

Mississippi

# SPORTSMAN<sup>®</sup>



www.MS-SPORTSMAN.com

MARCH 2021

## READY FOR A GOBBLER?

- TIPS FROM A TURKEY MASTER
- HUNTING TOMS ON THE FRINGE

SWIM JIGS FOR BASS

CRAPPIE ON FOOT


DEER OF THE YEAR:  
MISTAKES BIG BUCKS MADE

\$2.99 MARCH 2021

7 25274 23008 2

CATFISH TROTLINE BASICS





A deal you  
can't pass up.  
From your expert,  
local dealer.



Get the expert service and quality parts that only your local Kubota dealer can deliver. They'll take great care of you and your equipment. Register for this great deal at [KubotaOilOffer.com](http://KubotaOilOffer.com).

GET **\$10** OR MORE OFF A 5 GALLON BUCKET  
OF KUBOTA UDT2 HYDRAULIC OIL

## Parish Tractor

1602 S Main St  
Poplarville, MS 39470  
(601)-795-4521

[KubotaUSA.com](http://KubotaUSA.com)

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2021. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer. For the complete disclaimer, go to [KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers](http://KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers) and see the posted disclaimer. Coupons must be present when service order is written or parts are purchased. Not valid with any other offer of discounted service. Offer good for \$10 off one 5 gallon bucket of Kubota UDT or Super UDT2 hydraulic fluid for B, BX, and LX Series tractors; \$20 off of two 5 gallon buckets of Kubota UDT or Super UDT2 hydraulic fluid for L Series tractor; and \$30 off of three 5 gallon buckets of Kubota UDT or Super UDT2 hydraulic fluid for M Series tractor (excluding M7). One coupon per customer per tractor. Valid only with original genuine Kubota parts purchased at the dealership. Coupon not valid on previous charges. Subject to availability. Coupons have no cash value. Excludes hazardous waste fee, tax and shop supplies. Offer valid through 3/31/2021

# WONDERING IF NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO SELL?



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



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



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



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



**LAKE PICKLE**  
Agent, East Central MS  
(601) 750-2487



**JEFF TAYLOR**  
Agent, East Central MS  
(601) 248-9433



**RICK WALTERS**  
Agent, Eastern MS  
(601) 498-8888



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



**TYLER ALLDREAD**  
Agent, West Central MS  
(662) 230-7322



**MIKE BOYD**  
Agent, Southeast MS  
(601) 810-7038

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



**WHITETAIL PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE**

HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER

**WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM**



Whitetail Properties Real Estate, LLC DBA Whitetail Properties. In the States of Nebraska & North Dakota DBA Whitetail Trophy Properties Real Estate LLC. Licensed in IL, MO, IA, KS, KY, NE & OK - Dan Peritz, Broker. Licensed in AR, CO, GA, MN, ND, SD, TN & WI - Jeff Evans, Broker. Licensed in FL, OH & PA - Jefferson Kirk Gilbert, Broker. Licensed in TX & NM - Joey Ballington, Broker. Licensed in IN - Bill Minor, Broker. Licensed in AL, GA, LA, & MS - Sybil Stewart, Broker. Licensed in TN - Tim Burnette, Broker. Licensed in TN - Bobby Powers, Broker. Licensed in AR - Anthony Chrisco, Broker. Licensed in NC, SC, VA - Chip Camp, Broker. Licensed in NC - Rich Baugh, Broker. Licensed in MI - Edmund Joel Noyaski, Broker. Licensed in MD, WV - Debbie S. Laux, Broker. Licensed in MT, ID, UT, WY, OR - Aaron Milliken, Broker. Licensed in NY - John Myers, Real Estate Broker.





**29**  
DEER OF THE YEAR  
2020-21



**19**  
TIPS FROM A  
TURKEY  
MASTER

Mississippi  
**CONTENTS**

Volume 23 | Number 3 | March 2021

FEATURES:

**19 TIPS FROM A TURKEY MASTER** *COVER STORY*

Veteran, old-school hunter shares how he likes to call, set up on gobblers, make them make a fatal mistake.

> By Mike Giles

**24 PROPERTY LINE TOMS**

Turkeys often hang out in places you don't have permission to hunt, but are close by. Here's how to deal with gobblers on the next piece of property.

> By Andy Douglas

**29 DEER OF THE YEAR 2020-21**

Mississippi's whitetails showed out again in the latest hunting season, with dozens of real trophy bucks meeting their maker. Here's the latest info...

**37 CRAPPIE ON FOOT**

March brings high water and the chance to wade for a limit of Mississippi slabs. Here's how a couple of crappie-fishing experts get wet to get bit.

> By Phillip Gentry

**43 GO FOR A SWIM**

Swim jig is a perfect lure for bass when it seems like nothing else is working, and it doesn't take a genius to tie one on and fish it effectively.

> By Bobby Cleveland

OUTDOOR UPDATE:

- 6 MARCH'S BLESSINGS**
- 9 CCA FIGHTS FOR SNAPPER**
- 14 CANEY LAKE LUNKER BASS**

COLUMNS:

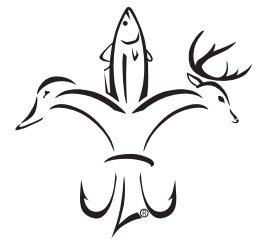
- 48 LUNKER LINES** By Paul Elias
- 50 LURE REVIEW** By Don Shoopman
- 52 GETTIN' FRESH** By Hal Schramm
- 54 SPECIES SPOTLIGHT** By Brian Cope
- 56 COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE** By Jerry Dilsaver

DEPARTMENTS:

- 12** Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook
- 28** Hunting/Fishing regs
- 58** Astro Tables
- 58** Advertiser Index

**ON THE COVER:**

Very few things can get a Mississippi hunter's heart pumping like the gobble of a big tom turkey, and then the sight of that white or red head and big fan easing through the woods. Photo courtesy Kasey Miller.



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

**PRESIDENT:** Lisa Lottinger Cuccia  
**PUBLISHER:** Jonathan Menard  
**EDITOR:** Dan Kibler  
**MANAGING EDITOR:** Alicia LaFont  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:** Bobby Cleveland  
bobbyc7754@yahoo.com, 601.506.0739  
**PRODUCTION DIRECTOR:** Jeff Caldwell  
**ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER:**  
Desiree P. Lewis

**ART DIRECTOR:** Kevin Orgeron  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:**  
Jeff Cashio, Alissa Zeringue  
**CONTROLLER:** Juanita Guidry  
**ADVERTISING SALES:**  
Mark Hilzlim (National Sales), Mark Boyd,  
Asa Faulkner, Burton Angelle, Peter Church,  
Bret Holten and David Hughes

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

**ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:**  
advertising@MS-Sportsman.com  
985.758.7217

**CIRCULATION INQUIRIES:**  
985.758.7217

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

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

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

**Volume 23 | No 3**

**STIHL**

## CLAIM YOUR OUTDOORS.

— GET SET FOR THE SEASON WITH STIHL.



12" bar†

### MSA 120 C-B

Reliable, battery power for clearing sight lines, stand locations, ground plots, and shoreline. Essential tool for firewood and around camp.

**\$299<sup>99</sup>** Includes AK 20 battery and AL 101 charger.




### RB 400 DIRT BOSS®

Powerful pressure washer for cleaning a variety of equipment and surfaces after hunting and fishing.

**\$619<sup>99</sup>**

Real STIHL. Find Yours at [STIHLDEALERS.COM](http://STIHLDEALERS.COM)

All prices SSW-SRP. Available at participating dealers. †The actual listed guide bar length may vary from the effective cutting length based on which powerhead it is installed on. ©2021 STIHL 21SPM2FP-12-145323-2



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



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

Rick Small

# MARCH: GOD'S GIFT TO US ALL

## TURKEYS, GREAT FISHING MARKS FIRST DAY OF MISSISSIPPI SPRING

**M**arch mornings are God's gift to a Mississippi sportsman. Consider this, from the woodlands:

- It's a cool dawn, with the sun just starting to give the night sky a little glow in the east, meaning your walk

down the trail through the forest needs more pace if you are to reach your listening point before daylight. A light breeze hits your face, reminding you that winter still has a few days remaining, and you shiver once, maybe twice. You start to hear a few chirps from the songbirds as they, too, see the lightening heavens. Suddenly, from deep in the trees, you hear an owl start a cadence of hoots. You stop and wait for it, and it comes: Gobble! The hunt begins.

Or, this from the water:

- The blue sky is transforming rapidly into an

artist's canvas, full of orange hues. The steady hum of the outboard is soothing, though it isn't helping you fight off the sleep that only an hour ago held you in its joyous clutches. At 30 miles per hour, the chill of the morning is intensified, and it is reason enough to appreciate how well your \$30 metallic, insulated cup keeps your coffee warm. It's the first thing you reach for when the run ends and you begin sliding through

the stumps and timber along a creek channel. The second thing you grab is your jig pole; it's ready to go to work. You drop the jig down around the roots of an old cypress, dancing it around, hoping there's a crappie hungry enough to inhale the pink and chartreuse lure, and it does. Thump! Oh yeah, it's on.

We could substitute a bass-fishing scene in any Mississippi lake, or a redfish exploding on a bait in the marshes of the Gulf and produce the same message.

March in Mississippi is simply magical.

So what if deer season is over and the guns are cleaned and safely stored, or that the retrievers that for two months eagerly dove into frigid waters to fetch your ducks, and the feists and curs that treed your squirrels for hours on end, are now just lap dogs beside you on the couch — or that the beagle packs that chased rabbits through hell and back are sleeping in their pens.

It's March, and there's much to do, so many memories to make.

"The perfect Mississippi morning is hitting the turkey woods at daylight and following that up with a fishing pole later in the morning," said Joe Watts of Canton, who's been doing that for more than 45 years. "A good day is at least getting one gobbler to play the game, whether you kill it or not, and then getting your line stretched a bunch of times in the shallows of Barnett Reservoir. March is our first chance to do that."

Watts introduced me to one of my great pleasures in life, catching hybrid-striped and striped bass on the reservoir; our first trip is a hall-of-fame memory. It followed a morning dance with an elusive gobbler that escaped after an hour's worth of steady gobbling at his camp along the Pearl River.



Andy Douglas

Crappie fishing is a must for Mississippi fishermen this month as slabs make their journey into the shallows to spawn — some of them don't make it.



Dan Kibler

# MISSISSIPPI TURKEY SEASONS

## YOUTH SEASON

March 8-14, statewide. Only hunters ages 15 and under are allowed to harvest turkeys.

## REGULAR SEASON

March 15-May 1, statewide.

## LIMIT

One adult gobbler or one gobbler with a 6-inch or longer beard per day, 3 per spring season. Hunters 15 years of age and younger may harvest one gobbler of choice (any age) per day, 3 per spring season.

## OTHER SEASONS

March does provide marginal hunting opportunities in addition to turkey season.

- The statewide season on bobwhite quail ends on March 6.
- Trapping season remains open through March 15 statewide.
- The Conservation Order season on light geese, which opened after the regular waterfowl seasons ended, remains open through March 31. It requires a special free permit from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks before hunting. There is no limit on snow, blue or Ross' geese during this season.

To participate in the Light Goose Conservation Order season, hunters need a valid Mississippi hunting license, a state waterfowl stamp and a free Light Goose Conservation Order permit number. Hunters can obtain a permit number by visiting [mdwfp.com/waterfowl](http://mdwfp.com/waterfowl).

Under the Conservation Order, shooting hours are from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. Only snow, blue, and Ross' geese are eligible for harvest. The use of electronic calls is allowed. The use of unplugged shotguns is allowed.

Hunters must use non-toxic shot and must possess a valid Mississippi hunting license and a Mississippi state waterfowl stamp. Hunters do not need a federal waterfowl stamp. ■

We had my boat hooked up at the camp, and we raced to the river to relieve our frustrations. Two hours and two limits of 7-pound hybrids later, with about 60 more released to boot, we had our relief.

That's when March tossed us a treat. A turkey, very close to the river near our fishing spot — and on public property — gobbled out of the blue at 11 a.m. At 11:03, a second gobble erupted, noticeably louder and closer.

We still had on our camo, and I reminded my partner that my shotgun was in the rod box, still loaded with copper-coated 5s.

What happened next was truly remarkable and made that morning one we'd never forget. We had just enough time to troll over to the bank, scramble up and dive next to a tree. I was still catching my breath when Watts scratched a light yelp out of his box call. The gobbler responded with a gobble that shook us to our souls. He was right on top of us, figuratively, but literally just below us in a little oak bottom. Watts enticed him to come take a peek over the edge of the ridge, and that's where he was greeted by a tight wad of No. 5s.

It was a wonderful morning, ending in a friendship that has produced hundreds more memories usually tied to a hunting or fishing trip.

This issue of *Mississippi Sportsman* is full of information that can guide you to a memorable March morning.

- Writer Mike Giles shares expert tips on turkey hunting to help both veterans and newbies alike.
- Writer Andy Douglas takes it a step further, sharing expert tips on outsmarting what he calls "fringe gobblers" — those tough-to-kill birds that hang out on the edges of your property lines.
- Regular contributor Phillip Gentry discusses the "dos and don'ts" of wading for crappie, a popular pastime for yanking spawning fish from the shallows.
- And there's another feature by some loathsome writer about using a swim jig — a spinnerbait without the blades — to fool bass and even redfish.

Finally, there's a recap of some of the best deer stories of the 2020-21 season in our annual "Deer of the Year" feature.

Sit back, flip the pages, rest and enjoy. Then, get up and go make memories. ■

# BARNETT WILL GET NEW BOAT RAMP

**F**ishermen at Barnett Reservoir will have quicker access to the lake's best crappie and bass fishing when a new boat ramp opens in March.

Officials at the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District, the state agency that oversees the 33,000-acre lake near Jackson, said the Goshen Springs South Ramp will open shortly after the reservoir is raised back to its normal level of 297.5. The lake was held at 296 from December through February to provide more storage for the kind of rains that led to the flood in February 2020.

"We are very pleased to add Goshen South to the many access points on our lake," said John Sigman, PRVWSD's general manager. "This ramp is important for several reasons, including that it provides the only direct public access to the upper lake on the east shore, and it will take pressure off Goshen North, which is right across Mississippi Highway 43."

Goshen North, previously called Goshen Springs Landing, is the lake's busiest, with its three ramps providing protected launching and access to both the upper river and upper main-lake area. It is home to fishing tournaments most every weekend day. Add in hundreds of other recreational boaters pushing parking to the

max, often encroaching on the busy highway.

Sigman said it was that aspect that helped PRVWSD repurpose some highway funding to help fund the new ramp's construction.

"From a safety standpoint, the new ramp and its parking area will help a lot," he said. "We realize that the limited parking will need to be increased in the future, and there is certainly room to do that."

A boating lane has been dredged that will link the ramp to existing channels that provide access south toward the dam and west toward the Highway 25 bridge and access to the river.

"I am looking forward to that new ramp, especially with the crappie spawn coming up within a month," said Gene Woods of Jackson, a regular perch-jerker. "A lot of my favorite spawning holes are within a mile of that ramp, and I won't even have to get in the river to reach some of them."

"But that's not what I look forward to the most. What I am going to really like is seeing shorter lines at the ramps. Whew, it can get busy with the fish are biting." ■

## MORE CWD CASES ARE CONFIRMED

**W**ith increased testing, including mandatory checks on hunter-harvested deer in some counties, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks has confirmed 27 new cases of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in the state. All 2020-21 hunting season confirmations come from the North Mississippi CWD Management Zone. One suspected case is awaiting confirmation from further testing.

Only two new counties, Alcorn and Tippah, with one each, were added to the list of positive tests.

The total number of confirmed cases in Mississippi is 81. The first case was found in Issaquena County in 2018 in a mature buck recovered from a deer camp in late January. It was confirmed in February. Only one other case, in 2019, has come from the Issaquena Management Zone.

