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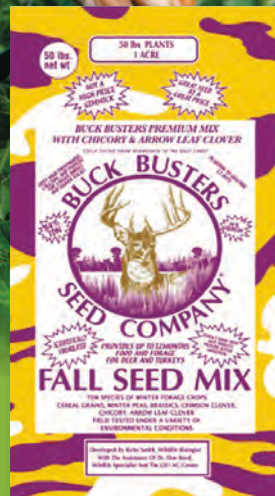
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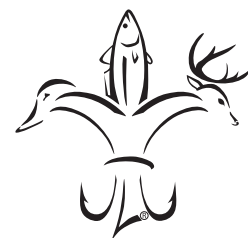
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SMALL



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SEE RED,
CATCH REDS



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You're a bass fisherman and you want to catch some redfish? Don't worry about buying all kinds of new tackle. The rods, reels and lures you already have should do the trick. Photo by Brian Carroll.



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Outdoor
UPDATE
with
Bobby Cleveland



Bobby Cleveland has covered sports in Mississippi for over 38 years. A native of Hattiesburg and graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Cleveland lives on Ross Barnett Reservoir near Jackson with his wife Pam. He can be reached at bobby7754@yahoo.com.

Bobby Cleveland

AUGUST: HUNTING ON THE HORIZON!

EVEN THE PANDEMIC WON'T AFFECT MISSISSIPPI'S LOVE FOR THE CHASE

By Bobby Cleveland

When the best thing you can say about the next page on the calendar is, "Hey, at least it gets us one month closer to hunting season," then it must be August, also known to Mississippians as "hell on Earth."

In 2020, we can pray it also gets us one step closer to the end of the COVID 19 pandemic.

In mid-July, Mississippi's COVID case count was still rising to nearly 1,000 cases a day. Our per capita infection rate ranked in the top 20 of states/countries. There's been talk of seeing some of the bans of April and May returning, like restaurants and bars, gyms and other businesses. It seems doubtful there will be a true school year, or — Lord help us — football.

What does that leave?

Hopefully, hunting and fishing.

I say "hopefully," because fishing and boating was banned in Mississippi for a time back in April.

"They made that mistake once; I doubt they'd do it again," said Ronnie Porter of Jackson, an avid outdoorsman. "I say it jokingly, but they better think twice about telling well-armed hunters they can't hunt. I can laugh about it, but rest assured, there's a lot of folks 'round here that don't have a sense of humor, not when it comes to hunting."

While most traditional hunting seasons don't open until later in the fall, August does bring us the opening of one: alligator season. The application and draws took place in June. The record 960 permits issued for public waters can start being used on Aug. 28. A total of 5,143 applied, meaning the odds were about one in 5½.

In the meantime, the fishing action this summer has been, well, hot. Anglers in the Gulf of Mexico are reporting an outstanding season for trout and redfish, snapper — when it was open — and even shark. Freshwater was also productive, with crappie and bass no longer being able to hide because of advances in electronic fish-finding technology like live scopes.

"I even bought one of those things," said jigging purist Rabbit Rogers of Brandon. "Had to keep up with everybody else. Those things are a game-changer and, in the summer, when they go deep, they can't hide. You can pull up on a spot and without dropping a line, know whether you need to stay or move on. You can tell if there's fish there and what the quality is."

This issue of *Mississippi Sportsman*, as every month, can help fill the void when it's too hot to fish, or when quarantine has you in lockdown in the air-conditioned comfort of your recliner.

Inside, you'll find a bevy of features that can keep you occupied.

- Writer Bryan Hendricks takes us out in the Gulf marshes where the water is most-often clear in the summer and discusses tactics with some of Mississippi's best redfish captains.

- Phillip Gentry details the best rigs and baits for catching the fat cats in rivers and lakes.

- Mike Giles has expert tips on finesse fishing for largemouth bass.

- To set the tone for the early hunting season, Andy Douglas looks at September's wing-shooting — dove and teal, including what you can do in August to prepare.

Sit back. Stay safe. Fish when you can, and enjoy this August issue of *Mississippi Sportsman*. ■

CHARTER CAPTAINS CATCH A BIG BREAK:

FISHING IN THE GULF IS GREAT; PLENTY OF FISHERMEN, TOO

Capt. Matt Tusa of Shore Thing Charters in Bay St. Louis smiled throughout the day on the Gulf of Mexico. Fish were biting. The seas were calm. His clients were happy.

He and a lot of Mississippi charter captains have smiled a lot lately, and to a man, they'll tell you, "It's about time."

"We've had a rough couple of years," Tusa said. "Between last year's publicity fiasco related to the algae, this year's COVID scare and a lot of winter and spring flood waters coming into the Gulf, it's been tough staying busy. You do what you can, fish when you can and hope for the best."

"This summer has been great. The weather has been cooperative and the fishing, well, it's been fantastic, especially the redfish and speckled trout. The trout have been hard for the average angler to find and stay on, at times, but for charter captains running all the time, it's easier."

"We didn't have as much freshwater incursion from the Mississippi River through Bonnet Carré Spillway. We did have a couple of big floods on the Pearl River (and the Pascagoula River) that gave us fits earlier this year. It's encouraging."

Tusa (228-493-9743) thinks the stage is setting up for a good August, and it needs to be since most captains have their date books filled with trips.

"We started seeing some tripletail in late June, and it's been good through early July," Tusa said. "That's gotten to be a pretty big deal for us, since it offers us an extra bonus for our clients at the end of the day. If we can get on the trout early — and August is pretty dependable around structure — or on the redfish, or both, and fill a box, then we can spend the last couple of hours running and gunning for tripletail."

Tripletail, aka blackfish, are considered by most people to be the best-tasting nearshore species in the Gulf. They are odd in that while most fish move out to find cooler water in the summer, blackfish migrate from deep to shallow and can be found within



Bobby Cleveland

a mile or two of the beaches.

"Anywhere you can find cover on the surface, like crab pots (buoys), channel markers, floating debris or anything really, you want to pass by pretty close and look a floating fish, laying on its side, waiting for a meal to pass by," Tusa said. "On a 90- or 100-degree day, we can run at 20 to 30 miles per hour and look at crab pots. With a trained eye, you can spot them pretty easy. You pass them by, sneak back up to them and offer them a live shrimp. Man, they can't pass it up."

Over in Biloxi, fisherman George Porter had a great snapper season on his private boat, at least until the season closed July 5 when the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources said the recreational quota was running short.

"We can only hope when they finish the tallying, we might see the season reopen either in late July, August or at least for Labor Day," Porter said. "The fishing was so good that we could catch a 5- or 6-angler limit of two each per angler and keep whatever size fish the person wanted. We had one trip when we brought in 10 snapper that weighed 257 pounds — that's an average of 25.7 pounds per fish."

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, the state agency that oversees saltwater fishing, has not announced yet whether any part of the state's or Gulf-wide recreational quota remained and when or if the season would reopen. ■

TAX-FREE WEEKEND JUST IN TIME FOR DOVES

Mississippi will offer a Second Amendment Tax Free Weekend as usual, but it will be a week later than normal, Sept. 4-6.

Dove season opens on Saturday, Sept. 5, so hunters who plan on doing some serious sky-blasting will have the first day of the Tax-Free Weekend to make their tax-exempt purchases.

"Well it could be worse, but only if they didn't have one," said hunter Bill Taylor of Brandon. "I usually go and buy about six cases of shells before the season starts.... I

can go in on (Sept. 4) and load up for the rest of the season.

"That'll work, because our biggest hunts are always the Saturday, Sunday and Monday of the Labor Day weekend. I'll need a bunch as always, because my twin sons will be hunting with me, and this year, my youngest child, my daughter Sally, wants to start. She turned 14 and wants to go and I'm happy about it. I bought her a 20-gauge, and she's ready to go. My boys and I shoot 12s, so I'll have to get about six cases of 12s and

two 20s to get through the season.

"(But) if this COVID 19 keeps them out of school, man I might need a lot more shells. They'll want to go every day after they do their virtual classes."

During the Tax-Free Weekend, all gun and archery equipment and some accessories can be purchased without sales tax. Many stores combine sales with the weekend so hunters can really get a bargain. ■

COVID FORCES SHOW CANCELLATIONS

As expected, Mississippi's oldest and newest outdoor shows have been postponed due to social-distancing restrictions related to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Mississippi Wildlife Foundation said it will not hold its annual Wildlife Extravaganza in 2020. Ashlee Smith, MWF's chief executive officer, said the combination of last year's boycott of its event due to the organization's opposition to the completion of the Yazoo Backwater Pumps and COVID 19 restrictions only allowing 25% of occupancy for indoor events led to the cancellation of what would have been the 34th annual Extravaganza.

Smith said new dates will have to be found "in a cooler time of the year" for a smaller outdoor and virtual event. Plans will be announced later.

A new show, the Mississippi Outdoor Expo, which took over the Extravaganza's traditional dates the first weekend in August, and the Fairground/Trade Mart venue — prompting a lawsuit by the Mississippi Wildlife Federation — has also cancelled, with no plans going forward.

Don Brazil, CEO of the sponsoring Foundation for Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, said the farming and outdoor show is a victim solely of COVID 19. He said that a new date could be selected, but that "a lot of things would have to fall into place" for a show to take place. ■



The COVID-19 pandemic has put on hold two outdoor shows scheduled for this year.



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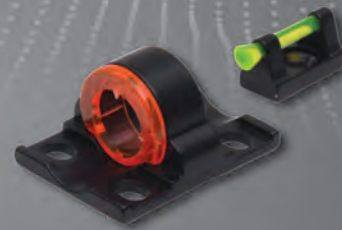
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Myles Hunt Stanley

Myles Hunt Stanley, 10, caught this 14.8-pound carp on June 18, 2020 in Madison County.



Pace Clark

Pace Clark killed this spike buck while hunting with his dad on his grandfather's farm in Wayne County.



Brandon Laird

Brandon Laird took his first buck in Smith County while hunting with his dad on Jan. 18, 2020, shooting a Winchester .243.

GOT PICS? We want 'em

All images will be considered, but those taken on the water or in the woods will have the best chance of being featured.

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AUGUST'S TOP 5 MISSISSIPPI FISHING TRIPS



Bull reds will school around barrier islands off Mississippi's Gulf coast this month. Look for birds diving on the surface.

Dan Kibler

So what if it's hot? If the fish are biting, fishermen barely notice the waterfalls of sweat cascading down their bodies, seemingly from every pore. Try any of these proven "hot" spots in August for a productive day on the water.

BULL REDS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

The hardest thing about catching red-fish in August along Mississippi's barrier islands is finding keeper fish. Seriously, the schools of reds swimming in the Gulf are full of the big, bull reds, and with the state limit being three with only one exceeding 30 inches, it's tough to fill a fish box on a trip.

"But if you're in it for fun, there's nothing better than a day of chasing the bulls, hooking up on light tackle, and then battling the beast for anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour," said Bill Ladner of Pass Christian. "What's great about it is that the schools are so big that everybody on the boat can be hooked up at once. That's when the open cockpit, center console boats are preferred, and the dance can be exciting and highly entertaining."

Ladner said his group usually starts on the south side of Ship Island and will watch for big birds diving. The birds will often either be over a school of bulls or speckled trout, diving to feed on the same bait the fish are. Any kind of lure will work, but a topwater plug just adds to the excitement.

float down in the lazy current. In the meantime, you have the option of parking on a sandbar on the inside bend and tight-lining with cut shad, or positioning the boat in the deeper outside bend and fishing deeper. Every hour or two, you can run check the jugs and keep track of the devices. By the end of the day, you can have all you care to clean."

Rawlings also recommends fishing any area below where a tributary is flowing into the river.

"Look for where the water is mixing, and fish right there," he said, adding, "and hold on tight."

CRAPPIE, GRENADA LAKE

This is a fun trip in the summer, both because it's productive for slab crappie and also because it involves trolling to keep the air moving and can be done just as easily from under a canopy top.

"We use a pontoon boat, listen to music, plug in a portable fan, stay under the shade, and reel in the fish when they bite one of our Bandit crankbaits," said Gerald Townsend of Greenwood. "It's a great way to spend the day."

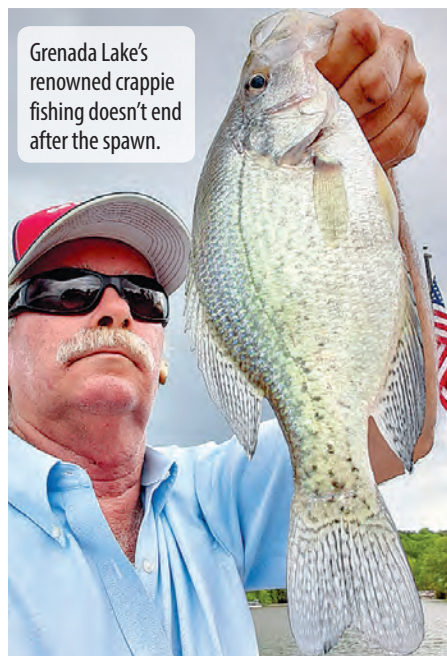
Townsend trolls with multiple light-action baitcasting rods spooled with 10-pound mono and a variety of either Bandit 300 and/or 200 series crankbaits.

