

# LAKE FORK "The Big Bass Capital of Texas"



## "The Fisherman's Guide, News You Can Use" "Lines To Get Hooked On"

2 Sections

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Year End Review on Lake Fork and Great Things To Look Forward To in 2015



By Don Hampton

Lake Fork could only be described as exciting and living up to its reputation as the "Big Bass Capital of Texas" in 2014.

In the 2014 Toyota ShareLunker Season Lake

Fork contributed three lunkers of the nine entered into the program state wide. Randall Claybourne from Tulsa, Oklahoma won the program's Angler of the Year with his Lake Fork catch of 13.86-pounds. Other anglers making a great entry into the program with

Lake Fork lunkers were Blake Eppinette from Downsville, Louisiana with a 13.6-pound bass and Stephen Proctor from Pryor, Oklahoma with a 13.29-pound bass. David Roulston from Frisco, Texas has started off the 2015 Toyota ShareLunker season in a big way. On Thursday, November 20th at approximately 1 p.m fishing Lake Fork he caught a lunker bass weighing 13.88-pounds, measuring 26.75-inches in length, with a girth of 20.5-inches. With David's latest entry it brought the ShareLunker entries to 558 with 257 of those lunkers hav-

ing been caught on Lake Fork. On April 6, 2014 BassChamps hosted its 6th Annual Ford Mega Bass Tournament with 1,643 Anglers coming to participate in the largest one-day pay-out for a big bass tournament. With a new

(See Year End Review....Continued on Page 4-A)



Lake Fork guide Danny Holder should hire out as Santa every year, because he really makes a good one! He was Santa's helper having pictures taken with the children and accepting their "Wish List" for the real Santa at Oak Ridge Marina on December 13th when parents brought their children for "Breakfast with Santa". There were 170 participants that shared the holiday experience.

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## Bubba thinks a lot of the "Fish Tales" on Lake Fork are bigger than the "Fish Tails"!

By: Don Hampton

Everything is big on Lake Fork. That could be the reason, one of Bubba's New Year's Resolutions is to lose some weight. He is not too excited about that one though. He likes his fried fish, chicken fried steaks, mashed potatoes and gravy. Bubba is also kind of proud of his size. He says, "People can see I'm healthy and with my longer arms I can make longer casts!" Well, that's Bubba for you... always looking for the positive in a situation. He even wants to get a bumper sticker for his truck that says, "Made In Texas By Texans". His truck was built in Detroit so we know he's not referring to that!

Big is the reason Bubba chose to live on Lake Fork. For the big bass and I do believe for the big stories and the number of restaurants that have "All You Can Eat", while you tell these exaggerations!

Bubba has a tendency to tell a few tall-tales himself. With him when he is exaggerating a story he does it in full jest. Fishing is just too much fun to fib about it. Bubba's stories range from the bass he caught that was so big, that when he pulled it out of the water the lake level dropped two feet to the one that was so big it struck at his boat thinking it was a topwater lure. My very favorite one he told me was about the one he hooked under the 154 bridge. This hawg was so big and strong it pulled him from the bridge to the dam. It was so strong and fast he was pass-

ing other boats that were on plane. When the fish got him in deeper water he had to cut his line because he was afraid the fish was going to pull his boat under like a bobber on a cane pole.

One of Bubba's favorite past-times is sitting around making up exaggerated funny fishing stories. It is like some of the jokes he makes up. He'll practice them on Bubbette until she gets so tired of them she runs off to Wal-Mart and then he rehearses them to himself. When he gets to a point where he laughs at them, then look out world here they come!

With his stories a person knows they are all in jest and only for the fun of telling. You know right away his stories are literally, "unbelievably funny".

With some anglers and their fish stories you can just watch and listen to Bubba to determine if he believes them. If you or someone else is telling Bubba a fish story that he just isn't quite buying, you can tell right off. If his only comment during the story is "Right" or "Really", he isn't going for it! If he finds the story just too unbelievable, "Right" and "Really", will be long and drawn out with too many syllables in the pronunciation. So much so he sounds like he is doing an impression of Dr. Evil in the Austin Powers movie.

A perfect example of one of these stories is when an angler, (we won't say his profession), told Bubba he caught a double-digit bass every day for 28 days in a row fishing Lake Fork. All Bubba said was "Riiiggghht!"

What Bubba really wanted for Christmas

he didn't get! But, he had already figured out that Bubbette wouldn't be able to find it, so he wasn't too disappointed. He wanted one of those fancy reels that some of these anglers must have in their possession. The kind of reel that has the built in scale and measuring tape. He has some nice reels that Bubbette has bought him on special occasions but none that tell him how long or heavy the fish was that broke off.

Bubba knows these reels must exist, if only for the most elite fishermen, because otherwise how could they tell these stories with such preciseness. One angler told Bubba, "I hooked an 11.4 pound bass over 24" but never got it to the surface before it wrapped me on a stump and broke my line!" Bubba's reply, "Riiiggghht!" Another angler told Bubba just after a tournament, "I almost had you beat! I had an 8 pound 10 ounce bass all the way up to the boat before it broke my line!" Bubba's reply, "Riiiggghht! You want to see my check?"

