

# LAKE FORK "The Big Bass Capital of Texas"



2 Sections

*"The Fisherman's Guide,  
News You Can Use"  
"Lines To Get Hooked On"*  
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Vol. 18

December, 2016

No. 208



The 22nd Annual Eagle Fest will be held on January 28th and 29th in Emory. This year, the Lake Fork Chamber of Commerce and the Tawakoni Regional Chamber of Commerce are joining forces with the Rains Chamber of Commerce to truly make this a regional event.

Saturday the 28th will feature bus and boat tours on Lake Fork and Sunday the 29th will feature bus and boat tours on Lake Tawakoni.

We are asking all LFCC members to get involved with Eagle Fest as it brings a great source of revenue to our area during one of the slowest times of the year.

Unlike anglers, the birding enthusiasts who travel to this event are "tourists" in every sense of the word! They are looking for unique

places to shop, eat and stay while they spend a weekend in East Texas.

Please go to facebook and Like the Eagle Fest page to receive updates of activities: <https://www.facebook.com/RainsEagleFest/>

There are several ways to get involved  
1) Volunteer; Help out on a committee, help set-up, tear down, work the door - there will be a need for lots of hands.  
2) Become A Sponsor; sponsorships start at only \$25 and include

tickets to the event!

3) Be A Vendor; Attendees love shopping the sales booths at Eagle Fest. Show your products or direct them back to your business for more sales.

4) Advertise: Eagle Fest has a full color magazine with maps, information about the area, places to shop, eat and stay! For more information call the Lake Fork Chamber of Commerce at 800-846-1859 ext 803 to speak with someone directly about the event. Hope to see you there!



Fisherman's Guide News Photo by Don Hampton



Not the biggest bass on Lake Fork but when it is the first of the morning it is huge! Peggy McWhorter caught the first bass of the morning on 11/26/16 while fishing with her husband Mike.



## "In Loving Memory"

Deborah Jordan, owner of Jordan's Coffee Creek Marina on Lake Fork passed away on November 24th. She was preceded by her husband Albert who passed away in 2012. She had been running the marina until her cancer returned in 2015. It is a tragic loss to Lake Fork and her family. I'm sure she is reunited with her husband in heaven. Our sincere condolences.



# Bubba's suggestions on "Don'ts and Do's" when shopping for your Bubbette

By Don Hampton

When buying for your Bubbette this Christmas, take some advice from Bubba on gift selection. Bubba is not the smartest man in the world but he is a quick learner.

Bubba's suggestions of what not to buy:

- 1.) Don't buy her anything that can be construed or used as a weapon for inflicting pain if she doesn't like it.
- 2.) Don't buy her anything you could use if she doesn't like it, (see #1).
- 3.) Garden tools, lawnmower, or a chainsaw is definitely a no-no, (see #1).
- 4.) No new tires or parts for the automobile, (see #1).
- 5.) A new trolling motor will get you hurt,

(see #1).

- 6.) A cover for the boat, (see #1).
- 7.) Don't buy her any household or kitchen appliances – ever! (#1 could apply).
- 8.) Tickets to boat shows, fishing seminars or the Bassmasters Classic, (paper-cuts really hurt, see #1).
- 9.) A gift certificate from a tackle store, (see #8 & #1).
- 10.) A replica of the biggest fish you've caught this year, (see #1).

With all ten of these don'ts, Bubba has assured me they have been tried and true... but, for the ten don'ts Bubba suggests he has come up with ten do's. These are called the "Bubba Do's learned by paying his dues!"

Bubba has it down to a fine art now and suggests you try these do's:

- 1.) Go with the heart.
- 2.) Consider her need for relaxation. This will make it easier for you to relax.
- 3.) Buy jewelry...it always works.
- 4.) If you buy her clothes, know her size, if not, buy a smaller vs. a larger size, (see #1, don'ts list).
- 5.) Listen for clues, hints, and suggestions. There will be plenty.
- 6.) Ask her friends, mother, or sister what she wants.
- 7.) Think of her unspoken wants and be daring and romantic.
- 8.) Don't be afraid to buy from a store she frequents. WalMarts are everywhere!

9.) Buy what she wants, but that she wouldn't buy for herself.

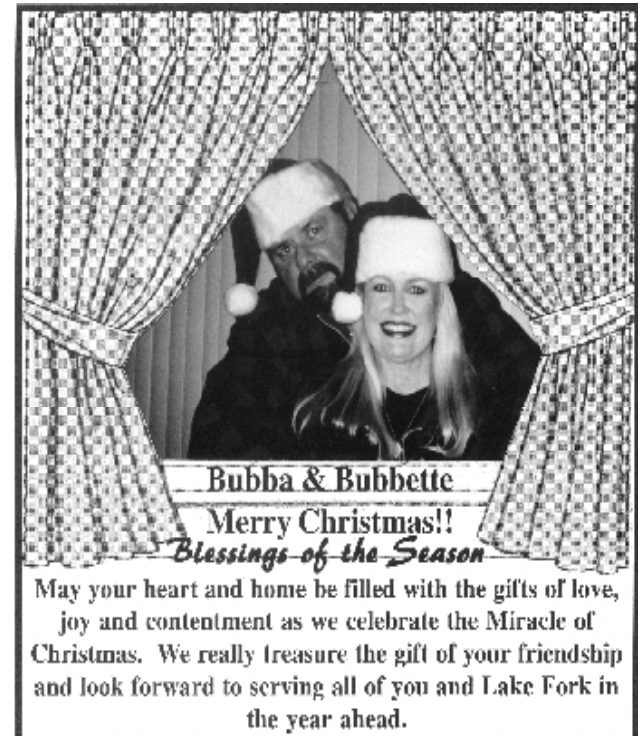
10.) Make sure she knows where the gift is from, so she discreetly can return it.

For the last few Christmases, Bubba has practiced these do's and don'ts. I do believe they are working because I haven't seen any bumps or lumps on his head after Christmas. Those all appear after New Year's Eve, but that is an entirely different story.

Try some "Bubba Knowledge" shopping this year for your Bubbette. It could save you a lump sum!

Bubbette's suggestion for shopping for Bubba is simple...

"Get some new stuff... Bubba likes stuff!"



May your heart and home be filled with the gifts of love, joy and contentment as we celebrate the Miracle of Christmas. We really treasure the gift of your friendship and look forward to serving all of you and Lake Fork in the year ahead.



