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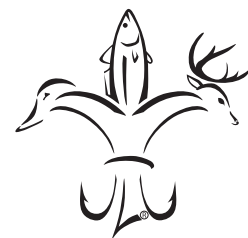


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POP THE TOP FOR FALL TROUT



14
COUNTING DOWN TO
OPENING DAY



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SPORTSMAN

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High-school student Matt Adcock of White Oak arrowed this great Smith County buck on Oct. 2. Photo courtesy Matt Adcock.



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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.

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE IN NOVEMBER? DEER, DUCKS, BASS, TROUT ARE ALL ON OUTDOORS MENU THIS MONTH

Shortly after dawn, I launched my Stealth 1200 buck boat into the murky flooded waters of Mahannah WMA in search of high ground and deer. I'd set my sights on one area of the WMA that might still have dry land. Amazingly, I encountered thousands of ducks in the flooded fields and hardwood bottoms from the recent rains and rising floodwaters.

As I maneuvered through the flooded fields and timber, mallards and wood ducks surrounded me on all sides. Most of the ducks swam to the side as I passed within 30 to 40 yards of them. The sound was like something out of a duck preserve, as thousands of mallards were sounding off, thrashing the water and feeding at the same time.

Soaking in the magnificent scene, I reveled in the sights and sounds and the opportunity to experience such a wonderful moment outdoors. Not another soul was in the area; I was alone in the outdoors. The solitude was broken only by the sound of wildlife and an occasional, distant shotgun blast.

Two hours after launching the boat, I hit pay dirt in the form of dry land. Twenty minutes later, I spotted a buck with a tall rack trailing two does. I raised my rifle and took aim as the buck disappeared behind a tree and squeezed the trigger as he came out the other side. The buck weighed 210 pounds and had nine points and a 20-inch spread, my biggest public-land buck at the time.

Two days later, we went back and had a wonderful day duck hunting. The ducks were still there by the thousands, thanks to unseasonably wintry weather and flood waters. I was blessed to harvest a trophy buck and many mallards on the same WMA in the same week.

November is a time when most hunters head back to the woods, waters and sloughs in search of deer, ducks, rabbit, quail and doves. Anglers will experience some of the year's best fishing after the October and November cool-down, when fish become active and feed heavily in anticipation of the coming winter.

No matter what your preferred fish or game of choice, the

bountiful woods and waters of Mississippi are teeming with fish and wildlife, and lots of opportunities abound.

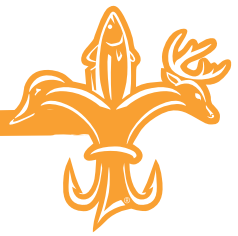
If ducks are on your mind, read my public-land waterfowl forecast; you'll learn about some of the best public lands the state has to offer. I have hunted and fished on many of these public lands throughout my life and harvested an abundance of ducks as well. Biologists give tips on the best spots in their regions across all of Mississippi.

Writer David Hawkins covers November's magic as it applies to deer hunting during one of our favorite months to hunt. Hawkins is a veteran of many deer seasons and has harvested an untold number of deer from all areas of the state over a lifetime of chasing the wily white-tailed deer.

Fall is one of the best times to catch bass, and the fishing can be red hot from Gulf Coast waters to the many creeks, streams, sloughs, rivers and larger impoundments across the state, along the Mississippi River and up to Pickwick Lake. John Felsher discusses technique for catching fall bass and covers some of the best ways to locate and catch bass in freshwater lakes and streams.

Felsher also covers topwater fishing for speckled trout, a real saltwater prize. He writes about some favorite topwater lures and techniques with which anglers have had success during the fall. There's hardly anything more fun than catching specks during the fall and loading the boat with tasty trout fillets.

Kinny Haddox's feature "Antlers 'R Us" covers some of the basics of preparation for taxidermy; how to handle deer after the kill and before getting him to the taxidermist. Preserving the buck of a lifetime begins at the moment of the kill and continues until you drop him off at the taxidermist. It can mean the difference between a gorgeous mount, or one less than desirable. He also shares tips that one taxidermist has gathered from the hunters who regularly bring him trophy bucks to mount. ■



WHITE OAK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT NAILS HUGE SMITH COUNTY TROPHY BUCK

Matt Adcock watched a group of bachelor bucks feeding across an acorn bottom and spotted two mature bucks. One stood out due to his size and the size of his antlers.

Adcock, who lives in White Oak, didn't have to think twice about shooting the buck when it finally got into range. A student at Simpson County Academy in Mendenhall, he drew his bow and waited until the right moment.

"Thwack!" sounded the Swacker broadhead as it smacked the deer's vitals a split second after Adcock's release. His aim was true; he had remained calm during the moment of truth.

Adcock was rewarded with a 13-point Smith County buck — a main-frame 10-pointer with three splits that weighed better than 180 pounds.

"I spotted the buck on my trail camera last year; he was an 11-point, and he had a hole in him," Adcock said. "One of the neighbors may have shot him last year. When he showed up on my camera this year, he had much more mass and was noticeably bigger. I patterned him for a week or so and finally decided to go after him."

The buck was frequenting a hardwood bottom with another mature 8-pointer and a couple of smaller bucks. Adcock got in his stand right about noon on Oct. 2 and stayed until dark.

"I saw the other bucks that had been with the bigger buck but never saw him come through," Adcock said. "I got down from my stand right at dark and walked toward the field on my way out and came face to face with him at 30 yards, but it was just too late to shoot. I wasn't able to see him clearly enough to shoot or take a chance at wounding him."

Oct. 3, a Sunday, was a day of reckoning for the young hunter, but he didn't have a clue how it was going to turn out.

"I got in there the next afternoon, and the other bucks came in. I spotted my target buck at about 100 yards, feeding on acorns as he fed my way," Adcock said. "The buck was traveling through a pinch-point in the acorn flat with a pine thicket on one side and a thick, overgrown field on the other."

The buck made its way towards Adcock like it was on an invisible string. The moment of truth came as it walked into an opening at 27 yards.

"I let the arrow fly, and the buck ran away, out of my sight, at about 70 yards,"

Adcock said. "I called my dad and told him what had happened, and he said to get Heath to help me look for the deer since he was close by. We didn't want to spook the deer and push him further away if he was still alive."

Heath Walters of Taylorsville has a prize chocolate Lab, Gage, a well-known tracking dog that has recovered many deer that escaped hunters.

"We waited until about 8:30 and took Gage up there, and Heath turned him loose," Adcock said. "The dog picked him up quick and found him in a few minutes; the buck was already dead. As it turned out, he fell dead just past the last spot I saw him, 75 yards from the kill zone."

The broadhead had cut a massive hole in the buck on the way through, and the blood trail was so big there was really no need for a tracking dog, but it's better to be safe than sorry. ■



Mississippi hunters in 24 counties can hunt turkeys with the permission of permitted landowners from Oct. 15-Nov. 15.

TURKEY HUNTING EXCITING IN FALL



Photo by Mike Giles

Easing slowly through a hardwood bottom, I topped a rise on a ridge, and the woods exploded with wings flapping and turkeys shrieking and making all manner of commotion and unearthly sounds. I was startled by a flock of wild turkeys flushing in all directions, and it took me quite a few minutes to settle down and get my wits back.

I sat down and waited for the woods to calm down so I could resume deer hunting. In a few minutes, turkeys started calling from all directions, calling to the other turkeys using kee-kees and lost calls. It seemed like every turkey in the flock was sounding off.

I copied one of the hens with my natural voice and sent out a high-pitched lost call of my own. I was answered by turkeys from every direction. As young birds sent out high-pitched kee-kees, the older, raspy hens and gobblers responded with lost calls.

I kept calling, and they kept answering as they closed in on my position. It didn't take long before the whole flock appeared around me and assembled on an acorn flat before moving off. It was the first time I'd busted a flock and called them back. It took place near Daleville many years ago.

What I learned that day was textbook in calling up fall turkeys, and it has served me well in the years since. Although we didn't have a fall season at the time, what I learned back then has led to successful fall turkey hunting trips.

On another fall deer hunt in the midwest, I called up a flock of 80 hens while waiting on a buck to pass by. There were obviously many more in the area, but when the bucks started running does by me, I quit fooling with the turkeys and eventually took a nice 8-pointer that morning.

After harvesting my buck, I borrowed a shotgun and went turkey hunting. I had two either-sex tags and was gung-ho to call up a Thanksgiving gobbler and fill one of my fall tags. At the crack of daylight, the turkeys started welcoming the new dawn, and I quickly sent out a few sultry yelps, clucks and purrs.

The turkeys started flying down in my direction, and before long, I heard gobblers fighting, wings beating and raucous fighting purrs from several birds. I kept calling, and the gobbling and fighting intensified as they got closer.

FALL SEASON DATES, REGULATIONS

Fall turkey season is open by permit only from Oct. 15 to Nov. 15 on private lands in the following counties or portions of counties where the landowner/leaseholder completes a fall turkey hunting application to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks' Jackson Office and receives tags. The fall season bag limit is two turkeys, which may be of either sex.

Delta Unit: Bolivar County west of the main Mississippi River levee and those lands east of the main Mississippi River levee known as 27 Break Hunting Club; Coahoma, Desoto, Issaquena, Tunica, and Washington counties west of the main Mississippi River levee.

North Central Unit: Benton, Lafayette, Marshall, Panola, Tippah, and Union counties.

Southwest Unit: Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Hinds, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Warren, Wilkinson, and Yazoo counties. For further information check out the Department of Wildlife's website at www.MDWFP.com.

Suddenly, I heard a gobbler cluck from over the rise to my left, so I cut my eyes in that direction and saw a longbeard walk behind a tree. I swung the Remington shotgun around and took aim to the left of the small tree just in time to see the old tom peak around the tree with only his head showing.

"Ka-Boom" roared the shotgun, and the gobbler bit the dust, never even twitching.

If you like to hunt gobblers in the spring, then you will love fall hunting, as they are challenging and make for exciting hunts. If you have access to some of the limited hunting available in the state, then try your skill at calling fall turkeys. ■

Fall is a great time to introduce kids to fishing. Mike Giles recently took his first grandson, Zane Michael Gowens, fishing near Collinsville, where he caught his first bass.

CHILD'S FIRST BASS CAN HAVE HUGE IMPACT

GETTING YOUNGSTERS STARTED CAN BE A BIT OF A TEST, BUT A PASSING GRADE WILL BE A BIG STEP IN HIS/HER LIFE

Zane Michael Gowens was born to fish, though he didn't yet know it at the time. He donned a Bass Pro Shops' jersey and posed for a photo with his grandfather before he ever left the hospital.

Fishing comes naturally to his family. His mother, Chandler Giles Gowens, won her first fishing tournament, The Sandy Ridge Bream Tournament for Kids Only, at age 6.

His grandfather won plenty of tournaments, youth and otherwise, and enjoyed fishing with his father, grandfather and uncle. So fish-catching is in the family's blood, passed down for many generations.

So it should have come as no surprise that it comes naturally for Zane, who recently traveled to the Meridian area for his first fishing trip.

There comes a time for every youngster when he or she is introduced to something that has a positive impact on their life. If it is really fun and successful, it could light a spark of desire that becomes a lifelong passion. I didn't want to push my fishing passion on Zane too soon, but I was biding my time until I thought he was ready to be introduced to our fine sport.

With that in mind, we recently went to a small pond that had a pier, just the ticket for a young angler. The lake has a lot of small bream and a few bass and catfish.

Since Zane was pretty small, I rigged up an old Lew's Speed Stick rod for him because it was light and easy to handle. We bought a few crickets, and I put one on the hook and handed him the rod. In just a couple of minutes, a bream hit it and stole the bait. We put on another cricket, and this time, Zane hooked him and quickly pulled him onto the pier.

We were ecstatic and wanted to get a picture with him, but he didn't know about getting too close to that fish. He just didn't know what to think about that. We baited his rod again, and pretty soon, he caught a big bluegill; by then, he was pretty intrigued by this fishing thing and wanted to touch the bream.

We spent about 15 or 20 minutes, and Zane caught quite a few bream and had a ball. He never lost interest, but we decided to knock off for a while. After we got a snack, he checked out the area around the pond, and it was about time to go. As we went to get the rod and crickets from the pier, he didn't want to leave.

"I want to fish some," he said. He grabbed the rod, I put a cricket on, and he pitched it into the water. The cricket floated for a minute, and a dark fish rose up from the depths, sending a wake across the surface as he headed for the wiggling cricket.

"Ka-Whoosh!" The bass struck, and Zane held on for dear life as the bass tried to take the rod away from him. He fought the bass with all his might, but the rod did the trick and wore the



Photo by Mike Giles

bass down. He led the bass to the edge of the pier, and I reached down and grabbed the first bass of his life.

The celebration began; we had a ball taking pictures and watching Zane as he wanted to touch the fish and see what it felt like and what this was all about. His first fishing trip was very fun and memorable. Take a kid fishing this fall and you might just light a spark of fishing desire in a kid's life. ■

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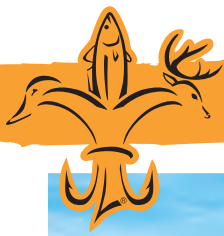
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HUNTING/FISHING SCRAPBOOK



Jace Mcknight, 5, was very proud of this croaker he caught while fishing Graveline Bayou this past June.



Mack James, 10, and Stone Kelly, 12, caught these jack crevalle in Bay St. Louis.



Jeremy Doyle, who moved to Mississippi from Pennsylvania about a year ago, caught his first gar on July 9, 2021, at the Ross Barnett Reservoir spillway. He used a large minnow, and within 5 minutes this gar hit his bait like a freight train. After a 10- to 15-minute fight, he brought this fish in for a few photos and then released it.



Jonathan Malone and his 4-year-old son, Matthew, were fishing at Maynor Creek Water Park in Waynesboro when Matthew caught this nice bass on a Baby Torpedo under a bridge.

