck or even a more mature buck. And they agree that patience is crucial.

“We’re hunting does right now,” said Donnie Briley of Briley Outfitting in San Angelo, who manages deer on ranches covering nearly 20,000 acres. “We tell our hunters the most important thing is not to shoot the first one that walks out — wait for several of them to come out so you have something to compare.”

Herb Koehler, a member of a group of landowners that formed the DeWitt County Wildlife Management Association, agreed.

“I think the best way is to compare the size of does in a group,” he said.

The size difference in the deer this time of year helps, Briley said.

“Most of our does here weigh 80 to 90 pounds,” he said. “The nubbin bucks weigh 65 to 70 pounds.”

But there is another risk, Briley said.

“It’s so dry here this year, some of the more mature bucks are already losing their horns,” he said. “You have to make sure you’re not looking at a more mature buck.”

One way, Briley said, is to wait for a

See **DOES**, Page 16



COLD-WEATHER CANADAS: Tyson Keller, left, and Travis Vacek aim at two Canada geese over decoys. Despite frigid temperatures, geese along the Missouri River in South Dakota are making a habit of not migrating any farther south. Photo by David J. Sams.

Temps go down, geese stay up north

Visit to South Dakota dispels front-pushing myth

By DAVID J. SAMS

When Texas waterfowlers hear about sub-zero temperatures in the Dakotas, their first reaction is to call their hunting buddies.

“Did you hear the report?”

“That should push some new birds down. Let’s go hunting tomorrow.”

They go, but often there aren’t any new birds to shoot. What happened? They sit in the blind and cast out different ideas.

“They got 6 inches of snow, how can they even find food?”

“Do you think they got short-stopped in Kansas?” The questions just keep coming.

The answer often is — nothing happened. The birds just sat out the cold, not feeding much but

just waiting on the open water.

Near Pierre, S.D., plenty of open water remains. The Oahe Dam sends thousands of gallons each day down the Missouri River. The geese and about 180,000 ducks swim around as if it is nothing despite minus 12-degree temperatures, blowing snow and 30-mph winds.

In Pierre recently, a group of hunters saw this happen. Tyson Keller, a former goose guide, forecast a big push from big honkers sitting in the same situation in Bismarck.

“They should be pushing down here with this weather, you better get up here,” he said.

Keller drove and talked on his cell phone to others scouting all parts of the area. Not much was

being reported.

Keller’s friend Martin Hesby called in to report he had just shot two pheasants as he sat watching a distant field for geese.

All the reports and the weather said to hunt close to the river roost. At dinner, the group of Avery Pro Staffers discussed what to put out.

“Full bodies, fully flocked or shells,” they discussed.

“Put them all out,” they agreed.

“What blinds? Do you have the snow covers?”

The next morning, Travis Vacek unloaded his yellow lab, Foley, into minus 12 degrees and a light snow. While the diesel

See **GEESE**, Page 22

Cities making headway against rampaging deer

Trapping, feeding bans help control urban herds

By THOMAS PHILLIPS

Hunters can wait all morning and all evening for a buck to step out of the brush. Or they can drive through suburbia and find deer after deer.

But suburban deer usually are not hunted — by civilians, anyway.

Some Texas cities with an overabundance of white-tailed deer have used varying methods to control their populations. Often, professional trappers drop nets on baited areas to remove deer.

The deer, technically state property, are not sold, but a property owner will pay the trapper to trap and re-

locate the deer to the property owner’s land. Deer are also taken to processing plants, and the venison is given to food banks.

In Hollywood Park, a suburb of San Antonio, Will Mangum leads the city’s deer management program.

“I’m just right on the cusp of having pretty much everything under control,” Mangum said.

Hunting is often out of the question as a management method. Cities commonly prohibit discharging firearms in the city limits. For Lakeway, where the urban deer battle began in Texas, bowhunting might have worked, but it was feared that inexperienced archers would improperly, and nonfatally, shoot deer and leave them with arrows protruding from their bodies.

Texas Parks and Wildlife’s Kevin

See **URBAN**, Page 21



CITY SLICKERS: Although some cities trap and remove deer, one of Texas Parks and Wildlife’s primary recommendations for lowering populations is to stop feeding deer. That can mean changing what plants are used in lawns and flower beds. Photo by David J. Sams.

Hunting News in Brief

50,000 names on ‘We Are Wetlands’ petition

With Congress confronting the loss of wetlands protections once provided in the Clean Water Act, a national coalition of conservationists has launched a new grassroots campaign calling for the restoration of federal wetlands protections. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership launched the “We Are Wetlands” campaign in April. It is designed to add 80,000 signatures — one for each acre of natural wetlands that will be lost this year — to the call for restored wetlands protections.

The campaign has reached 50,000 signatures. “America’s hunters and anglers know full well the importance of wetlands to the resources they revere,” said TRCP President and CEO George Cooper. “Five to 7 million waterfowl annually use wetlands as feeding and resting areas, and nine of every 10 fish caught recreationally depend on wetlands at some point in their lives. Put simply, it’s impossible to overstate the value of wetlands to our nation’s fish and wildlife — and the American sportsman.”

— Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership report

New campaign targets backcountry economics

Using the anniversary of the 2001 federal roadless rule as to mark the occasion, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership recently launched “Banking on the Backcountry,” a new campaign uniting hunting and angling groups and businesses in support of backcountry conservation and highlighting the economic boost provided by roadless areas.

“Fishing and hunting annually contribute more than \$190 billion to our nation’s economic system,” said TRCP Roadless Initiative Manager Joel Webster. “Conscientious management of roadless areas can support strong economies in rural communities and stable jobs associated with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation.”

— Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership report

DU, Bayer team up to increase winter wheat

Bayer CropScience and Ducks Unlimited have joined forces to launch a North American project called “Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action.”

“By working with Ducks Unlimited, we want to expand the practice of growing winter cereals across the prairies in Canada and the United States,” said Bill Buckner, President and CEO of Bayer CropScience LP. “We recognize winter wheat is an excellent crop that provides economic advantages to growers when included in cropping rotations while also enhancing waterfowl and other wildlife habitats.”

From a waterfowl-conservation standpoint, one of the key limiting factors for continental waterfowl populations is a lack of nesting cover on the prairies. Ducks Unlimited Canada’s research has shown that the density of hatched nests in winter wheat fields is 24 times greater than in spring wheat.

— Ducks Unlimited report

Waterfowl reports good as season winds down

High Plains Mallard Management Unit: Goose hunting has been very good, especially with colder temperatures. Limits of Canada geese have been taken over corn and wheat. Snow geese have been cooperating over salt and pepper spreads. Duck numbers improved with each passing front. Good hunts were had around Knox City for mallards, wigeons and gadwalls.

North Zone Duck: Mallard numbers improved on area lakes and reservoirs. Hunters working backwater sloughs and timber ponds have scored limits of mallards. Lake and reservoir hunters have had to find secluded potholes. Hunting has been fair at best near the Interstate 10 corridor.

South Zone Duck: Limits of redheads and pintails were taken on coastal bay flats near Port O’Connor, Seadrift, Rockport, Port Aransas and Port Mansfield. Prairie hunters saw an influx of green-winged teal. Goose hunters have watched large congregations disperse into smaller groups.

—Texas Parks and Wildlife report

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FISHING

On the coast, redfishing off to good start

With low tides, fish concentrated

By Danno Wise

As 2009 gets underway, anglers along the Texas coast are seeing something both old and new when it comes to finding and catching redfish in midwinter. Although most anglers are seeing the same old situations they face every January — extremely low tides, high winds, cool temperatures — they are also finding plenty of fish. In general, '09 is off to a great start and looks as

if it could be a banner year for redfish anglers. “We’ve had some low tides, but we always do in January,” said Port Aransas guide Capt. Marvin Engle. “If we have enough water, I’ll be up on the flats, freelining shrimp in the potholes. When we have really low tides, I’ll stick to the channel edges. The good thing about those low tides is they really concentrate the fish. So it’s a little easier to find fish when the water’s low.” Port Isabel guide Capt. Robert Sirvello has also seen the water “drop out” of some of his fishing spots. But Sirvello was quick to point out the fish were plentiful and

willing to eat. Anglers, he says, just need to be flexible and “follow the water.” “When the tide has been high, I’ve been drifting the flats in the Three Islands area, sight casting to pot holes,” said Sirvello. “The pot-holes have been holding plenty of reds. I’ve been throwing mostly tails — plastic shrimp in particular — and just concentrating on the potholes.” When he hasn’t had enough water to effectively work the flats, Sirvello said he follows pretty much the same game plan as Engle — just find water. “On low tides, the feeder chan-

nels have been productive,” Sirvello said, referring to the many small channels that crisscross the vast flats in the Lower Laguna Madre. Engle said that regardless of the water level, he doesn’t usually bother fishing until mid-morning during January. “I’ve found there’s no need to get out too early,” said Engle. “You can catch some fish in the deep water earlier in the day. But the water really needs to warm up a little bit before the fish get up on the flats.” Finding warm water has also been the key for Baffin Bay guide Capt. Jim Onderdonk. “Overall, redfishing has been real

good,” Onderdonksaid. “Right now, we’ve really been having to pick our location based on water temperature and tide height. When it’s cool, we’re fishing the ditch right (the Intracoastal Waterway). But on warm days, we’re up on the flats.” “The biggest problem for some guys right now is getting bait. There’s been a real shrimp shortage in our area. But I’ve found you can still do real good with scented artificials. Again, early in the day or on cool days, hit the drop-offs. Later in the day, once it warms up, go up on flats. You follow that basic pattern, and you’ll catch plenty of redfish right now in Baffin.”

Head south for spring (already)

Bite begins early in South Texas stock tanks, small lakes

By Craig Nyhus

A deer hunter in South Texas took a break to cast a line on a 4-acre pond in late December. The frenzy that followed caught him off guard. He landed and released dozens of bass — all on lures known for catching springtime largemouths. Not all Texas fishermen realize that December is spring for bass in small South Texas impoundments. Water temperature is the key, according to anglers and pond management experts. John Jones of Lochow Ranch, a lake management company, helps landowners build, stock and manage ponds across the country. “Down in South Texas, they get two spawns,” Jones said. “There is definitely a fall spawn as well as a spring spawn.” Jones, also a wildlife biologist, believes water temperature and periods of daylight explain why South Texas pond fishing starts so soon. “We see a lot of variability in water temperatures through Texas and into Mexico,” he said. “For example, the water right now in ponds near Uvalde is 15 to 20 degrees warmer than the water in North Texas ponds. We shocked in North Texas and the water was in the low 40s. In South Texas, it’s 55 to 58 degrees. Some South Texas ponds are dealing with algae right now.” And farther south, the fish grow bigger.



STOCK TANK LUNKER: This South Texas largemouth was taken from a shallow flat at a small stock tank with a crankbait in late December. Schools of fry were found all over the pond. Warmer water temperatures get the bass active early in the southern regions of the state. Photo by David J. Sams.

See SOUTH, Page 16

Canoesport bought by ACK
Houston store under new management, ownership

By Thomas Phillips

Austin Canoe and Kayak has a new home closer to the Gulf breeze and a clientele eager for the company's reputation for strong customer service. The company recently purchased Canoesport in Houston, adding a third location to its Austin and San Marcos stores. The Houston location puts it in another prime paddling area. “You’re an hour drive from water in almost any direction,” said Chris Hackerd, one of the company’s three owners. ACK Canoesport will focus on providing customer service that will endear the company to Houston-area paddlers, Hackerd said,

by being open seven days a week and offering full-service sales and rentals. “We’re here for the paddling community and not the other way around,” Hackerd said. He includes anglers in that paddling community and said the majority of buyers want to fish at times from their boat. “I think all of the kayak manufacturers are seeing that the fishing group is a group to be reckoned with,” Hackerd said. Kendal Larson, a kayak angler from Sugar Land and former vice president of sales for Malibu Kayak, said the Houston market has been thirsty for a kayak-and-canoe store that sells many product lines, not just one.