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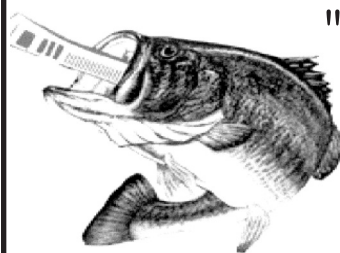
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Eric Ceglinski from Woodlawn, Illinois caught this nice bass weighing 9.54-pounds fishing Lake Fork with a Texas rigged worm. CPR (Courtesy Photo Minnow Bucket Marina)



Lake Fork guide John Morris caught this hawg weighing 9.2-pounds while fishing on Lake Fork. CPR (Courtesy Photo J&M Guide Services)



Al Morrell from Wagoner, OK., caught this nice Lake Fork bass weighing 9.13-lbs. measuring 25.5" in length. CPR (Courtesy Photo)

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year To All of Our Readers, Writers and Great Friends***



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# Recognitions Showcase Outstanding Achievement for TPWD

Several Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employees and the TPW Commission were recognized by Executive Director Carter Smith for their outstanding work in various fields at a recent meeting in Austin. **Ducks Unlimited Presents the Order of Conservation to TPW Commission**

The TPW Commission was selected by Ducks Unlimited (DU) Canada for long time commitment to waterfowl and wetlands conservation both in Texas and on the Canadian breeding grounds.

The DU Canada Order of Conservation is presented to individuals, committees, organizations, corporations and government agencies who are truly inspiring in the field of wetlands conservation.

Contributions supporting continental waterfowl conservation are made possible by hunters through the department's migratory game bird stamp program.

**Eighteen Participants Graduate from the Game Warden Citizen's Academy**

The second Texas Game Warden Citizen's Academy class was recognized at the graduation of the participants during a recent meeting of the TPW Commission.

The academy was instructed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department game wardens across the state and provided an inside view of the di-

verse activities faced by wardens every day.

The curriculum included an overview of program functions including, game warden training, law, land and marine patrol techniques, outreach, accident investigations and reconstruction, criminal investigations, search and rescue, K9 operations, officer safety, technology and recruiting. The program consisted of four sessions, including classroom instruction and bimonthly field trips. Attendees had the opportunity to interact with and develop an in-depth knowledge of the complex duties of Texas game wardens. Kleberg County Game Warden John McFall Named Game Warden of the Year Award

Kleberg County Game Warden John McFall was awarded the Texas Game Warden Association's (TGWA) first Game Warden of the Year award. Warden McFall has been stationed in Kleberg County for the duration of his 28-year career.

During his tenure, he has been a part of several impactful projects such as being the district representative of the TGWA for many years, the senior warden in his district and being deployed to aid in response to many natural disasters, the most notable being Hurricane Katrina.

McFall also took on an active role in coordinating the construction of two floating cabins

in the Lower Laguna Madre and Baffin Bay. These cabins are a tremendous asset for the wardens in the district to use as a base of operations for fisheries and water safety patrols.

**Palo Duro Superintendent Recognized for Outstanding Women in Texas Government Award**

Palo Duro Canyon State Park superintendent Shannon Blalock is the recipient of the Outstanding Management award by the State Agency Council to the Governor's Commission for Women. Every other year the Commission's State Agency Council recognizes the best and brightest from among the 81,000 women in state government. Blalock was one of only four individuals honored by the Council.

Candidates were nominated by their respective agency heads in four categories -- outstanding community involvement, outstanding leadership, outstanding management and outstanding professional development. A committee reviewed the nominations and selected four women whose contributions exemplified each category.

During her Texas State Parks career, Blalock has been influential in her management and leadership of several state parks, including becoming the first female to lead Palo Duro Canyon State Park, and was key to the creation of the Citizens Park

(Continued on Next Page)



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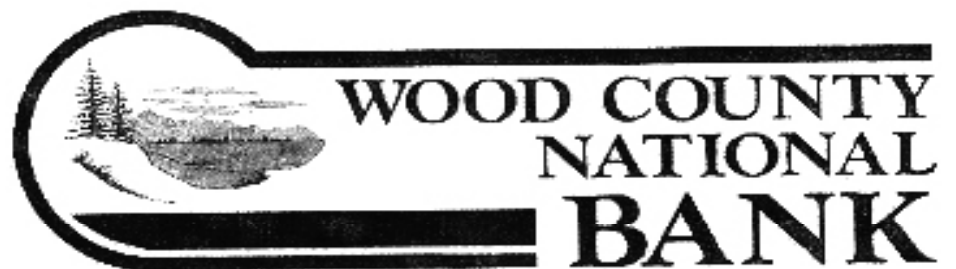
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**Ranger Academy (CPRA) when she was leading the operation at Dinosaur Valley State Park. Hardin County Game Warden Michael Boone Named Shikar-Safari International Wildlife Officer of the Year**

The Shikar-Safari Club International has recognized Hardin County game warden Michael Boone as the Wildlife Officer of the Year. Boone is a 24-year veteran currently stationed in southeast Texas.

Every year, the Shikar-Safari Club International recognizes game wardens from North America as Wildlife Officers of the Year. This marks the 37th year this award has been presented to a Texas game warden.

During his career, Boone has conducted 32 programs and participated in five different Operation Outdoor events that introduced over 176 novice hunters and fishermen to the outdoors. He also exemplified his leadership skills by working the Orange County emergency operations center during the spring floods that shut down I-10 in Orange County and was involved with a notable case involving an individual who killed two Whooping Cranes in Jefferson County, just to name a few. **Warmwater Fisheries Award Presented to TPWD by the International Federation of Fly Fishers**

TPWD has an active partnership with the International Federation of Fly Fishers (IFFF) centered on conserving aquatic and fishery resources and promoting the sport of fly fishing. In recognition of this collaboration, the International Federation of Fly

Fishers presented TPWD's Inland Fisheries Division and the Aquatic Education program with the 2016 Dr. James A. Henshall Warmwater Fisheries Award.

TPWD has worked with the International Federation of Fly Fishers to build the River Access and Conservation Areas program. This program leases private lands for public access to bank, wade and kayak fishing. Over the past three years, the program has improved angler access to more than 150 miles of Texas rivers, including portions of the Brazos, Colorado, Devils, Guadalupe, Llano, Neches, Nueces, Sabine and South Llano rivers.

This award spotlights TPWD's efforts to protect, restore and enhance Texas' warmwater fisheries, including an effective aquatic education and fly fishing education programs; support of fly fishing outreach events such as the Texas Fly Fishing Expo and Fly Fish Texas; working to expand and enhance access to fly fishing opportunities on Texas rivers; investments in fish habitat restoration and protection; and efforts to restore Guadalupe Bass and other native fishes.

**Inland Fisheries Division Recognized with Sport Fish Restoration Outstanding Project Award**

TPWD's Inland Fisheries Division is the recipient of the 2016 Sport Fish Restoration Outstanding Project Award presented by the Fisheries Administration Section of the American Fisheries Society.

