

Mississippi

JANUARY 2018

SPORTSMAN[®]



**KIDS + DOGS =
SQUIRRELS**

**DOG-GONE
DEER TIME**

TIMING LAST-MINUTE BUCKS



**+
2018
SALTWATER
CALENDAR**

\$2.99 JANUARY 2018



**SPILLWAY
SLABS
BELOW THE REZ**

**DON'T
PASS ON
PIGGIES**

**KILL MORE
JANUARY
DELTA
DUCKS**



www.MS-SPORTSMAN.com

**REED'S
METALS, INC.**

ORDER TODAY, PICKUP TODAY!

NOW IN 8 LOCATIONS

ACROSS THE SOUTHEAST WITH THE NEWEST LOCATION IN

→ CROSS CITY, FL ←



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

www.reedsmetals.com



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



**METAL ROOFING
ALLIANCE
MEMBER**



**FLORIDA
ROOFING
ASSOCIATION
MEMBER**



**GAS OR ELECTRIC,
WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!**

GET \$2,000 OFF THE NEW STAMPEDE AND \$1,500 OFF THE RECOIL iS.

Dominate any terrain in the 80 horsepower Stampede 900
or sneak up on your game in the all-electric 72 volt Recoil iS.
Either way we've got you covered!

BenNelsonGolfCars.com

**BEN
NELSON**
Golf & Outdoor

TEXTRON
OFF ROAD

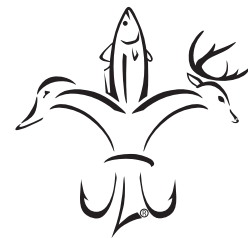
401 Country Place Parkway | Pearl, MS 39208 | 601.664.7117
9231 W. Oaklawn Road | Biloxi, MS 39532 | 228.396.3905

36
2018 Saltwater
Calendar



Mississippi
CONTENTS

Volume 20 | Number 1 | January 2018



Mississippi
SPORTSMAN

www.MS-SPORTSMAN.com

PUBLISHER: Tony Taylor
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: Mark Boyd
MANAGING EDITOR: Bobby Cleveland
bobbyc7754@yahoo.com, 601.506.0739
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Alicia LaFont
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Jeff Caldwell
ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER:
Desiree P. Lewis
ART DIRECTOR: Rodney Anouilh
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:
Jeff Cashio, Kevin Orgeron, Alissa Zeringue
CONTROLLER: Juanita Guidry
SALES DIRECTOR: Tony Taylor
504.416.7621/tonyt@lasmag.com
ADVERTISING SALES:
Mark Hilzim (National Sales), Jay Forrest,
Asa Faulkner, Brent Comardelle, Mark Boyd,
Greg Webb, Liz Lowe, Ron Dorsey, Bret Holten
CONTRIBUTORS:
David A. Brown, Sam Davis, Bill Garbo, Phillip
Gentry, Michael O. Giles, Chris Ginn, Paul
Johnson, Tommy Kirkland, John E. Phillips,
Hal Schramm, Allan Tarvid, John J. Woods
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR:
Ricky Naquin 985.859.7744/rickyn@lasmag.com
CIRCULATION FIELD MANAGER:
Tim Stiglets 601.434.1526/timstiglets@comcast.net

FEATURES:

20 Better late than never *cover story*

Don't give up as deer season's final days approach. Think outside the box, and you might put your tag on a nice buck.

>>> By Mike O. Giles

29 Don't duck out early

Late-season waterfowl might be tough for many Delta hunters, but these tips should help keep those limits coming.

>>> By Phillip Gentry

36 2018 Mississippi Saltwater Calendar

Here's a quarterly look at what the Gulf of Mexico and inshore areas have to offer Mississippi fishermen in the coming year.

>>> By Bobby Cleveland

44 Dog-day afternoon

Hunting with dogs is a great way to bag a winter limit of squirrels, and to introduce youngsters to the sport.

>>> By Jerald Horst

52 Sure-thing spillway slabs?

When conditions line up, crappie can congregate in the water below Ross Barnett's dam and make a fisherman's January day.

>>> By David Hawkins

58 Learn deer body language

Deer communicate using different body movements. Learn what they're saying and you'll have more hunting success.

>>> By Jeff Burleson

63 Drop by design

Drop-shotting might seem simple, but understanding how to adjust to match specific situations can put more bass in the boat.

>>> By David Brown

COLUMNS:

68 Gettin' Fresh By Hal Schramm

70 Lunker Lines By Paul Elias

72 Happy Trails By Bill Garbo

74 Lure Review
By Don Shoopman

76 Sticks and Strings
By Sammy Romano

78 Cooking on the Wild Side
By Jerry Dilsaver

DEPARTMENTS:

6 Outdoor Update

80 Field Notes

86 New Products

88 Astro Tables

89 Tide Guide

90 Advertiser Index

ON THE COVER:



New Year's Day is no time to give up chasing those big bucks that seem to have disappeared into Mississippi's woods and thickets. It just takes a little thinking outside the box.

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:

Contact Tony Taylor
email: tonyt@lasmag.com/504.416.7621

SUBSCRIPTIONS OR
SUBSCRIPTION ISSUES,
CALL 1-855-371-1546

Monday thru Friday, 6 am to 11 pm
Saturday & Sunday, 8 am - 5 pm CST

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

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

Volume 20 | No 1



Catch the **G3** Life

INSTANT REBATES

HURRY LIMITED TIME OFFER!



Sportsman up to **\$1500***

Bays up to **\$1500***

Angler V up to **\$1500***

Gator Tough Jons up to **\$500***



LIMITED TIME OFFER - ACT NOW!

*Rebates in effect at participating dealers only. Purchase one of the new (unused and not previously warranty registered) G3 Boats fishing boat, Yamaha motor and trailer packages between 12/15/17 and 3/31/18 and receive a Catch the G3 Life Instant Rebate off the participating dealer's retail price ranging from \$500 to \$1500 depending on the model purchased. Rebates end 3/31/18. This promotion offer is void where prohibited by law. Promotion valid in U.S. and Canada. The G3 Boats Military Instant Rebate Program is open to all U.S. Armed Forces personnel that are on active duty, in the Reserves or National Guard, honorably discharged or retired, including current spouse. This rebate can be used in addition to the other great promotional programs from G3. G3 reserves the right to change, end or cancel this Program at any time. Other restrictions and conditions apply. See g3boats.com for complete details. Some optional equipment shown in some photographs. No model substitutions or rain checks. Not redeemable for cash. G3 reserves the right to change or cancel this promotion at any time. Follow instructional materials and obey all laws. Ride responsibly, wearing protective apparel and USCG approved personal flotation device. Always drive within your capabilities, allowing time and distance for maneuvering, and respect others around you. Never drink and ride. ©2017 Yamaha Motor Corporation, USA.

g3boats.com 901 COWAN DRIVE, LEBANON, MO 65536





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.

NEW YEAR, NEAR OPPORTUNITIES

IT'S TIME TO PLAN ANOTHER YEAR OF GREAT HUNTING AND FISHING TRIPS

Hudson Hadley, 14, harvested this 225-pound 8-point with an 18-inch spread in November near Woodville. **BELOW:** Manning Moody of Wiggins and his father got their limits of wood ducks in south Mississippi.

Happy New Year!
Question: What does a new calendar for a Mississippi sportsman and a blank canvas for an artist have in common? Come on, you got this, easy breezy.

Answer: A chance to start anew, which, for the sportsmen and women of the Magnolia State, means 365 more days to enjoy the magnificent splendor of our natural wonderland.

So many days, so many opportunities, so where does one start?

This issue of *Mississippi Sportsman* is a good choice. It is full of features and commentaries about hunting — the long season is peaking — and fishing in January.

- Mike O. Giles shares expert tips on how to fool trophy bucks, mostly post-rut.

- Phillip Gentry takes us to the Delta, which should be full of ducks this month.
- Jerald Horst looks at the great sport of squirrel hunting with treeing dogs, an adventure to thrill and educate youngsters.
- David Hawkins heads below the dam at Barnett Reservoir to find the secrets to catching crappie in the cold, yet productive tailrace.

There's also a year-long look at saltwater fishing opportunities — in quarterly three-month sections — to help plan your year on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Hint: January is one of the "hottest" months to fish.

These stories are sure to entertain and educate.

It is our wish at *Mississippi Sportsman* that 2018 brings you much joy and success

in your sporting endeavors, and it is our resolution to help you achieve your goals. Cheers! ■



PLENTY OF TIME FOR DEER (AND DOGS)

The rut may be over in some parts of the state, but from the I-20 corridor south, there's a good bet bucks are still chasing does throughout January.

The state's regular gun season extends through Jan. 17 statewide, and for that small segment of hunters who still run deer with dogs, the entire period is open to that practice. That's a perfect time for the dogs, said one hunter who represents a big North Mississippi club, where the practice is restricted until after the rut.

"We don't allow our members, by rule, to run dogs until Jan. 1, then I think just about all of us become dog hunters for the last few weekends," said Wiley Thompson of Senatobia. "We learned that the bucks that survive the rut become extremely hard to kill after it ends. We started man-driving deer in January about 10 or 12 years ago and had success.

"We eventually networked and found a couple of guys from south Mississippi who had dogs (and) were looking for a place to hunt. We worked out an arrangement with them, and they came up, and it became a thing we do every year. We still have members who still-hunt in January on the weekdays and even on the weekends, but during the last decade, I'd bet 90 percent of our best bucks were killed in front of dogs."



The idea, Thompson said, is that the bucks withdraw to their core range and buried up in thickets near food and become nocturnal after the rut.

"It was like they left the country, and we knew that wasn't the case," he said. "We had trail-cam photos showing they were still there, but were moving only at night. We have tight trophy restrictions, so we weren't concerned about immature bucks being killed.

"Another asset was that we were able to reach our antlerless harvest quotas. We killed a lot of does in front of the dogs in January. We were able to get the numbers that our biologist was telling us we needed to get on our 5,000 acres. I think you need a tract that big to run dogs."

In south Mississippi, where using dogs is more accepted and traditional, the opposite situation can be found.

"We quit running dogs in January and leave them in the pens

REMAINING DEER SEASONS

Delta, Northeast, East Central and Southwest Zones

Gun with dogs: Open through Jan. 17. Either-sex on private lands; legal bucks only on open public land (unless otherwise posted).

Primitive weapon/archery (no dogs): Opens Jan. 18, closes Jan. 31. Either-sex on private lands; legal bucks only on open public land (unless otherwise posted). Note: Hunters on private lands can use weapon of choice (including modern long guns) during this season with appropriate license. Youth can use weapon of choice on any land.

Southeast Zone

Gun with dogs: Open through Jan. 17. Either-sex on private lands; legal bucks only on open public land (unless otherwise posted).

Primitive weapon/archery (no dogs): Opens Jan. 18, closes Feb. 15. From Jan. 18 to Jan. 31, private-land hunters can take either-sex deer, but legal bucks only on public land (unless otherwise posted). From Feb. 1 to Feb. 15, it is legal bucks only on all lands. Note: Hunters on private lands can use weapon of choice (including modern guns) during this season with appropriate license. Youth can use weapon of choice on any land, and may take antlerless deer through Feb. 15 on private land.

from that point on," said Corey Thames of Hattiesburg. "We're just polar opposites from north Mississippi. We don't see the pre-rut or the rut until the last part of the gun season in mid-January and then through the extended seasons and into mid-February. I killed a nice 9-point last year locked on a doe on Feb. 5. He was running her hard and was the fifth buck to pass my stand that morning. I've never heard so much grunting in the woods.

"It doesn't get right down here until January, and several years ago, after Katrina, we decided that we wouldn't run dogs any more after New Year's Day. We started seeing more of the rutting behavior and we never changed the rule back."

Thames said there are some clubs where dogs are used throughout January, "but those are generally the hard-core, dyed-in-the-wool dog men who really love hearing the dogs run. I'm all for them, because I love to hear them running a buck, too." ■

GOT PICS? We want 'em

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

Email images to: alicial@lasmag.com

Youth-oriented squirrel hunts will take place at Barnett Reservoir in February.

NEW YOUTH SQUIRREL OPPORTUNITY SET

Barnett Reservoir officials gave final approval in November to open lands below the dam, adjacent to the spillway, for youth-oriented squirrel hunts in February. It will be the first time that squirrels have been legally hunted in the area in more than 50 years.

"We've had our deer hunters from our archery draw hunts tell us that we have a lot of squirrels and raccoons below the dam," said Craig Hunt, Director of Parks and Recreation for the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District. "We also had people asking us if we would consider opening the area for squirrel hunting.

"In looking at it, and knowing we had such a limited area — less than 300 acres on each side of the river — we decided that while it was enough room to hunt, there were some limitations that we'd have to have. The main thing is that we will not allow dogs. There simply was not enough acreage to have two or three groups of hunters and their dogs."

The PRWSD Board of Directors was unanimous in its support of the season, and also that it be youth-oriented. There

must be at least one youth, aged 15 and under, in each hunting group, and that child must be accompanied and under the direct supervision of a licensed (or exempt) adult over the age of 21. All members of the party may carry a firearm and harvest squirrels, and all hunters must wear orange.

"The other key rule is that we do not allow rifles of any type, and that includes a .22 rimfire," Hunt said. "We only allow shotguns."

For more information on the hunts, and sign-in/sign-out rules, visit the PRWSD online at therez.ms. ■

GREAT DUCK OUTLOOK

If early December is any indication, Mississippi waterfowling is in for a great January season.

"One of the best starts of a duck season I've ever seen, and I've been hunting ducks in the Delta for over five decades," said Tom Hardy of Southaven. "I hunt from Greenville north to the Tennessee line,

and I can tell you that in all that area, this is the most ducks I've encountered in December that I can remember.

"That includes mallards and pintails, too. It wasn't just green-wings and gadwalls and small ducks. I'm part of a four-man core group of duck hunters who hunt a mix of public and private land, and we limited out the first weekend in December and followed it up with full limits the second weekend, when it snowed so much in South Mississippi."



A retriever bringing back a prize is a common sight in the Delta in January.

Bobby Cleveland

Hardy said that the surprise southern snow might have passed over North Mississippi to blanket the Pine Belt region, but that it apparently had a significant impact on ducks.

"Usually, the ducks we get in early December are traveling through, and after a brief stop in the Delta, they head on down to the coastal marshes," he said. "This year, I swear, I think that freak snow line from Baton Rouge over to Jackson turned them around and brought them back.

"I just hope they hang around into January and are still here when the main body of the migration rolls. If that's the case, and we have enough water in the Delta despite the drought conditions, we will be covered up with ducks. We can use some more heavy rain in mid December for sure." ■

MISSISSIPPI DUCK SEASON

Regular season: Open through Jan. 28 statewide.

Youth season: Feb. 3, only youths age 15 and under may carry firearms but must be accompanied by and under the direct supervision of a licensed or exempt adult, 21 years of age or older. The adult may call and participate in all of the hunting activity, except shooting.

Limit: Six ducks daily, including no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females), 3 wood ducks, 2 red-heads, 3 scaup, 2 canvasbacks, 1 mottled duck, 2 black ducks, and 1 pintail.

Considering Selling Land?

Buying Land?

Download our free "Tips for Selling or Buying Timberland" at

www.TimberLandSales.com



MEMBER BROKERS

Brad Campbell, RF, ACF
662-323-9103

Lynn Prine, RF, ACF
662-615-4179

Steve Butler, RF, ACF
601-591-4006

Mark Dale, RF, ACF
601-587-4446

MS Registered Foresters & Members of the Association of Consulting Foresters

NEW LOCATION IN GLUCKSTADT OPENING IN 2018!

COMING SOON

Barnett's

BODY SHOP
Tire & Alignment

FLOWOOD, MS - 601-939-9700 • RICHLAND, MS - 601-664-9770
BYRAM, MS - 601-372-0042 • RIDGELAND, MS - 601-856-0700

"DANG THEM HOGS"

Wild pigs continue to be a growing problem in many areas of Mississippi, despite an increased effort — mandatory at some clubs — to eradicate the nuisance beasts.

"We've got the \$500 rule at our club in the Delta," said O.T. Sutton, who hunts north of Greenville behind the levee. "If you get caught passing a pig, it's a fine. If you get caught shooting a buck, and we don't care if it's a 200-inch class deer, with a pig in range, it doubles to \$1,000. Dang them hogs; they've already cost me a big buck I've been hunting all season."

Sutton said he's on a trophy 8-point that he's hunted all during archery season and the early gun season. With a one-buck limit and 150-inch minimum, he's dedicated his season to that one deer. The one time he had the buck coming toward a shooting opportunity, pigs showed up and chased him away.

"I killed three of the five pigs before they got out of sight, and I was hoping the

buck had put enough ground between himself and my shooting not to spook him too much," Sutton said. "Cam photos show he did not leave that core area, so hopefully I will get another opportunity once he starts chasing does.

"We've gotten serious about the pig problem. We've put out traps, and we've baited them as much as possible, and we've killed the stew out of them, but they just seem to increase despite what we do. Dang them hogs!"

Under Mississippi law, hogs can be killed 24-7, 365 days a year.

"Oh yeah, we're on a year-long hog

mission," Sutton said. "I promise you this, if they cost me another shot at that 8-point — I've always wanted a monster 8, and this one will push 160 inches — I will make them pay." ■



Trey Graham with a big boar killed in Lafayette County.

Hunting/Fishing **SCRAPBOOK**



J.R. Hill with an 80-pound, hand-grabbed flathead catfish he got in Tallahatchie County.



Jude Grantham killed his first deer, a 4-point, in Perry County.



Brandon Laird with a big coyote taken in Smith County while hunting with his dad.



DO MORE FOR MORE MILES

STOP IN FOR THE
MICHELIN® DEFENDER® LTX® M/S.
ITS STRONGER ADVANCED TREAD COMPOUNDS
HOLD UP TO TOUGHER CONDITIONS LONGER.*



**MICHELIN®
DEFENDER® LTX® M/S**

*Based on resistance to gravel and severe wear testing compared to MICHELIN® LTX® M/S².
Copyright © 2016 Michelin North America, Inc. All rights reserved.

THE TIRE DEPOT
601-944-4885 • 1191 Old Fannin Rd. • Brandon, MS 39047

Kim Odom poses with fish that were caught on live shrimp at Pass Marianne Reef.



FIVE JANUARY HOT SPOTS

You better believe that January has some hot fishing opportunities in Mississippi, and these five are our picks for the month.

1. DAVIS LAKE, TOMBIGBEE NATIONAL FOREST:

Don't go to this 200-acre lake looking to catch a mess of bass for a January fish fry. Absolutely not; you will be wasting your time. "What you go to Davis Lake for in January is one bite," said Jeff Foster of Tupelo, whose one bite several years ago on an early January morning produced a 17.3-pound bass, the second-largest largemouth ever reported in Mississippi. "Take a shaky head worm rig and just throw it and fish it slow on deep structure until you get a bite. You might not get one, and you might get two or three. But it only takes that one bite to produce a fish of a lifetime."

2. BARNETT RESERVOIR:

The Rez was red-hot in December, and January is traditionally better than December when it comes to crappie fishing. As David Hawkins' feature in this edition tells us, the spillway is a great spot

to visit after heavy rains force the release of water at the dam. Until then, fishing the edges of the creeks and rivers is the ticket.

3. EAGLE, ALBERMARLE AND CHOTARD OXBOWS:

No doubt about it, go over to these three Mississippi River oxbows north of Vicksburg and fish for suspended crappie. On Eagle Lake, target black crappie under the piers and boathouses on the Mississippi bank; the Louisiana side is too shallow. Most of the fish are caught fishing jigs 3 to 4 feet deep in deeper water. To reach the connected oxbows, Albermarle and Chotard, pass by Eagle Lake and turn right once on the levee. Signs point the way to Laney's and Chotard Landings. Once on the water, use electronics to find suspended schools of fish in deep water and then troll and/or drift through them with jigs tipped with minnows.

4. COASTAL RIVERS:

The Pascagoula, Biloxi and Jordan river systems on the Gulf Coast are excellent in January, especially if it's a dry month without a lot of freshwater running in the rivers. The Pascagoula is a great late-winter

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

5. TENN-TOM WATERWAY:

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

CRAPPIE EXPLOSION

A lot of other Mississippi lakes get more attention as crappie destinations, but in December, Barnett Reservoir near Jackson produced monster slabs in limit numbers.

"Best cold-weather run I've seen on The Rez in my life," said James Thomas of Jackson. "I'm for real now, and not kidding. I've fished this lake for nearly 40 years, and I've caught my share of fish, but I have never seen so many 1½- to 2½-pound fish hitting so often. There was a run of five days when my buddy and I limited (30 each) in less than two hours. We didn't have time to get cold."

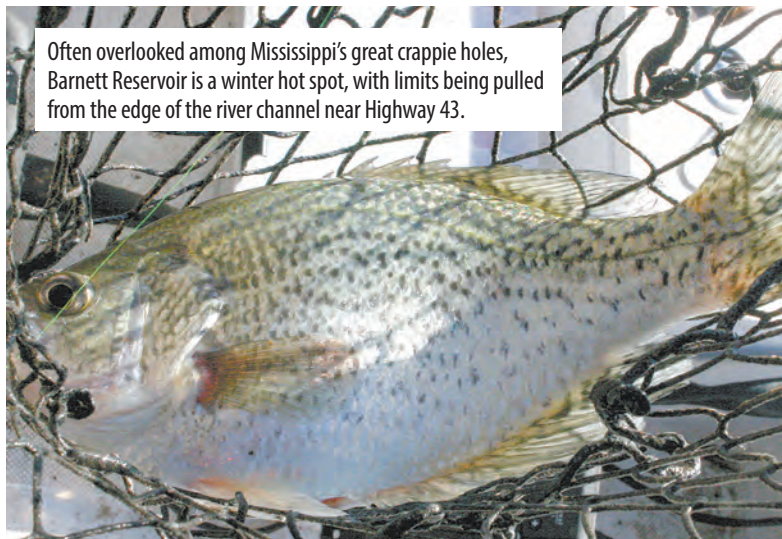
Thomas said every one of the fish came from the edge of the river channel within 200 yards of the Highway 43 bridge that separates the two areas of the 33,000-acre lake known as the main lake and the upper river area.

"When it starts getting cold, that's where I go, and that's where I usually find them," Thomas said. "I drift or troll for them with

jigs tipped with a small minnow or with just a medium to large minnow. Once we establish a depth — and we don't have fancy electronics so we do it by fishing at different depths until we find them — we wear them out.

"This year, I've never seen the numbers that we've seen, or that we've caught. We've caught enough to fill our freezers and those of our family and friends. We're now trying to get enough for a big fry for our church to start the New Year, and I believe we can handle that."

Thomas said the action should stay good until the first heavy rain comes and creates too much current for the fish to hold in the funnel-like area created by the bridge.



Often overlooked among Mississippi's great crappie holes, Barnett Reservoir is a winter hot spot, with limits being pulled from the edge of the river channel near Highway 43.

Bobby Cleveland

"But that's OK, because once that happens, the fish just move over on that big flat on the east side below 43, where the eddy current circles back and creates what they call the Welfare Hole," he said. "That's when you see about 200 or 300 boats in about one or two acres and they'll all be catching fish.

"So it's not like the catching stops. Oh no, you can count on the Welfare Holes to be magic when the current starts running." ■

BLACKJACK... INSPIRED PERFORMANCE!

The new **BlackJack 256!**



BlackJack
boats

For more information
or to find a dealer near you, visit
www.blackjackboats.com





CAROTHERS STICKS 180-INCH TYPICAL 14 POINT

By Bobby Cleveland

Photo courtesy Zac Carothers

COAHOMA MONSTER COULD CHALLENGE FOR ARCHERY STATE RECORD

Here's what you need to know statistically about the 180-inch (green, gross) buck Zac Carothers shot with a bow Nov. 19 in Coahoma County.

It is a natural 14-point, practically symmetrical from the base to the ends of its twin, 26-inch main beams. What it lacks in tine length — the longest is 8 inches — it makes up for in mass.

Not only in the circumferences that hold above 5 inches through all but one allowable measurement, but also in measurable bony material.

At the widest point, the two beams are 21 inches apart.

Now, let's get down to the interesting and intriguing parts of this story. Zac Carothers was hunting with his best friend, favorite hunting partner and mentor, Sean Carothers.

His dad.

"He's always been my hunting partner, and I killed my first deer with him when I

was 6 with a rifle," the son said. "He played a big role in this buck because he passed on it last year when it was a 150- or 160-inch 12-point. It was right under his stand for 10 minutes.

"Dad knows deer, and he knew it was young and would get bigger if it survived. It was a big buck, but Dad knew had potential to be a lot bigger if he let it walk."

The buck survived even though all the members of the Coahoma County club knew it was there. Entering this season, the Carothers knew the competition for the big buck would be tough, but only on Nov. 19 did Zac Carothers know just how brutal it could get.

"Everybody knew this buck was around, and they were hunting him pretty hard," he said. "I guess there were at least six or seven hunting him hard. Heck, there was a guy 100 yards from me hunting with a rifle Sunday."

The Carothers are bowhunters in a club with members who will hunt with a gun

when allowed. Father and son never hunt fields, because as bow hunters they prefer to be in the woods.

"I signed in Sunday to this stand I was hunting near a big oak tree where the big buck was showing up (on camera) nearly every day to feed," Zac Carothers said. "I have to put my name on a stand, so I put on this nearby field. Everybody knew I was going to be in the woods.

