

# LAKE FORK "The Big Bass Capital of Texas"



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2 Sections

Vol. 19

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No. 220

## Town Hall Meeting Addressing The Concerns of Giant Salvinia

By Don Hampton

A Town Hall Meeting was held on Tuesday, November 21st and was presented by the Lake Fork Sportsman's Association and Texas Parks and Wildlife. This meeting was called to address the concern for the growing Giant Salvinia infestation on Lake Fork. Spokesman at the meeting was John Findeisen, Brookeland Aquatic Invasive Species team leader with TPWD.

Salvinia has three primary stages of growth, primary stage, secondary, and tertiary stage. It was explained in the meeting the way they were planning to treat this infestation. There is going to be a boom placed across White Oak Creek in the first phase. Anglers can lift their trolling motor and cross the boom but are urged not to cross or exit where this invasive plant can be seen.

They are mainly going to spray mats of giant salvinia that are not contained by other vegetation. Through re-



cent studies they have found that natural cut grasses keep the salvinia in place. As the other grasses die off from the winter stages they will aggressively spray those singularly mats, thus protecting natural grasses and cover on Lake Fork. In areas where Salvinia is mixed with other vegetation, weevils will be introduced in these locations. The Salvinia Weevil feeds only on Salvinia and will not harm any natural grasses in the lake.

Salvinia is the great hitchhiker. No one group can be blamed for it being transported from lake to lake. It can attach itself to anything including birds, animals, duck decoys, boat motors and trailers.

Local anglers, and businesses are asked to work with SRA and TPWD on this aggressive species. Maybe in the future we all may be able to 'Adopt A Shoreline' like they have on the highways.

To have this plant in any way in your possession constitutes a Misdemeanor offense. An NTP and Exotic Species permit can be obtained for those wishing to help, through TPWD.

If anyone should notice new growth of Salvinia in different places on the lake, they are urged to contact SRA or [john.findeisen@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:john.findeisen@tpwd.texas.gov). TPWD: The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has con-

(See Town Hall....

Continued on Page 4-A)



**"Preserving The Legend That Is Lake Fork!"** Yantis High School Students, The Lake Fork Sportsman's Association, and TPWD took another step forward in the preservation of Lake Fork.

## New Plantings On Lake Fork

By Don Hampton

On Friday, November 10th, Yantis High School students in association with Lake Fork Sportsman's Association, and Texas Parks and Wildlife planted 414 button bushes on Lake Fork.

This is a continuing program to help preserve the legend that is Lake Fork. Of the 414 bushes planted, 67 of those were Cypress trees.

Eighteen students from Yantis High School ranging from ninth thru twelfth grade volunteered to as-

sist in the program. The students in the Agriculture Science/Horticulture classes were accompanied by their teachers Tonya Rabenaldt and Mike Moore of YISD. These youth were truly an inspiration of our youth today. They worked diligently and were quite respectful in performing their tasks.

Also in attendance were the volunteers from LFSA and members of TPWD. Representing Texas Parks and Wildlife in this endeavor were Kevin Storey, Monte Brown, Evan Cartabiano, and Kurt Felix.

The button bushes and Cypress trees as they grow will prevent erosion of the bank lines. They will also provide cover for bedding bass and fingerling protection after the spawn and during restocking.

After all of the hard work that was done in the planting, all of the volunteers were treated to lunch at Oak Ridge Marina Restaurant provided by LFSA.

The Lake Fork Sportsman's association is to be commended for all their efforts in "Preserving The LegendThatIsLakeFork!"



# Bubba Claus sworn in to replace Santa for East Texas lake areas

By Bubba B. Tuff

Well boys and girls Santa's contract has been renegotiated and it directly effects Lake Fork, Bob Sandlin, and Lake Tawakoni areas.

Due to the influx of new homeowners and the overwhelming amount of tourism to the lake areas, Santa regrets to inform us he will no longer be the bearer of good tidings. His contract has been renegotiated by the State of Texas Fairies and Elves Local 101.

Set forth in the new contract, Santa's responsibilities will no longer include the Lake Fork, Bob Sandlin, Lake Tawakoni and East Texas area. Cookie breaks will be shortened to assure satisfactory work ethics and quality.

In a press release to "The Fisherman's Guide News", sent out November 26, 2017, Santa's replacement was named. Everyone can rest assured we will be in good hands. The replacement for the lake areas will be his third cousin, Bubba Claus.

Bubba Claus is originally from the South Pole. There he attended Equator High and went on to further his education by attending night school majoring in Chimney Dropping and Fire Safety.

"I share the same goal as my cousin Santa. I will deliver toys to all the boys and girls at the lakes and in the East Texas area," said Bubba Claus in an interview with "The Fisherman's Guide, News You Can Use."

In the interview, to relieve concerned parents, the differences in the method of delivery were discussed at great length. Bubba Claus assured, "Christmas would be bettern' ever and jus' doggone good!"

The differences in delivery will include the following:

\* There will be no danger of a Grinch stealing your Christmas. On Bubba's sleigh he has a loaded gun rack and a bumper sticker that reads: "These toys insured by Smith and Wesson."

\* Instead of milk and cookies, Bubba Claus prefers that children leave a Bud Light and fried crappie, and hush-puppies on the fireplace mantel.

\* When Bubba Claus' sleigh lands on your roof, do not be

alarmed by the sound of barking. Bubba Claus's sleigh will be pulled by floppy-eared flying coon dogs instead of reindeer. (It seems Santa once loaned Bubba his reindeer and now Blitzen's head overlooks Bubba's fireplace.)

\* No longer will you hear "On Comet, on Cupid, on Blitzen, on Donner." Instead in a southern drawl you will hear, "Buedro, Jake, Snake, Goober, Gomer, less' git 'er done!"

\* For that night only and for Bubba Claus only the local speed limits will be waived. Also, in accordance with local tradition, Bubba's bumper will have a sticker on it saying "Made in Texas by Texans, So Don't Mess With Bubba!"

\* Bubba Claus does not wear a belt. If the children are present when he bends over to put the presents under the tree, make sure they turn their heads.

\* Out of respect for Bubba, the traditional Christmas songs like "Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer" and "Santa Merry Christmas and Claus Is Coming To

Town" will be replaced by "Bubba Shot The Jukebox" and "Grandma Got Ran Over By A Reindeer."

After extended negotiations it was determined by all agencies involved, Bubba Claus would definitely fit and exceed the slot. Thus he was judged a "Keeper"! Happy New Year!