The award, presented by Joe Larschied the fisheries bureau chief with the Iowa Depart-

ment of National Resources, highlights and recognizes the importance and effectiveness of the Sport Fish Restoration program and excellence in fisheries management, research and education.

Since 2010, TPWD and its partners have delivered a lengthy list of conservation actions to ensure that current and future generations are able to continue to enjoy the unique ecological, aesthetic, recreational, and economic values offered by healthy Hill Country rivers.

A few of these projects include:

- Restoration of 9,327 acres of fish and wildlife habitats
- Survey and conduct large-scale control of invasive riparian plants along more than 200 miles of Hill Country rivers
- Reintroduce Guadalupe bass to the Blanco River and the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River

The Sport Fish Restoration Program is supported by anglers and boaters through federal excise taxes that anglers pay when acquiring fishing equipment, buying motor boat fuel, and buying boats and is a critically important funding program that supports fisheries, anglers and angler education. The funds are collected by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and given back in grants to agencies like TPWD to invest in our lakes, rivers and reservoirs to improve the fisheries and fisheries habitat.

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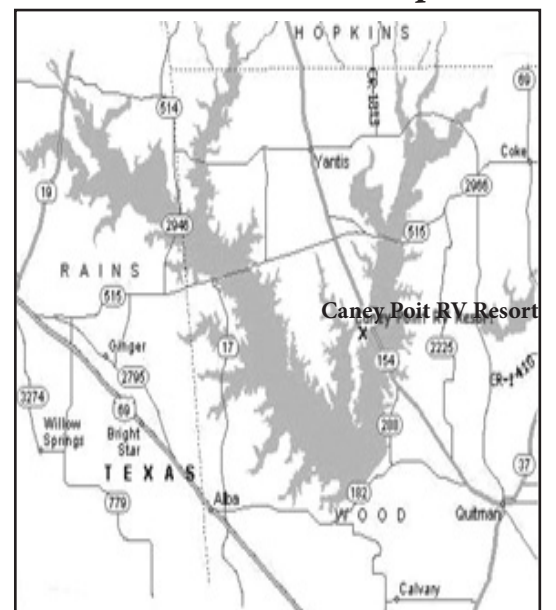
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# December on Lake Fork

By David Ozio

"We are headed into December and wouldn't ya know it, the warm fall weather has put the lake way behind schedule. Main lake water temps are still in the mid 60's and the fish seem to be in the "I don't know what to do" mode. Nonetheless, this Christmas month will play out like most Novembers and the bass will start showing up on the usual deep spots a little later than normal. Who knows, we may end up with some severe cold fronts over the next couple of weeks and it's everything back to normal.

The lack of rain to date has the lake dropping to almost three feet low. This has helped the bite to date shallow but the warm water temps aren't allowing the big bass to gang up deep. This changed

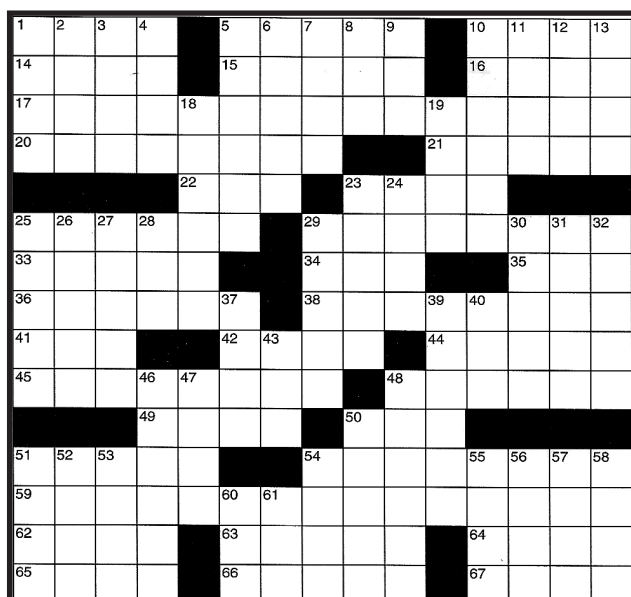
our focus to mid depth water patterns and this will continue into December while we are searching for the next ShareLunker. Provided the water cools heading into Santa month, good electronics will play a key roll in the search of these groups of monster green fish and the best place to start your search will be at the mouth of the major creeks, Birch, Penson, Mustang, Williams, Wolfe and Dale. Focus on the shad and scan for hooks that are surrounding the clouds of bait. All these bass will be suspended so target these fish with a flutter spoon if the wind is an issue or a weightless fluke if the water is calm. Count the bait down to the level where you marked them at the rate of a second per foot. At that point, twitch the fluke or rip the spoon. Stay in touch with the shad and see what happens. The M-Pack Lures flutter spoon will do the trick if you are in the mouth of a creek that is inundated with timber. Let it flutter to the bottom and experiment with different retrieves to isolate what the fish favor. A standard spoon in the same silver or gold works better if you are in open water with no obstructions. Pay close attention to your graph and direct your efforts in areas where there are schools of sand bass or bar fish. All year, the big black bass have been mixed in with the schools feeding on the unwitting small



bar fish. C-rigs and drop shots have worked well also using redbug and junebug Talon Carolina Worms. Locate the baitfish and go to work.

The shallow bite will still be relevant if the water temps stay above 60 degrees. Rattletraps, square-bills, chatterbaits and spinnerbaits will all answer the call to duty. Look for vegetation in the skinny water and pay attention to any baitfish activity. There will also be other patterns that will work during this time of the year, one being the jig and craw trailer fished on the creek bends where wood is present. Black and blue is my fav, especially on cloudy days. If the water is fairly clear, switch to watermelon red front to back. Work it slow, espe-

(See December Bass....  
Continued on Page 20-A)



## CLUES ACROSS

1. Greeting or sympathy
5. Velocity
10. A wife (law)
14. Smell
15. Flour moths genus
16. Hebrew calendar month
17. Retail rivals
20. A city built on the central plateau
21. Inspect
22. Raincoat
23. Flexible armor
25. Rouse
29. One-sided contest
33. Spirit in "The Tempest"
34. Sacred chest
35. Opening
36. Stoves
38. Reduced in size
41. Food additive, abbr.
42. School groups
44. A sharp narrow ridge
45. More becoming
48. Conditions of balance
49. Private school in New York
50. The act of singing
51. Mei-ling \_\_, wife of Chiang Kai-shek
54. Peace talk participants
59. Famous acting duo
62. Sustained dull painful emotion
63. Jan \_\_, Dutch painter
64. Exchange premium
65. Data transmission speed measure
66. Caravanserais
67. A cozy or secluded retreat