Bubba has decided these anglers must have one of those fancy reels that tells exactly how much a fish weighs upon hook-up! He's weighed a lot of fish in his time but he couldn't tell you exactly what a fish weighed on the end of his line while its still in the water.

After much thought and pondering on Bubba's part he came to a conclusion. "These big fish tales are like big people getting their pictures taken. Each one will have you convinced that a photograph adds 10 pounds to their weight!"

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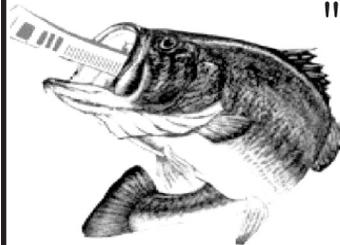
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## Year End Review on Lake Fork and Great Things To Look Forward To in 2015 (Continued from Page 1-A)

Ford truck given away each hour and 15 places being paid, there was a lot of incentive to catch a big Lake Fork bass. Mother Nature wasn't nice to the anglers but seven anglers drove off in new Ford trucks. On March 22, 2015 the 7th Annual Ford Mega Bass tournament will be held out of Lake Fork Marina with a new Ford truck and places paid each hour of the tournament.

In May 2014 Lake Fork saw the return of the Texas Toyota Bass Classic. Professional Angler Keith Combs of Huntington, Texas broke the tour-level world record catching 110-pounds in three days of competition fishing this great reservoir. The 2015 TTBC will be held this year on Lake Fork May 21-24, 2015.

The "10th Annual Legend of Lake Fork Big Bass Tournament" that was held in May showed anglers love Lake Fork and fishing in May is a great time to be here. During the course of the tournament 1,145 anglers representing 21 states came to participate. During the tournament 29 bass over the 24" slot were brought to the weigh-in ranging from 7-pounds to 10.29-pounds. This tournament is open to all makes and models of boats. This year's tournament has a guarantee of \$320,000 and will be held on May 15, 16, 17, 2015 hosted out of Lake Fork Marina. For more information on this tournament go to [www.legendoflakefork.net](http://www.legendoflakefork.net).

June is exciting on Lake Fork mostly for our

youth with the Wood County, TPWD Games Warden's Association hosting the Annual Kidfish Day at SRA Headquarters. This past year we had over 400 children ranging in age from 2 to 16 that came to participate. Skeeter Owners also like this month for the Annual Skeeter Owner's Tournament held every June on Lake Fork.

Anglers can always look forward to the "Hook n' Cook" sand bass tournament in July hosted by The Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork and Fisherman's One Stop.

In September on Lake Fork it goes from idle to fast speed with the Maddog Moore tournament and Sealy Outdoors Big Bass Splash. This year at the Big Bass Splash they reported 2,470 anglers representing 28 states and 2 countries came to Lake Fork to compete for part of the \$500,000 in cash and prizes. During the 3 day course of that tournament 1,828.34-pounds of bass were brought to the weigh-in with 33 of those bass exceeding the 24" slot limit. The 29th Annual Sealy Outdoors Big Bass Splash on Lake Fork is scheduled for September 18, 19, 20, 2015.

The 9th Annual Berkley Big Bass Tournament was held on October 18, 19, 2014. In this unique tournament anglers can only use Berkley and Sebile baits. For this event 901 anglers came to try their luck for the many paid places paid per hour and the chance to take home one

of the two new Skeeter bass boats given away for the heaviest bass. This is another great event put on by BassChamps on Lake Fork. This tournament is scheduled for October 17, 18, 2015.

If you are looking to catch a ShareLunker, you have until April 30th to complete your task. Judging from the statistics and numbers, believe me, Lake Fork is your best bet.

See you on the lake or at the boat shows. Have a great New Year, Fish Friendly, and practice C.P.R. (Catch \* Photo \* Release)

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## Rainbow Trout Coming to Tyler's Nature Center

The East Texas Woods and Waters Foundation (ETWWF) and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will host two special fishing events in January 2015. Two thousand rainbow trout will be stocked into The Nature Center pond to provide a free fishing opportunity for area youth and their adult fishing mentors. Event dates are January 3 and 10, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., rain or shine.

Adult mentors should bring all equipment and bait necessary for fishing (see recommended equipment below). A limited amount of fishing equipment (and bait) will be on hand for those who cannot bring their own on a first-come--first-served basis. Adult mentors do not need to be experienced anglers. TPWD staff will be on hand to assist.

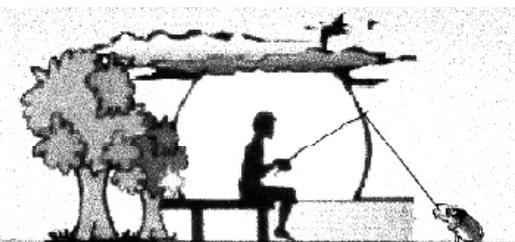
"Anglers will have the choice of releasing their catch or keeping up to a limit of five fish per person to take home," said Craig Bonds, East Texas Regional Fisheries Director. "We also have fish-cleaning facilities courtesy of the East Texas Woods and Waters Foundation, and we will offer fish-cleaning demonstrations."

