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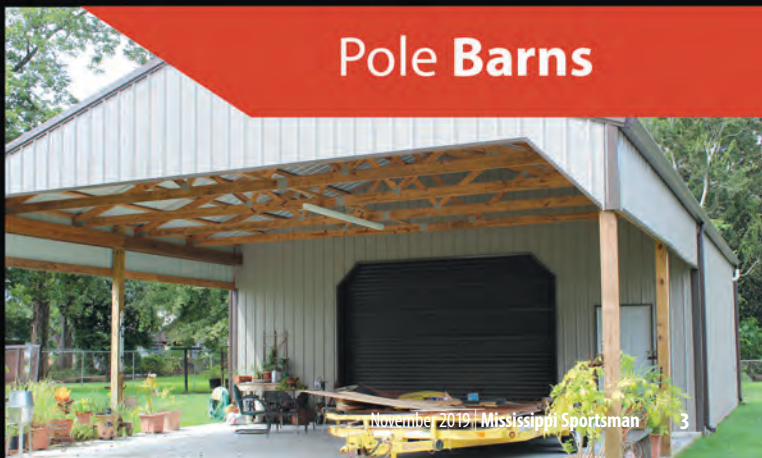
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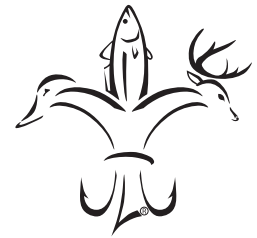
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Chip Henderson of Flowwood arrowed this "Mack Daddy" of a buck in Hinds County on Oct. 7. Photo courtesy Chip Henderson.



Mississippi
SPORTSMAN

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PUBLISHER: Tony Taylor

EDITOR: Dan Kibler

MANAGING EDITOR: Alicia LaFont

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Bobby Cleveland
bobbyc7754@yahoo.com, 601.506.0739

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Jeff Caldwell

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER:
Desiree P. Lewis

ART DIRECTOR: Kevin Orgeron

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:
Jeff Cashio, Alissa Zeringue

CONTROLLER: Juanita Guidry

SALES DIRECTOR: Jay Forrest
225.278.0258/jayf@lasmag.com

ADVERTISING SALES:

Mark Hiltz (National Sales), Mark Boyd, Asa Faulkner, Peter Church, Burton Angelle, John Cain and Bret Holten

CONTRIBUTORS:

David A. Brown, Chris Bush, Bobby Cleveland, Brian Cope, Jerry Dilsaver, Paul Elias, David Hawkins, Bill Garbo, Phillip Gentry, Michael O. Giles, Dan Kibler, Sammy Romano, Hal Schramm and Don Shoopman

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR:

Ricky Naquin 985.859.7744/rickyn@lasmag.com

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:

Contact Jay Forrest
email: jayf@lasmag.com/225.278.0258

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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.

NOVEMBER: TIME TO REAP THE BENEFITS OF MONTHS OF WORK

AFTER ANTICIPATION AND PREPARATION, IT'S TIME FOR HUNTING SEASON

"The month of November makes me feel that life is passing more quickly. In an effort to slow it down, I try to fill the hours more meaningfully." — Henry Rollins

Those lyrics, written by a comedian/songwriter, could have been written by any Mississippi sportsman, about the calendar's 11th month, about how after months of anticipation and preparation for hunting season, it passes way too quickly.

To slow it down and enjoy every passing moment, sportsmen and women find comfort spending their hours in a deer stand, a duck blind or behind a pack of beagles running through the brush. For some, it may even be sitting in a boat cashing in on a fish's instinctive need to feed — and for the first time in a long-long time, without the fear of heat stroke.

November is indeed a special month for hundreds of thousands of Mississippians, with the emphasis squarely on hunting — and deer hunting in particular. The long offseason is over, the torturous hours of camp workdays are done, and it's time to be thankful for what the heart of the fall and winter months provide — a

time to reap the benefits.

Bow season may have opened in October, but it's November's gun season that puts the most people in the woods.

- The youth gun season begins on Nov. 9 statewide for youngsters aged 15 and under.
- The early primitive weapon season runs Nov. 11-22 for antlerless deer only and only on private lands.
- The regular gun season opens Nov. 23, and the party really begins.

Make sure you pack this edition of *Mississippi Sportsman* in your camp bag to enjoy between hunts or even during the long sits in a blind. It's full of interesting reads, including two stories that could help you be more productive during the deer season: tips on identifying a buck's core area, and what deer rubs mean and what they can tell you.

For fishermen, Phillip Gentry offers two pieces, one that can help find more catfish in November's cooling waters and the other that looks at four overlooked places that produce fall crap-pie in Mississippi.

Enjoy the read, be safe and have a great season. ■

REMEMBER CHANGES TO DEER BAG LIMITS

Mississippians in most areas will have more opportunities to take deer this season, thanks to some changes in regulations; however, in the flood-stricken South Delta Zone, hunters will have fewer opportunities as the herd and habitat recover from more than eight months of backwater flooding.

For antlered deer, the limit on bucks remains one per day, not to exceed three per season, except for South Delta Zone, where the limit is two per season.

The big change for bucks is that all hunters may now include one buck of any antler size in his or her three-buck limit on private land or on lands in the Holly Springs National Forest. All other bucks must meet the antler criteria established in the appropriate deer management zone. Hunters ages 15 and under face no antler restrictions on private land and on authorized state and federal lands.

For antlerless deer, the only major change is that in the South Delta Zone, the annual season limit drops from five to two. On private lands in the Northeast, Delta, East Central, and Southwest

MISSISSIPPI'S 2019-2020 DEER SEASONS

Delta, Northeast, East Central, South Delta and Southwest Zones:

Archery: Open through Nov. 22, but bowhunting is allowed during any open gun season through Jan. 31.

Youth: Nov. 9-Nov. 22.

Antlerless primitive weapon: Nov. 11-Nov. 22, private lands only.

Gun, with dogs: Nov. 23-Dec. 1.

Primitive weapon: Dec. 2-Dec. 15 (weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license).

Gun, without dogs (still season): Dec. 16-Dec. 23.

Gun, with dogs: Dec. 24-Jan. 22.

Archery/Primitive weapon: Jan. 23-Jan. 31 (weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license).

Southeast Zone:

Archery: Open through Nov. 22, but bow hunting is allowed during any open gun season through Feb. 15.

Youth: Nov. 9-Nov. 22.

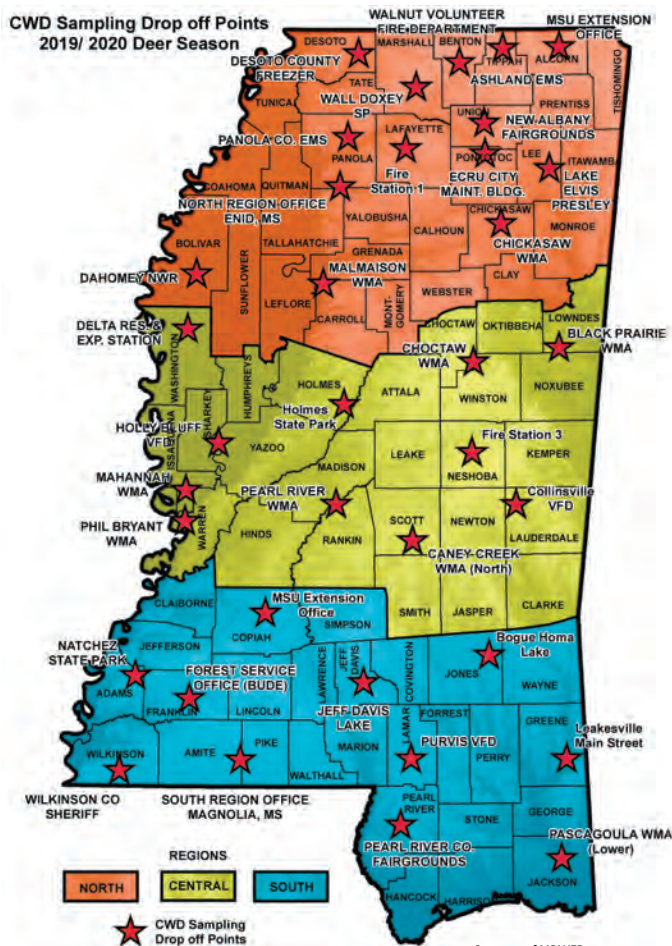
Gun, with dogs: Nov. 23-Dec. 1.

Primitive weapon: Dec. 2-Dec. 15 (weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license).

Gun, without dogs (still season): Dec. 16-Dec. 23.

Gun, with dogs: Dec. 24-Jan. 22.

Archery/Primitive weapon: Jan. 23-Jan. 31 for either-sex deer; Feb. 1-Feb. 15 legal bucks only (weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license).



Map showing the drop-off sites for CWD testing.

Courtesy of MDWFP

Zones the limit on antlerless deer is five per season — there is no daily bag limit, meaning hunters can take as many as they choose any day as long as the season limit is not exceeded.

That is not the case in the Southeast Zone, where the season limit is two per season and the daily limit is one.

On U.S. Forest Service lands, the antlerless bag limit is one per day, not to exceed five per season, except in the Southeast Zone which is two per season/one per day.

Regardless of the area, Mississippi hunters have a lot of opportunity to fill their freezers with venison and, for the luckiest, put another rack or two on the wall. ■

LEGAL BUCK MINIMUMS

Delta, South Delta Zones: Either a 12-inch inside spread OR a 15-inch main beam.

East Central, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast Zones: Either a 10-inch inside spread OR a 13-inch main beam.

A LONGER WAIT FOR DUCKS

Due to a change in the late-season frameworks, Mississippi duck hunters will have to wait a little longer this month before they can hit the water.

Only two days in November are open in the regular duck season, Nov. 29-30, instead of recent years when hunters had two short weekend seasons, including the Thanksgiving holiday.

The change came when the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service adjusted its rule about when the season must end. Previously, it was required to end on the Sunday before Jan. 31. Under the new frameworks, the season can run through Jan. 31 no matter how the calendar falls.

Under the old rules, the 2019-2020 season would have ended on Sunday, Jan. 26. Under the new rules it will end on Friday Jan. 31, and it comes at a cheap cost.

“Oh yeah, I’d trade a few November days for almost another full week of hunting in late January, even if it cost us hunting around Thanksgiving (which it does not),” said Riley Barnes of Southaven, an avid waterfowler who hunts throughout the northern tier Delta counties. “Heck, I’d trade December days for February days in a heartbeat — the later the better, because migration peaks the later in winter you go.”

Told that the weekend after Thanksgiving is still included in the 2019-2020 season, Barnes said: “Man, that’s absolutely the best situation we could have. A holiday weekend for the few early ducks we get, and then hunting to the end of January — perfect. I’ve already booked a week of vacation at work for the last week of January. I always said I would, and I am doing it.”

Mississippi’s duck first season opens on the Friday after Thanksgiving, Nov. 29, and will end on Sunday, Dec. 1. The rest of the season is a straight run from Friday, Dec. 6 through Jan. 31.

Coinciding with duck season are the seasons on both coot and mergansers. ■

DUCK SEASON / LIMITS

Mississippi’s 2019-2020 duck season is statewide, in two splits.

First split: Nov. 29-Dec. 1.

Second split: Dec. 6-Jan. 31.

Youth, veterans and active military days: Nov. 16 and Feb. 8.

Bag limits

Ducks: Six ducks per day, including no more than four mallards (only two of which may be females), three wood ducks, two redheads, three scaup, two canvasbacks, one mottled duck, two black ducks, and one pintail.

Mergansers: Five per day, only two of which can be hooded.

Coots: 15 daily.

Possession: The possession limit on ducks, coots and mergansers is equal to three times the daily limit of each.



Mississippi waterfowl hunters may miss a few days in November, but they’ll get several more days in late January.

MIGRATORY OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Well before duck season opens, hunters have plenty of other November opportunities on migratory birds.

The light goose conservation order allows hunters to take snow, blue and Ross’ geese outside the normal goose season. This year’s order began Oct. 1; the first segment runs through Nov. 10. It will reopen Feb. 1-7 and Feb. 9-March 31.

A free, special permit is required from the MDWFP before hunting under the conservation order, but that’s one of the few restrictions, along with mandatory non-toxic shot (no lead). These geese don’t have a limit, shotguns do not have to be plugged and electronic calls are allowed. While a valid Mississippi hunting license (unless exempt) and a state waterfowl stamp is required, no federal waterfowl stamp is necessary.

The regular goose season opens Nov. 11 and ends Nov. 24, then

coincides with the duck season (Nov. 29-Dec. 1 and Dec. 6-Jan. 31). Regular waterfowl rules are in effect: non-toxic shells, guns plugged to hold no more than three shells, state license and both state and federal waterfowl stamps required.

Dove hunters have limited opportunity in November. In the South Zone, the second season that opened in October runs through Nov. 6. In the North Zone, the second season ends Nov. 16. Both zones will have a third season in December and January.

Crow season opens Nov. 2 and runs through Feb. 28. As usual, there is no limit.

The snipe season opens Nov. 14 and ends on Feb. 28.

The seasons on gallinules and rails, which was open during September, reopens on Nov. 22 and will end Dec. 31. ■

NEWEST MDWFP APPS USEFUL

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks has two new cell-phone apps available to enhance and streamline the hunting experience, especially for users of the agency's Wildlife Management Areas. Both are free and are available for both IOS and Android platforms.

The WMA Check-in App allows a user to complete both the check-in and check-out required for hunting on these areas. After registering the app one time upon downloading, the user can simplify his or her trip.

To check in, simply click "check-in" and select the appropriate WMA and complete the activities planned.

To check out, click "check-out" and follow the instructions.

Both can be done regardless of cell coverage; however, due to lack of coverage at many rural WMAs, it is recommended that the initial download and registration be completed before arriving at the WMA.

The other new MDWFP app is the Game Check, a harvest reporting system that is completely voluntary for the coming deer season — but was mandatory for the 2019 spring turkey season. This app, also free and available for both IOS and Android systems, allows a hunter to report a harvest. He or she would simply open the app, click on "report a deer," and complete and submit the entry. This can be done regardless of available cell service, since the entry will automatically be sent once coverage resumes. Hunters will also be able to participate online at mdwfp.com/gamecheck.

Why game check? According to the MDWFP, Mississippi's deer herd faces mounting challenges, such as Chronic Wasting Disease, that can have localized or statewide impacts. Harvest

TURKEY AND SMALL GAME, TOO

Just when you thought we'd presented enough opportunity, there's more — plenty more, including an opportunity in 24 counties to get a wild turkey for the Thanksgiving table.

Mississippi's fall turkey season began in mid-October and ends on Nov. 15 in the three fall turkey zones:

Delta: The counties of Bolivar (west of the main Mississippi River levee and those lands east of the main Mississippi River levee known as 27 Break Hunting Club), Coahoma, Desoto, Issaquena, Tunica, and Washington (west of the main Mississippi River levee).

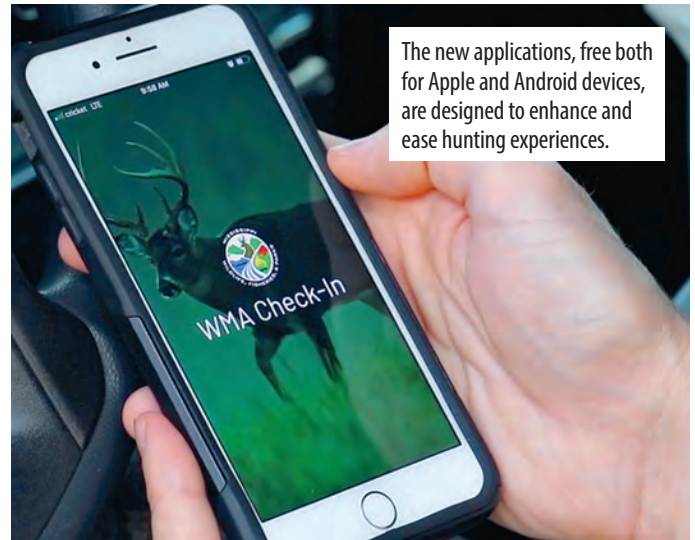
North Central: The counties of Benton, Lafayette, Marshall, Panola, Tippah and Union.

Southwest: The counties of Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Hinds, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Warren, Wilkinson, and Yazoo.

The fall limit in all areas is two turkeys, which may be either-sex.

Small-game seasons are open for rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, opossum and bobcat, as well as the trapping season. Does anybody like mulligan stew?

Even quail hunters get a brief shot in November. The statewide season opens Nov. 28 and runs through March 7. ■



The new applications, free both for Apple and Android devices, are designed to enhance and ease hunting experiences.

Courtesy of MDWFP

reporting of white-tailed deer allows for more precise resource management. It will:

- Provide for the first time timely and efficient county-level harvest data that is integral for improving adaptive approaches to management.
- Provide deer population data that is critical for managing Chronic Wasting Disease.
- Demonstrate to the hunting community that harvest management and bag limits are important.
- Provide hunters the opportunity to be actively engaged in white-tailed deer management.

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GATOR ARCHERY
— OUTDOORS —
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GOOD WEATHER MAKES FOR GREAT GATOR SEASON

To Ricky Flynt, alligator program coordinator for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, the secret to a successful alligator season is as simple as weather, and the 2019 season was a perfect example, with participation records set.

"The weather was absolutely perfect for the 10-day hunting season statewide," Flynt said. "It gave hunters ample opportunity to hunt."

And, boy did they. Flynt said the MDWFP received a total of 4,414 permit applications, and 957 of the 960 available permits were sold. The total harvest of 922 — out of more than 2,000 alligators captured — is surpassed only by the harvest of 982 in the 2015 season. The season also had one of the highest hunter success rates at 75%.

"We had the highest participation ever," Flynt said. "Public water levels were above typical levels, and that allowed hunters to get to areas that have not been accessible in other years."

Of the seven zones, the Southwest Zone had the highest number of harvested alligators (422) and tied the Southeast Zone in the length category (with 13½-foot alligators).

"Alligator hunters are selective about the alligators they keep because of the limits," Flynt said. "Hunters are allowed two gators, and only one that is over 7 feet long."

