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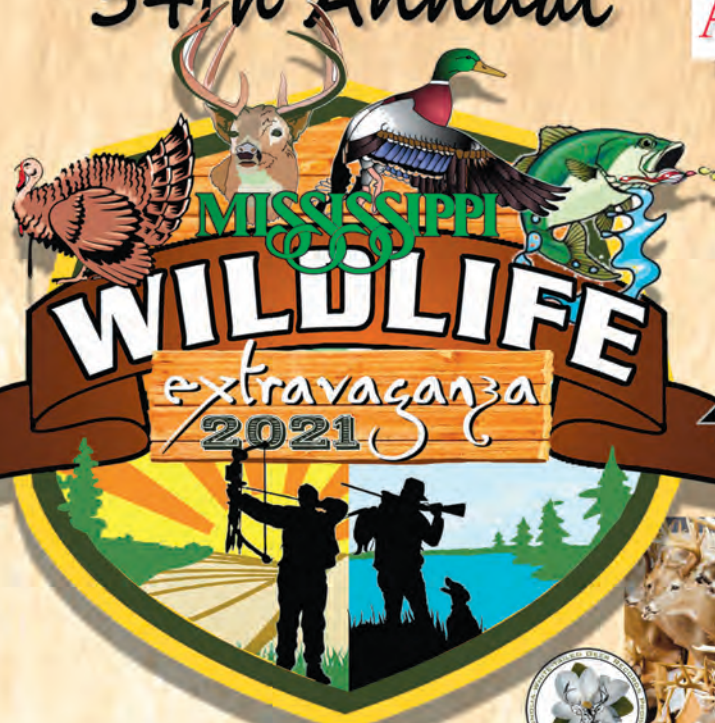


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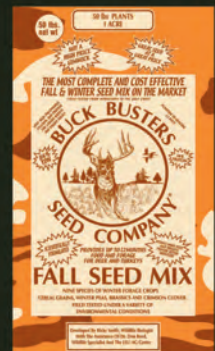
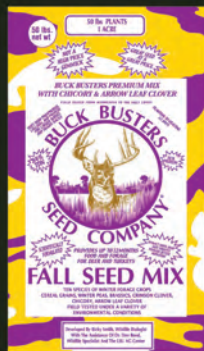


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SACK SUMMER STREAM
SPOTTED
BASS



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GIVE A FLIP ABOUT
FLOUNDER



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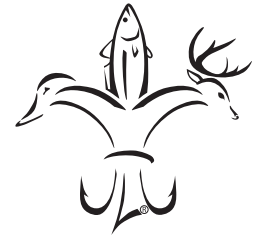
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Flipping isn't a tactic often used to catch flounder, but it's a good one, in the right situations.
Photo by Will Drost.



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SPORTSMAN

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Volume 23 | No 7

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Outdoor UPDATE

with
Mike Giles



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

JULY IS HOT, BUT FISHING IS HOTTER

STREAM BASS, FLOUNDER, BARRIER ISLAND FISH ARE IN THE FORECAST

July is one of our hottest months, but the fishing can be red hot as well. Whether you're fishing freshwater or saltwater, the action can be spectacular if you know where to go and pick your times. From the sparkling

waters off the Gulf coast, to oxbows along the Mississippi River, to Ross Barnett Reservoir, along many small creeks and streams to the bountiful waters of Pickwick Lake, there is something for everyone.

The features in this month's issue of *Mississippi Sportsman* include tips on how to catch fish, where and when to go.

If you want to catch fish and get away from the crowds then check out my spotted bass article featuring a few of our state's small-

waters experts. Read about my discovery of the spotted bass in the Chunky River when I was a young boy and how to find and catch them now.

Follow Daniel Dilley of Forest, as he catches explosive spotted bass from small creeks and streams in central Mississippi

during the heat of the summer. Adam Stewart and Jack Davis, from Meridian and Daleville, catch and release spotted bass and share some of their techniques for finding and catching the feisty bass in shallow creeks in east Mississippi and west Alabama.

If saltwater fishing is your preference, then check out John Felsher's feature on flipping for flounder, as he reveals a freshwater bass technique that can help anglers winch flatfish out of any kind of cover.

Live or let die? Phillip Gentry brings us timely tips about keeping bait or fish alive in a bait tank or livewell during the heat of the day. It can be a chore during the summer, but there are ways that anglers can put the odds of survival in their favor. If you want to catch crappie, bass or any other fish during the scalding, hot-water months, you need to keep those baitfish fresh and alive. It can mean the difference between bringing fish home for supper or going home empty-handed.

If kayak fishing is your passion and you like catching powerful saltwater fish, then read Chris Holmes article "No barrier to kayaks". The barrier islands in the Gulf off the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi offer great opportunities for kayak-bound anglers. Holmes will share some of his experience, plus tips and techniques on how to find them and catch them — and how to make the arrangements for the trip of a lifetime.

While many anglers are still fishing, more than a few hunters are looking for ways to pass the time during the sweltering days of July and August. Bill Garbo's feature on "The camera doesn't lie" is spot-on for hunters itching to get back into the woods to prepare for deer hunting. But Garbo tells



Shane Ladner with a beautiful bull red caught near Cat Island on a Matrix Shad.

MOSLEY RALLIES, FINISHES FIFTH IN BASS CLASSIC

Brock Mosley of Collinsville started the 2021 Bassmaster Classic in mid-June slowly, bringing in only four fish on the first day at Lake Ray Roberts near Houston, Texas.

But he rallied the next two days and finished fifth, winning \$25,000 and catching the biggest fish on the tournament's final day.

Mosley's 3-day catch of 42 pounds was eight pounds behind winner Hank Cherry of North Carolina, who won his second-straight Classic title after winning in 2020 on Alabama's Lake Guntersville.

Mosley opened with four fish weighing 8-10 on the first day, June 10. The second day, he brought in a 5-fish limit weighing 14-5. On the final day, he weighed in the day's biggest sack, a 19-1 limit that included the day's big fish, 6-8.

Mosley has continued to rise in the rankings of the top Elite Series Pros the past two years, finishing fourth in this year's BASS Angler of the Year race. In addition, he finished second at Pickwick Lake and on the Sabine River in 2021

Bass Elite Series tournaments that preceded the Classic, originally scheduled for March but moved to June by COVID considerations. ■

you how to put the odds in your favor this fall and winter without having to spend a lot of time in the woods during hot weather.

Five months of trail-camera photos and extensive weather data gave Garbo a thorough picture of buck movement on his hunting property. What can you glean from it? It might be a good idea to get out your game cameras and put them to work scouting for you the way Garbo does.

Whether you're still catching fish, or you want to get ready for the fall and winter hunting season, the magazine is filled with timely tips, techniques and success stories of how to do it and where to go. Read along and see what you might like to try differently this summer. ■



Photo courtesy Brock Mosley

Brock Mosley, a bass pro from Collinsville, finished fifth in the Bassmaster Classic on Texas' Lake Ray Roberts in mid-June, winning \$25,000.

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This 10.1-pound bass hit a frog bait for angler Kyle Walley of Columbia on May 23. It also attracted the attention of a hungry alligator.



Photos courtesy Kyle Walley

COLUMBIA MAN WINS BATTLE WITH GATOR FOR HUGE BASS

ANGLER WINS, BOATS BILL WALLER LARGEMOUTH THAT WENT 10.1

Kyle Walley of Columbia is an avid bass angler who goes fishing every chance he gets. On May 23, Walley's wife, Aleshia, son Logan and father, Stuart Walley, joined him on Lake Bill Waller near his hometown.

"When we come out here to fish, we definitely don't come out here for big fish; we come out here to take some home for supper," Walley said. "This lake has too many small bass, and we've been trying

to get the population in balance the past couple of years, so catching a lunker bass was not on the agenda. But that's just what happened."

Just before calling it a day, Walley made one last cast, and his lure was smashed by a monster bass. After an epic battle between him, the bass and a hungry alligator, he got the fish in the boat. It weighed 10.1 pounds, was 25¾ inches long and was the trophy of a lifetime.

"There's one color worm the bass really like in these parts, and that's gooseberry, and we were down to one pack," Walley said. "We made one trip around the lake and caught 14 fish, and the last one slung off our last Gooseberry worm, so we decided to head back to the ramp."

Before they could get to the ramp, an alligator swam towards the boat. Alecia Walley wanted to take some photos.

"We trolled up toward the alligator. He

was swimming near the lily pads, and my wife was taking pictures, so I picked up my frog rod and cast my KVD Poppin Perch frog past the alligator and was bringing it back out," Walley said. "I popped that frog twice, and there was such a massive explosion that I thought the gator ate it, but then I saw the gator swimming the other direction, so I set the hook, and it was like setting the hook into a truck."

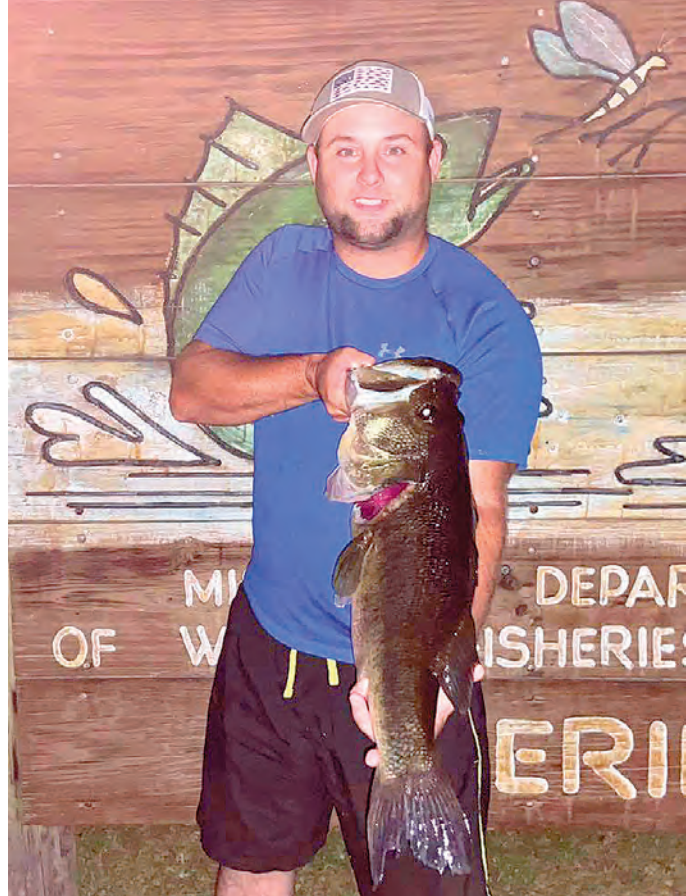
The bass was huge; it jumped in front of the alligator, and when the gator realized it was a fish jumping, it turned around and came back toward her.

"When the alligator came up to the fish, I gave the fish some slack, and she went back down and wrapped the line around a log," Walley said. "We ran up there to get the fish off of the log, and every time she boiled near the surface, the gator slashed and bit at the bass. The gator kept biting at the bass, so now the gator was trying to catch the fish, and we were trying to catch her before the gator got her."

Walley finally got the fish off the log and started trolling away from the pads into open water. But every time the bass got close to the boat and wallowed and thrashed on the surface, the gator tried to grab it.

"The gator finally got between the fish and boat, and it kept biting at the fish every time she got near the boat," Walley said. "We realized we didn't have a net, so that made it harder trying to land a monster bass ... and with an alligator trying to eat the fish. I let the bass go down and then was trying to maneuver her around the boat while my wife started swatting at the gator with a rod to make him leave, but he didn't. I finally worked the bass around the boat behind the motor so we could get to her, and Dad was able to grab the bass and bring her in."

"I've been fishing the lake for 30 years, so I told Dad that this fish



was 30 years in the making, and I almost lost her to an alligator," Walley said. "I couldn't just come out here and catch a 10-pound bass; I had to do it in spectacular fashion." ■

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MISSISSIPPI DEEP SEA RODEO RETURNS IN JULY

After a year's hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mississippi's annual Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo is back on track. Anglers from all over the state will converge on the Gulfport Small Craft Harbor the weekend of July 4 to enjoy fishing, food, fun and fireworks.

This year, the tournament will feature plenty of entertainment, music and fun things for the whole family in addition to the fishing and awards. The rodeo begins on July 1 and will end on Sunday, July 4, with a fireworks show scheduled to kick off at 8:45 p.m.