“Not only do they stress diversity and depth in product, but there’s nobody that stresses as much customer service,” Larson said. Seasoned paddlers will find the latest of the industry’s products and innovations, Larson said. Newcomers will find a knowledgeable staff. “Kayakers are an interesting breed in that they expect folks to know what they’re talking about,” Larson said. Larson never shopped at Canoesport before Austin Canoe and Kayak bought it, but he said the company will do well with its purchase. “My expectation is that Austin Canoe and Kayak is going to have an extraordinarily good run in Houston,” Larson said.

Bank fisherman finds new home for personal best cat

Stores won’t buy, but they like big, unusual fish

By Craig Nyhus

Michael Williams loves catfishing, and he does most of it from shore. Armed with long rods, heavy weights, circle hooks and frozen shad, bluegill or Rio Grande perch, the 26-year-old from Austin heads most often to the shores of Lake Travis. Usually catching eating-sized fish, he has been hoping for a big one. On Jan. 10, his efforts were rewarded with a 35-pound,

9-ounce blue catfish that now swims in the aquarium at the Cabela’s store in Buda. “I was fishing a windy point at Bob Wentz Park,” Williams said. “I took two 12-foot rods, and I carry a bag with tackle and bait. It’s about a half-mile walk. “It’s real shallow off the point; you have to cast out 100 yards or so. That’s why I use real heavy weights, usually 8 ounces. That day I was using 10-ounce weights because I bought the store out of all of their 8-ouncers.” After being set up by 9 a.m., Williams caught a few 2- to 3-pound blue cats. “Then it went quiet,” he said.

See STORE, Page 23

GAME WARDEN BLOTTER

POACHING AT FOSSIL RIM NETS 41 CHARGES FOR TRIO

Hood County Game Warden De-shanna Creager and Johnson County Game Warden Scott Kirkpatrick were given a tip on various violations that occurred on property belonging to Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Somervell County. Upon investigation and hours of observation in sub-freezing temperatures, two violators were caught poaching without the landowner's consent. During questioning, it was determined that a third person was involved. Charges filed are for 22 Class C violations, 15 Class A violations and four state jail felonies. Two weapons were seized, and two white-tailed deer bucks were recovered and seized along with the meat. Cases are pending.

STILL SHOOTING DESPITE FLASHING LIGHTS

A truck with no taillights ran a stop sign about a half-mile from where Hardeman County Game Warden Matt Thompson and Wilbarger County Game Warden Dyke McMahan were sitting. They followed the vehicle for a couple of miles while the vehicle ran a spotlight. The occupants fired several shots, stopped and the driver fired a couple more times while Thompson's red and blue lights were on. Thompson took the gun from the driver, who was wearing an ankle monitor because of a previous conviction Thompson and McMahan filed four years ago for meth-amphetamines and waste of game. No bond was set for the individual and the two other occupants, whom McMahan has handled on numerous occasions for the same offense, were also arrested and jailed.

POACHER TURNS TAIL, TRIES TO RUN FROM GAS STATION

As Terrell County Game Warden Saul Aguilar pulled into a gas station to fill up and continue his patrol, he

Injured owl sinks in talons, won't let go

Guadalupe County Game Warden Tracy Large was patrolling near La Vernia in Wilson County when he received a call from the sheriff's department requesting he meet with emergency medical personnel on a county road outside La Vernia. Upon arrival, Large was informed that a man was driving home and saw an injured barred owl in the road. The man didn't want the owl to get hit so he picked it up to move it. When he picked it up, the owl sank its talons into the man's forearm and would not

let go. EMS said that when they arrived, the man was trying to shake the owl off his arm. The barred owl, which had been wrapped in a towel and placed in a box, was transported to Last Chance Forever Bird Conservatory in San Antonio.

noticed a man exit his truck on his way into the store. Suddenly the man glanced over to see the game warden pulling into the gas station. The man quickly re-entered his truck, and his reverse lights came on. Aguilar noticed a set of antlers sticking out from the bed of the truck, so he quickly redirected his attention and contacted the man. Sorting through the meat quickly revealed that there were two whole deer with only one head to show. A citation was issued for no proof of sex.

MULE DEER SEASON ENDED TWO WEEKS EARLIER

Lubbock County Game Warden Quentin Terrel received a call about a mule deer that had been taken to a local processor after the season ended. Terrel responded and found a mule deer buck that was tagged as being killed about two weeks after the end date. He contacted the shooter, who claimed his friends had told him the season lasted until the end of the month, so he shot the deer. The shooter said he had just been to hunter safety class two weeks earlier, and he should have checked the dates himself instead of taking his friends' word. Charges are pending.

UNSATISFIED POACHER TURNED IN BY TRACKER HE HIRED — A COP

Irion County Game Warden Justin Jackson was notified of a possible waste of game that had occurred just inside Irion County. A man had em-

ployed a man and his tracking dog to find his buck deer. The deer was found but the hunter was not happy with the antlers on the 10-point buck and indicated that he might throw it away and go back for a larger buck that he had seen earlier. The man also indicated he had another deer hanging back at the barn. Unknown to the shooter was that he had hired an off-duty police officer to help him find his deer. The officer reported the situation. At the ranch, Jackson checked to see if the deer had been thrown away. While opening a gate inside the ranch, Jackson spotted a drop of blood on the ground and started following a trail. The trail led to a deer carcass that had the head cut off and had not been skinned or gutted. The man was charged with Class A waste of game, and the 10-point buck head was confiscated. He was jailed after the judge set a \$5,000 bond for his release.

ANGLERS RESCUED FROM RIVER BEFORE STORM

Wichita County Game Wardens Pat Canan and Luett McMahan rescued two individuals from the Wichita River about 3:30 a.m. The people had planned a river fishing trip from the Petrolia Bridge to the Byers Bridge and arrived at the river at about 3:30 p.m. the day before. They underestimated the time it would take to make the trip, and with an approaching severe storm with lightning, rain and

dropping temperatures, they called for help at 1:30 a.m. Based on landmarks, the wardens estimated their location. Using sirens, lights and cell phone coverage, they located both people and removed them from the river before the storm hit. Both were tired, wet, covered in mud and ready for a warm meal and a hot shower.

SKIN, VISOR PIECE LEAD WARDEN TO SUSPECT

Sabine County Game Warden Randy Button responded to a complaint that a deer skin was hanging in a tree close to a new gated development on the lake. Button located a piece of broken vent visor on the ground and eventually matched it to a vehicle at a residence in a nearby subdivision. A cooler was soon located that contained the illegally taken deer. Cases pending for possession of an illegally killed game animal.

BIRDSEED FOR SONGBIRDS AT DUCK CAMP?

Panola County Game Warden Tom Gallenbach discovered a previously unknown hunting camp. Looking around the camp, it was obvious that the occupants had been duck hunting. Gallenbach also noticed 40 pounds of wild birdseed. When the men returned, Gallenbach checked their licenses and birds, and then inquired about the birdseed. They replied that they enjoyed seeing songbirds in the area. Upon further questioning, the men admitted bait-

ing the area for ducks with the birdseed. Cases are pending.

HALF OF ARGUING COUPLE WANTED ON WARRANT


While checking fishing licenses at the crappie dock at Canyon Lake, Comal County Game Warden Brent Satsky observed a man and woman arguing in their vehicle in the parking lot. Upon contacting the couple, Satsky separated them and began to investigate the cause of their disagreement. During his investigation, Satsky discovered that the man was wanted in Washington County, Ark., on a felony warrant for criminal non-support. He was arrested for the warrant and later charged for assault causing bodily injury for the altercation with the female.

DOE ACCIDENTALLY SHOT AT NIGHT

A landowner said a doe deer had been shot and was in his backyard. Nacogdoches County Game Warden Audie Hamm spoke with neighbors and learned that the landowner had shot a high-powered rifle about 7:45 p.m. Further investigation revealed that the original landowner — the complainant — had shot the white-tailed doe by accident. He said he would never shoot again at night. The case is pending as a charge of hunting-possession white-tailed doe deer in a closed season.

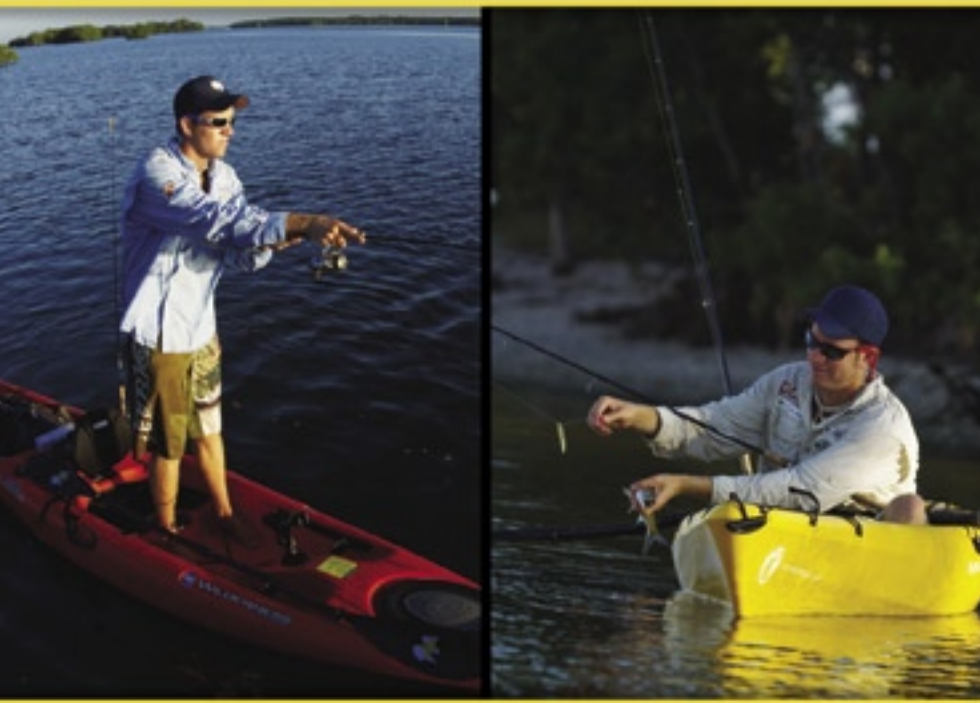
GUN WORKS OK NOW, SUSPECT LEARNS

About midnight, Taylor County Game Warden Roy Johnson was watching a vehicle in a field that had a spotlight working. The vehicle pulled out onto the public roadway and went a short distance before turning sideways. One shot was fired. Johnson stopped the vehicle, and the occupant said he hadn't shot his gun lately and shot a sign to see if it was shooting properly.



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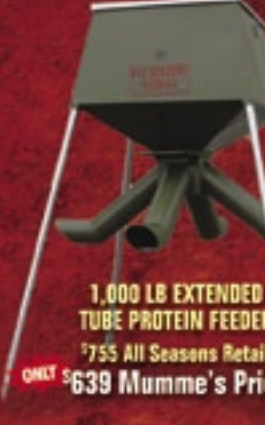
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HEROES



TY GERKE, 6, shot his first deer near Hallettsville while hunting with his father, Billy Gerke.



DYLAN DEAN shot these roosters near Muleshoe on opening weekend of pheasant season.