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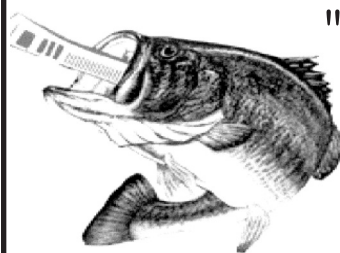
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## Inland Fisheries Staff Considering Simplified Largemouth Bass Regulations Across the State

After nearly a year of reviewing special largemouth bass regulations in place across the state, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department inland fisheries management staff are considering changes to simplify regulations at 18 public lakes. Inland Fisheries staff previewed the potential changes to bass regulations to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission at a meeting held recently in Lufkin.

"Largemouth bass are one of the first species we started managing in the state, and we've done a great job managing our bass fisheries through time," said Dave Terre, TPWD Chief of Inland Fisheries Management and Research. "Our process has been to use different kinds of regulations for bass to accomplish specific management goals. With these potential changes, we still hope to attain the same management goals, but we are trying to reduce the number and kinds of special regulations with the goal of making them less complicated, more easily understood and enforceable."

Twelve of the 18 lakes affected by the potential changes would revert to the statewide 14-inch minimum length limit, which governs nearly 80 percent of water bodies in the state. The other six lakes affected would see changes to more appropriate special regulations.

Lakes being considered to revert to the statewide limit include Granbury, Possum Kingdom, Ratcliff, Bryan, Cooper, Old Mount Pleasant

City, Bridgeport, Burke-Crenshaw, Georgetown, Madisonville, San Augustine and Sweetwater.

A change from the 14-24 inch slot length limit to a 16-24 inch slot is being considered for Fayette County Reservoir, Gibbons Creek Reservoir and Lake Monticello. Under the potential changes, Grapevine Lake would change to no minimum length limit with a bag limit of 5 fish of which only two can be less than 18 inches. Purvis Creek State Park Lake and Lake Raven would change from catch and release only to a five-fish daily bag and a 16-inch maximum length limit. The 16-24 slot and 16-inch maximum limits include provisions for anglers to possess bass 24 inches or longer for possible submission to the Toyota ShareLunker program.

Terre said before considering any changes, district fisheries biologists were tasked to look carefully at the special regulations and determine if they met the current largemouth bass goals and objectives at each reservoir. In some cases, such as those lakes with 14-18 inch slot length limits and the 16- and 18-inch minimum length limits, biologists found the regulations had little or mixed results on the bass population when compared to the statewide limit. Reservoirs having a 14-24 inch slot length limit or catch and release only were moved to other successful regulation types to reduce regulation complexity with-

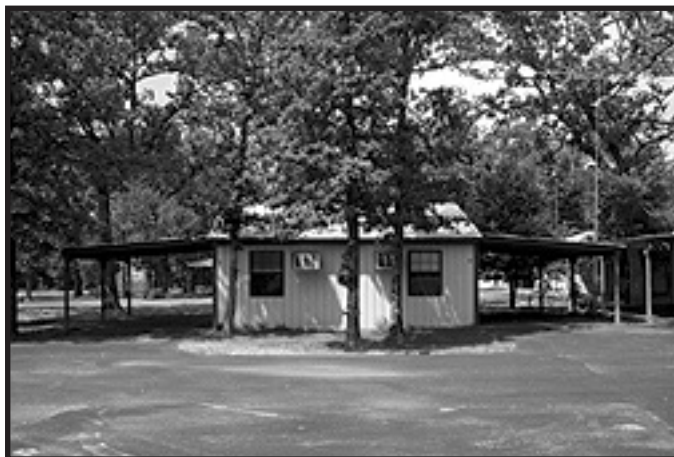
out compromising fishery management goals.

If the changes being considered are approved, the number of reservoirs 500 acres and larger with special largemouth bass regulations would decrease from 30 to 21. Terre said biologists will continue to look at the remaining reservoirs with special regulations with the intent of further simplifying the rules at those lakes, too.

"Our goal is for anglers to see less variation of the largemouth bass rules when they visit Texas lakes," Terre said. "But we are doing this without sacrificing our standards of making the bass fishing great. We hold that high and true for our fisheries."

Additionally, inland fisheries staff are considering changing existing special regulations on lakes Bellwood and Davey Crockett, to a 16-inch maximum length limit. Terre said these changes are being considered to improve or maintain the existing bass populations in these reservoirs.

In January, inland fisheries staff will present these possible changes to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. If the Commission approves, the proposed changes will be published in the Texas Register, which begins the process of official public comment. Prior to that, anglers wishing to comment on the potential changes can direct those to Dave Terre ([dave.terre@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:dave.terre@tpwd.texas.gov); 512-389-4855).



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## Town Hall Meeting Addressing The Concerns of Giant Salvinia (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1-A)

firmed the presence of invasive giant salvinia at three locations on Lake Fork – the largest total infestation ever found on the lake.

Personnel from the Sabine River Authority (SRA) and the Tyler North district fisheries office confirmed the infestation Thursday, Oct. 26, within hours of being notified by a local property owner. The TPWD Brookeland aquatic invasive species team later coordinated the placement of a containment boom to isolate the worst-affected cove and surveyed sections of shoreline to determine the extent of the giant salvinia's presence.

"We are seeing 12-15 total acres of giant salvinia in Lake Fork at this time," said John Findeisen, Brookeland Aquatic Invasive Species team lead. "There's enough giant salvinia scattered throughout the lake that eradication would be almost impossible at this point. We will continue to search the lake but we also ask that boaters and property owners also keep an eye out for the plant and call us if they see it."

According to Findeisen, 90 percent of the infestation – about 10 acres – is confined to White Oak Creek behind the containment boom. But the other scattered plants confirmed along the highway 17 bridge at Fisherman's Cove Boat Ramp, and directly across from White Oak Creek cannot be contained to their current locations.

Judging by the distribution and age of the

plants, it is apparent the giant salvinia at White Oak Creek has been in place for at least 8-10 months, Findeisen said. As is the case for other introductions in East Texas, the plants were most likely introduced to the lake by boat trailer.

"These new infestations underscore the importance of removing all plant material from boats and trailers before leaving the ramp," Findeisen said. "Invasive species spread quickly and easily so we urge all boaters to clean, drain, and dry their equipment to keep the giant salvinia from spreading to other East Texas lakes."

In addition to placing the containment boom around the White Oak Creek infestation, TPWD staff will be conducting chemical treatment on the other giant salvinia mats. Because the giant salvinia cannot be contained and will only be maintained at the lake, TPWD will not be treating the giant salvinia patches currently mixed in with native emergent plants.

"When with other vegetation, giant salvinia can be tricky to treat with herbicides," Findeisen said. "Our experience with treating salvinia in mixed plant colonies has been the salvinia rebounds faster after the treatment and is no longer being held in place by the other plant species. This gives the giant salvinia free rein to float all over the lake, creating a bigger problem. Additionally, we don't want to disrupt the habitat

those native plants provide to fish and wildlife."

TPWD and SRA will continue to conduct additional surveys to check for the spread of the plant to other areas of the lake, and additional chemical treatment will be conducted on giant salvinia mats as needed, Findeisen added.