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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MOIST SNUFF

MDMR CERTIFIES TWO MORE STATE RECORDS

T From News Reports
he Mississippi Department of Marine Resources certified two state fishing records in September. Rodie Armes, 11, of Pass Christian, set the youth record for cownose ray (*Rhinoptera bonasus*) using conventional tackle with a fish weighing 22 pounds, 11.04 ounces. Joseph Triplett of Biloxi set a new all-tackle record using a spear for red lionfish (*Pterois volitans*) with a fish weighing 2 pounds, 12.98 ounces. ■



Rodie Armes's cownose ray was a state youth record.

Photos courtesy MDMR

An advertisement for STIHL. It shows two men in camouflage gear and orange safety vests standing in a lush green forest. One man is holding a chainsaw. In the background, there is a utility vehicle (UTV) with a STIHL logo on its side. The text below the image reads: 'STIHL IS ALWAYS IN SEASON - GEAR UP FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS. Find the outdoor power equipment you need to take on the outdoors and the expertise to back it up at your authorized local STIHL Dealer. Not sold at Lowe's® or The Home Depot.® Real STIHL. Find Yours at STIHLDEALERS.COM. Lowe's® and The Home Depot® are trademarks of their respective companies. ©2021 STIHL/SSW'.



Joseph Triplett's red lionfish is a state record for a spearfish trophy.

MDWFP REMINDS HUNTERS OF SPECIAL CWD REGULATIONS

MISSISSIPPI DEER CARCASS TRANSPORTATION BAN

Here's a reminder for Mississippi deer hunters that the presence of chronic wasting disease in deer has caused the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks to make some regulation changes aimed at keeping the disease from spreading.

It is unlawful to:

- Import, transport or possess any portion of a cervid carcass originating from any state, territory, or foreign country into Mississippi.
- Transport any portion of a cervid carcass outside from an MDWFP-defined CWD Management Zone.

CWD MANAGEMENT ZONES

North MS Management Zone

Includes Alcorn, Benton, Desoto, Leflore, Marshall, Panola, Pontotoc, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, and Union counties.

Issaquena Management Zone

All portions of Warren County;

All portions of Issaquena and Sharkey counties defined as:

- All areas east of the Mississippi River;
- All areas south of Highways 14 and 16;
- Areas west of the Yazoo River.

REGULATIONS

Carcasses may not be transported outside of any CWD Management Zone. Research has shown that decomposed carcasses of infected animals can also contribute to transmission when prions bind to soil and plant material. Thus, movement of carcasses may introduce CWD into previously uninfected areas. Any harvested deer may be taken directly to a taxidermist or meat processor within the CWD Management Zone. Only these products may leave the a zone:

- Cut/wrapped meat (commercially or privately);
- Deboned meat, or bone-in quarters with no part of the spinal column or head attached;
- Hides with no head attached, finished taxidermy;
- Antlers with no tissue attached;
- Cleaned skull plates (no brain tissue);
- Cleaned skulls (no lymphoid or brain tissue).

Hunters may only transport a deer head outside of a MDWFP-defined CWD Management Zone to a permitted taxidermist participating in the CWD collection program. A CWD sample number must be obtained from the participating taxidermist prior to transporting the deer head outside of the MDWFP-defined CWD Management Zone. This sample number must

accompany the deer head while in transport and be available for inspection by Law Enforcement upon request. The deer head must be delivered to the participating taxidermist within 5 days of receiving the sample number. This does not apply to deer, elk, or other cervids harvested outside of Mississippi.

Supplemental feeding (salt licks, mineral licks and feeders) is banned in all CWD Management Zones. Direct contact with prions is the most effective means of transmitting CWD. Research indicates saliva may have the highest concentration of prions. Thus, to minimize concentration of deer and potential spread of CWD, supplemental feeding is banned within all CWD Management Zones. ■



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COUNTING DOWN TO OPENING DAY

MISSISSIPPI HUNTERS ARE READY FOR THE 'REAL' OPENING DAY OF DEER SEASON: NOV. 20. HERE'S HOW TO PREPARE FOR THAT FIRST MORNING'S HUNT.

■ By David Hawkins

DEER SEASON IS HERE IN ALL ITS GLORY.

Hunters are flocking to Mississippi's fields and forests for an opportunity to harvest one of the 1.45 million white-tailed deer that will be deemed as legal.

Hunters on private land can harbor a reasonable expectation of putting venison in the larder. The same goes for public-land hunters who are willing to put in the time scouting for hot spots of deer activity.

Eclipsed only by Thanksgiving and high-school sports, deer season is the largest November activity, involving all 82 counties. Harvest reports indicate that about 166,000 licensed hunters are involved. No matter the means of harvest — bow, gun or muzzle-loader — there is a season for everyone. Breaking down the seasons is simply a matter of visiting the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks' website, mdwfp.com. The annual Outdoor Digest delivers much of the same information concerning dates and times.

Archery season opened Oct. 1 for most of the state and rolls over into November with the promise of cooler weather, and dependable food sources for both bucks and does. Credit last winter's ice storm or an unusually wet year, but mast crops are promising across the better part of the state. Persimmon trees are loaded, as are dogwood and muscadine.

As wild forbs diminish, these and other soft-mast crops will attract deer. When these foods begin to pass ahead of the first freeze, acorns and food plots will begin to pick up the slack. Hunting available food sources will be a pretty sure bet as the first gun season approaches. All this is to say that bowhunters should take advantage of the ample but ever-changing food sources that deer rely on for subsistence.

WHAT'S UP IN DEER WOODS? >

A good-weather year has provided plenty of natural foods for deer, making them healthy entering the fall and hunting season.



WHAT'S UP IN DEER WOODS?

So, what are deer doing besides eating in early November? Groups of does are traveling together. Fawns are or have lost their spots and are weaned, able to exist on their own without mother's constant supervision. This is a blessing and a curse for both deer and hunter.

Bucks are still traveling in bachelor groups, but some territorial rubbing, pawing and fighting may give the hunter the illusion that the rut is starting early. Don't be fooled; the females decide when the rut starts. Bucks see a rise in testosterone when antlers stop growing and velvet is drying. They are already ready to breed, but does are not too receptive to the idea. For all practical purposes, deer in early November are eating and putting on weight for the coming winter.

Savvy salesmen will have you believe that purchasing expensive supplements, feeds and foodstuffs now will result in bigger racks. It sounds too good to be true, because it is. Antler growth has already stopped. Supplemental feeding seems to have become a euphemism for baiting.


Deer hunters with private land should have food plots in the ground, with good stands starting to be evident. Food plots with a mineral lick, hard-mast trees nearby and what remains

of summer foods, such as honeysuckle, are excellent places to hang a stand. Work days in preparation for the season should have allowed lots of boots on the ground, time to locate bedding areas, food sources and travel corridors.

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE OFFERINGS

Public-land hunters can pretty much do the same thing. A little studying of the available options will turn up vast amounts of land where deer live and feed. Some areas are restricted to draw hunts, while others are wide open from the get-go. What public-land hunting does require is patience and scouting — lots of scouting.

Wildlife Management Areas are typically managed for the maximum available resource for hunters. Food plots are planted; controlled burns and timber harvests keep the landscape ideal for deer and turkey. Stream set-aside areas protect mature mast-producing hardwoods from cutting. A bit of scouting and map-reading can aid the hunter in locating these areas. There is a common misconception that a sea of orange-clad hunters is stalking through the woods all the time. Later in November, during dog season — where legal — that may seem to be the case. As a rule, however, there is more than ample room for anyone wanting a quality hunt to find an area where



Bucks may be starting to get their dander up, but the rut won't kick in until does become receptive.

they can hunt undisturbed.

Youth hunters get the first opportunity to pop a cap at an either-sex harvest. The youth season opens Nov. 6 and remains open until the traditional Opening Day of Nov. 20. Most food plots are in the ground, and scouting cameras are out and recording this season's possible harvest. The weather is usually mild. Do your part to introduce a youngster to deer hunting.

Older hunters get a chance to harvest does with primitive weapons starting on Nov. 8 on private land. There is a good argument for taking antlerless deer early. More food will be available as fall turns into winter. Fewer does will make the buck-to-doe ratio a bit more in favor of the hunter once the rut gets started.

"This is a time of year when I like to hunt food plots," said William McKinley, deer program coordinator for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. "Deer are not as skittish, and there is ample time for watching and learning."

EARLY ON, BE PICKY

It is sound advice to pass on the first deer that step into the green patch. Yearlings and fawns will often precede adults. Waiting allows a hunter to compare sizes, thus avoiding the harvest of an immature animal. Getting a head start on freezer meat is always a good idea. Primitive weapons are defined in the Outdoor Digest and online at mdwfp.com.

Regardless of these early opportunities, the REAL opening day is Nov. 20 in all but coastal counties. Gun season opens in all deer management units that day. It's a morning that compares with Christmas; youth and adults are ripe with anticipation. Months of preparation have been invested for this annual event. I am reminded of an auto-parts store clerk who said, "Aside from a few old women and crippled children, everyone in the community would be deer hunting on opening morning."

With the latest technology, even those may have the chance to hunt.

"I still have sleepless nights at ... camp on opening weekend," said hunter Steve McFarland. "The anticipation is just so great. I don't guess there is a time of the year when deer hunting with my family is not on my mind. We start planning our vacation days around next deer season, before this season is over."

McFarland and his family hunt at a family oriented camp near his childhood home in Kemper County. The camp is on land leased from a timber company and is considered private land.

Dog hunting, that is, hunting deer with dogs before riding the roads later to hunt for the dogs, still has areas of strong support across Mississippi. Still-hunting, however, has gained an ever stronger following over the years. Keeping a pack of deer hounds is an expensive proposition. Food and medical treatment account for hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars. Ethical dog hunters invest in tracking collars and cell phone apps to prevent encroachment onto private property.



Josh Hawkins of Pearl took this buck on the traditional opening day of gun season in 2020. The 2021 opening day is Nov. 20.

DOES EFFORT EQUAL EXECUTION? >

A promotional advertisement for Suzuki Marine. The background is a blue, underwater-themed scene with a boat on the surface. The text reads "Sizzling Hot Deals From Suzuki's Summer SPLASH Sales Event". It features a Suzuki outboard motor, a "5 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY" badge, and a "REPOWER FINANCE" badge with the Suzuki logo and "THE ULTIMATE OUTBOARD MOTOR". Below the badges, it says "5 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY" and "RATES AS LOW AS 5.99% ON NEW SUZUKI OUTBOARDS ON APPROVED CREDIT. (60 MONTHS)". At the bottom, there is a logo for "Tims Marine" with a phone number "504-682-5252" and website "www.tims-marine.com".

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DOES EFFORT EQUAL EXECUTION?

It should come as no surprise that hunter participation was up during the 2021 season. Hunters took to the woods because COVID-19 interrupted their typical work patterns, allowing them more time to hunt. Others saw an opportunity to stock the larder with healthy, nutritious venison. According to McKinley, the deer harvest was up 19½% over the previous season. Total hunter effort increased by 12%. Mutant strains of that same COVID virus could again affect the bottom line this season.

Deer found a good food supply during both summer and fall in most parts of Mississippi. Only those areas with damage from Hurricane Ida may witness lower mast production.

Chronic wasting disease continues to be a problem worthy of



Hunters are urged to submit heads from bucks and does for testing at CWD collection sites such as this one at Caney Creek WMA.

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concern. MDWFP will again have CWD collection centers in various around the state. It is vital that hunters have harvested deer tested or leave the deer's head at one of the collection locations.

"The more information we have, the better we can monitor the location of infected animals and put in place the best management practices to control the spread of this deadly disease," McKinley said.

To find those locations where CWD is present, consult the Mississippi Outdoor Digest or visit mdwfp.com.

Noted outdoor writer Havilah Babcock said it best when he penned the title to his book, "My Health is Better in November."

Mr. Babcock, I think that can be said for many of us. ■



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



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THIS TAXIDERMIST HAS LEARNED
PLENTY ABOUT DEER HUNTING FROM
HIS SUCCESSFUL CUSTOMERS.

ANTLERS 'R' US

■ By Kinny Haddox

It's every deer hunter's dream,

to be surrounded by big bucks, staring them right in the eyes.

It's heart-pounding, looking at not just a trophy of a lifetime, but dozens of them. No, make that hundreds of them.

Fortunately for Chancy Lee Frith, he gets to live that dream every day, and he's not even in the woods. He's in the main shop at K&K Taxidermy in Ragley, La., a small city an hour north of Lake Charles. Frith takes in around 450 trophy deer to mount every year, and last year, that number climbed to 550. That keeps him and his family, plus five full-time employees, busy year-round.

Also, Frith loves to hunt deer himself, and that sometimes makes it tough. As folks bring in their trophies, he can't help but think about the big ones he is seeing on his lease in Louisiana and his family land that borders the Homochitto National Forest north of Woodville, Miss.

"Oh yes, that's pretty tough," he said, "but taking care of our customers always come first. One of the worst cases for me was a couple of years ago; I was after a big 10-point on our lease pretty heavy. I had daylight deer-cam pictures of him and was ready to take him, but I couldn't slip off. The next day, another hunter on our lease came to the shop and told me to come outside and see what he had. It was the big 10-point. I was happy for him, but not for me. I did get to mount him, but that's tough when it's one I wanted so badly."

Frith not only has his own personal knowledge of deer hunting, but he also gleans information from the hundreds of hunters who bring him their trophies. From that, he's come up with some things that can help any hunter be more successful.

"You can find big deer almost anywhere, but to be consistent, I guess the most important thing about finding trophy bucks is management," Frith said. "Two of my regular repeat customers are Trent and Erica Buxton; I've learned so much from them. They always come in and show us pictures of 2- and 3-year-old deer they are watching grow. As they get older, they even give them names. When you keep up with deer like that until they are late 4- or 5-year-old deer, you are going to have some good ones. Throw in minerals and food plots, and you've got consistent big bucks to hunt."



