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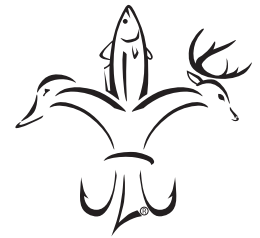
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Volume 20 | Number 9 | September 2018



Mississippi  
**SPORTSMAN**  
www.MS-SPORTSMAN.com

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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

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Mississippi deer hunters would love to know where to find big, mature bucks on public land. This month's WMA forecast may answer that question. Photo by Rick Small.

**“WAX Game Mix is Still the Best!  
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September heralds the return of hunting season and is a cause to celebrate. For many, that means a big dove hunt on opening day, Sept. 1

**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](mailto:bobbyc7754@yahoo.com).

Outdoor  
**UPDATE**  
with  
**Bobby Cleveland**

Bobby Cleveland

# IT'S TIME TO REJOICE: HUNTING RETURNS IN SEPTEMBER

## OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR EARLY SEASON MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTERS

**M**ississippi sportsmen can rejoice. September is here, and that means summer's sounds of silence will soon be broken by the roar of shotguns booming over the countryside. Hunting season is officially back.

It starts on Sept. 1 with the beginning of several migratory bird seasons, including dove and Canada goose, and it gets even more exciting on Sept. 15 when the early teal season opens.

By month's end, squirrel could be on the menu for some families; youth season for children under the age of 16 is Sept. 24-30.

It won't be all play, however. As writer Phillip Gentry explains in this month's issue, September is also the peak time for deer-camp workdays. Hunters have a lot to do to get fields, stands and even clubhouses ready for the coming season. Scouting is also on the menu.

For public-land hunters, Mike Giles provides a look at the best Wildlife Management Areas in all regions of the state to chase different species.

Activities won't be limited to land, either. Fishing opportunities abound in September and this month's *Mississippi Sportsman* has the information you need to make the most of your time on the water.

David Hawkins writes about the various ways to catch catfish, Brian Cope takes us to the Gulf of Mexico to tackle tripletail,

and there's tips from bass pro Pete Ponds on finding largemouths in waters from farm ponds to large reservoir and river systems.

We've got all that and lots more, as *Mississippi Sportsman* helps set the stage for the most exciting time of the year for outdoorsmen. It is a time of celebration indeed because it sets the stage for even more outdoor opportunities in the months ahead.

Let's go! ■

### HUNTERS: load up on on tax-free weekend

Mississippi hunters can stock up for the coming season during the Second Amendment, tax-free weekend, Aug. 31-Sept. 2. All sales on guns, ammunition, archery equipment and firearm/bow accessories will be exempt from state sales tax, plus many sporting good stores run specials that can lead to even more savings.

Learn more about what's exempt and what's not by visiting <http://www.dor.ms.gov/Pages/Second-Amendment-Sales-Tax-Holiday.aspx>.

# DOVE HUNTERS LOVE NEW SEASON FRAMEWORKS

If you have to miss opening day of the dove season on Sept. 1, don't sweat it. Even if you have to miss the entire first weekend — opting instead to enjoy the first college football games of the season — it's not a problem, at least not for the vast majority of dove hunters in Mississippi.

In the north dove zone, the first segment of the season is open for 37 days, all the way to Oct. 7. That includes the Mississippi Delta and the black prairie belt, the two hot spots for dove hunting.

In the south zone, that small corner of southeast Mississippi below U.S. 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35, the happiness will be delayed until later in the year. The first segment, Sept.



A youngster with his limit of birds relaxes on the tailgate after a good September day afield.

Bobby Cleveland

1-9, is a short one, leaving 81 days to enjoy later in the fall and winter in the final two segments.

The long first season is not the biggest news in the north zone. New federal frameworks will allow hunting all the way through the end of Jan. 31, giving hunters in the Delta more days to hunt dove that migrate in from the upper Midwest. The third and final segment of the north zone season will be Dec.

22-Jan. 31, and for dove-hunt purists like Neal Vaughn of Greenwood, that's great news.

"A lot of hunters forget that doves are migratory, just like ducks, geese and crows," Vaughn said. "Yes, we have a lot of native doves that are like a resident population. That's what we hunt in September and October. But by December, we've put the fear of the gun in them, and what's left are leery.

"That's when the birds move down from the north. When the midwest freezes over, they have to come down. These are big birds, and when they get here, they are hungry from all that flying, and they arrive, when our food sources are greatly reduced. That's a perfect situation for dove hunters, because all of the birds, the residents and the migrators, are all concentrated around the remaining food sources, and they have to eat."

Vaughn said he's seen periods late in the season when thousands of birds will locate one good food source and go to it day after day after day despite running into almost daily shotgun volleys.

"They had no choice," he said. "It was plentiful grass seed that had been washed up on a high spot that ran the length of a long bean field. They kept coming despite the pressure. We only had like two weeks of hunting in the late season, so we couldn't space it out. This year, if a similar situation develops, we will have time to space out our hunts and still get plenty of action. I love this framework."

Under the frameworks, states were allowed to set seasons of up to 90 days between Sept. 1 and Jan. 31, and they were allowed to break into zones and divide the days in zones into as many as three segments. ■

## BLUE-WINGED TEAL STILL PLENTIFUL

While the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service had not issued results from its annual duck population survey and its fall flight forecast by Aug. 1, the numbers of blue-winged teal are most assuredly high. Last year, they showed an 18-percent increase over 2016 and were 57 percent above the long-term average. It's that 50-year average that is indicative of the strong population.

That's important for waterfowlers, who depend on the early migrating species to provide the first duck-hunting opportunities of the year. Mississippi's early teal season is 16 days, Sept. 15-30. The limit is six per day, with a possession limit of 18.

"We had a fair teal season in 2017, even with the increase in birds," said Jimmy Pearson of Grenada. "The problem for many of us was the timing. The season is a gamble, like a crap shoot. We set a season based on when we expect teal to migrate through. Some years we get lucky, and our 16-day season hits it perfectly, with the peak of the migration in the middle of the season.

"Last year, most of the birds came through late in the season, at least where I hunted, and we didn't have but a few good days of hunting. The first week to 10 days were basically a bust. Our

continues >

## 2018-19 DOVE SEASONS

### North Zone:

Sept. 1-Oct. 7; Oct. 27-Nov. 7; Dec. 22-Jan. 31 (total of 90 days).

### South Zone (area south of U.S. Highway 84, and east of Mississippi Highway 35):

Sept. 1-9; Oct. 6-Nov. 7; Dec. 15-Jan. 31 (total of 90 days).

### Limits:

15 daily, 45 possession.

**GOT PICS?** We want 'em Email images to: [alicial@lasmag.com](mailto:alicial@lasmag.com)

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

**TEAL** CONTINUED

A team of teal hunters gather for a photo after a September morning in 2017 around a shallow converted catfish farm pond.

converted catfish ponds didn't produce during that time, but we found some birds on bigger waters like Grenada Lake and over on the (Mississippi) river. Then, during the last five or six days, we had a strong migration, and our catfish ponds were covered up with teal. That gave us one good weekend."

Teal feed in extremely shallow water, basically looking for mud flats, Vaughn said.



Bobby Cleveland

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"I think that's why Grenada Lake was a little more productive last year," he said. "Summer was dry, and the water was falling, leaving a lot of the lake's points exposed. The little groups of teal were buzzing those areas. That's not easy hunting because there's not a lot of cover to hide in out on those points. You have to work to find places where you can get in the trees or brush on the bank and still get them passing in shooting range."

Managing the water levels in the smaller ponds is a gamble, too.

"You want to drop the water right before the season to expose more of the bottom, but then it's not a sure bet you will get the rain to fill those ponds back up. And if you can't pump water, which can be expensive, you could be in trouble as dry weather continues through to the first duck seasons in late November and early December.

"You've got to have water and you've got to have food if those ponds are going to attract and hold big ducks when they start arriving." ■

# MORE DAYS FOR CANADA GEESE, OTHER MIGRATORY BIRDS



The early season on Canada goose — this year it's open all of September — gives hunters a shot at what are called "resident" geese.

**U**SFWS framework changes weren't limited to doves. New regulations will allow more days to hunt Canada geese during September, as well as rails, moorhens and gallinules.

The early Canada season has expanded from 15 to 30 days, as frameworks allow the entire month of September to be used to hunt what are commonly referred to as resident geese.

"I don't know why more people don't hunt them in September," said Josh Stewart of Jackson, who makes use of the opportunity to shoot Canadas on the upper river area of Barnett Reservoir. "We've got a bountiful supply of Canada

geese on Barnett and many other lakes — too many geese, a lot of people say. They are not as wily as migratory geese or ducks, either.

"They are used to being around boats and people all the time. In past seasons, over the 15-day period, they weren't hunted enough to ever get boat-shy. I don't know if that will change now that I can hunt them for the entire month. Maybe they will be spooked by the end of the month and fly down the lake to areas where hunting isn't allowed."

Stewart said he and several friends hunt just about every weekend day available

## SEPTEMBER'S OVERLOOKED MIGRATORY SEASONS

**Canada geese:** Sept. 1-30; daily limit of 5, possession limit of 15.

**Moorhens and gallinules:** Sept 1-30; daily limit 15 singly or in aggregate, possession limit 45.

**Rails:** Sept. 1-Sept 30; limits on clapper and king rails are 15 singly or in aggregate, and 45 in possession, and limits on sora and Virginia rails are 15 singly or in aggregate, and 45 in possession.

continues >

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**MORE DAYS** CONTINUED

during the season, plus the Labor Day holiday, and they combine fishing and hunting.

"We get in the backwaters and fish for bass that are moving up on the migrating shad and work on them while watching for geese," he said.

"By lunch, we've usually gotten a limit of one or the other, or both. If we've got a few boats of us, we make it a contest with friendly wagers. It's fun.

"It's kind of a strange way to goose hunt: No camo, no decoys, limited calling, if any. But it works, and if even if it doesn't, we can catch fish."

This year, Vaughn said, he and his friends will pay more attention to the shoreline, too.

"I see where they have expanded gallinule and rail seasons," he said. "It's also open the entire month, and the reservoir's backwaters are full of them. I've seen them for years and always wondered how they would taste, so last year I killed a couple of gallinules to try them. Turns out they are good. They have a little-bit wilder flavor than duck, but the meat is lighter in color.

"The birds that are really good are the rails. They aren't nearly as plentiful, but if you can find them and you can get them, trust me, do it. They are like a bigger version of a quail, with whiter meat than most migratory birds. I will be looking for them this year for sure." ■

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# SPECK EVENT SUCCESSFUL

**A** speckled trout tournament format, designed by fishermen for fishermen, proved successful this summer and could lead to a series of contests on the Mississippi coast in 2019.

"We held it in conjunction with the Mississippi Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, which had seen its Speckled Trout Shootout lose its popularity until it had gone away," said Capt. Jeremy McHugh. "It wasn't just at the Rodeo, but pretty much coastwide. Interest was going away because fishermen were tired of how events were run and tired of the rules.

"I am a tournament fisherman, too, and I wanted to end that trend. I got together

with other tournament fishermen and discussed rules and formats and came up with a plan that would prevent any gray areas or drama, which was the root of the problems."

This year's Speckled Trout Shootout at the Rodeo drew 115 fishermen in 33 boats, and McHugh said it was a big success.

"Everybody loved it," he said. "The format was simple and was based more of what you'd see at the major offshore, bluewater tournaments. We allowed boats to have up to four people per team, had them line up in the harbor for a boat inspection, gave them stickers and then blasted a horn, and they all left at one time. They had 12 hours to fish, and they could enter the boat's best five fish.

"It went smoothly. The winners, Team Foreplay, had 19 pounds, and 10 ounces. We had

a 100-percent payback, and because of a sponsor, we were able to add to the pot. There was no jealousy; we saw more camaraderie. Fishermen by nature are jealous, but if you are fishing for the right reason it won't happen."

Instead of continuing with more tournaments in 2018, McHugh said he and others decided to spend the rest of the year recruiting sponsors and fishermen, as well as honing the concept.

"We put that Shootout together in about a month last summer, and we decided to instead to start planning for 2019," McHugh said. "We're shooting for a series of events across the Mississippi Gulf Coast with a grand



A new format for speckled trout tournaments debuted at the 2018 Mississippi Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo and could lead to a tournament series in 2019.

Photo courtesy Capt. Jeremy McHugh

championship at the end. We're focusing on locating sponsors and educating fishermen to get it right for 2019."

McHugh said the plan is to have biologists involved in the events and to have a polygraph available in case of any questions. ■

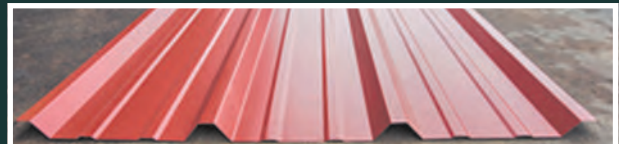
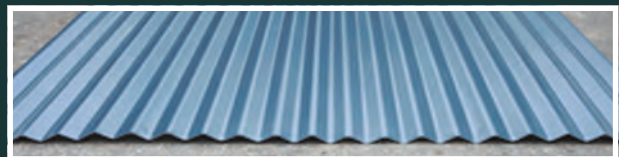
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State wildlife officials have announced new regulations regarding deer hunting in the newly redefined Chronic Wasting Disease management area in the South Delta.

# REG CHANGES ANNOUNCED

## FOR DEER IN CWD MANAGEMENT AREA

**M**ississippi's efforts to contain chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer will cause some changes for hunters, according to proposals passed in July by the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.

The biggest news is that the CWD containment zone was constricted by redefining its borders by highways and rivers instead of county lines.

According to Russ Walsh, wildlife bureau executive director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, the new containment zone would be defined as all areas south of Mississippi Highways 14 and 16, areas west of the Yazoo River, all portions of Warren County and all areas east of the Mississippi River.

In other words, the zone will be bordered to the west by the Mississippi River, to the east by the Yazoo River and Warren County lines, to the north by Highways 14 and 16 and to the south by the Warren County line.

Provided the proposal gets final approval at the mid-August meeting, only those areas within the newly defined zone would continue under a ban on supplemental feedings, and permits will still have to be obtained by the trapping of wild hogs.

Hinds and Claiborne counties would fall out of the CWD zone altogether, as would small parts of Issaquena County and Sharkey County and a large piece of Yazoo County. Those areas would no longer be included in a ban on supplemental feeding or require permits to trap wild hogs. All of Warren County remains in the CWD zone.

The original CWD containment zone, established after a single mature buck became the first — and to date, only — confirmed case of the deadly disease was found in Issaquena County. Any county that was touched by a 25-mile circle around the site where the sick deer died was included in its entirety. Supplemental feeding was immediately banned and permits required for trapping hogs, including bait being allowed only inside traps.

Although nearly 2,000 deer have been tested since October 2017, only the one positive test was confirmed. CWD is an always-fatal disease that affects cervids, like white-tailed deer, elk, moose and mule deer. Mississippi is the 26th state to have a positive test for CWD.

According to Walsh, the proposals also include how deer killed during the 2018-19 season can be transported in the zone. The only portions of a harvested deer

that would be legally removed from the proposed zone are:

- Meat from cervids that has been completely deboned, which then could be processed outside the zone.
- Antlers, or antlers attached to a cleaned skull plates or cleaned skulls where no tissue is attached to the skull.
- Cleaned teeth.
- Finished taxidermy and antler products.
- Hides and tanned products.

Asked if any consideration had been given to the availability of testing for hunters in that area or any area this season, Walsh said yes.

"We have a sampling plan with a target of 5,000 deer, 1,000 from within (the CWD zone) and 4,000 from outside," he said. "There will be drop-off locations around the state for hunters to deposit heads for testing."

Walsh said that check-in stations will be established within the CWD zone on peak hunting days, such as opening day of gun season; the Friday after Thanksgiving; December 29-30; and January 5-6.

"According to our survey data and local knowledge, those are high-traffic days," Walsh said. "If (CWD) is here or somewhere else, we hope to find it." ■

Hunting/Fishing  
**SCRAPBOOK**



Buddy Ballard poses with his daughter, Sarah Ballard, and a turkey killed in Marion County.



Trever Serpas and his buddies with some rabbits from a Feb. 24 trip in Belzoni.



Lacy Robinson of Gulfport was on a fishing trip with her parents and some family friends on July 20 when she landed one of the first catches of the day, this gorgeous snapper. Robinson is a true Mississippi sportsman and loves to fish every chance she gets.



Jeremy Whittle took this Marshall County bass in May.



Brandon Laird caught this Smith County bluegill in a farm pond.

The MDWFP has officially acquired nearly 18,000 acres of prime Delta habitat adjacent to the existing Mahannah WMA. For now, the new area is called Steele Bayou WMA, but it will not be open for hunting during the 2018-19 seasons.



# NO HUNTING THIS SEASON ON NEW STEELE BAYOU WMA

The Nature Conservancy of Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks announced in July that they had completed the purchase of 17,816 contiguous acres of wildlife habitat in the South Delta from the Anderson-Tully Timber Company.

Adjacent to the existing Mahannah Wildlife Management Area, the land is in Warren and Issaquena County. Combined, Mahannah and the new land, tentatively named Steele Bayou WMA, will give MDWFP ownership of a total of 30,511 contiguous acres.

That is second in size only to the Pascagoula WMA, which has 37,415 acres and was purchased in the same fashion with help from the Nature Conservancy.

The MDWFP has announced no plans for its development of the Steele Bayou WMA, but Russ Walsh, executive director of the wildlife bureau, confirmed that it will not be opened for the 2018-19 hunting season. "We have not had time to decide on a management plan for it, so we felt it was best to take our time

and try to get it established for the next year," he said.

The lack of hunting on the WMA is a concern for neighboring farmers.

"That bothers me a little, because that area needs to be hunted," said Jeff Terry of nearby Eagle Lake, whose farm borders the new WMA.

"This area can't afford to go a season without hunting on that land. We are just getting our deer herd under control, and with Mahannah being a permit-only deer hunting WMA, that's going to mean an explosion of deer. That's going to hurt those of us in the farming business.

"Don't get me wrong; I am all for the state getting this property and will be great for generations to come. There simply aren't going to be any more blocks of land like this available for the public. It's great, and I'm excited for the future hunters of this state."

According to the Conservancy, the MDWFP used existing funding and federal grants for its part of the purchase, and that the MDWFP would repay the Conservancy over the next three to four years for its purchase of the other 7,000 acres.

The Conservancy said the Caterpillar Foundation, the MDWFP Foundation and Entergy also contributed to the purchase. ■

## PROPERTIES FOR SALE IN MS & LA

### ADAMS COUNTY

• 100 Acres ..... \$2,750/AC

### AMITE COUNTY

• 23 Acres ..... \$3,476/AC  
• 39 Acres ..... \$3,950/AC  
• 40 Acres ..... \$2,800/AC  
• 40 Acres & Home ..... \$205,000  
• 51.85 Acres ..... \$5,014/AC  
• 91.83 Acres ..... \$3,800/AC  
• 125 Acres ..... \$3,900/AC  
• 127.5 Acres ..... \$4,200/AC  
• 151 Acres ..... \$4,200/AC  
• 200 Acres & Camp ..... \$1,120,000  
• 209 Acres ..... \$3,348/AC  
• 278.5 Acres ..... \$4,000/AC  
• 360 Acres & Home ..... \$3,500,000  
• 1305 Acres & Home ..... \$7,500,000  
• 6.5 Acres ..... \$29,000  
• 17.5 Acres ..... \$69,000  
• 37 Acres ..... \$2,945/AC  
• 69.69 Acres ..... \$3,800/AC

### ATTALA COUNTY

• 540.5 Acres ..... \$950/AC

### CALHOUN COUNTY

• 75 Acres ..... \$1,300/AC

### CLARKE COUNTY

• 800 Acres & Lodge ..... \$2,100,000  
• 40 Acres ..... \$2,025/AC  
• 132 Acres ..... \$2,651/AC

### CLAIBORNE COUNTY

• 75 Acres & Camp ..... \$275,000  
• 176 Acres ..... \$3,181/AC  
• 360 Acres ..... \$2,950/AC

### COPIAH COUNTY

• 339 Acres ..... \$2,651/AC  
• 166 Acres ..... \$2,100/AC  
• 63.5 & Camp ..... \$289,000

### COVINGTON COUNTY

• 162 Acres Cabin & River ..... \$4,300/AC

### FORREST COUNTY

• 80 Acres ..... \$3,125/AC  
• 123 Acres ..... \$2,500/AC

### FRANKLIN COUNTY

• 15 Acres ..... \$3,200/AC  
• 60 Acres ..... \$3,850/AC

### GRENEADA COUNTY

• 160 Acres ..... \$4,000/AC

### HARRISON COUNTY

• 243 Acres ..... \$4,900/AC  
• 129 Acres ..... \$3,900/AC  
• 47 Acres ..... \$4,100/AC  
• 82 Acres ..... \$3,950/AC

### HINDS COUNTY

• 184 Acres ..... \$2,700/AC

### JASPER COUNTY

• 114 Acres ..... \$1,400/AC  
• 69.5 Acres ..... \$2,500/AC  
• 40 Acres ..... \$2,500/AC

### JEFFERSON COUNTY

• 2260 Acres & Lodge ..... \$8,300,000  
• 23 Acres & log cabin ..... \$268,000  
• 86.65 Acres ..... \$3,439/AC  
• 110 Acres & log cabin ..... \$575,000

### JONES COUNTY

• 21 Acres ..... \$2,000/AC  
• 50 Acres ..... \$3,100/AC

### LAWRENCE COUNTY

• 52.51 Acres ..... \$2,092/AC  
• 335 Acres & Camp ..... \$653,250  
• 710 Acres & Camp ..... \$1,225,000

### LINCOLN COUNTY

• 87.49 Acres ..... \$2,857/AC  
• 11.99 Acres ..... \$42,000

### MADISON COUNTY

• 134 Acres ..... \$1,200/AC  
• 206.2 Acres ..... \$2,271/AC

### MARION COUNTY

• 84.56 Acres ..... \$2,944/AC  
• 113 Acres ..... \$2,876/AC  
• 115 Acres ..... \$2,650/AC

### PEARL RIVER

• 61.7 Acres ..... \$2,299/AC  
• 64 Acres ..... \$3,487/AC  
• 67 Acres ..... \$3,450/AC

### PIKE COUNTY

• 9 Acres & Home ..... \$45,000  
• 10 Acres & Home ..... \$168,000  
• 24.87 Acres ..... \$3,397/AC  
• 28 Acres ..... \$4,625/AC  
• 31.57 Acres ..... \$4,497/AC  
• 40 Acres ..... \$2,475/AC  
• 40 Acres ..... \$2,950/AC  
• 77 Acres ..... \$5,181/AC  
• 80 Acres & Home ..... \$209,500  
• 132 Acres ..... \$2,401/AC  
• 135 Acres ..... \$2,350/AC  
• 140 Acres ..... \$2,350/AC

• 144 Acres ..... \$2,956/AC  
• 192 Acres ..... \$2,950/AC  
• 275 Acres ..... \$2,350/AC  
• 423 Acres ..... \$3,534/AC  
• 335 Acres ..... \$2,950/AC  
• 467 Acres ..... \$2,795/AC  
• 28.69 Acres & cabin ..... \$525,000  
• 238 Acres & home ..... \$997,300

### WALTHAM COUNTY

• 38.78 Acres ..... \$2,166/AC  
• 160 Acres ..... \$2,181/AC  
• 118 Acres ..... \$2,900/AC  
• 115 Acres & home ..... \$517,000  
• 58 Acres ..... \$2,844/AC  
• 7.16 Acres ..... \$24,000

### WAYNE COUNTY

• 27 Acres ..... \$2,200/AC  
• 120 Acres ..... \$1,500/AC  
• 220 Acres ..... \$2,050/AC  
• 39.5 Acres ..... \$1,974/AC

### WILKINSON COUNTY

• 153 Acres ..... \$3,790/AC  
• 26 Acres & Lodge ..... \$399,000

### LOUISIANA

**Bienville**  
• 89.78 Acres ..... \$2,449/AC  
**Bossier**  
• 40 Acres ..... \$3,500/AC  
• 75 Acres ..... \$4,250/AC  
• 120 Acres ..... \$3,958/AC  
**Caddo**  
• 170 Acres ..... \$4,600/AC  
• 32.4 Acres ..... \$3,395/AC  
• 20 Acres ..... \$4,000/AC  
• 17 Acres ..... \$4,000/AC  
**Desoto**  
• 40 Acres ..... \$2,800/AC  
**East Baton Rouge**  
• 239 Acres ..... \$3,999,000  
**East Feliciana**  
• 479 Acres ..... \$2,290,000  
**Livingston Parish**  
• 38 Acres ..... \$10,000/AC  
**Sabine**  
• 21 Acres ..... \$3,571/AC  
**Tangipahoa Parish**  
• 35 Acres & Home ..... \$389,000  
**Webster**  
• 958 Acres ..... \$1,252/AC  
• 55 Acres ..... \$3,400/AC  
• 113 Acres ..... \$3,200/AC  
**Washington**  
• 150 Acres ..... \$3,993/AC



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**Location:** The property is located 14 miles south of Florence, MS in Simpson County.