The Saltwater Division will include competition in barracuda, black drum, blackfish, bonito, flounder, gar, gray snapper, grouper, jack crevalle, king mackerel, cobia (lemonfish), redfish, shark, Spanish mackerel, speckled trout, stingray, dolphin, red snapper, tuna and wahoo.

The Freshwater Division includes competition in bream, catfish, crappie, green trout (largemouth bass) and striped bass. Catches must be in accordance with Mississippi regulations.

This year, the tournament will feature plenty of entertainment, music and fun things for the whole family to do daily in addition to the fishing and awards.

The Bull Shark Bounty will offer \$20,000 for any angler who catches a state-record bull shark by the close of the scales on July 4.

Competitive fishing starts any time after 12:01 a.m. on the morning of the first day and ends at 4 p.m. on the final day of the Rodeo. Fishing craft may be on location ready for fishing or have left their berths at fisherman's pleasure. Scales open at noon and close at 6 p.m. on all days except the final day. On the final day, the scales open at noon and close at 4 p.m. Kids scales close at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Kids (ages 4-12) will compete for five spots in 11 categories: speckled trout, redfish, white trout, croaker, ground mullet, flounder, sheepshead, drum, bass, bream and catfish.

MISSISSIPPI DEEP SEA FISHING RODEO

Thursday July 1

Noon Rodeo scales, gates open, Midway opens
6 p.m. Rodeo scales close for the day
8 p.m. Award daily prizes
10:30 p.m. Rodeo closes

Friday July 2

Noon Rodeo scales, gates open, Midway opens
6 p.m. Rodeo scales close for the day
8 p.m. Award daily prizes
10:30 p.m. Rodeo closes

Saturday July 3

Noon Kids and Rodeo scales, gates open, Midway opens
4 p.m. Kids scale closes
4:10 p.m. Kids Cast Net competition
5 p.m. Kids Extreme Watergun / Hula Hoop contest
6 p.m. Kids Awards
6 p.m. Rodeo scales close
8 p.m. Award daily prizes
10:30 p.m. Rodeo closes

Sunday July 4

Noon Kids and Rodeo scales, gates, Midway open
4 p.m. Scales close
5 p.m. Adults Cast Net competition
6 p.m. Award daily prizes
6:15 p.m. Scholarship Pageant
7 p.m. Award final prizes
8:45 p.m. Fireworks
10:30 p.m. Rodeo ends

Kids' category winners will receive a Zebco Big Cat combo. Runners-up will receive Zebco Micro combos; third-place will take a Zebco 101 combo, and fourth- and fifth-place finishes will receive a tackle box kit and a hydration backpack, respectively.

King fishermen and queen fishermen in saltwater and freshwater categories will receive \$100 each. ■

MS WILDLIFE EXTRAVAGANZA RETURNS AFTER 1-YEAR HIATUS

Mississippi's oldest and most-recognized outdoor show is back after a year's break for the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mississippi Wildlife Federation and Mississippi Outdoor Expo LLC have partnered to bring back a redesigned Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza, scheduled for July 30-Aug. 1 at the Refuge Resort & Conference Center in Flowood.

The show will feature exhibits and seminars, including 4 acres of outdoor exhibitor spaces, including lakefront spaces on a 12-acre lake. This provides a unique opportunity to check out all the latest hunting, fishing and outdoor gear. An all-new Kid Zone play area is a special feature.

The Magnolia Records Big Buck scoring and awards is back, and two world-record whitetails will be on display: the Stephen Tucker and Milo Hanson bucks.

Special events and people on tap this year include: Jason Reynolds and his high-flying retrievers, catfish hand-grabbin' tanks, youth archery range, BB gun range, Brad Case and Casting for Kids, Paul Meek turkey calling for kids, along with Ashley Jones, Ronnie Adams and Bruce Mitchell from *Swamp People*; Paul LeBlanc and Kinion from *Southern Boyz Outdoors*; Yawt; Josh Carney; Eddie Salter; Kenneth Lancaster with *The Given Right* TV show; Real South Hunting; Drake Waterfowl pro staff; taxidermy and game prep seminars; kayak and other fishing and angling demonstrations.

Other attractions include:

- Ducks Unlimited's statewide golf tournament will be on Friday, July 30;
- NWTF state turkey calling championship on Saturday, July 31;

- Kid's day, 12-and-under free on Friday, July 30 from noon until 7 p.m.;
- Ladies Power Hours, 1-3 p.m. on Saturday, July 31, featuring women in outdoors speakers. Ladies get in free between 1 and 3 p.m.; all females get a free t-shirt while supplies last.
- Gardening and habitat-management seminars. ■

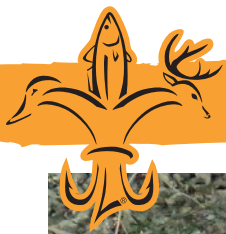
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Rebecca Lynch

This buck was taken on Dec. 5, 2020, in the Lake Mary area near Fort Adams. Matt Lynch and his daughter, Rebecca, 5, were hunting together when she spotted this buck standing behind a white crane on the other side of a duck pond. Matt Lynch dropped him. Twenty minutes later, the pig came out and she said, "Shoot him, too." Lynch gives her all the credit for this hunt.



Parker Earls

Parker Earls of Hattiesburg killed his first gobbler on April 17 on a hunt in Tennessee. The turkey had a 9½-inch beard and 1⅞-inch spurs.



Aaron Woodard

Aaron Woodard took down this big, freak buck with a bow at 20 yards on the evening of Nov. 12 in Madison.



Ann Austin Smith

Ann Austin Smith, 10, took this Yazoo County gobbler on April 25, 2021. It had an 11-inch beard and 1⅞-inch spurs.

GOT PICS?
We want 'em

Email images to: 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.

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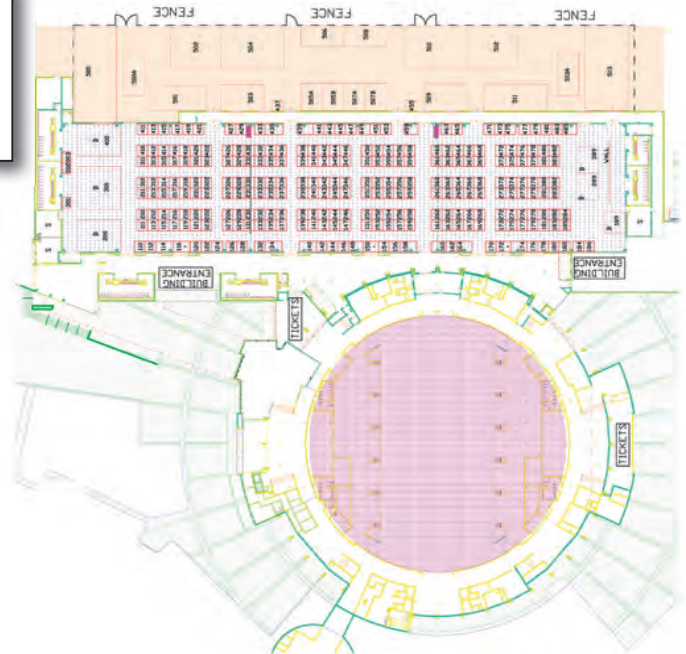
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■ By John N. Felsher

**A FRESHWATER BASS
TECHNIQUE CAN HELP
ANGLERS WINCH
FLATFISH OUT OF ANY
KIND OF COVER.**

GIVE A FLIP ABOUT FLOUNDER

The angler nosed his boat into thick canes, stripped out a few feet of line with his left hand and swung a worm toward the reeds.

As he released the line, the succulent morsel slipped into a pocket of open water between two cane clumps. The worm never touched bottom, although it was barely 24 inches below the surface. Feeling an almost imperceptible nudge on the line, the angler set the hook.

“ANOTHER FLOUNDER,”

he said, disappointed. “How am I going to win this bass tournament if I keep catching flounder?”

Long ago, bass anglers fishing tidal waters discovered that flounder will slurp up just about anything that a bass will eat and commonly attack the same forage, sometimes at the same time. When fishing weedy shorelines, many bass anglers flip jigs, creature baits or other soft-plastic temptations into heavy cover. Few methods can probe thick cover as effectively as dropping baits into tight places with pinpoint accuracy at point-blank range.

BURIED TREASURE

This standard bass technique also tempts weed-loving flounder. Flatfish regularly enter extremely shallow water along

marshy shorelines. They can stay in water barely deep enough to cover their gills.

Rather than chase baits, flounder bury their splotchy, brown bodies in the soft muck to hide. With only their eyes protruding above the goo, they wait for the current to wash food past them. Then, they erupt in a silty cloud to grab anything that passes temptingly close. Believing nothing can see them, the masters of camouflage also hide from danger. Rather than flee, flounder typically allow a boat to float right over them, even in very shallow water.

To tempt these camouflaged, shallow predators, move quietly along weedy, ragged shorelines. Using a long rod almost like a cane pole, strip off a few feet of line and hold the excess in one hand. Then, swing the rod toward a likely ambush spot. When the bait appears to momentarily hover over a tiny pocket of open water, release the offering. It should enter the water with barely a ripple.

“I like to target areas laden with structure, like irregular shorelines in 1 to 3 feet of water,” said Mark L. Wright of Legends of the Lower Marsh Fishing Charters and Guide Service (228-324-7612) in Pass Christian. “I look for gaps between any structure or between patches of grass and canes. I fish those gaps. When the tide isn’t moving much, we get reaction strikes from flounder. With soft-plastic baits, I can cover a lot more water than with live bait. For plastics, I like chartreuse, white and clear colors.”

Jacob Wood shows off a flounder he caught. Fun to catch, flounder hit many types of lures and baits, including soft-plastic worms.



COVER SHOTS >

COVER SHOTS

A skilled flipper can penetrate very thick cover with incredible accuracy, even slipping lures between individual cane stems. Sometimes, the smallest hiding places hold huge flounder. For flipping thick, shoreline cover, many anglers use weedless jigs tipped with craw trailers to mimic crabs. Texas-rigged worms, lizards or tubes and other soft baits can also target flounder that few people ever try to catch.

“People who fish a marshy shoreline the conventional way with a popping cork or with jigs tipped with plastics probably leave a lot of flounder untouched,” said guide Sonny Schindler with Shore Thing Fishing Charters (228-342-2206) in Bay St. Louis. “By flipping, people can more thoroughly work a shoreline and target more fish. Not many saltwater fishermen use the flipping technique, so flounder don’t see it very often. It might take them by surprise.”

For shallow-water flipping, many people also use wacky worms. To rig a wacky worm, run a hook completely through the middle of a straight worm instead of “down the throat,” as in a Texas rig. Leave the hook exposed rather than inserting it back into the plastic like in a Texas rig. With nearly neutral buoyancy, a straight worm rigged wacky style makes a very natural horizontal presentation that mimics a dying sand eel, one of a flounder’s preferred meals.

“I use floating, straight-tail worms with neutral buoyancy,” said angler Ronnie Addison of Robert, La. “When rigged properly, the worm should be flat with the hook in it. The hook needs to be crosswise to the molding seam in the worm.”

Fish a wacky worm without a weight. Unlike weighted baits thrown from a distance that plop into the water, possibly spooking skittish fish, a wacky worm makes a very subtle entry. Drop a wacky worm as close to reeds as possible, and let it sink naturally with no artificial action.

MEALS FROM ABOVE

With both eyes on one side of their heads, flounder must constantly look up. They see objects silhouetted against the bright sky. With its subtle, horizontal presentation, a wacky worm sinks slowly while the flounder watches from below. As the morsel approaches the fish’s hiding spot, the natural action of a wacky worm triggers

Capt. Sonny Schindler said anglers can work grassy shorelines in the marsh much more thoroughly by flipping than with a cork and lure.





Flounder hit a variety of soft-plastic lures. To make a wacky worm, start with straight worms and insert the hook into the middle.

its predatory instinct. Even a flounder not feeding aggressively might snatch something that almost lands on its head or that looks like an easy meal.

“When it enters the water, a wacky worm goes plumb crazy,” Addison said. “It has sort of a swimming motion when it sinks; both ends kind of wobble. It has all kinds of natural movement, with a lot of shimmy and shake. The ends of the worm kind of fold back and almost touch each other in sort of an undulating motion when the angler twitches the rod tip.”