"We use 10-pound, because we've established a depth that we can get out of our crankbaits, and it stays consistent," he said. "We adjust the depth by the amount of line we let out. The depth we need is determined by the fish on our electronics"

BLUE CATS, MISSISSIPPI RIVER

From the Tennessee border south to Woodville, the Big Muddy provides Mississippi anglers so many opportunities to catch a trophy cat of a lifetime, or to simply fill a freezer with "eater-sized" cats with a single day on the river. Most Augusts, the river is stable, the temperature is at its highest, and that works in the fisherman's favor to concentrate big blues in deep water next to shallower feeding areas.

"The perfect spot is where you have a big bend in the river that creates both a deep (outside bend) and shallow (inside bend) area," said Phil Rawlings of Vicksburg. "You can toss out a bunch of jugs at varying depths and toss them out upstream of the bend and let them



Grenada Lake's renowned crappie fishing doesn't end after the spawn.

BLACK BASS, PICKWICK LAKE

We'd be negligent in our duty to omit this giant TVA lake in extreme northeast Mississippi. Pickwick is famous for its midday bass bite in the hottest times of the year.

Why?

"When people are turning down their thermostats on their home air conditioners, TVA revs up the turbines at the dam to produce the electricity needed," said guide Roger Stegall of Iuka. "When all turbines are turning, it produces a lot of current, and that creates a feeding frenzy on Pickwick. You find a productive hump in 10 to 15 feet of water, and you're subject to catch a largemouth, smallmouth or spotted bass on any cast. The hotter the weather, the hotter the fishing. Just take lots of sunscreen, bottled water and get after it."

Popular lures include Carolina-rigged soft plastics, a jig-and-grub combo and deep-running crankbaits.

"And if you ever want to try the Alabama rig, this is a place to do it," Stegall said.

CRAPPIE, BARNETT RESERVOIR

With the advent of advanced electronics such as live scopes, crappie have few places they can hide on the 33,000-acre lake, which is that's loaded with old timber.

"It has been a game changer for sure," said Bill Rooker of Jackson. "It's unreal how much easier it makes finding fish, big fish, and then catching them. It may never replace trolling as the best summer tactics on some lakes, but on Barnett, where there is so much cover in deep water, using live scopes is the ticket.

"I've been fishing the lake for over 30 years, and I have some traditional spots I've always fished. I'd have to go to them, fish for a while to find out if the fish are there. Now, I can pull up, turn on the scope and find out if I need to stay and fish or move on."

Deep, horizontal cover is Rooker's favorite.

"That's where they are going to be, and on the main lake due to stratification in the summer, they are going to be between 10 and 12 feet deep in the water column," he said. ■

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My maiden cast in Mississippi stuck a 30-pound class redfish, establishing a high standard that revealed one of the Magnolia State's most-overlooked delights.

I was fishing out of Bay St. Louis with Capt. Sonny Schindler of Shore Thing Charters, along with my son, Matthew, Tommy Akin of Nashville, Tenn., and Mike Jones of Vicksburg. Akin and Jones organized the trip on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Tourism.

Frankly, I'd never given much thought to fishing Mississippi's coast. I've had some great inshore and off-shore trips all across the Gulf, and although I covered Alabama's saltwater scene for *Outdoor Life* in the late 1990s, I was never asked to write about Mississippi's part in this genre.

"Fishing is huge here," Jones said. "Everybody does it, but they don't promote it."

We met the affable and loquacious Schindler at 5 a.m. on a warm summer morning, just as the sky was brightening on the sunrise side of the Gulf. As we reached the mouth of the bayou at the bay, Schindler idled his engine and said a short prayer. He requested success for all the other fishermen and for safety from rain, wind, lightning, waterspouts, "and all that other bad stuff." Finally, he requested plenty of hard-pulling, edible fish. With that, he put the visor back on his head and throttled down his big outboard for a long ride into the waves.

We stopped at a short, thin mud spit amid a vast expanse of open water. In the distance, on a larger island, were the ruins of an old hunting and fishing camp.

"You need to take a picture of this," Schindler said, pointing to the sliver of mud. "This used to cover several hundred acres. This is all that's left, and soon it'll be gone, too."

Schindler talked wistfully about wade-fishing the marsh

when he was in high school and college. It has eroded away, as has much of the marsh at the mouth of the Mississippi River delta. Current poured through a gap between the island and a submerged reef. Most of our group used light spinning outfits with tandem Strike King Redfish Magic swimbaits on reels spooled with braid tied to a swivel, tied to heavy monofilament.

Mine was the only one that did not have a tandem rig. Instead, it featured a ¼-ounce ball jig with a pumpkinseed/red flake curlytail grub — a basic shaky head setup that bass anglers use in highland reservoirs across the country.

My first cast was parallel to the boat. I let the lure hit the bottom and retrieved it by lifting it off the bottom, letting it fall and reeling in the slack, the same technique I use to catch smallmouth and Kentucky bass under bluffs in clear, highland streams and in the famous White River system of northern Arkansas and southern Missouri. I was very comfortable with the technique, but the product was considerably more substantial than usual.



SEE RED, CATCH REDS

By Bryan Hendricks

CLEAR-WATER TECHNIQUES AND BAIT THAT TRICK LARGEMOUTH BASS IN HIGHLANDS RESERVOIRS ARE JUST ABOUT PERFECT FOR DOING BATTLE WITH REDFISH ALONG MISSISSIPPI'S GULF COAST.

Quickly, a big fish slammed the rig and took off like a sprint car.

It stripped line off the spool while the drag hummed. I handed the rod to Matthew. It was his first time fishing in the salt, and I wanted him to experience a different class of fish than any he had encountered before.

“What are you grinnin’ at?” Akin asked, amused at Matt’s adolescent exuberance over his precariously arched rod. Matt’s smile was so broad that the corners of his mouth practically stretched around his neck.

“I’ll bet that’s a great big bull red,” Schindler said.

It took about 20 minutes, but Matt finally maneuvered the fish into Schindler’s net. It was indeed a big bull red, about 35 pounds. After taking some photos, we released it.

Schindler suddenly seemed disquieted.

“Did you get that on the first cast?” he asked.

“Sure did,” I replied with unrestrained joy. “That bait scarcely touched bottom when that fish scooped it up and...”

“Wow. I mean, I don’t like to get one on the first cast,” Schindler said, pulling back his visor and rubbing his forehead fretfully. “It’s kind of like, you know, bad luck.”

“If a 35-pound bull red is bad luck, it’s a darned sight better than the good luck I’ve had lately,” I said. “Besides, it’s too late to worry about that now.”

Schindler laughed, relaxed and got back to business, which on this particular morning was very brisk.

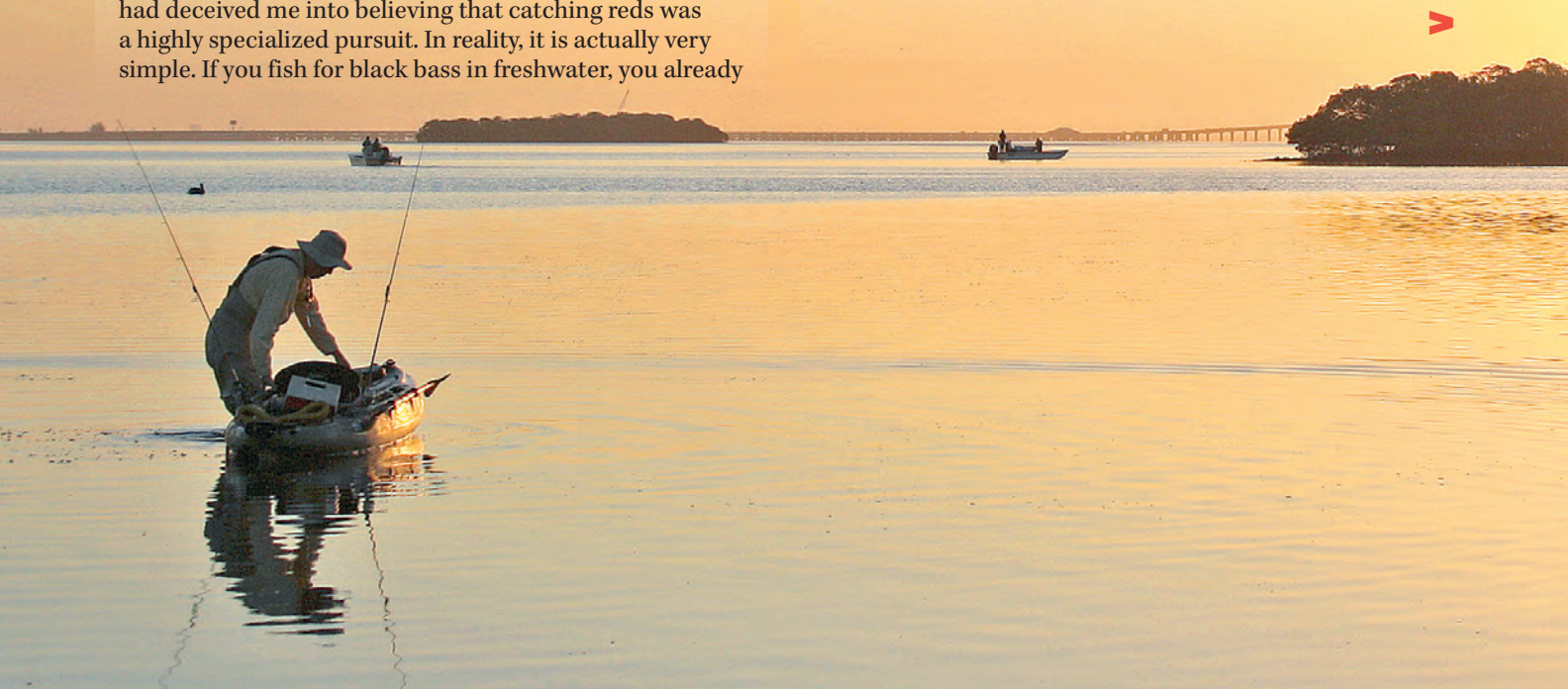
The place was a shallow, shell key that had once been marsh, but it had been reduced to open water by encroaching salt. Even so, it was still fertile and teemed with food, making it very attractive to big redfish.

It was the bass technique that captivated me the most, however. Years of reading redfishing accounts had deceived me into believing that catching reds was a highly specialized pursuit. In reality, it is actually very simple. If you fish for black bass in freshwater, you already

have almost everything you need. The main requirements include a medium-action or medium-heavy bass rod with a slow tip and at least a 2500 series spinning rod with small-diameter, heavy line, an ample selection of soft-plastic lures and an assortment of jigheads. The translation is almost directly linear. The difference is that current influences redfish feeding behavior a lot more than it does bass. If you’re in the right place on a tide or in wind-whipped waters, you stand an excellent chance of encountering redfish.

My favorite method for pursuing redfish happens to be my favorite method for pursuing big largemouth bass on highland reservoirs: fishing from a kayak. It is a simple art that I learned from Morgan Promnitz, director of fishing business development for Hobie. Using pedal-drive Hobie Pro Angler 14 kayaks, we stalked the shorelines at the tail of an incoming tide, casting swimbaits to redfish feeding along the the outside edges of shoreline cover. Again, the tackle was the same as I use for casting to largemouth bass in similar situations.

Bait selection is equally simple. I primarily use Redfish Assassin swimbaits, 4-inch Gulp shrimp and D.O.A. shrimp. These are subtle variations of the same swimbaits we use for bass when fishing clear lakes, and although we don’t use those particular brands or styles for bass, I have no doubt they would work. The tapered paddletails create exaggerated actions that are irresistible to sight-feeding fish in clear, shoreline water. They also allow you to cover a lot of water from multiple angles while pedaling or paddling stealthily along a bank.





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**SEE RED,
CATCH REDS**

The D.O.A. Shrimp is an outstanding bait for redfish in clear water with standard bass tackle.

For shallow water, I throw swimbaits on jigs no heavier than ¼-ounce. Often, ⅛-ounce is sufficient, because the baits themselves are heavy enough to allow for effortless casting. A ⅛-ounce head falls slowly, allowing you to reel slowly if the situation requires it. The presentation is very similar to a shaky head technique. Let the rig touch bottom and then retrieve it by bouncing it with short rod strokes while reeling in slack line. With scented baits like Gulp, I let them sit longer than I do with unscented baits, just as I do when fishing Gulp Alive and Powerbaits for bass on shaky heads.

Slack, mid-day tides are the most-challenging times to catch redfish, and this is when clear-water, sight-fishing bass techniques come to the forefront. When the water is still, big, moss-backed reds often hunker among rocks, sand or mud on the shady sides of jetties, revetments and breakwaters. You can see them with good, polarized sunglasses. This is important, because you have to keep your boat or kayak a good distance outboard of a lazing fish. Pinpoint his position and cast so that you can soak and bounce the bait close enough to the fish to make a run at it with a minimal expense in energy.

Unlike sight-fishing for bedding bass, a redfish won't pick a shrimp up by the tail and carry it away from a bed. A redfish goes for the kill every time.