**Size:** 457 Acres

**Roads:** Roads have been built along the high fenceline and throughout the property

**Utilites:** Electric and Butane, rural water supplier, working well, and treatment system on site

**Lakes:** 2 Fully stocked lakes and 2 smaller ponds

**Homesites:** Fully Furnished Lodge, 2 Private cabins, a detached bunkhouse, and a poolhouse

**Other structures:** Large Skinning shed

**Wildlife:** Approximately 100 animals on site: Red Stags, Axis, Fallow, & Blackbucks

**Price:** 1.9 Million



Surrounded by a high fence and beautiful accent gate, this 457 acre parcel is located just 30 minutes south of Jackson in Simpson County. The majority of the property is hardwood timber with scattered pastures, wildlife openings, 2 fully stocked lakes, and 2 smaller ponds. After a long day in the field or by the lake, sit back and unwind in the fully furnished Main Lodge or one of the two private cabins. With a total of 8 bedrooms, 5 full baths, and 2 half baths; there is enough room for 22 guests! After a dip in the heated swimming pool in the poolhouse, relax around the firepit on the deck of the main lodge or catch a movie in the media room at the Lodge.



**Please Contact: Joni McClain, Owner/Broker • Blue Diamond Realty • 601-672-7999 • [Joni@mcclain.ms](mailto:Joni@mcclain.ms)**

# SNAPPER SEASON ENDS 2 WEEKS EARLY

By Bobby Cleveland



Recreational anglers along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi filled their annual quota of red snapper well before the scheduled Sept. 3 end of the season.

## MDMR'S PROJECTION SHOWS ANGLERS REACHED QUOTA BY AUG. 17

**M**ississippi's recreational fishing season for red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico ended about two weeks early, as fishermen reached their annual quota — 135,149 pounds — on Aug. 17, with the season originally scheduled to run until Sept. 3.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources announced on Aug. 14 that "preliminary estimates from the Tails 'n Scales reporting system indicate the annual catch target for the private recreational fishery is projected to be reached by (Aug. 17)."

Mississippi's original season was established as May 25 to Sept. 3, basically from the Memorial Day Weekend to the Labor Day Weekend. In setting that season, MDMR also announced it might close the

season for a short term if it appeared the quota was in jeopardy before Labor Day.

In the first year of the pilot Federal Exempt Fishing Permit, which allowed the five states on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico to set their seasons and monitor catches in accordance with quotas set by federal officials, Mississippi's recreational quota was set at 135,149 pounds.

By July 4, fishermen had caught 82,500 pounds, according to MDMR, and the season was interrupted and closed from July 8-22 in an attempt to save fish for Labor Day weekend, the last big fishing weekend of the summer.

MDMR instituted a 10-percent buffer, basically reducing the target catch to 121,634 pounds, according to Matt Hill, the finfish bureau director, to guard

against overharvest. Using the buffered quota, fishermen had less than 40,000 pounds of snapper left when the season reopened July 23.

"I hate it is closing, but ... I think you'd be hard pressed to find a single snapper fisherman on the coast who wouldn't agree that this year, with state supervision and more opportunity, wasn't much better than what we've been having in recent years under federally set seasons," said angler James Thompson of Gulfport.

Thompson stands by his July prediction that, "I think we're going to find that the red snapper are far more plentiful than federal officials have been estimating.

"The fish are there," he said. "We're proving it by catching fish." ■

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WMA/GAME LANDS PREVIEW

# 2018-19 WMA FORECAST

MISSISSIPPI HUNTERS ARE BLESSED WITH TREMENDOUS PUBLIC-LAND OPPORTUNITIES. HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.

By Michael Giles

**B**rad Madden sat high in a climbing tree stand overlooking an open bottom frequented by grass-browsing does that were beginning to be chased by bucks at the onset of the rut. He had seen a few does earlier in the afternoon, but nothing with antlers.

Suddenly, a doe busted into the open with a buck in hot pursuit.

Tic-pow! Madden's rifle crumpled the 9-point buck instantly.

"He chased that doe back and forth a few times before stopping suddenly," Madden said.

"I saw he had a split G-2 on the

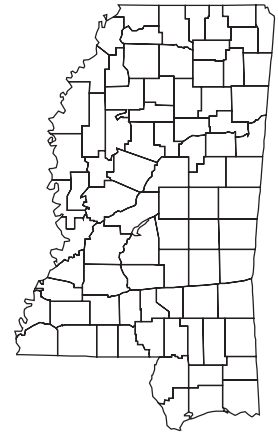
right side, so I knew he was (a shooter), so I pulled the trigger with only minutes of shooting time left."

The 185-pound buck sported a wide rack that another hunter had seen and passed up earlier, on the first day of a Canemount Wildlife Management Area hunt. Madden took the trophy buck with only minutes of shooting light left in his 3-day hunt.

Not every Wildlife Management Area in Mississippi is a trophy draw unit, but most have good deer populations and provide excellent opportunities to harvest a deer or quality buck — or to enjoy outstanding small game or waterfowl hunting. Enjoy this tour. ■

# MISSISSIPPI'S WMA REGIONS

By Michael Giles



**M**ississippi's WMA system is managed in six regions — Southwest, Southeast, East Central, Delta, Northwest and Northeast — and it offers outstanding hunting for several species across the state. *Mississippi Sportsman* spoke to biologists with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks who manage WMAs in each region to help hunters find the best hunting. If you take the time to scout, plan and get your boots on the ground, you have an opportunity to be successful on one of the many public land opportunities in the state.

## SOUTHWEST

A mix of Loess Bluffs on the western edge, the region has a varied topography that provides excellent opportunities. Good mast production has helped boost deer and squirrel opportunities, and its location near the Mississippi River brings some waterfowl. Josh Moree is the MDWFP's regional WMA biologist.

## SOUTHEAST

The sandy soil of this coastal region prevents its deer from growing the massive racks of other areas, but the deer population is plentiful, especially on the WMAs. Small game species thrive on some of the state's largest public tracts. Cody Haynes is the MDWFP's regional WMA biologist.

## EAST-CENTRAL

Some of the heaviest hunted WMAs are in this region, and the mix of hardwood, pines and agricultural lands combines to make it productive for many species. Chad Masley is the WDMFP's regional WMA biologist.

## DELTA

Though frequently flooded and home to the state's only verified case of chronic wasting disease, the Mississippi Delta is a hunter's paradise. From Loess Bluffs and rich agriculture to beautiful river bottoms, the region has the best duck and dove hunting, as well as big trophy bucks. Roger Tanksley is MDWFP's regional WMA biologist.

## NORTHWEST

A mix of agriculture, Loess Bluffs and river bottoms, this region is rapidly growing in popularity and production of the three D's: deer, ducks and doves. Brad Holder is the MDWFP's regional WMA biologist.

## NORTHEAST

Over the past two decades, public hunting opportunities have been greatly enhanced, much of it related to lands surrounding the Tenn-Tom Waterway. Nathan Blount is the MDWFP's regional WMA biologist.



Mississippi hunters have some of the best public-land hunting opportunities available anywhere in the Southeast.

Mike Giles

By Michael Giles

# SQUIRRELED AWAY

## SANDY CREEK WMA

**Sandy Creek WMA**, which covers 19,125 acres in Adams and Franklin counties, is the region's top squirrel-hunting area, with **Tallahala**, 27,442 acres in Scott, Newton, Smith and Jasper counties, close behind, according to biologist Josh Moree. "Sandy Creek has large areas of hardwood bottoms and plenty of squirrel habitat. Tallahala has a lot of hardwood bottoms with good squirrel habitat. There's plenty of squirrel dog hunters in this area and they



have a lot of room to move around and hunt."

## PASCAGOULA WMA

"**Pascagoula River WMA** (37,415 acres) has the best all-around squirrel hunting," biologist Cody Haynes said. "Hunters harvest both fox squirrels and grey squirrels. **Leaf River, Mason Creek** and **Chickasawhay WMAs** all have good squirrel populations and offer excellent opportunities to harvest squirrels also."

## YOCKANOOKANY WMA

"**Yockanookany WMA** (2,735 acres on the Yockanookany River in Attala County) is the best squirrel hunting in this region," said biologist Chad Masley. "There's plenty of mast-producing trees and habitat for the squirrels, and we have a lot of hunters taking advantage of that, too. **Choctaw WMA** is probably No. 2 for harvesting squirrels."

## SUNFLOWER WMA

"**Sunflower WMA** is also going to be the top squirrel hunting area in this region," biologist Roger Tanksley said. "Hunters harvest both phases of the fox squirrels — red and black — and they kill grey squirrels too. Another big factor is that hunters can hunt the squirrels any day of the week, unlike on **Mahanah** and **Twin Oaks**."

## UPPER SARDIS/MALMAISON

"**Upper Sardis** and **Malmaison WMAs** are the top destinations for squirrel hunting in the Northwest," biologist Brad Holder said. "There are squirrels at **Charles Ray Nix WMA**, but it's not on the same level as Upper Sardis and Malmaison."

## CANAL SECTION/WILLIAMS

"**Canal Section** and **John Bell Williams** are your best bets to harvest squirrels," said biologist Nathan Blount. "There's a lot of bottomland hardwoods and lots of squirrels. Last year, John Bell Williams had the best harvest ratio with 1.68 kills per manday of hunting." ■

Whitetail Breakdown up next >



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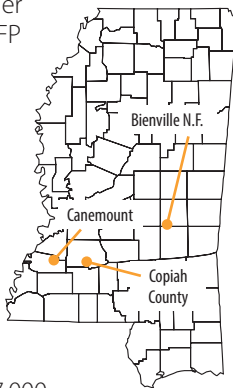
# THE WHITETAIL BREAKDOWN

MISSISSIPPI HUNTERS HAVE PLENTY OF PUBLIC-LAND OPTIONS

By Mike Giles

## **SOUTHWEST**

**Canemount WMA** is permit-only and, as a 3,500-acre tract in the deer-rich Loess Bluffs of Claiborne County near the Mississippi River, it is a prized draw. The hills have very fertile topsoil, with a lot of mast-producing oaks. This WMA has a long history of trophy deer management, and the property's previous owner worked with MDWFP biologists through the Deer Management Assistance Program for many years to facilitate quality deer management. That's paying off for public land hunters now.



**"Covich County WMA** is a 7,000-acre WMA about an hour drive south of Jackson, so it gets a lot of pressure," Josh Moree said. "But there's a good chance to harvest a decent deer here if you put in the time."

"The **Bienville National Forest Complex** has three WMAs — Bienville, Tallahala, and Caney Creek — and all allow deer hunting with dogs, as well as still hunting," Moree said. Combined these three WMAs encompass over 82,000 acres of prime south public hunting lands.

## **SOUTHEAST**

Biologist Cody Haynes said that **Leaf River WMA**, which covers 41,500 acres in Perry County near McLain, "gives hunters in this region the best opportunity to harvest a quality buck. We've gone back to the 12-inch spread and 15-inch antler criteria there that should give them a little more time to grow. The others have 10 and 12 minimum restrictions. Buck harvests were good last year and should

be even better this season if the weather cooperates."

**Chickasawhay WMA** has had its overall deer harvest numbers reduced due to doe-harvest restrictions, but the buck-harvest numbers remained pretty constant with prior year's harvests. Opportunities to harvest a



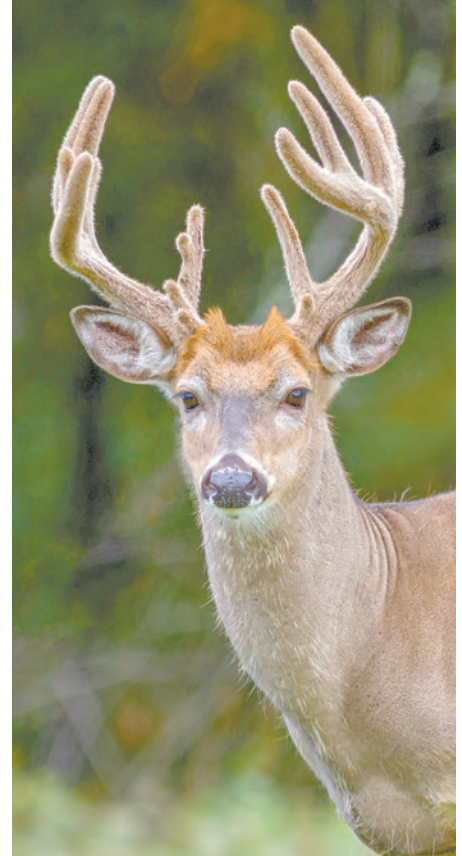
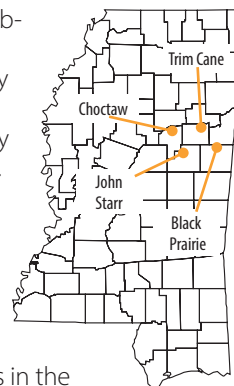
buck look good this year on Chickasawhay, which covers 29,049 acres in Jones County.

## **EAST CENTRAL**

**Black Prairie WMA**, which covers 6,000 acres in Lowndes County near Brooksville, is "the best WMA in the East Central Region to harvest a quality buck," biologist Chad Masley said, adding that 1,600 acres are in agriculture. "We've started our camera surveys, and they're showing some quality bucks there."

**"John Starr WMA** (8,244 acres in Oktibeha and Winston County) is probably your next bet at harvesting a quality buck in this region.

**"Choctaw WMA** (21,705 acres, in Choctaw and Winston counties near Ackerman) doesn't have the harvest rates as in the past but is still a great area. Salvage cuts (are) improving the habitat as well and should lead to better opportunities for hunters."

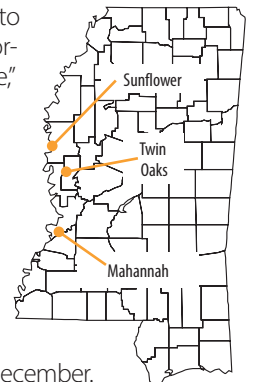


**"Trim Cane WMA** has 875 acres but good quality deer, and (it) provides excellent opportunities to harvest a good buck for youth and handicap hunts," Masley said. "Deer hunting is limited to handicapped and youth hunters, which limits the pressure. We have one hunt a week and each Saturday we draw for two youth hunters and two handicap hunters."

## **DELTA**

Changes are in store at two very popular deer WMAs, including **Mahannah WMA**, made up of 12,695 acres in Warren and Issaquena counties. The MDWFP has done away with a requirement that hunters get drawn to kill a doe to earn their way into the December bucks-only hunt. "On Mahannah, we'll have archery hunts in October, primitive weapons hunts in November and rifle hunts in December, which will translate to more hunting opportunities for everyone," Roger Tanksley said.

**Twin Oaks WMA**, which covers 5,847 acres near Rolling Fork, will change to have archery in October and primitive weapons hunts in November and December. Tanksley said one change that is good for hunters while reducing pressure



on deer is that there will be two two-day draw hunts each week, each with two scouting days a week and one off-limits day each week.

“Sunflower WMA (62,000 acres) is huge, and hunters can hunt every day of the week wherever they want. Hunters have a good opportunity to harvest a Boone and Crockett deer here also,” Tanksley said. “If you put in the time and scout, you should be able to find an area to hunt away from people and have a good possibility of harvesting a quality buck, too.”

## NORTHWEST

“Based on harvest data, nicer bucks are harvested more frequently on **Malmaison** and **Charles Ray Nix WMAs**,” regional biologist Brad Holder said. “Better habitat quality within and around these WMAs and special regulations such as larger spread and main beam length antler criteria help produce older bucks. These two WMAs and **Cossar State Park WMA** probably provide the best chance at harvesting a doe or buck.”

**Calhoun County, Upper Sardis and Graham Lake Waterfowl WMAs** follow less-restrictive antler criteria — 10-inch minimum spread or 13-inch minimum main beam — for legal bucks.

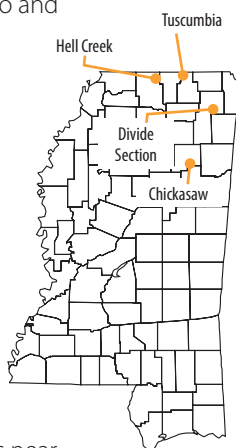
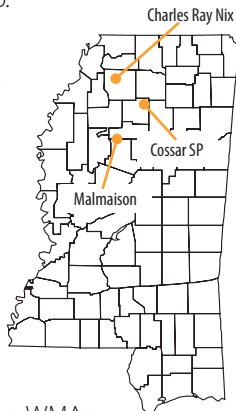
**Charles Ray Nix** and **Cossar State Park WMAs** offer draw hunts for deer.

## NORTHEAST

“**Divide Section WMA** is the best bet for harvesting a deer for meat, as the doe-harvest pressure is not that bad,” biologist Nathan Blount said, describing a 1,537-acre WMA in Tishomingo and Prentiss counties. “And some of our best bucks taken in the region have been harvested here as well.”

**Chickasaw WMA**, which covers 26,815 acres in Chickasaw County, has the best buck harvest per man-day in the region, and there’s plenty of room to spread out and find deer.

“For archers, **Hell Creek WMA** (2,344 acres near New Albany) and **Tuscumbia WMA** (2,693 acres near Corinth) are the best in this region,” Blount said. “Check the WMA regulations for exact hunting dates and opportunities before hunting.” ■



# THE BEST OF THE GAMEBIRDS

By Michael Giles

## QUAIL, DOVES OFTEN FORGOTTEN

**T**wo Southwest Region WMAs, **Marion County** and **Copiah County**, earned the only recommendations from biologists statewide as quail destinations. Biologist Josh Moree said both have decent populations of wild birds and are very popular with hunters. Woodcocks, which are very popular now, have also been reported



Two WMAs in Mississippi’s Southwest Region attract plenty of quail hunters: Marion County and Copiah County.

While there are many public dove fields across the state’s WMAs, only two drew mention from a regional biologist, both youth-oriented.

Black Prairie in the Northeast Region and Mahannah WMA in the Delta will have special youth hunts this year. The Black Prairie Youth Dove Hunt will be Sept. 3; the Mahannah Youth Dove Hunt will be Sept. 8. Both are draw hunts limited to 50 youths. The application period was August.

Dove hunting for all ages will be allowed on specified days after the initial youth hunts are held through the first season segment. Check the local WMA regulations for dates and rules. For more information on dove fields at WMAs around the state check out the MDWFP’s online dove site at <https://www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/dove-program/>. ■

Ducks up next >

# THE DUCK STOPS HERE

By Michael Giles

## SOUTHWEST

**Pearl River WMA** is about the only area in the region that has good waterfowl opportunities, and biologist Josh Moree said it is a youth-only waterfowl hunt, by permit only. This WMA has several managed waterfowl impoundments, as well as 1,000 acres of flooded hardwood, sloughs and moist-soil impoundments. The rest of the region's WMAs have limited wood duck opportunities along creeks, sloughs and other places like that.