"That stand I wanted is on the main road. When I walked to it, there was a truck parked right under my stand. I'm not kidding you; it was right under it."

The disgusted hunter decided to walk to a stand on the field that he'd signed in to hunt. He climbed up, sat down and continued stewing.

"About 4:30, I looked up down the main road, which I could see from the stand, and out this big buck walked, heading right to the oak and my stand," Carothers said. "Man, I was mad. He stopped when he saw the truck, stared at it for a minute

Zac Carothers of Oxford took this rare, natural 14-point on Nov. 19 in Coahoma County. The buck gross scores over 180 inches, putting it close to the typical archery record in Mississippi.

and then, luckily, he spun and ran toward me and the field. He got out in the field about 75 yards and stopped, stuck his nose in the air and looked around. Then, he put his tail up and bolted back out of the field.

"I figured he'd got my wind and took off. I said, 'He ain't coming back here today. I'm done.' A few minutes later I texted to Dad that I was going to get down and leave."

But...

"Then a doe walked out near my stand, and I decided to give it a chance. A few minutes later, about 5:15, two 8-points walked out in a far corner of the field about 75 yards away," Carothers said. "A minute or two later, the big boy came out behind them, and they just stood around feeding in that corner. I didn't have a lot of hope. They were just staying in that corner.

"But, then another doe walked out under my stand. That was luck. The two 8s saw her and came running toward her. It's the pre-rut up here, and they came to her.

They didn't run her, but just sort of bumping her."

Which, of course, the dominant buck in the land couldn't stand.

"He bowed up and ran toward them and chased them out of the field," Carothers said. "When he got rid of them, he stopped and gave me a perfect broadside shot at 42 yards. I couldn't believe it."

Carothers lifted his Mathews Monster bow, set on 65 pounds, went to full draw and put his single pin on the buck.

"It's set at 30 yards, and I had just ranged the field and knew he was about 40 yards," Carothers said. "I aimed a little high and hit the release. It was one of those shots that when you take it, you just know it's right. You know it's a dead deer."

The shot was a bit high, but the 100-grain Rage Trypan broadhead entered just behind the shoulder.

"It didn't pass through, and I could see the Nockturnal glowing when he hit the woods," Carothers said. "I knew he wasn't going far, but my Dad and I, to be safe,

decided to wait two hours and get my blood-trailing dog. His name is Tracks for Cash."

The dog's nose was money.

"Found him in 30 seconds," Zac Carothers said. "Took us longer to get to him than it did him to find it. The deer didn't go 50 yards out of the field."

It was by far the biggest buck the young hunter had ever killed.

"I killed a 150-inch 8-point last year in Illinois with my bow, and I killed a 165-inch buck with my gun several years ago before I went bow-only," Carothers said. "I'm all bow now."

The 14-point will surely put Carothers near the top of the record book for archery typicals in Mississippi. The record belongs to Earl Stubblefield with a 2016 12-point that scored 181⅜. At No. 2 is a 173⅞-inch buck killed in 2012 by Kevin Medlin in DeSoto County.

"All I know is that I have a buck of a lifetime," Carothers said. "I am very fortunate." ■

YOU DON'T BECOME #1 UNLESS YOUR CALL GROWS STRONGER EVERY DAY

How do you become America's #1 deer call maker? You dedicate 40 years to recording and listening to their language. Then you put everything you learn in the hands of expert craftsmen. Then you test everything you make until it's right. Some call it extreme. Others just call it Primos. primos.com

PRIMOS
HUNTING
SPEAK THE LANGUAGE

PEARSON'S PATIENCE PRODUCES PALMATED TROPHY

MONROE COUNTY
16-POINT SHOULD
TOP 167 INCHES

By Bobby Cleveland

Ben Pearson had only killed two bucks in his life, and it had been four years since he'd shot his last one, a 120-inch 11-point, with a bow.

"I just hadn't seen anything since then big enough that I wanted to shoot," said Pearson, a 23-year-old electrician from West Point. "You know what, though, I feel like it paid off for me."

Boy, did, it ever.

On Sunday, Nov. 26, Pearson killed a 16-point buck with impressive palmation, roughly green-scoring more than 167 gross inches, while hunting on a small piece of property owned by his uncle in Monroe County.

Yet to be measured by an official scorer, which Pearson said would be needed to judge the palmated antlers, the buck is 39 inches wide and the right main beam is 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference at the widest point.

"Amazing," Pearson said.

The same word could be used to describe the entire process behind the taking of the buck.

"I run cameras pretty much all year on my grandparents' property, but I didn't have pictures of deer worth talking about, maybe three deer total," Pearson said. "My



Ben Pearson, 23, of West Point, killed this trophy palmated buck Nov. 26 in Monroe County after patiently waiting nearly four years since his last buck.

Photo courtesy Mike Pearson

Uncle George lives on about 11 acres across the road from them, and I asked him if I could hang a camera back behind his house. He gave me permission, and I put the camera up on Nov. 12. I went back to put a ground blind up on the 15th and I checked the camera.

"I was standing next to the camera checking the card on my iPhone when I saw the first picture of him, so I immediately left. I backed out of there so I wouldn't mess him up."

The opportunity to hunt the buck didn't come until Thanksgiving week.

"The wind wasn't right on Thanksgiving; it was a south wind, that wasn't good for that three-acre field, so I didn't hunt it Thursday or Friday, and went on Saturday,"

Pearson said. "I saw two bucks on Saturday but I passed on them. The wind was right so I went back on Sunday afternoon.

"I rattled some old antlers a few times around 4:45, and he came out at about 5:10 in the far corner of the field about 200 yards away. He stuck his head up like he was looking for what was in his field. I shot him 10 seconds later."

It was the first shot at a deer with his new rifle, and Pearson made it count.

"I got a new Winchester XPR 6.5 rifle for my birthday in August, and I sighted it in the week before the gun season," he said. "I was shooting Hornady 143-grain precision ammo."

That the buck came from an 11-acre piece of property is also amazing.

"I know the neighbors that hunt the adjacent property, and I know they didn't have any photos of this buck, either," Pearson said. "I really think he lived his whole life — at least the last couple of years of it — just living in that big thicket on my uncle's property. It's mostly briars and browse with a creek bottom back there."

There were some available groceries, too.

"When I showed the photos to my Uncle George, he said he'd seen that buck in his vegetable garden a couple of times this summer," Pearson said. "It's a farm, but he has about a half-acre vegetable garden right there next to his house."

Pearson said he's 95-percent sure he had photos of the buck, two years ago behind his grandparents' house just across the road.

"He was a 9-point buck then, but he had the palmation and he had that same sticker point on the right side that was prominent this year," he said. "He has a similar body, looks the same, but of course he had more antler this year."

Pearson said he was stunned at the amount of deer on the small property.

"He was the 12th deer I saw that Sunday afternoon," he said. "One of the other two bucks I saw in there on Saturday, I'd probably shoot him if I hadn't shot this big one. Instead, I think I will let my girlfriend shoot it."

For the patient Pearson, that might be another smart move that may pay off down the line. ■

TAXIDERMY
by **DAN HEASLEY**



DAN HEASLEY

12310 Hwy 18 • Raymond, MS 39154

601-857-0077 - shop

601-259-7826 - cell

www.danheasleytaxidermy.com

heasleyd@bellsouth.net

**After your harvest, trust your
processing to Dwight**



**Dwight's Deer
Processing**

10237 MS-18
Raymond, MS 39154
(601) 857-2324



Camden Lott harvested this 11-point buck in Quitman County near Batesville while hunting on his grandfather's land. The 238-pound buck sported 12-inch tines, an 18-inch spread and scored 162 Buckmasters-BTR.



Courtesy Camden Lott

10TH-GRADER DROPS MONSTER BUCK

By Mike O. Giles

Like he had so many times with his grandfather, Camden Lott eased towards his deer stand in full stealth mode on a hunt Nov. 11 that would end with the 15-year-old killing a 162-inch, 12-point buck.

Lott had hunted on the property many times before, usually with his grandfather, James Homer Massey. They were together when the youngster killed his first buck, creating a bond that could never be broken, even by Massey's unexpected passing last year.

It was the same path that his mother, Keren Massey Lott, had taken with Massey many years before.

The tradition of deer hunting is strong with this family, thanks to James Homer Massey, whose legacy remains in his children and grandchildren.

Arriving at his stand, Lott climbed into a shooting house and surveyed the area around the stand with memories of prior hunts lingering strong in his thoughts. Yet,

he remained all business.

"Some does came into the field, so I decided to shoot one," Lott said.

He centered his crosshairs on a plump doe and squeezed off a shot and, he said, "She took off like a bolt of lightning."

Lott wasn't sure he'd made a good shot, so he stayed put. Things hadn't started out good, but the Sebastopol 10th-grader had high hopes his luck would change.

"About an hour later, a dozen does came into the pipeline and started feeding," Lott said. "I was texting my friends about how many deer were in the field, and I looked up and saw a big buck walk out, looking straight at me.

"I was shaking, and my adrenalin was really flowing. I was trying to aim at him, but I had to settle down a minute, and then another buck, came out right beside the first one, so I had to let them separate before I shot."

During the delay, Lott noticed something important.

"The second buck was substantially bigger than the first one; I knew he was a shooter instantly," he said.

Lott wasted no time settling the crosshairs on this buck, and he slowly squeezed the trigger on the .270 Browning BAR.

The gun roared, and the big buck fell where it stood.

"He tried to get back up, and I shot him again," Lott said. "I wasn't going to let him get away like the doe had earlier."

The last shot ended any chance of escape, and the buck of a lifetime was in his grasp. It didn't take long before his dad, Trent, and uncle, Ty Massey, showed up to help. As it turned out, Lott had made a good shot on the doe as well; they found her a short distance away.

Family members gathered at the scene, and tears of joy were shed.

"Granddaddy would be so proud, Camden," Ty Massey said. "Granddaddy would be so proud." ■

ENTER THE BIG BUCK BOUNTY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AN EXOTIC HUNT AT MCCLAIN LODGE



mcclainlodge.com

Sponsors:



Dwight Deer Processing

For a complete list of rules, visit
www.yourcountryus96.com





BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

DON'T GIVE UP AS DEER SEASON'S FINAL DAYS APPROACH. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX, AND YOU MIGHT PUT YOUR TAG ON A NICE BUCK.

By Mike O. Giles

Have you gone through a season when everything that could go wrong did, when it seemed that every hunter you knew had harvested a buck except yourself.

What do you do when the chips are down in the waning days of deer season?

If you haven't harvested that buck yet, don't lose hope, because some of the biggest deer are taken during the final days of the season.

Many modern-day hunters place game cameras in strategic places to locate shooter bucks and keep track of their whereabouts throughout the season. Sometimes, cameras alert those hunters that a trophy or shooter buck has moved onto their property. Having cameras out can keep hunters abreast of current events, knowing whether a deer is still working their property or has moved on.

During the rut, many bucks will venture outside their core zones in search

of hot does, and that's when they're most vulnerable. Inevitably, many of those bucks will be susceptible to falling victim to diehard hunters driven by an unrelenting desire to achieve success in the woods, no matter the situation or how much time remains.

That's just the situation I found myself in a couple of years ago.

Although I had harvested several does and one nice buck for the freezer, I wanted another buck, preferably a mature one that had shown up on my game camera a few days after Christmas.

There was just one catch, however; the buck was showing up near my stand only after dark. I never had pictures of him during daylight hours. Although I didn't know his routine, the game-camera photos drove me to stay in the woods until the final days of the season. I'd hunted my stand early, mid-day and at last light, hoping for a glimpse of him, but it just didn't happen.

The author took this buck on a late January hunt by thinking outside the box and using stealth to reach a remote, rarely hunted location.





Many hunters find that a silent boat approach to remote areas will lead to encounters with mature bucks.



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

During 8-to-5 working hours, I concentrated on work, but subconsciously, I was thinking about a place where I might intercept that old buck. My stand sat high atop an intersection of several ridge drainages that the bucks used to traverse the difficult terrain.

I could watch from afar, but it was obvious this buck wasn't going to get there until after dark, so I brainstormed where he might be coming from.

Just to the west of the stand lay a creek drainage, a streamside management zone that runs along a property line, bordered by thick pines to the east and a cutover to the west. Deer use the creek bottom to travel north and south, but I didn't know whether the buck would use the area as a transition zone for access to the area near my stand. If he came through with daylight remaining, I might be able to intercept him.

On the last Thursday of the season, I left work with the creek drainage on my mind, not knowing where I'd take a stand, but knowing that I wanted to watch the corner of the cutover and the area where the stream management zone intersected with another property line. Nobody had been hunting the area, as it was on the backside of several properties, and the cutover was barren and wide open.

I parked at the gate and made a 5-minute walk to the edge of my planned hunting area, then began my descent to the stream, stalking and glassing.

I used a three-step, stop-and-look, then a four- or five-step, pause-stop-and-look routine. I stepped as slowly and quietly as I could, pausing to view the area in front with my binoculars.

Stealth mode was a key to slipping into the area unobserved so I didn't bust the deer before I could take my stand.

I'd still-hunted and stalked about 10 minutes when movement caught my eye about 125 yards to the west. I'd seen something move on the ridge straight across the hollow along the cutover line boundary. All I could see was a dark spot on the side of the

hill, so I raised my rifle and looked with my scope. I could see that it was a deer, but what kind I didn't know.

Then the deer raised his head, and his rack filled my scope. With no time or place to take a prop, I settled the crosshairs on his lower neck and squeezed the trigger.

Tic-Boom!

The rifle roared, and the buck collapsed in a heap and didn't even twitch. I watched him for a couple minutes to make sure he was down for good and then made my way across the hollow. Turns out the 9-point buck was nipping on browse and facing downhill, in my direction when the 130-grain Hornady .270 bullet met its mark.

The quest for my buck ended before I ever took a stand, thanks to good fortune, timing and entering his sanctuary area in extreme-stealth mode. The buck had likely spent most of his late afternoons in the area before arriving at my stand well after dark.

While it's not always possible to intercept a buck like this, it is a possibility, and with a little planning and effort you might be able to do the same thing.

Sometimes you just need to think outside the box and do something different, and you might surprise that wary old buck that's probably already patterned the hunters.

KEYS TO TROPHY BUCKS **UP NEXT >**

Thickets hold deer all year long, and late January is no exception. Being there when a trophy buck exposes himself is the key, and that requires a lot of time in a stand.



HUNTING LAND FOR SALE

**\$2.3
BILLION
& 615,000
ACRES**
sold company
wide in the last
5 years



ART MOTT
Agent, Land Specialist
Southern Mississippi
(601) 757-8602



BRAD FARRIS
Agent, Land Specialist
West Central Mississippi
(601) 506-1304



CHIPPER GIBBS
Agent, Land Specialist
West Central Mississippi
(601) 248-8984



LARRY STEWART
Agent, Land Specialist
Southern Mississippi
(985) 320-9112

CONTACT AN AGENT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BUYING AND SELLING HUNTING, RANCH, FARMLAND AND TIMBERLAND



WHITETAIL PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE

HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER

WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM



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





VICK: KEYS TO TROPHY BUCKS

Patience, perseverance, tenacity and passion are elements of Mark Vick's hunting repertoire that pushes him to accomplish things other hunters aspire but lack the will to do. When it comes to killing trophy bucks, Vick, from Collinsville, sees the waning days of the season as a prime time.

While many bucks and does are wary of the season-long hunter onslaught, many are also tired and hungry from all the rutting activity that has occurred. That makes them vulnerable, especially for hunters who are still spending time in the woods, and that means the odds are increasing in the hunters' favor. It certainly worked for Vick last season.

Vick had spent a long season in the woods, and he had passed on many small bucks. He was still looking for a trophy, a wise, old buck that was the biggest one in his territory — you know, the survivor, the buck that goes nocturnal except for during the rut or when the opportunity to be with a hot doe presents itself.

While different areas of the state produce different quality deer, there's no area that gets more hunting pressure than east Mississippi. With roads every quarter-mile and food plots and stands on every powerline or open spot that will hold grass, the pressure put on deer there is second to none.

That usually drives the older, wiser bucks to become nocturnal. A few dedicated hunters like Vick keep going despite the odds being in the buck's favor.

"I spotted a good, quality buck on my game camera and was after him," Vick said. "I'll usually let the young bucks walk and let my son Brett shoot the does and occasionally harvest a buck



Mark Vick harvested this last-minute buck in the final days of January 2017. The 152-inch buck sported 13 points.

of his own, but I hold out for the bigger deer."

LONG-DISTANCE HUNTING

Vick likes to use long distance when hunting.

"When I'm hunting, I want to see as long a distance I can," he said. "I like to hunt cutovers, long-distance lanes or food plots, too. By hunting long range, I can cover a lot of ground and not worry about disturbing the area or leaving my scent there and spooking the bucks."

It only takes one time to spook a quality buck, and that might be the only chance you'll get during daylight hours. Bust him one time with your scent, and it may be all over.

Vick made a last-minute trip to one of his Kemper County properties last January and picked a stand that overlooked a 300-yard long food plot in a cutover that had grown into a pine plantation that deer were using regularly.

"I didn't have long to hunt, but I knew that I could get into the stand unde-

LATE-SEASON DEER CHECKLIST

- Hunt near food sources late in the season, as food will be scarce and bucks and does will be in the vicinity.
- Hunt thickets, stream management zones or other areas that might be overlooked and left alone. Find the area that's least-impacted by human intervention, and you'll probably find some deer.
- Utilize game cameras to locate late-season bucks that may have moved into your area during the rut looking for does or food.
- Hunt wide-open spaces such as fields, cutovers or powerlines so you can cover a lot of ground.
- Hunt trails leading to and from food plots by placing stands back off the plots where you can intercept bucks that normally arrive after dark.
- Hunt mid-day if possible, as bucks will pattern hunters who go in early and late in the day. ■



Mature, heavy-bodied bucks, run ragged by the rut, can still make mistakes in January. A hunter just has to be in the right place at the right time to take advantage.

tected, and I just had to try him again,” Vick said. “I knew that there was a doe coming in regularly, and I hoped that he would follow her in.”

That’s exactly what happened. After a doe came in and fed for a while, Vick looked up and saw that the buck had entered the lane, staring in the doe’s direction. Since they were so far from his stand, there wasn’t a problem with the scent spooking the buck, but Vick knew a buck of that caliber could be gone in the blink of an eye.

Amazingly, the buck strode into view at 5:15 p.m. and offered Vick a 225-yard shot. He centered the crosshairs of his 7mm Magnum on the buck and squeezed off a shot.

Ka-Boom!

The rifle roared, the buck crumpled and Vick’s season-long quest was over.

The 30-minute hunt after work had turned into the hunt of his lifetime. With very little gunfire in the woods that late in the year — with most hunters licking their wounds or getting ready for fishing, golf or turkey hunting — one old buck made a mistake and thought the season was over.

Vick’s Kemper County trophy sported 13 points, scored 152 B&C and was a fitting end to what had been a frustrating season to many hunters.

Vick made him pay. Tenacity, desire, and a passion for chasing wise, old bucks are what kept him going to the very end, despite the odds being in the deer’s favor. The lush strip of green winter grass was too much for the old buck. Was he hungry? Maybe he was looking for one more doe, or just maybe he thought the season was over.



PRECISION MARKSMANSHIP, GEAR **UP NEXT >**

JEFF REGISTER BUILDING & TRUSS



40' x 60' x 12' Installed
Roof Only, Closed Gables\$7,642*
Roof Only, Open Gables\$6,850*

30' x 40' x 10' Installed
Roof Only, Open Gables\$3,950*

registerbarns.com

228-678-0971-Office

228-234-9115-Cell

228-234-7241-Cell

2611 26th Ave. • Gulfport, MS

Second location in Highland Home, AL

*prices do not include taxes and delivery



Wildlife Management Solutions, Inc.
Specializing in Wildlife Management Products
Seed • Feed • Fertilizer
Chemical • Wildlife Trees • Boss Buck™ Feeders

Look for our
WMS Seed Blends
in stores across
AL, FL, LA, & MS



Check out our website,
Friend us on Facebook,
or Call us for
a Dealer near you!

productsforwildlifemanagement.com
14281 Hwy 11 South • Eutaw, AL 35462
1-877-400-8089
seedsource@bellsouth.net



PRECISION MARKSMANSHIP, GEAR

While Vick has used many rifles, he settled on the 7mm Magnum and has two go-to guns

“You may think that the 7 Mag is too big and kicks too much, but that isn’t the case,” Vick said. “I have a Browning X-Bolt stainless steel with ports that throws the sound to the sides and doesn’t blow the shooter’s ears out. And it doesn’t kick you like a mule either, just kind of a soft push.”

Vick also has a Z6 Swarovski scope with a 30mm tube, about as good a scope as you can buy. It’s clear in low-light conditions and hardly gets too dark to shoot in legal shooting hours.

“When a buck walks out at 300 yards, I want to know that I can shoot it,” Vick said. “The further you can shoot, the better off you are. My 13-year-old son, Brett, has made every shot he’s taken with his 7mm Magnum Remington 700 Sendero with a bull barrel, too.”



Bucks will often feed during mid-day late in the season, having seen hunters come and go in the mornings and afternoons.

Koola Eze

- COOLER OR FREEZER, set to your desired temperature.
- 115 Volts, Standard household plug.
- This cooler is designed with no fans, the walls and ceiling have cold plates to keep from drying out your deer meat.
- Only weighs 1050 lbs
- Only three working components: Compressor, Condenser fan motor, and thermostat.
- Plastic feet for easy moving over concrete.
- 3 year warranty or extended 5 year warranty for \$250.
- 6 stainless steel meat hooks.
- Outside dimensions 6' x 6' x 8' 8 1/2" tall
- Inside dimensions 5'4" x 5'4" x 7" tall
- Made with 4" polyurethane foam
- Can be mounted on a trailer.



Rental Trailers Available

Contact: Kevin Helton (662) 571-5115 Located in Yazoo City, MS

Kubota RTV X-Series

Do more with Kubota's full line of powerful 4WD workhorses.



RTV-X900

- Kubota Diesel Engine - 21.5 HP*
- Front and Extra Duty Independent Rear Suspension (IRS)
- Available in General Purpose or Worksite Models

RTV-X1100C

- Kubota Diesel Engine - 24.8 HP*
- Rugged Variable Hydro Transmission (VHT-X)
- Premium Temperature-Controlled Grand Cab with AC/Heat/Defogging



RTV-X1120D

- Kubota Diesel Engine - 24.8 HP*
- Standard Hydraulic Bed Lift
- Available in Kubota Orange or Realtree® AP Camouflage**

RTV-X1140

- Kubota Diesel Engine - 24.8 HP*
- Convertible Cargo Bed for More Seating or Additional Cargo Space
- 1,300 lbs. Towing Capacity

WATTS BROTHERS TRACTORS

7061 Hwy 49 N., Hattiesburg, MS 39402
601.264.5877 • www.wattsbro.com



*For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer and the product operator's manual. Please refer to the other specifications and details for various models as recommended equipment. **Realtree® is a registered trademark of Realtree Outdoor Enterprises, LLC. Optional equipment may be available. ©Watts Brothers - 2018/01/10/16





PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

While it may be a little late to talk about practice late in deer season, there's no better time to get started. Vick has learned that having quality equipment in good working order and knowing how to use that equipment is the most-basic element of becoming a successful hunter.

"When I get a new rifle, I want to shoot it a lot and be able to consistently hit something the size of an orange out to 300 yards," Vick said. "When I'm shooting out of a shoot house or on sandbags, I'm confident that I can make the shot out to that distance as well, but that only comes after putting in a lot of time at the shooting range, too."

Vick has consistently killed bucks at 180 to 250 yards, and that comes from having quality equipment, spending time at the range and keeping that equipment in top working shape. By practicing and putting in range time, a hunter can determine his limitations and how far he can effectively shoot his weapon. Then, when the moment of truth arrives, success is a great possibility. ■



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

From camps to custom homes, build with

FRED
NETTerville
LUMBER COMPANY



Netterville Lumber Company is your complete solution to professional moldings like Crown Molding, Wall Paneling, and Trim Moldings. Custom Trim & Solid Hardwood Floors. We look forward to working with homeowners, designers and builders.



www.nettervillelumber.com
800.343.4577



Berryland

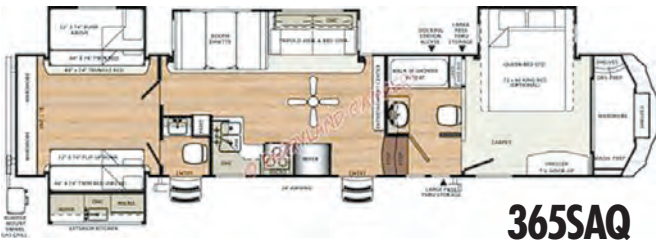
Campers

HOLDEN

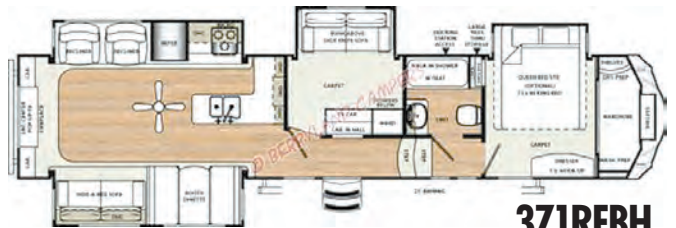


4 GREAT BUNKHOUSE FLOORPLANS

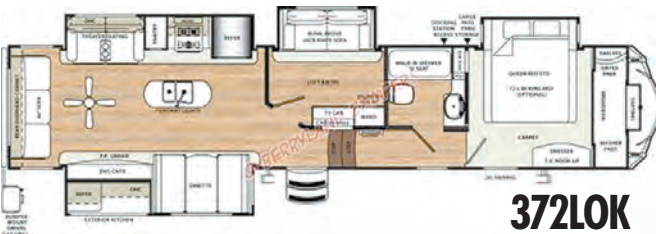
STARTING AT \$44,990



365SAQ



371REBH



372LOK



383RBLOK

MesaRidge SALEM

ROCKWOOD

SALEM HEMISPHERE LIFE

WORK and PLAY

HOLDEN, LA • Exit 29

TOLL FREE 1-877-567-7079

www.berrylandcampers.com/holden

Late-season waterfowl might be tough for many Delta hunters, but these tips should help keep those limits coming.