## CLUES DOWN

1. Search thoroughly
2. Hebrew calendar month
3. Cape near Lisbon
4. Dehydrates
5. A variable quantity
6. State of sudden fright
7. Icelandic poems
8. Work unit
9. Thai
10. Leg bone
11. In a way, looked
12. African nation
13. Formerly (archaic)
18. Trope
19. A way to wound
23. Bogs down
24. Requests
25. Yeasts
26. Wipe out
27. A way to burn
28. Two-year-old sheep
29. Of cheekbone
30. Timbers
31. Greek island in the Mediterranean
32. The god of the underworld
37. Work natural fibers into a thread
39. Ancient Persia ruler
40. A major division of geological time
43. Black or green
46. In a way, chopped
47. Dazed
48. Enchantresses
50. Ghastly pale from physical or emotional distress
51. Knife
52. Predatory whale
53. Hawaiian Island
54. The content of cognition
55. Abba \_\_, Israeli politician
56. Toboggan
57. Bearded or dwarf
58. Unpleasant person
60. Request
61. Last in an indefinitely large series

Answers on Page 21-A



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## TPWD Urging Private Landowners to Participate in Brief Questionnaire

Understanding Texas as private landowner needs, preferences and concerns in operating and managing their land and natural resources is the purpose of a brief online questionnaire developed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Private Lands Advisory Committee in partnership with Texas A&M University Institute of Renewable Natural Resources.

The electronic survey is available now through Dec. 20, takes about 10-15 minutes to complete and is

accessible at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BNPNBXR>.

"Texas has over 142 million privately-owned acres and thousands of landowners, each having their own objectives in managing their property - their private rural working land," said Dr. Bill Eikenhorst, chairman of TPWD's Private Lands Advisory Committee. "With the help of private landowners who participate in this survey, we are hoping to find better ways to serve and meet their land management needs."

Participation in the questionnaire and individual responses will remain confidential -- responses will not be associated with landowners or their property and will only be presented in aggregate form.



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## "The Moon Report" December Crappie On Fork

By Terri Moon

Hard to believe this year has come to an end in the "blink of an eye"!! It's been a year of "ups and downs" and "highs and lows"!

This year started with unprecedented HIGH water levels combined with high winds that did a lot of dock damage around the lake and also it broke off many of our "marker" trees. This made navigating the lake quite a different experience! It made me appreciate my Lowrance HDS units more than ever – because believe me, when these lake levels change that drastically, it's like learning a new lake when you're out of the boat lanes. It made my GPS trails and waypoints "PRICELESS"!! Also the high water levels made it necessary to release water quickly and anyone who fishes Lake Fork a lot knows that these fish do NOT like current. So needless to say, the fishing started off a little tough this year.

Then the spring fronts came along – about every 3 to 5 days. The water temperatures



bounced up and down so much the spawn dragged on thru June this year! But, May and June fishing was once again AWESOME! We had pretty good fishing mid July thru September – (if you caught a day when they weren't pulling water out). Then October thru November, we had some great days – overall, our numbers were down a little but the quality of the crappie was "off the chart"! With the latest cold fronts that came through, it sent the water temperature falling and put crappie on the move. We were catching some 3-12 ft. but the last front sent many to deeper water. It's time to chase the bait-

fish and hit the main lake points near creek channels, deep water humps and drop-offs and don't forget the bridges. The colder the water temperature gets, the deeper they will go. Just keep your eye on that graph and adjust your casts accordingly.

The colors working for us have been Lake Fork Tackle's chartreuse w/pink and pearl on bright days – then blue/chartreuse and threadfin shad on cloudier days. In the baby shad, also Cajun Cricket has produced. The big bream that have moved in the brush piles are liking these baits too – (especially

(See December Crappie.....  
Continued on Page 21-A)

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## Waterfowl Hunting Season Got Underway

Waterfowlers looked to the north for help as duck and goose hunting seasons kicked off recently under less than ideal conditions. A lack of cold weather has delayed the winter migration once again this year, according to field observations by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists. "Weather patterns, especially significant cold fronts, can have great impact on migration timing," said Kevin Kraai, TPWD waterfowl program coordinator. "Unfortunately, this is the one factor we can't predict, but we keep our fingers crossed for lots of frozen water north of the Red River throughout most of the winter."

The general duck hunting season got under way recently in the Texas Panhandle (High Plains Mallard Management Unit), and in the South and North Zones. Goose hunting kicked off also statewide.

The good news again this year is that much of the remaining waterfowl habitat across the state

appears to be in prime condition thanks to an abundance of rainfall over the last two years.

"As waterfowl hunters and biologists, we are always looking to the sky to send us water for birds to forage in and for us to hunt," Kraai noted. "Rarely do we ever say that there is too much water, but we came close last year and wet conditions seemed to have persisted into the summer months in many parts of Texas. "Overall duck and goose populations are at or near records and we expect an excellent migration assuming we get timely cold fronts throughout the fall and winter."

One significant example of how an excess of water is benefitting the birds and the hunting prospects this year, restrictions for irrigation water along the coastal prairies were lifted, resulting in an additional 40,000 to 50,000 acres of rice production on the Texas coastal prairies. "This will greatly increase carrying capacity of our Gulf Coast region and the birds are expected

to respond favorably," predicted Kraai. "We have already seen early migrants taking advantage of these new resources in surprising numbers."

While habitat conditions across the coastal region are much-improved, biologists are still hoping for more rain to replenish freshwater ponds and wetlands. "Habitat conditions were as good as we have seen in years going into early teal seasons this September, but prolonged periods of little to no rainfall since September have really dried out our coastal habitats," said Kraai. "Our marshes and estuaries received significant freshwater inflows this summer, which has resulted in excellent growth of important waterfowl foods up and down the Gulf Coast. We hope the rain will return soon to flood up the foods that were produced this summer."

A similar scenario is occurring in the northern region of the state where playa lakes in the Texas

(See Waterfowl Hunting Season...

Continued on Page 16-A)



Gary & Leonard Blanton

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## TPWD Filing Felony Charges Following Assault on Texas Game Warden

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) law enforcement officials plan to file felony charges recently in Bastrop County on 36-year-old Jake Russell Childers for resisting arrest and assault on a state game warden attempting to make an arrest.

Acting on notifications from several law enforcement agencies that Childers posed a safety threat to police and the public, was wanted on eight outstanding felony arrest warrants, and was suspected of involvement in illegal hunting activities, a Bastrop County game warden initiated a surveillance operation near the home of a known relative.

