

LAKE FORK "The Big Bass Capital of Texas"



"The Fisherman's Guide, News You Can Use" "Lines To Get Hooked On"

2 Sections

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Free

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No. 186



Lake Fork guide Mark Stevenson from Alba, Texas will be inducted in the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in June, 2015.

Lake Fork Guide Steps Into Fishing Hall of Fame

When Mark Stevenson pulled a 17.67-pound largemouth bass from Lake Fork on November 26, 1986, he had no idea that he would become an inductee in the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in June 2015 nor that he had just set in motion a chain of events that would touch millions of lives, change careers, make fortunes and inspire conservation efforts. The fish Steven-

son named Ethel after a close relative played a big part in making bass fishing what it is today. Stevenson has organized fishing trips for numerous charitable organizations, including the Make-a-Wish Foundation, Dallas CAN Academy, Project Action Benefit and Turning POINT. He has worked with the Lake Fork Sportsman's Association to enhance the Lake Fork fishery.

"This is Ethel's Story"

Ethel owns the distinction of being the first fish entered into what was called Operation Share a Lone Star Lunker at the time. In 1993 the name of the program was changed to Share a Lunker, Inc., and it was merged with the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas. Anheuser Busch was the official sponsor (See Lake Fork Guide....

Continued on Page 4-A)



At the Mesquite 'Texas Tackle, Hunting, & Boat Show' anglers and boaters came to the Sartin Marine display not only to look at the 2015 line of boats he had on display, but also to visit with Randy Qualls, Owner Legend Boats (lt), Chris Lane, 2012 Bassmaster Champion (ctr), and Billy Sartin, Owner Sartin Marine on Lake Fork.

Boat Shows Prove To Be Good Business

By Don Hampton

Many businesses realize the importance of getting a jump start on their annual income and promotion of their

services. If their target market is the outdoor person, what better way to do this than at Boat, Tackle, Hunting and Fishing Shows? The Lake Fork Chamber of

Commerce recognizes this fact and does an excellent job at promoting our lake and businesses at shows each year in

(See Boat Shows....
Continued on Page 15-A)



At the Mesquite show many children were introduced to the joy of fishing in the stocked "Kids Fishing Pond" with Rainbow Trout.

A Romeo Bubba Will Never Be As Long As There Are Fishes In The Sea

By: Don Hampton

Bubba thought hard and then he thought long...

On Valentine Days of the past...And how he'd went wrong...

On this day of romance he always tried his best...

But for one reason or another he never passed the test...

To Bubba's way of thinking this day must be cursed...

For each one that passed seemed to have been the worst!

On one such day he almost bought her perfume, but couldn't find the right odor...

That was the one

when he bought her a new trolling motor!

He's tried even to get her something in which she'd truly delight...

But she wasn't impressed when he bought her a floating crappie light!

Bubba tries so hard to show through gifts the love for Bub-bette he does feel...

But still she wasn't impressed with the Shimano combination rod n' reel!

The next year he just knew she'd think his gift was so devine...

But still she wasn't impressed with the spool of new braided line!

Bubba thought for a year Bubbette would know she was his dream...

So he bought her a subscription to BASSMAS-TER magazine!

He'll never forget the Valentine's Day when he got hit with rocks...

That was the one he bought her the new bass angler's tackle box!

He thought on one such day, it would only show he loved her more...

And went out and bought her a new riding lawn mower!

But Bubba learned a lesson on Valentine's Day this past year...

That was when he bought her a floating fishing pier!

On Valentine Days in the past Bubba has bought Bubbette everything from lures to hooks...

And always finds himself the next day dodging vases and books!

Bubbette knows Bubba's love for her is so very strong...

But when it comes to buying gifts he has the tendency to go wrong!

He'll leave the house with intentions of buying perfume, clothing or jewels...

But when he gets home from town

he's bought fishing equipment or tools.

Bubbette has tossed at Bubba some hints and clues...

On some of the more particular don'ts and do's!

More well defined you might could say she made a threat or two...

This way to Bubba the thought is more likely to get through!

So Bubba listened to her while thinking of his boat and the lake...

And the light went off upstairs and he knew this year he'd not make a mistake!!!

Because of the thinking long and hard, Bubba is play-

ing it smart so he doesn't have to sleep in the yard...

He's going to go buy something with the Hallmark seal, that tells her of the love in his heart and how he really does feel.

But also to keep him from landing in the yard, he is going to include in the package her own Wal-Mart gift card...

This year Bubba is trying so hard not to make a mistake.

In hopes that Bubbette will let him fish with his club in a tournament on a heated Lake!

To My Bubbette, Happy Valentine Day! This Bubba Loves You!

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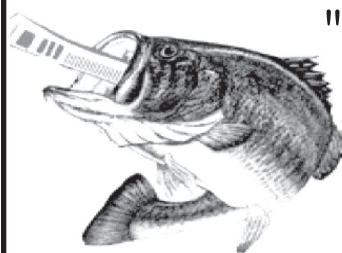
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Lake Fork Guide Steps Into Fishing Hall of Fame (Continued from Page 1-A)

from 1996 to 2008, providing prizes for anglers and a specially equipped truck used to pick up and return lunkers. During that time the program was known as the Budweiser ShareLunker Program. The name was changed to the Toyota ShareLunker Program in 2009 when Toyota became the new sponsor. Anglers donate or loan 13-pound or larger bass to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for use as brooders in a program designed to increase the size and growth rate of largemouth bass in Texas public waters.

Bill Rutledge headed TPWD's freshwater hatchery program in the 1980s, and the idea sprang from a problem. "At the time the lunger program started, our hatcheries were old and had zero visibility with the public," he recalls. "A member of the TPWD Commission had an office right down the street from one of the hatcheries, and he didn't even know it was there. We were looking for a way to increase visibility. Ultimately we hoped the impact would be to get funding for more hatcheries from the Texas Legislature."

What Rutledge came up with was Operation Share a Lone Star Lunker, though that was not the original name suggested for the program. "I wanted to call it 'Wanted Dead or Alive,' with the word Dead crossed out, but Bob Kemp, the director of the fisheries division, didn't like

that," he says. Kemp's assistant, Charles Leigon, was friends with Bill Roth, who was the marketing director for the Lone Star Brewery in San Antonio, and through that connection the program gained a name and a sponsor.

The second reason for the program was to improve the genetics of bass being raised in TPWD hatcheries. "For years, hatchery managers had been keeping the fastest-growing fish from their ponds for brooders," Rutledge says. Without intending to, they were selecting for fish that, in Rutledge's words, "lived fast and died young. By bringing in Florida largemouth bass from the wild we could add a little science to our brood stock program."

The idea was not an easy sell. "We pitched the idea to the sportswriters first, and none of them thought anyone would give up a 13-pound bass," Rutledge recalls. "However, the Texas Taxidermy Association agreed to provide anglers with a fiberglass replica of their fish, so they could put their fish back into the lake and still have a mount."

Other people had doubts the program would work, including David Campbell, who was manager of the Tyler Fish Hatchery, where the lunger program was headquartered, and who became the program's manager. "Rutledge was always coming up with something new," Campbell says. "I thought this was just another one of his

wild ideas. We already had more to do than we could handle; I didn't think anglers would give up the biggest fish of their lives; and I thought it would be bad publicity if a fish died. As time went on I was proved wrong on all three counts."

