

Mississippi

SPORTSMAN[®]

**+ WINTER FISH
HOT SPOTS**

FEBRUARY 2019
www.MS-SPORTSMAN.com



MSU STUDENT'S **GIANT TROPHY** FROM WMA

**CWD
STRIKES AGAIN**

**DON'T EAT CROW,
SHOOT THEM**

**BUSHYTAIL
KNOW-HOW**

**PLUS:
PRO TIPS
FOR BASS**

\$2.99 FEBRUARY 2019



**CATCH MORE
WINTER CATS**

**BARNETT BASS
START TO STIR**



**REED'S
METALS, INC.**

ORDER TODAY, PICKUP TODAY!

**8 LOCATIONS
ACROSS THE U.S. SOUTHEAST**



METAL ROOFS • METAL BUILDINGS • POLE BARNs • AND MORE!

www.reedsmetals.com



**FLORIDA
BUILDING
CODE 2010**
APPROVED
FL #12725-R1



**METAL ROOFING
ALLIANCE
MEMBER**



POWER ON THE PROWL.



TEXTRON
OFF ROAD

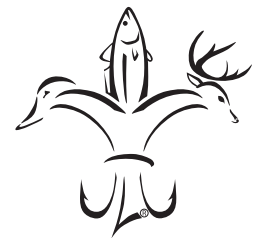
TEST DRIVE THE WHISPER-QUIET **50HP PROWLER PRO**

Made in America, Textron's Prowler Pro runs quiet and relentlessly outworks everything. Test drive a utility vehicle that keeps its mouth shut and gets the job done. Visit us today in central or coastal Mississippi.

BenNelson.com

**BEN
NELSON**
Golf & Outdoor

243 Industrial Dr. North | Madison, MS 39110 | 601.664.7117
9231 West Oaklawn Road | Biloxi, MS 39532 | 228.396.3905



Mississippi
SPORTSMAN
www.MS-SPORTSMAN.com

PUBLISHER: Tony Taylor
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Bobby Cleveland
 bobbyc7754@yahoo.com, 601.506.0739
MANAGING EDITOR: Dan Kibler
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Alicia LaFont
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Jeff Caldwell
ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER:
 Desiree P. Lewis
ART DIRECTOR: Rodney Anouilh
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:
 Jeff Cashio, Kevin Orgeron, Alissa Zeringue
CONTROLLER: Juanita Guidry
SALES DIRECTOR: Jay Forrest
 225.278.0258/jayf@lasmag.com
ADVERTISING SALES:
 Mark Hilzim (National Sales), Asa Faulkner, Brent Comardelle, Mark Boyd, Greg Webb, Peter Church, Ron Dorsey and Bret Holden
CONTRIBUTORS:
 David A. Brown, Andy Crawford, Jerry Dilsaver, Paul Elias, David Hawkins, Bill Garbo, Phillip Gentry, Michael O. Giles, Chris Ginn, Dan Kibler, Tommy Kirkland, Sammy Romano, Hal Schramm and Don Shoopman
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR:
 Ricky Naquin 985.859.7744/rickyn@lasmag.com
CIRCULATION FIELD MANAGER:
 Tim Stiglets 601.434.1526/timstiglets@comcast.net



Mississippi
CONTENTS

Volume 21 | Number 2 | February 2019

FEATURES:

- 29 Big bass buster**
Brandon angler has honed his big-bass skills for years, says targeting lunkers takes special tactics. Here's how to match his catches.
>>>By Mike Giles
- 43 Cold cat tricks**
Don't give up on catfish just because it's winter. Blues, flatheads and channels will all bite, if you change tactics to account for the cold weather.
>>>By Phillip Gentry
- 49 Bushytail bonanza**
Once Mississippi's favorite game animal, squirrels still provide hunters plenty of enjoyment across the Magnolia State.
>>>By David Hawkins
- 55 Something to crow about**
Ready to give your shoulder and ears a workout? Add to your wingshooting enjoyment by blasting away at a hundred or so Mississippi crows.
>>>By Bobby Cleveland

OUTDOOR UPDATE:

- 6 Small game, CWD, plus BIG BUCKS!!** cover story

COLUMNS:

- 38 Lunker Lines** By Paul Elias
- 60 Gettin' Fresh** By Hal Schramm
- 62 Lure Review** By Don Shoopman
- 64 Cooking on the Wild Side**
By Jerry Dilsaver

DEPARTMENTS:

- 27** Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook
- 71** Sportsman Showcase
- 72** Hunting/Fishing regs
- 73** Astro Tables
- 74** Advertiser Index

FIELD NOTES:

- 38** Jigs for March bass
- 40** Organize your tackle
- 44** Fish shiners for bass
- 66** Try controlled burns
- 67** Plant deer barriers
- 68** Gun cleaning tips
- 69** Choose your anchor
- 70** Fly rod practice

ON THE COVER:



Mississippi State student Blake Caruso killed this 191-inch buck on Dec. 13 at a WMA in north Mississippi. His story is on page 22, one of a handful of profiles of some huge Magnolia State whitetails. Photo courtesy Blake Caruso.

SUBSCRIPTIONS OR SUBSCRIPTION ISSUES, CALL 1-855-371-1546
 Monday thru Friday, 6 am to 11 pm
 Saturday & Sunday, 8 am - 5 pm CST

MISSISSIPPI SPORTSMAN is published monthly by Louisiana Publishing, Inc., Allen J. Lottinger, President, 14236 Highway 90, P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, LA 70039. Periodicals postage pending paid at Boutte, La., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Mississippi Sportsman, P.O. Box 433294, Palm Coast, FL 32143. All rights reserved. Reproduction of contents is strictly prohibited without permission of Mississippi Sportsman. **EDITORIAL:** Mississippi Sportsman uses free-lance writers throughout the state. Call (985) 758-7217 for information on submitting articles and photos. Mississippi Sportsman is not responsible for the loss of queries, manuscripts or other materials.

P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, LA 70039-1199
 985.758.7217

Volume 21 | No2



YAMAHA OUTBOARDS'
**SAY YES TO
 RELIABILITY** SALES EVENT

OFFER VALID FROM JANUARY 1, 2019 – MARCH 31, 2019

For a Limited Time, Buy an Eligible New Yamaha
2.5 hp – 115 hp Four-Stroke Outboard and Get:

5 Years
 OF WARRANTY PROTECTION*
PLUS UP TO **\$500**
 IN DEALER CREDIT*

For a Limited Time, Buy an Eligible New Yamaha
150 hp – 300 hp Four-Stroke Outboard and Get:

6 Years
 OF WARRANTY PROTECTION*

Eligible Four-Stroke Outboards Only**	Dealership Credit Toward Purchase of Additional Goods/Services*	+	2-Year Y.E.S. Value Based On MSRP	=	Total Value of Credit & Y.E.S. Benefits Combined
115 HP	\$500 based on MSRP	+	Free! \$800 value	=	Free! \$1,300 value
60-90 HP	\$400 based on MSRP	+	Free! \$725 value	=	Free! \$1,125 value
30-50 HP	\$350 based on MSRP	+	Free! \$450 value	=	Free! \$800 value
20-25 HP	\$300 based on MSRP	+	Free! \$330 value	=	Free! \$630 value
9.9-15 HP	\$250 based on MSRP	+	Free! \$170 value	=	Free! \$420 value
2.5-8 HP	\$200 based on MSRP	+	Free! \$170 value	=	Free! \$370 value

Eligible Four-Stroke Outboards Only	3-Year Ltd. Warranty + 3-Year Y.E.S.	3-Year Y.E.S. Value Based On MSRP
250-300 HP V6	6 Years Total	Free! \$2,700 value
200-225 HP	6 Years Total	Free! \$2,250 value
150-175 HP	6 Years Total	Free! \$1,500 value

⊕ Add three years of Yamaha Extended Service (Y.E.S.) to your three-year Yamaha Limited Warranty.

*Add two years of Yamaha Extended Service (Y.E.S.) to your three-year Yamaha Limited Warranty.
 **Applicable models may vary - not applicable for new models introduced after December 1, 2018.

See your authorized participating Yamaha Outboard Dealer today for details! Other restrictions and conditions may apply.

***PROGRAM TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** Consumer benefit for purchasing a new (unused, not previously warranty registered) eligible Yamaha 150hp to 300hp four-stroke outboard is a 36-month Yamaha Extended Service contract (choice offered in Florida is a 36-month Yamaha Limited Warranty). Consumer benefit for purchasing a new eligible Yamaha 2.5hp to 115hp four-stroke outboard is a credit based on MSRP toward the purchase of goods and/or services at the authorized participating dealer that sold the outboard, at no extra cost to consumer plus a 24-month Yamaha Extended Service contract (choice offered in Florida is a 24-month Yamaha Limited Warranty). NO BENEFIT SUBSTITUTIONS. To be eligible, outboards must have been manufactured since January 2012. Promotion is only applicable from authorized participating Yamaha Outboard dealers in the U.S.A. sold to purchasing consumers residing in the U.S.A. Promotion is limited to available stock in dealer inventory that is sold, PDI completed, delivered and warranty registered on YMBS by the dealer in accordance with Yamaha's promotion and warranty registration requirements during applicable dates. Applicable models may vary. Any new models introduced after December 1, 2018 are NOT eligible for this promotion. No model substitutions, benefit substitutions, extensions or rain checks will be allowed. Outboards sold or provided for commercial, camp, resort, guide, rental, promotional/demo, government agency, competition, tournament or sponsorship use are not eligible. This promotion cannot be used in conjunction with any other Yamaha offer. Some exceptions may apply. See authorized participating Yamaha dealer for complete details. Yamaha reserves the right to change or cancel this promotion at any time. Other restrictions and conditions apply.

REMEMBER to always observe all applicable boating laws. Never drink and drive. Dress properly with a USCG-approved personal flotation device and protective gear.
 © 2019 Yamaha Motor Corporation, U.S.A. All rights reserved.

YamahaOutboards.com

Reliability Starts Here.®



Gray squirrels will get a lot of attention from hunters across Mississippi this month as small-game takes center stage.

Outdoor UPDATE with Bobby Cleveland



Bobby Cleveland has covered sports in Mississippi for over 38 years. A native of Hattiesburg and graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Cleveland lives on Ross Barnett Reservoir near Jackson with his wife Pam. He can be reached at bobbyc7754@yahoo.com.



SMALL GAME: FEBRUARY FUN TIME BUT DON'T FORGET ABOUT RED-HOT, COLD-WATER FISHING AROUND THE MAGNOLIA STATE



For most Mississippi sportsmen, February puts the long deer season in the rear-view mirror. Only in the southeast corner, south of US 84 and east of Mississippi HWY 35, can hunters still chase whitetails.

But suffer not, the second month of 2019 offers plenty of consumptive outdoor sports to enjoy, and this issue of *Mississippi Sportsman* is here to get you ready for the action.

Small-game hunting moves center stage in all but the Southeast Deer Zone, with rabbits and squirrels in starring roles. Even though these seasons have been open since October, they have

had only supporting roles. Writer David Hawkins gives us a look at hunting Mississippi's bushytail grand slam — taking gray, red and black squirrels. Hint: head west toward the Mississippi River to find them all on public lands.

We've also got a look at the fun, ear-splitting sport of hunting crows. Whether one employs a highly amplified electronic call or takes the time to learn to talk crow with mouth calls, this activity can be so

much fun and beneficial to the state's pecan growers.

Focus also shifts back to the water, and the great fishing Mississippi always produces. Writer Mike Giles offers tips and places to catch giant prespawn bass, while Phillip Gentry has expert advice on huge catfish.

Without further adieu, let's get going. ■

GOT PICS? We want 'em

Email images to: images@ms-sportsman.com

*Digital images must be sent in jpeg format. High-resolution images (taken on your camera's highest setting) will work the best. All images (physical and digital) become property of Mississippi Sportsman and cannot be returned.

BEAGLE MUSIC: A HARMONY YOU WON'T SOON FORGET

With apologies to — name your favorite musician here — there is nothing more pleasant to the ears than the sound of a pack of beagles in pursuit of a rabbit.

"If you've never heard it, you don't understand," said Tony Holeman of Brandon. "It is the finest sound in all the world."

From the moment the first dog strikes until the shotgun roars, the chorus of beagles is a perfect mix of joy, satisfaction and excitement — especially the latter.

"The whole time they're in the thickets or the swamps, out of sight, you hear the chase," Holeman said. "You might hear it getting faint, and you relax, knowing they are headed away from you and just enjoy the sound. Then, when the rabbit turns and heads back, which they almost always do, that's when you start getting excited."

The louder they get, the closer the rabbit is coming to gun range and the more the anticipation builds.

"You listen, trying to gauge the sound. Is it getting close or heading to one of your flanks?" Holeman said. "You're trying to outguess the rabbit and get either yourself or another shooter in the right place. Usually, we get there too late, and the rabbit has passed and on its way to the next shooter."

Frustration is part of the fun: standing there, eyes and ears peeled, and the dogs come out of the brush, nose to the ground on the trail of the rabbit that passed behind your back when you weren't looking.

"I can't tell you how many times it happens to all of us rabbit hunters," Holeman said, "but I can tell you how many times the hunter catches grief about it from the rest of the hunters — every single time. Hey, that's part of it, and we've all been there. And let me tell you, don't you dare empty your shotgun on a rabbit and miss. You'll catch grief about that for years and years and years. Like, 'Cleveland, you remember that time a rabbit ran right between your legs and you missed it three times and the last one you were shooting straight down?'"

Sadly, yes, I do, and I'm reminded of it often.

Rabbit season continues through Feb. 28. The limit is 8 per day per hunter. Enjoy. ■

[more updates...](#) ➤

HILLBILLIES AND CANECUTTERS

Mississippi has two species of rabbits: the cottontail, aka hillbilly, and the bigger-bodied swamp rabbit, aka canecutter or swamper.

Both are relatively common across the state, but cottontails are probably the most numerous and widely distributed. Swamp rabbits are most-frequently found in wetland habitat and are the most desired by hunters interested in the sporting aspect.

"Swampers probably are, because of the long, circular chases," said hunter Phillip Long. "A good canecutter race can last a long, long time, with the dogs running slap out of hearing range. We like them because we usually find more concentrations of them that we do the hillbillies. We run a lot of hillbillies just because there

are a lot of them around, but you put a pack of good dogs in a creek or a river bottom with a few food plots around, and swampers will be thick.

While the bigger canecutters are good to eat, purists prefer the sweet, tender meat of the smaller hillbillies.

"We find a lot of concentrations of hillbillies in the Delta in turnrows or on old overgrown levees," Long said. "We once killed 17 hillbillies in 30 minutes on a 250-yard railroad-bed levee running through a big cotton field."

"Truth be known, I prefer the hillbillies for eating because they are more tender and tasty to me. About three or four of those little rabbits in a pot of dumplings, shoot, they will melt in your mouth and give it a buttery taste." ■



Rabbit hunters love swamp rabbits for the long chases with beagles, and they love cottontails for their tender flavor.

Bobby Cleveland

DEER STILL IN DANGER IN SE

Five hundred square inches of fluorescent orange is still in fashion in extreme southeast Mississippi, at least through Feb. 15. Deer are still legal in that corner of the state.

"I think it's great that we get those extra days late, and it is a fair trade giving up the first 15 days of bow season in October for these February days," said Robert Fuller of Hattiesburg. "It's a no-brainer for us; I don't think there's a deer hunter down here that would argue that. There's two big plusses: October is too miserable to sit in a stand, and February gives us a better chance at catching deer during the rut.

"Last year, I killed my biggest buck on Feb. 4, chasing a doe. I went to the stand at 1 o'clock, killed him at 2, and had him dressed and in the cooler in time to make it home for kickoff of the Super Bowl."

Fuller is hoping to match last year's 130-inch 8-pointer; he said that's a relative giant for his area of Perry County.

"I've got another nice one on camera this year, but he has been totally nocturnal," he said. "It's just like last year. I only had pictures of that buck at night and never laid eyes on him until he started chasing. This year, the bucks were still bunched up in early January and, other than some rubs, only the young ones had started showing any signs of rutting behavior. I bet we'll see them chasing somewhere between late January or early February. Last year, at least for me, it was Feb. 1."

Deer hunters are limited to legal bucks only after Feb. 1 on all lands, but they can still use weapon of choice on private lands with proper licensing. ■



Deer hunters in the Southeast Zone are hoping the late rut arrival in their area will lead to success that other hunters enjoyed during the rut in December and January.

MORE FEBRUARY HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

February hunting opportunities aren't limited to rabbits and squirrels.

There's also raccoon, bobcat and opossum (and trapping) through Feb. 28, as well as several bird seasons:

- * Quail through March 2;
- * Snipe and crow through Feb. 28;
- * Youth waterfowl day Feb. 2;
- * Light goose conservation order Feb. 1; closed Feb. 2; reopens Feb. 3-March 31;

February is also a good time to work on wild hogs in areas where the nuisance beasts exist. Hogs can be hunted 24 hours, seven days a week and 52 weeks a year on private lands, unless areas are closed for certain reasons.

Visit mdwfp.com for specific rules related to the light goose conservation order and hog hunting.

SOUTHEAST ZONE DEER HUNTING

PRIMITIVE WEAPON / ARCHERY: Jan. 18-31. Either-Sex on private land. Legal bucks only on open, public land. Weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license.

PRIMITIVE WEAPON / ARCHERY: Feb. 1-15. Legal bucks only on private and open public land. Weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license.

YOUTH (AGED 15 AND UNDER): Open through Feb. 15. Either sex on private and authorized state and federal lands, but legal bucks only on authorized state and federal lands.

Several WMAS will offer draw hunts during Mississippi's 2019 spring turkey season, but the application deadline is Feb. 15.



TURKEY HUNT DRAW DEADLINE FEB. 15

The deadline to apply for turkey hunts on several Wildlife Management Areas operated by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is Feb. 15.

Participating WMAs are Bienville, Black Prairie, Canal Section/John Bell Williams, Caney Creek, Canemount, Caston Creek, Copiah County, Leaf River, Malmaison,

Sandy Creek, Sunflower, Tallahala, Twin Oaks, Upper Sardis, Ward Bayou and Yockanookany.

Special youth-only hunts are on Canemount, Charles Ray Nix, Sardis Waterfowl and Sunflower WMAs and Natchez State Park.

Mississippi's spring turkey season is March 15-May 1, with the special

youth-only season March 8-14.

Only on-line applications are accepted. Visit www.mdwfp.com/draws to begin the process. Applicants must have a hunting license and WMA permit, a youth-exempt license or a lifetime license. WMA user permits are available at www.mdwfp.com or may be purchased anywhere hunting licenses are sold. ■

LATEST CWD WHITETAIL DISCOVERED IN MARSHALL COUNTY

A 1½-year-old, free-range buck collected between Holly Springs and Byhalia in Marshall County is Mississippi's fourth confirmed case of chronic wasting disease, causing the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks to greatly expand the North Mississippi CWD Management Zone.

The zone, created last fall after the discovery of another CWD buck in Pontotoc County, now encompasses all or parts of 11 counties. Included are all of Benton, Lafayette, Marshall, Pontotoc, Tippah and Union counties; those parts of Alcorn, Lee and Prentiss counties west of US 4, and those parts of DeSoto and Tate counties east of I-55.

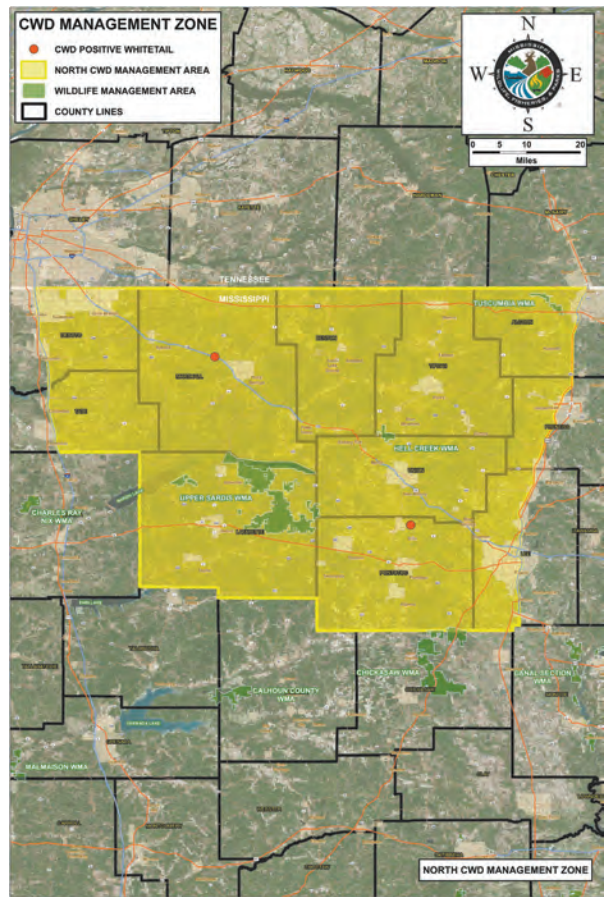
Mississippi's other CWD Management Zone, known as the Issaquena Zone, includes all of Warren County, plus those areas of Issaquena and Sharkey counties south of Mississippi HWY 14 and HWY 16 and east of the Mississippi River and west of the Yazoo River. Two confirmed cases of deer with CWD have been found in Issaquena County, including the initial case of a 4½-year-old buck in January 2018 and a doe found about six miles away last fall.

Regulations established in both CWD Zones include:

- A total ban on supplemental feeding, including feeders,

and mineral and salt licks.

- No transportation of deer carcasses from within the zone to outside the zone. It is legal to transport only cut and wrapped meat, deboned meat, hides with no head attached, finished taxidermy, antlers with no tissue attached, clean skull plates with no internal soft tissue attached, and cleaned skulls with no lymphoid or brain tissue attached. ■



LOUISIANA'S
CAJUN BAYOU
LAFOURCHE PARISH

You'll find an authentic Cajun lifestyle unlike any other filled with outdoor experiences, food, and festival celebrations. Come see the unpolished, unspoiled beauty up and down the Bayou. Where Cajun runs deep

LACA.JUNBAYOU.COM #CAJUNBAYOU

LOUISIANA
Feed Your Soul.

[f](#) [t](#) [v](#) [i](#)

CALLING ALL SPORTSMEN

The *Sportsman* is looking for photos, videos and reports from anglers and hunters across Mississippi.

We value your input and want to see what you're doing — and how you're doing it. Here's how to become part of our Sportsman community ... it's easy.

SPORTSMAN SCRAPBOOK

We are looking for sportsmen and women who love to hunt and/or fish and have pictures doing what they love! If you have good pictures — we want to see them.

We will feature the best pictures we get each month on our website. And that's not all — we'll choose several pics each month to appear in *Mississippi Sportsman's* scrapbook section!

Just email your best pictures in the largest file size you have available with a description of who, what and where, to: images@ms-sportsman.com.

SPORTSMAN TIPS AND TRIPS

But that's not all — we are also expanding our reader-generated news coverage because we value your input and want to see what you're up to in the woods and waters of Mississippi.

It's never been easier to have your trip featured in the *Sportsman*. Just submit your photo or photos and a detailed fishing/hunting report to: images@ms-sportsman.com.

ms-sportsman.com.

Send us a description of your trip and be sure to include where, when, how, what bait or lures were used and the conditions you experienced. Story should range from 300 to 600 words. But we're not only interested in fishing and hunting reports, you can even send us your gadget reviews, rigging tips, pics of your boat, your deer camp, etc. The ideas are limitless.