In shallow water, flounder usually strike swiftly as the bait falls — or not at all. Don’t waste time in an unproductive pocket. If a bait hits bottom without a strike, pull it up and out, go a short distance and let it sink again or swing it to another likely hiding spot, perhaps only a few inches away. An experienced angler can probe just about every hiding place along a reedy shoreline.

For fishing particularly thick cover, rig a wacky worm weedless. Anglers can use pre-rigged, weedless hooks with weedguards that slip under the barb of the hook. Otherwise, string an intact rubber band from the barb to the eye of the hook, creating a simple, flexible weed guard.

When flipping soft plastics, pay attention to your line. Flounder often simply suck in a sinking bait. You might not detect a subtle strike, only feel a slight tug on the line or maybe a bit of extra weight. An angler might simply notice the line moving in an odd direction. If in doubt, set the hook.

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Like bass, flounder are mostly ambush predators, so they wind up hitting many of the same artificial baits, like this swimbait.



Anglers can catch flounder by flipping any weedy shorelines in coastal Mississippi. They can also flip baits under docks or next to bulkheads and other structures. Some of the best flounder fishing occurs in the Pearl River and Pascagoula River deltas or the tributaries flowing into Back Bay, also called Biloxi Bay. Old Fort Bayou flows into the eastern end of Back Bay and holds flounder. Also try the Davis Bayou area, Bayou Caddy marshes, Heron Bay or the area where the Jourdan and Wolf rivers flow into Bay St. Louis.

Some bass anglers bring their techniques to saltwater. Others use flipping as a backup technique when other methods don't work or when they can't reach their favorite honey holes. However, when done correctly under the right conditions, flipping can put many flounder in a boat quickly, and it's just downright fun to do. ■



John N. Felsher is a professional freelance writer and photographer with more than 1,700 articles in more than 117 magazines to his credit. He worked as the outdoors editor for several Louisiana newspapers and currently co-hosts a weekly outdoors radio show on WNSP 105.5 FM in Mobile, Ala. You can contact him at JohnNFelsher.com.

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Louisiana and Mississippi have several barrier islands, the most-famous being Grand Isle, the only remaining inhabited one. It is a popular fishing destination and can be accessed by vehicle. It is frequented by kayak anglers and is the closest thing to beach fishing many can get.

However, several other islands dot the Gulf coast and provide excellent fishing. Kayak anglers with a yearning to ply these remote waters need to plan a mothership trip to get their kayaks to these fishing spots.

The barrier islands are dynamic, changing in size and shape every year due to tides and waves, and particularly, tropical weather events. The number and strength of recent hurricanes and tropical storms have reduced most to a fraction of their historical size. While some are still sizable, others are more like overgrown sandbars or are completely submerged.

Restoration of these islands is high on the list of coastal planning projects in order to preserve their role as barriers to reduce the strength and destruction when these storms make landfall. They also provide critical nesting habitat for many species of birds.

MAKING THE TRIP >

BARRIER ISLANDS IN THE GULF OFFER GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR KAYAK-BOUND ANGLERS. MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME.

■ By Chris Holmes

NO BARRIER TO KAYAKS



MAKING THE TRIP

However, “going to fish the islands” is a dream for many anglers, and kayak anglers are adding these trips to their bucket lists. It is not as difficult as you might think and also provides some distinct advantages. The vast majority of fishing around the islands entails wading, so many anglers wait until late spring or early summer, once water temperatures are warm enough to comfortably and safely wade. However, a few savvy anglers beat the crowds by using lightweight waders while the water is still cold. Kayak anglers have realized they too can get in on this early activity without having to get into the water.

All of the islands require relatively long trips over open water, and caution needs to be taken to pick the best weather days. A suitable boat that can handle the extra loads of the kayaks and gear must be available. Secure the 'yaks well so they don't bounce around, risking damage. The bigger, overnight operations often allow customers to bring a kayak as long as it is pre-arranged. A couple specialize in kayak island adventures, and there's always the private-boat option.

The typical practice is to anchor close to the island in water shallow enough to wade without swimming but deep enough to account for tidal drops that could strand the vessel on hard sand until the water returns. However, if you are bringing in kayaks, anchoring in a water that's a bit deeper is not an issue.

Pay attention to areas where mothership operations set up; they have access to great fishing intel.

If most anglers wade-fish around the islands, what is the advantage of going through the trouble of bringing kayaks?

Mobility.

GETTING AROUND

When you leave the powerboat to wade, you are limited in the tackle and supplies you can carry, and you can't get very far from the boat. Typically, you can carry one rod and a few lures. Food and drink must be carefully planned and is limited. On the other hand, the kayak serves as a mobile base of operations and allows you to travel as far as you want, be self-sufficient and carry everything that you want — too much in many cases — including fish storage by way of a hard or soft cooler, food and water, plus several rods and tackle trays.

A second reason for a kayak is for those not comfortable wade-fishing. I love the experience of wade-fishing but am never truly comfortable. Sharks and stingrays are common around the barrier islands, and you will undoubtedly see them. Sharks also regularly take swipes at fish stringers hanging off the hips of wading anglers, precariously close for comfort. Also, if you want to fish live bait, you must also tow along a floating bait bucket, which adds to your load as well as providing additional shark-attracting scent. Fishing from the kayak allows you to ply the same waters and keep everything that might attract a shark in the kayak instead of in the water.

Plus, a kayak doesn't prevent you from wade-fishing. A stake-out pole allows you to hop out whenever you want and anchor the yak. It provides you a floating base that goes wherever you want. The stake-out pole should be firmly set in the sand to prevent wave action from pulling it out. One trick I learned from the late Capt. Theophile Bourgeois is to waddle the pole tightly back and forth as it sinks further into the sand. He used this method to stake out his seaplane on his many island adventures.



BARRIER ISLAND CHAINS

The main barrier island chains from west to east are the Isle Dernieres, Timbalier, Breton and Chandeleur. All were part of an entire chain of islands that once blanketed the coast. Though some are generically referred to by the singular term island, they are all part of the barrier chain and are broken up into many smaller islands and spits. Their makeup changes on an annual basis. That cove where you found fish last year could be a sandbar or open water this year, but there are usually some fishable areas, except in extreme conditions. The Gulf-facing sides are naturally rougher, but there are days when both sides are slick as glass. Many have spots where you can walk or even drag a kayak across the island and fish either side.

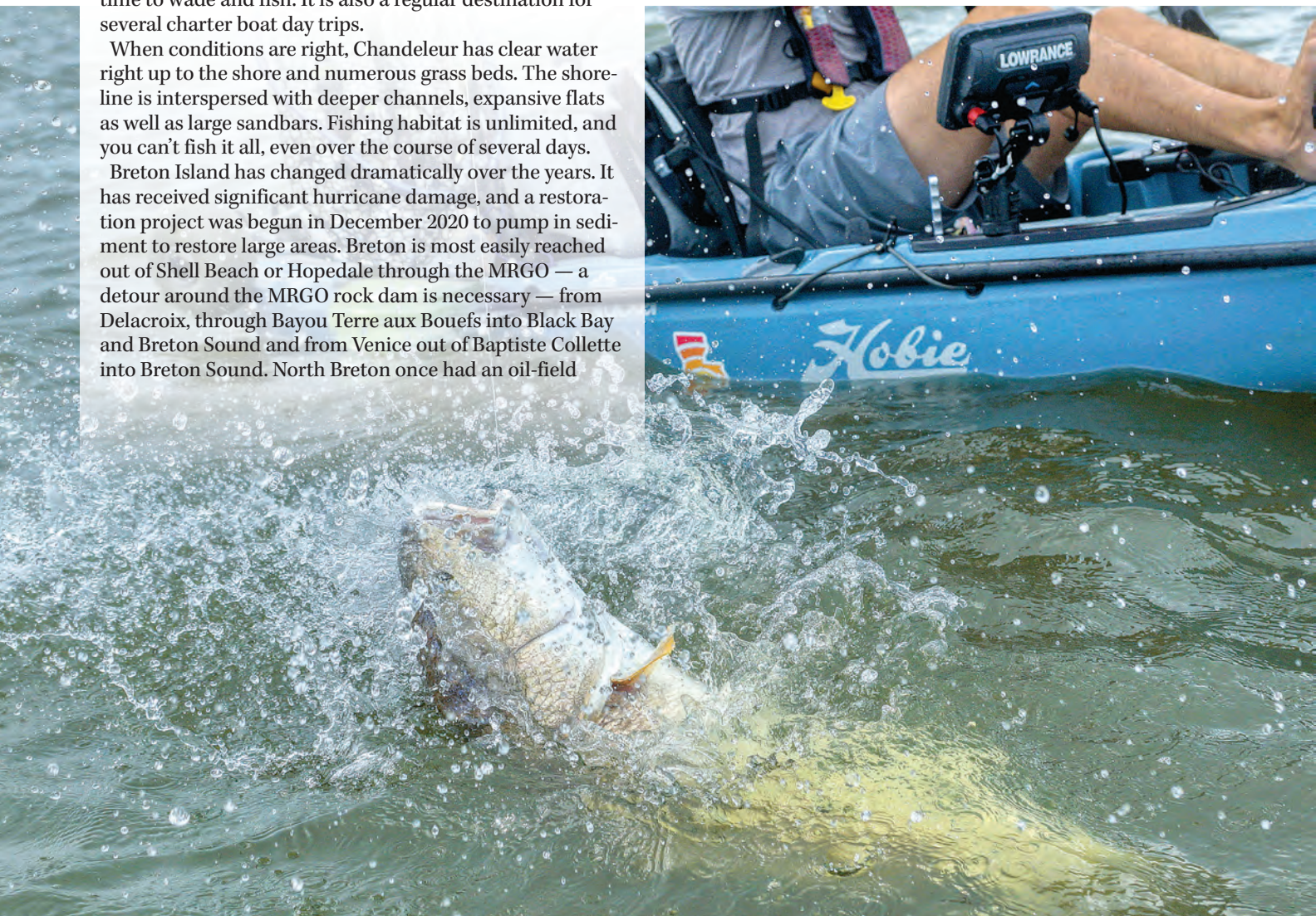
Chandeleur is by far the most-popular. It is the farthest east of all of the island chains. It is uniquely positioned, easily accessed from several places in Mississippi and Louisiana. There are several operations that offer guided fishing, as well as overnight accommodations for anglers wanting to extend their time on the island. Seaplanes regularly land, bringing fishermen in by air so they have more time to wade and fish. It is also a regular destination for several charter boat day trips.

When conditions are right, Chandeleur has clear water right up to the shore and numerous grass beds. The shoreline is interspersed with deeper channels, expansive flats as well as large sandbars. Fishing habitat is unlimited, and you can't fish it all, even over the course of several days.

Breton Island has changed dramatically over the years. It has received significant hurricane damage, and a restoration project was begun in December 2020 to pump in sediment to restore large areas. Breton is most easily reached out of Shell Beach or Hopedale through the MRGO — a detour around the MRGO rock dam is necessary — from Delacroix, through Bayou Terre aux Bouefs into Black Bay and Breton Sound and from Venice out of Baptiste Collette into Breton Sound. North Breton once had an oil-field



Bull reds in the kayak never disappoint. Late in the summer, they get thick around the barrier islands. This one hit a Rat-L-Trap. **BELOW:** While trout are generally the main attraction, a wide variety of inshore species are available, including bull reds like this one.



Clear water, hard sand and hefty stringers. The Gulf coast's barrier islands provide excellent kayak fishing opportunities.

facility in a large interior bay, but it was destroyed by a hurricane. Breton offers great fishing, and its proximity to several popular fishing ports makes it a great choice for day trips.

The Isle Dernieres and Timbalier chains have also undergone various protection projects over the years. Besides pumping in sediment for land-building, large sections of rock jetties were placed in hopes of offering wave protection, some which are now submerged. The rocks provide island protection, fish attracting habitat — unseen hazards for powerboats. Several areas are also littered with sheet pilings and oil-field related debris.

Another advantage the kayak offers is the ability to get close and even behind some of these structures and find fish. From Raccoon Island to the west and East Timbalier to the east, these chains are popular for anglers fishing out Houma, Dularge, Cocodrie, Leeville and even Grand Isle. Some see more attention than others, but even the tiniest of island remnants can offer good fishing.

