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

2 Sections

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Free

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No. 221

Rains County "The Eagle Capital of Texas"



Just one of the many eagles that make Lake Fork their home. (*Fisherman's Guide Photo by Don Hampton*)

The 23rd Annual RAINS COUNTY EAGLE FEST is coming soon!

The Eagle Fest will be Saturday, January 20, 2018 at the Rains Elementary School at 372 FM 3299, Emory, Texas (On the RISD Campus, just south of Hwy 69).

This year marks the 23rd Annual Rains County Eagle Fest. The first festival was held following a resolution in 1995 when the 74th Legislature

of the State of Texas declared Rains County "The Eagle Capital of Texas" as an effort to protect and preserve the American Bald Eagles in the area. The resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 24, 1995 and by the House on May 29, 1995. It was signed by the Governor George W. Bush on June 16, 1995 officially proclaiming Rains County as the "Eagle Capital of Texas". The Rains County Eagle Fest is an educational effort to expand our knowledge of the bald eagles in the area and our local heritage.

(See 23rd Annual....
Continued on Page 3-A)



In comparison, a full grown eagle's claw and talons are larger than a full grown man's hand.



Collin Bradford, 9 years old, caught this nice Lake Fork hawg while fishing with guide Andrew Grills. C.P.R.

You Do Not Own The Water or Lake

By Don Hampton

As defined in Webster's dictionary, ignorance is the lack of education and stupid is slow to comprehend or lacking intelligence. An angler on the lake that exhibits good sportsmanship doesn't fit in either of these categories. It would seem we have some on the lakes that do not comprehend good sportsmanship

and fit in the category of one of the above mentioned definition.

It is pretty simple to understand if an individual is fishing where you wish to, you just need to find another place to fish. No one owns the water but if someone else is in what you would call your area, it is their area to fish. It does not matter if you have brush piles there that you have placed.

Once the structure you are placing in the lake leaves your boat or pontoon, you no longer own it. It becomes public domain and anyone can legally fish it.

Some still do not comprehend this! One individual has been cited with five Class B Misdemeanors, for Fisherman Harrassment, another for two

(See You Don Not....
Continued on Page 4-A)

"If That's Your Fishing Hole, Where's Your Mailbox?"

By: Don Hampton

When Bubba speaks of owning something, you can bet it is definitely his stuff. He is also very possessive over his stuff! Everyone knows Bubba needs stuff especially Bubbette and when he gets out of hand getting stuff, she puts him straight again. What Bubba truly cannot understand is people laying claim to something that can't possibly be theirs.

When it comes to fishing in public waters he is under the impression that those waters actually belong to the State of Texas. He also holds dear the belief that anyone that purchases a fishing license and abides by the laws can fish those waters anytime and anywhere they so desire. After all this is Texas and Bubba even has a bumper sticker that reads, "MADE IN TEXAS BY TEXANS". So, what Bubba would really like to know is if there has been a new "Homestead Act" put in effect that he has not heard of that allows anglers to claim portions of water. If so he is going to be out of luck because Bubbette won't let him get anymore stuff!

If there has not been a new "Homestead Act" implemented, why are so many anglers claiming waters? It seems more and more that Bubba is hearing, "That's my fishing hole, you can't go there!" Some anglers will say this in a sportsmanship jest, but then again you hear some say it with meaning. Bubba has the tendency to laugh with the sportsmen and laugh at the others.

Bubba had a long extensive conversation with

one of the latter the other day on Lake Fork. Bubba was out fishing one of his favorite spots, (it's even called "Community Hump"), when he was made to feel like he'd eaten someone else's fried chicken at a family reunion. Well, Bubba doesn't stay in a hurt mood for too long at a time and soon put the chicken bones on another plate. He apologized for trespassing and not spotting the individual's mailbox when he pulled in with his boat. Bubba didn't let it stop there though! This boy has seen an Enquirer and has an inquiring mind.

The next thing Bubba wanted to know was if he had pulled in the driveway or ran over his lawn because his trolling motor did tear up some lily pads and he didn't want to be held responsible. Well this gave the other boat something to discuss, but they were soon interrupted by Bubba's next question. "What do property and school taxes run a year on a place like this?" Bubba sincerely asked. "I've been thinking of getting a place like this of my own to retire to but don't know if Bubbette and me can quite afford it! And, seeing you are a guide, is this portion of the lake zoned business or residential and where does your property line end?" Bubba went on to add with all the conviction and sincerity of a Baptist preacher at a hot summer night tent revival. Well the only reply Bubba got referred to his mother and something about his heritage and then they left. He thought they didn't show very much sportsmanship and they weren't very sociable either because

they wouldn't even accept his invitation over.

Bubba being the type of person he is didn't wish to trespass on this individual's property anymore. To make sure of this he followed them all day to see if he had any other property on the lake with maybe a mailbox in front of it. Bubba did not locate one at any of the places they went to and fished. He did of course mark the spots on his GPS and gave them to all his friends so they would know these spots did not belong to anyone and they would not be trespassing if they fished there. Bubba is just that kind of guy!

Another drawback on individuals that claim fishing holes as their own is that now you have Bubba thinking! If the fish school there, shouldn't you pay school taxes? If you plant a cedar tree there, isn't that an improvement and property value would increase thus increasing your property taxes?

So, when you are out on the lake, if you are one of those that seriously claims a fishing hole as your own, Bubba just might call the tax assessor on you!

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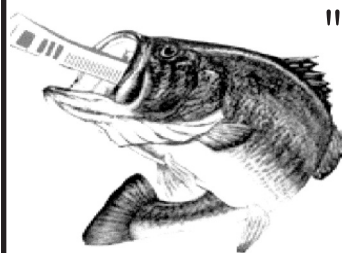
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23rd Annual RAINS COUNTY EAGLE FEST (Continued from Page 1-A)

Although the weather is often unpredictable in January during the festival, winter is the best time to see the eagles since there is less foliage obstructing the view and their nests.

The Rains County Eagle Fest hosts visitors from all over the country. This is a full day festival celebrating and highlighting the American Bald Eagles that live around Lake Fork, Lake Tawakoni and in Rains County. The festival includes a line-up of live bird shows, educational

exhibits and displays, fun wildlife presentations, interactive Aztec Dance performances, nature tours, craft and food vendors and more! A highlight of the festival is the bus and barge tours at Lake Fork and the special bus tours at the old Iron Bridge Crossing at the Sabine River Authority on Lake Tawakoni. This is a special opportunity to view eagles and other birds and wildlife native to the area in their natural habitat. General Admission is \$5 for adults and teens.

Children under 12 are free. Bus and barge tours are available at an additional cost – Bus tours are \$5 per person; Barge tours are \$35 per person. Tickets are available in advance online. General Admission and Bus Tour tickets will also be available at the door (however, due to limited seating on the barge tours, tickets usually sell out in advance).

Full details and links are available at www.visitrainscounty.com under the "EVENT" tab. *(Fisherman's Guide Photos by Don Hampton)*



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You Do Not Own The Water or Lake (Continued from Page 1-A)

cases and a few others. They even believe they can get away with it by putting vulgar notes on windshields of vehicles. This is still harassment and all cases should be reported. If this happens to any of you, video it on your cell phone and please by all means report it to the game wardens.

To further educate all of those I'm referring to here is the LAW.