Only one state record was reported; it tied a previous mark for longest female at 10 feet. The gator captured by Paul Edwards of Okalona on Sept. 5 weighed 289 pounds, with a belly girth of 48 inches and a tail girth of 34½ inches. ■

The hunting party of Paul Edwards of Okolona tied the state record for the longest female alligator taken in public waters. The alligator was 10 feet long and weighed 289 pounds. It had a belly girth of 48 inches and tail girth of 34.5 inches. It was taken in the late-morning hours of Sept. 5 from the West Central Alligator Hunting Zone. The alligator was certified by Ricky Flynt, MDWFP alligator program coordinator, on Sept. 5. The hunters were, (l-r), Brandon Griggs, Marvin Griggs, Paul Edwards, Taylor Criddle, Hunter Griggs, and James Boyd.

2019 ALLIGATOR NUMBERS

Total applicants	4,414
Permits sold	957 out of 960
Permits used	816 (85.4%)
Total hunters	3,065
Average hunting party	3.8 people
Success rate	75.5 % (617 permits)
Total harvest	918
Over 7 feet	422
Under 7 feet	496
Total released	2018
Hours per gator	7.86

LET'S NOT FORGET FISHING

With summer temperatures reaching well into October — two of the hottest weekends were actually in the fall, with heat indexes exceeding 100 in both late September and early October — Mississippi anglers are just as excited about November's arrival as are hunters.

"Thought I was going to die, it was so hot," said Dan Gore of Madison. "Maybe it's that I'm older now, but this summer seemed like one of the hottest and the driest I've ever suffered. There were times in September and even October when I had to quit, on the water, and seek air-conditioned relief.

"That ain't right, I'm telling you. It just ain't right."

The good news, Gore said, was that he rarely saw boats on any of his favorite waters late in the summer into early fall, meaning fish weren't pressured.

"Apparently, I wasn't the only one scared of the heat," he said. "I didn't see a lot of boats in the parking lots at Barnett Reservoir. I didn't see many on my subdivision lake. When I went fishing on the coast at Cat Island, we practically had the whole south shore of the island to ourselves. I couldn't believe it."

November is a peak fishing time in Mississippi, with fish naturally entering a period of heavy feeding in advance of winter and the spring spawning season. Bass and crappie go crazy in freshwater, while many saltwater species come further into harm's way by coming nearer to the shore.

"Redfish, speckled trout, (black) drum, sheepshead, even flounder, they all move up and either get shallow in the outer marsh areas or move up into the bays and the mouths of coastal rivers," said Ron Guidry of Bay St. Louis. "We save on gas money because we aren't traveling far to reach the fish. Right here in Bay St. Louis, all we have to do to fill an ice chest with reds, black drum and sheepshead is run to the Highway 90 bridge pilings.

"If your desire is to tangle with bigger fish over taking fish home to eat, all you have to do is run the barrier islands or the Biloxi Marsh and look for the schools of bull reds and jack crevalle. They're out there thick in November, and boy, you can burn some line with them."

That coastal opportunity — especially the Highway 90 bridges in Bay St. Louis, Biloxi/Ocean Springs and Pascagoula River — tops our list of top 5 hot spots for November in Mississippi. The rest:

CRAPPIE, BARNETT RESERVOIR

The reservoir has been drawn down nearly 2 feet this entire year, which should lead to a lot of fat and sassy fish to be caught on the 33,000-acre lake near Jackson. Crappie tend to hang close to cover, but instead of being between 10 and 13 feet deep, they can be found as shallow as 6 to 8 feet on timber in the old lake beds. A jig tipped with a small minnow will get you the bites once you find the fish.

CATFISH, TENN-TOM WATERWAY

You can enjoy both quantity and quality on the different pools of this river system when catfishing in November. Big blues can be found feeding heavily in the deeper, outside bends of the old river channels, while schools of "eater" channel cats just right for taking home to the cleaning shed can be found on sand bars in more moderate depths with current.

BASS, CRAPPIE IN OXBOWS

The many oxbows off the Mississippi River in the Delta, from Vicksburg north to Memphis, are an outstanding place to look for big largemouth and crappie in November. Water levels remain stable, and the water fairly clear. Trolling deep, open water for crappie peaks at the connected oxbows of Chotard and Albermarle north of Vicksburg. Some of the inland oxbows in the South Delta might be difficult this year after having been impacted by backwater flooding, but lakes like Wolf, Washington and Bee are worth a check. Bass fishermen love Lake Ferguson at Greenville, where you can find a whole new appreciation for the practice of "deep cranking" for largemouth. Lake Whittington is another hot oxbow for bass in November.



Anglers around Bay St. Louis can catch plenty of hefty sheepshead around the Highway 90 bridge pilings.

BASS FISHING, PICKWICK LAKE

Think you have to wait for the spring spawn to catch a trophy smallmouth at Pickwick Lake? Think again; they can be had in November on crankbaits on rock bluff banks. Guide Roger Stegall proved that on a trip on the lake decades ago, casting a series of deep and mid-range crankbaits right against the sheer drops on the rocks.

"They don't just bite, they unload on a crankbait," he said.

Even if the smallies aren't biting, there's plenty of quality largemouth and spotted bass action, also shallow. Just look for shad in the back ends of coves and the fish will be nearby. ■



Maury Sullivan

Maury Sullivan with a jack crevelle caught while fishing around Horn Island.



Jacob Smith

Jacob Smith harvested this deer in southwest Pearl River County on Jan. 17, 2018, a few days after it snowed.



Bryan Sullivan

Bryan Sullivan poses with a 10-point buck he took on a southeast Mississippi WMA.



Cal Cossich

Cal Cossich with a limit of topwater trout he caught while wading.

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A 'MACK DADDY' OF A PRAYER IS ANSWERED

FLOWOOD BOWHUNTER ARROWS HUGE, 150-INCH HINDS COUNTY BUCK

By Bill Garbo

Chip Henderson, lead pastor of Pinelake Church, was scrolling through trail-camera photos this past August when one caused his heart to skip a beat. With his head and wheels spinning, he sat, staring at a photo of one of the most eye-popping, beautiful bucks he had ever seen.

Further examination revealed additional photos of the huge, main-frame 10-pointer, and surprisingly, most were taken during daylight hours.

Leading up to the Oct. 1 bow season opening, Henderson, who is from Flowood, accumulated a pile of additional photos of the Hinds County buck. He began to refer to the giant buck as "Mack" — short for "Mack-Daddy" — and as a serious and dedicated bowhunter, he realized that a wily, old buck of this caliber casually traipsing around during daylight hours would probably give him one good opportunity. If the buck realized it was being hunted, it would likely become nocturnal, and Henderson knew he needed to close the deal the first time in, if possible.

That worked out perfectly, when, on Oct. 7, Henderson arrowed the huge buck, which carried a rack with a gross Boone & Crockett Club score of 153 inches, including a 19-inch inside spread, 22-inch main beams and tines as long as 12 inches.

Henderson's only access to Mack's likely bedding cover was from the south, so he had to wait for a northerly wind. Summer hung around through the beginning of archery season, but the first cold front of the season finally arrived, and he realized he'd have his coveted north wind on Monday, Oct. 7.

Back in August, Henderson had carefully blazed a machete trail through the brushy understory of a mature pine stand to the ridge where Mack had been photographed so often. It flanked a thick bottom he thought was Mack's bedding area. Henderson picked out what he thought was a perfectly located pine and put up an Ole Man lock-on stand at the top of a 16-foot



ON THE COVER

Chip Henderson of Flowood first saw his "Mack Daddy" buck in a trail-camera photo (below) in early August. He killed the big buck the first time he hunted him, on the afternoon of Oct. 7 — the first time he got a needed north wind.

stick-ladder. The setup was made even better by a honey locust tree right in front for concealment.

Henderson slept restlessly the night before, and Oct. 7 dawned with the forecast north wind, but he had morning appointments and a 1 p.m. dental appointment, so he planned an afternoon hunt. Afterwards, with hunting clothes and gear already in his truck, he got to the gate of his hunting grounds at 2:45, quickly donned his gear, sprayed down with scent killer, and began the 600-yard walk to his stand. As he got closer to the ridge, he slowed down and started to ease along as carefully and quietly as possible. But nearing the stand, he stepped on a stick that made a loud "pop," and his heart sank as he watched a startled deer melt away into the brush. Had he just blown his chance?

After climbing into his stand and getting situated, a doe walked out, a good sign that the loud stick cracking had not ruined



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things. At about 3:30, he caught a glimpse of movement, and he could see antlers, but the deer stopped and disappeared. After 15 nerve-wracking minutes, he saw the buck move again at 50 yards, and Henderson realized it was Mack, headed straight toward him.

The buck tested the wind and kept coming, slowly and cautiously. When it got to 30 yards, the buck stopped with his head behind a tree, and Henderson picked up his bow and shifted his body slightly to the right to get the best shot angle.

At 20 yards, the buck turned broadside and stepped out into an open shooting lane and stopped. Henderson went to full draw with his Matthews bow, put his 20-yard sight pin behind the buck's front shoulder, and squeezed his release at 3:45 p.m.

Zzzzzzzzztt!! Whack! The Rage mechanical broad head struck home.

Henderson watched as the glowing Lumenoc danced away through the brush like a fire fly. After waiting a full hour, he took up the blood trail, and after about 100 yards, he found Mack piled up. ■



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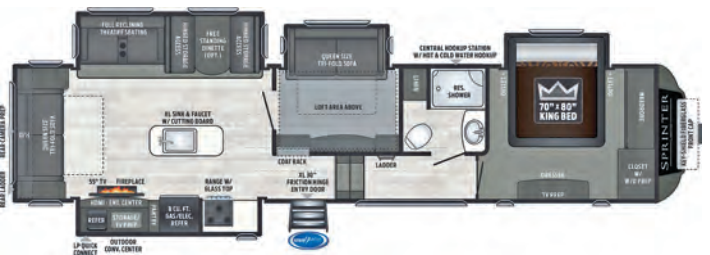


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On any given day, a hunter can step into the woods at his or her deer camp or on public land and be in a whitetail buck's home range. The boundaries of this home range are fluid, ever expanding, ever contracting, ever changing as physical and environmental forces shape the buck's behavior. Places he feeds in the spring on fresh forbs, he may never visit in the fall as acorns become his favored forage.

The home range is not defined in terms of human size, and it may well overlap with the home ranges of other bucks. In fact, during periods of low testosterone, bucks may travel in groups, aptly called buck or bachelor groups. These groups will break apart in the fall when hormones kick in. Velvet on the antlers will begin to die and dry, rubbing will become a daily activity, as well as sparring among members of the group, and breeding

becomes a thought on every buck's mind.

Within every deer's home range will be food, water, shelter and a secure bedding area. Compare that with your own life. You have a house, an office, stores where you buy food, medicine, clothes and such, and the roads that connect them. This is your home range, and on any given day, you can be found within that area. Somewhere in there is your inner sanctum, your happy place. Maybe it's a TV room, a man cave, a bedroom or a combination of those. For bucks, this is their core area. Food will be close, escape from intrusion will be easy, and a dry bedding area will provide restful sleep and regeneration.



FIND A BUCK'S HOME RANGE AND KEY IN ON HIS CORE AREA, AND YOU'RE A LOT CLOSER TO PUTTING YOUR TAG ON HIM THIS SEASON.

Home, home on the range

By David Hawkins

Within his home range,

a buck will cross paths with other deer that share the food sources and bedding areas; interaction may or may not occur.

For the hunter, finding a home range should be pretty easy. There is a 50-50 chance a hunter will harvest a buck while hunting in its home range; either you will or you won't. If you want better odds, search that home range for a core area; chances of success will increase dramatically.

A home range is usually measured in square miles, but the shape of that range is anything but geometric, such as human minds might consider. One biologist compared a home range to a flood-control lake, with ever changing boundaries and sizes.

Urban sprawl, commercial development, large-scale farming and flooding are all factors that make a difference in a buck's home range. Country dwellers and suburbanites know deer are no respecters of fences, streets or property lines. A food source is a food source to a deer, be it a patented rose or a white oak acorn. As food sources change, so does a deer's home range. The old adage that a deer will never travel far from where it was born has not been proven to be factual.

CORE AREAS

Scattered throughout a buck's home range are core areas. These can vary in size, based on any number of factors. Food sources and security are a primary needs, but as the year passes, female deer become more included in the equation.

Bucks will leave the core area to seek does that are entering estrus. Scrapes, rubs and licking branches are a deer's version of a dating website. Some hunters refer to these indicators as deer bulletin boards. That's a good analogy, since bucks and does both visit the sites to leave evidence of their desires.

The first of the scrapes and rubs are often made in close proximity to a core area. So how do hunters find such areas and take advantage of the seasonal deer traffic? Simple; pull on the boots and get off the couch. Look for those parcels of land isolated by human boundaries and remember, deer don't care about our lines.

One Jasper County deer club had a timber company lease of 2,800 acres that was in a constant state of flux. Trees were harvested, replanted, thinned and killed by wildfire and pine beetles. The constant was the main road thru the property, which was closed to public traffic. Hunters regularly used ATVs to get around the camp.

It was almost by accident, I stumbled onto a core area on a small bluff above a curve in the main road. A stand of replanted pines was almost choked out by honeysuckle vines. The ground was covered in deer droppings and a dozen, aging scrapes. Small pines had been broken and limbs of trees were broken everywhere. Not a suitable tree for a climbing stand was in sight. It was obvious this was the bedroom for one or several bucks. The question was how to hunt it.



When scouting in the fall, soft mast such as these persimmons will attract deer from core areas.




Find a lot of rubs and scrapes with licking branches in small area, and you've likely found a buck's core area.

To the west was 500 acres of the same terrain; to the east was private land and a ridge of acorn-producing oaks. There was one skinny pine just big enough for a stand looking down a rutted skidder tract. It paid off on the first sit. Deer boiled in and out of the cutover into the posted oak forest. I heard more deer vocalizations from that stand than any other, including the first and only time I saw a doe do a snort-wheeze, which went more snort-wheeze-wheezzzzzzzzzzz. On another sit, an 8-point buck busted a doe out of the thicket and trailed her down the skidder track with his head back, grunting like a duroc at a feed trough. I later caught another buck raking a pine tree, and my .243 turned him into venison for my freezer.

The lesson learned was this: every member of the club drove ATVs within 20 yards of a core area and never realized it was there. Core areas may appear impossible to hunt, but the trails leading to, from and around them can be hunted.



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“On a seasonal scale, we typically see a single core area per buck,”

said Dr. Bronson Strickland, who works at Mississippi State University’s Deer Research Facility. “The core area typically has relatively more cover than the surrounding landscape. Before the rut, there can certainly be some core areas that are used by more than one buck. Once a hunter locates this core area, I would advise the hunter disturb the area as little as possible. Rather than going into the core area, my advice would be to stay on the periphery and use trail cameras to determine which deer are using the core area. Disturb the areas as little as possible.”

Finding a core area is not really all that difficult. Locate a deer trail and follow it; it often runs between the bedding and feeding areas. Knowledge of the existing mast crops is essential, as deer will sometimes visit these food sources several times a day as different deer groups feed. Remember, this is not McDonald’s at lunchtime.

Deer droppings, territorial rubs and scrapes all indicate the presence of a deer. Note these places and determine the prevailing wind. Place your stand or blind close enough to the possible core area to have a safe shot, but not so close that you spook the deer. Be wise with cover scents and include boots and socks in scent control.

Go to school on whitetails

Mississippi State University has offered and continues to offer white-tailed deer short courses to hunters wanting to learn what deer are doing at any given time in their lives.

Contact Mississippi State (www.msudeerlab.com) for dates and time of courses that are scheduled.



Bucks will rub trees to leave their identifying scent, often to alert does and other bucks of their presence.

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Home, home on the range

A long creeks and drains, especially where high banks have been cut, deer will use favored crossings; these are other locations to seek out. Outside the core area, such crossings are good places to set up trail cameras. Resist the urge to check the camera too often and disturb the crossing. Once a week is plenty, once every two weeks is better, and having a trail camera that sends photos to your phone is even better; visits are needed only to change batteries.

With so many pine forests suffering damage from the 2018 pine beetle problem, deer have plenty of possible core



A core area perhaps 2 acres in size is visible in this photo. The thicket formed after pine beetles killed the trees and sunlight regenerated the herbaceous growth.

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areas to choose from, so setting up near a food source or scrape line may yield better results. Where pines were cut or died, sunlight has reached the forest floor, encouraging the lush growth of forbs and grasses, expanding feeding areas and travel areas. On some U.S. Forest Service land, both on WMAs and open land, deer have a lot to eat this fall.

"I'm not trying to knock food plots," said veteran hunter Josh Hawkins of Brandon. "I spend a lot of money on seed, fertilizer, tractor fuel and mineral blocks. My four daughters like hunting from a stand over a food plot because they tend to see more deer in the course of a day, albeit does, fawns and immature bucks — but it keeps them going to the woods. I prefer hunting near thickets where mast crops and scrape lines lure deer in. And public woods are loaded with such areas, for hunters willing to put on their boots and go scouting." ■



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



Rick Small

UNDERSTANDING rubs

By Rick Small

VETERAN OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER SHARES HIS INSIGHTS ON THE MEANING OF DEER'S RUBBED TREES.

Rick Small

Rubs,

the marks that whitetail bucks leave on trees, are a means of communication and have several meanings to all deer.

As a wildlife photographer, I have watched bucks rub trees more times than I care to imagine. Bucks make rubs to strip the velvet off their antlers, but they happen for many other reasons. I have seen bucks use anything from honeysuckle, to briars, to bushes, to thick-limbed saplings to remove velvet. I saw — and got on film — one buck even use the strands of a barbed-wire fence to tear the velvet from his rack.

I am confident that my years of observations have helped me understand why bucks rub trees and bushes, even though my ideas may not hold true 100% of the time. The information can still be useful to hunters, helping them understand and pattern the behaviors of bucks on your hunting land.

Bucks make rubs by raking and twisting their antlers on trees, ranging in size from pencil-thin to thigh-sized. They make rubs for visual markings and scent markings to communicate their presence to other deer in their territory. Rubs also have the added benefit of helping to build and strengthen neck and shoulder muscles for use in their quest for dominance.