So, if you know a kid who wants to go fishing, this is a chance to make some

wonderful memories outdoors and enjoy the wonderful sport of fishing. Adults who attend these events must bring at least one child and mentor them while fishing. Recommended Equipment: A light-action rod and reel combination (one per child) with small fishing hooks, light line 12 lb. test or less, small bobbers (optional), and small split shot. For bait, bring salmon eggs, whole kernel corn, marshmallows, small worms, or prepared trout bait (Berkley PowerBait Hatchery Formula Chews or similar). Small rooster-tail spinners work well. If you intend to keep trout, please bring a stringer or small cooler. Special Rules: Fishing will be allowed only on Saturday, January 3, and Saturday, January 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Youth must be supervised at all times by their adult mentors. Parking will be allowed in designated areas only. Only rainbow trout (five per day) and channel catfish (one per day) may be kept per angler. Each angler is restricted to no more than two fishing poles. No fishing license is required for youth or their adult mentors. Free to all participants. Pre-registration is not required. Sponsorship: These special events are made

possible by the members of the East Texas Woods and Waters Foundation and staff of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Other Activities: The Nature Center in Tyler has a series of outdoor hiking trails that may also be of interest to visitors. We invite you to explore these trails and also enjoy a day of fishing! How to Get Here: From ESE Loop 323 in Tyler, go southeast on University Blvd. (Spur 248). Take a right turn on F.M. 848 (Bascom Rd.). Go 0.2 mile and turn right at The Nature Center gate. Please park in main parking area and walk to pond using the concrete trail near the kiosk. Got Questions? Richard Ott, Fisheries Biologist, (903) 566-2161 or Kevin Storey, Fisheries Biologist, (903) 593-5077.

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## 2015 on the Fork Looks To Be Great

By Danny Ozio

"Another year has flown by and we are at the cusp of entering into 2015. Fishing was great last year and I most certainly think it has the potential to be better this year. With a recent Toyota ShareLunker, a 13.88 toad entered into the system, the stage is set for more to follow. It seems that the crappie fleet this winter are harvesting some good numbers which means the giant bass are out there feeding up whenever possible. I foresee someone will bring a fifteen or sixteen to the scales in January or February. With the lake dropping at the rate it is, this should gather the green monsters up and offer the anglers easier access to a trophy of a lifetime.

Main lake water temps are hovering in the low fifties and the lake is about 7 1/2 feet low. This

speaks volumes to me and points to a great bite in January. The water is several degrees warmer this year at this time than last year. This might be why the shallow bite of lately has been excellent. The numbers have been good although no giants have made it to my landing net. It's just a matter of time.

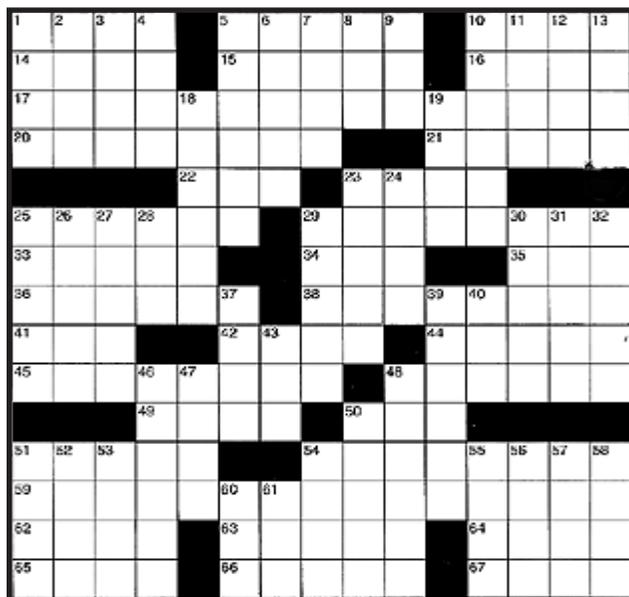
January is usually a great month for fishing hydrilla as the bass tend to congregate on the outside edges, especially on sunny days. This is where the red rattle trap truly shines. The 1/2 ounce version is the norm but always keep a 3/4 ounce tied on to probe the deep outside edges of the grass. In most cases, you will catch much larger bass on the bigger version. The key to trap fishing is to touch the grass with the lure as it races through the vegetation. In some cases, let it bury up in the foliage and then rip it out. This action usually triggers the strike. Sunshine is the key for this pattern and the afternoons are usually the best. Shallow stumps are also a dark horse pattern at this time of the year, especially in the creeks. Focus on the largest wood in the 3 to 8ft range. Several presentations will work but the jig will bring home the bacon. Cast just past the wood and work it back through the roots. A Texas rig brush hawg will also work along with my fav, the drop shot. Use dark colors on cloudy days, black/blue or green pumpkin, and watermelon red or watermelon magic on the sun-



ny days. Running bank lines in the afternoon can be a profitable pattern using a chatterbait. White works well and I will use black/blue on cloudy days. If the wind is none existent, switch to a suspending jerkbait and work it slowly. This is a great tactic when the fish are lethargic and skittish.