While beautiful and often eerily peaceful, the islands are alive with the soothing sounds of waves lapping or even crashing the beach and the calls and cries of various bird colonies. They are fragile, and their future is uncertain, but the fishing is often fantastic. If you have a kayak-angler bucket list, this is one you should check off sooner than later. ■

For an aerial view of the area from Raccoon Island to East Timbalier, check out this YouTube video: <https://youtube.com/drbccej01uFM>.



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As we floated around a bend in the Chunky River, I spotted a rocky shoal that had turbulent water crashing over it, so I cast a small spinnerbait across the shoal and kept the slack out of the line as I let the current carry it slowly downstream. Wham!

Suddenly, a bass smashed my lure and almost tore the rod from my hands. I held on and fought him with all my might. A few minutes later, I landed my first Chunky River spotted bass. He fought wildly, like a 4-pounder, but he was only average size. The strangest thing was, he had red eyes. I'd never seen nor heard of one like that.

I fished around the next bend and nailed another spotted bass and started hollering for my buddies. I was sure that this was a monster bass. But this one was almost a twin of the first one and taught me a lesson in their ferocity.

Those two spotted bass were caught some 50 years ago on a Boy Scout outing on the 7-mile bend. They were the first spotted bass I ever caught, but they were not the last, as I started targeting them in small streams, creeks, and shallow rivers around the state. These smaller waterways are too small to launch traditional outboard-powered boats, thus, most remain free of heavy fishing pressure, and most have plenty of spotted bass for the taking.

You don't have to go too far to find spotted bass, as they proliferate in thousands of small creeks, streams and shallow rivers all over the state. Some are named, and some are so small that they don't even have a name, but they do have feisty spotted bass that are eager to strike almost any offering during the hot summer.

You can fish from a kayak, canoe or duck boat, avoid the crowds and still have fun catching fish. Along the way, you might just encounter a few snakes, hawks, deer, turkey and coyotes.

SACK SUMMER STREAM SPOTTED BASS

CREEKS, STREAMS AND SMALL RIVERS OF ANY SIZE ACROSS MISSISSIPPI WILL LIKELY HOLD SPOTTED BASS, AND THESE AGGRESSIVE FISH CAN MAKE FOR A SPECTACULAR SUMMER OUTING. ■ By Mike Giles

FISHING SHOALS, RAPIDS

Adam Stewart of Meridian is an avid angler who practices strict catch-and-release, and he catches a ton of spotted bass each summer and fall from small creeks and streams across Mississippi.

“I like to fish the smaller creeks and rivers that don’t have a lot of fishing pressure and target spotted bass because they’re so aggressive,” Stewart said. “I’ve caught spotted bass that are about the same size of the lure up to almost 3 pounds, and they all fight hard.”

During the summer, Stewart concentrates on fishing areas that have shoals or rocky rapids.

“I like to fish below the shoal areas when I’m fishing the Chunky River,” he said. “I’ll cast across and retrieve pretty fast, keeping the slack out so I can feel the fish hit and keep the lure from hanging up.”

Daniel Giles parked his canoe on a set of shoals to target spotted bass downstream of the turbulence.

Stewart sticks with the basics when targeting spotted bass during the summer; he’ll use a jig and crawfish, a red craw crankbait and a Blue Fox Minnow when working areas below shoals.

“I’ll use soft plastics in the areas with no current as I’m paddling downstream,” Stewart said. “In between the shoals areas, I’ll hit the stumps, submerged trees and target anything that might hold a fish. If there is no current in an area, or a deep pool, I’ll use a small Zoom Fluke or paddletail worm, pitch it into the water and let it glide down.”

Stewart really prefers covering a lot of water so he can put his lure in front of a lot of bass, and that’s where the Blue Fox Minnow comes in handy, as it’s heavy enough for a fast retrieve through the swift waters below the shoals or rocky areas while still maintaining the feel. He prefers the ¼-ounce size that is 2 inches long and carries a single treble hook.

While Stewart’s main target is spotted bass, he does catch redbreast sunfish and occasionally large crappie in some of the small streams. Another minnow-style lure he uses is a Mepps Minnow that has a blade at the front and small hooks that will catch any small panfish.

KAYAK BOUND ➤



KAYAK BOUND

Daniel Dilley of Forest is another avid angler who loves catching the feisty spotted bass in small creeks in central Mississippi. He finds good fishing holes while chasing deer during the fall and winter and hits those areas during the summer.

Dilley prefers fishing out of small kayaks, and he also likes to utilize a 2-person kayak, as he often takes one of his children fishing with him. He can maneuver the smaller kayaks very easily without causing a commotion on the water and spooking bass.

"I like to target any wood structure that I can find," Dilley said. "I'll work the deep, cut banks and any ditches that pour into the creek. Bass attack baitfish that get swept into the main creek, and they will strike lures, also."

Dilley is always looking for new structure that has fallen into creeks or floated into an area, and he usually catches bass on it, as they use it for ambush points when baitfish swim past.

"I like to fish Texas-rigged baby Brush Hogs and shaky heads rigged with a Yum Dinger or finesse worm," he said. "I like watermelon/red flake or pumpkin as my go-to colors, and I'll also use a junebug/red flake color with good success."

SUMMER TOPWATER PATTERNS

Anglers shouldn't overlook topwater patterns during the summer. Stewart has had good success fishing topwater lures during hot weather, which is something you might not think about during the summer.

"I like to fish a Baby Torpedo during the summer. If I can find an area on the river that has shoals and turbulent water, I'll work that lure across the top, and the bass will tear it up," Stewart said. "In fact, bass will strike that bait almost any time of the day if you work it past them. They just can't resist them for some reason."

Dr. George Arrington is another avid angler from Meridian who loves to catch spotted bass on topwater lures; his go to bait is a Devil's Horse. Arrington regularly catches 3- and 4-pounders on a Devil's Horse, and he's a firm believer in the topwater prop bait.



Aiden Dilley often fishes in the front of his father's two-person kayak on central Mississippi streams. **OPPOSITE:** Daniel Dilley finds plenty of good fishing spots along creeks and smaller rivers while deer-hunting. He returns in summer to target spotted bass.



SWIMBAITS, SPINNERBAITS

Jack Davis of Daleville grew up fishing creeks, streams and shallow rivers, and he still loves catching and eating spotted bass — and usually catches plenty of them.

“We had a trip to the Sucarnoochee River up near Porterville recently, and we caught and released 41 spotted bass,” Davis said. “We caught them on swimbaits all day, and my biggest was a 3-pound spotted bass. They were hitting light blue and greenish-colored swimbaits, but they seemed to prefer the light-blue color a little better.”

Davis also likes to use a chartreuse spinnerbait with gold blades, and he recently also had a fantastic trip to Pawticfaw Creek in Kemper County with his son, Jeff.

“I went fishing with Jeff, and we really caught the spots,” Davis said. “We caught them stacked up and feeding in a creek bend about four days before a full moon. We caught 18 bass in 35 minutes; most of mine came on that spinnerbait, and Jeff caught his on a worm. It was a fantastic trip, and we hit them just right at feeding time.”

LOW-BUDGET SUMMER FUN >



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

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LOW-BUDGET SUMMER FUN

It doesn't take any fancy equipment to fish small streams, creeks and shallow rivers. A spinning or baitcasting combo will suffice, but you'd better have fresh line, because the spotted bass that live in the streams will break your line around a stump or rock if you're not prepared.

Davis likes to fish smaller streams or creeks from the bank, if possible, but he fishes most of the larger creeks like Sucarnoochee in an Uncle Buck's Pond Prowler. It seats two anglers comfortably, is easy to maneuver in the water — you can turn it on a dime — and it's light enough for two men to load easily. Probably the biggest advantage to this 12-foot boat is that you can sit in comfortable chairs, which means a lot to anglers who have spent a lifetime working and fishing.

Probably the best, all-around fishing vessel for creeks is a kayak. You can fish out of a single or two-person kayak; they're easy to paddle and a breeze to load, as most are very light without the added weight of a trolling motor and battery.

Popular shallow-water fishing crafts include: Ascend kayaks, Uncle Buck's Pond Prowler, Wilderness Systems Recon 120 HD, Sea Ghost Vibe Kayak. ■

A small crankbait fooled this Chunky River spotted bass for the author.

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Paul Elias



FISHING LEDGES WORKS FOR SARDIS LAKE'S JULY BASS

DEEP-DIVING CRANKBAITS AND PLASTIC WORMS ARE SUMMER'S GO-TO BAITS

Sardis Reservoir in Lafayette, Panola and Marshall counties has made a comeback in the numbers of big bass it's producing. I consider Sardis a structure lake, and its best summer pattern is ledge fishing.

I have three favorite lures I use in July at Sardis. If the bass stop biting any one of these lures, I can cast another to catch more bass out of the same spot before moving on to another school.

I like a deep-diving crankbait like a Mann's 20+ in a gray ghost or green/

chartreuse with a green back, aka Homer color. I'll fish with a 7-foot-6, medium-action FX Custom rod with 14-pound test White Peacock fluorocarbon and a 6.2:1 ELS Bruin reel. River ledges and main-lake points with sharp drop-offs on sloping underwater points will be my focus from mid-lake to the dam.

I'll fish these same areas with a Carolina-rigged plastic worm with 50-pound bass braid on a 5.3:1 ELS Bruin reel. I'll slide a 1-ounce weight up the main line, attach the main line to a barrel swivel and tie a 28-pound monofilament

leader to the swivel's other eye. To the tag end of the leader, I'll attach a 6/0 wide-gap hook with a Mann's jelly worm in watermelon red, rigged Texas-style.

I'll fish a drop-shot rig on a spinning outfit with 15-pound bass braid and a



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.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The author shows off a Mann's 20+ crankbait and a Jelly Worm, two lures he relies on when targeting Sardis Lake's bass during the summer when they're holding on ledges.

6-foot leader of fluorocarbon. I'll thread a 6-inch Mann's jelly worm in junebug onto my drop-shot hook and have a ¼-ounce drop-shot weight on the end of the line.

CRANKBAIT TACTICS

I'll cast crankbaits perpendicular to where the creeks and ditches drop off into the main river channel. Next, I'll fish parallel, up and down the same ledges, about 100 yards on either side of the creeks and the ditches. These cuts generally have stumps or places with hard bottoms.

WORM TECHNIQUES

You may pinpoint large schools of bass holding on these places that won't bite or have quit biting crankbaits. That's when I move to the Carolina or drop-shot rigs. If you can get one bass to take any of these baits, usually other bass start biting.

OTHER TRICKS

I look for bass and schools of baitfish with the ClearVU and SideVu features of Garmin's LiveScope. I'll use these tools to study the underwater points and mark the locations of the stumps and schools of bass I see holding on these points and then fish there. If I find a school of bass that isn't biting, I'll leave it, check another school I have located and come back to the first school later. Since Sardis isn't a big reservoir, once the bass set up on these underwater points, they'll generally stay where you can find them all summer long.

If you see schools of shad up near the surface or bass feeding on them, cast a walking bait like the Zara Spook to the outer edges of the shad. The bass will come to the surface to attack it. I fish the Zara Spook on an 8.1:1 reel with 28-pound mono on a 6-foot-9, medium-action FX Custom rod.

Another tool I use to bring a school of bass to the surface is my Hydrowave — a device that sends out baitfish sounds underwater. Once the bass hear those sounds and spot the baitfish and/or the Zara Spook moving on the surface, they'll start feeding actively.

Because I know bass will be holding on the same underwater points throughout the summer's heat, I'll make several successful trips to Sardis before the cooler weather occurs in the fall. ■

SALTWATER

STATE COASTAL WATERS REGULATIONS (0 - 3 miles)

FISH SPECIES	Minimum Lengths	Creel Limit (per person)
Greater amberjack	34" FL	1/day
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	no limit
White marlin	66" LJFL	no limit
Sailfish	63" LJFL	no limit
Sharks (large coastal/pelagic)@	37" TL*	1/day or 3/boat
Sharks@	37" TL*	1/day, 3/vessel
Cobia	36" FL	2 per day
Redfish (red drum)	18" minimum 30" maximum TL	3/day (1 over 30")
Flounder (state waters)	12" TL	15/day
Groupers (black and gag)	24" TL@	4/day aggregate
Hogfish	12" FL@	5/day
Red, yellowfin grouper	20" TL@	4/day
Scamp grouper	16" TL@	4/day
Speckled hind/Warsaw grouper	no minimum@	1/day each
Gray/schoolmaster/cubera/ mahogany/yellowtail/dog snapper	12" TL@	5/day aggregate
Mutton snapper	18" TL@	10/day
Queen/blackfin/silk/winchman snapper	none@	5/day aggregate
Vermillion/lane snapper	10"/8" TL@	20/day aggregate
Gray triggerfish	15" FL@	1/day
Golden/blueline/anchor/blackline tilefish	none@	20/day
King mackerel	24" FL@	2/day
Spanish mackerel	12" FL@	15/day
Yellowfin tuna	27" CFL@	3/day
Bigeye tuna	27" CFL@	no limit
Tripletail	18" TL	3/day
Spotted sea trout (speckled)	15"	15/day

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

FRESHWATER

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

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

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

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

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

* Possession of certain species of sharks is prohibited.