For visual markings, rubs are often made on tree species that have light colored wood under the bark, which makes the rub more visible to other deer traveling through the area. Their choices depend on the tree species in their home ranges, but the trees I've seen used most often are pines.

An impressive buck rubs the base of his right antler on a rather substantial tree, leaving his scent and building his neck muscles.




Rick Small

Bucks that live in close proximity to each other may have differing tastes as to the species they prefer for their rubs. While some bucks prefer mostly soft wood, others favor hardwood species; pine vs. ironwood, for example. The species of trees rubbed can also have a bearing on “the look” of a buck’s antlers. Things such as the type of sap and the tree’s tanin content play a part in how dark or how light their racks will be stained.

Most rubs fall into the category of scent markers. Watching a buck make a rub can be very educational, much less exciting. A buck will rub his rack up and down a tree, trying to rub his forehead and eyes on the tree as much as possible. Using the bases of his rack for the majority of the rubbing, the buck will also twist, push and pull on the tree, depositing scent from glands located on his forehead and around his eyes. A buck will rub for a bit, stop to smell and lick where he just rubbed, then continue this sequence until he is satisfied he has left sufficient evidence of his presence in the area — sort of a “wash-rinse-repeat” scenario.

For a Rick Small video showing a big buck rubbing his horns on the strands of a barbed wire fence, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5deidL6CfGc>



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Understanding rubs

Almost all rubs on sizeable trees will at least be started by big bucks; smaller bucks may rub them after the bark has been torn off.

I have watched does and other bucks smell and lick rubs left by other deer to get an idea of which buck left that “calling card.” On several occasions, I have even seen two bucks take turns rubbing and scent-marking the same tree. Bucks also get the added benefit of building their muscles and stamina when they work each rub. With an overload of testosterone coursing through their bloodstreams for breeding, it is akin to you or I working out while taking steroids.

Rubs come in several categories: travel-route rubs, core-area/bedding-area rubs (both of which normally are in clusters), and boundary rubs. You can tell a lot about a buck and his territory by finding his rubs. Travel-route rubs are usually made on trees along the direction a buck uses to get from one part of his domain to another. They will be spaced out in a rough line along this route. The rubs will be on the side of the trees as the buck approaches them on his travels. Clusters, or rubs in close bunches, usually point to a buck’s core and/or bedding areas. If nothing else, a rub will tell you a buck has spent time in that section of the woods.

How is the size of a rubbed tree related to the size of the rubbing it? I have never witnessed a young, small-racked buck start a rub on a tree with any size to it. Conversely, I have seen small bucks rub on large trees that already have a rub on them, probably made by a different, mature buck.

The larger the diameter of a tree, the harder it is for a small buck to rub his forehead and around the eyes to leave any



Rick Small

scent. Large, mature bucks will rub most any size tree, from small to thigh-sized. Also, it is mostly true that the higher up a tree the rub goes, the bigger/taller the buck is that made it. ■



Rick Small of Rock Hill, S.C., is one of the nation’s leading wildlife photographers. His work has appeared in regional and national magazines, and he is a regular contributor to *Carolina Sportsman*. See more of his work at www.facebook.com/ricksmallphotography/

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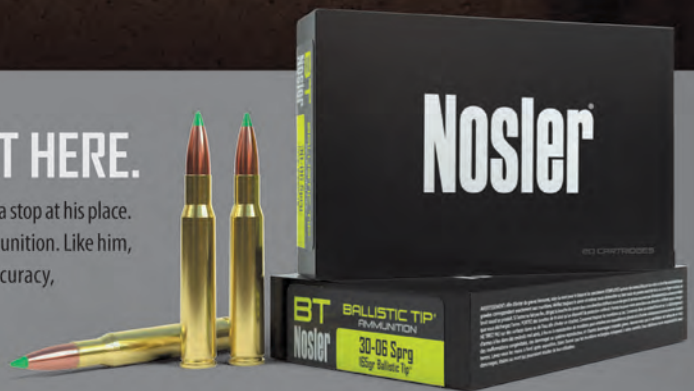
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STICKS & STRINGS

Sammy Romano



Randall Shaw

GARMIN'S XERO SIGHT EXPENSIVE BUT WORTH IT

RANGE-FINDING, ANTI-TORQUE FEATURES MAKE THIS A TOP-DRAWER SIGHT FOR ANY HUNTER'S BOW

Archery is a vast subject, with a nearly limitless number of topics, so it isn't often that I am compelled to revisit a product that has been featured in this column.

However, after installing a Garmin Xero A1i sight on my personal bow, I felt it was necessary. I highlighted this sight about two years ago after it debuted at the ATA show. It was the talk of the show, and although I ordered some for the shop, I was somewhat skeptical of how well they would work and hold up in hunting conditions.

Garmin has long been known for well-engineered, durable products that are user-friendly; and after more than two years of selling them, I'm happy to report that the Xero sights are no exception. Now that I am shooting this sight personally, I have an even better idea of how it works, giving me more insight into its benefits.

My initial reason for installing this sight

was its unique range-finding feature, but I've come to realize it has many additional, unexpected features that have drastically improved my shooting. I'll say this about the Garmin Xero A1i, I don't just like it I love it!

NO RANGE? NO PROBLEM

The primary feature of the Xero sight is its unique, range-finding feature. It not only ranges the target but also displays a lighted LED "pin" at the correct aiming point to hit the target dead center.

Yardage and shot angle are clearly displayed on an LCD screen just above the top of the sight ring, but because the sight illuminates only the correct aiming point, they are unnecessary to reference during the shot cycle. This is huge for the dynamic situations often encountered in the field while hunting.

The No. 1 worry for many bowhunters is distance to the target, with high or

low impacts often resulting in wounded game or longer tracking jobs. This helps to eliminate that worry, as well as the need to shuffle back and forth, clipping to and unclipping from your D-loop to pick up your range finder as the animal moves around.

The Xero uses a pressure switch mounted on the bow's grip to actuate the built-in range finder while at full draw, so if the target animal changes range during the shot sequence, it can quickly be ranged again, all without having to let down your bow. In my opinion, this is a game changer, especially when it comes to rutting whitetails. One drawback to the range-finding feature would



Sammy Romano is a life-long hunter who has worked in the archery industry for more than 24 years. His expertise includes compounds and crossbows. He can be reached at sambok31@aol.com.

OPPOSITE: Garmin's Xero A1i sight (far left) covers every need a bowhunter might come up with when he comes to full draw on a trophy animal. The author said the sight was instrumental in making a killing shot on this alligator (left) because of its ability to compensate for steep-angle shots.

be the laser-striking brush between the bow and the target, thus illuminating the wrong pin. Garmin considered this, and this sight offers a fixed-pin option that can be used when hunting thicker cover.

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS, BETTER RESULTS

Although the range-finding feature alone would be well worth the investment, since installing the A1i on my bow, I have found several unexpected benefits of equal value. One is the reticle feature used while ranging the target. This is similar to the reticle on the IQ bow sights; it serves as both a torque indicator, as well as an additional reinforcement of anchor point. A reticle consisting of a green ring is centered around a red dot when the bow is properly aligned, leading to more consistent ranging as well as shot placement.

Today's ultra-parallel limb bows are more easily torqued, causing shots to impact left or right of the bull's-eye. This tendency is enhanced by the awkward positions often encountered in the field. Although I teach archery almost daily, I'm often guilty of torquing the bow myself. This feature has virtually eliminated my left and right misses.

Another unexpected benefit is sight clarity and an unobstructed view of the target. As an aging archer who struggles with being able to focus on both the pin and the target, as well as target panic, I now realize how much my inability to see clearly was a contributing factor to both my inaccuracy and target panic. Although there are magnified sights and peeps to help with this, I find this sight works much better for my eyes, and not having to worry about dew or snow in my peep lens is a major plus. The Xero A1i also has a light sensor, that when enabled, automatically adjusts the pin brightness to the optimum level, eliminating the need for tinkering with a sight light at dusk and dawn.

There are very few drawbacks to the Garmin Xero

A1i. One is that it is currently not legal for use in Florida and several western states. I expect this may change as regulations catch up to technology, because if anything, it helps to reduce the number of wounded animals. Another is its higher price. With a retail of almost \$1,000, it costs as much as many high-end bows. That being said, for all of the money hunters spend to get to the moment of a shot at a big-game animal with a bow, I consider this minimal due to its obvious benefits.

Last, it helps to have a second person when setting up the Garmin Xero. Although I found setup to be relatively easy, this sight is not for the archer who struggles to program a smart phone or TV remote. If you are one of those people, seek help from someone who is tech-savvy when setting your sight. Other than that, it will make you more effective than ever and lead to a better experience. Stop by a Garmin retailer and check one out soon. ■

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GRUNTS & GOBBLES

David Moreland

Finding deer sign like this big buck rub is a boots-on-the-ground deal; no amount of technology can substitute.

THE ART OF READING SIGN

HAVE TECHNOLOGY, GADGETS, GEAR DULLED HUNTERS' SIGN SENSES?

Dan Kibler

In the movie, *The Last of the Mohicans*, we find our three heroes in the opening scene reading the sign of an elk that they are chasing through the mountain forest. The chase ends when Hawkeye, aka Natty Bumppo, fires and drops the elk in its tracks.

Reading sign is as old as hunting. Sign is simply the evidence that game animals and birds leave on the landscape that shows they've been around. The type of sign varies with species; with deer, it could include tracks, trails, scrapes, rubs, droppings, browsing and acorn caps. With wild turkeys, it could be tracks, droppings, dusting sites, calls and feathers. Some wildlife species leave a lot of sign, some very little.

Aldo Leopold, the father of wildlife management, discussed reading sign in his book *A Sand County Almanac*. He praised those hunters who do the work of reading sign and use it to try and connect with the quarry. He doesn't have

much praise for those hunters who take short cuts and make use of technology, gadgets and gears. Of course, Leopold was an old-school hunter who found more satisfaction in the pursuit than the kill. Generally, as hunters mature and age, the adventure and the opportunity to just be in the outdoors become more important than shooting an animal.

Most Baby Boomer hunters started out in the era of old-school of hunting, where scouting and reading sign before the hunt was a must. This art was taught to us by fathers, grandfathers, uncles and mentors who had grown up reading sign. The technology that is available today simply was not around in the 1960s.

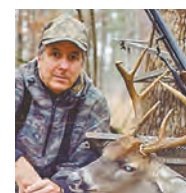
Most boomer hunters probably remember finding their first deer track or deer crossing. I can remember my first Pearl River buck; I read scrape sign for three weeks before I was able to go make a hunt. What a thrilling moment it was when a buck walked to the scrape at daylight and then dropped in its tracks when

I squeezed the trigger.

Hunting regulations on Wildlife Management Areas are different from private lands, and public-land hunters must still use the art of reading sign to have success — and that is just fine with me.

SKIP OLD SCHOOL

Technology has changed the game of hunting. Today, a hunter does not really have to scout the woods for deer sign. Simply set up a feeder, attach a camera to a tree, and voila, an instant set-up that requires no person to be out and about looking for deer sign. In fact, the hunter does not even have to go out to check the feeder; he or she simply sets the camera up with his phone, and he



Dave Moreland is the author of the new book *Louisiana Whitetails*, which explains how to grow big deer and where to hunt them. The book is available at www.SportsmanGear.com and at Amazon.com.

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can watch the game and the feeder at the same time.

So is this bad, making use of modern technology to do the scouting? Not really; it's simply taking advantage of technology in a society where time is limited. I use cameras all the time; mine are somewhat low-tech, I can't afford the super-tech gadgets, plus, I am technology challenged.

Cameras save time and energy when trying to determine the population status of deer and turkey on a landscape. These pictures, however, don't often tell the whole story, unless you simply are looking at killing a deer. Then, they will certainly show you what you need to know. Quite often, the pictures provide a starting point for the hunter, then the hunter has to do some leg work, reading the sign, to connect with the quarry.

Of course, technology will not help with all species. If you like to squirrel hunt, reading sign is a must. Squirrel sign for the most part is finding the cuttings of squirrels as they feed on mast such as pine cones, acorns, hickory nuts, cypress balls and the like.

ADDED INFO

Actually scouting the woods before the season will provide the hunter with information concerning acorn availability. When mast is limited, this information is most useful for the deer hunter. Knowing where an oak tree is that is dropping acorns is always an opportunity for a set-up. This may be one of those years where such information is important. It appears that some oak trees have plenty of acorns, while others have few.

continues >



As the rut intensifies, the number of rubs in the woods increases, providing visible sign for deer hunters.

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GRUNTS & GOBBLES

continued



Turkey sign includes tracks, scratchings, droppings, dusting areas and feathers.

Rabbits leave tracks and droppings on the landscape, but most hunters don't go around looking for this rabbit sign before hunting. Actually seeing rabbits early in the morning or late in the evening, either around the deer stand in a field or while traveling to and from the stand, will give the hunter an idea of rabbit numbers and where they are.

Likewise, dove hunters don't do a lot of looking for dove sign. Actual observation of birds around fields is generally the way hunters determine where to hunt. Unfortunately, some hunters prefer to take the short cuts that Leopold wrote about and place grain out in the field to attract the doves. The news release that my state's wildlife agency put out after the opening weekend of dove season indicated that many hunters decided this short cut was the way to go.

Regulations are different for public and private land. Regulations are different on state and federal public lands so it is important that hunters read the regulations book. Reading this sign could help keep you out of trouble this season. ■

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To say a particular fishing location or pattern is “overlooked” makes the assumption that other folks are fishing, just not in the prescribed location.

However, crappie fishing in the fall generally means the entire lake is overlooked, since most folks are out sitting in a tree, a football stadium or in front of the TV.

Nonetheless, there are particular locations that hold respectable numbers of

crappie that other anglers simply either don't fish or aren't aware of their fish-holding potential.

One thing each of these places has in common is they find favor to crappie that are seeking asylum from the fall turnover and/or are an easy stop between the fall migration from deeper water to shallow.

OXBOWS >

OVERLOOKED?

CRAPPIE FISHING DURING THE FALL IS A LOT LIKE SPRING FISHING, MINUS THE CROWDS. HERE ARE 4 OVERLOOKED PLACES TO FIND SLABS WHEN THE LEAVES ARE TURNING.

■ By Phillip Gentry

OPPOSITE: Riprap is a year-round haven for crappie, but it will congregate crappie as waters begin to cool in the fall.

OXBOWS

Brad Taylor of Greenville, past president of the Magnolia Crappie Club and a tournament angler, has fished oxbows most of his life and looks forward to the fall when oxbows along the Mississippi River provide some of the best action in the entire state.

“Fall water levels are more stable in these oxbows,” Taylor said. “However, it’s a good idea to keep tabs on the water levels of the Mississippi before heading out to an oxbow, because the true oxbows that are connected directly to the river by a ditch or canal fluctuate with the river levels. If the water gets too deep coming in from the Mississippi River it will scatter the fish and make them harder to catch because there’s deep water everywhere and not just in the main runs.”

Taylor said oxbows tend to get overlooked in favor of larger, more-popular lakes. Anglers can expect to catch both white and black crappie in oxbows, depending on the location.

“River specks will be down in the brush, most of which is man-made stuff that’s been sunk along the edge of the oxbow channel,” he said. “These fish will almost always be right in the brush or at least around the tops of it. It’s pretty common to get 20 to 25 fish in a day’s fishing, and they’ll be big, healthy, green-tinted black crappie. A pound-and-a-half speck is really something to see in a blackwater oxbow.”

“White crappie are typically the better fish and are found relating to brush, but (they) nearly always suspend somewhere

up in the water column,” he said. “Get out in deeper water and look for shad on your sonar, then follow the bait and you’re almost guaranteed to find some big white crappie.”

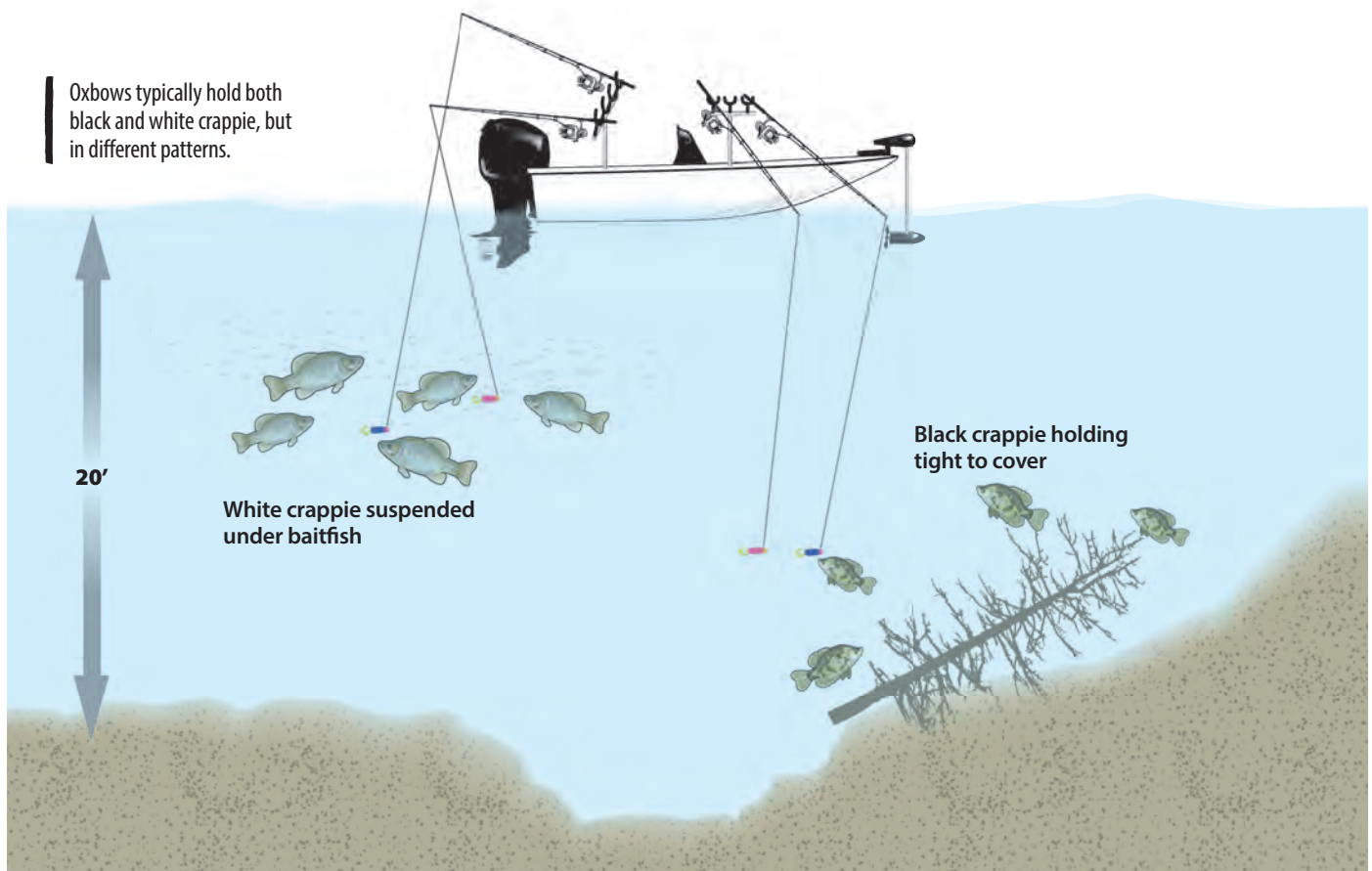
RIPRAP

Tournament angler Kent Driscoll, a member of the B’n’M Poles pro staff, said a lot of people don’t fish riprap because they can’t see the forest for the trees.