Focus has now shifted to the counties along the Tennessee border and Benton County in particular. The 21 new confirmations this year bring the county's total to 54, which is exactly two-thirds of the state's total cases.

Neighboring Marshall County is second with 20, with four cases added this year.

Issaquena has had two confirmations, though none this year, and the counties of Alcorn, Panola, Pontotoc and Tippah have one each.

These totals were reported through Feb. 8; the MDWFP is still conducting tests on animals submitted. A total of 6,033 deer had been sampled since July 2020, with the bulk during the hunting season. ■

## Nighttime Wild Hog Hunts!

**PRICES AND EXTRAS**

FEES

One Nighttime Adventure: **\$500**  
(Ranch rifle w/Ranch night vision scope)

Hunter's own Rifle **\$400**  
(with hunter's night vision scope)

Arrive 3 hours before sunset.  
Includes taking 2 hogs and guide services

EXTRAS

Additional hogs (each): **\$100**

Ranch rifle w/night vision & suppressor: **\$100**

Game-cleaning (each): **\$40**

Lodging (per night): **\$100**

Consecutive Friday & Saturday night Hunts: **\$900**  
Arrive 3 hours before sunset.  
Includes taking 4 hogs, guide services, lodging,  
meals, and fishing (bring equipment)

**SEE WEBSITE  
FOR DATES AVAILABLE**



McKenna  
Ranch Outfitters

741 County Rd 313 • Pachuta, MS  
601-692-3224  
mckennaranchoutfitters.com

The Coastal Conservation Association says federal statistics about Gulf snapper populations are off the mark, and the resulting restrictions on Mississippi and Alabama anglers unfair.

# CCA FIGHTING BACK AGAINST PROPOSED RED SNAPPER RESTRICTIONS

**T**he Coastal Conservation Association is fighting federal officials over red snapper reductions for Mississippi and Alabama in 2021 and is urging individual anglers to join the battle before April.

According to CCA, the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council is considering major reductions in the catch quotas for the two states, 52% in Mississippi and 62% in Alabama, but it tabled the action at its winter meeting in January until it convenes again April 12-15 to establish red snapper seasons and limits for 2021.

The CCA feels the Council, a federal bureau of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that oversees recreational and commercial fishing regulations in the Gulf, is unfairly using harvest data reported by the two states to prop up an unreliable system based more on estimates instead of actual numbers. The Council in 2020 announced the in-season harvest data provided by the states through a mandatory recreational fish reporting system must be "calibrated back into NOAA's Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data for management."

Essentially, the CCA said, the new, real-time data was ordered to go through a mathematical conversion to produce harvest results in the old MRIP numbers. Those converted numbers indicate that Mississippi and Alabama are significantly overharvesting their quotas, which the states' statistics do not show.

According to CCA, that method effectively binds the new data to an antiquated system that the National Academy of Sciences labeled as totally flawed.

"As long as NOAA insists on tying future management to a history of mistakes and bad data, we will never see progress in this fishery despite the best efforts of the states and the Congress," said Ted Venker, CCA's conservation director. "The state systems were designed for use in this kind of management and are the best science available. At the same time, the Great Red Snapper Count shows very plainly that the stock isn't overfished. Penalizing Mississippi and Alabama anglers like this feels like mindless mismanagement."

The Great Red Snapper Count was funded by Congress as an



independent, two-year project to get a true estimate of the Gulf red snapper population. It found a population three times larger than NOAA fisheries numbers. The Council received the count numbers in November, but the findings are undergoing a peer-review process through the Council's Science and Statistical Committee.

"The hope is between now and April, NOAA will manage to plug the new numbers into an interim analysis to avoid penalizing Mississippi and Alabama so severely in the short run," Venker said. "Using the new data to prop up NOAA's broken system is not how the results of the count should be used, but it could solve NOAA's latest self-manufactured crisis. There is a lot of flexibility to avoid crushing those two states that the agency seems unwilling to use."

With several Council members questioning the need to take action before the Council's results were taken into account, action was tabled until April when CCA hopes the two states won't be harshly penalized.

"Ideally, between now and April, a solution can be found, but the ultimate solution is to delegate full responsibility for the fishery to the states once and for all to end this endless cycle of management by crisis," Venker said.

CCA of Mississippi is supporting efforts by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources to counter the 52% reduction in the state's quota. The agency's Tails n' Scales harvest system has provided for two years the ability to open and close seasons based on real-time data.

CCA is urging recreational fishermen to comment to the Council on red snapper before the April 12-15 meeting. Comments can be emailed to [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org). ■

# TOP FIVE MARCH FISHING HOTSPOTS

Obviously, March is a hot month for fishing throughout Mississippi, as fish transition from their docile winter behavior and start feeding heavily to fuel their coming spawning desires. There are so many good places to wet a hook, but these five are proven early spring hot spots.

• **Jordan River, Bay of St. Louis.** Guide Sonny Schindler loves fishing for reds in March, especially on a high tide. That's when the bay, which is formed by the mouth of the Jordan River, gets hot. "The high water opens up a lot of new water for fishermen to chase reds," said Schindler, of Shore Thing Charters in Bay St. Louis. "The same tide that makes fishing the marshes difficult makes it easy in the bay, plus, you don't have very far to run."

Schindler said the high water pushes the fish up on the banks looking for easy meals. The rest of the month, he counts on the U.S. Highway 90 bridge pilings to produce the hot action for redfish and their black drum cousins, as well as plentiful sheepshead.

• **Flint Creek Water Park, Wiggins.** South Mississippi's best crappie lake hits a spawning peak earlier than most lakes. The males move up in early March; the females will follow when the water temp moves up to 60 degrees or more. Take a jig and look for shallow cover in small coves or around riprap banks. Bonus tip: take a bass fishing outfit, because the females will be feeding heavy before making their final move up to the beds. Look for any drop off outside of a spawning area.

• **Jeff Davis Lake, Prentiss.** This MDWFP lake offers two options, and both can be extremely productive. Both the impressive largemouth bass population and a healthy redear bream population hit the shallows in March to start procreating. Bass can be found all around the edges of this lake, but you'll need to find some clean hard bottoms for the redear.

• **Lake Washington, Glen Allan.** There's a reason why this old Washington County oxbow lake south of Greenville is included on everybody's Top 10 list of crappie hotspots in the world. It's loaded with big fish, and they are most vulnerable in March — in the final stages of the prespawn in early March and the early stages of the spawn later in the month. For prespawners before the waters reaches 60 degrees and stays there, drift-fishing with

The high end of the tide is the time to catch March reds where the Jordan River meets the Bay of St. Louis.



Dan Kibler

spider rigs covering the entire water column down in 7 to 8 feet of water with a jig/minnow combination. Once the surface temperature hits 60 and surges past it for good, move on up into the plentiful cypress trees and heavy brush and hit every imaginable spot with a jig. The smaller size of this lake, compared to the state's larger crappie waters, makes this a great choice because it's fishable on moderately windy days that would leave you docked at Grenada Lake or Barnett Reservoir.

• **Barnett Reservoir, Jackson.** Can't leave this one off the list most months, and certainly not in March, when the bass and crappie become extremely vulnerable. Watch the surface temperature. Once they pass 50 degrees, the male bass will move into the shallows and begin preparing beds. They rarely let a swimming lizard pass without an attack. Once the temperature hits the upper 50s, say, 56 to 58, the big females will start showing up as if someone flipped on a switch. One day you can't buy a bite, and the next day your five best fish could easily surpass 20 or 25 pounds. The favorite bait of most old timers is the swimming lizard, fished around pad stems on the east side of the main lake from Old Fannin Landing north to Highway 43. Crappie fishermen can go shallow and chase the males as they prepare beds or stay with the creek channels where they approach the spawning grounds and fish for the bigger sows as they make a slower progression to the shallows. ■

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: 5 BILLS LEFT

The Mississippi Legislature was still considering, as of mid-February, eight different bills involving outdoor recreation, including a Senate bill that would give the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks the power to establish special deer seasons for the purposes of collecting deer for chronic wasting disease testing and allow the use air guns, air bows and pre-charged pneumatic weapons during different seasons.

Senate Bill 2035 was passed by the full Senate and was headed to the House for consideration by representatives. The bill would allow the Commission to establish CWD seasons both inside and outside the regular deer-season framework.

It would also give the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks the power to establish regulations for the use of air guns for small-game hunting during small-game seasons. It would also allow the MDWFP to establish regulations for the use of air bows and pre-charged pneumatic weapons for big game, excluding turkey. They would not be legal for game birds and migratory birds and waterfowl.

SB 2035 was one of six bills to escape the Senate deadline for committee action and one two to have gained full Senate approval by mid-February.

The Senate also approved S.B. 2486 to establish a committee to study how the MDWFP's state parks could be operated in the future, including the possibility of transferring ownership of some or all parks to other entities for operation.

Only two bills got out of the House Committee on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. One mirrors closely a bill in the Senate that would give the MDWFP the discretion to monitor/test for CWD in enclosures. The other is more interesting in that it would establish an Outdoor Stewardship Fund and

a board to oversee the fund's operation. H.B. 1231 would accrue funds to help state and local agencies and entities purchase lands and waters for conservation purposes.

These and other bills can be tracked online through the legislative session by visiting <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2021/pdf/mainmenu.htm>. ■

**TOUGH AS NAILS**

**Gamakatsu**

**Superline Offset Round Bend**

**WWW.GAMAKATSU.COM**

**It's a jungle out there and the Gamakatsu Superline Offset Round Bend Worm Hook is built using heavy wire specially designed for braided line and heavier fluorocarbon. Have no fear.**



# Hunting/Fishing SCRAPBOOK



**Blakely Cheramie**

Blakely Cheramie killed this pie-bald buck in Union Church on Dec. 26.



**Cole Blanchard**

Cole Blanchard took his first turkey using a shotgun while hunting in Natchitoches, La.



**Haleigh Davis**

Haleigh Davis with a 53-pound blue catfish caught in the Mississippi River near Port Gibson on rod and reel. The fish was released after photos.



**Ainsley McGinty**

Bentonia hunter Ainsley McGinty took this river-bottom 9-point buck on Dec. 22. It had 20- and 21-inch main beams, 5-inch bases and an 18-inch spread.

Tommy and Shelby Theriot were all smiles after their father-daughter duck hunt. It was Shelby's first time hunting ducks.



**Tommy and Shelby Theriot**

# GOT PICS? We want 'em

Email images to: [images@ms-sportsman.com](mailto:images@ms-sportsman.com)

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

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



Nathan LaGrange

Nathan LaGrange was hunting in Centreville when he took this 10-point buck on Dec. 21. It went on to score 134 with main beams of 22¾ inches.



This Louisiana crew went dog hunting in a Mississippi national forest on Dec. 26. They killed seven bucks and missed four more.

**Clean & Restore Your Boat**  
DECKS UPHOLSTERY ENGINES . . . EVERYTHING!  
**FREE SHIPPING**

**ProClean MARINE™**  
Learn More at [ProcleanMarine.com](http://ProcleanMarine.com)  
MADE IN THE USA SAVE \$10 per gallon USE CODE SAVE10

**STIHL**

**CLAIM YOUR OUTDOORS.**  
— GET SET FOR THE SEASON WITH STIHL.

12" bar†

**MSA 120 C-B**  
Reliable, battery power for clearing sight lines, stand locations, ground plots, and shoreline. Essential tool for firewood and around camp.

**\$299<sup>99</sup>** Includes AK 20 battery and AL 101 charger.

Real STIHL. Find Yours at [STIHLDEALERS.COM](http://STIHLDEALERS.COM)

All prices SSW-SRP. Available at participating dealers. \*The actual listed guide bar length can vary from the effective cutting length based on which powerhead it is installed on. ©2020 STIHL 218PM (13R-04-145335-1)

# WHEELER CATCHES MONSTER BASS ON MODIFIED SPINNER

By Mike Giles

**S**tan Wheeler of Columbus, Miss., and fishing buddy Larry Phebus took a trip to a lake near West Point on Nov. 17. The day dawned bright and sunny, and Wheeler started catching bass as soon as he started fishing. Little did he know, the day would be a memorable trip, even a lifetime memory, thanks to a 12.6-pound bass that showed up.

Most of the bass in the lake were small, but Wheeler and Phebus were excited about the opportunity to catch fish.

"I'm always thinking of ways to make a lure better, or I'm modifying them," Wheeler said. "I modified a Beetle Spin so that I could get it to run like I wanted it to and started catching a lot of fish on it. On my first trip with the new lure, my fishing buddy laughed at (it), but after I caught five in a row, he was asking for one of them. I even caught 30 bass on it one day."

"I'd caught about a dozen bass that day and just flipped the lure out and let it go down and then pumped it up again," Wheeler said. "Most of the bass were stunted and small, but they were fun to catch."

Then, wham!

"A bass smashed the lure and took off to my left," said Wheeler. "He was probably about 4 to 5 feet down, and he got hung on the submerged brush, so I just kept the line tight but eased up on him a little, and he swam off the brush."

Wheeler kept up the pressure and kept battling the bass.

"I was reeling him straight in, and he just swam right up into some brush along the



bank and 'Boom,' my line broke," Wheeler said. "I walked down the bank to the brush and saw the bass tangled up in the limbs, so I reached down and grabbed him. When I pulled him out of the water he just kept getting bigger and bigger."

The bass had wrapped the line around the brush and was stuck so tight that he couldn't move, allowing Wheeler to reach down and grab it by the jaw and hoist it out of the limbs and water.

"Larry came over to see what I'd caught and got the digital scales out to weigh the fish," Wheeler said. "I'd never caught one that big and didn't know how big he was, but I did know he was a really huge bass."

Phebus weighed the bass three times on digital scales, and it came up to 12.6 pounds, a huge bass anywhere.

"The biggest bass I ever caught before was 8 pounds, and this one was so much bigger," Wheeler said. "I guess he'd been gorging himself on those stunted bass in that lake and really bulked up."

Wheeler thinks the bass had never seen anything like his customized Beetle Spin, so it didn't hesitate when he pitched the lure out there.

"I took replaced the blade on the Beetle

Spin and put on a bigger, round blade and a bigger head," said Wheeler. "Then, I put a larger body on the lure, and they just liked it from the first time I fished it. We've caught big bream, crappie and bass on the lure, that my partner dubbed a 'Wheeler Special! I like the junebug or black/blue flake color on it too.' ■

## BASS EXTRAS

Weight: 12.6 pounds

Time of day: 1:40 p. m.

Rod and reel: Bass Pro Shops rod with a Shimano B100 Mag reel with Viscous line.

Lure: Wheeler Special. "My latest creation is a Beetle Spin that I modified by replacing the small, factory spinner blade with a larger, hammered-gold Colorado blade in order to get more vibration and thump. I replaced the factory jighead with a larger, minnow shaped jighead (and) replaced the factory Beetle Spin body with the rear tail section of a Zoom Fluke stickworm."

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



**Barnett's**  
BODY SHOP

24  
Hour  
Towing

**5 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU!!!**  
FLOWOOD, MS • 601-939-9700  
RICHLAND, MS • 601-664-9770  
BYRAM, MS • 601-372-0042  
RIDGELAND, MS • 601-856-0700  
GLUCKSTADT, MS • 601-499-1700

**COVER  
THE SPREAD**



**R100 SPYDERLOK  
ROD HOLDER**

Take your spider rigging to the next level. With 360 degree rotating arms and 4 locking rod holders this rig will be your new favorite. Designed for trolling or anchor, saltwater or freshwater. Each rod holder on the R100 SpyderLok Gen 2 features our patented SpyderLok technology - the teeth lock in place, securing your position tightly.