Harassment of Hunters, Trappers, or Anglers (Sportsmen's Rights Act-TPWD Code, s62.0125) is punishable by a fine of \$200 to \$2,000 and/or 180 days in Jail. Summary:

This law represents Texas' hunter harassment law, also known as the Sportsman's Rights Act. Under the section, a person may not intentionally interfere with another person lawfully engaged in the process of hunting, fishing, or catching wildlife, or intentionally harass, drive, or disturb any wildlife for the purpose of disrupting lawful hunting. Violation is a Class B misdemeanor. It is an affirmative defense to prosecution that the defendant's conduct is protected by the right to freedom of speech under the constitution of this state or the United States.

Statute Text

(a) This section may be cited as the Sportsman's Rights Act.

(b) In this section:

(1) "Wildlife" means all species of wild mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, or amphibians.

(2) "Process of hunting or catching" means any act directed at the lawful hunting or catching of wildlife, including camping or other acts preparatory to hunting or catching of wildlife that occur on land or water on which the affected person has the right or privilege of hunting or catching that wildlife.

(c) No person may intentionally interfere with another person lawfully engaged in the process of hunting, fishing or catching wildlife.

(d) No person may intentionally harass, drive, or disturb any wildlife for the purpose of disrupting a person lawfully engaged in the process of hunting, fishing, or catching wildlife.

(e) No person may enter or remain on public land or enter or remain on private land without the landowner's or his agent's consent if the person intends to disrupt another person lawfully engaged in the process of hunting or catching wildlife.

(f) This section does not apply to a peace officer of this state, a law enforcement officer of the United States, a member of the armed forces of the United States or of this state, or employees of the department or other state or federal agencies having statutory responsibility to manage wildlife or land during the time that the officer, member, or employee is in the actual discharge of official duties.

(g) A person who violates this section commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

(h) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution that the defendant's conduct is protected by the right to freedom of speech under the constitution of this state or the United States.

Fishing and hunting are recreational sports, let us all practice good sportsmanship. It doesn't take that much effort to hunt and fish friendly. Read what Bubba has to say about it on Page 2-A.



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Toyota ShareLunker Program Announces 2018 Season Changes

For more than 30 years, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Toyota ShareLunker Program has partnered with anglers to enhance bass fishing in Texas. This year, the program is launching Jan. 1, 2018, with a new year-round participation season and more opportunities for anglers to participate and be recognized for contributions. The program also has a new logo and look that conveys the excitement of catching a lunker bass.

"Angler recognition continues to be a primary goal of the Toyota ShareLunker program," said Kyle Brookshear, Toyota ShareLunker program coordinator. "This year for the first time ever anglers who catch a largemouth bass 8 pounds or larger can participate simply by providing important catch information for us to use to improve bass fisheries science. We will be recognizing and rewarding these anglers as well as those anglers who loan their lunker bass weighing 13 pound or greater to our breeding program during the spawning season."

The four new levels of achievement are: Lunker Legacy Class: Every angler who loans a 13 pound or larger bass to the Toyota ShareLunker program during the spawning period Jan. 1 to March 31 will join the prestigious

Lunker Legacy Class. These valuable fish are an integral piece of the Toyota ShareLunker selective breeding and stocking program and anglers will be eligible for an exciting prize package commensurate with the importance of sharing their lunker. Each Lunker Legacy Class angler will receive a Toyota ShareLunker Catch Kit containing branded merchandise and fishing tackle items, a 13lb+ Legacy decal, VIP access to awards programming at the Toyota Bassmaster Texas Fest, a replica of their fish, and an entry into the year-end ShareLunker Prize Drawing to win a \$5,000 shopping spree and an annual fishing license. These anglers will also be entered into the Legacy Class Prize Drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree and an annual fishing license at the end of the spawning period March 31. Additional prizes may be included in both of these prize drawings prior to their entry deadlines. Lunker Legend Class: Anglers who enter a 13 pound or larger largemouth bass Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 will become a part of the Lunker Legend Class. These anglers will receive a Toyota ShareLunker Catch Kit containing branded merchandise and fishing tackle items, a 13lb+ decal to display their achievement, a replica of their fish, and an entry into the

year-end ShareLunker Prize Drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree and an annual fishing license. Additional prizes may be included in the prize drawing prior to its entry deadline. Lunker Elite Class: Anglers catching double-digit largemouth bass 10 to 12.99 pounds Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 will become a part of the Lunker Elite Class. These anglers will receive a Toyota ShareLunker Catch Kit containing branded merchandise and fishing tackle items, a 10lb+ decal to display their achievement, and an entry into the year-end ShareLunker Prize Drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree and an annual fishing license. Additional prizes may be included in the prize drawing prior to its entry deadline. Lunker Class: Anglers entering largemouth bass at least 8 pounds or 24 inches Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 will be recognized at the Lunker Class level. These anglers will receive a Toyota ShareLunker Catch Kit containing branded merchandise and fishing tackle items, an 8lb+ decal to display their achievement, and an entry into the year-end ShareLunker Prize Drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree and an annual fishing license. Additional prizes may be included in

(See Toyota ShareLunkers..... Continued on Page 14-A)

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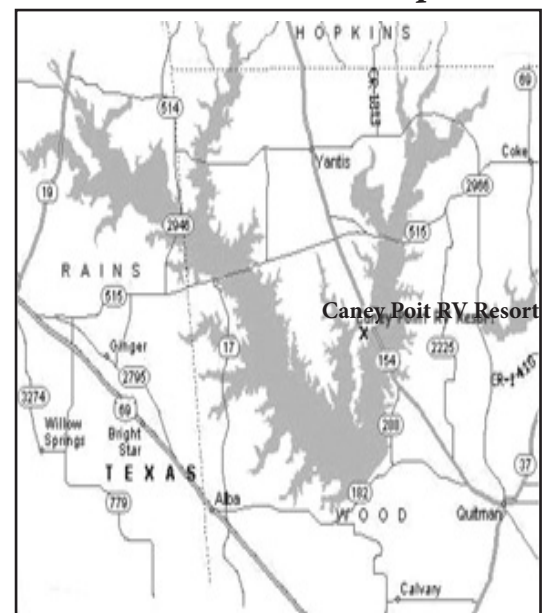
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Patience and Electronics are the key for January

By David Ozio

"The cold season is well upon us heading into the new year and water temps will be the key as we rebound off one of the worst cold snaps we have encountered in years. January can be classed as "big fish month" if you have the patience to endure adverse conditions and just a few bites. Handle those categories and you can be rewarded handsomely with a double digit of a life time.

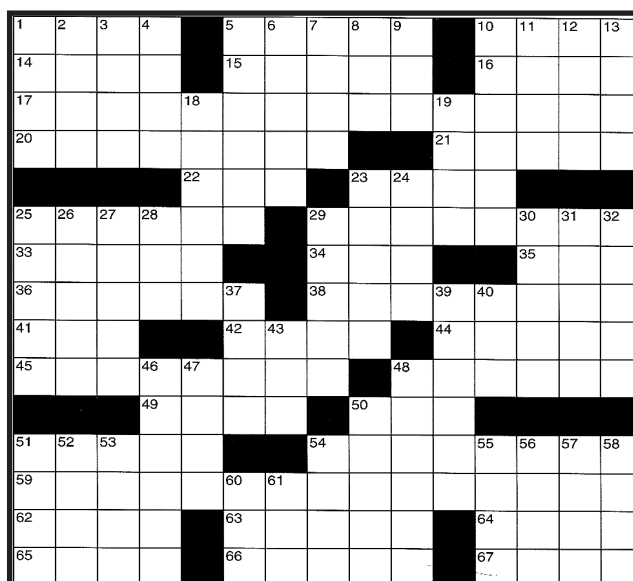
As it stands now, the lake is a foot low and the water temps are hovering around the low 50's which points to the fact that most bass have set up on their winter haunts out in deep water. I suspect these water temps will drop even further into the mid 40's as we cruise into January.