The sheer numbers of trophy racks hanging from the ceiling in Chancy Lee Frith's taxidermy shop in Louisiana is mind-boggling.



Frith is also a big believer in trail cameras. “Some people don’t use them, but trail cameras can give you so much information, like what trails deer are using, what time they are in certain areas and how many bucks and does are using that area,” he said. “It’s especially important when your time in the woods is limited.”

The other major factor that determines success on big bucks is the rut.

“If there is a time you can target big bucks during the season, when you have a good shot at seeing one during daylight hours, it’s the rut,” Frith said. “Look, deer move around fairly freely, but when the first week of bow season hits and the activity in the woods picks up, those deer go nocturnal again — especially older, wiser bucks.

“The one time when you can get them to slip out during daylight after that is when the rut is on and they are chasing does. Keeping up with the rut is about as important a thing as you can do.”

Frith said many deer hunters even schedule vacation during the rut; it shows in his business. About half of the big deer that come into his shop arrive during the rut. The good thing is, if you hunt in more than one area, you can catch the rut more than once.



Kinny Haddox has been writing magazine and newspaper articles about the outdoors in Louisiana for 45 years. He publishes a daily website, lakedarbonnelife.com and is a member of the Louisiana Chapter of the Outdoor Legends Hall of Fame. He and his wife, DiAnne, live in West Monroe.

“The rut down here where I live is usually late October and on up into November through Thanksgiving,” he said. “When it slacks off here, we can go up into Mississippi, and the rut there is mostly December and



Besides mounting hundreds of trophy bucks every year, taxidermist Chancy Lee Frith has learned a little about deer hunting himself.

Don't 'short-cape' your trophy buck

Too much is better than not enough. That applies to a lot of good things in life, and one of them is preparing your trophy deer to take to the taxidermist.

“One of the worst things you can possibly do when you have a trophy deer to be mounted is to not leave enough cape,” taxidermist Chancy Lee Frith said. “So many times, hunters cut the cape off short, and it makes us have to really stretch the skin to cover the form. Even worse, we have to order a smaller form, and the deer looks smaller. Nobody wants that.”

Most people skin their deer head down, hanging by the feet. When you do that, all the weight is hanging down and the deer is stretched tight. If you cut it too short, what looks like enough will slide up toward the head and not be enough. To be safe, he tells hunters to make a ring cut almost all the way back of where the stomach meets the hindquarter.



When getting ready to take a deer head to the taxidermist, make sure you leave as much of the cape as possible.

Rule No. 2 — or really 1A, according to Frith — is to keep your deer cool and covered. Letting the deer get hot makes some of the hair fall out. Letting direct sunlight hit it also deteriorates the quality of the hair and skin within a matter of hours, which both affect the best outcome of the mount. ■

Chancey Lee Frith mounts hundreds of deer heads every year; he said about half of them are taken during the rut, when bucks occasionally let their guard down.

sometimes up into January. Within a half-day drive in several directions, you can find deer rutting activity in different places at different times.”

Learning from others is also important. It has been key to success in business and in hunting for Frith.

“My dad had to work a lot and didn’t get to hunt much, but my uncle Johnny taught me all about deer hunting when I was 15 years old,” Frith said. “He taught me everything I knew about deer hunting.

“The same thing happened when we got into the taxidermy business. I was working construction and fighting a jackhammer all day. My wife, Melanie, and I wanted to have our own taxidermy business. We were honestly a bit scared when we saw how much went into it, but a federal game warden in the area who did taxidermy on the side took time to teach us how to do it right. After about a year of helping him, he told us to get some business cards, that we were ready to go out on our own. It’s been a blessing from God to be able to do this and to meet and work with so many fine people and make sure their outdoor trophies are prepared the right way at a reasonable cost. Our son works with us today, and one day it will be his to continue.” ■



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Bucks along the big, muddy border

Louisiana and Mississippi share a common border — the mighty Mississippi River. They also share good numbers of big-racked deer.

But as a hunter who spends a considerable amount of time in the deer woods of both states, taxidermist Chancy Lee Frith said there are some pretty obvious differences in the way many hunters in the two states hunt.

Frith said one thing that is important in hunting two states is to keep up with all the different rules and regulations, especially specific ones for public lands.

LOUISIANA

Where he hunts in Louisiana, Frith said, it is mostly around pine forests with a few hardwoods. The terrain is flat, and deer lay up in the thickets pretty much all day.

“The obvious things we look for are trails, scrapes and rubs. If you can find fresh tracks on the trails, obviously that’s a good place to hang your stand,” said Frith, who hunts a private lease in Beauregard Parish. “Hunting in the pine woods means you usually have to get pretty close to the deer, either getting a shot on a trail or where they cross a woods road.

“This terrain also makes it a good place to hunt with a boy. The only shots long enough to require a gun are on the edge of clearings or cutovers, that sort of thing. Also, the rut in our part of Louisiana is pretty early, usually around the end of October into November.”

MISSISSIPPI

Frith said the terrain in Mississippi where he hunts is all hardwood ridges with lots of open ground and big, winding creeks. The ridges offer a hunter the chance to sit with his or her back up against a big tree and see long distances below them, just like being in a big stand.

“When we say ‘creek’ in Louisiana, it’s usually something you can walk across, but in Mississippi there are long, wide stretches of creek with sandbars and crystal-clear water. I love to target those,” he said. “The deer come out and cross those areas or just come to into the open there. It seems like the deer there move better and are a little bit more likely to move all day, not just at daylight and dark.”



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Frith hunts there mostly with a rifle and has taken some deer out to 200 to 250 yards, especially on the edge of the creek. He said if you are doing that kind of hunting, make sure your gun is sighted in and you are prepared for that shot.

The Homochitto National Forest covers 191,839 acres; Frith hunts the national forest and family land that borders it. He said it's amazing the number of big deer that you see moving in that area. The rut there is usually a bit later, around December and sometimes into January. ■

How is hunting in Mississippi different from Louisiana? In Mississippi, creeks are real waterways.

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Don't wait until the rain stops to get into your stand; deer will be moving before you leave your truck or camp. Be there before the rain stops.



HUNTING THE RAIN AND WEATHER CHANGES

BE ON STAND BEFORE THE RAIN STOPS AND DEER MOVE

Most hunters don't like hunting during the rain, but it can be a good and productive time to go. You must be prepared and dress for the occasion or it will be unpleasant. Plan to hunt inside shooting houses or blinds; tree umbrellas work well for tree stands.

Vegetation and leaves on the ground will be wet, so your walk in will be silent. The rain will wash away any scent you leave behind entering hunting territory. What you'll discover is that the deer, for the most part, will lock down during the rain.

"I think deer normally bed up during the rain," said hunter Preston Dean of Monticello, Miss. "However, that being said, I do believe on occasion and specifically

during the rut, bucks will move in the rain."

There will be minimal movement, especially if the rain is heavy. But once the rain breaks, deer will be on the move — especially if skies clear. It's one of the best times to be in the field. If you're sitting at camp and wait until the rain stops before getting on your stand, you've waited too long. You'll bump deer on the way in. You've got to be there and wait it out.

"While hunting a few seasons ago, I noticed a spot where I hunt that always had fresh tracks after a rain. One day while hunting, it started to rain, and I headed for that spot. The deer were already there and saw me — I was too late. I think after the rain is best," said Dean.

Plan your hunt with the current weather forecast, and plan to be in the stand when

the rain is predicted to end. Many times in the fall of the year, the rain precedes cold fronts, and a strong, cold front after a rain can yield great results.

One more thing to remember in relations to approaching fronts: it's great hunting after the front has passed and it has turned cooler — it can be just as good as before the weather front.

Deer sense oncoming drastic changes in weather, and it triggers a feeding frenzy.

Whitetails will feed like crazy right before a front moves through, then they bed down during any wind and rain, and they'll come out quickly when the front passes. Plan your hunts with this in mind, and you are sure to be successful. ■

TAKE BETTER OUTDOOR PHOTOS

The proliferation of smart-phone technology has put a capable digital camera in everyone's pocket and made professional-quality digital cameras less expensive. These developments have democratized photography, expanding the Average Joe's ability to capture great images.

But smart-phone cameras and editing software can only do so much. What can you do to improve your pictures? Jordan McEntyre, who specializes in outdoors photography and videography, shares his tips for better wildlife photography.

"It all comes down to knowing how to use your equipment before you enter the woods," McEntyre said. "When the time comes to photograph a deer — or any other animal — you'll often have a split-second to get the shot."

A deer won't wait for you to fumble with your settings.

Learning the settings on your camera will also lead to better quality pictures straight from the camera. This means you'll only have to make small adjustments in post-production.

"You want to capture an image that's true to the eye," he said, "and the way to do that is to control the light sensitivity of your camera."

People can spot a poor image that's been edited into a cartoon.

"One day, you'll be photographing beneath an overcast sky, and the next, you'll be working beneath bright, blue-eyed skies with the sunlight beaming straight down," McEntyre said. "You have no control over lighting in the woods, so it's all about knowing what camera settings are required to produce the best picture in whatever light nature gives you to work with.

"So, you've got to spend as much time behind the camera as you can," McEntyre said. "Get out in the woods and photograph in different light conditions."

FIND WHAT WORKS

Keep a record that includes a description of the light present during a given shoot and the camera settings for each photograph you take. The record will give you a sense of what works and what doesn't.

"You'd be surprised how often a photograph captured with my iPhone is shared more on Instagram than photographs I've taken with my (professional equipment)," McEntyre said. "It can be humbling when

Keep records of the deer photos you take so you'll understand what went right and wrong in different set ups. **INSET:** Whatever camera you use for hunting photos, learn it thoroughly so you'll be better prepared to use it when a big buck appears, dead or alive.



Photos by Jordan McEntyre

it happens, and it just shows that opportunity and a grasp of the fundamentals can matter more than equipment.

TRUST YOUR EYE

People have a natural sense of composition. We have been bombarded with media since birth, and all of it is arranged to suit the eye: the TV shows we watch, the advertisements we see, and the layout of this article in the magazine. Don't be afraid to trust your instincts.

"And post on Instagram every day if you can," McEntyre said. "Pay attention to what gets noticed and what doesn't."

Ditch what doesn't work in favor of what does. ■



HUNGRY SPECKS WILL JUMP ON TOPWATER PLUGS IN NOVEMBER; THEY'RE HUNGRY ENOUGH TO EAT ANYTHING THAT MOVES, AND THESE BAITS MOVE JUST RIGHT.

■ By John N. Felsher

Pinned into a pocket along the shoreline, the mullet never stood a chance, as they futilely leaped for safety. They couldn't escape the vicious, toothy predators slashing at them from all sides. With black/silver and green/silver Top Dogs tied on, we cast into the maelstrom from an extreme distance. Our hefty topwater baits splashed down in the strike zone and barely twitched before they disappeared in a frothy storm of exploding spray as we both hooked up with speckled trout in the 4- to 6-pound class.

"It sure will make the hair stand up on the back of your head when you get a big hit on top from a speckled trout," said guide Scott Simpson of Impulsive Charters in Long Beach. "It's an explosive strike that will bring you out of your shoes if you aren't paying attention."

Besides creating heart-palpitating strikes, large topwaters consistently catch bigger speckled trout than most other natural or artificial baits, with the possible exception of live baitfish. Of course, working smaller topwaters will provoke more action but generally catch smaller trout. Use bigger baits in choppy water and smaller lures in calm conditions.

POP THE TOP FOR FALL TROUT

GO BIG OR GO HOME

“For big trout, I like throwing topwater baits,” said Ronnie Daniels with Fisher-Man Guide Services in Pass Christian. “Anglers can catch big trout on many baits, but topwaters tend to draw strikes from larger fish. They have larger profiles, so smaller fish won’t hit them as much.”

To find big trout that might hit a topwater bait, first look for what specks want to eat. Until a trout reaches about 3 pounds, it mostly eats shrimp. Of course, no trout will resist a live shrimp swimming enticingly past its nose, but giant trout want a big meal without expending too much energy to catch it. They want fishy meals and look for mullet, croaker or menhaden, aka pogies, and other finned prey. A 5-pound trout can easily gulp down a 12-inch mullet and still smack a 6-inch topwater bait with vengeance. Imagine what a 10-pounder can swallow.

“Topwater baits are great to throw when trout prey upon mullets,” said Charlie Thomason of Bayou Charters and Silver Sides Lodges in Hopedale, La. “Speckled trout know that mullet hang on the top of the water. When you throw anything that kind of looks like a mullet, a trout will attack it.”

FIND BAIT FIRST

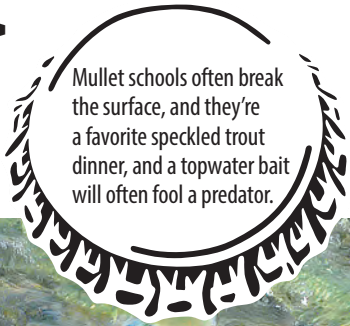
When looking for big trout, first find the prey, particularly agitated or nervous baitfish. Then, offer the trout something that

looks like the prey. Many topwater enticements closely resemble mullet, which often thrust their heads above the water. To a hungry trout, a struggling mullet looks like fillet mignon.

“Go where the bait is,” said Erik Rue with Calcasieu Charter Service in Lake Charles, La. “Bigger trout survive more on mullet, pogies, pinfish and similar prey. Look for big wads of mullet — that’s where the big trout will be — and throw topwaters at them. A speckled trout is a very aggressive fish, especially around other trout.”

Diving birds can mean schooling trout feeding near the surface, although monster specks normally hunt alone or with just a few of their large brethren. Feeding trout also make slicks on the water. When feeding on oily baitfish, snaggle-toothed specks rip their hapless prey apart. The fish oil floats to the surface, forming a sheen that looks a bit like gasoline spilled in the water. For the best results, look for small, emerging slicks because these indicate trout actively feeding on oily baitfish. Since slicks drift with the wind or tides, determine the direction of the flow and get ahead of the slick to intercept the fish.