The deep bite is always an option on Fork. The key to catching large bass in the depths is finding the bait. I use the Lowrance 12 Touch to scour across water in the 18 to 30-ft range. Once I see the bait, the bass are close. I will use a jigging spoon along with a flutter spoon to get the bass to commit. Most of the time the largemouth will be suspended so the countdown method will be

(See 2015 on the Fork...  
Continued on Page 20-A)



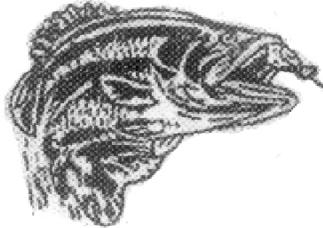
**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Tramp
- 5. Trainee
- 10. Questions
- 14. Winged
- 15. Comic or grand \_\_\_\_
- 16. Grandmother
- 17. 1956 winners
- 20. Personal backgrounds
- 21. Rhizopodan (var.)
- 22. Type of tube
- 23. Many blood vessels
- 25. Bench
- 29. Migrants
- 33. Bitter chemical
- 34. Equal (prefix)
- 35. Sound of disgust
- 36. Spears
- 38. Flour
- 41. Fed
- 42. Detroit suburb
- 44. Covered with marks
- 45. Greenwich, for one
- 48. Terminates
- 49. Artificial diamond
- 50. Blackball
- 51. Puff adder genus
- 54. Nakedness
- 59. 1944 winners
- 62. \_\_\_\_ Frank's diary
- 63. Machine for shaping wood
- 64. Flightless bird
- 65. Metric weight units (abbr.)
- 66. Blends
- 67. Formerly (archaic)

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Used to have (Scottish)
- 2. Stew with chickpeas
- 3. Low voice
- 4. Minerals
- 5. Adjoin
- 6. Opposite of starboard side
- 7. H<sub>2</sub>O
- 8. Before
- 9. Seaman
- 10. Type of instinct
- 11. Former East German state
- 12. Ornament
- 13. Capital of Yemen
- 18. Church council of A.D. 325
- 19. Thomas \_\_\_\_, American cartoonist
- 23. \_\_\_\_'s Rebellion, slave uprising
- 24. Minute particle
- 25. \_\_\_\_, spicy sausage
- 26. Lift up
- 27. Used in laser printers
- 28. Twitch
- 29. Stone parsley
- 30. Poems
- 31. Leopold von \_\_\_\_, German historian, 1795-1886
- 32. Daniel \_\_\_\_, rebel of 1786
- 37. Commotion
- 39. Can or bottle \_\_\_\_
- 40. Mauna \_\_\_\_, Hawaiian volcano
- 43. Tell on
- 46. Waders
- 47. Measured portion
- 48. Menus (French)
- 50. Cleanse
- 51. \_\_\_\_ Pitt
- 52. Private school in New York
- 53. To seize or hold
- 54. Sandwiches
- 55. Atom bomb
- 56. Ruler
- 57. Cuts
- 58. Vexation
- 60. Radio frequency
- 61. \_\_\_\_ de cologne

Answers on Page 21-A



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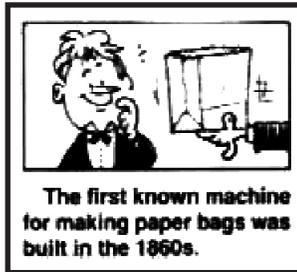
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## New Helicopter Strengthens Texas Game Wardens

The Texas Game Warden's recently unveiled its new Airbus AS350B3e helicopter that will enhance the department's state-wide law enforcement apparatus and assist with its search and rescue and disaster response efforts. The aircraft is outfitted with the latest law enforcement technology and emergency response equipment including a rescue hoist, thermal imager, searchlight, public address system, satellite communication and night vision. Funding for the new aircraft, which was approximately \$5 million, was made possible through leg-

islative appropriation during the 83rd Texas Legislative session. "This helicopter is going to be a tremendous asset and force multiplier for the Texas Game Wardens," said Col. Craig Hunter, TPWD Law Enforcement Director. "We will not only be able to more efficiently move personnel and equipment across the state, but with the addition of the new hoist system, we will be able to better leverage our marine and ground assets to enhance our search and rescue capabilities during times of disaster." Among the new aircrafts advantages are its ability to carry ad-

ditional game wardens including its K9 teams during remote search and rescue missions or other specially trained personnel for specific assignments. In addition to the new helicopter, the department also has a fixed wing 2009 Turbo Cessna Model 206 aircraft.