Their feeding habits are slowed down due to the cold water and one good meal could last them a while. The key is to target schools of shad and barfish in the 20-30 foot range. Good electronics are the key and pay strict attention to the hooks that surround the school. The A-rig will be the go to set up to target these monster bass and rig it with any five inch swimbait on a 3/16 oz head. A flutter spoon or jigging spoon will also do the trick and my color choice will be gold. Focus your search on humps, roadbeds, long points and pond dams. If you notice the big arches laying on the bottom, switch to the Cariolina rig or foot-ball jig in black/blue to attract the larger bites. Use a long leader on your C-rig with a 3/0 or 4/0 hook. Creature baits, large worms or giants lizards will be the baits of choice. I use blue fleck and chartreuse pepper on cloudy days and watermelon red or watermelon candy colors when the suns beaming down in full force. Drop shots will play a huge roll in the coming months especially if the lake stays at this level or slightly below. January is the time of the year when the ultra giants are moving around and it offers the extreme possibility to boat the trophy of your dreams.

Fishing shallow on the bright sunny days is the place to be, especially between 2:00 and 5:00pm.



It is the warmest part of the day and the top layer of water offers comfort to the sluggish bass. Vegetation is the attraction for these bass and I would throw a rattletrap or chatterbait to draw a strike. Depending upon the water temp, a suspending jerkbait would be the ticket if the temps are lagging into the mid 40's. Red colors are the main choice for the moving baits and I would have a chrome version tied on as a backup. Gold has worked well on partly cloudy days and I always keep one handy on whatever lure I present. Don't be afraid to hurl them into the thick grass and rip it out as bass will hit it once it clears the outer



CLUES ACROSS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Large cat | 41. Embryo |
| 5. Gets | 42. French abbot |
| 10. Dutch distiller | 44. Planet on which we live |
| 14. Ruler | 45. Provençal verses |
| 15. What belongs to you | 48. Native American boats |
| 16. Rookie reporter's assignment | 49. Dry |
| 17. Christmas symbol | 50. Gullible person (slang) |
| 20. Trains | 51. Missouri town |
| 21. Incompetent | 54. Italian or Frenchman |
| 22. Federal housing department | 59. What Santa's doing with his list |
| 23. Rescue | 62. Aboriginal race |
| 25. Transmits | 63. River in France |
| 29. Military punishments | 64. Thomas ____, British composer, 1700 |
| 33. Smell (var.) | 65. Form bubbles |
| 34. "Norma ____, film | 66. Commands |
| 35. Attorneys' organization (abbr.) | 67. Pumpkin or poppy |
| 36. Anger | |
| 38. Intensely happy | |

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. One who did it (slang) | 30. Inward (prefix) |
| 2. Asian river between China and Russia | 31. 12 characters to an inch |
| 3. Journey | 32. Oliver ____, banker |
| 4. Bead | 37. Aristocrat |
| 5. Island in the Mediterranean | 39. Beverage container |
| 6. Expressed delight | 40. On (Dutch) |
| 7. Disarrange | 43. Injurious |
| 8. Slip | 46. Powder |
| 9. South-southeast | 47. Asian nation (var.) |
| 10. Woman's hat | 48. Menus (French) |
| 11. Double-reed instrument | 50. Grease in sheep's wool |
| 12. Programming language | 51. Canadian flyers |
| 13. Proofreaders' mark | 52. Tributary of the Mississippi River |
| 18. Pakistani city | 53. River in Siberia |
| 19. Flowering plant | 54. Armor plate |
| 23. Universe | 55. Belonging to the Public Works Administration |
| 24. Sweet beverages | 56. Republic of Ireland |
| 25. Anchor ropes | 57. Inflammatory disease |
| 26. Saying | 58. State of extreme poverty |
| 27. Part of bell sounds | 60. Similar (suffix) |
| 28. Birth-control means | 61. Born of |
| 29. ____ cycle | |

Answers on Page 21-A



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(See Patience and
Continued on Page 20-A)

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Rainbow Trout Coming to Tyler's Nature Center

Take a kid fishing and help them bag colorful rainbow trout for free during the 12th annual "Trails to Trout" fishing days held in January at The Tyler Nature Center. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is stocking 2,000 rainbow trout at the pond for adult and child team fishing from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jan. 6 and 13.

There is no registration required and no need to purchase a fishing license - all anglers need to bring is fishing equipment and bait. The East Texas Woods and Waters Foundation (ETWWF) and TPWD

will provide the rest, including staff on-hand to assist beginner fishing duos and limited fishing equipment for those who need it on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Anglers have the option of releasing their catch but are encouraged to keep up to a limit of five [rainbow trout] per person to take home," said Spencer Dumont, East Texas Regional Fisheries Director. "We also have fish-cleaning facilities and ice available courtesy of the East Texas Woods and Waters Foundation."

In addition to the daily bag limit of

five rainbow trout, anglers can also keep up to one channel catfish per day.

After a day of fishing at the pond head over to the nearby outdoor hiking trails to complete the great outdoors experience. Recommended Equipment: Each child will need a light-action rod and reel combination with small fishing hooks, light line 12

(See Rainbow Trout...

Continued on Page 21-A)

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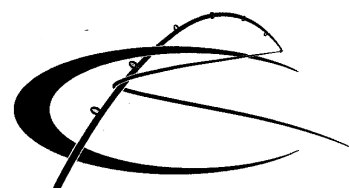
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Emory, Texas

"The Moon Report"

A New Year and New Equipment

By Terri Moon

I can't begin to tell you how excited I am to start out the New Year with blessings of all new equipment starting with a new Skeeter Solera boat. This will be a new adventure for me because all I've ever known is my 1997 Champion "Fish Hunter" – but she is old and tired! (I'm feeling a little "separation anxiety"), but still very excited for new beginnings! Believe it or not I still haven't gotten to see it yet. It's waiting for me to get back from Missouri!

I'm trying to get my mom and dad both well enough to come to Texas for a visit and we're getting really close to that happening. Thanks for all the prayers and well wishes. We've got a couple more Dr. approvals to go and then we're headed south! (They are pretty excited about seeing the boat too!)

I can't wait for you all to see it also. I will have new Lowrance HDS units with down and side imaging and my favorite of ALL time – my MinnKota Ultrex trolling motor. It's the ultimate! Plus I will have new Shimano 5'6" Clarus Rods and Shimano 500 Sahara Reels, spooled with 8# Suffix Siege hi/vis tangerine line. Wow – this boat even has an awesome stereo and phone chargers! I think you're going to love the comfy seats and boat layout.



I am looking forward to hearing all your opinions on what would make this boat more accommodating to the crappie fishermen. (They are listening!) The crappie world is exploding right now and I'm glad Skeeter wants to be a part of it! They are making the perfect balance of "fish and fun"! I can't wait for the exciting year to come!

But for now – the coldest weather is hitting New Years day so if your crappie aren't where they were, you better start looking a little deeper. Find the shad off main lake points, deep water humps, and deep creek channel bends. This is also a good time to rig double jigs about a foot apart for "double" the excitement when you catch 2 at a time! I will usually put a 1/8 oz. Bubba Bait on the bottom and a Lake Fork Tackle "Live Baby Shad" on 1/16 oz. jig head on top with a loop knot.