Giant salvinia has been present in Texas for nearly 20 years. Giant salvinia was first discovered on Toledo Bend in 1998 and has since spread throughout East Texas. In addition to current infestations at Toledo Bend, Sam Rayburn and Caddo Lake, the invasive plant has been newly introduced or reintroduced at four Texas lakes in the last three months: Lake Murvaul, Lake Palestine, Martin Creek Lake and now Lake Fork.

All boaters should learn to identify giant salvinia as well as other invasive species that occur in Texas waters. Most importantly, boaters should remember to clean their boats and trailers before leaving the boat ramp. Transporting giant salvinia, along with other invasive species, is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine of up to \$500 per violation. Boaters and property owners are urged to clean, drain, and dry their boats and trailers in between trips and to report additional infestations outside of the affected areas by calling (903) 593-5077, (903) 570-5745, or by emailing [kevin.storey@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:kevin.storey@tpwd.texas.gov).



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# Texas Game Wardens Bag High Profile Trophy Deer Poachers

Deer hunters will go to great lengths in pursuit of a trophy white-tailed buck; poachers are willing to go farther, breaking ethical rules and game laws designed to protect and conserve one of Texas' most prized wildlife resources.

Investigations into the illegal take of three whitetail bucks seized by Grayson County game wardens during the 2016-2017 hunting season illustrate just how far some folks are willing to go to bag a trophy deer. Grayson County in northeast Texas along the Red River is known for producing quality whitetails, and is one of only a handful of counties in Texas where bowhunting is the only legal means of harvest.

The cases filed against the individuals responsible for illegally taking the three seized deer, which have a combined gross Boone & Crockett score of over 535 inches, and a combined civil restitution value of \$34,954.80, should serve as a warning to would be criminals.

Arguably, one of the most bizarre of the three cases involved the biggest buck. Rumors spread like wildfire after photos of a huge 19-point buck surfaced. Game wardens received information suggesting the hunter's story didn't add up. On Dec. 16, 2016, the man who killed the big buck, John Walker Drinnon, 34, of Whitesboro, Texas, told game wardens that he killed the 19-pointer on public hunting land in Okla-

homa. The wardens had obtained a game camera image of the deer in question, photographed on public hunting land on the Texas side of Lake Texoma, which contradicted Drinnon's claim.

Working with their counterparts in Oklahoma and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents to build a case, game wardens eventually obtained a confession from Drinnon that he had killed the buck in Grayson County from a public roadway with a rifle. Charges were filed against Drinnon for taking a deer without landowner consent (a state jail felony), hunting without landowner consent and hunting from a vehicle (Class A misdemeanors). Drinnon was also issued citations for no hunting license, hunting from the public roadway, no hunter education, and illegal means and methods.

On Oct. 12, Drinnon pled guilty to the felony charge of taking a whitetail deer without landowner consent in 15th District Court in Sherman, Texas. Civil restitution on the deer, which scored 202 B&C, was estimated at \$18,048.10.

Advances in stealth surveillance technology have made game cameras essential gear for serious deer hunters. In Grayson County, wary old bucks present a challenge for bowhunters, but seldom escape the camera or coffee shop gossip.

While Timothy Kane Sweet, 37, of Sherman, didn't claim the 19-pointer he bagged originat-

ed out of state, he did attempt to hide the fact it was another Grayson County monster buck. Sweet claimed he killed the deer in neighboring Fannin County. What he failed to consider while concocting his tale was that the deer, which scored 177 B&C, exhibited a unique rack that had been captured on a game camera in Grayson County. Once again, rumors flared and tips sparked a game warden investigation. During an interview with the game warden, Sweet claimed he made a poor shot on the deer that didn't draw blood, but returned to the area later that evening to inspect. When the buck jumped up and began to run off, Sweet said he shot it five or six times illegally at night with a pistol.

On Oct. 20, Sweet pled no contest to charges of illegal means and methods, improperly tagged whitetail deer, and hunting out of season (Class C misdemeanors) in Justice of the Peace Court in Whitesboro, Texas. Civil restitution was estimated at \$10,664.35.

The third case involves an individual who killed a big 10-point buck during the 2016-17 hunting season and attempted to take advantage of hunting license benefits reserved for disabled veterans. Brian Eugene Culp, 47, of Gunter, Texas, tagged the 157-inch B&C whitetail us-

(See Texas Game Wardens..... Continued on Page 7-A)

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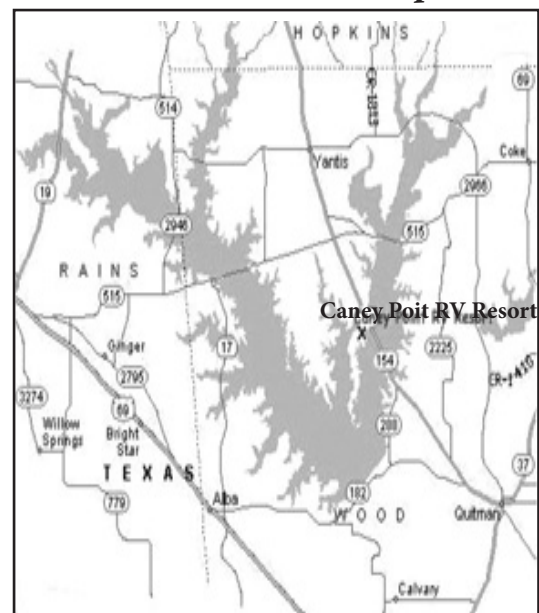
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# The Focus is on Mid Level Water Patterns

By David Ozio

"Winter is starting to creep up on us and the bass know what's around the corner. This spells "food-thirty" for the big green fish and December is an awesome month to sack a giant. Shad are starting to show up at the mouths of the major creeks and the biological clock for the bass tells them they need to feed up for the cold days ahead. Seasonal temps are a little warmer than normal at the moment but every major cold front that rocks through will accelerate the process forcing the bass to gorge on shad which will fatten them up for the dormant short daylight days ahead.