MILLENNIUMMARINE.COM

**MILLENNIUM  
MARINE**

# SPRING CRAPPIE: GO NOW

COPIAH COUNTY GUIDE SAYS MARCH IS TOPS

By Andy Douglas

**W**hy do sportsmen and women get excited when spring approaches? It's the great fishing action that lies ahead.

With March rolling in, whether as a lamb or as a lion, one thing is certain: spring is not far away, and the crappie are transitioning as we speak. When water temperatures near 60 degrees, the spawn will begin.

This varies in Mississippi, as the northern parts of the state are typically cooler than the southern parts. Keep an eye on your area



If you don't know how it's done, don't own a boat or want to see how it's done by the pros; look up a local guide such as Copiah County's Jimmy Walters.

**TIE UP YOUR LOOSE ENDS.**

INFUSED WITH  
**RUSTRICTOR**  
BLOCKS RUST SIX LONGER

LIFT OUT BOXES

BUILT-IN EZ LABEL SYSTEM

GET AN EDGE

EASY CUSTOMIZATION

SNAP SHUT INTERIOR BOXES

The World's Most Advanced Tackle Storage

**PLANO**  
**EDGE**

STAY SHARP.

▶ TERMINAL 3700

and the places you target crappie, as cold fronts this time of year affect water temperature. Fish move into shallow water as it warms and transition back to deeper water if it cools back down.

Just before the actual spawn, male and female crappie go through a feeding frenzy, trying to add to their energy reserves for the approaching, stressful spawning period. This is a good time to catch them.

If you don't know a lot about crappie fishing or don't own a boat, don't let that stop you. You can hire a guide who knows how it's done and knows a particular hole of water like Jimmy Walters of Wesson.

"I guide mostly at Lake Lincoln," Walters said. "I also help out another guide service on Lake Grenada when they get too much to handle."

When males move in to prepare nests, the females are not far away, feeding in deeper water. Areas to target when this is happening are ledges next to shallow areas that drop sharply into deeper water.

"March is the prime time of the year to catch spawning crappie," said Walters, who owns and operates his own custom jig-making business and fishes his baits all the time. "I will target ledges and back off on the deeper side in 6 to 8 feet of water."

The fishing is good now and only getting better — crappie are on the move to their spawning grounds. Anglers should keep in mind that crappie bed in shallow coves that are protected from wind and waves.

Anglers can take advantage of the fact that male crappie will vigorously defend their nests from predators or anything else they perceive as a threat. If an intruder gets too close, they will chase it, biting and nipping at it until the threat leaves.

With March rolling in, whether as a lamb or as a lion, one thing is certain: spring is not far away, and the crappie are on the move.

Males protect the nest after the eggs have hatched and continue to attack anything that comes near. This makes them susceptible to baits and lures after nesting activity has ended.

Take advantage of spring crappie action as they are concentrating into small shallow areas to bed. It's exciting — this makes spring crappie easier to find and catch than any other time of the year. ■

To contact Jimmy Walters, visit the Facebook page for his custom jigs: [www.facebook.com/juniortwalters95](http://www.facebook.com/juniortwalters95) or call Uncle Rays Bait Shop (601-643-0175).



**SOME PEOPLE  
SPEND WAY  
TOO MUCH  
TIME ONLINE**

**ICAST  
2019**  
New Product Showcase WINNER

*Advanced tackle storage for overly obsessive anglers.*

[planomolding.com/edge](http://planomolding.com/edge)    

*The Versatility You Need.  
The Style You Want.*



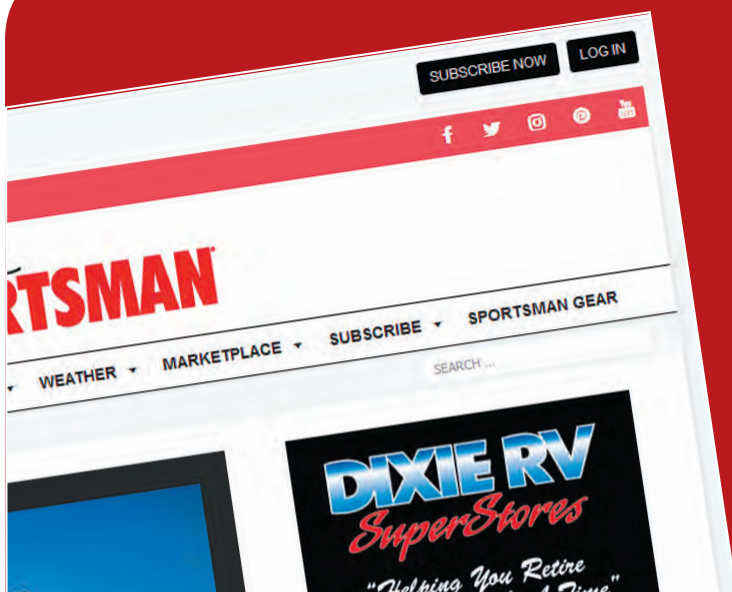
### Introducing the NEW BlackJack 256 Coastal

The BlackJack 256 Coastal is the newest addition to the BlackJack line, combining offshore and bay boat elements. Its three-piece design, deeper casting deck and open aft deck give you the ability to fish comfortably in bigger waters without sacrificing inshore capabilities. Add forward seating, and the Coastal converts to a day cruiser perfect for family trips to your favorite sandbar or island. The Coastal has the versatility you need with the style and performance you've come to expect from BlackJack Boats.

Go to [blackjackboats.com](http://blackjackboats.com) to learn more or find a dealer near you!

**BlackJack**

POWERED BY  **YAMAHA**



## ARE YOU A SPORTSMAN SUBSCRIBER?

then you are already a member

Simply log in to get full web access on all smart devices and our monthly print magazine



GO SPORTSMAN:  
**MS-SPORTSMAN.COM**

**W**alter Ridinger owl-hooted from the top of a ridge near Meridian, but the gobblers were shut up tighter than a drum, so he moved to another prime spot to listen a few minutes.

"I hooted, and the owls and crows started raising cane," Ridinger said. "So I moved down to the end of a ridgetop (and) green field and pondered what my next move would be. Suddenly, a crow flew over, and a turkey belted out a shock-gobble right in the hollow beside me. He was so close I was afraid to move, so I slowly sat down by a tree."

Ridinger yelped to the gobbler at 5:50 a.m., but 40 minutes later, he hadn't heard another sound.

"While I was sitting there, two other gobblers got cranked up, further off — one to the north and one toward the west — and I mean, one was hammering," Ridinger said. "I didn't hear the closest bird again, so I hit the ridge and walked down an old logging road to the west and set up to call to the more vocal one."

At 6:45, Ridinger sat down and cackled.

"Gobble, gobble, obble," thundered two old toms on opposite sides of him.

And then, there was only silence.

"I called again at 7, and then at 7:15, and didn't get a response," he said. "I just didn't know what had happened or why they'd shut up. At 7:30, I yelped on my box call, and one gobbled where I'd started calling from originally. I yelped with my mouth call, and he gobbled, and then with my box, and he gobbled, but he never budged."

The wise, old tom was strutting back and forth and toying with Ridinger as he had with many hunters.

"I knew I had to do something different or he wasn't going to move any closer," Ridinger said. "I called with my mouth call again, and he gobbled, and then I yelped with both sides of the box, and he gobbled again — but he never moved an inch."

### GAME CHANGER >

■ By Mike Giles

# TIPS FROM A TURKEY MASTER

**VETERAN, OLD-SCHOOL HUNTER SHARES HOW HE LIKES TO CALL, SET UP ON GOBBLERS, MAKE THEM MAKE A FATAL MISTAKE.**

## GAME CHANGER

Time was slipping away, and Ridinger knew desperate measures were in order.

“I remembered my scratch box call that I’d made back before the season, so I pulled it out of my pocket and yelped,” he said.

“Gobble, obble, obble,” thundered the old tom in a lusty response to Ridinger’s sweet come-hither pleadings.

“As soon as I yelped to him with my scratch box, he started my way, and I could tell he was coming down the old logging trail,” Ridinger said. “There was a bunch of huckleberry bushes obscuring my view, but I saw one opening in the bushes, and I knew that had to be my shot, or he’s going to be in my lap. He was torn up, and I bet he gobbled 20 times as he quickly moved toward me, so I never yelped to him again.”

“All of a sudden, I caught a glimpse of the tom coming,” said Ridinger. “I had my gun on my knee pointed to the opening ahead of him, and when he eased up to the opening and stuck his neck out, I pulled the trigger.”

“Ka-boom” roared the Remington 870 shotgun, and the gobbler met his maker.

It had been a challenging duel, and Ridinger had called up the lovesick bird with a scratch box he’d made himself. Evidently, the wise, old gobbler had never heard such sweet calls in those

woods before.

“Sometimes, you’ve got to use a different call, or one that the bird hasn’t heard before, to get his interest,” Ridinger said. “In this case, I almost forgot about the scratch box I had in my pocket, but as it turned out, the gobbler liked it and came running.”

## CALLS AND SETUPS

Ridinger, a retired railroad engineer from Meridian, has spent a lifetime hunting turkeys, and he’s been influenced by some of the sport’s most-legendary hunters and callers: Ben Rodgers Lee, Preston Pittman and M. L. Lynch. He hasn’t forgotten his turkey hunting education the Bogue Flower Hills west of Meridian, and he makes turkey calls.

“I don’t carry a lot of calls with me, but I do rely on a Primos or Pittman mouth call, a Ben Lee box call and a Lynch box,” Ridinger said. “If you can master those three types of calls, you can surely call in gobblers everywhere you hunt.”

“Typically, I want to arrive at my first listening spot before daybreak and listen as the woods wake up,” Ridinger said. “If you have hills or mountains in your hunting area, then you should know a high place where you can get to hear a gobbler from a long way off without spooking him. The key to hunting a bird off of the roost is to know the lay of the land and locate a tom on the roost.”



If you can locate a gobbling turkey on the roost, you can get set up on him and start the day with a good shot at getting him to head your way.

“I like to get up on top of the ridge when calling to a gobbling bird,” Ridinger said. “If you want to get a leg up on him, then get up higher than the bird is. I’m not sure why, but the gobblers like to come uphill, and they will come to a call if they’re in a hollow below or on a lower point of the ridge I’m on. It’s important to get on the same ridge they’re on before you start working them or get to a ridge above them.”

While they may occasionally come long distances to a call during late season when the hens are on their nests, gobblers normally won’t come from another ridge to your location, so it’s best to close the distance and get to where they are comfortable or want to be.



Don’t count on a tom crossing a barrier like this barbed wire fence to get to you. Set up where he faces the least resistance. **ABOVE, RIGHT:**The author poses with a gobbler taken in the Bogue Flower Hills near Meridian, Walter Ridinger’s stomping grounds.



## Quality and comfort to keep you going. Affordability to bring it home.



New L60LE Series    Heavy-Duty Chassis    37- 42 HP



Stop by to see why the all-new Kubota L60LE series compact tractors are the best overall package of affordability, quality, and comfort.

- Large heavy-duty chassis
- Large, spacious operator platform with premium operator controls
- Premium electronic HST Plus™ transmission
- Available climate-controlled cab for year-round comfort

Together we do more®

### Crain Tractor and Equipment

508 Hwy 98  
Columbia, MS 39429  
601-736-4527

KubotaUSA.com

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2021. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, disclaimer, safety, incentive offer and product information, consult your local Dealer or go to KubotaUSA.com.

**A**fter he's located a gobbling turkey, Ridinger will set up 150 to 175 yards away, as close as he can without spooking him. "I'll let him gobble on the roost, and I wait until just before fly-down time to give him a series of light tree yelp or purrs and clucks to let him know where I'm at," Ridinger said. "If you call to him too much while he's on the roost, you risk spooking him or making him suspicious."

Less is more for old-time turkey hunters like Ridinger. They prefer giving gobblers just a little sweet love talk and come-hither pleadings to make that gobbler want more.

Gobblers in many areas with high hunting pressure may be called to soon after they crack out of their shells, so they know the difference between birds and hunters.

"If you play your cards right and get set up and be the first hen to call to the gobbler, then he may fly down your way, and you'll have a quick hunt," said Ridinger. "It doesn't always work that way, but sometimes, all it takes is a tree yelp or a purr and cluck to get them to head your way right off the bat."

### MID-MORNING HUNTS

If you've hunted turkeys for very long, you know there are times when gobblers are silent on the roost or silent after they fly down. What then? If you're not sure where the bird is after he flies off the roost, it might be a good idea to find a trail, an old logging road or a ridgetop and stay on the move until you fire one up.

"We've always owl-hooted and crow-called when trying to locate birds after fly-down and through mid-day," Ridinger said. "I prefer to owl hoot and crow call during the mid-day hours as well. I prefer that, because on one hunt, I was going along and stopping every so often and cackling and yelping. After I did that, I heard a noise and saw a big gobbler running away from me. My thoughts were that he had heard me at my last stop and started toward me, and when I walked up and called, he knew I wasn't a hen and got away from me. If I'd have owl-hooted or crow-called, he may have gobbled and let me know where he



Walter Ridinger killed this big gobbler in the Bogue Phalia Hills near Meridian last season.

was, but he surely wouldn't have come running towards me."

Ridinger occasionally stops and calls to the turkeys during the mid-day hours, but he's going to get set up and be ready for a turkey to show up before he makes a call. That way, if a gobbler is close to him and decides to come up unannounced, he won't be busted.

"If I'm going to try a locator turkey call, I'll never do it walking down the road," he said. "I'll always set up a few minutes and then try it, and I won't leave until I'm sure no birds have come in."

"Patience is also a key aspect in tangling with a wise, old tom, as you need to stay put and give them time to come in," he said. "They may come in quietly without ever making a peep, and if you move, then there's a good chance, you'll spook them." ■

**GREAT**



**DUCK**



**FOOD**



See Us On **Amazing Banana Water Lily, Reborn.mp4**

**DYNAMITE DUCK FOOD**  
**(843) 240-0530**

[www.BANANAWATERLILIES.com](http://www.BANANAWATERLILIES.com)  
[www.FROSTWATERFOWL.com](http://www.FROSTWATERFOWL.com)

# WALTER RIDINGER'S TURKEY THOUGHTS

Walter Ridinger took this gobbler with his 40-year-old Ben Lee box call and a scratch box he'd made before the 2020 season.



•“Gene Nunnery, author of *The Old Pro Turkey Hunter*, said that turkeys are like people. When they’ve had a good night’s sleep, they felt good in the morning and felt like gobbling, so they’d cut it loose. But when they’d had a bad night or weathered the storm all night or been harassed by predators or poachers, they might not make a peep.”

•“There’s no set way to do it, and nothing written down for every situation that may occur, but I’m going to get up and react to how the weather is and how the morning is going before I decide to do something or hunt a certain way.”

•“When it comes to old-school turkey calling, less is more, and sometimes that’s better when calling to wary old gobblers.” ■



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



**TU01** FIELD PRO  
TURKEY SEAT



**TU02** RUN N' GUN  
TURKEY SEAT

MILLENNIUMSTANDS.COM

## IMPROVE YOUR GROUND GAME

To help you keep from wiggling and spooking birds, a comfortable, high-quality, portable turkey seat is so much better than sitting on the ground. And there are none better than Millennium Outdoors' premium-quality TU01 Field Pro Turkey Seat and TU02 Run N' Gun Turkey Seat. Both have been designed to provide the ultimate combination of comfort and convenience for serious turkey hunters.





**TURKEYS OFTEN HANG OUT IN PLACES YOU DON'T HAVE PERMISSION TO HUNT, BUT THEY'RE CLOSE BY. HERE'S HOW TO DEAL WITH GOBLERS ON THE NEXT TRACT OF LAND.**

■ By Andy Douglas

# **PROPERTY LINE**

# **TOMS**

# YOU'VE PROBABLY BEEN THERE.

You know where a big tom has been roosting and go after him early, before fly-down time. He gobbles, but he is not exactly where he is supposed to be; he is close to the property line. You go straight to him, and suddenly, there you are, face-to-face with a big **POSTED** sign — and your tom is just across the line.