DON'T DUCK OUT EARLY

By Phillip Gentry

The Central Flyway is probably the most-utilized of all of the flight paths that bring numerous species of waterfowl from their prairie pothole breeding grounds in the United States and Canada to their southern wintering grounds.

Mississippi sits near the southern terminus of the flyway, so its annual duck migration is dependent on many factors. Each year, hunters in the Delta region hope for conditions that will bring ducks and hunters together on frequent occasion.

Count Torch Tindle of Cleveland in that group.

A former duck-hunting guide, Tindle now focuses all of his waterfowling efforts on his own enjoyment, maintaining several waterfowl leases as well as hunting public lands along the Mississippi River. He also hunts in southeast Missouri, giving him an early look at the migration.

Tindle said this season's forecast looked pretty good at the beginning of the first season in late November. >

“Early season cold fronts pushed the birds down from up north early,” Tindle said. “Now, we need for conditions to stay right here in Mississippi for those birds to continue their migration down here and hopefully stay here for a while.”

Over his years of hunting, Tindle has found that ducks will only go as far south as they have to avoid the harshest weather. The worst-case scenario, in his experience, is for the weather to turn cold early and then warm up.

“They don’t like thunderstorms and severe weather, which is what you get when it starts out cold and then warms up,” he said. “Thunderstorms will push birds on south, and we only get them for a short period.”

He also said that if it gets cold up north and freezes, and then warms up, birds will move back up, too.

“The ideal scenario is to have a hard freeze up north and for that freeze line to extend down to around Memphis,” Tindle said. “If we’re next in line and the weather stays cold but not below freezing throughout the season, we’ll have plenty of ducks to hunt here in the Delta.”

On the leases he hunts, fields have been pumped, so water shouldn’t be an issue. Despite the dry conditions all summer, the long-range forecast was for above-average rainfall and snowfall to bring both cold and water.

As for his public-hunting forays onto the Mississippi River, Tindle said water levels have to reach at least 16 feet on the Arkansas City gauge, his personal indicator when he’s hunting the river along Coahoma and Bolivar counties.

“Any water lower than 16 feet, and you can’t get into the oxbows, sloughs and backwaters that are considered public waters once the water rises yet stays within the natural boundary of the river,” he said.

When the season approaches, Tindle spends as much time as possible scouting to see if there are ducks in the area and how they might be moving. He also relies heavily on aerial surveys conducted by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and published each week on the agency’s website.

“Since all of our ducks usually stop off in Missouri before they come here, I’ll also monitor what’s going on with the surveys published by Missouri Department of Conservation,” Tindle said. “If they’ve got birds, and a decent-sized cold front comes through, you can bet we’ll see an influx of birds ahead of that system.”



January ducks don't act the way they did back at Thanksgiving when the season opened. It takes slightly different approaches to keep bagging them consistently.

LATE SEASON WATERFOWL TIPS

Until Jan. 28, when the regular waterfowl season ends in Mississippi, duck hunters need to adjust their tactics to be more successful on late-season ducks.

Many things have changed since Thanksgiving, and, like battle-scarred veterans, ducks that are moving down the Central Flyway are more savvy than the bright-eyed newbies that came earlier.

Take a look at these late season tips and work them into your setup when you hit the water this month.

• **Less calling, more decoy movement.** “We don’t blow the call much at all once we get into January,” said Dave Green, an avid hunter from Union County. “Just a little tap, something that says ‘Come over here and see.’ Something like a quick feed call. That’s all it takes and about all they can stand.”

Torch Tindle, another veteran hunter, said he and Green reduce the number of decoys in the spread.

“Probably the best thing you can do is add natural motion rather than numbers,” Tindle said. “I’m old-school in this regard. Give me a jerk-string over a motion decoy every time. You can put three or four decoys on a string in the middle of a group of maybe eight or 10, and they’ll all look more realistic.”

• **Pile on the camo:** Hunters are famous for face-painting, mask-wearing, and beard-growing to cover themselves, but what about your gear, your boat, your dog — even the shape of your blind?

“By January, anything with a boxy shape means danger to a duck,” said duck hunter Thom Pratt of Washington County. “Spend extra time cutting branches and limbs, anything natural. From the air, any tarp or cover tends to look boxy and flat. Using 3-dimensional stuff, and lots of it, to hide, is the way to go.”

• **Hunt mid-day and late:** This might sound more like a deer-season tip, but there’s some sound reasoning behind mid-day water fowling.

“Everyone hunts first light,” said hunter Steve Emery of DeSoto County. “Well, if it’s cold overnight, and your area freezes up, ducks won’t land. It’s better to wait till the sun thaws the ice off. If you’re hunting on the river, that’s also a good time for boat traffic to push ducks around, so it’s worth the effort, either to stay later or go in and hunt later.” ■

CURADO

FOR REEL LIFE

ICAST
2017
BEST FRESHWATER REEL



The **NEW, Shimano Curado** lives up to its heritage and sets new standards of **versatility, performance** and **reliability**. This is the one reel you will want to use every day, for life.

SHIMANO

fish.shimano.com

DON'T FORGET TO USE YOUR



GIFT CARD

Available at



**FOR ALL.
FOR LESS.™**

academy.com

“Once we get birds, they tend to move back and forth in our state from feeding to resting areas, and they’ll even move up and down the river based on the amount of hunting pressure they’re getting,” Tindle said.

Dave Green is Tindle’s long-time hunting buddy and a member of the same club; they hunt all over the north Delta region.

Dubbed “Greenhead” by his hunting buddies, Green said that while he hopes for good duck-hunting weather in the area, daily weather and the way waterfowlers relate to it has a lot to do with success rates.

“If it’s a bluebird, sunny day, that’s the

best days to be hunting on the river,” Green said. “On the other hand, if the forecast is for overcast skies, rain or other generally cloudy conditions, I prefer to hunt one of the flooded fields leased to our duck hunting club.”

Green’s explained that ducks have a hard time seeing when an entire area is covered with water and there’s a lot of glare coming off the river and surrounding areas.

Scouting beforehand and knowing the lay of the land generally gives him a good idea of how birds will approach; he wants to set up his blind and his decoys where the sun and the wind is in the birds’ faces as they come in.

“You want the wind blowing from behind you and the sun shining at your

back,” Green said. “No animal likes to look into the sun. Glare in their eyes is some of the best camouflage there is. Ducks also land into the wind, so the wind at your back is going to put you in the best shooting position.”

Public-land hunting or getting permission to hunt private land off the Mississippi River is tricky. Green said to know which situation you’re in to make sure you are legal and not trespassing.

“As a general rule, we hunt out of a boat blind anytime we’re on the river,” he said. “It’s best if you can work the boat up into the willows or some other backdrop to help break out your outline. Just remember to keep the sun and wind at your back and stay in the boat to avoid any chance of trespassing.”

On cloudy, overcast or rainy days, he will go to one of his leases, which have permanent blinds that help him and other hunters stay concealed until time to shoot.

“In a pit blind on a flooded field, you start to get into more decoy strategies,” Green said. “You want things to look natural, but you also want to tip the suggestion to your advantage, so instead of landing away from the blind, birds will land within shooting range.”

Three strategies Green uses involve a “U” shape, a double line, and a smorgasbord of mixed ducks with an opening in the center.

“The ‘U’ provides a landing spot in the center, while the two lines create a kind of runway,” he said. “Mixing ducks looks more natural, but you always want to leave a target opening spot for ducks to land.”

Green said by January, the number of decoys he uses in his spreads decreases dramatically, as does the amount of calling he uses to get the birds to commit.

“We don’t call much at all,” he said. “No big, long, wound-up hail calls like you hear on TV — not this time of year.” ■

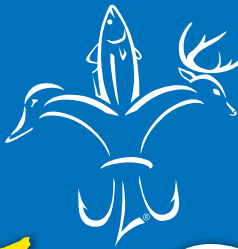
GEAR CHOICES FOR 2018 >



Despite the dry weather over the summer, having water in duck hunting impoundments is rarely a problem as the water is pumped in on most private areas.



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



Louisiana

39TH ANNUAL

SPORTSMAN[®] SHOW & festival

2018
March 15-18

Lamar-Dixon Expo Center
Gonzales, Louisiana

LOUISIANA'S OLDEST & LARGEST FISHING & HUNTING SHOW

Mark Your Calendar

It's back...

the South's largest
hunting, fishing, boating,
atv, tractor show...

Everything you need to make your
outdoor activities a success.

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

March 15-18, 2018

Lamar-Dixon Expo Center
Gonzales, LA

TOP NEW GEAR CHOICES

FOR 2018

Newer and better technology keeps the hunting industry moving and duck hunters digging in their pockets. These items are worth a look

• **Cabela's Instinct Hi Vis Layout Blind.** This versatile layout blind, backed by a lifetime warranty, has a framed hammock seat that holds you up off the ground and keeps you in an upright shooting position.

The 10-inch waterproof tarpaulin bottom seals out wet, muddy ground while the attached stubble straps allow you to attach natural vegetation to blend the blind into the surroundings and help keep you shielded from wary birds.

It also features flexible-frame window mesh, which allows hunters to mold the viewing area to their liking, while the camo doors provide added concealment, even when the blind is open.

Suggested retail price is \$339.99 from cabelas.com

• **Red Head® Canvasback Extreme Waders.** These waders are built to last and give hunters great durability and protection in the blind or marsh. Laminated, ultra-rugged Span Tough outer material and waterproof 5mm neoprene naturally insulates and offers great resistance to punctures and abrasion from brush and briars.

A generous cut and new crotch design delivers a more-comfortable fit and greater movement while bending and squatting. The boots feature wool-felt mid-soles and 1,600-gram 3M Thinsulate Ultra insulation to shield your feet from the cold while trudging through freezing cold waters.

They also feature a fleece-lined hand-warmer pocket, chest pocket with water-resistant cell phone pouch, zip utility pocket, and a magnetic utility pocket.

Suggested retail price is \$249.99 at basspro.com

• **Mack's Prairie Wings' Signature Duck Calls.** This line of calls combines exotic good looks and natural sound of increasingly rare Cocobolo wood with the classy appeal and performance of ivory acrylic.

John Stephens, a three-time world calling champion, personally tunes the Original, Short Barrel, Daisy Cutter, Diablo, and Barbelly models. Jim Ronquest, another world champion, personally tunes the Mondo and Mondo LT models.

Each call has their signature engraved on the barrel along with a "tuned by" card inside the box signed by the tuner of the call.

Suggested retail price is \$134.99 from mackspw.com.



Whenever hunting public lands or any area off the Mississippi River, it's advisable to hunt from a boat and stay in the boat to avoid trespassing.

Avenger

AV-26



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



222 Sportfish



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

From The
Back Water
To The
Blue Water



230CC



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

2018

By Bobby Cleveland

MISSISSIPPI SALTWATER CALENDAR

Here's a quarterly look at what the Gulf of Mexico and inshore areas have to offer Mississippi fishermen in the coming year. Take notes and fill your coolers.

A man wearing a white t-shirt with a "Columbia" logo, a white baseball cap, and sunglasses is smiling while holding two large speckled trout. One fish is held in his right hand, and the other is held behind his head. The background shows the open ocean under a clear blue sky.

Speckled trout can be caught year-round on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, but tactics vary from month to month.



Six very thick layers of clothing, including two outer ones resistant to water, helped break the chilly air during the 40-minute run across the west end of the Mississippi Sound.

It was a ride that would have been impossible without the heavy garments, including insulated gloves, a full-face wool mask with only eye holes and a set of goggles to protect said peepers from icing over. “Don’t worry; it’ll be worth it, I promise,” said Capt. O.T. Sutton, who quickly found the right speed to keep his 22-foot boat bouncing on top of the crests of the 1-foot seas. He was making 30 knots, and it was pushing cool air through every available break in fabric. “That first redfish will have you sweating; just wait and see.”

From Bayou Caddy in Waveland, we crossed the sound to the Biloxi Marsh without taking a wave. Five minutes after arriving, Sutton’s prediction proved true.

A redfish hit a Redfish Magic spinnerbait on my second cast, and the braided line sang as it was pulled through the rod eyes.

It was a bull, easily longer than 30 inches, and it was working me over. “Sweating yet?” Sutton asked, laughing as he saw me struggling, not so much with the fish than trying to shed layers of clothing with the fish on.

Have you ever tried to remove two jackets and a pair of rain overalls while fishing a 25-pound red? It’s not easy.

Sutton quickly hooked up on the same spot, and the laughing stopped. It took us about 15 minutes to subdue the two fish, and before either of us made another cast, we adjusted our wardrobes. Good thing, too.

Over the next three hours, fishing a half-mile stretch of the north shore of the Biloxi Marsh, due south of the mouth of the Pearl River, we worked over the redfish. And, they worked over us, too.

IT WAS THE FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY 2017,

and we hoped it was an omen of the year ahead. It was certainly proof that the marine waters off the Mississippi and Louisiana coasts produce year-round. In this story, we'll break down the calendar into quarters, listing the top saltwater options for each time of the year. Dress appropriately, and let's get going.

FIRST QUARTER: SHORT RUNS, FULL BOXES

Not a time for the weak of heart, January, February and March offer some of the easiest and best fishing on the calendar. Weather is what makes it so, but it's also why many fishermen are reluctant to schedule trips.

"It's just so darn fickle," said Sutton. "We may have two weeks of unfishable weather, then get two or three, or even four or five good days in a row when the conditions are as good as we get all year. You just have to be ready to go when the window opens."

Guide Sonny Schindler of Shore Thing Charters in Bay St. Louis said, "That's probably the hardest fishing time of the year because of the weather, cancelling trips, but it is probably the easiest time to get on fish because you don't have to go very far."

Redfish are plentiful, both in the marsh and in the bays. Trout move up, too, and can often be found holding in big schools in deep holes in places like bays, coastal river bends and oyster beds.

"Don't overlook sheepshead and black drum — what we call puppy drum — either," said Capt. Robert Earl McDaniel. "All those species move in during the winter, and we don't have to run far; heck, a lot of times we don't even have to leave the bays and hit the sound."

Bridge pilings on US 90, where it crosses the coastal rivers before they become bays, are hot spots treasured by recreational fishermen and charter captains alike.

"A lot of times, we're talking about leaving the dock at 7 or 8 and being back by noon with a box full of good, eating fish," said Jerry Mayes of Biloxi. "You may have to move around to a few pilings to find

the hot spot, but once you have, dead bait shrimp is all you need to fill a box."

The key, fishermen agree, is current and knowing how it's working, and then using trial-and-error to find the best way to present a lure so it reaches the base of the piling where predatory gamefish are waiting in ambush mode.

Sutton prefers the run across the sound to the marsh.

"If you can get out there, it's worth the run, and I'd rather save my days for when I can," he said. "Some of the best redfish and speck fishing we do is in the winter. If you can find a deep hole in a bayou, you might can limit on trout without moving."

Offshore, winter is pretty quiet off the Mississippi coast, except for a few

because this time of year, it can get rough on you in a hurry. I know those smaller boats that run from Venice can handle it, but their trip is much shorter.

"You can certainly load the boat with tuna, but honestly, it's the time of year to work over the reds and specks."

SECOND QUARTER: ADD COBIA, SNAPPER TO THE MIX

McDaniel is probably the happiest fisherman on the coast to see April arrive. He knows cobia are coming in quickly on their migration from the east, and that snapper season will open in a month or so.

"Cobia and snapper are my bread and butter," said McDaniel, whose charter



From April to June, Mississippi anglers catch cobia on many patterns, including a fly rod around ship channel buoys.

anglers with big cabin cruisers.

"If you can handle the run — and it can be nearly 100 miles — then the yellowfin tuna action is superb down at the lumps south of Venice (La.)," said Biloxi's George Johnson. "You have to have a big boat,

boat is named *WhipaSnapa*; a snapper boat for sure, but also the boat whose predecessor of the same name produced the state record for cobia.

"I start keeping close tabs on the reports out of Destin (Fla.) and Pensacola (Fla.) to

see when the cobia start biting," he said. "Then I know they will be coming over here a few weeks later. They migrate up the Gulf Coast to spawn, and in Mississippi, that means the old sand bars and submerged islands out in the Gulf."

McDaniel finds an appropriate spot and puts out a huge chum slick to attract the giant female cobia, which will follow it back to the source, and to McDaniel's live baits staggered at distances behind the boat.

"April and early May are the best times, then after that, I start running the structure to find the cobia," he said. "Oil rigs, old wrecks, reefs, channel markers — anything that will hold fish — could have one or two for the taking any given day."

Although red snapper season has not been set or determined, it's a safe bet it will open sometime around June 1. That has been the opening day the past few years.

"It's a mess, what they've done with the season-setting process, but I know on June 1, it is likely to be open for the recreational angler," said James House of Gulfport. "It may be for a weekend, or for a week or two, or they may do what they did last year and open it only on weekends for the whole summer. The one time I know I can count on going is early June."

May is a good month offshore for amberjacks, if the season is open.

"It has closed the day before the snapper season has opened, at least for the past few years," House said. "Crazy; that's about all I can say about that."

June is a peak month for billfish, and other big gamefish species.



As soon as the red snapper season opens in June, Capt. Robert Earl McDaniel starts putting the giant sows in the boat.

"The best bluewater fishing in our part of the Gulf is in June, which is why we have our Mississippi Gulf Coast Billfish Classic in June," said Bobby Carter, tournament director for the event. "The mouth of the Mississippi is almost due south of Biloxi, and it's within easy reach for the big tournament boats. Tuna, wahoo, marlin, and last year, we added swordfish."

April, May and June are a time of transition for the nearshore species like trout and redbfish.

continues on page 40



CARGO LIFTS

THREE MODELS ★ THREE CHOICES ★ SAME QUALITY

DO-IT-YOURSELF KITS NOW AVAILABLE!

Cargo Lift Distributors, LLC located in Port Bolivar, Texas



EasyLift™

Lifts 1000 lbs



EconomyLift™

Lifts 1000 lbs



MiniLift™

Lifts 500 lbs

Equipped with "Cage-Arrest™" Brake System & Safety Screen to protect cargo from falling out.

This cage features balusters to better match deck hand railing.

This unit is for the small needs & take less space. Gates optional.

Marine Grade Aluminum . Stainless Hardware . Dual SS Cables . Remote Controls

Call today 888.684.6110 or visit www.beachouselifts.com

“Cat Island gets hot, because it has a lot of grass beds on the south side,” said Schindler. “Once they get around the islands like that, they will stay, especially around grass, throughout the spawning process.”

Last year, spawning specks were caught as late as mid-August around Cat Island, which has the best grass beds of any area of the Mississippi Coast.

THIRD QUARTER: IT'S ON, ALL OVER

July brings the heat of the summer and some of the hottest fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. It will stay that way through the end of the third quarter, September.

“Just like the cold of winter, the heat of the summer isn't always for the weak of heart,” said Sutton. “I nearly fell out from heat stroke one day last summer, which is why my boat now has a Bimini top. I was so busy catching fish I didn't realize how hot I had gotten.”

Finding big schools of speckled trout can be as easy as finding an offshore oyster bed or the right shallow-water oil platform.



Sheepshead give fishermen a quick, box-filling opportunity on the bridge pilings, like the U.S. 90 Bridge in Ocean Springs.

Non-Current Sales Event!!!

215 XTS



NauticStar
BOATS

2140 Sport



Huge Indoor
Showroom!!!

Save
BIG!!!

Skeeter SX 210



SKEETER
PERFORMANCE FISHING BOATS

SX 230



NEW
Location

**dockside
marine**

YAMAHA

63116 Hwy 10 Bogalusa, LA 70427
Phone: (985) 732-7600

dockside-marine.com

“Everybody knows oyster beds are trout havens, but a lot of people are oblivious to the fact that before any oil rigs or platforms are built, builders lay down big shell beds to harden the bottom,” House said. “In the summer, if you can find a rig in a depth of between 8 and 15 feet, it is subject to be holding specks — and big ones.”

Surf fishermen can find trout wading off the main beach or off any of the barrier islands, and they aren't surprised when a redfish hits the bait.

“The Biloxi Marsh is full of reds in the summer, but the best fishing is on a fall during a high-tide period,” Sutton said. “We start to see schools of reds roaming the edges of the marsh, and a lot of those will be over the slot and have to be thrown back. But, they're still fun.”

Flounder are fun to gig at night, on a full moon, on the beaches and around the islands, but they can also be caught on a hook-and-line around rock jetties — like those located just behind Casino Row in Biloxi.

“Ground mullet, too, and let me tell you

Capt. Kenny Shiyou put this 26-pound tripletail on his boat in 100-degree weather in August, putting a “cool” end to a hot day on the Gulf.



something, flounder and ground mullet are two of the best -eating fish in the world,” McDaniel said.

Offshore, depending on the federal seasons, red snapper are still plentiful as well as mangrove (gray) snapper, grouper and cobia, around oil rigs, wrecks and

reefs. King mackerel make their first solid appearance in July and will stay thick in the northern Gulf through the fall. Spanish mackerel are also plentiful and trolling spoons or casting spoons will fill a box quickly.

continues on page 42



HAVOC BOATS

Wrekin Havoc



EMMETT'S MARINE

354 DALE TRL NE • BROOKHAVEN, MS 39601

(601) 833-2277

WWW.EMMETTSMARINE.COM



All of that action is available, but the third quarter offers one unique opportunity that no other time presents — tripletail, aka blackfish, and the most-popular way of catching them is pretty “cool.”

“No doubt about it, we try to end each day with at least an hour or two of looking for tripletails,” Schindler said. “You need to keep your biggest and best shrimp in the baitwell alive and ready for the tripletails. What we do is find long lines of crab pots put out by commercial crabbers and run alongside them at 20 or 30 miles an hour, looking for the tripletails around the buoys. You can see them pretty easily once you’re accustomed to looking for them. They try to make themselves a part of the buoy, it seems, and wait for the current to bring something past to eat.”

When fishermen spot one in the water — a big brown blob next to a buoy — the ploy is for the captain to run another 100 yards downcurrent, stop and slowly idle back to the spotted fish. Once in easy casting distance, the idea is to toss the shrimp, usually on a hook about a foot underneath a cork, past the fish, and then ease it back into striking distance.

“They are curious and will go look at this cork and then find the shrimp, and they can’t resist it,” Schindler said.

FOURTH QUARTER: CONSISTENT WEATHER, GOOD FISHING

Charter captains love the fall weather, although the timing isn’t the best.

“October and November are two of our best months, weather-wise, because we don’t see a lot of fronts,” Schindler said. “We can count on running most of our bookings without having weather cancellations.”

The problem is that bookings slow because of school.

That’s okay for Sutton, a recreational fisherman whose school days are 50 years in his rear-view mirror.

“That just means less competition on the water, especially on weekdays,” he said. “I love the fall, mainly because I love redfish, and they are so much easier to find and catch from October through the holidays. And if you get the right condi-

tions in the marsh, you can find speckled trout all over the place.”

Sutton proved it one day this past November, just after Thanksgiving, when the allure of trout pulled him out of his deer stand in the Delta, and he prepped his boat and gear for a week or two of trout and reds.

At first light, in 40-degree weather, he took us across the sound to the marsh and into a magical area known as Bob’s Bayou. In the first 15 minutes, we found redfish feeding heartily on the end of a rising tide.

Two hours later, on the falling tide and at the third spot we checked, we found a school of speckled trout holding on a nondescript bank, less than 30 yards in

length. We fished for trout, our remaining shrimp getting a bite on every cast.

It brought up a conversation based on that early January day, when Sutton and I had hit the redfish so hard, just a few miles away in the marsh.

“We thought that might be a good omen, and it was,” Sutton said. “And this is a perfect way to end the year.” ■



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



Fall is perhaps the best time to catch nice redfish in the Biloxi Marshes, with fish hungry and fishing pressure at a low level.



Brookhaven

Honda

YOU'LL LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, YOU'LL LOVE WHAT YOU SAVE!

**2016 PIONEER™
1000
SXS10M3**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$13,999*
SALE.....\$10,697**

**2017 PIONEER™
500
SXS500M2H**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$8,999*
SALE.....\$7,097**

**2017 PIONEER™
700
SXS700M2**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$10,499*
SALE.....\$8,497**

**2017 RANCHER®
DCT IRS TRX
420 FA5
4x4 Automatic
Shift**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$7,399*
SALE.....\$5,997**

**2017 RINCON®
TRX 680 FA
4x4 Automatic
Transmission**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$9,399*
SALE.....\$7,597**

**2017 RANCHER
TRX 420 FM1
4x4 Manual Shift**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$6,399*
SALE.....\$4,997**

**2017
RANCHER®
TRX 420
TM1 2x4
Manual Shift**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$5,349*
SALE.....\$4,197**

**2017 RANCHER® 420
TRX 420 FA 2**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$7,599*
SALE.....\$6,197**

**2017
FOREMAN®
500
TRX 500 FM1
4x4 Manual
Shift**



5 AVAILABLE

MSRP \$7,299*
SALE.....\$5,797**

Brookhaven

Honda

8-5 Mon.-Fri. • 8-2 Sat.