The lack of rain to date has the lake dropping to almost a foot and a half below pool. This has

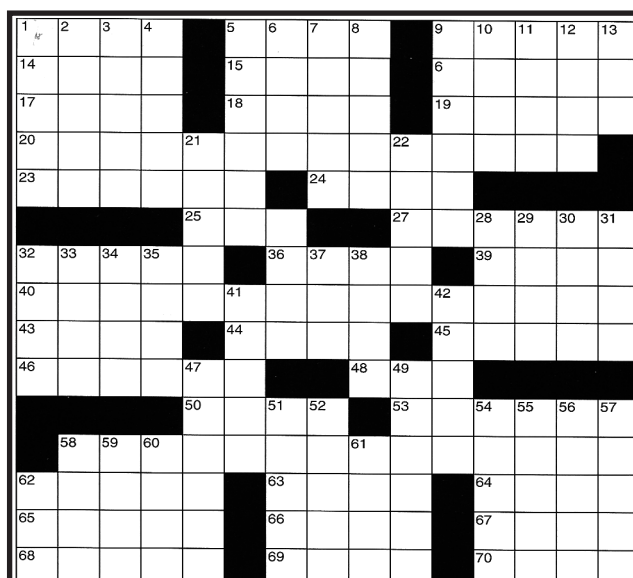
helped the bite to date shallow but the warmer water temps aren't allowing the big bass to gang up deep as of this writing. This changes our focus to mid depth water patterns and this will continue into December while we are searching for the next ShareLunker. Provided the water cools heading into Santa 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 barfish. All year, the big black bass have been mixed in with the schools feeding on the unwitting small barfish. 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

(See The Focus.....  
Continued on Page 20-A)



## CLUES ACROSS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Leon ____, singer                        | 43. Lubes                                 |
| 5. Male red deer                            | 44. State of Cambodia                     |
| 9. A clique that seeks power                | 45. Tree fiber                            |
| 14. Soviet city                             | 46. Hunting dogs resembling greyhounds    |
| 15. Pitcher                                 | 48. Office dept.                          |
| 16. Unaccompanied                           | 50. A university in Connecticut           |
| 17. West African                            | 53. Eras                                  |
| 18. A strong cord                           | 58. Verdict, of sorts                     |
| 19. Indian seaport                          | 62. Blocks                                |
| 20. Winter garments                         | 63. Helicopter                            |
| 23. Adds piquancy                           | 64. Small ornamental ladies' bag          |
| 24. Ticket or check                         | 65. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet |
| 25. A shag rug made in Sweden               | 66. Oxalis                                |
| 27. Florida city                            | 67. Fellow                                |
| 32. Severo __, U.S. biochemist              | 68. An arm or outlet of a lake            |
| 36. People descended from a common ancestor | 69. Showing sound judgment                |
| 39. Greasy                                  | 70. Totals                                |
| 40. Ray Charles song                        |   |

## CLUES DOWN

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Laugh lines (slang)          | 34. The large room of a castle               |
| 2. South Dravidian              | 35. Southern Japan city                      |
| 3. One of Caroline Islands      | 37. Supplement with difficulty               |
| 4. White (French)               | 38. Gomer __, marine                         |
| 5. Disbelief                    | 41. Bearded reddish sheep of southern Asia   |
| 6. Truant                       | 42. Filippiano __, Italian painter 1457-1504 |
| 7. Cloths                       | 47. Japanese Islands                         |
| 8. Process                      | 49. Force from office                        |
| 9. Yellowish melon              | 51. Nigerian capital                         |
| 10. Astringent                  | 52. Author, ____, Jong                       |
| 11. Cold wind                   | 54. Russian lake                             |
| 12. Geese genus                 | 55. Quoted                                   |
| 13. Lease                       | 56. Hunting dog                              |
| 21. Chemical solution           | 57. Annoyances                               |
| 22. Cabal                       | 58. Monetary unit of Botswana                |
| 26. Type of text                | 59. Heed                                     |
| 28. Containers                  | 60. Melon, cucumbers, pumpkin                |
| 29. Register                    | 61. Urban center                             |
| 30. Hebrew calendar month       | 62. Taxi                                     |
| 31. Auld lang __, good old days |  |
| 32. Native American people      |  |
| 33. Blue flowered plant         |  |

Answers on Page 21-A

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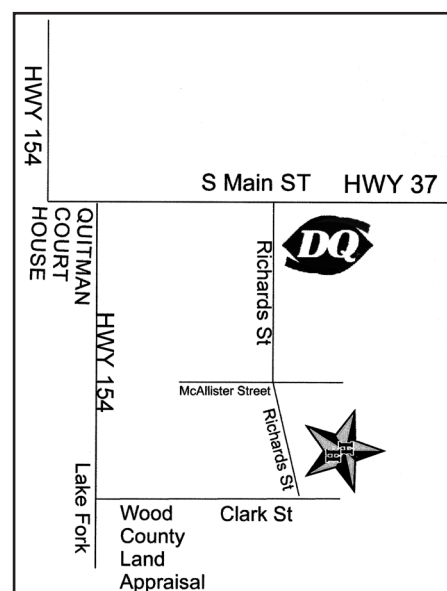
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## Texas Game Wardens *(Continued from Page 5-A)*

ing a Super Combo hunting and fishing license (available at no cost to disabled veterans) that he did not qualify to possess.

On May 19, Culp pled no contest in Justice of the Peace Court in Whitesboro to a charge of hunting without a valid license. Civil restitution was estimated at \$6,242.35.

"These cases exemplify the hard work and dedication state game wardens deliver day in and day out to enforce Texas game laws," said Col. Grahame Jones, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Law Enforcement Division

Director. "I want to extend special recognition and gratitude to Grayson County game wardens Michael Hummert and Daron Blackerby for a job well done."

Hummert was also the lead investigator into a 2014 poaching ring on the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge in Grayson County. Working collaboratively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hummert apprehended a group of five subjects who were sneaking onto the refuge to poach trophy bucks. The investigation led to six felonies and 34 Class A misde-

meanor charges filed.

Grayson County game wardens would like to thank the public for their assistance in these cases. Game wardens would also like to remind the public that they can report any illegal hunting activity to Texas Game Wardens using Operation Game Thief (800-792-GAME) or by contacting their local game warden.

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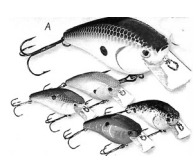
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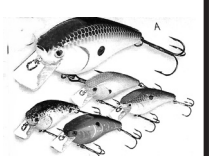


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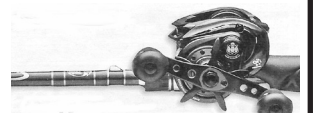
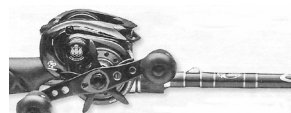
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## "The Moon Report" "20 Years of Lake Fork Crappie"

By Terri Moon

Well, another year has flown by and it's even harder to believe that I've been guiding for 20 years now! All 20 years have been in my 1997 Champion "Fish Hunter" boat that Jerry had given me for an anniversary present that year. It was probably the "BEST" gift he ever gave me! So needless to say, I'm very sentimental when it comes to this boat. When Jerry passed away 5 years ago this month and ALL of my equipment was stolen, I seriously considered just giving up and walking away. It all just hurt too badly. But, an "ARMY OF ANGELS" came to my rescue replacing everything I'd need to start over – (Nothing has ever touched my heart more!)