SHARE AN ADVENTURE

Want to share your great hunting or fishing photos with the Lone Star Outdoor News family? Send your photo, phone number and caption information to

editor@lonestaroutdoornews.com
or
Heroes,
Lone Star Outdoor News
9304 Forest Lane,
Suite 114 South,
Dallas, TX, 75243



CYNTHIA C. CUELLAR, 11 , shot two javelinas with her TC .22-250 on New Year's Day in Zapata County while hunting with her father, Martin.



SEAN TAYLOR, 13, shot his first buck, a 10-pointer, in McCulloch County, with his father, Shawn House.



JOHNNY HATTNER, 13, of Keller, left, shot this gemsbok bull in Namibia with Keith Wright of Didimala Safaris. He is pictured with his friend, Taylor Lund, of Colorado.



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Boating

Nitro Z-8:

Power,

usability,

comfort

The new NITRO Z-8 bass boat brings the perfect mix of size, power and features to serious anglers everywhere. At 20 feet, 1 inch long with a 96-inch beam, the Z-8 is a spacious, incredibly stable craft with huge casting decks.

It's the power, though, that attracts avid and tournament anglers. Rated up to 250 horsepower, the Z-8 easily gets up on plane and smoothly speeds to your next destination. The boat has huge storage compartments, including an illuminated one in the bow deck. Onboard are rod lockers, two aerated Guardian livewells and a large bow panel with a trim switch and room for additional electronics. The boat has a bicycle seat at the bow, a folding fishing chair aft, and an anti-fatigue padded bow deck.

Standard features include a padded comfort bow deck, a flush-mounted fish finder in the console and an on-board battery charger. The Z-8 comes equipped with a Lowrance X96 fish finder, two 20-gallon insulated



SPORTY AND FAST: The NITRO Z-8 jumps out of the chute to reach speeds in excess of 80 mph when equipped with a Mercury 250 Pro XS.

livewells with pump-out controls and dual remote drain controls. A few of the many available options include an adjustable jack plate, oxygen generator, automatic bilge pumps and tilt hydraulic steering.

Lone Star Outdoor News tested the Nitro Z-8 equipped with a Mercury

Optimax Pro XS 250 HP motor with bass fishing pro Edwin Evers. Evers provided an overview of his new fishing rig and kicked it up to 82 mph (on the boat's speedometer) as we whisked across the lake. Fortunately, Evers wanted to fish so he allowed me to drop him off at the dock

and take a ride. As the boat idled out of the no-wake zone, the anticipation was getting to me. Hitting the throttle, the fiberglass hull eased out of the hole and then jumped up in a hurry. The Z-8 reached 75 mph on a GPS in no time. Running flat out took a

Z-8 Specs

Length	20 feet, 1 inch
Beam . . . . .	.96 inches
Transom Height . . . . .	.22 inches
Max. Recommended HP	250 HP
Max. Person Capacity	4 Persons
Max. Person Weight . . . .	.1,000 lbs.
Max. Weight Capacity . . . .	.1,850 lbs.
Weight (approx.) . . . . .	.1,950 lbs.
Fuel Capacity	55 Gallons
Length on Trailer	
with Swing-Away	23 feet 6 inches
Width on Trailer.	8 feet 6 inches
Weight with Trailer	
(approx.) . . . . .	.3,620 lbs.

bit of steering and trying turns at top speed were a bit sluggish. Let's just say you should probably slow down a bit before making significant turns.

Everything about the Z-8 says "sporty" and "fast," including the graphics and gauges. The helm feels a bit tight for guys over 6 feet, and the tilt steering option would be a benefit to taller anglers.

All of the gauges have great visibility to the driver, and a nice footrest sits under the console. The seat trim and fit are all very plush, and the passenger handholds are comfortable to grip.

Prices for the Z-8 begin at \$32,995. With the Mercury 250 Pro XS, the price is \$43,975.

— David J. Sams

Ranger

Z522

Comanche:

Faster, and

with more

fishing gear

New for 2009, the Ranger Z522 Comanche takes the popular Z520 to a whole new level of performance. Combining acceleration, performance and gigantic storage systems, the boat is sure to be a favorite with tournament and avid anglers alike.

Measuring 22 feet, 4 inches in length, the Z522 Comanche is rated for a maximum 300 horsepower motor and sports a redesigned interior, a host of fishing-friendly features and a hull design drawn from the versatile and acclaimed 500 Series.

Lone Star Outdoor News tested the Z522, and the super-wide deck grabs one's attention immediately. For team tournaments, both anglers could easily fish from the front of the boat.

Another attention-grabber is storage and more storage. For those who pack a lot of — maybe too much — tackle, this is their boat. Three rod lockers measure up to 8



COMFORT AND PERFORMANCE: The Ranger Z522 Comanche sports a huge deck, ample storage, better seats and reaches 68 mph while maintaining its smooth ride. Photo by Craig Nyhus.

feet, 6 inches, and the tackle storage containers sport a new compression system ensuring a watertight seal. Tournament anglers will like the livewell that includes a divider and an oxygenator.

The stern has a different look, with a spoiler instead of a splashwell — and it works. The new, seven-gauge instrument panel puts all of the instruments in one's sightline, and the new SRS Soft Ride Seating system is a big improvement.

The ride, though, is the top at-

traction of the Z522. Driving the boat in fairly light winds didn't put the boat to the test. Designed for fishing the Great Lakes, the two-footers experienced during the test drive meant nothing to it.

The test boat was equipped with a Mercury Optimax 250, and at 5,700 rpm it reached 68.7 mph while maintaining its extremely smooth ride. At both low and high speeds, the Z522 is surprisingly easy to handle, a plus for less-experienced operators. A pair of 32-gallon fuel tanks

provide extended running range. Drivers taller than 6 feet will like the legroom, although a tall passenger may bump knees on the panel if not sitting up straight.

The Z522 Comanche comes equipped with a choice of Lowrance or Humminbird electronics mounted at both the bow and console and a 24-volt Minn Kota Maxxum trolling motor.

The test boat included the optional recessed trolling motor foot pedal — a necessity for those spend-

Z522 Specs

Length	22 feet, 4 inches
Beam . . . . .	.95 inches
Transom Height . . . . .	.23 inches
Max. Horsepower	300
Capacity Persons/	
Motor/Gear	1,900 lbs
Inside Depth . . . . .	.22 inches
Boat Weight Single	
(approx.)	1,940 lbs.
Boat Weight Dual	
(approx.) . . . . .	.1,965 lbs.
Fuel Capacity	64 gallons
Trailer GVWR . . . . .	.CF5000
Length on Trailer with	
Motor Down	27 feet, 6 inches
Length on Trailer with	
Motor Down and Swing-Away	
Tongue Open	25 feet, 6 inches
Width on Trailer.	102 inches

ing hours at the front of the boat. A tour of the manufacturing plant in Flippin, Ark., helped explain the boat's smooth lines and top performance, especially under the deck. A new robotic water jet, called the JetTool, cuts holes and lids into the fiberglass and interior deck components.

The precise cuts from the 60,000 psi water jet provides clean and uniform cuts, a big bonus to anyone who reaches into areas housing the batteries or pumps or removes mounting plates to install electronics.

Prices for the Z522 begin at \$55,995. As tested, the price is \$59,995.

— Craig Nyhus



Roughneck 1760CC

by Lowe Boats

Length 17-feet, 6 inches
Beam 83.5 inches
Bottom width 60 inches
Side depth 25 inches
Approximate hull weight 888 lbs.
Max. weight capacity 1,550 lbs.
Max. person capacity 6
Max. horsepower 75

Tough, and then some

This totally redesigned johnboat will take anglers out in any weather. With a baked-on acrylic paint, all-welded construction, and heavy-duty, oversized components, it'll stand up to inclement weather (including freezing and wet conditions). Its proprietary Vor-Trac 3.5-degree V hull is designed for at-rest stability and dry, smooth-running capability in skinny water. The boat's aluminum center console has a recessed switch panel and windscreen, a folding driver's seat and fixed passenger seat in front of the console with storage beneath. It boasts storage boxes in its bow deck, formed-in spray rails, a bilge pump, running lights, plus a 44-inch-long aerated livewell and an 8-foot, 4-inch rod-gun locker. In addition, the bow casting deck can accommodate extra seat bases for two-across crappie fishing. The boat, which also is available in a side-console configuration, includes such options for anglers as a pedestal fishing seat with pole and a trolling motor.

Cost: About \$11,000 with a 50 HP outboard
(417) 532-9101
www.loweboats.com



223 Cayman

by Ranger Boats

Length 22 feet, 3 inches
Beam 92.5 inches
Max. weight capacity 1,600 lbs.
Max. horsepower 250

Bigger inside, shallower out

This flats skiff, a longtime favorite for fishermen, offers smooth, responsive handling. The 15-inch integrated engine setback not only opens up more interior room but also allows for faster, shallower hole shots, says Ranger. The 223 Cayman boasts a balanced weight distribution for easy poling, spacious decks with plenty of storage, a 360-degree walk-around and an aerated livewell-baitwell. Additional features include a saltwater-edition three-bank battery charger and a self-baling cockpit.

Cost: \$53,494 with a Yamaha 225 HPDI outboard
(800) 373-2628
www.rangerboats.com



Evolution 201 XL

by Stratos Boats

Length 20 feet, 9 inches
Beam 96 inches
Fuel capacity 50 gallons
Weight capacity 1,635 lbs.
Max. horsepower 250

Touring lakes, tournaments

The bass boat is specifically engineered to fish the tournament trail. But any angler will enjoy the ultimate fishing experience and performance offered by this model. From a hotrod-inspired instrument panel of performance and diagnostic gauges to a huge front casting deck and 8-foot rod storage, the 201XL Evolution gives competitive anglers a tournament-ready rig focused on fishing. It comes standard with Humminbird 767 electronics, 24-volt Minn Kota Maxxum trolling motor and on-board battery charger. Plus, it also offers lockable storage, an organized center rod locker and tackle management system.

Its 40-gallon livewell comes equipped with a removable divider. The boat is carpeted throughout and features custom marine upholstery on the driver and passenger bucket seats.

Cost: \$47,895 with a Yamaha 250 HPDI
(877) 978-7286
www.stratosboats.com

235DC

fishing boat by
Century Boat Co.

Length 23 feet
Beam 8-feet, 6 inches
Fuel capacity 140 gallons
Weight (without engine) 4,200 lbs.
Max. horsepower 300

For the whole fishing family

This dual-console family-friendly model is a big-water sport fishing boat. While anglers will like the convenience of the 15-gallon baitwell, flush-mount, electronics-capable console, removable tilt-out tackle box, raw-water washdown and four stainless steel gunwale rod holders, everyone will appreciate the wide-open floor plan. The boat's storage includes two 185-quart bow storage compartments, a 24-cubic-foot in-floor storage compartment, a 34-quart dock-line holder at the transom for easy access, and a 2-cubic-foot drawer located under the passenger seat. The bow easily converts from comfortable lounge seating to a bow table. Children who don't want to fish can rest on the rear bench seat or recline in the chaise lounge while listening to a four-speaker stereo with iPod/MP3/cell phone storage box. Options include a freshwater transom shower, ski-tow pylon, colored hull and tilt steering.

Cost: MSRP is \$67,191 with Yamaha F250
(850) 769-0311
www.centuryboats.com



The Professional 17.8

skiff by Hellsbay

Length 17 feet, 8 inches
Beam 70 inches
Weight 425 lbs.
Draft . . 6 inches with engine, fuel
Rec'd power . . Mercury 40-70 HP

Name the situation, it's there

This boat offers the angler the versatility of fishing in a wide variety of conditions and elements. Described by its maker as a beautifully blended combination of shallow draft, dry, comfortable ride and innovative design, this model was developed for guides, professionals and hard-core enthusiasts. The skiff is offered in a side-console or central-console configuration. It comes standard with integrated rod racks with tubes for 10 rods. But anglers might want to add such options as a livewell system, forward casting platform, additional rod racks and push poles.