1-866-546-6328 • 1-601-833-6041

www.brookhavenhonda.com

www.MS-Sportsman.com

**EXIT 40 OFF I-55 IN BROOKHAVEN, MS
NEXT TO HOME DEPOT**

honda.com RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR RIDERS 16 YEARS AND OLDER. BE A RESPONSIBLE RIDER. REMEMBER, ATVS CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO OPERATE. FOR YOUR SAFETY, ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET, EYE PROTECTION AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING, AND NEVER RIDE ON PAVED SURFACES OR PUBLIC ROADS. KEEP IN MIND THAT RIDING DOESN'T MIX WITH DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. Honda RECOMMENDS THAT ALL ATV RIDERS TAKE A TRAINING COURSE AND READ THEIR OWNER'S MANUAL THOROUGHLY. For rider training information or to sign up for a rider training course, call the ATV Safety Institute at 1-800-887-2887. FourTrax Foreman®, Rubicon™, Rincon™ and GPScape™ are trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. PIONEER IS ONLY FOR DRIVERS 16 YEARS AND OLDER. MULTI-PURPOSE UTILITY VEHICLES CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO OPERATE. FOR YOUR SAFETY, BE RESPONSIBLE. ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET, EYE PROTECTION AND APPROPRIATE CLOTHING. ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT, AND KEEP THE SIDE NETS AND DOORS CLOSED. AVOID EXCESSIVE SPEEDS AND BE CAREFUL ON DIFFICULT TERRAIN. ALL MUV DRIVERS SHOULD WATCH THE SAFETY VIDEO MULTIPURPOSE UTILITY VEHICLES: A GUIDE TO SAFE OPERATION AND READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL BEFORE OPERATING THE VEHICLE. NEVER DRIVE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. ON PUBLIC ROADS, OR WITH MORE THAN ONE PASSENGER. DRIVER AND PASSENGER MUST BE TALL ENOUGH FOR SEAT BELT TO FIT PROPERLY AND TO BRACE THEMSELVES WITH BOTH FEET FIRMLY ON THE FLOOR. PASSENGER MUST BE ABLE TO GRASP THE HAND HOLD WITH THE SEAT BELT ON AND BOTH FEET ON THE FLOOR. RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT WHEN DRIVING. Pioneer is a trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. *Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price (or MMSRP) excludes destination charge. Visit www.powersports.honda.com to view applicable destination charge amount.
** Prices subject to change after 1/1/2018





BY JERALD HORST

DOG DAY AFTERNOON

(or morning)

Hunting with dogs is a great way to bag a winter limit of squirrels and to introduce youngsters to the sport. These hunters understand perfectly.

Everything was gray. The woods were drab, leafless and gray. The bare tree trunks and limbs were gray.

The dead leaves underfoot were gray. The sky was heavily overcast with uniformly gray clouds.

Even the squirrels were gray. Conditions were perfect for a day of squirrel hunting with dogs, a sociable sport.

For most of the season, squirrel hunters are the most-reclusive of

all outdoorsmen. They try to make themselves utterly invisible and silent in the woods. Crossing paths with another hunter ruins their morning.

But something magical happens in January, when all the leaves are off the trees — especially after deer season closes. The sound of laughter, joking, dogs barking and shotguns banging rings through the woods as the time comes for squirrel hunting with dogs.

This was what Cameron Harris, 34, a lanky, square-jawed 6-foot-5 giant from Ferriday, La., who sells agricultural

chemicals, called, “a big annual family hunt.” Harris’s father, Weldon, 64, and brother ,Taylor, 31, both cotton farmers from Kosciusko, Miss., were there.

The team’s dean was retired county agent Don Schmidt, 68, from Carthage, Miss. Family friend Shannon McMullin, 34, an oil-rig tool pusher, supplied the kids necessary for a fun hunt: Hunter, 14, Lilly, 10, and Parker, 8.

Most important to the success of the hunt were the two dog men: Joe Shumaker, 57, and

“It’s not about the shooting for us,” Shumaker said. “We will carry a gun early in the season or when it’s just the two of us. We like to let the others shoot late in the season.”

Between 300 and 400 squirrels are killed over their dogs every year.

The final count was 10 people in the woods, not counting me, and it wasn’t a person too many. It takes a lot of eyes to spot a hidden squirrel and a lot of shots to bring down one zig-zagging wide open through the trees.

ACTION STARTS EARLY...

Thirty seconds after Fletcher and Shumaker unleashed their dogs, the curs barked, signaling they had treed their first squirrel.

The hunters, necks craned upwards, spread into a ring around the tree, working to get the youngsters a shot at the first squirrel. Parker McMullin just couldn’t spot the squirrel sitting in an open crotch in the tree. Hunter McMullin’s double-barrel boomed and the squirrel tumbled down the trunk, obviously crippled.

Somehow, the spunky rodent scrambled between the legs of the four dogs intent on grabbing it, scampered up a tiny sweet gum tree and shot into a 2-inch hole.

Gone!

A PERFECT START FOR YOUNG HUNTERS

After Joe Shumaker and Terry Fletcher buckled tracking collars on their dogs, Shumaker lined up the youngsters and gave them a short safety lesson.

“Only shoot up. If a squirrel comes down the tree, don’t shoot,” he said. “It will go back up a tree.”

The pace of hunting with a squirrel dog creates an ideal learning opportunity for young hunters. Fast handling of loaded guns to make snap shots are never needed. Young hunters carry their own firearms to become accustomed to handling the weapons.

But until the hunters reach the tree where the dogs are barking treed, kids’ weapons typically remain unloaded. When they do load them, they are under the supervision of adults who make sure the guns are handled safely.

Boredom, a common affliction of young deer and duck hunters, is never a problem when hunting squirrels with dogs. The group is constantly on the move through the woods, keeping up with the ranging dogs or bee-lining to the excited barking of treed dogs.

When a treed squirrel breaks and runs, shooting can be fast and furious, with young hunters often ending up with empty shotguns and a lot of misses.

Every tree presents a tactical challenge.

Occasionally, a hidden squirrel can be spotted in a tree crotch or plastered on the side of a limb. But very often, the hunters have to shake a vine, light a smoky fire, or beat on the side of the tree to make the squirrel move.

Even the dogs tussling with each other over the right to claim a downed squirrel is amusing. All of it is great fun for kids. ■



Terry Fletcher, 60. Each brought two mountain cur squirrel dogs. Neither carried a gun.



Joe Shumaker gives young hunters safety instructions before a squirrel hunt with his dogs. **INSET:** Youngsters enjoy squirrel hunting with dogs because it involves a lot of activity and being quiet is unimportant to the success of the hunt.

Photos by Herald Horst

A good hunting vest with a game pouch in back is necessary, a lesson that hunt host Cameron Harris knows all too well.

Fifteen minutes later, the dogs treed again. "He's in that tree over there," Shumaker announced, pointing at a tree off to the side of the one where the dogs were barking treed. Squirrels often leave the trees that they run up to hide in another they deem more hospitable.

Of course, the dogs stick to the tree the squirrel climbed.

Taylor Harris's shotgun boomed. This one went into the bag.

... AND OFTEN ...

The next squirrel quickly ducked into a hollow gum, and the men moved on. Fifteen minutes later, the dogs put a squirrel up a tall oak tree where it sat in the bald open in the treetop. Taylor cracked down on him.

As it was falling, he yelled, "I see another one."

Bam!

As it was falling, another hunter yelled, "He's still alive."

Kaboom!

"Not now," Taylor popped off.

Two more squirrels, just like that.

"Let me shake a vine," Shumaker said, grabbing a wrist-thick muscadine vine. One shake and another squirrel soared out of the tree like a flying squirrel. Three shots boomed at the squirrel that was balling jack 50 yards to a hollow tree. All three missed.

This was squirrel hunting with a dog at its best.

A few came easy — one shot at a sitting target, and the squirrel was in the bag.

Most came hard — a shake of the vine, and it was off to the races, 10 shots at a zig-zagging squirrel running wide open through the tree-tops, with no one cutting a hair until the ninth shot.

"That's the fun in this,"

Cameron Harris said.

This wasn't a day for .22 rifles.

The pace was an on-and-off saunter through the woods, with occasional rest breaks that the senior hunters

appreciated. It wasn't strenuous, but by the hunt's end, everybody knew they had walked a lot.

... RIGHT TO THE END

By late morning, the eagle-eyed Shumaker, first to reach the treed dogs, shouted back to the gang, "There's two coons up there."

Shumaker and Fletcher tied the dogs to a small tree.

"They are already tuckered out," Shumaker explained. "I don't want them fighting a crippled coon."

continued on page 48



Jerald Horst

TOGO ISLAND

Hunting Club



I have been fortunate to hunt up and down the MS River. I can tell you Togo Island qualifies as a game rich environment and a year round retreat that any outdoor enthusiast will enjoy and respect.

Will Primor

- Memberships available by invitation only
- 7180 Acres of Premier Recreational Land for Deer, Waterfowl, Turkey & Fishing
- 9.8 Miles of MS River Frontage
- 2.7 Miles of Big Black River Frontage
- Access by all Weather Road from Hwy 61 South
- Togo is a peninsula (rather than a proper Island)

Contact
Brad Farris - bradfarris@bellsouth.net
Harry Dendy - hdendy@hughes.net
Lane Mitchell - flane9@me.com

For More Information go to
togoisland.com



The curs are quick to grab any animal shot out of a tree.

The three McMullen youngsters quickly shot the raccoons and gave them to adults to carry. The dogs were cut loose to find more squirrels.

Shortly after noon, with the adult hunters' game bags full of squirrels and the raccoons suddenly seeming heavier, the pace slowed. So did the dogs' enthusiasm.

Without an official declaration, the hunt was over.

Everyone knew it.

Everyone was smiling.

WHY TREE A SQUIRREL?

At first thought, the idea of treeing a squirrel sounds odd, like hunting a rabbit by throwing it into a briar patch. Squirrels, after all, live in trees. We hunt them to get them out of the trees.

But for a couple months each season, hunting squirrels by treeing them with dogs works as slick as grease on a doorknob.

Most of the year, bushytails find almost everything they want to eat: tree buds, fruit, nuts, seeds and insects — yes, insects — up in the treetops, seldom having to come to the ground, even to drink.

But in winter, trees have shed their nuts, acorns, cypress balls and seeds along with their leaves. In response, squirrels have to come to earth to grub them out of the leaves.

When a squirrel travels on the ground, it leaves a hot scent that a trained squirrel dog can easily find. Dogs work, nose to the ground, in a crisscross pattern, ranging ahead and to the sides of the hunters, just out of their line of sight.

Typically, when a dog hits a solid trail, it opens with a chop bark that alerts the hunters to move in its direction. The striking dog is usually joined by the other dog or dogs, which help work out the trail to a certain tree.

At the tree, all the dogs will bark continuously and loudly, often propping themselves upright on their hind legs.

Knowing which tree a squirrel is in is a huge assist for hunters. Squirrels on the ground are extremely difficult to hunt. They know that they are out of their safety zone and are extremely wary. In winter, they are difficult for hunters to spot: not silhouetted against the sky and without shaking limbs or falling nut cuttings to give them away.

EVERY TREE PRESENTS A CHALLENGE

Each time the dogs treed, the hunters would circle the suspect tree, scrutinizing every bump, knot or leaf nest. If a squirrel wasn't visible, they scanned trees next to that tree in case the squirrel crossed over.

If no one spotted the squirrel, the next step was to "shake" a vine running into the tree by vigorously pulling on it to create a yo-yo like effect. If that produced no results or if the tree was vine-less but held a leaf nest, someone invariably shot a load into the nest. Sometimes that paid off, but most often not.

Holes in hollow trees were and are the bane of squirrel hunters, perfect hideaways for a frightened squirrel. One technique used by Joe Shumaker in an attempt to get a hidden squirrel to expose itself was to sharply rap the side of the hollow tree multiple times with a stout stick.

Smoking is another technique especially favored by Taylor Harris when the squirrel has hidden in a tree with an opening at or

DAMP, CLOUDY AND GRAY

— PERFECT DAY

While any day spent squirrel hunting in January and February is better than one spent at work or at home, some are definitely better than others according to veteran hunters Joe Shumaker and Terry Fletcher.

Since squirrel dogs hunt by scent, and game scent dissipates quickly in hot, dry weather, damp and cloudy conditions are preferred.

Best of all is right after a rain. Shumaker said damp conditions also seem to affect squirrel behavior.

"They seem less scary," he said. "Lots of times, they will stay out in the open instead of hitting a hole when they are treed."

Shumaker and Fletcher agree that windy conditions are never good. Tree limbs are constantly moving and squirrels don't feel as safe. They are spooky.

Also, shaking vines, an essential part of getting hidden squirrels to move, isn't as productive, because tree limbs all around the squirrel are already shaking.

Squirrel hunting with dogs is just as effective in evenings as in mornings. In fact, many hunters believe that afternoon hunts are better because the squirrels have had all day to lay down scent trails as they forage.

Under cloudy, damp conditions, squirrels stay active later into the morning and become active earlier in the evening. Under the best conditions, squirrel hunting all day is possible, if the hunters and the dogs possess the stamina. ■



Hunters, old and young alike — Taylor Harris, Shannon McMullen and Parker McMullen — try to locate a squirrel that's been treed.

Jerald Horst



Shaking vines produces movement in tree tops and is a very effective way of making a hidden squirrel move.

Jerald Horst

near ground level. He raked dry leaves into the cavity, whipped out his trusty cigarette lighter carried just for that purpose, and blew gently on the smoldering leaves to encourage the fire.

Surprisingly often, a squirrel would squirt out of the hollow at full speed.

Another tactic involved poking a long slender branch into the hollow's opening. Preferably, the branch is long enough to reach the tip of the hollow. If the hollow is long, a section of vine will often work better.


A variation of using a vine is called "twisting a squirrel out." The end of the inserted vine is mutilated with a knife. Once the vine reaches the tip of the hollow, the hunter begins twisting the vine vigorously to tangle the hairs of the squirrel's tail in the vine's end.

Once this is accomplished, the squirrel is involuntarily dragged downward to the opening. Grabbing the live squirrel by hand must be done carefully because they will bite viciously.

Every tree was a strategic challenge. It was part of the fun. Everyone's eyes and ideas were welcome.

TRAINING A GOOD SQUIRREL DOG >

Let Us Sell Your Property



MOSSY OAK[®]

PROPERTIES

LAND INVESTMENTS LLC

Jackson • Natchez • Vicksburg

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

61 Acres Quitman Co.
Duck Hunters Dream! Adjoins a 300 ac. US Fish & Wildlife Preserve (Peterson Lake) in Lambert. 12 yr. old, nice 2 story lodge overlooking Dorsey Lake w/625sf insulated shop. \$392,000. Call Ken.

24 Acres Copiah Co.
Great hunting tract w/pond & 25 yr. old mixed pine/hdwd timber located in a rural area east of Hazelhurst. \$68,000. Call Ken.

227.7 Acres Adams Co.
SUPER deer/turkey hunting tract 10 min. from Natchez w/ 10 food plots, 3 box stands. Timber harvest executed to enhance deer habitat. Ongoing deer mgt. program. Kittering Creektraverses the property and enhances beauty. \$730,000. Call Tom.

10-25-50-100-650 Acres Rankin Co.
Beautiful wooded homesites w/light restrictions & exc. deer/turkey. \$3000-\$5000/ac. Call Ken (owner/agent).

715 Acres Humphreys Co.
Delta Cropland located between Belzoni & Cruger w/high quality soil, shop/equip. shed, grain bin, 2BR, 1BA home, 4 wells & 4 pivots. \$3,575,000. Call Ken.

168 Acres Jefferson Co.
Fronts Natchez Trace w/83+/- ac fenced pasture & 83+/- ac. hdwd/pine. This tract has hay barn, equip. shed, & abundant deer/turkey. \$722,400. Call Charles.

30-50-75-100-2900 Acres Pearl River Co.
Located on Hwy 43N adjoining Bogue Chitto NWR & Old River WMA offering great deer/turkey hunting. \$2950/ac. Call Ken.

18 Acres Newton Co.
Property consist of double wide M.H. with car shed & shop. Approx. 5 ac. Open w/barn & rest is mix hdwd/pine timber. Owner will sell home w/3ac. & 15 ac. separately. \$88,000. Call Ken.

410 Acres Pearl River Co.
Deer/Turkey/Bass Fishing Showplace! 343 ac. enclosed w/game fence since 2006 using QDMA guidelines. 6000 sf Lodge on an 18 ac. Trophy Bass Lake. 5 irrigated food plots 3-5 ac. w/ box stands & over 25 bow stands. Metal building that stores 2 tractors w/ implements, 2 golf carts & 60 kw generator. Lighted skeet range & 3-D bow range is a night time favorite. 67 ac. outside fence w/2300 sf caretaker's home on stocked lake. \$2,500,000. Call Ken.

294 Acres Holmes Co.
Trophy deer hunting with totally remodeled 110 yr. old 3400sf home/lodge overlooking stocked lake. Land is set up with food plots, 9 box stands & new pole barn. Neighbors are trophy deer conscience. Near Morgan Break, Acona & Black Hawk. \$1,071,000. Call Ken.

100 Acres Jasper Co.
This tract consists of hardwood w/some pine, camp, good road system w/5 ac. lake and live creek. This property has est. food plots w/shooting houses & stands. Property has good duck hunting as well as deer/turkey/small game. \$299,950. Call Wayne.

1.88 Acres Sharkey Co.
Located in the middle of Delta National Forrest. Very close to Panther Swamp & Sunflower Waterfowl Project. Utilities available. .94 ac. \$40K or 1.88 ac. \$80,000. Call Andrew.

41 Acres Jefferson Davis Co.
Property located near Prentiss consisting of 3 yr. old plant. pine w/pipe. This tract has est. food plots in a great deer hunting area. \$70,000. Call Ken.

Andrew Pates - 601-720-1872
Don Schmidt - 601-416-5878
Tom Middleton - 601-597-5727
Charles Feltus - 601-431-8285

Barry Maxwell - 318-719-0318
Bill Crigler - 318-201-0744
Noah Reeves - 318-282-6703
Wayne Holloway - 601-454-2894

Ken Hall, Broker - 601-942-9513

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

Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated



GOOD TRAINING MAKES FOR A GOOD SQUIRREL DOG

Squirrel dogs are made, not born according to Joe Shumaker and Terry Fletcher. "A pointer will instinctively point a rock," Shumaker said. "A retriever puppy will pick up that same rock and carry it around in his mouth by instinct. Squirrel dogs have to learn everything."

"Get a good pair of boots and spend a lot of time in the woods with the dog. Part of it is that squirrel dogs need to bond with people rather than other dogs. They are more like Labrador retrievers than trail hounds. Mountain curs want to please people."

Fletcher said that he likes to take a dog to a park with a lot of squirrels and turn it loose to chase squirrels up trees.

"They have to learn what to chase and that squirrels go up trees," he said.

Shumaker said the hardest thing is to get dogs to bark up a tree.

"I've seen dogs that are interested in squirrels chase one on the ground, but when the squirrel goes up a tree, the dog keeps going past the tree, then looks around for the squirrel," he said.

A good training tool is a device called a squirrel tube, said Shumaker. Squirrel tubes are essentially tubes at least 10 feet long made of 1-inch mesh wire, capped on both ends. A live-trapped squirrel is released into the tube for the dog to hopefully chase back and forth. The tube may be laid on the ground or suspended overhead.

"If your dog doesn't get squirrely with one of these, you really have your work cut out for you," he said.

Both men strap Garmin Alpha Track and Train System collars on their dogs before hunting with them or training them. The GPS part of the system locates how far away from the hunter the dogs have treed. The shocking function of the collar system is used for training purposes, especially to prevent them from chasing other game species, particularly deer, but also rabbits.

"If a dog shows any indication of chasing a deer, I will grab my controller and light him up," said Shumaker. "But the quickest way to ruin a dog is over-discipline — too much shocking."

"Another thing is hunting with someone



At the end of the hunt, everybody had meat in their hand and smiles on their faces. **INSET:** Treed dogs focus their attention up the tree, barking loudly. The ruckus usually keeps the squirrel frozen in the tree until the hunters arrive.

Photos by Jerald Horst

with an aggressive dog. If a dog like that whips your dog at a tree, it will never tree again."

Shumaker believes in keeping a dog in hunting shape.

"A third thing that can ruin a dog, even a finished dog, is not hunting it enough," he said. "They will get out of condition, get fat. Squirrel dogs need to be worked three or four times a week from October through February. You can't just say, 'Well, it's February,' and get the dog out of its pen." ■



Jerald Horst is a retired Louisiana State University professor of fisheries. He is an active writer, book author and outdoorsman. Jerald may be reached at jerald@rockinghorst.com.

DIDN'T GET
YOUR HOLIDAY WISH...

SUBSCRIBE TODAY TO
MISSISSIPPI SPORTSMAN MAGAZINE
TO FULFILL ALL OF YOUR
FISHING AND HUNTING WISHES!



Subscribe today for the best:

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

\$17.95
12 issues

Toll-free
1-855-371-1546
or for faster service visit

MS-Sportsman.com/subscribe



Mississippi
SPORTSMAN

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of first issue



SURE-THING SPILLWAY SLABS?

By David Hawkins

WHEN CONDITIONS LINE UP, CRAPPIE CAN CONGREGATE IN THE WATER BELOW ROSS BARNETT'S DAM AND MAKE A FISHERMAN'S DAY — EVEN IN JANUARY.

When managers at Barnett Reservoir increase discharge at the spillway, crappie are pulled through the gates and congregate in the eddy currents below.



A popular idiom for simplicity is to compare something to “shooting fish in a barrel.” It has no better application than some winter fishing opportunities on the Pearl River when the waters in the spillway below Barnett Reservoir begin to rise.

Fishermen targeting crappie congregate in great numbers, and few go away disappointed.

When conditions are right and the fish are present, limits can be caught in a relatively short period of time. Some anglers compare the spillway fishing to the bite during the spring spawn. Read on, and discover how you too can get in on the action.

WHEN THE WATER GETS RIGHT

To understand the phenomenon of spillway fishing for crappie, anglers need to understand the big picture.

Rains in the Pearl River basin upstream of The Rez must cause an inflow significant enough to sharply raise the main lake’s winter level. Like a domino effect, the inflow requires reservoir managers to increase the discharge through the spillway.

This action creates a strong current in the main lake near the gates. Crappie, being somewhat lethargic in the 40- to 50-degree water — and naturally being deep during the winter — go with the flow and are either pulled or swim with the current through the gates into the river below the dam.

There, they find water that is slightly warmer and contains a higher amount of dissolved oxygen. As they settle into their new environs, they find food plentiful, even though some of it comes with a hook.

About 100 yards below the spillway structure, the flow slows somewhat, and eddy currents form where the river widens — most prominently on the west side, downstream of the boat ramp. But crappie aren’t the only finfish holding in the slack water. Shad are there as well.

Hungry fish meet available bait, and nature takes its course. The bite is then officially on.

Also helping the cause are some warmer days that always happen in January. The old joke is that with the opening of the new legislative session, hot air in the area is inevitable.

SLOW RISE, SLOW FALL **UPNEXT** >



SLOW RISE, SLOW FALL

Rapid changes in the water level at the spillway will turn the bite off. For that reason, a slow change, either rising or falling, will yield the best results. Remember to follow the fish, which move up and spread out with rising water and pull back to the channel when it falls.

“There are fish in the river pretty much all the time,” said Tom Holman, a fisheries biologist for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. “I talked to a guy (in mid-November) who had a cooler full of very nice crappie that he caught using minnows around shoreline brush and log jams.”

Holman explained why the crappie are where they are this month.

“During the winter — and the colder, the better — crappie become torpid and just ride or float along with the current. This is why the ‘Welfare Hole’ below Highway 43 is so good,” Holman said. “The fish get hung up in the big eddy below the bridge. Increased rain means increased current, so they come to a dam and get sucked out.

“The warmer the water, the more able they are to avoid a downstream ride through the dam because they can swim out of the current. Also, if it’s a dry winter, there’s less flow, so fewer fish move through the gates, regardless of temperature.”

Once the water is up and crappie are in the eddy, the shooting or catching fish in the barrel should be simple, right?

Well, maybe not so much.

Remember, the fish are still sluggish, the water is stained and getting the proper presentation may take some effort.

“It has been our experience that the perch may be suspended at 8 feet in 15 feet of water, or 9 feet in 12 feet of water,” said angler Charley Golden of Taylorsville. “We have used a double-hook rig with lip-hooked shiners about 14 to 18 inches apart to locate the fish. Two anglers can do this with single poles and cover a lot of water until the school is found. A single angler may use two or more poles — rules only allow one from the bank — or a spider rig if conditions allow.

“Once you are seen catching fish, you find out you have lots of new friends. It’s not uncommon to see boats gather pole-



Clyde Lindsey holds a 3.31-pound white crappie.

lengths apart or even closer.”