In the early morning hours of Sunday, Nov. 13, the game warden observed Childers leaving the home in possession of fishing gear walking toward an area known to be a local trouble spot for trespassing and fishing on private ponds without landowner consent. After requesting backup from local law enforcement, the warden made his way to a location he suspected Childers to be headed. Due to concerns the individual was about to flee the area, the decision was made to initiate contact with the suspect prior to backup arriving on scene. As the game warden attempted to put him in handcuffs, Childers resisted arrest and assaulted

the game warden. After an intense struggle, Childers escaped into thick woods nearby.

An extensive manhunt ensued involving several law enforcement agencies, headed by TPWD's criminal investigations and tactical operations teams. Childers, with help from his sister, 34-year-old Dusty Lynn McBride, managed to elude law enforcement for two days before being apprehended in Austin early Tuesday by multiple law enforcement agencies, including state game wardens, state troopers, Austin police and Bastrop County sheriff's deputies.

At the time of his arrest, Childers had numerous outstanding felony warrants out of Live Oak County on various charges, including assault and burglary.

His sister was also arrested for hindering apprehension or prosecution, a third degree felony, and booked into the Travis County Jail by game wardens along with Childers.

The game warden who was assaulted sustained minor injuries in the initial incident and remained involved throughout the manhunt. "This incident illustrates the dedication of Texas game wardens and the risks our officers face every day while carrying out their duties as state police officers," said Col.

Craig Hunter, TPWD Director of Law Enforcement. "It is the responsibility of every Texas game warden to ensure the public's safety on and off the pavement."

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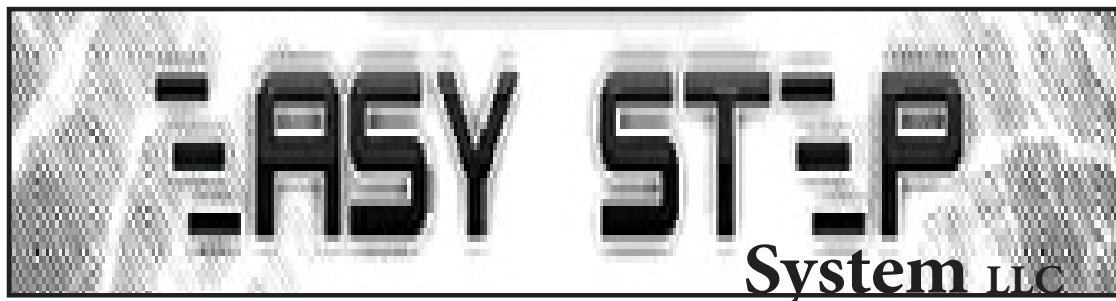
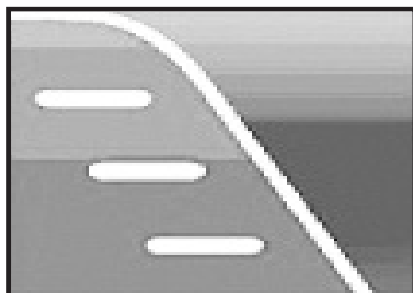
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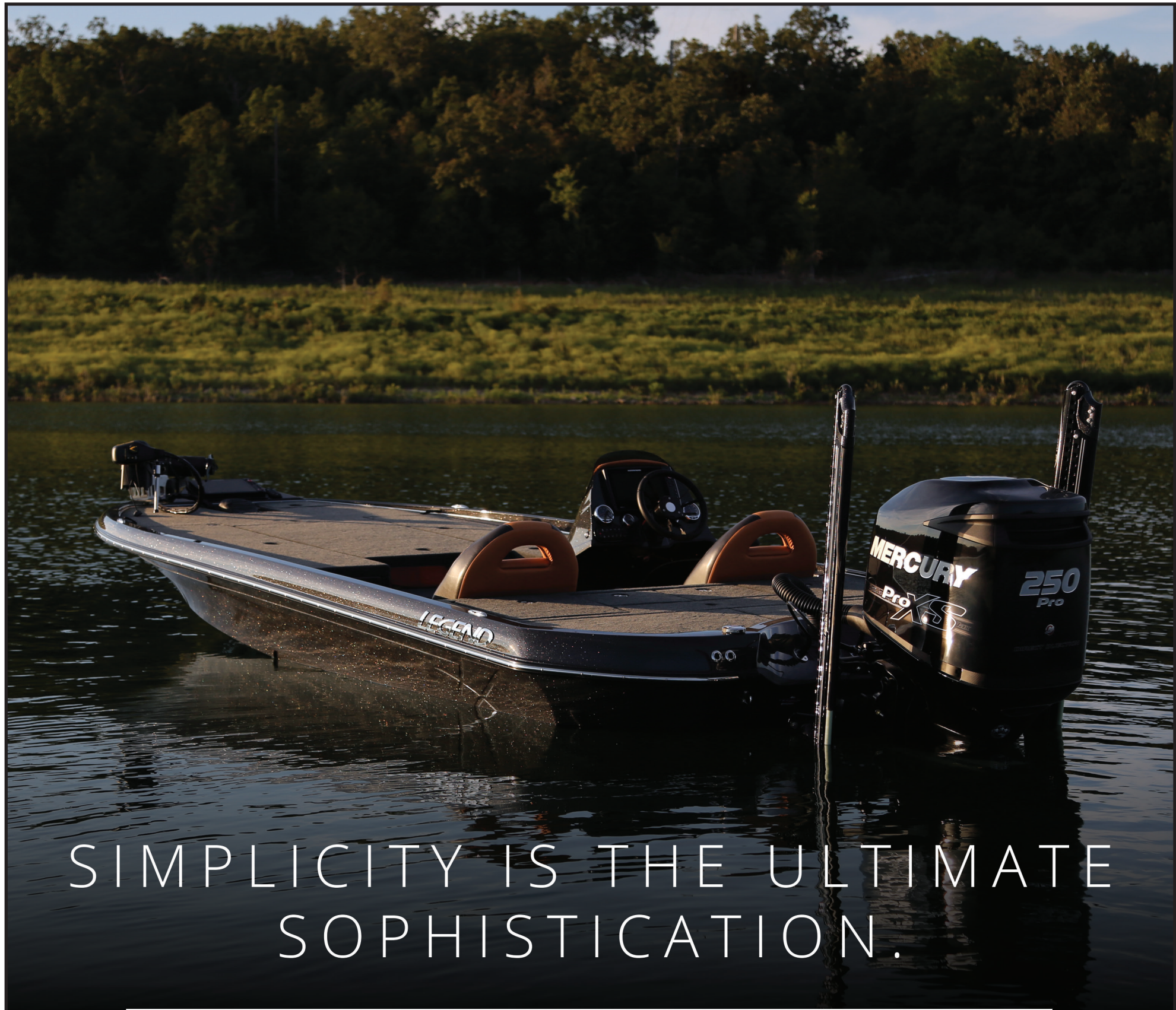


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## Multiple Agencies Thwart Major Drug Shipment on South Padre Island

Texas Game Wardens, along with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security, helped intercept a drug shipment along a popular stretch of surf on South Padre Island recently, seizing 730 pounds of marijuana and arresting six individuals on drug trafficking charges.