Cost: About \$40,250 (for the side console), when equipped with a Mercury 60 HP four-stroke engine. About \$41,250 (for the central console), when equipped with a Mercury 60 HP four-stroke engine plus ice chest/seat.
(321) 383.8223
www.hellsbayboatworks.com



320 Express

luxury fishing boat
by Everglades Boats

Length 32-feet, 4 inches
Beam 10-feet, 8-inches
Max. person capacity 14
Max. weight capacity 5,200 lbs.
Fuel capacity 288 gallons
Water capacity 35 gallons
Bridge clearance 9-feet, 9 inches
Max. horsepower 700

All aboard and living well

For overnight trips or longer fishing outings, this is what anglers will want. Of course, it offers plenty of power, (think twin Yamaha 350 V8 outboards and a standard Westerbeke generator), but it also is a comfortable boat with a fully enclosed helm deck with air conditioning. The captain's chair offers a touch screen digital control system. Down below, guests will find 6 feet, 4 inches of standing headroom in the air-conditioned main cabin, an enclosed head with wet shower, a full galley with single burner stove, a combination microwave/coffee maker, a mid-cabin bunk and countless other little luxuries. What's not to like about this hardtop boat, which comes equipped with tons of standard equipment? Serious anglers will appreciate the spacious cockpit and the bait-rigging station, complete with cutting board, tackle storage and sink, plus the 81-gallon aft fish box and 43-gallon livewell.

Cost: Base price with 350 Yamahas is \$369,231
(386) 409-2202
www.evergladeboats.com



South
Continued from Page 8

“It’s a longer growing season,” Jones said. “A bass we stocked as a fingerling in a pond near Victoria now weighs 9.7 pounds. With management, the fish can grow 2.5 to 3 pounds per year. In North Texas with the same management you might get 2 pounds per year.”

Mike Albertson of Houston fishes private lakes south of the city.

“The fishing’s been great,” he said. “They’re in a spring pattern — they’ll be spawning here shortly.”

Does
Continued from Page 6

doe with yearlings with her to come out.

The most important pieces of equipment for the hunters, Briley said, are optics, especially in distinguishing does from nubbin bucks.

“You have to study the head,” he said. “The does will have a longer nose, and their head will be more mature.”

According to Kip Adams of the Quality Deer Management Association, the relative shortness of a fawn’s face is the most critical identifying feature. A fawn’s forehead and nose are shorter in comparison to an adult doe’s head.

Behavior of the animals can give their age away as well.

“Fawns are more playful, naïve and often more aggressive,” Adams wrote. “A buck fawn may be the first antlerless deer you see because he is less wary and more inquisitive.”

The antler bases of the nubbin buck are difficult to see, but later in the season can be noticed with good binoculars, particularly from a side view.

Briley and Koehler agreed aging does is difficult.

Albertson said most of the lakes are fairly shallow and have ample hydrilla, allowing the water to warm quickly.

“Most of them aren’t much more than 10 feet deep,” he said. “It doesn’t take much to warm them up and get the fish active.”

For those with access to private water in South Texas, the advice of both Jones and Albertson is to start now.

“Instead of starting in March, start in January,” Jones said. “Move all of the patterns forward at least a month.”

And there’s a bonus.

“It’s when I fish,” Jones said. “It’s not so hot.”

“It’s hard to tell a 1 1/2-year-old doe from a 4-year-old doe,” Briley said.

“Sometimes you can tell by their bellies,” Koehler said. “But it’s difficult. There doesn’t seem like there is much distinction in the sway on their backs.”

QDMA has offered some additional tips to ensure harvesting an older doe and avoiding a buck fawn and has produced a poster with all of its tips to aid hunters.

In addition to the tips from Briley, Adams and Koehler, QDM suggests looking for “wear and tear” signs that typify mature does, such as ears that appear too short for the head, a swayed back and a sagging belly. The snout of an adult doe is relatively longer than a fawn’s. An adult doe’s body is rectangular while a fawn’s body is square.

They also suggest checking the distance from the ear to the eye. In a buck fawn, the distance from their ear to eye is about the same as the distance from eye to nose. In contrast, the distance from an adult doe’s ear to eye is much shorter than from eye to nose.

QDM agrees with Briley that patience is the key, and if you aren’t sure of the age or sex — wait until you can make a positive identification.

Fences
Continued from Page 1

ingenuity, he hopes to fix the problem.

A friend of Parker’s has a game operation that builds pens deer can access but elk cannot.

“We’re going to have to fence off all the feeders,” Parker said. “And we have to build the fence out of 2 3/8- or 2 7/8-inch pipe — those elk are so strong.

“And we have to keep the bottom rung high enough so the mule deer bucks can get under it. We may have a little trial and error.”

Parker has no animosity for the elk, though.

“I like them,” he said. “There are getting to be more and more out here; I wish they would be declared a game animal in Texas. You just can’t afford to feed them, they’re going to have to live on what’s out here for now.”

Pronghorn antelope roam through Parker’s ranch as well.

“But we can’t make the antelope come to feed,” he said. “Some people have tried but I haven’t heard of anything that really works.”

In most of Texas, feral hogs are the reason for fencing around feeders. Mike Baird of Quality Custom

Fence said hogs wreak havoc on feeders and fences.

“The hog part is pretty easy, actually,” he said. “We use 36-inch cattle panels that work to keep them out while the deer can jump in and out. The tough part with hogs is their strength. They push their nose under a fence or panel and use their strength to push under it. It’s amazing what they can get into sometimes.”

While most landowners go to great lengths to try to keep feral hogs out, at the Hacienda Ranch, near Uvalde, Brad Draughon designed two gates to take advantage of the ever-increasing hog numbers around the high-fenced ranch. The gates let hogs into a 10-by-15 foot pen, and they can’t get out.

“We knew a lot of pigs were there,” he said. “So we designed the gates. We put out diesel corn (corn saturated with diesel fuel) and count the hogs that come in. Then we can open the gate to move them into an area where the hunters can hunt them.”

Draughon said the diesel corn attracts them so well he sometimes captures too many.

Baird said that whenever a problem — or an opportunity — arises, where there is a will, there is a way when it comes to fencing.

“You just have to think about it,” he said. “We can usually design it.”

Blues
Continued from Page 1

Why were there so few of them in the 2008-09 season?

“In the Trans-Pecos area, Fort Stockton to the Big Bend, they had a lot of blue quail for four to five years in a row,” said Robert Perez, the top quail biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife.

“But this year,” he added, “the party is over.”

Quail outfitters, whose season ends Feb. 22, agreed.

“About 95 percent of our clients used to limit out every day,” said David Harrison, who operates near Midland. “But this year, I would say it’s about 65 percent or less.”

A similar Midland-area assessment came from Mike Bruner, whose company, Outdoor West Texas, manages the hunting operations on more than a dozen ranches.

“We have a ranch south of Midland for blue quail where hunters used to see 50 coveys a day,” he said, “But now they’re down to 15 to 20.

And these are horseback hunters with big running dogs.”

Ranchers, about as far south as you can get in West Texas, are also wondering about blues.

“In a decent year, we ought to find 15 or so coveys a day,” said Ben Love, who has a cattle operation near Marathon. “But everybody I’m talking to is finding four to six coveys a day — about half of what we ought to have.”

Perez, Harrison and Love said the region received rainfall, but not when the quail needed it for breeding.

“We didn’t get general rains in the Trans-Pecos until pretty darn late in the summer,” Love said. “By the time conditions got right, it was in the early fall.”

Harrison agreed.

“We didn’t replace the birds we shot last year,” he said. “We didn’t have proper moisture at the right times and the proper insects.

“Without insects, our birds can’t survive.”

But the mystery transcends common beliefs about quail population and rainfall.

Perez said researchers a few years ago were stumped because they couldn’t figure out why there were declines during periods of suitable habitat.

“They hypothesized that maybe there was a disease that we were not aware of,” he said.

But, he added, nothing conclusive was determined.

The exercise wasn’t useless, however.

Perez said it showed the need for much more research on blue quail, adding that researchers have published about 3,000 studies on bobwhites but far fewer on blues.

Meanwhile, hunters are willing to shoot fewer birds until the blue quail are back on the boom side of the boom-bust cycle.

“People are used to limiting out every day,” Harrison said. “That’s 15 birds. Now people are getting eight to 12 birds a day. But many clients are just happy to be out there.

“People are more interested in the experience.”

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A Academy

FISHING REPORT

HOT BITES

LARGEMOUTH BASS



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

BASTROP: Good on Rat-L-Traps and chartreuse jigs.

BRAUNIG: Good on crankbaits and dark soft plastic worms in the reeds and near the jetty and dam.

GRANBURY: Good on chartreuse soft plastics, spinnerbaits, crankbaits and Rat-L-Traps.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Good on watermelon red lizards on the east end of the lake in 15 feet.

WHITE, HYBRID, STRIPER



BRAUNIG: Striped bass are excellent on liver and shad at Dead Tree Point and down rigging silver and gold spoons and marble spinners near the dam.

RAY ROBERTS: White bass are excellent on jigging spoons (worked slow or dead sticking).

WALTER E. LONG: Hybrid striper are very good on minnows in the cove and at the hot water outlet. White bass are very good on minnows.

GRAPEVINE: White bass are good on slabs.

CATFISH



CALAVERAS: Channel and blue catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp and cheesebait near the railroad trestle and 181 Cove.

BRAUNIG: Channel catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp, cheesebait and cut bait near the spillway and the intake. Blue catfish are good on cut bait.

AMISTAD: Yellow catfish are good on trotlines and droplines baited with live perch.

CRAPPIE



BROWNWOOD: Good on Li'l Fishies and minnows over brush piles in 10-25 feet.

LIVINGSTON: Very good on minnows.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Good on minnows near the dam in 15-20 feet.

RAY ROBERTS: Good on 1/16 oz. jigs and Road Runners walking the creek banks.

WALTER E. LONG: Good on red wigglers.

ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 51 degrees; 0.13' low. Black bass are fair on black/blue jigs or live baits suspended in trees. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on live baits.

AMISTAD: Water clear; 58 degrees; 1.66' high. Black bass are good on slabs, crankbaits and soft plastic worms. Striped bass are fair on slabs, crankbaits and grubs. White bass are fair on slabs and crankbaits. Catfish are fair on shrimp, nightcrawlers, chicken livers and cheese-bait in 60-90 feet.

ATHENS: Water lightly stained, 48-53 degrees; 0.56' low. Black bass are fair on crankbaits, white spinnerbaits and black/blue jig with matching trailers. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on nightcrawlers and cut bait.

BASTROP: Water lightly stained. Crappie are good on minnows over brush piles in 15-20 feet. Channel and blue catfish are fair on stinkbait and liver. Yellow catfish are slow.

BELTON: Water clear; 60 degrees; 2.74' low. Black bass are slow. Hybrid striper are good on live shad. White bass are fair on minnows. Crappie are good on minnows at night. Channel and blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with frozen shad. Yellow catfish are fair on trotlines baited with live perch.

BRAUNIG: Water stained; 62 degrees. Redfish are slow. Channel catfish are excellent on liver, shrimp, cheesebait and cut bait near the spillway and the intake. Blue catfish are good on cut bait.

BROWNWOOD: Water stained; 51 degrees; 4.98' low. Black bass are good on chartreuse jigs, crankbaits and watermelon/gold 4" worms in 10-25 feet. Hybrid striper are slow. White bass are slow. Channel catfish are good on stinkbait, minnows and frozen shrimp in 10-20 feet. Yellow catfish are slow.