Ethel decided to bite Mark Stevenson's jig at a point in history that was tailor-made to transform a megabass into a megastar. Texas had begun stocking Florida largemouth bass into public waters in the early 1970s, and the state record was bro-

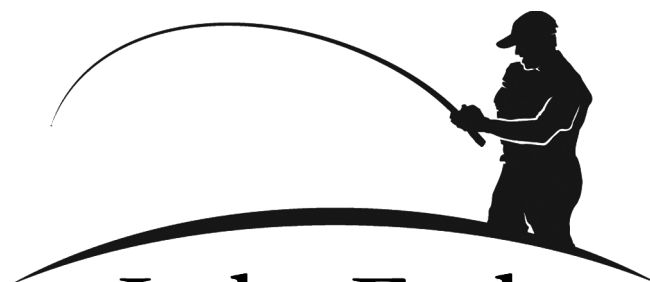
(Continued on Next Page)

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ken numerous times as the Florida genes kicked in. Although we don't know for sure, Campbell thinks it's likely that Ethel was one of the bass stocked into ponds in the lake before it was filled. Lake Fork was impounded in 1980, and Ethel was between 9 and 10 years old when caught.

Bass tournaments had been growing in popularity since the 1960s, and the standard procedure until 1972 was to bring a stringer of dead fish to the weigh-in. Then Ray Scott started promoting catch-and-release through his Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.), and anglers began returning fish to the lake after weigh-ins. Part of the reason was that no one believed that really big fish could be kept alive in captivity after being caught.

Ethel changed that perception, but not without a struggle.

Stevenson, a guide on Lakes Lavon and Fork, had two clients with him the day he caught Ethel. "We got a late start that morning because a big cold front had come through and there was a heavy frost," he says. "We let it warm up a bit and then started fishing a creek channel. Fish were holding around stumps along the side. We got to this one spot, and I got lucky. Instead of burying herself in the bush, she swam out. We were all excited about catching a fish that size, but we guessed she weighed about 15 and a half. She was so fat we didn't realize she was as long as she was [27.5 inches]. After a while we decided to go in and weigh her. When we put her on the scales and I real-

ized I had a new state record, I got really excited."

Leaving the fish in the minnow tank at the store where she was weighed, Stevenson and his clients went back to fishing. "I called some people in Dallas, and when we came back in, the parking lot was absolutely full. There were people everywhere. The excitement was contagious. It was amazing how quickly the news got out over the grapevine," Stevenson says.

What Stevenson did not know until later was that Ethel was taken from the tank a number of times by people who wanted to be photographed holding her. As a result, she was not in good condition when David Campbell arrived to pick her up, and she developed a serious fungus infection. "Treating the fungus was a big deal, and I spent hours each day trying to get her to eat," Campbell says. "I would sit there at night for two or three hours with the lights on low, dangling a koi carp on a length of monofilament line in front of her. It was probably a month before she ate."

But while Ethel wasn't eating, the media was in a feeding frenzy. "All three major television networks covered the story of how we kept that fish alive," says Campbell. "People came from everywhere to see the fish. I lived on the hatchery, which was next to a tire plant, and I would go out at 5 a.m. and there would be people waiting to see her. In the six months she was at the hatchery, 10,000 people signed the guest book in the room with her. I did not realize people would be that interested

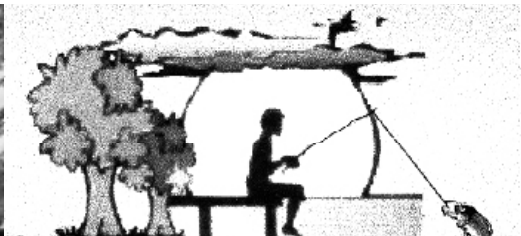
in a fish. My opinion about the importance of the program changed because of that, and so did my career. Until Ethel I was in the fish production business. Because of her I got into the public relations business." He logged 43 phone calls about the fish in one day.

Ethel's survival prompted Rutledge to ask David Campbell to set down the procedures on caring for big fish, and those rules, now publicized through Toyota ShareLunker posters and marinas

and on the TFFC Web site, still hold true today. "What we learned from taking care of Ethel changed how people treat big fish," Campbell says. "I went to work for TPWD in 1965, and we had a book we thought was the Bible on raising fish. Now I look at that book and have some good chuckles. Knowledge has changed over the years, and it is our responsibility to change with it."

Ethel's popular-
(See Lake Fork Guide....
Continued on Page 9-A)

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February on Lake Fork

By David Ozio

"Spring is not that far out of reach as we head into February on Lake Fork. January was somewhat strange in it's own right regarding weather patterns as we were in snow gear one day and then a few days later, I saw guys fishing in shorts and t-shirts. Go figure! The fish don't know what to make of it and have recently decided to boycott all feeding. Well, maybe it's not exactly that bad. We still managed some great days whether the bass liked it or not.

February is ushering in longer days which will keep valuable sunshine in place for the majority of the day. This will mean warmer water temps are headed our way and the bass will start staging for the annual spawn. Early in the month, I will focus my attention to the mouths of the major creeks tar-

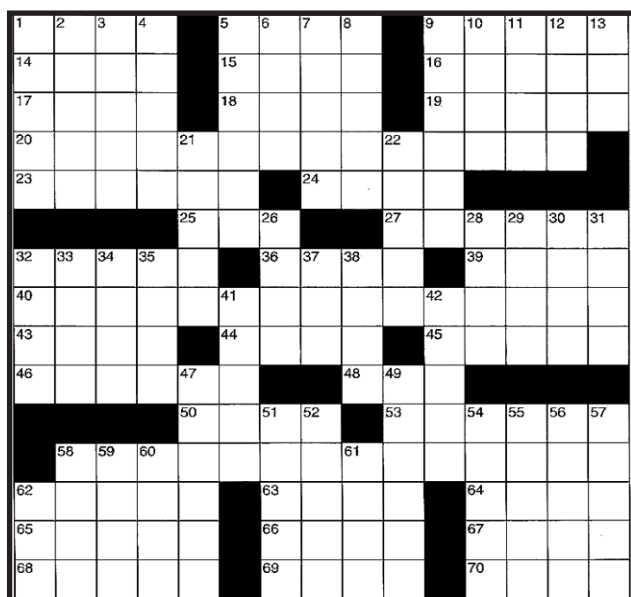
geting the main lake points and secondary points as I explore the first 1/2 of that body of water. The big sows will begin to move in and take up residence in the mid-depths usually suspending in trees waiting their time to slip into the shallows. I will go after these beasts with crankbaits, jerkbaits, big spinnerbaits and the A-rig. Determining their position each day is the challenge and this is strictly dependent upon cold fronts, wind and warm weather. All these factors will move them around in the water column as they trek towards the shallows and back based upon the barometer. The warm days are the most fun and my guests will hurl rattle traps or chatterbaits at the shoreline grass stalking the prespawn females who will head shallow looking for warmth. Two or three days of sunshine will usually be enough to move them up and the game plan is to chunk and wind. Squarebills will also work well in this situation and shouldn't be overlooked. Cold fronts, on the other hand, are a different animal. The bass will move back out to the first breakline and suspend just out of reach for most anglers. Now is when the crankbaits come into vogue. Colors of choice should stay simple, reds, shad patterns or any chartreuse combination. If that presentation fails, shift gears to a jig and craw trailer and pitch the wood. Start on the edge of the creeks



and work your way back until you find the active fish. Black/blue, PP&J or Green Pumpkin are all good jig choices. The next task will be to simply cover water. Just don't camp out in one creek, fish several of them in a day. Also, keep close watch as to what goes on around you with regard to the birds. They are professional eaters and they will let you know what the bait is up to.