Not only will we publish the best reports we receive on our website, but we will feature our editor's top pics on the front page of the website, and in social media posts as well as the magazine! Be sure to include your name and your social media handles so we can tag you.

VIDEO REPORTS

If you're into shooting videos, make sure you talk about where you are fishing or hunting in the video, and also try to show baits and conditions. If you don't narrate, then please send us a written description of the event. Videos taken in horizontal format are best for the web, and if the subject matter is time-sensitive, it's best to send it in as soon as possible. Please include all information about the video in captions or with your commentary. Sorry, absolutely no copyrighted music can be accepted.

Featured reports and videos will receive a FREE gift certificate to shop in our store: www.sportsmangear.com.

RESERVOIR TRASH RULE CAUSES CONFUSION

A new trash regulation has gone into effect for bank fishermen on Ross Barnett Reservoir near Jackson that will have its greatest impact on anglers visiting the popular Spillway Recreation Area — although it is in effect on all banks of the 33,000-acre lake.

The rule requires that bank fishermen must have it their possession — and use — “a container marked ‘Trash’ with stencil or other clear markings for the disposal of garbage or refuse and shall dispose of any garbage or refuse at designated disposal sites provided onshore.”

While it is hoped that fishermen will use solid, reusable containers with lids, the regulation does not specify what material must be used, only that it be labeled trash.

The intention is to curb a continuing litter problem in areas of high fishing pressure, like the spillway, a site that a frustrated board of directors of the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District has considered closing to fishermen if the trash situation didn't improve.

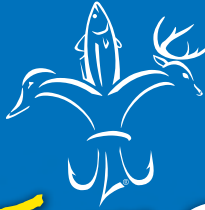
The regulation, which went into effect Jan. 1, does not impact boaters — another point of confusion. Existing law requires all boats, regardless of type, to store “garbage and other refuse aboard the water craft in leak-proof, non-absorbent containers with tight-fitting lids and disposed of only at designated disposal sites provided on shore.”

Existing compartments of boats qualify.

February is usually a peak month for crappie fishing in the spillway area, since the rainy season usually leads to increased water discharge through the dam's gates. ■



**REED'S
METALS, INC.**
Presents



Louisiana

40TH ANNUAL

SPORTSMAN[®]
& festival
SHOW

2019
March 14-17
Lamar-Dixon Expo Center
Gonzales, Louisiana

LOUISIANA'S OLDEST & LARGEST FISHING & HUNTING SHOW

Mark Your Calendar
Over 30 million dollars
of hunting and fishing
related product on display.

For exhibitor information, contact **Jack Fisher 504-415-8847** or jackf@lasmag.com

March 14-17, 2019

Lamar-Dixon Expo Center
Gonzales, LA



**SPECIAL
SHOW-ONLY
FINANCING**



Louisiana SPORTSMAN BOAT SHOW

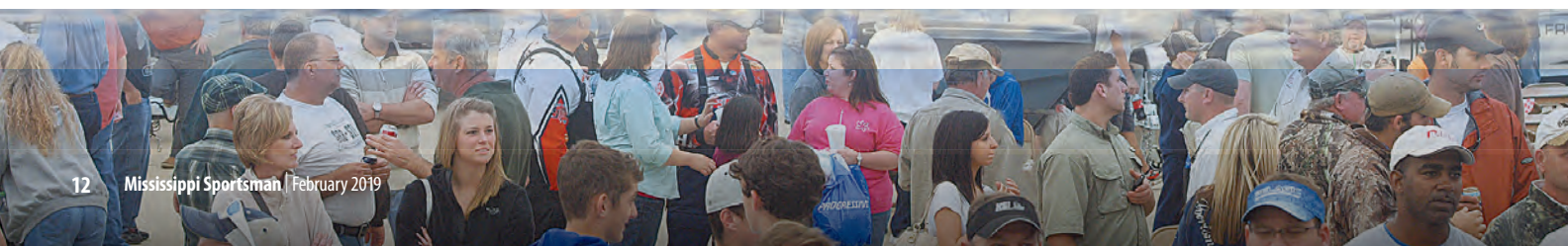
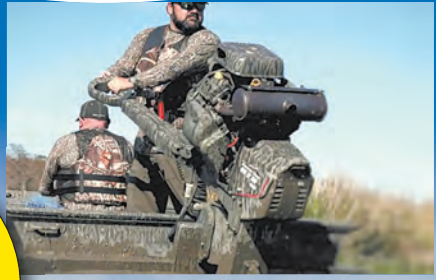


March 14-17
Lamar-Dixon Expo Center
Gonzales, Louisiana

75,000 covered square feet of showroom space displaying the top brands from the top dealers. All units priced to sell — Financing available.

- Bass Boats
- Bay Boats
- Pontoon Boats
- Duck Boats
- Aluminum Boats
- Kayaks

**NEW
DEALERS &
NEW LINES
FOR 2019**





Louisiana SPORTSMAN BIG BUCK Contest



AT THE LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN SHOW... MARCH 14-17 • LAMAR-DIXON EXPO CENTER • GONZALES, LOUISIANA

Bring any legal rack from the 2017-18 or 2018-19 season and you're eligible to win.*

Hosted by The Louisiana State Chapter of QDMA

8 GREAT CATEGORIES

- Best Louisiana Gun
- Best Louisiana Bow
- Best Out-of-State Gun
- Best Out-of-state Bow
- Youth
- Muzzleloader or Crossbow
- Best Mississippi Gun
- Best Mississippi Bow

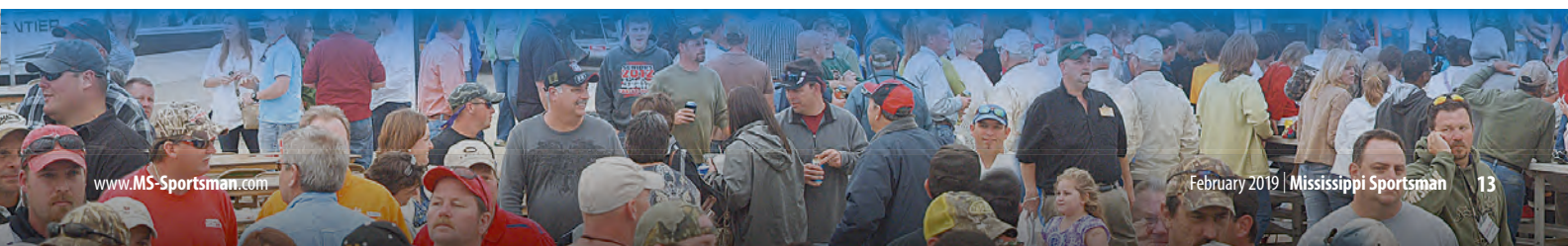


Prizes brought to you by



★ Dave Moreland will be heading up the team of official scorers. If your deer is at the taxidermist, tell 'em you need your rack for the contest.

For more information visit: www.LouisianaSportsmanShow.com or contact Pat Bonin, Contest Director 985.758.7217 / patrickb@lasmag.com



5 FEBRUARY FISHING HOT SPOTS

While most waters in Mississippi can produce outstanding action in February — with both bass and crappie fattening up in prespawn patterns — these five hot spots are proven producers worth a trip.

• **BARNETT RESERVOIR:** Whether you like catfish, crappie or bass, Barnett Reservoir is a February hot spot. Seriously cold days offer fishermen targeting catfish the best bank-fishing of the year.

Catfish move shallow to feast on shad that succumb to the cold water. Just cast as far as you can with night crawlers or

cut shad and set multiple poles. Tight-lining on the bottom is the ticket.

For crappie, watch the river current. After heavy seasonal rains, a fast river usually follows, and that puts fish in the “Welfare Hole,” a popular fishing area just south of the Pearl River bridge on Mississippi HWY 43. The bridge pilings are the place to fish in normal river flow, but when it’s racing move southeast to the big flat just off the river. The current forms a big eddy that offers fish safe haven.



Sheepshead are a great February target around pilings under the US 90 bridge over the Jordan River in Bay St. Louis.

Of course, if the river is running fast, so is the spillway, and the crappie will be thick in the tailrace. Bass fishermen play the warm fronts. The third or fourth day of a warming trend will lure the big fish out of



25 Years of Quality and Value!!

America's Favorite Pontoon Boat!!!





COME SEE US AT THE LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN SHOW MARCH 14-17, AT LAMAR DIXON CENTER IN GONZALES.

3663 PONTCHARTRAIN DR. • SLIDELL, LA 70458

985-643-6668

1306 S. HAUGH AVE, STE. A • PICAYUNE, MS 39466

601-798-4700

Powered by



YAMAHA

www.cypresscove.net

 "Like" us on Facebook

the deep water to nearby shallows. Pad stems along the river channel are ideal targets for a small-bladed spinnerbait.

• **EAGLE LAKE:** For crappie fishermen, there's no doubting this old Mississippi River oxbow north of Vicksburg. Since the lake has outstanding populations of both black and white crappie, there are options. Fish for suspended black crappie around piers on the Mississippi bank; the Louisiana side is too shallow. Most fish are caught fishing jigs 3 to 4 feet deep in deeper water; put your boat as tight to the structure as possible and reaching well up under to get to the middle of the piers. Sling-shotting is a perfect method for crappie, shooting a jig on light spinning tackle. For the big, white crappie, head to the open water out for the "Float Row" area and troll deep. Using electronics to locate big suspended schools of either crappie or baitfish will increase your catch rate considerably.

• **DAVIS LAKE:** This U.S. Forest Service impoundment in the Tombigbee National Forest, just off the Natchez Trace 30 miles south of Tupelo, is a winter hot spot, having produced the second-largest bass on record in Mississippi on a cold day with freezing temperatures. The key is following the main creek channel or ditch channels through the deepest areas of the lake until you locate structure like stumps or logs. A shaky head worm is the preferred bait of Davis Lake's big-bass chasers. Be patient, and remember that you're there for that one or two big-fish bites a day that can be life changers.

• **COASTAL RIVERS:** The Pascagoula, Biloxi and Jordan River systems on the Mississippi Gulf Coast are excellent this month, especially if it's a dry month without a lot of freshwater running in the rivers. The Pascagoula is a great late-winter trout producer, with deep holes holding the

big specks. The Biloxi and its partner, the Tchoutacabouffa, produce great large-mouth action in their upper ends, but any cast is also subject to bring a bite from a speck, redfish or puppy drum. A personal favorite is targeting the US 90 bridge pilings at the mouth of the Jordan River in Bay St. Louis. Big sheepshead, puppy drum and redfish all use those pilings to ambush baitfish. Bridges on the other rivers work, too, but Bay St. Louis is the best.

• **TENN-TOM WATERWAY:** If you like to catch catfish, this system in the northeast Mississippi is as good a choice — and safer — than the Mississippi River, and it is challenging the Big Muddy's reputation

as the best catfish waters in the South. Whether you are trying to catch a monster flathead or blue cat — or just fill an icebox with keeper-sized and fun-to-eat channel catfish — Columbus Lake on the Tenn-Tom Waterway is the place to be. According to local knowledge, unless the water is 50 degrees or more, forget the big ones and go for the smaller ones. Look for stumpy areas off the main channel with water between 7 and 20 feet and use cut bait on a 5/0 hook to catch blues and channels from one to 15 pounds. ■

**WE ARE A NEW
TRACKER
DEALER!**
Come see the
new lines!
Reps will be on site.



TRACKER
boats

NITRO
responsibly built boats

Sun TRACKER

33rd Year SALE-A-VERSARY KICK OFF!
FEBRUARY 21-23, 2019 • THURSDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-5PM • SATURDAY 8AM-3PM

Bryan's
MARINE

FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED

JOIN US ON f

**4899 HWY 84 WEST,
VIDALIA, LA 71373**
318-336-9009
www.BryansMarine.com
 Mon-Fri 8am-5pm • Sat 8am-12pm

MERCURY

Mississippi-Louisiana's Boating
Headquarters Since 1986

Ranger
BOATS

**RB 190 -
W/ YAMAHA VF115,
24 VOLT TROLL
MOTOR, BATTERY
CHARGER,
LOWRANCE GPS**



YAMAHA

BOAT STUF
DISCOUNT MARINE SUPPLIES

WESTBANK
2499 Peters Rd • Harvey, LA
504-340-4991

NORTHSHORE
662 Old Spanish Trail • Slidell, LA
985-649-9044

WWW.BOATSTUF.COM

Mason Nooe made the most of a second chance at this odd, palmated buck in Rankin County, putting him down on Dec. 22.



NOOE BAGS 'MOOSE'

PALMATED BUCK WAS 'ONE THAT GOT AWAY' LAST YEAR

On New Year's Eve of 2017, Mason Nooe saw a big buck with heavy, palmated antlers chasing a doe.

Despite windy conditions and a long shot in fading light, he took a chance.

It did not go well.

"I hit him in the throat, and it must have bounced off the collar bone," Nooe said. "They winded me and were about to bolt, and I took a 230-yard shot in a 25-mile-per-hour crosswind.

"I called the 'Nose to the Ground' tracking guys, and two came out with different dogs and both told me I'd see this buck again. There just wasn't a lot of blood. They didn't think he was dead."

They were right.

Fast forward to Dec. 22, 2018. Nooe got another chance on the first day he was able to hunt this season.

"It was a morning hunt, about 8:15, on our family land near Pelahatchie in Rankin County," said Nooe, a mortgage originator in Flowood. "I was in the exact-same stand, overlooking this long pipeline. I got in there before sunrise, and I started seeing deer right away. They were chasing pretty hard, and I could see them running in the trees and the field.

"I even saw a nice young 8-point, but

I decided he needed at least another year and let him go. That was early about daylight."

The action was steady, and the hunter was ready, his head on a swivel.

"I was looking around, and at about 8:15, a doe came trotting out of the trees into the pipeline," Nooe said. "She was flicking her tail and looking back behind her. I knew immediately something was up, so I got my gun ready, and by the time I got the scope dialed down from 12 to about 5 or 6, he came barreling out.

"Same buck as last year, from the same stand on the same field, only this year he was a lot closer and came out from the opposite direction. They were about 65 yards away, which is why I had to dial back the scope."

The doe took off and cleared the pipeline, but the buck never took his eyes off his prize.

"He turned and ran up the pipeline away from me, and I think he was trying to get an angle on her to cut her off in the woods," Nooe said. "I had to stop him so I made a couple of grunts with my throat, and it didn't faze him. Then I whistled as loud as I could, and he stopped, gave me a good quartering away shot at 80 yards."

Nooe sent one round downrange from his Bennelli R1 .30.06, the same gun that he had used nearly a year ago.

This time, he was on target, and the big buck went down.

Nooe didn't need the trailing dogs, but he felt the need to call the same guys.

"I wanted to tell them they were right about seeing that buck again," he said.

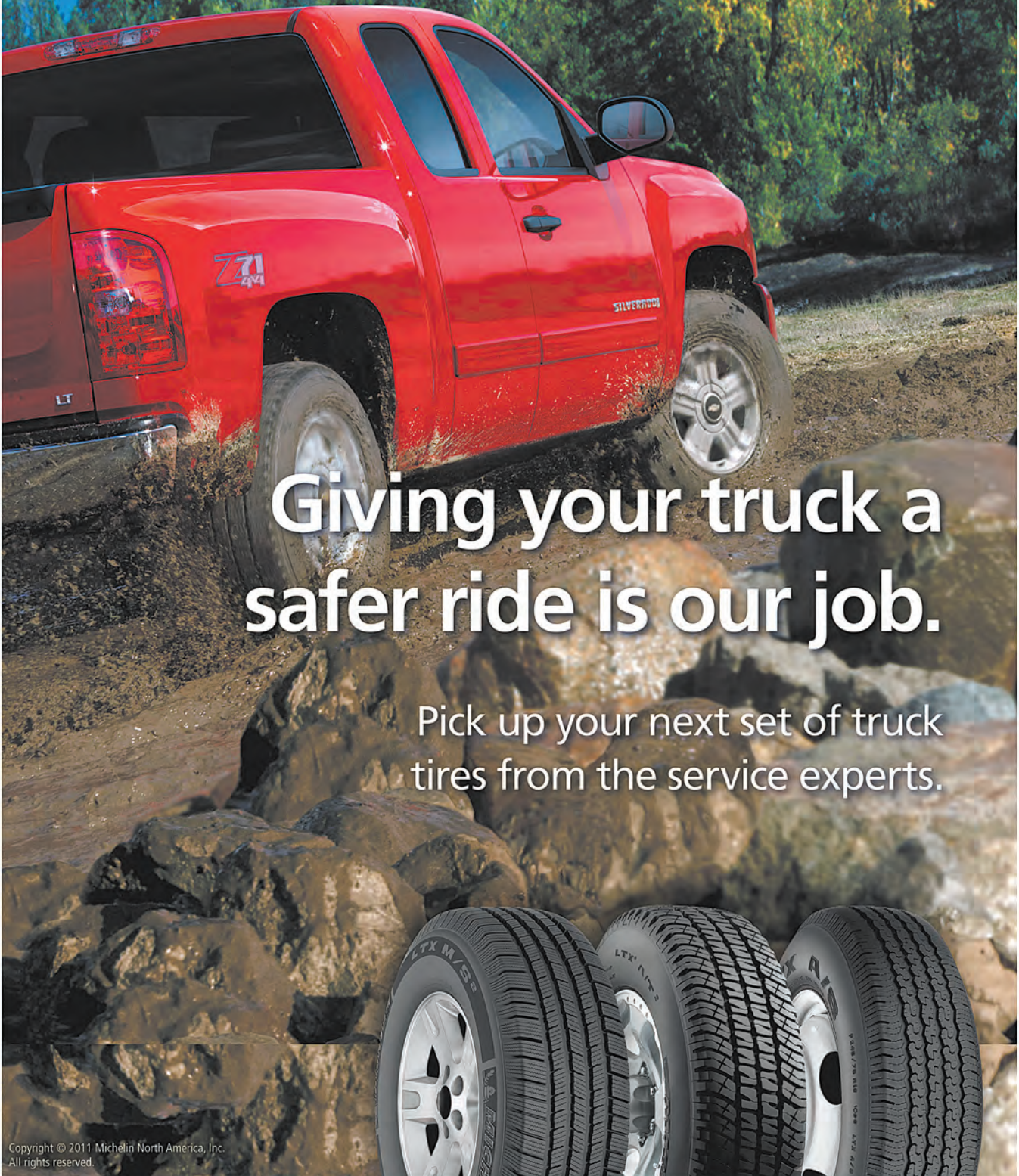
The buck had a 10-point main-frame rack, but one point on the right side had been broken off.

"I haven't had him scored yet because of the holidays and trying to catch up with the scorer at Deviney's for the Big Buck Bounty," Nooe said. "I have no idea what he will score."

Whatever that number is most of it will come from its incredible mass, which because of palmation will yield at least two measurements in the 10-inch neighborhood.

"Both sides are palmated like a moose," Nooe said. "I killed a 10-point out there a few years ago, but it wasn't anywhere near this class of a buck."

Not many are, at least not in Mississippi, where we only have whitetails and no moose. ■



Giving your truck a safer ride is our job.

Pick up your next set of truck tires from the service experts.

Copyright © 2011 Michelin North America, Inc. All rights reserved.



1191 Old Fannin Rd • 601-944-4885
5758 Terry Rd • 601-372-0872
www.tiredepotms.com



BURTON'S OBSESSION NETS TROPHY

FARMER OVERCOMES MANY OBSTACLES
BEFORE PUTTING DOWN 'CAESER'

Drew Burton's pursuit of a Humphreys County trophy buck was epic, a two-month battle of man vs. deer.

And man vs. man.
And man vs. farming.
And man vs. time.
And man vs. ...

"There was just so much involved, so much that happened," said Burton, 33, a farmer. "I've hunted my whole life, and I've killed a lot of bucks, and a lot of big bucks, but never has there been one that consumed me like this one. He was all I could think of for two months. He got in my head.

"I named him 'Caesar.'"

Caesar died on Dec. 12, shot by Burton practically out of self-defense, exactly two months after the farmer first got trail-camera photos of the massive Delta buck.

CAESAR'S STORY

"It's unreal, this story, but I swear it's true," he said, just before retelling the tale of his taking the 173-inch (gross) 10-point with two stickers.

"After I got those first pictures on Oct. 12, I realized very quickly that I would either kill it by mid-October during bow season or it would be after he started chasing does during the rut in December," Burton said. "The reason was that of the 400 pictures I had of him, none were taken anywhere remotely close to daylight hours. All of them were taken at night. As a matter of fact, I never knew what color his antler's were."

The first pictures came from a patch of woods on the far eastern edge of the Burtons' farmland, a low-pressured area practically on the property line.



Drew Burton of Belzoni hunted this massive 12-point on the family farm in Humphreys County from Oct. 12 to Dec. 12. When he finally killed it, his shot was less than 20 feet.

"That bothered me, because the camera was about 3 feet from the line, and my neighbors hunt," he said. "He was close to access to other people, other hunters. When I got those first pictures, it was hot, but to kill the buck where he was, I was going to need a north wind. On Oct. 12 it was hot, which means south winds.

"But, I got a long-range forecast that indicated we had a cold front coming that would give me the north winds for several days. I needed to harvest rice at that time, but I went and hired somebody to run my combine for me so I could take off and hunt."

THAT FIRST MORNING

"Can you believe it? It was perfect," Burton said. "I got in the stand in the dark, and it was a north wind. I felt good, until first light. At 5:30 that morning, my neighbor to the south, who's also a farmer, cranked up his tractor and started disking his field. I'm a farmer; I know he was doing what he had to do, but he was disking the field right next to where I was hunting. I

understand, but it sure jacked up my hunt. The buck disappeared."

The buck appeared in two more trail-camera photos, and then nothing. It was beginning to look like it would take the rut to get the majestic buck moving.

Burton and a bunch of friends from Mobile, Ala., had scheduled and booked a Kansas hunting trip for Nov. 12. He knew that while he was gone, there was a possibility that Caesar could meet his doom.

"I started moving cams to the west; I had a hunch he was moving," Burton said. "On the fourth or fifth day, I got a blurry picture but I recognized it was Caesar, because on the end of the right main beam, he had a crab claw or a drop tine. It was him.

"I put new batteries in the camera, put up a stand, and went to Kansas. I started getting pictures of him like clockwork, early morning and evening, but never during the day. I was in Kansas realizing I had blown it. I had a friend with a buck like this one time that had to leave it, and

it had gotten killed by another hunter."

Burton killed a nice 9-point in Kansas, but his mind was elsewhere.

"All I could think about was Caesar," he said. "Another friend of mine got a photo of him and texted me while I was in a tree in Kansas and said it was a 170- to 180-inch (buck), and he was going to hunt him all week.

"Next day, again, I'm in a tree, and he texted and said the big buck was done. I was sick. I was just empty. Then, 25 minutes later he texted back and said he was just kidding and to enjoy my hunt."

BACK TO MISSISSIPPI

Burton was driving back from Kansas on Nov. 17, the opening day of gun season in Mississippi. He was monitoring his cell phone the whole way, watching for posts of any big deer going down near his property.

"I have a friend with a food plot near the area, and about 5 p.m. we texted, and he said he thought he killed the big 10," Burton said. "I got nauseous that Caesar could be laying dead in that food plot. I waited a few minutes and called him back. He took a deep breath and said it was not the same 10-point. Caesar was alive."