Finally, my favorite method for catching redfish in clear water is with topwater plugs. As with bass in clear reservoirs, redfish often can't resist a cigar-type topwater plug in current or in windy chop. The MirrOlure She Dog is a traditional favorite,



but my favorite is the Boing Boinger in “real herring” or “sicky shad” colors. Boing topwaters feature an interior titanium rod with a clapper on the end. Using a walk-the-dog motion, the rod flexes and slaps the clapper against the interior walls, creating a much louder thump than you get with similar baits that have only rattles. You hear the thumps from a long distance, and so do fish. When redfish are in a mood to strike on the surface, they will find and attack the Boinger.

When the weather gets hot and sticky, these tactics will help you maximize your fun chasing redfish in the Mississippi salt. ■



Bryan Hendricks, *Outdoors Editor for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette newspaper, is also a book author and radio personality. He is an avid saltwater kayak and stream angler.*

Fishing from a kayak is the author's favorite way to stalk redfish in slack water along jetties, revetments and breakwaters in the heat of the day.



Dan Love peered across the waters of Ross Barnett Reservoir, picked out a target and sailed a jerkbait to the spot. As he worked the lure back towards the boat, it darted back and forth until a monster bass smashed it and dove for the depths. Love instantly set the hook and drove it deep into the jaws of the massive bass. “Ka-Whoosh”

The bass exploded through the surface and thrashed wildly as Love used all of his faculties and equipment to keep it on the line. After wearing the fish down, Love boated it, quickly took a photo and released it to grow and be caught another day.

“I tend to go away from what everybody else is using these days,” said Love. “While most

people are going away from jerkbaits by midsummer, I’ll be switching to them, as I like to cast something different than everybody else.”

While many view hard jerkbaits as prespawn or cold-weather baits, Love utilizes them as finesse baits throughout the summer — or as long as they’re biting them.

“I’ll fish them from 3 feet deep to 18 feet deep,” he said. “A lot of fish suspend during the summer, and they’ll come up and get one from below. If there’s a thermocline, I’ll fish them all the way down to the thermocline but not below.” Love prefers using clear lures like the Strike King jerkbait in the IU color: clear with a green and blue back.

FINESSE EQUIPMENT >

IF IT’S HOT, GO SMALL

FINESSE-FISHING AND ALL THAT COMES WITH IT — LIGHT LINE, SMALL BAITS, SMALL WEIGHTS — CAN PLAY A BIG PART OF CATCHING SUMMER BASS ACROSS MISSISSIPPI.

■ By Mike Giles





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If it's hot, go small

Spooling braid but using a fluorocarbon leader gives Dan Love plenty of power for setting the hook and fighting big summer bass.

DROP-SHOT RIG

The traditional drop-shot rig has been around for a while and has been responsible for many bass tournament wins around the country in clear lakes and during hot weather. However, Love said they are a good choice for novice anglers or for anyone who hasn't finesse-fished.

"If I have a novice fishing with me, and the bite is tough, I'll put them on a drop-shot," Love said. "I prefer using them (over) a Carolina rig during tough conditions, because many bass will swallow the hook on the Carolina rigs, you'll end up killing some fish, and that can mean the difference between winning a tournament or coming up just a little short. A dead fish cost me \$600 in a recent tournament, and if you extrapolate that over a whole year, you could lose thousands of dollars."

Many fishermen think drop-shot rigs are only used with light tackle and light weights, small hooks, and small baits, but that doesn't always have to be the case, according to Love.

"You can use a ½-ounce weight with a 5/0 hook and a 9-inch worm," Love said. "It's kind of like a reverse Carolina rig, but novice anglers can really feel the bass when they strike since the hook is above the weight, and they can set the hook before the bass swallow it. The sensitivity of the drop-shot technique allows anglers the ability to detect sensitive strikes and set the hook quicker, regardless of the size of hook, weight or worm, and that's important when finessing bass into biting."



LEDGE-FISHING SHAKY HEADS

"During July and August, I'm going to concentrate on graphing the deep ledges to find schools of bass," said bass pro Jay Mabry of Meridian. "Fish are like people; they're going to find somewhere to get out of the heat, whether it's in the shade or in deep water. I'll stay on the move until I find a ledge that has fish, and then I'll work them with a shaky head. I'm not going to fishing random ledges if the fish aren't there, I want to see them on my Humminbird Helix 12 graph before I start fishing."

"I always downsize when the fishing gets tough and throw a shaky head with a finesse worm rigged on 10-pound fluorocarbon line. I prefer Zoom trick worms when using a shaky head."

"I'll use the watermelon color in clear water and the redbug color in stained water. I don't care what I use this time of year, but the key is you have to locate the bass, and if you can find them, you can usually catch them some time during the day."

Jay Mabry of Meridian displays a lunker bass he caught while finesse-fishing ledges in the summer.

Seeing bass and baitfish on your depth finder before you start fishing a spot will lead to better catches.



Mabry grew up fishing a variety of lakes and rivers in Mississippi and Alabama and has spent a lot of time on the Tenn-Tom waterway system. He has also learned how to catch hot weather bass during the dog days of August.

“When I’m on the river or fishing lakes, the key will always be hunting for and finding the bass on the ledges first, and then determining what they want,” Mabry said. “If I find ledges with grass on them, I’ll try working them with Carolina rigs and big worms, too.”

While Mabry likes finessing them with shaky heads when bass are lethargic and holding tight to the ledges, he’ll also try some traditional deep-water ledge baits.

“I’ll use a crankbait on the ledges if the bass are suspended just above the ledge or grass,” Mabry said. “If I can trigger a reaction bite, they’ll usually

start feeding, and then you can catch them on a variety of lures. But my go-to bait will be that shaky head with a finesse worm if the bite is slow.”

Bass will also congregate around bridges that have current moving through, and that’s a favorite area of Mabry’s no matter where he’s fishing.

“I like to look for current, generally around the bridges or causeways,” Mabry said. “If you can find current moving through a bridge, whether that’s on the river or a lake, the bass will usually relate to the bridge and strike your lure when you put it on them. They’ll stage by the concrete pillars or rocky points and ambush unsuspecting baitfish or lures that swim past.”

If you want to keep fishing and catch fish during the dog days of summer then try a few of these experts tips and techniques and you should be successful at finding and catching hot weather bass. ■



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

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GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

Largemouth bass get big by consuming more energy than they expend for metabolism, activity and reproduction.



PREDATOR-PREY DYNAMICS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Photo courtesy Gene Gilliland

TEMPERATURE CHANGES CAN HAVE COMPLEX EFFECTS ON FISH COMMUNITIES

Climate change and global warming are not universally accepted. I get that. My intent is neither to support nor refute climate change, but rather share how small changes in temperature — one of many climate variables predicted to change — can affect sportfish. While it seems intuitive that a warming climate would result in a longer growing season and faster growth for warmwater sportfish like largemouth bass, the results indicate this may not be the case.

MODELING EXERCISE

The study system was West Long Lake, a 62-acre lake in north-central Nebraska with a simple fish community composed primarily of bluegill, yellow perch, largemouth bass and northern pike. Northern pike, like largemouth bass, are piscivorous, and both species feed on bluegill and yellow perch.

A multi-agency team of fisheries

scientists used three regional climate-change models — models that predicted changes at the county level rather than generalized global or continental models that are not expected to be locally accurate — to predict annual temperature regimes for West Long Lake in 2040 and 2060. The models predicted different annual temperature regimes, but all forecast mean monthly temperature changes compared to present averages were minus 0.4 °F to plus 4.2 °F from April through October 2040 and plus 2.0 °F to 6.3 °F during April through October 2060.

Largemouth bass and northern pike growth and food consumption were estimated from bioenergetic models, which use well-established physiological parameters to estimate energy used for metabolism, activity and waste excretion to predict species- and size-specific food consumption and growth of predator fish. Water temperature and energy content of forage are input data. The

models consider temperatures at which feeding begins, optimal temperature and temperatures above which feeding slows and stops.

PREDICTIONS

Because the bioenergetic models used temperature inputs predicted by three climate-change models, ranges of growth and food consumption were predicted for both 2040 and 2060. All changes were compared to model outputs for temperatures measured in 2001.

Average daily food consumption for largemouth bass increased from less than 1% to 67% among months. The



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.

greatest increase in food consumption occurred in spring and fall. Total April-to-October food consumption increased 5% to 15% for 2040 predicted temperatures and 20% to 30% for 2060 predicted temperatures.

The change in average daily food consumption for northern pike ranged from a decrease of 18% to an increase of 76% among months. Increased food consumption occurred in spring and fall, but food consumption decreased in the summer. Total April-to-October food consumption increased 5% to 15% for 2040 predicted temperatures and 20% to 30% for 2060 predicted temperatures.

Growth of largemouth bass from April to October in 2040 was 1.3% less to 4.3% more than 2001 growth rate. By 2060, growth would decline 0.1% to 4.1% compared to 2001. Northern pike growth from April to October would decline 3.3% to 27.5% by 2040 and 17.7% to 45.3% by 2060.

UNDERSTAND TEMPERATURE EFFECTS

Both metabolism and food consumption rise with warmer temperatures. Positive growth occurs when energy consumed exceeds energy burned for metabolism; fish lose weight (negative growth) when energy burned to support metabolism exceeds energy consumed. At temperatures above optimum, metabolism continues to increase, but food consumption declines, and fish can stop growing and lose weight.

Optimum temperature for northern pike, a coolwater fish at the southern edge of its range in West Long Lake, is 68 to 75°F. Optimum temperature for largemouth bass is 82 to 84°F. Northern pike would be expected to have a longer period of negative growth than largemouth bass in a warming environment, exactly as the results predicted.

A shortcoming of the research is failure to include growth before April and after October. Under historical temperature conditions, water temperature is cool and growth is slow before April and after October in this temperate-zone lake. But in a warming environment, growth of both species would resume earlier in the spring and continue later in the fall than during the 2001 temperature scenario. Thus, predicted declines in growth during an entire year would be lower for both species. Conversely, increases in food consumption during an entire year would be greater.

ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS

While the lack of increase in growth despite greatly increased food consumption is important, the change in food consumption is potentially more consequential. The greatly increased food consumption from April to October may cause an imbalance between preda-

tors and their food supply unless the increases in temperature resulted in substantial increases in production of bluegills and yellow perch, the primary forage.

The total amount of forage consumed is important, but equally or more important is when the food consumption increases. While the total increase in consumption for the April-to-October growing season was always less than 30%, average daily consumption rates were up to 60% greater during May and October for both largemouth bass and northern pike. These spikes in consumption are likely to influence the population dynamics of the prey species. These declines in prey abundance resulting from greater bass and pike consumption will further reduce the growth of the bass and pike and could lead to smaller average sizes. ■

LUNKER LINES ➤

Northern pike, native to cooler-water lakes and rivers throughout the world, are fish-eating, stalking predators. Growing to a large size, with a mouth filled with sharp teeth allow them to consume a wide range of sizes and species of forage fishes.



LUNKER LINES

Paul Elias

Big smallmouth bass often will hold in deep water on shell banks, deep points and ledges in summer at Pickwick.



HAVE A PLAN AT PICKWICK

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August, generally the hottest month, means a high demand for air conditioning in the Tennessee Valley, causing the TVA plant upstream of Pickwick Lake to work overtime, generating power and releasing cold, highly oxygenated water from Wilson Dam.

That water will make baitfish and bass feed actively, so before you leave to fish Pickwick, call TVA or go to www.tva.com and learn when the power plant will be turning the generators, thereby creating current and causing bass to bite across the 43,000-acre reservoir.

You'll catch a lot of fish at Pickwick — largemouth, spotted and smallmouth bass, plus white bass, hybrid saltwater stripers, saltwater stripers, bream and catfish. The places you're fishing may concentrate all those species. Although some schools of bass will hold in deep water, usually in moving water, you'll find bass on sandbars, flats and points.

EARLY MORNING

At first light, you'll have a topwater

bite and see bass schooling. I'll move to grassbed points, mussel bars, main-river sandbars and the ends of main-river points.

I'll begin fishing about 100 yards upriver from each point and fish all the way around the point and 100 yards below it. I search for bass and the depth where they're concentrating on my Garmin LiveScope. I'll fish different lures to try to make them bite, including a Mann's 20+ crankbait, a Carolina-rigged Mann's JellyBug, an 8-inch flutter spoon, a hair jig, a shaky head and a drop-shot.

The 8-inch chrome flutter spoon will catch big bass or 1½-pounders. You may get a number of short strikes on the spoon, but if a hybrid or striper is around, it will eat it quickly. Whatever takes that spoon is bound to put a bow in your rod and a smile on your face.

LATE MORNING

I'll use my LiveScope to find an under-water school. Then, I'll cast upcurrent a Mann's 20+ in grey ghost color on a 7-foot-6 FX custom cranking rod

with an ELS Bruin 6.3:1 ratio reel and 20-pound White Peacock fluorocarbon. I'll reel the crankbait downcurrent, varying my retrieve, but generally fairly fast on the shallow part of the point, closest to the bank, depending on how much current is coming down the river. Next, I'll cast my crankbait to the deep side, imitating a baitfish moving from deep to shallow water.