The deep bite in general has been poor of lately and I don't expect it to improve anytime soon. I will still continue to search for these deep monsters in hopes that a giant wolfe pack will show up to feed on any given ridge or hump getting ready for the spawn. Of course, I will target them with

(See February...
Continued on Page 20-A)



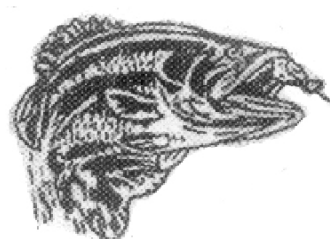
CLUES ACROSS

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Large chest muscles | 43. Friends (French) |
| 5. Ready money | 44. Where computer nerds meet |
| 9. Dark or somber | 45. Frederick _____, French statesman |
| 14. Make whoopee | 46. Puffed |
| 15. Celery (Spanish) | 48. Way to gain a point |
| 16. Declare | 50. Despoiled |
| 17. Look | 53. Fervent |
| 18. Will not (obsolete) | 58. 1953 Morton Thompson best seller |
| 19. "1836 siege" of United States | 62. Confines |
| 20. "____ Stranger," 1952 Bette Davis film (four words) | 63. Defy |
| 23. Swimming movement | 64. God of fire (Hindu) |
| 24. Flatfish | 65. Elicit, in a way |
| 25. Tax collector | 66. Lyrics |
| 27. Productive | 67. Tai |
| 32. Moses' elder brother (Bible) | 68. Military quarters |
| 36. Fabrics | 69. Understands |
| 39. Get possession of | 70. Goidelic language of Ireland |
| 40. Vonnegut novel | |

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Supports | 32. As fast as can be done (abbr.) |
| 2. Octet | 33. _____ mater, one's school |
| 3. Beautify | 34. H ₂ O |
| 4. One who takes dictation | 35. Remove |
| 5. Sign of the zodiac | 37. Social gathering |
| 6. Capital of Samoa | 38. Subject |
| 7. Window frames | 41. Enwraps |
| 8. Royal _____ way, London university | 42. Classical music |
| 9. Without excess | 47. Deletes |
| 10. Quick tempo (abbr.) | 49. Loving touch |
| 11. Side of a ship | 51. Portuguese folk songs |
| 12. Buddhist monk | 52. Hebrew letter |
| 13. Tokyo | 54. Enzyme |
| 21. Supplementing with difficulty | 55. Lasiocampid moth |
| 22. Blink of an eye | 56. Babies (Spanish) |
| 26. To satisfy | 57. Cycle |
| 28. Water (Spanish) | 58. Ryukyu Islands city (Japan) |
| 29. Male singer | 59. Old-Irish alphabet |
| 30. Falsehoods | 60. Part-time employee |
| 31. Want | 61. Gum, for one |
| | 62. Reciprocal of sine (abbr.) |

Answers on Page 21-A



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Game Wardens Investigating Whooping Crane Death

Texas game wardens in Aransas County are awaiting necropsy results on a state and federally protected whooping crane found dead recently near a duck blind located in the Aransas Bay system close to Sand Lake.

The bird was partially decomposed when recovered by Texas Parks and Wildlife game wardens who had been contacted by a local hunting guide who had originally discovered the crane. Whoopers are the tallest birds in North America, standing nearly five feet. The

cranes are solid white except for black wing-tips that are visible only in flight. They fly with necks and legs outstretched. Each fall, they make a 2,400-mile migratory journey from Canada to the Texas coast. In the spring, they return north.

TPWD game wardens and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are jointly investigating this incident. If anyone has additional information regarding this matter, they are encouraged to call Operation Game Thief at 1-800-792-GAME (4263). Callers may

remain anonymous.

Since beginning their slow recovery from a low of 16 birds in the 1940s, whoopers have wintered on the Texas coast on and near Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Recently though, several groups of whooping cranes have expanded their wintering areas to include other coastal areas and some inland sites in Central Texas.



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"The Moon Report"

February on Fork!

By Terri Moon

WOW! It's February! That means it won't be long till those crappie start moving up the creeks starting their transition to spring time patterns! I can hardly wait!!! In the meantime, water temperatures are running from mid to upper 40's. The majority of bait-fish are still hovering in the 40 to 50 ft. depths and the crappie are being caught anywhere between 30 ft. to the bottom using a slow motion to NO motion presentation. At these depths, I would double rig 1/8 oz. jigs or it seems to take forever to reach those depths!

Keep checking main lake points and deep water humps. But, as the water temperatures rise to the mid 50's, it's time to start checking secondary points. Be sure and keep an eye on that graph – especially around the new and full moon. You will generally find the fish shallower. I sure appreciate my Lowrance HDS-12 to help



me chase down these migrating crappie.

The baits that have been working are Bobby Garland's electric chicken, or blue thunder, and Lake Fork Tackle's live baby shad in blue & pearl or pink & white. I'm excited about "Crappie Town's" new "DADDEE SHAD" in smoke & pearl. You can see this and the full line of Bobby Garland baits at crappietown.com. (You might want to get you some of the new – ITTY BIT SWIM'R baits for this spring along with their ITTY BITS JIGHEADS – 1/48 oz.) Ms. Betty will get these shipped right out to you! Also on this website you will find Jackie Albin's "Stump Jumper" which is a protective bracket for your transducer. It's a

money saver! Replacing those transducers gets expensive!

Before I close I want to send a big "Thank You" to Nevelle who has the trolling motor shop on 154 for checking out my trolling motor and diagnosing my issues. If you need him, his number is 903-393-9500. Also, "Thanks" to Greg at Service Marine for taking care of my battery issues and getting us back to fishing. If you are needing any repairs or maintenance done, call Chuck, Perry or Greg @ Service Marine 903-473-3909. I sure appreciate you all!

Last but not least a big "Happy Birthday" to my dad, Bob Carleton, of Leesville, MO. – My Best to you all!

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Lake Fork Guide Steps Into Fishing Hall of Fame (Continued from Page 5-A)

ity attracted the attention of Johnny Morris, the founder of Bass Pro Shops, and Mark Stevenson decided to give the fish to Bass Pro for display in their Springfield, Missouri, store. "I agonized for a long time over whether to put her back in the lake or give her to Bass Pro," Stevenson says. "David Campbell felt that at her age she would not live very long if put back in the lake." After consulting with Campbell on how to transport Ethel, Stevenson equipped a galvanized livestock watering tank in the back of his Suburban with an oxygen bottle and air stone and put a top on so she could not jump out, and Ethel rode in style to Missouri. "They had a pathway cleared into the store, and I backed the Suburban all the way up to their big waterfall tank. She took to it immediately, staked out a territory and became their main attraction," Stevenson says. "What it boiled down to was it inspired catch-and-release and showed people that if trophy fish are handled right, they can survive. Ethel also showed that the program TPWD had for developing Lake Fork worked - that stewardship of wildlife and management

can actually work better than if you just let nature take its course, especially with our growing population and shrinking water resources."

"She was the best thing that ever happened to Bass Pro Shops as far as getting people in there," Johnny Morris says. "She was an unbelievable inspiration to a lot of folks." No one knows just how much Ethel impacted Bass Pro's business, but when she went to Springfield there was just the one store; now there are more than 60.

Ethel's legacy can be measured in other ways. At the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, the current home of the Toyota Share-Lunker program, a caricature of Ethel appears on signage. And while it can't be said that Ethel built any stores for Bass Pro Shops, she played a major role in construction of a \$2.1 million conservation center at TFFC that bears Johnny Morris' name as well as that of the fund drive's organizer, Richard Hart. Morris gave a \$650,000 challenge grant for construction, and the check bore the inscription "In Memory of Ethel."