Whether the fish you're trying to keep healthy are in the bait tank or in the livewell, there are several tricks that you can use to keep them alive — or at least tasty if the final destination is the table — and they all boil down to one thing: increased oxygen levels.

Once you understand how to control and manipulate oxygen levels in your livewell or bait tank, you can increase the fish's intake of oxygen, which will keep them alive longer.

Here are seven ways to help control and maintain oxygen levels in your holding tanks.

KEEPING BAIT OR FISH ALIVE IN A BAIT TANK OR LIVEWELL CAN BE A CHORE DURING THE HOT SUMMER, BUT THERE ARE WAYS THAT ANGLERS CAN PUT THE ODDS OF SURVIVAL IN THEIR FAVOR.

By Phillip Gentry

**LIVE OR
LET DIE.**

OXYGEN TANKS

Higher water temperatures in summer reduce the dissolved oxygen that fish need to survive. By inducing concentrated oxygen into the water rather than just air, which is only 16% oxygen, higher dissolved-oxygen levels can be maintained.

Supplied oxygen systems work through the use of a compressed air tank, a gas flow regulator and an air stone to disperse the oxygen in the water.

A portable oxygen system can be obtained online through retail tackle warehouses or bought at some high-end bait and tackle stores. Oxygen refills can be obtained at welding supply houses, medical supply stores or these same tackle shops.

“A lot of anglers are scared of using oxygen bottles because they believe there is a risk of fire or explosion,” said crappie pro Kent Driscoll, “but there’s no need to be. My portable tank has kept bait alive through the hottest summer days as well as fish in the livewell during a tournament.”

WATER AERATION

Almost everyone who fishes has seen portable air pumps that hang on the side of a cooler or minnow bucket to make bubbles

in the water. While these devices work in more-comfortable temperatures, they don’t offer a lot of assistance when the air and water temperatures are above 80° F.

Part of the problem with the “bubbler” is that the air bubbles are too large to allow much oxygen transfer to the water. In order to saturate water with oxygen, especially warmer water, those bubbles must be smaller and suspend longer in the water.

Several companies that manufacture baitwells and livewells make air venturi systems that can be retrofitted to your livewell or built-in bait tank. The venturi systems both circulate water and, in creating a vacuum to move water, are able to suck air into the pump and finely mix the air with the water as it is pumped.

This mixing process produces exponentially more and much smaller bubbles, meaning more surface area for the transfer of oxygen between the air and water. The pumping process also creates a water flow that holds the tiny bubbles suspended in the water for longer, allowing more time for the transfer.

INSULATION >

A well-aerated, circulating livewell can be conditioned to keep bait or your catch alive and healthy, even on the hottest days.



INSULATION

Several years ago, the cooler market was saturated with products offering denser insulating properties. The goal was to keep items stored in the cooler at colder temperatures for longer periods of time.

The same insulation principle can greatly assist with keeping livewells and baitwells designed to hold either bait or fish working at higher efficiency.

To check the insulating properties of your livewell or bait tank, you need to get a peek behind the well. In some cases, there may be no insulation at all. This problem will be compounded if the material used to construct the well is metal rather than plastic, due to metal's ability to transfer heat. An uninsulated, metal livewell on a 90-degree day offers little more than a way to slow-cook your catch as soon as it's deposited in the tank.

A fiberglass repair shop may be able to add insulation to your built-in livewell or bait tank by inserting a nozzle into an opening behind the well and injecting some expandable insulation behind the walls of the tank.

Another, albeit more-expensive option, is to replace your livewell tank with one offering better water-insulating qualities.

FIZZING

Often, fish caught during the summer are rapidly retrieved from deep water before their air bladders have time to adjust. "Fizzling" a fish will allow it to orient itself upright in the livewell rather than floating on its side, where only one gill can reach the water. Fizzling involves mechanically ventilating the air bladder, releasing the excess pressure so that the bladder will work normally without being inflated to the point of bursting.

Ronnie Capps, a crappie pro, designed a measuring device,



Using B'n'M's Crappie Saver and a hollow needle to deflate the swim bladder of a fish caught from deep water will help the fish stay alive in the livewell or after being released.



now made by B'n'M Poles, that shows the angler where to insert a needle in order to ventilate a crappie's swim bladder. It's called the Crappie Saver.

"Take the fish and place it head first into the Saver," Capps said. "There's a sliding scale near the head that shows where you would insert the needle. You can get these hollow needles at most veterinary supply places.

"Going in from the tail side, slide that needle under the scale at a 45-degree angle and go straight down. You'll see bubbles come out the other end of the needle, and you can even hear the pressure release. Just let the pressure equalize for about 8 seconds, remove the needle, and then you can release it or put it in the livewell, knowing he'll survive until weigh-in."

FIN WEIGHTING

Before fizzing or venting became an available practice for the average angler, a few industrious anglers made fin weights to counterbalance the effect of the overinflated swim bladder. Fin weights are made by wiring an alligator clip to a 2- to 4-ounce sinker. The weights are clipped to the fish's pectoral fins, making it ride upright in the live well.

"If you're not comfortable with fizzing, or don't have the needle and stuff, this is a cheap and quick way to keep crappie caught from deep water alive and healthy until weigh-in," said Wilson Roberts, a Mississippi angler. "We used to do it all the time. I probably still got a couple of them rolling around in the bottom of my livewell for those times when I catch a good, deep-water fish.

ADD ICE

It's a proven fact that colder water will hold more dissolved oxygen than warmer water. Warm water holds less dissolved oxygen than cold water because the molecules are moving faster, allowing oxygen to escape from the water. Adding ice cools the water in the bait tank or livewell and helps it hold more dissolved oxygen.

"When adding ice, don't use store-bought or any other ice made from chlorinated water, which will only remove oxygen, not add it," said Brad Taylor, an angler from Greenville. "Lake or well water frozen beforehand in milk jugs or 2-liter bottles is a good way to make your own, chlorine-free ice."

Another good idea is to purchase a floating pool thermometer to monitor the water temperature. Adding too much ice too quickly can cause temperature shock and kill fish or bait. The ideal water temperature range in a livewell should be between 65° and 75° F. The closer you get to 80°, the higher the mortality rate of fish or bait.

OPPOSITE: Fish soaking in warm water on a hot summer day in an uninsulated metal livewell will turn great tasting meat into mush. Come prepared by bringing extra ice and bring fish to be kept straight from the water to a cooler full of ice.



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.

STRAIGHT TO THE COOLER

Putting fish in a cooler on ice is not for bait or tournament fish that should be released, but by putting crappie you intend to eat directly on ice, and lots of it, the fish will chill faster and not marinate all day in a warm soup, making the meat much tastier on the table.

"You can tell when fish have sat in a hot live well all day," said John Harrison, who guides crappie fishermen on Grenada Lake. "The meat gets mushy, and the guts will start turning. That gives the fish a really strong taste, and it's a waste of some good-eating fish. All it takes is a little planning to bring some extra ice and put your summer time fish right in the cooler." ■

LIVWELL ADDITIVES >

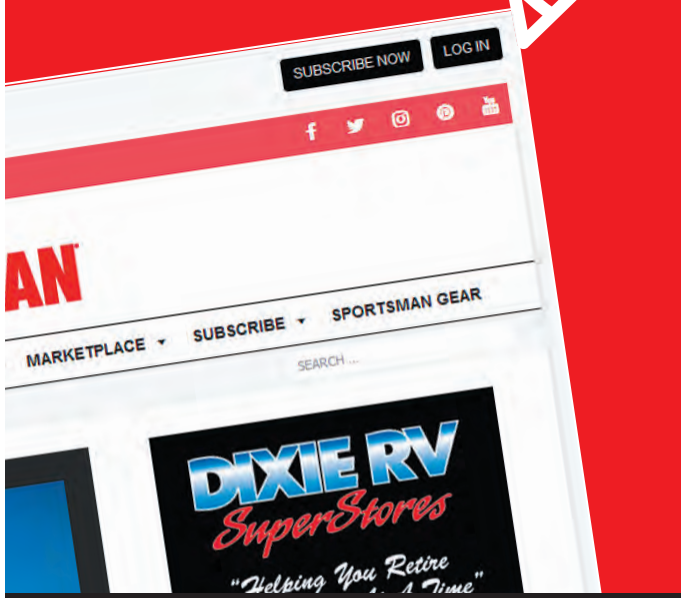


Fish often regurgitate stomach contents or defecate after being caught, keeping tabs on the conditions of your livewell can help your catch stay healthy all day.

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LIVEWELL ADDITIVES

BELOW: Chemicals that can be added to a livewell or bait tank to insure that fish remain healthy typically work by strengthening the protective slime coat and reducing the release of toxins, which calm fish down.

A number of additives are available to assist with keeping fish alive and healthy in your livewell. Before you consider using an additive, make it a point to regularly clean your livewell. Fish often regurgitate and defecate after being caught, in addition to releasing other toxins. If these are allowed to remain in the livewell between uses, they can create bacteria that can quickly harm even healthy fish.

A good, hard rinsing with clean water after every use is the best way to maintain a livewell, with periodic scrubbing using a biodegradable soap.

Additives typically try to achieve two primary goals: increasing a fish's slime coat and reducing the release of toxins. Increasing slime coat is done by adding electrolytes to the water, which is a fancy way of saying salt. Reducing the release of toxins is a way of calming fish that is done with several different chemicals. Salt still plays a major role, but additional antiseptic compounds are also used.

At the end of the day, a good, clean, well-maintained livewell that has adequate insulation and circulation is hard to beat, but including additives in your bait tank or livewell can help address fish stress levels that tend to compound during hot weather. ■



Photo courtesy of sure-life.com

FIVE MONTHS OF TRAIL-CAMERA PHOTOS AND EXTENSIVE WEATHER DATA GAVE THE AUTHOR A THOROUGH PICTURE OF BUCK MOVEMENT ON HIS HUNTING PROPERTY. WHAT CAN YOU GLEAN FROM IT?

■ By Bill Garbo

THE CAMERA DOESN'T LIE

The extreme cold weather that entered central Mississippi this past February caused me to reflect on some very interesting work I did a few years ago regarding buck movement and temperature.

What did I learn from an intensive trail-camera study on my hunting property during the core of the 2008-2009 deer season? I didn't set out to analyze buck-movement patterns during the rut, but while enjoying the use of digital trail cameras, the project found me. As an engineer, I have always been intrigued by numbers and statistics, but as far as my passion for deer hunting, the thought never struck me early on that my extensive collection of trail-cam photos might one day be an invaluable resource for analyzing buck movement patterns.

My hunting property was in the lower half of the Big Black River Basin, referred to in some circles as the Big Black Corridor. This particular river basin, encompassing an 11-county area, has earned a reputation over the years for its production of trophy class whitetail bucks. The area has historically yielded about one-third of the top-scoring bucks taken in Mississippi. This particular property contained a uniquely diverse habitat that included a creekbottom floodplain, thickets of heavy cover, fields and food plots, water sources and heavily wooded upland hills and hollows. In other words, it was an ideal place to observe a wide cross-section of buck movement tendencies.

SWEAT THE DETAILS >



SWEAT THE DETAILS

Being a detail guy, I have always carefully set up my annual trail-cam web, and without exception, preserved and cataloged all of my trail-cam photos. To that end, with no preconceived idea of the results, I set out to catalog, identify and sort my trail-cam photo data from the 2008-2009 deer season to see what it might reveal. During that particular season, I had a continuous camera spread that yielded several hundred buck "data points."