PICK YOUR POISON >



Mullet schools often break the surface, and they’re a favorite speckled trout dinner, and a topwater bait will often fool a predator.



PICK YOUR POISON

Fishermen can throw many different floating lures, but most saltwater specialists like “walking” or “walk-the-dog” baits.” With brisk wrist flicks of the rod, make the bait “walk” with a scintillating side-to-side action that mimics a wounded bait-fish. Tie walking baits with a loop knot rather than cinch a knot down on the eye of the hook, or use a split ring so the bait can zigzag more freely.

“Mullet spend a lot of time on the surface, and big trout key on that,” Daniels said. “Trout have a predatory instinct. When looking at a topwater bait, they see a profile that resembles a larger prey fish like a mullet. An injured fish is typically going to be up near the surface, swimming with an erratic motion, not in a straight line. A walk-the-dog type bait imitates that struggling baitfish action.”

Most people work walking baits with a constant, zig-zag motion, but the biggest trout might want something different. Try working a bait several feet, then pause so it sits motionless a few seconds. Try different retrieves and speeds to see what works best that day.

“When working a topwater bait, find out what the fish want,” Daniels said. “Sometimes, they want it run fairly quickly, with

almost non-stop movement. Some days, fish are a little more sluggish and want a slower bait, especially when the water turns a little cooler. When working a walking bait, sometimes I make it wobble widely from side to side and work it slower. Sometimes, I pause frequently and let it sit still for a second or two. I experiment with different retrieves and colors to find out what they want. My all-time favorite color is a bone with a slight silver pattern to it.”

GO LONG

Heavy, large-profile baits can be cast long distances, essential for catching giant specks. Strikes from the biggest trout usually occur at the extreme end of a cast. That also makes these lures excellent search baits since they cover so much water.

“Get the bait as far away from the boat as possible and keep quiet,” Rue said. “The person who can cast the farthest will probably get the most bites and biggest fish. Use the wind to make longer casts and for drifting into position. Don’t overuse the trolling motor. People need to be in stealth mode to catch bigger trout. It’s almost like hunting, to an extent.”

Anglers can also fish popping plugs, which displace water with curved blades or noses. When jerked, they create quite a surface commotion. Work poppers slowly. Cast one to a good spot and let it rest a while, then pop it. Keep repeating this retrieve. These baits work best for eliciting opportunity strikes from non-aggressive feeders.

Big fish will often follow a lure quite a distance without striking. Most people who spot a fish would naturally slow

Diving birds such as sea gulls will readily give away the position of trout feeding on schools of baitfish or shrimp.



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.



down or pause the retrieve to let the fish catch up, but a trout doesn't need help running down prey. A baitfish fleeing for its life with a gnarly-toothed speck hot on its tail kicks in turbo mode and starts swimming erratically. Nothing infuriates a hungry predator more than "fast" food trying to get away. Speeding up your retrieve could provoke incredibly violent strikes.

BE PATIENT

When a fish blasts a topwater lure, resist the temptation to set the hook. Trout don't always connect when attacking, particularly when chasing a fast-moving lure. Yanking the rod prematurely could pull the lure out of a fish's mouth. Wait to feel the fish on the line. If the speck doesn't make solid contact the first time, keep moving the bait. That fish didn't go away; it might hit again, or perhaps another spotted predator will take a shot.

"Working a topwater bait requires patience," Simpson said. "I've had fish hit a topwater seven or eight times on a single cast. When a big trout blows up on a topwater bait, it sometimes knocks it completely out of the water. When a fish strikes and misses, I pause the bait so the fish thinks it wounded or stunned the baitfish. After 2 or 3 seconds, I start twitching it again and work it a few more feet. Then, I might pause it again. That might entice another strike."



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Pop the top for fall trout



Speckled trout are suckers for a big, walk-the-dog style topwater bait retrieved erratically across the surface.



Anglers can fish topwaters around any shallow cover, including marshy shorelines, jetties, sandbars, oyster beds, artificial reefs, sunken wrecks and grass flats. They can even work around structure in deeper water, including bridge pilings, docks, vertical bulkheads and similar places because specks and baitfish both commonly suspend near the surface.

Beaches can also provide outstanding action. Waves sculpt parallel sandbars separated by troughs. Bait congregates in deeper troughs. Small channels separating bars allow predators to enter these deeper spots to bushwhack baitfish. In addition, many Gulf Coast beaches have accumulated considerable debris deposited by countless storms over the years. These structures can also attract trout.

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“Throwing topwater baits is not only a very effective way to fish for big trout, but in my opinion, the most enjoyable way,” Daniels said. “Topwater fishing is the only form of fishing where missing a fish is just as exciting as catching one.”

Fishing large topwaters takes patience and perseverance, but any cast could produce the speck of a lifetime. Just make it a long cast to stay on top of the action. ■

For information about Scott Simpson with Impulsive Charters in Long Beach, Miss., call 228-669-6204 or visit www.captainscottsimpson.com.

For information about Ronnie Daniels with Fisher-Man Guide Services in Pass Christian, Miss., call 228-323-1115 or visit mfisherman.com.

For information about Charlie Thomason of Bayou Charters and Silver Sides Lodges in Hopedale, La., call 504-278-3474 or visit captaincharlie.com.

For information about Erik Rue with Calcasieu Charter Service in Lake Charles, La., call 337-598-4700 or visit calcasieucharters.com.



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The GB100 weighs in at 83 pounds; it can be held in place with ground stakes or secured to a platform. The blind is 7-foot-3 by 4-foot to accommodate multiple hunters, and numerous windows can be configured for hunting with a gun, a crossbow or a standard compound bow.

Black windows and an all-black interior provide great concealment. Even the entry door in the back doubles as a window to check out your backtrail.

The frame is strong, welded steel, with the a heavy duty, water-resistant outer shell that comes with loops for brushing it up to break up the outline.

MSRP: \$427.99

For more info, visit: millennium-outdoors.com.



BIG&J POUR-IT-ON MOLASSES

Corn is tough to beat as a food for hunters running bait sites or feeders before and during deer season, but with a splash of Big&J's Pour-It-On Molasses, corn is actually better for the bucks you want to attract.

Pour-It-On Molasses combines a nutritional benefit and intense aroma that pulls deer in and keeps them in the area. It has a total digestible nutrition level that is higher than most premium feeds. It provides amino acids that are key building blocks for proteins, so deer realize a greater nutritional value; less

protein is passed through the body and excreted as waste.

It has organic zinc, copper, magnesium and manganese, along with trace minerals that help promote antler growth and proper body function.

Pour-It-On-Molasses mixed with corn is a great attractant in fall, but its nutritional benefits really start in the post-rut and winter months when nutrition is often scarce.

MSRP: \$12.99

For more info, visit: bigandj.com.

OKUMA DTR CUSTOM INSHORE RODS

Venice, La., is really "down the road" so when Okuma designers worked with a Venice-based captain to design a series of inshore rods, it named the series "DTR."

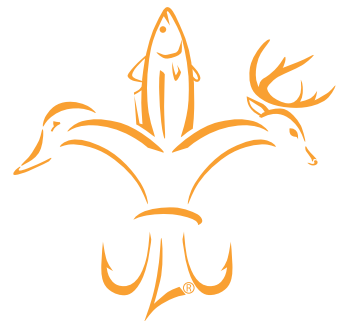
Okuma is offers 11 models, six spinning and five baitcasting, in 7-foot and 7-foot-2 lengths with split or single-piece, cork handles, 24/30-ton, low-resin carbon rod blanks featuring Okuma's Ultimate Flex Reinforced tips, SeaGuide XO series angled, stainless steel guides with zirconium

inserts for fishing braid or mono, a Fuji skeleton reel seat with a woven carbon insert and a precision-placed, stainless steel hook keeper.

Rods are technique-specific, built for topwater, Carolina rigs, popping corks, jig/jerbaits and spoon/spinner/bladed jig. They run from medium-light to medium-heavy actions.

MSRP: \$119-\$129

For more info, visit: okumafishingusa.com



A group of mallards circled the decoy spread and started its descent from high in the stratosphere. The ducks had obviously traveled a long way on their trek south; their descent was controlled, and the circular motion resembled a hurricane as they wound their way around in ever tighter spirals until they dropped their landing gear only feet from the water.

Toler Robinson's shotgun roared three times as ducks crashed into the water. Several were not touched and immediately began their ascent to flee, and another volley of shotgun blasts followed from Robinson's friends, with more mallards crashing into the decoy spread for one last time.

Robinson grew up duck hunting, and he can stay with the best of them when it comes to locating, calling and shooting ducks. He spends a lot of time in the Mississippi Delta every year and usually finds plenty of ducks to hunt, both on public and private land. This year looks to be another good year, but

as always, the quality of the hunting depends upon getting plenty of cold weather to drive the ducks south to Mississippi.

BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

Along with cold weather, hunters need food and water to attract ducks, and in that respect, Mississippi has plenty of public and private hunting areas with food and water, as many fields have been planted with duck food on Wildlife Management Areas, as well as on private land. The woods and waters and feed are in place for another banner season if Mother Nature cooperates.

The Mississippi Delta ranks as one of the premier duck-hunting locations in the country, and this year, it is poised to lead the state in duck production again.

MISSISSIPPI HAS EXCELLENT WATERFOWL HABITAT ON PUBLIC-HUNTING LANDS THAT'S SET UP FOR A GREAT SEASON, IF MOTHER NATURE COOPERATES. HERE ARE SOME HUNTS TO CONSIDER.

■ By Mike Giles

WMA DUCK DOINGS



SOUTH DELTA REGION

“Over the past 3 or 4 years, managing for duck hunting and having cover crops and food on **Mahannah** and **Howard Miller** (WMAs) has been extremely difficult due to floods,” said biologist Roger Tankesly with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. “This year has been totally different, and both of these WMAs are looking very good.”

It’s been several years since MDWFP has been able to do anything with **Mahannah** as far as normal duck planting. This year’s localized flooding was earlier in summer, and MDWFP has been able to get in and get some things planted.

“We’ve planted over 100 acres of crops out in the impoundments, and we have a lot of managed, moist-soil vegetation, and (we’ve) had an airplane out there spraying the coffee weed this year,” Tankesly said. “We have a lot of coffee weed, but we are leaving a lot of coffee weed for cover; it helps break up the units and give ducks some security. **Mahannah** is looking better than it has ever been as far as the food and hunter cover.

“All we need is a little more time for growing, and we’ll be pumping water into the impoundments. The only thing else we need is some good cold weather to push them down here.

“Although we have had some problems at **Howard Miller** with the 17-inch rain received earlier this year — the farmer lost 800 acres of soybeans — we took on an additional 800 acres of moist-soil management,” Tankesly said. “We planted Sudan strips and wild-game food sorghum, got some millet planted

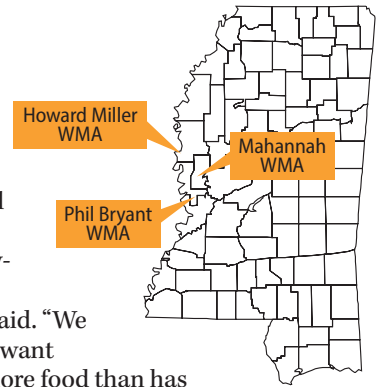
and also some native grasses such as barnyard and sprinkle top, tea weed and tooth cup as well as the natural stuff.”

“There are soybeans growing, as well as a good corn crop and cover crops,” he said. “We have everything the ducks want there and probably have more food than has ever been and more cover than ever.”

“As for **Howard Miller WMA**, if we have the weather and ducks pushed down here, then I’m looking for one of the finest harvests in years,” Tankesly said. “Just looking at the food and cover aspect of it because the food and cover will be there.”

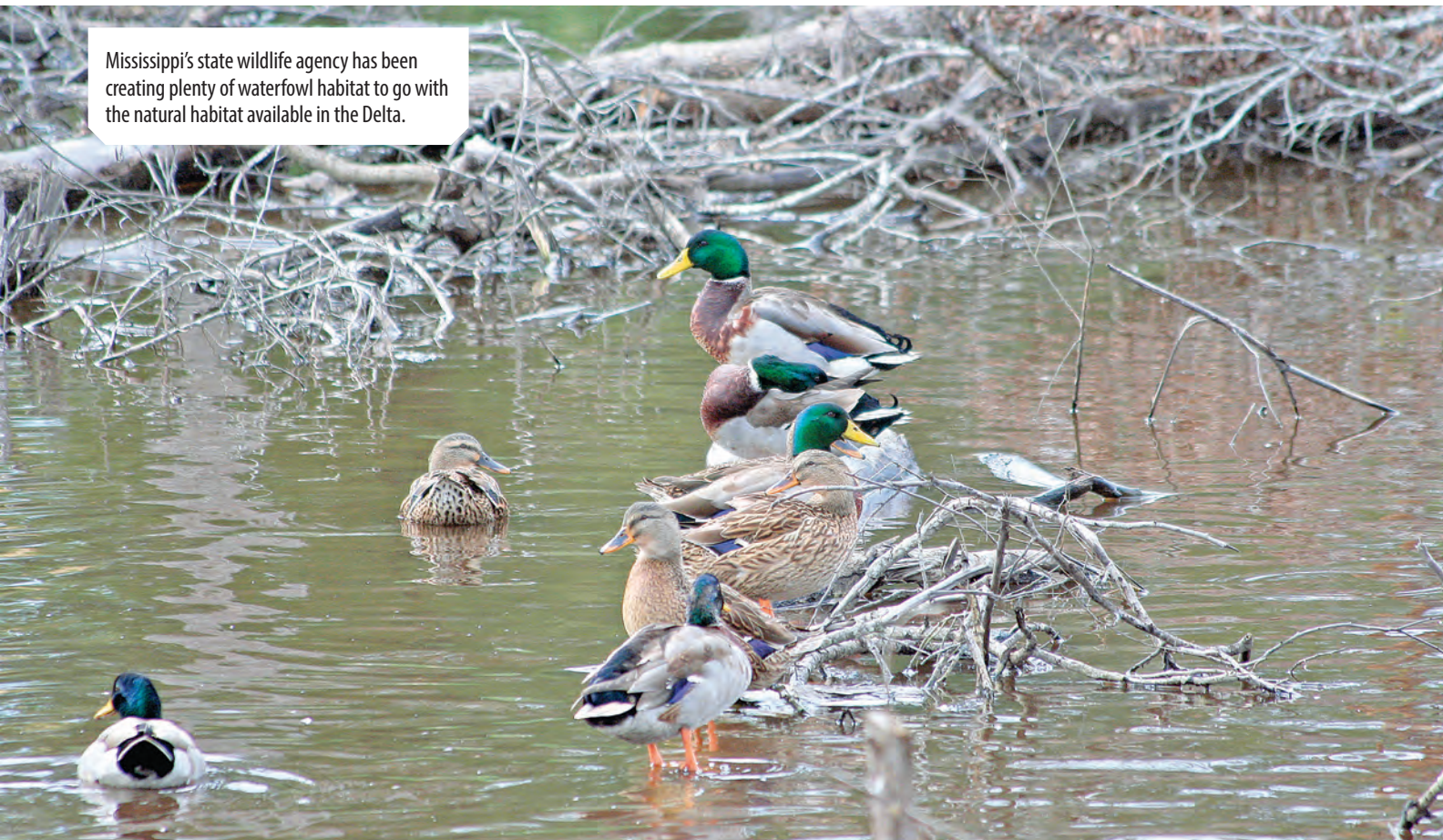
Phil Bryant WMA is a newer unit located in the heart of some of the best hunting in the Delta; it has a variety of units for deer, duck, squirrel and trophy hunting. One of the units is a limited, group-hunt draw area that is unique.