## DELTA

As you'd expect, the Delta offers the best duck hunting in Mississippi, and as a by-product, it also offers the best public-land duck hunting. Said biologist Roger Tanksley: "Howard Miller WMA (Issaquena County)

is the top waterfowl WMA in the region and the state, with 2,500 acres of crops — about 400 acres of rice and 1,100 acres of beans — and moist-soil vegetation, so we usually have plenty of ducks. The harvest went up here last year when we cut the hunting back to three days a week.

"I'd say that **William C. Deviney WMA** would be No. 2 in the region. (It was) previously known as Indianola WMA and is a pre-draw area only with no standby."

Another excellent WMA for draw hunts is **Muscadine Farms**, a converted catfish farm with many old, converted ponds.

The best opportunity to hunt every day with no draw hunting is **Sunflower WMA**. With 6,500 acres of slough and slough-control areas that can catch water and back it up to hold ducks, as well as



Mississippi WMAs hold plenty of ducks in many areas of the state, but some properties are water dependent; when there's plenty of water, the ducks will be there.

Mike Giles

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greentree reservoirs, there's just a lot of natural places to hunt.

## **SOUTHEAST**

Because of its proximity to the coastal marshes and the many river systems, the region has some good duck hunting, biologist Cody Haynes said. The massive **Pascagoula River WMA** has a lot of backwater sloughs and is probably the best shot for waterfowl hunters. **Ward Bayou WMA**, south of Pascagoula River WMA, also has good duck hunting opportunities. **Mason Creek** and **Old River WMAs** also have a lot of backwater areas that attract ducks.

## **NORTHWEST**

"**Malmaison** and **Upper Sardis WMAs** are the top destinations for waterfowl hunting in the Northwest WMA Region," biologist Brad Holder said. "Wetland habitat on both attracts waterfowl each winter."

## **EAST CENTRAL**

**Trim Cane WMA** is primarily managed for waterfowl and has the best opportunity to harvest ducks, according

to biologist Chad Masley, who added that if there is water, it usually has a lot of ducks. **Nanhi Waiya WMA**, which has 8,243 acres on the upper Pearl River in Neshoba and Winston counties and **Okatibbee WMA**, adjacent to Okatibbee Lake north of Meridian, can offer excellent waterfowl opportunities.

## **NORTHEAST**

Biologist Nathan Blount said **Tuscumbia WMA** in Alcorn County near Corinth is the best waterfowl hunting opportunity in the region. Rainfall is a necessary component to put water in the duck holes, and if it falls, the area will have ducks. Unit 1 is open to waterfowl hunting, and there's usually a mix of wood ducks and mallards, but a boat is needed to access most of it; there is a boat ramp. Unit 2 is draw-hunt only with nine impoundments, with nine hunters drawn for each impoundment, and each can bring up to three guests. About half the ducks harvested will be



mallards, with some teal, gadwall and pintails mixed in too. **Canal Section** in Prentiss, Itawamba and Monroe Counties has open-water mallards, and Blount said more than 1,000 ducks were taken there last year. ■

Rabbits up next >

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# RUN, RABBIT, RUN

By Michael Giles

Good habitat is the single biggest key to having a huntable population of rabbits in Mississippi, either on private or public land.

## **SOUTHWEST**

In a region without any noted rabbit-heavy WMAs, **Tallahala** has enough acreage to turn loose a pack of beagles to find both hillbilly and canecutter rabbits.

## **SOUTHEAST**

**Theodore Mars WMA** in Pearl River County near Poplarville is the best bet for rabbits in this region, according to biologist Cody Haynes. "The habitat is good for rabbits, so the opportunity is there."

## **EAST CENTRAL**

**Trim Cane WMA** is among the best public rabbit-hunting areas in the state. Biologist Chad Masley said the habitat is managed for rabbits, and many hunters take advantage of the opportunities, which are draw-hunt only. Masley also recommended **Choctaw WMA**, where rabbit numbers quadrupled as the habitat got thicker. There are special dates for rabbit hunts, but the opportunities are good if you can get drawn.

## **DELTA**

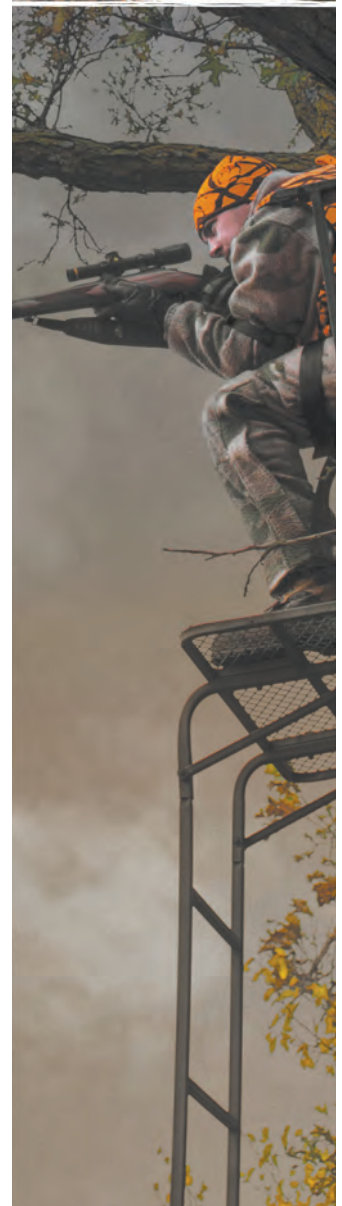
**Lake George WMA**, which covers 8,383 acres in Yazoo County, is extremely popular with rabbit hunters. The high availability of habitat produces outstanding hunting. Hunter success on this area is generally high, and hunting opportunities are practically unrestricted.

## **NORTHWEST**

According to biologist Chad Holder, **Charles Ray Nix WMA** provides the best rabbit hunting in the region, thanks to some old fields with excellent cover providing good rabbit habitat. Decent rabbit hunting can be found at **Calhoun County** and **Upper Sardis**.

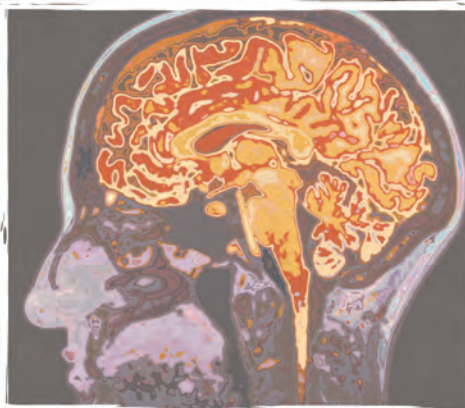
## **NORTHEAST**

**Canal Section** is the most-popular rabbit hunting WMA in the state, according to Blount, who said the southern portion of the WMA is the most popular. **Hell Creek WMA** is also a good bet for harvesting rabbits; it had the best harvest rate at 1.72 per man-day. ■



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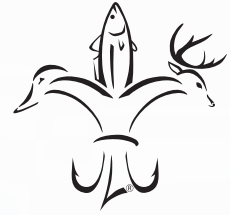
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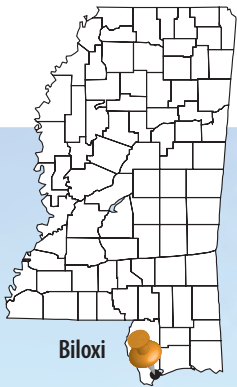


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# MADE IN THE SHADE

By Brian Cope

Keep a sharp eye out for tripletail when you leave the dock in Biloxi; they provide some great, late-summer sight-fishing opportunities.

**W**hen most fishermen hear about saltwater sight-fishing out of Biloxi, they immediately think about spotting redfish tailing in the shallows of the marsh or pushing water against a bank.

But the best sight-fishing experience for those who spend a lot of time on the water might be for tripletail, aka blackfish.

Tripletail enter the Mississippi Sound and Biloxi Marsh in late spring and stick around all summer, until the water temperature drops below about 70 degrees. September is a great month to target them before they head for deeper water.

These fish are hard fighters, tasty on the table, and this time of year, they're easy to find.

For Ronnie Daniels of Fisher-Man Guide Services out of Pass Christian, tripletail are the ultimate sight-fishing quarry.

"Tripletail are a somewhat mysterious fish that a lot of people don't know much about," he said. "They look a lot

like a big, black crappie. They like to hang out under anything that's floating, anything providing shade. They'll lay on their side just under the surface.

"That's part of what makes them so much fun to catch. You can ride along until you see one, circle back, pitch a bait to them, watch them eat the bait, and when you set the hook, you better hang on, because it's about to get exciting."

Instead of checking electronics for telltale signs of structure, baitfish or temperature breaks, finding tripletail is as easy as finding anything that provides underwater shade.

That's another pleasing aspect of the sport: You can do it running at speed, which is great on a hot summer's day.

"Tripletail will come up to the top and put their eyeballs right in the shade of anything that's floating," said Daniels. "The best bet for me — since I know where lots of crab traps are — is to run a whole crab-trap line and just look under the trap floats until we find the fish."

When he finds a tripletail, Daniels likes to have his clients keep it in sight through the entire process. Once the shrimp is in position, he advises anglers to resist the urge to do anything other than let the current carry the bait to the fish.





**“Y**ou can catch these fish on artificial lures, and sometimes we’ll do it if we run out of live bait or if we’re fishing with strictly artificials for other species, and (we) happen upon a tripletail,” he said. “But when we’re really targeting them, you can’t make it any easier on yourself than by using live shrimp.”

Once the fish sees the shrimp, the hardest part for anglers is the waiting. You’ll see the fish react to the shrimp as it turns its nose toward the bait. It might look at it for several seconds from an inch away before it actually bites, so anglers need to be patient but ready to set the hook.

When it comes to tackle and rigging, Daniels prefers three different setups. For all of them, he uses 7-foot-2 custom Parker rods and 3000 series spinning reels spooled with 40-pound braid and 40-pound fluorocarbon leaders.

He calls his first setup a free-line; he splices the fluorocarbon leader to the main line with a knot, then puts one small split shot weight about a foot above the bait, which is impaled on a No. 8 treble hook.

In his second setup, Daniels uses an Oddball popping cork with a 12- to 18-inch leader tied to the treble hook. The third is a slight variation, using a 3-foot leader under the cork. This one is for fishing around floating objects when the tripletail get spooked, dive and are hesitant to return to the surface.


It doesn’t take hours riding to check crab-trap pots and find fish; Daniels said if you’ve got a good pair of polarized shades, you don’t have to slow down very much to spot these fish, and they aren’t as easy to spook as many folks think.

“When I’m looking for these fish, I’ll run down the line of floats anywhere from 26 to 34 miles an hour, depending on what the water conditions will let me see. As long as the



splash of your boat doesn’t land directly on top of the fish, it’s not a problem. Even if the fish go down in the water column when you pass by, they’ll come back up, and you can still catch them.

“Don’t put an angler up on the bow where it’s a safety concern. Once you’re on plane, if the fish are up top and willing to bite, you can see them from anywhere in the boat. These fish are used to crab boats running by and checking crab traps; they’re used to fishermen blowing past them, and they’re used to the wake. As long as you don’t get close enough to directly splash the fish — unless it’s one of those rare days when all the fish are finicky — they’re going to stay up, and you’re going to have a shot at them.”

 Tripletail are usually willing to bite if you can find them and flip a live shrimp into their sight line.



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**M**ark Wright of Legends of the Lower Marsh Fishing Charters in Pass Christian said the trick is

to stay on plane while checking floats.

“If you go too slow, you’re kicking up a bigger wake and disturbing the water more,” Wright said. “Just stay where the water isn’t splashing on top of the floats. The wake when you’re on plane doesn’t bother them.”

Daniels said that while floats are easy to find and predictable places to find tripletail, anglers shouldn’t ignore other types of floating debris, no matter how small or unnatural.

“We’ve caught tripletail under a discarded surgical glove before,” he said. “Half a watermelon, floating plywood, anything on the surface that creates shade — you need to check it out. Sometimes even a small clump of floating grass will have two or three tripletail under it.

“If you encounter multiple pieces of floating grass or other debris, you will often find at least one fish under every piece, and they will stay in the shade of that clump even as it floats freely with the current. You always want to check anything you see — no matter how small it is — that’s floating on the surface.”

Wright agrees that anglers shouldn’t pass up anything

offering shade. Even fixed vertical objects like PVC pipe that’s stuck into the bottom to mark areas like oyster beds will hold tripletail.

“Floating objects are definitely targets you always want to check, but even the thinnest PVC pipe that is stuck into the bottom gives off enough shade to attract these fish,” he said. “The advantage is that there’s no float or buoy rope to worry about tangling your line in.”

Wright also likes live shrimp for bait, and he said small, live menhaden are good bets, too. He prefers to free-line his bait with a single split-shot when he’s able to see the tripletail just under the surface, but he will use corks when the fish don’t show themselves.

“Whether it’s because of too much chop



Though sometimes solid black, hence the nickname “blackfish,” tripletail come in different color patterns, like this interesting mottled look.

**“We’ve caught tripletail under a discarded surgical glove before.”**

on the water or because the fish sim-

ply are staying down, just because you can’t see the fish doesn’t mean they aren’t under these floating or fixed objects that give shade,” Wright said. “This time of year, the tripletail are around, and you’ll find plenty of them on these objects. If you can’t see them, it’s a good bet they’re just a little too deep, and you can catch them on popping corks with one to 3-foot leaders.”

Both captains agree that one of the biggest mistakes anglers make is not realizing that more than one tripletail is often under the same floating object. They advise anglers to keep their eyes peeled for a second or third fish once they spot one.

When you see more than one, the other fish will usually stay put once the first

hooked fish is out of the way. Once the initial tripletail is in the boat, cast another shrimp as quickly as possible. Chances are high that you’ll catch that second fish, and it’s not at all that uncommon to hook the third one as well. ■

*For information on Capt. Ronnie Daniels’ Fisher-Man Guide Service, call (228) 323-1115 on visit his website at [msfisherman.com](http://msfisherman.com).*

*For information on Capt. Mark Wright’s Legends of the Lower Marsh Guide Service, call (228) 324-7612 or visit [legendsofthelowermarsh.com](http://legendsofthelowermarsh.com).*



**Brian Cope** is a retired Air Force combat communications technician. He has been writing about the outdoors since 2006. He’s spent half his life hunting and fishing. The rest, he said, has been wasted.

Because tripletail like a slack tide and calm water — and stay on the top around structure — they are a perfect target for fly fishermen. A permit crab pattern works nicely.



Mark Wright

## Slack tide the right tide for tripletails

Most saltwater anglers believe that moving tides — incoming or outgoing — are the best parts of the tide cycle to fish. And they believe slack tide to be the worst, either slack high or low. The exception is when fishing for tripletail.

These tasty and feisty fish can be caught on a slack tide and/or either a rising or falling tide if the current isn't moving too much, according to Mark Wright of Legends of the Lower Marsh Guide Service.

"When the tide is moving, it's usually not too tough to still see the fish under crab-trap floats or PVC markers, but when it's really ripping and the surface is very choppy, it can be a little challenging to see them," Wright said.

"On the slack tide, it's easier to see them; it's easier to get into casting position without being pushed by the current; and it's easier to spot the fish and watch them take the bait."

In September, tripletail have two things in mind — staying in the shade and eating — and lucky for anglers, these fish really don't care what stage the tide is in. If an easy meal presents itself, they're likely to take it, no matter what.

This makes tripletail a perfect fish in several ways. It means anglers can fish a whole day without skipping a beat during slack tide, and anglers targeting other species like redfish and speckled trout can add tripletail to the menu once the tide is full high or dead low and reds and specks slow down or stop biting.

"When you're running up and down these crab-trap lines, you're normally going to see some tripletail under these floats, but it's even easier to see them at slack tide because there is very little ripple on the surface," Wright said. "Live bait is still a great choice at slack tide, and it's also a really good time for fly anglers to cast small permit crab patterns. It's best to cast as close to the fish as possible, then use slow, short strips to keep the crab in the strike zone as long as possible." ■

A pontoon boat with a blue and white color scheme is on a lake. A man and a child are on board. The boat has a Tohatsu outboard motor. The background shows a rocky shoreline and trees.

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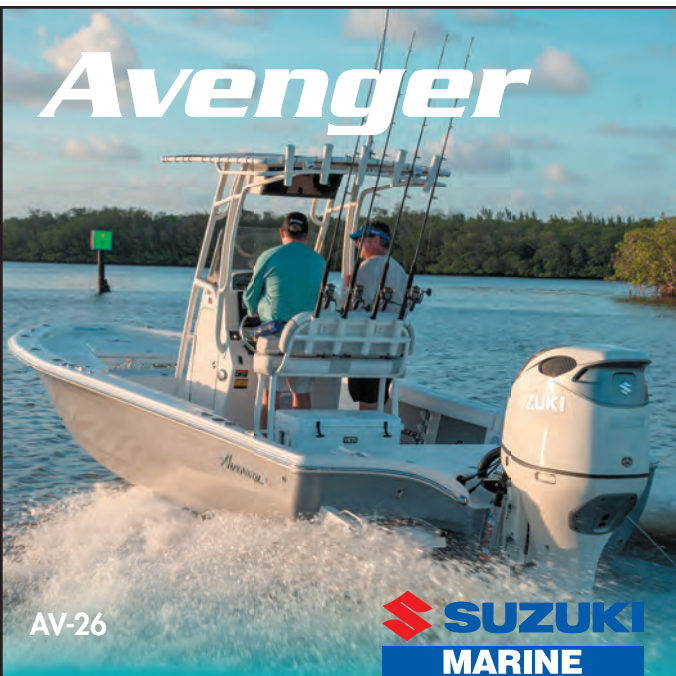
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**W**hen asked about September bass fishing in Mississippi, pro fisherman Pete Ponds answered with an immediate and unexpected question of his own:

“What type of water are you fishing, because that makes a world of difference?” Ponds said. “Are we talking about rivers or reservoirs, medium-sized lakes or subdivision or farm ponds?”

Too often, top-rung bass fishermen respond to questions with answers related to where their professional careers have taken them, like reservoirs and major river systems, overlooking the obvious point that the vast majority of anglers lack the equipment or wherewithal to fish big waters.

“We have to realize that the average fisherman is going to take one rod and reel, or maybe two, and either float, wade or walk around the edges of a small body of water,” said Ponds, who is from Gluckstadt, and, when home, fishes in his subdivision lake, Lake Caroline, and other nearby lakes. “I rarely fish a farm pond; I did when I was younger. I do fish a lot of 100- to 500-acre lakes. I grew up fishing Barnett Reservoir, and I have competitively fished big lakes and rivers for over 20 years.

“They may differ in size and in forage bases, but I usually take the same approach to small ones as I do big ones. That is especially true in September, when the fish are entering the first stages of their cool-down transition.”

**FINDING THE ARTERIES UP NEXT >**

Small ponds, big lakes and rivers, September’s tactics are just about the same. Learn how to approach these different but similar fisheries.

By Bobby Cleveland

# BASS ON ALL FRONTS

Bobby Cleveland



## FINDING THE ARTERIES

Ponds said no matter the size of the pond, there will always be one major September traffic pattern: “usually a creek channel or a ditch, or something that was damned to back up and hold water.”

That’s where he starts.

“In September, especially after the first cool front....” Ponds said, hesitating before adding, “Think about it, we always get a small cool front in September, either right at the start or middle of the month. It doesn’t have to be a major change, just enough degrees that you notice it. Believe me, the fish will notice it — baitfish and predator fish — and it triggers a change.”

Biologists will also tell you that photosensitivity plays a significant, if not dominant, role in behavior. Fish and other wildlife are fine-tuned to the amount of daylight in a 24-hour period. The days growing shorter, even if by mere minutes, is enough to impact their behavior. Even if the weather becomes atypical of any given season — we all know how hot it can be in Mississippi in a deer stand — creatures instinctively know that it’s time to change, be it locating food sources or for purposes of procreation.

“When they feel that first change, that first front, fish start to transition into the fall/winter patterns,” Ponds said. “That means they are going to move to whatever the primary channels are in their core areas. Even 2- or 3-acre farm ponds are going to have something like a ditch that they will relate to.”

“The bigger the lake or river system, the bigger and more numerous those channels will be. That’s where I start looking in September, no matter where I am fishing in Mississippi.”

Okay, let’s go fishing.

## SMALLER PONDS, LAKES

Appropriately named, Ponds said small lakes and stock ponds all have the same kinds of cover and structure as much bigger lake — points, flats, and channels — just on a small scale.

“Find the channel, whatever it is, start in the deepest part of the lake and start moving up,” he said. “Fish will have been in as deep of water as possible during the summer, but as the weather starts cooling, they will start moving back up toward the upper end of the pond or lake.”

“Obviously, most smaller ponds are going to have a sunfish-based baitfish supply instead of shad, and there will be a lot of other food sources in the shallows, like insects, worms and frogs. Try to see what is available.”

Once you have identified the channel and forage, choose a lure that closely resembles the food supply, such as bream-colors on a crankbait.

“Depending on whether or not you are in a boat will somewhat dictate what you can throw,” Ponds said. “If you are in some type of watercraft, you can get out on the lake in the channel and throw a crankbait that is suitable for depth and work shallow to deep. I like to use a Bandit Series 200 or a shallow Bandit Flat Maxx in a bream pattern, but if the water is a little deeper, say 6 to 10 feet or more, then I switch to a Series 300. If you are throwing from a bank, you will be retrieving from deep to shallow. Then you might can get away with the 200, maybe, but may have to consider dropping to a 100.”

Pete Ponds wants to be on the water after the first cool snap that requires a jacket; it’s probably his favorite fishing day of the year.



Bobby Cleveland

# FIVE BAITS

## Ponds ties on this month

Bass pro Pete Ponds is an avid dove hunter, but when he's not in a sunflower field in The Delta in September, you will find him on the water doing what he enjoys most: catching big bass.