What do you do? Where should you sit? The answer is not always a simple one when considering what's legal and what's ethical.

## FRINGE TURKEYS

Hens and gobblers are not respecters of property lines. They do, however, love diverse areas, and they spend a lot of their time along the edges of habitat: fields, stands of pines, oak flats, swamps, clear-cuts and pastures. This even includes thickets and cutovers when hens start to look for nesting areas.

It just so happens that in these diverse places, turkey hunters are chasing spring gobblers — the breaks and edges of different habitats, which often occur along a property line. When big pine timber is next to an open pasture, or a big oak flat meets up with a fresh, clean clear-cut, many times, they are owned by different individuals.

Turkeys spend a lot of time near borders of different terrain. They use edges to navigate and can easily go to different feeding areas or quickly escape predators.

## WHAT'S LEGAL

It is perfectly legal for a property owner, lease-holder or hunter with legal permission to hunt an entire property, even up to the actual property line. You cannot legally cross the line unless there is legal permission or agreements with the adjacent property owner. Nor can game be shot across the line — it would be trespassing to retrieve a gobbler, even if it was only a few feet.

## WHAT'S ETHICAL? >

Because habitat edges often occur along property lines, and because turkeys frequent edges, you're liable to be faced with this situation.

## WHAT'S ETHICAL?

It's a loaded question and can be different, as each hunter's ethics may differ. Any way it is looked at, though, turkey hunting right on the property line is not a good idea. Even though it is legal, it can cause conflicts.

"I stay away from the property lines while turkey hunting," said Van Britt, a veteran turkey hunter from Copiah County. "Every time you set up on a gobbler, you have a decision to make; you can set yourself up for success or failure and even for adversity."

Etiquette calls for hunters to respect property lines and have regards for other hunters who hunt properties next to yours. It is manners that leads hunters to back off the property line at least a little more than shotgun range.

If a hunter backs off the line a good distance, there will not be any subsequent accusations or any temptations to take a shot at a tom across that line.

"I don't put myself in the position of having to make that decision," Britt said. "A hundred yards away from property lines is a good rule of thumb."



Hens will often feed along the edges of fields and big timber, common sites of property boundaries, and gobblers will usually not be far behind. **ABOVE:** Hunters should try to stay at least as far away from the edge of a property as the range of their shotgun.

## TACTICS FOR FRINGE GOBBLERS

If you are hunting a place with different types of habitat, it is a good idea to hunt the edges, as long as the property is continuous and you are not hunting along a boundary. Here are a few breaks in turkey habitat to target:

- Big pine timber next to a field or pasture;
- Stream management zones (SMZs);
- Large, open hardwoods joining plantation pines;
- Sandbars on rivers, creeks and streams running through any terrain;
- Logging trails and rights-of-way in big open woods;
- Edges of green fields and food plots;
- Long and high ridges, especially in hardwoods;
- Alongside flooded timber.

The list could go on. The bottom line is, any change in topography can be places spring turkeys will frequent. Sitting on edges with decoys in an open area is very productive.

When it comes to calling, there is no magic call that will bring them in running from a neighboring property. Basic traditional calling and patience is the key to luring them in.

"I don't go out with the intentions of calling a turkey off someone else's place," said Britt.

## CONCLUSION

Not all woods are created equal, so consider the terrain that you are hunting; find the edges, breaks in terrain, and changes in topography — you will encounter more turkeys. Remember that turkeys, like other animals, will use the path of least resistance, whether they are feeding or traveling from one area to another. Use the changes in terrain and hunt the edges, and if the edge you are near is a property line, just back off a little and enjoy the hunt. ■



Turkeys, like deer, are lovers of edges, where two types of habitat meet. That often happens along a property line.

# OVER 1,000,000 ACRES SOLD!



- Mississippi
- Louisiana
- Alabama
- Arkansas



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 can be contacted at [andydouglas.outdoors@yahoo.com](mailto:andydouglas.outdoors@yahoo.com)



SOUTHERN STATES REALTY

View All Land For Sale  
[SouthernStatesRealty.com](http://SouthernStatesRealty.com)  
 601.250.0017

**HUNTING SEASONS**

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
<b>Doves</b>	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
<b>Quail</b>	Nov. 26-March 6	8	
<b>Rabbit</b>	Oct. 17-Feb. 28	8	
<b>Squirrel (fall)</b>	Oct. 1-Feb. 28	8	
<b>Squirrel (spr)</b>	May 15-June 1	4	
<b>Raccoon</b>	July 1-Sept. 30	1 raccoon per party	
<b>Rac/Opp/Bobct</b>	Oct. 1-Oct. 31 (food/sport) Nov. 1-Feb. 28 (food/sport/pelt)	5/day, 8/party No limit	
<b>Rails</b>			
King & Clapper	Sept. 1-Oct. 4, Nov. 26-Dec. 31	15	45
Sora & Virginia	Sept. 1-Oct. 4, Nov. 26-Dec. 31	25	75
<b>Gallinules</b>	Sept. 1-Oct. 4, Nov. 26-Dec. 31	15	45
<b>Snipe</b>	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28	8	24
<b>Crow</b>	Nov. 7 - Feb. 28	No limit	No limit
<b>Woodcock</b>	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31	3	9
<b>Wild Turkey</b>			
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
<b>Duck</b>	Teal only: Sept. 12-27 Nov. 27-29, Dec. 4-6 Dec. 9-Jan. 31	6 6
<b>Geese</b>	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
<b>Light Geese conservation</b>	Oct. 1-Nov. 12, Feb. 1-5, Feb. 8-March 31	No limit

**DEER SEASON**

ZONE	ARCHERY	PRIM WEAPON	GUNS
<b>Northeast</b>	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)
<b>East Central</b>	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)
<b>Southwest</b>	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)
<b>Southeast</b>	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)
<b>Delta/South Delta</b>	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)

**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](http://gulfcouncil.org).

**FRESHWATER**

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

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

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

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

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

\* Possession of certain species of sharks is prohibited.

# DEER OF THE YEAR

# 2020-21

MISSISSIPPI'S WHITETAILS SHOWED OUT AGAIN IN THE LATEST HUNTING SEASON, WITH DOZENS OF REAL TROPHY BUCKS MEETING THEIR MAKER. HERE'S THE LATEST INFO....

**D**eer season in Mississippi began back in October, with hunters carrying archery equipment into tree stands around the Magnolia State. It didn't finish up until Feb. 15, and in between, plenty of bragging-sized whitetails met their matches.

*Mississippi Sportsman* reported on close to 20 of those best kills. The following are recaps of some of the latest bucks to bite the dust, followed by a gallery of trophy whitetails.



Andrew Hart's 172-inch

## THE WAIT WAS WORTH IT

**A**ndrew Hart of Madison and his hunting friends located a trophy buck in December 2019 near Belzoni. He had an opportunity to shoot the buck late on Dec. 28, but he'd just returned from a Texas hunting trip on which he had harvested several deer. As a result, he was tired and passed on a buck that he'd normally have shot. Hart estimated that the buck would score 150. Some of his hunting partners thought he was either pulling their leg or crazy for passing on the buck.

Unfortunately, the Yazoo River flooded and stayed high the remainder of the season, and the season was closed early in the area as a result.

"After the water went back down, we went back in and got the (trail) camera, and there were several pictures of the buck coming by with water up to his chest," Hart said. "We followed him on camera last summer and fall. He was running with another 150-inch buck during the early fall, and my son Cory spotted the smaller buck on opening day of the season. After he watched the smaller buck about 20 minutes Cory shot him, thinking the hit-list buck wasn't going to show. That buck scored 154 inches and was a great bow buck."

"We planted about 30 acres of corn, 20 acres of beans and left for them the deer; they were really working on it," Hart said. "So it was no surprise when Cory killed the 154-inch buck on opening day of bow season."

Hart estimated that the bigger buck was in the 170-inch range last fall, and he and all his friends were hunting hard for a glimpse of him; they weren't disappointed. The buck was working one core area, and several hunters saw him pass through one of the lanes near a stand, but they could never get a good shot — he was moving too fast.

One afternoon, a hunter had his daughter in the stand, and she saw the buck come through the lane too fast for her to get a shot, but they were confident somebody was going to get a crack at him because he was working through there too frequently.

"Cory got in the stand the next day and hunted from 5:30 until 9 a.m., and the deer crossed a lane and went into a thicket between the lanes but never came out the other side," Hart said. "At 1:30, another hunter came back and got in that stand, and Cory got down and went to another stand."

When Hart arrived that afternoon, Dec. 2, he went to the north side of the property to give the others some space.

"I got on my stand and had some does come out and feed in the field," Hart said. "About 4:30, a big deer came into the lane about 120 yards to my left and started walking towards the other deer, coming in my direction, and I looked at him and then put the binoculars down and shouldered my gun and put the cross-hairs right behind his shoulder and squeezed the trigger just as he turned to go into the woods."

"Pow-whap!" The buck lurched at the shot from Hart's .308 Steyr rifle and jumped out of the lane. Hart left the deer alone and went back to camp for a little while, and then came back with the others to look for it.

"The buck only went about 40 yards after I shot him, but I just wanted to be sure that he was mortally wounded before going in after him," Hart said.

The huge buck had 10 scorable points, an 18¼-inch inside spread, and it weighed 225 pounds. The buck was green-scored at 172⅞ inches by Mary Solomon at Ellis Solomon Taxidermy in Brandon. ■

— Mike Giles

# RACCOON IS BUCK'S UNDOING

**M**ichael Baham, a 43-year-old Baptist pastor from Maben, had climbed down from his ladder stand at 5:12 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 23, to take care of a doe he'd shot 45 minutes earlier in a shooting lane.

He took a few steps and saw a raccoon in the lane, headed in his direction.

"I thought at first it was a coyote, but it was a big coon," Baham said. "Then, about 40 yards past him in the lane, I saw a deer bobbing its head. I said to myself, 'That's a deer, a buck, a monster buck.' I could tell he was a lot better than an 8-pointer."

Baham had his Ruger M-77 .30-06 rifle on his shoulder in a sling, and little by little, as the buck raised and lowered its head over the next minute-and-a-half, he was able to get the rifle to his shoulder and deliver a killing shot at 85 yards.

The huge 11-point buck — a 5x5 main-frame with a single, sticker point on the left antler — wound up measuring 163 inches, with an almost 18-inch inside spread, several times longer than 10 inches and bases that approached 6 inches in circumference.

"When I replayed the event in my mind, I think that coon provided me with the opportunity to shoot that deer," Baham said. "I think that deer was focused on the coon instead of me. That's how I got my gun up. I think it distracted him enough for me to shoulder my gun."

Baham, a pastor at Double Springs Baptist Church in Maben, was hunting on a piece of private land in Oktibbeha County that afternoon. The deer was a big surprise, not only to Baham, but to a friend with whom he was hunting.

"I had no clue he was there," Baham said. "A good friend I've been hunting with didn't have this deer on any of his (trail) cameras. We hadn't hunted this place since October; we haven't hunted together much this season. He's had the COVID, and he'd just gotten well."

"My family and I try to get four or five deer a year, process and eat them different ways, and my wife had said before I went that



it would be great to get one more. I'd already killed two nice 8-pointers, so I wasn't going to tag out on another buck unless it was a huge one. I was probably going to be happy to get a doe. We didn't have a lot of encouraging buck activity there.

"I got in my stand, and I told myself that the first nice doe that came out, I was going to take her. So the first one slipped out, and I shot her, and she fell right there. I decided to stay a while; I didn't want to stay until pitch-black dark, because I'd have a deer to clean and process, and I had to preach a sermon the next morning, but I decided to stay a while."

Baham finally decided to climb down with about 30 minutes of daylight left, to give him time to take care of the doe. That's when his encounter with the buck took place.

Baham said he was able to, inch by inch, get his rifle and sling off his shoulder, get his left hand on the rifle, then raise it into shooting position.

**OPPOSITE:** Michael Baham of Maben killed this 163-inch Oktibbeha County buck on Jan. 23.

"I had my gun strapped on my shoulder, and the deer started staring me down," he said. "He was bobbing his head up and down. I figured I was fixing to watch the biggest buck I've ever seen run away.

"He put his head down, and I got my gun in both hands, at my hip. He put his head down and took a step and a half, like he was going to cover the 20-yard shooting lane, and I eased my gun up and got my eye in the scope. I steadied the gun and said that if I could get it to my shoulder, I'll pull the trigger. I got it there, and I got the cross-hairs on his shoulder and pulled the trigger. He ran off, bolted across the shooting lane."

Baham feared that he'd missed the buck, which ran off without any sign that he'd been shot. Baham started in that direction.

"As I got close to where I shot him to start looking for blood, before I got to where he had been standing, I caught a glimpse of something white in the hardwoods. It was his belly. He had gone about 50 yards and dropped.

"I stopped about 15 yards from him and knelt down and had a little praise-fest," he said. "My emotions went from zero to 100 real fast.

"I started thinking about what happened — every time something like this happens, it seems like a God-ordained moment; you can't believe things like this just happen. In this particular place, there's a little curve in the shooting lane, and from the bow ladder stand I was in, you can see about 40 or 50 yards to the east, and you can see into the hardwood block. If I had stayed in the stand, I wouldn't have seen this buck; I had to get out and walk that way a couple of steps to see him. Five minutes earlier or later and I wouldn't have seen him."

Baham got the buck — and the doe — processed and taken care of, and he camped

out the buck and took him to his brother, Ricky, who runs Iti Tashka Taxidermy in Loranger, La. Ricky Baham put his tape measure on the buck and came up the 163-inch measurement. He said the buck had a 17 $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch inside spread and tines as long as 10 $\frac{5}{8}$  and 10 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches and bases that measured 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  and 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches in circumference. ■

— Dan Kibler

**FROM DUCK BOATS TO BASS BOATS**

**CHECK OUT WHAT GATOR TRAX CAN DO FOR YOU**

**FOR A FULL LINE OF GATOR TRAX BOATS, VISIT [WWW.GATORTRAXBOATS.COM](http://WWW.GATORTRAXBOATS.COM)**

The advertisement features a large image of a duck boat with a thatched roof and a purple bass boat with two outboard motors. Below the main image are two smaller inset photos: one showing a duck boat on a trailer and another showing a bass boat with three people on the water. The background of the bottom half of the ad has a green, textured pattern.

# THE TALE OF SLEWFOOT'S DEMISE

**J**ordan Montgomery and Randy Prestridge of Brookhaven knew a big buck was in the area of Lincoln County where they were hunting. Being friends and hunting partners, they teamed up last summer, placing trail cameras across a section of hardwoods that had a creek running through it.

The work paid off when Montgomery drilled the 10-point, 155-inch trophy on Jan. 22.

Montgomery's quest for the buck began in earnest in October, when he decided to bowhunt an area and checked a camera before hunting. A big buck had been there every day, all week in numerous photos — but all after dark. Montgomery hunted the area hard but never saw the deer.

"Everywhere we got a photo of the buck or knew someone else had a photo of the buck, I dropped a pin on my 'onX Hunt' map," Montgomery said. "He was covering a large area."

The two hunters thought they had pinpointed the buck's bedding area and core travel areas, but there was a lot of hunting pressure from hunters in the area running deer dogs. Most of the photos of the buck were in a section of hardwoods in an old swampy area.

**““”** *Everywhere we got a photo of the buck or knew someone else had a photo of the buck, I dropped a pin on my 'onX Hunt' map. He was covering a large area.*

Montgomery and Prestridge noticed the buck had an injured back foot that looked like an old gunshot wound that had healed, so the buck acquired the name "Slewfoot."

"I don't like to name a buck I am hunting, but this one was worthy of a name," Montgomery said.