“In the group-hunt area, four guests can hunt together at a time; they can hunt ducks in the morning and deer in the afternoon,” Tankesly said. “There’s plenty of places to spread out (and) hunt, whatever is in season. We want that hunt to be very enjoyable, so we only hunt it a few weeks to keep the hunting pressure down.



NORTH DELTA >

Mississippi’s state wildlife agency has been creating plenty of waterfowl habitat to go with the natural habitat available in the Delta.



NORTH DELTA REGION

“O’Keefe (WMA) is open to duck hunters without a draw,” said Weston Thompson, regional biologist for MDWFP. “We do have some really good places that have draw hunts too.”

“Charlie Capps WMA is probably the best in the North Delta Region as far as draw hunts.

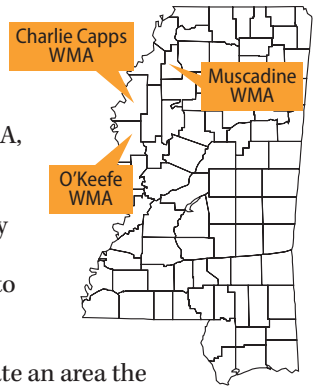
“O’Keefe was carrying a lot of ducks last year on our moist-soil habitat and on our AG fields, so that’s a good place to go if you want to go the draw route,” Thompson said. “We’ve done a whole lot of work at the Muscadine WMA. It’s probably in the best shape it’s been in the last few years. It’s a draw hunt, but we also have a standby aspect at Muscadine, so you can come on a standby hunt if you’re not drawn out anywhere.”

Thompson said MDWFP is trying to attract mallards mostly, but North Delta WMAs have wood ducks, teal, gadwall, spoon-bills and other species of ducks.

“Most people want to hunt and shoot mallards,” Thompson said, “so that has been our goal to attract mallards. You will pretty much find any duck that you can kill in Mississippi that will be in the Delta WMAs.

NORTHEAST REGION

“Tuscumbia, near Corinth, is one of the best waterfowl hunting opportunities in this region,” said biologist Nathan Blount



of MDWFP. “If we get enough rainfall to put water in the WMA, we’ll have ducks.

“Although Unit One is open to waterfowl hunting, with usually a mixture of wood ducks and mallards, you will need a boat to access most of it, and there is a boat ramp there,” Blount said.

If you put in the time and locate an area the ducks are using, you should be able to have some action if the ducks have moved in.

“Unit Two is draw hunt-only, with nine impoundments and nine hunters drawn for each impoundment, and they can bring up to three guests per hunter drawn. About half the ducks harvested will be mallards, with some teal, gadwall and pintails mixed in, too.”

“Canal Section is in Prentiss, Itawamba and Monroe counties near Fulton and has open-water mallards,” Blount said. “On a good year, you may have over a thousand ducks harvested along the waterways.”

NORTHWEST ➤

MDWFP has worked to try and attract more mallards to its North Delta WMAs because they’re hunters’ favorites.



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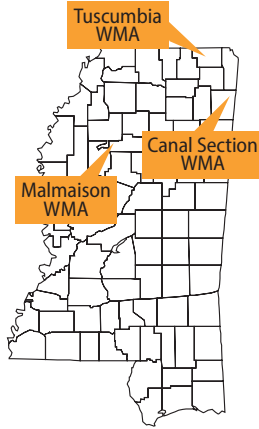


NORTHWEST REGION

“Malmaison is our flagship waterfowl area in this region,” said biologist Brad Holder of MDWFP. “The McIntyre Scatters and the Malmaison greentree reservoirs are popular areas that hold a lot of ducks. The Scatters consistently provides excellent duck hunting year after year.”

Several generations of hunters have hunted the Scatters and enjoyed the bountiful duck hunting while passing on their hunting heritage.

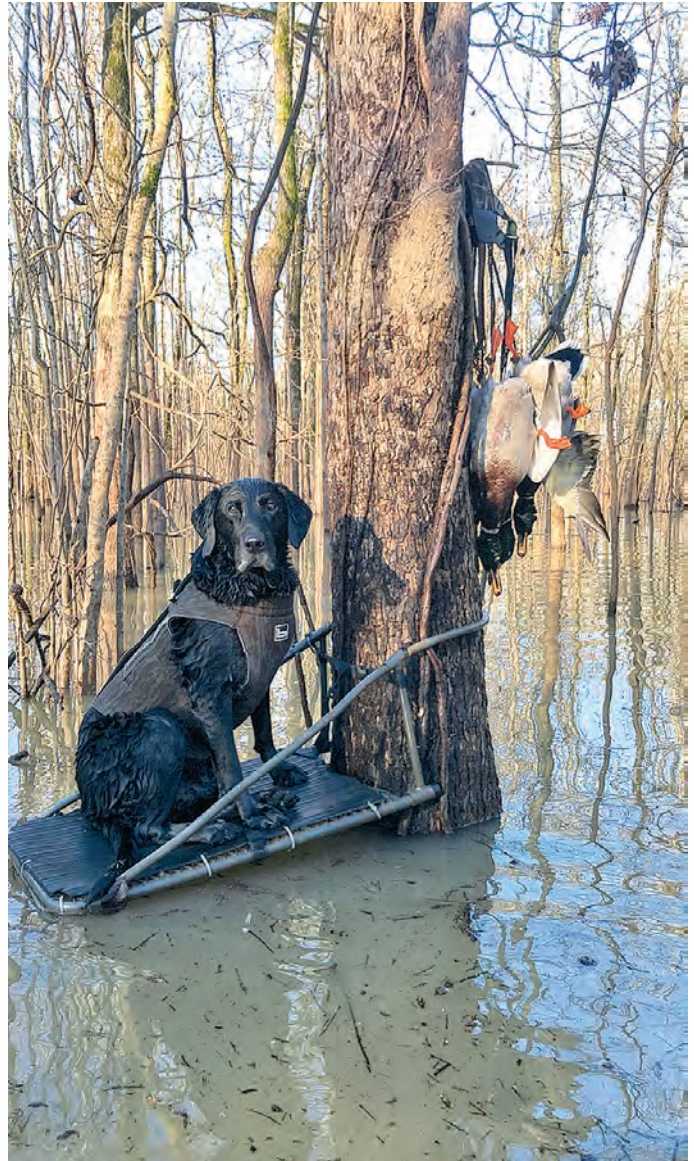
Greentree reservoirs will hold plenty of ducks for Mississippi hunters on Malmaison WMA.



EAST CENTRAL REGION

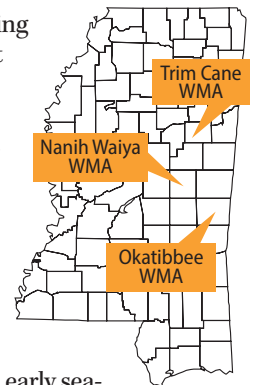
Trim Cane WMA near Starkville is primarily managed for waterfowl and rabbit hunting, and it has the best opportunity to harvest ducks in this region

“Trim Cane is your best bet for waterfowl if it gets enough water early,” according to biologist Chad Masley of MDWFP. “Generally, if we have the water here early, we’ll usually have a lot of ducks, too.”



Nanah Waiya also provides duck-hunting opportunities in an area of the state that doesn’t have much water for ducks. It has wood ducks, and it offers some good hunting when the weather is right.

Okatibbee WMA near Collinsville offers excellent waterfowl opportunities along creeks, beaver sloughs and in the upper end of Okatibbee Lake. Many hunters had excellent teal hunts during the early season, but hunters must put in the time to scout and plan their hunts accordingly. During the early season, avid hunters will be set up in the prime areas well before daybreak.



Having areas fill with water early in the season typically allows good waterfowl habitat to draw more ducks.

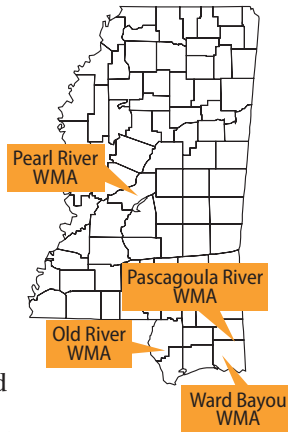


Mike Giles of Meridian has been hunting and fishing Mississippi since 1965. He is an award-winning wildlife photographer, writer, seminar speaker and guide.

SOUTHEAST REGION

Although this is not a great area for waterfowl, hunters can harvest wood ducks along the creeks, sloughs, and rivers.

Ward Bayou, Pascagoula River and Old River offer excellent wood duck opportunities, and occasionally you'll have some dabbling ducks come in also.



SOUTHWEST REGION

“**Pearl River WMA** is about the only area we have in the region that has good waterfowl opportunities,” said Josh Moree, MDWFP’s regional biologist, “and this is a youth-only waterfowl hunt by permit only. We have several managed waterfowl impoundments that offer excellent harvest opportunities. We also have about a thousand acres of flooded hardwood, sloughs and moist soil impoundments for youth only.”

“The rest of our WMAs have limited wood duck opportunities along creeks, sloughs and places like that.” ■

Mississippi waterfowl hunters have numerous public-hunting areas where they can expect the chance to harvest ducks.



HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION
Doves	Sept. 4-Oct. 17(n), Sept. 4-19 (s)	15	45
	Oct. 30-Nov. 28 (n), Oct. 9-Nov. 7 (s)		
	Dec. 25-Jan. 9 (n), Dec. 19-Jan. 31 (s)		
Quail	Nov. 25-March 5	8	
Rabbit	Oct. 16-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (fall)	Oct. 1-Feb. 28	8	
Squirrel (spr)	May 15-June 1	4	
Raccoon	July 1-Sept. 30	1 raccoon per party	
Rac/Opp/Bobct	Oct. 1-Oct. 31 (food/sport)	5/day, 8/party	
	Nov. 1-Feb. 28 (food/sport/pelt)	No limit	
Rails			
King & Clapper	Sept. 1-Oct. 3, Nov. 26-Jan. 1	15	45
Sora & Virginia	Sept. 1-Oct. 3, Nov. 26-Jan. 1	25	75
Gallinules	Sept. 1-Oct. 3, Nov. 26-Jan. 1	15	45
Snipe	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28	8	24
Crow	Nov. 6 - Feb. 28	No limit	No limit
Woodcock	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31	3	9
Wild Turkey			
Fall season	Oct. 15-Nov. 15 (permit, selected counties)	2 per season (may be either sex)	
Spring season	March 15-May 1	1/day, 3/season, longbeards only	
Youth season	March 8-14	1/day, 3/season, bearded birds only	

WATERFOWL SEASONS

SPECIES	DATES	BAG LIMIT
Duck	Teal only: Sept. 11-26	6
	Nov. 26-28, Dec. 3-5	6
	Dec. 9-Jan. 31	
Geese (Canada, blue, Ross, white-fronted, brant)	Sept. 1-30	5
	Nov. 12-28, Dec. 3-5,	Canada 3, Brant 1
	Dec. 9-Jan. 31	Snow/blue/Ross 20 White-fronted 3
Light Geese conservation	Oct. 1-Nov. 11, Nov. 29-Dec. 2 Dec. 6-8, Feb. 1-4, Feb. 7-March 31 Feb. 8-March 31	No limit

DEER SEASON

ZONE	ARCHERY	PRIM WEAPON	GUNS
Northeast	Oct. 1-Nov. 19	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 20-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 8-19 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 20-31 (archery/primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 19(dogs) Nov. 6-19 (youth)
East Central	Oct. 1-Nov. 19	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 20-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 8-19 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 20-31 (archery-primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 19(dogs) Nov. 6-19 (youth)
Southwest	Oct. 1-Nov. 19	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 20-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 8-19 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 20-31 (archery-primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 19(dogs) Nov. 6-Jan. 19 (youth)
Southeast	Oct. 15-Nov. 19	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 20-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Jan. 21-31 (either-sex arch-primitive)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Feb. 1-15 (archery-primitive bucks only)		Dec. 24-Jan. 20(dogs) Nov. 21-Feb. 15 (yth)
Delta/South Delta	Oct. 1-Nov. 19	Dec. 2-15	Nov. 20-Dec. 1 (dogs)
	Nov. 9-20 (antlerless primitive weapon)		Dec. 16-23 (no dogs)
	Jan. 20-31 (archery primitive weapon)		Dec. 24-Jan. 19(dogs) Nov. 6-Jan. 19 (youth)

FALL BASS, GREAT BASS

By John N. Felsher

**COOLING WEATHER,
PLENTIFUL FORAGE PUT
LARGEMOUTHS ON THEIR
BEST NON-SPRING FEED ALL
YEAR-LONG. HERE'S HOW TO
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.**

Fall gives Mississippi sportsmen abundant opportunities to pursue various outdoors activities, including some of the best bass fishing of the year. In the fall, anglers might not land the giants they catch in late winter before the big girls spawn, but fishermen can put excellent numbers in the boat.