Golden keeps an assortment of jigheads and tube bodies on hand and tips the jigs with small shiners, about 2 inches long. At times, he also uses a bare hook with a shiner hooked through the back rather than a jighead. Another thing he does is dance a Road Runner on a spinning rod until he finds the fish. He allows the lure to fall to the bottom, brings it up a few inches and makes the bait rise and fall while moving from side to side.

“The late Billy Joe Cross taught me a trick that I really think makes a difference,” Golden said. “When tying on a single jig, tie it so that the jig and hook hang 90 degrees to the line. Even if it takes a little drop of super-glue to keep it from slipping, it seems to make a difference. The company that makes the Road Runner (TTI-Blakemore) offers a tandem rig that is deadly when trolling along the dam around the spillway and the inlet to the Jackson water plant.”

WHEN THE WATER'S NOT RIGHT **UP NEXT** ➤



Boats below the spillway are sometime just a pole's length apart.

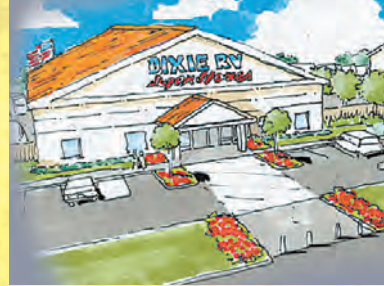


DIXIE RV

CAMPING & OUTDOOR STORE!!



HAMMOND
Sales & Service:
866-591-2024
Located off I-12 Exit 35
10241 Destination Dr.
Hammond, LA 70403
SALES: Mon - Sat 8 am - 7 pm
SERVICE: Mon - Sat 8 am - 5 pm



Breaux Bridge
Sales & Service:
337-889-0011
Located off I-10, Exit 109
657 Enterprise Pkwy.
Breax Bridge, LA 70517

www.dixierv.com

MOMENTUM



Over **400**
Trailers, Fifth
Wheels and
Toy Haulers
On Display!

LACROSSE
by PRIME TIME MFG.



Hammond
Only

Hideout
by Hornet



Hammond
Only

Laredo



Hammond
Only

TORQUE



SENECA



GREYHAWK



Bounder



CLASS B

WINNEBAGO
Touring Coach



Over **100**
Motorhomes
On Display

"Helping You Retire One Weekend At A Time"





WHEN THE WATER'S NOT RIGHT

So we know why crappie are in the eddy currents below the spillway, but what about those times when the winter rains are more fickle but the cold persists just the same. The current will still bring the fish to the dam, but there is just less chance they will get pulled through the gates. This is when trolling with a spider rig can pay with dividends, according to angler Ron Neal of Forest.

"As I understand it, the riprap gets some warming from the sun and air," Neal said. "Thus, the water near the rocks is slightly warmer and is inviting to baitfish such as small shad. So the crappie may be a bit shallower, but the fish are a little more scattered — wherever the bait is."

Neal uses an assortment of jig styles and colors, with eight or more baits in the water at any given time. He will adjust the depths as he catches fish or sees promising images on his fish finder. He'll fish that the successful pattern until the fish either move or turn off.

Neal and his son, Tyler, fish as many crappie tournaments as time allows. Members of the Magnolia Crappie Club, Ron likes to use 6- to 8-pound monofilament line and jigs weighing $\frac{1}{8}$ - to $\frac{1}{16}$ -ounce.

"Just about anything with a chartreuse color is a winner," Neal said. "Sometimes chartreuse and black is the ticket, and other times it's pink and chartreuse. There seems to be little difference in the jig being a tube body or one tied with feathers. It's a little more hit-and-miss, but a square-lipped crankbait in a shad pattern seems to catch bigger fish. (It) just depends on whether you want a big supper or just a few bigger fish."

THE LOWHEAD OPTION

Upriver from The Rez, close to where Rankin, Leake and Scott counties meet, is the reservoir's headwater dam, the Lowhead Dam. Lowhead refers to a specific type of dam that allows a constant flow over a certain elevation, but at Barnett, it has become the nickname for a fishing hot spot.

Here, water from the upper Pearl River flows constantly over the concrete structure into the river below. On the Scott County side, there is the concrete structure that once promised to ferry recreational boaters past the Lowhead to the river above. The Easter flood of 1979 pretty much ended that idea when it washed away the transfer apparatus.

The eddy currents around that platform will hold crappie in the winter. Fishing there is better off the bank, but a boat is not out of the question.

The Madison County side of the Lowhead is only accessible by boat, and the eddy current there is usually a little smaller. Still, the fish will hold there, but be forewarned, there is a lot of trash in the water, and hang-ups are not uncommon.



This Road Runner Tandem Crappie Rig is a popular choice for anglers in the main lake near the spillway gates.



A jig with a lip-hooked minnow is a deadly combination on crappie at the Rez just about any time of year.

EXPECT A LIGHT BITE

More often than not, anglers will adjust a float to the depth required to catch fish. A simple, orange Styrofoam float is very common and about all that is needed. My late father, Eber Hawkins, used floats made from the quills of turkey wings when fishing for crappie. He said they offered less restriction to the bait and the bite. If the quill lay flat or went down, there was a fish on.

Big crappie are there for the taking at Barnett Reservoir spillway, when the water is up and running in the winter.



Golden said he often lifts his pole to check or move his bait and finds a crappie already on the line.

“There is a 30-crappie limit,” Golden said, “but you’ll need 60 to 75 shiners or more to get that limit. The rest will be used feeding the little catfish. In the 30-plus years I have fished below the spillway, I’ve caught everything but a spoonbill and a grass carp.”

When conditions come together for the perfect storm, the water will be crowded with boats, and the bank and riprap will be thick with anglers. With a little patience, everybody will get in on the action.

Two things to remember when fishing at the Spillway:

- First, you litter, you lose. The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District has already promised to close the spillway area to all use if littering does not stop.

So when you leave, gather everything around you and place it in a garbage can or take it to another proper disposal site.

- Second, wear an approved personal flotation device, aka life jacket, if you are in a boat. The water temperature will be in the 50s, and heavy clothing will double or triple your weight, making it next to impossible to swim. Hypothermia sets in quickly and death can follow in a matter of minutes. Don’t take the risk. Be prepared.

Watch the rain clouds and the local weather forecaster; keep all your crappie gear in ready condition, and when the gates open at The Rez head to the spillway.

Catching crappie there can be just like shooting fish in a barrel. ■



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

You have horses. We have horsepower.

RTV X-SERIES

From hay bales and stall cleaning to property maintenance and pasture patrol — trust the next generation of America’s top-selling diesel utility vehicle to help you get the job done.

- Powerful, 3-Cylinder Kubota Diesel Engines
- Extra Duty Independent Rear Suspension (IRS)
- Over 1,100 lbs. Cargo Capacity
- Kubota Orange or Realtree® AP Camo*



M6 SERIES

If it was a horse, it would be a thoroughbred: Kubota’s powerful M6 Series utility tractors bring uncompromising quality, performance and versatility to your farm or ranch.

- Powerful Kubota Diesel Engines from 104.5 to 141.4 HP**
- Available Grand X Cab
- Wide Variety of Rugged, Performance-Matched Implements — Including Quick Attach/Detach Loader



DEVINEY

2173 Hwy 51 North
Madison, MS 39110
Phone: 601-859-0020
www.devineyrentalandsupply.com



www.kubota.com

*Realtree® is a registered trademark of Jordan Outdoor Enterprises, Ltd.
**For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer and the product operator’s manual. Power (HP/KW) and other specifications are based on various standards or recommended practices. Optional equipment may be shown.
© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2016





Understand a deer's body language and

By Jeff Burleson

TAG MORE BUCKS

Learn how to tell what deer are communicating with their body movements and you'll have more hunting success.

From using the latest technology in optics, attractants and calls to different hunting strategies in the woods, deer hunters are always looking for something that helps them gain an advantage over their quarry.

While crystal-clear optics give hunters an edge at first and last light, some of the best advantages for hunters have nothing to do with technology — it's something that's right in front of their eyes.

Hunters can improve their success in the woods by learning to better understand a deer's behavior, body language and reactions to stimuli in the wild. Deer will let hunters know what is happening, and if they pay attention and decipher the message, they may know what move to make next.

Deer and other wild animals have very limited communication abilities. Deer communicate with each other more through scent than any of their other senses. People communicate through a wide variety of methods, but many forget how effectively they can communicate silently, through body language. You can pick up on another person's demeanor through their stance and facial expressions, and while humans can mask their true feelings, deer lack this ability and can be read like a book by a trained eye.

Deer would be bad poker players.

So when is it important to understand what a deer is thinking or what a deer sees? To start with, deer are extremely perceptive in the woods; they can hear sounds hundreds of yards away and can smell scents at even greater distances. When deer recognize danger or detect another deer in the woods, they will quickly show their findings through body language.

Mike Herron killed the biggest typical buck entered at the 2013 Dixie Deer Classic in Raleigh, N.C. — which draws

bucks from several southeastern states — with his 162-inch monster. Understanding how to interpret a deer's actions while he's on stand is a critical component to his hunting strategy. He watches the deer he can see constantly to figure out what is going on and what is going to happen next.

"Deer are the first to tell you when there are more deer in the area," he said. "Just watch their ears, and if they keep staring behind them, most likely, there are more deer approaching. The more alert they are when looking in another direction other than towards your stand, the more obvious another deer is making its way into the picture."

Deer don't usually surprise each other. They will usually detect another deer coming long before it arrives. The big question is for them, "Who is coming?"

Veteran hunter Alex Hughes is no stranger to killing big bucks. Over the past three years, Hughes has taken two 150-inch class bucks with his bow, and reading a deer's body language is a huge part of his game plan, especially when a real trophy buck is in the area.

"Deer will let you know when somebody is coming. If they are moving their head back and forth from an approaching trail, that is a good indicator of an approaching deer," Hughes said. "And if the deer is starting to cower down, then get ready for a more dominant deer to arrive."

Mature, dominant bucks behave differently from subordinate deer when approaching a food source. Herron typically notices that big bucks don't ease into a food source or an area when there are already other deer present.

"Once an older deer commits to the food source, for the most part, he's relying on the others to spot the dangers," he said, "because he has already checked it with the wind before he gets there anyway. Mature bucks don't seem to be as alert as a younger deer, either."

continues on page 61 ➤

Squirrels are not only a popular small-game animal in the Carolinas, they can be a distant early warning system for hunters that deer are entering an area.

Squirrels can be a deer hunter's **BEST FRIENDS**

Hunters invest countless hours in deer stands under a wide variety of conditions. After years of sitting motionless in the stand and watching the time tick by, they have practically earned a



Trophy Fallow Deer

Management Fallow, \$1,750
Trophy Fallow, \$3,200

*Limited Time Offer
Call **601-842-5771**

mcclainhunting.com

Please visit website to see additional animals that are available. Prices listed.

master's degree in several outdoor disciplines, including interpreting nature's signals, which can come in many forms, including wildlife alerts.

Veteran hunter Mike Herron thinks one of the most important animal-behavior markers in the woods isn't from a deer at all.

"Squirrels are always my favorite," he said. "When they start barking, you better get ready, because a deer or a coyote is on the way."

When squirrels are out tumbling in the leaves and caching acorns for the winter, rarely will they allow a deer or turkey to pass by without announcing their presence. Typically, deer hunters will hear a stick break or something to alert them of a deer on the way, but squirrels will pick up on these deer long before hunters.

While squirrels are the best indicator for deer coming, other wildlife, including turkeys and blue jays will also signal when a deer is coming. Hunters should always be on the lookout for deer coming, but when they can't, the squirrels and other wildlife will signal their approach. ■

RIGHT: Looking in the same direction with their ears pointed forward, these does are anticipating the approach of another animal. **INSET:** A deer standing rigid with its head high and neck stiff is likely on alert and sensing danger, and it may not stay around much longer.

If a deer is entering an area at a fast pace, and deer already in the area are alert and moving out of the way, it is probably the big buck the hunter has been hoping to see all season.

Another important behavior to recognize is when deer are not comfortable and perceive some sort of danger brewing. Typically, if a big buck they are targeting steps out, the next step is to make the shot. But that sometimes isn't always that easy, and a hunter will choose to watch the deer for a while before they make their squeezing the trigger or string release. Hughes said he watches a deer's posture carefully, especially the way it holds its neck and head.

"If the deer is holding his head high with a stiff neck, they are on alert and sensing danger. But if they are swaying their head back and forth and wagging their tail from side to side, they are relaxed," Hughes said. "If you notice a deer hesitant to feed around you, continuing to lift its head and smelling the air, it is probably about to leave the area. If it's a trophy, you better act quickly."

Deer hunting has many facets, and learning to read deer on stand is one of the most-important steps to make to become a better hunter. As soon deer hunters learn to take advantage of a deer's behavior, its body language, he or she will be a step closer to taking trophy bucks on a regular basis. ■



Jeff Burleson, a veteran hunter and angler, has a degree in fisheries and wildlife sciences and is a certified biologist and professional forester for Southern Palmetto Environmental Consulting.



Tara Wildlife - Halpino

Warren County, Mississippi
2160 +/- Acres (\$3,500/acre)
\$7,560,000

Mississippi River Historic Hunting Property. HALPINO is now for sale. When you think of Mississippi River hunting you will always think of Tara Wildlife. Halpino is a 2160 acre parcel of Tara that has been strictly bowhunting for many years. Halpino Lake is included totally on this property along with several duck impoundments erected by Ducks Unlimited. The property consist of all hardwoods with a large number of wild pecan trees being scattered throughout the property. This truly is a hunting paradise that will be home to a lucky hunter one day soon.

- **Estimated Acres:** 2160+/- acres with a 300 acre lake.
- **Residence:** Single Family, 5,000 +/- sqft, 6BD/6.5BA, Built in 1995.
- **Legal Description:** +/- 2160 Acres in Warren County, MS between the MS River and the Levee.

**NATIONAL
LAND
REALTY**
nationalland.com



RONNIE RICHARDSON
Broker in Charge, Jackson, MS Office
Licensed in MS
Cell: 601-668-7231
Office: 601-878-2484
Fax: 601-878-5424

Property Highlights:

- Once in our lifetime opportunity to own a part of a Historic Hunting Property that is famous Worldwide.
- Mississippi River Frontage bottomland hardwood hunting paradise.
- Views of the Duck Pond from the porch are captivating and views of the Mississippi River are always something special.
- Investment in Recreational Hunting property has been unsurpassed over the past several years and with a property such as this, the values should continue to increase.
- Sportsman's Paradise right here for sure with Hunting and Fishing opportunities unmatched.
- Home to the best whitetail deer hunting on planet earth. With a liberal 4 month season, large bag limits and over the counter licenses, this is a place that makes deer hunting seem easy.
- Hardwood laden property with lots of wild pecan trees and wildlife habitat throughout.
- Close to Vicksburg with gambling, shopping and historical opportunities available.
- Halpino Lodge is sitting on the bank of a duck pond where you can sit and watch the wildlife for endless hours.
- Mississippi River Frontage.
- Easily accessed off the Levee Road with a gravel road going right up to the lodge. The interior road system has been developed over the years to access all the food plots and stands.


NEW YEAR, NEW GEAR.

FOR PERFORMANCE THAT'S PERFECT.

The Sportsman Performance Pique Shirt is made from our premium blend of Peruvian Pima Cotton and micro denier polyester. This blend offers ultimate moisture wicking properties for comfort and year-round durability for the active outdoor life.



SPORTSMANGEAR.COM

A man wearing a blue and grey hoodie with 'MARINE' and an anchor logo, a black and white 'MARINE' cap, and sunglasses is smiling while holding a large bass. He is on a boat, and a fishing rod is visible in the background. The background shows green water.

Drop-shotting might seem simple, but understanding how to make small adjustments to match specific situations can put more bass in the boat. Here are the pros' tips.

DROP by design

By David A. Brown

It's the go-to rig for finessing finicky fish, nudging the cold-weary and lightly probing a variety of hard-cover scenarios from docks to laydowns to bridges.

No doubt about it: The drop-shot gets it done when other baits struggle. But, while the general rig may be broad-reaching, several design points merit consideration.

Like any tool or tactic, dialing in the details that are most relevant to your objective bears significant impact on the final results.

Consider these areas of drop-shot variation:

BAIT STYLES

Worms from 4 to 6 inches long comprise the majority of drop-shot selections.

Options are many, but bass pro Aaron Martens keeps it simple by basing his selection on water temperature because it relates to feeding aggression levels.

"If the water is in the mid-60s or lower, I go with a 6-inch Roboworm Straight Tail Worm," Martens said. "But if the water's in the upper-60s, or 70s, then I like the Roboworm Fat Worm."

A common alternative is a baitfish profile like Strike King's KVD Dream Shot, Half Shell, Yamamoto Shad Shape Worm and YUM Warning Shot. Typically designed with tails that kick and wiggle, these baits are designed to mimic a meandering forage fish.

For a bolder look — especially around hydrilla edges, reeds and the like — try a craw-style bait. This beefy profile is particularly effective during winter and spring when crustaceans make up a significant portion of the bass diet.

If a more subtle version of the crustacean look is in order, craw worms like the Gambler Flap Daddy or Missile Baits Fuse blend slender bodies with crawfish claws.

The Flap Daddy sports full-sized pinchers, while the more-finesse Fuse includes slender appendages offering just enough action to garner attention.

WEIGHTS

Starting with materials, lead sinkers cost less than those made of tungsten, but the latter offers distinct advantages.

For starters, tungsten's density means you can decrease your weight profile. Also, because that density creates a sharp impact with whatever the weight hits, you're getting constant bottom "reads."

As far as shapes, elongated cylinders and tear drops are the common selections. Martens likes a cylinder weight when he's fishing a drop-shot across any type of entangling bottom like brush, wood, etc., because the slender profile tends to slip in and out of tight spots better.

A tear-drop weight isn't necessarily snag-prone, but it is particularly effective when Martens needs to interpret the bottom to detect key changes. The round bottom presents greater surface area, which combines with tungsten's sensitive composition to deliver emails to your fingertips.

"The rounded edge of a tear drop weight rolls well, and it transfers signals well from the bottom," Martens said. "That tells you if you're coming through mud or rock or over wood."

Martens also will use a cylinder weight when vertically



A properly balanced drop-shot can be a highly effective rig for finicky bass.

fishing a drop-shot in deeper water, as the streamlined form suffers less water drag and therefore reaches bottom more quickly.

Most anglers prefer the lightest weight possible but consider that water pressure increases with depth. That means you can often get away with less weight than you might think in deeper spots.

Heavier weights help most for punching through rough water and current to ensure your bait reaches the target area.

Also, faster-falling baits can trigger suspended fish to bite rather than lose a potential meal.

LINE & LEADERS

Martens' rule of thumb for standard leader measurement is simple: Match your worm length.

He will, however, alter that for situational needs. Earlier in the year, for instance, bass tend to feed closer to the bottom, particularly when post-cold front conditions have them holding lower.

In such scenarios, by decreasing his drop-shot leader to one-half or one-third of his worm's length — sometimes, as short as an inch — he not only puts his bait where the fish are looking but he creates an enticing presentation that leverages the dynamics of bottom proximity.

"A short leader gives your bait a quicker bounce," Martens said. "It's like dribbling a basketball: If you dribble it standing up, the ball moves slowly, but if you get closer to the ground, it tightens up.

"It's the same with a drop-shot. You get a quicker action in the worm."

Noting that he considers anything 3 inches or less

"short," Martens said low-lying bass generally respond better to a sharp, snappy action held right in their faces, as opposed to the subtle, waving action from a leader of 20 inches or more.

Martens is certainly not averse to longer leaders, in fact, he'll extend his leaders anytime fish are suspending in the water column — perhaps over a brush pile or stake bed that's likely to ensnare baits dropped into the thicket.

continues on page 66



Bass pro Cody Meyer often turns to a drop-shot for fishing under bridges.

Powered to Perform.





\$24,795 PLUS FREIGHT & PREP
Pro Team™ 195 TXW
w/Mercury® 150 L FourStroke
& Custom Trailer



\$15,695 PLUS FREIGHT & PREP
BASS BUGGY® 18 DLX
w/Mercury® 40 ELPT FourStroke
Optional trailer available



\$19,995 PLUS FREIGHT & PREP
GRIZZLY® 1860 MXV Sportsman
w/Mercury® 40 ELPT FourStroke
& Custom Trailer



**401 Hwy 51 South
Brookhaven, Mississippi
PH: 601-833-2628**

Photos may show optional or special edition equipment available at an additional cost. Local taxes, license, registration and doc fees vary by state and are in addition to prices shown. Boat prices are suggested and approval by the manufacturer. Details in pricing, savings, features and promotions may vary by location and are subject to change without notice. Void where prohibited by law. Best efforts are used to ensure the accuracy of our advertising, however, errors may sometimes occur. See your local dealer for complete information. Prices shown do not include dealer freight and prep charges, unless otherwise noted. U.S.A. Springfield, MA, USA. Prices shown are based on United States Currency or Pounds. ATVs and SUVs can be hazardous to operate. For your safety always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing. Never ride on paved surfaces or public roads. Never carry a passenger on a single-rider ATV. Only ride an ATV that is right for your age. Supervise riders younger than 16. Always wear a seat belt on UTVs. We recommend that all riders take a training course, and that they read and understand their owner's manual before operation. For safety or training information, see your dealer or call the ATV Safety Institute at (800) 957-2867. © 2012 Tracker Marine Group

DROPSHOTTING BASS

In any case, Martens noted the snappy action characteristic of a short leader is less important in that situation because bass are more likely to be looking up and feeding more actively.

Here's a tip. Try a long-leadered drop-shot around drain pipes with light current. Minnows often hold in a manageable out-flow to feed on tiny stuff that tumbles out with draining water. Holding a small drop-shot bait along the current edge creates the illusion of a minnow that's not watching his six.

SWIVELS

Line twist is the bane of drop-shotting. A bait standing perpendicular to your line creates water drag, which creates the spinning motion that can twist line and lead to those dreaded wind knots that often plague spinning gear.



A tear-drop shaped dropshot weight is the common choice, but in snaggy bottom, a cylinder tends to tangle less often.

Bass pro Cody Meyer cures this ill by linking his main line and leader with a small swivel.

Whether he's pitching his drop-shot into 6 feet of water by a dock or dropping it into 15 feet of water by a deeper bridge piling, Meyer knows bait rotation won't impact his main line.

Simplifying the drop-shot rigging, Gamakatsu offers the Swivel Shot, essentially a swivel connected to a line clip with a hook mounted on a wire stem between the two parts. Just tie your main line to the swivel and add a leader to the clip.

With the hook free to rotate on the stem, bait movement won't affect your line.

Similarly, the VMC Spin Shot mounts a hook on a wire stem between two ends of a swivel.

THE RIGHT OUTFIT

Bass pro John Crews is so exacting with his drop-shot tackle that he helped Cashion Rods design one to his specifications.

Noting that he's not hesitant to use a longer, stouter rod for drop-shotting, Crews wanted a 7-foot, 4-inch medium-heavy spinning outfit that would quickly subdue big fish and minimize their chances of coming unbuttoned.

"I like a longer drop-shot rod because it gives you more control, especially when you're fighting those big fish," he said.

The rod's well-designed drop-shot weight holder is positioned near the butt, so terminal tackle stays out of the way.

Bass pro John Crews helped design a drop-shot rod with a counterweighted butt section and a conveniently placed weight holder.



Also important is the 3 ounces of counterbalancing weight built into the rod butt.

"When you hold the handle, the tip wants to stay up, and that makes the rod very light, so you'll detect every bite," Crews said.

Recent years have seen drop-shot aficionados spooling their spinning reels with braided line and capping the spool with 20 to 30 feet of 6- to 8-pound fluorocarbon. The braid benefits delivery, as well as the bite response.

"Your casting is better with the braid-to-fluorocarbon leader," pro Aaron Martens said. "And, if you get bit on the end of your cast, it's like getting bit beside the boat because there's no stretch." ■

BEST RIGGING

Most of the major hook brands offer light-wire, task-specific hooks that you can size to the bait of your choice. As far as specific models, base that on a handful of common rigging options:

- **Nose hooking.** “This is what I’m going to throw in open water,” Meyer said of this straightforward hook placement. “For one thing, there’s more action. There’s less constriction on the bait, so it moves more freely.”

- **Wacky rigged.** Inserting a hook through the bait’s middle so it sits perpendicular to the hook with the ends wiggling freely, this option is a good bet for pressured fish that need a little more convincing.

“Let’s say I fish a spot and I’m catching a few by nose-hooking them, but the bite stops: That’s when the wacky rig is going to come into play,” Meyer said.

“You also want to throw this in open water, but it is superior around cruising fish and bed fish.”

- **Texas rigged.** A small worm hook allows Meyer to create that classic weed-less arrangement that keeps snaggy cover at bay. Anywhere Meyer’s concerned about snagging, the Texas-rigged drop-shot bait gets the call.

“The hook-up ratio is a little better on a Texas rig, but I don’t throw it in open water because the bigger hook will constrict the worm and limit the action,” Meyer said.

Fully analyzed, the drop-shot technique is actually more detailed than it might appear.

But don’t be intimidated by the complexities: Time on the water will guide you to the right formulas for the scenarios you fish. Dial in your preferences and keep a couple of different drop-shot rigs handy — this is a bona fide fish catcher. ■



The common dropshot hooking styles are (top to bottom) wacky, Texas-rigged and nose hooked.