Everyone's blessings sent my way helped me "stand up and start over"!! It's been a tough road but I'm still hanging in there thanks to everyone who has helped me along the way. Especially Chuck, Perry and Greg at Service Marine who have kept my motor running; Bryan and Billy Sartin who helped with all my trolling motor issues; John Switzer and Clyde McAfee who kept my depth finders going with Lowrance, and Clint Granger who helps me with putting out my brush piles. It really seems to take a village to keep me going! My heartfelt thanks to each of you and especially to Lake Fork Marina for always having a place for me to park my boat and having a GREAT place for my customers to stay.

Sadly the week before I



left for Missouri for the holidays, my poor motor started running rough – "water in my oil" NOT GOOD! But, knowing I had a weeks' worth of trips left, Greg at Service Marine came to my rescue and changed my oil daily to keep my motor running long enough to get me through the week. We were definitely running on a "wing and a prayer" – and with Greg's help, kept me from doing more damage to the motor. Every day I would just "BELIEVE" we would make it through it (it was like when I chose to believe that the snake was out of my boat! LOL!) Sometimes you just have to "believe"!!! But anyway, it looks like my old champion will be going on a "hiatus" for a while. There is good news for the New Year – It looks like I will be in a new Skeeter Solera boat starting in January! As sad as I am stepping out of my boat, I'm very excited to step into a new boat (I haven't done that in 20 years)! I'm so grateful

for the opportunity Skeeter Boats has given me and the timing couldn't have been better! This is another blessing I'm so thankful for! Also, I can't wait for you all to come check it out. This is going to be fishing in comfort and style with all the latest equipment – Lowrance HDS units and a MinnKota Ultrex Trolling Motor. It doesn't get any better except for brand new Shi-

(Continued on Next Page)

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mano Sahara 500 reels and Shimano 5'6" Clarus Ultralite Rods. Thanks to Tanner Worley of Sportco for helping me carry on the "Shimano Tradition"! Shimano is the reason Jerry and I came to Texas in 1991, thanks to Toyo Shimano and especially Tom Brooke of Shimano Canada. So, I will always respectfully fly their flag!

It's going to be an exciting upcoming year of new beginnings and if the fishing is only half as good as this year, it will still be incredible because this year was probably the best year for crappie I've ever had!

Just before I left for the holiday, the crappie were in their fall transition so we were catching them as shal-

low as 8 ft. and as deep as 28 ft. in brush piles, tree lines, main lake points and at the bridges. As the water temps begin to drop, start looking deeper and follow the baitfish. The colors working for us have been Lake Fork Tackles limetreuse and pink and pearl on bright days. Then on cloudier days, threadfin shad or black and chartreuse in live baby shad were producing. Also, Bubba Baits in bluegill or chartreuse and blue were working – (even the bream liked these especially when you tip it with a Berkley crappie nibble)!

Please remember December 1st to March 1st you have to keep the first 25 crappie you catch.

Once again, many thanks to all of you who fished with me this year and I'm sure looking forward to seeing you all again this year!

Don't forget to check out Lake Fork Marina for your holiday shopping for the fishermen in your life. They've got some great gift ideas!

Also, if any of you are interested in filling your freezer with catfish, you need to get with Cameron Burnett at Lake Fork Marina—he is whacking them! You can check it out on his facebook page. He is on some monster cats!

I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and many blessings to you all!



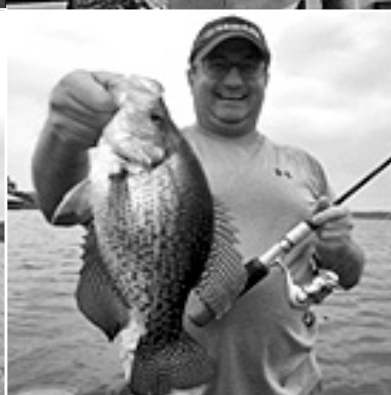
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## Texas Deer Hunters Were Set for Opening Day

Despite unseasonably warm temperatures in the forecast for much of the state, a rather balmy start for the Texas deer season opener Nov. 4th didn't deter hunters from participating in this time-honored tradition.

Hunting prospects were expected to be

good across the state, regardless of the weather, according to wildlife biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

The general deer hunting season opened Saturday, Nov. 4th and runs through Jan. 7, 2018 in North Texas; Jan.

21, 2018 in South Texas. A late youth-only season is also slated for Jan. 8-21, 2018. For additional late season deer hunting opportunities and county specific regulations, consult the 2017-18 Outdoor Annual of hunting and fishing regulations. Generally speaking,

white-tailed deer in Texas have fared well in recent years with a stable population of about 4.3 million, according to Alan Cain, TPWD whitetail deer program leader. "The vast majority of the state had a good habitat conditions going into last winter and early spring, which helped bucks recover from the rigors of the rut, and gave them a good foundation to start the antler growth cycle this year," he said.

However, unlike the previous two years where widespread consistent rain and good habitat conditions persisted through the

summer for much of the state, 2017 saw dry weather patterns take hold in May and continue into late August. These drier conditions late in the season will likely have some impact on final stages of antler development, body weights, and possibly fawn production, Cain explained, but hunters should still expect a good hunting season.

"Dry conditions were not uniform across the state and spotty rains from May through July left patches of green across the landscape in the western two-thirds of the state," said Cain. "Landowners and hunters

with properties lucky enough to receive some of early summer rains and that have remained green may expect better than average deer quality this fall."

Hunters are reminded of new regulations for the 2017-18 season, including the establishment of chronic wasting disease (CWD) management zones. Hunters who harvest mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, red deer, or other CWD susceptible species within the Trans-Pecos, Panhandle, and South-Central Texas CWD Containment and Surveillance

(See Texas Deer....  
Continued on Page 14-A)

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*If you know a family that has a child that meets our criteria, just have them call us.*