Around 4:30 a.m. on Oct. 13, game wardens assigned to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Marine Tactical Operations Group received notification that a vessel was traveling

northbound from Mexico and made landfall on South Padre Island. The team immediately responded to the call and located a vehicle parked in the surf near the hotel district of South Padre Island. The vehicle was backed up to the water with a vessel known as a "lancha" behind it in the surf.

The lancha fled the scene and the driver of the vehicle was immediately taken into custody. Game wardens and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agents with the Office of Air Marine seized 17

bundles of marijuana from the vehicle and the surrounding beach area.

Agents with the Office of Air Marine then pursued the southbound lancha until it capsized approximately 4 miles south of the landing location. Five individuals aboard the lancha were taken into custody, while the vessel and additional bundles of marijuana were recovered and seized along with the vehicle.

"The illegal trafficking of narcotics will not be tolerated in the state of Texas and activities like this that are blatantly conducted in areas frequented by sportsmen and tourists will be dealt with immediately," said COL Game Warden Craig Hunter, TPWD Director of Law Enforcement. "Thanks to the strong relationship of cooperation that the Texas law enforcement community has with our federal partners, we are able continue our interdiction of illegal activity up and down the coast and along Texas' international border."

Agencies assisting with the interdiction, transportation, recovery of narcotics and apprehension of subjects were: the United States Customs and Border Protection Office of Air Marine, Homeland Security Investigations, South Padre Island Police Department, United States Coast Guard SPI Station, Cameron County Park Police and Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens.

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## Fall into Fishing along the Texas Coast

Anglers are taking full advantage of the recent unseasonably warm weather this fall that has kept fishing conditions pleasant along the Texas coast, according to coastal fisheries biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

"Conditions are ideal for recreational anglers right now," said Jerry Mambretti, TPWD Coastal Fisheries Division regional director for the upper coast. "It's sunny, with cool clear water, not too windy and good tidal movement."

Mambretti noted that in most all the major bay systems along the upper coast, anglers are reporting good catches of spotted seatrout and although it appears the fall flounder run may be off to a delayed start, catches are picking up along Sabine Lake and in Galveston and San Antonio Bays.

Lower water temperatures force flounder to migrate from the bays into the Gulf of Mexico to spawn. This 'flounder run' typically happens in November.

"The flounder appear to be on the move as angler catches have improved since the recent cooler weather has set in, which has been reflected by increased catches seen in TPWD gill net samples," Mambretti said.

Perry Trial, TPWD Coastal Fisheries Division regional director for the lower coast, is seeing similar activity. "Overall fishing pressure has

remained relatively high throughout the fall so far and trout catches have been good," he said. "Flounder have been abundant in our sampling gears, but landings are down this fall. Higher than normal tides in October and the November ban on gigging have contributed to the low landings."

Due to declining flounder populations, new regulations were implemented in 2009 and 2014 to increase the abundance of flounder coastwide. During the month of November the daily bag limit for flounder dropped from 5 to 2 with the possession limit equal to the bag limit. Only a pole-and-line was used to harvest flounder in November. From Dec. 1-14, the daily bag limit and possession limit are 2, but flounder may be taken by any legal fishing device including a gig. The minimum size limit for taking flounder is 14 inches.

"These regulations have helped us stabilize the southern flounder population and reverse the decline of this recreationally important species," said Lance Robinson, TPWD Coastal Fisheries Division deputy director.

The regulations for other popular sportfish like red drum and spotted seatrout do not change during this time. For all bag and size limits, visit our Saltwater Bag and Length Limits page online. For the latest on fishing conditions, be sure to check out TPWD's Weekly Fishing Report online.

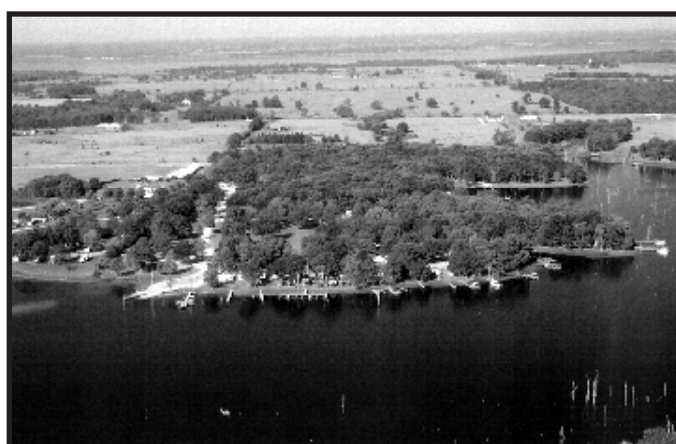


At the Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork end of the year championship held on Lake of the Pines, Kenny LaDuke won 1st Place overall with a total weight of 37.41-pounds and had 1st largest bass weighing in at 7.21-lbs.

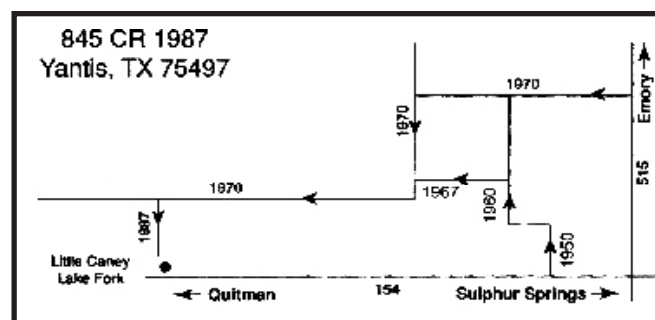


At the Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork end of the year championship held on Lake of the Pines, Don Hampton won 2nd Place overall with a total weight of 26.16-pounds and had 2nd largest bass weighing in at 5.28-lbs.

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## Waterfowl Hunting Season Got Underway (Continued from Page 9-A)

Panhandle have rapidly evaporated over the last few months, leaving waterfowl and hunters high and dry heading into the season. "Decent rainfall filled a few playa basins in August, but many have already greatly receded or dried up completely now leaving very few playa basins holding wa-

ter," Kraai said. "We are keeping our fingers crossed for a wet fall so ducks and geese have a place to swim while enjoying the region's ample supply

of agricultural foods."