I am well aware that many hunters would rather get a root canal than deal with several months of trail-camera photos, collected, cataloged and analyzed. The good news is, I have already done the work, and I'll bet that at a minimum, you will anecdotally see connections to your own observations of buck movement gleaned from both deer stand and trail-cam pics.

As it turned out, my trail cameras did a respectable job of chronicling buck movement, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,

rain or shine. The various observations and conclusions that were ultimately drawn should not be considered absolutes, but rather indicators of repetitive tendencies and preferences of bucks during the rut.

Over the years I have learned by trial-and-error where the best buck travel corridors are located, what food plots bucks tend to frequent during the pre-rut, and which scrapes and scrape lines are primary, perennial ones. This knowledge allows a hunter or land manager to place a series of trail cams in a way that will yield the most-efficient and effective results.

During the early pre-rut, my cameras were placed to watch known, heavily traveled buck corridors. Then, at the first sign of scraping activity at several known perennial scrape locations, I relocated certain trail cameras to monitor primary scrape-line activity. In my experience, placing cameras at primary scrape-line locations has, over time, proven to be the best way to monitor and assess the bucks that use your property during the rut.

SPAN THE ENTIRE RUT >



Knowing where bucks are before the season is great, but not nearly as important as knowing where they'll be during the rut.



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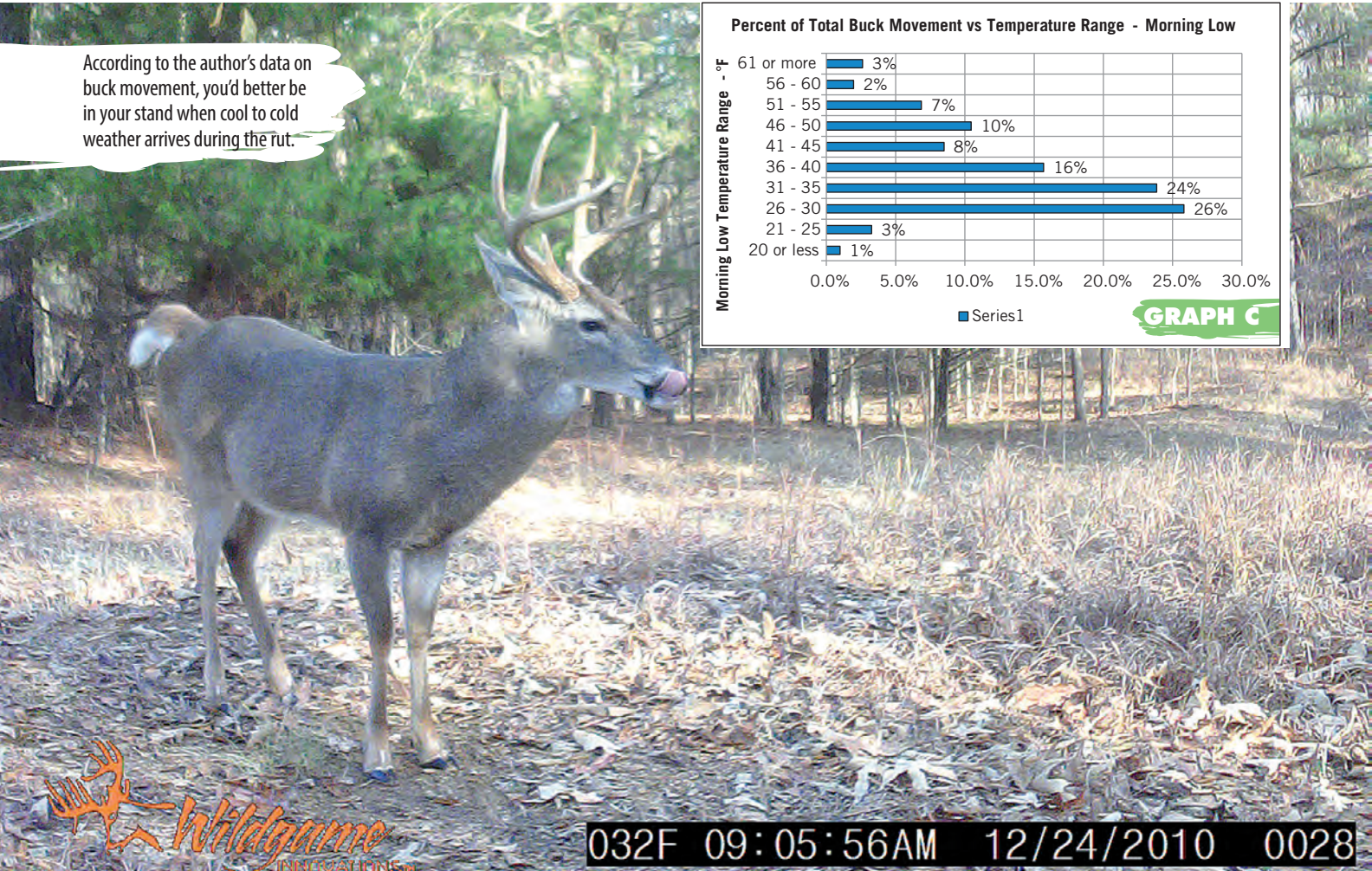
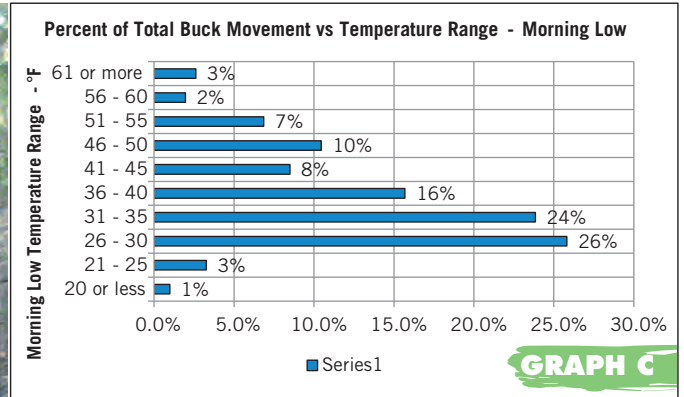
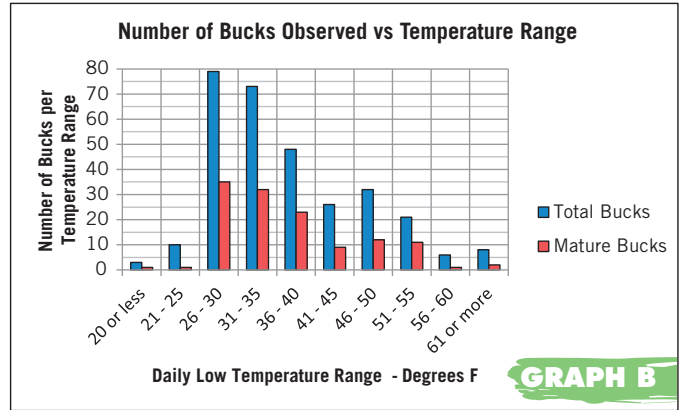
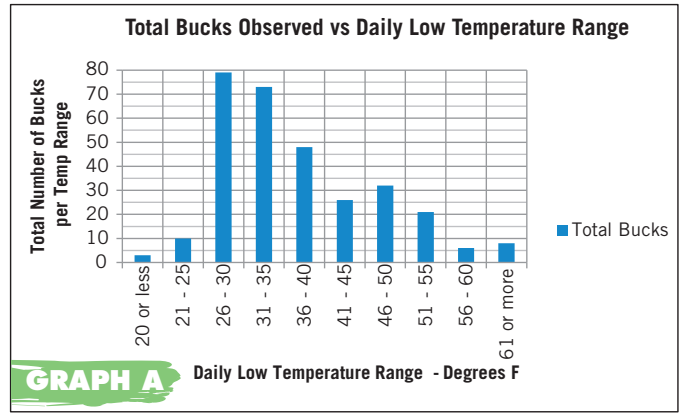


SPAN THE ENTIRE RUT

With all of my cameras in place and operating properly, I began the buck-movement study on Oct. 20, 2008, and concluded it on March 20, 2009. The study spanned a 5-month period that included the pre-rut, seeking, chasing, breeding and post-rut periods. More than 300 buck data points were amassed. For each "buck observation data point," the date, time and relative age-class of each observed buck was carefully recorded. Regarding relative-age class, the most accurate method was to segregate the buck data points into two age classifications: immature for 1½- to 2½-year-old bucks and mature for all bucks identified as 3½ years or older.

The data was then sliced, diced and sorted to see what it might yield. Some of the findings are quite surprising and enlightening, while others are in conformance with conventional deer wisdom. While I do not consider the results of this study to be revolutionary from the standpoint of deer science, it definitely indicates buck-movement tendencies that are directly applicable to my hunting property, which should be easily extrapolated to other properties, at least regionally. My buck-movement data was compared to various weather and other parameters that were downloaded from the National Weather Service and U. S. Naval Observatory web sites.

According to the author's data on buck movement, you'd better be in your stand when cool to cold weather arrives during the rut.



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Trail cameras were set up along scrape lines after bucks began scraping prior to the onset of the rut.

Throughout the entire rut sequence, weather overall was found to be the single, largest factor affecting buck movement. I was able to isolate and analyze buck movement as it related to rain events — which usually preceded cold fronts — daily low temperature, daily high temperature, daily percentage of cloud cover and average daily wind speed.

MORNING LOW TEMPERATURE

I compared daily buck movement with the corresponding daily low temperature, as recorded by the National Weather Service, and found that there was actually a prominent sweet spot for overall buck movement. Fully half of all observed buck movement occurred on days when the morning low ranged from 31° to 40°, with 70% of all buck movement corresponding to days with a morning low temperature below 46°. I was quite surprised to find that only 4% of the observed buck movement occurred below 31°. In other words, cool to cold mornings triggered good buck movement, but extreme cold had the opposite effect. I also found that only 5% of daily observed buck movement occurred on days with a low temperature of 61° or higher.

DAILY HIGH TEMPERATURE >



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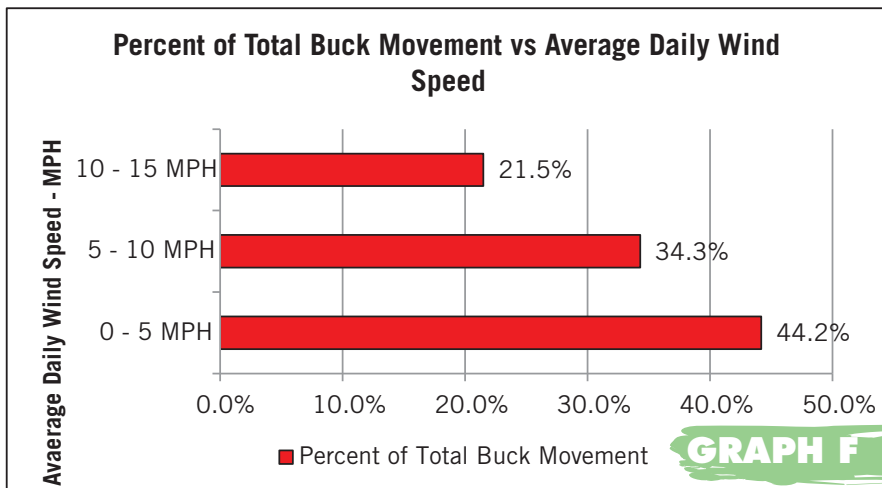
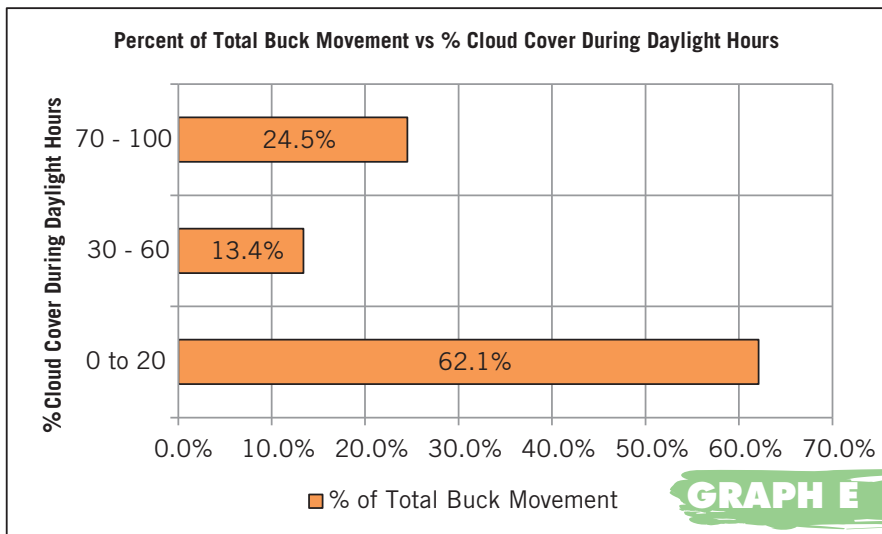
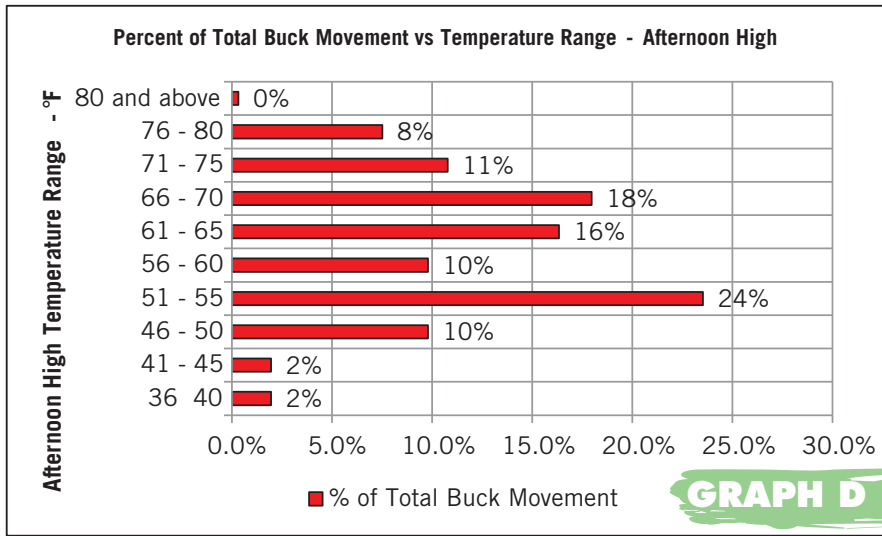