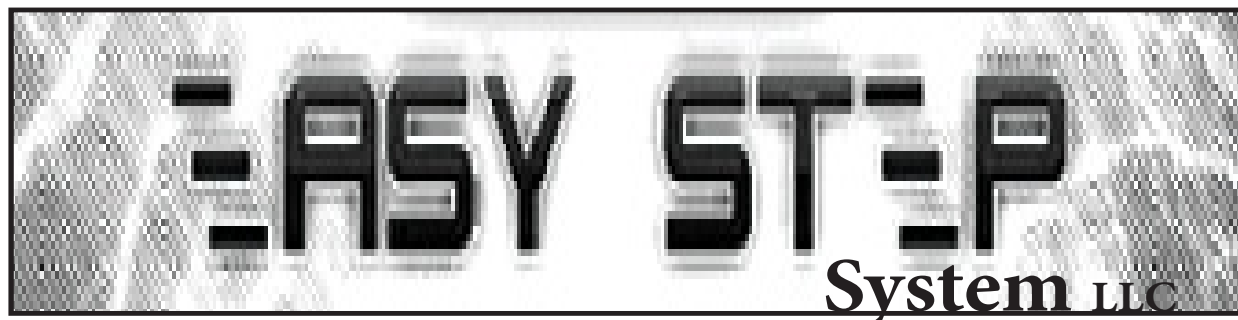
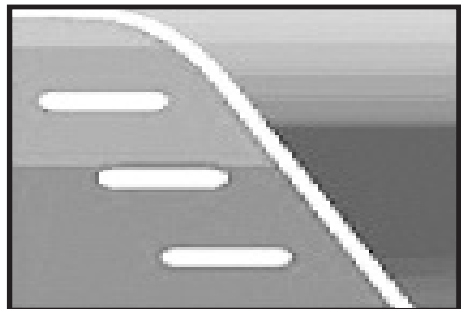
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**For Scheduling or More Info Contact: Don Hampton, Founder & Program Director**  
visit our website: [www.wishtofishfoundation.com](http://www.wishtofishfoundation.com)





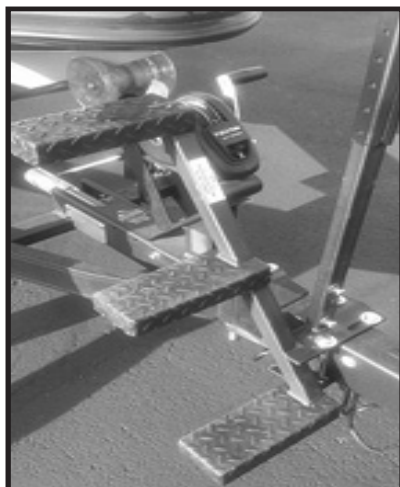
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*Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. ~ Matthew 4:19 ~*



## "Knowing What To Look For!"

By Michael McFarland

Well this winter it's looking like another warm one! The weather man calls for an El-Niña winter season meaning dry and unusually warm. I usually prefer to spend more time fishing deep in the channels and creek swings during the winter months however a mild winter means a lot more

shallow fish and an earlier setup for the spawn. I will use my Lowrance sonar in two different ways to locate both deep groups of baitfish and shallow groups of baitfish. Where the right bait is located, the bass are also located!

For deep fishing I use both sonar and down scan at the same time. This helps me see the image in 2 different

ways at the same time and allows me to make a clearer interpretation. I am mainly looking for the schools of baitfish and prefer that the bait be located on the top of the structure such as long points, road beds, humps etc...

I will also sometimes set the sonar screen to split/bottom lock or split/zoom. This allows me to find the fish that

are located tighter on the bottom. Once I find the right bait and proper setup it's usually game on. The challenge is to search and be patient until you find what you're looking for.

For shallow fish I will use my side scan in combination with my temp graph. As I idle my way back into and out of shallow creeks, coves and bays, I will use the sidescan set at 50 ft. left and 50 ft. right. In addition I turn on my temp graph so I can monitor the changing water temp closely. I am looking for two things. The first thing is, I closely watch my temp graph for warm trending water. Even on cold days, the afternoon sun can warm up the shallow back water as much as 2 to 7 degrees or even more in some cases. Both the baitfish and bass will use this frequently on a daily basis so once you find an area that warm trends properly, you can bet it will continue to be good area again and again under

the same conditions. I have found that you need to find at least 5 degrees or warmer before expecting to find shallow activity and great fishing.

The second thing I am doing is paying very close attention to my side scan. Again as I'm idling in and out, I intentionally pass over secondary points and places where big females begin staging prior to the spawn. I will intentionally drive past specific stumps and or trees that I know will hold these big females. I look very closely at the sidescan for either the image of a fish itself or

the shadow that may be cast by the fish. I also from time to time, will put the cursor on a specific target and zoom in to take a closer look. Remember with warm winter weather, the big females are likely to move in early this year, so pay attention or you might just drive right by the fish you've always wanted to catch!

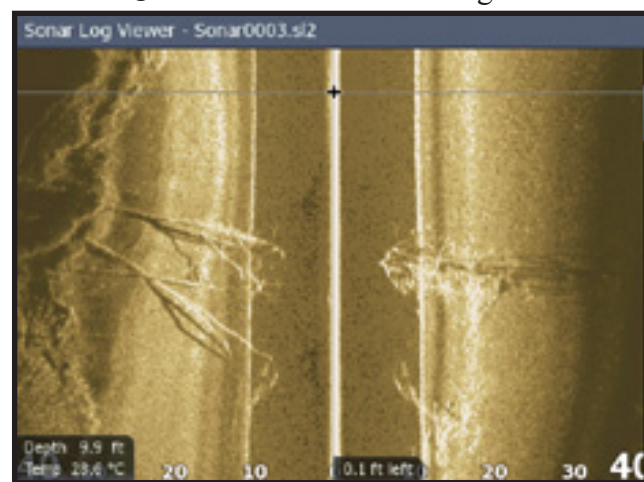
For further sonar instruction or information about booking a guided fishing trip, please contact: Mike McFarland 602-826-1524 Mike@mcfarlandfishing.com



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## Texas Deer Hunters Were Set for Opening Day (Continued from Page 10-A)

Zones are required to bring their animals to a TPWD check station within 48 hours of harvest. TPWD also urges voluntary sampling of hunter harvested deer outside of these zones.

Hunters should also be aware of rules banning importation of certain deer, elk, and other CWD susceptible species carcass parts from states where the disease has been detected,

as well as the movement of the same carcass parts from CWD zones. The rules are part of the state's comprehensive CWD management plan to determine the prevalence and geo-

graphic extent of the disease and to contain the disease to the areas where it is known to exist. More information about CWD Management and Regulations for Hunters is available on TPWD's web site.

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## The Perfect Gift For The Angler

By Don Hampton

If you are looking for that perfect Christmas gift, birthday gift, or just thinking of a gift for the angler in your life, you need not look any further than the Easy Step System. These steps mount easily on any trailer and make getting in and out of your boat as simple as walking up or down the stairs in your home.

With these steps there is no more crawling on your hands and knees. They eliminate slipping when searching for the fender on your trailer or falling while searching for the trailer fender. Also there is no getting your feet wet when loading and unloading your boat by yourself. Just so you do not lose your balance they come with a handrail to hold on to thus stabilizing you when entering and exiting your watercraft.

These units mount easily on the tongue or frame of your trailer so you can load and unload everyone and everything on or off of your boat safely while still on the trailer. Every Easy Step System is made in America, in Tyler, Texas and has a 400-pound capacity rating.

Personally I've had an Easy Step System on my past four boats and cannot ever imagine not having one. There have been times in the past where my foot slipped and I came out with skinned knees and a couple of times even worse. I've gotten wet feet in the winter loading and unload-

ing my boat at different ramps, which makes for a very uncomfortable day fishing. The Easy Step System has eliminated these and all problems loading and unloading since I've had one.