If you look in his boat, you will likely see about a dozen rods on deck with an assortment of lures tied on. According to Ponds, there are five lures you will always find this month:

- Series 200 Bandit crankbait and a shallow Flat Maxx.
- A drop-shot rig with a small Yum Warning Shot or the Yum Sharp Shooter on a spinning outfit
- A plastic frog: The Scum Dog from the Mississippi-based Southern Lure Co.
- A hard-bodied topwater lure: either a Spook or a Pop-R.
- A swim jig: typically his own pro model made by Talon, with a Yum Woolly Hawgcrawl plastic trailer. ■

Look in Pete Ponds' boat in September and you are going to find at least one rod with a Bandit 200 crankbait, for obvious reasons.



Bobby Cleveland

Even on small impoundments, fish tend to group up in September, Ponds said, and that increases feeding activity.

“Look for bass pushing bream up to the surface, and when you do, you can count on bites,” he said. “I like a Yum Pulse, a Fluke-like lure, or a Pop-R when they are on top. A small buzzbait is another choice.”

Ponds said soft plastics are always popular on small lakes, usually Texas-rigged but also Carolina- or wacky-rigged. One of Ponds' favorites to work in the shallows is to wacky rig a Yum Dinger, a Senko-type bait, on a small finesse hook.

“Fish gather up, so look for a pattern to form,” he said. “A place where a point or flat reaches the edge of the channel is perfect. It might be that outside bends or inside bends of the ditch or creek is what holds fish. Try to figure that out, and when you do, work it all the way back up the channel.”

Mississippi has seen a boom in housing developments around lakes, usually those covering 50 to 100 acres. Joe Watts of Canton lives on a 50-acre lake and fishes it regularly.

“No matter what time of year it is, there is a going to be a shallow-water bite somewhere on the lake every day,” Watts said. “The great thing about a small lake is that a fish can be around a channel or a point, or on some deep cover, and only be a quick swim from the bank. They can decide to move up to eat and just go do it.”

“The banks I look for in the summer are nearest the deep end, but in September and on into October, they move up the old creek and back toward the big flats on the upper ends of the

lake and coves. My favorite bait then is red lipless crankbait, mainly a Strike King Red Eye Shad. They kill it, whether I'm fishing from the bank, a pier or a two-man boat.”

Dan Smith of Ridgeland primarily fishes a 500-acre subdivision lake and a 20-acre stocked private lake, both in Madison County. He's a hardcore cover fisherman.

“Both of these lakes were built in the last 30 years after the fishing world discovered the importance of creating cover in lakes,” he said. “Instead of just digging out a big hole for a lake, they knocked down the trees and formed structure. They did it with a lot of thought, too, in how it needed to be arranged for maximum effect. The smaller lake has a lot of cover in rows in deep water, and then isolated cover along the main ditches and the old creek. The bigger lake has acres of old timber in the windrows all over the place, but some isolated patches.

“Those isolated patches on the points and along the channel is where I find the best fish holding in big numbers in September and really good in October, but the giant fish are always on the isolated stumps. A stump in 6 to 8 feet of water near a creek is going to have a big fish on it. If I can't get one on a crankbait or a swimbait, then I will use a 10-inch worm.”

**MAJOR RESERVOIRS UP NEXT >**

## MAJOR RESERVOIRS

When Ponds talks about big waters in Mississippi, he talks mostly about Barnett Reservoir, his home lake and where he learned to fish. He's still learning.

"You might think you know it inside and out, but there is always something different," he said. "Like in the last five years, I've learned that in September, the upper river area of Barnett is a great place to try a drop-shot worm on sandbar points. It works great on the spotted bass, but it also catches largemouth."

Little discoveries like that keep fishing interesting for pros, and weekend warriors.

"I like that, but I also realize that the same patterns that have produced great fishing for decades still work on Barnett, like

fishing the points and pads upriver when the gizzard shad start showing up," Ponds said. "That's always September magic. Gizzard shad are bigger than threadfin, which are more populous, but this time of year is when they migrate out of the deeper main lake and river and start moving toward the shallows. They are the ones you can see jumping, and when you do, it's worth investigating that area because they aren't jumping because they like it. Something is trying to eat them, and that is usually big largemouth.

"Both gizzard and threadfin shad migrate off the main lake, either toward the shallow coves of the lake or up the river or Pelahatchie Creek. When you see the first signs of dying pads, then you know the shad are coming. When they come, the bass will be right with them, usually in a school."

Barnett bass are famous for crushing plastic frogs, and the pattern will work in September, but Ponds likes a buzzbait.

"They will be actively feeding and are aggressive most of the time," he said. "A buzzbait can produce a lot of action, and if it slows, then I will switch to either a swim jig or a Yum Dinger in the pads. The key is finding the places where ditches or creeks enter a pad field, or pad fields on points and secondary points off the river. That's where they really load up."

"When you find a school chasing those big gizzard shad to the point that they are jumping out of the water, you need to get on that right away, because those will be bigger bass, like 3- and 4- and 5-pounders. Those gizzard shad are game-changers. Fish your way into those creeks and openings, starting on the outside and fish in."

On overcast days, flats on the outer edges of the pad fields on the main lake or along popular creek channels, become fish havens as bass move out to feed on the shad.

"That's when I want a crankbait and cover as much water as possible," Ponds said. "I really like the shallow version of the Bandit Flat Maxx or the lipless Yum One Knocker or Hard Knocker. It can get wild."

## RIVER SYSTEMS UP NEXT >



Bobby Cleveland

When working pad stems or other vegetation in September, Pete Ponds likes to fish a soft-plastic Senko-type bait like the Yum Dinger.

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## RIVER SYSTEMS

"I really like the rivers in September, and for me, that means the Pearl on the upper end of Barnett, but the same things work on other rivers around Mississippi," Ponds said. "September is a great time to be on the rivers.

"That's where the shad migrations are the biggest, and where you find a great combination of points and cuts, secondary points and cuts and moving water. Current is important, and it is important for a fisherman to learn how current can place fish on certain structure, like a point. The aggressive fish are always going to be on the outside of the point in the current, looking for something to pick off. Less-aggressive fish that will still be hungry are going to be on the inside of the point, the slack side. How you approach the two is going to be different."

The aggressive fish in the current will hit just about any bait, Ponds said.

"It's 'Katie-bar-the-door' type fishing," he said. "A crankbait that matches the depth will work; a lipless crankbait will, too. Heck, anything will, but you want something you can work it quick with. There won't be as many fish in the current as there will be on the slack side, so after picking off the aggressive fish, move around and start fishing the slack side. Most times, you will have to slow down and use more finesse, like a drop shot."

The ideal situation, Ponds said, is finding a point that creates a natural eddy in the current.

"You find those eddies, and it's like finding a vein of gold ore instead of a nugget or two," he said. "It's the jackpot."

Another good place to look is the outside bends of the river, where Ponds said the current is naturally the strongest.

"Anything you can find that breaks the current and creates a little eddy water, that's where you can find pockets of bass," he said. "They'll be sitting in that slack water always watching for something to pass by that they can pounce on. A Whing-Ding (tail-spinner) type lure is deadly, but so is a drop-shot. Don't think a big fish won't eat a 4- or 5-inch drop-shot worm. They will and not think twice about it until they are in your hand in a boat taking a picture." ■



**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.

Finding isolated cover like stumps on shallow- to medium-depth flats produce lunker largemouths for Dan Smith in September.



# Electronics make drop-shot **BETTER, MORE FUN**

Pete Ponds uses his electronics to pinpoint fish on points and other cover. He said it has increased his productivity and his fun.

When Pete Ponds is fishing a river system in September, he relishes the improving drop-shot bite, not just because it produces fish, but also because it's possible to see the bite — even in deep water, and big fish.

"With the new electronics like my Lowrance HCS 16 or HCS 12 systems, I can not only find the fish more easily, but watch the action take place," Ponds said. "You can see the lure, and you can see the fish, and you can see the fish move to the lure and take it."

"That's pretty cool."

Ponds uses his electronics to locate schools of fish on the ends of sandbar points in the river, like on the Pearl on the upper end of Barnett Reservoir near Jackson. Then, he uses them to pinpoint his presentation.

"It's added a whole new dimension to fishing," he said. "This technology stuff is crazy."

Ponds has always caught fish in these scenarios, but he now has a better understanding of how and why vertical fishing works.

"I've learned more about how fish are positioned on the points and in the cuts, and I've learned which fish in which positions are the most aggressive," he said.

"One thing I've learned is this drop-shotting on the river is a lot more productive than I thought. I used to enjoy going out to the Pearl and using it to target spotted bass, but now I'm catching largemouth bass in those same areas on the same pattern. Big fish, too."

"You'd be surprised how little the boat affects fish in those situations. I used to think it was a deep-water tactic only, but I've caught big largemouth and spots in as little as 7 or 8 feet of water, fishing straight down."

Sounds likes fun!

Said Ponds: "It is." ■



Bobby Cleveland

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# A Scout is...

Deer hunters should be prepared to figure out where whitetails will be when bow season opens. Knowing food sources and trails approaching them will give you a leg up.

By Phillip Gentry

**P**erry Ross of Big Creek never thinks of deer hunting as a seasonal sport. At 55, he's got nearly 50 years under his belt in the woods, and for him, there's the offseason and the on-season — but it's always deer season.

Ross hunts huge parcels of land in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas as part of his business, Ross Trophy Outfitters, but he's always got something cooking at home by the time Oct. 1 rolls around, opening day of Mississippi's archery season.

Ross believes deer season actually begins the day the previous season ends. He understands that not every deer hunter keeps such a strict regimen, and he had some tips for hunters who are late to the party.

"If you watch deer hunting on TV, you see hunters headed out into the cold to hunt; that's not Mississippi," he said. "This is hot-weather hunting for the first part of the season, and you have to plan and hunt differently because of that."



## A Scout is...

**W**ith a month to go until the fun starts, many deer clubs are rushing to get food plots in the ground. Ross said they are important for nutrition and antler development, and they can be hunted over, but in Mississippi, food plots typically aren't a big draw during daylight hours until much later in the season.

"You are much better off during the preseason identifying the places that have oak flats," he said. "Water oaks and pin oaks will drop first, and then you'll get white oaks and red oaks and whatever else is available. Your better deer tend not to hit food plots or baited areas until after dark."

Ross (662-983-9304) said identifying the No. 1 food source deer will use on a property — oak trees — will provide clues about where to hunt. Some hunters will throw up a ladder stand with a clear view of several trees in close proximity; Ross wants to back up and find trails leading to those oaks, which requires spending some quality time on the ground scouting.

"As hunters, we do a lot to educate deer about how we hunt them," Ross said. "We put up trail cameras, and we go in there every day and check them. When a good buck does show up on camera, he knows you better than you know him."

Having hunted in wide-open ranges as well as thicker forests, Ross said Southern deer — and Mississippi deer in particular — rely on their sense of smell a lot more than sight or hearing. At times, deer may not believe what they see if they can't attach a scent to it. Because of that, how a hunter approaches an area is critical anytime he steps in the woods.

"When I'm preseason scouting, whether that's using a program like X-maps or just a handheld map, I'm looking for likely bedding areas and then for pinch points or edges between the bedding area and those oak flats," Ross said. "I'm also planning my approach to those areas, even the first time I walk in. I want to make sure I'm going in downwind and not leaving a bunch of scent behind to educate those deer."

While other hunters are busy building and putting up stands, Ross ([www.rosstrophyoutfitters.com](http://www.rosstrophyoutfitters.com)) prefers the versatility of a climbing stand or a portable lock-on. If he has an area he likes from his scouting, he keeps in mind the two most-likely wind scenarios he'll face in Mississippi — southwest or north winds — and he makes sure he's identified areas to place his stand on the daily conditions when he goes to hunt.

"We get a lot of southwest winds in Mississippi in the early season, so I want to make sure I have my area planned out for a southwest stand," he said. "When the weather changes, we get north winds for a few days, so I also want to plan for that."

Like other hunters who are out hanging and checking trail cameras before the season, Ross will use game cameras to collect information, but his take on them is more pro-active than most.

"First of all, you're going to need more cameras than you think," he said. "I'm trying to identify a trophy buck's core area, so when you see the, then look for the travel route he's using and back down that trail to his bedding area."

continues on page 48 >>>

Mississippi hunters need to locate stands for the early season to take into account the predominant southwest wind, plus the occasional north wind.



Phillip Gentry

# No matter the weapon, practice

While you're getting the land and your knowledge of it in shape, don't forget about re-honing those shooting skills. Whether you hunt with modern firearm, bow or primitive weapon, putting practice time in at the range is a great idea.

Les Smith hunts near his home in Senatobia and has his property set up for some long shots, even out to the 400-yard range.

"We've got some permanent shooting houses where we can see 400 to 500 yards," he said. "That kind of shot isn't for everyone, but if you don't practice at that range, you'll never make that shot when it counts."

While having a steady rest and reliable equipment are keys to accurate hunting, toning muscle strength for bow season is a real asset for archers like Chuck Wilson of Columbus.

"I try to shoot year-round, but I get my bow out at least two months ahead of time, so by late July or August, I start shooting 15 or 20 shots in the afternoon after work," Wilson said. "I don't just stand and shoot, either. I get out one of my ladder stands and move it around and try to think of real-life shots I may have to make, like shooting to my weak side or behind me or leaning out to shoot around a limb. That way I know I can make a tough shot or if I need to wait for a better one." ■



Phillip Gentry

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## A Scout is...

**R**oss has a warning for hunters who fall in love with a buck they find on camera: everything changes once the velvet comes off. He said a good buck is likely to move once the season arrives. He believes this is God's way of making sure the buck isn't inbreeding. You can kill him, he said, but you have to do it quickly.

"The good news is that some good buck on another property will leave there and is likely to show up where you're at," he said. "That's why identifying the core area is important. Get in there and hunt him before the mating season changes everything."

A final tip on preseason scouting and even seasonal scouting with cameras is to check them every six or seven days instead of daily. If you have a camera at a baited area, check it when you put out new bait. If it's close to an area you are hunting, take a card with you on the hunt and pull the old card on your way out.

Ross summed up his thoughts on being late to any piece of property, both in joining a club and on the day of the hunt. He tells the story of being a new member in a big club. When opening day arrived, all the members drove out to their stands in their side-by-sides, hunted until 10:30 and came back for breakfast. Ross had done his scouting and figured out likely escape routes once the hunting pressure increased, and he used that knowledge to kill a nice buck every opening day for several years.

"I took a climber and went in the long way, well before daylight," he said. "I had figured out where the deer were approaching other stands and where they would go once things got hectic. The second thing I did was stay in the woods well past 10 o'clock. Once everyone else packed up and began to leave, they pushed the deer right to me, and I had 15 to 20 nice bucks to choose from.

"Most of the time, especially in a big club, you have to be smarter than the deer as well as smarter than the competition." ■



Locating a big buck's core area helps hunters avoid being left behind when the buck changes patterns, looking for does.



**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.

continues on page 50 >>>



Trail cameras provide clues to deer movements, but guide Perry Ross bets you're going to need more cameras than you think, and recommends checking them weekly instead of daily.

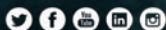


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# Last-minute land: go deep, stay late

Most hunting clubs or landowners look for new members or leases during the summer. Word-of-mouth is the more common way that openings get filled, but some larger clubs or tracts may advertise in the newspaper, want ads or even online on social media pages.

However, if you've ever been a member of a large club, you've probably witnessed last-minute openings that were hard to fill. That being said, it pays to network with other hunters and let people know if you're looking for a new place to hunt.

"We have around 15 members in a big tract I hunt near Ramsey Springs," said hunter Ron Smith of Hattiesburg. "The lease comes due in June, and nearly every year, there's somebody that says they're going to pay their dues and then something comes up. I don't know how many times we're in September looking to fill at least one spot."

Public land seems to get a bad rap, but while you may not be able to build stands or plant food plots on WMAs, taking the time to learn public land means you'll never have to be without a place to hunt.

Succeeding on public land or on private lands that are new to you have basically the same requirement — hunt deeper and longer.

"I hunted public land for many years," Smith said. "It was always my experience



Ronnie Galliard

Getting in on a lease or hunt-club land late in the preseason doesn't have to hurt your chances of taking a big buck.

that most hunters didn't hunt very far from the truck, and they would be gone after about 10 o'clock in the morning. People get spoiled, but the deer don't just vanish after the morning hours. That's actually a pretty good time to have somebody spook one to you." ■

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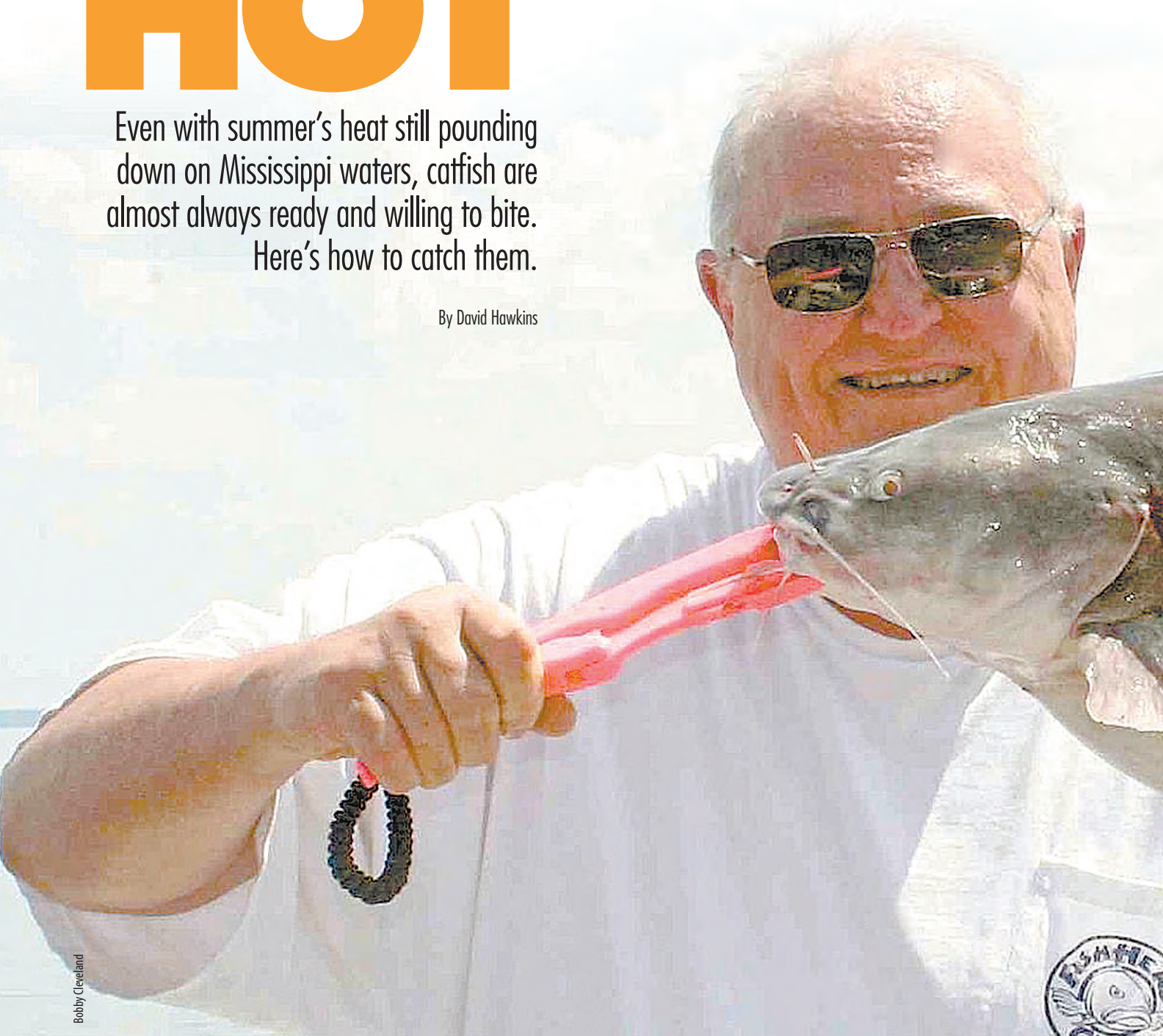


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# COLOR CATFISH HOT

Even with summer's heat still pounding down on Mississippi waters, catfish are almost always ready and willing to bite. Here's how to catch them.

By David Hawkins



Bobby Cleveland

**S**eptember in Mississippi can be the hottest time of the year. Noted for the return of football, deer-camp workdays and oppressive heat, it is still the heart of summer — even though fall is on the horizon as the ninth month arrives.

Yet on the water, on the steamiest of days, the hottest action is often for catfish. As miserable as the mid-day heat may be, it's never too hot to catch catfish.

Mississippi waters are home to a large number of catfish species and subspecies, but only three — flatheads, blues and

channels — are targeted for their size and quality as table fare. Many a skillet of hot grease has welcomed a yellow bullhead, aka mud-cat, but most of those little cats are caught in smaller rivers and creeks on limb lines with earthworms.

Of the big three species, flatheads are by far the most prized. Their flesh is white and delicate; it can be baked or broiled, but battered and fried is by far the top choice. Flatheads are river dwellers, choosing to occupy deep holes or live under logjams where they can lie in wait for a passing meal. They prefer live bait.

Blue cats are another river-dweller, but without the selective palate. A blue will eat just about anything; stink baits are a top choice, as are cut shad. Goldfish and large shiners are good choices for anglers looking for a less-odiferous offering. Blues like to be close to deep water but

will patrol shallow flats at night.