CADDO: Water off-color; 48-54 degrees; 0.55' high. Black bass are good on jigs, chrome Rat-L-Traps and flukes fished around vegetation and trees. Crappie are fair on red/white or red/green jigs in Big Cypress channel near Johnson's Ranch. No reports on white bass or catfish.

CALAVERAS: Water stained; 62 degrees. Black bass are good on dark soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits and crankbaits around reed beds and near the dam. Striped bass are slow. Redfish are slow. Crappie are slow. Yellow catfish are slow.

CANYON LAKE: Water clear; 59 degrees; 11.19' low. Striped bass are fair jigging Pirk Minnows and trolling Gizz 4s and Shad Raps on down riggers in the lower end of the lake over humps in 40-60 feet. White bass are fair and small on blade baits along main lake bluffs. Smallmouth bass are very good on tomato red and smoke/red flake tubes on jigheads and smoke drop shot worms along main lake points and bluffs. Crappie are slow. Channel catfish are slow. Yellow and blue catfish are slow.

CHOKE CANYON: Water clear; 62 degrees; 5.33' low. Black bass to 7 pounds are good on heavy jigs and large soft plastic lizards in the grass and fair on crankbaits. White bass are fair on minnows upriver. Crappie are slow but some large ones caught on minnows. Drum are fair on live worms. Channel and blue catfish are good on punchbait in 2-7 feet. Yellow catfish are slow.

COLEMAN: Water clear; 60 degrees; 5.83' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon and dark red soft plastics, Rat-L-Traps and crankbaits. Hybrid striper are fair on minnows. Crappie are good on minnows and white tube jigs. Channel and blue catfish are good on stinkbait, liver and frozen shrimp. Yellow catfish are slow.

COLETO CREEK: Water clear; 74 degrees (81 degrees at discharge); 3.57' low. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows in 10-16 feet. Channel and blue catfish are fair on trotlines baited with liver and nightcrawlers. Yellow catfish are fair on trotlines baited with live perch.

COLORADO CITY: Water clear; 48 degrees; 6.32' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are slow. White bass are slow. Catfish are slow.

COLORADO RIVER (Above Lake Buchanan): Water clear. Black bass are slow. Striped bass are slow. White bass are fair on minnows and slabs. Crappie are fair on minnows. Catfish are fair on nightcrawlers, stinkbait and frozen shrimp in deep holes.

CONROE: Water murky; 1.07' low. Black bass are fair on tequila sunrise and pumpkinseed soft plastics, crankbaits and spinnerbaits in 15-25 feet. Striped bass

are fair on minnows. Crappie are fair on minnows. Catfish are good on stinkbait, nightcrawlers and frozen shrimp.

COOPER: Water lightly stained; 47-53 degrees; 6.16' low. Black bass are fair on Texas-rigged blue fleck worms, drop shot rigs and slow-rolled spinnerbaits. Crappie are fair to good on jigs and minnows over brush piles. White bass are good on slabs. Hybrid striper are fair to good on slabs and live shad. Catfish are fair on nightcrawlers and prepared bait.

FAIRFIELD: Water fairly clear; 76-88 degrees. Bass are moving toward banks and are fair to good on Carolina-rigged flukes and shad-colored crankbaits.

FALCON: Water clear; 62 degrees. Black bass are good on spinnerbaits. Striped bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Channel and blue catfish are good on shrimp and cut bait. Yellow catfish are slow.

FAYETTE: Water clear; 61 degrees. Black bass are fair on Carolina-rigged soft plastics and Rat-L-Traps. Channel and blue catfish are slow.

FORK: Water lightly stained; 48-54 degrees; 0.81' low. Black bass are fair on black/blue jigs around wood in the mouths of coves


2.54' low. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits and Texas-rigged 7" purple worms. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair on live minnows and slabs. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers and prepared bait.

LAKE O' THE PINES: Water stained; 47-53 degrees; 0.51' high. Black bass are slow to fair on Texas rigs, weightless flukes or 5" Yum Dingers and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are good on nightcrawlers and cut shad. Bream are fair on red wigglers.

LAVON: Water stained; 48-54 degrees; 4.43' low. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, spinnerbaits and shallow running crankbaits. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs around bridge columns. Catfish are fair to good on cut shad and nightcrawlers.

LBJ: Water stained; 60 degrees; 0.16' low. Black bass are fair to good on black/blue Curb's jigs and green pumpkin tubes on docks. Striped bass are slow. White bass are fair to good on silver Pirk Minnows and Spoiler Shads in the channel near the power plant. Crappie are fair on minnows in brush piles under heated docks. Channel catfish are fair on minnows and nightcrawlers. Yellow and blue catfish are slow.

Hot Spot



WHITNEY

Water clear; 9.69' low. Black bass are good on watermelon soft plastics, spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Striped bass are fair on minnows and white striper jigs. White bass are fair on minnows. Crappie are good on minnows. Catfish are good on frozen shrimp, liver and stinkbait. Clay Yadon with Reel Deal Guide Service (817-219-3707), after fishing one morning last week, said the fishing is great on Lake Whitney. "It was excellent, had a nice limit of stripers," he said. He is working shad imitations under birds in 25-35 feet of water, letting the lure sink to the bottom and retrieving it slowly. He advised boaters to kill their motors before drifting to fish, from upwind, to avoid spooking stripers.

and white/chartreuse spinnerbaits along main lake grass lines. Crappie are fair on minnows and small jigs under main lake bridges and around brush piles. Catfish are good on prepared bait along creeks.

GIBBONS CREEK: Water clear. Black bass are fair on watermelon soft plastics, spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows. Catfish are good on frozen shrimp and liver.

GRANBURY: Water clear; 2.35' low. Black bass are good on chartreuse soft plastics, spinnerbaits, crankbaits and Rat-L-Traps. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows and blue tube jigs. Catfish are good on frozen shrimp and stinkbait.

GRAPEVINE: Water off-color; 48-53 degrees; 7.16' low. Black bass are fair on jigs, Texas rigs, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair to good on cut bait and nightcrawlers.

GREENBELT: Water stained; 42 degrees; 28.61' low. Black bass are slow on black/blue jigs or live baits suspended in trees and on shad-colored crankbaits along secondary points. Crappie are fair on jigs and minnows. White bass are fair on live baits and silver crankbaits. Smallmouth bass are slow on live baits. Walleye are fair on live baits and crankbaits. Catfish are fair on cut and live baits.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water stained; 56 degrees; 0.64' high. Crappie are good on minnows near the dam in 15-20 feet. Bream are fair on live worms near grass beds. Channel and blue catfish are slow.

HUBBARD CREEK: Water lightly stained; 50 degrees; 2.70' low. Black bass are fair on slow-rolled white spinnerbaits along secondary points and through deeper timber and on live baits. Crappie are fair on jigs and minnows. White bass and hybrid stripers are fair on live baits and crankbaits. Catfish are good on live baits.

JOE POOL: Water off-color; 48-53 degrees;

Lewisville: Water off-color; 47-53 degrees; 3.92' low. Black bass are slow on pumpkin tubes pitched to standing timber and shad pattern crankbaits along the old dam riprap. White bass are fair on slabs in 15-25 feet. Catfish are good on cut shad under trees where cormorants are roosting.

LIVINGSTON: Water fairly clear; 58 degrees; 0.18' high. Black bass are fair to good on spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Striped bass are fair on Rat-L-Traps and Charlie slabs. White bass are slow. Blue catfish are good on trotlines baited with shad. Yellow catfish are slow.

MEREDITH: Water stained; 43 degrees; 74.13' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored crankbaits, spinnerbaits and minnows around rocky humps and secondary points. Crappie are fair on jigs and minnows. White bass are fair on live baits and black back/silver crankbaits. Smallmouth bass are slow on live baits and crankbaits. Walleye are fair on live baits. Channel catfish are fair on live baits.

MONTICELLO: Water fairly clear; 75-88 degrees; 0.3' low. Black bass are fair to good on topwaters early, later switching to weightless flukes, Texas rigs, spinnerbaits and chrome Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are good on minnows. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait.

NAVARRO MILLS: Water murky; 50 degrees; 2.94' low. Black bass are good on slabs near the dam. White bass are slow. Crappie are good on minnows near the dam in brush piles in 8-10 feet. Channel and blue catfish are fair on shrimp and cheese bait near the dam. Yellow catfish are slow.

O.H. IVIE: Water lightly stained; 51 degrees; 12.02' low. Black bass are fair on shad-colored crankbaits worked along secondary points and live baits along drop-offs and humps. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Smallmouth bass are fair on live baits. Channel catfish are good on prepared and live baits.

OAK CREEK: Water lightly stained; 47

degrees; 2.82' low. Black bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on shad.

PALESTINE: Water lightly stained; 47-53 degrees; 0.23' low. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, jigs and crankbaits. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair on prepared bait. Bream are fair on worms. Hybrid striper and white bass are fair to good on slabs.

POSSUM KINGDOM: Water stained; 54 degrees; 2.63' low. Black bass are fair on brown/red jigs along creek channel bends and main lake points in 15-22 feet depth. Crappie are fair on small white jigs and minnows worked along wood structures. White bass are fair on silver spoons or slabs along the river channel suspended in 20-30 feet depth on the North end of the reservoir. Catfish are good on live shad, cut baits and cut liver in the Rock Creek area.

RAY HUBBARD: Water off-color; 46-53 degrees; 1.34' low. Black bass are slow on spinnerbaits, crankbaits and Texas-rigged worms. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs at the fishing barges and around bridge columns. White bass are fair to good on white or chartreuse slabs and Humdingers. Hybrid striper are fair on slabs. Catfish are fair on prepared bait.

RAY ROBERTS: Water murky; 46-50 degrees; 1.34' low. Black bass are slow on jigs and XCalibur suspending jerkbaits. No reports on catfish.

RICHLAND CHAMBERS: Water off-color; 46-52 degrees; 4.39' low. Black bass are good on Texas-rigged watermelon worms in the creek channels and off secondary points and on black/blue jigs or Texas rigs around docks. White bass and hybrid striper are good on white/chartreuse and chartreuse slabs on main lake humps and secondary points. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs around deep-water trees. Catfish are good on juglines with live perch set off the main creek channels and flats.

SAM RAYBURN: Water lightly stained; 62 degrees; 6.63' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon soft plastics, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. White bass are fair on live minnows and white tube jigs. Crappie are fair on minnows and white tube jigs. Bream are fair on worms. Catfish are good on frozen shrimp and nightcrawlers.

STAMFORD: Water lightly stained; 49 degrees; 2.18' low. Black bass are fair on live baits along secondary points. Crappie are fair on live baits and jigs. White and striped bass are fair on live baits. Catfish are fair on shad and minnows.

STILLHOUSE: Water clear; 53 degrees; 4.89' low. Black bass are fair on minnows and watermelon seed worms. White bass are slow. Crappie are slow. Carp are good on corn in 20 feet. Channel and blue catfish are fair on nightcrawlers. Yellow catfish are slow.

TAWAKONI: Water lightly stained; 47-53 degrees; 4.75' low. Black bass are fair on spinnerbaits, jigs and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair on minnows. White bass are fair on slabs. Striped bass and hybrid striper are fair on live shad and slabs. Catfish are fair on prepared bait.

TEXOMA: Water off-color; 46-52 degrees; 0.55' low. Black bass are fair on chatterbaits, spinnerbaits, crankbaits and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. Striped bass are fair to good on live shad and Storm WildEyes. Catfish are fair to good on chartreuse (use Worm-Glo) nightcrawlers and cut shad.