As all of us get older we have to take better care of ourselves. At my age anything I can do to alleviate the pressure on my knees and back I am going to do it. The Easy Step System does just that making my fishing much safer with less problems.



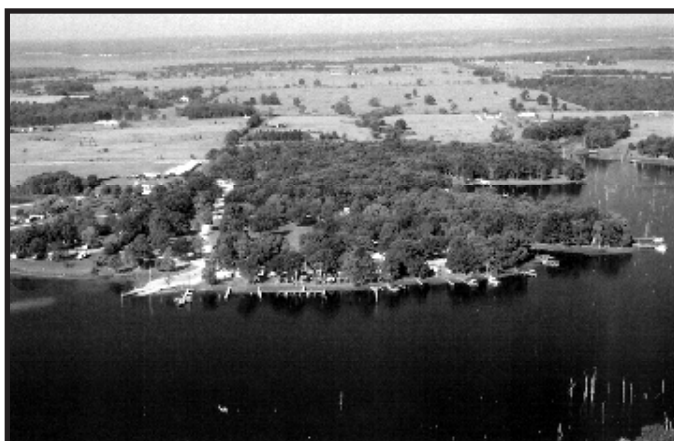
Just recently Easy Step System came out with the new Model ESS-3 18-SM. This model is offset for more mounting options. With the sonars, lights, and Hydro-Wave I have mounted on the front of my boat I was having to step over all of these to get onto my boat with the ESS-3. When ESS came out with the new side mount I had to have one. Since I installed that system on my trailer there is no stepping over electronics. I simply walk up

the steps and step into my boat. How could boating be any simpler.

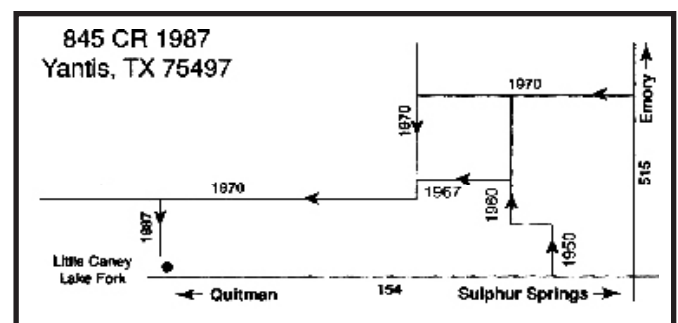
The Easy Step Sytem comes in five different models to fit any trailer whether fixed or swing-away tongue trailers.

If you are looking for that gift for the angler in your life or if you are an angler seeing the benefits of having one on your trailer, give them a call at: 800-966-1502. You can also check them out online at [www.easystepsystem.com](http://www.easystepsystem.com) or email [info@easystepsystem.com](mailto:info@easystepsystem.com).

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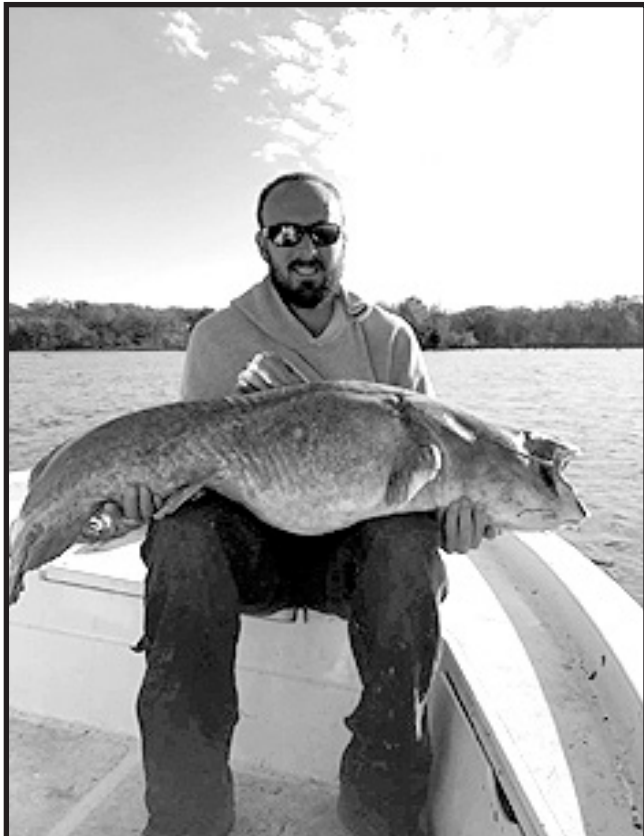
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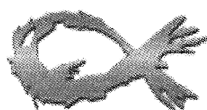
Lake Fork Catfish Guide Cameron Burnett topped his best when he was fishing in November and caught this nice 74-pound catfish. This monster was released back into the lake after photo. Anyone wishing to fill their freezers or just catch a monster like this can contact Cameron through Lake Fork Marina. Such a great catch like this is a lifetime memory.



Brian Dick and Doug Watson were doing a little bass fishing on Lake Fork when they caught this blue cat weighing 60-pounds. When Doug Watson set the hook I'm sure he thought he had a new lake record bass with the weight on the other end.



Army Vet, Charlie Bird was fishing with Lake Fork Guide Whitt Smith on a donated trip when he caught his personal best over the slot bass in November.



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Collin Bradford, 9 years old, caught this nice bass weighing 7.9-pounds while fishing with Lake Fork Guide Andrew Grills. CPR



Kevin Bradford caught this nice bass weighing 9-pounds in November while fishing with Lake Fork Guide Andrew Grills. CPR

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# 'Pack of Knowledge' Winter Tactics and what to look for!

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 winter. 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 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 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 prespawn 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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## TPWD Announces Rainbow Trout Stocking Season in Texas

With hundreds of thousands of catchable-size rainbow trout coming to 150 public water bodies across the state this winter, Texas anglers have plenty of cool-weather fishing opportunities to look forward to in the coming months.

A total of 18 Neighborhood Fishin' lakes and ponds located in Texas' 11 most populated urban centers will be the first of the season to offer rainbow trout fishing. Stockings started Nov. 22 in most locations and will continue every two weeks.

"These urban area parks are the easiest places in Texas for families to catch a fish close to home," said Eddie McKenna, TPWD Multicultural Marketing and Outreach Specialist. "85 percent of

us live near one of these small lakes and ponds. By making fishing accessible, we're helping create a whole new generation of anglers."