Then, I'll change to a white/chartreuse hair jig, cast it to the deep water and retrieve it to shallow water on a 7-foot-1, medium-heavy FX custom rod, an ELS 7.3:1 Bruin reel and the same line. On the shallow side of the bar, I'll cast a jig as far as possible upcurrent, allow it to ride the current until it hits bottom, snap it off the bottom and make several turns on



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.

my reel to take up the slack as it rides the current before falling to the bottom. I've learned I can cover a point much more effectively by reeling my lures from the deep side of the point up to the shallow side, especially on the north ends of bars. Then, the crankbait and the jig can ride the current while being retrieved.

Next, I'll pick up my flutter spoon and watch the line as the spoon falls all the way to the bottom on my LiveScope. Once I jerk the spoon off the bottom, I can watch it fall back and the bass following it, even if they don't eat it. I'll use this on a FX 7-foot-4 heavy plus custom rod with a medium-action tip, the same reel and 23-pound fluorocarbon. Once the spoon hits the bottom, pull or snatch it off the bottom, take up slack until it hits the bottom and snatch it once more.

SLOWER, SMALLER

If I'm not catching bass, I'll slow my baits down and also downsize them. My first lure choice will be a ¼-ounce shaky head jig on a No. 3/0 hook with a green pumpkin/purple flake JellyBug that's Texas-rigged. I'll use 15-pound bass braid with an 8-foot leader of 10-pound fluorocarbon. I'll generally fish it like I do a Texas-rigged worm — pulling it up off the bottom

and letting it fall back or varying my retrieve and dragging it along the bottom.

My other choice is to use a watermelon-red JellyBug, nose-hooking it on a drop shot rig with a ¼-ounce drop-shot weight on the end of my leader, and the drop-shot hook tied about 8 inches above my lead. I'll be fishing with a 7-foot-4, medium-heavy FX custom rod. I'll run and look at as many points as I can until I spot a school of bass holding on a point on my LiveScope and then begin fishing.

The best reason to choose Pickwick in August is you may catch and release 100 fish a day of multiple species, and you're the least likely to strike out. ■

LURE REVIEW >

Four of Paul Elias's favorite lures for fishing Pickwick Lake in August include a big flutter spoon, a JellyBug, a Mann's 20+ crankbait and a white/chartreuse hair jig.



LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Brett Preuett skipped a Tube Worm under a dock on the Cane River to catch this large bass. Preuett has been catching bass on the Crème plastic worm for about a year.



Photo courtesy Brett Preuett

CRÈME'S TUBE WORM

VENERATED LURE COMPANY BRINGS BACK OLD FAVORITE

That Crème soft-plastic worm might have heard your grandfather talk about is catching on again since it was reintroduced last year by the Tyler, Texas-based manufacturer.

Crème's Tube Worm is a plastic worm that floats and "has that tube aspect to it," a deadly combination, according to Brett Preuett of Monroe, La., a Bassmaster Elite Series angler. That look gives it a unique presentation unlike other plastic worms.

"I think it's a really good bait. I think it's something different than the rest of the market.... There's just not that many that float. It seems like I definitely get some more bites," said Preuett, who has been using the Tube Worm to catch bass con-

sistently for about a year.

Preuett pointed out the solid head section above a hollow-body, tube tail that traps air in the cavity, that causes it to float and gives the tail's tube tentacles a chance to undulate even when the rest of the plastic worm is motionless.

NEW UNVEILING

The Tube Worm was unveiled at 2019 ICAST to rave reviews and sold out at the Crème booth during the 50th annual Bassmaster Classic in early March at Alabama's Lake Guntersville. Its success validates the 71-year-old company's decision, prompted by popular demand, to bring back the Tube Worm, according to Mike Clark, a Crème lure designer and

social-media manager who has been with the company since 1993.

"It was popular back in the '70s and '80s. It sold millions," said Clark, 56.

The original Tube Worm was designed by Wayne Kent, whose career began as a teenager in a bait shop in Tyler, then took off when he and his wife, Judy, made soft plastics in their garage while he was attending Tyler Junior College and sold them to Crème founder Nick Crème.

Crème and his wife, Cosma, started



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.

their business in their Akron, Ohio, home, then opened a second plant in Tyler in 1960 and a few years later relocated the entire company to Texas. The Crèmes and the Kents, who owned and operated Knight Manufacturing Co., became business partners and eventually merged in 1989, five years after Crème's death. Kent introduced his Tube Worm in 1976. He hired Clark in 1993, long after the production of the Tube Worm had been discontinued.

Clark said since the mid-2010s, the company has received countless requests for a comeback by the Tube Worm. Crème officials listened and brought it back in 2019. It features modern colors proven to catch bass today.

Preuett, who fished one year on the FLW Tour before joining the Bassmaster Elite Series in 2016, said he fishes it as a Carolina-rigged soft plastic and on a drop-shot. It has been effective in heavily pressured Texas reservoirs such as Toledo Bend and Sam Rayburn, he said.

RIGGING METHODS

"It's really good with the shaky head, too, for spotted bass, so when I go to a spotted bass lake, I like to throw it on a shaky head," said Preuett, who also guides on Toledo Bend and Rayburn.

"It's a pretty versatile bait, a little bit different. Everybody should give it a try and see what they think," he said, noting it also can be Texas-rigged and fished on a Neko Rig.

The key is to avoid imbedding a hook point below the

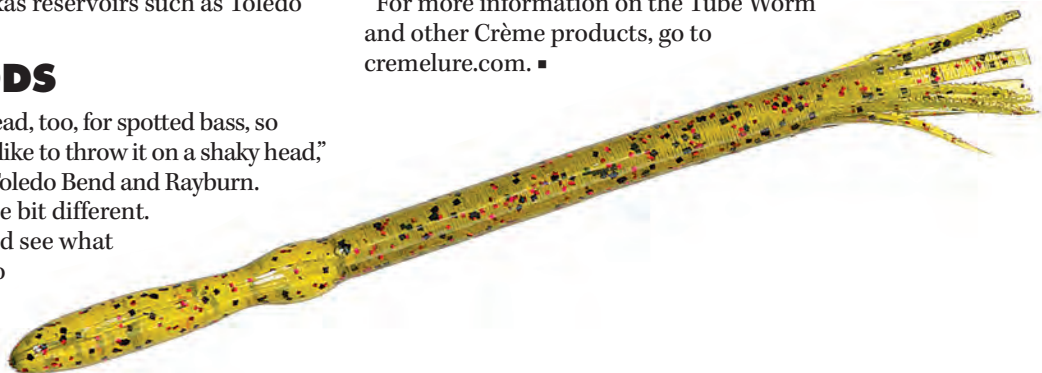
worm's egg sack. Preuett relies on a 3/0 Gamakatsu G-Lock hook for Carolina Rigs and a 2/0 hook for drop-shotting, while Clark recommends a 2/0 or 3/0 sproat hook.

Preuett's favorite colors are cotton candy and watermelon magic. Other popular colors are green pumpkin, watermelon/red and junebug/red, according to Clark.

Preuett fishes the Tube Worm on a drop-shot with 10-pound test Sunline Shooter fluorocarbon — 12-pound test if in heavy cover — about 18 inches above a 3/8-ounce weight. He uses a 7-foot-3 Shimano MH spinning rod and a Shimano Stellar spinning reel.

On a Carolina rig, Preuett uses 18-pound fluorocarbon for the main line and 15-pound test fluoro tied to a 4-foot, 15-pound leader with a Bayou Rattler Sonar Ballzz under a 3/4- or 1-ounce Titan Tungsten weight.

For more information on the Tube Worm and other Crème products, go to cremelure.com. ■

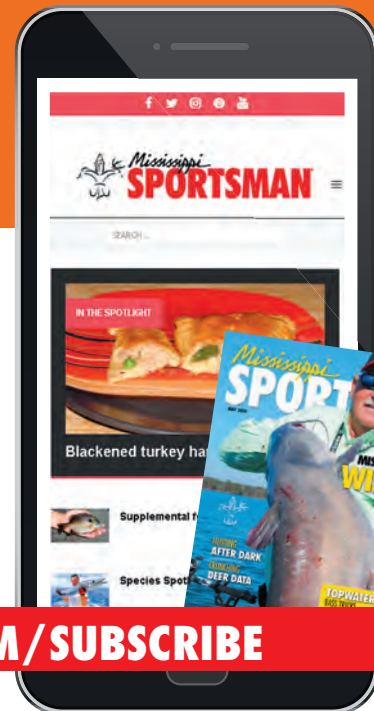


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Traditionally, hunting seasons kick off every year in Mississippi with the opening of dove season on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. It's one of the most-anticipated hunting days of the year, as hunters look forward to the hot weather coming to an end and cooler fall temperatures arriving shortly. This year's opener is set for Sept. 5; hunters can start shooting 30 minutes before sunrise in both the North and South zones.

FINDING A PLACE TO HUNT

Serious dove hunters start preparations in the spring, planting crops such as sunflowers, corn or millet for fast wing-shooting action in September. Most dove fields with these kinds of crops have matured and are mowed or disked, leaving strips standing for hunters to hide in and saving some of the crop for later in the season. They are usually 5 to 20 acres in size.

If you haven't planted specifically for dove hunting, farms with grain fields are the places hunters customarily seek out. This could be crops like browntop millet, corn, sunflowers, milo or wheat

that are normal agricultural plantings. After the harvest, no strips will be left, but wide-open acreage will draw birds with spillage left by combines and harvesters. Agriculture is abundant throughout the Magnolia State, and most hunters should be able to find places within an hour's drive of home.

Other agricultural fields that attract doves are those planted in grasses for cattle. Rye grass, winter wheat and oats are just a few. Farmers will break up these fields by disking and harrowing. Plantings are usually occurring by the first part of September.

Cut hay fields can be productive. The crop will be cut and bailed, with smaller square bails removed for storage. Sometimes round bales will be left in fields, giving hunters excellent cover to hide from flying birds. Lots of seed will be left on clean ground, and this will attract doves consistently, especially if there is water and roosting areas nearby.

**LAST MINUTE
OPTIONS >**



LABOR DAY WEEKEND REALLY GETS MISSISSIPPI HUNTERS' BLOOD FLOWING, AS THOUSANDS OF HUNTERS HEAD FOR DOVE FIELDS TO BLAST AWAY AT THOSE QUICK, GRAY DARTERS. IT CAN BE CLOSE TO A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE FOR SOME.

■ By Andy Douglas

**READY FOR
KICKOFF**

LAST-MINUTE OPTIONS

Some Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) offer dove fields for Mississippi hunters. Not every WMA has a dove field, so a little research will have to be done. By looking online at www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/wma/dove-fields, hunters can find rules and regulations for each WMA and a phone number to contact personnel with any questions.

Find an outfitter. Lots of times, outfitters or hunting services that offer waterfowl, deer, or turkey hunting also book dove hunts.

“We planted 30 acres of sunflowers specifically for dove hunting; we will mow down every other section,” said Phillip Cagle, owner of White Oak Hunting Service of Dundee in Tunica County. “There is also cut corn all around, as well as planted wheat.”

White Oak books dove hunts throughout the season, can house 80 plus hunters and offers high-quality hunts.

“We usually cater in lunch on opening day,” Cagle said, “We will have a good time dove hunting.”

OVERLOOKED PLACES

There are a lot of places to hunt doves that never cross the mind of hunters, and with a little planning and a little effort, they can produce a 15-bird daily limit. It doesn't always take a lot of preparations, out-of-pocket expenses or long-range planning; here are some ideas.

Deer food plots are excellent places. It's great when the plot is first planted, with bare ground and seed on the ground. Doves are not strong scratchers, and the bare ground and scattered seeds will attract them. Most seed mixes are winter wheat, oats and clovers combined or sometimes sown individually. Either way doves will go for it.

Hunters can take advantage of deer plots where wheat or oats have grown to maturity. Spraying with herbicides targeting other grasses and weeds will leave the mature wheat or



oats with bare ground underneath a canopy. Doves like this; it provides falling seeds from the crop, shade when it's hot and cover from overhead predators. Strips can be mowed or disked, providing open areas and exposing seeds.

Recently burned fields attract doves, and so do fresh, clear timber cuts; these places will hold a lot of exposed natural vegetation seeds. Overgrown fields, especially ones that have an abundance of goat-weed— aka woolly croton, doveweed or skunkweed — is one of the best natural dove fields there is. Mow it clean or leave some strips for hiding; you won't go wrong either way.

STAY LEGAL ➤

Labor Day weekend dove hunts are events that hunters mark on their calendars, especially young hunters getting their first taste of the sport. **ACROSS SPREAD:** Huge, round bales of hay often left in cut fields provide great places for hunters to hide from doves coming in to feed on seed scattered from the harvest.



STAY LEGAL

It is the hunter's responsibility to stay legal and know that the place they are hunting is permissible by state law, even on pay-to-hunt fields. Here is a short list of things that are allowed and what you can't do:

- Crops such as browntop millet, milo, corn, wheat, sunflowers and other small grains can be planted for the purpose of hunting doves and can be manipulated by mowing, disking, dragging down or baling. What cannot be done is adding to or broadcasting addition seeds of any type on the ground after the crop manipulation is done.
- Hunting over the same types of crops in agricultural fields after a harvest is allowed. Hunting the spillage is okay, but adding additional seeds on the ground after harvest is illegal.
- Hunting is allowed on grounds that have been planted with wheat, oats, rye, etc., in a manner consistent with normal agricultural practices. An example is winter wheat, which is sown at a rate no greater than 90 pounds per acre. Anything additional seed, even on prepared ground, is considered baiting. These types of seeds cannot be broadcast over bare ground for hunting; the ground must be prepared or no-till drilled.
- Overseeding of wheat or rye before harvesting soybeans, corn or cotton to establish a cover crop is recognized as normal agricultural practices and can be hunted. What can't be done is

broadcasting seeds after the crop is harvested to hunt doves.