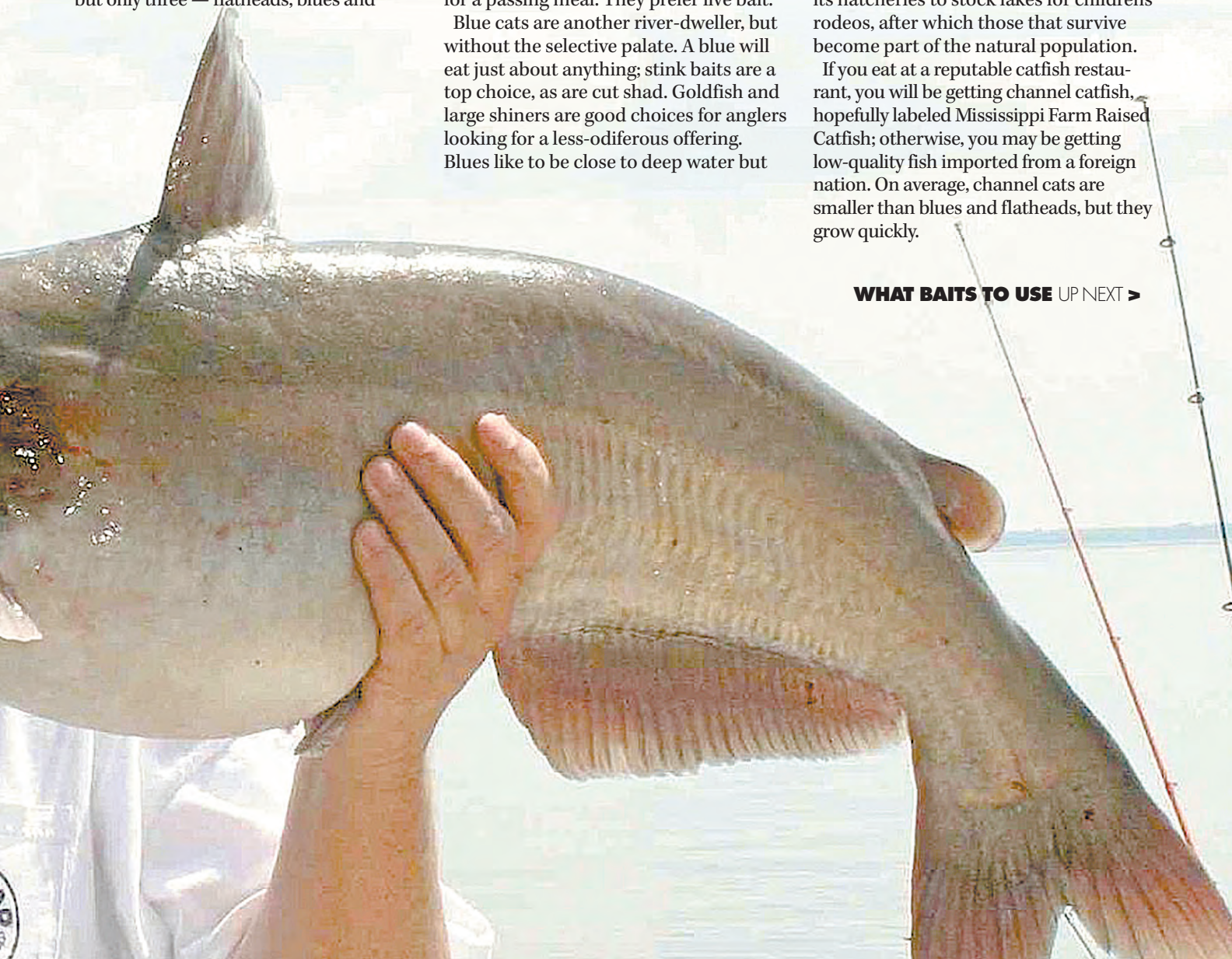
Channels are the most-frequently stocked catfish, both for fishing and for aquaculture purposes.

“Channel cats are the only catfish stocked into state lakes and state park lakes,” said Jerry Brown, a biologist with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. “These fish are easy to catch and are commonly caught by live-bait anglers seeking crappie or bream.”

The agency uses channel cats raised in its hatcheries to stock lakes for childrens' rodeos, after which those that survive become part of the natural population.

If you eat at a reputable catfish restaurant, you will be getting channel catfish, hopefully labeled Mississippi Farm Raised Catfish; otherwise, you may be getting low-quality fish imported from a foreign nation. On average, channel cats are smaller than blues and flatheads, but they grow quickly.

**WHAT BAITS TO USE** UP NEXT >





## WHAT BAITS TO USE

There are two kinds of catfish bait: live or stink. We'll cover the stinkbaits first. There are two types, store-bought and homemade.

When shopping or creating stinkbaits, consider these two factors:

- How well does it stay on the hook?
- Does it create a little slick or scent trail in the water for the catfish to follow?

Chicken livers are popular baits, but the meat is fragile and difficult to keep on the hook. Beef or pork liver stays hooked better and leaves a decent scent trail. Hot dogs soaked in fish oil and garlic and cut into three equal lengths do well where current is weak. Soak the wieners overnight in a plastic bag. Don't worry about the grade; the cheap red hotdogs do just fine. A pack of eight cut into thirds will yield 24 baits.

Blood-based baits are sold commercially, with some requiring a sponge to hold the bait on the hook. Some come in a tube, with the contents to be squeezed into another plastic cavity attached to the hook; others are a paste intended to be rolled into a ball, then squeezed onto the hook. These work, but then, some catfish will eat anything.

Josh Hawkins of Pelahatchie hoists a nice blue catfish that bit on a live goldfish presented under a jug.



One angler I know collects road kill that has ripened in the summer sun. He strips the meat from the bones and places it on the hook as is. I've seen coolers of catfish he says came from the Pearl River near the Low Head dam.

He eats well.

Fresh or frozen cut bait is my favorite stinkbait. Use a cast net to harvest shad or catch small bream on a hook and line. Use the live bream as bait for flatheads and cut the shad/dead bream into chunks for channels and blues.

While fishing on the Tennessee River last summer, I was introduced to a new catfish bait — at least new for me. Richard Simms of Scenic City Charters uses cut shad for big blue cats, but when it comes time to drift, he hooks on a chunk of chicken, the cuts you'd likely find in home refrigerator.

"Boneless breast is best," Simms said. "Just trim all the excess fat and skin from the chicken. Chicken tenders also work if you are targeting smaller fish."

I can't argue. We boated a dozen blues ranging from 15 to 26 pounds during a two-hour drift. I'm anxious to try the technique on the Mississippi River and Tenn-Tom.

Some other bait choices are: live minnows, goldfish, cheese, P&G bar soap, sun-ripened shrimp, squid, cheap cat food wrapped in a gauze bag, and crappie and bream heads from previous fishing trips.

Live bait for big flatheads includes but is not limited to bream or other sunfish. Since law does not allow the commercial sale of gamefish, you will have to catch them yourself. It is legal to use gamefish for bait, if they are caught by legal methods. This is not difficult: a few minutes with a hook, line and either worms and/or crickets fished around the edges of a lake or river can usually result in a dozen or so prime baits.

Cut shad is a top choice for catfish bait. The head, with the guts attached, lays down a scent trail in the water catfish cannot ignore.



David Hawkins

## MISSISSIPPI'S RECORD CATFISH

**Channel catfish:** 51 pounds, 12 ounces, Tom Edwards, Lake Tom Bailey, May 31, 1997.

**Blue catfish:** 95 pounds, Dakota Hinson, Mississippi River, Natchez, March 16, 2009.

**Flathead catfish:** 77.7 pounds, Matt Bingham, Mississippi River, DeSoto County, April 21, 2012.

**Black bullhead:** 5.56 pounds, Harold B. Alexander, Sunrise Lake, June 21, 1988.

**Brown bullhead:** 6.13 pounds, Bobby L. Gibson, farm pond, Gautier, Jan. 19, 1991.

**Yellow bullhead:** 2 pounds, 13 ounces, Robert Cason, Mossy Lake, May 26, 1974.

Hook the bream under and toward the back of the dorsal fin. Cut off part of the tail fan to add to the injured fish appeal. Big catfish find them difficult to resist.

Crayfish may well be the best live bait going for all species of big catfish. Examine the stomach contents of the catfish you catch; chances are their bellies will be full of shad and crayfish. Remove the pincers and hook them so that they swim backwards. Making a crayfish trap and using it properly will provide all the bait you'll need for a September outing.

**GEARING UP** UP NEXT >

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## GEARING UP

Ask 100 catfish anglers the best way to fish, and you'll get about 200 answers. Jug-fishing is growing in popularity, and trotlines seem to be holding their own. Rods and reels still have a strong following, as do set lines.

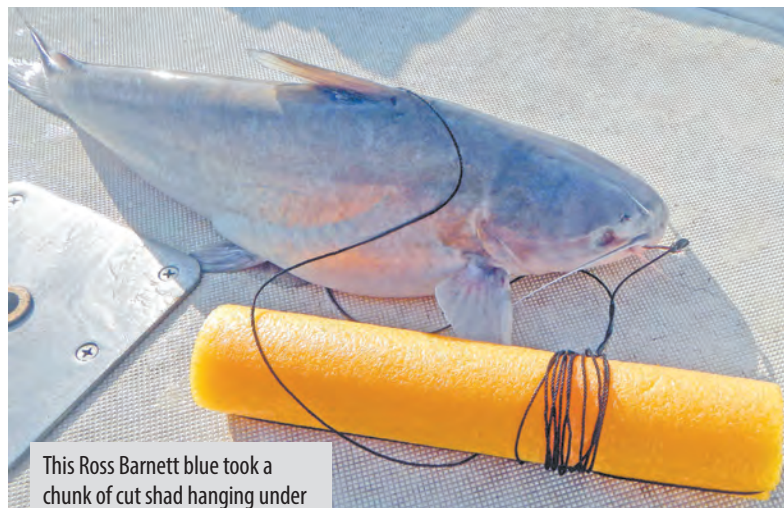
Using an FFFD (free-floating fishing device) — or jug — comes with some restrictions. They are prohibited on state lakes and state park lakes but are allowed on rivers and reservoirs. Consult local and state regulations before throwing out a spread.

A typical jug will consist of a painted, 2-liter soft-drink bottle with a length of line attached to the neck. Fancier rigs are being made out of PVC inside swimming pool noodles. Add a hook and weight plus your favorite bait, and you're all set to fish.

Using split rings and snap swivels will make the fishing depth adjustable. Adding reflective tape makes the devices easier to see when fishing at night. Needless to say, the devices can be as simple or complex as you wish them to be. Commercial models are sold at all big-box sporting goods stores for those wanting a ready-rig.

Trotlining is simply stretching a long line of set hooks between two fixed objects, such as stumps or poles. Each of the lines holding a hook should be on a swivel to prevent the lines from becoming a hopelessly tangled mess. Another trotline method is to secure one end to a stump or pole and the other end to a weight, such as a rock or a coffee can filled with concrete. This allows the bait to reach a greater depth, presenting the baits to more fish.

Jug fishing for catfish is a perfect way to involve the family, with each member having a role to play, from operating the boat to baiting hooks to tossing the jugs.



This Ross Barnett blue took a chunk of cut shad hanging under a homemade FFFD made from a swimming noodle.

Photos by David Hawkins

Catfish are notorious for swallowing hooks. Removing these hooks can become difficult and time consuming. For that reason, many anglers make up a number of quick replacement rigs. That allows them to simply detach a fish, hook and all, and recover the hook during fish cleaning. A heavy-duty snap swivel is the easiest way to accomplish this. Trotline clips serve the same purpose and are found wherever fishing tackle is sold.

Rods and reels can run the gamut from cheap to expensive. Use the gear best adapted to the size catfish you wish to catch. Using gear that is too light can result in frustration and too many lost fish.

Start with a medium to heavy, 5- to 6-foot rod. A 7-footer will work, especially when long casts are warranted. Saltwater tackle made for redfish is ideal for Mr. Whiskers. Surf rods are good for casting long distances but are gross overkill for smaller fish.



## PROCESSING THE CATCH

Very large catfish are fun to catch and definitely make for impressive photos, but they are not generally considered the top table fare, especially those in the 30-pound range and up, the size noodlers like Greg Parker of Brandon often grab. But he doesn't hesitate to cook big fish.

"The quality of the meat can be greatly improved by cutting off the tail, just ahead of the tail fin," he said. "This allows the fish to bleed out. Removing the thin strip of red meat along the lateral line and the yellowish meat along the top of the back will also improve overall flavor."

## WHERE TO GO

Listing hot spots for Mississippi catfish would take forever; it would be a much shorter list if we identified waters that won't produce.

For bank-fishing, a good starting place would be Mississippi's state lakes and state parks systems. These lakes boast

good populations of channel catfish and are constantly restocked as needed. The state-record channel was caught in Lake Tom Bailey in Lauderdale County.

Trotliners love the upper river and creek areas of reservoirs and lakes, as well as the cottonwood trees and willows along the banks of oxbow lakes.

For the most-serious fishermen and trophy anglers, however, nothing short of waters having river as part of their names will do. Whether from a sandbar in the Mississippi River, or a clean bank on the upper portion of the Big Black, flathead and blue cats can be coaxed from the river drainages of the state, just about anywhere you drop a bait in the water. ■



David Hawkins is a freelance writer living in Forest, Miss. He can be reached at [hawkins2209@att.net](mailto:hawkins2209@att.net).

The author found that a big chunk of chicken breast will work on big blue catfish, catching this 25.8-pound fish at Pickwick Lake.



David Hawkins



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FISH SPECIES	Minimum Lengths	Creel Limit (per person)
Greater amberjack	34" FL	1/day
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	no limit
White marlin	66" LJFL	no limit
Sailfish	63" LJFL	no limit
Sharks (large coastal/pelagic)@	37" TL*	1/day or 3/boat
Sharks@	25" TL*	4/day
Cobia	33" FL	2 per day
Redfish (red drum)	18" minimum	
	30" maximum TL	3/day (1 over 30")
Flounder (state waters)	12" TL	15/day
Groupers (black and gag)	24" TL@	4/day aggregate
Hogfish	12" FL@	5/day
Red, yellowfin grouper	20" TL@	4/day
Scamp grouper	16" TL@	4/day
Speckled hind/Warsaw grouper	no minimum@	1/day each
Gray/schoolmaster/cubera/ mahogany/yellowtail/dog snapper	12" TL@	10/day aggregate
Mutton snapper	16" TL@	10/day
Queen/blackfin/silk/winchman snapper	none@	10/day aggregate
Vermillion/lane snapper	10"/8" TL@	20/day aggregate
Gray triggerfish	14" FL@	20/day
Golden/blueline/anchor/blackline tilefish	none@	20/day
King mackerel	24" FL@	2/day
Spanish mackerel	no minimum size@	15/day
Yellowfin tuna	27" CFL@	3/day
Bigeye tuna	27" CFL@	no limit
Tripletail	18" TL	3/day
Spotted sea trout (speckled)	15"	15/day

@ For openings and closings of federally regulated fish and updated size limits, visit [gulfcouncil.org](http://gulfcouncil.org).

**FRESHWATER**

FISH Species (Inland waters)	Minimum Size Limit	Creel Limit (per day)
Crappie/Panfish #	%	30 crappie, 100 bream
Largemouth, smallmouth, spotted bass	%	10 in combination
Channel catfish	No more than 1 over 34"	None +
Blue catfish	No more than 1 over 34"	None +
Flathead catfish	No more than 1 over 34"	None +
Striped bass or hybrid bass	15"	6 in combination
Mountain Trout (Lake Lamar Bruce)	No restrictions	3
Sauger	%	10
Walleye	%	3
Alligator gar/paddlefish	No fish over 30" in creel	2

TL=Total Length; LJFL=Lower jaw to middle of fork in tail; FL=Fork Length (tip of snout to middle of fork in tail); CFL=Curved Fork Length (measure of a line tracing contour of body from tip of upper jaw to fork of the tail).

+ In Lake Okhissa, 5 per day, in ReCon Lake and all MDWFP lakes, 10 per day

% For lake-specific regs, see MDWFP's Regulations Digest or [www.mdwfp.com](http://www.mdwfp.com)/

# In Lake Okhissa and Percy Quin State Park, the creel limit is 50 per day.

\* Possession of certain species of sharks is prohibited.

**HUNTING SEASONS**

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Doves	Sept. 1-Oct. 7 (n), Sept. 1-Sept. 9 (s)	15	45
	Oct. 27-Nov. 7 (n), Oct. 6-Nov. 7 (s)		
	Dec. 22-Jan. 31 (n), Dec. 15-Jan. 31 (s)		
Quail	Nov. 22-March 2	8	
Rabbit	Oct. 1-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (fall)	Sept. 30-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (spr)	May 15-June 1	4	
Raccoon	July 1-Sept. 30	1 raccoons per party	
Rac/Opp/Bobct	Oct. 1-Oct. 31 (food/sport)	5/day, 8/party	
	Nov. 1-Feb. 28 (food/sport/pelt)	No limit	
<b>Rails</b>			
King & Clapper	Sept. 2-Nov. 10	25	75
Sora & Virginia,	Sept. 2-Nov. 10	15	45
Gallinules	Sept. 2-Nov. 10	15	45
Snipe	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28	8	24
Crow	Nov. 4 - Feb. 28	No limit	No limit
Woodcock	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31	3	9
<b>Wild Turkey</b>			
Fall season	Oct. 15-Nov. 15 (selected counties)	2 per season (may be either sex)	
Spring season	March 15-May 1	1/day, 3/season, longbeards only	
Youth season	March 8-14	1/day, 3/season, bearded birds only	

**WATERFOWL SEASONS**

SPECIES	DATES	BAG LIMIT
Duck	Teal only: Sept. 15-30	6
	Nov. 23-25, Nov. 30-Dec. 2	6
	Dec. 5-Jan. 27	
Geese	Sept. 1-30	5
(Canada, blue, Ross, white-fronted, brant)	Nov. 9-25, Nov. 30-Dec. 2,	Canada 3, Brant 1
	Dec. 5-Jan. 27	Snow/blue/Ross 20 White-fronted 3
Light Geese conservation	Oct. 1-Nov. 8, Jan. 28-Feb. 1, Feb. 3-March 31	No limit

**DEER SEASON**

ZONE	ARCHERY	PRIM WEAPON	GUNS
Northeast	Oct. 1-Nov. 16	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 17-31 (archery/primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 16(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)
East Central	Oct. 1-Nov. 16	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 17-31 (archery-primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 16(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)
Southwest	Oct. 1-Nov. 16	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 17-31 (archery-primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan.16(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)
Southeast	Oct. 15-Nov. 16	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Jan. 1 (dogs)
	Jan. 17-31 (either-sex arch-primitive)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Feb. 1-15 (archery-primitive bucks only)		Dec. 24-Jan. 16(dogs) Nov. 3-Feb. 15(youth)
Delta	Oct. 1-Nov. 16	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 17-Jan. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 5-16 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 17-31(archery primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 17(dogs) Nov. 3-Jan. 31 (youth)

A man wearing a camouflage cap and vest is smiling while holding a dove in his left hand and a shotgun in his right. He is standing in a field of harvested corn stalks under a clear blue sky. A large sunflower is positioned in the upper right corner of the page.

# FIND THE Dove Buffet

By Jeff Burleson

The best wing-shooting on Labor Day weekend will usually be in fields where doves have discovered a solid food source. You need to join them.

**W**ith an estimated population of 275 million in North America, the mourning dove is one of the most-abundant and recognizable birds in the land. In the south, Labor Day weekend brings hunters from all walks of life into fields for the opening day of the dove season.

While some hunters target deer and turkey, and others painfully anticipate the arrival of the first wave of blue-winged teal, every shotgun-carrying Mississippian goes dove hunting, even if just on the opening weekend. Across the Magnolia State, the opening day of dove season brings more hunters out of hiding than any other single hunting day.

For diehard dove hunters, the opening day festivities are scheduled well in advance with a local dove club membership, where the fields are prepared and ready for the opening day blitz. For many others, a good shoot is just a short drive away from home on both public and private lands.

Learn how to find a good field and where the best places to set up are to reach a quick 15-bird limit during the first season.



Jeff Burleson

**E**ven though doves are considered migratory birds, the dove migration is considered less dramatic than the big move south by waterfowl, according to Michael Hook, a small-game biologist with a wildlife agency in one southeastern state.

“Doves tend to get a lot of focus in our ... department,” Hook said. “We started banding doves in 2003 in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The band returns are giving us more information than we would otherwise know — like harvest rates, population estimates and migration data.”

Between 30,000 to 50,000 doves are banded annually across the country. According to 15 years of band-recovery data, the overwhelming majority of the annual dove harvest is resident birds, not those migrating from northern states.

“Field collection from the banding program runs between July 1 and Aug. 15,” Hook said. “Most of our band

returns come from 5 to 10 miles from where initially captured. The birds aren’t moving a whole lot this time of year. We had 110 band returns last year; only eight were killed out of state, and they were all from adjacent states.

“However, the birds may certainly migrate regionally to the south into neighboring states if they survive the initial season. More often, birds from the north migrate into our area due to harsh winter conditions, and that isn’t generally until November or December. Our resident flocks will remain local if the food remains available and if the weather remains favorable.”

The bottom line is, the majority of the birds available for the first part of dove season live fairly close to where they were hatched. For the best opening day opportunity, hunters need to pay close attention to where doves have been all summer. The best habitat will attract and keep the largest flocks around.

“Doves need food, water and cover,” Hook said. “If they have everything they need, they aren’t going anywhere,



but doves will not think twice about traveling long distances to find a more-stable food source or if hunting pressure increases.”

Doves need a solid food source; they aren't choosy when it comes to food, with seeds making up 99 percent of their daily intake. From native grass seeds and pokeberries to common agriculture grains, doves will stay around any available food source. Manicured crop fields filled with corn, watermelons, sunflowers or millet are a jackpot for doves seeking a reliable food source. Hunters should scout and find fields with abundant grain and a clean surface down below.

“A clean surface with seeds all over the ground makes it easy on them, since they can't push through the heavy stuff with their small legs,” Hook said. “Keeping it clean is huge. They will not think twice about flying a long way if they need to find a better food source.”