Burton was back home, and his pursuit of Caesar was relentless.

"I got back, and he was my main priority," he said. "I was hunting every day I could, and two weeks later I was in a stand and I hear gunshots from my neighbor's property. His wife had shot Caesar."

Rather, she had shot at Caesar.

"My neighbor called me and said she had hit a big 10 and could I come help find him," Burton said. "I told him I would

come after I finished dinner. I was getting ready to go when he called and said there was no blood or hair or any trace. It appeared it was a clean miss.

CAESAR IS STILL OUT THERE

"I got confirmation of him at 10:55 that night. My phone dings, and I had a trail-cam photo of him. He was in a small block of woods that probably hadn't had a footprint in it since it had been planted. It was the middle of the week, and I went and set up a camera there. The next morning, I got up to go duck hunting, and my phone dings and I had a photo of him at 5:10 a.m. The trouble was, I had no stand over there or anything. So I went duck hunting."

An avid waterfowler and dove-club operator, Burton's mind was not on birds that morning. All he could think about was...

"Caesar, that's it," he said. "My buddies noticed and asked me what was wrong. I wasn't feeling the duck hunt at all. What I was doing was scheming on how I could get in there and get Caesar. There's no trees in there I could hang a stand on, and I tried calling around to see if anyone had a tripod so I could get off the ground. No luck.

"I did have a ground blind on another part of the farm, so I got it. I needed a north wind, but it was blowing out of the southeast, but luckily, it was just enough out of the east to give me protection. So, I loaded up everything, guns, blind, chair, garden shears. ... Man, I had a load, and it felt like was lugging 400 pounds in there. Something told me I had to go."

So he did, and he did get set up, but, boy, he was uncomfortable.

continued >



Let Us Sell Your Property

MOSSY OAK
PROPERTIES

LAND INVESTMENTS LLC

Jackson • Natchez • Vicksburg

601-362-0059 • 601-304-0744 • 601-636-5263

Adams Co. — 136+/- ac.

Located on Hwy. 84 just east of Hwy. 61 & Natchez Trace. Residential, recreational & commercial tract in a great hunting area. \$477,855. Call Tom.

Adams Co. — 243+/- ac.

Timberland & sloughs on Lake Mary near Jackson Point. \$585,000. Call Charles.

Amite Co. — 51+/- ac.

Three mixed use residential, recreational & timberland tracts (30+/-, 15+/- & 5+/- ac.) on Nebo Rd. Offered individually or as a unit. \$125,000. Call Tom.

Claiborne Co. — 147+/- ac.

Cut-over timberland near Port Gibson w/frontage on Bayou Pierre. \$404,250. Call Charles.

Franklin Co. — 177+/- ac.

Good stand of hdwds. & pine near Hwy. 33 & Bude. REDUCED \$499,000. Call Charles.

Hinds Co. - 22+/- ac.

Located outside of Edwards in a great deer hunting area. Nice timber with small lake. \$75,000. Call Ken.

Jefferson Co. — 114+/- ac.

Nice whitetail deer hunting near Fayette. \$314,160. Call Tom.

Jefferson Co. — 2,253+/- ac.

Contentment Plantation. Deer & duck hunters paradise w/4,900 sq. ft. lodge, 50 ac. bass lake & 65 ac. of duck holes. \$6,985,000. Call Charles or Tom.

Jefferson Co. — 92+/- ac.

Hunting tract with hdwd. timber in the Rodney Hill area. \$230,000. Call Tom.

Lawrence Co. — 277+/- ac.

Gently rolling mature pine & hdwd. timber. Over ½ mile on Silver Creek w/neat rustic camp. Infested with turkey. \$695,000. Call Bill.

Pearl River Co. —

1,549+/- ac. & 139 ac. & 110 ac. & 61 ac. & 60 ac. & 50 ac. tracts

Cybur Farms located on Hwy. 43 N. of Picayune near and/or adjoining the Bogue Chitto NWR and only a few miles from Old River WMA. Mixed timber w/great deer, turkey & small game hunting. \$2,950/ac. Call Ken.

Rankin Co. —

11 ac., 12 ac., 15 ac., 41 ac., 53 ac., & 131 ac. tracts

Located in Johns between Brandon & Pucket w/light restrictions \$4,500 – \$5,000 per ac. Call Ken Owner/Broker.

Rankin/Simpson Cos. — 123+/- ac.

Located just outside Florence w/16 yr. old plantation pine that needs thinning. Great deer/turkey area. REDUCED! \$307,500. Call Ken.

Scott Co. — 40+/- ac.

Located on Hwy. 25 w/residential, commercial and recreational (6 yr. plantation pine) mixed use. \$140,000. Call Ken.

Stone Co. 9 +/- ac.

Located in Red Creek WMA w/great hunting. 36' motor home w/all utilities & gated driveway. Mixed hdwd/pine & stocked pond. \$60,000. Call Ken.

Wilkinson Co. — 130+/- ac.

15 mi. S. of Natchez. Beautiful mixed timber, food plots & stands. Great neighbors! \$468,000. Call Bill.

City of Natchez - 3 BR 3.5 BA

1230 sf Condo built in 2013 in Old Canal St. Depot in Downtown Natchez, within walking distance to restaurants, bars & MS River frontage. \$330,000. Call Barton.

Tom Middleton - 601-597-5727
Charles Feltus - 601-431-8285
Barry Maxwell - 318-719-0318

Bill Crigler - 318-201-0744
Barton McIntosh - 318-481-3840

Ken Hall, Broker - 601-942-9513

See pics of these and other hunting tracts on
www.landinvestments.ms

Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated

"I had replayed in my mind over and over for two months how I would kill this deer," Burton said. "How it happened, didn't come close to any of the scenarios. I have never really liked ground blinds, and my mind was telling me I have to be the dumbest hunter in the world.

"I sprayed every ounce of everything I had to cover me. I mean everything from doe urine to covers."

While he didn't feel confident, he did have one thing in his favor. It was the rut, bucks were chasing, and that makes them do some stupid things.

"At 3:15, I hear some low, short grunts, and a young cowhorn spike came out. He never noticed me, so that made me feel pretty good," Burton said. "At 4 o'clock, I heard three very hard, deep grunts and instantly grabbed my binoculars. I didn't know what was coming, but I knew something was coming and I wanted to be ready.

"A doe came trotting from the woods into the grass, loping like something was behind her. Then a buck came out right behind her, right on her butt. I instantly

recognized it was Caesar. Half of me almost collapsed the blind, but the other half grabbed the gun and was telling me to get this done. I tossed the binoculars and got the gun. She was running circles 20 yards in front of me, leading him around. This all took about 45 seconds, but it seemed like an eternity."

With everything happening close to the blind, and there was tall grass, like sage, everywhere. Burton was hesitant to move, they were so close.

THE END GAME

"Finally, she turned and ran away from me about 45 to 50 yards out, and then took a left, hooked around and started running straight at me and the ground blind," he said. "She was getting closer, 35 yards, 30 yards, 25 yards, 15 yards, 10 yards ... and he was right behind her.

"I can't see much of him above the grass, just his head and neck, and he gets 20 feet from the blind. I literally thought she was going to lead him right into the blind with me. I finally said, 'This is it. It's now or never.' I put the scope on what I thought

was his shoulder and shot. I hit him right in the throat and he fell dead right at my feet. I could have spit on him out the front window. All of this happened right out that front window."

The buck was a main-frame 10 point with two stickers, one on the right brow tine and the other at the end of the right main beam. The antlers have an 18½-inch inside spread, with long tines. The left G3 was the longest at 11½ inches.

"My biggest before that in Mississippi was a 151-inch buck," said Burton, who knows he blessed, not only with the opportunity to get the buck, but also that his wife Lindsay had grown up in a family of hunters.

"She knew how important this buck was to me," Burton said. "Look, she's 9 months pregnant ... but she never complained about my obsession with Caesar. She loves to see me have fun and have success.

"It really makes a man appreciate a good woman who loves what her man loves and understands." ■

ATTENTION Deer Hunters

Are you tired of deer dogs coming off National Forests ruining your still hunts?

We commissioned a state-wide voter survey in December of 2017 where a total of 625 Mississippi voters statewide were interviewed by telephone. Voters were asked about the appropriateness of hunting with deer dogs on the National Forests in the state. Fifty three percent of Mississippi voters said that dog-deer hunting should not be allowed at all on National Forests.

Sixty two percent of Mississippi voters said there should be regulatory consequences to the deer-dog owner when their dogs get onto land they aren't supposed to be on. A clear majority of women (58%) thought dog-deer hunting should not be allowed on National Forests in Mississippi. Although not a majority, more men thought dog-deer hunting



You've paid for your property, planted food plots, managed for deer and you see more deer-dogs than deer. You don't have to take it anymore. Visit: www.ruralpropertyrights.org or Email us at: msproprrights@gmail.org

should not be allowed (48%) than thought it should be allowed (37%). Sixty three percent of voters under the age of 50 stated that dog-

deer hunting should not be allowed on National Forests. These results indicate strong voter support for additional restrictions on

dog-deer hunting in Mississippi. Readers wanting more detail on the survey can visit our website, www.ruralpropertyrights.org.



**RURAL PROPERTY RIGHTS
ASSOCIATION OF MISSISSIPPI**
Assuring the peaceful enjoyment of private property.



GBR
GEORGIA BOOT RUBBER



GEORGIA BOOT   
MARSHLAND



MSU SENIOR GETS HUGE WMA BUCK

CARUSO BORROWS RIFLE, DELAYS DUCK HUNT, KILLS MONSTER NON-TYPICAL BUCK

Blake Caruso killed this 191-inch buck on Dec. 13 chasing a doe on a WMA in north Mississippi with a .35 Whelan rifle.

A funny thing happened to Blake Caruso on his way from finals at Mississippi State University on Dec. 12, headed to a duck hunt in the south Delta near Vicksburg.

A senior, Caruso got sidetracked, and boy, is he glad he did.

Acting on a tip from his older brother, Dustin, Caruso took his brother's climbing stand, borrowed a .35 Whelan rifle from a brother's friend and shot the buck of a lifetime — a 191-inch monster — on public land in North Mississippi.

"I really don't want to name the WMA, because you know how it is; you put a buck out there like this, and everybody and his brother will be hunting there the next few years," Caruso said.

The buck's rack is tall, thick, wide and dark, sporting 16 points on a 10-point main-frame rack.

"It's unreal," Caruso said, "especially for a guy that before this buck had never seen anything bigger than 120 or 130 inches from a stand."

The story behind it is short, at least for the Caruso brothers.

"My brother and I and my dad and some

friends, we've hunted this particular WMA for the past two or three years," Caruso said. "We've always done pretty good there, killing a few bucks each year in the 120- to 130-inch range. We've always hunted this one section of the WMA, and on Dec. 9, Dustin was over there, and, on a hunch, decided to scout this new area of that same section.

"I got a text from him that he had just jumped a monster buck, a really big buck. He said it was 160 or 170 (inches), and that I needed to get over there and hunt it because they were starting to chase does, and he had a business trip to Oklahoma. One of my friends at State was still taking finals, and we were going duck hunting down at Vicksburg, so I drove over to my brother's house at Greenwood to get my shotgun and stuff for the ducks."

It was then that the lure of a possible giant buck became too much.

"My brother hadn't left yet, and he got a map out and showed me where he jumped the buck, and we discussed where I could hunt it," Caruso said. "He had found this long gas-pipeline opening along a creek and said if I could go in

there and find a good tree, that's where I needed to be."

IN THE WOODS EARLY

The next day, his brother flew to Oklahoma and Caruso headed to the woods with the borrowed gun and stand, and with directions on how to get a mile into the woods and set up.

"I got in there about 6:15 and found a decent tree — not a great one — and climbed up," he said. "I was settled about 6:20, and about 10 minutes later, I had a doe walk out about 40 yards. I decided to change trees, and I moved to another one. From 8 to 10 that morning, I saw six deer: four does and two bucks. One of the bucks was a good one, and I considered taking it, but I told myself, 'Blake, you are in here hunting a monster buck. Don't shoot. Don't settle!' So I didn't shoot."

That was a good decision, about as good as the one he made that morning when he went prepared to stay in the tree all day.

"From 10 until about 3 p.m., I didn't see anything; it was like they quit moving totally," he said. "I saw a few turkeys and some other animals, but not a single deer. Then, about 3:30, they started coming back, headed the other way toward the ag fields. Two does walked out, about

100 yards, and I noticed they were acting funny and looking back.

"I texted my brother and told him what was happening; he was at the Dallas airport waiting for his connecting flight with this bosses and other people from his office. Dustin texted back, 'If it's him, bust him!' I told him it was probably just another doe."

THE RIGHT DOE

It was, but it was the doe that Caruso needed it to be — a hot one, the kind that can lead a big, mature buck into a trap.

Which is exactly what happened.

"I got my gun up and looked and saw the third doe and behind her, I saw movement," Caruso said. "I looked over, and I saw the deer, and when he lifted up his head, I knew immediately this was the buck Dustin had seen. I could see chocolate antlers, and I could see stickers, but I didn't look long. I looked away and took a deep breath, and said, 'Oh, my God!'"

"The third doe was following the same line as the first two, which was across the 20-yard-wide pipeline that was about 15 yards from the creek. They had to cross those 15 yards of woods and brush to get to the pipeline and then 20 yards across the pipeline to the other woods. My first thought was that I hope she didn't wind me; the breeze had been blowing that way earlier. My second thought was that if she followed those other two does, and if he followed her, which he was, then she would lead him right into the pipeline."

As he waited, Caruso finished preparations, turning into position and checking the gun.

Caruso said a small tree had fallen down on the edge of the pipeline, blocking his shot for about half the clearing at the point where the deer were crossing.

"She had just about cleared the pipeline on the other side when he finally decided to cross," he said. "He was behind that treetop. I could see him, but I couldn't jeopardize the shot because of all the brush. I was ready for him. I mean, when that third doe first stepped clear, I had put my crosshairs on her and practiced. I didn't want to mess up.

"Finally, he started to move again and stepped clear of the treetop, then he stopped and turned and looked right at me. It was perfect. He was broadside and was giving me the chance. I put it on his

shoulder and pulled the trigger."

The gun roared, and when it settled, Caruso liked what he saw.

ALONE ON TOP OF THE WORLD

"The buck was hunched up, and I could tell I hit him square in the front shoulders," he said. "His leg was flopping around. I felt pretty good that it was done. I knew he wasn't going far, and the emotions came out."

The buck struggled off, and Caruso looked around and realized he had no one with whom to share the moment.

"I immediately called Dustin," he said. "He was still at the Dallas airport, and I know I was really excited because he told me he couldn't understand anything I was saying. I told him I shot it and that he had to be down. He told me to call him back when I found him. I called Dad, and I called Mom and a few others. I was so excited. It took about 30 minutes before I was ready to go look.

"So I climbed down and started to go look, and I saw this big white belly in the woods; I knew it had to be him. It was and when I got to him and saw those antlers, I lost it. I Facetimed Dustin and told him, 'I'm looking at him!'"

"He hollered, 'Turn the phone around and let me see it!' I did, and it was funny, because he was there in the airport with all his bosses and co-workers huddled behind him looking at the phone. When they saw it, they all started screaming and hollering. Don't you know all the people in the airport were staring at them. Had to be funny."

Of course, there was a lot of work to do.

NOT FINISHED YET

"I had walked a mile from the truck to get in there, but my brother made arrangements with another friend to be ready to help me," Caruso said. "I called him on my way out and within 5 minutes of me getting to the truck, he was there with his Ranger. We took off and could only get about halfway in there to him before there was another creek.

"We took a ratchet strap in there and got it around his head and we drug that buck 800 yards to the Ranger. He weighed 225 pounds at the check-in station, and,



believe me, we felt every pound of it while we were dragging."

Back at the truck, as they were loading the buck from the Ranger to the pickup, another truck drove up and stopped.

"Where I was hunting was pretty close to the property line between the WMA and a farm, and turned out that this was the neighboring landowner," Caruso said. "He asked me if I had killed anything, and I said, 'Yes.' He asked if it was a buck, and I said, 'Yes.' He asked if it was a good one, and I said, 'Yes sir, it was a big one!'"

"He looked at it and said, 'Congratulations, I've been hunting that buck for two years and haven't been able to get him. Congratulations; it's a good one.' He wasn't mad, but I guess disappointed, but he did end up sending me pictures he had of the buck for over two years."

Several people have measured the buck, and the gross score has consistently been within an inch of 191, including over 16 inches of abnormal points. The biggest appears to be a 6-inch extra brow tine on the right side. The main beams were 25% and 25 inches, with the longest tines, the G2s, measuring 10% and 11%. The bases were 6 inches thick and the mass extends to the end of the beams with the last legal measurements 4 $\frac{2}{8}$ and 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

"They aged him at check-in at 4 $\frac{1}{2}$, but after the jawbone was pulled, it appears to be more like 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 6 $\frac{1}{2}$," Caruso said. "The coloration of the antlers is what is so great about this buck. They are dark, and they are beautiful. I am very fortunate to have gotten him."

As for the duck hunt?

"Yeah, we went two days later and got a wood duck and a ringneck," Caruso said. "Didn't matter." ■



ATTORNEY'S SECOND-CHANCE BUCK A BEAUTY

LOUISIANA HUNTER GETS A 163-INCH BUCK
IN CLAIBORNE COUNTY AFTER MISSING TWICE

Daniel Dorner killed this buck with a wrap-around rack in Claiborne County on Dec. 26. It scores over 163 gross inches.

That Daniel Dorner was reading the book "The God of Second Chances" by Steve Arterburn while deer hunting the day after Christmas was more than just a little coincidental.

"To me, reading that book in the stand, and it being about God giving you second chances, is the story behind this deer," said Dorner, 26, a New Orleans attorney who hunts near Port Gibson in Claiborne County. "After I missed the buck, God gave me a second chance, and it's like He meant for me to kill that deer."

Truth be told, it was actually a third chance.

"Yeah, I missed twice," Dorner said. "But you know how the rut is; bucks have their minds on one thing and one thing only, and they are oblivious to everything else."

Dorner didn't really want to hunt that day, which was rather warm and dreary.

"It was like 58 degrees that morning with a high of about 68 or 70 degrees," he said. "I didn't plan to hunt; I just went to camp to help my dad get the place ready for the whole family to come to camp that week. I had to work in New Orleans on the 27th, so I just went up there Christmas night to help on the 26th. Day up and day back.

"But Dad talked me into hunting that afternoon, so at about 2 o'clock, I got my stuff ready to head to the stand. I always hunt off hours; that's when I kill my biggest bucks — either between 9 and 10 in the morning or between 2 and 4 in the afternoon. Not the typical times that people hunt, but I don't think this buck had patterned us as much as it was he

was looking for hot does."

Dorner said he was settled in the stand by 2:30 and immediately made a few calls.

"I went through a couple of calling sequences and then started reading the book," he said. "A little later, I heard something running through the bottom, and I looked up and saw this deer. I recognized it immediately. He was about 80 yards away, and I just tossed the book on the ground."

Dorner was 20 feet up in a ladder stand, which he put up around Thanksgiving after getting pictures of this odd buck on a trail camera.

"He's got that unique identifying characteristic of main beams that almost touch tips," he said. "We had a picture of him last year, and he was about the same size

then. This year, I got a picture of him on a trail camera in early November at 6:30 p.m. before the time changed. Then, we got more pics of him on feeders further away. I figured out that this area was his bedding area, and it was very thick. Then I found a rub, one of the biggest I've ever seen, and I knew it had to be him because of the way it was gouged into the tree with those close tips.

"I put a camera on that rub and later went in and hung the stand. I never went back, because you don't usually see a buck like this in the open during daylight, except during the rut. I didn't want to go back in there before the rut and spook him."

FIRST DEER OF THE DAY

On Dec. 26, no other deer had come through the area.

"He was the only one I saw, and he came through running with his nose to the ground," Dorner said. "He wasn't running a doe, but he sure was looking. When I first saw him, he was about 80 yards and

was coming from my right. I dropped the book because I couldn't get it in the bag. When he went behind some trees, I was able to get up and get situated.

"I looked for shooting lanes and picked a spot that I could shoot but didn't know which way he was going to go. I was shooting free-handed, and when I got the shot, I missed. I don't know if I hit a limb or what or if I hit him. He ran a little bit and stopped again. I shot a second shot.

"When I'm shooting a big buck, I try to put as much lead in him as I can, and I don't worry about messing up meat. When he stopped a third time, he was broadside, and I had a very small window to shoot through. He dropped where he stood. I clipped the spine and the bullet went down through the body. It was a steep angle down in that bottom, and the third shot was only at 40 yards. The first shot was at 80 yards and the second at 60. By the third shot, he was 40 yards. He had turned and come toward me."

The mainframe 8-point with two stickers off the back measures 163 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches gross.

The main beams are incredible.

"They both measure 27 inches and loop around, and even though I didn't measure the gap, I'd say it was less than an inch between the tips," Dorner said. "I've seen a few like that, but never that close. We've had pictures of other deer with that characteristic, so maybe we have it in our gene pool."

Another feature of this old, mature trophy buck was the mass.

"It had 6-inch bases and carried it all the way out, with only the final measurement below 5 inches at 4 $\frac{1}{2}$," Dorner said. "We aged him at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$, but he only weighed 175. One trait of our deer there is that the big antlers have small bodies. The heavier, 200-pound-plus bucks never have big racks."

Dorner shoots a .270 but is considering moving up to a heavier caliber.

"I like to hunt in thick, dense cover," he said. "I missed a big buck last year when I hit a limb, and then this happened. I don't know for sure I hit a limb, but I don't want to be in that position again." ■

HUNTING LAND FOR SALE





ART MOTT
Agent, Southern MS
(601) 757-8602



BRAD FARRIS
Agent, West Central MS
(601) 506-1304



CHIPPER GIBBES
Agent, West Central MS
(601) 248-8984



JEFF TAYLOR
Agent, Mississippi
(601) 248-9433



LARRY STEWART
Agent, Southern MS
(985) 320-9112



DAVID PRITCHARD
Agent, Northwest MS
(901) 487-5754



JOSH MONK
Agent, Northwest MS
(901) 495-4625

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL LAND SPECIALIST TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BUYING AND SELLING HUNTING, RANCH, FARM AND TIMBERLAND



WHITETAIL PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE
HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER
WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM



Whitetail Properties Real Estate, LLC | dba Whitetail Properties | Nebraska & North Dakota DBA Whitetail Trophy Properties Real Estate LLC | Lic. in IL, MO, IA, KS, KY, NE & OK - Dan Perez, Broker | Lic. in AR, CO, GA, MN, ND, TN, SD & WI - Jeff Evans, Broker | Lic. in FL, OH, & PA - Jefferson Kirk Gilbert, Broker | Lic. in NM & TX - Joey Ballington, Broker | Lic. in IN - John Boyken, Broker | Lic. in LA, MS, GA & AL - Sybil Stewart, Broker | Lic. in TN - Chris Wakefield, Broker | Lic. in TN - Bobby Powers, Broker | Lic. in AR - Johnny Ball, Broker | Lic. in SC - Rick Elliot, Broker | Lic. in NC - Rich Baugh, Broker | Lic. in MI - Edmund Joel Nogaski, Broker





STARKVILLE TEEN GETS 130-INCH PRESENT

By Dan Kibler

HUNTER PASSED SHOOTER BUCK ON DEC. 24, IS REWARDED FOR PATIENCE WITH CHRISTMAS MORNING TROPHY

Christmas Eve wasn't that great for Isaac Buckner of Starkville, and Christmas morning didn't start out too great, but there was a huge present waiting for him in a patch of hardwoods in Oktibbeha County.