"That fish was one of our biggest motiva-

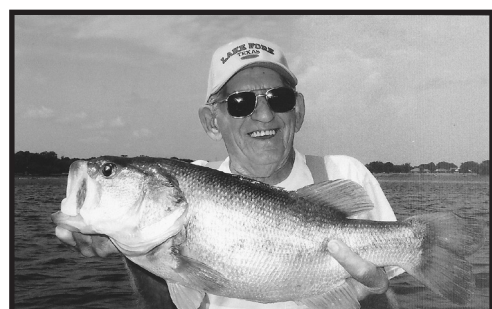
tions for support for this building," Morris noted at the dedication ceremony in April 2007.

Ethel's memory lives on at Bass Pro Shops across the country, where replicas of her are displayed. There's also a memorial to Ethel at the Springfield store. Ethel died in 1994 at the age of 19. An Ethel memorial service held at the store on August 25, 1994, drew a crowd estimated at 1,500. "The absolutely remarkable thing was how many people showed up," says Mark Stevenson, who spoke at the service along with Johnny Morris and other Bass Pro staff. "There were probably 35 or 40 outdoor writers there from all over the United States."

Ethel was viewed by millions of people during her reign as the queen of largemouth bass. "To young and old alike, Ethel was the star of daily fish feeding shows. She filled the dreams of many fishermen and the imagination of many young anglers," the memorial service program reads.

The dreams Ethel inspired lured many people to Lake Fork hoping they could catch a big fish themselves. "Catching her made me want to go

(See Lake Fork Guide....Continued on Page 11-A)



"HAPPY BIRTHDAY POPS!!"



TERRI MOON

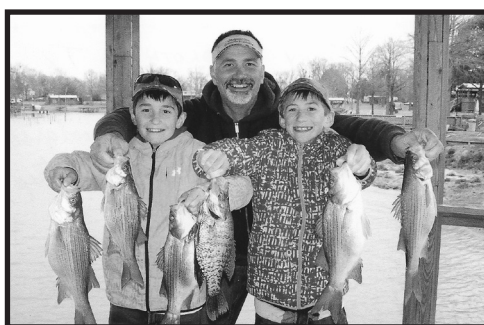
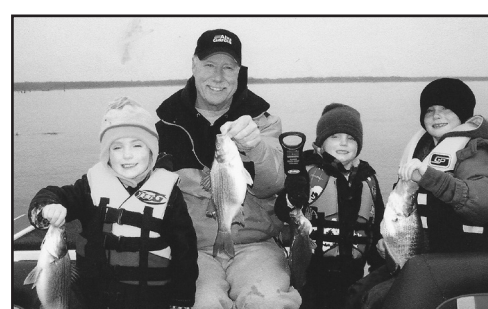
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Lake Fork Guide Steps Into Fishing Hall of Fame (Continued from Page 9-A)

out and catch another one, and I'm still trying," Stevenson says. "The publicity was tremendous for my guide service. Plus it changed the whole perception of Lake Fork. Almost overnight it went from being a sleepy little East Texas lake to just absolutely crowded. Motels on the lake went from one-third occupancy to full. Restaurants had all the business they could handle. Catching Ethel showcased the lake. Instead of people coming from 150 miles away to fish, we started seeing people from out of state. As far as David Campbell and the rest of the guys at TPWD are concerned, it solidified what they did to this lake with their management program. It put them in the limelight and gave their fisheries management program a boost - it proved it worked."

Ethel's impact went far beyond Lake Fork, however. "I think the ShareLunker program changed us from having lakes where you can just go out and catch fish to having lakes where you can catch trophy fish," Stevenson says. ShareLunker program records bear him out. Whereas 257 of the 558 entries into the program have come from

Lake Fork, ShareLunkers have now been caught from 55 public reservoirs and a number of private lakes. "It's gotten to the point that if you want to have a chance to catch a big bass in Texas, just fish in water," Campbell jokes.

"Everybody thought the ShareLunker program was the silliest thing when Bill Rutledge started it," said Phil Durocher, the former head of TPWD's Inland Fisheries Division. "It turned out to be one of the best programs we've ever had in getting our conservation message out and getting people to recognize the value of big fish. A 13-pound bass is probably worth as much to an angler as a 170- to 180-class whitetail buck is to a hunter. These big fish are too valuable to kill, and that's what we've been able to teach people through the ShareLunker program."

And what of the original purpose of the big bass program, trying to wheedle money for fish hatcheries out of the Texas Legislature? "I don't know if Ethel was responsible, but everything fell into place, and the Legislature appropriated \$8 million for hatcheries," Rutledge says. Never underestimate the power of a fish.

Especially one named Ethel.

Entries are accepted into the Toyota ShareLunker program from October 1 until April 30 each year. Fish must be legally caught in Texas waters. Handle the fish according to the procedures at <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/sharelunker> and call (903) 681-0550. If poor cell phone service prevents use of the voice number, call their 24-hour pager at (888) 784-0600 and leave your phone number, including area code as soon as possible after catching the fish. David Campbell has retired but someone will be ready to answer your call so that arrangements can be made to have your fish picked up within 12 hours.

Fish are taken to the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, where the big females are paired with males and, if all goes well, spawned. The resulting off-spring are stocked into lakes that contributed ShareLunkers that season.

Ethel was not spawned while she was with TPWD. "I was afraid I might do something that would kill her," said Campbell. But she lived in Lake Fork through a number of spawning seasons, and undoubtedly many of her descendants swim in the lake today.

Perhaps an Ethel II is out there waiting for you.