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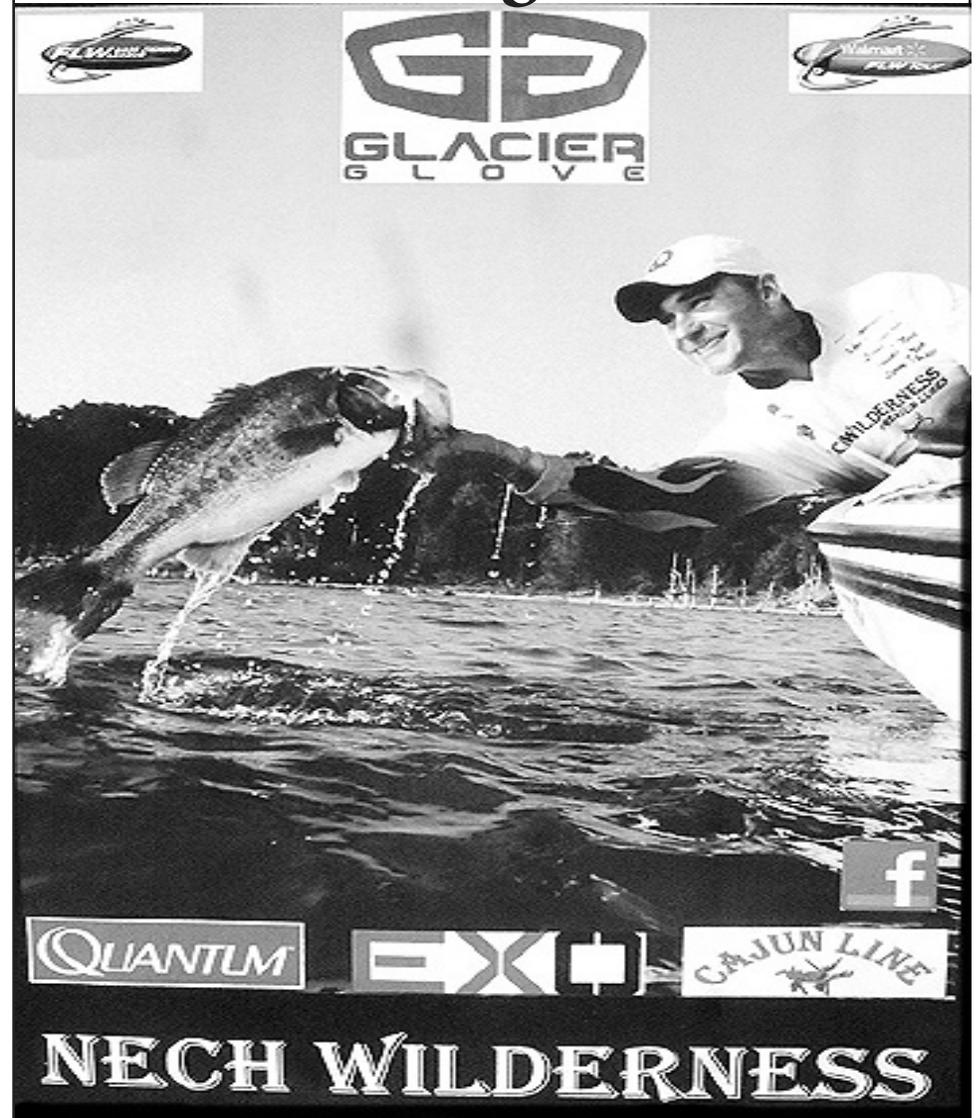


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By Terri Moon



Yes – time flies when you're fishing and here it is, a new year to begin! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. I took some time off to head to Missouri to spend some time with family and friends.

What a bonus it is to get back home to Lake Fork!

For those of you coming to Lake Fork for the first time, please be extra careful getting around out there because of the water conditions. There are many channel markers missing and some have drifted away from where they are supposed to be. So when in doubt – just IDLE! It's not worth getting hurt over. If you should hit a stump and need motor repairs, you need to contact Chuck or Perry at Service Marine in Emory 903-473-3909. They will get you fixed up and back on the water. They are the best! One last piece of advice – be sure and wear those kill switches and life vests. You can never be too careful.

I guess the safest way to get around (at least for me) is having a good G.P.S. My Lowrance has been an amazing asset for navigating. I've been able to make

my own trails that I know are safe to get around and boy is that a "peace of mind"! If you're considering upgrading your electronics, do yourself a favor and get the G.P.S. combos. I promise it will enhance your fishing experience! Some of us need all the help we can get!

So, if the weather is too bad for fishing, get out there to some of the boat and tackle shows in your area. Lowrance will be at the Texas Fishing and Outdoor Show in Mesquite and the Houston International Boat Show in Houston. This way you can see all the latest Lowrance has to offer and have any questions answered right then. Maybe I'll see you there!

Be sure and stop by the Shimano booth too to see their latest surprises for '15. Plus, the Gamma fishing line will be there and many more tackle booths and boat companies displaying their new-

est crafts for the New Year. Be sure to take the whole family. There will also be fishing pools for the children and many more activities. These shows are great for stocking up for the upcoming spawn.

Well, finally, if you do find a nice day and venture out, I would target 25 to 35 feet in 30 to 45 feet of water and keep a close eye on that depth finder. It will tell you how deep you need to be fishing. As far as colors to use – I'd stick to a darker color with murky water conditions – black, gray or navy with a chartreuse tail. When in clearer water try the lighter colors white, green and blue with chartreuse are working well. When the bite slows down and you are still marking fish, don't be afraid to change up your color combinations.

If I don't see you at the shows, hope to see you on the water. Be safe and practice safe boating.

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## Texas Game Wardens on Border Make Large Gillnet Seizure

Texas game wardens conducting an enhanced marine patrol of the lower Rio Grande near Boca Chica along the Texas-Mexico border recently seized roughly 8,000 feet of illegal gillnet.

Though no arrests were made, the gillnet is believed to have belonged to commercial fishermen from Mexico. Fishing with a gillnet in Texas waters is a violation of state law.