On Christmas Eve, Buckner, an 18-year-old senior at Starkville Christian School, passed up a shooter buck.

"I was kicking myself," he admitted.

Then, when he hit the road early Christmas morning to hunt the same stand, his car started to act up, so he turned around and went home.

"It was running out of oil, and it was starting to skip," he said.

At home, Buckner climbed in his father's truck, but it was almost out of gas. He had to stop for a fill-up that delayed him even further.

But he wound up being right on time when a 130-inch buck he'd nicknamed "Hershey" showed up that morning.

"We had trail-camera photos of this buck near the beginning of the season, most of them at night," Buckner said. "Then, he showed up around Thanksgiving. We had two photos of him in the morning when nobody was there (hunting). Two mornings before (Dec. 23), he came in there five minutes before I got to my stand.

"Christmas morning, I knew he had been there five minutes early, and I hoped to get there early, but all that happened," he said. "I jumped a doe on the way in, then another doe busted me. I was in my stand by 6:10."

Buckner, 25 feet up in a lock-on style tree stand, watched a doe slip into the hardwoods where he was hunting, overlooking a trail he'd been watching all season. The doe came from the right side around 6:50.

"After the doe came out, I heard a noise to my left, and I saw this huge body, but I couldn't see his horns," Buckner said. "Then I heard something behind the doe, and out came the buck I'd passed up the night before.

High school senior Isaac Buckner of Starkville took this 130-inch buck in Oktibbeha County. He was able to recover the deer with help from his brothers, Luke and Josiah.

"The doe saw the (first) buck and started to walk the other way, then I saw him; he came out from behind a tree and was walking the opposite way. My heart was racing, and I got my gun (a .30-06) on him. He turned a little bit, and I shot. He fell, and he started to get up, and I shot again. I called my brother, and he started to get up, and I shot him one more time."

The buck, nicknamed Hershey because his horns were dark brown, like chocolate, carried a tall, heavy 4x4 frame with five sticker points. Two tines on each beam were longer than 10 inches.

"The week before, I'd been out of town, and I had two big bucks on camera at that stand," Buckner said. "So I was gonna sit it." ■

Hunting/Fishing
SCRAPBOOK



Ainsley McGinty, 8, poses with her first deer. It was taken Nov. 17, 2018 in Stewart.



Jack Cade, 8, of Madison was hunting with his dad on Nov. 11 when he killed his first deer. They were on their family farm in Noxubee County when he made a 125-yard shot on this 5-point buck.



Dean Thomason, 7, poses with his first deer. It was taken in Jackson County.



Ethan Koch, 8, got his first deer on Sept. 9, 2018 using a 243. This nice spike was taken while hunting with his grandpa in Heidelberg.



Aiden Laird, 9, with a Smith County doe taken Nov. 21, 2018, hunting with his dad.

GOT PICS? We want 'em

Email images to: images@ms-sportsman.com

*Digital images must be sent in jpeg format. High-resolution images will work the best. All images (physical and digital) become property of Mississippi Sportsman and cannot be returned.

DIXIE RV SuperStores



SHOP 2019 DEALS

2019 NEW DEALS

It's a **new year** at Dixie RV & we've got **new deals** for you!
Summer will be here before you know it
& we want to make sure you find the perfect rv.



**DIXIE
DISCOUNT
\$8,563!**

**2018 Keystone
Summerland 2660RL**

\$179/mo or \$16,995

STK #28052. MSRP \$25,558. Sale Price \$16,995 plus tax, tag, title, and license fee. Dealer discount of \$8,563 on approved credit. Offer available with 10% down and approved credit. \$179 Per Month for 144 Months with 7.49% APR Financing. Not all customers will qualify for the advertised rate. Expires 2/28/2019.



**DIXIE
DISCOUNT
\$10,438!**

**2018 Open Range
UT2804RK**

\$244/mo or \$22,995

STK #28074. MSRP \$33,433. Sale Price \$22,995 plus tax, tag, title, and license fee. Dealer discount of \$10,438 on approved credit. Offer available with 10% down and approved credit. \$244 Per Month for 144 Months with 7.49% APR Financing. Not all customers will qualify for the advertised rate. Expires 2/28/2019.



**DIXIE
DISCOUNT
\$24,091!**

**2019 Heartland
Milestone 377MB**

\$359/mo or \$39,995

STK #28940. MSRP \$64,086. Sale Price \$39,995 plus tax, tag, title, and license fee. Dealer discount of \$24,091 on approved credit. Offer available with 10% down and approved credit. \$359 Per Month for 180 Months with 6.99% APR Financing. Not all customers will qualify for the advertised rate. Expires 2/28/2019.



**DIXIE
DISCOUNT
\$44,018!**

**2018 Thor Motor
Coach Gemini 23TR**

\$499/mo or \$66,995

STK #28060. MSRP \$111,013. Sale Price \$66,995 plus tax, tag, title, and license fee. Dealer discount of \$44,018 on approved credit. Offer available with 10% down and approved credit. \$499 Per Month for 240 Months with 6.49% APR Financing. Not all customers will qualify for the advertised rate. Expires 2/28/2019.



**DIXIE
DISCOUNT
\$46,988!**

**2018 Thor Motor
Coach Vegas 25.5**

\$519/mo or \$69,995

STK #28015. MSRP \$116,983. Sale Price \$69,995 plus tax, tag, title, and license fee. Dealer discount of \$46,988 on approved credit. Offer available with 10% down and approved credit. \$519 Per Month for 240 Months with 6.49% APR Financing. Not all customers will qualify for the advertised rate. Expires 2/28/2019.



**DIXIE
DISCOUNT
\$40,144!**

**2019 Entegra Coach
Odyssey 29V**

\$539/mo or \$72,995

STK #26811. MSRP \$113,139. Sale Price \$72,995 plus tax, tag, title, and license fee. Dealer discount of \$40,144 on approved credit. Offer available with 10% down and approved credit. \$539 Per Month for 240 Months with 6.49% APR Financing. Not all customers will qualify for the advertised rate. Expires 2-28/2019.

NATION'S TOP SELECTION OF RV BRANDS

"Helping You Retire One Weekend At A Time"




GRAND BAY
Sales: 844-781-1231
Service: 844-781-1240

12167 Interchange Drive
Grand Bay, AL 36541

SALES:
Mon - Sat
8 am - 7 pm

SERVICE:
Mon - Sat
8 am - 5 pm

dixierv.com

A man with a beard and a light-colored cap is smiling while holding a large bass. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. The fish is held vertically in front of him, showing its head and body. The background shows a body of water and a line of trees.

Brandon angler has honed his big-bass skills for years, says targeting lunkers takes special tactics. Here's how to match his catches.

BIG BASS BUSTER

By Mike Giles

Bill McKay pitched his jig to a submerged stump along a ditch on Ross Barnett Reservoir, and a lunker bass thumped it hard. McKay whipped his rod back and drove the hook deep into the jaw of the bass. The enraged sow exploded through the surface and tried to escape, but it was no match for this long-time bass fisherman. McKay made quick work and put him in the boat and his livewell to fill his tournament creel.

McKay, who is from Brandon, has fished Barnett his entire life, and February is one of his favorite times, because the sow bass are primed and ready to go. His biggest lunker caught from the Rez during a tournament weighed 10.89 pounds and was caught on Feb. 2. This month, he is looking for four or five quality bites, and he'll usually have 23 to 26 pounds if he gets the right bites and lands them.

McKay has won many tournaments, money, prizes and even boats, but his success wasn't always like that. Early in his career, he struggled to even place or get a check in a tournament.

"When I first started fishing tournaments, I would catch 50 to 75 bass in a day," said McKay, "but I would always come up short, just a few ounces out of the money and just miss a check. That happened over and over. I finally asked (myself) 'What I was doing wrong?' because catching fish wasn't a problem."

Though he was catching plenty of fish he wasn't catching the big girls, and that was a problem.

BIG BITES MEAN BIG BASS
UP NEXT >



BIG BITES MEAN BIG BASS

So what's the secret to his success?

"I had to re-evaluate what I was doing, and it was obvious that I wasn't ever going to win tournaments by catching a lot of bass," McKay said. "I had to find a way to catch big bass and stick with it if I wanted to be successful."

And that's what McKay did; he started targeting lunker bass and became very successful.

"During a tournament a couple of years ago, I only got four bites, but they weighed over 26 pounds," he said. "That's the kind of fish it takes to win on Ross Barnett or get a big check."

That may be easier said than done. Too many anglers want to win tournaments but don't want to change what they're doing or put in the effort to do so. If you want to win tournaments or just consistently catch big bass on highly pressured waters, it takes time, effort and determination. Not too many people can stand on the deck of a boat and flip, pitch and cast, hoping for five bites all day. Here are a few of McKay's successful tips, techniques and strategies for catching big fish.

LEARN THE LAKE BOTTOM FIRST

"When I'm fishing a new lake or new areas, I spend a lot of time with my big motor running, looking for submerged stumps, drops and ledges with brush and cover," McKay said. "Back in the early days, I had to cover a lot of water fishing and finding the submerged brush through a lot of hard work and trial and error, but now I use my electronics and GPS units to find and mark stumps, humps, brush and underwater spots that everybody else isn't fishing."

"Once the water temperature gets to the 40s, I'll target



Phillip Gentry

A fisherman's electronics are essential to finding the kind of cover in which bigger bass will spend much of their lives.

isolated stumps in 2 to 4 feet of water close to deeper water that's at least 2 to 4 feet deeper than the stumps or cover," said McKay. "I like to fish isolated stumps on the edges of ditches, creeks, slough and the same isolated cover wherever I can find areas like that. The bass will come back every year and stage on the same places."

Through trial and error, McKay has learned that the big ol' sow bass will stage beside the stumps and roots, so he will target those during February and March.

SEARCH BAITS UP NEXT >



Bill McKay of Brandon said it takes different tactics to consistently catch big bass, not big numbers of bass.

FROM 18-26 FT WE HAVE THE BAY YOU ARE LOOKING FOR



265 XTS
EXTREME TOURNAMENT SERIES
26'2" LOA / 9'0" BEAM

Build the bay, offshore, hybrid or deck boat of your dreams on our website!



244 XTS
24'6" LOA / 8'6" BEAM



227 XTS
22'6" LOA / 8'6" BEAM



215 XTS
21'2" LOA / 9'8" BEAM



195 BAY
18'8" LOA / 9'3" BEAM

NauticStar
BOATS

Call (662) 200-4664 or visit our website:
NauticStarBoats.com

Factory Authorized with
YAMAHA



LIFETIME
Limited Hull Warranty





Square-bill crankbaits will deflect off stumps and brush piles, drawing reaction strikes from bass.

SEARCH BAITS

McKay likes to cover a lot of water when he's searching for bass or looking for new areas, and that typically means square-bill crankbaits and big spinnerbaits.

"I have caught a lot of big bass on the 3-inch Bagley square-bill crankbaits in cold water," McKay said. "I like to bang that square bill into stumps and brush and dig into those roots, and that will trigger bass into reaction strikes. The only drawback is if you're fishing a tournament and you get hung up in the roots or structure and mess up the area in the shallow water."

Another go-to bait that McKay used in his early years and still relies on to search and find bass in cold water is a big-bladed spinnerbaits. He lets the pulsating blades entice bass into biting when he slow-rolls the bait through thick cover while banging into and around the cover. The strikes are sometimes ferocious, and the lure is a jam-up, cold-weather bait that is not as prone to hanging up as the big, square-billed crankbaits.

These days, however, his best big-bass producer is a jig with a big trailer.

THE MONEY BAIT

"When I'm fishing a tournament during cold weather, I'll throw a big jig with a big trailer," said McKay. "I like any color as long as it has a combination of black, blue and purple. Any of those colors are good by themselves or any combination of two or three."

McKay's money bait technique: Fish sloooow! "As long as it's a dark-colored jig, it will work around stumps," he said. "I like to fish it really, really slow — almost like dead-sticking it. The reason I like to work the stump fields and ditches with the jigs is because they will come through the brush and roots a little better. And those pre-spawn bass will smash them, too, but you need to crawl that bait, because the lunkers are lethargic when the water is very cold."

McKay prefers fishing a medium-weight jig with a big trailer in shallow water because it doesn't get hung up as much as a heavier bait.

When the bite is on and the wind is down McKay is apt to catch a 25- to 27-pound, five-bass limit. He'll typically have a couple in the 5- and 6-pound range, plus a few 4- to 5-pounders, and that's usually enough for a top-3 finish on most cold-weather tournament days in Mississippi.

"I try to get within 20 to 30 feet of stumps, and they're all underwater, unseen by other anglers," McKay said. "I'm confident that everybody else hasn't already pounded the stumps that I'm fishing because they're much harder to find, and most folks just don't spend that much time on the water looking for isolated stumps."

Fishing up close also allows McKay to jerk a bass up and out



of the brush in a hurry, because lunkers in the 7- to 10-pound range will bury down into the roots and break him off in a heartbeat — and then it's all over.

"I want to get close enough to get bit and get them out, but not too close or I'll spook those shallow-water bass," McKay said. "Ideally, I'll make underhand roll casts with the jig about an inch above the water or pitch up close to the stump so I can control the jig and make precise casts without a big splash."

When fishing a 3/8- to 1/2-ounce jig and trailer, McKay prefers a 7-foot, heavy action baitcasting combo and 25-pound fluoro-carbon.



A jig and trailer is a certified big-bass bait, especially in cooler water when fish are less active and willing to chase lures.

“I prefer the lighter jig in shallow water if the wind isn’t blowing, but I’ll move up to the heavier jig if the wind is blowing,” he said. “I fished a tournament a few years ago and was paired with pro angler Mark Menendez, and he gave me some Oldham jigs. I liked them and have used them ever since.”

FISHING PIERS AND POLES

If a lake has piers and poles, you’ll usually find brush piles planted beside them, and they are a favorite target for McKay. “I like to fish lakes like Eagle Lake during cold weather, too. I’ll fish the piers and poles and work the brush piles around them and usually catch big fish,” McKay said. “If you’re willing to spend some time on the water and locate areas that have big bass, you can catch some really big strings in February.”

Another proven technique McKay utilizes in February and March is a prespawn pattern on the main lake at Barnett.

“If the wind will let me fish the main lake, I’ll target prespawn bass, and I also catch a lot of bass that have already spawned with a Bagley’s DB3,” McKay said. “I still throw it because it swims with an erratic motion, and I’ve caught a lot of bass on it when the water temperature is in the 50- to 65-degree range.” ■



Mike Giles of Meridian has been hunting and fishing Mississippi since 1965. He is an award-winning wildlife photographer, writer, seminar speaker and guide.

PUBLIC-LAKE LUNKERS
UP NEXT >



Faster. Smoother. Drier.

For a world-class, center-console bay boat, look no further than BlackJack Boats. From design to construction, each and every boat is hand-crafted with precision, creating one of the fastest bay boats on the market. With BlackJack, you get quality, show-stopping design plus a performance like no other!

Go to blackjackboats.com to learn more or find a dealer near you!

BlackJack

POWERED BY  **YAMAHA**

BIG BASS BUSTER

BEST BETS FOR PUBLIC-LAKE LUNKERS

Though they're not all large lakes, these lakes produce big bass, and February is the perfect time to get after them. According to fisheries biologist Rick Dillard, if you want to catch a lunker, these are some of the best Mississippi has to offer. There's no doubt big bass are swimming in these waters, in fact, the next state record may be caught from one of them.

Dillard has personally electro-shocked up many bass in excess of 10 pounds from some of these lakes. Catching them is the hard part.

- **Davis Lake.** This is a 200-acre lake just south of Tupelo, and it has behemoth bass. Jeff Foster caught a trophy largemouth on Jan. 4, 2013, that weighed 17.34 pounds, just missing the state record of 18.15 pounds.
- **Turkey Fork.** Near Richton, this lake is full of pads and grass and lunker bass.

Mississippi is home to a number of small lakes that produce awfully big bass.

- **Okhissa.** Near Bude, this lake is deep and clear and grows lunker bass.
 - **Chewalla.** Chewalla covers 223 acres in the Holly Springs National Forest. It was stocked with Florida-strain bass in 1998. It is one of the few lakes in that area that has produced double-digit bass.
 - **Marathon.** This small lake south of Forest also has lunker bass swimming in its waters.
- Here are Bill McKay's favorite public lakes beside Ross Barnett.
- **Calling Panther.** Deep and clear, this lake is tough to fish but harbors massive bass.
 - **Chotard and Albemarle.** Another lake chock full of quality lunker bass in the 4- to 6-pound range.
 - **Eagle Lake.** Eagle lake produces large



strings of 5-pounders in January and February

Bill Giles' wild-card lake:

- **Neshoba County Lake.** When it comes to consistently producing lunker bass in the 9- to 12-pound range, Neshoba County is probably one of the top two lakes in the state. Anglers regularly catch monster bass in February and March. Don't expect to catch large numbers, but if you know what to do and how to fish the lake, you might just catch the lunker of your lifetime on any cast. ■

Scout
BOATS
Discover More...

COME SEE US
AT THE LOUISIANA
SPORTSMAN SHOW
MARCH 14-17,
AT LAMAR DIXON
CENTER IN GONZALES.



3663 PONTCHARTRAIN DR. • SLIDELL, LA 70458

985-643-6668

1306 S. HAUGH AVE, STE. A • PICAYUNE, MS 39466

601-798-4700



YAMAHA

www.cypresscove.net

f "Like" us on Facebook

PARISH
TRACTOR

One of the

LARGEST
Kubota dealers in

NORTH AMERICA

Home of Parish Package Deals!



WE ARE MOWER THAN JUST A TRACTOR STORE

LUNKER LINES

Paul Elias

Paul Elias picks Ross Barnett as his favorite February bass fishing place.

ROSS BARNETT IS FEBRUARY FAVE

BECAUSE OF LILY PAD STEMS, SHALLOWS WARM EARLIER THAN IN OTHER MISSISSIPPI RESERVOIRS

February is one of the most-productive months to fish Ross Barnett Reservoir to catch very big and good numbers of bass. The bass there move into the lily pad stems much earlier than bass in other lakes, due to it being such a shallow lake and warming up earlier and more quickly than many Mississippi lakes.

The lily pad stems, the main cover used by bass year-round, hold heat, put that heat into the water and make the shallow water even warmer. As soon as the shallow water starts warming, bass realize that the spawn is about to happen. Although bass usually spawn in Ross Barnett in late February or early March, they move in to prepare for the spawn much earlier.

FISH A CRANKBAIT

My No. 1 bait for fishing Ross Barnett in February is a Mann's Baby 1-Minus crankbait in fire orange or tri-colors with

a black back, chartreuse sides and an orange belly. This small crankbait dives to less than a foot. Most of the lily pad stems will be very shallow. I'll throw it on a 7.5-to-1 gear-ratio reel with 30-pound test bass braid and a 7-foot-2 heavy rod. I'll tie the line straight to the lure. I'll hit the lily pad stems with the lure to bounce off them and vary my retrieves to let the bass tell me how they want the lure.

Also around the lily pad stems, you'll find numbers of stumps. I want this crankbait to bounce off the lily pad stems closest to the underwater stumps and then run it over the tops of and down the sides of the stumps, hit those stumps and then bounce off. When there are no stumps to work, I search for the lily pad stems leaning into the water — looking similar to a small tree that's fallen over into the water.

Before you ask, yes, you'll get hung up some while fishing those stumps and lily pad stems. However, that's why I like the

Baby 1-Minus, since it's less likely to get hung up than other crankbaits or other sizes of crankbaits. Often, bass will want you to use a fast retrieve, but I've found that a medium retrieve seems to work best to catch fish weighing 1 to 9 pounds in the lily pad stems.

USE A SPINNER BAIT

My second lure of choice is a 3/8-ounce Mann's Classic spinnerbait with a chartreuse and white skirt with gold Indiana blades and a trailer hook. I'll use the same rod, reel and line to cast the spinner bait as I have the Baby 1-Minus and fish it in the exact same way I've fished the Baby 1-Minus.

SHORT STRIKERS

If I get a short strike on the Baby 1-Minus or the Classic spinnerbait, I'll pick up a rod with a Baby 1-Minus or a Mann's swimming Craw Worm and throw it back to that same area.

According to Paul Elias, if for some reason fishing the shallow water in February isn't paying off in bass, fish the rocks.



PRODUCTIVE STEMS

Fish 3 miles above or 3 miles below the HWY 43 bridge to locate the most shallow water, lily pad stems, stumps and little ditches for catching February bass. To pick the most productive section of this water, I'll generally choose from the HWY 43 bridge south on the eastern side of the lake.

TWO OTHER BAITS

The black/blue flake or juniebug-colored Craw Worm and a bladed jig are two other productive February baits. I like to have a Texas-rigged Craw Worm tied onto one of the three rods I always keep on my deck. I'll swim the Craw Worm just like I swim the Baby 1-Minus and the spinnerbait through the lily pad stems and on both sides, in front of and over the tops of underwater stumps. I'll fish with 50-pound bass braid on a 7-foot-6 medium heavy rod with a 7.5-to-1 gear ratio reel.

If for some reason, shallow water isn't producing bass, I'll leave the lily pads and go to the shallow rocks around the HWY 43 bridge, near the dam and at the mouth of Pelahatchie Bay. I'll fish the spinnerbait the same way I've used it to fish lily pad stems, along with a green pumpkin bladed jig with a green pumpkin crawfish trailer. I'll slow-roll the spinnerbait and the bladed jig from about 1 to 5 feet deep, casting on a 45-degree angle and allowing each to bump off the rocks.

This month, I expect the best five bass I catch in a day of fishing at Ross Barnett to weigh from 15 to 20 pounds. ■



Paul Elias, of Laurel, has fished 15 Bassmaster Classics with career winnings of over \$1 million, including one Bassmaster Classic Championship. Elias also holds the current record for a four-day BASS tournament weigh-in with 132 pounds, 8 ounces, on Falcon Lake in Texas.

RJ's OUTBOARD
Sales & Service

Since 1980
Over 70 Years of Service Experience!

WAR EAGLE BOATS "Built for hunters who love to fish"

1208 Old Fannin Road
Brandon, MS 39047
601-919-0919
www.rjsoutboard.com

YAMAHA

Jigs become productive bass baits when fish are concentrating on crawfish, as they are in late winter and early spring.



MAKE JIGS YOUR FEBRUARY FAVES

BIG BASS, JIGS JUST GO TOGETHER

By Dan Kibler

If bass pro Davy Hite is ever identified with a single lure, it would be a jig. He admits it's his favorite bait, especially when it comes to targeting big fish, which makes it his favorite bait in February and March.

Hite, a former Bassmaster Classic champion and BASS Angler of the Year who retired several years ago to work as an announcer on Bassmaster Live TV, leaves no doubts.

"I think February is a perfect month to fish a jig and crawfish trailer," he said. "The water temperature is usually in the

low 50s, which is perfect jig weather. It's a great time to catch a big fish, and a jig is a perfect bait for a bit fish. The two sort of go together.

"If you keep a jig in the water, sooner or later, you'll get a big bite."

The key, Hite said, is knowing that bass are hunting for crawfish as winter begins to give way to the approaching spring.