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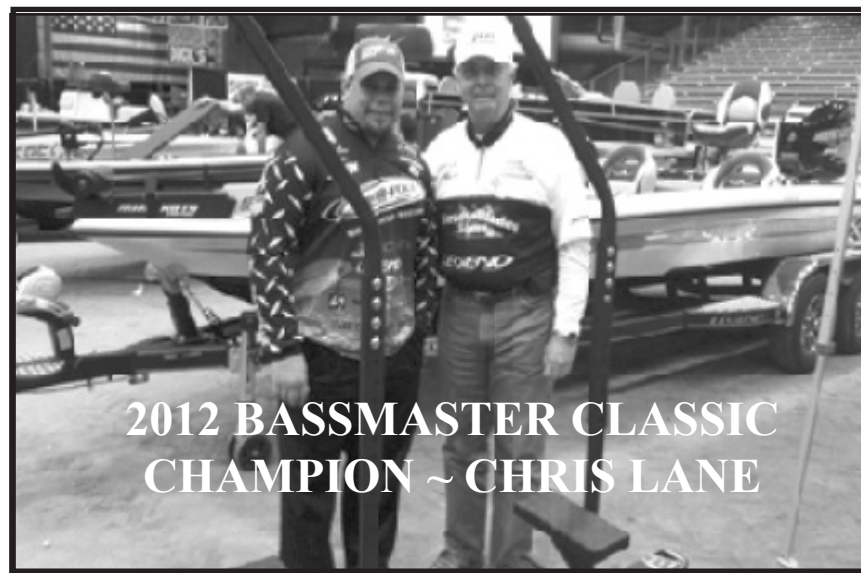
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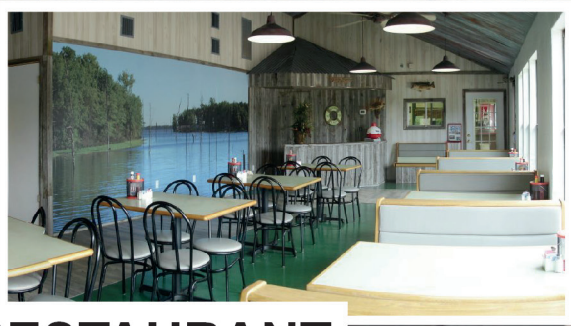
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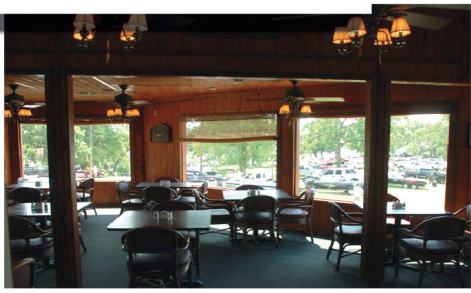
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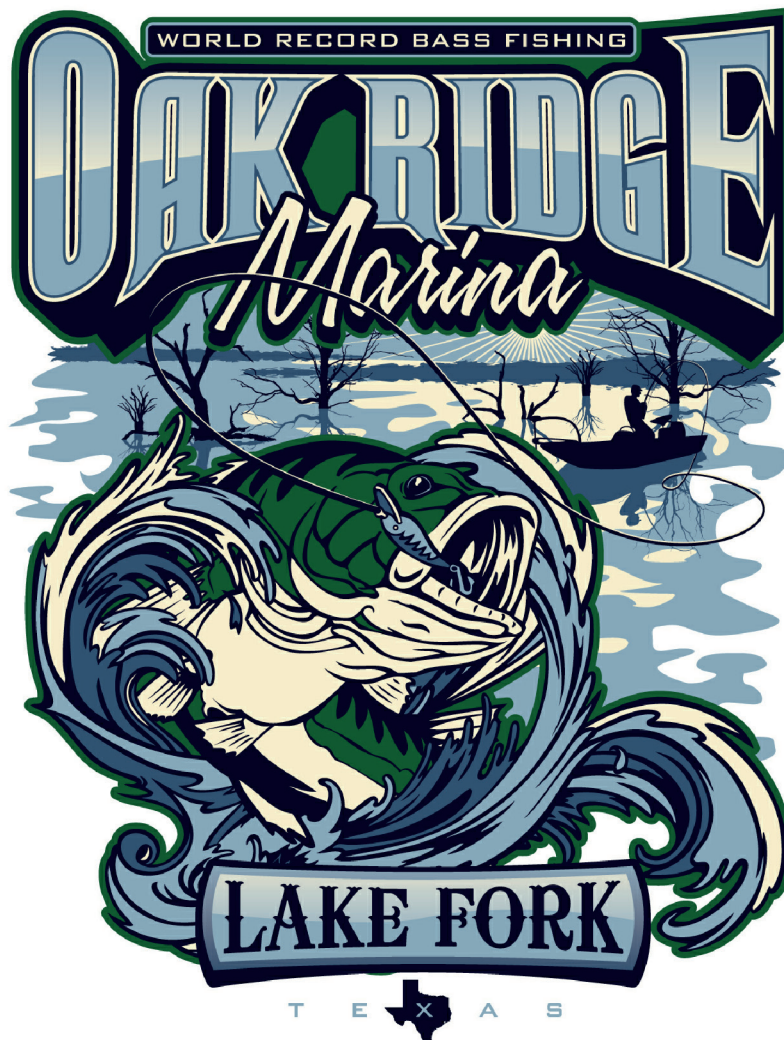
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Fly Fish Texas March 14 at TFFC

Learn to tie a fly, cast a fly and catch a fish all in one day during the annual Fly Fish Texas event at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center March 14.

Throughout the day, experienced fly-tiers will be demonstrating and teaching fly-tying in the Anglers Pavilion on a one-on-one basis. In addition, group instruction in beginning fly-tying will be offered in the Hart-Morris Conservation Center classroom beginning at noon. Both are offered on a walk-up basis.

Beginning casting instruction will take place continuously in the Conservation Center parking lot from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. In the Conservation Center Room B, attend fly-fishing 101 at 10:00 a.m. and learn about essential flies for Texas fresh water at 11:00 a.m.

Fly-fishing kayak style will be presented on the shore of the casting pond at 2:00 p.m.

Vendors will be displaying and selling fly-fishing gear, and seminars will brief visitors on where

and how to fly-fish in fresh and salt waters for a variety of species. The program will include presentations on fly-fishing the Brazos River (3:00 p.m. in the Conservation Center Room B) and history of rainbow trout in North America (Anheuser-Busch Dive Theater at 3:00 p.m.).

Other sessions will focus on caring for fly-fishing equipment (Anheuser-Bush Dive Theater at 10:00 a.m.), choosing a fly line (Anheuser-Bush Dive Theater at 1:00 p.m.) and fishing the slam of B.A.S.S. in southern rivers (Conservation Center Room B at 2:00 p.m.).

Kayak use will be demonstrated on the casting pond. Do-it-yourself fly-fishing for rainbow trout, sunfish and catfish will be available all day in TFFC's ponds and streams.

Food service will be available onsite, or attendees may bring a picnic. TFFC's regularly scheduled dive shows will take place in the dive theater at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and will be followed by tram tours of the hatchery.

Event sponsors include Sabine River Authority, Dallas Fly Fishers, Temple Fork Outfitters, Red Hat Rentals, Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites--Athens, Friends of TFFC, Cripple Creek BBQ, Danny's Smokehouse Bar-B-Que, First State Bank and Super 8--Athens.

Show hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All Fly Fish Texas activities are free with regular paid admission to the center. For a complete schedule of activities and seminars, visit www.tpwd.texas.gov/tffc and click on the Fly Fish Texas link.

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Summer Pantone from Tybee Island, Georgia caught this 8.7-lb bass fishing Lake Fork on Jan 17th. C.P.R. (Courtesy Photo by Joe McCartha)

Boat Shows Prove To Be Good Business (Continued from Page 1-A)

several states. Their volunteers working the shows are to be commended. They go out of their way donating their time and energy to promote our area. They know that if consum-

ers do not know your location and the services you offer it is very likely you're missing customers and income. This is where advertising and promotion play a key factor in success!

At each show there is quite a variety of booths that not only cater to the outdoor person but the entire family. The kids can enjoy fishing for rainbow trout or channel catfish

while mom checks out anything from cooking utensils to the latest outdoor fashion. Dads have no problem keeping themselves occupied with everything from new boat lines, latest fishing tackle, knives, hunting supplies, and even the lat-

est in outdoor fashion. They can also get helpful hints on tactics and baits from pro anglers like Chris Lane and Zell Rolland who were at the Mesquite show. If that is not enough they can sit in on the many instructional seminars at the show

put on by professional anglers and guides.

If you or your business has not attended one of these shows; this may be food for thought. Afterall, advertising and promotion is a 100% tax writeoff.