- Livestock can feed on grain or salt provided in a feed lot, which is a small enclosed area where livestock are fed to increase their weight. Feed which has been scattered or wasted by the animals around the feeding areas may be attractive to doves. Dove hunting is legal on these areas as long as they are considered a normal agricultural practice. However, deliberately depositing grain, salt, or other feed to improve dove hunting is illegal.

CONCLUSION

Get ready, do what you must do, make your plans even if you have a few weeks — opening day of dove season is almost here. It's not too late if you haven't prepared. It's a good time to get out and join-in the most social of hunting events we have. Hunters can mix it up with other hunters and get fired up for the all approaching hunting opportunities we have in our great state. ■

Spreading grain seed in a field that has been prepared for planting by disking is considered a normal agricultural practice, and the field can be hunted.



Andy Douglas is an outdoor writer and photographer from Brookhaven. A native of Lincoln County, he's chased deer, turkeys, bass and most anything else the past 35 years. He lives the outdoor lifestyle and is passionate about sharing that with others through stories and photos.



Blue-winged teal start their southern migration early enough to put plenty of them in Mississippi by September.



TEAL IS THE SEPTEMBER DEAL

Summer days are hot and long. The last thing hunters are thinking about is duck hunting, but quickly approaching is a special, fall wing-shooting opportunity for Magnolia State hunters.

That's right; Mississippi has duck hunting in September. The state's early teal season will open on Sept. 12 and run for 16 days, ending on Sept. 27.

The period from late August to early September is the time that teal, mainly blue-winged teal, start their southern migration and make their presence in Mississippi. Their migration habits are different from any other waterfowl in North America, starting at such an early time and in hot weather.

The sudden appearance of these swift little ducks is a welcome sign of the approaching fall and gives Magnolia State duck enthusiasts a chance at some early season action. They come traveling through, riding the winds of approaching cool fronts, stopping mostly to feed and rest.


Where do you hunt them? Anywhere with good water.

That can be hard to come by in a hot, dry spell. Hunters should target areas like oxbow lakes, big beaver sloughs, lakes and flooded timber. Catfish ponds and any fields that are being flooded or irrigated can hold and attract them, especially if the field is planted in some type of grain.

The purpose for most National Wildlife Refuges and some Wildlife Management Areas is to provide a place for ducks, teal included, a place for rest and solace. A few WMAs offer early season teal-hunting opportunities. Visit

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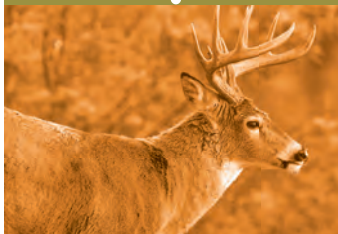
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TEAL IS THE DEAL >

www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/wma and links for individual WMAs for seasons and regulations.

If you want to get after some early season teal and don't have a place to go or a WMA near you that offers teal hunting, try an outfitter, especially one that's located near flyways like the Mississippi River.

"We take hunters out every year and put them on early season teal. We have lots of timber that stays flooded year-round," said Phillip Cagle, who owns White Oak Hunting Service in Tunica County. "It's something that's fun to do and gets you fired up for the upcoming hunting season."

Here today and gone tomorrow is the best way to describe blue-winged teal. They will be on the move as cool fronts come through.

With a quick-shooting shotgun and an improved or modified choke, using No. 4 or No. 6, non-toxic shot, skilled hunters with a teal whistle and a mallard call, set up over a spread of a dozen or so decoys, can lure in the quick blue-winged ducks for a shot. These early fall ducks are challenging wing-shooting and excellent table fare. ■

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Rigging and bait choices for catfishing may, at first blush, seem like the simplest things in the world. Catfish feed on the bottom, they eat dead stuff and they usually aren't too picky.

Right?

It may surprise some Mississippi anglers that the world of catfishing has entered a new era. While it's true that catfish, at times, are not very picky and can be caught on anything you throw at them, the evolution of trophy catfishing and species-specific fishing has taught us that not all catfish are alike in their feeding habits, and the tactics, tackle, and baits used to tempt catfish often spells the difference between success and failure.

A handful of rigs are employed by both casual and tournament catfishermen today. The rigs range from simple to relatively complex, most based on the environment in which the angler is fishing.

BUMPING RIG ▾

DEPENDING ON WHERE AND HOW YOU'RE FISHING, AND WHAT CATFISH YOU'RE TARGETING, YOU'LL NEED TO TIE ON ONE OF SEVERAL DIFFERENT KINDS OF TERMINAL-TACKLE RIGS. HERE THEY ARE.

■ By Phillip Gentry



RIGS FOR CATFISH

BUMPING RIG

Bumping rigs can be as simple or as complex as you want to make them. The main components are a heavy weight, spherical or pyramid shaped. According to guide David Magness of Cat'n Around, the size of the weight is dictated by the amount of current.

"I prefer a round cannonball over any other type of weight, because there is more surface area on the ball. When it makes contact with the bottom, there is only one bump," he said. "A pyramid or bank sinker falls over when it hits the bottom, creating a false "double tap" when it hits the bottom."

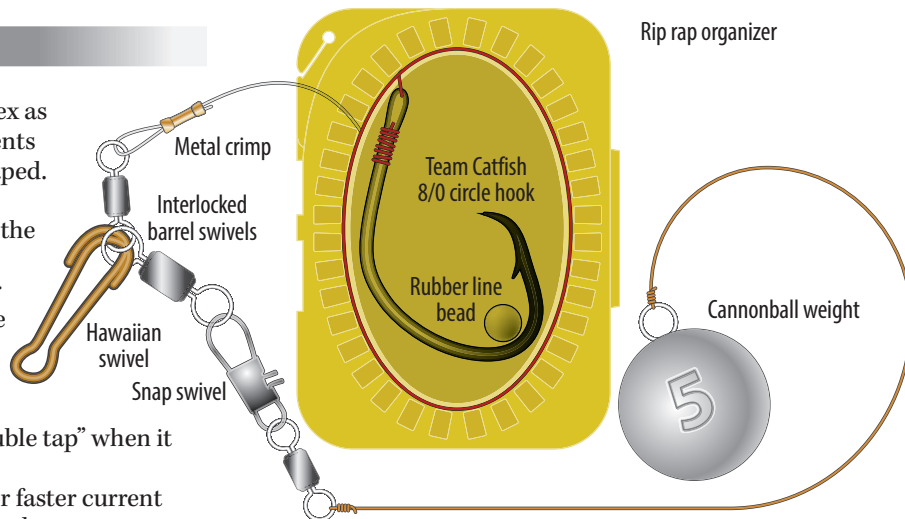
He said the rule of thumb is more weight for faster current and/or slower boat speed and less weight for slower current or faster boat speed.

While some anglers prefer a three-way swivel for bumping, Magness uses an interlocked barrel swivel.

"The interlocked swivel is preferred over a 3-way swivel because it provides the main fishing line with direct, in-line contact with the weight," he said. "The most important aspect in bumping is feeling the bottom."

Magness said the only hook he uses is a Team Catfish Double Action 8/0 circle hook, which is identical to a 7/0 Daiichi circle hook. He snells the hook with 50-pound Hi-Seas Quatro line and crimps the tag end to the barrel swivel with a metal crimp.

While his bumping rig might seem complicated and difficult to store, Magness stores the leader, attached to the remainder of the rig, in a Rig-Rap organizer. The only detach-



able component is the weight line, which he ties to the coast-lock snap swivel. This allows him to change weights and lengths of line quickly based on current fishing conditions.

FLATHEAD RIG

The flathead rig is a favorite of FV catfishing guide Ty Conkle, who mainly fishes on the upper Tennessee River for flatheads. It is fairly simple in design, a variation of a Carolina rig, but with a no-roll sinker to keep the rig and bait steady in current.

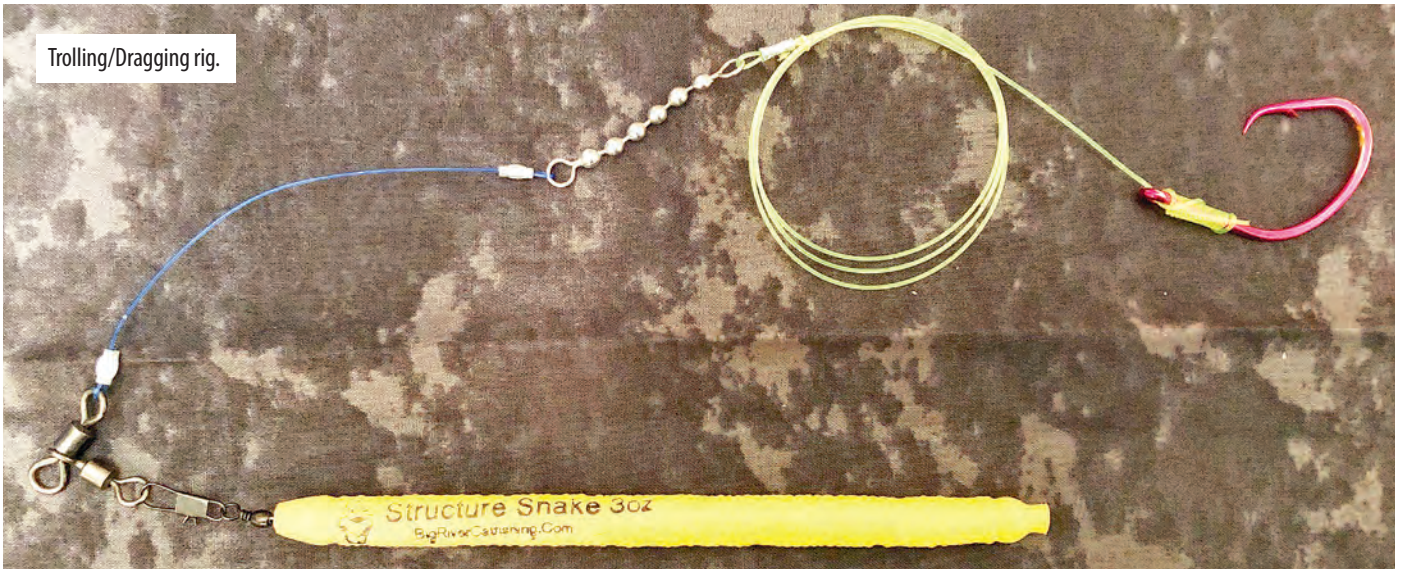
"Technically, I am fishing in the reservoir, but I'm in the upper ends where there is good current coming out of the dam above wherever I'm fishing," he said.

The rig uses a 4/0 to 6/0 no-roll sinker and an 8/0 Team Catfish Double Action circle hook on either end of a 3-foot



A no-roll sinker is a key part of guide Ty Conkle's rig for flathead catfish.

Trolling/Dragging rig.



Phillip Gentry

length of 60-pound leader. The heavy weight is needed to keep the bait in place in current.

When anchored down, Conkle will spread six of these rigs out, fan-casting rods around the boat so he's covering multiple depths.

TROLLING/DRAWING RIG

Many anglers are familiar with the trolling for catfish using a slinky weight to keep the bait on the bottom. Tournament angler Rusty Jackson of Olive Branch utilizes the same concept but has designed his own version of slinky weights that helps him fish structure most other anglers would avoid.

Dragging heavy tackle through submerged trees, rocks and debris piles is not for the faint of heart, so Jackson uses specialized tackle. At the heart is a specially designed trolling weight that he makes called a Structure Snake.

Jackson named the weight because of the flexible way it bends and crawls around heavy cover. It is a long, slinky weight, coated in high-density, polypropylene thermal plastic that allows the weight to drag across and through obstacles without hanging up.

He drags the weight on 80-pound, main-line braid attached to a Hawaiian swivel that slips to another 3-way swivel. The Structure Snake is attached to one end of the 3-way, while a 36-inch length of leader is attached to the other. The leader, which terminates in an 8/0 Daiichi hook, is comprised of two lengths connected by a 40-pound barrel swivel. The first 4 inches is

a break link of 40-pound mono; if the hook becomes wedged, the break link protects against loss of the entire rig. The remaining leader is 100-pound mono crimped to the swivel and snelled to the hook. About midway down the leader is an oval float that provides buoyancy to the leader line and allows the baited hook to ride just above the structure to prevent snagging.

"It might sound complicated, but it's a good system, and it absolutely allows you to fish in places others won't go," said Jackson.