“Crappie will always relate to riprap, no matter what type of lake, river or area you’re fishing,” he said. “It’s also a great place to fish, because the rocks provide a big current break for the fish and a big wind break for the fisherman. Also, as the weather and water start to get cooler, all that rock will warm up in the late-afternoon sun, and that gradual warming will heat the surrounding water up a degree or two, enough to draw both baitfish and crappie.”

Driscoll said the combination of food, deep water and slightly warmer temperatures make riprap a great place to load up on crappie, and it’s not hard to fish.

“Fishing riprap is like fishing a stairwell with a gradual slope,” he said. “You first have to figure out what depth level the fish are using, as it tends to change based on conditions. Most riprap will be at nearly a 45-degree angle. That means if you’re 5 feet off the bank, you’re in about 5 feet of water; if you’re 10 feet out, you’re in 10 feet and so on. Most riprap will extend out at least 25 feet under water, and that gives you a wide range of depths to locate fish.”





Philip Gentry

BOAT DOCKS

Brad Whitehead, a guide on Pickwick Lake, said fishing boat docks can be a year-round tactic, but he finds the fall can be as good as the spring when it comes to catching crappie around them.

Whitehead looks for boat docks that provide access to deep water. Those docks with at least 12 feet of water off the front end are ideal. Boat docks with large roof coverings or canopies create a large area of shade.

To catch these fish, he's going to shoot the docks with a slow-falling, 1/24- to 1/32-ounce jig.

"It takes a bit of practice," Whitehead said. "You bend the rod over and hold the jig between your thumb and forefinger under the reel. Release the jig and simultaneously release the line, which sling shots the bait forward, parallel to the water, causing it to skip up under the boat or dock or whatever you're shooting at.

"Watch your line as the jig sinks. Any twitch, movement or sudden stopping of the line means a fish just sucked your jig in. That's when you need to set the hook" he said.

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RIVERS

John Harrison, a guide on Grenada Lake, is well known for catching big crappie from reservoirs, but he admitted that crappie-fishing in a river is a great way to find crappie that get a whole lot less pressure.

Harrison said finding a good river to fish is as simple as motoring all the way up to the headwaters of a reservoir and fishing the flowing waters there — or by putting in at one of the many rivers that cross the state.

“It’s not really that different from fishing a big reservoir, where crappie live in river arms that have been impounded,” Harrison said. “Crappie will hold along the edge of the river channels, and they will congregate around some type of structure that breaks the current and also attracts baitfish. In the spring and fall, they will move out of the main river and work their way into smaller tributaries and shallower water.”

Unlike reservoir fishing, where most of the successful tactics involve fishing multiple rods, Harrison said river fishing is almost entirely a single-pole event.

“It’s almost 100% jig fishing, whether you’re in the main river or one of the offshoots,” he said. “You might get away with trolling the deep end of a slough, but



Pickwick guide Brad Whitehead shows how to get the right bend in a limber rod to shoot crappie jigs under boat docks.

Phillip Gentry

you’ll get hung up a lot because there’s so much debris on the bottom of most rivers. I like a good 8- to 9-foot graphite jig pole to jig with. I’ll use that to work a 1/16-ounce jig around visible shoreline structure or working a deep-water stump field.” ■



Veteran outdoor writer **Phillip Gentry** is a regular contributor to *Mississippi Sportsman*. He hunts and fishes for just about everything that runs and swims — and even some things that hop.

MORE OXYGEN EQUALS MORE CRAPPIE

Steve Coleman, an eight-time national champion crappie fisherman, said the best way to combat low oxygen levels that often occur during the fall is to find areas that provide more oxygen.

He pointed to the headwaters of a creek.

“Look for moving water,” said Coleman, from Tiptonville, Tenn. “Any time you have current, either from dropping lake levels for winter pool or where you’ve got water coming into a lake, you’ll have better water quality. That moving water, especially if it tumbles coming into the lake, will have more oxygen and crappie will always gravitate to the better water quality during the fall.

Coleman said you can tell when a lake is turning over in areas that are calm and still. The water will have a dark or murky look and you’ll often see dead shad on the surface. Moving water keeps the water stirred up and doesn’t affect the fishing.

He scoffs when anglers say they’ve never caught crappie in water with current

“Crappie don’t like having to fight the current, but they do like to eat, and that’s another reason they’ll head to moving water,” he said. “This time of year, baitfish migrate into the backs of creeks,

Crappie pro Steve Coleman said flowing water contains more dissolved oxygen and is a great place to look for turnover weary crappie.



Phillip Gentry

they’re also looking for better water quality.

“Crappie won’t spend much time in fast moving water,” said Coleman. “Typically, they like to hide behind a current break and dart out there and eat baitfish that are swept past.” ■

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LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman



The Petit Minnow has a paddetail; when fished on a light jighead, it is a great bait for targeting crappie. **OPPOSITE:** Although big slabs can get their mouths around big baits, the Petit Minnow is much closer to the size of the forage they're often targeting.

THE PETIT MINNOW

CRAPPIE PSYCHIC'S LITTLE SOFT-PLASTIC BAIT IS PERFECT FOR CRAPPIE, SPECKLED TROUT

Tim Hebert of Thibodaux has the most-sophisticated marine electronics on the market in his boat to pinpoint crappie, better known as sac-a-lait where he's from.

The latest technology, the Garmin Panoptix LiveScope System, shows Hebert where the fish are located. He's still got to catch them, however, and he's doing that this year with the new Crappie Psychic Petit Minnow.

Capt. Clyde Folse of Raceland, who owns The Crappie Psychic, trotted out the new, 2½-inch, soft-plastic minnow-style bait with a distinct paddetail action this summer. It has been responsible for beaucoup sac-a-lait and speckled trout, as well as bream and bass.

Hebert and his tournament partner, Andre Smith of Schriever, have been catching enough sac-a-lait on the Petit Minnow to finish strong in crappie tournaments on Lake Fork and Ouachita River. Hebert also boasted a 1.72-pound sac-a-lait that bit a Petit Minnow to win the crappie division of the Krewe of Hercules Fishing Rodeo in mid-August on Lake Verret.

Speckled trout are loving Petit Minnows, too, according to Capt. Mike Guidry of Cutoff. Guidry is hooked on the small, slender swimbait that packs a punch as it makes an impact on the freshwater and saltwater scene.

"Oh, yeah, the Petit Minnow is awesome. It's just, even standing still, it has

good action The tail, I don't know how it does it, but it does. Just the slightest little movement" makes it wiggle, said Hebert, a machine-shop manager at Gulf Coast Manufacturing in Houma, "They have a good profile, and they have a lot of action."

Hebert's favorite color is chartreuse/black; the other five Petit Minnow colors are: chartreuse/pink, chartreuse, black/white, black/chartreuse, pink and blue/white. He fishes them on a red, ⅓2-ounce



Don Shoopman fishes for freshwater and saltwater species mostly in and around the Atchafalaya Basin and Vermilion Bay. He moved to the Sportsman's Paradise in 1976, and he and his wife June live in New Iberia. They have two grown sons.

jighead from Cajun Lures. In clear water, he ties it to 6-pound monofilament; in stained water, he uses 20-pound braid. In a recent tournament on the Ouachita River, he fished tight-lined them on 10-foot jiggling poles.

The Petit Minnow has caught plenty of speckled trout since the first prototype was introduced this past summer. Guidry, a 21-year veteran who runs Rippin' Lip Guide Service, started catching fish on them in July.

One of the first trips with the soft plastic in hand was with Folsie.

"I was doing some scouting. I said, 'Why don't you come scouting with me,'" said Guidry, who caught specks with Folsie, mostly on blue/white and white Petit Minnows, but on ever color Folsie brought along. Guidry has been catching on them ever since when the conditions warrant.

And when is that?

"A lot of times, I tell my customers to match what the trout are feeding on at the time. When trout are feeding on glass minnows, they annihilate that thing," he said. "When you see glass minnows, or trout are spitting them up when you put them in the boat, tie some on."

Most of the speckled trout he and others in his boat have caught are 1 to 1½ pounds.

"It's mostly school trout," he said.

Finding a suitable leadhead with a hook fit for a Petit Minnow eventually took him to ¼- and ½-ounce crappie leadheads.

"I looked for a hook that was kind of stout and didn't bend easy, the same kind they use tube jigs with. I think Clyde's coming out with a hook for that," he said.

Considering the size of the Petit Minnow, Guidry goes with a cigar-shaped cork weighted on one end used for sac-a-lait fishing, rather than a popping cork. He fishes the soft plastic, sometimes tandem-rigged, about 1½ feet deep on 12-pound monofilament on a spinning rod. He believes 6- to 8-pound SpiderWire braid would be effective, too.

Water clarity doesn't have to be great to use the Petit Minnow, he said.

"It wasn't real clear when we went out the first time, kind of stained. It worked out well everywhere we went. It was really awesome," he said.

For more information on the Petit Minnow, visit www.thecrappiepsychic.com or call 985-790-0862. ■



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Shall we gather • at the river?

READING AND UNDERSTANDING RIVER PATTERNS ARE TOP PRIORITIES IF YOU'RE AFTER THE CATFISH WHO LIVE THERE.

■ By Phillip Gentry

Casual observers may look at the myriad of rivers that flow through Mississippi and simply see water moving from Point A to Point B.

Catfish anglers who ply these rivers, which include big ones like the Mississippi, Pearl, Pascagoula and Tombigbee and even smaller ones like the Tallahatchie, Yazoo, Big Black, Leaf and Chickasawhay, see ever-changing environments where fish can hold in one area one day and somewhere else the next.

Moreso than the lakes, ponds and reservoirs — and even the Magnolia State's coastal waters — river-fishing presents an almost daily challenge for anglers.

Understanding changes in patterns and how catfish relate to them is key to catching them. Why, whole volumes of books could be written about year-round changes, fall patterns tend to be a favorite among veteran catters.

**FISH FALLING
WATERS >**

Phillip Gentry

Shall we gather at the river?



FISH FALLING WATERS

Ben Goebel, a Mississippi-based member of the B'n'M Poles pro staff, said falling water levels are a very predictable pattern for catching catfish on the Mississippi River.

"The river has been up almost all year," Goebel said. "That gives catfish a lot of different places to go, but when the water recedes, they drop back into more predictable and dependable locations."

Like many Mississippi River catfishermen, Goebel's go-to tactic for 90% of his fishing is bumping. He uses a variable-speed trolling motor to keep his boat pointed upcurrent, while the river slowly moves him downstream. In this manner, he and his clients can "bump" baits along the bottom to target catfish.

"Most people think about still-fishing while anchored in deep holes on the Mississippi," he said. "This time of year, with falling water levels, catfish are more likely to be holding on deep-water flats in 45 to 50 feet of water. They're orienting to ledges and current seams."

He said that with fish vacating shoreline areas in favor of the river channel, he finds that these fish out in the middle of the river are more inclined to feed.

"It's all a big puzzle, and for me, it's what makes catfishing interesting," he said. "In one particular spot, I might have a run where fish are holding next to some structure at the top of the run, and then a little further back, there might be few more fish that are simply orienting to a seam

in the current out on a flat. Then, toward the edge of the run, there could be some more fish holding on a ledge that drops into a deeper area of the river."

LOCATE DEEP HOLES

One of the keys to catching big catfish from any river is knowing where to find them. Trophy-sized catfish will lay up in deep holes on a nearly year-round basis, and one of the easiest, most consistent places to find good catfish holes is around a wing dike.

Wing dikes are plentiful and found up and down many large rivers. A wing dike, aka wing dam, is a man-made barrier that, unlike a conventional dam, only extends part-way into a river. These structures force water into a fast-moving, center channel that reduces the rate of sediment accumulation, while slowing water flow near the banks.

Guide Bob Crosby from Madison said fishing wing dikes is an obvious choice for most catfish anglers, but there more to it than meets the eye.

"The average dike is probably a couple hundred yards long," he said. "You can anchor up on the edge of the dike, where the main current is blowing through the cutout. Catfish will hold right on the edge of the main current and the slower current. Use your graph, find the fish and anchor up on them."

ABOVE: Wing dikes are structures placed to control sediment and washout along the banks of the river; they are also a popular location to find catfish.

Mike Curtis displays a nice catfish he caught while river fishing from his kayak.

Kayaking for catfish

Mike Curtis

Mike Curtis and his family discovered the fun of paddling and catching catfish from small- to medium-sized rivers several years ago. Unlike most die-hard kayak anglers, the Curtis family forgoes all the gear and tackle normally associated with kayak fishing, and especially catfishing, and opts for a more simple approach.

This fact is best illustrated in their bait choices, which more readily found in the grocery store than the local bait shop.

"My favorite bait for catfishing in the river is fresh, raw chicken breast," Curtis said. "We cut it into racquetball-sized chunks and let it float in the current."

The Curtis family also fishes from a fleet of varied cockpit-style touring kayaks, without the myriad of rod holders normally associated with catfish. One paddler, one rod is the favored approach. Curtis explains how the family catfishing pattern came into existence.

"For the most part, we just float the river and cast the bait either out front or to the side," he said. "I rig the baits on an 8/0 circle hook and float it under a large slip cork. I just let the current carry the bait in front of me, and we cover water. Every so often, I'll cast along the bank, just like I was bream fishing with bait under a cork."

Unlike bream fishing, Curtis' standard gear is a Shakespeare Catfish Ugly Stik and a Penn 4500 reel spooled with 55 pound braided line.

Curtis said the fishing is either float down and paddle back or, if there are two cars available for a longer float, they will park one downstream at the next take-out and float a stretch. ■



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Shall we gather at the river?

Bridge pilings are some of the more-common current breaks in any river. Debris collects both above and below the surface and naturally attracts catfish.

While water levels are sometimes in a state of flux, especially on the Mississippi where Crosby fishes, the fall typically presents the most-stable water levels of the year.

“Most of the dikes come out of the water at Vicksburg at about 14 feet, but they’re all out at 12 feet,” Crosby said. “If water conditions remain steady at this level, meaning not a lot of rapid ups or downs, it’s no trouble to fish the scour holes at the ends of the dikes. That’s where I catch the majority of my big fish.

Once he is settled, Crosby will fan-cast rods around his boat in locations catfish are likely to hold. He may place a couple of baits on the downslope of a hole and a couple straight off into the depths.

“I prefer to target larger catfish, so most of my tackle is outfitted with two-hook rigs,” he said. “That’s a hook in the head and a trailer hook in the tail on a fresh, 8- to 10-inch skipjack. I use 8/0 Gamakatsu circle hooks with a slider for my sinker like a slip slider. Typically, I use 6- to 8-ounce to weights to keep the bait on the bottom in a moderate current.”

MAN-MADE CURRENT BREAKS

Angler Joey Pounders of Caledonia said a lot of anglers target blue catfish in deep holes, but he has found that whether he is fishing deep or shallow, the key element is moving water with structure that provides a current break.

“You’re going to get more action when the current is going



Phillip Gentry

than when not,” he said. “If the water’s dead that day in that area, don’t even worry about fishing that spot. If the water’s blowing, it’s more likely to be a great spot to fish, especially if you can find a current break like a bridge piling or laydown tree, because the fish are going to huddle around the back side of these things.”

Pounders will anchor his boat, rigged with sturdy rod holders around the stern and cast to several spots in that area.