Likewise, East Texas also received extensive rainfall last year and the lakes, reservoir and river bottoms experienced prolonged high water that biologists say will have impacted production of moist-soil plants this summer, but submerged aquatic plant

production should be excellent and will attract all types of dabbling and diving ducks in this part of the state. Warm and dry conditions this fall have set in and the region is in need of a change in weather pattern soon for the Pineywoods to hold migrating birds.

Hunters are encour-

aged to review hunting rules and requirements in the 2016-17 Waterfowl Hunting Digest before heading afield. Printed copies of the digest are available wherever hunting licenses are sold and online at [http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd\\_bk\\_k0700\\_1014.pdf](http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_k0700_1014.pdf).

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## Nominations Sought Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame

Individuals or organizations that have made a lasting contribution to freshwater fishing in Texas may be nominated through Dec. 31 for induction into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

The nominee must be a Texan or Texas organization. Individuals may be living or deceased. Selection will be made by an independent committee

and induction will take place during the annual Hall of Fame banquet at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) in Athens.

The most recent additions to the Hall of Fame are volunteer angling instructor Randi Wayland, outdoor writer Ray Sasser, and the world's oldest competitive bass fishing tournament, the Texas State Bass Tournament.

Videos about prior inductees may be viewed in the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame at TFFC; some are also available on YouTube. Brief biographical sketches of past inductees and links to videos and the nomination form may be found at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/spd-est/visitorcenters/tffc/visit/virtualtour/hallof-fame/inductees.phtml>.

## Improvements at Mission Tejas are Underway

A new project is underway at Mission Tejas State Park to replace damage caused by a fire during Hurricane Ike in 2008.

Improvements at the park that are currently ongoing include a new entrance, a head-

quarters building, a visitors center and restroom facilities. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

The park is located in the community of Weches, 15 miles from Grapeland. For

more information about the park, including park hours, equipment rentals and ranger programs, visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department website or contact the park at (936) 687-2394.

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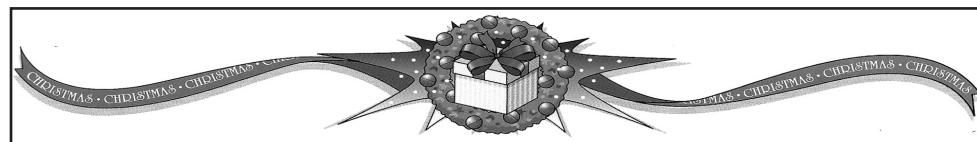


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## "Pack of Knowledge" "Winter Bass Habits"

By Andrew Grills

Winter is almost here on Lake Fork. If I only had three months a year to fish, December would be one of those months for sure. The reason is the colder it gets, the bigger the bass I catch. That's why I think it would be a good idea to discuss the cold water habits of bass that I have learned over the years.

When I was learning to fish Lake Fork before I began guiding, I had spent most of my time fishing during the winter months. I worked on a construction crew and we did a

lot of work in the northern part of the country where it just wasn't possible to work in the winter. Therefore, I had a few months a year, during the winter to spend time on the lake.

I was never intimidated by cold water. I hear folks talk about slowing down when the water temperature drops to the mid 50's. However, I have had phenomenal days using moving presentations when the water was in the low 40's! I have fished water as cold as 36 degrees on Lake Fork. That day was in the winter of 2014. We caught 7 bass that day on a chatterbait.

The main thing to keep in mind concerning winter fishing, is that the smaller bass don't have the need to feed very much. They're metabolism is running so slow due to their cold blooded nature that they don't feel very hungry. The bigger female bass however, have developing egg sacks that need protein to grow. Also, bigger bass have to eat more often in winter to keep up their body weight.

Bass fishing in the winter on Lake Fork is all about big bass, not numbers. While you can have some nice days where you catch quite a few, a bite an hour is about what I expect on an average day. The key is those bites will generally be quality bites.

I rarely fish deeper than 12' in the win-

ter. Sure, there are tons of bass in the deeper water on the lower end of the lake. However, a lot of fish stay close to shallow water in order to warm up on sunny days. They will pull up and suspend on sunny days, or move to very shallow water on warm afternoons.

They like deeper water close by as well. I believe this gives big bass a feeling of safety. Always having an escape route and having some more comfortable water in case of a severe cold snap is important. The term "deeper water" is relative. In some of the creeks on the upper end of a reservoir that could mean 6' deep. On other areas of the lake it might mean 25'. It just depends on the area and how deep the water gets in the vicinity.

Ledges become a key type of structure in the winter. This gives bass the safety of deep water access and access to more shallow water as well. They only have to move vertically to get comfortable. The main ledges I fish here on Lake Fork are the creeks, ditches, and drains that were present before the reservoir was flooded.

When searching for fish in creek channels and ditches, look for the areas that still have definition. Sometimes the creeks will silt in

(See Pack of Knowledge....

Continued on Page 22-A)



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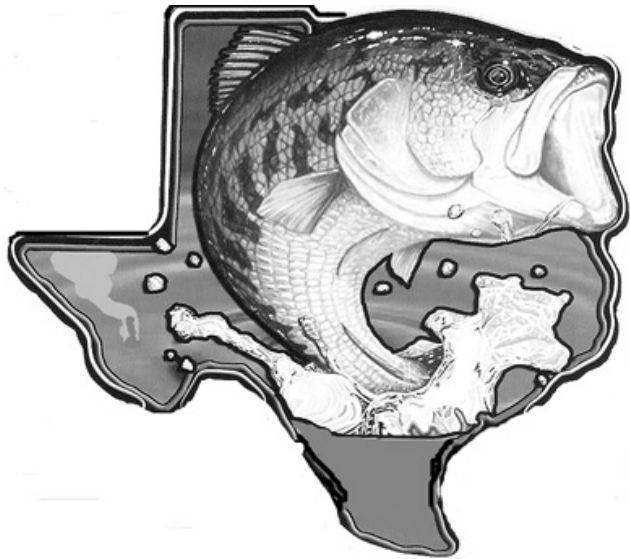
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# Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork Membership Drive



By Don Hampton

Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork is a highly motivated progressive bass fishing club with ties to the Wish to Fish Foundation and Weight Masters at the Wood County Kid Fish. If you love bass fishing, like competition, wish to improve your skills, and make new friendships that could last a lifetime, you should come join our bass club.

Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork has 13 club tournaments per year with 2 drops in point category. A 2-day tournament is held in the month of November at the end of the year championship with accommodations provided by the club. All tournaments are held within an hour drive from Lake Fork. The club fishes lakes like Welch, Monticello, Winnsboro, Quitman, Hawkins, Tyler, Holbrook, Tawakoni, Bob Sandlin, and Cypress Springs. Wherever

the club votes to go fish is where the next tournament is held. Take-off for each tournament is 6 a.m. with everyone in by 3:30 p.m. This club also hosts 2 open tournaments per year on Lake Fork. One is held in the spring and the other in the fall.