Game wardens found hundreds of fish trapped in the netting, including red drum, snook, black drum, sheepshead, tarpon, mullet, jack crevalle, and gizzard shad. In addition to fish, the gillnet contained blue crabs, as well as cormorants and brown pelicans. Game wardens were able to save two of the brown pelicans, but the other birds had died. Using a gillnet in state waters is a Class B misdemeanor punishable by a

fine not to exceed \$2,000, confinement in jail not to exceed 180 days or both. Taking the fish, crabs, and protected birds would bring additional charges. "Illegal commercial fishing activity from Mexico poses a significant threat towards the natural resources of Texas and we take the threat extremely seriously," said Maj. Malcom Wilkes.

Anyone witnessing alleged illegal commercial fishing or any poaching activity is encouraged to call their local game warden or Operation Game Thief at 800-792-GAME (4263).

"Game Wardens working the Rio Grande, the Gulf of Mexico, and border lakes are working in a very complex, demanding, and dangerous environment," said Grahame Jones, TPWD Chief of Special Operations. "In addition to routine interdiction of commercial fishermen from Mexico who are

fishing Texas waters illegally, our game wardens encounter human smugglers and drug smugglers very frequently."

"It is important to realize that the same groups from Mexico that utilize long-lines and gillnets in Texas waters to indiscriminately remove thousands of sharks, reef fish, turtles, dolphins, and other species of marine life also take part in other illegal smuggling activities," said Capt. James Dunks, who is based in Brownsville. "Our presence along the Texas Border helps to protect our natural resources significantly while also helping to protect Texas against other criminal activity." For more information on TPWD's ongoing efforts to confront illegal fishing practices along the border, see [http://www.tpwmagazine.com/archive/2014/oct/ed\\_3\\_poachers/index.phtml](http://www.tpwmagazine.com/archive/2014/oct/ed_3_poachers/index.phtml)



Benny Weatherford  
Beebe, AR.,

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## Master Naturalist Program Seeks Applicants

Sixteen chapters of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be conducting training classes in the coming spring and summer months for volunteers wanting to learn about natural resource and conservation management.

The Texas Master Naturalist program, made up of 44 chapters located across the state, aims to develop a corps of well-informed citizen volunteers to educate their communities about the management of natural resources.

The main qualification needed to become a certified Texas Master Naturalist is an interest in learning and playing an active part in conservation. Volunteers will receive a minimum of 40 hours training from educators and specialists from places such as universities, natural resource agencies, nature centers and museums. Training topics include interpretation and management of natural resources, ecological concepts, ecoregions in Texas and natural systems management.

Volunteers are then asked to provide 40 hours of service a year in community education, demonstration and habitat enhancement projects in order to maintain certification as a Texas Master Naturalist. They are also expected to pursue a minimum of eight hours of advance training in areas of personal interest. However, many of the volunteers will go above and beyond their basic requirements once involved, and are encouraged to develop personal projects connecting to the mission of the chapter and state-wide program. The following Texas Master Naturalist chapters offering volunteer training this spring are listed with contact information. Enrollment is limited in most chapters. Some registration deadlines are fast approaching so contact a chapter near you to see if seating is still available. --Angleton--Cradle of Texas Chapter--Training runs Jan. 28 through May 13. Classes are held on Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Half a day is class

with the second half field trips. A total of 14 classes will be held in this period. Some class locations are Brazos Bend State Park, Sea Center and others. Registration is \$100 due by Jan. 21. For more information contact Roy Morgan at royemorgan@aol.com or 979-297-7677 or the AgriLife Extension office @ 979-864-1558x116. Chapter website: <http://TMN-COT.org>. --Bastrop - Lost Pines Chapter - Training dates are Feb. 2 through May 1. Most classes meet Monday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. with six Saturday sessions. The schedule is on our website (<http://txmn.org/lostpines/training/basic-training/2014-lpmn-basic-training/>) Locations vary, but will be primarily in Bastrop. Class size limited to 30. Registration fee \$115.00. Registration deadline is Dec. 20. Contact Julia Akin, [juliaakin@mac.com](mailto:juliaakin@mac.com). Website <http://txmn.org/lostpines> --Collin County -- Blackland Prairie Chapter -- Train-

(See Master Naturalist.... Continued on Page 14-A)