During the rut in December, the buck disappeared for three weeks with no photos, but Montgomery was persistent. A doe winded him late one evening in early January, so he got down out of his stand and headed home. Shortly afterwards, his cell phone sent him a photo of the buck after dark — right where he had been hunting. The next morning, Montgomery was at work when he received his first and only daylight photo of the deer, at the same location.



Jordan Montgomery dropped this 10-point, 155-point Lincoln County trophy on Jan. 22.

The afternoon of Jan. 22, a few days after dog season ended, Montgomery went after the buck, hoping it would slip up and move around since things had settled down.

He got on the stand at 3:30. After a while, he heard something behind him. Thinking it was only squirrels, he turned to look and spotted bushes shaking, then saw a tail flick and knew it was a deer. Though the thick cover, Montgomery made out antlers and could see that it was a buck hooking a tree. He saw how long the tines were and knew it was Slewfoot, only 30 yards away on a rise, almost at Jordan's eye level.

Montgomery held his rifle on a small opening that he thought would be his only chance for a shot. When the buck crossed the opening, quartering away, Montgomery got the crosshairs on his shoulder and squeezed off a shot. The buck bolted and was soon out of sight.

When he climbed down, Montgomery found blood, but he didn't want to push the buck. He called a co-worker and friend, Braden Smith, also of Brookhaven, who has top-notch blood-trailing dogs. Smith arrived, put a dog on the blood trail and tracked him by GPS. The dog went 60 yards and came right back.

"Your deer is dead," Smith said.

Montgomery and Smith followed the GPS track straight to the buck of a lifetime, a 10-pointer with a 17½-inch inside spread that was later scored by a taxidermist at 155½ inches — his biggest buck to date. ■

— Andy Douglas

# THE CHESS GAME

**M**iles Joyner, of Collinsville discovered that a really good Lauderdale County buck was using an area he was hunting, and after putting out game cameras in late October, he located a stand on the edge of a hardwood-bottom swamp and pine thicket. His stand overlooked a green strip 120 yards long and 20 yards wide that served as a transition area between the hardwoods and pines.

At the time of discovery the buck went to the top of Joyner's hit list and eventually engaged in a game of chess, matching moves with the avid hunter. In January, the buck became an obsession for him.

"I hunted the buck seven days in a row and kept up with his movement with my camera," Joyner said. "Earlier in the season, he was coming to two different fields during daylight hours, so I'd hunt stand No. 5 one day; the buck would be at No. 6. Then I'd go to No. 6 the next day, and he'd show up at No. 5."

It seemed like the buck had a sixth sense and was one step ahead; each time Joyner made a move, the buck countered by moving to another spot.

"One day I got a picture of the buck through my cell phone at mid-day," said Kent Joyner, Mike Joyner's father. "I thought the next picture was going to be a kill photo, because Miles was hunting that stand. I kept getting pictures of the buck, so I texted Miles and found out that he'd left to get lunch and take a break."

Joyner raced back to the area, and a doe was still in the field, but the buck had vacated the premises.

It seemed that the harder Miles hunted, the smarter the buck got.

"I came close three days in a row but just missed seeing him each time," Miles said. "I went hunting one day and got down at 11 o'clock, and the buck showed up at 11:20. The next day, I hunted 'til noon, and he came in at 12:20. On the third day, I hunted to 11 and went to the store to get lunch, and he came into the field before I even got to the store!"

With the regular season dwindling down, Joyner was getting desperate, so he did the only thing any die-hard hunter would do: he kept going back, day after day, figuring persistence would be the key to intercepting the buck. Finally, on Jan. 21, he succeeded.

"I'd hunted several days in a row, and one particular morning, the deer were moving good," said Miles. "I didn't get to the stand until about 8 a.m., and a nice 8-point and spike came out, but I passed on the 8-point because I knew the bigger buck was still working the area."

Then, does started coming through the field, and one particular doe came in and seemed confused.

"About 30 minutes after one doe came in, another came in and meandered around like she was lost

and didn't know where to go," Joyner said. "I looked up where she had come into the field and saw another deer coming in."

Joyner's adrenalin was really flowing when he saw antlers, and then he really got excited as he recognized the buck that seen only in photos.

"I let him take about three steps into the field," Joyner said. "He didn't even look my way and turned quartering away from me."

"Tic-Boom!" Joyner's custom-made .308 roared. Before the sound had even died, the buck dropped in his tracks, never even twitching.

The great buck weighed 198 pounds and carried a main-frame 10-point rack with one sticker point. With an 18-inch inside spread, the buck rough-scored at 150 inches. ■

— Mike Giles

Miles Joyner killed this 11-point, 150-inch Lauderdale County trophy on Jan. 21.



# 'GOING THROUGH MOTIONS' PRODUCES TROPHY BUCK FOR FORT GIBSON HUNTER

**T**rent McCaa admits readily that he wasn't expecting much when he climbed into his Claiborne County box blind on the afternoon of Jan. 28.

He hadn't taken a deer all season; one buck he'd targeted early on had been taken out by another hunter. Maybe, he thought, he would take a doe if the opportunity presented itself.

Well, it did, but it wasn't a doe. It was a 163-inch, main-frame 11-point buck, one McCaa had no idea even existed.

"He was a total surprise to me," said McCaa, from Port Gibson. "I had no idea this deer was there.

"We have 2,000 acres, and we're pretty heavily into management, running (trail) cameras year-round, and we didn't have him on cameras, and none of the other guys in our camp had seen him.

"So with deer season winding down — I hadn't hunted or checked my cameras for a week or week-and-a-half — and I decided to go a couple more times. He just showed up. It was a shock."

McCaa, a 39-year-old land real-estate salesman for Hopper's Properties, climbed into his box blind at about 3:45 p.m. to watch two food plots he had planted in wheat and oats, one to the west and one to the east of his stand.

"I was just going through the motions," he said. "I thought about shooting a doe; I hadn't shot anything all year."

The does started filtering in about 4:45, followed by one buck that McCaa watched chase a doe around the field for a good 20 minutes.

"About 5:15, some does started coming in on the east side, maybe 13 does. About 5:35, I looked to my left, and another deer was on the west side of the plot. His body was so small, I figured it was just another doe, but I grabbed my binoculars and looked, and it was a big buck.

"In this stand, a Ranch King blind, I don't open the windows until something comes out, and this deer was just staring at the stand, for at least 3 minutes. I didn't move. I told myself, 'I don't think my heart can take this.'"

"Earlier in the year, I was hunting another buck from this stand, and I thought it might be that one, but then I remember, 'Oh no, that deer's already been killed.'"

McCaa won the stare-down.

"I put my binoculars down; I haven't even raised my window yet, and he's looking dead at it," he said. "I thought, 'He's gonna do something, one way or the other,' but he finally put his head down to feed and took a few steps into the plot.

"I figured it was now or never. I eased the window up, got my gun ready, but as soon

as I put it on him, he started walking. I kept adjusting and adjusting, and he walked over to that buck that was out earlier and stopped.

"I shot him, and he dropped right on the spot."

At 175 yards, a bullet from McCaa's 7mm-08 — a Christmas present when he was 13 — collapsed the buck, which never moved.

The buck McCaa found a few minutes later was a wide, heavy brute. It had a 6x5 main-frame rack with three scorable sticker points around its bases, a 21 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch inside spread, main beams that reached 24 and 24 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, tines as long as 9 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches and bases that were 6 and 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches in circumference. The buck, whose body McCaa described as "run down," weighed 175 pounds.

"I'd never seen him, and nobody in my camp had ever seen him. After I killed him, I checked my cameras, and I had one photo of him," McCaa said. "But the day I posted pictures on Facebook, people came out of the woodwork who had seen him or had pictures. The farthest away was 6 miles. I found a guy who had gone duck hunting around Christmas who had seen him about 4 o'clock in the morning. But to get from where there were pictures of him to where I killed him, he had to cross a 4-lane highway and come a long way."

— Dan Kibler



# DEER-OF-THE-YEAR GALLERY



John Waters of Benton killed this 8-point, 142-inch Yazoo County buck on Oct. 1.



Gray Worthey of Choudrant, La., took this 14-point, 170-inch buck from Hogue Island on Oct. 2.



Bill Chunn of Philadelphia tagged this 12-point, 174-inch Kemper County buck on Oct. 3.



Trent Pace of Aberdeen killed one of the most-unusual Mississippi bucks of 2020 on Oct. 4 in Monroe County.



Derek Eaves of Louisville dropped this 10-point, 142-inch Noxubee County buck on Oct. 5.



James Meriwether of Natchez killed this 12-point, 152-inch Adams County buck on Oct. 6.



Zack Jones of Sterlington, La., killed this 11-point, 152-inch buck on Nov. 7 on Ashbrook Island.



Matt Langford of Petal dropped this 12-point, 157-inch Holmes County buck on Nov. 22.



Blake Herrin of Carriere tagged this 11-point, 176-inch buck from the Panther Swamp NWR on Nov. 23.

# DEER-OF-THE-YEAR GALLERY



Hayden Juul of Prairieville, La., tagged this 10-point, 150-inch buck on Dec. 4 in Amite County.



Byhalia's David Holliman dropped this 20-point, 187-inch Desoto County buck on Dec. 6.



Eric Pell of Vicksburg killed this 8-point, 164-inch buck on Dec. 11 in Warren County.



Thomas Lyons of Biloxi killed this 20-point, 187-inch buck in Lowndes County on Dec. 11.



Robin Prince of Labadieville, La., tagged this 24-point, 215-inch trophy on Dec. 11 in Humphries County.



Lance Arrington of Meridian dropped this 12-point, 160-inch buck on Dec. 24 in Lauderdale County.

To get all the details on every single deer Mississippi Sportsman has covered this season — and in past years — head to [www.ms-sportsman.com/bigbucks](http://www.ms-sportsman.com/bigbucks).



**MARCH BRINGS HIGH WATER AND THE CHANCE TO WADE FOR A LIMIT OF MISSISSIPPI SLABS. HERE'S HOW A COUPLE OF CRAPPIE-FISHING EXPERTS GET WET TO GET BIT.**

■ By Phillip Gentry

# CRAPPIE ON FOOT

bnmpoles.com

Phillip Gentry

If there was a “season” for fishing in the Magnolia State that gets anglers as excited as the opening day of deer, turkey or even duck season, it would have to be  
**“WADING” SEASON FOR CRAPPIE,**  
 even though there are no officially posted dates.

Wading season typically begins the last week of February, or whenever male black crappie begin invading the shallows, seeking out good nesting sites. The bite often lasts through May and well into June, as wave after wave of first black crappie, then white crappie, move into shallow cover to complete the spawn, and then the males stick around to protect the nesting sites.

Pro fishermen Ronnie Capps and Steve Coleman have won more crappie tournaments in Mississippi than they can remember, but they often refer to the phenomenal wade-fishing the state offers as some of the best memories they have.

“Wading for crappie is more addictive than golf, turkey hunting, bowhunting, or any other sport I have ever tried,” Capps

said. “It’s the ultimate hand-to-hand combat-type fishing there is. I have literally hooked a crappie that ran between my legs and broke me off because I couldn’t stop him.”

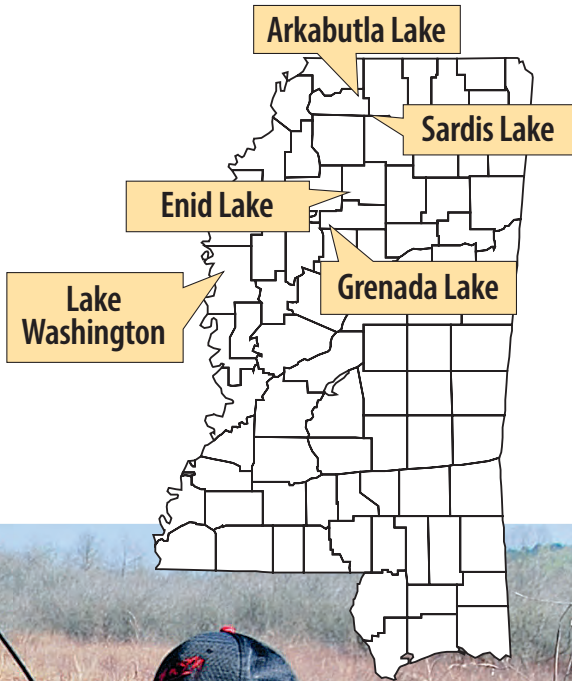
Suffice to say that the best time to wade is anytime water temperatures range between the upper 50s and the lower 70s. Regardless of what the calendar says, 60-degree water will push crappie into the shallows, either to spawn, feed or both.

In the spring, it’s not just the water temperature that moves crappie. Rising water, moon phase and lengthening daylight are some things that get crappie moving, but to many anglers, the best indicator is when the water temperature hits the 60-degree mark; that seems to be the best signal to a lot of fish to start moving up into knee deep water.



Recently flooded lands seem to be the most attractive to crappie as they move shallow.

# FAVORITE WADING SPOTS FOR MISSISSIPPI CRAPPIE



## LAKE WASHINGTON

Both ends of the oxbow taper out to flats that contain a lot of cypress trees and stumps. These areas may be accessible by foot. The inside bends of Lake Washington make up an entire flat area; some are better than others. Try Cuckleberry Swamp and John Henry's Slough, areas you'll need to access by boat to wade.

## GRENADA LAKE

The headwaters of both the Yalobusha and Skuna rivers are good places to wade. On the Yalobusha, try the Red Grass Creek area; on the Skuna, try the Turkey Creek area.

## SARDIS LAKE

Fish the areas surrounding the Hwy 7 access near the head of the Little Tallahatchie River. The backs of Clear Creek and Tubby Creek are also good when the water levels are appropriate on the south bank.

## ENID LAKE

The headwaters of the Yacona River often provide good wading but may best be accessed by boat. Other locations include the back waters of Long Branch at Frost Creek on the south bank of the lake and the backwaters of Wallace and Hubbard creeks on the north, near the dam.

## ARKABUTLA

The backs of Hurricane and Mussacuna creeks are local favorites. Also, try the headwaters of Coldwater Creek in the vicinity of Hwy 304. ■



**T**he best conditions for wading are when lake levels are abnormally high and water filters into the thickest of brush. Look for stands of ironwood, button bush and even young-growth hardwoods.

“On bushy structure, fish as close as possible to the trunk of the bush” Capps said. “The best ones will have four or five stems coming up from the trunk. Crappie love to spawn in the middle of these upshoots. Any hardwoods that have massive wild grape vines hanging into the water can also be super spots.”

Coleman is equally at home fishing waist-deep for crappie among the flooded willow and cypress trees and green undergrowth as spring waters rise.

“At the onset of the rising water, smart weed patches and sespania will be the first spots to try” said Coleman. “These types of undergrowth are most productive in the very back of a bay or creek arm, in conjunction with a creek channel or even a tiny run-off ditch.”

It’s important to remember that any type of break in the terrain will act as a pathway for crappie to follow — both into the shallow jungles and back out into the safety of deeper water. Also, any influx of water, such as runoff from spring rains or

a naturally occurring creek, will concentrate crappie. When water has pushed into these areas and surface water temperatures reach into the 70s, anglers can expect to see a lot of activity from carp, gar and most of all, male crappie.

“Many times I have found a hot area and caught a limit of fish in a location as small as your living room” Capps said. “A good rule of thumb is to not fish deeper than waist deep. Typically, most of my fish are caught about mid-thigh deep when fishing in areas with good tree cover that causes an entire area to be shaded, even on a sunny day.”

Wading for crappie limits an angler to only what he or she can reasonably carry. This means leaving the bait tank, the rod locker and the livewell behind. Also, wading means a single pole, and typically not the long rods that are favored in other situations.

“Eight feet is plenty long enough for reaching out, but (it) still allows you to handle the rod in heavy cover,” Capps said.