Bass fishing in the fall largely depends upon shad. As the weather cools and the leaves change, bass fatten up on high-protein threadfin shad before the really cold weather hits — if it does. Find the shad, and anglers should find the bass.

The best fall lures imitate shad; these include conventional shad-pattern crankbaits, lipless rattling baits in chrome/blue or chrome/chartreuse, swimbaits and chrome spoons.

For the most fun, whether throwing at schooling bass chasing shad or plugging along shorelines and flats waiting for a strike, nothing compares to a big, hungry bass smashing a topwater bait. Water takes much longer to change temperature than air, so even on a cold, November day, the water could remain relatively warm, so bass stay feeding in the shallows and might hit topwater temptations all day-long.

“In the fall, I like to throw topwaters around grass and wood,” said veteran pro fisherman Dean Rojas. “Topwaters are one of the best fall baits. Usually, the bite is from bigger fish. The fish have been feeding on shad all summer, so they are fat and healthy.”

POP, WALK, JERK

Anglers can use various types of topwaters. Poppers displace water with curved surfaces at their noses. Prop baits come with tiny propellers on the nose, tail or both ends that thrash the surface like tiny motors. Anglers can fish either of these lures around any visible cover, including weed beds, stump fields, fallen trees, docks or shorelines.

Poppers require slow, deliberate movement. Cast a popper to a likely spot and let it sit a few moments until the rings dissipate, then pop it and let it sit again. Anglers can work prop baits the same way or run them across the surface like floating buzzbaits.

An outstanding bait for tempting schoolies or searching for bass, walk-the-dog or walking baits zig-zag across the surface like crippled baitfish. These large, heavy baits sail long distances. Use a 3- to 4-inch walking bait when bass are feeding mostly on smaller shad and throw 6- to 8-inch baits when bass prefer big shad. Larger-profile baits can call in fish from a distance. Work them with a steady, slashing retrieve at varied speeds. Pause periodically so the bait sits still on the water a few moments.

Jerkbaits also produce excellent action in the fall for schooling bass or around cover. Jerkbaits look like long, slender crankbaits with small lips that make the bait dive and wobble enticingly when an angler jerks the rod tip. Some jerkbaits float, and others suspend or slowly sink. When fishing floaters, pop the rod to make the lure gurgle on the surface before diving a foot or two. Then, pause the retrieve so the lure floats back to the surface. Anglers can also reel jerkbaits slowly and steadily so the lip creates an erratic, wobbling action just below the surface.

"I love fishing jerkbaits," said Alabama pro Randy Howell, a Bassmaster Classic champion. "I use them in the fall when the water starts to cool and fish start chasing baitfish, but they are effective all year-long. They're extremely versatile lures that can be fished in many different situations. Jerkbaits are very good for targeting non-active fish and provoking reaction strikes."

Slow-sinking or suspending jerkbaits look almost identical to floaters, but with more heft. Some come with rattles for more enticement. Some come with metal balls that

move inside the lure to transfer weight forward for longer casts. In open water, like along a sloping point or over a hump, jerkbaits can pull bass up to the surface.

"I prefer suspending jerkbaits," Howell said. "When the angler stops the retrieve, it just hovers in the strike zone, giving fish a chance to eat it. When it's moving, fish often trail it. When it stops in their face, they eat it reactively. To get really good with a jerkbait, fish it with a 'pop, pop, stop — pop, pop, stop' cadence. Pause a couple seconds between the fall and the start-back. That causes the bait to go side-to-side with kind of a walking motion similar to the action of a walk-the-dog topwater bait, but under the water."

As the water cools, switch to thin, flat-sided crankbaits. With tighter wobbles, these baits closely mimic the shape and movement of threadfin shad. To a bass, those vibrations also feel very similar to the natural vibrations created by a live shad swimming.

UNDER THE UMBRELLA ➤

A jerkbait is a highly effective bait for targeting bass in the fall. The long, slim bait wobbles when pulled through the water.



UNDER THE UMBRELLA

Another hot technique for tempting schooling bass is casting throw an Alabama rig or similar multi-bait presentations made by other companies. All variants essentially consist of three or more wires coming off a single, lead wire that looks like the frame of an umbrella. Tipped with soft-plastic swimbaits, the entire rig resembles a baitfish school, triggering intense, competitive feeding instincts in predatory fish. Hungry bass might rise to attack a tempting school of baitfish fluttering over their heads.

“An umbrella rig is a really awesome fishing technique,” said pro Paul Elias of Laurel, a former Bassmaster Classic champion. “The neat thing about it is that anglers can rig it any way they want to rig it. The weights and the types of baits determine how deep someone will fish with it. I normally throw it with five swimbaits. The bass thinks he’s about to get a mouthful of baitfish.”

Among the oldest and most versatile baits on the market, spinnerbaits can entice bass from top to bottom all year-long. The whirling blades mimic the flashing of white baitfish. The blades also send vibrations pulsating throughout the water column, provoking reaction strikes.

GATHER AT THE RIVER

In the fall, some of the best fishing occurs in rivers like the Pearl and Pascagoula. Traditionally, rivers drop to their lowest and clearest water levels in the fall, concentrating fish in main channels. In coastal river deltas, anglers can catch huge numbers of bass and possibly tangle with some salty species like redfish on the same baits at the same time.

“The Pascagoula River is really great for bass numbers, especially in the fall when the temperature gets a little cooler,” said Stephen Brown, a biologist with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. “Typically, the tributaries hold clearer water. That’s usually where people find the bass. The Escatawpa River is another good place to look for bass. It has some really good spotted bass as well as largemouth.”

Brian Barton, a Pickwick Lake guide, shows off a large-mouth bass he caught on an Alabama rig, aka umbrella rig. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** A bass comes to the boat after hitting a lipless crankbait, which has a tight wobble and resembles a threadfin shad.



“The Pascagoula River is really great for bass numbers, especially in the fall when the temperature gets a little cooler.**”**



Even the mighty Mississippi usually drops in the fall. The Father of Waters periodically floods, refills and renews backwaters and oxbows. Some of the ancient oxbow lakes, like Chotard, Albemarle, Eagle and Washington, can produce incredible bass fishing in the fall.

“When the water levels are right, active oxbows offer some of the best fishing in the state because they are so rich in nutrients,” said Ryan Jones, an MDWFP biologist. “The flood pulse that periodically brings nutrients back into the lake boosts production. People can enter Chotard from the river when the level is about 13 feet at Vicksburg. When the river has been high and starts a slow fall, it also pulls water from other smaller lakes like Tennessee and Airplane. When that happens, bass stack up at little cuts and points, eating anything that comes out of those backwater areas. Anglers catch a lot of 6- to 8-pound bass in Eagle Lake.”

RESERVOIR CHOICES >



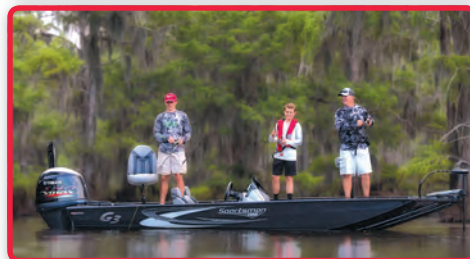
John N. Felsher is a professional freelance writer and photographer with more than 1,700 articles in more than 117 magazines to his credit. He worked as the outdoors editor for several Louisiana newspapers and currently co-hosts a weekly outdoors radio show on WNSP 105.5 FM in Mobile, Ala. You can contact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

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YAMAHA

RESERVOIR CHOICES

Every fall, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lowers the water levels in the “Big Four” flood-control lakes of northern Mississippi: Arkabutla, Enid, Grenada and Sardis. More known for great catches of crappie, these four lakes can also produce good largemouth action. Enid probably tops the list. Anglers sometimes catch 8-pound bass there.

Always a favorite, Pickwick Lake in northeast Mississippi has produced many double-digit largemouth, including some exceeding 14 pounds, plus monster smallmouth over the years. Another perennial favorite, Ross

Barnett Reservoir near Jackson, consistently ranks very high for numbers, but it also holds some double-digit fish.

“Ross Barnett has a lot of pads, some coontail and water hyacinths,” Elias said. “It has many shallow stumps. I like to throw a black buzzbait or a chartreuse and white spinnerbait and bounce it off the logs and stumps. Pickwick is probably the second-best lake on the Tennessee River chain, second only to Gunterville.”

Many smaller lakes and ponds in parks and the public fishing lake program can also produce outstanding fall fishing. Many of these small waters receive very little pressure, even during peak fishing times.

When cooler weather hits, most pleasure boaters and skiers disappear until the spring, and thousands of hunters head to the forests, fields, swamps and marshes to pursue game. Therefore, Mississippi bass anglers could find themselves alone over the hottest honey holes at the best time of year to fish them. ■



Michael Conley shows off a bass he caught on a jerkbait, which imitates a shad, a prime forage species for bass in the fall.

A fall fishing trip for bass can be enhanced by taking a shotgun or .22 rifle and taking squirrels when the opportunity presents itself.

CAST-AND-BLAST OPPORTUNITIES

With so many options available in the fall, Mississippi sportsmen face the dilemma of deciding whether to fish or hunt. Why agonize over that choice? Do both with a cast-and-blast adventure.

When paddling a canoe, kayak or other small craft, sportsmen can fish for bass while listening for any squirrel activity. Keep a gun in a

convenient but safe place for opportunities that arise. Gliding along silently in a human-powered boat, sportsmen can sneak up on squirrels where thick growth makes walking nearly impossible.

Many people hunt and fish in teams. One person sits in the bow ready for action, while the other controls the boat. This creates an excellent opportunity for children to enjoy the outdoors. In a boat, children sit in relative comfort. Boaters could carry snacks and refreshments to take occasional breaks.

Besides squirrels, people might jump wood ducks during waterfowl season. Sportsmen could also spot an occasional rabbit hopping along the shoreline, possibly a feral hog or other legal game. Public lands along the Pascagoula River probably offer the best cast and blast options, but Mississippi sportsmen can try this type of adventure anywhere they can float a kayak or canoe where it's safe and legal to hunt. ■



John N. Felster

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GETTIN' FRESH

Hal Schramm

These Georgia cubes were similar to those used in a Texas study of fish attractors.



Tim Bonvechio

PLASTIC IN LAKES? NOT BAD

FISH ATTRACTORS MADE FROM SYNTHETICS WILL ACTUALLY ATTRACT FISH

When I saw the old-but-newly-acquired fix-upper vessel parked in his yard, I asked my bass-fishing buddy, “Hey Ben, what’s the pontoon boat for?”

“Habitat barge,” he replied. “I’ll use it to install brush piles.”

Ben is a maestro at extracting bass and other sportfish from brush piles, so the more the better. Adding brush piles to favorite waters is a common practice — although labor-intensive — for many anglers. And when done with some forethought, it is probably a good thing for Mississippi’s reservoirs, which are increasingly devoid of habitat.

Habitat enhancement in reservoirs is getting a lot of attention from fisheries agencies nationwide. As reservoirs age, woody habitat — brush, logs, standing timber — decomposes. Several studies have clearly demonstrated the importance of woody habitat to productive fish populations, and many more studies

have documented the benefit of installed woody habitat to angler catch.

In other words, wood is good.

LEARNING BY DOING

Adding habitat to aging reservoirs is far from a new idea. Years ago, many studies reported on the effects of adding woody habitat. Some reported that different fish species had preferences for different types of sunken trees and brush, for example, pine vs. cedar vs. hardwoods. I think the “wisdom” gained from these studies is that where the woody habitat is placed and the interstitial spaces — the sizes and amounts of nooks and crannies — has more to do with what fish and what sizes are most attracted.

Years ago, the Tennessee Valley Authority installed many extensive fish attractors in Pickwick and other TVA impoundments. Long before GPS, the fish attractors were marked with telephone poles pushed into the bottom. At least some of the telephone poles are

still there, but the sunken brush is long gone. Decomposition is a problem with all added woody habitat. How long the brush lasts and remains effective varies depending on the type and size of wood. Repurposed Christmas trees may attract fish for only one or two years. Hardwoods tops with thick limbs last longer, but bigger and heavier woody habitat creates deployment problems.

PLASTIC ATTRACTORS

While Ben’s habitat barge may suffice for enhancing his secret fishing holes, deployment of fish attractors on a large scale is time-consuming and requires a serious upgrade in equipment. Given



Hal Schramm is an avid angler and veteran fisheries biologist.



A Texas study proved that crappie are attracted to plastic fish attractors.

Don Gabelhouse

AVERAGE NUMBER OF ADULT FISH PER SITE AT CORRUGATED PIPE AND PLASTIC MESH FISH ATTRACTORS

Species	Corrugated Pipe	Plastic Mesh
Black crappie	4.7	0.8
Bluegill	22.1	5.4
Largemouth bass	0.2	1.5
Spotted bass	0.7	1.8

would remain in relatively deep water if the reservoir level fluctuated. All were put in areas devoid of cover but with other fish-attracting features, like underwater points of adjacent to steep contour breaks. Fish use of the structures was monitored by divers and fixed underwater cameras in 2014 and 2016.

The drain-pipe structure attracted more species and greater numbers of all species combined than the mesh structures. The drain pipe structure had more black crappie, bluegill and longear sunfish; the mesh structures had greater numbers of largemouth and spotted bass.