TOLEDO BEND: Water clear; 61 degrees; 3.38' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon red soft plastics, spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Striped bass are slow. White bass are slow. Crappie are fair on minnows over brush piles. Bream are fair on worms. Channel and blue catfish are good on liver, frozen shrimp and stinkbait. Yellow catfish are slow.

TRAVIS: Water clear; 57 degrees; 25.41' low. Black bass are fair on brown jigs, green pumpkin worms and smoke grubs in 28-40 feet. Striped bass are slow. White bass are good on silver jigging spoons and white grubs in 28-45 feet. Crappie are fair on minnows and white tube jigs in 25-45 feet. Channel and blue catfish are fair on minnows and fresh cut bait in 32-48 feet. Yellow catfish are slow.

WALTER E. LONG: Water stained; 61 degrees. Black bass are slow. Channel and blue catfish are good on nightcrawlers. Yellow catfish are slow.

WRIGHT PATMAN: Water lightly stained; 48-54 degrees; 3.96' high. Black bass are fair flukes, Texas rigs and slow rolled spinnerbaits. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait and cut shad.

SALTWATER SCENE

NORTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good in the deeper bayous on scented baits. Trout and redfish are good in the river on shad. Cold weather should push fish to deep holes.

SOUTH SABINE: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell and pods of shad. Bull redfish are good at the jetty on crabs and shrimp. Trout are good on the edge of the channel on live bait.

BOLIVAR: Trout are fair to good in the deep holes on natural baits. Redfish are good in Rollover Pass on natural baits. Tides are below normal.

TRINITY BAY: Trout are fair to good while working pods of mullet. Redfish are fair to good around the spillway and in the marsh on natural baits. Tides are well below normal due to north winds.

EAST GALVESTON BAY: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell in 4-8 feet of water on soft plastics. Redfish are good in cuts and sloughs leading to the marsh. Tides are below normal.

WEST GALVESTON BAY: Trout are fair to good while drifting shell and mud. Waders have taken better trout on Corkies in the mud. Bull redfish and sharks have been taken at the jetty on a variety of natural baits.

TEXAS CITY: Flounder are fair to good on the drop-offs adjacent to the channel. Best baits have been mud minnows, Gulps and jigs tipped with shrimp. Redfish are fair to good in Moses Lake on mullet and shrimp.

FREEPORT: Bull redfish are good at the jetty on shrimp and crabs. Sand trout and whiting are fair to good at San Luis Pass and the mouth of Cold Pass on soft plastics tipped with shrimp and peeled shrimp.

EAST MATAGORDA: Trout are fair to good while drifting over shell. Waders have taken better trout on the edge of muddy reefs. Tides are well below normal.

MATAGORDA: Trout are fair to good while drifting mud and shell on Gulps under popping corks. Redfish are fair on the south shoreline of West Bay in the guts and cuts on Bass Assassins, Sand Eels and Trout Killers.

PORT O'CONNOR: Bull redfish are good at the jetty on crabs, finger mullet and live shrimp. Trout are good over shell and mud in San Antonio Bay on soft plastics and live shrimp. Redfish are good in the channels and deep bayous on shrimp.

ROCKPORT: Trout are fair to good over shell and mud for waders working Corkies, MirrOlures and soft plastics in Copano Bay. Redfish are good on live shrimp under a cork while drifting the edges of the Estes Flats. Redfish are good in California Hole on mullet and shrimp.

PORT ARANSAS: Bull redfish are good at the jetty and on the edge of the Intracoastal on crabs, finger mullet, cut-bait and fresh table shrimp. Whiting, sand trout and sheepshead are good around the rocks on shrimp. A few black drum are beginning to show.

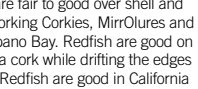
CORPUS CHRISTI: Redfish are good on shrimp on the edges of the spoils in the Intracoastal and in the Humble Channel. Trout are fair to good from the piers at night on live bait.


BAFFIN BAY: Trout are fair to good under lights at night in the Land Cut on live shrimp and glow plastics. Trout are fair to good on the edge of the channel and spoils on plastics, Gulps, Corkies and MirrOlures.

PORT MANSFIELD: Trout are good around rafts of mullet on Corkies, MirrOlures and sus-pending baits. Redfish are good around East Cut on mullet and other natural baits. Redfish are good on the channel on mullet.


SOUTH PADRE: Trout, redfish and black drum are fair to good on the edge of the flats on shrimp and Gulps. Snook and mangrove snapper are good in the Brownsville Ship Channel on shrimp and DOA Shrimp.

PORT ISABEL: Trout are good on deeper flats and along channel edges on DOA Shrimp and Gulps. Redfish are good around the spoils on live shrimp, Gulps and DOA Shrimp under popping corks.





TEXAS' LARGEST SALTWATER BOAT SELECTION!




Corpus Christi
800 622-2449
Hitchcock
281 779-0500

BLUE★WAVE 2400 Pure Bay


SHEARWATER 2400Z

STERLING 180TX


SEA HUNT U232



GCMboats.com

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GCMboats.com

YAMAHA

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Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2009