STINKBAIT/DIPBAIT RIG ➤

 An advertisement for Okuma Convector Line Counter Reels. The top half shows a fisherman in a blue shirt and sunglasses holding a large red snapper. The bottom half is a close-up of the reel, which is black and silver with 'okuma' and 'CONVECTOR' branding. The text 'CONVECTOR LINE COUNTER REELS' is prominently displayed at the top. Below the fisherman, it says 'INSPIRED BY STRENGTH'. At the bottom left is the 'okuma INSPIRED FISHING' logo with the website 'www.okumafishingusa.com'. At the bottom right, it says 'CV-30D'.

Built with durability and reliability in mind, the Okuma Convector Line Counter Reel is perfect for your inshore and offshore Red Snapper fishing! One of the most dependable reels on the market with corrosion resistant graphite frame and side plates, machined and anodized aluminum spools and comfortable ergo grip handle knobs.

STINKBAIT/DIPBAIT RIG

The catfish rigs already discussed have focused on larger blue and or flathead catfish. This last rig is designed for channel catfish. It is a basic Carolina rig, but the specialized part is what goes on the hook. Commercial dip bait rigs are available, but one of the simplest and most-effective baits when using dip baits, also referred to as stinkbaits, is a household object.

Some years ago, veteran angler Walt Justus of Petal learned that a slice of pool noodle, the kind kids play with in the swimming pool, makes a great medium for the dip baits to stick to. Think of the pool noodle like a really long pineapple. In fact, a can-sized piece of swim noodle can last an angler an entire summer.

"I fish a lot of the state lakes for catfish in the summer," Justus said. "I'll load up the camper and the family and fish off the bank a lot of times. Right before daylight and right before dark is when I do best with stinkbaits. Sometimes, I'll fish on into the night."

To prepare the pool noodle for use, use a sharp knife to cut a ring off the end of the noodle about ¾-inch thick. Lay the slice

of the hollow noodle flat and cut the ring into chunks anywhere from ¾- to 1-inch across.

Before applying any bait to the noodle, thread it on the hook. Most anglers use a Carolina rig with a ½- to ¾-ounce weight and a leader 1½ to 3 feet long. Dip baits are sold in jars or buckets with resealable lids. Drop the hooked section of noodle into the jar or bucket and use a stick or spoon to smear the bait onto it.

When casting the bait, it is common for some of the dip bait to fall or sling off. Think of this as helping to chum the area. Fan-cast numerous baits around your position and give each about 15 minutes before checking and re-baiting. If you haven't gotten a bite in 20 to 30 minutes, it's time to relocate. ■



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.

Slice off a ¾-inch section of pool noodle, then cut it into pieces that are threaded on a hook and dipped in stinkbait.



Phillip Gentry

THE BEST CATFISH BAIT, HANDS DOWN: SKIPJACK HERRING



A recurring theme from Mississippi anglers is the importance of using river herring for bait when targeting catfish, particularly trophy-sized blues or flatheads. The hands-down favorite is skipjack herring, aka skipjack shad.

Skipjack reside in rivers year-round but can be more difficult to catch at certain times of the year.

"If I can't get skipjack, I'd just as soon not fish," said Jay Pickle, who along with his dad, Pat, catches the bait they use to tame Mississippi River cats. "You can try live bream, pond perch or goldfish, and you'll catch a fish or two, but nothing like the skipjacks."

Like catfish, anglers can

find skipjack herring living in the current that flow through and around the river dikes. Bait is caught by hand, using rod-and-reel. One important aspect to catching herring is that they feed by sight, so water clarity is an issue. Without clear water, it's hard to get the herring to bite.

"These old runouts, wing dams or old lakes draining, anywhere you've got running, shallow water that is clear enough to see, is a good place to catch bait," Pickle said. "We use a Sabiki rig and just bounce it along the bottom."

Some anglers find that cooler weather is a better time to catch bait, and they will often stock up and freeze any supplemental bait for use later in the year. Care is needed to freeze the skipjack properly, insuring it is viable when thawed for later use. ■

A big chunk of skipjack herring is arguably the best bait for catfish in Mississippi waters.

Phillip Gentry

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: FLATHEAD CATFISH ▶

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SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope

Drayden Lacoste and his grandfather, Gerard Mayon, caught this 25-pound flathead catfish and 24 blue cats on jug lines in Morgan City, La.



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: FLATHEAD CATFISH

FLATHEADS ARE AMONG THE BIGGEST CATS THAT SWIM IN NORTH AMERICAN WATERS

The flathead catfish, *Pylodictus olivaris*, is one of the Big Three species of catfish that lurk in many American waterways.

Along with the Arkansas blue and the channel catfish, flatheads are highly prized by anglers.

Flatheads grow quite large, rivaled only by blues. True to its name, this fish has a very flat head. If you were to make an artificial flathead using a pile of junk, the head of a shovel lying upside-down, flat on the ground, would make the perfect head. The mouth of this fish resemble the rear drop-down door of a large cargo plane.

The flathead is native to the Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio river basins, but they have been introduced to many other areas. It is highly adaptable to a wide range of waters and can live in very harsh conditions in terms of water quality.

Flathead catfish are highly skilled hunters. They begin their lives eating small

crayfish, freshwater shrimp and tiny fish. As they grow, their appetites get bigger, and their ability to eat larger prey does, too. The bigger a flathead gets, the bigger the prey it can eat. One of its favorite foods is sunfish: bluegills, shellcrackers and redbreasts. But they also eat plenty of bass and other catfish.

When it comes to diet, flatheads are not picky. However, they do prefer live prey over already dead fish. Unlike other catfish species, flatheads will ignore decaying fish and will hold out for quite some time, searching for live prey even when plenty of dead fish are around.

PREDATOR DAMAGE

In states where flatheads have been introduced, fisheries biologists believe they have played a big role in eliminating some prominent native fish. White catfish, along with yellow and brown bullheads — smaller catfish species — have virtually disappeared in almost

every state where flatheads have been introduced by anglers, Redbreast sunfish have also seen huge decreases in their numbers, due in large part to the introduction of flatheads.

Flatheads spawn around hollowed-out logs, undercut banks and any debris they can find. The males make nests that can range widely in depth. Females lay between 4,000 and 10,000 eggs at a time. Males aerate the eggs with tail movements and guard them from predators. Once the eggs hatch, the males continue guarding them until they have consumed their own yolk sacs. After that, the juvenile fish disperse.

Flatheads usually begin spawning



Brian Cope of Edisto Island, S.C., is a retired Air Force combat communications technician. He has a B.A. in English Literature from the University of South Carolina and has been writing about the outdoors since 2006. He's spent half his life hunting and fishing. The rest, he said, has been wasted.

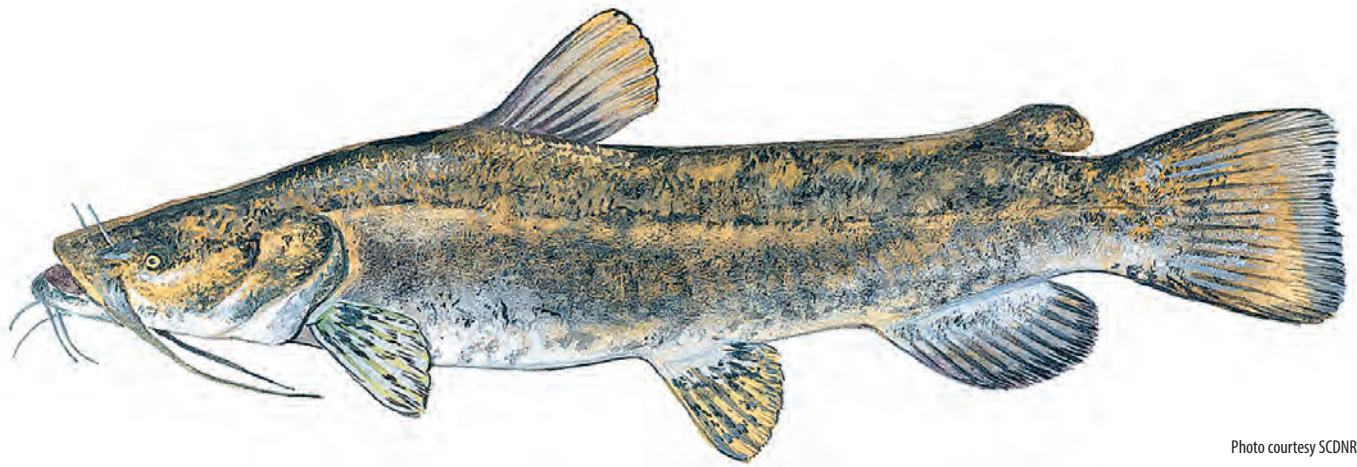


Photo courtesy SCDNR

between the age of 4 and 5 years. Their average life expectancy in the wild is about 20 years.

Flatheads are among the most solitary of fish, preferring to find a protected spot and hunker down, only mingling with others for the purpose of spawning. Anglers targeting flatheads look for sunken debris fields, undercut banks and partially-submerged timber.

Flatheads are identified by the fish's olive color, non-forked tail and flat head. These characteristics distinguish them from other catfish. However, some inexperienced anglers often mistake them for blues and/or channels.

NICKNAMES

Flatheads have many nicknames across the country, including: yellow cat, Johnnie cat, pie, pied cat, shovel head, flattop, Opelousous catfish (and Op, for short), Mississippi cat, mud cat, and flatty. In Louisiana, they are often referred to as goujon, tabby and tabby cat.

When it comes to table fare, most anglers agree that flatheads taste better than other catfish. Some anglers believe this is because of its insistence on eating only fresh, live food.

The world-record flathead weighed 123 pounds, 9 ounces and was caught in Elk City Reservoir in Kansas. Other, considerably larger flatheads have been caught by commercial fishermen

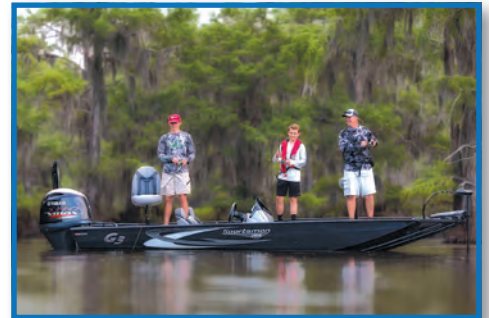
and were not eligible for world records.

Rolland Lasseigne caught Louisiana's state-record flathead in July 2007. He caught the fish, which weighed 95 pounds, in Wax Lake. Mississippi's record

flathead weighed 77.7 pounds. Matt Bingham of Memphis, Tenn., caught it from the Mississippi River in April 2012. ■

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YAMAHA

STICKS AND STRINGS

Sammy Romano

A hand-held release usually requires a lower anchor point; this archer shows proper form.



A RELEASE THAT'S HANDY

HAND-HELD RELEASE AIDS ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE POPULAR IN THE ARCHERY WORLD, AND FOR GOOD REASON

The majority of bowhunters shoot using a mechanical release aid, and most of them here in the Southeast use a wrist-caliper design that secure around the wrist of the archer's draw arm with a wide strap, allowing the archer to draw the bow by pulling from their wrist.

When used properly, the index finger is hooked around the trigger at the first or second crease from the tip. The archer then flexes his shoulder blades inward, using "back tension" to cause the release aid to fire unexpectedly.

In a perfect world, this is how it should work, but in my experience, a vast majority of bowhunters don't use their release aid correctly. Most archers incorrectly pull the trigger of their wrist caliper with their index finger. In the worst cases, archers jerk or even slap the trigger, round-housing it and causing the bow to move at the shot. This malady commonly progresses into severe target panic, robbing the archer of accuracy, and leading to blown shot opportunities or even worse, wounded game.

TARGET PANIC

I have suffered from target panic myself, and it is both extremely frustrating and de-motivating. One common treatment for target panic involves the use

of a hand-held release aid, especially a hinge-style, back-tension model. These releases force the archer to pull through the shot and follow through properly. Bowhunters, however, often need to release the arrow in a shorter time frame, both to allow for the animal's movement and narrow shooting lanes.

RELEASE STYLES

Although this often rules out the use of a hinge-style release while hunting, other hand-held release aids will help increase accuracy by promoting better form and can be fired using proper back tension more easily than wrist-caliper models.

The most popular and easiest hand-held releases to use are thumb releases. These hand-held releases are triggered by either back tension, thumb pressure or a combination of both methods. This allows the archer to practice good shooting habits by using back tension to trigger the release, but also to fire more quickly when necessary.

Hand-held releases are available in many configurations, and these are usually described by the number of fingers used to grasp the release. Also available are 2-, 3- and even 4-finger releases. Four-finger releases provide the most-secure grip but are notorious for allowing the shooter to torque the string more easily.

One notable exception is the Hardcore 4-Finger release by Tru-Fire. This model uses a fully swiveling head to eliminate string torque. I shoot this model personally and really like it. Three-finger releases are the most popular, but lately, 2-finger models have been quickly gaining ground. I recommend trying several different styles and models when possible before purchasing a hand-held release. Since these releases are actually held in your hand, the fit and design matters more than with a wrist release. Also, hand-held releases are generally much more expensive, so it helps to purchase the right one the first time.

MAKE ADJUSTMENTS

One common mistake when switching from a wrist caliper to a hand-held release is a failure to make the necessary adjustments in order to guarantee success. In most cases, a draw-length adjustment of one-half inch longer draw is required. The peep sight needs to be raised both to adjust for both this new,



Sammy Romano is a lifelong hunter who has worked in the archery industry for more than 25 years. His expertise includes compounds and crossbows. He can be reached at samboka31@aol.com.

longer draw length, and because hand-held releases usually call for a lower anchor point.