## DOVE HUNTING IN Mississippi

### Northern Zone

Seasons: Sept. 1-Oct. 7, Oct. 27-Nov. 7-17, Dec. 22-Jan.31, 2019.

Bag limit: 15, includes mourning dove and/or white winged dove, singly or aggregate. Possession limit is three times the daily bag limit unless otherwise specified

Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise until sunset unless otherwise specified

### Southern Zone

Seasons: Sept. 1-9, Oct. 6-Nov. 7, Dec. 15-Jan. 31, 2019.

Bag limit: 15, includes mourning dove and/or white winged dove singly or aggregate Possession limit is the daily bag limit unless otherwise specified.

Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise until sunset unless otherwise specified.

Report all banded doves to [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov).

Dove hunters surrounding cut grain fields are bound to get some good shooting on Labor Day weekend.



**F**or doves, size does matter, according to Doug Howell, migratory gamebird coordinator for another state wildlife agency in the southeast. Larger fields in heavy agriculture areas are typically the ones that will receive the most usage.

“Doves are strong fliers and prefer large expanses of open area for daily movements,” Howell said. “Fields that are 10 acres or (larger) tend to have the best potential for concentrating hunt-able numbers of birds — and the larger the better.”

Doves like to stay on a good food source when they can. Birds that have found one early in the summer will remain on it until the season opens or the groceries dissipate.

“If possible, cut the corn early and condition the birds to feeding early,” Hook said. “You will draw them in from a long distance, providing a solid food source before other fields mature.”

Unfortunately, dove hunters don’t always have complete control over when crops are harvested and dove food becomes available, but they can scout to see what fields are cut early and ask permission to hunt. These fields will bring the birds in early and ensure a good hunt on opening day, which is Saturday,



Jeff Burleson

Sept. 1, in Mississippi. And as long as the opening day pressure isn’t too severe, the birds will remain local, not having a reason to leave.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, approximately 14 million doves are harvested, the large majority during the first segment of the season. If there was ever a time to get a piece of the action, the first season is by far the best time to set a target on a limit of doves. ■



Power lines and other above-ground structures that line or cut through dove fields will attract plenty of birds, which often land on the lines to survey their feeding grounds. **ABOVE:** A good dove hunt is a great way to introduce youngsters to the sport of hunting.

Jeff Burleson



Jeff Burleson is a certified wildlife biologist and professional forester.

## DOVE field-ology

The best dove hunts always begin with a solid food source, from native grasses and forbs to carbohydrate-rich grains in agriculture fields.

But it takes more than just a seed buffet to have a good dove hunt. Where there is strategy to tag a Boone & Crockett buck, dove hunters have proven tactics they can utilize to get a quick 15-bird limit for the crock pot.

The best dove shoots are generally in fields 10 acres or larger. The bigger the fields, the more hunters needed to keep birds flying and off the feeding grounds. A general rule of thumb is one hunter per 1 to 1½ acres. Hunters should be placed in a grid system, and if extra hunters are available, they should be placed along the perimeter, no closer than 50 yards apart. As long as enough hunters are available to cover the field, the action should keep the birds moving and flying off the ground enough to have a good shoot.

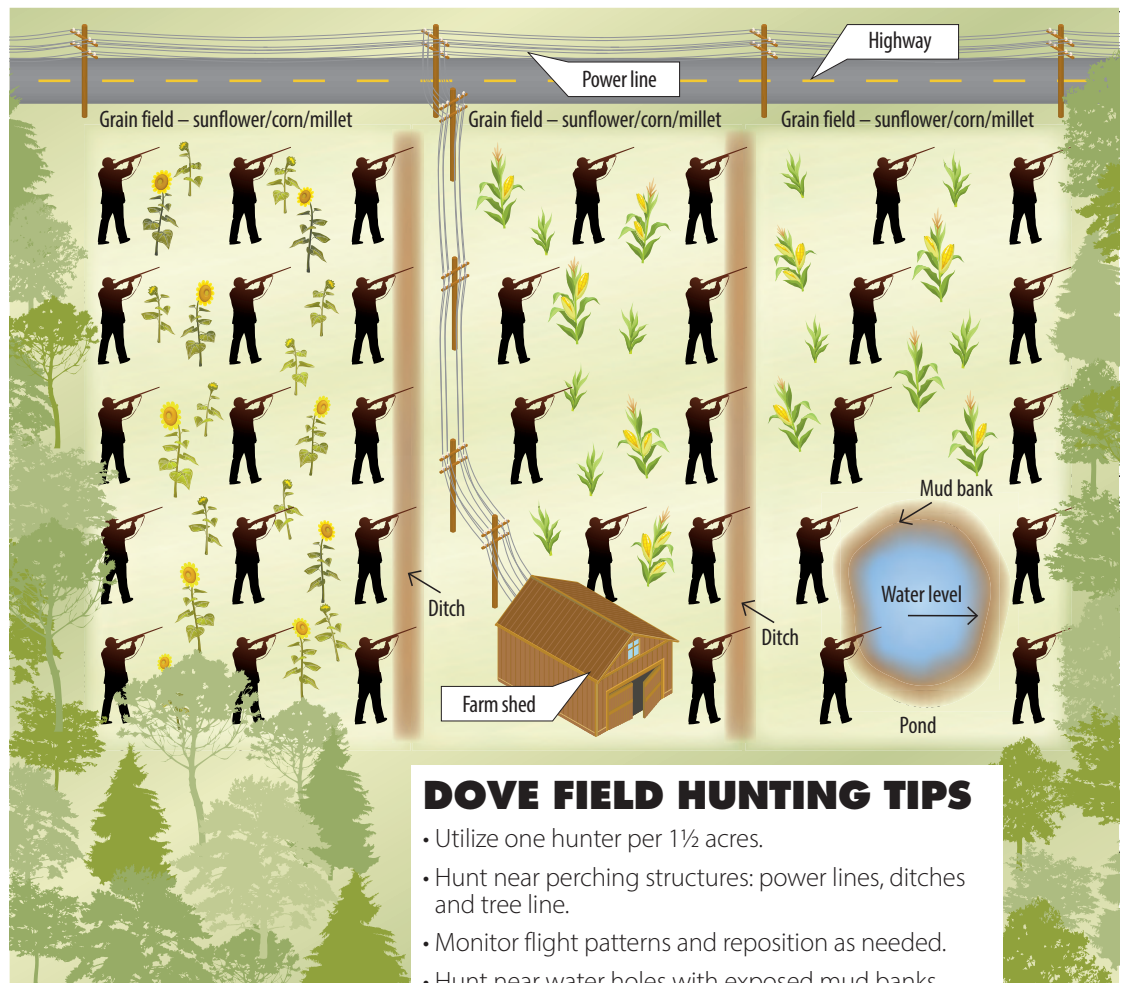
But hunters aren't always as abundant as needed especially when a very large field is selected for a hunt. While doves will fly into the field and swoop down to land, they will often fly to a high perch first to scout the area out for predators before they land. These high perches can be deadly positions to hide hunters. Look also for power lines, interior tree lines, individual trees, rooftops or anything adjacent to the food where birds can perch before landing to feed. High perches can be deadly places to take a quick limit.

Water sources are also perfect places to draw in birds, especially when the weather is seasonably hot. Small ponds or depressions in a field can be hot places. The best water sources are ones with exposed mud banks that provide a clean landing and drinking area for doves.

Every hunter who has invested hours in a dove field in September notices that some people are always in a better place than others. Doves will travel along a familiar flight path to a food source. When hunters are lucky enough to be in the right spot, they will tend to get their limit much earlier than hunters several rows away. When hunting with a large group, successful hunters should leave the field when they fill their limit, allowing other hunters to move to the hottest spot. If a small group of hunters is covering a field, and they notice a predictable flight path, they should try to move to better cover that pattern.

The best way to maximize a field's potential is to scout the field before opening day and draw out a diagram/map. While winging it can bring intermittent success, strategic planning can make a better experience for the entire group. ■

**LABOR DAY**  
UP NEXT ➤



### DOVE FIELD HUNTING TIPS

- Utilize one hunter per 1½ acres.
- Hunt near perching structures: power lines, ditches and tree line.
- Monitor flight patterns and reposition as needed.
- Hunt near water holes with exposed mud banks.
- Keep all shots above a 45-degree angle from the ground to ensure safe hunting.

Doves will flock to fields with solid food sources; for productive hunts later in the season, find fields that aren't cut until after Labor Day weekend.

## DON'T GIVE UP AFTER Labor Day

For many hunters, the first day of dove season is often also the last day, as they quickly shift their attention to deer and the excellent fishing that September generally provides. While the dove population takes a major hit on Labor Day weekend, the rest of the season shouldn't be ignored.

Doves don't enjoy being a target at their kitchen table. If the shooting doesn't subside quickly, they



Donna Brookshire

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will find a new place to feed without guns blazing every time they try to get a kernel of corn in their craws. It doesn't take long to send a flock of doves off into the sunset, but most will flee to the nearest substantial food source where they can feed undisturbed by hunters.

After Labor Day weekend, hunters can scan the countryside for fields that haven't been harvested or hunted. You may not see doves dive-bombing these fields, but they will often give away their location by resting on nearby power lines and in trees surrounding the field.

Hunters with access to multiple, productive fields should try to hold back a field or two through the early season assault until the time is right for a mid-season hunt. Often, these fields will serve as sanctuaries where hundreds of birds will gather when the sound of shotguns abounds everywhere else.

Even though the Labor Day weekend hunts seem to have fizzled out, there can be plenty of great places to find doves throughout the rest of the season. ■



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## GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

# SELF-REGULATING BASS?

SUCCESS OF RECRUITMENT NOT RELATED TO THE NUMBER OF SPAWNERS

A healthy bass population has good recruitment, but a strong spawn does not necessarily result in more catchable bass and good bass fishing.



**R**ecruitment of young fish is essential to sustained fishing. Despite the amount and intensity of management directed at largemouth bass, America's most-popular gamefish, the relationship between the abundance of adults and their offspring has not been clearly established. Pond studies from the University of Florida shed light on this critical question.

The Florida researchers stocked one-acre hatchery ponds with three to 20 male-female pairs of adult largemouth

bass. Bluegill, redear sunfish, and golden shiners were stocked to provide forage for the adult bass and their offspring. Yearling largemouth bass were stocked as predators on the soon-to-be-produced bass fingerlings. Stocking rates for all fish were within the range of biomass of these species found in Florida lakes.

The bass nested in all ponds, and the numbers of successful nests — those that produced fry — was positively related to the number of adult bass. But when the ponds were drained in the fall, there was no relationship between the numbers

of adult spawners and recovered bass fingerlings. The ponds stocked with three pairs of adults produced as many offspring as those stocked with 20 pairs.

Density dependent population regulation, which is commonly observed in many animal populations, occurs when some feedback mechanism — like disease, competition for food and starvation or predation — limits the number of individuals in the population to the number the environment can support. The density of young bass in the Florida ponds remained similar no matter how

many nests were successful. Clearly, density dependent population regulation occurred, but how?

## RELATIVE DENSITY

The number of small forage fish declined as the density of Age-0 bass increased. Further, mean length of the Age-0 bass decreased as their density increased. At high densities, the Age-0 bass appeared food limited.

Food limitation does not directly affect survival of Age-0 bass, at least not through their first summer. When high densities of bass deplete the available food supply, the growth of the young bass slows. The longer they stay small, the more vulnerable they are to predators. In this experiment, yearling bass were the predator.

Predation on slow-growing, Age-0 bass is a double-edged sword. First, the smaller bass are vulnerable to a greater number of predators. Second, because predators satisfy their energy demand by weight consumed, not numbers, the yearling bass will eat more Age-0 bass in a high-density, slow-growing population with small Age-0 bass than in a less-

dense, fast-growing population where the Age-0 bass are larger.

This simple and long-overdue study did not produce any revelations, but it provided solid scientific evidence to support the reasoning that good managers have applied for many years. There are two implications that should make anglers take notice. First, the fear factor about bed-fishing destroying bass fisheries promulgated by some scientists over the past two decades, and the need to protect spawning bass, are without substance in all lakes except those with so few adult bass that they probably aren't worth fishing.

The second implication is that stocking bass into waters with existing bass populations is a waste. Indeed, excessive stocking could even lower the recruitment if the growth of Age-0 bass, both wild-spawned and stocked, is strongly suppressed. ■



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.



Eric Porterfield

Good bass lakes in Mississippi have good reproduction. Stocking largemouth bass into lakes with natural reproduction may result in slow growth of the young bass and can be a waste of limited resources.

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A secret to successfully fishing a frog over grass is to make sure the bass has the lure in its mouth before setting the hook.

# THREE-PRONGED BASS APPROACH AT OKHISSA

SEPTEMBER BRINGS FISHING CHALLENGES;  
HERE ARE WAYS TO ATTACK THOSE FISH

I'm concentrating on 1,075-acre Lake Okhissa this month, since it is home to plenty of vegetation and numbers of big bass. September often is a tricky month to fish for bass; baitfish are starting to move into shallow water — with bass following them — and the vegetation is breaking up some, which means more areas will be available to fish than in the summer. My favorite lures will be surface lures, frogs and punch baits.

## TOPWATER EARLY

For about the first 1½ hours of daylight, I'll be searching for main-lake points, pockets and cuts. I'll target grass lines around the points with a walking bait like a Zara Spook. I'll use a Shimano Curado 7.5:1 reel spooled with 30-pound

bass braid with a 23-pound fluorocarbon leader on a 6-foot-6, medium-action Shimano baitcasting rod.

I'll walk a clear-belly Spook with a metal flake gray or blue back with a medium retrieve, stopping the bait occasionally to trigger strikes from bass that might not be very active. I'm looking for baitfish activity on the edges of the grass, where they will be schooled up tight and on the move.

I'll mix the Spook with a ¼-ounce white buzzbait to trigger strikes from more-active bass that prefer a small bait. I'll fish the buzzbait with a trailer hook on 20-pound White Peacock fluorocarbon and the same reel as the Spook, but on a 6-foot-10, medium-heavy ExPride rod. By varying the retrieve, I can determine how fast or slowly the bass want the lure.

## FROG 'EM UP

Next, I'll fish two types of Mann's frogs: a black Super Frog that I'll walk on top of the grass and a white Pygmy Frog on top of the grass, around the lily pads and targeting the places where some grass is breaking away and leaving openings on the edges. With a Super Frog, I'll fish a 7-foot-3, heavy action ExPride rod with 50-pound bass braid and a 7.5:1 reel.

I'll walk that frog across the top of the grass like the Zara Spook, using a steady retrieve, until I reach an opening in the grass where bass often will be, trailing the surface movement of the frog. Those bass won't actually attack the frog until the frog comes to an opening or is on the edge of the grass.

You must pay attention, because you

may not see a big explosion. The bass may be cruising under the frog, suck it into its mouth and move your line sideways. Remember to hesitate just long enough to make sure the bass has the bait before you set the hook.

The baitfish will tell you where the bass are when you hear them smacking under the vegetation or see the bass moving through the vegetation. If you have no success, start flipping and pitching with punch baits.

## PUNCH THE BASS UP

I'll assume bass are feeding under the grass and flip and pitch with two styles of punch baits. I'll use a heavy action Shimano flipping stick, 60-pound bass braid and a 1½-ounce bullet sinker. I'll have another rod rigged with a 1-ounce weight to penetrate grass that's less thick and lily pads.

The rod with the heavy weight will have a 6-inch junebug Jelly worm, rigged weedless with a No. 4/0 wide-gap hook to allow the weight pull the worm through the grass. The other rod will carry a black with blue flake Craw Worm with a No. 5/0 wide gap hook. Both will be 7-foot-6 ExPride rods. Be ready to set the hook the instant the worm penetrates and comes out the other side of the grass. Get the bass out of the grass quickly to disorient it.

A bass is most likely to take these baits at three different times in the process: when the bait gets under the grass, once the bait hits the bottom, or when you pull the weight and lure to the bottom of the grass, hold it there for a few seconds and allow it to fall back to the bottom. You may flip and pitch for a long stretch of grass and still not get a bite. But when you do get one, put your Power Pole down. You may get numerous bites in a grassy, 10-foot square. If you get a bite on the worm and the bass doesn't take it, throw right back in that same spot with a Craw Worm.

In September at Okhissa, you'll catch bass weighing from

1 to 7 or 8 pounds, especially when flipping and pitching the vegetation. Expect 20 bites per day, and hope to land half of them. Although Okhissa has spotted bass and largemouths, fishing the vegetation probably will yield more largemouths. ■



**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.



A buzzbait can be deadly during the first hour of daylight in September when you swim it along the edges of the grass.

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# YAMAHA

## HAPPY TRAILS

Bill Garbo

For whitetails, the author's arsenal contains everything from rifled slugs all the way down to a .223. His overall favorite is the .35 Whelen.



# PAY ATTENTION TO THE BUSINESS END

PREFERENCE IN WEAPONS, AMMO AND SIGHTS PALES IN COMPARISON TO THE ABILITY TO PUT YOUR SHOT ON TARGET WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF

**M**y, how times have changed over the past 50 or so years in the whitetail woods, especially when it comes to the “business end” of the enterprise.

During my first forays into whitetail habitat around 1970, my clothing and equipment was a woefully inadequate, cobbled-together collection of mostly borrowed or repurposed items. If a hunter wanted to hunt from a deer stand, he had to build it with wood, hammer and nails. A fledgling industry providing portable deer stands was barely off the ground.

Weapon-wise, it was pretty simple in most locales. In the deep south, hunting deer with dogs was still a dominant and widespread tradition, making shotguns the weapon of choice for many hunters.

I well remember using my 16-gauge, Remington 870 pump with a modified-choke barrel and running to the store a

day or two before opening day to buy a five-pack of No. 1 buckshot shells. There was really more luck than skill involved when blasting away at a buck that a dog pack ran by your appointed stand.

When you fast-forward to today, the list of available weapons, calibers and loads is almost mind-boggling by comparison. Over my almost 50 years of deer hunting, the development and continued evolution of rifles and shotguns, ammunition and telescopic sights has been more a matter of refinement than revolution. In today's world, telescopic sights are better optically, much easier to adjust, more reliable and mounted more securely. Ammunition, primers and bullets are more uniform and reliable than they have ever been.

## IT LOOKS EASY

The one thing that hasn't changed is that in order to make the shot, the hunter has to put his sights on what he

intends to hit, and with a steady hold, get the shot off without disturbing his aim. It all sounds pretty simple in theory, but in practice, several things must happen simultaneously and correctly for the end result to be as intended.

It all works if the rifle or rifled shotgun is correctly sighted-in, and if that weapon is inherently accurate, if trajectory can be ignored — it cannot if the shot is long — and if windage lead is not a factor, as it would be on a running deer. If that is all there is to it, why aren't all hunters great shots?

This party can be spoiled so easily by just a few simple facts. First, even in the case of the most-seasoned rifleman, the rifle must be held absolutely steady, which is difficult even from a sandbag on a bench rest. It's next to impossible not to have at least a little bit of wobble when the hunter is using a rail or a window sill or the side of a tree trunk, or having to

continues on page 72

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## HAPPY TRAILS

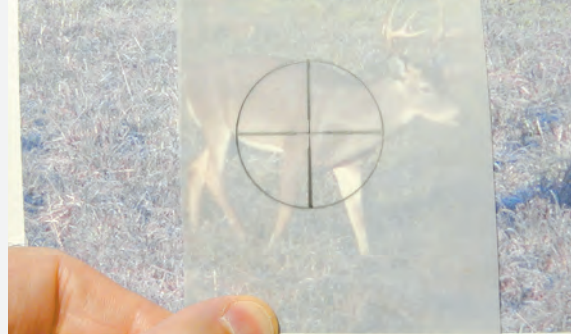
shoot offhand. Second, pulling the trigger without disturbing one's aim is every bit as difficult as holding the rifle steady. Even under the most-perfect conditions, using a heavy, well-balanced rifle with a light trigger pull, the act of squeezing the trigger will cause a slight movement. In the real world, at the moment of truth, a breeze is usually blowing and adrenaline is pumping, before even taking into account the rifle rest or lack thereof, the distance to the target, air temperature, angle and on and on, making it infinitely more difficult than it would be at the range on a sandbag.

## DETAILS, DETAILS

But how does a deer hunter compen-

## SHOOTING BASICS:

- Always identify your target
- Gain a solid shooting position
- Estimate the range
- Allow for it
- Squeeze the trigger
- Make a clean kill



The author drew a scope reticle on a piece of see-thru Mylar in order to practice aim point on random deer photos. This is a very useful tool for teaching a youth or newcomer about the proper place to aim.

sate for all of these factors and become a competent marksman who is able to consistently make good shots? Besides the basics of regular target practice, good shooting skill in the field can be boiled down to learning how to quickly get into the most-steady shooting position possible under the prevailing conditions

and then executing and controlling the trigger squeeze properly to make the shot count.

The hunter's choice of weapon, ammunition and sight should be governed by whether the hunter hunts in deep woods or fields, is presented with shots of 50 to no more than 100 yards, or shots out to 300 yards and beyond.

I personally do not like to take lower-percentage shots at distances over about 200 yards. Have I successfully made long shots in the past? Absolutely, I made several long, difficult shots on elk and deer a number of years ago, back when I practiced more and had better eyesight. But it takes skill developed over years of practice to turn what are low-percentage shots — to the average hunter — into routine shots.

Accurate marksmanship is a "perishable" skill with a definite shelf life, unless one regularly and consistently practices in order to stay sharp. Go to the range, and after confirming on the sandbag that your rifle is "on the money," put the sandbag away and shoot sitting, standing, prone and everything in-between to see how you do under more realistic conditions. ■



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**Bill Garbo** is a petroleum engineer and avid whitetail hunter from Madison. 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.

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## LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Delta Lures' spinnerbaits are available in 1/4-, 3/8- and 3/4-ounce models.

# DELTA LURES' SPINNERBAIT

AVAILABLE WITH TRADITIONAL "R" BEND —  
OR IN A "TWISTED" MODEL

**T**wo long-time fishing buddies couldn't keep a good thing to themselves 7½ years ago, which was a blessing for bass fishermen who love to catch on quality spinnerbaits.