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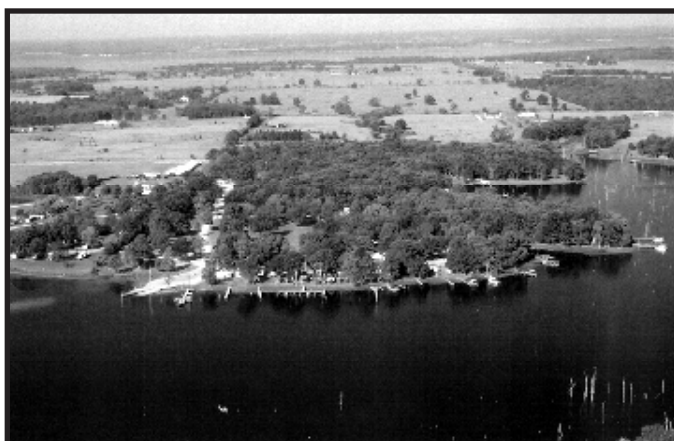


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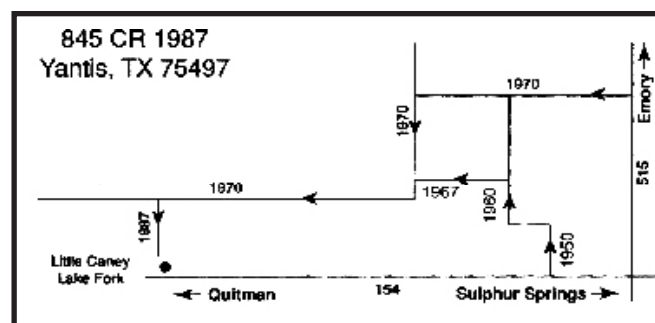


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SEAFWA Recognizes Game Warden and TPWD Employee

Two Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employees were recognized at a recent TPW Commission meeting by executive director Carter Smith for receiving awards from the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Texas Game Warden Derek Spitzer won SEAFWA's 2014 Texas Wildlife Officer of the Year award, marking the 45th year this award has been presented to a Texas game warden.

Spitzer has served with TPWD since 2000, when he began his career as a warden in Harris County. During Spitzer's tenure, he has been

involved with several high profile cases, including the "30 Deer Case," in which 30 deer were killed illegally in a three-month span. As a result of Spitzer's investigative work, 22 charges were brought forward. Sentences handed down included more than \$41,000 in fines and 3000 hours of community service.

A founding member of the Texas Game Warden Dive Team, Spitzer also is involved with the youth in his community and serves as a field training officer for newly hired wardens. In the past year, he logged more than 465 hours of marine patrol and

filed over 300 cases, leading the district in both categories.

The Commission also recognized Chuck Kowaleski, winner of SEAFWA's 2014 Wildlife Biologist of the Year award.

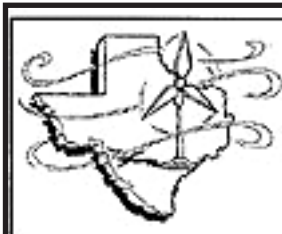
Kowaleski began his career with TPWD in 1990 as a Coastal Fisheries technician in the Galveston Bay complex. In 1993 he was hired by the Inland Fisheries Division and later the Wildlife Division as one of the first urban fish and wildlife biologists for Houston, where he helped develop Sheldon Lake Environmental Education Center. In 2001, Kowaleski

rejoined the Wildlife Division as its farm bill coordinator and liaison with NRCS. During the past 12 years Kowaleski has focused on working with partners to implement farm bill programs that benefit wildlife. He was instrumental in creating special wildlife resource areas for lesser prairie chickens, bobwhite quail, pronghorn, black-capped vireos, ocelots, mottled ducks and red-cockaded woodpeckers using EQIP and WHIP funding. From 2003-2012, these wildlife resource areas provided \$30.4 million in federal cost share to 931 landowners

involved in habitat improvement focused on priority wildlife species on 1.325 million acres.

Kowaleski currently serves the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies as a member of the Ag Conservation Committee and EQIP Working Group Chair. He has been a working member of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee for many years and served as NBTC's vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. Kowaleski currently serves as NBTC steering committee chair.

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Bonds Named New TPWD Inland Fisheries Division Director

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has named Craig Bonds as the new division director for Inland Fisheries.

"Craig Bonds' vision, experience, science background, and strong history of leadership made him a compelling choice as the next director of our Inland Fisheries team. As well as anyone, Craig understands the myriad issues confronting our fisheries and aquatic habitats in the state. He is eminently well respected and well positioned to lead our Inland Fisheries team as they continue to steward our nationally renowned fisheries," said Carter Smith, the TPWD executive director.

Bonds' career with TPWD spans 16 years within the Inland Fisheries research and management branch, including the assistant district team leader, district supervisor and regional director; a position he has held since 2007. He has worked in all three of TPWD's Inland Fisheries management regions.

In his most recent position he has been responsible for the implementation and evaluation of statewide freshwater fisheries management and research throughout East Texas.

"His work experience is extensive and includes many of the division's high-profile programs," said Ross Melinchuk, the TPWD deputy executive director for natural resources. "Craig has been

involved in aquatic invasive species control, alligator gar research and management, reservoir fisheries habitat partnerships, and expansion of our Neighborhood Fishing programs to urban centers, as well as cross-border fisheries management with Louisiana and Oklahoma, and the Toyota Texas Bass Classic." "The Inland Fisheries division and the anglers of this state will be well served by Craig and his team of 200 fisheries professionals as they take on the challenges of the 21st Century in the Lone Star State,"

A sixth generation Texan, Bonds holds a Bachelor of Science degree from

Texas A&M University and a Master of Science in Fisheries Management from Virginia Tech.

Bonds is a Certified Fisheries Professional with the American Fisheries Society and has twice received the Outstanding Fisheries Worker of the Year award from the Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

Bonds assumed his new position as the TPWD Inland Fisheries division director on January 19.

"I am truly honored and privileged to be given this opportunity to lead a highly dedicated and capable team of Inland Fisheries professionals,"

said Bonds. "I look forward to working together with them and our external partners to carry out our mission of providing the best possible public fishing opportunities while faithfully honoring our aquatic resource stewardship principles."



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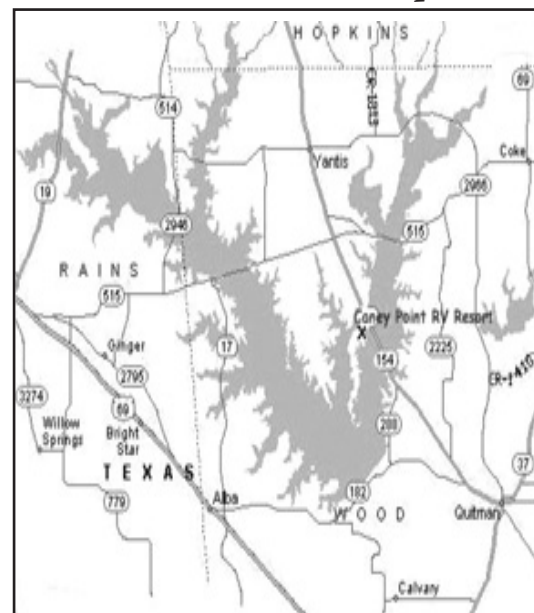
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"Pack of Knowledge" Tips for Targeting Big Bass

By Andrew Grills

It's hard to imagine what the next big idea in the world of bass fishing will be. In my lifetime, fishing lures sure have come a long way, from super realistic swimbaits to elaborate umbrella rigs. However, one of my go-to lures has been around for many decades and continues to fool big bass on a regular basis.

If you look on the deck of my boat any time of year, you'll likely see a jig tied on at least one rod.

When I was first learning to fish for bass, I realized that jigs were a big fish lure, and I made it my mission to master the technique. I am still learning today, but maybe you'll find some information here that will make you a more efficient jig fisherman.