Many archers want to “try out” a hand-held release aid without making these adjustments that are necessary to ensure success. This transition is best made before beginning to practice for hunting season, because it not only requires the archer to modify his or her form, but requires the bow to be re-tuned — and often new arrows. Trying to change releases with only a short practice window is a recipe for disaster. It takes many practice shots to develop the muscle memory required to shoot consistently, and anything less is cheating yourself.

Because of their design and the fact that they help promote proper form and release, thereby increasing accuracy, hand-held releases are growing in popularity every day. In fact, one of the most frequently asked questions at our bow counter is “Will a hand-held release help me shoot more accurately?” The answer is a resounding yes.

But like a lot of other things in this world, changing your release aid requires both practice and commitment to get the most benefit from it. As with any change to your bow setup, a good pro shop can make this process much easier. If you’ve ever considered switching releases, stop in your local pro shop and try out a hand-held release aid soon. ■

Two-finger, hand-held releases are gaining in popularity among archers.



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COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

GRILLED MACKEREL FAJITAS

DON'T LIKE KING MACKEREL? TRY THEM IN THIS TASTY TREAT



Grilling outside is an awfully good way to enjoy a late summer afternoon. **INSET:** Fajitas are a great way to introduce diners to king mackerel, which many people shy away from eating.

Not everyone appreciates the taste of king mackerel, but I can't remember ever meeting anyone who didn't enjoy catching them. Plus, they are one of the few fish that you have a good chance of catching in August's heat, and they can usually be found just a short run off the beach. Making fajitas is a fun way to eat them that may get more folks to try them.

As hot as it is, August is when fall begins to occasionally flex its muscles, and there are occasional cooler mornings and evenings. These same days are great times to fire up the grill and have a fun meal on the deck or patio with lots of friends and/or family. There are options for meals to prepare outside, but grilled king mackerel fajitas are tasty, good for you and fun to make. It's also nice that during August king mackerel may

be caught as close in as the end of piers, while they are almost always within 10 miles or so of the beach.

If you like fish but think king mackerel have a strong flavor, this is a great way to try them. Trim all the red from the fillets before slicing them, and all that remains is pretty meat. Cook it until it begins to flake but be sure not to overcook it. The ingredients for the marinade make it seem like it will be spicy, but it's not. It really is a great recipe to prepare a fun and tasty meal from a fish that often gets maligned. Mackerel has the B-complex vitamins that help lower blood pressure and cholesterol, so it's good for you too.

Give grilled king mackerel fajitas a try. The idea is unusual and the flavor is unusually good. I'm sure you'll be surprised how much you like it. ■

KING MACKEREL FAJITAS

I know this sounds unusual and isn't a way you'd think of to prepare king mackerel. Don't let that stand in your way, or you'll be missing out. This is a combination of king mackerel, peppers, onions and a of spices that make it taste just right. It's even better when prepared outside on one of the August nights when the heat of summer breaks.

I like king mackerel, and this is a different way to eat it. Just about everyone likes fajitas, so why not feature king mackerel as the meat? This may be a little better when using smaller kings, but it tastes good regardless of the size of the fish used. On a smaller king, the fillet can be from about anywhere, but with a larger king, a section of fillet between the anal vent and the tail is about the right thickness.

Start by trimming all the red meat off the fillets; it is simple and only takes a few minutes. The strips should be roughly the diameter of a man's index finger — thick enough not to overcook easily, and it also seems to absorb just about the right amount of marinade to have the taste, but not be overpowering.

The marinade ingredients and amounts listed make a good combination that adds some flavor without being too strong or spicy. I don't mind experimentation with my recipes and

actually encourage varying the amounts to lean to your personal tastes. Add more chili powder or cayenne pepper to make it spicier and reduce them to make the flavor more subdued. More or less soy sauce and just about every other ingredient changes the taste a little.

Be careful with the lime. This calls for a third of a cup of fresh lime juice, and it can get a little strong if the fish marinates too long. A half-hour is a good minimum to absorb some lime taste, and two hours lets it absorb a lot of lime flavor.

The vegetables contribute a lot. I like to use mini sweet peppers; they are milder and more tender, and I believe taste a little sweeter. Jalapenos are a personal preference. I would suggest at least using one to get the flavor, and if you like them, use two or maybe even three.

I used medium-size tortillas for this meal. When fixing for more people or people who haven't tried this before, I would suggest using small tortillas. They are large enough to give folks a good taste and easier to handle.

This is a fun meal that is easy to prepare and tastes very good. It lends itself to preparing outside on a grill, so having a vegetable tray to prevent small pieces from falling through the grate is a must. If you like fish, I'm pretty sure you'll enjoy it. ■

PREPARATION:

Combine the lime juice, water, 3 tablespoons of olive oil, garlic paste, soy sauce, liquid smoke, smoked paprika, onion powder, black pepper, chili powder and cayenne pepper and whisk until mixed well.

Cut the fillets into approximately finger-size strips. Put the king mackerel strips in a Zip Lock bag, add the marinade, squish it around a little, squeeze all the air out and let it marinate in the fridge for 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Slice the onions and bell peppers into strips approximately 3/8- to 1/2-inch wide. Slice the jalapenos into strips approximately 1/4-inch wide. Combine the onions and peppers and drizzle a little olive oil on them. Sprinkle the peppers and onions with Cavender's All Purpose Greek Seasoning (to taste) and put them in a Zip Lock bag in the refrigerator until ready to cook. Spray a grill vegetable tray liberally with non-stick cooking spray and place on the grill.

Preheat grill to high. Pour the peppers and onions onto the grill tray and cook until they begin to wilt, stirring often and being careful not to scorch them. Remove the peppers and onions to a bowl. Spray non-stick cooking spray on the vegetable tray again. Place the fish strips on the grill and cook 2 to 4 minutes on each size, depending on heat of grill. Remove as soon as the meat flakes and be careful not to overcook.

Warm tortillas on the grill. Combine fish, peppers and onions on tortilla shells and serve immediately.

INGREDIENTS:

1½ pounds of king mackerel fillets
1 large sweet onion
1 package of mixed mini sweet peppers
1 or 2 jalapeno peppers
1 package of small or medium size flour tortillas
½ cup fresh lime juice (from 4 to 5 limes)
¼ cup water
3 tbsp and a drizzle of olive oil
1 tbsp garlic paste
2 tps soy sauce
½ tsp liquid smoke
2 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp onion powder
½ tsp black pepper
1 tbsp chili powder
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
Cavender's All Purpose Greek Seasoning (to taste)



Feel free to add any sauces, squeeze of lime, or salsa that you like. I believe the lime is strong enough as it was marinated and usually add a squeeze of Texas Pete Cha Sauce or Scotch Bonnet Pepper Sauce to my fajitas. Others will have their favorite sauces.

I really like salads and would have a lettuce wedge or green salad to begin the meal. This is a fresh and light meal so chunks of cooled watermelon or fruit salad make a nice dessert. If you've got to have something sweeter, try a slice of Key Lime pie. ■



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



FIND CURRENT, THEN FISH IT

By Dustin Wilks

MOVING WATER INVIGORATES HOT-WEATHER BASS

August is not the time to “camp out” on a spot, hoping bass will bite. You need to be fishing where they are biting, and that means moving water.

The water is hot, in the upper 80s, even low 90s. While it is true deeper water is not that hot, it gets tricky this month because a thermocline has most likely developed, leading to areas of cool water with no oxygen. The warmer, upper layer is where the fish and oxygen are. The depth you need to be fishing is dependent on the body of water you are fishing.

Growing up, fishing my home lake all the time, the thermocline would often be around 14 to 16 feet deep — relatively deep. There will be two thermoclines, however, one in just the first 6 inches up to a little more than 3 feet, again,

depending on where you are fishing.

Here’s a case in point. If you jump in, the water will be hot from your head to your waist, then drastically cool below. This middle layer is still oxygenated and is where you need to be fishing. So on my home lake this month, I want to be fishing between 3 and 16 feet deep unless I detect that the thermocline is different from what history tells me.

FISH CURRENT

In ponds with little wind or current flow, there will generally be no oxygen at all below about 3 feet, so you need to be fishing shallow. This gets me to my point — find current and find bass. Any current in the summer can generate feeding activity. Wind blowing under a bridge, a boat loading up, powering on the ramp,

and obviously the river sections of lakes or rivers themselves are all forms of current.

Current moves and oxygenates the water, making bass and bait more active. It is very tough to fish deep water that is not moving. Always call ahead or look up on the Internet any power generations or water releases from dams and try to fit in your fishing around those times. We all have a limited amount of time to fish, so make it count and go when they’re biting.

Current will make fish less likely to suspend on deep structure, and it will make them position in predictable locations in shallow water as well. Bass like the current coming at them, bringing food, so bends in channels are important.

HIT THE BOTTOM

Since bass with current will get on the



When hot weather bears down on reservoirs, look for areas with noticeable current; the baitfish and bass there will be much more active than anywhere else.

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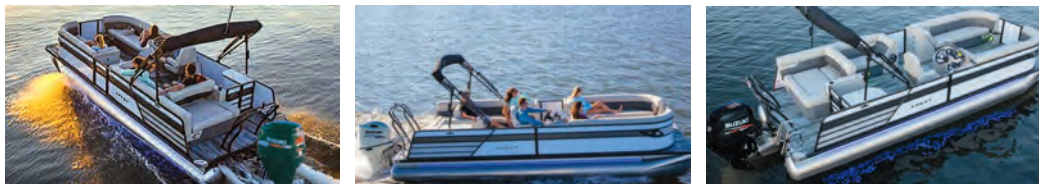
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CREST



bottom, bottom-bouncing baits like big crankbaits, worms and jigs are the ticket on deep structure. If there is no current, you may need to fish higher in the water column with an Alabama rig. I really like to reel a crankbait really fast along the bottom — almost as fast a lipless bait — this gets schools fired up.

Don't settle for fishing stagnation this month — find some moving water and find the bass. ■

NOTE: Dustin Wilks is a former professional bass fisherman from Rocky Mount, N.C. He qualified for six Bassmaster Classics and now has a television show on the World Fishing Network (WFN), Catching Bass With Dustin Wilks.

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An aerial photo of a hunting property from mapping software can offer plenty of preliminary indications of possible places for deer movements and stand sites.

TECHNO SCOUTING

By Taylor Pardue

TRAIL CAMS, MAPPING SOFTWARE PROVIDES HUNTERS EARLY EDGE

Hunting has definitely entered the 21st century, with range-finding rifle scopes, night-vision binoculars for predator and hog hunting, and apps for our smartphones that tell us exactly when the sun rises and sets.

And with new technology comes new ways to scout off-site, preventing you from putting down any scent that might disturb the deer you're targeting.

Modern trail cameras allow hunters to keep an eye on deer trails without physically checking them. Transmitters can email images directly to your laptop, letting you stay away for days or even weeks.

Several camera manufacturers are beginning to offer this service, although some require subscription fees. But photos come stamped with time, date, moon phase and temperature to let you pattern specific deer.

Trail cameras have changed deer scouting forever. Some advanced models can transmit photos to a hunter's laptop or even his or her cell phone in real time.



But digital scouting doesn't end there.

Software programs like Google Earth (www.google.com/earth) allow you to check terrain features in areas you haven't physically seen. Newer satellite offerings can bring you current imaging that enables you to see whether a tree has fallen or a bait pile has been eaten near your favorite blind or stand.

Looking to lease a new property? Check a parcel without having to walk every square inch of it; find water and cover locations to get an idea of where to set up.

Many counties operate websites with property lines and other tax information available. Hunters can use these sites' ARC GIS maps to find out who owns particular pieces of land and contact them for hunting permission.

Technology also means never again having to guess about tree-stand placement.

Websites like Intellicast (www.intellicast.com) give wind speed and direction for an area with up-to-the-hour information, so hunters can keep track of prevailing winds for several days or weeks to choose which direction to face, rather than guessing the direction of the wind and placing your stand haphazardly.

Overlooking price and politics, drones are an option, too. Ethical uses exclude following or harassing animals, but new civilian models can carry a video camera into the woods and check out areas you might consider hunting. Hunters could use the drones to follow game trails through the woods — all without leaving scent on the paths.

Technology gives and takes. And each hunter has to make a decision about how traditional or modern they want to hunt — but ethics ultimately have to be the priority of either choice.

Choose wisely. ■

With new technology comes new ways to scout off-site, preventing you from putting down any scent that might disturb the deer you're targeting.



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Cade Hurst of Liberty was fishing out of Bay St. Louis, wading Flatboat Key, when he and a buddy caught these speckled trout.

MAKE SOME NOISE!



Photo by Cade Hurst

ADDING SOUND TO LURES By Brian Cope WILL GET A TROUT'S ATTENTION

Noise — at least the right noise — can attract speckled trout and give your bait or lure a better chance at being eaten. Popping corks are great noisemakers, and they add an extra or sound to live bait or artificial lures equally, as long as they are used as more than just strike indicators.