Anglers looking for somewhere to fish for free without having to purchase a fishing license can visit one of 18 state parks being stocked with rainbow trout this year. The list of state parks regularly receiving rainbow trout stockings includes Lake Bob Sandlin State Park in East Texas, Blanco State Park in Central Texas, and Fort Richardson State Park in North Texas. Many of the state parks being stocked with rainbow trout have a free tackle loaner program on-site for anyone who needs it. One of the state's most popular trout

fishing destinations, the Guadalupe River fishery downstream of Canyon Lake between Austin and San Antonio, will receive more than 17,000 rainbow trout through February with the first stocking happening Dec. 1. Temporary lease agreements with four privately-owned resorts provide free public fishing access to the Guadalupe River.

All of the 150-plus lakes, ponds and river tailraces being stocked around the state will receive more than 300,000 rainbow trout through the first week of March. The full list of public water bodies receiving rainbow trout this year, along with scheduled stocking dates and numbers of fish, can be found online

at [www.tpwd.texas.gov/troutstocking](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/troutstocking).

Rainbow trout have a salmon-like shape and make for great eating. They prefer cold water, so in most parts of Texas they can survive only in winter. They love cheese, kernel corn, nightcrawlers, red wigglers or mealworms. Anglers who prefer lures can try small inline spin-

nerbaits or spoons.

Rainbow trout are subject to a five fish per day bag limit, with no minimum length limit. Special regulations are in effect on two sections of the Guadalupe River. Anglers ages 17 and older must have a valid Texas freshwater fishing license - including while fishing at Neighborhood'

Fishin ponds - unless fishing within a Texas State Park where fishing licenses are not required. Kids under 17 fish for free.

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## The Focus is on Mid Level Water Patterns (Continued from Page 6-A)

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, especially 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/LakeForkGuideDavidOzio>. I post my daily trip results on this page. I would like to thank Okuma Fishing and Talon Custom Lures for making my job the blast that it is and 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."

If you have news or photos on Lake Fork Contact Us!

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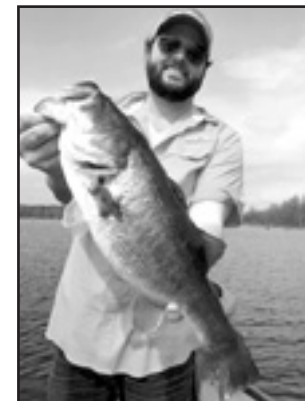
David Hansen with David Ozio



Mike Payne & Lewis Keese with David Ozio



Riley Brownfield with David Ozio



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## 10th Anniversary of USTS Texas Clipper Sinking as an Artificial Reef

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Artificial Reef Program sank the USTS Texas Clipper 10 years ago on Nov. 17, 2007. Prior to its sinking off South Padre Island, the 473-foot vessel was a World War II troop transport, New York City luxury liner and a sea cadet training ship.

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the sinking of the USTS Texas Clipper, the Artificial Reef Program is holding a contest for participating divers to win bronze and silver coins for logging between two and four dives on the Clipper during the upcoming year. There will also be a lottery drawing among bronze and silver coin holders for a gold commemorative coin at the end of the contest.

"After 10 years as an artificial reef the USTS Texas Clipper has become a premiere diving location supporting the local fishery and economy in South Texas. To celebrate this milestone, we want to offer these special commemorative coins to the public," said TPWD Artificial Reef Program Leader J. Dale Shively.

The contest will run from Nov. 17, 2017 to Nov. 18, 2018. Participants must complete two logged dives on the Clipper during this time period to earn a bronze coin. To earn a silver coin, divers need to complete an additional two dives for a total of four dives. For each coin earned, the participant's name will be entered into a lottery drawing for a grand prize gold coin. A maximum of two submissions are allowed per participant. Supplies

are limited so coins will be awarded in order of submissions received.

All dives must be logged on the TPWD submission form and sent to the Artificial Reef Program. All submissions must be received by email or postmarked by November 30, 2018. Participants may email submission forms to Allison

Baldwin at [Allison.baldwin@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:Allison.baldwin@tpwd.texas.gov); or mail them to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Dickinson Marine Lab, 1502 FM 517 East Dickinson, TX 77539. You may also call 281-534-0147 for more information.

For video of the sinking, visit the TPWD YouTube page.

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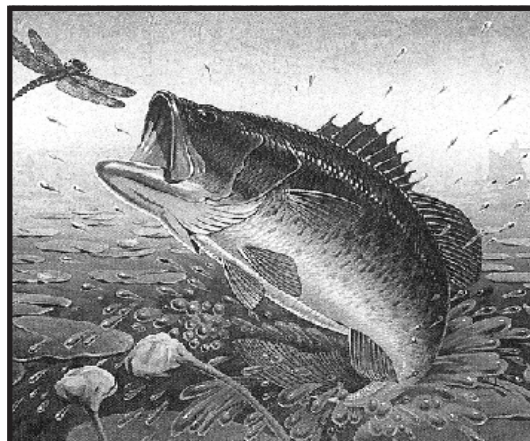
### Weather Find

There are 14 weather terms 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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DEGREES  
CUMULUS  
METEOROLOGIST  
WEATHER  
RAIN

FRONT  
JET STREAM  
DEW POINT  
MAP  
WIND CHILL  
HUMIDITY  
FORECAST

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## Fugitive Involved in Shootout with Texas Game Warden Captured

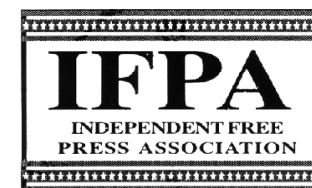
Texas game wardens, with assistance from U.S. Marshalls and the Dallas Police Department, have taken into custody a suspect involved in a firefight following a shooting incident at a bar in the West Texas town of Haskell early Sunday morning, Nov. 5th.

The suspect, identified as Encarnacio Ortiz Jr., 49, was captured in south Dallas on Nov. 7th without incident, and is being held on \$1 million bond in the Dallas County Jail. He is charged with aggravated assault of a public servant with a deadly weapon.

Ortiz allegedly entered a local bar in Haskell shortly after midnight Sunday, brandished a handgun and discharged several rounds. No one was injured during the incident, and Ortiz fled the scene.

A Haskell County game warden and Haskell Police Department officer responded to the shots fired call and located the suspect driving a vehicle on the northern end of the city. Officers attempted to pull over the vehicle, and when the suspect did not comply, a Haskell police officer rammed the suspect vehicle to attempt to



end the pursuit. The suspect immediately fired shots at the police officer, at which point the officers returned fire. The suspect was able to drive his vehicle a short distance away from the scene and fled on foot. He was located in south Dallas following a two-day manhunt by state and local law enforcement.



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Clint Granger was crappie fishing with guide Terri Moon when he caught this nice crappie. Just the right size to release to the grease!



Barkley Spikes was fishing Lake Fork with guide Andrew Grills in November when he caught this nice bass weighing 9-lbs.10-ozs. CPR



Lake Fork Crappie Guide Terri Moon caught this nice bass while fishing with clients in November. CPR

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