Now if it's just too cold to go fishing, this

is the month to check out all the new equipment, latest tackle and what's happening in the boating world at all of your "Boat and Tackle Shows" in your area. Also, if you haven't done it yet, it's a great time to get your boat serviced and ready for the upcoming year ahead. I recommend Chuck, Perry or Greg at Service Marine in Emory or Bryan or Billy, at Sartin Marine in Yantis. All of these guys have kept me go-

(Continued on Next Page)

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ing all these years. Many thanks to each of you!

Also a big thank you to Fred at Diamond Sports Marine in Yantis for handling all of our Skeeter needs in the area.

Don't let this cold weather slow you down. There is plenty to do to be ready for the next "nice" day! Believe it or not we are only about 4 weeks away from the "big ones" moving in – so don't forget to book early for best dates, 903-335-0941 and accommodation availability at the beautiful Lake Fork Marina 903-765-2764.

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Wishing everyone the very best in the upcoming year!

Many thanks to all of you that have contributed to the care and upkeep for our beautiful "Camp Dog Buddy" and especially to Scuba Steve who not only opened his heart but his home for a warm place for Buddy to sleep in this cold weather.

Love to All!!!







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Golden Alga Returns to Several West Texas Reservoirs

Biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are monitoring increasing golden alga levels in reservoirs and rivers around San Angelo.

Golden alga is a single-celled organism that, under certain environmental conditions, can release

toxins that affect fish, freshwater mussels and the juvenile stage of frogs and other amphibians. Golden alga only effects gill-breathing animals and poses no threat to humans or livestock. Concern over increasing golden alga cell counts began when

golden alga monitoring on Nov. 7 showed low toxicity in E.V. Spence Reservoir. Then in early December, anglers reported several large dead fish at the reservoir, which prompted additional samples. Water samples collected on Dec. 11 indicated

moderate toxicity and a significant increase in golden alga cells in E.V. Spence Reservoir.

"Although several large dead fish, including largemouth bass, catfish, and carp were reported by anglers, we have not yet seen a widespread fish kill at E.V. Spence," said Lynn Wright, TPWD Fisheries Biologist in San Angelo. "At this time, it appears golden alga is having a limited impact on fish populations in the reservoir, but it is early in the sea-

son and further development is possible."

Additionally, two reservoirs that have a history of golden alga problems, Colorado City and Moss Creek Reservoir, are also currently being affected. Colorado City Reservoir, which has been severely impacted annually by golden alga since 2001, showed high toxicity. Dead fish, including bullhead catfish and common carp, were also observed along the shoreline. Moss Creek had low toxicity on Nov. 7, but no dead

fish were observed.

Golden alga was also found in the Concho River at Mullins Crossing at a moderate toxicity, but to date no dead fish have been observed in the Concho River. This section of the Concho River experienced a golden alga fish kill in the spring this year.

The good news is that locations where golden alga had previously been documented, including the Colorado River, O.H. Ivie Reservoir, Champion Creek and Brady Creek Reservoir were sampled and showed no toxicity in the samples.

The San Angelo fisheries management office, in coordination with other agencies, will continue to monitor golden alga throughout the winter and spring. Although large-scale treatment for golden alga is not feasible, TPWD biologists will evaluate the need for fish stocking after the golden alga blooms subside.

First discovered in Texas in 1985, golden alga (*Prymnesium parvum*) has since been responsible for fish kills in the Colorado, Canadian, Wichita, Red and Brazos river systems.

Additional information about golden alga and its effects on Texas reservoirs can be found online at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/water/environmentconcerns/hab/ga/>.

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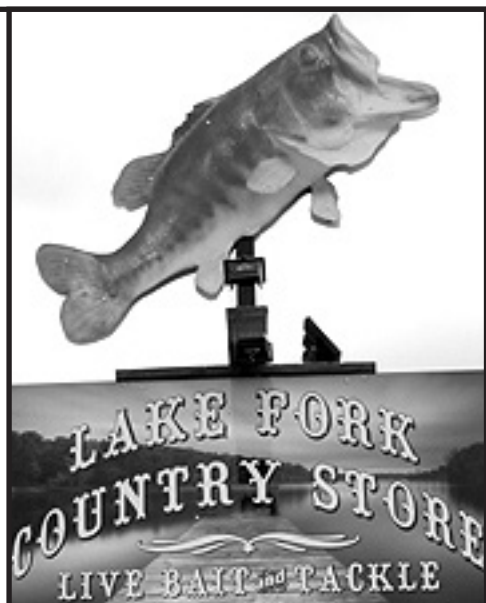
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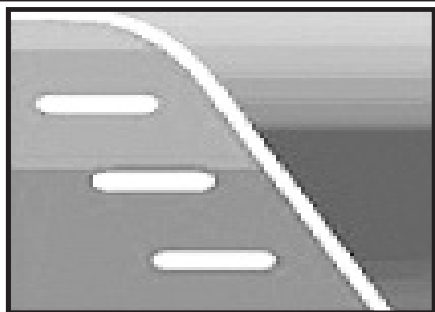
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"Knowing What To Look For!"

By Michael McFarland

This month I decided to share a couple of pics straight from my logs of Lake Fork! This is one of my favorite spots. It often fills up with massive amounts of crappie and plenty of giant bass that feed on those crappie!! By using my Lowrance down scan and side scan simultaneously, I simply follow and study the creeks marking channel swings, big stumps, etc.... You will make way to many

marks at Lake Fork to remember details so use appropriate icons and make short notes to help you remember! You may also find some very interesting things on Lake Fork as you will see the wagon wheel in pic #2. I have spent many hours studying Lake Fork and have over 1500 specifically labeled waypoints from one end of the lake to the other. Remember however you go about studying any lake it will take time, dedication and commitment. None of

this is easy or everyone would do it! If you would like to learn how to use or interpret your sonar more efficiently or just want to go fishing, please visit McFarlandfishing.com or call Mike McFarland 602-826-1524. Thank you and I wish you all a Happy New Year!