The club meetings are held after each tournament and the next lake and date are voted on by the membership at that time. In this respect it helps the members that may be fishing other tournaments to keep the dates from conflicting. Also at each meeting after the tournament the Top 3 winners inform the rest of the club what they caught their fish on, the technique, and depth. In this aspect it helps the other anglers improve their skills and lets them know what they could have tried different. The top three places are paid each tournament and the Top 6 for the year receive fishing shirts supplied by the club.

Dues to join the club are a mere \$30 per year. Cost for each tournament is \$25 with a \$5 Big Bass Option. There is also a progressive side pot that an optional \$5 for the first 7-pound or over bass.

Texas Trails Bassmaster is a boat owner club only, no non boaters are accepted. Family members who join individually can fish in the same boat. This refers to husband and wife or parent and siblings. We do limit two anglers per boat. All boats, makes and models are welcome as long as they meet state regulations.

The next club tournament will be held on Lake Welch on December 10th. The annual Christmas party will be held on December 17 at Bro's

Patio/Fishermans One Stop.

If this club sounds like one you'd like to set your hook in, give me a call, Don Hampton at 903-360-6994 or 903-383-7748 or Rodney Ellis, President at 903-714-6473. For more information go to [www.texastrailsbassmasters.com](http://www.texastrailsbassmasters.com).

I hope to be fishing with you this year!

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## December Bass on Fork (Continued from Page 6-A)

cially through the roots of the trees. Sunny afternoons during this season can also be a gold mine. As the water cools into the mid-fifties, chatterbaits and traps are the go to baits worked shallow and be sure to focus on the 2:00 to 5:30pm window. Water warms during the afternoon and the fish will move up for a free meal. Pay attention to any bird activity and they will lead you to the bass.

December/January is also a great month to catch numbers on the power plant lakes. If cabin fever has set in, give me a call and we can wear

them out where the water temps are summer like. If you are headed out to Lake Fork in December 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 December and some in January. 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/Lake-ForkGuideDavidOzio>. 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 and Talon Custom Lures for making my job the blast that it is. A special shout out to Nautical Mile 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."

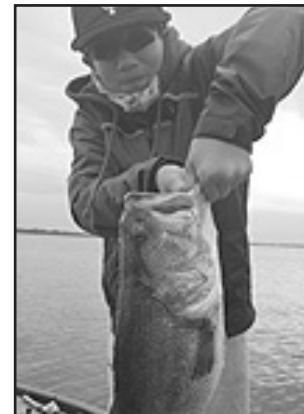
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## December Crappie On Fork Continued from Page 8-A)

if you tip it with Berkley's crappie nibble!)

Please remember December 1st to March 1st you must keep the first 25 crappie you catch – no culling rule is in effect.

This deep water December fishing has me very excited and the number one reason is my MinnKota Ulterra Trolling Motor! It still amazes me every day! I just love the anchor button and not having to be tethered to the foot pedal! The auto stow display is the number one feature my customers are impressed with (ME TOO!!!) So, if all you

wives really love your "fishermen husbands" – I bet this would be at the top of their "want list" for Christmas!

Also, if you are looking for gifts for the fishermen in your family, you definitely need to stop by Lake Fork Marina. They have put together some great "gift baskets"

for the holidays! You can even order online LakeForkMarina.com

I want to wish everyone a Wonderful Holiday Season and send a big thank you to everyone who came and fished with me this year. You are all so much appreciated!

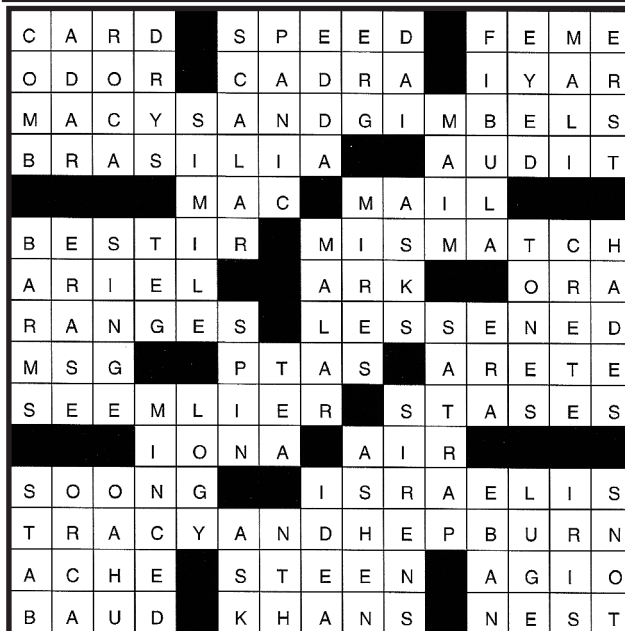
My best and many blessings to you all!

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The tradition of using small candles to light a Christmas tree is thought to date back to the mid-17th century.

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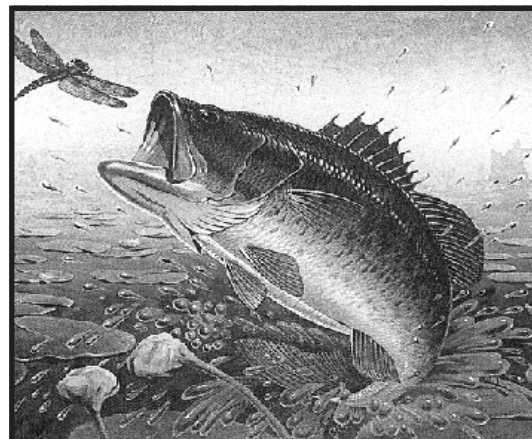
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### Winter Find

There are 14 articles of winter clothing hidden throughout the scrambled puzzle below. See how many you can find and circle. The words go horizontally and vertically, backward and forward.

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

over time. Not all are equal. Also, keep an eye out for sharp "horseshoe" bends in the creek. A bend will almost always mean there is a deeper,

steeper, more washed out part of the channel. This will be on the outside of the bends. Later in winter, when the fish really start to get into a true pre-

spawn pattern, they will relate to flats big time. However, there are usually still drains and ditches that will hold the biggest fish in the area.

Hopefully you found something helpful here concerning winter bass habits. It's my favorite time of year to fish, and it just might become yours.

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### *Fish Friendly*



Adrian Bloomfield from Australia was fishing with Lake Fork guide Andrew Grills in November when he caught this hawg weighing 10-lbs. 11-ozs. Quite the story to take back home. CPR (Photo Courtesy Andrew Grills Guide Service)



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