In place of a bait bucket or tackle box, Capps and Coleman rely exclusively on 1/16-ounce jigheads paired with a small selection of plastic baits. These are packed in a small, hand-size tackle box that will fit in the front pouch of a pair chest waders.



Look for crappie to spawn in waves from late February into early June.



In place of boats, tackle boxes and bait buckets, wading anglers need only a single rod, a pair of waders, a handful of lures in a small tackle box and a stringer.

Phillip Gentry

On occasion, Coleman may tip the jig with a crappie nibble or other scent-providing bait, but he maintains it normally isn't necessary.

"The only thing those crappie are interested in is getting that jig away from their nest," he said. "Sometimes they'll 'bout take the rod out of your hands doing it."

The final piece of wading gear is a chain or rope stringer that the angler can clip to his waders and string fish as they are caught.

"If it's real thick, you might want to shorten it up, but most of the time, fish on the stringer will float right along behind you and be out of the way" said Coleman. "When you glance over your shoulder and see a big ol' long line of slabs tagging along, you know you've had a good day." ■

### HOW LOW CAN YOU GO? >



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.

**TOHATSU**

**EMMETT'S MARINE**

**EMMETT'S MARINE**  
 358 Dale Trail • Brookhaven, MS 39601  
 (601) 833-2277  
 WWW.EMMETTSMARINE.COM

# HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

A few years ago in mid-March, guide John Harrison of Calhoun City spent a day doing something he loves: crappie fishing — but in a set of chest waders, getting in the water to meet the fish on its own turf.

Harrison recalls that particular day vividly because he made an incredible discovery about the fish he thought he knew so well.

“I was at Grenada, and we’d had a good bit of rain that year, so the water was up,” he said. “My normal routine when I wade for crappie is to put the boat in and ride to the very back of one of my favorite creeks, then beach the boat and get out and wade around the shallow flats.”

“I was a pretty good ways back up the creek, and there was an underwater ditch that was too deep to cross, so I decided to walk out on the bank and cross the ditch where it ran back into the woods. Up there, it was only about 3 feet across and even somebody as short as me could step across it. Well, when I started to cross I noticed that a fish spooked in the ditch right under me

**THE ULTIMATE OUTBOARD MOTOR**



**SUZUKI 350**



**Tims Marine**

**504-682-5252**  
**www.tims-marine.com**

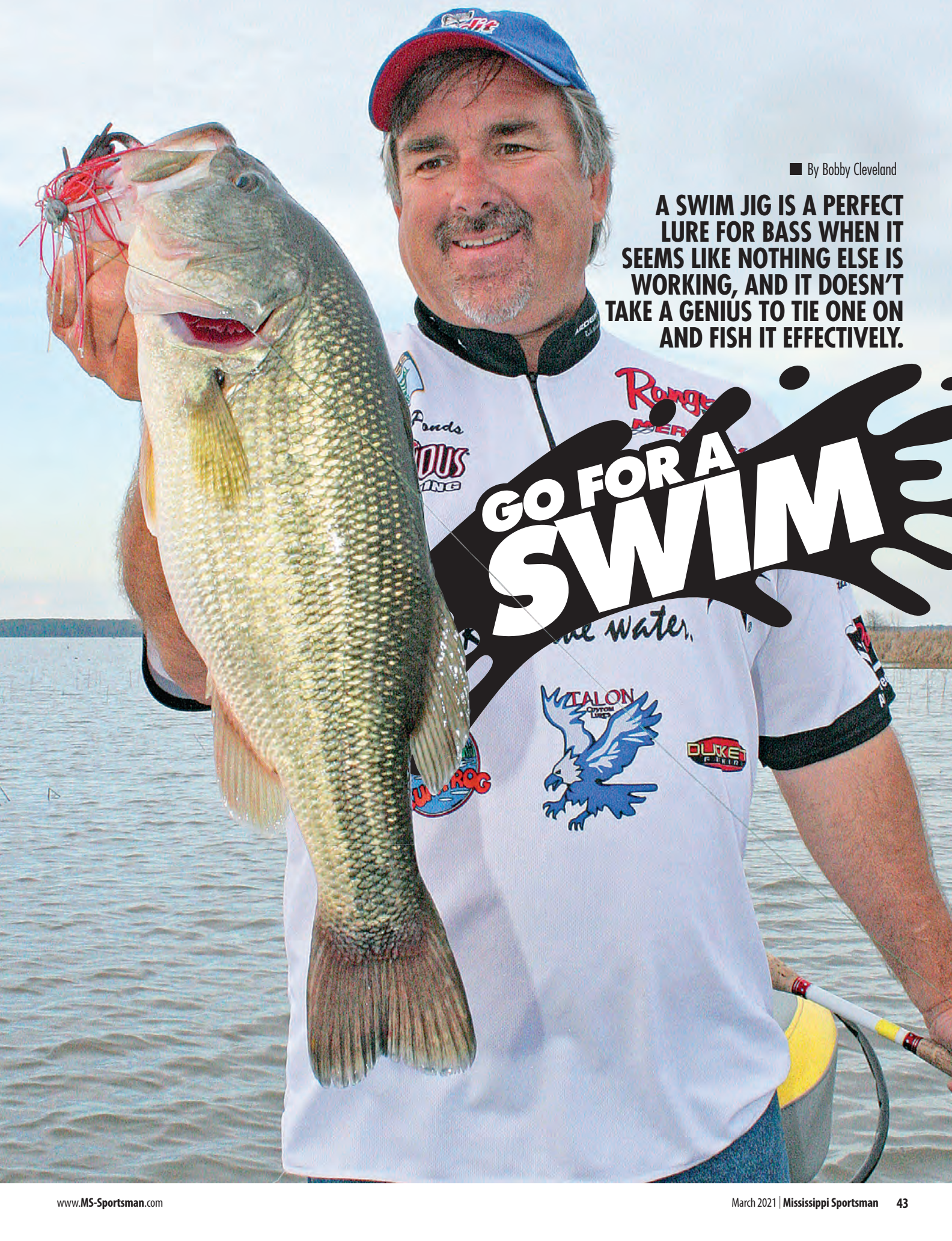


John Harrison received an education one day from some backcountry crappie during a wade-fishing trip.

Philip Gentry

and darted off toward the lake. The water couldn't have been more than a foot or two deep there, but I got curious. Since I was carrying my wading rod, I pulled off about 8 inches of line and dipped the jig down in the ditch, and no sooner than it touched the water, a big ol' crappie snatched it.

“I pulled the fish up on the bank, unhooked it and dropped it back in again, same thing — POW! The jig was inhaled by another pound-and-a-half crappie,” he said. “I couldn't believe it, I was standing up there way back in the woods catching slab crappie out of a little ditch that was so shallow, I could almost see their backs sticking out of the water. That's the day I discovered how far back and how shallow crappie will go to spawn when the conditions are right.” ■



■ By Bobby Cleveland

**A SWIM JIG IS A PERFECT LURE FOR BASS WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE NOTHING ELSE IS WORKING, AND IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO TIE ONE ON AND FISH IT EFFECTIVELY.**

# GO FOR A SWIM

**After patrolling the shallows in a popular prespawn area of Barnett Reservoir on a warm March morning, bass pro Pete Ponds of Madison had put dozens of small, buck bass in the boat with a swimming lizard and a buzzbait.**

## **NO LUNKERS WERE TO BE FOUND.**

“I think we’ve proven that the big sows haven’t moved up to the shallow beds yet, but the water temperature says they ought to be,” said Ponds, as he turned to look back at the deeper water. “It was 56 when we got here, and it’s 58 now, and 58 has always been the magic number for the females to start. I think we’ll try the edges of that old creek that runs back in here to this spawning flat.”

It was the right move.

Within 10 minutes, we got two timid strikes, Ponds on a buzzbait and me on a lizard. They fish didn’t take either one.

Ponds again made the correct call, bending down to the front deck of his boat and grabbing another white Duckett rod, this one armed with a silver and red prototype swim jig. He added a soft plastic crawfish trailer.

“I’ve got a feeling,” he said.

He launched the lure just past the spot where a bass had



swirled on my spinnerbait just 30 seconds earlier and began a slow, steady retrieve out of the ditch up onto its edge, lined with pad stems.

"Whoa," Ponds yelled as he bowed up hard against a fish. "This is a big one."

The 4-pounder was swung quickly up in the boat.

I was already tying on a swim jig and adding a 4-inch, soft-plastic swim-bait, trying to relocate the spot where Ponds had a swirl on his buzzbait. He pointed to the spot with his rod tip, and I launched.

"Just reel it like a spinnerbait," Ponds said. "It's an idiot bait; any idiot can fish it. Cast and reel. Cast and reel."

The lure passed the spot, and I could see the water bulge just before there was a huge swirl and splash.

"I got him," I hollered, quickly pulling in a 4-pound female fat with eggs.

My introduction to and instant infatuation with the swim jig continued throughout that morning. We put about a dozen sows



The prototype swim jig that Pete Ponds and the author used to catch dozens of big, prespawn bass in March became the Talon Pete Ponds Finesse Swimming jig. **OPPOSITE:** Bass will work over a swim jig when they won't mess with a noisier, more active lure.

in the boat over the next 2 hours that would have allowed us to easily cull the 3- and 4-pounders, had it been a tournament.

"An easy 25- or 27-pound day," Ponds said, referring to our best five fish.

Less than a year from that day, Ponds and Talon Lures introduced the Pete Ponds Series Finesse Swimming Jig.

I was hooked.

## MULTIPLE USES ➤

**DTR Custom**  
INSHORE RODS

**SOUTH**  
**LA 23**

**INSPIRED BY ADVENTURE**

Designed in Venice Louisiana, DTR Custom Inshore rods were developed for the harsh conditions associated with the Gulf Coast. With 11 technique-specific models to choose from, the DTR Custom Inshore rods are built on light and responsive 24/30-ton low resin carbon blanks and are created to withstand even the toughest fighting fish.

**okuma**  
INSPIRED FISHING  
www.okumafishingusa.com


## MULTIPLE USES

“There’s so many uses for the swim jig,” Ponds said later. “What you saw that day was just one. Those fish were on the move shallow to spawn but were timid. The other lures were spooking them. I don’t think the bass were swiping at the buzzbait as much as running from it. If you remember, they acted the same way with the spinnerbait you had been throwing.”

“The swim jig is a little more subtle. It is basically the body of a spinnerbait or buzzbait, a lead, conical-shaped head with a hook and a skirt but without any blades. You add the trailer of your choice, just like you would either with a buzzbait or spinnerbait, and you cast and reel. It’s pretty much the same thing.”

Ponds said a swim jig is effective in several situations:



 Pete Ponds’ swim jig, matched with a soft-plastic trailer, offers bass a more subtle lure than a buzzbait or spinnerbait, with their whirling blades.

**Schooling bass.** Ponds put a whopping on feeding large-mouth with a white swim jig and pearl grub trailer.

“Reel it like fire to get in the middle of the frenzy, then pause and let it fall,” he said. “The smaller fish always seem to be up on top doing the work; the bigger fish are usually under them, picking off all the shad that are either injured or shaken up and sink below the frenzy.”

That same action was magical that fall when big striped bass were schooling on Barnett Reservoir. My lake-best of 13 pounds, 11 ounces came on a swim jig I let flutter down through a school.

**Docks and piers.** Ponds is expert at skipping a bait under wooden structures and is adept with any lure. The swim jig is no exception.

“I can bounce that as far as or further than anything else and then start bringing it back,” he said. “There’s a lot of lures that will produce on that in the summer when the bass are hiding

so far back under a dock, but a swim jig is really effective when the fish are finicky. It’s just subtle.”

Gene Bishop of Ridgeland, a 2016 Bassmasters Classic qualifier, loves that pattern on Eagle Lake, where boat houses and piers are the primary bass habitat in the summer and fall. Bishop, who regularly posts YouTube fishing shorts online, made a video on the pattern.

“You can take a swimbait and add it to a swimming jig and throw it up under those piers, and bass can’t stand it,” he said. “They see so many lures. You have to change up. The lure is also extremely structure-friendly. It’s weedless, and you can get in and around those pier pilings and cross beams where the fish are.”

**Vegetation.** Ponds likes a swim jig around vegetation where options are limited.

“You can swim it in, around and through pads, around thick grass mats, through sparse vegetation, and above heavy bottom vegetation,” he said. “A lot of lures can’t get through all those scenarios without grabbing greenery or slime that comes out with it, but the swim jig can and will. In the fall, when the shad start migrating out of the river into the backwaters, they stop and hang out on pad points. The pads are starting to thin out at the same time, and they open up just perfectly for the swim jig.”

Angler Ricky Johnson of Brandon uses a swim jig similarly in the pads on the main upriver and secondary points on Barnett from early March through May.

“Those points are staging areas for bass moving back into the backwaters for spawning, and again in the post-spawn period as they move back to deeper water,” he said. “I catch so many fish on those points with pad stems in late February and March, then turn and hit them again in the blooming pads in May. There’s always a swim jig with a 3-, 4- or 5-inch swimbait trailer on the front deck of my boat when I’m on the river in the spring. I just cast and reel, usually keeping

the lure about a foot to two deep in the sparse pads. I absolutely love it in the scattered pads when the fish are in there.”

**Rip-rap banks.** Ponds likes the swim jig along rocky banks both at Barnett and a subdivision lake near his home.

“What’s great about the lure in that situation is, once you establish the depth that fish are holding, whether it’s a foot or 18 inches, right on the rocks, or 5 or 6 feet or even 8 feet, you can reel the swim jig and trailer at that depth and keep it there,” he said. “You keep that sucker in the strike zone long enough, and it will make you happy.”

Swim jigs come in weights ranging from ¼- to ½-ounce, with ⅜-ounce providing the most versatility. The ¼-ounce lure is usually reserved for sparse cover or shallow, grassy coves or bays where the lure must be kept above submerged vegetation. The ½-ounce lure is a great pick for the rip-rap scenario where you might want or need to fish deeper. The ⅜-ounce action is great for shallow structure and skipping situations.

Spinning gear is great for skipping, but a short rod is necessary. Otherwise, any medium-heavy action rod works fine. ■

# A KILLER REDFISH BAIT, TOO

Capt. Tommy Sutton of Slidell, La., was introduced to swim jigs on a redfish trip in the Biloxi Marsh that needed a mid-morning rescue.

"I won't ever leave the dock again without some of those in the boat; you can be darn sure of that," he said.

Sutton was talking about a swim jig, a bass bait that has exploded on the scene over the past decade, that saved that day's trip.

It had started with a perfect, rising tide that by 9 a.m. had turned into a dead tide. For those first 2 hours, Sutton, Dan Smith of Ridgeland and I stayed busy hammering slot and bull reds on spinnerbaits. Rarely did 10 minutes pass without one or more of us tied into a redfish. We boated at least 35 or 40, releasing all but the legal limit.

Then the tide stopped, and the bite did, too. We could see the reds in the clear water, but we couldn't entice even a casual look-see at one of our offerings.

"That redfish right there just ran from my spinnerbait," Sutton said, pointing with his rod tip as the fish swam past the trolling motor. Smith tossed a grub out in front of it, and the splash caused the fish to turn and race off in another direction.

"It's about over y'all," Sutton said. "We should have picked up some live bait. They're running from everything else."

Our options were limited. The shallow water was full of slimy moss that rendered grubs and spoons useless. As soon as one hit the water, it instantly transformed into a baseball-sized clump of green, with several inches trailing behind it in the water.

Desperate and looking through my gear, I came upon a bag filled with ¼-ounce swim jigs. I passed them around and we tied them on with 4-inch swimbaits for trailers.

"Throw them and fish them just like a spinnerbait but keep them up out of the slime," I said. "This might reduce the spooking."

We were stunned. Not all the fish reacted positively but most did. We went back to catching fish. The baits produced in many different scenarios, including points, shoals, broken grass, mossy shallow ponds and oyster beds.