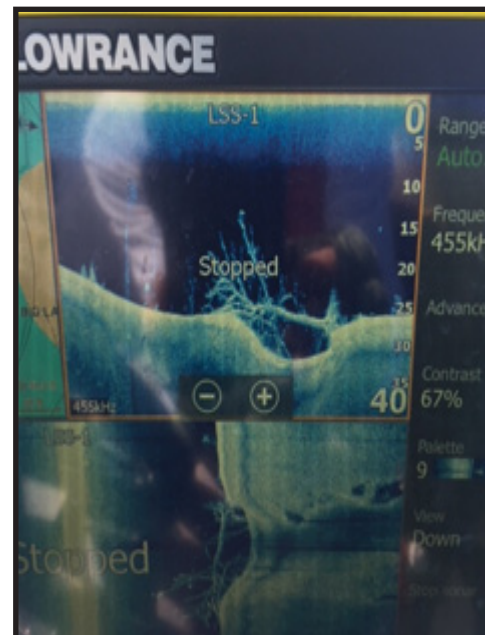
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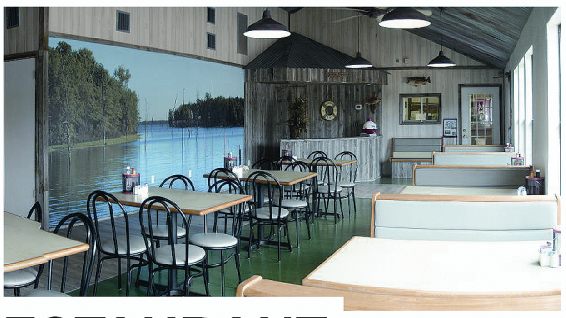
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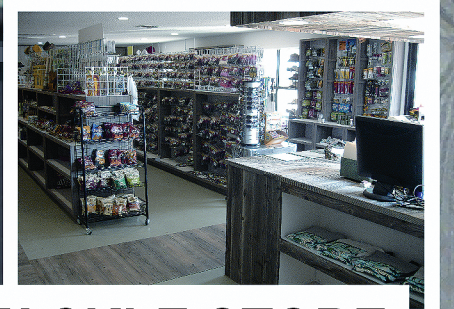
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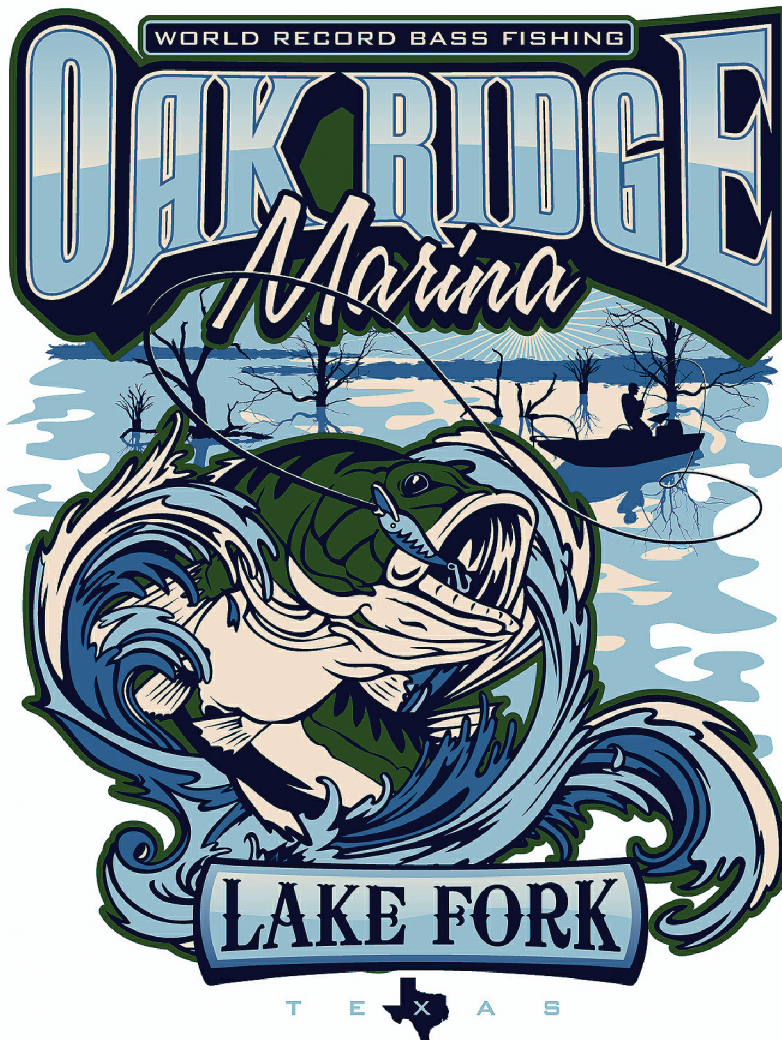
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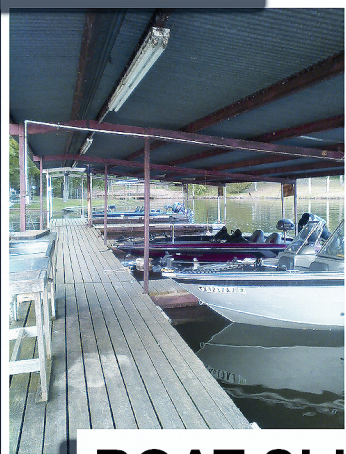
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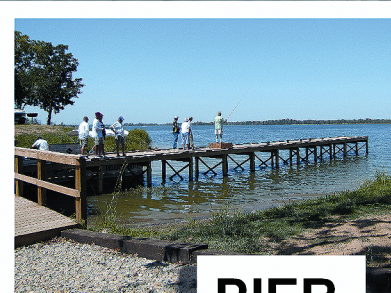
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Toyota ShareLunker Program Announces 2018 Season Changes (Continued from Page 5-A)

the prize drawing prior to its entry deadline.

A new logo and new tagline, "Bigger Better Bass" highlight the branding changes to the program, which also includes new Toyota ShareLunker branded merchandise for prizes, updated marketing materials and a new website and mobile application to make it easy to enter your catch in the program and keep up with the latest ShareLunker news.

Starting Jan. 1, anglers will now be able to quickly enter their catch on their smartphone using the new Toyota ShareLunker mobile application, which will be available for free download in the iTunes app store and on Google play or online on the new Toyota ShareLunker website, texassharelunker.com. The digital entry forms will allow anglers to easily submit photos of the fish be-

ing properly measured, weighed and held. Other entry criteria will be detailed on the website and mobile application Jan. 1, the official start of the new yearlong season.

In addition to providing information and photos of their fish, anglers will also be able to provide a genetic sample of their largemouth bass by collecting and sending fish scales to TPWD using simple instructions from the app and website. These data will help fisheries biologists evaluate the impact of the ShareLunker breeding and stocking program in the gene pool. "Monitoring the impact of ShareLunker stockings is critical to evaluating the success of the program," Brookshear said. "That's why the citizen scientist piece is so important - we need anglers to help us better understand the populations of our biggest bass in Texas and we are excited to offer exciting prizes in exchange for providing us with the information and genetic material from their lunker catches."

Hatcheries staff will also attempt to spawn all eligible ShareLunkers 13 pounds or larger donated between Jan. 1 and March 31. Offspring of female genetic intergrades will be combined and stocked back to the source locations for all ShareLunker entries for the year, and genetically pure offspring will be maintained at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens and eventually distributed to all TPWD production hatcheries to be used as brood stock for statewide largemouth bass stockings.

"Our goal is for all hatchery-held Florida largemouth bass brood stock to eventually be the descendants of ShareLunkers," Brookshear said. "Increasing the percentage of ShareLunker offspring being introduced into Texas waters is an important part of increasing the lunker genetic potential in the state. We are incredibly grateful for anglers who choose to loan us these valuable fish and we are looking forward to continuing our efforts to make Texas fishing bigger and better with the selective breeding program."

For program updates, photos and to keep up with Texas lunker catches, join the ShareLunker community online at www.facebook.com/sharelunkerprogram/.

More details on the shopping spree and other prizes for ShareLunker entries will be finalized and shared in the near future.

The Toyota ShareLunker Program is made possible by a grant to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Foundation from Gulf States Toyota. Toyota is a longtime supporter of the Foundation and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, providing major funding for a wide variety of education, fish, parks and wildlife projects.

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Recovering America's Wildlife Act Would Bring \$63 Million Per Year to Texas

A nationwide alliance of government, business, education and conservation leaders has united to combat one of America's greatest threats--the decline of our fish and wildlife and their natural habitats, and what this means for people and the economy. Scientists estimate that one-third of wildlife species in the United States are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered without additional funding for their conservation.

The Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife, a national group with a sizeable Texas chapter, supports a congressional proposal to create a 21st-century wildlife conservation funding model. This effort grew out of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, involving members representing the outdoor recreation, retail and manufacturing sector, the energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups and state and federal fish and wildlife agencies.

The bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act, H.R. 4647, introduced by Representatives Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI), would redirect \$1.3 billion in existing royalties annually from energy and

mineral development on federal lands and waters, money not currently earmarked for any specific fund or purpose. This approach would not require taxpayers or businesses to pay more, but would redirect funds to invest in fish and wildlife conservation. RAWA allocations would follow a formula based on a state's human population size and land area. Texas would receive the maximum allowed, 5 percent, or \$63 million currently. Combined with the required non-federal match of 25 percent, Texas would have almost \$80 million per year for research, habitat management and protection, land acquisition, education, law enforcement, and outdoor recreation focused on Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) listed in the Texas Conservation Action Plan. A preliminary report by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department explains what the bill would mean for Texas, outlines Texas goals and objectives, and highlights examples showing how funds could be spent in Texas. "For Texas, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would mean transformative change for people and wildlife, the kind of breakthrough that comes once in a generation," said Carter Smith, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department executive director.

"Passage of this bill would galvanize state efforts to conserve and restore more than 1,300 nongame fish and wildlife species of concern here in the Lone Star State. By focusing on these species and their habitats, we could keep common species common and avoid the need for endangered species listings by getting ahead of wildlife declines while there's still time to act. That's good for jobs and the economy as well as wildlife, which is why this plan started with buy-in from industry and business. These species and the habitats where they live are the 'goose that lays the golden egg' which sustain multi-billion-dollar nature tourism industries in our state, as well as clean air and water and healthy outdoor recreation. H.R. XXXX would mean millions in new grants to non-profits, universities, landowners, local communities and others. Besides natural resource benefits, this could also transform nature-based recreation and education opportunities for people of all ages, including children and families. It would be the greatest wildlife conservation breakthrough in decades."

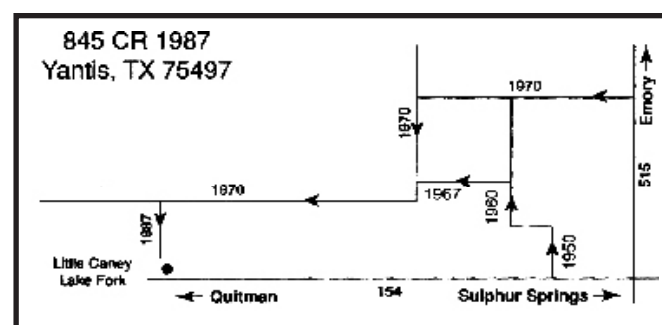
It currently costs the American public hundreds of millions of dollars each year to re-

(See Recovering America's.....Continued on Page 16-A)

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Recovering America's Wildlife Act Would Bring \$63 Million Per Year to Texas (Continued from Page 15-A)

store threatened and endangered species, costs that could be avoided or greatly reduced if proactive conservation measures were implemented first. Proactive conservation is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers, good for business and good for our communities. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would provide the needed resources for proactive conservation nationwide.

The bill is being called the most important American wildlife conservation proposal since passage of two landmark federal laws Pittman-Robertson in 1937 and Dingell-Johnson in 1950, which provided breakthrough funding for game fish and animals on the brink of extinction.

"America's hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and boaters have been the primary funders of state-based conservation efforts to this day," said Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation President Jeff Crane. "This recommendation simply directs funding for conservation from other sectors that use our natural resources."

"We thank Representatives Fortenberry and Dingell for introducing the historic Recovering America's Wildlife Act," said Collin O'Mara, President and CEO of the Na-

tional Wildlife Federation. "This bill will help thousands of wildlife species through proactive, collaborative, on-the-ground efforts. The approach is unique because it calls for early action to save struggling wildlife, rather than waiting until species are on the brink of extinction and need expensive 'emergency room' measures to recover. When this bill becomes law, we will increase wildlife populations, strengthen America's economy, and reduce the need for regulatory measures."

"A lot is at stake if we do not act soon. Every American benefits when we have healthy and accessible fish and wildlife. We need to start down a new path where we invest proactively in conservation rather than reactively."

More information about the Recovering America's Wildlife Act is on the alliance national website at OurNatureUSA.com or on the Texas chapter website at txwildlifealliance.org. About the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife: The Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife formed in 2017 to secure funding for much needed conservation of our most precious natural resources, our fish and wildlife. The Alliance was built upon the strong partnership created by the Blue Ribbon Panel on

Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources. The Texas chapter includes more than 200 member organizations representing more than a million Texans. The diverse Texas coalition consists of landowners, conservation organizations, privately-held businesses, sportsmen's groups, church congregations, educational institutions, and other civic organizations, who have come together to support fish and wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation, and conservation education.



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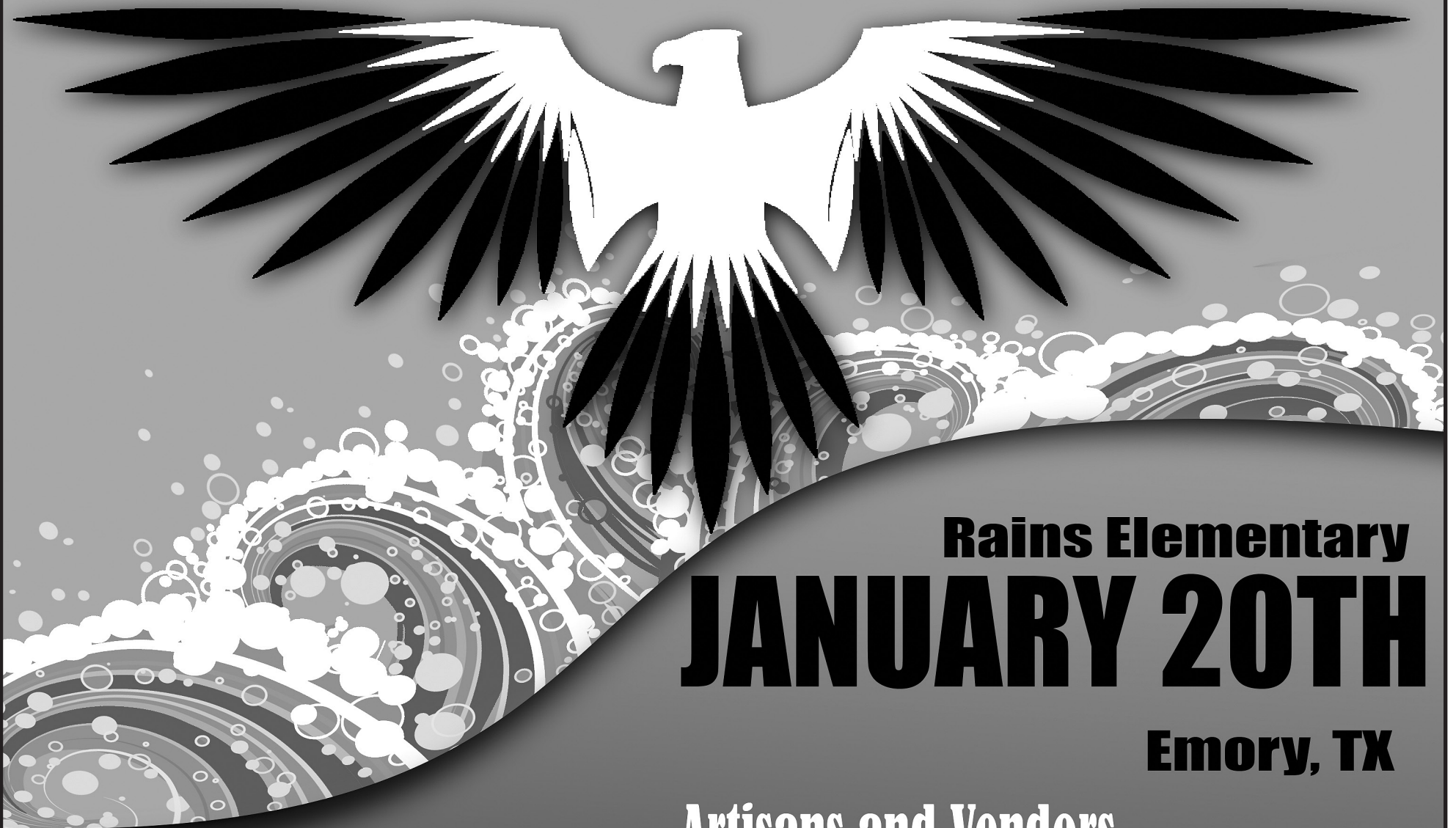
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'Pack of Knowledge' "Tips for Targeting Bigger Bass"