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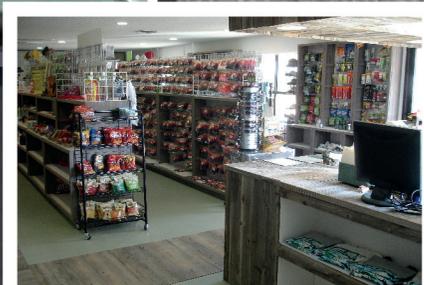
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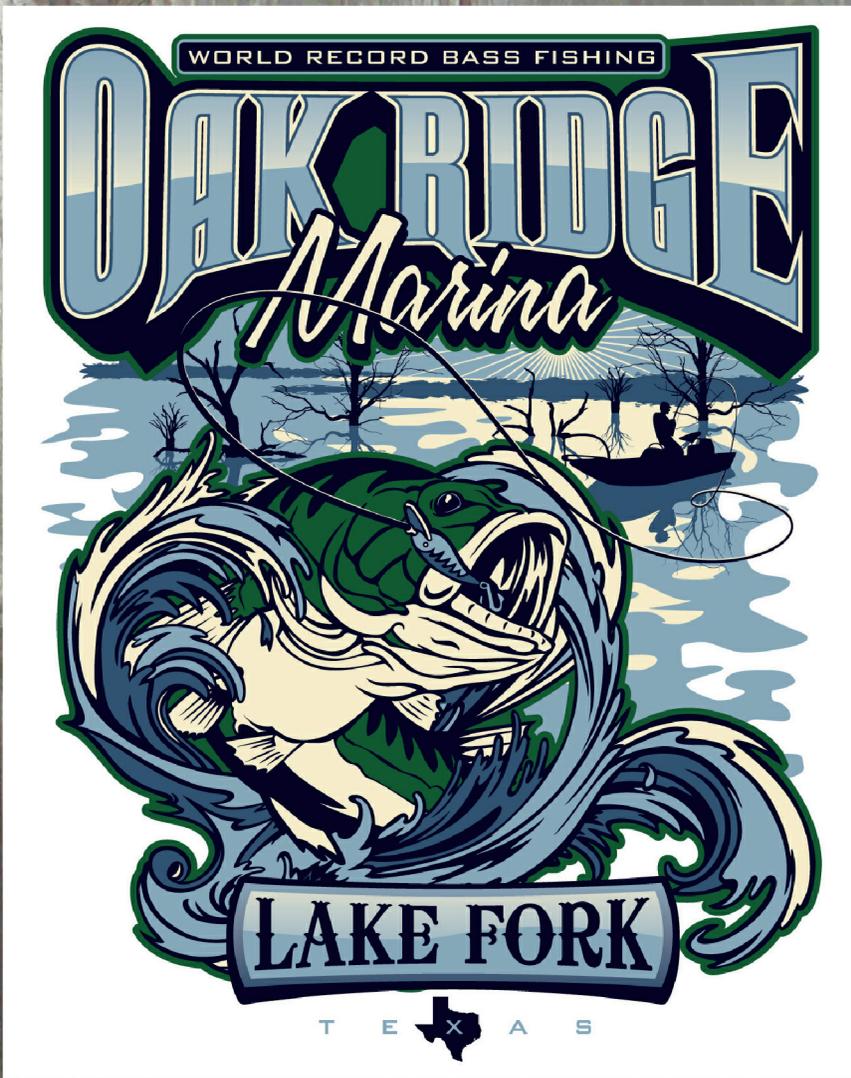
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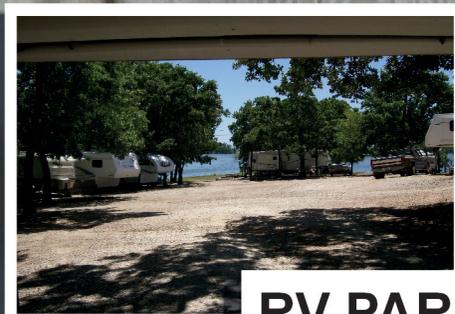
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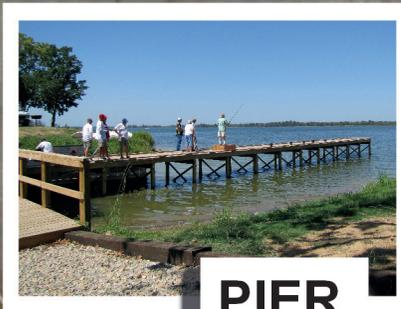
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## Master Naturalist Program Seeks Applicants (Continued from Page 11-A)

ing classes beginning Feb. 11 and run through April 29. The classes meet on Wednesday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Science Resource Building on the campus of the Heard Museum in McKinney. Field trips are usually held once a month Feb. through May with additional classes and trips held throughout the year. The fee is \$150.00 with scholarships available. Applications are due Jan. 23. Applications are on their website at <http://www.BPTMN.org> plus a tentative listing of the classes to be held.

--Dallas - North Texas Chapter -- Training dates for the spring are Feb. 10 through April 28 with training times on Tuesday evenings from 6-9 p.m. Training will be held at the Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 10056 Marsh Lane (at Walnut Hill) Suite B101 Dallas 75229. A Registration Fee of \$170 is due before training begins. For more information, contact Ellen Guiling at [education@ntmn.org](mailto:education@ntmn.org). The registration deadline is Jan 16. Applications available on the website: <http://NTMN.org>  
--Denton - Elm Fork Chapter - Training begins

Sept. 1 and will end Nov. 17. Classes are scheduled on each Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Denton AgriLife Extension Service, located at the Joseph A. Carroll Building, 401 W. Hickory Street, Denton, TX 76201. (Parking and the entrance to the building are located on W. Mulberry Street.) Class size is limited to the first 30 students. Registration fee is \$150.00. Information about the Master Naturalist volunteer program is available on our website, <http://txmn.org/elmfork/> or you can email Kathryn Gildersleeve at [Kathryn.gildersleeve@denton-county.com](mailto:Kathryn.gildersleeve@denton-county.com). The deadline for registration is Aug. 20.

--Georgetown - Good Water Chapter - Training begins March 3 and will end May 12. Registration is due before Feb. 17 and we will be accepting 30 Students. Classes are normally held on Tuesdays from 1- 5 p.m. with some field trips on Saturdays. For more information contact Wayne Rhoden at [mgardener@suddenlink.net](mailto:mgardener@suddenlink.net) or visit our web site at [www.txmn.org/goodwater](http://www.txmn.org/goodwater).