"There are a lot of different thoughts on why big fish will bite a jig," Hite said. "I've

heard biologists say there's a lot of protein in crawfish, so it makes sense that a big female bass, with her eggs developing, preparing for the spawn, would want more protein. If deer can recognize which



Come see us at the
BILOXI BOAT SHOW
February 22-24
2019

Nautic Star 215 XTS **NauticStar**



Nautic Star 2302 L **NauticStar**



378 Reynoir Street • Biloxi, MS 39530
(228) 435-3389
sevencsmarine.net

★★★★★
5-Star Gold Certified Yamaha Service Center
with over 75 years combined experience

"In Business Since 1960"



YAMAHA



Simple shades of brown and natural colors are often perfect color combos when fishing jigs in late February, especially if you're fishing in relatively clear water.

foods in the woods have the most protein, bass ought to be able to. Eating a big crawfish that's high in protein would be important for a big, female fish."

Hite's favorite jig/craw combination is a half-ounce Buckeye Mop Jig with a Yamamoto Flappin' Hog II — the latter a cross between a crawfish and a creature bait.

"A straight, brown jig is hard to beat," Hite said. "I'll choose the color of the trailer based on the color of the water. If the water is fairly clear, I'll fish brown/amber or brown/green pumpkin. If the water is a little stained, I might fish black, orange or green pumpkin/chartreuse claws."

Hite fishes deeper points and roadbeds early in the month when the water is still cold. As it warms, he said "fish are anxious" to move shallow, and a warm rain late in the month will help.

"When that happens, you can fish shallow and catch some really big fish," he said. "They're anxious to move up, you get a warm rain, and that water along the bank warms up. Those fish will move up a lot quicker than people think."

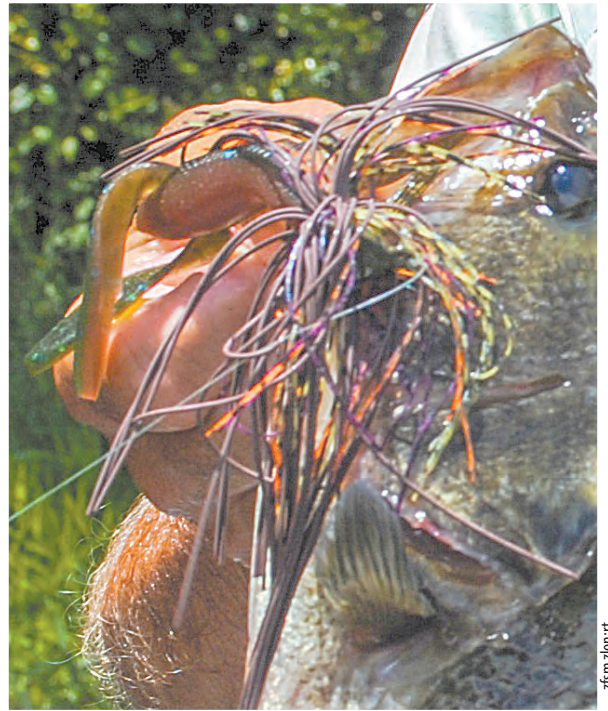
Hite concentrates on any kind of rock he can find, because of the presence of crawfish around rocks.

"One thing I've learned that has helped me catch more fish is to pay attention to the kind of rock you're fishing," he said. "The rock on banks will vary from lake to lake. Sometimes, bass will get on one kind of rock or the other, and if you realize it, then you're able to really pinpoint the kinds of spots where they'll be holding. They might be on one kind of rock or the other, or they might be on the transition area, where you move from one kind of rock to another or from a rocky bank to something else."

Hite said that bass will move up in February in waves, so he'll spend more

"You won't have loners on those kinds

of places," he said. "I'll spend more time on a single place like that in February — if I catch a fish — than I'll spend on a single place in any other month." ■



zfm.zlon;rt

Z-SERIES

Z-Series bags give you unobstructed worry free access to your gear and durable waterproof protection.

ZIPPERLESS DESIGN

WATERPROOF

SECURED ATTACHMENTS

PLANO
PROTECT YOUR PASSION

PLANOMOLDING.COM

NEW

KRYPTEK PATTERN

CORROSION PROOF DESIGN FOR DEPENDABLE STORAGE

Examine every bait you want to fish with in the coming year, checking hooks, looking for rust and any other imperfections. **INSET:** Organize your smaller tackle boxes by lure type and by size and color.

ORGANIZE THOSE TACKLE BOXES

By Dustin Wilks

GET LURES IN PLACE, READY TO TIE ON

Sometimes, there's just nothing better to do than roll around in your tackle and dream of the great fishing that's ahead.

There may be a little drool involved that results from thinking about how nice that new rod is going to be or how that new crankbait is going to run.

Here's how I approach organizing my tackle for the upcoming fishing season — a great way to spend a February afternoon.

Every angler should have several goals in mind while organizing tackle: eliminate waste and add backups of your favorites to improve efficiency.

The hardest of these to do is eliminate waste and determine what has become junk. It's really hard to get rid of baits and part with stuff.

We have a limited amount of space in our boats and tackle boxes. I want to make sure every square inch of space my tackle takes up is worthwhile. I want every bait to run right, every hook to be new,

and every bait to have a purpose.

I use several sizes and styles of boxes to organize things into categories. It's a good idea to replace most of your boxes every year or two to avoid rust contamination. From experience, once it starts, you can't stop it. I use the Z-rust anti-rust tackle boxes from Flambeau as much as I can. They really work wonderfully. I even put the Z-rust dividers into my other box styles to cut down on the rust in those, and I have not had any rust in those boxes.

GET BAIT READY

When it comes to jigs, I want every bait ready to be tied on. The only thing I wait to do when I'm on the water is trim the skirt. I let the water conditions dictate the thickness and length of the skirt. I eliminate a lot of colors and baits I don't use and clean out any with even a hint of rust on them. Any bait that carries a little rust will contaminate the other lures in that box, leading to a big, nasty, rusted-up box. Eliminate a few to save the rest.

Now I've got crankbaits, spinnerbaits, soft plastics (about 15 styles I routinely use), topwaters, buzzbaits, swimbaits, spoons and other specialty items to organize. I replace hooks, throw away torn baits, fix any that have gotten dinged up.

ADD BACKUPS

The easiest and by far most fun of my three goals is to add backups of my favorites. While I'm organizing, I'm also looking to see what I have available. Of baits I use frequently, it's not uncommon to see five or more duplicates in my tackle box. I once lost eight spinnerbaits on a single day, so I'm quite paranoid about having back-up lures in my boat. With soft plastics, I want enough in the boat of every type to last me at least two days.

Improve efficiency. Once you have restocked and eliminated useless junk that has accumulated, it's time to think about placement. Everything needs a place. ■



FEED A WINTER BASS A SHINER

BIG LIVE BAITS TEMPT BIG BASS

By Phillip Gentry

Live shiner fishing for trophy sized largemouth bass came to fame in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Florida anglers learned that big bass could be caught in the winter by offering one big bait to tempt bass that may feed only once or twice per day in colder water.

The keys to fishing live shiners are proper presentation of the bait so that it stays lively, and getting the bait out in front of the bass, which in many cases are holding tight to heavy cover.

In more open-water areas, bass may be holding relatively deep, so drifting or trolling the bait is typically the best way to present it in a natural manner to fish that may be holding along a channel edge or drop off.

Typically known as live-lining or

free-lining, a 6- to 8-inch or even larger bait is hooked through the nose using a 3/0 or 4/0 circle or kahle hook. The hook is attached to a 3- to 4-foot section of fluorocarbon leader in the 15- to 20-pound class, providing abrasion resistance if the bait is pulled through wood or rocky cover. Tie the leader to a quality barrel swivel to prevent line twist that is inherent with trolling. Main line in the 15- to 20-pound class is typically sufficient.

Trolling allows better boat control than drifting, but care should be exercised to not troll faster than 1.0 to 1.5 mph. In cooler water, shiners will stay lively and active for extended periods, but bass will not chase them far.

Using no weight on the free line rig



A big live bait will tempt a winter bass that feeds only one or two times a day.

Terry Madewell

will allow the bait to find its own depth and reduces the chance of snagging or fouling, especially if aquatic vegetation is present. In more obstruction-free water, a bullet worm weight, split shot, or egg sinker up to a quarter ounce can be added to get the bait down. ■

2 LOCALLY-OWNED LOCATIONS



BOAT STUF

DISCOUNT MARINE SUPPLIES

NEW | USED CONSIGNMENT

LET US...
SELL YOUR BOAT



2800 PURE HYBRID - W/YAMAHA F300



248 COMMANDER

- ULTIMA HARD TOP
- LED UNDER WATER LIGHTS
- BOW CUSHIONS
- WITH YAMAHA 300HP

WESTBANK
2499 Peters Rd • Harvey, LA
504-340-4991

NORTHSHORE
662 Old Spanish Trail • Slidell, LA
985-649-9044

WWW.BOATSTUF.COM



Introducing *Pioneer* BOATS
Charting a new course.

NEW 2019 Pelagic 266

- Length 26' 6" Beam 9' 2"
- Fuel Capacity 180 Gallons
- Livewell 50 Gallons



For more information, go to PioneerBoats.com
or call 843-538-6604
or like us on Facebook at Pioneer Boats
for the latest available information.



Avenger



AV-26



For more information, go to AvengerBayBoats.com
or call 843-538-6604
or like us on Facebook at Avenger Bay Boats
for the latest available information.

From The
Back Water
To The
Blue Water



200CC



For more information, go to BullsBayBoats.com
or call 843-538-6604
or like us on Facebook at Bulls Bay Boats
for the latest available information.

IT'S a misconception that catfish of any species simply "go away" during the winter. In fact, veteran anglers will tell you that winter is one of the best times to catch a trophy sized blue or channel catfish. In addition, the idea that flathead or yellow catfish won't bite in cold weather is a pure fallacy. February is a great time to catch catfish of any species, but the tactics and techniques used when the water is cold will vary somewhat from tactics used in warmer months.

Following are some tried-and-true tips for the catfish angler who doesn't want to wait for spring to get on the water. Winter catters who apply a couple of these tips could end up with a bruiser at the end of the line or a cooler full of tasty eaters ready for the skillet.

Jason Aycock, who fishes the Mississippi River, said it's rare for him to anchor up for catfish, but he's most likely to do so during winter. A veteran tournament angler, Aycock said patience is the key; trophy

catfish will bite, even in colder water, but anglers need to be patient and give them more time.

"When I fish at anchor in the summer, I put the anchor on a clock," said Aycock. "The fish get 20 minutes to show themselves or I'm on to the next spot. In the winter, however, I may give a spot 45 minutes or more. Their metabolism is slower, and it often takes more time for them to make up their mind to bite and to find your bait."

David Magness, a veteran angler from Hernando, said winter is a time to catch big catfish in deep holes and consistent numbers of eating-sized cats in undercut or backwater areas. Cooler water makes catfish movements and locations more predictable, and but it also means allowing fish more time to locate your baits and possibly downsizing portions from the huge summer buffets many anglers are accustomed to using.



Don't give up on catfish just because it's winter. Blues, flatheads and channels will all bite, if you change tactics to account for the cold weather.

By Phillip Gentry



Phillip Gentry

COLD CAT TRICKS



NORMALLY, MAGNESS PUTS HIS BAITED RODS IN HOLDERS,

but he'll fish these areas with a hold-and-bounce tactic called bumping that allows the bait to cover more ground.

"Instead of just anchoring and putting rods out, actually hold the rod, let it to the bottom, then lift your rod tip, let the current carry it down 2 or 3 feet, then let it hit the bottom again," said Magness. "Sometimes, you might have so much line out, you think you're going to spool your reel before you get a hit. However, when you're catching trophy sized catfish in the current with 100 feet of line out, that's a lot of fun."

Pro catter Joey Pounders of Steens advises anglers not to bypass flathead catfish during the winter. He said it's a fallacy that flatheads don't bite in cold water. He has caught flatheads in single-digit temperatures. The key is knowing where to look.

"My best pattern for flathead fishing in the winter is going to be standing timber in the 25- to 30-foot depths," he said. "Most of that depth and structure will be in old river runs off the main

channels of the rivers and waterways I fish on the Tenn-Tom Waterway. The main runs get dredged but aren't as deep; 15 feet is about the maximum for the main channels."

He said flatheads will bunch up during the winter, but they will still feed. He has caught 5 or 6 large flatheads, even as many as 10, out of an area that is no bigger than 30x30 feet. The secret is to keep trying spots until you find the fish.

Brian Barton of Muscle Shoals, Ala., a guide on Pickwick Lake, looks for catfish to feed higher in the water column on bright, sunny, winter days. He learned this trick from many years as a commercial catfisherman when the first three to five baits on a trotline would hold fish, while the hooks that sagged into deeper water were bare.

"This is especially true in clear water," he said. "I believe the sunfish move up, especially around rock bluffs or dam facings or steep riprap banks — anything that will absorb sunlight and heat the water. Of course, when the bait comes up, so do the catfish."

Barton said he has seen this pattern work for blues, flatheads and channel catfish.

"Everyone says that only the sunfish react to sunlight, but I believe all fish do for one reason or another."



Trolling for catfish is often an effective winter tactic, so long as you can slow your progress down to allow fish time to respond. **INSET:** Guide Brian Barton said it's not unusual for winter catfish to suspend on sunny days and sun like other species.





WINTER SALES EVENT

SUZUKI
MARINE

THE **ULTIMATE**
4-STROKE OUTBOARD

With Special Offers For the 2019 Boat Show Season

Your Suzuki Marine Dealer has exceptional deals in store for you when you purchase a new Suzuki outboard from 25 to 350 horsepower during the winter Boat Show Season. Get Suzuki's 3-Year Limited Warranty plus 3 years of Extended Protection at no extra charge. There are Instant Savings on select models, and Low-Rate Financing is also available. See your participating Suzuki Marine dealer for all the details.



SIX YEARS OF PROTECTION
3 Years Limited Warranty + 3 Years Extended Protection

Six Years of Protection at no extra charge on all new outboards 25 to 350 HP.



INSTANT SAVINGS

Instant Savings on select models when you buy at the boat show. See your dealer for details.



REPOWER FINANCE

Rates as low as 5.99% on new Suzuki outboards on approved credit.* (60 Months)



SMITH MARINE
www.smithmarinesales.com

109 CONESTOGA RD
RIDGELAND, MS 39115
601-856-3959

Genie Six Extended Protection program is applicable to new Suzuki Outboard Motors from 25 to 350 HP in inventory which are sold and delivered to buyers between 01/01/18 and 02/28/18 in accordance with the provisions of a Participating Authorized Suzuki Marine dealer in the continental US and Alaska to a purchasing customer who resides in the continental US or Alaska. Customer should request to receive an acknowledgment letter and full copy of contract including terms, conditions and model card from Suzuki Extended Protection within 90 days of purchase. If an acknowledgment letter is not received in time period stated, contact Suzuki Marine of America, Inc. — Marine Marketing via email: marketing@smoa.com. The Genie Six Protection is available for pleasure use only and is not redeemable for cash. Instant Savings apply to qualifying purchases of select Suzuki Outboard Motors made between 01/01/18 and 02/28/18. For list of participating models, see participating dealer or visit www.suzukimarine.com. Instant Savings must be applied against the agreed upon selling price of the outboard motor and collection in the full of sale. Suzuki will, at its sole discretion's parts account. There are no model substitutions, health certificate, title checks, or extensions. Suzuki reserves the right to change or cancel these provisions at any time without notice or obligation. *Financing offers available through Suzuki Retail Finance. As low as 5.99% APR financing for 60 months on new and repossessed Suzuki Outboard Motors. Subject to credit approval. Not all buyers will qualify. Approval and any rates and terms provided, are based on creditworthiness. \$19,999 (new) or \$1,000 (used) per \$1,000 financed for 60 months is based on 5.99% APR. Hypothetical figures and calculations; your actual monthly payment may differ based on financing terms, credit for application, accessories or other factors such as down payment and fees. Offer effective on new, unregistered Suzuki Outboard Motors purchased from a participating authorized Suzuki Marine dealer between 01/01/18 and 02/28/18. "Suzuki", the Suzuki "S" and model names are Suzuki trademarks or ©. Don't drink and drive. Always wear a life jacket and read your owner's manual. © 2018 Suzuki Marine of America, Inc.



National Exposure, Local Expertise®

Specializing in all types of rural real estate, including:

- Homes
- Farms
- Timberland
- Recreational Land
- Waterfront Properties
- Executive Estates

Over 200+ listings in Mississippi and Louisiana

#1 United Country Real Estate Office Internationally in Sales

United Country Real Estate

Gibson Realty & Land Company

601.250.0017
GibsonRealtyMS.com

Facebook.com/UnitedCountryGibsonRealty

Photos by Phillip Gentry



Mark Blauvelt of West Point, a B'n'M catfish pro staffer, said one species he consistently catches, even during the coldest months, is channel catfish. Blauvelt suggests moving away from major reservoirs and rivers and concentrating efforts on smaller bodies of water when targeting winter channel cats.

"Channel catfish remain active throughout the winter," he said. "The fish will move into wintertime patterns, which means they'll seek out the deepest holes, but they'll still feed heavily."

Blauvelt loves a medium-action rod with a sensitive tip for channels. It helps him detect bites, while providing enough backbone to land trophy fish that may exceed 15 pounds.

"My preferred bait during the winter is still fresh-cut shad if you can find them," Blauvelt said. "I will also use frozen shad that I've stored for the winter, and I find the bigger baits do better for freezing than the smaller baits."

David Shipman of Corinth, a tournament angler, looks for catfish to suspend during cooler months. He likes to keep his baits off the bottom to make them more available to suspended catfish and in fact, refers to this tactic as "suspend fishing."

"Suspend fishing works year-round, but (it) probably produces better during the cooler months, starting in November and running until March," he said. "Unlike the other bottom tactics, it doesn't work as well in areas of heavy current but will still produce fish no matter where you try it."

"I usually don't go over a half-mile an hour, and sometimes even slower," he said. "First, you want to get into an area where you are marking catfish. Sometimes, they might be suspending right off the bottom, and other times they might be halfway to the surface. That's regardless of the water depth. I've seen fish suspending at 35 feet over 70 feet of water."

DROPPING ANCHOR

Boat position is critical to putting out a successful spread of cut baits for catfish. In order to target fish at a variety of depths, it's important to anchor the boat so that you can cast across a several different depths. Once you locate a spot to fish, use marker buoys to mark the position before anchoring. Some anglers use marker buoys to mark where they want their anchors to be, as well as where they want the boat to be positioned.

To get a rock-solid setup so your boat won't drift and pull baits into structure, use two anchors with about 500 to 700 feet of rope on each one. You need that much rope out to properly position and secure the boat when fishing in deep water — anywhere from 20 to 80 feet deep depending on the season. The rule is to have five times the anchor line out as the depth you're fishing.

To properly anchor, use one anchor off the bow and one off the stern. Use a heavy, claw-type anchor to grab hold in the bottom or a Danforth anchor with flukes that rotate and dig



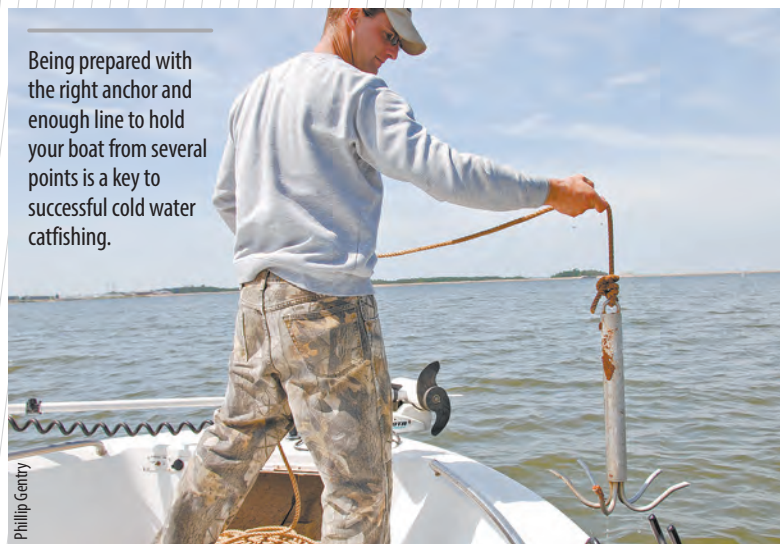
Phillip Gentry

It's a fallacy that flathead catfish won't bite during the winter.

When the mercury dips this month, don't sit around waiting for warmer weather. Grab your catfish rods and hit the water now, when you're most likely to have the water and the fish all to yourself. ■



Phillip Gentry is a freelance outdoor writer and photographer who says that if it swims, walks, hops, flies or crawls he's usually not too far behind.



Phillip Gentry

Being prepared with the right anchor and enough line to hold your boat from several points is a key to successful cold water catfishing.

into soft bottoms like sand or mud. Each anchor should have a 6- to 10-foot length of chain or a length of sturdy, twisted rope to help secure the anchor and not chafe the rope against bottom structure. ■

Phil King's two-hook rig gives winter catfish anglers a choice of two baits or one large bait and helps put more scent in the water.



Phillip Gentry

THE TWO-HOOK TROLLING RIG

For trophy blue and flathead catfish trolling, pro angler Phil King of Corinth uses a variation of a rig that employs a stinger hook to insure hookups on a big fish or nab a short striker. It's a great way to catch trophy flatheads by trolling. Bait for the rig would consist of a large whole skipjack herring, shad or live bream.

"I tie this rig using two 7/0 Daiichi circle hooks," said King. "I'm going to use a big, whole bait for trolling. I snell both hooks, and that way, you get about a 99-percent hookup rate on the circle hook."

King ties the rig using a three-way swivel. The main line, 80-pound braid, is tied to one end. A slinky weight is connected to the middle eye of the swivel. Slinky weights can be made using 550 paracord and No. 4 buckshot pellets or purchased commercially made. A length of 30-pound mono leader is tied to the remaining eye. The length of the leader will vary depending on how high you want the bait to suspend in the water column. A 3- to 4-inch crappie float is threaded on the leader between the swivel and the first hook.

"The float will raise or lower bait," said King. "If the catfish are suspended, you can run it up closer to the hook. Move the float up, and it will suspend your bait. Move it closer to your swivel, and it'll drop the bait down closer to the bottom if fish are tight to the bottom."

King ties the second hook as a stinger about 2 or 3 inches wider than the length of the bait. Snelling the hook, he runs the leader through, wraps it seven times and pulls it back out through the eye with enough line to span the bait, plus extra and enough to snell the end hook.

"I hook a whole river herring — or skipjack as we call it — I shut his mouth with the inline hook and then hook him back toward the lower end from underneath with the other," said King. "Sometimes catfish will short-strike a big bait, especially after a front. But this rig also works to suspend cut baits, bream and you can also troll crankbaits with it." ■

BATTERY WORLD

**BRANDS YOU KNOW.
BRANDS YOU TRUST.**



**GOLF CART
BATTERIES!**

BW SERIES
6V 208AH **\$99.95**
8V 170AH **\$104.95**
12V 155AH **\$159.95**



TROJAN
6V 225AH **\$114.95**
8V 170AH **\$119.95**
12V 155AH **\$174.95**

All prices with core exchange

**MARINE STARTING
SPECIALS**



**GROUP SIZE 24
1000 MARINE
CRANKING AMPS
\$99.95**

With Core Exchange

6424 Hwy 98 West • Hattiesburg, MS 39402
601.264.4448
batteryworldonline.com



NEW ARRIVALS

COMING SPRING 2019



ROCKSTAR WOVEN FISHING SHORTS
and BUTTON-DOWN FISHING SHIRTS
— MADE BY ANGLERS, FOR ANGLERS

CAN'T WAIT? SHOP THE LATEST SPORTSMAN SWAG
SPORTSMANGEAR.COM

Bushytail

By David Hawkins

BONANZA



David Hawkins

Once Mississippi's favorite game animal, squirrels still provide hunters plenty of enjoyment across the Magnolia State.