By Andrew Grills

There may be some luck involved when someone comes along and catches a double digit bass on their first trip to Lake Fork. However, when someone regularly catches big fish, it isn't an accident. There are a few things that I believe increase the odds of catching bigger fish on a consistent basis. Here are some tips that seemed to pay off for us this past year, and resulted in some big catches.

We've all heard the saying that big baits catch big fish. While there are times and circumstances where the opposite can be true, in

most cases bigger lures produce bigger bites. More often than not, we erred on the side of using larger than normal lures this past year.

For instance, in a scenario where we would've normally used a regular sized fluke, we rigged a magnum fluke instead. When we would've reached for a 5 inch flutter spoon, we opted for the biggest spoon we could get our hands on. Rather than tossing a 5 inch paddle tail swim-bait, we found ourselves throwing much larger swimbaits on tackle that could be mistaken for deep sea fishing equipment. In many cases this meant sacrificing quantity in place of quality.

We were also careful about location. We all know big bass feed and position near structure. Points, creek channels, humps, and roadbeds are among favorite big bass hangouts. Focusing on areas with key structure, and often a combination of more than one type of structure paid off. For example, a point with a roadbed crossing it and a creek channel bending against it will hold big bass when the time is right. Spending more time in areas like this resulted in some big catches for us.

Another thing we were mindful of was our equipment. Sometimes a customer doesn't want to hear that their favorite new rod and reel is insufficient to handle a lunker. In some cases we spent the first portion of the day learning to

use baitcasting equipment, or replacing light line with 20lb test. Reminders to check the drag and make sure it was tight, and to double check that knot... all of the little things we can easily overlook are things that can make the difference between someone catching the biggest fish of their life or just another one that got away.

Finally, timing is a very important factor we tried to keep in mind. We all know being at the right place, at the right time pretty much sums it up. However, the right time can often be the most difficult time to fish. Some of my best days ever have been while a strong front is passing through or right after. There are several reasons fish get active under these conditions, but the main thing to keep in mind is that this is when a big bass makes mistakes.

Periods of consistent, stable weather are also worth paying attention to. Florida strain bass are not big fans of change, and after several days of stable weather conditions one should expect the bite to be pretty good. During these periods, and the hours leading up to the next front are times to fish as much as possible.

Hopefully these tips give you some ideas that will help you catch more big bass in 2018. It's my goal for this coming year to be even better. I believe paying attention to baits, location, equipment, and timing can help put more lunkers in the boat.



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Game Warden Field Notes

The following items are compiled from recent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department law enforcement reports.

--That's Not Neighborly--A Titus County game warden received a trespassing complaint in the Miller's Cove area of Titus County. The land owner said he found a large hog trap on his property and he does not allow hunting. The land owner did not know who the trap belonged to but he suspected it was a neighbor that owed him money. The game warden contacted the neighbor and received a confession. Citations were issued for no hunting license and criminal trespassing. A warning was also given for hunting without landowner's consent.

--Lively Crappie--A Jackson County game warden and his

ride along were patrolling the Navidad River south of Lake Texana dam when they came upon some illegal throw lines. After inspecting numerous lines, the warden came upon a line that was baited with an undersized crappie. Due to the liveliness of the crappie, he knew the bait was freshly placed onto the line. The warden proceeded down river to see if they could find the suspect who placed the lines. He witnessed a boat in the middle of the river channel and after making a water safety contact he was able to determine that this was the individual who had placed the lines. The said individual received a citation for using game fish as bait as well as warnings for undersized crappie and gear tag violations.

--Baiting the Baiters--

-On opening day of the spring Eastern turkey hunting season, Red River County game wardens were revisiting areas they had discovered during recent patrols that had been baited with corn. They observed four separate hunters actively hunting Eastern turkey over bait in violation of state game laws. One hunter shot a turkey over the bait, but was unsuccessful in finding it. Other hunting license violations were also encountered during these contacts. Multiple cases are pending.

--Net Loss-- Responding to a tip from an Operation Game Thief call, a Tarrant County game warden caught four men fishing with a cast net and keeping game fish in violation of state fishing laws. The men were in possession of 130 crappie, 64 yellow bass,

8 black bass, and 37 perch. About 50 of the crappie and bass were undersized. None of the men had fishing licenses. The fish were cleaned and donated. Multiple cases filed.

--Caught with the Loot--Game wardens patrolling the tornado disaster area in Van Zandt County to minimize looting problems and enforce a mandatory curfew stopped a suspicious vehicle

filled with several miscellaneous items that appeared to be potentially stolen from homes in the area. Upon questioning the subject and searching the vehicle, it was discovered he was in possession of 18 grams of a crystal like substance believed to be methamphetamine, marijuana, scales, baggies, and other drug paraphernalia. With assistance from the Van

Zandt County Sheriff's Office and state troopers, the subject was then transported and booked into the Van Zandt County Jail for manufacturing and distributing narcotics, a first degree felony. Cases are pending.

--a.k.a Under Arrest--Smith County game wardens were patrolling Lake Tyler when they made contact with

(See Game Warden
Continued on Page 23-A)



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Patience and Electronics are the key for January *(Continued from Page 6-A)*

edge. Experiment to see where the green fish might be positioned. Make some casts out to the deep edge of the grass and slow roll the bait back to the boat. You might be surprised at the results.

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 January searching for the trophy of a lifetime, I would love to be a part of this trophy quest. 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/DavidOzioLakeForkGuide>. I post my daily trip results on this page. I would also like to thank Okuma Fishing and Talon Custom Lures for making my job the blast that it is. They produce excellent products that make chasing big green fish a dream. 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."

DAVID OZIO

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Rainbow Trout (Continued from Page 7-A)

lb. test or less, small bobbers (optional), and small split shot. For bait, bring salmon eggs, whole kernel corn, marshmallows, small worms or prepared trout bait (Berkley PowerBait Hatchery Formula Chews or similar). Small rooster-tail spinners work well. If you intend

to keep trout, make sure to pack a stringer or small cooler. How to Get Here: From ESE Loop 323 in Tyler, go south-east on University Blvd. (Spur 248). Take a right turn on F.M. 848 (Bascom Road). Go 0.2 miles and turn right at The Nature Center gate.