“My bait of choice is live shad, cast-netted directly from the lake at the start of the trip or the night before. Sizes will range anywhere from 5 to 8 inches in length and possibly a filleted shad for blue cats. I’ll fan-cast six rods, I use the B’n’M Silver Cats Magnum rods, evenly distributing baits in various water depths and structure,” he said. ■

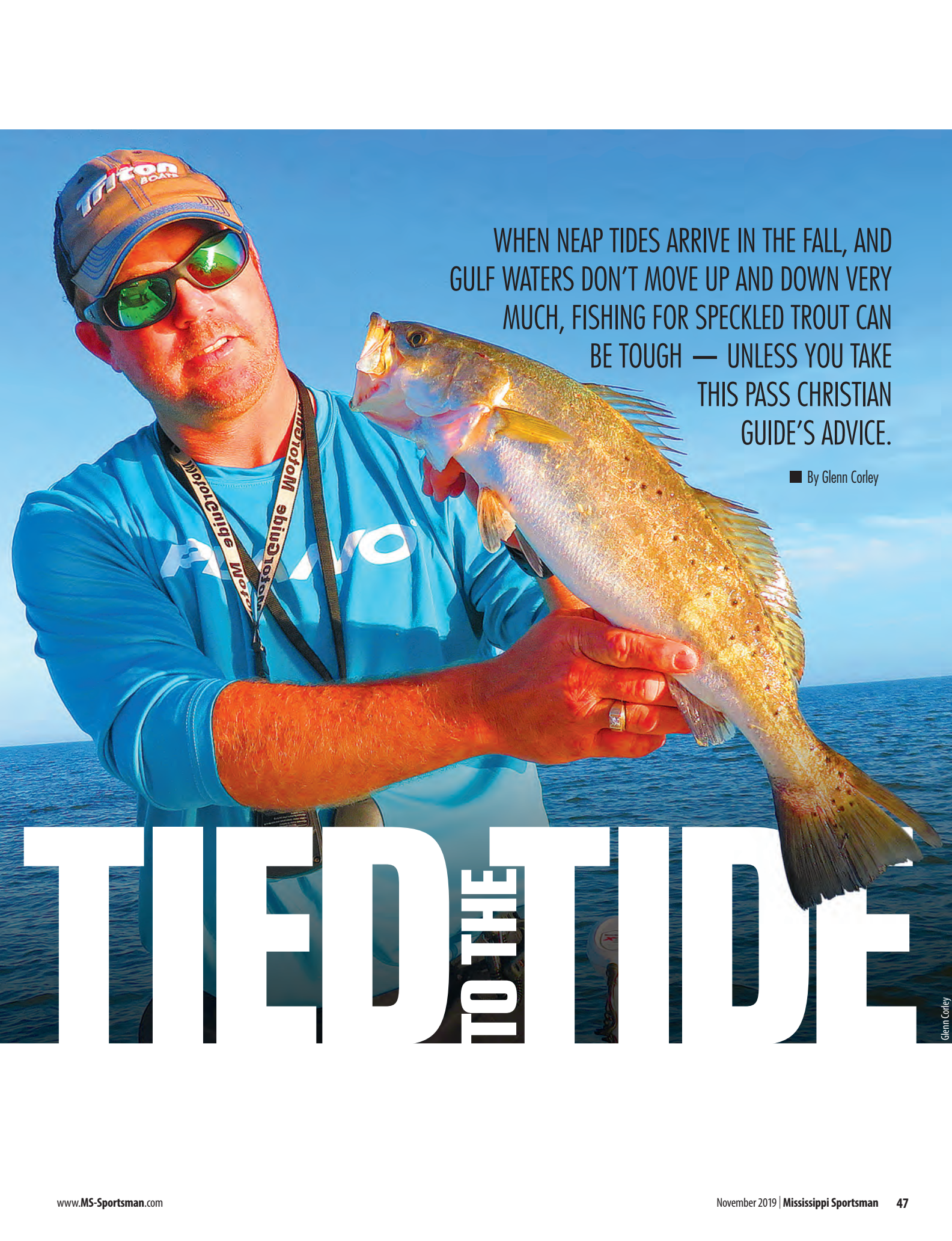


Veteran outdoor writer Phillip Gentry is a regular contributor to *Mississippi Sportsman*. He hunts and fishes for just about everything that runs and swims — and even some things that hop.

Joey Pounders has learned that current breaks, whether man-made or natural, provide a great place for catfish to hide out of the current to ambush prey.



Phillip Gentry



WHEN NEAP TIDES ARRIVE IN THE FALL, AND GULF WATERS DON'T MOVE UP AND DOWN VERY MUCH, FISHING FOR SPECKLED TROUT CAN BE TOUGH — UNLESS YOU TAKE THIS PASS CHRISTIAN GUIDE'S ADVICE.

■ By Glenn Corley

TIED TO THE TIDE

Glenn Corley

When is the best time to go fishing for speckled trout? Of course, it's whenever you can go, but some Mississippi anglers will not fish a neap tide — when there's little vertical difference between high-tide and low-tide levels and not much water moving — because they feel the trout will not bite.

Ronnie Daniels of Fisher Man Guide Service disagrees with this logic.

"A neap tide does not deter me from catching a lot of trout when other people would not go out fishing," Daniels said, admitting he has to make a few adjustments to catch fish at a time when many anglers don't think there is enough moving water to trigger much of a bite.

To catch plenty of trout, Daniels (228-323-1115), will fish big bodies of water that neck down between smaller islands with a rock and shell bottom. These areas will have more water moving through them, and they're where he looks for bait.

"This is where you will find the trout," he said.

The bait, often croaker or mullet, will suspend in the water column in areas with moving water.

"The trout will generally be suspending and holding right off the bottom ... waiting for the bait to come by them," said Daniels, who uses lures that imitate croaker or small mullet, normally good-sized lures.

"The downside to using bigger baits is that there may not be as many bites, but (there's) an increase of catching bigger fish instead of numerous smaller ones," he said.

Daniels will also fish deeper waters with depths of 5 to 8 feet. It will take longer for the lures to get down to the

suspended fish, but that's where the strike will come.

"Usually, the trout will hit when the lure falls right in front of them," said Daniel, who is looking for a reaction bite and will twitch his rod tip a couple of times when he thinks his lure has fallen to the right depth.

"Most of the time, the trout will slam the lure," Daniels said. "When you feel the fish hit, then strike firm. Other times, the trout will nudge the bait three or four times but will not commit to a strike."

Daniels uses a variety of lures, but he likes those that fall about a foot per second and weigh around a ¼-ounce: MirrOdine

Soft-Dine, Soft-Dine XL, other stickbaits and ¼-ounce jigheads with soft-plastic baits that imitate baitfish.

As far as equipment, Daniels uses custom-made 7-foot-3 Parker rods with a medium or fast tip, mated with low-profile Abu Garcia Revo inshore reels spooled with 30-pound braid and 12 to 18 inches of 20-pound fluorocarbon or monofilament as a leader.

Daniels is adamant about tying on lures with a loop knot and never using hard-



Soft-plastic lures on jigheads and lures that suspend or sink slowly, like Soft-Dines, are great fall baits for trout and redfish.



Glenn Corley

ware that might change the way the lure works, altering its presentation.

Daniels generally fishes the Pas Christian area from spring to the end of November. The water temperature will usually drop to around 70 degrees during October and November, after trout finish spawning. He fishes until the water temperature drops into the 60s.

Daniels concentrates on some of the 41 man-made reefs sunk off the Mississippi coast and managed by the Department of Marine Resources. Daniels likes the Gene Taylor Reef, built with rubble from the Bay St. Louis bridge about 7 miles off the beach, 300 yards long, the Jailhouse Reef in Mississippi Sound and the old Pas Marianne Lighthouse, which is 5½ miles south of Pas Christian. ■



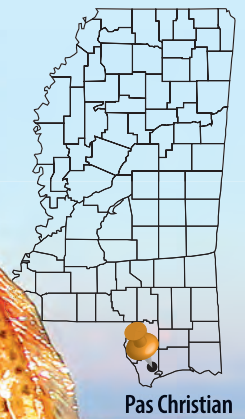
Former school teacher Glenn "Teach" Corley began writing about the outdoors when he retired from the classroom. He has had more than 200 articles and photographs published in magazines and newspapers.

Trout are commonly caught in areas with plenty of current. They're harder to find during neap tides, but they'll bite in what passes for moving water, normally caused by pinch points.

November's Neap Tides

Out of Pas Christian, November's neap tides — the lowest changes between daily high and low tides — will be Nov. 1-8 and 16-20.

Neap tides are normally related to waxing and waning moon phases. Larger "spring" tides are typically associated with full- and new-moon phases.



Pas Christian



Glenn Corley

SPECKLED TRUTH

Chris Bush

Paul Brown baits, including the Corky, Fat Boy, Soft Dine and Devil, have the reputation of being more productive as the water cools in fall and winter. The author put them to the test.

WHEN IT'S COLD, THEY'RE HOT

PAUL BROWN BAITS HAVE THE RIGHT MOVES FOR FALL, WINTER TROUT

The feeling of the Corky “thump” is subtle, yet profound. In trophy trout circles, it’s a feeling that is known well. It’s a bite transformed into a mythical persona and one that gains steam in conversation when the thermometer retreats from the summer heat.

Let’s examine the sink rate and sink profile of some popular Paul Brown lures and decide if time of year turns this bait from ordinary to extraordinary.

CORKY SEASON

As an early 1980s baby growing up in New Orleans, I was fortunate to remember a time before social media. Days on the delta weren’t measured by likes and shares but seared into a camera’s film. Countless negatives at my parents’ house proved that we liked to fish — a lot. Better yet, magazines and other periodicals gave us monthly insight versus the Google keyword searches we now live by.

In one of those magazines, I remember reading about the legendary Paul Brown Corky. As I matured and the dawn of the internet arrived, I remember visiting www.wadefishing.com. On this early internet site, I remember reading posts and gawking at pictures by Capt. Jesse

Arsola and other South Texas legends. One thing I distinctly remember was, as temperatures cooled, big trout became more prevalent, and it never failed that the “Corky” was the lure of choice.

Fast forward, and it’s clear to see that the dawn of the information age set the foundation to a notional “Corky season”. In other words, when temperatures got colder, the more effective these baits became.

Now with a cult-like following, Paul Brown references show up on social media starting Oct. 1 and linger into the better part of spring. Why? Are these baits that much more effective in the winter than the summer?

I wanted to explore that possibility, examining sink rate and sink profile for a variety of lures in various salinities and water temps.

SINK RATE

I set up a 10-gallon tank. There was no current, and it was filled with tap water. I then filmed five descents of six lures: the Fatboy, Fatboy Floater, Corky Original, Devil, Soft Dine and Soft Dine XL. Establishing the foundation, I did this at 0 ppt (parts per thousand) of salt and 71.9-degree water, which means the

water column is void of all density. Below is the average of the five descents and measured in seconds/foot:

Fatboy: 1.64
Fatboy Floater: 2.16
Corky Original: 2.10
Devil: 1.3
Soft Dine: 1.73
Soft Dine XL: 1.83

I added 1½ pounds of kosher salt to the tank. Every pound of salt equals 10 parts per thousand of salinity. In addition, I decided to chill the water, using ice, to the lower 50s to simulate what would be true winter water.

Here are the sink results at 15 ppt and 52.3 degrees:

Fatboy: 1.98
Fatboy Floater: 3.22
Original: 2.15
Devil: 1.63
Soft Dine: 1.97
Soft Dine XL: 1.99



Chris Bush is a U.S. Air Force officer and a licensed charter captain. He spends his time targeting big speckled trout and sharing knowledge on his website, *Speckled Truth*.



Big trout, caught in cold-weather situations, are more likely to hit a slow-moving, slow-sinking bait.

Taking it a step further, I wanted to simulate a high-salinity estuary, so I added another 1½ pounds of salt, which raised the salinity to 30 ppt. — a total of 3 pounds to 10 gallons. Keeping the temperature the same, I measured the descents again.

- Fatboy:** 2.30
- Fatboy Floater:** 4.23
- Original:** 2.58
- Devil:** 1.69
- Soft Dine:** 2.15
- Soft Dine XL:** 2.22

It's clear to see that all Paul Brown lures sink more slowly as salinities go up and water temperatures go down. As anglers, having a sound understanding of the baits' sink performance is critical in a sterile environment. As wind, tide and water clarity factor into the equation, sink rates may be impacted even more.

In other words, if I'm fishing in February, I can target some skinny water pretty effectively because I know in a sterile environment, a Fatboy will sink close to a foot every 2½ second. Factoring in wind and water clarity, it may sink even more slowly, which leads

to this being an optimal choice for targeting big fish in skinny water.

Now that we've examined sink rate, let's look at sink profile.

SINK PROFILE

Like sink rate, sink profile is also paramount to visualizing what your presentation looks like to your targeted fish.

Fatboy: The Fatboy is known for its "wobble." This sort of built-in characteristic separates this bait from the others. It clearly wobbles side-to-side as it sinks. Better yet, it sinks horizontally, which give it a great profile for big trout to target. Its sink profile did not change between salinities, just the sink rate.

Fatboy Floater: Contrary to popular belief, this bait doesn't float, except at 30 ppt and 51-degree water temps. Even then, it will only float for a half-second before it starts its descent. Unlike a regular Fat Boy, it doesn't possess the wobble and sinks tail first, albeit very slowly when the water gets cold and salty.

Original: Of all of the Paul Brown lures tested, this one had the most-consistent sink rate, varying ever so slightly. It also

continues>

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SPECKLED TRUTH

continued

had the most-consistent sink profile. Upon entry, it typically righted itself almost immediately and had a very subtle wobble, unlike its bigger brother, the Fatboy.

Devil: The Devil, as you would suspect, had the most unique sink profile, and like that of the soft plastics I've tested, its sink profile emulated a darter-style bait. Every time it entered the water, it sank with the head slightly forward and tail up. In addition, it glided gently through the water column, even with no current. Its profile did not change as salinity levels increased.

Soft Dine: This was an interesting find because I was really surprised at how much a regular Soft Dine wobbled upon descent. In stature, this bait has a much smaller profile than a Fatboy but it possessed all of the same characteristics: horizontal descent, no glide and a ton of wobble. That was good to see, because it offers a great alternative to its bigger profile cousin.

Soft Dine XL: Like the regular Soft Dine, I thought it would

have a pronounced wobble, but it didn't. Instead it had a regular sink profile: little to no wobble and a horizontal descent. It also glided a little more than the Soft Dine.

WRAP-UP

Despite having a sound understanding and a tremendous amount of success with these baits, I learned a lot by doing this experiment. Watching each descent coupled with having tangible sink-rate data, I can remember different trips and why one of these was successful. These baits perform differently given the water temperature and salinity levels in your estuary, and whether you fish in North Carolina or Louisiana, I encourage you to reflect on why these baits may have been successful.

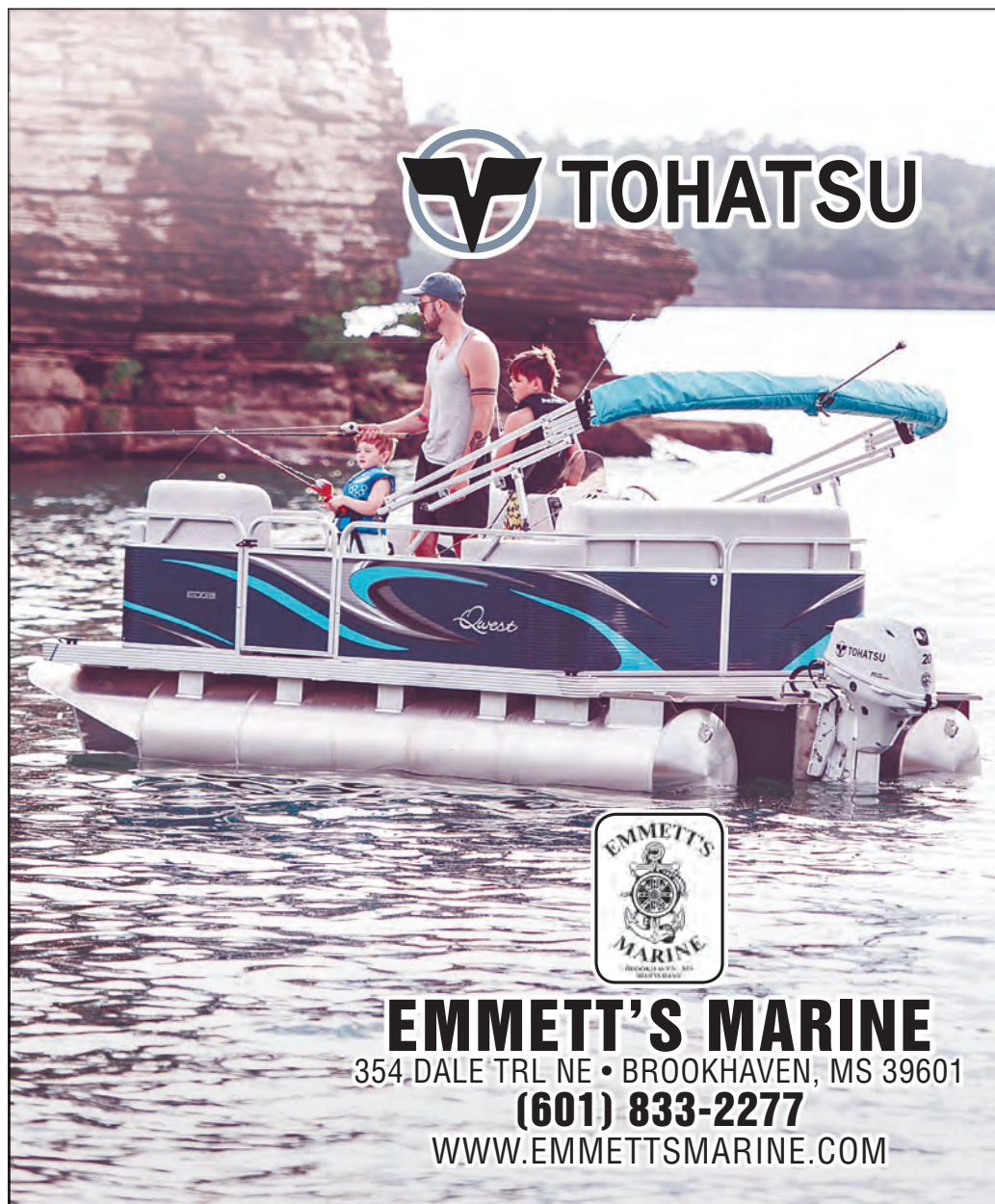
CORKY SEASON, FACT OR FICTION

Those images on high-gloss magazine pages in the mid-1990s presented the notion that these baits transcended their performance once temperatures fell. Now, with tangible evidence, it's safe to say that Corky Season is indeed a real thing. Let's examine why.

The first is water level. Regardless of estuary, water levels in the winter typically get lower. Because the descent rates of these baits slows as the water gets colder, you can fish them consistently and confidently where trophy trout roam: skinny flats with deep water nearby.

Second, and most important, it imitates a finfish. Here in my south Texas home, trophy trout can be found in surprisingly skinny water in the winter. Also, most other forage has vacated the shallow flats, leaving mullet and other small trout as their main forage. So, confidently fishing a bait that performs better in a shrinking water column, coupled with a mullet profile imitation, can lend itself to some epic winter trophy trout action.