But popping corks aren't the only way to attract trout with noise. Many lures come with built-in noisemakers that can draw attention to themselves. Some of them are topwater lures, some work just under the surface and some on the bottom.

RATTLE, RATTLE

Egret Baits makes a rattling version of the popular Vudu shrimp, which is designed to be worked on the bottom. Numerous companies — Heddon, LIVETARGET and MirrOlure to name a few — make

topwater plugs with cupped faces that cause water to splash, creating noise. Many walk-the-dog plugs also incorporate rattles, and the ones that don't also make noise on the surface as the bait works left and right, causing subtle noises.

Rat-L-Trap is one of the most well-known rattling lures; saltwater and even floating versions are available. The floating versions are great to work over submerged oyster rakes, as anglers get the full effect of the rattles without fear of hanging up in the shells.

The Bomber Badonk-A-Donk SS is a slow-sinking lure that gives anglers the ability to walk-the-dog just under the surface. This lure is made with rattles and is available in high-pitch or low-pitch version.

BAITFISH SOUNDS

Livingston Lures takes things even

further. Instead of a generic rattling noise, this company's lures contain a small chip that, when wet, emits the sounds of baitfish. This makes it, according to pro staffer Jess Haynes of Redfish Charters in Hilton Head, S.C., the only artificial lure that makes noise while sitting still.

Even when using soft-plastic lures along the bottom, such as Norton Sand eels, Z-Man Trout Tricks or Billy Bay Halo Shad, noise can easily be added by using a jighead from Rockport Rattler. These jigheads come in a variety of colors and sizes and have a built-in rattle chamber on the head that has no impact on the action of the lure. ■

SALTWATER

STATE COASTAL WATERS REGULATIONS (0 - 3 miles)

FISH SPECIES	Minimum Lengths	Creel Limit (per person)
Greater amberjack	34" FL	1/day
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	no limit
White marlin	66" LJFL	no limit
Sailfish	63" LJFL	no limit
Sharks (large coastal/pelagic)@	37" TL*	1/day or 3/boat
Sharks@	37" TL*	1/day, 3/vessel
Cobia	36" 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@	5/day aggregate
Mutton snapper	18" TL@	10/day
Queen/blackfin/silk/winchman snapper	none@	5/day aggregate
Vermillion/lane snapper	10"/8" TL@	20/day aggregate
Gray triggerfish	15" FL@	1/day
Golden/blueline/anchor/blackline tilefish	none@	20/day
King mackerel	24" FL@	2/day
Spanish mackerel	12" FL@	15/day
Yellowfin tuna	27" CFL@	3/day
Bigeye tuna	27" CFL@	no limit
Tripletail	18" TL	3/day
Spotted sea trout (speckled)	15"	15/day

@ For openings and closings of federally regulated fish and updated size limits, visit gulfcouncil.org.

FRESHWATER

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

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

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

% For lake-specific regs, see MDWFP's Regulations Digest or www.mdwfp.com/

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

* Possession of certain species of sharks is prohibited.

HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Doves	Sept. 5-Oct. 18 (n), Sept. 5-20 (s) Oct. 24-Nov. 21 (n), Oct. 10-Nov. 8 (s) Dec. 23-Jan. 8 (n), Dec. 19-Jan. 31 (s)	15	45
Quail	Nov. 26-March 6	8	
Rabbit	Oct. 17-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (fall)	Oct. 1-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (spr)	May 15-June 1	4	
Raccoon	July 1-Sept. 30	1 raccoon per party	
Rac/Opp/Bobct	Oct. 1-Oct. 31 (food/sport) Nov. 1-Feb. 28 (food/sport/pelt)	5/day, 8/party No limit	
Rails			
King & Clapper	Sept. 1-Oct. 4, Nov. 26-Dec. 31	15	45
Sora & Virginia,	Sept. 1-Oct. 4, Nov. 26-Dec. 31	25	75
Gallinules	Sept. 1-Oct. 4, Nov. 26-Dec. 31	15	45
Snipe	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28	8	24
Crow	Nov. 7 - Feb. 28	No limit	No limit
Woodcock	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31	3	9
Wild Turkey			
Fall season	Oct. 15-Nov. 15 (permit, 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. 12-27 Nov. 27-29, Dec. 4-6 Dec. 9-Jan. 31	6 6
Geese (Canada, blue, Ross, white-fronted, brant)	Sept. 1-30 Nov. 13-29, Dec. 4-6, Dec. 9-Jan. 31	5 Canada 3, Brant 1 Snow/blue/Ross 20 White-fronted 3
Light Geese conservation	Oct. 1-Nov. 12, Feb. 1-5, Feb. 8-March 31	No limit

DEER SEASON

ZONE	ARCHERY	PRIM WEAPON	GUNS
Northeast	Oct. 1-Nov. 20 Nov. 9-20 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 21-31 (archery/primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 21-Dec. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 20(dogs) Nov. 7-20 (youth)
East Central	Oct. 1-Nov. 20 Nov. 9-20 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 21-31 (archery-primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 21-Dec. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 20(dogs) Nov. 7-20 (youth)
Southwest	Oct. 1-Nov. 20 Nov. 9-20 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 21-31 (archery-primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 21-Dec. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan.20(dogs) Nov. 7-Jan. 20 (youth)
Southeast	Oct. 15-Nov. 20 Jan. 21-31 (either-sex arch-primitive) Feb. 1-15 (archery-primitive bucks only)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 21-Dec. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 20(dogs) Nov. 21-Feb. 15 (yth)
Delta/South Delta	Oct. 1-Nov. 20 Nov. 9-20 (antlerless primitive weapon) Jan. 21-31 (archery primitive weapon)	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 21-Jan. 1 (dogs) Dec. 16-23 (no dogs) Dec. 24-Jan. 22(dogs) Nov. 7-Jan. 20 (youth)

BARNETT EXPLORER CROSSBOWS

Barnett, one of the industry leaders in crossbow production, has added three models in a new Explorer series this year for hunters who want high-dollar performance in an affordable package.

The XP370, XP380 and XP400 come ready to hunt with a single-bolt assembly, 4x32 scope, a side-mount quiver, rope-cocking device and two 20-inch carbon arrows.

Two important features are the Soft Lok Floating Bristle Arrow Retainer, which holds arrows securely in place, an Anti-Dry Fire trigger system. The three crossbows propel arrows at 370,

380 and 400 feet per second, respectively, based on draw weights of 165, 185 and 200 pounds, with weights between 6 and 6.2 pounds. Overall lengths are 32¼ to 33¾ inches and all three bows are 19 inches wide.

**MSRP: XP370 \$329.99;
XP380 \$399.99; XP400
\$449.99**

**For more info, visit:
www.barnettcrossbows.com.**



MILLENNIUM L105, L110 LADDER STANDS

There's no place much safer to be up a tree than in a ladder deer stand, especially if it's one of Millennium's new L105 or L110 models.

Strapped in with a safety strap, you're the king of your hunting domain, with a solid ladder and seat, plus a padded shooting rail on which to rest your rifle, shotgun or crossbow.

The L105 is an 18-foot, single-seat ladder. The L110 has a fold-up seat and larger platform that makes it bowhunter friendly, as well as a double-rail rigid ladder system that allows the stand to be

placed anywhere from 8 to 21 feet off the ground.

Both stands feature an anti-flex support system that eliminates the need for a tree brace, and both come with 35-foot Safelink Safety lines and carabiners that allow you to raise and lower your weapon safely. Both have 300-pound capacities and weigh between 90 and 92 pounds.

MSRP: \$299.99, \$339.99.

For more info, visit: millenniumstands.com

PLANO AW2 RIFLE CASES

Plano Molding, the Texas-based company that has provided the fishing market with hundreds of great products over the past several decades, has moved some of its tackle box technology to its line of protective gun cases, introducing the All-Weather 2 Rifle Cases with the Rustrictor waterproofing technology.

Perfect on the company's tackle boxes, Rustrictor makes the rifle cases, 36-, 42- and 52-inch models, perfectly waterproof and able to withstand any of the rigors or travel.

The cases feature the Dri-Loc seal that is waterproof and dustproof, so there's no chance of rust or corrosion developing, even if the case sits through a downpour on a baggage carrier somewhere. By the way, the cases are lockable and airline approved, including a pressure-release

valve to equalize pressure changes while in flight.

MSRP: \$119.99-\$199.99

For more info, visit: www.planomolding.com/hunting/gun-cases/rifle-cases





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 2020 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar. \$13.95 (plus \$4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2020 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 2020, the year's best periods, a look ahead at 2021, and more. Comes with FREE 2020 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for \$8.95, plus \$3 s&h. **Book: "How to Know When to Go" by Rick Taylor.** \$14.95 (plus \$4 s&h). 100 pages, 43 illustrations. A comprehensive look at the main factors influencing fish and game activity periods, plus how to devise an effective when-to-go game plan using any year's PrimeTimes calendars. Individual assessments of bass, panfish, deer, turkey, and more.

2020 Ultimate PrimeTimes software for PCs. \$29.95 (plus \$3 s&h, or no s&h if downloaded from web). The world's best forecaster allows you to fine-tune the peak times to your exact location, quarry, and even weather. Too many features to list here, including making your own App. For more details, please call us or visit our web site (see below).

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

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

2020 AUG					BEST DAYS				LUNAR PERIODS						
					POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	VALUE	TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED					
									MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT			
Sat 1									49	7:09 pm	11:41 pm - Midnight	4:08 am	11:10 am - 12:02 pm		
Sun 2									57	7:58 pm	Midnight - 12:33 am	5:07 am	12:06 pm - 12:58 pm		
Mon 3									62	8:40 pm	12:32 am - 1:30 am	6:09 am	12:57 pm - 1:55 pm	FULL	
Tue 4									53	9:16 pm	1:19 am - 2:27 am	7:10 am	1:44 pm - 2:52 pm		
Wed 5									44	9:48 pm	1:59 am - 3:21 am	8:10 am	2:24 pm - 3:46 pm		
Thu 6									35	10:17 pm	2:36 am - 4:14 am	9:08 am	3:01 pm - 4:39 pm		
Fri 7									33	10:44 pm	3:09 am - 5:05 am	10:05 am	3:34 pm - 5:30 pm		
Sat 8									35	11:10 pm	3:43 am - 5:55 am	11:00 am	4:08 pm - 6:20 pm		
Sun 9									39	11:37 pm	4:14 am - 6:44 am	11:55 am	4:39 pm - 7:09 pm	Apogee	
Mon 10									46		4:47 am - 7:33 am	12:51 pm	5:12 pm - 7:58 pm	HALF	
Tue 11									59	12:05 am	5:23 am - 8:23 am	1:47 pm	5:48 pm - 8:48 pm		
Wed 12									53	12:37 am	6:01 am - 9:13 am	2:45 pm	6:26 pm - 9:38 pm		
Thu 13									50	1:12 am	6:44 am - 10:06 am	3:44 pm	7:09 pm - 10:31 pm		
Fri 14									53	1:54 am	7:31 am - 11:03 am	4:43 pm	7:56 pm - 11:28 pm		
Sat 15									64	2:43 am	8:23 am - 11:59 am	5:40 pm	8:48 pm - 12:24 am	HIGH	
Sun 16									75	3:39 am	9:22 am - 12:54 pm	6:34 pm	9:47 pm - 1:19 am		
Mon 17									85	4:42 am	10:22 am - 1:48 pm	7:23 pm	10:47 pm - 2:13 am	NEW	
Tue 18									88	5:50 am	11:24 am - 2:40 pm	8:07 pm	11:49 pm - Midnight		
Wed 19									76	7:00 am	12:28 pm - 3:28 pm	8:46 pm	Midnight - 3:05 am		
Thu 20									64	8:11 am	1:31 pm - 4:11 pm	9:22 pm	12:53 am - 3:53 am		
Fri 21									52	9:21 am	2:34 pm - 4:52 pm	9:56 pm	1:56 am - 4:36 am	Perigee	
Sat 22									43	10:31 am	3:36 pm - 5:34 pm	10:30 pm	2:59 am - 5:17 am		
Sun 23									39	11:41 am	4:37 pm - 6:15 pm	11:05 pm	4:01 am - 5:59 am		
Mon 24									40	12:50 pm	5:40 pm - 6:58 pm	11:42 pm	5:02 am - 6:40 am	HALF	
Tue 25									47	1:58 pm	6:40 pm - 7:46 pm	12:42 pm	6:05 am - 7:23 am		
Wed 26									34	3:05 pm	7:41 pm - 8:37 pm	12:24 am	7:05 am - 8:11 am	LOW	
Thu 27									27	4:07 pm	8:40 pm - 9:32 pm	1:11 am	8:06 am - 9:02 am		
Fri 28									26	5:04 pm	9:36 pm - 10:28 pm	2:03 am	9:05 am - 9:57 am		
Sat 29									26	5:55 pm	10:28 pm - 11:24 pm	3:00 am	10:01 am - 10:53 am		
Sun 30									36	6:38 pm	11:14 pm - 12:20 am	4:00 am	10:53 am - 11:49 am		
Mon 31									46	7:16 pm	11:56 pm - Midnight	5:00 am	11:39 am - 12:45 pm		
					25	50	75	AVERAGE							

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

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