The tide really started falling 2 hours later, and, as would be expected, the action hastened. All three of us stayed with the swim jigs.

Sutton took us to the outer edges of the marsh where the bay-ous met the open water, and we fished points. It was magical.

"Not many days that you spend more time reeling in fish than



Capt. Tommy Sutton learned how much redfish like swim jigs on a trip to the Biloxi Marsh.



Bobby Cleveland

you do just casting and reeling, and we did that today," Sutton said. "We were able to keep fishing through the dead tide, catching fish when usually you have to throw in the towel or switch to live bait." ■



A native of Hattiesburg, Miss., and graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Bobby Cleveland lives on Ross Barnett Reservoir near Jackson with his wife Pam. He can be reached at [bobbyc7754@yahoo.com](mailto:bobbyc7754@yahoo.com).

## LUNKER LINES

Paul Elias



Plastic lizards are subtle baits that bass often will take in March when they won't take a fast-moving bait.

# BET ON MAYNOR CREEK FOR MARCH BEDDING BASS

## RIPRAP, LILY PADS ARE KEYS TO LAKE'S GREAT LARGEMOUTHS

**M**aynor Creek just west of Waynesboro is a productive lake for bass in March because it has numbers of big bass in its shallow water.

On the northern end of the lake, you'll see a bridge that crosses the creek, where the riprap creates a funnel for bass headed to the shallow spawning grounds above the bridge. Bass usually hold in the riprap on either side of the bridge, where they can eat the spawning shad and hold close to the rocks in the winter, spring and summer. Since the riprap generally is only a hot spot for an hour or less daily, I try to fish the riprap points early.

### THE BEST BAITS

• **Zara Spook.** I'll start off with a walking topwater bait like the Zara Spook, using a 6-foot-9 medium-action FX Custom rod with a 7.3:1 Bruin reel. The rod will have 30-pound bass braid with a 17-pound monofilament leader. The leader keeps the hooks from getting tangled up in the braid

In March, bass will be feeding early, and I'll work the Spook with a walk-the-dog retrieve, sliding the bait until it stops, then jerking it and letting it slide and pause before I twitch it again.

• **Baby 1-Minus.** Along the riprap, I expect to catch bass from 1 to 8 pounds. If I'm not catching many fish, I'll switch over to the shad-colored Mann's Baby 1-Minus crankbait, on a 7-foot-1, medium-action FX Custom cranking rod with 20-pound White Peacock fluorocarbon. I'll bump this bait off the rocks and reel it fast to imitate a shad that's trying to get away from a bass. I'll only fish from the point of the riprap down the creek about 40 yards to where the most bass tend to concentrate. I will usually only spend about 30 minutes fishing the bridge, because the bass will be there and bite quickly, or they won't be there.

### LILY PAD TARGETS

Before I start fishing the lily pad clumps, I'll observe them to see if I can see any movement indicating that a bass is there.

If there's movement, I'll make seven or eight casts to the clumps.

• **Swim jig.** I'll start with will be a black/blue swim jig with a weed guard and a black/blue crawfish. I'll be using a 6-foot-10, heavy-action FX Custom rod with 30-pound bass braid on a 6.2:1 Bruin reel. I'll fish the entire north end because spawning bass will react to that swim jig. Another advantage I have with a swim jig is that if I can see the beds or an opening in the new lily pads or lily pad stems I can drop my rod tip and let the jig fall right into them.

• **Plastic lizard.** If I'm not getting many bites on the swim jig, I'll fish a 7-foot-3, heavy-action FX Custom rod with a 7.3:1 Bruin reel and 20-pound fluorocarbon



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.

tyed with a black/blue plastic lizard with a 1/8-ounce weight in front of it. I'll fish this lure more slowly than the swim jig, and if I can see beds, I'll cast the lizard right to them for a reaction strike. I'll also fish it around the edges of the lily pad clumps and then flip it onto those new clumps. Bass usually will be spawning under each pad; however, you'll have to fish these clumps thoroughly to get the bass to bite.

• **Buzzbait, soft-plastic lizard.** If the sky is somewhat overcast, I'll also have a white 3/8-ounce buzzbait tied to a 6-foot-10 heavy-action FX Custom rod with 28-pound monofilament. If I want to speed up, I'll run that buzzbait around the edges of and through the new lily pad clumps. The buzzbait allows me to cover more water more quickly than I can with a swim jig or a plastic lizard. Often, a bass will blow up on the buzzbait but won't get it in its mouth. I'll cast right back to the spot with a lizard. I'll fish that area thoroughly with both the lizard and the swim jig.

On a day of March fishing, I expect to catch at least 20 bass. Many of those bass will be small, male bass, with perhaps several big females weighing from 3 to 8 pounds



Paul Elias expects to catch around 20 bass on a March day at Maynor Creek, including a handful of nice female bass.

*If you want some fast topwater action and the opportunity to catch a really big bass, I believe Maynor Creek will be your best bet.*

each. If you want some fast topwater action and the opportunity to catch a really big bass, I believe Maynor Creek will be your best bet. ■



**Since 1980**  
**Over 70 Years of Service Experience!**

# Open House March 12-13















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



## LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Bass pro Mark Daniels set out to design a square-bill crankbait. The Bill Lewis MDJ Series SB-57 is the result.



# SB-57 MDJ SERIES CRANKBAIT

BILL LEWIS LURES HAS ANOTHER WINNER IN THIS PRO-DESIGNED, SQUARE-BILLED BAIT

**T**he latest addition to Mark Daniels Jr.'s MDJ Series of crankbaits will play bumper car and bounce off structure time and time again as it's reeled through the strike zone.

Daniels, a 39-year-old bass pro, can take all the credit for the lure he designed a few years ago for Bill Lewis Lures, the home of the Rat-L-Trap. Crankbait aficionados can count on them to produce as they have for him on Major League Fishing's Bass Pro Tour.

A California transplant who lives in Tuskegee, Ala., Daniels put months of thought and effort into making the SB-57. The crankbait was popular last year as

more people took up bass fishing due to coronavirus pandemic restrictions.

Wes Higgins, president of Bill Lewis Lures of Alexandria, is impressed with the crankbait.

"Everybody who gets their hands on it likes it. We're letting people decide. It's kind of been under the radar. With all the shows canceled like they were, we weren't able to get the word out like we wanted," he said.

The SB-57, which weighs  $\frac{3}{8}$ -ounce, was introduced at the ICAST trade show in 2019, it went on the shelves in 2020, and the fishing public spoke in terms of sales through 2020.

## HIGH-END PARTS

This crankbait is something different, a higher-end artificial lure at an affordable price, Higgins said, noting its quality components and high-performance features seen in higher-priced crankbaits.

It's just what Daniels wanted in a crankbait not named MR-6, another one of his signature baits, or Echo 1.75. The SB-57, which dives 3 to 6 feet and deflects off



*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.*

wood and rocks, fills the niche he was hoping to fill. "I've been thinking about it for about 3 years," he said. "I wanted a bait I could just pull up to any lake in the country and tie on. I started talking to Wes. I said, 'Let's design one to be that all-purpose design square-bill.' I did it all on my own. I took a lot of different qualities from baits I've used over the years. I incorporated what I wanted in a square bill and came up with the SB-57. It's been an excellent bait."

The 2¼-inch SB-57, balanced to give it a slow rise during a pause in the retrieve, has a different body shape than the MR-6. Plus, it has a computer-chip lip — a circuit-board, square, coffin-style bill.

It's armed and dangerous.

"The name SB-57 comes from the length (5.72 centimeters). It has No. 4 Mustad Triple Grip treble hooks. I feel like it fits the square-bill best and holds big fish the best," he said.

## UNIQUE CONSTRUCTION

The SB-57's most-notable feature is a honeycomb interior that allows for a thinner body but makes it very durable. Daniels borrowed that concept from some of his favorites over the years.

"It's unique. That's the first-ever square bill that's got a honeycomb-body construction. That allows the walls to be thinner but still strong. It acts like a wooden bait but has the durability to go along with it," Higgins said.

Daniels had only a prototype of the SB-57 last June when he finished 12th in an MLF tournament on Wisconsin's Lake Winnebago.

"I literally had only one, a prototype. I was catching them back-to-back-to-back," he said. "It's been a real good bait. I've done really good with it. It's an all-around good bait. I like to call it my 4-wheeler crankbait."

Daniels' favorite color is red glitter craw, he said.

Daniels throws the bait on 12-pound Seagaur fluorocarbon spooled on a 6.8:1 ratio BPS Johnny Morris Platinum Signature Series reel seated on a medium-action, 7-foot-5 Favorite Rush Series rod. ■



A Bill Lewis Lures' MDJ SB-57 crankbait.

For more information about SB-57 MDJ Series crankbaits and other Bill Lewis Lures products, go to [www.rat-l-trap.com](http://www.rat-l-trap.com).

# BUILD & PRICE YOURS TODAY!

INTRODUCING THE ALL NEW 2021  
**KENCRAFT 25**  
BASE BOAT POWERED WITH  
**TWIN YAMAHA'S FS200XCA**

KenCraft

**SPECIFICATIONS**  
CENTERLINE: 25'2"  
BEAM: 8'9"  
DRY WEIGHT: 4,500 LBS  
FUEL: 160 GALLON  
MAX HP: 500

DEADRISE/ENTRY: 55  
DEADRISE TRANSOM: 22  
DRAFT: 18  
LIVE WELL STANDARD: 32 GALLON

**ADDITIONAL AVAILABLE MODEL**  
KENCRAFT 21

Bay Rider

MODELS AVAILABLE  
219 & 239

Bay Rider

FLATBOTTOM

MODELS AVAILABLE  
2060, 2260, 2460

4417 TENNESSEE AVENUE  
HWY 49 • GULFPORT, MS  
**228-731-3955**

[WWW.COASTALMARINESALES.COM](http://WWW.COASTALMARINESALES.COM)

## GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

A Mississippi River flathead caught on a trotline.



# TROTTLINES FOR CATFISH

VIRGINIA STUDY FINDS EFFECTS ON GAMEFISH TO BE MINIMAL

**T**rotlining is an effective way to catch catfish — blues, channels, and flatheads — lots of them, and large fish, too. Although I may curse them when I snag unmarked trotlines when bass fishing and have little tolerance for untended and abandoned lines, I've also had a lot of fun fishing trotlines. An often-repeated concern is the effect of trotlines on game fish. A study on Virginia's New River offers insights on this issue.

## SEEKING ANSWERS

The New River offers anglers opportunities to catch walleye, trophy muskie, and trophy smallmouth bass in addition to channel and flathead catfish. True, muskie do not occur in the Deep South, and populations of Gulf Coast strain walleye swim in only a few rivers and impoundments in Mississippi, but these fish share their fish-eating habits with several Mississippi sport fish. Thus, the study — one of the few that has rigorously evaluated trotline catch — is applicable to our fisheries.

Virginia Tech and biologists with the

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries fished trotlines from May through October in four areas of the New River. Half the lines were baited with live bullheads and minnows, and half were baited with cut gizzard shad. They were fished overnight in likely catfish habitat. Each trotline had 26 hooks, split evenly between 3/0 circle hooks and 2/0 J-hooks attached to alternate dropper lines.

A total of almost 3,700 hook-nights (a 26-hook trotline fished overnight would be 26 hook-nights) caught 338 fish, 80% of which were catfish. By-catch included 12 snapping turtles, 14 smallmouth bass, 18 walleye and two muskie.

## LIVE BAITS RULED

Approximately 80% of all fish were caught on live bait. All of the muskie, smallmouth, and walleye — and 91 of 93 flathead catfish — were caught on live bait. Only channel catfish were caught with cut bait, and catch rates were low: 3.5 channel cats per 100 hook-nights with cut bait, about half the catch rate of 7.2 channel cats per 100 hook-nights with live bait.

Trotline catches of channel catfish remained consistent throughout the study. Flathead catfish were approximately two times more likely to be caught in August. Gamefish were more likely to be caught in June and October.

Channel catfish were more likely to be caught on circle hooks, but flathead catfish and gamefish were equally caught with circle and J-hooks. Of gamefish, 67% were hooked in the stomach or throat with J-hooks, compared to only 18% with circle hooks. Half the walleye and one third of the smallmouth bass were dead when the trotlines were retrieved.

Assessing the impact of trotlines on gamefish required estimates of recreational trotline fishing catch and effort. Field surveys for trotlines counted 32 active trotlines in the four study reaches.



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.

Trotlines fished in rivers can be hard to spot. To get an estimate of trotline detection, some of the biologists set “dummy” trotlines, and then other biologists searched for the lines. Of the dummy trotlines, 90% were detected. I don’t know about New River trotliners, but some trotliners I know set their lines so they can’t be seen and rely on a grapple to retrieve the line. Likely, the 32 lines was an underestimate of trotlining effort.

Trotliners reported fishing trotlines with an average of 30 hooks per line and fished their lines an average of almost nine trips per month during the May-to-October time frame. Few anglers fished trotlines after October or before May. Applying this data to the estimated number of lines resulted in an average of 518 hook-nights per mile of river for the season.

The trotliners averaged 13.2 catfish per 100 hook-nights. Most used live bait. Gamefish catch averaged 1.3 fish per 100 hook-nights, or one gamefish for every 32 catfish caught.

## TROT LINES: NOT EVIL

Virginia biologists concluded that the relatively few gamefish caught on trotlines did not pose a large problem. High proportions of gamefish were gut-hooked with J-hooks. Circle hooks had the same catfish catch rate as J-hooks and were much less injurious to gamefish. Survival of released gamefish would benefit from use of circle hooks without reducing catfish catch.

As catfish management moves forward, some anglers are clamoring for regulations that will increase trophy catfish opportunities. Accomplishing this in fisheries with moderate to high harvest will require some combination of high size limits or limited harvest of truly large fish. Achieving the benefits of such regulations will require high survival of released fish.

The New River study found more than 73% of channel and flathead catfish were hooked in the lip, and less than 3% were hooked in the stomach or throat. It appears that hooking mortality of trotline-caught catfish can be relatively low. I think it is a safe bet that frequently tending trotlines will increase catfish and gamefish survival after release. ■



Photo courtesy Graham Montague

# Come see the Crest Classic Platinum Pontoons at our new location.

CREST



# Smith Marine

149 Harbor Dr • Ridgeland, MS • (601) 856-3959

## SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope



# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: BLUE CATFISH

POPULAR AMONG FISHERMEN, THEY'VE SPREAD OUT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

**B**lue catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*) are native to the Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio river basins. They're typically the biggest catfish species in most states, including Louisiana and Mississippi, and the largest species of catfish in North America.

Blue catfish are slender, smooth-skinned, scaleless fish. They have deeply forked tails, which makes them easily distinguished from flathead catfish. They have a set of four whiskers called barbels around their mouths.

Despite the name, the color of a blue catfish varies widely, based on water quality. They are often slate blue on their backs, with the blue giving way to silver or gray on the sides, and white on their bellies. However, some blue catfish are much darker and some very light-colored. Even in the same bodies of water,

their colors of different fish can vary.

Blue catfish have a distinct line running from their upper mouths to their dorsal fins. Their anal fins are straight-edged and have between 30 and 36 rays. At certain sizes, it takes counting these rays to distinguish a blue cat from a channel cat.

Although only native to the river basins mentioned above, blue catfish have been stocked in many states. Their fast growth rates, along with their tasty flesh, have made them popular across the country. In some states, blue catfish have been blamed for diminishing populations of other catfish species, most notably channel catfish.

## HABITAT VARIETY

Blue cats are highly adaptable and live in almost any type of freshwater; lakes, ponds, creeks, swamps and rivers are all good candidates to hold populations of

blue cats. They are often even found in brackish waters, and anglers sometimes catch them mixed in with flounder, redfish and other saltwater species.