Much could be written about swim jigs and football jigs, but the traditional "pitching" or "flipping" jig is the one to be throwing this time of year. In the winter and early spring, prespawn females feed heavily on crawfish. Crawfish are easy prey in the colder water and are one of the best sources of protein a bass can find. A pitching style jig is the perfect crawfish imitator and can also be presented in the heavy timber where big fish live this time of year on Lake Fork.

The first thing I look at when choosing a jig to fish in timber is the head design. This is the most important aspect of a jig in my opinion. You want to find a head that comes through cover well, but more importantly you want one that hooks fish well. Many jig companies boast of the giant hooks they use, and that's because many anglers miss or lose a lot of bites on jigs. The hook is not at fault in most cases. Usually, the design of the head determines how and if a fish gets hooked.

Ideally, you want a jig head that hooks fish in the top of the mouth. Usually, the jig that comes through the wood cover best will have a narrow or

pointed head design. The bulbous, rounded heads such as the traditional "arkie head" design get lodged in the roots and branches often and can be frustrating to fish. However, once a bass has that jig in its mouth and you set the hook, the first thing that makes contact with the fish's closed lips is the jig head. If it is a narrow jig head style, the jig will immediately turn on its side and you will end up missing the fish or "skin hooking" it. Once hooked, if the point isn't protruding from the outside of the fish's face, and is simply threaded sideways inside the fish's mouth, there's a good chance you're using a faulty head design. I have found that I would rather deal with the aggravation of getting snagged more often than miss or lose fish, therefore I try to use a head design that hooks fish the best.

I don't have any one jig that I use 100% of the time, there are several head designs that are very effective. My favorite is the traditional arkie head. This design gets hung up some, but keep in mind its the head (not the hook), so they can be easily retrieved as long as you don't get too impatient and bury the hook by yanking the rod. I like the arkie head because the fish are hooked through the roof of the mouth almost every time, and that means more fish in the boat for me and my customers. Often, I use jigs that I put together myself

(See Pack of Knowledge....Continued on Next Page)



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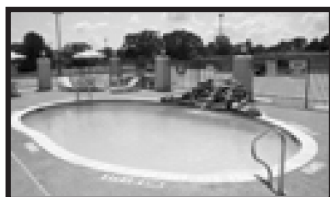
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Pack of Knowledge *(Continued from Page 18-A)*

when I use an arkie head because there aren't many with that design on the market. Triangular shaped heads (for lack of a better word to describe them) such as the one found on Mark Pack's structure guard jig, are very efficient as well. These are flat on the bottom and don't roll on their side during the hook set.

Skirt color is another important factor. I think the most important thing is to find a couple colors you have confidence in. For me, two or three colors cover my jig fishing needs year round. I find I have more confidence using a dark colored jig in murky water, such as a black and blue, or black/brown/amber combination. In clear water, a predominantly green pumpkin or watermelon combination works well for me.

In my opinion, elaborate color combinations are a matter of preference and confidence for every angler, so pick something you believe in and let the fish help you make up your mind. For instance, here on Lake Fork, I like a green pumpkin/watermelon combination with a little blue in it certain times of year, that's just a preference for me. As an angler, you want to find a couple colors you believe in and fish them with 100% confidence. It's well known that a jig is more of a big fish lure than a numbers lure, so having confidence in the color you're throwing is important. Being that I probably won't get very many bites, if I'm second guessing and changing colors over and over, it's likely I won't be very successful.

As for jig size, I prefer to go with a heavier jig, but

still a compact profile. A ½ or ¾ ounce jig is what I use 90% of the time regardless of water depth. Many fishermen seem to like a lightly weighted jig with a slow, enticing fall rate. However, I believe one of the qualities about jigs that appeal to big bass the most is the fact that it is a "reaction bait". I fish jigs slow most of the time, but when it rolls over a branch or root it still drops to the bottom quickly and kicks up some dust. When a jig happens to do this over a piece of cover a big bass is laying beneath, I think the fish will have a hard time not pouncing on it out of instinct.

I always trim the silicone skirts on my jigs. I usually cut the skirt a ¼ inch below the bend of the hook. I like to cut a

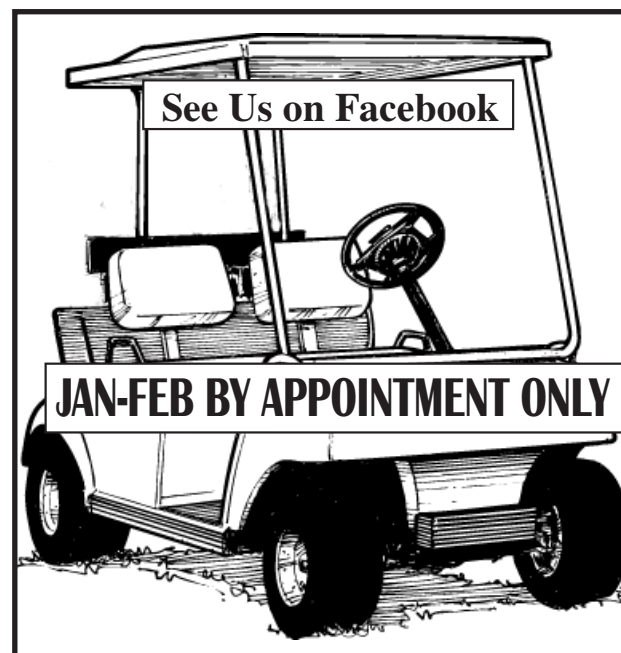
half moon type line from side to side, then I turn the jig and do it again. This way, the strands on the outer edges of the skirt are the shortest and the shorter strands flare out well in the water. This may just be a matter of preference but it seems to work. I also use a compact, crawfish imitating trailer most of

the time. I like to match the color of the trailer with the skirt colors.

In my next article I will discuss the how, where, and when of jig fishing. Hopefully you've found something useful here in spite of the fact that some of this is very basic information. As a guide fishing with different anglers on a daily basis, I believe

there are some misconceptions about jig fishing. Hopefully this gives you some ideas, and if nothing else the confidence to go throw a jig this month!

Andrew is a professional guide on Lake Fork and is sponsored by Skeeter Boats, Nautical Mile Marine Tyler, Costa Del Mar, M-Pack Lures and Simms fishing apparel.



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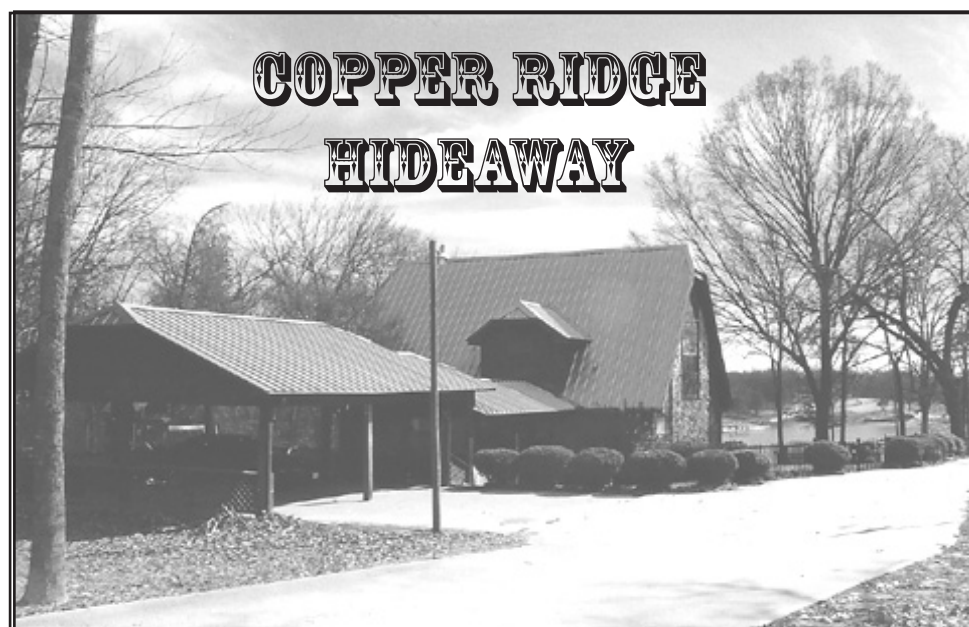
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February on Lake Fork (Continued from Page 6-A)