We see them in parks, we see them from the deer stand and in the yard, and we sometimes hear them in the attic.

Squirrels are around all the time, or so it seems. Many big-game hunters cut their hunting teeth on woodlot squirrels. Before deer and turkey were successfully re-introduced to Mississippi, squirrels were the top game animal, and they remain fun to stalk and harvest, excellent table fare and the perfect teaching aid for adults to introduce children to hunting.

Squirrels are everywhere there is a food source. Hard mast, like acorns and hickory nuts, is a favorite, but by no means the only course when they all come to Mamma-and-Them on Sunday. Studies have indicated they can remember locations where

acorns were hidden in the fall and will return to the buried fare until it is depleted. Other nuts are stored in the hollows of trees and logs, so there is always a backup. Dogwood mast, pecans, fruit orchards and late summer grapes such as muscadines are quite an attractant as well.

“Hard mast is really important during the fall and winter. If those food resources aren’t there, squirrels will likely be less abundant,” said Rick Hamrick, small-game coordinator for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. “Some will move elsewhere in search of food, and those that remain have to work harder to find it. That could have an effect on the population next season. Fewer individuals carrying over through the winter could mean less production in spring and summer.”



Population abundance is difficult to measure, *Hamrick added.*

Observation is a key, and looking at snapshots of the harvest from October to mid-November the past couple of seasons, the Delta and southwest portions of the state could be seeing lower squirrel populations. Most of the other regions' trends show a stable to increased harvest.

Harvest figures don't always tell the whole story, but they often follow population trends. However, it's been a wet year, and some of the decline in harvest may be a result of access and conditions more than population declines. The weather also stayed through hot much of October.

"Overall, the hardwood mast crop might be categorized as good at best," Hamrick said. "In different parts of the state, it ranges from fair to excellent, so there's a lot of variability. In a statewide context, it appears below what we'd seen the last few years. I believe squirrel populations are mostly good this year, but we could locally see fewer squirrels next season, given a lower mast crop overall."

As the winter supply begins to dwindle, bushytails will begin to attack the emerging leaf buds of elms and hickories. Pine cones with the treasure of nuts encased tightly near the core will be getting hammered. Any kind of fungi that is not toxic is also fare game. Squirrels are not above

putting on a few extra ounces eating the corn hunters have provided for deer. All this is to say that the only creature that eats better than a squirrel is a wild hog.

Hardwoods are the best places to start hunting. Stream set-asides in national forests and Wildlife Management Areas provide enough hunting for an entire season. Delta bottomland and other large stands of hardwoods are enough to provide a lifetime of squirrel chasing.

Mississippi's fall season ends Feb. 28. The daily bag limit is eight, regardless of species. A short spring season — May 15-June 1 — gives hunters a chance to take four squirrels per day, again, regardless of species.



The common gray squirrel, with a head about the size of a golf ball, presents a challenging target for even the most skilled marksman. Squirrel hunting is considered an excellent introduction to hunting and outdoor woodcraft for beginners of any age.



David Hawkins

CATCH MORE FISH WITH A SUBSCRIPTION TO MISSISSIPPI SPORTSMAN!



\$17.95
12 issues

Subscribe today for the best:

- FISHING HOTSPOTS
- HUNTING TACTICS
- LATEST MUST-HAVE GEAR
- EXPERT ADVICE

Toll-free **1-855-371-1546**
or for faster service visit
MS-Sportsman.com/subscribe



Mississippi
SPORTSMAN

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of first issue

DOGS VS. STILL HUNTING

Take the time to examine a squirrel, and you will understand why they are sometimes difficult to hunt. Large eyes can scan the forest floor, and ears can detect sounds out of the ordinary. However, squirrels have short memories. If a hunter can be still for a time, a squirrel will make a dash to safety — especially if there is a hollow tree nearby.

Randy Brown of Vicksburg has hunted ducks and deer in the Delta, but for the past 20 years, he has been squirrels almost exclusively. Still-hunting is his preferred method.

“Slipping along, keeping my eyes in the trees, is the best method I’ve found,” Brown said. “I always stop beside a tree and get comfortable. Then, if I see a squirrel at a distance, I try to sneak to within range. I have a couple of .22 rifles



Randy Brown of Vicksburg used a customized Ruger 10/22 to collect this potential squirrel stew.

Photo courtesy Randy Brown

I have worked on to make them into tack drivers. One is a semi-auto, and the other is a single-shot.”

Brown most enjoys being in the outdoors and being a part of nature. He moves slowly and stops a lot to scope the area around him. He tries to set up shots where the animal is against the side of the tree. That way, if he misses his shot, the bullet will hit the tree and not travel for a long distance.

“I like hunting in the Delta where the big squirrels are,” Brown said. “Mahannah is a favorite and has all three of the color phases: the gray, red and black squirrels. The fox (red and black) phases can vary from a cinnamon brown to completely black. I’ve even seen some cat squirrels with a reddish tinge in their tails.”

Twin Oaks is another WMA that Brown hunts when Mahannah is closed due to flooding. The newly acquired land bordering Mahannah will soon open close to 17,000 additional acres to the public. Specific



Kris Goodwin (left), of Starkville, and James Austin display a fine harvest of squirrels and the well trained dogs that made the harvest fun.

Photo courtesy Dave Goodwin

rules and regulations will be posted for the 2019-2020 hunting season.

For hunters wishing to enlist the services of a dog, stealth is not quite as important, but two hunters are always better than one. Once the dog trees, hunters can circle the tree and may cause the squirrel to move, allowing for a safe shot. Another method used by many still-hunters is to shake vines, especially when a squirrel nest is in the tree. This shaking will spook the bushytail from the nest and allow a ready hunter a quick shot.

PLAN TO BAG A GRAND SLAM

Fox and cat squirrels are common in every Mississippi county. The black phase of the fox squirrel is more common in the river and Delta counties, but they have been killed on occasion in the Pearl River and Leaf River drainages. Mahannah, Twin Oaks and Sunflower are excellent WMAs to begin a quest for a squirrel grand slam. Consult the Mississippi Outdoor Digest or visit MDWFP.com for more areas and specific information. ■



David Hawkins is a freelance writer living in Forest, Miss. He can be reached at hawkins2209@att.net.

WEAPONRY

Air rifles are anything but new. The Lewis and Clark expedition used an air-rifle on its trek to what is now the Northwest. Large-bore air rifles capable of killing deer have been re-introduced in recent years, and the small-bore models are a far cry from the Red Ryders we carried as children.

Make no mistake, modern air-rifles like the Gamo Maxxim Swarm in .22 caliber are serious shooters for anyone needing a low-noise, close-range solution for dealing with yard pests or small game afield. They demand all the respect of their modern rimfire and centerfire cousins.

The family of .22 rimfires is arguably the most-popular choice of squirrel hunters in Mississippi. The .22 long-rifle has been around for more than a century and has been chambered in every conceivable action. Ammunition improvements have kept it in the game as a modern medicine for small game.



The .22 Winchester Magnum adds substantial thump and extends the range of its little brother. That can also be said of the .17-calibers that have arrived on the scene more recently. Accuracy and shootability have never been better. Within the ranges for which

The Gamo Maxxim Swarm (right) fires a .22 pellet and is a fine squirrel gun. Other effective rounds are the .17 HMR (below, left) and .22 Winchester Magnum (below, right).



each was designed, these rimfires get the job done.

Shotguns run a close second to .22s in the popularity race. No. 6 shot seems to be the most-popular choice with Nos. 5 and 7½ making a good showing. Gauge doesn't seem to be as important as recoil. Guns chambered in .410 are good choices for recoil-sensitive hunters with 28- and 20-gauge guns being completely adequate. A good used shotgun will be the most-economical way to get started squirrel hunting. ■




**40 MPH
DURABILITY MEETS SPEED**

A side-by-side should do more than take you places. That's why the all-new Kubota RTV-XG850 Sidekick is designed for both hard work and long weekends. Do it all with 40 mph travel speeds, major versatility and all the comfort you need. Experience what it feels like to cross over to MORE with a Kubota Sidekick.

**\$0 Down, 0%^{A.P.R.} Financing
for 48 Months*** **OR** **\$500
Instant Rebate****

CRAIN TRACTOR & EQUIPMENT

508 Hwy 98 Bypass
Columbia, Mississippi 39429
601.736.4527 • www.craintractor.com

*\$0 Down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 48 months on purchases of select new Kubota RTV-XG850 Sidekick equipment from participating dealers. In-stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A., subject to credit approval. Example: 48 monthly payments of \$20.83 per \$1,000 financed. **Customer instant rebates of \$500 are available on qualifying cash or standard rate finance purchases of new Kubota RTV-XG850 equipment from participating dealers' stock inventory. Rebate is not available with 0% A.P.R. or other promotional financing. Some exceptions apply. Offer expires 3/31/19. See us or go to KubotaUSA.com for more information.

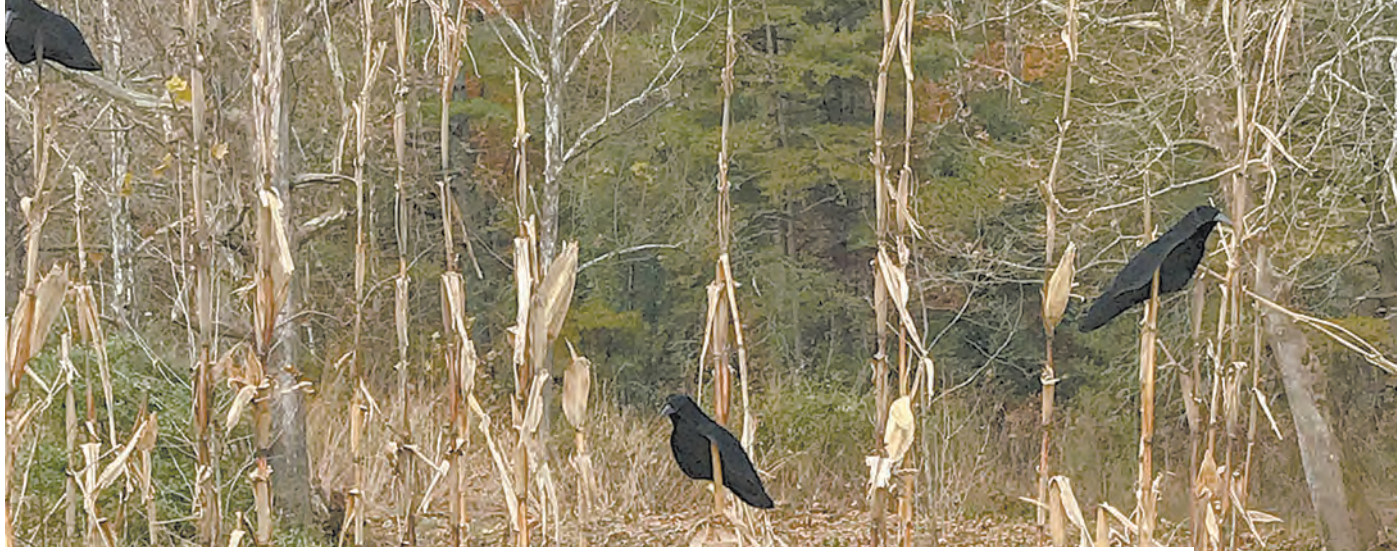
KubotaUSA.com



Gear Up for Your Fishing Trips this Spring



SHOP NOW AT
SPORTSMANGEAR.COM



SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT

By Bobby Cleveland

Ready to give your shoulder and ears a workout? Add to your wingshooting enjoyment by blasting away at a hundred or so Mississippi crows.



Shotgun: Check.

Case of high-power No. 6 shells: Check.

Full-body camo, with facemask: Check.

Dozen decoys: Check.

Electronic caller with call: Check.

Ear plugs: Check, and double check.

Bottle of Ibuprofen or Tylenol: Check, and triple check.

You know you're in for a fun morning when your hunting essentials list includes painkillers, and rest assured, no serious crow hunter will be without an ample supply.

"Don't leave home without them," said Dwight Partridge, "and, as a matter of fact, take a full dose as soon as your feet hit the floor in the morning. An ounce of prevention is definitely in order."

So what's the big deal? >

“IF YOU’RE LUCKY, YOU’RE GOING TO BE DOING A LOT OF SHOOTING, AS IN, MAKE SURE YOU LEAVE HOME WITH A FULL CASE OF SHELLS FOR THE BLIND,”

Partridge said. “First, somebody’s going to come shorthanded, or they’re going to show up seriously underarmed, you know, with like field-load 8s, like it’s a dove hunt. Carry big loads, cause these birds are tough suckers. Second, if the situation is right, then everybody is going to be blasting away from tight quarters in the blind.

“And, third, if the constant shooting doesn’t kill your head, then the sound of that dad-gum calling machine will drive you up a wall. It is relentless, and it is loud. By the time the hunt is over, I promise you that you will want to take that caller and blast it to smithereens.”

That warning, issued more than a decade ago, was almost enough to keep me from joining Partridge and two others on a hunt on a cold February morning in Claiborne County, a few miles south of Port Gibson, as, yep, the proverbial crow flies.

The hunt, arranged by Cliff Covington, the county extension agent, on his family farm, was perfect.

“We’re going to be set up between two commercial pecan groves, both within a mile, and we’ve got some wild pecans in that area,” Covington said. “As a matter of fact, the blind we’re going to use is built into the top of a pecan tree that was struck by lightning last year and broke in half. We’ll get in there the afternoon before and cut us out a blind, put out the decoys right before dark and be ready at the crack of dawn.”

The next morning, Covington, Partridge, Don Hynum and I were nestled in that brush top, waiting for the sun to rise. Coffee was poured, and we were intently listening for any crow calls with naked ears.

Duck hunters would have been proud of us. There was nothing exposed that would give us away. All shell boxes were covered. All faces were hidden behind masks or were painted. Our shooting lanes were well established.

“Everybody had their Advil?” Hynum asked after we all heard the distant sound of a crow, then two, then three.

“Got your ear plugs in?”

Hynum reached over and flipped the switch on the caller, and it unleashed an unholy cacophony that I was sure woke up people for miles.

It was a never-ending mimicry of a crow and owl fight. The two birds are enemies, and crows apparently are good about watching out for their own. When a fight is on, crows are quick to investigate.

“Get ready boys; it’s on,” Covington said, using his shotgun to point up a hill to the north. “Here they come.”

Over the next five hours, the shoot-

ing and the calling were relentless — Seriously, how did anyone design a caller that small with so much power?

MORE SHELLS, PLEASE

This is how good it was. Ninety minutes in, Partridge leaned over to the two locals and asked what time the Claiborne County Co-Op opened, because we were running out of shells.

Do the math: One case equals 10 boxes of shells, 25 shells to the box. That’s 250 shells, or 62.5 shells per hunter, in 90 minutes. On average, that’s two shots every three minutes.

We took a 30-minute halftime break to refill our coffee thermoses, call the



Action can be fast and furious when crows fly in to investigate calls.

Marty Shafer

MISSISSIPPI CROW PARTICULARS

MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE SEASON:

Open through Feb. 28.

DAILY LIMIT: None.

PREFERRED WEAPONS: Most crow hunters use 12-gauge, semi-automatic shotguns with high-brass No. 6s. Crows are big birds and can take a load of smaller shot, fly beyond the decoys and fall, which, if it survives, can create competition in calling and ruin a hunt. A 20-gauge is effective with the No. 6s or larger shot, helping youngsters get in on the action. Some hunters also carry a scoped .22 rimfire to pick off birds that land in nearby trees.

CALLS: Until you learn the individual calls, it is best to use the electronic calling system that broadcasts a crow and owl fight. Many game-call producers, such as Primos, make a variety of calls that offer different tones. Most also offer “how-to” videos, plus there is a plethora of free instruction available online.

DECOYS: Dozens of brands are available. Just be sure in Mississippi to have the common crow; there are scores of sub-species. Use a couple dozen and make sure you include a elevated sentry decoy, like in a tree, since that is common crow behavior. As the shoot progresses, dead crows will add to the array, but make sure you keep them within shooting range and that they are not upside down or in a peculiar position.

LOCATION: Most pecan growers will gladly allow access to sportsmen, at least to those who promise to clean up after the shoot. A single crow can eat as much as 7 pounds of pecans in a season. Depredation is reason enough to hunt a species that you wouldn't otherwise use.

TABLE FARE: Crows can be eaten. Their breasts are dark, like a dove or a duck, though the taste is stronger and the meat less tender. Therefore, most recipes call for crow breasts to be stewed or used in a gumbo. ■

Co-Op and reserve all the high-brass 6s they had — 16 boxes — and for a quick drive to town and back.

Partridge and I made the run and popped down another four-pill dose of Ibuprofen. We enjoyed the silence, without music and without conversation except this from me: “This is fun, but I can't wait 'til it's over. I need a Bloody Mary to kick these Advil into high gear.”

The day finally ended at noon. We hadn't run out of shells; we simply ran out of want-to.

I forget the total number of crows we dispatched to that great pecan orchard in the sky, but it was way north of triple figures. All were delivered to a neighbor's hog farm, where they were put to good use.

“That's about as much fun as you have, right there,” Hynum said. “I don't know how you could match that. Duck hunting is great, but the limit is six. With crows, there is no limit, and when you are near productive pecans, you are not going to run out of birds.”

“We shot close to a couple hundred crows, burned about 2½ cases of shells, and, look, crows are still coming.”

Having the county agent in the blind was ideal, since Covington knew well the lay of the land and had worked with the two pecan farmers. They were both having productive years but were besieged by crows.

“Man, they hate crows,” he said. “We're doing them a great service, and are having fun doing it. We killed about 200 of them today, and I read somewhere where a single crow can eat over 7 pounds of pecans per season.”

GET IN THE WAY

That Covington's farm sat directly on the flight path between the two pecan groves — and offered several wild pecan trees — put us right in the sweet spot.

It also helped that Hynum and Covington knew exactly how to set up the hunt, with the proper decoy display that included an owl decoy I keep on my pontoon boat when moored to keep birds away.

“You need at least a dozen crow decoys and the one owl, but it's best to have two dozen,” Hynum said. “One of them has to be off the ground in the tree, near the owl. Crows always have a sentry bird to overlook the flock, watching for predators like owls and raptors.”

“Once you start shooting, and killing crows, all the dead birds just add to the decoy spread. We may have started with 24 decoys, but we finished with nearly 200 or so.”

Every few minutes, between flights of flocks, one of us would go out and turn over any crows that were laying feet up.

“They've got keen eyesight,” Covington said, “and they are very smart. One thing you have to do is not let a crippled crow

get away. It always happens once or twice during a hunt that a wounded crow will manage to fly just out of gun range before it hits the ground or a limb. Once it's out there on the fringe, it will begin warning and calling other birds, and that can mess up a hunt. Somebody will have to go and kill it or

continues >



Mississippi has no daily bag limit on crows during a Nov. 3-Feb. 28 season.

Pete Rogers

SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT

V

at least drive it away.”

It happened to us three times that morning, and Covington was correct. Each time, the injured crow wouldn't shut up. We watched as each incoming flock would veer toward it instead of flying into our death trap, or what Partridge called our “ring of no return.”

A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

There is another way to shoot crows, but it requires a lot more dedication and expertise, since no electronic calling device is used.

Through acquaintances at Mossy Oak, I met a guy from Georgia who was as close to a professional crow hunter as you can get. When Jerry Tomlin agreed to drive over for the hunt, I called a huge commercial pecan grower, and he was happy to have help getting rid of crows.

Tomlin, who produced a few videos in the 1990s and began guiding hunts, is often hired by pecan growers to control crop depredation. Rarely, he said, does a pecan farmer deny him an opportunity to hunt crows.

This guy could talk crow, literally and figuratively. He knew the language, from the hailing calls to the important all-clear calls. He also knew crow biology.

“Just like duck hunting,” Tomlin said. “There are calls to get

Electronic crow callers can make a long, loud series of calls.



their attention, there are calls to calm them down, calls to alert them and calls to tell them, ‘It is okay; you are safe to feed here.’ Knowing the difference is the key, that and the importance of decoys. If you can call a crow close enough to see the decoys, you can shut up, and the dekes will finish the job.”

Knowing where to sit in the blind with Tomlin was important, too, and why this form of crow hunting also requires a full dose of Ibuprofen before, during and after the hunt.

That man could forevermore blow a crow call, which I learned at sunrise in freezing temperatures while running a 102-degree fever. We'd been there about 5 minutes when we heard a distant crow holler “Caw, caw, caw” perhaps two counties over, or so it seemed.

“CAW, CAW, CAW” blasted in my left ear as Tomlin taught me lesson No. 1 — sit behind him.

Lesson No. 2: “Whatever call a crow makes at that distance, answer it exactly. If he caws three times, you caw three times.”

Sure enough, a few seconds later, we got an answer from the same direction, the same “Caw, caw, caw,” only this time it was noticeably closer.

Tomlin answered exactly the same way, and the bird responded again, this time with just two caws, again closer. Tomlin gave him two back.

“Keep your eyes to the left; he or they should pop over that tree line any second now,” he said. “I'm going to let you shoot, and if there's just the one crow, kill it. If there's more than one, be darned sure you shoot the leader. No matter what, target the leader.”

In a matter of seconds, a crow appeared over the tree line headed right at us and then another, and another, and eventually seven crows were visible.

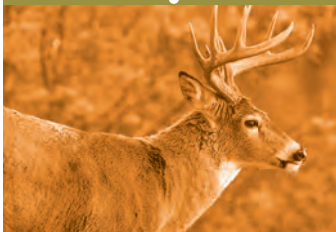
“Remember, lead crow first, then any of the rest, when I say now,” Tomlin said.

The crows came in and started circling at the edge of the pecan grove. We were about 100 yards in from the edge in Tomlin's ground blind. The lead crow was looking for the crow responsible for answering him.

Through binoculars, I saw him looking right at us, and I could tell the second he saw the array of decoys — he turned and led the small group right into the spread, on a flight path directly across from us.

“Now,” Tomlin whispered, “get that lead bird.”

Of course, in my excitement, I missed, shooting behind the



DeerView manufactures the best windows in the industry!

Dealer(s)/Manufacturer Pricing Available

All of our windows and doors can be custom made or you can select from our standard sizes.

817-453-7421

www.DeerViewWindows.com





A well set-up crow hunt can provide some exciting, fast shooting.

Pete Rogers

lead bird, hitting the second one instead. “BAM! BAM!” roared Tomlin’s gun, the lead bird fell, and I jumped out of my skin. My heart started beating again just as Tomlin hit the calls again. This time a series of three “ca-caws,” followed by this advice, “Watch and get ready, and again, try to shoot the lead bird.”

Responding to Tomlin’s call, which he described as the “It’s okay, there’s food to eat here” call, the five remaining crows circled and came back. This time, I got the first one with one shot and used my other two shells to get the last bird in the line.