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DAILY HIGH TEMPERATURE

The daily high temperature by itself was found overall to not be nearly as useful a predictor of daily buck movement as the daily low temperature.

PERCENT CLOUD COVER

Cloud cover, or lack thereof, equates roughly to barometric pressure. A lack of cloud cover is an indicator of a rising barometer or higher barometric pressure, while cloudy conditions indicate a falling or lower barometric pressure. In this study on my property, fully 62% of all observed buck movement occurred when the daily average cloud cover ranged from 0 to 20%. Cold “bluebird” days after frontal passage definitely seemed to favor increased buck movement.

AVERAGE DAILY WIND SPEED

As one might expect, 78% of my observed buck movement occurred when the average daily wind speed did not exceed 10 mph. Slightly less than half of all buck movement was observed when the average wind speed did not exceed 5 mph.

PRECIPITATION

Rainfall events were observed to definitely suppress buck movement, with buck activity coming to an almost complete halt during periods of heavy precipitation. ■



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

The author was able to pattern buck movements and how they related to weather conditions by studying more than 300 trail-cam photos.



WHAT DID I LEARN?

- There was a morning low-temperature sweet spot of 26° to 40°, where fully 66% of buck movement occurred.
- At 25° and below, buck movement dropped way off.
- Buck movement vs. high temperature was less defined, but only 4% of observed buck movement occurred with a daily high of 45° or lower.
- Fully 62% of buck movement occurred with 0 to 20% cloud cover. Bluebird days are best.
- Only 21% of buck movement occurred on days with average wind speeds of 10 to 15 mph or higher.
- In conclusion, with time being a precious commodity, I adjusted my hunting habits to be in the field when my chances for seeing bucks were highest. Not everything I learned was necessarily in synch with supposed conventional wisdom, but at the same time, a day in the woods beats a day elsewhere — whether bucks are moving or not. ■

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STICKS AND STRINGS

Sammy Romano

COVID & ARCHERY HUNTING

YOU'LL NEED TO REALLY PLAN AHEAD THIS SEASON TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first quarter of 2020 saw perhaps the greatest changes to the way we live our lives in the United States.

The shutdown of businesses, both nationally and worldwide, affected nearly every aspect of our lives, especially as consumers. Shortages of raw materials and missing employees led to much-longer lead times in the manufacturing of many products. This was very evident in the archery industry, which faced the double-edged sword of reduced supply, as well as a huge increase in demand.

Most archery products, including bows, crossbows and accessories, were affected, with lengthy back orders the norm. Especially hit hard were arrow manufacturers and custom string builders, with lead times of often up to several months.

THE EARLY BIRD....

As is often the case, success favors the well-prepared, and these supply issues were living proof of that old adage. Archers who had regularly maintained their bows' strings and had an ample supply of arrows and broadheads were able to capitalize on the extra time afforded in some cases by fewer hours of work, by shooting their bows or hunting more often.

Those who rode their strings until they were unravelling or broken and brought them to bow shops the customary 3 weeks before the season opened were left waiting for strings that often took several months to arrive, forcing them to hunt with questionable equipment — if at all. Many hunters had to tune and sight their bows in mid-season because they ran out of arrows or broadheads, both stressful and time consuming.

Both retailers and consumers will have to adjust their buying habits to avoid this situation in the future, but we are still in a huge hole when it comes to product availability. I think it will be well into 2022 before things seem at all normal again. As a



Sammy Romano

retailer, nothing is more frustrating than a customer trying to spend money with you and not being able to obtain the products they wish to purchase. We have increased both our order quantities, as well as our forecast lead times, to try to get ahead of these issues. That being said, the consumer still plays a large part in the scheme of things.

As a bowhunter, here are several things you can do to avoid being inconvenienced by high demand and short supply. First and foremost, plan as far ahead as possible. Bring your bow or crossbow in to have it checked over or serviced right away, so it will be ready for fall hunting seasons. That way, if there are any unforeseen issues that require parts, you are allowing plenty of time for



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

OPPOSITE PAGE: Bowhunters probably shouldn't expect to see pre-COVID inventories at their favorite bow shop until sometime in 2022. **BELOW:** Manufacturing slowdowns dating to the spring of 2020 left shelves empty of many archery accessories.



those parts to arrive.

When purchasing arrows, lighted nocks, and broadheads, buy **TWICE** as many as you think you will need. Arrows and broadheads are not perishable, and you will eventually — hopefully — use them anyway. Once you find an arrow/broadhead combination that flies well from your bow setup, it pays to have plenty of them, because these are the foundation of your tune. The last thing you want is to have to retune and resight mid-season. Again, I predict these issues will continue through the winter, and the middle of hunting season is no time to need “a few more arrows”.

If you have your bow in for service or items on order, don't call the shop every day to “check on it.” The retailer or service center is already doing everything they can to get your bow back to you or items you wish to purchase in stock. They only get paid when they deliver, so they are trying their hardest. Calling constantly only further stresses the situation by tying up an employee who could be working on the other end to find inventory or do repairs. Remember, we are all in this together, let's work together to make the best of a tough situation and get everybody into the field this year. ■

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GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

A nice bass from a lake with an undisturbed shoreline and ample woody cover.



FISH STORIES, ALTERNATE FACTS

STUDIES SHOW HOW HABITAT CHANGES AFFECT DIFFERENT FISH POPULATIONS

When I taught fisheries management at Mississippi State, I used what I called “fish stories” to convey fundamental principles of fisheries management.

The practice of fisheries management — and thus the teaching — is based on the outcomes of well-designed research studies. My so-called “fish stories” were research studies, but they had a little flair or maybe a surprise twist like a detective story.

LITTLE ROCK LAKE

One of my favorite fish stories is a study conducted by University of Wisconsin researchers to evaluate the importance of shoreline woody cover to a simple fish-

ery consisting primarily of largemouth bass and yellow perch.

Little Rock Lake is shaped like a Figure-8, with two basins joined by a narrow connection. The lake has no shoreline development and is closed to public access and private development. The two basins were isolated by a barrier installed at the narrow connection that prevented any fish movement between basins. Seventy-three percent of logs greater than 4 inches in diameter were removed per mile of shoreline in the treatment basin. No logs were removed from the other (reference) basin.

In the two years before wood removal, bass fed primarily on yellow perch, and yellow perch fed on aquatic invertebrates

such as insect larvae, snails and crayfish living on the bottom or on the woody substrates in both basins. Forage of terrestrial origin was less than 12% of bass diets in both basins.

Biologically, Little Rock Lake is a northern version of a Mississippi farm pond stocked with bass and bream; the bream feed on invertebrates, bass feed on the bream.



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.

In the two years after wood removal, perch were less than 14% of the bass diet, and terrestrial-origin prey increased to 51% to 55% percent of the bass diet in the treatment basin. In the reference basin, the proportion of yellow perch in the bass diet decreased in the first year after wood removal and then increased. Consumption of terrestrial prey by bass did not change.

The abundance of perch declined sharply in the treatment basin but increased in the reference basin after wood removal.

Growth of bass was slightly greater in the treatment basin than the reference basin before wood removal. After wood removal, growth of bass in the treatment basin declined to less than in the reference basin.

The simple conclusion from this well-designed study: when you remove the habitat that provides both food (the invertebrates living on the woody material) and shelter for the primary prey, both the prey (yellow perch) and predator (bass) collapse.

Why did the researchers remove 73% of large wood from the reference basin? Ah, the twist: this removal reduced the amount of shoreline woody cover to the average amount of wood that remains on the shorelines of similar Wisconsin lakes that have moderate shoreline development.

THE ALTERNATE FACT

A similar study was recently conducted in five small lakes in Ontario, Canada, to evaluate the effect of wood removal on simple fish assemblages dominated by brook trout. The lakes were protected from fishing and had similar amounts of shoreline woody cover before the study.

All wood was removed from 50% of the shoreline in three lakes (treatment lakes) and two lakes were left unaltered (reference lakes). The fish communities were monitored for two years before wood removal and 10 years after wood removal.

Fish biomass and production did not differ between the treatment and reference lakes before and after wood removal, suggesting removing a large amount of woody cover had little effect on the fish communities and clearly refuting the results of the Wisconsin study

Although, like all field experiments, many uncontrolled variables are in play and can influence outcomes. But the big difference between the studies: Little

Rock Lake had only a small amount of aquatic vegetation, whereas the lakes in the Ontario study had abundant aquatic vegetation that would provide substrate for attachment for invertebrates and shelter for small fishes. Indeed, aquatic macrophytes tended to be a more preferred habitat than the woody habitat. Removing the wood had a negligible effect on the habitat.

THE MORAL

The fundamental principle conveyed by these two “fish stories” is that habitat matters. What ecologists call “complex habitat” — habitats with a lot of surface area and interstices — benefits fish production. The increased surface area provides abundant substrate for growth of algae and the aquatic invertebrates that

feed on it. The interstices provide refuge from predation for forage fish.

Both wood and aquatic vegetation provide complex habitat, but aquatic vegetation does not grow in all lakes. In these lakes, woody material is especially important to sustain fish populations and fish production.

The source of woody material in lakes is trees on the shoreline that die and fall into the water. Thus, the health of fisheries depends on landowners to leave shoreline woody vegetation intact. ■

Unfortunately, this is a common site at Pickwick Lake. Clearing trees not only reduces the amount of woody cover but, in this case, leaves this steeply sloping shoreline vulnerable to erosion.



LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman



Sam McCarroll of Slidell holds a nice-sized speckled trout after it bit on a Matrix X-Shad "Croaker" soft plastic while on the water with Chas Champagne.

MATRIX X-SHAD CROAKER

CHAMPAGNE'S LATEST LURE IS DEAD RINGER FOR SPECKS' FAVORITE SUMMER MEAL

Anglers fishing for speckled trout along the Gulf coast know what to turn to when June turns to July: A live croaker or something that looks like a croaker.

Chas Champagne, who has spent many of his 38 years targeting speckled trout, has just the answer for the latter. The co-owner of Dockside Bait & Tackle who is well known for his Matrix line of soft plastics, feeds speckled trout the new Matrix X-Shad Croaker. It's made to catch yellowmouths — big speckled trout — when they are spawning.