a drop shot but a flutter spoon will work along with a jigging spoon. The Lowrance 12 Touch is a fantastic weapon to search out any deep fish but I really need them to get out of the 50ft of water and show themselves. If February happens to turn out toward the warm side, the masses of bass will move into the creeks and abandon the winter haunts where they have resided the past couple of months. My attention will then be in the 8 to 15ft range and using all the tools necessary to get them to show themselves. A Carolina Rig will be such a tool later in the month. Load it up with a

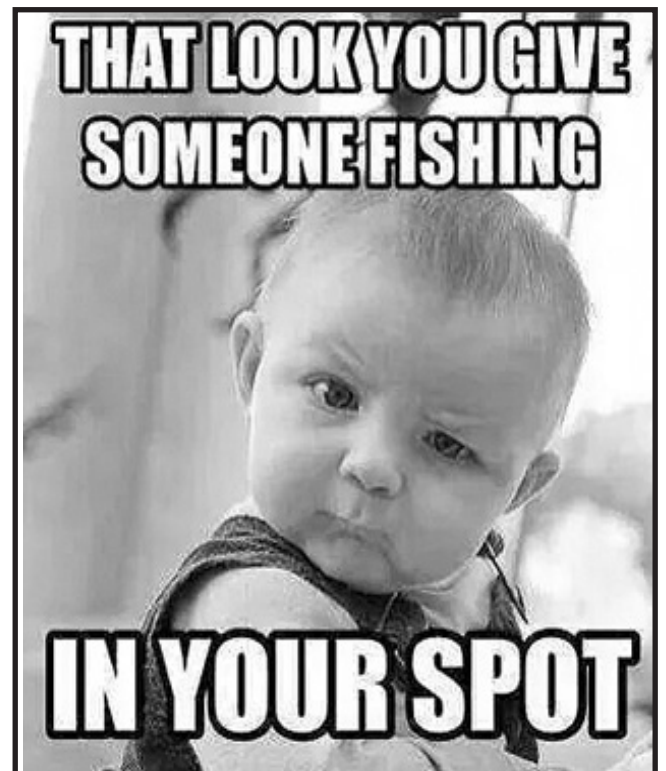
brush hog in watermelon candy red or a magnum lizard and bombard all the main lake and secondary points. If you happen to see shad present in the shallows, throw the squarebill and hang on.

If cabin fever has set in, give me a call and we can wear them out where the water temps are summer like. A ton of fun to say the least. If you are headed out to Lake Fork in February searching for the trophy of a lifetime, I would love to be a part of this trophy quest. I still have a few dates open in February and some in March. I also have gift certificates available if you have friends or loved one's who have dreamt of landing a huge bass. You can contact me at 409 782-4269 or e-mail me at skeet21c@aol.com. You can follow me on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/LakeForkGuideDavidOzio>. I post my daily trip results on this page. I run a Skeeter FX21 with a Yamaha 250SHO and would like to thank Skeeter for making my office on the lake the best in the country. I would also like to thank G-Loomis, Shimano, Lowrance and Talon Lure Company for making my job the blast that it is. A special shout out to H&W Marine in Tyler for all their help in keeping me on the water seven days a week, no issues. I hope to see a lot of you on the water. Romans 10:13. "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". I wish all of you a blessed day."



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Inland Fisheries Chief Receives National Fish Habitat Award

American Fisheries Society and the National Fish Habitat Partnership have recognized Tim Birdsong, branch chief of habitat conservation for Inland Fisheries, for his roles in the conservation of fisheries and aquatic resources.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Executive Director Carter Smith presented the award to Birdsong at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission meeting recently in Austin.

As chairman of the multi-state Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership and coordinator of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Native Black Bass Initiative, Birdsong played a lead role in developing and implementing a 10 year, \$30 million dollar business plan focused on reversing the declines of native black bass populations in the southern United States.

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These actions have directly benefited native largemouth bass

populations of 11 rivers in the southern U.S. In Texas, this project resulted in the successful reestablishment of Guadalupe Bass to the Blanco River, and contributed to the preservation of genetically-secure, self-sustaining pop-

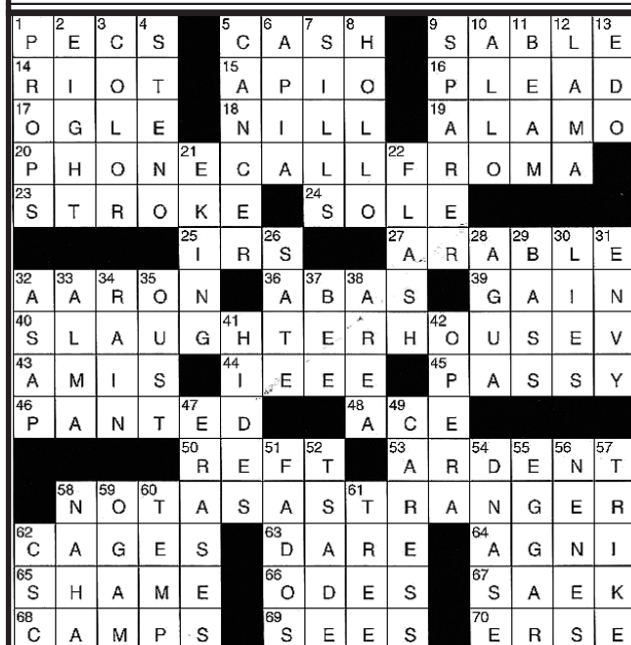
ulations of Guadalupe Bass in the Pedernales, Llano, and Colorado Rivers. For more information, visit: <http://fishhabitat.org/news/2014-national-fish-habitat-award-winners-honored>

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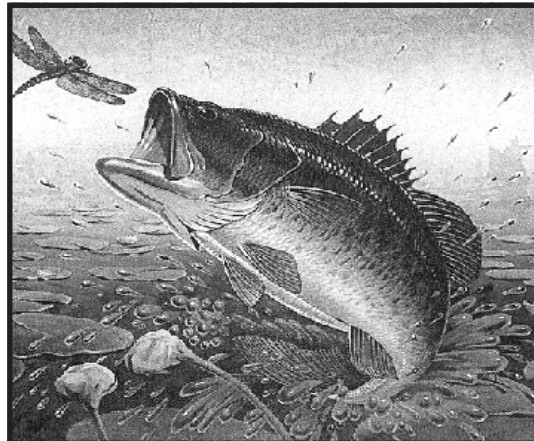
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CORN
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GERANIUM

LILY
MARIGOLD
PANSY
PEPPER
ROSE
TOMATO
TULIP

S E G R N I U M A T O E
N R O C A R R A T U L I
A E M U I N A R E G A C
P P E P R O C I L L O A
A P I L U T E G C O R B
S E Y N A P R O T E E B
P P I L U S D L O I R A
A N S Y E L R D M A R G
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