I'm not dismissing the notion that these baits don't work year-round, it's just that their characteristics lend themselves to being much more productive in the winter. ■



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GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

An adult black carp caught by a commercial fisherman in the Atchafalaya River, Louisiana. Catches of reproductive black carp and a range of sizes throughout the lower Mississippi river basin suggests black carp are now reproducing in the wild.



BLACK CARP CAN WIPE OUT MOLLUSKS

INVASIVE SPECIES IS REPRODUCING, WITH BAD RESULTS

Photo courtesy U.S. Geological Survey

The black carp is one of four species included in the group of Asian carp that includes grass carp, bighead carp and silver carp. These fish grow to more than 6 feet and 150 pounds in their native rivers of eastern China and Russia.

Black carp eat primarily mollusks (snails and mussels) when available. They were initially stocked into aquaculture ponds to eat the snails that are the intermediate host of flukes that parasitize cultured fish like channel catfish.

Although black carp stocked at fish farms were genetically manipulated to be triploid fish (three sets of chromosomes) and, thus, genetically sterile, the fish appear to be reproducing in the wild, so some escapees were diploid (two sets of chromosomes) and capable of reproducing.

Introduced, non-native plants and

animals usually negatively affect native plants and animals and their ecosystems. In the case of black carp, their selective consumption of snails and mussels — the most imperiled group of animals in the world — poses a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems.

While many management agencies decry the effect of introduced animals based solely on their known or expected behaviors — including what they eat — a study by graduate student Nate Hodgins at Mississippi State took a deeper look at potential effects of black carp by addressing how much they eat.

THE STUDY

Small (3- to 5-ounce) and large (1- to 2-pound) juvenile black carp were fed high-protein feed pellets or live snails in controlled laboratory conditions.

The average daily consumption rate — the amount of food consumed daily as a percentage of the fish's body weight — of small black carp fed pellets ranged from 1.4% to 1.7% at water temperatures ranging from 68° to 86°F. The average daily consumption of the large black carp fed pellets was 1.3% to 2.1% at the same range of water temperatures.

The average daily consumption rate of small black carp fed live snails was 5.9% to 6.3%.

The pellets have no water and, therefore, an ounce of pellets has much more



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.

energy than an ounce of live snails that are mostly water and inorganic shell. When daily consumption was calculated as energy, small black carp fed pellets consumed twice as much energy per day as those fed live snails. Possibly, energy consumption of black carp fed snails was mechanically limited. The snails were small, and the black carp ate 296 to 674 snails per day.

THE IMPLICATIONS

The energy consumption rates of small and large juvenile black carp were used to estimate the impact of black carp on natural snail and mussel populations. Across 84 studies, average mussel biomass ranges from about 0.03 to 3.0 ounces per square yard. Converting that biomass to energy and using the ranges of average daily energy consumption rates from the laboratory studies, a standing stock of 2.3 to 9.5 pounds per acre would consume the entire snail and mussel biomass in an average stream during a 180-day growing season when the water temperature is 68° to 86° F, the temperatures at which consumption was measured.

Estimates of black carp biomass measured as pounds per acre are not available. It is unlikely that standing stocks exceeding 2.3 pounds per acre are present at this early stage of black carp colonization and population expansion, but when individual fish quickly grow to sizes larger than 50 pounds, only a few black carp in a couple miles of stream can achieve the biomass necessary to extirpate the mollusks.

I think there is another — and more realistic — way to use the result from Hodgins' study to forecast the potential threat of black carp to native mussels. Much of the biomass of mussels in our streams and rivers results from a few large, old, thick-shelled individuals. Although black carp attain large size, these large mussels will largely escape consumption. Rather, consider the thousands of small, young mussels and snails that will be consumed annually by even a



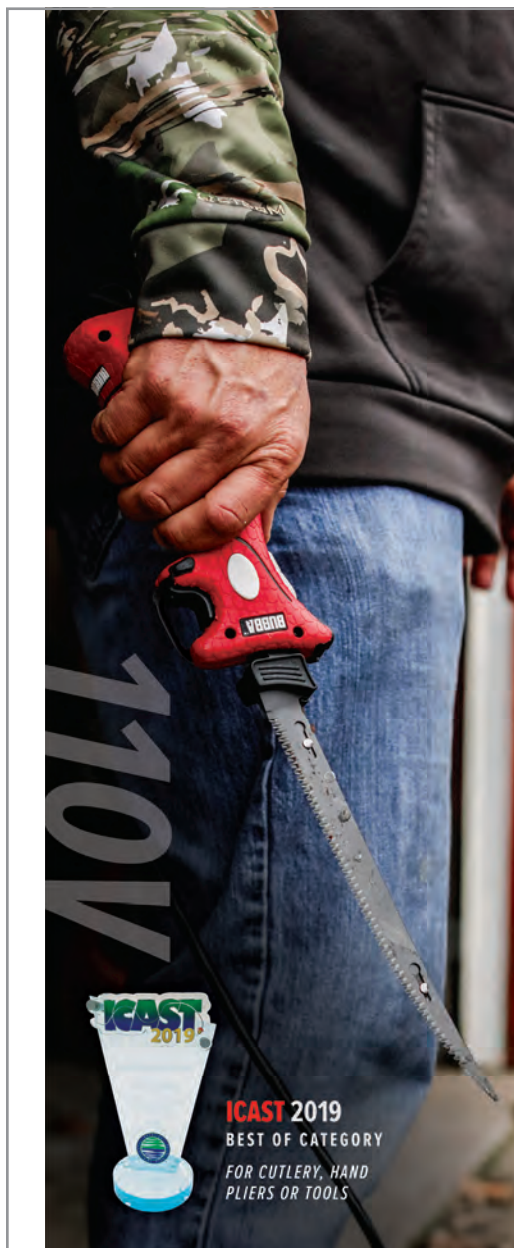
Photo courtesy Nate Hodgins

A SNAIL'S PACE:

One of the large black carp used in laboratory experiments to estimate food consumption rate of black carp. A few of these fish can threaten the native mollusk fauna in a couple of miles of stream.

few pounds per acre of relatively small black carp. As noted, small black carp in the laboratory trials consumed 296 to 674 live snails per day! Thus, the data supports decimation of an imperiled

mollusk fauna by even a low biomass of black carp that can eliminate the smaller, younger mollusks and prevent recruitment to adult stages. ■



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Paul Elias

Paul Elias says you'll get a number of small bass this month on Ross Barnett, but the opportunity is there to catch bass weighing from 4 to 6 pounds and perhaps a bigger one, too.

BARNETT'S SHALLOW BASS

AS GRASS, LILY PADS FALL BACK, THERE IS NEW, OPEN WATER FOR ANGLERS TO TEST

Bass always follow a buffet. When shad move to shallow water, so do the bass. In November, the shad will swim into Ross Barnett's shallow waters for two reasons. They'll move into the dying grass, hold and feed in 1 to 3 feet of water, due to the water cooling down. They'll also swim into the rocks — mainly riprap. As the water cools at the end of November, the rocks will reflect heat, and the warmest water in the lake will be near the surface.

So, I use several tactics to catch the bass in both places with four rods on my casting deck. I'll primarily be fishing on the lake's eastern side in the big lily pad bays.

GO SHALLOW EARLY

At the first of November, the lily pads are dying off, and the grass is breaking up. You'll be able to fish places you haven't since late spring and summer. You need to concentrate your fishing on the lily pads and grass areas the

first two weeks by using four key baits and covering plenty of water fairly quickly.

• **Buzzbait.** At first light, I'll be casting a black, 3/8-ounce buzzbait with black, painted blades, around the dying lily pads in open water and in the lanes formed by the grass that's also dying and breaking up in 1 to 3 feet of water. I'll use a heavy action, 7-foot-1 FX Custom rod with a fast tip and spool 30-pound bass braid on my 7.5:1 Bruin baitcasting reel. I'll be searching for shad moving back into shallow water. I'll get lots of bites, catching numbers of small bass, but November is also a very good month to catch a bass weighing 4 to 6 pounds — and possibly even a 9-pounder.

• **Super Frog.** I'll fish a white Mann's Super Frog in the grass and the pads that are too thick for the buzzbait. I want to learn what color the bass prefer that morning. I'll fish it on a heavy action,



Paul Elias likes to fish a blue shad Baby 1-Minus in the rocks and any open areas in grass and lily pads at Ross Barnett in November.

7-foot-4 FX Custom rod and the same reel spooled with 50-pound bass braid.

• **Baby 1-Minus.** I'll also fish a blue shad Mann's Baby 1-Minus on a 7-foot-2,



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.

medium-action FX Custom rod with the 7.5:1 Bruin reel spooled with 20-pound White Peacock fluorocarbon anywhere there's enough open water with grass under it that I can run a shallow-running crankbait without it getting hung. I'll try to tick the grass with the lure if I can. If it gets hung, I'll rip it out of the grass and pause it.

With these three lures, you'll get a number of short-striking bass that don't take the lure. You'll need to have a follow-up bait to cast to the spot where the bass missed your lure.

If you're fishing the buzzbait and the frog, the bass are most likely to blow up on those and not get the lures in their mouths.

• **Spring-R Worm.** I've been fishing a new follow-up bait I'm very excited about: a junebug-colored Mann's Spring-R worm. It has a spring that runs through the lure, causing the worm to have more action on the fall than any plastic worm I've ever fished. I'll rig it wacky style with a No. 1 wacky, weedless hook and cast it to the spot where the grass and lily pads are sparse. Then, the bass can see the bait fall and attack it. I'll fish it on a medium-action, 7-foot-4 FX Custom spinning rod with 15-pound bass braid on my Bruin spinning reel.

LATER: COVER WATER

As cold fronts move through in late November, I'll move to the rocks, fishing the same Baby 1-Minus and the Spring-R worm with the same setups of rod, reel and line that I've used to fish the grass and the pads.

The shad and other baitfish will be shallow on riprap, since the rocks reflect heat, and the warmest water will be near the surface. Ross Barnett has plenty of rocks, but I'll concentrate on the riprap in Pelahatchie Creek and near the dam.

I'm covering a lot of water quickly, for instance, maybe 1,000 yards of riprap. However, only 50 yards may give me four or five bass bites. Once I determine the places where I get the most bites, I'll concentrate there. ■

The Spring-R worm is a very effective follow-up bait.



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/blueline/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.

COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

While some things have been a bit unusual this fall, one thing we have been able to rely on is sportsmen hitting the woods and waters and returning with excellent fare for the dinner table. The opportunities are abundant, too — at least as long as the weather doesn't interfere. Fall fishing will be very good through at least Thanksgiving, and hunting seasons are open.

One of the most-slighted fish that are abundant during the fall are king mackerel. Many fishermen enjoy catching them, but some say they have a strong flavor and aren't good to eat.

That's just wrong.

King mackerel are the everyman's game-fish. They are primarily caught by fishermen in boats, but many are also landed from the piers. They get fishermen excited with clicker-melting runs and occasional T-top tall launches while chasing baitfish. Unfortunately, it's difficult to get all fishermen excited about eating them. They are delicious prepared in a variety of ways and they're good for you too, as long as they aren't eaten to excess. King mackerel are a prime source of Omega 3 fatty acids that help promote heart health and increase our good cholesterol.

This recipe is a unique way to prepare king mackerel. It pairs them with multiple vegetables in a light and easy meal. Hopefully, it's a way you'll like and prepare occasionally. Kings up to around 20 pounds have a milder flavor, and there are enough fillets in one of those to enjoy this six or eight times. This will be a great substitute for leftover turkey one of the days of Thanksgiving weekend.

Happy Thanksgiving to all. I hope you have many reasons to be thankful. ■



KING MACKEREL STIR FRY

A TWIST ON PREPARING A FISH MANY PEOPLE AVOID



OPPOSITE: The author adds ingredients for stir fry king mackerel into his FireDisc cooker. **INSET:** Marinate king mackerel pieces in Teriyaki sauce for two hours in the refrigerator.

KING MACKEREL STIR FRY

I'll go ahead and say it up front and out loud — I like eating king mackerel. The only quantifier to that statement is that it must be cooked properly. It can't be fried in old oil, and it can't be overcooked. If you get those two things right, it's pretty good.

I prefer kings in the 15- to 20-pound range, as they sometimes are a bit milder and are large enough to have steaks the right size, but I'll eat larger ones, and they're good too. This was prepared with a couple of fillets from a king of approximately 25 pounds, and it disappeared quickly after the pictures were taken.

I like simple recipes, especially those that can be done in a single pot or pan. This doesn't quite meet that standard, as it requires a second pot or rice cooker to prepare the rice. However, it's still pretty simple; the most difficult part is chopping the vegetables.

I believe simple is better and keep it that way by marinating the mackerel in teriyaki sauce and using a little low-sodium soy sauce sprinkled over the combined rice, veggies and fish. Some folks like a sweet, brown sauce over their stir fry. That may work well with chicken or beef, but I think it's too much with mackerel.

King mackerel is the featured ingredient in this recipe, but there are lots of vegetables. If you have a grill with a side burner, all of this can be prepared outside on a mild November evening. Even when it's cooler outside, and I prepare the rice inside, I like to cook the stir fry outside on my FireDisc Cooker.

I've featured this cooker in several recipes in

PREPARATION:

Cut the king mackerel into bite-sized pieces and put the pieces in a Zip-Lock bag and add just enough Teriyaki sauce to cover them, then marinate in the refrigerator for several hours.

Wash the vegetables and chop the broccolini, bell peppers and onion. Shred the cabbage and carrots. Cook the rice according to its directions. Heat a little olive oil in the FireDisc on high until it pops when sprinkled with water.

Cook the mackerel until almost done and remove. Put all the vegetables except the baby corns into the FireDisc and cook until tender, stirring frequently. Put the baby corns and fish in with the vegetables and stir frequently until warm.

Serve the stir fry over the rice. Top with roasted

the past and have tried to describe it several ways. I keep coming back to calling it a cowboy wok; that describes it pretty well. They're made in Texas and are a heck of a big steel, rounded-bottom pan and stand for cooking outdoors.

By cooking outside, I don't have to deal with the whoosh of steam when the fish and vegetables are dumped into the cooker. If you cook inside, be sure to have the stove vent fan running on high when you add them.

The biggest thing with this recipe is to be sure not to overcook anything. It goes south quickly if you overcook the fish or get the vegetables mushy. When you get it right, this is far better than you think it will be. It surprised me the first time we made it and it continues to do it. Give it a try and I believe you'll like it — maybe even enough to cook it again. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound king mackerel fillets
- 1 cup broccolini
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 cup snow peas
- 1 cup carrots
- ½ cup sweet onion
- ½ cup purple cabbage
- 1 can baby corn on the cob,
- 1 cup jasmine rice,
- 4 tbsp roasted sesame seeds
- Teriyaki sauce
- Soy Sauce (may substitute more teriyaki sauce, Tamari Sauce or Coconut Amino sauce)
- Salt and pepper



Jerry Dilsaver

sesame seeds and sprinkle with soy sauce (or teriyaki, tamari or coconut amino sauce) to taste.

This is a one-plate meal. It has meat, multiple vegetables and a starch in the mixture. All you need to add is a glass of ice-cold, sweet tea or your favorite adult beverage. If you would like dessert, it should be light, like pudding or sorbet.

I cook this in a FireDisc, but it could be cooked in a wok. ■



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 at captainjerry@captainjerry.com.

APEX PREDATOR

Joshua Chauvin

The author and a black, Mississippi River fox squirrel he took with a bow on a river island stalk for deer.

BLACK SQUIRRELS WITH A BOW

FOX SQUIRRELS ARE CHALLENGING TARGETS

Josh Chauvin

When I'm deer hunting in woods that are crawling with fox squirrels, I'm always on the lookout for a flash of black. Every year, I take several red and grey squirrels with my bows when easy shots present themselves near the ground. However, along the Mississippi River and surrounding bottomland hardwoods, some fox squirrels are black.

Big fox squirrels come in grey, silver, brown and black, and they make beautiful mounts and tanned pelts. I have lost quite a few arrows emptying my quiver into the tree tops in pursuit of them. A few shots have connected; I've taken three black fox squirrels.

When I was growing up, squirrels were my favorite animals to hunt. An albino fox squirrel shot long before I was born was mounted in my camp. Seeing that albino, I wanted a unique one to mount one day as well.

BLACK SQUIRRELS

After transitioning from small-game hunting in south Louisiana to mainly bowhunting the northern parishes along the Mississippi River, I finally started seeing the prettiest black squirrels. Not only did I want to get one, but I made it a goal to take one with a bow.

After many years and many lost arrows,

I finally shot my first black squirrel at 40 yards — out of my climbing tree stand — with my old compound. That squirrel was stationary, near the base of a tree. I was so far away I don't think the squirrel realized I had launched the arrow. It was just as exciting as downing a deer.

Unfortunately, the taxidermist lost the hide, so I was determined to get another to mount. In the following years, I had several other misses with my recurves. Once, I had nicked some hair off one, but it got away.

One year, I was making a primitive gun hunt and filmed a black squirrel with a white patch on its forehead. I saw the same squirrel again the next day. Archery hunting was closed for those two days, so I just filmed the squirrel. Of course, when I went back once archery season reopened, I never saw that squirrel again.

I've seen white-tailed red fox squirrels several times, but those were while running trails in non-hunting areas.

A SQUIRREL MOUNT

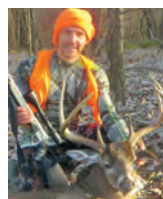
A few years later, I finally got another opportunity. I went to a small, river island with my 13-foot Boston Whaler to scout for deer and make an evening bow stalk. The place had some decent big-game sign, but what it had most were clouds of mosquitoes. Then, I discovered someone had stolen the game camera I

had set up on the island before the season. I was frustrated and itching all over from bug bites.

I still stuck to my game plan of stalking until sunset. The hunt finally turned in my favor when I noticed a quick flash of black darting across the ground.