Please park in designated areas in the main parking area and walk to the pond using the concrete trail near the kiosk. A complete list of trout stocking dates and locations is available at www.tpwd.texas.gov/troutstocking

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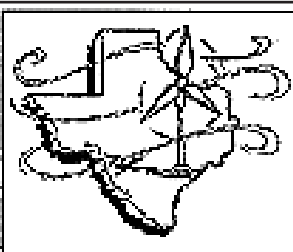
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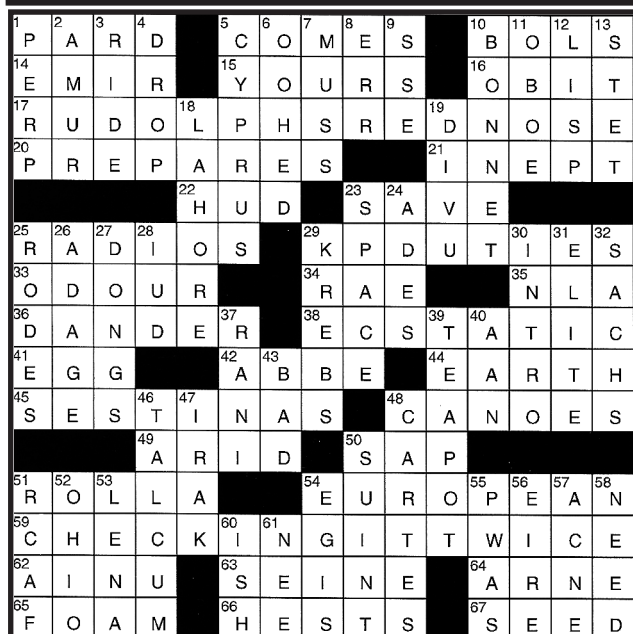
If you toss a penny in the air, it is actually more likely to land on "tails," since the "head" image is heavier, so it tends to end up on the bottom.

Just The Right Answers

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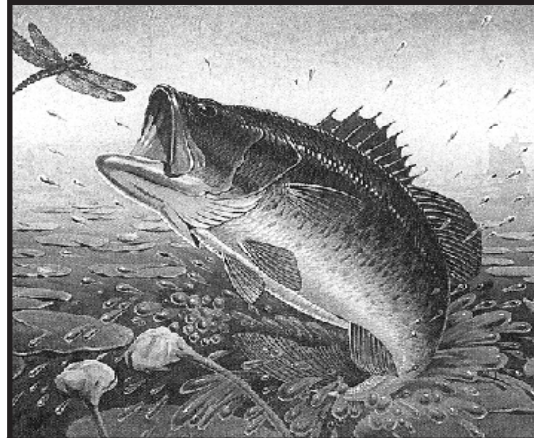
Winter Find

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.

ANORAK
BOOTS
CARDIGAN
EARMUFFS
GLOVES
HAT
MITTENS

MUFFLER
PARKA
SCARF
SNOWSUIT
SWEATER
TURTLENECK
WOOL SOCKS

O N S K C O S L O O W O
W S C A R F N S C A F R
A W R K O N A F L G E S
T E F R U M U F F L E R
E A F A P I R U K O W S
S T L P A T U M I V T N
V E C L G N F R F S I W
O R A E O S F A R A U S
T U R T L E N E C K S U
U I D H V L M U A N W T
R G I A S N I F R R O I
T S G W E O T F D O N R
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The Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork held their 17th Annual Christmas Party and General Meeting on December 16th at Bro's Patio. By Laws, Rules and the yearly election were held before all the fun started. Each of the members with wives brought a covered dish and gift for the White Elephant Drawing. Also at the event the Top 6 for 2017 were recognized for their accomplishment. From right to left, Angler of the Year, Kenny LaDuke, Chris Large, Don Hampton, Jim Martin, Leon Davis, and Rodney Ellis. Starting the 2018 year, if anyone would like to join this great club that has 2 open tournaments a year on Lake Fork and a tournament each month on lakes within an hour drive of Lake Fork, they can go to our website www.texas trails bassmasters.com or call Rodney Ellis, President at 903-714-6473 or Don (Bubba) Hampton, Vice President/Tournament Director at 903-360-6994 or email fishnews@lakefork.net. This club shares fishing information after each tournament in the meeting and are the Weight Masters at the Annual Kidfish on Lake Fork.



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Game Warden Field Notes (Continued from Page 19-A)

a group of individuals fishing in a park on the lake. One of the individuals identified himself by a name that wardens learned was an alias and tagged with outstanding arrest warrants. The suspect was arrested without incident, but had an extensive criminal history, including assault on a public servant and assault with a deadly weapon. The subject's warrant was a felony theft warrant out of Smith County and felony evading arrest from Corrigan Police Department.

--A Gator Tale--In March, a Duval County game warden got a tip about four individuals who had killed an alligator on the Nueces River in McMullen County. The individual gave the warden a list of the four suspects, a narrative of how the violation was committed and a picture of two individuals posing with the alligator. Several wardens executed a search warrant of a residence where two of the suspects were located. After initial denials of any knowledge of the event, one of the suspects admitted to catching an alligator and knocking it out with a paddle, then taking it to the bank to kill and skin. He also implicated three other individuals in the crime; however, he claimed he had no idea where the alligator skull was. The second suspect was interviewed and corroborated the first suspect's story and confirmed the involvement of two other individuals.

A girlfriend of one of the suspects mentioned in passing the group typically throws all of their fish guts over the fence in the back lot. The game wardens searched the lot and found the alligator skull in the brush. One of the suspects knew where the third individual lived, and took the game wardens to his house. Upon seeing his accomplice and the game wardens, the third individual immediately acknowledged that they were probably there because of the alligator and admitted to his involvement in killing the alligator. All of the suspects filled out statements naming themselves and each other in the crime. In total, 16 citations and civil restitution for the alligator are pending.

--Speared-- Comal County game wardens responded to the Guadalupe River in New Braunfels near the Faust Street Bridge on a report of a person illegally shooting bass with a homemade spear gun. Upon arrival, the wardens observed the suspect in the river with his spear gun and in possession of an undersized largemouth bass that he had caught/killed with the device. The man also did not have a fishing license. Cases are pending.

--Prop Scar--Comal County game wardens were called to the scene of a boating accident at Cranes Mill Marina on Canyon Lake where a 19-year-old male was struck by a boat propeller when he jumped in the lake unexpectedly to relieve him-

self. The individual was struck on his left shin and calf and received a significant laceration requiring medical transport to University Hospital in San Antonio. The investigation is still ongoing.

--Eaglets Down-- A Stephens County game warden received a call about a bald eagle's nest that had blown out of a tree near Hubbard Creek Lake Dam. The reporting party stated they had seen young bald eagles in the nest earlier that week and that there were mature eagles circling the area around the destroyed nest. The warden located the nest and found two juvenile bald eagles laying on the ground next to the nest. Both eagles appeared to be unharmed and in decent condition. Arrangements were made to take the birds to the wild bird rescue facility in Wichita Falls.

--The Joys of Spotlighting--Game wardens responded to a call in Refugio County about a vehicle spotlighting from the roadway. With assistance from the caller, the wardens stopped three individuals in a vehicle on a rural road. After a lengthy investigation and interview, it was found the three subjects were, in fact, out joy riding with intentions of hunting from the road. Multiple citations were issued.

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