NauticStar
NAUTICSTAR 19XS

Come see us at the
BILOXI
BOAT SHOW
February 2-4
2018



NauticStar
265XTS

NauticStar

SEVEN C MARINE

NauticStar **G3 Boats**

5-Star Gold Certified Yamaha Service Center
with over 75 years combined experience
“In Business Since 1960”

www.sevencsmarine.net
378 Reynoir St. • Biloxi • 228-435-3389

YAMAHA



A full-time freelance writer specializing in sport fishing, **David A. Brown** splits his time between journalism and marketing communications (www.tightwords.com).

GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

The senses of smell and taste were important to catching this Mississippi River blue catfish.



THE BIOLOGY BEHIND THE BITE

WHAT MAKES FISH BITE? COUNTLESS FACTORS

The vulnerability of fish to hook-and-line capture has become a hot topic among fisheries scientists.

A recent technical article in fisheries literature provided a rigorous review of what biologists know about why a fish gets caught on hook-and-line. In many ways, the long and heavily researched article was overkill, because it covered a diversity of fish species and fishing situations. It also tried to partition the complex issue into more narrow topics that could be studied. But the article left me with two significant take-home messages:

- Catching fish isn't easy and;
- Successful anglers are very accomplished predators.

You can only catch a fish if it is there to be caught. Fish are not randomly distributed. Habitat and forage affect where you are more likely to encounter a fish. Fish that are more mobile are more likely to be caught, and anglers

who cover more water are more likely to have more encounters.

GEAR SELECTIVITY

Although we've all caught fish on a lure that was too big to actually be consumed, generally fish can only be caught on a hook or lure that fits into their mouth. Fish with small mouths require smaller baits. Larger fish can feed on a spectrum of sizes of lure or baits. For those fish, like bass, that feed on fish that vary widely in size, larger lures or bait tend to catch bigger fish. Of course, the choice of bait or lure may change seasonally. What a lure resembles, its color and where it is presented also determines what you catch.

A premise of catching fish is that any point in time, an individual fish or a bunch of individual fish are either vulnerable or non-vulnerable to capture. Anglers can only catch fish that are vulnerable. The idea of "triggering a

reaction bite" touted by successful tournament bass anglers may challenge the simple dichotomy of vulnerable or non-vulnerable, such that there may be levels of non-vulnerable. Nevertheless, what affects fish being vulnerable is quite complex.

EXTERNALS

Factors such as temperature, wind, water current, light levels — often referred to as the abiotic environment — affect catchability. Many anglers believe that lunar phase and barometric changes also affect catchability.

INTERNAL STATE

The internal state of the fish will affect vulnerability. Some individuals are more bold or aggressive than others. This can be a function of size, but it also can vary among individuals of the same size. Substantial evidence exists for group effects on the internal state. For exam-

ple, competition may trigger aggression — or one fish feeding may excite others to feed. Abiotic conditions affect internal conditions. Fish stressed by poor environmental conditions, like toxic chemicals or low dissolved oxygen, won't bite. Temperature (an external condition) affects metabolism, which in turn affects hunger (an internal state).

LIFE HISTORY

Some fish have predictable behaviors tied to completing their life cycle. Many fish spawn in shallow water at certain narrow ranges of water temperature. Others make spawning migrations. These genetically programmed behaviors concentrate the fish or place them in predictable locations, but they may also change the fish's vulnerability to capture, such as bluegill on a spawning bed.

LEARNING

Much of what fish do is a consequence of what has conveyed fitness — what kept the species surviving and reproducing — over eons. Maladaptive behaviors are filtered out, effective behaviors are passed on across generations. Fish, however, do learn, and there is ample evidence that they can learn to avoid capture.

SENSORY ECOLOGY

Fish use their senses of sight, touch, smell, taste, hearing, detection of water movement, and, for catfish, electroreception to detect, capture, and accept or reject food. Whether fishing live bait, dead bait or lures, anglers exploit these senses to attract fish, make them bite, and not reject the offering.

Each of the above topics of what affects fish biting could be expanded into pages of greater detail and examples.

Regardless of what you fish for or how you fish, the simple outcome of catching fish is far from a simple process. Anglers who consistently catch fish, whether they are aware of it or not, know a lot about the fish they pursue. ■



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.



VULNERABLE?

A prespawn smallmouth bass is vulnerable to capture for a number of reasons. It is in a predictable place, allowing anglers to more easily locate it. Internal factors cause it to take in more food for its reproductive function. And its sense of sight can be fooled by a lure of the proper size and coloration for conditions.

RJ'S OUTBOARD

Sales & Service

Since 1980

Over 70 Years of Service Experience!

New Dealer for G3 boats

Largest War Eagle Dealer in the Country!

New Dealer for XPRESS Boats

Skeeter ZX 250

Bennington

G3 Sportsman Series

Wareagle 961 Blackhawk

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

YAMAHA

LUNKER LINES

Paul Elias

When a jig bounces off a root, a stump or a rock and begins to fall back to the bottom, that's when the Maynor Creek bass are most likely to attack.

JANUARY BASSING AT MAYNOR CREEK

KEY ON BRIDGE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Maynor Creek, a 450-acre body of water near Waynesboro, is my pick for great January bass fishing at this difficult time to catch bass.

The small size of this lake means you can narrow down where the bass will be holding and fish almost the entire lake in a day. A critical ingredient to catching January bass there is using the Solunar tables. You definitely want to be bass fishing around the creek's bridge during the major feeding times of the day and first thing every morning. I'll fish several places.

THE BRIDGE AREA

I'll start off my early morning by fishing the small bridge that crosses the creek with a shad-colored Mann's Reel 'N Shad on a ¼-ounce head. I'll fish it with a medium retrieve. I want to feel the bait's tail kicking back and forth on the riprap on the banks, points and bridge pilings.

I'll use 20-pound test White Peacock fluorocarbon with a 6-foot-10 Team

Lew's rod and a 7.5:1 Lew's reel. If the bass aren't actively feeding, I'll fish slowly a ½-ounce black/blue Stone Jig with a black/blue craw as a trailer on 23-pound line, a 7-foot-3 medium-heavy rod and the same reel.

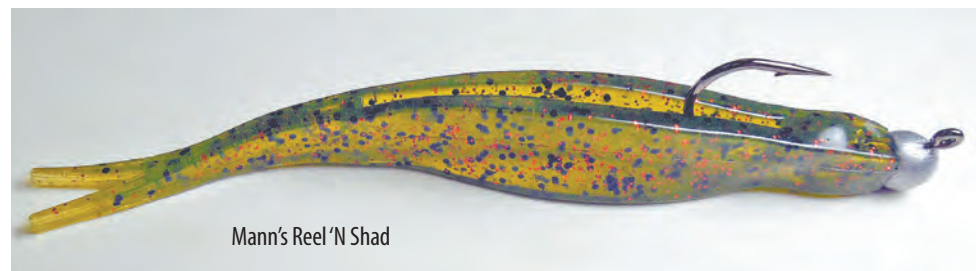
In January, bass either will be up in the shallows around the bridge or in very cold weather in the deepest part of the channel flowing under the bridge. The bass use this channel when they're constantly moving back and forth from the lower part of the creek to its back end.

When I fish the bridge, I'll also be casting a shad-colored Mann's C4 crankbait

that runs 5 to 6 feet deep on 20-pound line and a 7-foot-2 medium-action Lew's cranking rod with a 6.4:1 reel. I want the bait running into and deflecting off the rocks and the bottom to cause the bass to attack, even if they're not feeding.

THE MAIN LAKE

While you're fishing the bridge area, you need to continuously be looking back toward the main lake to try and spot bass schooling on the surface and chasing bait. In January, those schools of bass may contain some 3- to 5-pounders, but most will weigh 1½ to 3 pounds.



Mann's Reel 'N Shad

If I spot schools of bass breaking on the surface, I'll leave the bridge, get close enough to the school to cast my Reel 'N Shad just past them and then reel it fast through the school. After the school goes down, if the bass won't hit the Reel 'N Shad, then I'll fish a blue-back, pearl-sided ½-ounce Mann's Little George, a lead-headed tailspinner, on 20-pound line, a 7-foot rod and an 8.3:1 gear ratio reel. I'll cast the bait out, let it fall all the way to the bottom, snatch it up and allow it to fall back again. The bass most often will take it on the fall.

THE CREEK CHANNEL

Once I'm not catching bass around the bridge, I'll follow the creek channel that runs primarily on the east side. In a nice-sized pocket there, use your sonar to spot a small feeder creek coming off the creek channel that runs into the main creek channel with numbers of underwater stumps at its intersection.

My primary bait to fish very slowly in the creek channel is the ½-ounce Stone Jig. My Garmin Panoptix depth finder enables me to see the schools of bait and bass holding on the edge of the creek channel in real time and three dimensions and learn in which direction they're swimming. I want to feel the Stone Jig fall off a stump, a root or a rock and then return to the bottom. I'll make repeated casts to that school to get the bass to bite.

The last bait I'll fish on the creek channel is a drop-shot rig on a Lew's spinning reel with a 7-foot-2, medium-heavy spinning rod and 15-pound bass braid. I'll tie 6 feet of 15-pound fluorocarbon leader to the braided line with a ¼-ounce drop shot sinker and a No. 2/0 Gamakatsu hook above it with a 6-inch Mann's grape Jelly Worm. I'll slow-drag that drop-shot rig, stop it, take up my slack and then slow-drag it again.

Anywhere along the creek

channel or around the bridge that I get a bite, I'll return to those spots three or four times a day. A good day of January bass fishing on Maynor Creek is catching seven or eight bass, with two of those weighing more than 5 pounds. Yes, the weather will be cold, but the bass fishing at Maynor Creek can be hot in January. ■



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.

SOLUNAR TABLES:

Invented in 1928 by John Knight, Solunar tables predict when game animals and fish are going to be the most active, based on the position of the sun and moon. The strongest activity occurs when the moon is directly overhead or directly underfoot. The strongest activity occurs when there is a full moon or a new moon, and is weakest when there is a quarter-moon or a three-quarter moon. This is because the combined gravitational force of the moon and the sun is strongest when both are directly above or directly below our heads.

Payments as low as
\$412⁸²/mo



AVENGER

Avenger 26
Honda BF250
Sport Trail

Payments as low as
\$233⁸⁵/mo



BULLS BAY

2200 Bulls Bay
Honda BF150 Sport Trail

Atlantic Marine

Waveland, MS

103 Highway 90 Waveland, MS
(20 minutes from Slidell)

(228) 467-2847 • Toll Free: (877) 396-8079
bobbyatlantic@bellsouth.net

Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
www.atlanticmarinebk.com

*APR financing available on all new Honda packages (boat, motor and trailer, where Honda outboard engine is the main source of power) through American Honda Finance Corporation upon approved credit. 3.99% APR financing for 24 - 84 months, available to customers who qualify for AHFC credit tier 1. Example for new Honda outboard engines: 3.99% APR for 84 months financing at \$13.66 a month for every \$1,000 financed. 4.99% APR for 120 months financing at \$10.60 a month for every \$1,000 financed. 4.99% APR for 144 months financing at \$9.24 a month for every \$1,000 financed. Offer good on any new and unregistered Honda package, with a minimum amount financed of \$1,000 and a minimum monthly payment of \$100. Check with participating dealers for complete details. Dealers set actual sales prices. For well-qualified buyers, not all buyers may qualify. Higher rates apply for different terms and/or buyers with lower credit rating. Lower rates may also be available. Offer valid through 07/06/17, on new and unregistered Honda packages (marine engines 2hp - 250hp) and only on approved credit by Honda Financial Services through participating dealers. Honda Financial Services' standard credit criteria apply. Always wear a personal flotation device while boating and read your owner's manual. All Honda outboards meet EPA and CARB emission levels. © 2017 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

HONDA
MARINE

Honda Repower Dealer

For optimum performance and safety, read the Owner's Manual before operating your Honda Marine Product. Always wear a personal flotation device while boating.

Atlantic Marine is an authorized Honda Marine dealer.

This buck has the classic body build of a mature deer 5½ years or older, in spite of his paltry antlers.



RATE THAT BUCK

IF A "BIG, OL' MATURE BUCK" IS YOUR AIM, LEARN HOW TO RECOGNIZE HIM

Well, we once again find ourselves at the close of another year and headed straight into the clutches of what passes for winter here in the deep South.

As the new year begins, if a line drawn on a map of Mississippi represented the current geographical boundary of peak breeding and rutting activity, much like a blue, saw-toothed line represents a cold front on a television weather map, it would depict a diagonal line running roughly from southwest generally to northeast at about mid-state, with the line slowly moving and transitioning toward the southeast. This means that deer hunters across Mississippi, depending on exactly where they hunt, experience a wide variation of rut timing and peak breeding dates.

Moving from north to south, the conditions and challenges relative to seeing and bagging rutting bucks is directly dependent on the calendar and a hunter's location.

One common theme, however, can be found from one end of the state to the other: if bagging a fully mature buck is on your annual bucket list, a you must have a good understanding of your quarry. You can travel the state and ask different hunters what they're after, and get what sounds like the exact same answer. "Oh, I'm after a big ol' mature buck." As far as a buck's age, our imaginary hunter could mean anything from an adult 3½-year-old, to a mature 4½-year-old, or even a 5½- to 7½-year-old buck, the latter being truly old.

A lot of it has to do with a given hunter's level of experience in the woods and overall knowledge of buck behavior and exactly what visual characteristics are indicative of buck age.

It is not particularly hard to peg a buck's age — as viewed on-the-hoof — up to 3½ years of age. Beyond 3½, it becomes definitely harder, and age estimates made by hunters on bucks older than 3½, by eyeball or trail-camera photos, tend to be surprisingly inaccurate. Over the

years, my experience and observations have been that pre-harvest age estimates of bucks made by a lot of hunters tend to fall a year or two older than what ground-check reality reveals. I think the situation though has been getting progressively better over the past few years as hunters have become more educated and experienced regarding aging deer on-the-hoof.

Let's look at what visual clues are indicative of buck age from the age of 3½ on. A 3½-year-old buck is considered an adult, and as such, it has become heavily muscled, particularly in the neck and shoulders. This is the first time a buck's

TELLTALE SIGNS:

As a whitetail buck matures, its body undergoes changes that allow hunters to more accurately estimate its age: the size and stain of its tarsal glands, the sag of its heavy bell, the comparative size of its neck and front shoulders. Hunters who truly want to target an older, trophy deer, need to know how to recognize those changes.

front shoulders and neck appear to be swollen, but you can still discern a break where the neck meets the shoulders.

The buck will have a racehorse look with a relatively straight back and stomach line. Having a thin waist, the chest is noticeably deeper than the hindquarters. The buck's legs will finally appear to fit his body and not appear too long. At this age, a buck's antlers will begin to have decent mass and will be carrying overall somewhere between 50 to 75 percent of the buck's genetic potential. A buck's tarsal glands are still relatively small but will become darkened during the rut.

At 4½, a mature buck will still have some growth potential left. A buck's heavily muscled neck will blend right into his chest and shoulders. The waist line will be even with the bottom of the belly, and the legs will begin to appear to be a little short for the body. The belly line will be relatively straight showing no apparent sag. The buck's antlers will be expressing between 75 and 90 percent of their ultimate genetic potential. He will have large, darkly stained tarsal glands.

If a buck reaches the ripe old age of 5½ to 7½ years old, he is almost always a sight to behold. An older buck's body will be heavily muscled, but signs of aging will have appeared. His stomach will sag, and his back will have a sway-back look. The legs will appear to be noticeably short for the body. At this stage, the antlers are typically expressing 90 to 100 percent of their ultimate genetic potential, and past the age of 5½ the antlers can even begin to regress. The leg tarsals will be large heavily stained, even all the way to the hoof. ■



Bill Garbo is a petroleum engineer and avid whitetail hunter from Madison, Miss. He has lived and hunted out west and taken numerous big game species, but hunting big old mature southern whitetail bucks is his favorite pursuit by a country mile.



This buck in mid-September velvet just screams "fully mature." Look how the heavily muscled neck blends seamlessly into the shoulder.

12:09PM 09/14/17 86F STEALTH CAM

PROPERTIES FOR SALE IN MS & LA

ADAMS COUNTY

• 854 Acres & camp..... \$3,500/AC

AMITE COUNTY

• 23 Acres..... \$3,476/AC
 • 24.8 Acres & home \$239,500
 • 39 Acres..... \$3,950/AC
 • 40 Acres & Home \$219,000
 • 40 Acres & Home \$370,000
 • 99 Acres..... \$3,787/AC
 • 115 Acres..... \$3,750/AC
 • 125 Acres..... \$4,300/AC
 • 127.5 Acres..... \$4,200/AC
 • 151 Acres..... \$4,200/AC
 • 209 Acres..... \$3,348/AC
 • 278.5 Acres..... \$4,000/AC
 • 360 Acres & Home \$3,500,000
 • 1305 Acres & Home \$7,500,000

ATTALA COUNTY

• 540.5 Acres..... \$950/AC

CALHOUN COUNTY

• 75 Acres..... \$1,599/AC

CLARKE COUNTY

• 234.34 Acres \$2,651/AC
 • 800 Acres \$3,375/AC

CLAIBORNE COUNTY

• 176 Acres \$3,181/AC

COPIAH COUNTY

• 166 Acres \$2,289/AC

COVINGTON COUNTY

• 162 Acres cabin & river..... \$5,200/AC

FORREST COUNTY

• 30 Acres..... \$5,833/AC
 • 80 Acres river front \$2,850/AC
 • 80 Acres..... \$3,125/AC
 • 123 Acres \$2,500/AC

FRANKLIN COUNTY

• 15 Acres..... \$3,400/AC
 • 43.38 Acres..... \$4,200/AC
 • 277 Acres \$3,068/AC

HARRISON COUNTY

• 81.3 Acres \$4,500/AC
 • 129 Acres \$4,000/AC

• 243 Acres \$4,900/AC

HINDS COUNTY

• 92 Acres..... \$3,700/AC
 • 184 Acres \$2,700/AC

JASPER COUNTY

• 114 Acres \$1,400/AC
 • 69.5 Acres \$2,500/AC
 • 58.5 Acres..... \$3,418/AC
 • 40 Acres..... \$2,500/AC
 • 38.5 Acres..... \$2,077/AC

JEFFERSON COUNTY

• 722 Acres w/2 houses \$2,100,000

JONES COUNTY

• 21 Acres..... \$2,000/AC

KEMPER COUNTY

• 40 Acres..... \$6,000/AC

LAMAR COUNTY

• 20 Acres..... \$11,250/AC
 • 35 Acres..... \$8,750/AC

LAWRENCE COUNTY

• 52 Acres..... \$2,307/AC
 • 710 Acres & Camp \$1,225,000

LINCOLN COUNTY

• 87.49 Acres..... \$2,857/AC

MADISON COUNTY

• Home & 116 Acres \$3,250,000

MARION COUNTY

• 40 Acres..... \$2,800/AC
 • 14 Acres..... \$3,950/AC

PEARL RIVER COUNTY

• 150 Acres \$3,450/AC
 • 303 Acres \$3,500/AC
 • 534 Acres \$3,250/AC

PIKE COUNTY

• 10 Acres & Home \$199,000
 • 24.87 Acres..... \$3,397/AC
 • 28 Acres..... \$4,625/AC
 • 31.57 Acres..... \$4,497/AC
 • 40 Acres..... \$2,475/AC
 • 48 Acres..... \$3,227/AC

• 58 Acres..... \$2,637/AC

• 75 Acres..... \$3,526/AC
 • 77 Acres..... \$5,181/AC
 • 135 Acres \$2,350/AC
 • 140 Acres \$2,350/AC
 • 248 Acres \$2,818/AC
 • 275 Acres \$2,350/AC
 • 423 Acres \$3,850/AC

SIMPSON COUNTY

• 82 Acres & Home \$675,000

TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY

• 27 Acres..... \$2,962/AC

WALTHAM COUNTY

• 38.6 Acres \$3,200/AC
 • 38.78 Acres..... \$2,307/AC
 • 50 Acres & Camp..... \$209,000
 • 386 Acres & Home \$1,495,000

WAYNE COUNTY

• 120 Acres \$1,500/AC
 • 220 Acres \$2,050/AC
 • 39.5 Acres \$1,974/AC

WILKINSON COUNTY

• 153 Acres \$3,986/AC

LOUISIANA

Bienville
 • 89.78 Acres \$2,449/AC
Bossier
 • 76 Acres..... \$4,500/AC
 • 68 Acres..... \$5,515/AC
 • 79 Acres..... \$5,950/AC
 • 120 Acres \$3,958/AC
 • 272 Acres \$4,600/AC
Caddo
 • 1 Acres & Camp..... \$100,000
 • 170 Acres \$4,600/AC
East Baton Rouge Parish
 • 239 Acres \$3,999,000
East Feliciana Parish
 • 64 Acres & Camp..... \$349,000
 • 113 Acres & Lodge \$1,150,000
Sabine County
 • 21 Acres..... \$3,500/AC
 • Home on Toledo Bend \$550,000
Webster Parish
 • 958 Acres \$1,252/AC



Gibson Realty & Land Company

(601) 250-0017

8 AGENT/OFFICE LOCATIONS IN LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI
 WWW.GIBSONREALTYMS.COM
 No One Knows The Country Like We Do™

#1 United Country Office
 Internationally 2008,
 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013,
 2014, 2015, 2016

LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Steve Porter, who created the Super Sally, holds a hawg he caught recently on Florida's Lake Okeechobee.



THE SUPER SALLY

ONE OF BASS FISHING'S BEST KEPT SECRETS

For many anglers, especially in the South, there have been epic trips with lots of unforgettable “Sally Time.”

They casted, retrieved and set the hook time and time again, catching largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and more on an in-line spinnerbait made by Hildebrandt — the Snagless Sally. While that lure still has its days, a newer, larger model with a specific appeal to bass anglers was designed by Steve Porter, who lives near the shore of Lake Okeechobee in Florida.

Hildebrandt's Super Sally now ushers in “Super Sally Time.” No one knows that better than Porter's good friend Bernie Schultz, 63-year-old veteran bass pro

from Gainesville, Fla.

“It's not something you use every day,” Schultz said, “but when the situation's right, there's no better tool.”

After fishing with the Snagless Sally (the Super Sally's historic predecessor) in Taylor Bayou during the Bassmaster Elite tournament at Orange, Texas, in 2013, the time was right for him to use the Super Sally on the Calcasieu River in a Bassmaster Elite tournament out of Orange, La., in 2015.

The move paid off.

“I caught the fish critical to making the cut” on a Super Sally adorned with a 3½-inch Yamamoto swimbait, Schultz said of a bass he weighed in from the Calcasieu River.

“It was the perfect scenario for it, especially when the water started moving. They'd come out and kill that thing.”

WHERE TO FISH IT

“Any time I fish tidal waters, I've got one tied on. You can throw it just about anywhere and get bit because of the flash and vibration,” Schultz said, noting his favorite of the eight colors available is chartreuse sexy shad. “Then it's only a matter of choosing the right color.”

At the Calcasieu River, Schultz targeted wood exclusively with the Super Sally, and at Taylor Bayou he fished hyacinth mats, some flooded trees and grass beds. Super Sallys are deadly when worked over vegetation with water over it, which



Perfect for targeting bigger fish and heavier cover, the Super Sally can be fished throughout the water column.

means it “works really well at high tide.”

They are made in ¼-, ⅜- and ½-ounce sizes with No. 3 ½, No. 4 and No. 4 ½ Colorado blades, respectively. Schultz said he uses the smaller size until he gets a limit, then switches to a larger one to target bigger bass.

Other professional anglers use the Super Sally but for sponsorship reasons, they don’t always talk about it, Schultz said.

“There are a number of them that do, especially the ones who have been around a long time. They know and the guys around the Gulf Coast region, they know,” he said. “(But) they don’t talk about what a great weapon it is. It’s like one of the best kept secrets.”

One established professional angler, Steve Kennedy of Auburn, Ala., used the Super Sally’s famous predecessor, the Snagless Sally, to catch some hefty bass in a WalMart FLW tournament on Sam Rayburn in April 2014. (To watch the video go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwNVUjIouDs.) He put an Uncle Josh Pork Rind on the Snagless Sally.

Porter, 78, had a better idea when he made a pitch to beef up the Snagless Sally.

“I thought if I could come up with a bigger Snagless Sally, it could be a sure thing,” Porter said, adding he started working on it about four years ago and after a couple years, the finished product was in the catalog.

“It’s a great looking bait and it works as good as it looks,” he said, noting he insisted it have a silicone skirt.

SUPER SALLY’S DESIGNER

If anyone could build a bigger, better Snagless Sally, Porter could, according to Schultz.

“He’s got a wealth of knowledge. He’s a very innovative guy. He is the pioneer of the ‘Okeechobee big blade,’” he said.

Porter has impressive credentials as an inventor and designer. He was a partner in the launch several decades ago of the WeedMaster Trolling Motor Weed Guard, a cone that fits around the lower unit of a trolling motor. When Porter showed it at outdoors shows he always wound up, as fate would have it, next to the Hildebrandt Company booth — and in 1972 befriended Alan Hildebrandt and his wife, Edie, from Indiana.

Porter told Hildebrandt he wanted to make spinnerbaits with oversized blades in an effort to match the golden shiners — which grow as big as 12 inches — that were so prevalent in Florida lakes. Hildebrandt always responded by saying he was in the spinnerbait business — not the blade business.

To Porter’s surprise, though, a box of big blades was delivered a year or two later, and that started the wheels in motion.