Tides															
		High	Low	High	Low			High	Low	High	Low	High	Low		
Sabine Pass						Freeport						Corpus Christi			
1/21	3:17 p.m.	6:28 a.m.	---	---	---	1/21	3:18 p.m.	5:58 a.m.	---	---	---	1/21	3:26 p.m.	5:36 a.m.	---
1/22	3:50 p.m.	7:08 a.m.	---	---	---	1/22	3:51 p.m.	6:38 a.m.	---	---	---	1/22	3:59 p.m.	6:16 a.m.	---
1/23	4:10 p.m.	7:46 a.m.	10:37 p.m.	8:41 p.m.	1/23	4:11 p.m.	7:16 a.m.	10:38 p.m.	8:11 p.m.	1/23	4:19 p.m.	6:54 a.m.	10:46 p.m.	7:49 p.m.	---
1/24	4:22 p.m.	8:20 a.m.	11:34 p.m.	8:04 p.m.	1/24	4:23 p.m.	7:50 a.m.	11:35 p.m.	7:34 p.m.	1/24	4:31 p.m.	7:28 a.m.	11:43 p.m.	7:12 p.m.	---
1/25	4:34 p.m.	8:51 a.m.	---	8:31 p.m.	1/25	4:35 p.m.	8:21 a.m.	---	8:01 p.m.	1/25	4:43 p.m.	7:59 a.m.	---	7:39 p.m.	---
1/26	12:21 a.m.	9:21 a.m.	4:49 p.m.	9:15 p.m.	1/26	12:22 a.m.	8:51 a.m.	4:50 p.m.	8:45 p.m.	1/26	12:30 a.m.	8:29 a.m.	4:58 p.m.	8:23 p.m.	---
1/27	1:09 a.m.	9:50 a.m.	5:05 p.m.	10:03 p.m.	1/27	1:10 a.m.	9:20 a.m.	5:06 p.m.	9:33 p.m.	1/27	1:18 a.m.	8:58 a.m.	5:14 p.m.	9:11 p.m.	---
1/28	2:04 a.m.	10:19 a.m.	5:20 p.m.	10:52 p.m.	1/28	2:05 a.m.	9:49 a.m.	5:21 p.m.	10:22 p.m.	1/28	2:13 a.m.	9:27 a.m.	5:29 p.m.	10:00 p.m.	---
1/29	3:14 a.m.	10:49 a.m.	5:32 p.m.	11:41 p.m.	1/29	3:15 a.m.	10:19 a.m.	5:33 p.m.	11:11 p.m.	1/29	3:23 a.m.	9:57 a.m.	5:41 p.m.	10:49 p.m.	---
1/30	4:44 a.m.	11:21 a.m.	5:39 p.m.	---	1/30	4:45 a.m.	10:51 a.m.	5:40 p.m.	11:59 p.m.	1/30	4:53 a.m.	10:29 a.m.	5:48 p.m.	11:37 p.m.	---
1/31	6:33 a.m.	12:29 a.m.	5:35 p.m.	11:56 a.m.	1/31	6:34 a.m.	11:26 a.m.	5:36 p.m.	---	1/31	6:42 a.m.	11:25 a.m.	5:23 p.m.	---	---
2/1	8:35 a.m.	1:20 a.m.	5:17 p.m.	12:35 p.m.	2/1	8:36 a.m.	12:50 a.m.	5:18 p.m.	12:05 p.m.	2/1	8:44 a.m.	12:28 a.m.	5:26 p.m.	11:43 a.m.	---
2/2	4:43 p.m.	2:16 a.m.	---	---	2/2	4:44 p.m.	1:46 a.m.	---	---	2/2	4:52 p.m.	1:24 a.m.	---	---	---
2/3	3:56 p.m.	3:18 a.m.	---	---	2/3	3:57 p.m.	2:48 a.m.	---	---	2/3	4:05 p.m.	2:26 a.m.	---	---	---
2/4	1:34 p.m.	4:23 a.m.	---	---	2/4	1:35 p.m.	3:53 a.m.	---	---	2/4	1:43 p.m.	3:31 a.m.	---	---	---
2/5	2:15 p.m.	5:28 a.m.	---	---	2/5	2:16 p.m.	4:58 a.m.	---	---	2/5	2:24 p.m.	4:36 a.m.	---	---	---
2/6	2:50 p.m.	6:31 a.m.	9:48 p.m.	7:25 p.m.	2/6	2:51 p.m.	6:01 a.m.	9:49 p.m.	6:55 p.m.	2/6	2:59 p.m.	5:39 a.m.	9:57 p.m.	6:33 p.m.	---
2/7	3:20 p.m.	7:30 a.m.	11:25 p.m.	7:48 p.m.	2/7	3:21 p.m.	7:00 a.m.	11:26 p.m.	7:18 p.m.	2/7	3:29 p.m.	6:38 a.m.	11:34 p.m.	6:56 p.m.	---
2/8	3:46 p.m.	8:25 a.m.	---	8:31 p.m.	2/8	3:47 p.m.	7:55 a.m.	---	8:01 p.m.	2/8	3:55 p.m.	7:33 a.m.	---	7:39 p.m.	---
2/9	12:45 a.m.	9:16 a.m.	4:09 p.m.	9:20 p.m.	2/9	12:46 a.m.	8:46 a.m.	4:10 p.m.	8:50 p.m.	2/9	12:54 a.m.	8:24 a.m.	3:57 p.m.	8:28 p.m.	---
2/10	2:02 a.m.	10:04 a.m.	4:29 p.m.	10:14 p.m.	2/10	2:03 a.m.	9:34 a.m.	4:30 p.m.	9:44 p.m.	2/10	2:11 a.m.	9:12 a.m.	4:38 p.m.	9:22 p.m.	---
Port Bolivar						Pass Cavallo						South Padre Island			
1/21	5:32 p.m.	7:15 a.m.	---	---	1/21	4:35 p.m.	5:46 a.m.	---	---	1/21	4:08 p.m.	5:31 a.m.	---	---	---
1/22	6:05 p.m.	7:55 a.m.	---	---	1/22	5:08 p.m.	6:26 a.m.	---	---	1/22	4:48 p.m.	6:21 a.m.	---	---	---
1/23	6:25 p.m.	8:33 a.m.	---	9:28 p.m.	1/23	5:28 p.m.	7:04 a.m.	11:55 p.m.	7:59 p.m.	1/23	5:24 p.m.	7:05 a.m.	---	---	---
1/24	12:52 a.m.	9:07 a.m.	6:37 p.m.	8:51 p.m.	1/24	5:40 p.m.	7:38 a.m.	---	7:22 p.m.	1/24	5:52 p.m.	7:44 a.m.	---	---	---
1/25	1:49 a.m.	9:38 a.m.	6:49 p.m.	9:18 p.m.	1/25	12:52 a.m.	8:09 a.m.	5:52 p.m.	7:49 p.m.	1/25	6:07 p.m.	8:17 a.m.	---	---	---
1/26	2:36 a.m.	10:08 a.m.	7:04 p.m.	10:02 p.m.	1/26	1:39 a.m.	8:39 a.m.	6:07 p.m.	8:33 p.m.	1/26	6:10 p.m.	8:48 a.m.	---	---	---
1/27	3:24 a.m.	10:37 a.m.	7:20 p.m.	10:50 p.m.	1/27	2:27 a.m.	9:08 a.m.	6:23 p.m.	9:21 p.m.	1/27	6:06 p.m.	9:18 a.m.	---	---	---
1/28	4:19 a.m.	11:06 a.m.	7:35 p.m.	11:39 p.m.	1/28	3:22 a.m.	9:37 a.m.	6:38 p.m.	10:10 p.m.	1/28	5:57 p.m.	9:49 a.m.	---	11:08 p.m.	---
1/29	5:29 a.m.	11:36 a.m.	7:47 p.m.	---	1/29	4:32 a.m.	10:07 a.m.	6:50 p.m.	10:59 p.m.	1/29	2:35 a.m.	10:23 a.m.	5:46 p.m.	11:28 p.m.	---
1/30	6:59 a.m.	12:28 a.m.	7:54 p.m.	12:08 p.m.	1/30	6:02 a.m.	10:39 a.m.	6:57 p.m.	11:47 p.m.	1/30	4:22 a.m.	11:02 a.m.	5:32 p.m.	11:59 p.m.	---
1/31	8:48 a.m.	1:16 a.m.	7:50 p.m.	12:43 p.m.	1/31	7:51 a.m.	11:14 a.m.	6:53 p.m.	---	1/31	6:24 a.m.	11:48 a.m.	5:12 p.m.	---	---
2/1	10:50 a.m.	2:07 a.m.	7:32 p.m.	1:22 p.m.	2/1	9:53 a.m.	12:38 a.m.	6:35 p.m.	11:53 a.m.	2/1	8:55 a.m.	12:40 a.m.	4:32 p.m.	12:49 p.m.	---
2/2	6:58 p.m.	3:03 a.m.	---	---	2/2	6:01 p.m.	1:34 a.m.	---	---	2/2	11:51 a.m.	1:30 a.m.	---	---	---
2/3	6:11 p.m.	4:05 a.m.	---	---	2/3	5:14 p.m.	2:36 a.m.	---	6:43 p.m.	2/3	1:28 p.m.	2:29 a.m.	---	---	---
2/4	3:49 p.m.	5:10 a.m.	---	---	2/4	2:52 p.m.	3:41 a.m.	---	---	2/4	2:28 p.m.	3:33 a.m.	---	---	---
2/5	4:30 p.m.	6:15 a.m.	---	---	2/5	3:33 p.m.	4:46 a.m.	---	---	2/5	3:20 p.m.	4:39 a.m.	---	---	---
2/6	5:05 p.m.	7:18 a.m.	---	8:12 p.m.	2/6	4:08 p.m.	5:49 a.m.	11:06 p.m.	7:06 p.m.	2/6	4:05 p.m.	5:43 a.m.	---	---	---
2/7	12:03 a.m.	8:17 a.m.	5:35 p.m.	8:35 p.m.	2/7	4:38 p.m.	6:48 a.m.	---	---	2/7	4:39 p.m.	6:43 a.m.	---	---	---
2/8	1:40 a.m.	9:12 a.m.	6:01 p.m.	9:18 p.m.	2/8	12:43 a.m.	7:43 a.m.	5:04 p.m.	7:49 p.m.	2/8	4:57 p.m.	7:39 a.m.	11:10 p.m.	9:06 p.m.	---
2/9	3:00 a.m.	10:03 a.m.	6:24 p.m.	10:07 p.m.	2/9	2:03 a.m.	8:34 a.m.	5:27 p.m.	8:38 p.m.	2/9	5:02 p.m.	8:32 a.m.	---	9:08 p.m.	---
2/10	4:17 a.m.	10:51 a.m.	6:44 p.m.	11:01 p.m.	2/10	3:20 a.m.	9:22 a.m.	5:47 p.m.	9:32 p.m.	2/10	1:13 a.m.	9:23 a.m.	4:58 p.m.	9:40 p.m.	---
San Luis Pass						Port O'Connor						Port Isabel			
1/21	4:26 p.m.	6:57 a.m.	---	---	1/21	8:27 p.m.	9:05 a.m.	---	---	1/21	4:25 p.m.	6:07 a.m.	---	---	---
1/22	4:59 p.m.	7:37 a.m.	---	---	1/22	9:10 p.m.	9:58 a.m.	---	---	1/22	4:58 p.m.	6:47 a.m.	---	---	---
1/23	5:19 p.m.	8:15 a.m.	11:46 p.m.	9:10 p.m.	1/23	9:59 p.m.	10:46 a.m.	---	---	1/23	5:18 p.m.	7:25 a.m.	11:45 p.m.	8:20 p.m.	---
1/24	5:31 p.m.	8:49 a.m.	---	8:33 p.m.	1/24	10:52 p.m.	11:29 a.m.	---	---	1/24	5:30 p.m.	7:59 a.m.	---	7:43 p.m.	---
1/25	12:43 a.m.	9:20 a.m.	5:43 p.m.	9:00 p.m.	1/25	11:49 p.m.	12:06 p.m.	---	---	1/25	12:42 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	5:42 p.m.	8:10 p.m.	---
1/26	1:30 a.m.	9:50 a.m.	5:58 p.m.	9:44 p.m.	1/26	---	12:38 p.m.	---	---	1/26	1:29 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	5:57 p.m.	8:54 p.m.	---
1/27	2:18 a.m.	10:19 a.m.	6:14 p.m.	10:32 p.m.	1/27	12:53 a.m.	1:07 p.m.	---	---	1/27	2:17 a.m.	9:29 a.m.	6:13 p.m.	9:42 p.m.	---
1/28	3:13 a.m.	10:48 a.m.	6:29 p.m.	11:21 p.m.	1/28	2:26 a.m.	1:32 p.m.	---	---	1/28	3:12 a.m.	9:58 a.m.	6:28 p.m.	10:31 p.m.	---
1/29	4:23 a.m.	11:18 a.m.	6:41 p.m.	---	1/29	4:21 a.m.	1:51 p.m.	10:15 p.m.	---	1/29	4:22 a.m.	10:28 a.m.	6:40 p.m.	11:20 p.m.	---
1/30	5:53 a.m.	12:10 a.m.	6:48 p.m.	11:50 a.m.	1/30	6:22 a.m.	1:00 a.m.	8:10 p.m.	1:54 p.m.	1/30	5:52 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	6:47 p.m.	---	---
1/31	7:42 a.m.	12:58 a.m.	6:44 p.m.	12:25 p.m.	1/31	9:13 a.m.	2:17 a.m.	6:45 p.m.	12:46 p.m.	1/31	7:41 a.m.	12:08 a.m.	6:43 p.m.	11:35 a.m.	---
2/1	9:44 a.m.	1:49 a.m.	6:26 p.m.	1:04 p.m.	2/1	6:13 p.m.	3:20 a.m.	---	---	2/1	9:43 a.m.	12:59 a.m.	6:25 p.m.	12:14 p.m.	---
2/2	5:52 p.m.	2:45 a.m.	---	---	2/2	6:26 p.m.	4:27 a.m.	---	---	2/2	5:51 p.m.	1:55 a.m.	---	---	---
2/3	5:05 p.m.	3:47 a.m.	---	---	2/3	7:03 p.m.	5:40 a.m.	---	---	2/3	5:04 p.m.	2:57 a.m.	---	---	---
2/4	2:43 p.m.	4:52 a.m.	---	---	2/4	7:50 p.m.	6:56 a.m.	---	---	2/4	2:42 p.m.	4:02 a.m.	---	---	---
2/5	3:24 p.m.	5:57 a.m.	---	---	2/5	8:46 p.m.	8:10 a.m.	---	---	2/5	3:23 p.m.	5:07 a.m.	---	---	---
2/6	3:59 p.m.	7:00 a.m.	10:57 p.m.	7:54 p.m.	2/6	9:49 p.m.	9:17 a.m.	---	---	2/6	3:58 p.m.	6:10 a.m.	10:56 p.m.	7:04 p.m.	---
2/7	4:29 p.m.	7:59 a.m.	---	8:17 p.m.	2/7	11:05 p.m.	10:16 a.m.	---	---	2/7	4:28 p.m.	7:09 a.m.	---	7:27 p.m.	---
2/8	12:34 a.m.	8:54 a.m.	4:55 p.m.	9:00 p.m.	2/8	---	11:09 a.m.	---	---	2/8	12:33 a.m.	8:04 a.m.	4:54 p.m.	8:10 p.m.	---
2/9	1:54 a.m.	9:45 a.m.	5:18 p.m.	9:49 p.m.	2/9	12:55 a.m.	11:55 a.m.	---	---	2/9	1:53 a.m.	8:55 a.m.	5:17 p.m.	8:59 p.m.	---
2/10	3:11 a.m.	10:33 a.m.	5:38 p.m.	10:43 p.m.	2/10	3:11 a.m.	12:36 p.m.	---	---	2/10	3:10 a.m.	9:43 a.m.	5:37 p.m.	9:53 p.m.	---

Moon Phases									
New 		First 		Full 		Last 			
Jan 26		Feb 2		Feb 9		Feb 16			

OUTDOOR DATEBOOK

Jan. 30-Feb. 8
Dallas Winter Boat Show
Market Hall
(469) 549-0673
dallasboatshow.net

Jan. 31
Hill Country Safari Club International
Fundraiser dinner
YO Ranch Resort Hotel in Kerrville
(830) 896-6714
ward@omniglobal.net

Texas Hill Country
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Big Game Banquet
Community Center in Georgetown
(512) 260-3003



Gulf Coast National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Doyle Convention Center in Texas City
(281) 534-2890

Feb. 5
Erath County National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
City Limits in Stephenville
(972) 533-5512
danoprice86@gmail.com



Feb. 6
Victoria Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Big Game Banquet
(361) 578-0082

Dripping Springs National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Cabela's in Buda
(512) 262-7443
hruiz@austin.rr.com

Feb. 7
Ducks Unlimited

Puddle for the Ducks Bike Ride
Sun & Ski Sports at Katy Mills Mall in Katy
(713) 669-9810
duguy@hal-pc.org

Bass Champs Central Region
Tournament
Lake Travis at Pace Bend Park
(817) 439-3274
basschamps.com

Tomball Toms National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
VFW in Tomball
(281) 806-9066
jrw1217@gmail.com

Borger Ducks Unlimited
Fundraiser dinner
(806) 273-2200

Feb. 9
Wildlife Practices Workshop
For Bastrop and Caldwell county landowners
Lower Colorado River Authority
McKinney Roughs Nature Park in Cedar Creek
(512) 332-7280
mltpwd@onr.com

Feb. 12-14
Big Country Celebrity Quail Hunt
Abilene
(325) 677-6815
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Feb. 12
Dallas Safari Club
Monthly meeting
Embassy Suites Outdoor World in Grapevine
(469) 484-6776
debi@biggame.org

Hill Country National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Gillespie County Fairgrounds in Fredericksburg
(830) 990-2070
fbgtx@yahoo.com

Washington County National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Washington County Fairgrounds
Event Center in Brenham
(979) 830-1619
nwinkelmann@msn.com