“Ca-caw, ca-caw, ca-caw,” Tomlin called again.

The other three crows came back and, with my gun now empty, Tomlin rose and took all three out. All seven crows were done, and our decoy count rose from 30 to 37.

“Doesn’t always work that way, but if you can take the lead crow out and then hit them with that all-clear, it’s OK to call; the rest of the birds will think he just went down and started eating,” Tomlin said. “A lot of times they will turn and come back. Otherwise, they’re gone”

Later in the morning, Tomlin taught me another lesson. I shot and winged a solo bird, which it managed a slow glide to earth, about 100 yards away. Upon landing, it started this horrible, continuous cawing.

“Dang,” said Tomlin, who, without another word, sprung out of the blind,

ran to the crow and finished the job. He brought it back and tossed into the decoy array.

“That can ruin a setup in a heartbeat,” Tomlin said. “The last thing you want is a wounded crow competing with your calling, because he’s going to be making a warning call. Doesn’t matter what you do; any birds that come will immediately go to his aid. They are very protective.”

It’s the same theory behind the tape of the crow and owl fight, he said.

“The reason that works is that the crows will hear it and come to the aid of their buddy,” Tomlin said. “Owls and crows are natural enemies.

“I started hunting that way, too,” Tomlin said, “but I learned to call, and I think it is more fun, more challenging, to call the birds. You may not get as many shots this way, but it’s just more fun.”

And, I might add, it’s slightly easier on the ears. ■



Bobby Cleveland has covered sports in Mississippi for over 40 years. A native of Hattiesburg and graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Cleveland lives on Ross Barnett Reservoir near Jackson with his wife Pam.

Southern Camper Sales

2743 PASS RD, BILOXI, MS

228-896-4742



\$14,500

2015 GREY WOLF 31'
26 RL. Super Slide, rear living, 2 entrances, large storage box mounted on rear.



\$10,900

2015 RETRO 18'
177 By Riverside RVs. Twin Beds in Front. Sleeps 4. LOADED!



\$33,900

2007 JAYCO GREYHAWK 31'
Model 30 JS. Loaded unit with Double Sideouts. Ford E450 chassis. Sleeps 6.



\$37,900

2007 DAMON CHALLENGER 36'
348C. Ford Triton V-10 chassis. 2 slides. Call us for complete details.



\$6,995

2005 PILGRIM 27'
SE 260.5 Bunkhouse 5th Wheel with Super Slideout



\$22,900

2014 ROCKWOOD 33'
Signature Ultra Lite. Triple slide outs, Electric Hitch, Slide Toppers. LOADED!



\$11,995

2016 COACHMAN CATALINA 27'
243 4BS. Legacy Edition. Super Slide. Rear Bedroom. Call Us!



\$46,900

2012 LEPRECHAN 23'
M220. Chevy 4500 chassis with slide. Great shape with only 29K miles.



\$45,000

2004 TROPICAL LX - T370. Diesel Pusher with 350 HP Cat and 6 sp. Allison. New tires, new front A/C, tow bar included. Triple slideouts



\$13,900

2014 WOLFPACK 28'
TOY HAULER!!! Loaded with options and sleeps 6! Call us!



\$6,995

2014 RPOD BY FORREST RIVER 18' RP182G. Sleeps 4. Has an inside and outdoor kitchen.



\$44,900

2007 YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY CLUB 33'
Super Slide. Clean unit with a Triton v-10 powerhouse.

GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

The author gets together with a group of anglers every spring on Michigan's Lake St. Clair. Everyone travels at least 600 miles for the event. Although we can't claim ancestral fishing rights, this annual trip has great value to our small tribe.

THE VALUE OF FISH AND FISHERIES

FISHING'S WORTH IS EASY TO MEASURE — AND IT ISN'T



Photo courtesy Chris Patton

It's the middle of winter in the fish world. Not much happening under the water's surface except the usual predator-prey dance in slow motion.

Across much of Mississippi, it's the middle of winter for most anglers, too. Not many are on the water, although with most hunting seasons over, a lot are starting to think about fishing. It is a good time to think a little deeper than just about fish biology or catching them. What are fish and fishing opportunities worth?

DOLLARS ARE SENSE

Many popular and technical articles tout the economic value of recreational fishing; it is significant. Nationally, in 2016, more than 31 million anglers age 16 and older spent almost \$30 billion fishing in freshwater; another 8.3 million saltwater anglers age 16 and older spent more than \$11 billion. The most-recently

compiled statistics for Mississippi (2011) report 603,000 Mississippians age 16 and older spend \$528 million annually.

Fisheries management is a political game. License sales generate revenue, as do taxes on the sale of fishing equipment. Fishing also generates jobs in the manufacture and sale of fishing-related equipment, fishing guides and businesses like restaurants that support anglers. Fisheries management activities — monitoring fish populations and anglers, habitat enhancement, operating hatcheries, maintaining access, enforcement, research — and the personnel and facilities needed to accomplish these activities involve money. Legislators decide how money is spent. Fishing expenditures, revenue and jobs are statistics legislators understand. They also understand that every angler age 18 and older is a potential voter.

While dollars and number of anglers may not mean much to you, they mean a lot to the folks who have control over fisheries resources

ENVIRONMENT PLUS

The fish you catch are part of the aquatic web of life. Regardless of the species you target, robust populations of sportfish depend on a healthy aquatic ecosystem that begins with good water quality and habitat. And good fishing is a good indicator of a healthy environment.

A lake or river is a microcosm — the organisms that live there are bound by the water's edge. But the lake or river is strongly influenced by the watershed, everything upslope and upstream. Good fishing suggests the environmental health of the entire watershed; consistently poor fishing indicates repairs are needed.

But fishing has other values, and these accrue to participants: anglers.

CULTURAL VALUE

Many fisheries are managed to fulfill Native Americans' rights to fish, because fish and fishing are deeply rooted in their cultures. Their rights to fish are legally mandated by federal laws. Such is the case for salmon fisheries in the Pacific northwest and walleye fisheries in Minnesota.

I think restricting cultural value to Native Americans is narrow-minded and naïve. I'm a fisheries biologist, not a sociologist, but if culture is the customs, arts, social institutions and achievements of a particular nation, people or other social group, then angling has cultural value to many people. Anglers share common interests and develop friendships and bonds, like a tribe. Groups of anglers may be connected via Facebook or other social media. In some cases, they may not even know each other's name, but they chat on the water or at the access site. This is part of the fishing experience. I mourn the passing of the bait and tackle shop where anglers used to gather to share fish stories and their mutual interest in fishing.

Does it matter whether their ancestors fished four centuries ago, two generations ago, or they are first-generation anglers who will share fishing with their children? The cultural value of fishing is reflected in the passage of right-to-fish legislation by 20 states, including Mississippi, since 1996.

HEALTH VALUE

Fishing is fun (most days), and fish are healthy food. That's reason enough to value fish and fishing. But there is much research suggesting that fishing and exposure to nature can improve feelings of positive emotion, reduce

stress and increase cognitive fascination. Dr. Paul Quinnett, an avid angler and a clinical psychologist, prescribes fishing for suicide prevention. I highly recommend his entertaining and thought-provoking books on fishing: "Darwin's Bass," "Fishing Lessons" and "Pavlov's Trout."

Fishing provides opportunities for contemplative and competitive anglers. The health benefits are available to all, regardless of gender, age or physical and mental abilities.

THE LIST GOES ON

I have only touched on the recreational side of fishing. Commercial fishing, in

addition to providing millions of tons of valuable food consumed by billions of people, provides values to the fisheries similar to the categories above.

How do you value fishing? ■



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.

TOHATSU

EMMETT'S MARINE
BROOKHAVEN, MS

EMMETT'S MARINE
354 DALE TRL NE • BROOKHAVEN, MS 39601
(601) 833-2277
WWW.EMMETTSMARINE.COM

LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Dusty Anders used Rat-L-Trap's new MR-6 crankbait on a successful December trip at Toledo Bend.

RAT-L-TRAP'S NEW MR-6 CRANKBAIT

CASTING DISTANCE, ACTION AND VIBRATION ARE KEY FEATURES FOR NEW 6-FOOT MODEL

Mark Daniels Jr. knows what he wants in a crankbait — and he got it from Rat-L-Trap, the artificial lure manufacturer from Alexandria, La.

Daniels, a pro bass angler from California, hooked up with Rat-L-Trap a few years ago and rose to the top with the help of crankbaits, an ascent sure to continue now that he has the new MR-6, a departure from the legendary lipless crankbait series made by Rat-L-Trap.

Wes Higgins, 37-year-old president of Rat-L-Trap, is proud of Daniels and proud of the MR-6.

"It was purely driven by the pro staff. Certain pros kept coming to me and saying, 'Wes, if we could build us a 6-foot range crankbait, we could really use it. A 6-foot crankbait is what we have tied on across the country,'" Higgins said.

All Rat-L-Trap pro staffers had input in

the design of the MR-6. Daniels, though, was the "main guy."

"This is his baby. It's been great working with Mark," Higgins said. "It's a high-performance pro design that's got everything in it our anglers wanted," he said, including a low-pitched knocking sound unlike the rattle of a Rat-L-Trap.

The focus was on key features of crankbaits fished effectively at that depth. Those features included casting distance, action and vibration.

Retired firefighter Dusty Anders attested to those features after fishing trips on Toledo Bend and Lake Sam Rayburn. Anders, who retired in November, will turn his part-time bass fishing guide business to a full time venture — and he'll have an ample supply of MR-6s.

On a late-December trip, he caught about 30 bass, including 25 on the MR-6

with the others coming on a jerkbait. Water temperature was 57 degrees.

Because he was retrieving the crankbait over grass, ticking it at times, the bites came as he pulled away from the grass. The design of the crankbait, which is less buoyant than others, kept it a few inches off the grass — and that's where the bass targeted it that day.

"It's like a Rat-L-Trap. When you pull it out of the grass, they hit it. It (MR-6) doesn't hang up in the grass like a square-bill," he said.

According to Higgins, the MR-6's creation began in the fall of 2017. The body shape accounts for the vibration and action, he said.

"There's a lot of distance between the bottom of the belly and the top. Look at the shape. It goes from being tall at the back of the belly to tapered at the tail. The real fast taper at the tail gives us

the wiggle. The big flat side moves a lot of water," he said. "It's a pretty compact lure that gets after it."

As for the action, Anders said, "This is in between a real tight wiggle and a wobble. It's not quite as wide a wobble (as a square-bill crankbait)."

There are other things to like about the MR-6, he said.

"For one thing, I like the way it throws. This little bait throws excellent. It throws like a bullet," he said.

The 2¼-inch, ½-ounce crankbait has an internal weight-transfer system that enhances its castability, Higgins said.

And Rat-L-Trap armed the MR-6 with Mustad Triple Grip No. 4 treble hooks because, he said, "We wanted to make sure we had that action, but still had big hooks. Those guys don't like missing fish. In fact, that's one of the things Boyd Duckett was really impressed with when he tested it — that it had such good action and vibration with such large hooks on it."

Anders agreed.

"The thing I like about it is the big hooks. They're real sharp. You don't have to change them out of the box," he said.

And there are plenty of color options.

"I think we have the best colors," Higgins said about the 16 different offerings.

Remembering that day on Toledo Bend, Anders said, "Once I got tuned in to the right color, they had it in the back of their throat."

He started the day with a dark-colored MR-6, a Rayburn red craw, and caught some — but as the sun got up a majority of the bass got on a shad-colored crankbait, silverado.

For more information about Rat-L-Trap's MR-6 and other Rat-L-Trap products, call (318) 445-8301 or go to www.rat-l-trap.com. ■



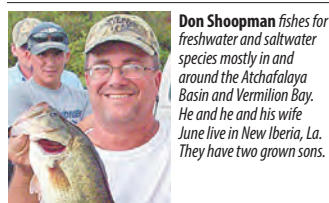
CUSTOM MAPS

- Full-Color Aerial Photo or Topo Map
- Zoom To Any Location In The U.S.
- Personalized Fishing & Hunting Maps
- National & State Wildlife Refuges
- All Waterways & Roads Labelled

*Beautiful wall maps or convenient roll-up size...
We can print any size...Laminating is available*

www.custom-mapping.com

CALL TODAY FOR YOUR FREE PREVIEW MAP
Custom Mapping Services (225) 677-7207



Don Shoopman fishes for freshwater and saltwater species mostly in and around the Atchafalaya Basin and Vermilion Bay. He and his wife June live in New Iberia, La. They have two grown sons.

LIVE YOUR OFFSHORE LIFE

#OFFSHORELIFE
@REGULATORMARINE

REGULATOR 28

REGULATOR MODELS AVAILABLE!
23, 25, 28, 31, 34, 34SS, AND 41

NORTHSHORE
662 Old Spanish Trail
Slidell, LA

985-649-9044
WWW.BOATSTUF.COM

YAMAHA

COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

MR. BOB GOES WELL WITH RICE

THIS WONDERFUL QUAIL DISH IS A BIRD HUNTER'S DELIGHT

The rice, relish and quail in this recipe can be served in a variety of ways. **INSET:** Quail halves go in the pan first, before being joined by the rice for 40 to 45 minutes.



There is something special about following bird dogs. Unfortunately, the numbers of wild quail and areas to hunt them continue to dwindle. Our country would be in much better shape if youngsters grew up seeing the loping stride of a big, ranging pointer or setter, the thorough inspection of every leaf by a Brittany spaniel, the grin on a proud bird dog's face as it delivered a quail to hand and the vibrating wag of a spaniel or German shorthair's tail just before it locks on point.

Yep, a lot of lessons could be learned by spending days afield searching for Mr. Bob. The manners and respect of bird dogs honoring and backing points is something we could all take to heart. The manner and thoroughness of the work during the hunt and the relaxation with friends are memories and lessons to last a lifetime. Even cleaning the birds, with feathers sticking to your fingers, is an exercise in patience many folks could learn.

Though hunters enjoy it, a quail hunt is for the dogs. The genetics of a strong bird dog line are impossible to deny. It shows by them shaking with excitement once out of the vehicle, then explodes with raw enthusiasm once given the command to hunt.

This recipe is about what the hunter does after his faithful companion has finished its role in the day's activities and delivered the bird to hand. Mr. Bob is a small creature, barely more than a morsel, but after the day's activities have come to a close, it's only fitting to prepare these little feathered chunks in a way that recognizes their importance to the hunter(s) and the bird dog(s).

One of my good friends, always a dedicated quail hunter, recently admitted to occasionally visiting a hunting preserve or buying and placing quail on his farm to be sure there were quail for his dogs to find. This is the attitude of most of my friends. It isn't about filling a limit, but spending time with family, friends and watching the dogs work.

All the walking during a quail hunt can be demanding, but it can also be amazingly relaxing. This recipe is a good one for when your hunt was fun and produced quail for dinner, but not a limit. I believe you will find it an easy way to prepare a few quail from a day's hunt. Hopefully, you also find it tasty. ■

EZ QUAIL AND RICE WITH RELISH

After following a pair of bird dogs for most of a day, a meal of fresh quail hits the spot. Many folks fry them, while others use their grills, and both are excellent. However, I try to avoid fried food as much as possible, and some days just aren't right for grilling, so here's another option.

Some days you just don't find a lot of wild birds, and — heaven forbid — some days, your pattern always seems to be in places the birds aren't. This recipe is a good one to help stretch a few birds into a meal. It also helps when the birds insist on flying into the heart of your pattern and you're preparing partial birds. Rice served with similar relishes has saved the day more than once, and the relish creates good taste without having to add gravy.

This relish is simple and adaptable. It begins with bacon to make sure everyone likes it. Consider bacon, onions and mushrooms as a start and feel free to add whatever vegetables and seasonings you like. I sometimes sprinkle on a little ground, smoked chipotle peppers to spice it up a little. For those with milder palates, a little more Cavender's gives more flavor without any heat. One of my friends adds a touch of sugar to make it sweeter, and another sautés the veggie in butter rather than the bacon drippings.

PREPARATION:

Dress the quail. I skin them, but this is a personal preference. Cut the quail into halves. Season the quail to taste with Cavender's and pepper. Spray a baking pan with non-stick cooking spray. Place the quail halves breast up in the bottom of a baking pan. I don't use a casserole dish, as the ceramic or glass gets too hot.

Sprinkle the rice around the pan, concentrating on the spaces between pieces of quail. Pour broth into pan. Preheat oven to 350. Bake for approximately 40 to 45 minutes until the liquid is gone and the rice is cooked. Be careful not to overcook the quail. Remove from oven and allow to sit for several minutes.

RELISH

Chop the mushrooms and onion. Cut the bacon into ½- to 1-inch pieces. Cook the bacon and remove from pan. Pour off and save excess bacon drippings. Sauté mushrooms and onions in bacon drippings with a dusting of Cavender's and pepper. Watch the pan closely, and don't let it get too dry. If needed, add some of the saved

I think this relish mix handles experimentation really well.

The quail are the guests of honor in this recipe, and you must pay attention not to overcook them. They will get tough and chewy if overcooked. However, the rice needs to cook long enough to be tender. Quail are thin and are usually almost or even fully covered with the broth to begin, and this helps keep them moist and prevents overcooking. I've tried this with wild rice, and it just takes too long to cook. If the quail get ahead of the rice in cooking, lay a piece of aluminum foil across the pan, but leave a corner or two exposed, and don't seal it.

I serve the quail on the rice, with the relish on the side, and let folks eat it as they like. I eat the quail separately and mix the relish with the rice, but I have friends who eat the relish with the quail and even one that picks the meat from the quail and mixes it with the rice and relish. However you prefer, if you like quail, I think you'll like this. Enjoy! ■

bacon drippings. Crumble bacon. Mix bacon crumbles into sautéed onions and mushrooms and remove from heat.

Serve the quail halves on top of the rice with relish around or between them. This goes well with a green vegetable, garden salad or green salad. Fresh, steamed broccoli is an excellent choice for the vegetable, but green beans and others also accompany it well. I like salads and will often begin or end with one, even if serving it with a green vegetable. A lettuce wedge with Bacon Chipotle Ranch dressing hits the spot for me — even as dessert. Fresh, hot, hearty bread is always a good addition. Enjoy. ■

TIP!

Covering any kind of meat with broth while cooking will help keep it from overcooking.

INGREDIENTS:

4 quail
3 slices thin bacon
1 cup uncooked rice
1½ cups chicken broth (or bullion)
¾ cup mushrooms (chopped)
¾ cup sweet onion (chopped)
Coarse ground black pepper
Cavender's All Purpose Greek Seasoning
Non-stick cooking spray



The author cuts bacon as part of the preparation of the relish that accompanies the quail and rice.



Jerry Dilsaver of Oak Island, N.C., is a freelance writer, as well as a former national king mackerel champion fisherman. Readers are encouraged to send their favorite recipes and a photo of the completed dish to possibly be used in a future issue of the magazine. E-mail the recipes and photos to Jerry.Dilsaver@captainjerry.com.

Prescribed burning is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve wildlife habitat, and winter is the prime time to set a controlled fire in the woods. **INSET:** Newly burned areas encourage growth of all sorts of plants; turkeys will feed on the tender shoots in winter and spring.

BURN, BABY, BURN

WINTER PERFECT FOR PRESCRIBED BURNING

By Jeff Burleson

Managing wildlife and game species is a year-round endeavor. Although wildlife management has many facets, habitat management is among the most-important in developing thriving populations of wildlife.

February is a great month to prepare and “spruce up” available spring/summer habitat for wild turkeys, and one of the most-overlooked and cost-effective habitat modification techniques is prescribed burning. Turkeys prosper in lands with a mix of woods and agriculture with frequent fire. Readily available spring/summer habitat, consisting of low plant cover within woodlands and old fields, is especially important. Winter burning maximizes wild foods and cover for turkeys of all ages.

Burning encourages the maintenance and development of early successional vegetation, including native warm-season grasses and forbs, which serve as excellent nesting and brood rearing habitat for turkeys.

Burning and its products increase the chances for survival of young poults. It is an essential component to continuing a huntable population of wild turkey for the future.

Not only do burned areas provide brood-rearing and nesting habitat, but adult turkeys eat 90-percent plant matter and 10-percent insects. They will seek out these areas to feed. The newly-burned areas encourage growth of warm-season grasses, sedges, forbs, legumes, and they provide a home for protein-rich insects. They are prime feeding areas for adults in the spring and poults in the summer. More than 75 percent of a poult’s diet should include insects to make it through the early developmental stages of their lives.

Burning should be restricted to old field areas and fire-resistant pine forests. The majority of hardwood trees are not fire tolerant and are not recommended for prescribed burns. Pine stands eligible for burning should also be restricted to older stands that have been thinned at least once. Sunlight is a necessity and a requirement of early successional growth. Young pine plantations have a dense canopy cover, which doesn’t allow adequate sunlight to reach the forest floor.

Targets for winter prescribed burns should be areas where there is poor understory development caused by encroachment of undesirable vegetation



— usually hardwood trees or woody shrubs — and/or accumulation of litter. The goal of a burn is to reduce litter and encourage growth of early successional species.

Each stand needs to be burned at least every three to five years. Rotate winter burns in various stands to have some newly burned area for each spring and summer period.

The burning season runs from January to March, prior to leaf-out, for low-intensity burns that benefit game birds. ■

Planting and cultivating a buffer of thick trees or bushes around a popular feeding area for deer can give animals a little more security to venture into the picture during daylight hours.

MAKE DEER FEEL MORE SECURE

By Jeff Burleson



Jeff Burleson

PLANT BUFFERS GIVE WHITETAILS A SENSE OF PROTECTION

With long seasons in most southeastern states, deer hunters have an extended period to target trophy bucks, which makes consistent disturbance from hunting pressure and other factors a real issue.

Hunters can improve their chances with a little buffering and protection around attractive sites on their properties, and winter is a perfect time to beef up buffers around ag fields or food plots to provide a better sense of security.

Care should be taken to shield these areas from unnecessary disturbance; that will promote their use by deer any time of day, when often, they are more likely to use them after dark.

Many agriculture fields are located along highways, and many food plots are created from existing agriculture fields. While deer may become adapted to the constant traffic, a traveling motorist will frequently pull off to take a peek, flushing the deer back into the forest cover.

Even when food plots are miles away from a public highway, they will frequently be created adjacent to a heavily-traveled woods road, which usually lacks significant cover to shield grazing wildlife from curious onlookers passing by.

Security is the key to keep deer on food sources during daylight hours. Planting forested buffers along any travel corridors

will significantly improve the productivity of food plots and prime agriculture fields during hunting season.

The width of buffers should be directly related to the level of disturbance expected along the travel corridor. Highly traveled roadways need wider buffer strips than a small dirt road bordering a food plot deep in the wilds. Buffers should be at least 25 feet wide, but 75 to 125 feet is ideal to fully protect these animals from unnatural disturbances.

BUFFERING PLANTS

The best buffers have a combination of trees, shrubs and brushy materials. The intent of any buffer is to provide 100-percent visual blockage and as much sound protection as possible.

The preferred way to establish these buffers is from a combination of planting and volunteer recruitment. Unfortunately, buffer establishment can be a lengthy process. Tree plantings should be the start of these buffers, with volunteer shrub and brushy species following afterwards. Pines and other evergreen species susceptible to rapid growth should be selected to jump-start these buffers. Selecting evergreen trees also prevents any period of leaf fall compromising the buffer's integrity as well.