Porter’s initial claim to fame, although a more recognizable name stole his thunder, was coming up with the first big-bladed spinnerbait that evolved into the “Okeechobee Special.” Hildebrandt blades were the first applied to the new concept for a big-bladed spinnerbait, first with an Indiana blade, then with a willow-leaf blade.

Porter began trying his creation out in 1974 and eventually settled on a No. 3 ½ Colorado blade in the front and a No. 7 willow-leaf in the back. While he prefers that combination, he also recommends a No. 3 or 3 ½ Colorado in front of a No. 6 willowleaf.

That was Porter’s beginning with Hildebrandt. Both Porter and Schultz have been associated for many years with Hildebrandt, which was purchased in 2006 by Yakima Bait Co.

BASS PRO BERNIE SCHULTZ ON THE SUPER SALLY:

TACKLE: My preferred rod choices range from 6-foot-6 to 6-foot-10 medium-heavy graphite baitcasting, usually the Shimano Expride series. I pair them with Shimano Curado-K or Chronarch reels in high-speed ratios (7:1 or 8:1).

I spool them with mono or braid, depending on the water clarity and/or thickness of the cover I’m fishing. For loose or thin cover and clear water, I’ll go with 15- to 17-pound Sufix Superior copolymer line. For heavier cover or dirty water, I use Sufix 832 braid, 30- to 40-pound test.

FAVORITE COLORS: Chartreuse sexy shad, smokey shad, pearl and black-red.

Color selection will depend on what type of baitfish the bass are feeding on, or the current weather conditions. Dark colors on dark days, brighter colors on bright days, or when certain baitfish are on the menu.

COVER OPTIONS: Lily pads, flooded grass, cypress trees and along mats of floating vegetation.

KEY SITUATIONS: Great tidal-river tool in grass or around wood. Excellent in current, too.

BEST CHARACTERISTICS: Easy to fish, weedless and will come through just about any type of cover.

NO. 5 BLADE WOULD BE GREAT

So many years later, Porter’s Super Sally has taken center stage. It is marketed with No. 3 ½, No. 4 and No. 4 ½ blades — but Porter likes a No. 5.

“If Hildebrandt would bring a No. 5 out, that’d please me greatly. A No. 4 works, but a No. 5 really gets their attention,” he said.

He’s very protective of the few Super Sallys he has with a No. 5 blade.

“Every time I go out I have one tied on. I’m kind of real careful with it. I cut and retie,” he said. “I don’t want to lose any with 5s.”

For more information on the Super Sally, Snagless Sally and other Yakima Bait Co. products, go to yakimabait.com, call 509-854-1311 or send an email to ybcinc@yakimabait.com. ■



Don Shoopman fishes for freshwater and saltwater species mostly in and around the Aitchafalaya 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.

STICKS AND STRINGS

Sammy Romano



A CROSSBOW BUILT FOR SUPREME ACCURACY

MISSION'S SUB-1 IS THE LATEST DESIGN FROM AN INDUSTRY LEADER

Mission's SUB-1 crossbow promises minute-of-angle accuracy thanks to a number of design improvements, including the Sync X Cam System (inset).

A little over a year ago, I heard rumblings that Matt McPherson and his engineers at Mission Crossbows were working on a revolutionary new crossbow design that would raise the bar for the entire industry.

As CEO and chief engineer of Mathews and Mission Archery, McPherson has been responsible for a lot of the innovations in bow design over the last 25-plus years, so I was anxiously awaiting the results. In October, my wait ended when Mission Crossbows unveiled the SUB-1, and I was not disappointed.

This crossbow does what its name implies, delivering sub-1-inch groups at 100 yards, and with less noise and recoil than any crossbow I've ever shot. The Mission SUB-1 shoots an arrow using what their engineers call "controlled acceleration." There is literally no thump or recoil at the shot. Also, the arrow leaves the flight deck in a smooth, controlled manner, with less flexing and loss of energy leading to better consistency. Everything about the Mission SUB-1's design revolves around delivering supreme accuracy.

TOTAL ACCURACY BEGINS WITH A PERFECT FOUNDATION

The SUB-1's foundation is a CNC-machined aluminum I-beam. This is extremely rigid and durable, providing a precision flight deck to launch arrows from, thereby eliminating any vertical nock travel. It is joined to a CNC machined aluminum stock which insures a tight fit, reducing noise while further enhancing accuracy. The stock's fore grip and AR style pistol grip are both over molded for an ergonomic/sure grip. The rear stock is fully adjustable with a wide range of length of pull, and also features an adjustable cheek comb with 1.25 inches of height adjustment.

The Mission SUB-1 utilizes short, wide limbs borrowed from Mathews' proven vertical bow technology. These shorter, wider limbs are very rigid, distributing stress better and providing more torsional stability for greater consistency. These are attached to the riser

with Mission's adjustable limb retention system, allowing the shooter to customize the draw weight of their SUB-1 to fit their individual needs. The SUB-1 does not require the use of a foot stirrup, using the back of the riser as a foot rest. This serves to reduce noise, while at the same time increasing power stroke and therefore arrow speed. For those who want a more traditional design, foot stirrups are available as an accessory.

The SUB-1 is powered by the Sync X



Cam System, which eliminates any possibility of horizontal nock travel while providing 80 percent let off for easy cocking. This cam system delivers up to 350 fps of arrow speed, yet is as quiet as, or quieter than, many vertical compound bows. The Zebra string and cables are served for a majority of their length, requiring a minimum amount of maintenance. The cams have sealed bearings, eliminating the need to oil or lubricate them. The SUB-1 comes with a standard rope cocking aid, and because of its high let off, cocks very easily — but it will also accept Mission Crossbow's RSD crank cocking device.

A NEW BENCHMARK IN TRIGGER DESIGN

At the heart of the Mission Crossbows SUB-1 lies the revolutionary Benchmark Fire Control System that was over two years in development. This system features a two-stage, match-grade trigger that utilizes a fully contained rolling sear set at only 3.4 pounds. This is honestly the best trigger I've ever felt on any crossbow. It also features the Easy-Load bolt retention arm, which allows for easy loading while applying optimal downward pressure on the arrow. It is topped with a rigid 7075 aluminum scope rail to eliminate flex and further enhance accuracy.

Perhaps the best feature of both the Benchmark Fire Control System and the entire SUB-1 is its one of a kind de-cocking button. This allows the shooter to safely and almost effortlessly de-cock the crossbow.

The Mission SUB-1 is a totally new crossbow design, and is the most accurate crossbow I've ever shot. It is compact at only 30.25 inches long, 13.8 inches wide uncocked, and 10.7 inches wide when cocked. It weighs 7.5 pounds, has a 200-pound draw weight and a 13.75-inch power stroke, sending arrows downrange at a respectable 350 fps. Its 80 percent let off makes it a pleasure to both cock and de-cock, as well. The SUB-1 is available in both black and Under Armour Ridge Reaper forest camo. Like all Mathews/Mission products, it features their unparalleled lifetime warranty with some of the best

A ONE-OF-A-KIND FEATURE:

Anyone who has ever hunted with a crossbow knows how annoying it is to have to unload by shooting it after the hunt. Over my many years in the archery industry, I've seen countless arrows destroyed during this process, and several injuries caused by unwise attempts to bypass the trigger to avoid having to shoot the crossbow. The SUB-1 has a button that allows the user to SAFELY unload the crossbow without firing it, using only the cocking aid. There are many things I love about my new SUB-1, but this is my favorite feature of all.

customer service in the entire industry. As soon as I shot one I ordered my own, and I recommend you stop into your local Mission Crossbows retailer and shoot one when you have time. I guarantee you'll be glad you did. ■



Sammy Romano is a lifelong hunter who has worked in the archery industry for more than 24 years. His expertise includes compounds and crossbows. He can be reached at samboka31@aol.com.

Kubota RTV-X1120D

America's best-selling diesel utility vehicle.*



- Powerful 3-cylinder 24.8 HP** Kubota diesel engine
- VHT-X transmission boosts performance and durability
- Heavy-duty front suspension and Extra Duty Independent Rear Suspension

- Available in Kubota orange or Realtree AP® camouflage***
- Standard hydraulic bed lift
- Well-placed controls and obstacle-free leg room provides operator comfort

We are Kubota.

Crain Tractor

508 Hwy 98 Bypass
Columbia, Mississippi 39429
(601) 736-4527 • www.craintractor.com





www.kubota.com
*Kubota RTV Series is America's best-selling diesel utility vehicle according to Power Products Marketing North American Utility Vehicle Market Reports, May 2015.
For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer and the product operator's manual. Power (HP/KW) and other specifications are based on various standards or recommended practices. *Realtree® is a registered trademark of Jordan Outdoor Enterprises, Ltd. Optional equipment may be shown.
© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2016




COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

I believe you'll enjoy this month's recipe. It's my version of something I remember enjoying most of my life.

During my childhood, this was usually served using beef, and it tastes pretty good that way still, but it's much tastier and better for you when the featured ingredient is some of the tender venison you harvested during the past deer season. This is comfort food. Something

similar, but featuring beef, is on the menu at just about every home-cooking grill or restaurant across the south. January is a mixed month for sportsmen. A number of hunting seasons are still going strong, and fishing should have made the

transition from fall to winter. January typically has the coldest weather of the year, and I usually features a stew or hearty soup that really warms cold sportsmen. This does that too, but in a slightly different way, and I couldn't get it out of my mind.

It also helped that I had several packages of venison cube steaks left from last year and didn't want to mix them with this year's venison, so I have been cooking this about once a week. It requires a little more attention than simply putting it in a crock pot and walking away, but I'm working on that and am getting close to a recipe good enough to share. Meanwhile, you'll have to settle for this — and if this is settling, you won't mind it a bit. ■



VENISON CUBE STEAK

A CHILDHOOD FAVORITE IS STILL A GREAT, WARMING DISH

Cube steak is an excellent and easy way to fix venison. It's a hearty, heart-warming meal for a cold January evening. It starts on the stove top and finishes up in the oven (inset).

.....**TIP!**.....

Quick-searing meats like venison holds in the natural juices and makes for a tastier result.

.....

VENISON CUBE STEAK

I was a youngster when I first had cube steak, served with lots of gravy on a big serving of homemade mashed potatoes, complete with the lumps that gave it away. There were vegetables and bread, but they weren't nearly as important. Vegetables were tolerated because they were required for kids, and the bread was just a pusher to try to get all the meat, potatoes and gravy on the fork and sop up any leftover gravy. This was probably my original "clean plate" meal, and I remember seeing grown men sneak a quick lick of the plate on numerous occasions.

While the recipes were similar, my aunt's was slightly different than ours, and my grandpa's was still a little different from either. Some included broth instead of water, the amount of pepper, black pepper only or some white pepper, mushrooms or not, and I'm sure there were more. The bottom line is, they were all delicious; it was a meal that was often requested.

This is a natural for cooking venison. The quick sear is to hold in the natural juices, and baking it slowly in the gravy keeps it moist on the outside while enhancing the flavor and tenderizing it. It should be just shy of falling apart and cut easily with the edge of your fork.

There are many ways to prepare this; most are

PREPARATION:

Sprinkle the salt, pepper and onion powder on both sides of the steaks. Put the flour evenly in a shallow dish or on wax paper and press both sides of the steaks into the flour. Pour the oil into a cast-iron pan and heat stove top to medium or medium-high.

Once the oil is hot, put the steaks in the pan and cook until lightly golden brown (approximately two to four minutes per side). Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Add water to the pan to cover most ($\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$) of the steaks. Stir in the beef bouillon until it is totally dissolved. Sprinkle in 3 rounded teaspoons of the flour remaining in the dish or on the wax paper and stir to mix. Bring to a boil and stir thoroughly.

Remove from the burner, cover and place on middle rack in oven. Bake 1½ to 2 hours until tender. It should cut with a fork. Check occasionally and stir and spoon some of the gravy onto the top of the steaks. Remove from oven and let sit about 5 minutes before serving.

TIP!
Baking applies the heat evenly to cube steak, and it helps keep the venison tender, which is a key to this recipe.

pretty similar. Some like to simmer the steaks on the stove top, but I like baking so the heat is applied evenly. This also helps keep it tender, and when you start with a tender piece of venison, you should prepare it to accentuate that tenderness. I consider this a responsibility.

I believe you'll enjoy this version. In addition to being melt-in-your-mouth tender, it has a nice flavor that is robust without being spicy. Many will want to serve it covered with lots of the gravy and more gravy heaped on mashed potatoes; it tastes good that way — really good.

However, for those like me who have become more health conscious, my suggestion is cooking it in the gravy to get some of that good flavor, then serving it without piling it on so there are less calories, carbohydrates and cholesterol.

It's really good served this way too. Enjoy! ■

Many people believe the way to serve this is with mashed potatoes, especially homemade, with lots of the gravy heaped on top. That certainly is good, but those of us who want the flavor but want to eat more healthy, it also serves well over wild rice with a minimum of gravy. I know it isn't quite the same, but it tastes good, and your arteries and cardiologist will thank you.

Vegetables are a must; I like steamed or roasted broccoli, but it also does well with steamed or stewed squash. A good, hearty wheat or rye bread adds a little extra taste and helps get the last morsels and gravy off the plate. This might be a good meal to skip dessert. ■

INGREDIENTS:

4 venison cube steaks (4 to 6 ounces each)

¼ cup all-purpose flour

⅓ cup vegetable oil

1 tsp beef bouillon (granules)

½ tsp coarse-ground black pepper

½ tsp. white pepper

Sprinkle of onion powder
Onion salt may be used

Light sprinkle of salt (optional to taste)

Water



A short stay in a cast-iron pan is the first step in making a tasty meal of venison cube steaks.

Jerry Dilsaver



Jerry Dilsaver of Oak Island, N.C., is a full-time freelance writer and lecturer, as well as a past Southern Kingfish Association national champion. He spends plenty of time every year in the deer and turkey woods, and on the water in boat or kayak.

TOP 3 WINTER BASS BAITS

By Andy Crawford

Wintertime bass fishing can be tough, and that can cause anglers to look for all kinds of gimmicks and off-the-wall tactics to get bites.

But bass pro Brian Latimer said it's actually a time to settle down.

"A lot of my stuff is so basic, but that's what works," Latimer said.

Here are the South Carolina pro's Top 3 baits he has to have when he's probing around for cold-water bass.

1 Z-MAN CHATTERBAIT

"I absolutely have to have a ChatterBait," Latimer said.

That's because the vibrating jigs are extremely effective when winter rains send stained waters into the system he's fishing.

"You need something that pushes a lot of water and puts off vibration so fish can find it," Latimer said.

Of course, it's also a bait that allows anglers to cover a lot of water to pick up scattered bass.

"And it's a good bait for big fish," he said.

He said the propensity for the lure to run shallow during a normal retrieve means anglers can nab fish that are pulled up on flats when the water warms up as the sun reaches its zenith.

"Don't forget that shallow zone," Latimer said. "Even when it's cold fish will be in water 2 feet or less."

But there's more to the lure than that.

"I can fish that shallow zone, but I can also slow down and fish (a ChatterBait) 6 to 8 feet deep," Latimer explained.



3 Z-MAN ZINKERZ

Soft-plastic stick baits don't have any discernible action, but Latimer said they are incredibly effective tools during the winter doldrums.

"It's one of the dumbest things you've ever seen, but (the lure) definitely works," he said.

Flexibility is the chief advantage to the lure.

"There's just so many rigging options: I can fish it weightless wacky, Texas-rig it, shaky-head it, wacky shot," Latimer said.

Of course, some anglers hate soft-plastic stick baits because of their reputation as being slow-falling lures.

"It does take a lot of patience," Latimer said. "But don't underestimate the amount of water you can cover with them. Usually, a fish is going to get it on the fall, so if I pick it up and (a fish) doesn't have it I can just reel in and move on."

2 MEDIUM-DIVING CRANKBAIT

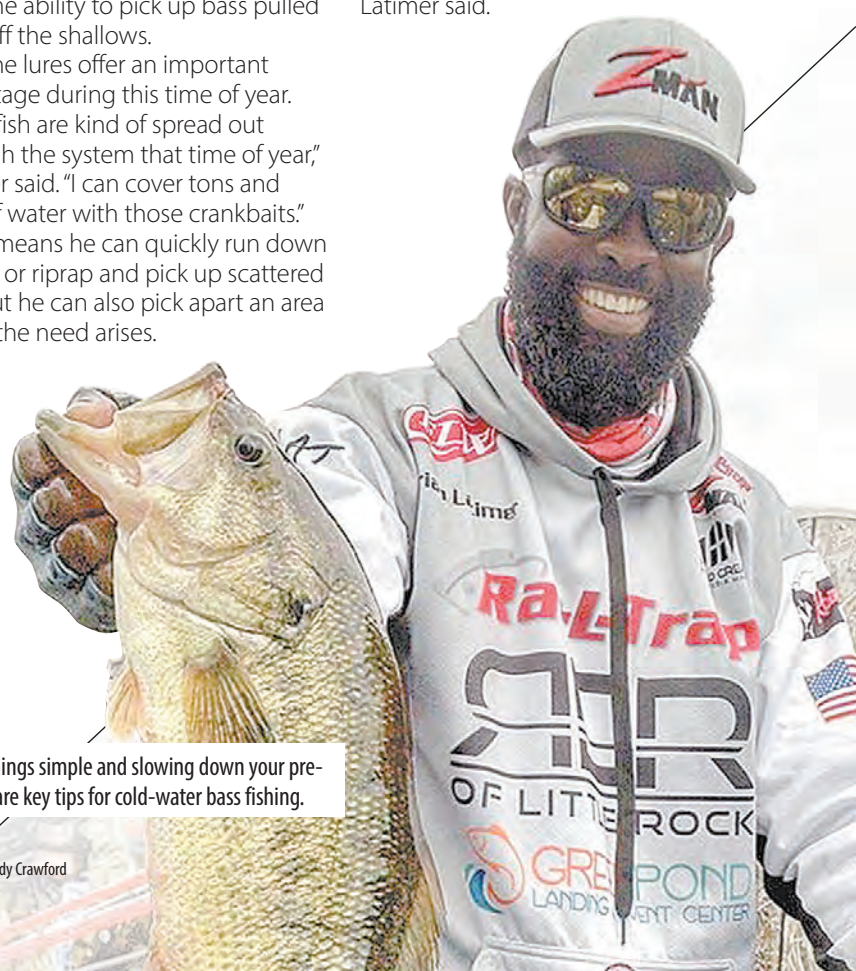
Latimer said crankbaits that effectively cover the 6- to 8-foot depths offer the ability to pick up bass pulled back off the shallows.

But the lures offer an important advantage during this time of year.

"The fish are kind of spread out through the system that time of year," Latimer said. "I can cover tons and tons of water with those crankbaits."

That means he can quickly run down a bank or riprap and pick up scattered fish, but he can also pick apart an area when the need arises.

"When I get to that sweet spot, I can slow down and fish it thoroughly," Latimer said.



Keeping things simple and slowing down your presentation are key tips for cold-water bass fishing.

Andy Crawford

MS & powersports

SALES • PARTS • SERVICE



2017 E-Z-GO
Freedom RXV
2+2 Electric

2018
Prowler
EV



**Gas &
Electric
Available**

Arctic Cat 2017 & 2018's

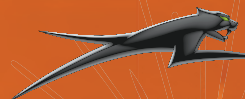


2017 Textron
Off Road Stampede EPS

Stampede 4 seat
2017 Textron Off Road
Stampede XTR EPS



**Used Golf
Carts
Starting
at \$2999**



ARCTIC CAT
SHARE OUR PASSION.™



A Textron Company

1060 Front St • Slidell, LA 70458 • 985-641-8833

SAVE MONEY, PREVENT BACKLASHES BY SPOOLING LESS LINE ON BAITCASTERS

By Andy Crawford

Short-spooling can save you some money by using less line — and also save you some aggravation with fewer backlashes.



Angler Adam Cook uses fluorocarbon on almost every reel he owns. The fact that it virtually disappears under water is a huge factor.

But he has other reasons for his choice in line.

"It sinks," Cook explained. "It's got a good stretch, but not too much. And I never have to worry about breaking off."

But he does believe in respooling every few trips because he fishes most weekends and wants his line to be fresh and strong.

"Whenever my line starts to get that curl in it, I put new line on," Cook said.

That's a pricey proposition, since the P-Line

he prefers runs as much as \$30 a pack.

So he saves money by doing something most anglers have been taught is wrong — he short-spoils his reels.

"I never put more than half a spool of line on," Cook said. "You don't need it. You save a lot of line."

What about casting distance, right? Well, Cook said he can cast just as far as he could with a full spool, even when using spinnerbaits and crankbaits. So that's not an issue.

And another significant advantage is icing on the cake.

"You'll get a lot fewer bird nests," Cook said. "If you try to fish a reel that's full, you'll get a lot more backlashes."

HOW TO PREVENT, REMOVE WIND LOOPS FROM SPINNING REELS

By Andy Crawford

I have a lifelong hatred of spinning reels, mainly generated by the loops that often form in the spooled line and create real messes.

"Whenever you're throwing that line, there's no tension to hold it on the roller bearing, so it goes limp and lays over itself," said inshore guide Austin Plaisance.

But there's an easy way to remove these knots, he said.

"You just pull the main line," Plaisance said. "You don't want to pull the loop, because that loop is under the main line."

He said gently pulling on the main line will remove line from the spool until the loop is revealed.

When the loop finally peels off the spool, it can create a knot in the line if it's not handled properly.

"You have two tag ends," Plaisance said. "Pull the tag ends and, most of the time, the loop will come out."

But you have to be patient.

"You don't want to pull tight," Plaisance said. "You don't want to pull (the tag ends) hard against each other or it'll dig in."

It's a particular problem with braided line because of the reasons anglers choose to use it.

"It forms mainly on braid because it doesn't have any memory," Plaisance said. "Memory helps on a spinning reel."

Of course, prevention is the best defense — and Plaisance said there's a

good way to minimize the occurrence of loops.

"Most of the time they form because you have too much line on a reel," he explained.

To prevent loops, he adds line onto the reel until he's just shot of the lip of the spool.

"I like to leave a fingernail of space (between the spooled line and the reel lip)," Plaisance said. "You have to have some lip to keep the line from looping." ■

Wind loops can be maddening when using spinning reels, but gently pulling on the main line is the best way to remove them.

Andy Crawford



SQUARE-BILLS ARE KILLER IN PRESPAWN

By Andy Crawford

January is when many largemouth bass are on the verge of pulling up tight for the spawn, with water temperatures dictating when exactly that happens.

Basspro Cliff Crochet knows the fish will be staged near spawning areas, so he'll be working slow-moving bayous and dead-end canals whenever he's not traveling for national tournaments.

"Early in the day, you're dealing with cool mornings, so I'm probably chilling out," Crochet said. "I'm probably going slow, flipping a jig."

He said casting a ½-ounce black/blue Santone Lures jig and bumping it back to the boat will pick up some bites while he waits on the water to warm just a bit.

"I'm looking for those lazy fish," Crochet said.

But when the sun gets up and starts pushing water temps upward, Crochet puts down his jig and turns to a winter pattern he said many anglers often don't think about.

"The most overlooked lure in January ... is the square-billed crankbait," he said.

Crochet said a Luck-E Strike RC2 Series 4



Many Atchafalaya Basin anglers don't think about throwing square-billed crankbaits this time of year, but Bassmaster Elite Series pro Cliff Crochet said the lures will catch fish that won't sniff a jig.

Andy Crawford

allows him to cover a lot of water and get bites from fish as they gorge for the coming spawn — bass that often won't hit anything else.

"The jig is on the bottom and a jerkbait is on top, but that square-bill covers everything in between," he explained. "I think there are certain times the fish are almost suspended."

He said the larger profile of the Series 4 offers some advantages compared to smaller square-bills.

"It's easier to cast, for one," Crochet said. "It's also rattling and pushes more water, so it's creating more commotion down there."

"Especially this time of year, you're dealing with hungry fish, aggressive fish, so I don't think you give up anything using a bigger bait."

Although he bangs the lure off any cover he sees, he isn't just cranking and winding.

"You can change your retrieve," he said. "In fact, stop-and-go is a real fun deal."

So cast the Luck-E Strike square-bill and give it a few cranks — and then stop reeling.

"Crank it six, seven, eight times to get it going, and you can feel the vibration of the bait," Crochet explained. "You stop it just briefly, and then you're going again."

"I think it gets you some reaction bites."

He said it's important to pay attention to the retrieve, learning what it feels like when the lure stops and starts again.

"When you start (reeling after the pause), you're going to feel that vibration again," Crochet said. "You get to know the timing, so when you throw out there, whenever you start again and you don't feel what you've been feeling — that's when the fish has it."

"A lot of times you'll start reeling and it'll feel like you're in grass. That's a fish."

There are times, however, when you start reeling and you feel absolutely nothing.

"It'll feel like somebody cut your line," Crochet said. "That's the fish swimming to you."

When that happens, you want to reel, reel, reel until you feel the fish, and then just lean into it."

Popular colors include Cajun Baby red, green copper shad and spotted shad.

To maximize his square-bill efforts, the angler uses a 7-foot, medium/heavy, fast-action Deuce rod; a reel with a 7:1 gear ratio and 20-pound Seaguar Rippin' monofilament.

The fast reel allows Crochet to get his crankbait rattling again quickly after a pause, while also providing the ability to reel in slack to catch up with fish that run toward the boat.