Feb. 13
Texas Deer Association
Superior Genetics Whitetail Deer Auction
San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo
(210) 767-8300
texasdeerassociation.com



Brazos Valley Ducks Unlimited
Fundraiser dinner
The Brazos Center in Bryan
(979) 255-8507
m-jones@ttimail.tamu.edu

Lake Proctor Comanche Ducks Unlimited
Fundraiser dinner
Melody Oaks Ranch in Priddy
(254) 485-0389

Feb. 14
Rockport Rio's National Wild Turkey Federation
Banquet
Paws & Taws
(361) 729-8130
henryharris@charter.net

Bass Champs North Region
Tournament
Richland Chambers Reservoir at Oak Cove
(817) 439-3274
basschamps.com

Feb. 19
Lufkin Ducks Unlimited
Fundraiser dinner
Lufkin Civic Center
(936) 639-8182

River City National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
New Braunfels Civic Center
(830) 629-3521

Feb. 20
Houston National Wild

Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Westchase Hilton
(832) 492-1400
sdp_ironhorse@sbcglobal.net

Feb. 21
Bass Champs South Region
Tournament
Lake Amistad
(817) 439-3274
www.basschamps.com

Feb. 24
Texas Trout Series
Tournament
Port Aransas
troutseries.com

Feb. 26
Corpus Christi National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Ortiz Center
(361) 548-4640
kalbrecht@grandecom.net

Montgomery County National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Lone Star Convention Center in Conroe
(936) 756-1707
jalpha640@yahoo.com

Feb. 27-Mar. 1
South Texas Boat, Sport and RV Show
Richard Borchard Regional Fairgrounds in Corpus Christi
(361) 248-4800
mia@showtechnology.com

Feb. 27
Pearland Ducks Unlimited
Fundraiser dinner
Lutheran Church
(281) 997-7351
txdufeather@sbcglobal.net

Cross Timbers National Wild Turkey Federation
Fundraiser dinner
Decatur Civic Center
(940) 627-4200
jbarrow1994@gmail.com

E-mail events to
editor@lonestaroutdoornews.com



MIST MYSTERY: Steam rises from the stacks at the power plant and off the water at Lake Monticello. Photo by Mike Hughs.

Warm water

Continued from Page 1

Lake Monticello, in Northeast Texas, brings out the anglers in bad weather. Most feel fishing is best when it's really cold and the steam is rising off the lake.

"That holds true most of the time," said Gary Johnson, who primarily guides at Lake Fork but spends winter days at Monticello. "But I've had some good days when the sun came out."

Johnson said the lake lost most of its grass five or six years ago and the size of the fish has suffered. "We've caught some 5- and 6-pounders," he said. "But overall the size is down."

The water temperature is 65 degrees at the north end of the lake, but near the discharge it is 76 degrees.

"Some of the fish have finished spawning," he said. "I've seen spawning fish since late December. And I saw some 5- and 6-pounders on the nests."

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Urban

Continued from Page 6

Schwausch, a program specialist for big game, generally recommends three starting points for overpopulated cities: stop feeding, form a committee for working on the problem and investigate deterrents, including removal.

“It took you some time to work up to this problem,” Schwausch said. “It’s going to take some time to work through it.”

Residents can discourage deer by not planting desirable plants. Nurseries can provide information on what deer don’t like.

Cities implementing deer management programs — which may include feeding bans — have had varying degrees of success, Schwausch said.

“Really, it depends on how well organized they are and how dedicated they are to the program,” he said.

Lakeway, outside Austin on the shores of Lake Travis, and Hollywood Park had and still have high deer densities.

The average density in the Hill Country, according to a TPW report published in 2000, is 65 deer per 1,000 acres, which it says is high.

Estimates for Lakeway’s pre-removal deer population weren’t available, but the 3,900-acre city removed 1,450 deer in the first two years of its program. The density of the removed deer was about 371 animals per 1,000 acres.

In the 1999-2000 season Lakeway trapped and relocated 650 deer. The next season, out came 800. Now the city tries to trap 200 to 300 per season.

By the book

TPW requires a permit for removing deer. (No permit is required for deterrence: using nonlethal sprays, noisemakers or other deterrents to shoo deer away.)

The state’s trap, transport and transplant permit is available to any property owner. But it requires that



DEER HAVEN: Deer populations can grow in urban areas because of abundant forage and little pressure from predators, including hunters. As a result, some cities remove deer through trapping to keep herds in check.

at least 10 trapped deer be tested for chronic wasting disease and sets other restrictions.

Applicants for trap, transport and process permits may only be a mayor, city manager, county judge or president of a property owners association.

On the outs

Lakeway hired James Bonds of Dripping Springs to remove its animals. Bonds also works for other cities, including Hollywood Park, and for game ranches.

For Lakeway and Hollywood Park, Bonds electronically lowers drop nets on deer and loads them into a modified trailer. For Lakeway, he transports them to a processing plant in

Johnson City, and the venison goes to charity. Hollywood Park sends its live deer to ranches in West Texas.

Initially, ranchers accepted Lakeway’s live deer, too. But changes in state regulations required ranches to have approved game management plans, and ranches largely quit participating, said Charles Edwards, Lakeway’s mayor from 1999-2003 and the current chairman of the city deer control committee.

“Virtually none of them wanted to spend a bunch of money on a game management plan,” Edwards said.

When ranches took the deer, they paid the trap and transport costs, leaving little expense to the city of Lakeway. Now the city spends about \$200 per deer to have them trapped,

transported and processed.

With all this work, the city’s deer population has dropped to about 500 to 800, Edwards said, though the city has not counted the deer in three or four years. Estimating the population requires 40 to 50 volunteers, is not highly accurate and is not required by TPW for operating a removal program.

“We feel like we have ours under control,” Edwards said.

Making progress

Hollywood Park has removed 1,500 deer over the last six or seven years, Mangum said. Three hundred were removed — taken to ranches — in 2006-2007. Last season 117 were

removed, and this season Mangum aims to remove 50 to 60.

The city of 3,000 people covers only 930 acres. Determining density there is also difficult.

The 300 deer removed in 2006-2007 made up a density of about 322 deer per 1,000 acres, for comparison with the estimates mentioned above.

“We probably had one of the highest concentrations of anywhere around of deer,” Mangum said.

Hollywood Park’s situation is manageable at this point, Mangum said, but trapping will continue.

“If people want to have deer in Hollywood Park, and we haven’t heard anything contrary to that, then we’re going to have to trap,” he said.

Yes, people still want deer in Hollywood Park. Feeding has been banned but not stopped. People who feed deer do not know the adverse effects feeding has on the animals. Overeating corn leads to oral problems, such as lumpy jaw and having teeth worn down too quickly because of the grit they pick up when eating corn off the ground, and gastrointestinal problems.

Residents who feed deer also create problems for trappers, who use feed to attract deer to the traps.

“I have to feed better than they do most of the time,” Mangum said.

Bonds, the trapper, said the seven or eight cities he works with are making progress against their overpopulation problems. And progress does not only mean reduced numbers. Before he began removing deer from Lakeway, the deer had poor coats and skinny bodies, he said.

“It was just a real bad situation,” he said.

After four or five years, the animals’ conditions improved. Their coats became prettier, and weights went up. After those few years into the programs, Bonds thought he had begun catching older does. He realized the does he was catching weren’t older but heavier — by about 20 pounds.

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Geese

Continued from Page 6

trucks were still in the middle of the field a single Canada goose plopped down with the 500 or so fully-flocked decoys. He sat down and started grubbing the snow for left over corn.

“It’s going to be a good day,” Keller yelled.

More geese were soon in the air, and the command to hide the trucks was given.

The hungry birds, all large Canadas, were moving. They looked over the rig and some dove in. The calling was good, and the decoying was better. Watching big Canadas backedpedaling over the decoys kept the group warm.

The geese dropped in steadily for about two hours, and limits of three birds each were easily taken. Then it was time for more scouting, talking and looking.

But the new birds still had not moved in.

“We’re going to have to hunt the same birds and hope they fly earlier in the morning,” Keller said.

The next morning was clear and cold. The guys ran through the same routine and were ready at 9 a.m. But the birds didn’t fly. Keller and Hesby watched flocks on the river.

“They aren’t ready yet; look at them just sitting there,” they commented from the warm truck.

After a long wait, flocks start ed moving about 1 p.m. It wasn’t long before the calling, flagging trio had birds checking out the spread. The RealMotion decoys started to take hold and a group of nine giant Canadas let their feet down for the last time. All nine fell into the decoys from only a few feet above them.

“We got them all, boys. Great shooting,” Keller said.



DROP ZONE: Thousands of Canada geese remain on the Missouri River in South Dakota through the winter despite frigid temperatures. Left, two large geese land in the decoy spread after being called and flagged by Tyson Keller’s hunting party. Limits of Canadas were taken by the group on a minus 12-degree morning. About 180,000 geese remain on about a five-mile stretch of open river, and most other water in the state is frozen, Keller said. Photos by David J. Sams.



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Store

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“I was about to check the bait in the rod that hadn’t had any bites when it bent over in the rod holder.

“I thought it was maybe a 15-pounder at first until it started pulling drag even though it was so far out there. Then it splashed at about 60 yards, and I knew it was something bigger.”

As the fish approached, Williams walked backwards and beached it.

“When I cradled her, she was massive,” he said. “I had to flag a lady down to hold the stringer while I pulled in the other rod.”

He initially thought he would take the fish home and filled a tank he had in the back of his pickup.

“It wasn’t big enough for the fish, though,” he said.

After showing the fish to his wife and family, he called his father.

“My dad asked me, ‘Why don’t you try to find a place for her?’ And he suggested calling Cabela’s,” Williams said. “I talked with Jason in the fishing department, and he said to bring her in. I went to the store, and we put her in the holding tank.”

Christopher White, the aquarium manager, returned to the store Monday and wanted to move the fish into the aquarium.

“The fish is doing great,” White said. “Especially since when it came in it was in such a small tank. It shows how tough those fish are.”

White said he gets some unusual requests from people with fish.

“We don’t take a lot of fish,” he said. “And we don’t pay cash for anything, but we do get calls from people wanting to sell a big bass or other fish. We’re more interested in something unusual or a record fish.”

The favorite fish of customers at the store is another catfish, an 83-pound yellow cat named “Miss Opal.”

“The people really like looking at the really big cats,” White said.

Williams, though, was just happy to catch his first big blue. “I hope the regulations only letting you keep one apply everywhere,” he said. “Everyone should get a chance to catch a fish like this.”

Outdoor News in Brief

Bear hunting OK’d by Kentucky officials

The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife commission approved a bear hunting season in three eastern Kentucky counties, making Kentucky the 28th state offering bear hunting. The two-day season is planned for December.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife officials say years of extensive studies indicate parts of eastern Kentucky are ready for a limited bear season, as more and more black bears are coming into the region from surrounding states.

Ten bears may be harvested during the season.

—Staff report

Apprentice licenses offered in Arizona

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is offering a new, free Apprentice Hunting License to encourage hunters to become mentors and introduce someone to hunting.

The license allows a licensed hunter to take a beginner on a hunt without the beginner having to buy a hunting license. The license is free for residents and nonresidents and is valid for two consecutive days for the take of small game, fur-bearing, predatory and nongame mammals, nongame birds, and upland game birds. To take migratory birds or waterfowl, the appropriate stamps are required.

— Arizona Game and Fish Dept. report



BIG BLUE: Mike Williams shows his biggest catfish, a 35-pound, 9-ounce blue caught from the shore at Lake Travis. The fish now swims in the aquarium at the Cabela’s store in Buda.



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