On most sites, loblolly pine is the choice

for rapid height growth. On sites that feature particularly dry conditions, longleaf pines should replace loblolly plantings for a higher survival rate. Planting a combination of loblolly and shortleaf or Virginia pine will accelerate the coverage. While loblolly is known for growing tall quickly, the shortleaf and Virginia pine will have more lateral growth to cover the lower stratum.

Loblolly pines should be planted a minimum of three to five rows deep. Trees should be spaced 6 to 8 feet apart along rows, and rows should be 10 feet apart. Shortleaf or Virginia pine should be planted along the roadway or in the interior of the buffer in their own rows, but in voids of the loblolly pine to complete buffer coverage. As the trees grow, other volunteer species will contribute to the buffer. In addition to planting trees, shrubs such as wax myrtle can be planted to jump-start the lower stratum.

While buffers can be created any time of year, all plantings in these buffers should be confined to the December-through-March period. To further encourage buffer growth, seasonal fertilization can be helpful. A balanced fertilizer of equal parts phosphate, nitrogen and potash can be broadcasted over the buffers in the spring and summer. ■

ANCHORS AWEIGH!

By Jerry Dilsaver

CHOOSE YOUR BOTTOM-HOLDING DEVICES WITH SITUATIONS IN MIND

When it comes to fishing, anglers often need to have skills and knowledge other than casting and retrieving in order to be successful. Some are apparent: the ability to throw a cast net to collect live bait. Others, including the ability to anchor quickly, quietly and successfully, aren't often at the forefront of fishermen's thoughts.

All it takes is a few minutes of looking through a marine retailer's catalog or visiting an Internet website to, see an abundance of anchor designs. Each touts some feature or situation that claims superior service. Certain bottoms or fishing situations call for one style or anchor over others.

1 THE DANFORTH ANCHOR

The Danforth, blade-style anchor is one of the best-holding anchors, regardless of bottom type, when used with an appropriate weight and enough anchor chain. The blades dig into the bottom to hold a boat steady. Holding power increases as heavier anchors are used, but it also can be increased by adding a longer and heavier length of chain.

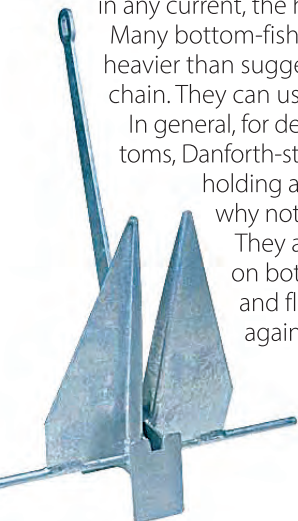
When rigged correctly, it will seek out a hold even on shell bottom and almost always digs its way to a secure hold.

Many fishermen use the least-expensive anchor rated for their boats and one of the 3-foot pieces of chain that come in packages, complete with a pair of shackles for attaching it to the anchor and anchor line. They often must use the full 7-to-1 scope recommended by the Coast Guard. With harder bottoms in any current, the hold is precarious at best.

Many bottom-fishermen use an anchor at least one weight heavier than suggested for their boats and add 20 to 30 feet of chain. They can usually anchor with a scope of 2-to-1 or less.

In general, for deeper water, higher currents and harder bottoms, Danforth-style anchors, with extra chain are excellent holding anchors. If they work so well in these extremes, why not use them everywhere?

They are not easy to untangle when they get hung on bottom structure, and they're noisy. The shank and flukes rotate and clank, and the chain clinks against everything it touches.



2 NAVY STYLE ANCHOR

When the current isn't too strong and the bottom isn't too hard, a rubber-coated Navy style anchor is amazingly quiet and brings a high-degree of stealth to anchoring when you're fishing for speckled trout or red drum in coastal creeks. This anchor can be used without any chain.

Navy style anchors bite well in soft bottoms, but they slip on rock or shell bottoms. Mushroom-shaped river anchors work to a point for this application, but I've found the Navy-style anchor works better in more situations.

3 'CAJUN' ANCHOR

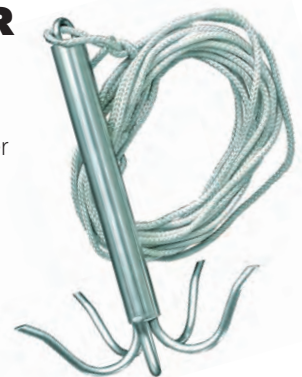
Cajun anchors have been gaining popularity with shallow-water fishermen, but they have a few limitations. Cajun anchors are simply long, steel poles, with an eye on one end and a slight point on the other. They can be pushed into the bottom in shallow water and tied to the eye or dropped over the side where their weight holds the boat.

Cajun anchors work well for staking in softer bottoms, but so does a push pole, which is longer, serves a dual purpose and can work in deeper water. If there is much current, a Cajun anchor laid on anything but the softest mud bottom will drag.

4 WRECK ANCHOR

As the name suggests, wreck anchors work well at wrecks and also are a good choice at many other kinds of underwater structure. These anchors consist of a 2- to 3-foot-long heavy steel center bar with three or four grapnel hooks of lighter material welded to the bottom.

The grapnel hooks grab in the structure and hold while anglers fish, but they can be pulled hard to straighten and release from the bottom.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Danforth-style anchor is a good all-around choice. Mushroom anchors are great when holding a soft bottom. Cajun anchors, aka anchor pins or shallow-water anchors, are great for holding boats in place in marshes. Wreck anchors are great for holding onto uneven bottom structure; the grapnels will straighten out when pulling it loose is needed.

CLEAN AT LAST

HERE'S HOW TO PUT THAT GUN AWAY UNTIL NEXT SEASON

By Gordon Hutchinson



Brushing out the barrel of a bolt-action rifle is one of the first steps in an end-of-season cleaning job.

A buddy with a new shotgun still in the box stored it in the trunk of a vehicle for a week or two, and when he retrieved it, found a thin pantina of rust on the metal parts, perhaps the result of humid conditions in the trunk.

That brought up the subject of giving guns a good cleaning before you put them away for a while — like the end of deer, duck, squirrel, rabbit or bird season.

First off, no WD-40!

Countless gunsmiths say, to a man, do not put WD-40 on your guns. Some jokingly say don't even have it in the same room with your guns, so you won't be tempted.

A gun coated with WD-40 instead of a good oil will rust — in an amazingly quick time. Yet duck hunters and other

outdoorsmen who shoot in wet environments will spray their guns down with WD-40 and forget about them. And days later, they will be shocked at the amount of surface rust they find on their fine firearms.

An excellent start to cleaning any firearm is to spray it down with a cleanser that removes oils, grease, burned powders, etc. In the military, rifles and parts were often cleaned with lighter fluid. Once the fluid washed the steel clean, it evaporated, leaving a clean, unprotected surface. Then, everything would be wiped down with an oily rag, with a lightly oiled patch run through the bore.

Nowadays, aerosol cans from gun stores do just that for you — with the ease of a powerful stream of cleanser shooting out of the can, knocking the filth, oils and

greases off the surface of your guns. These products are extremely effective and costly.

An excellent substitute is plain automotive brake parts cleaner, inexpensively obtained at any auto parts counter. It works exactly the same way at considerably less cost. Be warned; do not use carburetor cleaners for this job. These petroleum distillates will eat finishes on wooden grips and stocks, and they may melt plastic handgun grips.

Once you have cleaned the burnt powder and accumulated gunk trapped with the old grease and oils, wipe the gun down with an oily rag soaked with a good firearms protectant/lubricant, run a lightly-oiled rag through the bore and put your baby to rest for the long sleep until next hunting season. ■

Have you been in a wreck? You have a choice.
CHOOSE THE BEST!



Barnett's
BODY SHOP

24
Hour
Towing

5 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU!!!
FLOWOOD, MS • 601-939-9700
RICHLAND, MS • 601-664-9770
BYRAM, MS • 601-372-0042
RIDGELAND, MS • 601-856-0700
GLUCKSTADT, MS

Winter is a great time to work on your fly-casting technique, paying special attention to the relationship between the back cast and forward stroke.

WINTER FLY-ROD PRACTICE



GET YOUR STROKE DOWN, COLD By Richard Bernabe

If you're not inclined to take advantage of some of the Gulf Coast's coastal flats-fishing opportunities, this could be the time of year to practice, refine or improve your fly-casting stroke.

This can be done from the relative comfort of your own backyard. Warmth and hot coffee are only a few dozen steps from your practice area.

Here are some fly casting basics to remember when honing your casting stroke during the winter:

1. GET RID OF THAT SLACK, SLACKER

It's important to remember that in order to cast efficiently during forward and back casts, any slack must be removed from the line before the start of the cast.

Simply put, the line must be taut before the cast ever begins. This is true for the forward and the back cast. You'll not move the line or load the rod until the slack is gone. Power and efficiency will be wasted if the arm moves without the line.

2. START/STOP: A CASTING KEY

During the back and forward casts, the casting stroke must be accelerated to a

hard stop. Your casting motion must continually gain speed until the rod is brought to a complete stop in the desired position.

By accelerating, the rod is kept loaded at all times. A constant speed either forward or back will not load the rod properly, and the cast will fail.

Do not decelerate at the end of the stroke. The hard stop at the end of both the back and front casts is often compared to flicking wet paint from a paint brush. This comparison helped me greatly when I was first learning to cast.

3. MEASURE THAT STROKE

A longer casting stroke will result in a longer cast. Conversely, a shorter stroke will lead to a shorter cast. This is simple to understand but still requires practice.

4. YOUR PROBLEM IS BEHIND YOU

How your rod tip travels during the casting stroke defines how your line will travel through the air. If the rod tip travels straight, then your line will be straight; if curved, then a curved or wavy line.

The direction of your cast is defined by the direction of your rod tip at the end of the end of the casting stroke. If your rod

tip is curved by the way you stop your rod or hold your rod, then your line will curve on the cast as well.

It's during the back cast when most casting problems originate with beginning fly casters.

The old saying is: "When you're fly casting, 80 percent of your problems are behind you" — meaning, most casting problems relate to the back cast.

The perfect back cast is one that, when viewed from all angles, is 180 degrees away from the intended forward cast and has enough momentum to load the rod by bending back the rod tip. The line should be in a fairly tight loop and have no slack in it as you begin your forward cast. If your back cast is 180 degrees from your target, you will minimize tailing loops.

A tailing loop is caused by the end of the fly line running into the rest of the line on the cast (either forward or back). A back cast out of alignment or a rod tip not tracking straight can cause the problem.

Make a good back cast and keep the rod tip tracking straight on the forward cast. The tailing loop should disappear. ■

AMERICAN FASTBACKS

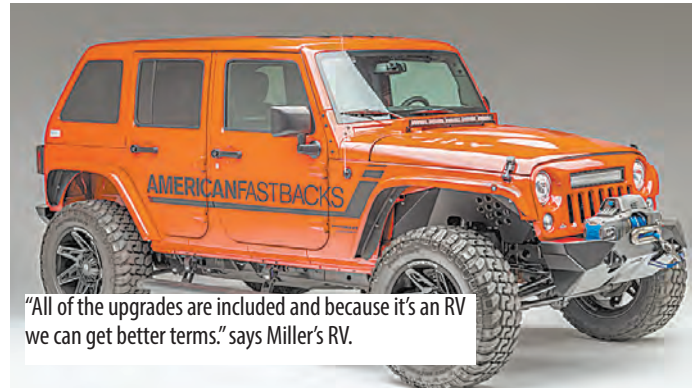
If you're looking for a loaded out Jeep Wrangler with features like 35-inch tires, custom tops, a Mopar lift kit, Fox shocks, LED light bars, electric running boards, custom bumpers, electric winch and much more — look no further than the American Fastbacks models at Miller's RV in Baton Rouge.

The vehicles, which are brand-new, 4-door Jeep Wranglers, come fully customized by American Fastbacks and are sold as a complete package.

"Most people buy a Jeep then have to come out pocket for all of the upgrades they want to make" said Jeff Hilliard, with Miller's RV in Baton Rouge. "With American Fastbacks all of the upgrades are included in the payment and because it's an RV we can get better terms. That means an amazing, loaded out Jeep at a really, really low payment - much lower than people expect!"

And if you choose to go off-road and do some camping, a Jeep RV is definitely the way to go.

"The back two seats lay down and have an integrated mattress that sleeps 2 people comfortably." Hilliard said. "One model even comes with a tent mounted to the roof that sets up at the touch of a button to sleep an additional two people. There is also a portable kitchen that comes with every unit. If you want to go camping it's there for you to use but it is easily removed for everyday use."



"All of the upgrades are included and because it's an RV we can get better terms." says Miller's RV.

The good news for your peace of mind is a full warranty on the vehicle, and the accessories.

"Because the customization is done by an RV manufacturer, it doesn't void any of the warranty on the chassis," Hilliard said. "Often when you add accessories to a vehicle, you can mess up the warranty with the original manufacturer, but this doesn't."

"So your full Jeep warranty is still in effect. And American Fastbacks warranty all of the hardware and the upgrade, so you get full warranty on both."

For more information on American Fastbacks Jeep RVs, call or text Miller's RV on Florida Boulevard in Baton Rouge at 225-275-2940, or visit miller'srv.com.

HELP WANTED

We are looking for drivers to deliver the Mississippi SPORTSMAN Magazine.

If You Love to Fish, Hunt and Meet People You Qualify!

Circulation experience helpful but not necessary
dependable vehicle & a valid MS drivers license a
must. If you have 3-5 days a month to help spread
the word I would like to hear from you!

Please Contact: Ricky Naquin,
Circulation Director @ 985-859-7744 -or- rickyn@lasmag.com

Mississippi
SPORTSMAN

CLASSIFIEDS

Display Ads

- 1/32 Page \$75/mn
- 1/16 Page \$107/mn
(vertical or horizontal)
- 1/8 Page \$155/mn
(vertical or horizontal)

Up to 25 words **\$19.95/mn** or \$45
for 3mns. Add a photo for \$10/mn

To place a classified display ad
Call 1-800-538-4355
Mon-Thurs 8-5 • Fri 8-3

REAL ESTATE

HAPPY JACK CABIN RENTAL. Great Fishing Lodge on the water with launch -Can Sleep 10- visit: www.LaCabins.com for booking & availability or call/text 504-628-7577

REAL ESTATE

LAKEFRONT PROPERTY. 2 story, 2BR, 2 bath house with 1,500 sq. ft. living area and 85' x 12' deck overlooking White Oak Lake, 15 mi. from Camden, Arkansas. House is pre-furnished and surrounded by 23,000 ac. Poison Springs WMA. Hunt deer, turkey, hogs. \$75,000. Call Mike at 870-403-1104.

Top It Off

SPORTSMANGear.com



SALTWATER

STATE COASTAL WATERS REGULATIONS (0 - 3 miles)

FISH SPECIES	Minimum Lengths	Creel Limit (per person)
Greater amberjack	34" FL	1/day
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	no limit
White marlin	66" LJFL	no limit
Sailfish	63" LJFL	no limit
Sharks (large coastal/pelagic)@	37" TL*	1/day or 3/boat
Sharks@	25" TL*	4/day
Cobia	33" FL	2 per day
Redfish (red drum)	18" minimum 30" maximum TL	3/day (1 over 30")
Flounder (state waters)	12" TL	15/day
Groupers (black and gag)	24" TL@	4/day aggregate
Hogfish	12" FL@	5/day
Red, yellowfin grouper	20" TL@	4/day
Scamp grouper	16" TL@	4/day
Speckled hind/Warsaw grouper	no minimum@	1/day each
Gray/schoolmaster/cubera/ mahogany/yellowtail/dog snapper	12" TL@	10/day aggregate
Mutton snapper	16" TL@	10/day
Queen/blackfin/silk/winchman snapper	none@	10/day aggregate
Vermillion/lane snapper	10"/8" TL@	20/day aggregate
Gray triggerfish	14" FL@	20/day
Golden/blue/line/anchor/blackline tilefish	none@	20/day
King mackerel	24" FL@	2/day
Spanish mackerel	no minimum size@	15/day
Yellowfin tuna	27" CFL@	3/day
Bigeye tuna	27" CFL@	no limit
Tripletail	18" TL	3/day
Spotted sea trout (speckled)	15"	15/day

@ For openings and closings of federally regulated fish and updated size limits, visit gulfcouncil.org.

FRESHWATER

FISH Species (Inland waters)	Minimum Size Limit	Creel Limit (per day)
Crappie/Panfish #	%	30 crappie, 100 bream
Largemouth, smallmouth, spotted bass	%	10 in combination
Channel catfish	No more than 1 over 34"	None +
Blue catfish	No more than 1 over 34"	None +
Flathead catfish	No more than 1 over 34"	None +
Striped bass or hybrid bass	15"	6 in combination
Mountain Trout (Lake Lamar Bruce)	No restrictions	3
Sauger	%	10
Walleye	%	3
Alligator gar/paddlefish	No fish over 30" in creel	2

TL=Total Length; LJFL=Lower jaw to middle of fork in tail; FL=Fork Length (tip of snout to middle of fork in tail); CFL=Curved Fork Length (measure of a line tracing contour of body from tip of upper jaw to fork of the tail).

+ In Lake Okhissa, 5 per day, in ReCon Lake and all MDWFP lakes, 10 per day

% For lake-specific regs, see MDWFP's Regulations Digest or www.mdwfp.com/

In Lake Okhissa and Percy Quin State Park, the creel limit is 50 per day.

* Possession of certain species of sharks is prohibited.

HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Doves	Sept. 1-Oct. 7 (n), Sept. 1-Sept. 9 (s) Oct. 27-Nov. 7 (n), Oct. 6-Nov. 7 (s) Dec. 22-Jan. 31 (n), Dec. 15-Jan. 31 (s)	15	45
Quail	Nov. 22-March 2	8	
Rabbit	Oct. 1-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (fall)	Sept. 30-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (spr)	May 15-June 1	4	
Raccoon	July 1-Sept. 30	1 raccoons per party	
Rac/Opp/Bobcat	Oct. 1-Oct. 31 (food/sport) Nov. 1-Feb. 28 (food/sport/pelt)	5/day, 8/party No limit	
Rails			
King & Clapper	Sept. 2-Nov. 10	25	75
Sora & Virginia,	Sept. 2-Nov. 10	15	45
Gallinules	Sept. 2-Nov. 10	15	45
Snipe	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28	8	24
Crow	Nov. 4 - Feb. 28	No limit	No limit
Woodcock	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31	3	9
Wild Turkey			
Fall season	Oct. 15-Nov. 15 (selected counties)	2 per season (may be either sex)	
Spring season	March 15-May 1	1/day, 3/season, longbeards only	
Youth season	March 8-14	1/day, 3/season, bearded birds only	

WATERFOWL SEASONS

SPECIES	DATES	BAG LIMIT
Duck	Teal only: Sept. 15-30 Nov. 23-25, Nov. 30-Dec. 2 Dec. 5-Jan. 27	6 6
Geese	Sept. 1-30	5
(Canada, blue, Ross, white-fronted, brant)	Nov. 9-25, Nov. 30-Dec. 2, Dec. 5-Jan. 27	Canada 3, Brant 1 Snow/blue/Ross 20 White-fronted 3
Light Geese conservation	Oct. 1-Nov. 8, Jan. 28-Feb. 1, Feb. 3-March 31	No limit

DEER SEASON

ZONE	ARCHERY	PRIM WEAPON	GUNS
Northeast	Oct. 1-Nov. 16 Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 17-31 (archery/primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Dec. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 16(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)
East Central	Oct. 1-Nov. 16 Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 17-31 (archery-primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Dec. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 16(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)
Southwest	Oct. 1-Nov. 16 Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 17-31 (archery-primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Dec. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan.16(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)
Southeast	Oct. 15-Nov. 16 Jan. 17-31 (either-sex arch-primitive) Feb. 1-15 (archery-primitive bucks only)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Jan. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 16(dogs) Nov. 3-Feb. 15(youth)
Delta	Oct. 1-Nov. 16 Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 17-31 (archery primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Jan. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 17(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)

BARNETT'S BODY SHOP	69	EMMETT'S MARINE	61	RURAL PROPERTY RIGHTS ASSOCIATION	20
BATTERY WORLD	47	FIRST SOUTH FARM CREDIT	76	SEVEN C'S MARINE	38
BAYOU LAFOURCHE AREA CVB	9	GIBSON REALTY/UNITED COUNTRY	45	SMITH MARINE	45
BEN NELSON GOLF AND OUTDOORS	3	K2 MARINE	33	SOUTHERN CAMPER SALES LLC	59
BOAT STUF	15, 41, 63	LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN SHOW	11, 12	TIRE DEPOT	17
BRYAN'S MARINE	15	MOSSY OAK PROPERTIES LAND INVESTMENTS	19	VAN'S OUTDOORS	75
CAROLINA COMPOSITES, LLC	42	NAUTIC STAR BOATS	31	WHITETAIL PROPERTIES	25
CRAIN TRACTOR	53	PARISH TRACTOR	35	YAMAHA MOTOR COMPANY	5
CUSTOM MAPPING SERVICE	63	PLANO SYNERGY	39		
CYPRESS COVE BOATING	14, 34, 73, 74	REED'S METALS, INC.	2		
DEER VIEW WINDOWS CO.	58	RJ'S OUTBOARD SALES & SERVICE	37		
DIXIE RV	28	ROCKY BRANDS	21		

Get decked out in the latest from the **SPORTSMAN** Store48, 54

Subscribe Today and **SAVE** 51

Cypress Cove is Now Selling



KEY WEST

COME SEE US AT THE LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN SHOW MARCH 14-17, AT LAMAR DIXON CENTER IN GONZALES.



Key West Boats: The best value on the water today.

- 1) More standard features than anything else in their class.
- 2) Uncompromised attention to safety, including positive flotation, in every model.
- 3) Unsurpassed resale value.

- 4) No wood construction, combined with light-weight coring materials and directional high strength glass, to give you many years of low upkeep and fuel efficient performance.
- 5) USCG standards used meeting some of the most stringent standards for safety, structural integrity, and stability in the world today.
- 6) Privately owned, built, and backed for over two decades by fishermen, for fisherman with one of the most liberal, least needed warranties in the industry.



3663 PONTCHARTRAIN DR. • SLIDELL, LA 70458

985-643-6668

1306 S. HAUGH AVE, STE. A • PICAYUNE, MS 39466

601-798-4700



YAMAHA

www.cypresscove.net

"Like" us on Facebook



SEE THE REVOLUTIONARY BLIND WITHOUT A BLIND SPOT NOW.

**SURROUND
VIEW**  **BLIND**



777 Hwy 468, Brandon, MS 39042
601.825.9087
2045 County Road 222, Cullman, AL 35057
256.775.4031

www.vansoutdoors.com

Follow us on 



YOUR VIEW

EXCLUSIVE
**ONE-WAY
SEE-THROUGH
WALLS**



HIS VIEW

With its revolutionary one-way see-through walls, the Double Bull SurroundView Blind lets you see all of your surroundings without being seen. Now you can spot all the movement you miss with traditional blinds, yet remain just as concealed. Download the app now and see what you've been missing.



DOUBLEBULL®



**WATCH
THE DEMO**



Download on the
App Store



It's About Your
LAND



Let's finance yours.

Your land is where your next chapter begins. It's a place to put down roots, carry on traditions, or even raise a family.

If land ownership or refinancing your land is what's next in your story, let First South guide you through financing the next chapter.

 **First South**
Farm Credit

Let's talk



800-955-1722 | FIRSTSOUTHLAND.COM