As I approached the tree, I couldn't locate the squirrel. The light was beginning to fade, and I thought the squirrel had taken off for good. Suddenly, I saw it creeping through thick vines up the tree, 15 yards away. I drew my Full Throttle compound, released the arrow, and the black squirrel fell from a perfect head-shot. After sprinting to grab it, I noticed a cottonmouth coiled up 2 feet away. I was lucky it didn't strike.

I found my arrow, around 200 yards away in the fading daylight — thanks to a lighted nock. That was a long boat ride back, slowly navigating the Mississippi with all the floating logs. I remember how long it took to get the boat back on the trailer in the dark, alone, with the fast-moving current. But I had forgotten all about the lost camera and countless



Joshua Chauvin is a health-focused ultramarathon runner who goes on solo manual-powered public land adventures focusing on hunting big game and large fish by using challenging methods and weapons. He enjoys self-filming and sharing the tactics and details from his expeditions to help others learn from his unique techniques.

The author's first black fox squirrel made for an impressive mount.

bug bites with my prized trophy for the wall.

The video of that hunt can be found at louisiana-sportsman.com/hunting-black-squirrels.

I mounted that squirrel, and it came out amazing. After that, I started self-tanning the hides of black squirrels I took.

HARD-FOUGHT WINS

One month, I missed a huge, black squirrel with my 100-pound longbow three times on one hunt. They were all ground shots, and the squirrel kept jumping the slow arrow. I found my arrows, but one of the Easton FMJ dangerous game shafts got bent.

The next month, I saw another interesting squirrel that had odd amounts of shine. With the rising sun, I couldn't tell if it was black or red. Soon, I found out it was one of many colors. I was able to connect with my warbow as it moved through the branches 12 yards away. The animal's shades of grey, silver, black and red were mesmerizing.

All the red and grey squirrels taken with my recurves make for fun days when the deer or pigs don't walk. Since I don't shoot too many squirrels, I really enjoy those few meals knowing I got that meat the hard way.

TIPS

The problem with bowhunting for squirrels is speed. With a compound bows, the squirrels usually don't have a chance to duck the arrow, which is travelling at more than 300 feet per second, unless they are aware of my presence. With traditional bows, squirrels have often jumped several feet before the 150- to 190-foot per second arrow arrives.

I find its best to shoot at a squirrel that is preoccupied searching for food on the ground or in thick branches. A squirrel standing on alert is a miss nearly every time.

Using a lighted nock can greatly aid in finding an arrow that has sailed through the branches. The arrows will fly another 100 to 200 yards. I use reflective arrow wraps. It makes finding an arrow a bit more challenging after dark, but with a strong headlight, the reflective wrap can be seen sticking up in the ground from more than 50 yards away.

I see the majority of my fox squirrels near wood edges along fields, swamps, bayous and rivers. I have a lot of luck near bitter pecan ridges and honey locust trees. In the middle of deep woods, the majority of squirrels I see are the smaller grey squirrels.

This season, try hunting the wood edges along the Mississippi River's bottomland hardwoods, and you may get an opportunity to bag a squirrel worthy of a mount. ■



Josh Chauvi

2019-20 MISSISSIPPI HUNTING REGULATIONS

Not an official document.
Please refer to MDWFP's
Rules & Regulations Digest,
www.mdwfp.com.

HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Doves	Sept. 1-Oct. 6 (n), Sept. 1-15 (s)	15	45
	Oct. 19-Nov. 16 (n), Oct. 5-Nov. 6 (s)		
	Dec. 21-Jan. 14 (n), Dec. 21-Jan. 31 (s)		
Quail	Nov. 28-March 7	8	
Rabbit	Oct. 12-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (fall)	Oct. 1-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (spr)	May 15-June 1	4	
Raccoon	July 1-Sept. 30	1 raccoons per party	
Rac/Opp/Bobct	Oct. 1-Oct. 31 (food/sport)	5/day, 8/party	
	Nov. 1-Feb. 28 (food/sport/pelt)	No limit	
Rails			
King & Clapper	Sept. 1-30, Nov. 22-Dec. 31	15	45
Sora & Virginia,	Sept. 1-30, Nov. 22-Dec. 31	25	75
Gallinules	Sept. 1-30, Nov. 22-Dec. 31	15	45
Snipe	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28	8	24
Crow	Nov. 2 - 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 14-May 1	1/day, 3/season, longbeards only	
Youth season	March 7-13	1/day, 3/season, bearded birds only	

WATERFOWL SEASONS

SPECIES	DATES	BAG LIMIT
Duck	Teal only: Sept. 14-30	6
	Nov. 29-Dec. 1,	6
	Dec. 6-Jan. 31	
Geese (Canada, blue, Ross, white-fronted, brant)	Sept. 1-30	5
	Nov. 11-24, Nov. 29-Jan. 1,	Canada 3, Brant 1
	Dec. 6-Jan. 31	Snow/blue/Ross 20 White-fronted 3
Light Geese conservation	Oct. 1-Nov. 10, Feb. 1-7, Feb. 9-March 31	No limit

DEER SEASON

ZONE	ARCHERY	PRIM WEAPON	GUNS
Northeast	Oct. 1-Nov. 22	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 23-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 11-22 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 17-31 (archery/primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 22(dogs) Nov. 9-22 (youth)
East Central	Oct. 1-Nov. 22	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 23-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 11-22 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 17-31 (archery-primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 22(dogs) Nov. 9-22 (youth)
Southwest	Oct. 1-Nov. 22	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 23-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 11-22 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 17-31 (archery-primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan.16(dogs) Nov. 9-Jan. 22 (youth)
Southeast	Oct. 15-Nov. 22	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 23-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Jan. 23-31 (either-sex arch-primitive)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Feb. 1-15 (archery-primitive bucks only)		Dec. 24-Jan. 16(dogs) Nov. 3-Feb. 15(youth)
Delta*	Oct. 1-Nov. 22	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 23-Jan. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 11-22 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 22-31 (archery primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 22(dogs) Nov. 9-22 (youth)

(See www.mdwfp.com for details on special Oct. 15-Jan. 5 South Delta Season)

Mushrooms of many types are a prime deer food that hunters often ignore.

INSET: This buck is eating mushrooms attached to a tree stump.

MUSHROOMS: PRIME DEER FOOD

DON'T OVERLOOK TASTY FUNGI By Jeff Burleson

Mushrooms are one of the most-overlooked deer foods available during just about every month, including fall and the approaching winter. Deer just love mushrooms and will go out of their way to get a mouthful of these tasty creations.

Since mushrooms are just the reproductive structures for subterranean fungal organisms, they will typically show up in the same places when conditions are ideal, and hunters better believe that deer will remember where to find these feeding centers after a rainfall event, too.

Mushrooms are members of the fungi kingdom that provide a decent food source for deer and some other species of wildlife throughout the year. Summer rains promote the emergence of mushrooms and other fungi deer will flock to when available.

Technically, mushrooms are fruits; the living component of fungi is called a mycelium and is made out of very small filaments webbed together (also called

hyphae). Fungi live within or on their food source, which will be found buried underground or within the tissues of living and dead biomass.

Fungi reproduce both sexually and asexually, but the fruits — galleries or mushrooms, as they are commonly called — carry billions of spores. These spores are a lot like seeds and will grow when attached to another food source under the right temperature and moisture conditions. Consequently, deer are very important to the propagation and dispersal of certain species of mushrooms. The warm and acidic conditions within a deer's digestive tract promote the spore germination after defecation.

The select wild mushrooms that are deadly to humans have no effect on deer. The deadly spores in certain species of wild mushrooms pass straight through their digestive tract.

Mushrooms and other fungi are flavorful, palatable and contain some excellent nutritional components. Wild mushrooms are both high in protein (25% to 50%)



and in carbohydrates (30% to 70%), as well as minerals. Hundreds of individual mushroom and fungi species are common in the southeast, including members of the genera *Amanita*, *Mycena*, *Suillus*, *Gomphidius*, *Pluerotis*, *Grifola*, *Morchella*, *Geastrum*, *Gymnopus*, *Cantharellus* and several others. Various species of fungi will be available throughout the fall and winter to supplement deer's daily diet. Places with recurrent emergence of mushrooms can be excellent places to watch during deer season. ■

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When a whitetail buck lifts his nose to test the wind, will he smell your last meal, what was on the seat of your truck, and the flowery detergent in which you washed your hunting clothes?

4 TIPS FOR SCENT CONTROL

DON'T STAND OUT IN THE WOODS

By Brian Cope

Don't smell good. Don't smell bad. Don't smell at all. It's a common practice for deer hunters to make themselves as scent-free as possible before heading to their stands, and over the past couple of decades, a whole category of gear has sprouted up to help with that task. The top four tips for staying scent-free in the woods include using some of those products, along with some common sense.

SCENT-FREE DETERGENT

Use laundry detergent that is made specifically for keeping hunting clothes scent-free. Products like Dead Down Wind and Scent-A-Way are good choices, and plenty of D-I-Y versions involving baking soda coupled with any number of other ingredients are easy to make.

NO CLOTHES INSIDE

Dry your hunting clothes outside. The scent of dryer sheets lingers even after you've stopped using them for several cycles of clothes, and hanging your clothes indoors will only capture indoor smells like fried bacon and cleaning products.

BAG 'EM UP

Once dry, put hunting clothes in an oversized, sealable bag or plastic container. It's also a good idea to add odorless dryer sheets like those made by the same companies mentioned above. Keep the clothes in this bag or container until you are in the woods, out of your vehicle, and ready to walk to your stand. Sounds a

little extreme, but if you're wearing your hunting clothes while pumping gas on the way to the woods, or while stopping at the Biskit Shak for coffee and a sausage sandwich, your odorless efforts are all for naught. These products and tips are helpful in keeping hunters from getting busted by wise deer that often approach places only when the wind is in their favor, but where a lot of hunters slip up is when they are not hunting at all.

NO HUNT, NO SCENT

Stay scent-free anytime you're near your stand, even if you aren't hunting. Many hunters check their trail-cameras throughout the week, and sometimes on the day before they are going to hunt. Where legal, they also fill or check feeders, salt-blocks, or other attractants placed near their hunting stands. Doing these activities without taking the same precautions as they do when getting in their stand is the downfall of many hunters who just can't understand why the deer quit coming around.

Veteran hunter Jonathan Phillips said going scent-free while working in the woods is no more difficult than it is when getting in the stand, and it's just as important.

"Some people think I'm too extreme when I check my trail-cams and when I put out corn, but aside from using Dead Down Wind, I wear rubber boots and Latex gloves anytime I'm in the woods, whether it's hunting or checking trail-cams. People don't realize how many things they touch with their hands when they go into the woods, but it's just a natural thing to touch fence posts, tree branches, and vines; all that stuff holds your scent for way longer than most people realize," he said. ■



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JUDGE A BUCK'S AGE BY HIS BODY

THE SHAPE OF A BUCK'S FORM SHOWS AGE BETTER THAN ANTLERS By Jeff Burleson

From the most-prestigious universities to the southern hunter's armchair recliner, wildlife-management strategies vary tremendously. Over the past three decades, deer-management regimes have blossomed into a newfound order, with hunters honing their harvests to develop a mature buck with larger and more expansive headgear.

The key component of trophy deer management is age; hunters need to learn to age bucks on the hoof in order to truly make harvest decisions in the tree stand. Deer age in a manner similar to humans with respect to muscle tone, skin looseness, overall body shape and physical characteristics. Hunters need to learn which traits to look for in an adolescent animal compared to a mature buck.

The size of the antlers and body mass don't always correlate

with age. In fact, well-fed bucks with superior genetics will grow larger antlers at an adolescent age. At that point, many inexperienced hunters pull the trigger on these bucks, long before these animals got a chance to reach their full potential.

First, buck fawns may never be mistaken for older bucks, but they will often be mistaken for young does, leading to many premature button buck fatalities, especially if tiny button-sized antlers aren't easily visible. Hunters should vow never to shoot the first animal that shows up on a feeding site. Buck fawns are often the first in a group of deer to leave cover.

The 1½-year-old class is the next grouping, winning the prize for the highest fatality rate among all age classes during hunting season. These young bucks are sexually mature and are just like a teen-aged boy who has just gone through puberty. Curiosity

This sway-backed, fat-bellied buck is literally showing his age; he's an old one.

and the desire to breed definitely places these animals in danger. They exhibit a wide variation of antler compositions, from spikes to well-developed 10-point racks, but their body characteristics will give them way as adolescents. These are slender, from end to end. They look like does with antlers.

Next, 2½-year-old bucks exhibit more muscle tone throughout their body, especially in their shoulders and hindquarters. The front-shoulder region looks broader than the neck, however, their neck is still fairly sleek, without too much muscle definition.

As 3½-year-olds, neck definition during the rut increases dramatically and is well-differentiated between the neck and shoulder region. Additionally, the front half or the brisket area is much larger or deeper than their hindquarters. A 3½-year-old buck is beginning to reach his prime, with a significant increase in body mass from earlier years.

If bucks were racehorses, they would be considered to reach their prime condition at 4½. Deer normally attain their peak weights at this age, with solid muscle mass throughout. These deer have filled out considerably from their hindquarters to the brisket, enough that their legs appear short. But the line of their backs still runs straight from neck to tail.

It is not until they exceed 5½ that their backs and bellies appear to sag some below their shoulders and hindquarters. At 5½ to 6½, deer earn the sleepy face look. Their faces begin to exhibit a slight wrinkled appearance, especially around their eyes. Their sagging bellies are more pronounced, with a noticeable dip along the top of their backs. Their loosening skin will wrinkle more and sag around their necks and shoulders, too. As bucks exceed 5½ years, they become less graceful and will begin to show signs of aging throughout their entire bodies, but only a tiny percentage of the population gets past 5½, time when

antler and body mass reaches its prime.

Discerning older age-classes can be tough for hunters even under the best conditions and with the most-developed optics on the market. However, the most-important age classes for hunters to recognize are 1½ to 4½. Hunters need to learn how to discern specific body characteristics of the different age-classes of bucks. If hunters will drop their binoculars from the antlers to examine body characteristics thoroughly, they will be able to make better harvesting decisions and improve the quality of their herd. And then, patient hunters can reap the rewards with a prime buck to hang in their trophy room. ■





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Singer/songwriter Zack Logan, Steve Chiasson and Sampson, a Chesapeake Bay retriever, on a north Louisiana duck hunt.



5 MISTAKES DUCK HUNTERS MAKE

WORK AHEAD OF HUNTS PREVENTS HEADACHES ONCE IN THE BLIND

Duck hunters spend all year looking forward to the first day of the season, and there's nothing worse than heading to camp and having everything go south.

Here are some steps to take that have helped veteran hunter Jeff DeBlieux ensure all he has to do is look down the barrel when that first flight of ducks drops into range:

BOAT CHECK

"Hunting the marsh, we almost all need a boat to hunt out of or to get to the blind," DeBlieux said. "So, is the boat ready to go?"

He said the items to check include the boat itself, plugs, running lights, the battery, the fuel tank and lines, life jackets, paddle, push pole, trailer, tail lights, tires — pirogues if you are using one. "Make sure to follow your boat float plan that you left with a friend or family member," he added.

BLIND CHECK

"We are hunting out of boat blinds or fixed blinds," DeBlieux said. "So, did you

pre-scout your blind location; and is your blind or boat brushed to match the existing terrain, set up for the sunrise and wind direction, tide range?

"You have to hide well, and the correct concealment is one of the most-important items. If the ducks can see you, they are not coming close."

THE DEKES

"Have you checked your decoys since last year: strings weights and the tangled mess that you left in the decoy bag from the last day of the season last year?" he asked.

SHOTGUN

"Do not just pull out the gun from last year and the old shells the night before opening day," DeBlieux cautioned. "Take your gun to the nearest sporting clay range and shoot a round or two to make sure it is working properly and you have a good feel of the proper lead.

"Also, make sure you have the correct steel-shot ammo. Make sure you have the proper chokes in your gun; shooting ducks in the decoys with your turkey choke makes it real hard to get a limit."

SHELL BUCKET, BLIND BAG

Things you should have in your bucket or bag include the 2019 hunting pamphlet, so you know the bag limits and regulations, proper shells for your gun, duck calls, a flashlight that works, rain gear, a ThermoCELL, a can of Off, bottles of water, snacks, sunglasses, cell phone and a roll of toilet paper.

"Make sure you have all your hunting license, your HIP permit and a federal duck stamp — and do not forget to check your boots for any holes," DeBlieux said. "That first step in the early morning water makes for a long hunting day with a wet foot." ■

"B.Y.O.G." — BRING YOUR OWN GAS — AND SAVE CASH

DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH YOU FISH OR HUNT, TRANSPORTING YOUR OWN FUEL COULD MEAN BIG SAVINGS

By Patrick Bonin

Capt. Todd Seither, a guide with Cajun Fishing Adventures out of Buras, La., is on the water in his 24-foot Skeeter well north of 200 days each and every year.

Depending on whether he's chasing reds or specks inshore, heading out to Breton Island or maybe targeting offshore species at deeper rigs, Seither, 44, puts some serious miles on his Yamaha 300 when he's on the water with clients.

He estimates that he runs an average of 15 to 20 miles every day, so he's putting somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 miles on his boat and motor every year. Depending on how far he has to run and where the bite is hot, he could be on the hook for 1,000 gallons of fuel or more annually.

So Seither, who lives in St. Rose, about 80 miles north of Buras, typically travels to work with six 5-gallon cans full of fuel he purchases near his home. He typically stays in Buras for two to three days before heading home to see his family, so 30 gallons is usually more than enough fuel for at least a couple days in the boat. When he gets home, he refills the gas cans and repeats the process year-round.

In doing so, he avoids paying high

marina prices for fuel — unless he absolutely has no choice.

"I'm typically saving a dollar a gallon over the local marinas, where gas is \$3-plus a gallon," Seither said. "Right now in (St. Rose), it's somewhere between \$1.95 and \$2.05 a gallon."

To make things easier, Seither uses a battery-operated siphon to pump the fuel into his boat, so he doesn't have to worry about fooling around with gas or making a mess before his trips.

"The pumps cost 10 bucks at Harbor Freight. If I burn out one a month, I don't care — but they actually last pretty good," he said.