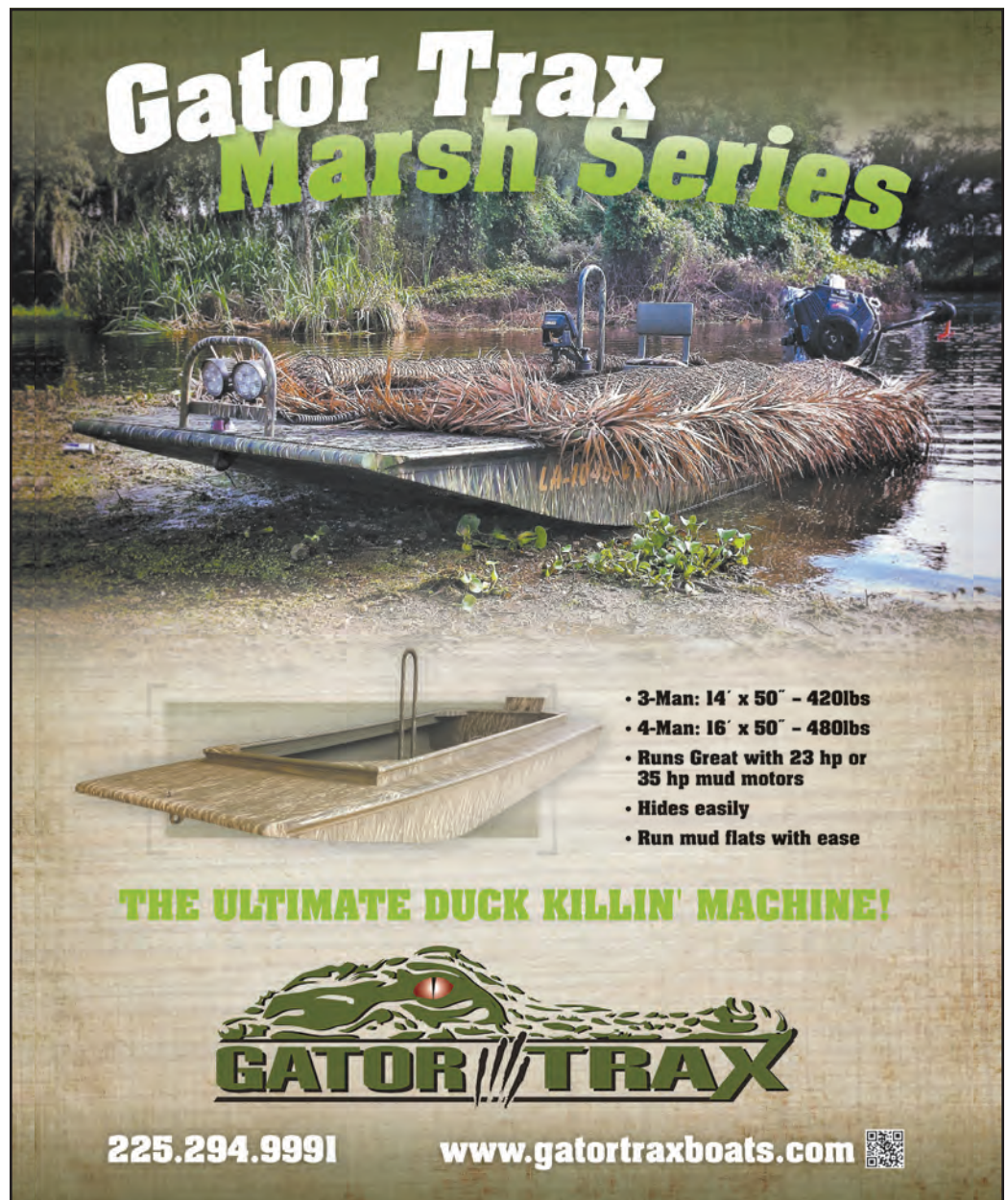
The heavy mono achieves two things.

"I don't want to dig this thing — I want to bang it off of everything I can," Crochet said. "I don't want it to run more than 2 feet deep; the heavier line helps keep it running 1, 2 feet deep."

"And then I have durability so I don't have to worry about it breaking."

The great thing about the lure is that, even though bites might be subtle, a bass usually isn't playing around when it decides to strike.


"I've caught fish on these square-bills that choked on it, have it sideways in their throat — you scratch your knuckles getting it out," Crochet said. "And those fish wouldn't hit a jig." ■




Gator Trax Marsh Series

- 3-Man: 14' x 50" - 420lbs
- 4-Man: 16' x 50" - 480lbs
- Runs Great with 23 hp or 35 hp mud motors
- Hides easily
- Run mud flats with ease

THE ULTIMATE DUCK KILLIN' MACHINE!



GATOR TRAX

225.294.9991 www.gatortraxboats.com 

BOOMERANG BRAID SNIPS

By Andy Crawford

I'm a die-hard braid fisherman, using the tough line on everything but crankbaits and spinnerbaits. The problem with braid, however, is it's so dang hard to cut.

That's not an issue, however, with the Boomerang snips.

This little beauty, which comes with short or long scissors, is razor sharp and makes quick, clean work of any fishing line: Braid, mono or fluorocarbon cut smoothly every time.

The snips features 420 stainless steel, corrosion-resistant cutters in a compact package that clips to your tackle box, console or belt loop.

And the tough retractable cord returns the snip right back to its original position — every time.

The blades close and lock into place when not in use, and the newest version even includes a jig-eye cleaner to ensure painted heads don't cause problems.

Oh, and you can even order a version with a built-in LED light to help in low-light situations.

Retails for \$12.99 without the light, \$15.99 with an LED light.

More Info: www.boomerangtool.com



Follow Us — In the woods and on Facebook

www.facebook.com/lasmag

GAMAKATSU G-BOX UTILITY CASE

By Andy Crawford

The new Gamakatsu G-Box utility case provides heavy-duty lure storage in a flexible format that allows you to customize the box for your specific needs.

And you don't have to fight to break the partition tabs free. In fact, they snap off cleanly, so you don't even have to trim leftover plastic.

The G-Box features a flexible, micro-rib system with micro-adjustable dividers, making them perfect for soft-plastic and hard baits.

And instead of a few set divider slots, there are numerous slots with almost infinite configurations.

And the boxes can easily be opened with one hand, so you can quickly access your favorite

lure — but they won't open if dropped.

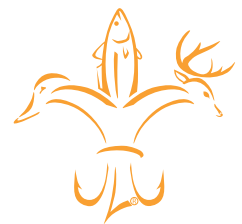
Rounded corners make the box easy to remove from tackle bags or boat compartments. The partitions are very sturdy, so your lures stay in place.

See-through construction makes it easy to spot the lure you need, but each box also comes with a label that can be affixed to the latch.

The 3200 case measures 8.1 by 5.7 by 1.6 inches, the 3600 measures 10.8 by 7.4 by 1.7 inches and the 3700 measures 14 by 9 by 2 inches.

The boxes retail from \$6.53 to \$12.95.

More Info: www.gamakatsu.com



New product submissions can be emailed to Mark Hilz at markh@lasmag.com.

CROSSPOINT WATERPROOF CREW SOCKS

The idea of waterproof, yet breathable, socks sounds like an oxymoron — but thanks to the people at Showers Pass, they're actually a reality.

The company's Crosspoint Waterproof Socks feature three-layer construction that sandwiches a waterproof layer between a knit outer layer and a breathable, moisture-wicking inner layer of Coolmax lining.

Designed for cyclists, the socks also have great possibilities for hiking, hunting and fishing, along with many other outdoor activities.

The socks are machine washable and are priced at \$35 per pair.

More Info: www.showerspass.com



ONE-TIE REUSABLE TIE STRAPS

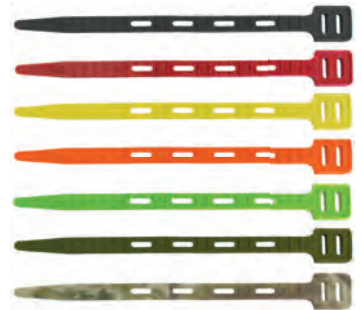
One-Tie reusable tie straps take the traditional plastic zip-tie strip to a new level, and that's great news for outdoorsmen who need a way to tie down gear when a zip-tie or bungee cord just doesn't get the job done.

Manufactured by Wisconsin-based Taylor Made Products, One-Ties are strong tie straps made from an automotive grade polymer in sizes from 8 to 32 inches that retail between \$1.99 and \$69.99 — depending on size and the number of straps in a pack.

The One-Tie straps have outdoors uses including wrapping up bundles of fishing rods, tying down tackle boxes or other items that aren't stationary in

the bottom of a boat — or even hanging items from a backpack that are too big to fit inside. They're perfect for tasks like strapping together sections of deer stand ladder for transport in and out of the woods, or for hanging items from your stand if there's no room for them around your seat.

They're available at Walmart, Menards, Lowe's and TrueValue retailers, or online through Amazon.



SHIMANO CURADO 200 K SERIES

Shimano made some waves in the fishing industry last summer when it debuted its new Curado 200 K series baitcasting reels at the annual ICAST show, and promptly took home honors for the best new freshwater reel.

The series includes three models, each coming in left-hand and right-hand retrieve, with six anti-rust ball bearings, micro-machined gears and Shimano's SVS Infinity braking system. The reel features adjustable internal and external brakes, and it weighs only between 7.6 and 7.8 ounces — thanks to side plates of graphite and CI4.

The 200 model (and 201 left-handed retrieve) has a 6.2-to-1 retrieve ratio, allowing the angler to take in 26 inches of line per turn of the handle. The 200KHG (and 201KHG left-handed retrieve) has a 7.4-to-1 ratio, getting back 31 inches per crank, and the high-speed 200KXG (and 201 KXG left-handed) has an 8.5-to-1 retrieve ratio, getting back 36 inches per crank.

The spool capacity on all six reels is 190 yards of

30-pound PowerPro braid or 155 yards of 10-pound monofilament.

The retail price on all six reels is \$179. They are available at a number of retail outlets, including Academy Sports+Outdoors (Academy.com).

More Info: www.fish.shimano.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 2018 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar. \$12.95 (plus \$4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2018 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 2018, the year's best periods, a look ahead at 2019, and more. Comes with FREE 2018 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for \$7.95, 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.

2018 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...** \$46.95 (plus \$6 s&h).
- #3: **Same as #2, minus book...** \$37.95 (plus \$5 s&h).

Send to: PrimeTimes 2018 - Dept. LS - 2487 NW 75th Ave., Ste. 100 - Ankeny, IA 50023

For credit/debit card orders, call toll-free **866-809-5063**.

2018 JAN	BEST DAYS				VALUE
	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	
Mon 1	██	██	██	██	77
Tue 2	██	██	██	██	66
Wed 3	██	██	██	██	54
Thu 4	██	██	██	██	42
Fri 5	██	██	██	██	35
Sat 6	██	██	██	██	31
Sun 7	██	██	██	██	33
Mon 8	██	██	██	██	40
Tue 9	██	██	██	██	27
Wed 10	██	██	██	██	19
Thu 11	██	██	██	██	16
Fri 12	██	██	██	██	14
Sat 13	██	██	██	██	22
Sun 14	██	██	██	██	30
Mon 15	██	██	██	██	40
Tue 16	██	██	██	██	45
Wed 17	██	██	██	██	36
Thu 18	██	██	██	██	28
Fri 19	██	██	██	██	22
Sat 20	██	██	██	██	20
Sun 21	██	██	██	██	23
Mon 22	██	██	██	██	26
Tue 23	██	██	██	██	34
Wed 24	██	██	██	██	48
Thu 25	██	██	██	██	41
Fri 26	██	██	██	██	40
Sat 27	██	██	██	██	42
Sun 28	██	██	██	██	54
Mon 29	██	██	██	██	65
Tue 30	██	██	██	██	75
Wed 31	██	██	██	██	79

25 50 75
AVERAGE

For more, visit primetimes2.com

LUNAR PERIODS						TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED			
MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT						
5:08 pm	10:45 pm - 2:05 am	6:37 am	10:06 am - 1:26 pm	☀	☾	☉	☽	☾	☽
6:14 pm	11:50 pm - Midnight	7:41 am	11:10 am - 2:30 pm						
7:23 pm	Midnight - 3:06 am	8:38 am	12:15 pm - 3:31 pm						
8:32 pm	12:54 am - 4:04 am	9:28 am	1:19 pm - 4:29 pm						
9:39 pm	1:57 am - 4:53 am	10:12 am	2:22 pm - 5:18 pm						
10:42 pm	2:58 am - 5:38 am	10:51 am	3:23 pm - 6:03 pm						
11:43 pm	3:55 am - 6:21 am	11:26 am	4:20 pm - 6:46 pm						
12:42 am	4:51 am - 6:59 am	11:59 am	5:16 pm - 7:24 pm						
1:39 am	5:42 am - 7:38 am	12:32 pm	6:07 pm - 8:03 pm						
2:35 am	6:34 am - 8:16 am	1:05 pm	6:59 pm - 8:41 pm						
3:30 am	7:26 am - 8:54 am	1:40 pm	7:51 pm - 9:19 pm						
4:24 am	8:16 am - 9:34 am	2:17 pm	8:41 pm - 9:59 pm						
5:16 am	9:06 am - 10:18 am	2:57 pm	9:31 pm - 10:43 pm						
6:06 am	10:04 am - 11:50 am	3:40 pm	10:21 pm - 11:27 pm						
6:53 am	11:32 am - 12:38 pm	4:27 pm	11:09 pm - 12:15 am						
7:37 am	12:16 pm - 1:28 pm	5:18 pm	11:57 pm - Midnight						
8:17 am	1:00 pm - 2:18 pm	6:10 pm	Midnight - 1:03 am						
8:55 am	1:42 pm - 3:10 pm	7:05 pm	12:41 am - 1:53 am						
9:29 am	2:20 pm - 4:02 pm	8:01 pm	1:25 am - 2:43 am						
10:03 am	2:58 pm - 4:54 pm	8:58 pm	2:07 am - 3:35 am						
10:35 am	3:36 pm - 5:48 pm	9:56 pm	2:45 am - 4:27 am						
11:09 am	4:15 pm - 6:41 pm	10:54 pm	3:23 am - 5:19 am						
11:43 am	4:56 pm - 7:38 pm	11:55 pm	4:01 am - 6:13 am						
12:21 pm	5:40 pm - 8:36 pm		4:40 am - 7:06 am						
1:04 pm	6:28 pm - 9:38 pm	12:57 am	5:21 am - 8:03 am						
1:52 pm	7:23 pm - 10:39 pm	2:02 am	6:05 am - 9:01 am						
2:47 pm	8:23 pm - 11:43 pm	3:08 am	6:53 am - 10:03 am						
3:49 pm	9:25 pm - 12:45 am	4:14 am	7:48 am - 11:04 am						
4:57 pm	10:31 pm - 1:43 am	5:19 am	8:48 am - 12:08 pm						
6:06 pm	11:36 pm - Midnight	6:19 am	9:50 am - 1:10 pm						
		7:13 am	10:56 am - 2:08 pm						

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.

For more information and samples of PrimeTimes products, visit our web site: www.primetimes2.com

KING MAC IS WHAT WE DO!

King Mackerel Tackle

Best Source For King Mackerel Tackle

Largest Selection of Custom Bait Rigs & Same Day Shipping on Most Items!

Over 40 years of saltwater experience: We outfit everyone from novice to pro!

Buy online or Download Our Catalog at: www.KingMacTak.com • 919-900-8998

HELP WANTED

We are looking for drivers to deliver the Mississippi SPORTSMAN Magazine.

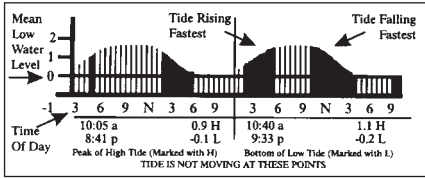
If You Love to Fish, Hunt and Meet People You Qualify!

Circulation experience helpful but not necessary
dependable vehicle & a valid MS drivers license a must. If you have 3-5 days a month to help spread the word I would like to hear from you!

Please Contact: Ricky Naquin,
Circulation Director @ 985-859-7744 -or- ricky@lasmag.com

Mississippi

SPORTSMAN

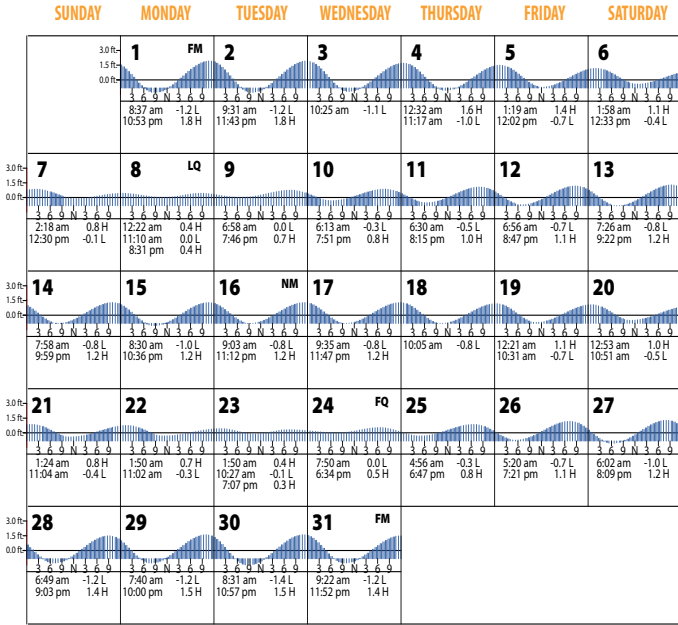


How to use the **SPORTSMAN** Tide Guide

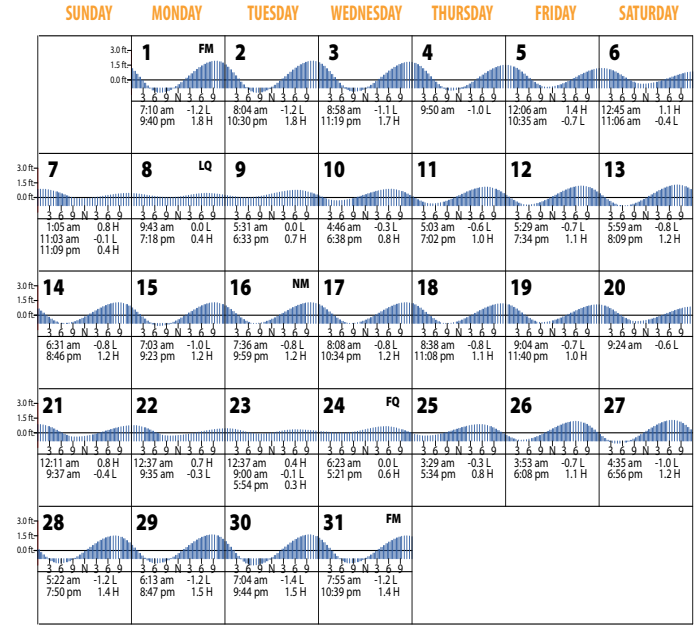
Fish feed most actively when the tide is moving. The Mississippi Sportsman has made it simple to spot the most active feeding periods each day in the TIDE GUIDE. Just fish those times indicated in black.

Be sure to visit our web site for more tide locations: <http://www.ms-sportsman.com>

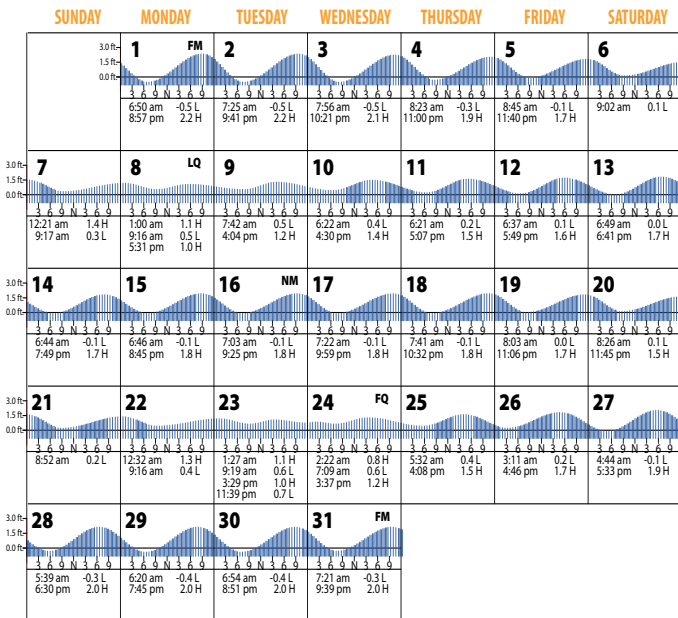
Bay St. Louis Entrance



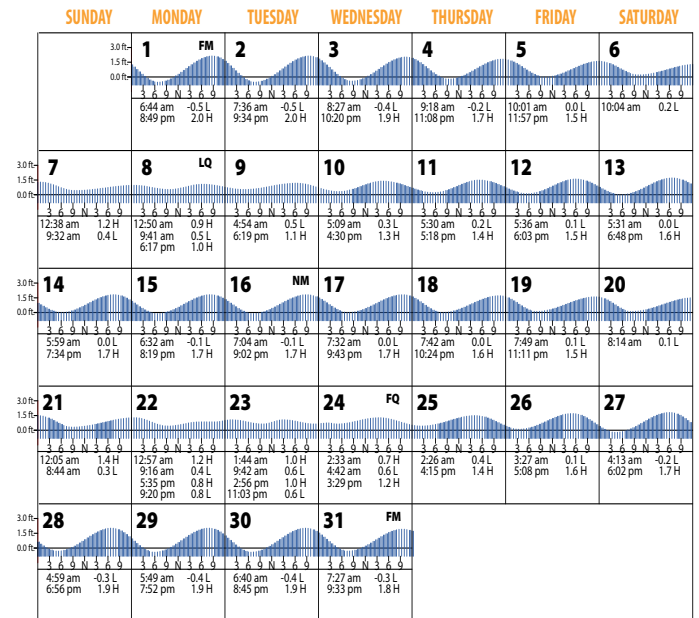
Biloxi Cadet Point, Biloxi Bay



Horn Island Mississippi Sound



Pascagoula Point Mississippi Sound



ATLANTIC MARINE	71	FRED NETTERVILLE LUMBER.....	27	REED'S METALS, INC.....	2
BARNETT'S BODY SHOP	9	G3 BOATS.....	5	RJ'S OUTBOARD SALES & SERVICE.....	69
BEN NELSON GOLF AND OUTDOOR.....	3	GATOR TRAX	85	SEVEN C'S MARINE.....	67
BERRYLAND CAMPERS.....	28	JEFF REGISTER BUILDING & TRUSS.....	25	SHIMANO AMERICAN CORP.....	31
BIG BUCK BOUNTY	19	K2 MARINE	13	TIMBERLAND SALES, LLC.....	9
BROOKHAVEN HONDA	43	KING MACKEREL TACKLE.....	88	TIRE DEPOT.....	11
CAROLINA COMPOSITES, LLC	35	KOOLA EZE.....	26	TOGO LAND COMPANY, LLC.....	47
COWARTS ARMS & AMMO, LLC.....	90	LOUISIANA SPORTSMAN SHOW.....	33	UNITED COUNTRY GIBSON REALTY.....	73
CRAIN TRACTOR	77	MARINE LIFT AND DOCK SUPPLY COMPANY.....	39	VAN'S OUTDOORS	91
DAN HEASLEY TAXIDERM.....	17	MCCLAIN LODGE.....	60	WATTS BROTHERS TRACTORS	26
DEVINEY RENTAL & SUPPLY.....	57	MOSSY OAK PROPERTIES LAND INVESTMENTS.....	49	WHITETAIL PROPERTIES	23
DIXIE RV	55	NATIONAL LAND REALTY RICHARDSON PROPERTIES INC	61	WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS INC.	25
DOCKSIDE MARINE.....	40	PRIMOS	15		
DWIGHT'S DEER PROCESSING.....	17	R&R POWERSPORTS.....	81		
EMMETT'S MARINE.....	41, 65				
FIRST SOUTH FARM CREDIT	92				

Get decked out in the latest
from the **SPORTSMAN** Store..... 62

Subscribe Today and SAVE 51

**Ammo, Firearms,
Scopes & Mounts**

*IF WE DON'T
HAVE IT, WE
CAN GET IT!*

**LAYAWAYS
AVAILABLE
90 DAYS SAME
AS CASH**

2605 Hwy 80 E
Pearl, MS 39208
601-932-1700
cowartsarms-ammo.com

**Cowarts Arms
& Ammo, LLC**

PRIMOS
HUNTING

SPEAK THE LANGUAGE™

DOGG CALLER DAYS

LIMITED TIME OFFER



\$50 INSTANT SAVINGS



\$30 INSTANT SAVINGS



\$20 INSTANT SAVINGS

UP TO **\$50**
INSTANT SAVINGS



2 Locations
to serve you!

777 Hwy 468
Brandon, MS 39042
601.825.9087

www.vansoutdoors.com

2045 County Road 222
Cullman, AL 35057
256.775.4031

Follow us on 



WHAT DOES *The* **FARM** MEAN TO YOU?



WHATEVER *The Farm* MEANS TO YOU, LET FIRST SOUTH FINANCE IT.

When it comes to financing or refinancing your place in the country, First South is the lender for you. With a century of experience in financing rural property, we're ready to help you with a loan for that perfect piece of land - for whatever

The Farm means to you. So please contact us today.



Your Rural Lender | FIRSTSOUTHLAND.COM | 800-955-1722



First South
Farm Credit