The configuration of the structures —arranged linearly or in a cluster — did not affect abundance of any species.

Corrosion of the hardware used to attach the structures to anchors resulted in the buoyant mesh structures floating to the surface — the plastic mesh is buoyant; the corrugated pipe structures remained on the bottom. Using only data from the pipe structures, abundance was greater in 2014 than 2016.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Plastic structure works. For a long time. Low maintenance, but use corrosion-resistant cables and cable clamps to anchor the structures.

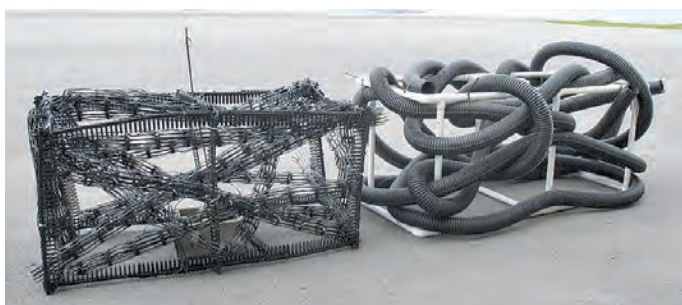
The greater attraction to the structures in 2014 than 2016 remains a bit of a mystery. More fish were expected in 2016, because Rayburn had less hydrilla in 2016, and the structures had a longer time to be colonized by algae and invertebrates. Diver observations, however, confirmed that these structures were quickly colonized by algae and invertebrates. A likely reason for the declining fish abundance was that these structures had been discovered by anglers, and fish had been harvested.

Interested in using fish- and angler-friendly plastic fish attractors or maybe encouraging a habitat-enhancement project with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks? The attractors used by TPWD cost (in 2014) \$125 to \$175 for each pipe structure and \$60 for each mesh structure.

Regardless of what kind of fish attractor you place in Mississippi's public waters, contact your district fisheries biologist to discuss any restrictions or permit requirements. ■

these costs, longer-lasting and more-durable plastic fish attractors, even though expensive to buy or build, may be more economical in the long run.

A study at Sam Rayburn Lake conducted by fisheries biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department compared fishes' attraction to PVC pipe-framed cubes filled with corrugated polyethylene drain pipe or plastic mesh. The frames filled with drain pipe are often called "Georgia cubes." Several years ago, biologists with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources found the cubes attracted species and numbers of fish similar to woody habitat during the first 2 years after deployment. By Year 3, however, the cubes attracted four times as many fish as the woody habitat, largely due to decomposition of the wood.



PVC-pipe fish attractors with plastic mesh (left) and drain pipe were part of a study in Texas's Sam Rayburn Reservoir.

Todd Driscoll

The attractors used in the Texas trials were 3x3x6 foot frames made of 1½- or 2-inch diameter PVC pipe. The corrugated pipe or plastic mesh was wound around the frames. Holes drilled in the frame facilitated sinking.

Multiple groups of six structures of each type were placed either in a line or in clusters in water 16 to 20 feet deep — above the metalimnion but deep enough to ensure that they

LUNKER LINES

Paul Elias

Although most Grenada bass will weigh 1 to 3 pounds, every now and then you'll catch a chunky bass like this.



GRANADA IN NOVEMBER

FISH BOTH ARMS OF THE LAKE, AND FISH THEM FAST. HIT STUMPS, LAYDOWNS

When people speak of Grenada Lake, sandwiched between Enid and Sardis lakes, most think of numbers of big crappie, not bass.

But good-sized bass also live there. I think the locals want to keep the outstanding bass fishing at Grenada Lake a secret. Bass and crappie often inhabit the same structure. The amount of structure that's put in Grenada for crappie by anglers also enhances the lake for bass.

So here's how I fish Grenada in November.

NO. 1 PATTERN: CRANKBAITS

Bass will be shallow, in 1 to 4 feet of water. I'll mainly fish stumps and laydowns, since the water will be being pulled down. My main baits will be shallow-running crankbaits, starting with a



Mann's Baby 1-Minus

grey ghost Mann's Baby 1-Minus followed by a C4 Elite Series in a shad pattern.

Two arms come together to create Grenada, and I'll go to the very backs of both of those arms to start and then fish to their mouths. I'll make multiple casts and fast retrieves at every piece of wood cover with both lures. I'll fish the shallow wood with the Baby 1-Minus and pin-

point bass at 3 to 4 feet with the C4.

The secret for bass success at Grenada is to cover plenty of water and fish as many stumps and laydowns as possible, not worrying about fishing the bank between the wood cover. I'll fast-forward my trolling motor as soon as I fish a stump to reach another laydown and start fishing again. You'll catch a few crappie on these little crankbaits too.

Also, search for baitfish. The shad migration usually takes place in November, and they will concentrate in the pockets and back ends of Grenada's



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.



½-ounce black buzzbait



two branches. I'll fish these two small crankbaits on a 7-foot-1, medium-action FX Custom rod with a 6.2:1 gear ratio Bruin ELS reel and 20-pound White Peacock fluorocarbon line.

NO. 2 TECHNIQUE: SPINNERBAITS

Next I'll fish a ¾-ounce Mann's Classic spinnerbait with a small, silver Colorado blade in front, a No. 4 willow-leaf blade behind and a white skirt. I'll fish it shallow, just like I did the small crankbaits, but I'll retrieve it more slowly on a 6-foot-10, heavy action FX Custom rod with a 6.2:1 Bruin reel and 20-pound fluorocarbon line. In November, Grenada generally receives several rain events, and the water becomes somewhat muddy. The spinnerbait will produce better in that muddy water than the crankbaits.

NO. 3 METHOD: BUZZBAITS

I'll also fish two different buzzbaits: a ½-ounce black or the same size in white. I let the bass tell me the color they prefer on that day. I'll be using 30-pound bass braided line with a 7.3:1 Bruin reel on a 6-foot-10, heavy action FX Custom rod.

NO. 4 TACTIC: STONE JIG

My last-resort tactic, if the bass aren't actively feeding, is pitching a ½-ounce Mann's Stone Jig in black/blue with a black/blue crawfish trailer around stumps and blowdowns. I'll have 50-pound bass braid on a 7.3:1 Bruin reel that's matched with a 7-foot-10 heavy-action FX Custom rod.



Mann's Stone Jig

BEST WAYS TO FISH GRENADA

I'll try to fish both arms of the 35,000-acre Grenada Lake in the same day, which includes most of the lake's surface area. Since these branches don't contain

numbers of stumps and laydowns, by just targeting the wood and making multiple casts to each piece of cover, you should be able to fish both branches before dark. The bass aren't schooled up in November, so you probably won't catch more than one or two off the same piece of cover.

Another general rule I follow at Grenada is that if I can't see the target I'm casting to, I generally won't fish there. However, after a big rain results in fairly stained water and seeing cover becomes tough, I'll use my Garmin Panoptix LiveScope to spot stumps and underwater cover I can't see with my eyes.

In November, you should be able to catch 15 bass between 1½ to 3 pounds and possibly a 5- to 6-pound kicker bass at Grenada. You'll probably also catch enough crappie on both the little crankbaits and the spinnerbaits to take some home to eat. ■

LURE REVIEW

Don Shoopman

Brian Branum's celebrated crankbait design became Bill Lewis's 1.75 Echo.

ECHO 1.75:

BASS PRO'S IDEA BECAME LURE DESIGNER'S SQUARE-BILL CRANKBAIT PROJECT, WITH BLESSINGS FROM BILL LEWIS LURES

A Lake Sam Rayburn fishing guide's voice oozes pure pride when he talks about a crankbait that's been around six years, with ebbs and flows in popularity. Brian Branum, 57, of Brookeland, Texas, designed the Bill Lewis Echo 1.75 square-bill crankbait from scratch. The Echo 1.75 features an intricate weighting system, plus six rattles made of three different materials to heighten sensitivity, i.e., sound. His was a Dr. Frankenstein-like approach that resulted in a crankbait that impresses thousands of bass anglers to this day.

One of those Echo 1.75 square-bill crankbait admirers is Wes Higgins, president of Bill Lewis Lures, which is based in Alexandria. Higgins described the Echo 1.75 as "the Colorado blade of square-bills, because it wobbles so wide and can produce lots of action on a slower retrieve. It's incredible around shallow grass and stained waters."

He also said the crankbait that hasn't received much publicity has been a long-time "secret weapon of many Sam Rayburn heavy-hitters."

After all, Higgins pointed out, it was made by Branum, an engineer with several successful, patented inventions behind him, including his first: an eye-wear design sold to Foster Grant that was his college senior project at age 24.

Branum, who designed lures for Gambler Baits starting in the early 2000s, has been guiding on Lake Sam Rayburn since 2004. "The Echo was a pretty fun project," said Branum, who fished FLW, Bassmaster and other tournament circuits in the 1990s.

A friend who was a pro bass circuit regular, Andrew Upshaw of Hemphill, Texas, had the idea for a crankbait and put the bug in Higgins' ear. Higgins liked what he heard while talking with Upshaw and Branum during the Rat-L-Trap Open in January 2014 at Sam Rayburn.

CHECK THE BOXES

Later, according to Branum, "Wes said, 'Get with Andrew Upshaw. We're going to build something besides a Rat-L-Trap.'"

Upshaw wanted a crankbait with a square lip. He specified five other must-haves for the crank bait.

- To rattle like at Rat-L-Trap;
- To be flat-sided;
- To have a wide body;
- To run well through hydrilla;
- To dive 2 to 5 feet.



Higgins chipped in with his own requests, which raised the list of boxes to check to 10.

"Wes asked if I had everything I needed. Wes hammered out a few more things about the bait," Branum said.

Upshaw and Branum drew pictures of their creation, and Higgins took notes, instructing Branum to make the prototypes by hand. He did, using body parts from other crankbaits to build three "robot-looking Frankensteins."

Then, a grad student in college was hired to produce a computer assisted design for Bill Lewis.

"He did a fine job," Branum said. "We had eight, maybe 10, 3D-printed by a company in Atlanta that did prosthetic parts."

The last test was to put finished crankbaits in the hands of three of his fishing buddies, who used models X, Y and Z. Each picked their favorite, and it was the same one.

The new crankbait hit the market in spring 2015. Of all the products he has invented or designed, Branum may be most proud of the Echo 1.75. Heck, he nailed a 5-pound bass on his creation before it hit the market.

One of the rattles in a special chamber is zinc-coated copper. Two others are lead, and three are steel alloys. The combination gives it the combination of low-knock and high-frequency rattle like the legendary, lipless Rat-L-Trap.

Those rattles make it different, but so does the weight system. Branum an axis of three rotations that makes it unique. On the cast, the rear weight controls the flight, then, without the lip getting involved, the middle weight takes over on the dive before switching to the front weight based on the angle of the fishing line.

It's armed with two Mustad Triple Grip treble hooks and quality split rings. ■

For more information on the Echo 1.75 visit rat-l-trap.com or call 800-633-4861.



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.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Brian Cope

Spanish mackerel are a pleasing addition to any nearshore fisherman's November catch.



Dan Kibler

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: SPANISH MACKEREL

SMALLER COUSIN OF THE KING MACKEREL, SPANISH ARE PEPPY INSHORE BATTLERS

Spanish mackerel, *Scomberomorus maculatus*, are long, slender fish with deeply-forked tails and sharp teeth. Their bodies present greenish backs, silver sides and belly, and numerous yellow spots on each side. They have distinct lateral lines that gently curve toward the tail of the fish, and they are covered in very tiny scales.

As Spanish mackerel mature, the yellow spots sometimes fade, especially in bigger fish. Because of this, big ones are often misidentified as small king mackerel, a larger cousin to the Spanish. This can cause big problems for anglers, since the two species have different size and creel limits in most states.

One of the easiest ways to distinguish the two subspecies apart is by paying close attention to the lateral line, which stands out visibly on both fish. This line on king mackerel has a very sudden drop, unlike the lateral line on Spanish, which drops more gradually and more slightly.

HEARTY EATERS

Spanish mackerel spend much of their lives in open waters, and are spread out from New England to the Yucatan Peninsula. They migrate with water temperatures between those two extremes. They are voracious eaters, and will eat pretty much anything small enough to fit in their mouths. Numerous species of smaller fish make up the bulk of their diet. They also eat their share of squid and shrimp.

Their travels often take them close to shore — even into the mouths of rivers throughout their range. They spawn in the open ocean from May to September and begin spawning at around 2 years of age.

WORLD-CLASS SPEED

Anglers catch Spanish mackerel from piers, boats and even from beaches in some areas. One of the most-popular lures is the Got-cha plug. Shiny spoons are also very effective, as are colorful

jigs retrieved very quickly. These fish are fast and will ignore slower lures to chase down faster ones. Anglers often catch large Spanish while trolling live baits for king mackerel.

These fish rarely grow bigger than 37 inches long or heavier than 12 pounds. Most never make it to 18 inches or 3 pounds. The Louisiana state record weighed 10.56 pounds and was caught by Mike LeBlanc in August 1972. Ron Dillistone caught Mississippi's state record, an 8-pound fish, in 1984. The world record weighed 13 pounds. Robert Cranton caught this fish in North Carolina's Ocracoke Inlet in November 1987. ■



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.

COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

Who in the South doesn't like barbecued ribs? How 'bout king mackerel ribs? This tasty recipe may surprise you. **INSET:** Kingly ribs off the grill and ready for the plate.

Fall fishing is excellent along the Gulf coast, and one species many folks catch quite often is king mackerel. Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of ways to cook kings. Two of the more popular are to grill steaks or fillets and to deep-fry breaded nuggets. I really like king mackerel and am always looking for different ways to cook it. This recipe sounds odd, but it's really good.

King mackerel moved in along the beaches during October but were spread out a bit. As the water cools, they move to deeper water, begin to school and feed heavily. This is the time when finding a school typically results in filling limits quickly — and with mainly medium to large fish. I suggest releasing all the large kings that are in condition to survive, as these are almost all female and the most productive breeders in the fishery.