Fred King and Roy Laborde, both of LaPlace, La., started making spinnerbaits in 2010, 13 years after they began fishing bass tournaments together. The spinnerbaits they relied on for years were difficult or impossible to get their hands on.

"We couldn't find what we were looking for ... the vibration, the wire, the ball-bearing swivel, so we just started making our own," King said.

They made the spinnerbaits well, obviously, because bass ate them. Word got out about the hot lures and soon, people were asking the outdoorsmen to build them some. And some more.

King and Laborde started mass-producing the spinnerbaits in January 2011. Their company, Delta Lures LLC, was born. Their distinctive logo, with a Louisiana map and a bass leaping near the star at LaPlace, can be seen wrapped on the Bass Cat boat Robbie Latuso of Gonzales uses on the Bassmaster Elite Series.

Delta Lures' spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, bladed jigs, jigs and complete lines of tackle are on racks in 41 stores in four states. The first to stock them was Scott Russo at the old Russo's Hunting and Fishing store in LaPlace.

"It's definitely growing, definitely picking up in popularity. We're starting to sell more around the country. Our production's grown in the last two years," King said.

The company has grown because its

owners emphasize building the artificial lures with quality parts, and the flexibility and ability to build to order and make custom products, like the wide variety of spinnerbaits.

"That's my favorite bait to fish, that and a buzzbait. We've been catching a lot of fish on the spinnerbait the last couple of months. We've been fishing the Venice and Delacroix areas," King said.

The owners pay attention to the slightest details while building the ¼-, ⅜- and ¾-ounce spinnerbaits. The stainless-steel wire is custom-made, and the heads are painted in Mississippi.

King and Laborde put the blades and other components together once they receive the heads, which have red 3D eyes, and special wire — 20,000 at a time for the latter. Wire gauges are .032

for ¼-ounce, .034 for ⅜-ounce and .040 for ¾-ounce models.

Delta spinnerbaits feature ball-bearing swivels, Mustad Ultra Point Black Nickel Hooks and H&H rubber skirts or 44-strand silicone skirts.

The blades are top of the line in popular colors and shapes. You can get spinnerbaits single-bladed or double-bladed, mix or match Colorado blades, willow-leaves, Indianas, turtle-backs, etc.

Most Delta Lures spinnerbaits have the traditional “R” bend to tie the line. However, old school “twisted” models are available.

Albert Collins of Nacogdoches, Texas, a veteran pro bass angler prefers the twisted models, King said, noting he was the first to ask for them. Count Don Hutchinson of Prairieville also among those who want to throw that model, he said.

Why? Collins, 53, said, “The R-bend is just a weak link to me.

“I grew up throwing a spinnerbait with a twist,” he said.

After the market was saturated with R-bends, he lost bass when the spinnerbait broke, he said. It could only handle three or four 4-pound-and-up bass at a time.

“The R-bend spinnerbait cost me a couple tournaments in the past. I’d throw it and the next thing you know I’d come back with two spinners,” he said. “I quit throwing spinnerbaits for a long time.”

King said people got away from the twisted bend because sometimes the line catches under the twist, frays and then breaks. However, he said, modern lines are stronger.

Collins got his twisted spinnerbaits and catches 25 to 40 bass on one, he said.

“Just pay attention to the line. Whenever I pull it in, I look at the line. You don’t have to pull it all the way to you,” he said.

“You can hardly wear them

out. They don’t have the R to bend and break. That was my whole reason for it. All the guys I’ve given it to try prefer it now.”

For more information on the spinnerbait and other Delta Lures’ products, go to [deltalures.com](http://deltalures.com). ■



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

Delta Lures started mass-producing spinnerbaits in 2011, and now their offerings are sold all over the country.



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## STICKS AND STRINGS

Sammy Romano

A mature doe is one of bowhunting's toughest challenges. Attention to small details led to the author's success.

# SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF — ALL THE TIME

DON'T REPEAT COMMON MISTAKES THAT ARE MADE EVERY SEASON

**A**s the calendar flips to September, my thoughts turn to deer and bowhunting. Archery season is already open in some places, and is about to open in many others. No matter where you hunt though, game time is imminent. With these thoughts in mind, I'd like to point out some common mistakes that lead to unfilled archery tags and empty freezers. While some seem obvious, I hear of hunters making these mistakes each and every year — and the heartache they cause. Hopefully, this will help you be more successful this season.

The first is so obvious, but many people fail to make sure that their archery gear and shooting form are up to par. I know several bowhunters who work on their property and scout year-round, only to head into the field with poorly maintained equipment, or a bow that is shooting "good enough to hit a deer." This is

self-defeating, and can be easily avoided with a little planning and practice. Think about it: What good is it to have the perfect stand setup, if you can't close the deal by making a vital shot?

Another common mistake is stand placement and setup. Many hunters put tree stands at the wrong height or shot distance, thereby making it much more difficult to get a shot or to hit the animal when a shot is presented.

### NOT TOO CLOSE

Stand height is a subject of much debate, but a rule of thumb is to set a stand only as high as necessary to be above the animal's line of sight and in good cover. Fifteen to 20 feet is my preferred height. Any higher leads to steep shot angles and therefore, reduced vitals exposure. Also, the steep angle causes high entry holes, which generally lead to poor blood trails.

The ideal distance is 20 yards from where the animal will be standing at the shot. Beginning bowhunters have a tendency to set up too close or too far. Setting up too close — under 15 yards — has a tendency to lead to high hits if you are even able to draw. At such close range, clothing noise and/or movement often leads to blown opportunities. Shooting at whitetails at distances over 30 yards leaves room for string jumping or movement by the deer, leading to poor shot placement and wounded animals.

When cutting shooting lanes, put a lot of thought into what you are doing. There is a fine line between trimming enough brush and limbs for clear arrow flight — and trimming away too much cover. Remember, you can always trim a little more, but you can't make new growth appear quickly. A good pole saw or trimmer makes this task much easier. Try to trim lanes that are vertically long rather

than wide — since your arrow is travelling an arc — to avoid hitting limbs or alerting deer to your presence. Trim multiple lanes so that if you miss an opportunity to shoot as a deer passes through one of them, you have another chance.

## TRIM YOUR TRIMS

A lot of hunters make the mistake of cutting down the woods, which alerts deer to potential danger or exposes their stand, making it hard to draw their bow unnoticed. Deer are far more perceptive than many hunters give them credit for, and mature deer quickly note any changes to their habitat. More than once, I have seen deer change their travel pattern to avoid a park-like setting caused by over-trimming of shooting lanes. Also, be sure to drag any cut limbs away from your stand.

Failure by a hunter to pay proper attention to scent control has saved the lives of many deer. Wash your clothes in scent-free detergent, and make sure to store them in an airtight container. Nothing screams, “Here sits a hunter” like household odors and human scent. If you can’t beat a deer’s nose, you’re done before you even get started. Shower before each hunt with unscented soap, and spray down with a scent-killing product. Use carbon clothing and an ozone generator to give you every edge possible. A whitetail’s No. 1 defense is its sense of smell — never underestimate this. Don’t hunt stands without a favorable wind or weather. Once deer figure out you are in the area, your chances of success drop drastically.

By avoiding these mistakes, you should



### HIDDEN AGENDA:

This stand is still well hidden, despite overlooking shooting lanes. The cover around it makes it difficult for deer to see a hunter.

drastically increase your chances this season. While most of this is common knowledge, each year I hear of hunters repeating these mistakes to a bad end. Pay attention to small details, and your opportunities — and therefore, your success — will surely increase. ■



**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.

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## SEAFOOD BIBLE

Jerald & Glenda Horst

# MISSISSIPPI COOKING ... LOUISIANA STYLE

FEATURED RED SNAPPER RECIPE FROM OLD GOLDEN MEADOW RESTAURANT

**R**icky Ruffi lives with his wife, Pam, near Bay Springs, Miss. And he's got all the credentials to prove that he's Magnolia State all the way.

His great-great-grandfather settled on former Indian land there in Jasper County in 1842. His Ruffin ancestors and relatives were cotton farmers, with the exception of his father, who raised beef cattle.

On his mother, Martha McAlpin's side, her great-great-grandfather



The meunière sauce that makes Ricky's dish so attractive and delicious is much more than a simple brown butter sauce. **INSET:** Ricky Ruffin's passion for cooking has to compete with fishing, hunting, gardening and travel for his attention.

patented land there in the 1850s. But the apple didn't fall from the tree. While Ruffin is a successful attorney by day, the rest of the time he raises cattle on rye grass and wheat in the winter.

For all the Mississippi in the man, he loves Louisiana. He enjoys the people, who he calls, "my kind of people, who like to have a good time. I love Cajun people. They love to hunt; they love to fish; they love to cook."

He loves the cooking, which he calls the best in the world. And he loves the fishing, which he considers as good as the cooking.

Four or five times a year, he rounds up a gang of his Mississippi friends and relatives to

invade Louisiana, where they head offshore from Fourchon. He loves to catch fish that pull hard: snapper (the bigger, the better), grouper, amberjacks, cobia, wahoo and tuna. "I like offshore fishing; the adrenaline rush of catching a big fish. You can't get that from speckled trout."

And he fills his freezers with his share of the catch to satisfy his passion for seafood cookery year-round. ■

## PANÉED SNAPPER WITH MEUNIÈRE SAUCE

"This one I ate at Randolph's restaurant in Golden Meadow," Ruffin said, explaining the history of the dish. "He (Randy Cheramie) used to put pecans in it. I leave the pecans out. We got to be friends because we were going down there to fish twice a month from March to July. He gave me the recipe.

"He would have four specials on Saturday

night. The kind of specials he had were the kind of cooking I like. He did a lot of sauces, plus he cooked a lot of the kind of fish I like — amberjack, snapper and lemonfish."

Randolph's is closed now: The Cheramie family sold it in 2001 and a few years later, it was permanently closed and the building demolished. But the recipe lives on in Ruffin's kitchen. ■

### PREPARATION: Serves 4.

Add Worcestershire and hot sauce to a medium sauce pan. Stir lemon and lime pieces and ½ teaspoon of Season-All into the sauce and sauté about three minutes, breaking up the citrus pieces as they cook. Remove the remnants of the lemon and lime pieces, lower heat and add the butter. Do not allow to boil. Slowly add half & half, whisking constantly. When the meunière sauce has thickened, turn the heat off and set it aside. Season the fillets with Season-All. Mix the fish fry and flour in a bowl. Dredge the fish in the fish-fry mixture. Heat the grape seed oil and butter in an iron skillet. When heated, add the fillets and fry until browned. Plate the finished fillets and top them with the meunière sauce. ■



The lemon and lime are removed after sautéing.

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 6 tbsp Crystal hot sauce
- 1 lemon, peeled and cut into small pieces
- 1 lime, peeled and cut into small pieces
- Season-All
- ½ pound butter
- ½ cup half & half
- 2 pounds snapper fillets
- 1 cup seasoned fish fry
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup grape seed oil
- 1 stick butter

### TIP!

Where this recipe calls for "Season-All," Ricky uses his favorite Catalpa Plantation Seasoning. It can be ordered by calling 800-417-9591.



Jerald and Glenda Horst are the authors of six excellent books on Louisiana seafood — *The Seafood Bible: Shrimp*, *The Seafood Bible: Crawfish*, *The Seafood Bible: Crabs*, *The Seafood Bible: Oysters*, *The Seafood Bible: Fish: Volume 1* and *The Seafood Bible: Fish: Volume 2*. Jerald and Glenda may be contacted at [jerald@rockinghorst.com](mailto:jerald@rockinghorst.com).



# SCOUTING FOR TEAL

IF YOU CAN, STAY MOBILE AND TARGET SHALLOW AREAS

By Darren Digby

**A**s some early migrating blue-winged teal are already arriving in the Magnolia State, hunters are gearing up to chase the feathered rockets.

Though some will simply head to their favorite blinds and hope for the best on Sept. 15, hunters with the ability to move around a bit would do well to put in some scouting time for best odds on opening day.

With the abundance of public hunting acreage in our state, there's plenty of room to move around to find habitat where the birds will congregate.

Keeping a few key points in mind will help you reduce your mileage by focusing your efforts in promising areas.

The blue-winged teal's diminutive size is a major factor in its feeding habits, so hunters should be thinking shallow when looking for areas where the birds might congregate. Early-arriving teal prefer to feed on the surface or on resources just below the surface, as their smaller bodies are unable to reach food at the bottom of deeper ponds. Before setting out, use aerial imagery to identify broken marshes and other areas where the water appears to be shallower than average.

In your area, shallow might mean a mud flat flooded at certain times of the day or a lowland area that might be flooded only seasonally — or even a pasture flooded from recent rains. But if you can find a local food source, you're likely



Mississippi's teal season kicks off Saturday, Sept. 15. Staying mobile and targeting public lands with shallow water will improve your odds of success.

Courtesy of Darren Digby

to catch them coming in to feast.

One way to identify shallow, feeding areas is to seek out congregations of wading shorebirds. Arriving blue-wings will often use the same habitat as the shorebirds, as both prefer a similar water depth. The presence of local mottled ducks is also a good indicator that duck-friendly food is available.

Teal often feed on seeds and small invertebrates, but will also eat some aquatic grasses such as algae and various weeds. Some of the best hunting I've enjoyed during the September season was in an area where native grass had been flooded with high tides and was dropping seeds into the water. It was no wonder that we found birds full of those seeds when we cleaned them after the hunt.

## X MARKS THE SPOT — OR DOES IT?

Though a shallow feeding spot may define the proverbial "X", that's not to say straps can't be filled by hunting nearby.

During the 2017 season, I was success-

ful hunting a pond that was 3 feet deep — but it was adjacent to some shallows matted with aquatic grasses. If just next to the "X" affords better concealment and/or easier access, set up there and rely on calling and decoys to sway the birds over for a look. As always, never be afraid to move if your initial setup appears out of the game.

Teal are as apt as any bird to be here today and gone tomorrow — so staying mobile will help keep your barrel hot throughout the 16-day season. ■

### TIP!

If you're using Google Earth to scout, use the historical imagery tool to review past images, as some might have been taken during low water conditions in the marsh — thus highlighting mud flats or areas that are particularly shallow.

Todd "Marsh Man" Masson catches numbers of marsh bass using weightless worms in clear water.

By Andy Crawford

# HOW TO USE WEIGHTLESS WORMS TO CATCH MORE BASS

FISH FIND SLOWLY FALLING PLASTIC LURES IRRESISTIBLE

**T**odd "Marsh Man" Masson is best known for his prowess catching speckled trout. After all, he wrote a book on the subject.

But during the summer, he often turns to his other fishing love — catching marsh bass.

And it's a safe bet he'll have a weightless worm tied on one of his rods.

"I think it looks extremely natural," Masson said of the lures. "It just looks like a dying baitfish, and the fish can't resist it."

Masson, who was the long-time editor of *Louisiana Sportsman* and is formerly a YouTube celebrity for Nola.com, said fishing with weightless worms is really pretty easy.

## RIGGING UP

He uses a medium-heavy rod and a reel spooled with braided line. He ties a 3- to 6-foot fluorocarbon leader because the technique is mainly a clear-water deal.

"I use 20-pound fluorocarbon, which is probably overkill," Masson said. "But let's face it ... there's not a whole lot of water you've got to worry about fish seeing your leader — especially fluorocarbon."

The fluoro leader also helps get the bait down because the line doesn't float.

"I really want that bait sinking quickly," Masson said.

If he thinks the rig needs a tad more

weight, he adds a split shot to the leader. That gets the bait down faster without killing the lure's action.

He connects the braid and leader with a uni-to-uni knot, creating a connection that's strong and easily passes through rod eyes.

A 4/0 Gamakatsu EWG hook is tied to the terminal end of the leader, and he goes with either a Zoom Speed Worm or a Yum Dinger.

And then it's just a matter of casting close to cover. The lure will work around any cover, but Masson has his favorite.

"What I really like (using weightless worms) is in sparse vegetation," Masson explained. "I also like to focus on the backsides of a point being hit by current."

"I throw it into the dead spot behind the point and twitch it into the current: That's where the fish are."

## SLOW IT DOWN

Patience is key, which makes it a challenging approach for many anglers.

"You really have to slow down," Masson

said. "We're power fishermen — move, move, move. But you can't do that with this bait. You have to be patient."

He simply casts it out, lets the worm sink for a few seconds and then gives his rod a couple of jerks.

"It's just twitch, twitch, pause — a long pause," he explained.

The strikes almost always come as the lure is fluttering down. But be aware that you will likely never feel a bite.

"You go to do another twitch, and it feels spongy, it doesn't feel right," Masson said.

That's the indication a fish has picked it up.

Therefore, it's important to put a little pressure on the lure before starting another twitching rhythm, he said.

"You don't want to give it a hard twitch (after the pause)," Masson explained.

"You want to pick up your rod to feel if something is on there." ■



Andy Crawford

# UNDERSTANDING HOW WATER FLOWS THROUGH THE MARSH

FISH USE 'SIDEWALKS, STREETS AND HIGHWAYS' TO TRAVEL AND CHASE BAIT

By Devin Denman

It's easy to look upon an area of marsh and only see a bunch of grass and water.

But a closer look reveals there's much more than meets the eye: It's a complex and thriving ecosystem.

As inshore anglers we need to understand this system, because that kind of understanding will help us enjoy fishing. Gaining that kind of knowledge can be tough, but this simple analogy breaks it all down in an easy-to-understand way that will help you catch more speckled trout and redfish.

## HIGHWAYS, STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Understanding how water moves through the marsh is everything, because without moving water you don't have a fishing trip.

The best anglers possess this understanding, knowing when and where tidal waters will move best.

## HOW MOST SEE THE MARSH

If you only fish spots — and not conditions — then chances are you see the rest of the marsh as just places that 'aren't your spot.'

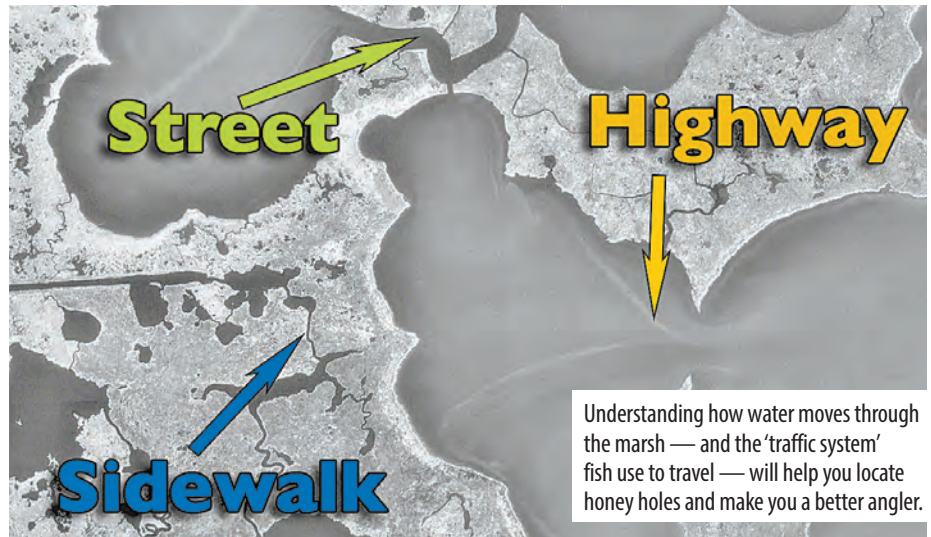
It's all just water you use to get to where the fish have always been — or maybe not.

But if you saw each body of water in the marsh as being like a path for fish to travel, and categorized them according to the traffic they can bear, then you'd see new opportunities to catch more fish.

## A NEW WAY TO SEE THE MARSH

Each body of water is used by marine life to travel from one area to the next, and can be classified by the amount of traffic they receive:

- Sidewalk
- Street



Devin Denman

### • Highway

So a trenasse bleeding into a pond would be a sidewalk, the bayou upon which the pond sits would be the street and the nearby pass where the bayou is situated would be the highway.

Check out the picture to get a better idea of how the fish might move around.

## HOW THIS KNOWLEDGE BENEFITS YOU

This understanding of how water moves through the marsh reveals spots that are worth trying because they might yield great catches at certain times.

## ONE EXAMPLE

Every spring and fall we have a mass exodus of shrimp from the marsh. They leave for saltier water to procreate and, as they do, are ambushed by speckled trout and redfish.

Using this highway analogy, it'd be a lot easier to guess where we should begin fishing, wouldn't it?

It would. Because we would know where they are traveling, and how they will travel there.

Good examples of places to try fishing would be large points in big, open water. A poor example would be a single trenasse.

The difference is that more water flows across one than the other, and more water equals more bait — which equals more predator fish like speckled trout and redfish for us to catch.

## CONCLUSION

I wanted to introduce this idea so you might gain a better understanding of your current honey holes, and how to locate new ones.

Fall is right around the corner, and some of the best fishing of the year will come with it. Tight lines, y'all. ■

*Editor's Note: Capt. Devin Denman is an avid inshore angler who writes the Louisiana Fishing Blog. To read more of his articles, visit [lafishblog.com](http://lafishblog.com).*

# AUSTIN'S HANDY DANDY LINE WINDER

By Andy Crawford

## MAKES CHANGING LINE ON-BOARD A SNAP

Is there anything worse than having to spool a reel while on the boat? I mean, after you spend the time to snatch the old line off the reel, you then have the pleasure of fighting a plastic spool of new line rolling around the boat — and it's a pain to ensure you're putting the line on the reel tightly.

Well, Barataria Bait & Tackle's Austin Plaisance has found a product that takes all the work out of that chore.

The contraption is so simple it's hard to believe it's not more ubiquitous in the fishing world.

## WHAT'S THE NAME OF THIS WONDER TOOL?

"I don't know what it's called," Plaisance said. "It's made in China and comes in just a clear package — no name on it. Call it 'Austin's Handy Dandy Line Winder.'"