"This is a specific design for Gulf coast fishermen for the middle of the summer, because croaker are some of the most sought-after baitfish," Champagne said.

There's more to it than speckled trout craving a meal of croaker. While he admittedly isn't a scientist, Champagne said he has heard often that croaker eat

speckled trout's eggs during the spawn.

"That's why they hate them? Who knows?" Champagne asked.

NATURAL IMAGE

The 3-inch Matrix X-Shad Croaker is the natural follow-up to the lure manufacturer's Matrix X-Shad, introduced in 2020, known for presenting "a natural image, like we peeled the skin off a fish" and painted on a soft plastic, as he said.

Champagne believed he had the next big thing in soft plastics last spring when he introduced the Matrix X-Shad. He was spot on. He's confident his company has the "real" next big thing. He won't get an argument from the hundred or so saltwater fishermen who got their hands on about 1,000 bags of Matrix X-Shad Croaker late last year. Unfortunately, supply was limited at that time of the release because of pandemic-related issues.

"They liked them a lot," Champagne

said. "By, far they are the most popular things we have right now, and coming into summer everyone wants it."

Dockside Bait & Tackle had a couple thousand bags on hand in March. Champagne declared that the company should be able to keep up, and that many more pieces were expected to keep up with demand.

"They won't last long, but at least we can keep the manufacturing going now," he said.

Original Matrix X-Shads looked like menhaden (pogeyes), mullet and glass minnows, but Champagne had something else in mind.



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.



A COVID HOLD

“When I decided to do the croaker one, I wanted to do it as soon as I made the X-Shad, but COVID put everything on hold,” he said. “That’s really the only one I was interested in, because croaker are such a hot commodity. In my opinion, that’s the closest replica of a croaker that I’ve ever seen.”

Attaining that genuine croaker image took some doing. Docksider Bait & Tackle packed several freshly caught croaker in dry ice and shipped them to the designers in Guatemala.

“Those people in the factory had never seen a croaker. In order to replicate it, they had to see (one),” he said.

Apparently, the designers studied and

learned well, because they nailed it right away. Their first, physically hand-painted job was on the money in prototypes Champagne received.

Just to make certain, there was plenty of field testing before the first substantial shipment was sent to Louisiana. The croaker paint job got a thumbs-up from Champagne and his business partner, Steve Wicks of Slidell, La.

While he hasn’t been able to fish with them very often, Champagne’s biggest speckled trout on a Matrix X-Shad Croaker has been a 22-inch fish.

BOTTOM-BOUNCING

The X-Shad Croaker is perfect for nearshore oil rigs, where he bounces the faux croaker along the bottom on a ¾- or

½-ounce Golden Eye jighead, or in the deep passes of the Rigolets, particularly around the bridges, where he puts the bait on a ½-ounce jighead. If he’s targeting fish over an oyster reef, he downsizes to a ¼-ounce model.

“The way we make our lures, when you put it on a jighead, (it) makes it look like a real fish. When you put this X-Shad on the jighead, it comes to life,” he said.

Like a real croaker. ■

For more information about the Matrix X-Shad Croaker and other Matrix products, call 985-707-9049 or visit www.matrixshad.com.

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**LIMITED QUANTITIES
WHEN THEY'RE GONE,
THEY'RE GONE!**

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope

Dolphin, aka Mahi-Mahi, are found throughout the Gulf of Mexico and the south Atlantic Ocean. They are aggressive, fast-growing and fast-swimming predators that are a favorite of anglers.



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: MAHI-MAHI (AKA DOLPHIN)

COLORFUL, TASTY FISH ARE AMONG THE FASTEST SWIMMING AND FASTEST-GROWING SPECIES YOU'LL EVER RUN INTO

Mahi-Mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*) are some of the most colorful fish in the sea. Their long, slender bodies are brightly colored in blues, greens and yellows. Their vibrant colors are very noticeable when the fish is underwater and immediately upon being caught, but they fade quickly once in the fish box. Death is not kind, leaving them a dull yellowish-brown to olive green color.

These fish have a single dorsal fin that runs almost the entire length of their backs, starting above the eye and ending just in front of the tail. They have extremely forked tails. Their eyes are small and almost in line with their mouths.

Mahi-Mahi are often called dolphin-fish or dolphin, and are not related to

porpoises, which are also often called dolphins. Anglers call the smaller ones peanuts or bailers. They call adult males bulls, thanks in part to the blunt, aggressive looking forehead on bigger males. Large females are often called cows. They have a much more rounded head than bulls. Big fish are also referred to as “gaffers” because they must be landed with a gaff, instead of “bailed” at the stern like smaller fish

Dolphins are found throughout the open ocean in tropical and subtropical waters. Their population is abundant in the western Atlantic from Nova Scotia to Argentina, in the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Caribbean Sea.

The name Mahi-Mahi is often spelled as Mahi mahi, mahi-mahi, or mahimahi. Other nicknames for the fish include

chicken dolphin and green dolphin. In some parts of the world, they are called dorado, which can be confusing because a popular freshwater fish species in some countries is also called dorado.

SELECTIVE DIET? NO!

Mahi-Mahi eat a wide variety of food. If it swims and is small enough to fit in its mouth, it's fair game, and that includes smaller Mahi-Mahi. The variety of their diet is matched by the number of predators that eat them. Especially when



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.

Mitchell Prokasy caught this nice Mahi-Mahi on baitcasting tackle.

small, they are preyed upon by just about every other fish that's bigger. It's not uncommon for anglers to catch some with holes pierced through them, presumably by billfish chasing them.

Humans also enjoy eating Mahi-Mahi. Aside from putting up a great fight on rod and reel, they are great eating.

These are fast-growing fish. A 1-year-olds typically weigh about 15 pounds, but some have been known to grow as big as 32 pounds in their first year. A 4-year-old dolphin is usually around 75 pounds. They are also prolific breeders, and they spawn throughout the entire year. Females only 8 inches long will participate in at least one spawning cycle before they are a year old.

Anglers catch a lot of Mahi-Mahi around offshore grass lines and other floating debris, often by casting spoons, jigs or topwater lures. Trolling is another popular way to catch them. Billfish anglers often catch them while trolling big lures for marlin and sailfish.

Louisiana's state record Mahi-Mahi is a 71.25-pound brute in June 1976 by Robert Prest IV. Mississippi's state-record involves two fish that weighed 62 pounds each. One was caught in 1981 by D.L. Siegel and the other by Leo Muldoon in 1985.

The world-record Mahi-Mahi was caught off the coast of Costa Rica in September 1976. It weighed 87 pounds. ■



ESCORT 22LR

With small-game seasons approaching in a handful of months, it's time get that rimfire rifle that's been gathering dust in your gun cabinet back in shape — or replace it with the latest.

Hatsan, the Arkansas-based company that manufactures shotguns and high-level air rifles, has entered the rimfire market with a bolt-action .22 rifle, simply named the 22LR.

The little rifle, which is only 41 inches long and weighs 6.1 pounds, comes in two stocks — Turkish walnut and synthetic — and with some great features at an affordable price. It has classic, functional lines.



The 22LR has a hard chrome-plated steel alloy receiver and barrel, plus a smooth, chrome-plated bolt. It comes with 5- and 10-round magazines to suit the squirrel hunter or just a farm boy or girl out plinking or on the range. It also features studs for the addition of a sling. The receiver has dovetail grooves for scope mounting.

MSRP: \$219-\$249.

For more info, visit: escortshotgunsusa.com



NOSWEAT CAP LINER

I have a couple of favorite caps I wear fishing, and they have something in common; they are a bit stained where the bill meets the cap, and they all have a lingering, ahem, aroma: sweat.

My next "fishing cap" won't have those problems. The reason: NoSweat's cap liners: disposable, moisture-wicking performance liners that stick inside any hat, cap or visor. The patented SweatLock technology is engineered to instantly absorb sweat, keeping the cap's material dry and odor-free — and free of any of

those aforementioned stains.

That is a big help if you wear eye-glasses, as sweat won't fog them up, and it won't find a way down your forehead into your eyes to sting.

The liners have a peel-and-stick adhesive that attaches them to the inside of the cap's crown. No only will the liner absorb sweat, it will wick it away from the head, keeping you drier.

MSRP: \$9.99 (pack of three)

For more info, visit: www.nosweatco.com

PLANO FIELD LOCKER ELEMENT BOW CASE

Flying somewhere to hunt something that's not among your normal targets or just rolling down the highway toward your regular tree stand, you can protect your compound bow from the rigors of travel with Plano's new Field Locker Element compound bow case.

The Field Locker Element has Easy-Glide wheels for dragging it through the airport, and the case is airport-approved. It features reinforced, molded construction, watertight seals that feature a Dri-Loc gasket similar to the Field Locker rifle series cases, double-density foam and industrial, draw-on latches.

The case is tough enough to meet or exceed Mil-Spec requirements, so it will accept padlocks, remain dustproof and waterproof, and has room inside for accessories including arrows and

arrowheads. Interior dimensions are 44x15x6.4 inches. Included is a pressure-relief valve that will handle pressure changes at any altitude.

MSRP: \$219.99

For more info, visit: www.planosynergy.com/new-products/





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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, 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 to your exact location, quarry, and even weather. Too many features to list here, including making your own App. For more details, please call us or visit our web site (see below).

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2021 JUL		BEST DAYS		LUNAR PERIODS				MOON PHASE	
THU	FRI	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	VALUE	MOON RISE	MOON SET	MOON PHASE
Thu 1	Fri 2	██	██	██	██	59	1:01 AM	1:08 PM	Half
Fri 2	Sat 3	██	██	██	██	50	1:27 AM	2:05 PM	Half
Sat 3	Sun 4	██	██	██	██	47	1:53 AM	3:01 PM	Half
Sun 4	Mon 5	██	██	██	██	48	2:19 AM	3:58 PM	Half
Mon 5	Tue 6	██	██	██	██	50	2:48 AM	4:55 PM	Apogee
Tue 6	Wed 7	██	██	██	██	61	3:21 AM	5:53 PM	Half
Wed 7	Thu 8	██	██	██	██	72	3:58 AM	6:50 PM	Half
Thu 8	Fri 9	██	██	██	██	83	4:41 AM	7:45 PM	High
Fri 9	Sat 10	██	██	██	██	89	5:30 AM	8:37 PM	New
Sat 10	Sun 11	██	██	██	██	78	6:25 AM	9:24 PM	Half
Sun 11	Mon 12	██	██	██	██	68	7:25 AM	10:05 PM	Half
Mon 12	Tue 13	██	██	██	██	57	8:27 AM	10:42 PM	Half
Tue 13	Wed 14	██	██	██	██	50	9:31 AM	11:15 PM	Half
Wed 14	Thu 15	██	██	██	██	49	10:35 AM	11:45 PM	Half
Thu 15	Fri 16	██	██	██	██	47	12:44 PM	12:15 AM	Half
Fri 16	Sat 17	██	██	██	██	49	1:50 PM	12:44 AM	Half
Sat 17	Sun 18	██	██	██	██	57	2:59 PM	1:16 AM	Half
Sun 18	Mon 19	██	██	██	██	45	4:10 PM	1:52 AM	Half
Mon 19	Tue 20	██	██	██	██	38	5:23 PM	2:33 AM	Half
Tue 20	Wed 21	██	██	██	██	47	6:33 PM	3:22 AM	Half
Wed 21	Thu 22	██	██	██	██	57	7:37 PM	4:20 AM	Perigee
Thu 22	Fri 23	██	██	██	██	67	8:33 PM	5:25 AM	Low
Fri 23	Sat 24	██	██	██	██	71	9:19 PM	6:35 AM	Full
Sat 24	Sun 25	██	██	██	██	61	10:31 PM	7:44 AM	Half
Sun 25	Mon 26	██	██	██	██	51	11:01 PM	8:51 AM	Half
Mon 26	Tue 27	██	██	██	██	42	11:28 PM	10:56 AM	Half
Tue 27	Wed 28	██	██	██	██	38	11:54 PM	11:54 AM	Half
Wed 28	Thu 29	██	██	██	██	40	12:20 AM	12:52 PM	Half
Thu 29	Fri 30	██	██	██	██	42			Half
Fri 30	Sat 31	██	██	██	██	49			Half
Sat 31		██	██	██	██	60			Half

25 50 75 AVERAGE

For more, visit primetimes2.com

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

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

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