Unfortunately, not all big kings are in good shape after a long fight and wouldn't survive, even if released. Then, there are others that, for a number of reasons, a fisherman wants to take home or hang on a set of scales. This recipe began as a different way to prepare kings, especially larger ones, and has become a favorite for us using the belly meat and rib bones. It tastes good using other parts, too.

Not everyone gets excited about eating king mackerel. Some folks like them as much as my family, others like them a little, still others say they eat it occasionally and some have no desire to ever have king mackerel on their dinner table. This recipe may change that. It really is surprisingly tasty.

This recipe tastes good and makes the meal fun. The ribs aren't like beef or pork and could easily be removed, but since this is being barbecued, they're left for visual effect. Some folks also think the meat immediately along the ribs is a little sweeter. Give it a try and see for yourself.

Folks with milder palates shouldn't let the hot sauce scare you. At this small amount and mixed with the 7Up, you won't taste it. Folks who like to kick the spice up a notch or three can add more hot sauce when served.

To ensure your meal is from the best fish possible, begin by putting them in the fish box and covering them with ice as soon as they hit the deck. Then, when cleaning them, take the time to remove all the red meat, skin and gristle so what remains is prime meat. This takes a few more minutes, but it's time well spent. ■

KINGLY RIBS

HERE'S A NEW SLANT ON A MUCH-MALIGNED MACKEREL



KINGLY RIBS

I understand that not everyone appreciates the taste of king mackerel. They have grayish meat and what some consider a strong taste. Some say it's an acquired taste, and maybe it is, but I like it — and this preparation may help you realize you like it, too.

I grew up in a commercial fishing family, and we often ate what wouldn't sell. The milder-flavored fish, like flounder, trout and drum, were usually sold, and we were left with fish that had more robust flavors. That wasn't an issue with me though, as the real taste of these fish isn't easily overpowered by the marinade, spices or breader used when cooking them. I had been enjoying eating king mackerel for many years when scientists determined their Omega 3 fatty acids are beneficial to our health.

The main part of this recipe was borrowed from my favorite way to prepare mullet. We have barbecued them in Carolina Treet Barbecue Sauce since I was a kid, and some years back, I tried it with king mackerel and liked it. If you can't find Carolina Treet, a similar, vinegar-based barbecue sauce should work, but I wouldn't try this with a sweet barbecue sauce. I believe your favorite pig pickin' sauce mixture might also work well, but I haven't tried it.

This recipe uses the meat from around the rib cage. It is good using other parts of the king, but we thought barbecuing was for ribs, so that's where this started. The ribs are pronounced and clearly visible on a larger king, and there is a lot of meat around them. It isn't quite a fillet, but it's a nice piece of meat.

The 7Up and hot sauce serve as a tenderizer and enhance the flavor. I use a freshly opened 2-liter bottle, as it has the most carbonation, and this helps it penetrate the meat. The citrus juices

PREPARATION:

Clean the fish so there is no red meat remaining — except next to the skin — and leave the ribs. Wash the fish, pat the pieces dry and place them in a Ziploc bag. Fill the Ziploc bag to cover the fish with 7Up. Pour in the tablespoon of hot sauce and swish to mix it well. Be sure the mixture reaches all the fish. Work all the air out of the bag and seal it. Marinate this covered in ice or in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes and up to several hours.

Tear a piece of aluminum foil for each piece of fish, roll up the edges and spray with non-stick spray. Remove the fish from the Ziploc, allow them to drip, and place each on a piece of aluminum foil with the skin down and ribs facing up.

Preheat grill to medium. Rub the fish with the pepper — to taste. Brush the fish with Carolina Treet and put a little Carolina Treet around the fish on the aluminum foil. Place the fish on the grill on the aluminum foil pieces. Cook the fish 10 to 14 minutes; this will vary depending on thickness of fish and heat of grill.

Brush the fish with the Carolina Treet that has run off and be sure there is still a little on the aluminum foil. Turn the heat to medium high for 4 to 6 minutes to finish cooking the fish. Be careful not to overcook the fish. Remove and serve hot.

Have some Carolina Treet, hot sauce, salt and pepper on the side for those wishing to add any of them.

This combines well with a variety of vegetables. Potatoes

in 7Up help break down the meat and mellow the flavor.

I don't know exactly how the hot sauce reacts with the citrus juices and carbonation, but it does something. Even though you won't taste any spice or heat at this amount, the flavor of the fish isn't the same without it.

The kind of hot sauce is important. This works best with a Texas Pete, Louisiana or similar, vinegar-based hot sauce. Tabasco and the Mexican-style hot sauces work well on some things, but not this.

The amount of pepper and Carolina Treet to use are personal preferences. I like a lot of pepper and a little more than light, but not too heavy, with the Carolina Treet. You can always add more once on your plate, but it's impossible to take any away. I don't add any salt to this as there is plenty in the Carolina Treet, but it may be added to personal tastes.

The cooking time varies significantly depending on the heat of the grill and the thickness of the meat. My grill is a little cooler than some, and the meat was thick, so it took longer to cook. I went about 14 to 16 minutes before basting again and about 8 minutes after. The sauce gathering in the foil beside and under the fish kept it from overcooking. However, if you see the sauce crusting, check the fish immediately.

Remember, fish dishes are best with fresh fish you caught that day. This adds the experience to the flavor and makes it special. ■

INGREDIENTS:

2 king mackerel rib sections

1 bottle of 7Up

1 TBL hot sauce, unopened

Carolina Treet Barbecue Sauce

Coarse ground black pepper and salt

Non-stick cooking spray

Ziploc bag

Aluminum foil



are a favorite side and they can be baked or fried. I served this meal most recently with baked sweet potatoes, butter beans and hot, fresh bread. A fresh green salad or lettuce wedge is a great way to begin. ■



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



Jimmy Watt liked the pumpkin spice look so much he made up four options of his hand-tied jigs to offer as crappie Holiday treats. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Wesley “Big Sasquatch” Miller’s hand-tied versions of a pumpkin spice jig with a gold and orange head.

PUMPKIN SPICE CRAPPIE JIGS — WHY NOT?

T By Kinny Haddox
emperatures are cooling. Leaves are falling. Stores have long-ago broken out way-too-early holiday season merchandise. And then, there’s pumpkin spice showing up everywhere.

Everywhere. Pumpkin spice candles. Pumpkin spice snacks. Pumpkin spice ... tea ... pancakes ... bread ... coffee ... creamer ... caramels and more. Blame it on pumpkin spice latte at Starbucks. That’s where the craze started 15 years ago.

So why not pumpkin spice crappie jigs and Crappie Nibbles?

We asked three expert jigmakers to use their imagination and try and match the colors of cinnamon, ginger, allspice, nutmeg and clove and make us some custom, pumpkin spice crappie jigs. And we went further. We even mixed a packet of pumpkin spice seasoning in a bottle of Crappie Magnet Slab Bites.

And we actually put them to the test. And we caught crappie on them.

That proves ... well, we’re not sure what it proves.

Other than if you put a good-looking bait in front of a hungry crappie, that crappie will eat it. Orange jigs have been around a long time, and while there are some on the market that are close

TOP LOUISIANA JIG-TIERS EXPERIMENT WITH THE COLORS THAT GO WITH A FAVORITE, CULTURAL PHENOMENA THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FISHING.

to that color combination, they usually have some other name or color code.

Our three volunteer jig makers were Wesley “Big Sasquatch” Miller of Doyline, La., Jimmy Watt of Bastrop, La., and Greg Davis of Tullos, La., all well-known for their top-quality and productive, hand-tied jigs.

Watt went with four color schemes, one mainly orange and brown, one gold body and orange tail, one orange body with a brown stripe and orange and black tail and one copper and tan with an orange tail. As with all his jigs, he added a single gold or silver foil trailer.

Miller made one gold head and one orange and accented the body with orange and gold mix with a small orange split tail. Davis, who makes Crappie G jigs, made three sizes from 1/32- to 1/8-ounce and stuck with all pumpkin — orange with a bit of gold and tan in the bodies and tails.

And as for the Slab Bites, we just took a bottle of McCormick’s Pumpkin Pie Spice flavoring and mixed it with the nibbles. We don’t have enough evidence to know how much the fish liked them, but there is no doubt it made the fishy nibbles smell a whole lot better. And as a bonus, it also worked well to keep the Slab Bites from sticking together, too.

"The pumpkin spice colors are similar to combination of a crawfish and a grass shrimp mixed together," said Davis. "It's a bug-looking pattern, and that works best for black crappie, but in off-color water, it will catch white crappie, too. A lot of people use orange heads and orange jigs all the time, so this isn't that uncommon. But the pumpkin spice . . . that's a first for me."

Watt laughed and said he'd try anything, noting he knew these jigs were just a novelty, but the colors do catch fish a lot of the year. In fact, some jigs he had already makes were very similar. He said that while these colors are mostly used in the spring or stained water, they work in the fall, as well when fish start feeding up for the colder months. Crawfish season, after all, usually kicks off in November in Louisiana. And most of these jigs look just like crawfish colors.

Colors are important, Miller said, but the main thing is finding fish and making sure you present the bait the way they want it. Sometimes the fish are super-aggressive and swim out to nail it. Other times, you have to be quiet, patient and wait until the fish are ready to bite. He agreed with the others that orange, gold and brown are dependable colors in the fall, and not just for household decorations, but for catching fish as well.

Love it or hate it, fall brings a resurgence of the cultural phenomenon we know as pumpkin spice. Ever since that first pumpkin pie spice coffee hit the market, it's been "a thing." There's no end in sight. And for you history buffs, the origin of pumpkin spice dates back to the Dutch East India Company and are native to Southeast Asian islands.

There are no crappie there, but if there were, we know what we could have used to catch them. ■











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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCL	VALUE	MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT		
1	2	3	4	5					45	3:44 AM	9:02 am - 11:34 am	4:43 PM	9:27 pm - 11:59 pm		
6	7	8	9	10					53	4:51 AM	10:01 am - 12:13 pm	5:13 PM	10:26 pm - 12:38 am		
11	12	13	14	15					61	6:00 AM	11:03 am - 12:51 pm	5:45 PM	11:28 pm - Midnight		New
16	17	18	19	20					64	7:12 AM	12:06 pm - 1:34 pm	6:20 PM	Midnight - 1:16 am		Perigee
21	22	23	24	25					52	8:27 AM	1:13 pm - 2:21 pm	7:00 PM	12:31 am - 1:59 am		
26	27	28	29	30					38	9:43 AM	2:20 pm - 3:16 pm	7:48 PM	1:38 am - 2:46 am		
1	2	3	4	5					25	9:57 AM	2:28 pm - 3:14 pm	7:43 PM	2:45 am - 3:41 am		End DST
6	7	8	9	10					19	11:05 AM	3:32 pm - 4:18 pm	8:46 PM	2:53 am - 3:39 am		Low
11	12	13	14	15					19	12:04 PM	4:33 pm - 5:21 pm	9:54 PM	3:57 am - 4:43 am		
16	17	18	19	20					24	12:52 PM	5:26 pm - 6:24 pm	11:02 PM	4:58 am - 5:46 am		
21	22	23	24	25					35	1:32 PM	6:11 pm - 7:23 pm		5:51 am - 6:49 am		Half
26	27	28	29	30					27	2:06 PM	6:51 pm - 8:19 pm	12:09 AM	6:36 am - 7:48 am		
1	2	3	4	5					23	2:35 PM	7:26 pm - 9:14 pm	1:12 AM	7:16 am - 8:44 am		
6	7	8	9	10					26	3:02 PM	8:00 pm - 10:06 pm	2:13 AM	7:51 am - 9:39 am		
11	12	13	14	15					24	3:27 PM	8:31 pm - 10:57 pm	3:12 AM	8:25 am - 10:31 am		
16	17	18	19	20					38	3:53 PM	9:03 pm - 11:49 pm	4:10 AM	8:56 am - 11:22 am		
21	22	23	24	25					50	4:20 PM	9:37 pm - 12:39 am	5:07 AM	9:28 am - 12:14 pm		
26	27	28	29	30					61	4:49 PM	10:14 pm - 1:30 am	6:05 AM	10:02 am - 1:04 pm		Full
1	2	3	4	5					67	5:22 PM	10:53 pm - 2:23 am	7:03 AM	10:39 am - 1:55 pm		Apogee
6	7	8	9	10					57	5:59 PM	11:38 pm - Midnight	8:01 AM	11:18 am - 2:48 pm		
11	12	13	14	15					48	6:42 PM	Midnight - 3:14 am	8:58 AM	12:03 pm - 3:39 pm		
16	17	18	19	20					40	7:31 PM	12:25 am - 4:07 am	9:52 AM	12:50 pm - 4:32 pm		
21	22	23	24	25					36	8:25 PM	1:16 am - 4:58 am	10:42 AM	1:41 pm - 5:23 pm		High
26	27	28	29	30					37	9:22 PM	2:07 am - 5:47 am	11:26 AM	2:32 pm - 6:12 pm		
1	2	3	4	5					36	10:22 PM	3:02 am - 6:32 am	12:05 PM	3:27 pm - 6:57 pm		
6	7	8	9	10					40	11:24 PM	3:57 am - 7:13 am	12:40 PM	4:22 pm - 7:38 pm		
11	12	13	14	15					48		4:51 am - 7:53 am	1:12 PM	5:16 pm - 8:18 pm		Half
16	17	18	19	20					36	12:27 AM	5:48 am - 8:30 am	1:41 PM	6:13 pm - 8:55 pm		
21	22	23	24	25					29	1:31 AM	6:44 am - 9:06 am	2:10 PM	7:09 pm - 9:31 pm		
26	27	28	29	30					27	2:36 AM	7:42 am - 9:44 am	2:40 PM	8:07 pm - 10:09 pm		
1	2	3	4	5											

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