Just like their flexibility in habitat, they are much the same in diet. Other fish, crustaceans, insects, mussels and other shellfish and plant matter make up the bulk of their diet. Even ducks, mice, snakes and turtles aren't safe when a hungry blue catfish is around.

Breeding at around 4 years of age, males create nests in logs, between rocks, under downfall and any other type of protected areas. Females produce



**Brian Cope** of Borden, 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.

Brian Cope

When blue catfish are this size, it's often difficult to distinguish them from channel catfish. Counting the number of rays on the anal fin is the surest way.

10,000 to 60,000 eggs per year. Spawning occurs in the spring, once water temperatures reach about 70 degrees.

Blue cats are sometimes misidentified as channel catfish, especially when the fish is in the 5- to 15-pound range. They can grow to more than 100 pounds and can live 20 or more years in the wild.

## HUGE RECORD FISH

Anglers across the country have many nicknames for blue catfish. Along the east coast, they are often referred to as Arkansas blues, mainly because Arkansas provided many of the early catfish stocked in other regions. Other nicknames include fork-tail catfish, humpback blue, silver catfish and chucklehead.



Brian Cope

The Louisiana state record blue catfish is 114 pounds. It was caught in the Mississippi River by Lawson Boyte in March 2014. The Mississippi state record, a 95-pound blue, also came from the Mississippi River — the Natchez area. Dakota Hinson caught the fish in March of 2009.

The world-record blue catfish weighed 143 pounds. Nick Anderson of Greenville, N.C., caught the giant fish in Kerr Lake, aka Buggs Island, on the North Carolina-Virginia border in June 2011. ■

# LOOKING FOR A NEW BOAT? DROP US A LINE!

**SPORTSMAN BOATS**

**SEVEN C MARINE**  
In Business Since 1960

**378 REYNOIR ST. • BILOXI**  
**228-435-3389**  
**www.sevencsmarine.net**

★★★★★

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

**YAMAHA**

**NauticStar BOATS**

**NauticStar BOATS**

**AVID BOATS**

## COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

## MUST BE PERLOO

USE RICE TO STRETCH SOME LEFTOVER WILD GAME INTO A GREAT MEAL



The author mixes the ingredients in his Must Be Perloo into a cast-iron skillet for cooking. **BELOW, RIGHT:** The finished product is a great example of late-winter comfort food for sportsmen.

Jerry Dilsaver

**T**his month's recipe began as a refrigerator cleaning exercise and developed into this dish. It isn't quite jambalaya, but it shares the style and some ingredients, and it isn't quite paella, but it shares the style and some ingredients, too.

It's a southern dish that began by using rice as the primary filler to stretch a limited amount of meat, and except for the pre-cooked rice, it can be cooked in one cast-iron pan, it must be perloo. It really isn't quite perloo, either, but we couldn't decide what to call it, and after a lengthy discussion after a meal with no leftovers, we decided it must be perloo. Whatever you choose to choose to call it, I believe you'll like it, and it isn't difficult to prepare.

What is perloo? That's a good question. I grew up enjoying a dish my father called shrimp perloo that was shrimp, rice, tomato paste, peppers and onions, and it was good. It wasn't until much later that I realized it originated as a way to stretch a limited amount of meat by using rice.

I have some Cajun cousins who say it's a cheap knockoff of jambalaya that doesn't include the spices, and some Florida cracker cousins that call it a cheap and easy way to make paella. I like jambalaya and paella, too, so calling it a copy of one of them is okay by me.

This particular version isn't what my father made, but a quickie version that can be put together to make use of whatever meat is available. I began using it as a way to stretch partial packages



of venison and feral pig sausage, and almost everyone has enjoyed it. This version is simple and should have folks at your table asking for more.

March is an in-between time in the Southeast, and a good time to give

this a go. You should have some venison and may have or be adding feral pork. Enjoy the sunny days, and when a cold snap or rain holds you inside for a day, put this together and enjoy it.

We're almost to the excellent outdoor opportunities for Spring 2021. Daylight Saving Time begins on March 14, and spring arrives on March 20. This hour of daylight transferred to the evening and the warming weather will give sportsmen more time after work to slip into the turkey woods or drown some worms. It will also be a good time to enjoy some "Must be Perloo." The shorter prep time and the fact that any leftovers warm well make it a great meal to have when returning home a little after dark when fishing, hunting or scouting for your next outing. It's pretty good for lunch too. ■

# MUST BE PERLOO

This is a sort of sideways way to make a perloo dish, but it has become a favorite over the years. The biggest difference is the meat and vegetables aren't cooked in the rice. The rice is already cooked, and this works particularly well for me, as I cook rice in bulk, then refrigerate it and have it ready to warm and eat or add into any dish I like. I used white rice for this particular meal, but brown rice also works well.

The directions of the rice package may be slightly different, especially between white and brown rice, but you will basically follow them. I like my rice fluffy and with a little flavor of its own, so I alter the rice directions just a little. When you add bouillon, do not get heavy handed, as it is very salty.

This recipe calls for venison or feral pork sausage; I like the taste of sausage and often have a partial package in the refrigerator's meat drawer. However, this can be made with almost any meat, seafood or combination of meat and seafood. Small amounts of chicken and shrimp combine well with the sausage.

Depending on the meat you use and how much fat you blend into your game, there may not be much for drippings to sauté the onions, pepper and garlic. When this happens, add a little oil, butter or non-stick cooking spray to the pan. I mix my game sausage very lean and usually have to add some buttery flavored, non-stick cooking spray to sauté the veggies. If the pan looks dry, I also give it another shot before adding the rice.

Regular readers know I'm not a stickler about the ingredients and the amounts of ingredients or spices. If you don't like something, don't add it. Conversely, if you like something a lot, add a little more. I do this with the black pepper and jalapeno peppers when I'm fixing only for myself. I have a friend in St. Augustine, Fla., who raises datil peppers. When he shares some of them, I use them in this when fixing it either for myself or my friends with robust palates who like spice. Datil peppers are a real treat, as they are lightly sweet, but they're a few notches above jalapenos on the heat scale.

The mini bell peppers are for taste and appearance. I think they're milder than larger bell peppers, and the multiple colors gives some appeal. If you can't find mini bells, use a red, orange or colored larger bell pepper. They don't have the hard edge like some green bell peppers.

This recipe calls for your choice of chopped tomatoes or Rotel. I always use Rotel when I can. The choice of original, mild, hot

## PREPARATION:

A note on cooking the rice: basically, follow the directions on the package. I add a little more water than required so the rice will be fluffy and not stick to the pan. I also use about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a teaspoon of Better than Bouillon — or a similar amount of bouillon cubes — per cup of water. Most package directions suggest a little butter or oil in the pan to prevent sticking. I use a splash of olive oil, even if the directions don't suggest it.

Chop the onion and peppers. Cook the sausage until almost done and remove from pan. If you have a second meat, cook or warm it with the sausage. Sauté onion, peppers and garlic in sausage drippings. Drain the chopped tomatoes (Rotel) and chopped green chilies and stir into pan.

or any of the other blends is up to you. I don't think the hot is that hot, but be warned; it uses habanero peppers, while the others use green chilies.

The last thing on the ingredients list is smoked paprika — a nice way to add a little hint of smoked flavor to the mix. I have friends who like a variety of sauces from soy sauce to sriracha sauce. If you like a particular sauce with rice, try it on a bite or two.

Must Be Perloo is really tasty and very simple to make. With the rice already cooked, prepping the peppers and onion is the hardest and most time-consuming part. If you cook rice just for this, its simmer time should give you plenty of time to prep the veggies. This is not a conventional way to make perloo, but since it isn't jambalaya or paella and counts on rice to make the meal, as the name implies, it Must Be Perloo. We occasionally find ourselves intentionally having leftover or extra portions of meat that are too small for a meal, but can be stretched into one with a few veggies and rice. This is comfort food that is filling and I'm pretty sure if you try it once, you'll have it again.

Enjoy! ■

## INGREDIENTS:

**½ to 1 pound venison or feral pig sausage**

**3 cups cooked rice**

**½ sweet onion**

**1 Jalapeno pepper**

**1 pack variety mini bell peppers**

**½ can chopped green chilies**

**½ can chopped tomatoes or Rotel**

**2 tsp chopped garlic**

**Salt, pepper (to taste)**

**Smoked paprika (to taste)**

**Sauces as desired**



Stir in rice and blend well over low heat for a couple of minutes. Add sausage and any second meat to mixture and warm to serving temperature while adding salt and pepper. Serve warm. Sprinkle paprika or sauces over individual servings to taste.

This is pretty much a meal in itself. A green salad or lettuce wedge is a nice addition and a light dessert, like flan or pudding, caps it off well. ■



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



**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 2021 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar.** \$13.95 (plus \$4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2021 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 2021, the year's best periods, look ahead at 2022, and more. Comes with FREE 2021 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.

**2021 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 for 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).

Send to: PrimeTimes 2021 - Dept. LS - 2487 NW 75th Ave., Ste. 100 - Ankeny, IA 50023

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

2021 MAR		BEST DAYS				
		POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	VALUE
Mon 1						55
Tue 2						42
Wed 3						33
Thu 4						34
Fri 5						41
Sat 6						28
Sun 7						22
Mon 8						21
Tue 9						22
Wed 10						32
Thu 11						43
Fri 12						55
Sat 13						62
Sun 14						53
Mon 15						46
Tue 16						38
Wed 17						37
Thu 18						40
Fri 19						43
Sat 20						50
Sun 21						62
Mon 22						53
Tue 23						48
Wed 24						48
Thu 25						57
Fri 26						66
Sat 27						76
Sun 28						78
Mon 29						66
Tue 30						54
Wed 31						41
		25 50 75			AVERAGE	

LUNAR PERIODS					
TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED					
MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT		
9:00 PM	1:03 am - 3:19 am	8:21 AM	1:28 pm - 3:44 pm	☉	Perigee
10:10 PM	2:03 am - 3:59 am	8:54 AM	2:28 pm - 4:24 pm	☉	
11:20 PM	3:05 am - 4:41 am	9:28 AM	3:30 pm - 5:06 pm	☉	
	4:08 am - 5:24 am	10:06 AM	4:33 pm - 5:49 pm	☉	
12:31 AM	5:11 am - 6:13 am	10:49 AM	5:36 pm - 6:38 pm	☉	Half
1:39 AM	6:14 am - 7:06 am	11:37 AM	6:39 pm - 7:31 pm	☉	
2:44 AM	7:14 am - 8:02 am	12:32 PM	7:39 pm - 8:27 pm	☉	Low
3:42 AM	8:13 am - 9:01 am	1:33 PM	8:38 pm - 9:26 pm	☉	
4:33 AM	9:04 am - 10:00 am	2:36 PM	9:29 pm - 10:25 pm	☉	
5:16 AM	9:52 am - 10:58 am	3:40 PM	10:17 pm - 11:23 pm	☉	
5:52 AM	10:35 am - 11:53 am	4:42 PM	11:00 pm - 12:18 am	☉	
6:24 AM	11:12 am - 12:48 pm	5:43 PM	11:37 pm - Midnight	☉	
6:53 AM	11:46 am - 1:42 pm	6:42 PM	Midnight - 1:13 am	☉	New
8:20 AM	1:20 pm - 3:32 pm	8:39 PM	12:11 am - 2:07 am	☉	Begin DST
8:46 AM	1:52 pm - 4:22 pm	9:35 PM	1:45 am - 3:57 am	☉	
9:12 AM	2:25 pm - 5:11 pm	10:32 PM	2:17 am - 4:47 am	☉	
9:40 AM	3:00 pm - 6:02 pm	11:28 PM	2:50 am - 5:36 am	☉	
10:11 AM	3:37 pm - 6:53 pm		3:25 am - 6:27 am	☉	Apogee
10:45 AM	4:18 pm - 7:44 pm	12:26 AM	4:02 am - 7:18 am	☉	
11:24 AM	5:02 pm - 8:38 pm	1:23 AM	4:43 am - 8:09 am	☉	Spring
12:09 PM	5:51 pm - 9:31 pm	2:19 AM	5:27 am - 9:03 am	☉	Half
1:01 PM	6:44 pm - 10:24 pm	3:13 AM	6:16 am - 9:56 am	☉	High
1:59 PM	7:42 pm - 11:14 pm	4:04 AM	7:09 am - 10:49 am	☉	
3:03 PM	8:40 pm - 12:02 am	4:50 AM	8:07 am - 11:39 am	☉	
4:10 PM	9:41 pm - 12:47 am	5:32 AM	9:05 am - 12:27 pm	☉	
5:18 PM	10:41 pm - 1:31 am	6:10 AM	10:06 am - 1:12 pm	☉	
6:28 PM	11:45 pm - Midnight	6:44 AM	11:06 am - 1:56 pm	☉	
7:39 PM	Midnight - 2:11 am	7:17 AM	12:10 pm - 2:36 pm	☉	Full
8:51 PM	12:46 am - 2:52 am	7:50 AM	1:11 pm - 3:17 pm	☉	
10:04 PM	1:51 am - 3:33 am	8:24 AM	2:16 pm - 3:58 pm	☉	Perigee
11:17 PM	2:55 am - 4:17 am	9:02 AM	3:20 pm - 4:42 pm	☉	

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

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

For more, visit [primetimes2.com](http://primetimes2.com)

For more information and samples of PrimeTimes products, visit our web site: [www.primetimes2.com](http://www.primetimes2.com)

## ADVERTISERS INDEX

BARNETT'S BODY SHOP .....	15	MCKENNA RANCH OUTFITTERS .....	8	SPRO CORPORATION .....	11
COASTAL MARINE SALES.....	51	MILLENIUM MARINE.....	15	STIHL SOUTHWEST .....	5, 13
CRAIN TRACTOR .....	21	MILLENIUM TREESTANDS .....	23	TIM'S MARINE .....	42
CWP PROSERIES.....	13	OKUMA FISHING TACKLE.....	45	UNITED COUNTRY-SOUTHERN STATES REALTY .....	27
EMMETT'S MARINE.....	41	PARISH TRACTOR.....	2	VAN'S OUTDOORS .....	59
FIRST SOUTH FARM CREDIT .....	60	PLANO SYNERGY.....	16, 17	WHITETAIL PROPERTIES .....	3
FROST WATERFOWL TRUST, LLC.....	22	RJ'S OUTBOARD SALES & SERVICE.....	49		
GATOR TRAX .....	31	SEVEN C'S MARINE.....	55		
K2 MARINE .....	18	SMITH MARINE .....	53		

Subscribe Today and SAVE ..... 18

FEDERAL 

IT'S FEDERAL  
SEASON 

SAVE &  
STRUT

**DONATION THANK YOU BONUS\***  
Earn a free onX Hunt 1-month Premium Membership redemption code when you elect to donate your rebate of \$6.00 or more



ON  HUNT



BUY ANY FEDERAL PREMIUM® TURKEY SHOTSHELL AMMUNITION TO  
**GET UP TO A \$20 REBATE**  
CHOOSE TO KEEP THE REBATE OR DONATE IT TO  
THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION



Qualifying purchases must be made February 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021. Exclusions apply.  
For details, rebate form, or to redeem online visit: <https://promotions.vistaoutdoor.com>

FEDERALPREMIUM.COM



777 HWY 468 • BRANDON, MS 39042 • 601.825.9087  
2045 COUNTY ROAD 222 • CULLMAN, AL 35057 • 256.775.4031  
Follow us on  [www.vansoutdoors.com](http://www.vansoutdoors.com)



*It's About*  
**LAND**



***Let's finance yours.***

Your land is where your next chapter begins. It's a place to put down roots, carry on traditions, or even raise a family.

If land ownership or refinancing your land is what's next in your story, let First South guide you through financing the next chapter.



**First South**  
*Farm Credit*

*Let's talk*



**800-955-1722 | [FIRSTSOUTHLAND.COM](http://FIRSTSOUTHLAND.COM)**