There's room for several pools of line to be slipped onto the metal rod. The plastic spools are held tight with a spring-loaded nut.

"That way, the spools can't turn unless

you're pulling on it," Plaisance explained.

The frame is bent to allow the terminal end to be inserted into a suction cup that holds tightly to a boat's console.

And Plaisance usually keeps a few spools of line on the winder.

"If I have a customer who breaks off or gets a big wind knot in the braid, I can quickly cut it and wind on more line so we can keep fishing," he said.

It's also perfect for keeping leader material handy.

"I like to downsize my leaders if the fish are finicky," Plaisance said. "I usually start with 15- to 20-pound fluorocarbon, but I go down from there.

"With this line winder, I can quickly change leader material."

Austin's Handy Dandy Line Winder



This simple line winder allows anglers to quickly and easily respool reels and change out leaders.

Andy Crawford

retails for \$14.95. Call Barataria Bait & Tackle at 504-347-4012 or log onto [www.baratariabaitandtackle.com](http://www.baratariabaitandtackle.com) for more information. ■

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In addition to color, the profile of the lure you're throwing also will determine its effectiveness depending on what forage predators are feeding on at the time.

# LURE PROFILE - NOT JUST COLOR - AN IMPORTANT FACTOR

By Devin Denman

Patrick Bonin

## CONSIDER WHAT FISH ARE LOOKING FOR WHEN THEY'RE HUNGRY

Inshore saltwater anglers love discussing, choosing and experimenting with lure color. It's no surprise the most asked question is, "What color were they biting?"

It's a good question, and you can't blame anyone for asking. After all, it really can make a difference.

But one thing about artificials most people don't pay attention to is the profile of a lure.

### WHAT EXACTLY IS THE 'PROFILE?'

Simply put, it's the lure's shape.

Think about it: a craw is shaped radically different than a shad-imitation bait.

That's an obvious difference to illustrate my point. Here are a few more: A pogey is shaped differently from a cocahoe, which is shaped differently from a potbelly minnow, which is shaped differently from a croaker.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Consider what it is fish are looking for when they're hungry.

Speckled trout hunting croakers are accustomed to looking for that humped back, flat belly and yellow-tinged fins.

If your bait looks like their forage, there is less chance for scrutiny. When the two

meet, it becomes business as usual and they'll bite.

### DOES IT REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Yes and no.

Let me explain: the key to success, on almost every fishing trip, is covering as much water as possible to find a school of fish so hungry that they'll hit anything that enters the water.

You've probably seen those videos of redfish and trout being caught on Legos, Barbie dolls, gummy worms and rubber chickens.

However, fish aren't always feeding hard, and you can't find them eating like that on every trip.

But when you do eventually run across that feeding behavior, you can up your game by tossing them something they're really looking for.

Give them a color, profile and presentation that matches the hatch.

Doing that is the difference between catching a half-limit, boating 30 to 50 fish or icing down an ice chest-full.

### SOME FISH ARE 'DUMBER'

The majority of fish hitting the cleaning

tables are 'young and dumb.'

Redfish under 27 inches are juveniles, and most speckled trout we catch haven't been around that long.

Almost all of them barely pass the 12-inch mark, with a 14- to 16-inch speck considered big by a lot of anglers. These smaller trout are more ready to eat than larger trout, and throwing a more exacting bait probably won't make that much of a difference to them. But it'd be nice to catch a big trout, wouldn't it?

The tactic of matching lure profiles shines with larger, more finicky fish who are already grown so much they have fewer predators to worry about.

### CONCLUSION

When it comes to artificials, inshore anglers rarely consider lure profile.

It's not a deal breaker for fishing trips, but when it's factored in, it could make a big difference in your success. At the bare minimum, it's something you should be aware of to boost your inshore knowledge.

Tight lines, y'all. ■

*Editor's Note: Capt. Devin Denman is an avid inshore angler who writes the Louisiana Fishing Blog. To read more of his articles, visit [lafishblog.com](http://lafishblog.com).*

# DON'T TOSS IT — BUTTON IT UP

By L. Woodrow Ross

## EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT GOING ON THE WALL, ANTLERS HAVE MANY USES

**D**eer hunters are often guilty of discarding items that are useful, and could be used to create reminders of a special hunt.

So rather than discarding antlers from a buck that might not be worthy of mounting, consider making buttons for a coat, jacket or shirt.

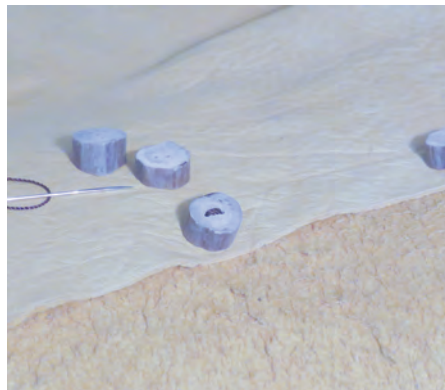
And these buttons are as functional as they are decorative.

### FOLLOW THESE EASY STEPS TO MAKE YOUR OWN:

- Just saw an antler to your desired button thickness, making them as symmetrical as possible. A band saw is the easiest way to accomplish this.
- If you want a glossy button, coat it with epoxy, polyurethane or some other coating. This will also increase the buttons' durability. Epoxy may be mixed 50/50 with denatured alcohol to make it easier to apply.
- Drill two small holes in each button.
- Measure and mark button spacing and button-hole spacing; 3½ inches is a good starting point for a shirt.
- Use an appropriate-sized needle and strong thread to attach the buttons to the garment.

Antlers can also be sawed into toggle button sizes with appropriate holes if you want to use them as secure attachments.

Of course, they can also be cut into sections of the appropriate length and used as knife handles. ■



Turn a discarded deer antler into decorative buttons, step by step (clockwise from top left): Pick out an antler of appropriate size, then saw the antler into thin sections. You have the option for a glossy finish by applying epoxy or a polyurethane finish. Then drill two holes in each button and use thread to secure them to a piece of material; in this case, a piece of buckskin that may become a jacket. Thicker sections of antler or cannon bones from whitetails can be turned into knife handles.



Photos by L. Woodrow Ross

## BAIT-UP CONTAINER MAKES TOTING MINNOWS EASY

By Dan Kibler

Anglers who like to fish with live minnows but don't like to drag along a bucket — especially if they're wading or fishing from a kayak or other paddle boat — will feel like somebody is thinking about them with the introduction of the Bait-Up live bait container.

The cylindrical container comes in two sizes — 20 and 35 ounces — and can hold up to two dozen minnows. Each container comes with a special lid that allows you to exchange stale water for fresh water as needed without losing any bait. When the lid is removed, a plastic mesh basket that rides on the bottom of the cylinder floats to the top filled with minnows. This allows anglers to remove bait without the need for a dip net, or digging their fingers into a minnow bucket and risking the loss of other baits.

A lanyard attached to the lid can be clipped onto your belt for easy carry, or onto the rigging of your kayak for a weekend float trip.

MSRP for the Bait-Up 20 is \$19.95, and \$24.95 for the Bait-Up 35.

**More Info:** [www.bait-up.com](http://www.bait-up.com)



## MALUNA: COOLERS WITHOUT HINGES

By Dan Kibler



The seal is the deal.

That's what Scott Hoyt, an expert in thermodynamics, discovered when he set out to build a better cooler, just introduced under the Maluna brand.

"The seal on the lid is the most important part of a cooler," he said. "Heat acts a lot like electricity or water. It seeks the path of least resistance and can enter through even the smallest opening."

And two of those openings were around the hinges on coolers — even high quality ones. So he eliminated them, making Maluna coolers "unhinged."

Four rubber tensioning straps — two on the back wall and two on the front — create a much better seal to keep heat out and cold in. Hoyt said tests show his coolers outperform industry leaders by 23 percent.

Another great feature is a thermometer built into the rotomolded cooler's drain plug, which shows the internal temperature to the outside world. A test cooler, filled with ice and vegetables on a Friday for canning and freezing, showed an interior temperature of 39.4 degrees the next Tuesday.

Maluna coolers sit on non-slip feet that keep it from sliding around in your pickup or on the deck of your boat.

Unhinged Maluna coolers come in 40-, 50-, 70- and 111-quart models, with MSRPs between \$269 and \$449.

**More Info:** [www.maluna.com](http://www.maluna.com)

## DANCO PRODIGY PLIERS

By Brian Cope

Whether crimping a split-shot, unhooking a fish, bending a hook back to its original shape or cutting fishing line, pliers are essential tools that no angler should be without.

And you can't go wrong with Danco's 7.5-inch Prodigy pliers. The aluminum frame is lightweight, rustproof and strong, and features silicone handle inserts for comfort and slip-resistance. Replaceable tungsten carbide side cutters make quick work of mono, fluorocarbon and braid, and the replaceable stainless steel jaw inserts are durable and corrosion-resistant.

These pliers automatically spring open when pulled out of their included sheath, and the coiled lanyard keeps them handy at all times. They come in 15 colors, and custom engraving is available for a personalized touch. At \$39.99, they won't break the bank.

**More Info:** [www.dancopliers.com](http://www.dancopliers.com)



New product submissions can be emailed to **Mark Boyd** at [markb@lasmag.com](mailto:markb@lasmag.com) or call 601-829-8080.



## SHIMANO CURADO DC BAITCASTING REELS

By Patrick Bonin

The DC stands for Digital Control, and quite honestly, it's one of the coolest things I've ever seen. I got the chance to fish with one this spring at Grosse Savanne Lodge during a Shimano media event, and it certainly didn't disappoint. Basically, each reel features a microcomputer that monitors the spool speed 1,000 times a second and applies the perfect amount of brake for each cast — which prevents backlashes and maximizes distance. We fished in some howling 30 mph winds to give the reels a workout, and they performed flawlessly — no "thumbing" required. Four easily adjustable external brake settings allow for different line and weather conditions. Reels are available in both left- and right-hand retrieves, with 6.2:1, 7.4:1 and 8.5:1 gear ratios. The reel went on to win Best Freshwater Reel at the New Product Showcase at ICAST in July. It's great for beginners, and also advanced anglers who want the ability to skip docks without overruns or bomb super-long casts. Reels started shipping last month, and should be available at your local tackle store now. The MSRP on all six models is \$249.99. (Not wasting valuable fishing time fighting backlashes — priceless.)

**More Info:** [www.fish.shimano.com](http://www.fish.shimano.com)



## THE FIRMINATOR: ALL-YOU-NEED FOOD PLOT TOOL FOR ATVS

By Dan Kibler

If you've ever had a hunting lease with perfect spots for food plots or a small dove field, but had no access to a tractor, you were probably out of luck when it came to planting clover, buckwheat, rape, sorghum, millet or sunflowers.

But now it's no sweat — if you have an ATV and a Firminator.

A 3-in-1 tool made to roll along behind a 500 CC or larger ATV, the Firminator is a unit that discs, seeds and cultipacks with the flick of a switch. From breaking ground to putting in seed that turns a quarter-acre of dirt into a wildlife magnet, it's all a hunter needs in the way of equipment to get green

stuff growing — except for maybe a soil test.

Manufactured by Ranew's Outdoor Equipment in Georgia, the Firminator comes in a variety of sizes, with the ATV model perfect for most hunters with food plots to plant. It features 12-inch discs, an ACCU-Seed seed delivery system and an agriculture-grade, cast-iron cultipacker.

The ATV model weighs 800 pounds, heavy enough to dig in when lighter units won't get the job done. It comes with a tow bar sized for a 1 7/8-inch ball, but it also has a 3-point hitch in case you have a small tractor handy.

MSRP is \$6,000.

**More Info:** [www.thefirminator.com](http://www.thefirminator.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).

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2018 SEP	BEST DAYS				LUNAR PERIODS				MOON RISE	TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED		MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT		MOON PHASE	
	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	VALUE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT								
Sat 1					51	11:32 pm	4:10 am - 7:06 am	12:30 pm	4:35 pm - 7:31 pm							
Sun 2					64		4:56 am - 8:02 am	1:32 pm	5:21 pm - 8:27 pm							HALF
Mon 3					56	12:15 am	5:45 am - 9:01 am	2:36 pm	6:10 pm - 9:26 pm							
Tue 4					52	1:05 am	6:40 am - 10:02 am	3:39 pm	7:05 pm - 10:27 pm							
Wed 5					53	2:02 am	7:40 am - 11:02 am	4:38 pm	8:05 pm - 11:27 pm							HIGH
Thu 6					64	3:05 am	8:41 am - 12:01 pm	5:34 pm	9:06 pm - 12:26 pm							
Fri 7					73	4:13 am	9:46 am - 12:56 pm	6:23 pm	10:11 pm - 1:21 am							Perigee
Sat 8					80	5:24 am	10:52 am - 1:48 pm	7:08 pm	11:17 pm - Midnight							
Sun 9					82	6:34 am	11:54 am - 2:36 pm	7:48 pm	Midnight - 2:13 am							NEW
Mon 10					68	7:43 am	12:57 pm - 3:19 pm	8:25 pm	1:19 am - 3:01 am							
Tue 11					53	8:50 am	1:56 pm - 4:02 pm	9:01 pm	1:22 am - 3:44 am							
Wed 12					40	9:55 am	2:55 pm - 4:43 pm	9:37 pm	2:21 am - 4:27 am							
Thu 13					31	10:58 am	3:52 pm - 5:24 pm	10:13 pm	3:20 am - 5:08 am							
Fri 14					29	11:59 am	4:46 pm - 6:08 pm	10:51 pm	4:17 am - 5:49 am							
Sat 15					31	12:57 pm	5:40 pm - 6:52 pm	11:31 pm	5:11 am - 6:33 am							
Sun 16					39	1:53 pm	6:32 pm - 7:38 pm		6:05 am - 7:17 am							HALF
Mon 17					28	2:46 pm	7:23 pm - 8:25 pm	12:15 am	6:57 am - 8:03 am							
Tue 18					21	3:35 pm	8:11 pm - 9:13 pm	1:01 am	7:48 am - 8:50 am							LOW
Wed 19					20	4:19 pm	8:57 pm - 10:03 pm	1:51 am	8:36 am - 9:38 am							Apogee
Thu 20					20	5:00 pm	9:41 pm - 10:53 pm	2:43 am	9:22 am - 10:28 am							
Fri 21					32	5:38 pm	10:22 pm - 11:44 pm	3:37 am	10:06 am - 11:18 am							
Sat 22					44	6:12 pm	11:00 pm - 12:36 am	4:32 am	10:47 am - 12:09 pm							Fall
Sun 23					56	6:45 pm	11:38 pm - Midnight	5:29 am	11:25 am - 1:01 pm							
Mon 24					63	7:17 pm	Midnight - 1:26 am	6:26 am	12:03 pm - 1:51 pm							FULL
Tue 25					55	7:48 pm	12:14 am - 2:20 am	7:23 am	12:39 pm - 2:45 pm							
Wed 26					48	8:20 pm	12:53 am - 3:11 am	8:22 am	1:18 pm - 3:36 pm							
Thu 27					42	8:54 pm	1:30 am - 4:06 am	9:22 am	1:55 pm - 4:31 pm							
Fri 28					40	9:32 pm	2:10 am - 5:02 am	10:24 am	2:35 pm - 5:27 pm							
Sat 29					44	10:13 pm	2:53 am - 5:59 am	11:27 am	3:18 pm - 6:24 pm							
Sun 30					46	11:01 pm	3:41 am - 6:57 am	12:30 pm	4:06 pm - 7:22 pm							

25 50 75  
AVERAGE

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ANY LUNAR PERIOD IS ENHANCED WHEN IT OVERLAPS A KEY SOLAR PERIOD. THE BEST OF THESE OVERLAPS ARE DESIGNATED BY THE SUN SYMBOLS:  
☀ = DAWN ☀ = HIGH NOON ☀ = DUSK  
WHILE THE LESSER MOONRISE AND -SET OVERLAPS (ABOUT 30 MIN. BEFORE AND AFTER THE LISTED TIME) ARE DESIGNATED BY BOLD BLACK TYPE.

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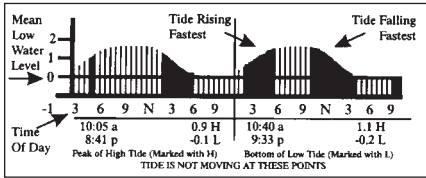
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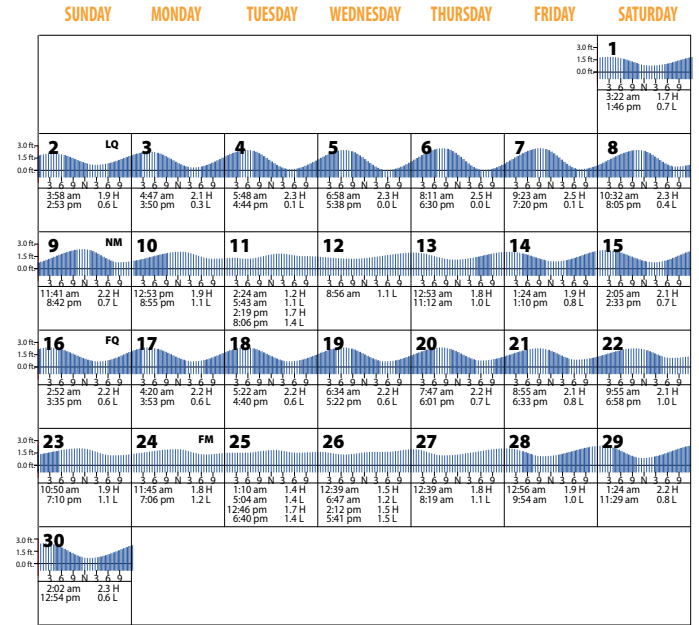
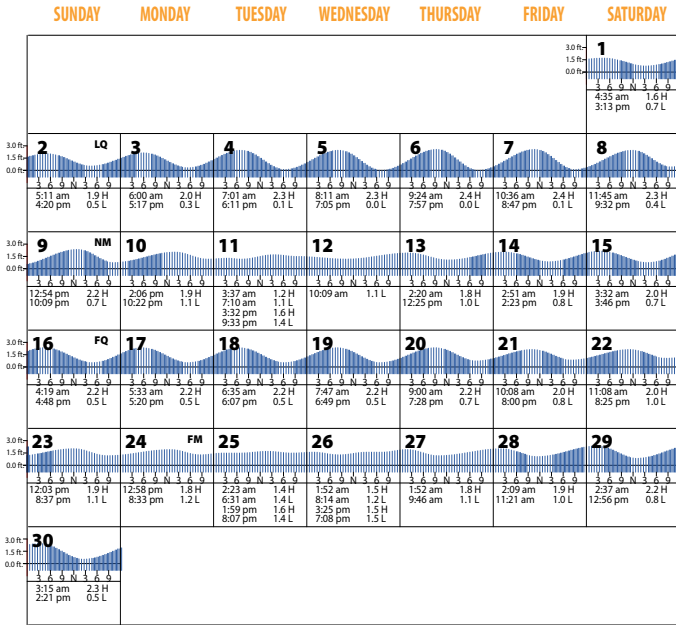
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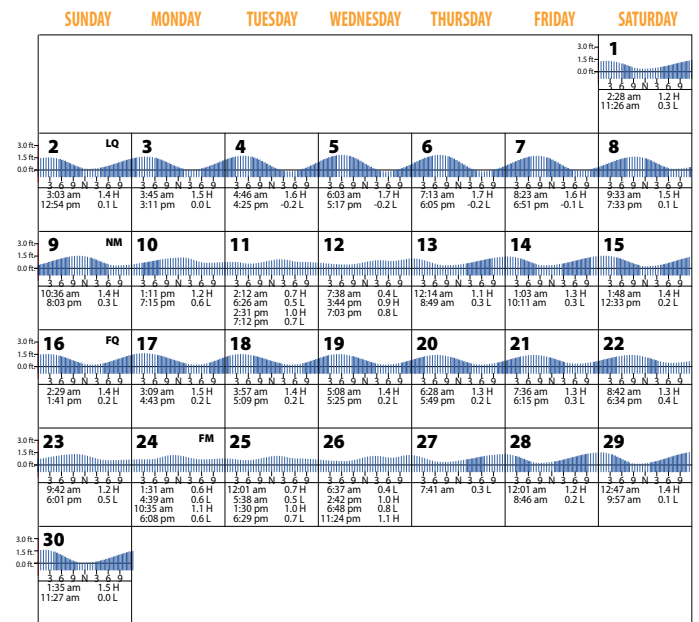
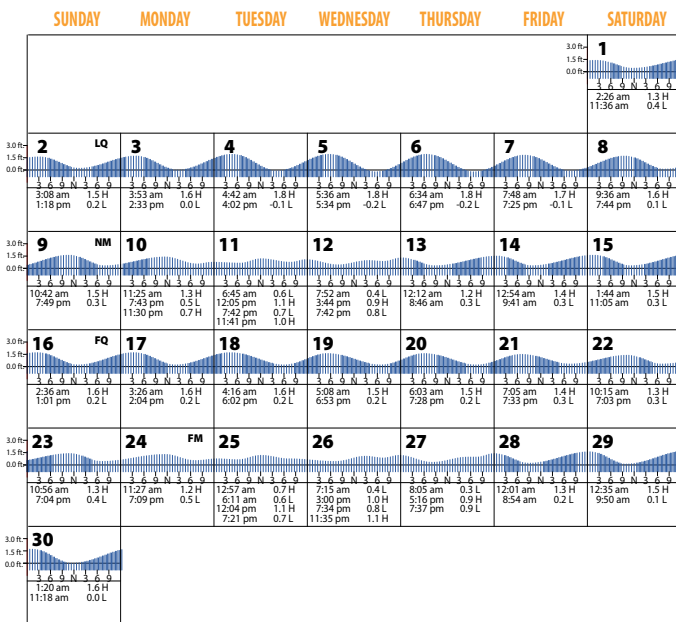
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