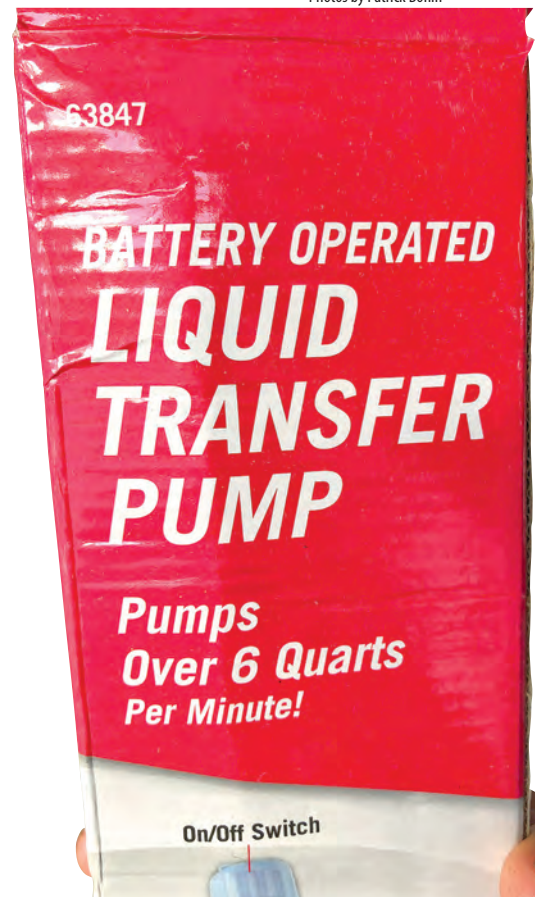
Filling his boat's tank with fuel every morning is just part of what he does to get his boat ready for clients — and also save a good chunk of cash each year.

"In the mornings is when I put the gas in. I'll set the can up on the deck of the boat, turn the (pump) switch on and then go grab a basket of ice and go ice up the boat, or go get my rods out of my locker," Seither said. "While it's doing its thing, I'm getting my boat ready and taking care of my morning routine." ■



Capt. Todd Seither transports less expensive fuel from his home up in St. Rose, La., to gas up his 24-foot Skeeter down at Cajun Fishing Adventures in Buras, La. As much as he's on the water each year, Seither estimates that he saves up to \$1,000 each year in fuel costs. **BELOW:** This is the battery operated pump Seither uses to fuel his boat with gas. He purchases the pump for about \$10 at Harbor Freight Tools.

Photos by Patrick Bonin



BECOME A DECOY DOC



RESTORE RELIABILITY AND BRING BACK BLING TO YOUR BLOCKS WITH THESE SIMPLE TIPS

By Joe Anglin

We all know that guy — the one who seems to find new ways to destroy any duck or goose decoy in his midst. He leaves decoys in the back of his pick-up until July 4 — including the ones he borrowed from you two years ago and never returned — and in an unceremonious act of glory, tosses them behind the garage so they can be dealt with later.

Perhaps you are that guy.

It could be a broken decoy line, a missing head or busted keel that's keeping that pile of decoys in the corner of the garage unaddressed, just high enough to constantly remind you that something needs to be done.

While every waterfowl hunter has a long list of wants and needs, most of us have plenty of decoys that sit idle season after season for various reasons. Perhaps you take really good care of your decoys but in the heat of battle forget about the few that will inevitably end up in disrepair. Dealing with decoys is a lot like managing a baseball team: phase new decoys in regularly and, as the season progresses, relegate others to the disabled list. Some of those game-worn blocks will end up being sent down to the minors for rehab, to be called up to the bigs only on those days when a massive spread is required.

Thirty years ago, when I was 12, my grandparents gave me a dozen mallard floaters. While they don't look nearly as good as the incredibly realistic and effective newer stuff in my arsenal, they still work when a big spread is needed; joining a cast of characters that varies in origin, but ultimately serving the same mission. I have two bags of such decoys relegated to this type

of duty that are always ready for deployment. Last season, they spent three days bobbing around in flooded corn with roughly two hundred other decoys, most of which made them look ugly, but they worked perfectly.

This wasn't by chance. I could have thrown those old blocks away or passed them on to a young hunter years ago, but I keep them around and seem to use them every season when the situation demands it. They've been repainted a few times and have worn a range of different anchors and lines, but over the years, I've taken care of them.

FIXING FLOATERS

The best way to fix up your old decoys is to tackle them all at once. You'll need to patch holes, glue keels and heads and apply touch-up paint where needed. You'll also need to fix or replace missing or damaged lines and anchors. It's all cheap and easy.

Finding shot holes and cracks is fairly easy but may require some detailed inspection. Use clear or black silicone to patch holes as needed. Take a close look at the base of each keel for hairline cracks, a common problem on decoys that spend a lot of time packed tightly in bags.

Several good options exist when it comes to touch-up paint. One of the best is Bird Vision UV Paint, which works great and is highly recommended for newer decoys. That said, plain satin latex applied with disposable foam brushes can work just fine for decoys on the JV squad. Flat paints tend to look dull after use, and glossy paints have too much shine. Satin perfectly matches the natural sheen of waterfowl feathers. A quick search of the

This old goose floater might be in desperate need of some paint, but a screw/roofing adhesive combo has held the broken head in place through four seasons.



Internet for specific tips on repainting decoys will have you painting with confidence.

Once the holes are plugged, cracks filled and the paint dry, it's time to repair and replace lines and deal with anchor issues. Have anchors and decoy cord handy, as well as crimps if you're not into tying good knots. Fencing pliers or similar tools with crimping ability will help ensure those expensive new anchors don't end up at the bottom of the drink.

FULL-BODY REHAB

Full-body decoys and stackable shells need love, too. Over time, heads become loose or broken, and paint becomes soiled and chipped. Scrub those filthy, full-body decoys, then fix and repaint them as needed.

Snow goose decoys, in particular, are susceptible to soiling, and while real snow geese do get dirty, decoy spreads have much better visibility and appeal to high-flying birds when individual decoys are clean and pop at a distance. A pressure washer can be used to clean some full-body decoys, but it's risky for others, as the water pressure may blow off some paint. It's best to start with a soft brush and warm, soapy water.

Once the decoys are clean, take a close look at all feet and heads, which can become overly loose or broken. While broken heads can be glued back on, about the only thing I've seen that truly holds up to being banged around in a boat is black windshield urethane, which can be purchased at automobile glass repair shops, or permanent, black marine adhesive (3M 5200). Another option is to screw the heads on with short drywall screws and use black butyl-based roofing caulk or waterproof roofing repair cement. These adhesives form a flexible, yet durable, waterproof seal that typically dries flat and blends in nicely with flocked heads on Canada goose decoys.

Speaking of flocked heads, it's wise to occasionally re-flock or replace well-worn goose decoy heads. However, a low cost, quick-fix is to use satin black Krylon Fusion for Plastic paint on flocked heads that are peeling or faded. The flat-white Krylon Fusion also does a great job of freshening up cheek and rump patches. Just be sure and mask off the darker paint so you don't bleed over into the body of the decoy.

Some of the newer decoys on the market are molded with flexible materials that won't crack or split and are marked flawlessly with paint that doesn't chip. These decoys absorb shot with amazing resilience, and every waterfowler should consider upgrading the starters in their line-up. Ten years from now, it's highly unlikely you'll find Avian-X decoys needing repairs, so they are well worth the modest investment. They just work better.

But even the best decoys out there still need occasional work on their anchors and lines, especially if they were in the care of that guy. A little TLC can bring older blocks back to life, so when you need to greet those northern red-legged greenheads with a great big welcoming party they are all ready for the show. ■



Plastic decoys with shot holes and cracks often fill with water but don't drain easily. Drill a hole on top of the decoy to drain it quickly, and then use silicone to seal the holes and cracks.



Hairline cracks along the keels of plastic decoys can be difficult to see. Use a permanent marker to mark them, and then flatten a bead of silicone over the cracks to seal them.

AVIAN-X OVERSIZED DECOYS

Worried about high-flying ducks noticing your decoys?

That worry goes out the window when your spread includes some of Avian-X's new oversized TopFlight decoys. The huge decoys — they come in six-packs of mallards and black ducks — are 17 inches long, 30% longer than normal-sized decoys. They look especially big from above; their width is tremendous.

Used by themselves or in spreads with typical decoys, these big blocks, with the typical, beautiful Avian-X paint jobs — the drakes' bright, green heads should be spotlights for passing flocks — should stand out plenty, especially in open-water situations.

MSRP is \$119.99 for a pack of six, which includes four drakes and two hens.

For more info, visit: www.avian-x.com



BIG & J'S "TO DIE FOR" DEER ATTRACTANT



Plenty of hunters supplement a white-tailed deer's diet with a number of things, corn foremost among them in most places where it's legal.

But if you think the sweet smell of golden niblets can draw deer in from long distances, step aside for Big&J's new "To Die For" deer attractant.

Made with a special hybrid sweet corn — five times sweeter than field corn, the manufacturer says — in granulated form, with the company's BB2 additive, To Die For features an aroma that is strong enough to be carried along by prevailing winds.

MSRP is \$12.99 for a 5-pound bag and \$24.99 for a 20-pound bag.

For more info, visit: www.bigandj.com



G. LOOMIS IMX-PRO BASS "CLASSIC ACTION" RODS

G. Loomis, manufacturer of some of the market's finest fishing rods, has come out with a new line of 17 IMX-Pro "Classic Action" rods in both casting and spinning models, which combine all of the quality features anglers have come to expect from the Woodland, Wash., company.

The "Classic Action" rods fall into three categories:
seven Mag Bass casting rods in lengths from 6-foot-6 to 7-foot-6 in medium,

medium-heavy and heavy actions, two 6-foot Classic Casting rods in medium and medium-heavy for close-order accuracy, and eight spinning rods from 6-foot to 7-foot-6 in light, medium and medium-heavy actions.

The rods come with full-cork grips, Fuji guides and G. Loomis' multi-taper technology that provides a fast tip for casting smaller baits long distances but the strength to get that big bass to the boat.

Of special note are two particular spinning rods: the 901S and 902S models that offer the ideal length, power and action to cast hair jigs and spy baits.

MSRP is \$315-375.

For more info, visit: www.gloomis.com



ASTRO TABLES

Astro Tables is far more effective than "moon tables" because it takes into account critical solar energies as well as lunar.

The "Best Days" column is based on the ever-changing positions of the sun and the moon, rating each day on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more solar/lunar influence that day is experiencing (see "Value" column or corresponding black bars).

The two Primary periods (Moon Overhead and Moon Underfoot) vary in length from one hour to three-and-one-half hours, depending on a number of important lunar cycles, such as how close the moon is to the earth that day and how high its orbit is. The solar symbols alert you to when a Primary period overlaps a major solar period (eg: Dawn, High-Noon, and Dusk). The secondary periods of Moonrise and Moonset last about one hour each... 30 minutes before and after the listed time. (See key at bottom of each month for more detail.)

Astro Tables is a quick-reference version of its parent publication, the **PrimeTimes Wall Calendar**, which is recommended for those wishing more complete data on the best days and times to go fishing and hunting for the entire year (see "Available Products" below).

PrimeTimes forecasts are based on solar/lunar research at a leading college of astrophysics and our own research pond/wildlife area. Annual data is supplied by the U.S. Naval Observatory. All times are adjusted to the center of your time zone and for Daylight Saving Time.

AVAILABLE PRODUCTS:

The 2019 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar. \$13.95 (plus \$4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2019 with this information-packed, full-color, 11-inch by 17-inch, graphic peaks

and-valleys forecaster. Includes rise and set times for the sun and moon, space to log your catches, "Timely Tips," plus fish and game symbols showing you each month's don't-miss periods. Also includes exclusive summary charts revealing the best and worst days of 2019, the year's best periods, a look ahead at 2020, and more. Comes with FREE 2019 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for \$8.95, plus \$3 s&h.

Book: "How to Know When to Go" by Rick Taylor. \$14.95 (plus \$4 s&h). 100 pages, 43 illustrations. A comprehensive look at the main factors influencing fish and game activity periods, plus how to devise an effective when-to-go game plan using any year's PrimeTimes calendars. Individual assessments of bass, panfish, deer, turkey, and more.

2019 Ultimate PrimeTimes software for PCs. \$29.95 (plus \$3 s&h, or no s&h if downloaded from web). The world's best forecaster allows you to fine-tune the peak times to your exact location, quarry, and even weather. Too many features to list here, including making your own App. For more details, please call us or visit our web site (see below).

SPECIAL PACKAGE OFFERS:

- #1: **Wall Calendar, Astro Tables and "How to Know..." book...** \$19.95 (plus \$5 s&h).
- #2: **Same as #1, plus Software...** \$47.95 (plus \$6 s&h).
- #3: **Same as #2, minus book...** \$38.95 (plus \$5 s&h).

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For credit/debit card orders, call **515-964-5516**, or go online to **primetimes2.com** and click **Catalog**.

BEST DAYS					
2019 NOV	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	VALUE
Fri 1	█	█	█	█	12
Sat 2	█	█	█	█	12

LUNAR PERIODS					
TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED					
MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT		
12:13 pm	4:47 pm - 5:43 pm ☀	10:15 pm	4:16 am - 5:14 am	☾	LOW
1:06 pm	5:40 pm - 6:36 pm ☀	11:11 pm	5:12 am - 6:08 am	☾	

Sun 3	█	█	█	█	18
Mon 4	█	█	█	█	29
Tue 5	█	█	█	█	21
Wed 6	█	█	█	█	17
Thu 7	█	█	█	█	19
Fri 8	█	█	█	█	22
Sat 9	█	█	█	█	34

12:52 pm	5:27 pm - 6:29 pm	11:07 pm	6:05 am - 7:01 am ☀	☾	
1:31 pm	6:10 pm - 7:22 pm		5:52 am - 6:54 am ☀	☾	PERIGEE
2:07 pm	6:50 pm - 8:12 pm	12:04 am	6:35 am - 7:47 am ☀	☾	
2:38 pm	7:26 pm - 9:02 pm	1:00 am	7:15 am - 8:37 am	☾	Apogee
3:07 pm	8:00 pm - 9:52 pm	1:56 am	7:51 am - 9:27 am	☾	
3:35 pm	8:33 pm - 10:41 pm	2:51 am	8:25 am - 10:17 am	☾	
4:02 pm	9:05 pm - 11:31 pm	3:46 am	8:58 am - 11:06 am	☾	

Sun 10	█	█	█	█	46
Mon 11	█	█	█	█	59
Tue 12	█	█	█	█	65
Wed 13	█	█	█	█	55
Thu 14	█	█	█	█	47
Fri 15	█	█	█	█	38
Sat 16	█	█	█	█	34

4:31 pm	9:41 pm - 12:21 am	4:42 am	9:30 am - 11:56 am	☾	
5:01 pm	10:18 pm - 1:14 am	5:39 am	10:06 am - 12:46 pm ☀	☾	
5:35 pm	10:58 pm - 2:08 am	6:38 am	10:43 am - 1:39 pm ☀	☾	FULL
6:13 pm	11:43 pm - Midnight	7:38 am	11:23 am - 2:33 pm	☾	
6:57 pm	Midnight - 3:03 am	8:39 am	12:08 pm - 3:28 pm	☾	
7:47 pm	12:32 am - 4:02 am	9:40 am	12:57 pm - 4:27 pm	☾	
8:44 pm	1:26 am - 4:58 am	10:38 am	1:51 pm - 5:23 pm	☾	HIGH

Sun 17	█	█	█	█	33
Mon 18	█	█	█	█	37
Tue 19	█	█	█	█	46
Wed 20	█	█	█	█	32
Thu 21	█	█	█	█	24
Fri 22	█	█	█	█	21
Sat 23	█	█	█	█	28

9:46 pm	2:24 am - 5:54 am	11:32 am	2:49 pm - 6:19 pm ☀	☾	
10:51 pm	3:24 am - 6:46 am	12:20 pm	3:49 pm - 7:11 pm	☾	
11:59 pm	4:25 am - 7:37 am	1:03 pm	4:50 pm - 8:02 pm	☾	HALF
	5:25 am - 8:25 am ☀	1:42 pm	5:50 pm - 8:50 pm	☾	
1:07 am	6:27 am - 9:07 am ☀	2:18 pm	6:52 pm - 9:32 pm	☾	
2:15 am	7:29 am - 9:47 am	2:52 pm	7:54 pm - 10:12 pm	☾	
3:23 am	8:30 am - 10:28 am	3:26 pm	8:55 pm - 10:53 pm	☾	Perigee

Sun 24	█	█	█	█	36
Mon 25	█	█	█	█	43
Tue 26	█	█	█	█	46
Wed 27	█	█	█	█	33
Thu 28	█	█	█	█	23
Fri 29	█	█	█	█	13
Sat 30	█	█	█	█	8

4:32 am	9:30 am - 11:12 am	4:02 pm	9:55 pm - 11:37 pm	☾	
5:41 am	10:31 am - 11:57 am ☀	4:40 pm	10:56 pm - 12:22 am	☾	
6:49 am	11:34 am - 12:42 pm ☀	5:23 pm	11:59 pm - Midnight	☾	NEW
7:55 am	12:35 pm - 1:33 pm	6:10 pm	Midnight - 1:07 am	☾	
8:58 am	1:32 pm - 2:28 pm	7:01 pm	1:00 am - 1:58 am	☾	LOW
9:55 am	2:27 pm - 3:23 pm	7:57 pm	1:57 am - 2:53 am	☾	
10:45 am	3:19 pm - 4:17 pm	8:54 pm	2:52 am - 3:48 am	☾	

25 50 75
AVERAGE

ANY LUNAR PERIOD IS ENHANCED WHEN IT OVERLAPS A KEY SOLAR PERIOD. THE BEST OF THESE OVERLAPS ARE DESIGNATED BY THE SUN SYMBOLS: ☀ = DAWN ☀ = HIGH NOON ☀ = DUSK

WHILE THE LESSER MOONRISE AND -SET OVERLAPS (ABOUT 30 MIN. BEFORE AND AFTER THE LISTED TIME) ARE DESIGNATED BY BOLD BLACK TYPE.

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