--Houston--Gulf Coast Chapter-- Spring classes will run Feb. 2 through May 18. The classes will be held on Monday mornings at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center. The class fee is \$150.00. The class limit is 20 students. Registration deadline is Jan. 15. For more information, please contact training.officer@txgcmn.org. Chapter website: <http://www.txgcmn.org>

--Jefferson -- Cypress Basin Chapter -- The deadline to apply is Jan. 5 with a class limit of 15. Classes meet one weekend a month -- January, February, March, and May in Jefferson and at Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Registration fee is \$130 per person or \$230 per married couple. For additional information contact Stella Barrow at 903-672-5524 or 903-736-3063. For application forms email Betty Morgan: [bgmorgan46@yahoo.com](mailto:bgmorgan46@yahoo.com).

--Marble Falls - Highland Lakes Chapter - Spring training will be held starting Feb. 26 through May 14, with classes every Thursday at varying times during the day. The deadline for the training class application is Dec. 15, with a class size of 15, and application fee of \$140. For more information, contact New Class Training Coordinator, Melanie Huff at [amhuff@281.com](mailto:amhuff@281.com).

Chapter website is <http://txmn.org/highlandlakes/>  
--Rockport -- Mid-Coast Chapter -- Training begins on Feb. 7 and runs through June 6. There are nine classes, most include a classroom and field component. The cost of the training is \$150. Applications are available on the website or you can email our Membership Chair at this address- [membership@midcoast-tmn.org](mailto:membership@midcoast-tmn.org). Class size is limited to 17 and is filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please visit our website [midcoast-tmn.org](http://midcoast-tmn.org) to learn more about our chapter and training.

--Round Top/Brenham -- Gideon Lincecum Chapter -- Training program starts Jan. 15. Classes will be held at Winedale Historical Center in Round Top, TX. Classes are every Monday evening from 6-9 p.m. and various dates for field trips. Class is limited to 25 people; registration fee is \$175.00 per person

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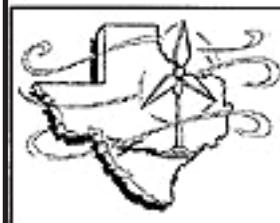
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Continued on Next Page)





Kenny LaDuke (ctr.) was presented the Texas Trails Bassmasters of Lake Fork "Albert Jordan Memorial Trophy" by Deborah Jordan (lt.) and Lew Conder, Club President (rt) at the club's Annual Christmas Party held at Fisherman's One Stop (Bro's) on Highway 515 on December 13th. Albert Jordan had been a long time member and officer of the club until he passed away in 2013 from kidney failure. In memory of Albert and all he did for the club, Texas Trails came up with a Memorial Championship Trophy. In order to win and have your name and year of accomplishment engraved on the trophy you must accumulate in the most points in the two-day end of the year club championship. Congratulations to Kenny LaDuke. Last year's recipient was Lew Conder.



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## Birders Flock To See New Species in Texas in 2014

The phenomenon of new birds seen in Texas jumped in 2014, underscoring the Lone Star State's rep as one of the top birding destinations in the country. It also illustrates how technology and social media are changing human culture.

There were three new species reported in Texas in 2014, all new to the state's bird list, pending approval by the Texas Ornithological Society. These include a red-legged honeycreeper that drew flocks of people Thanksgiving Day to Estero Llano Grande State Park in the Valley, a gray-crowned rosy-finch seen north of Dalhart in the Panhandle around Nov. 20, and a pair of common cranes still present as of Dec. 6 at Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge in the Panhandle. This represents almost as many rare birds in Texas this year as in the previous five years combined. Bird experts call these uncommon sightings "vagrants," oddities that stray from their typical ranges.

"This kind of stuff awaits any observer who's out there looking," said Cliff Shackelford, a bird biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "There will always be vagrants because birds are so mobile they can show up anywhere. We're probably only seeing the tip of the iceberg."

What's fueling the increase? Some birders speculate cheaper gas prices prompted more birders to get out in November, and a continental cold snap may have encouraged lots

of birds to move in search of food and cover.

But the iceberg's tip may be more visible these days in large part because of better binoculars, cameras, and audio recorders to capture bird calls, plus social media and mobile apps to tie it all together. "As soon as people hear about a rarity they get in the car or plane and go, because they can get there in time now," said Shelly Plante of TPWD, who runs the Great Texas Birding Classic. "People traveling coordinate in real time with people who are already at the sighting location, using social media and texts to make sure the bird is still there. The honeycreeper sighting happened on a Thanksgiving weekend when many people were already off and could pick up and go, and they did. The common cranes at Muleshoe have been there a couple of weeks, and there are still people making plans on Texbirds and Facebook to go see them."

Although avid birders often spread news of vagrants, they are not always the first to see them. These days, that honor can fall to anyone who happens to be in the right place at the right time.

"These vagrant birds can show up anywhere, including people's back yards," Shackelford said, noting it was a backyard birder who in 2012 reported the state's first Pineywoods record of a common redpoll, a small finch of the arctic tundra and boreal forest. "The takeaway is: if you see a bird you don't recognize, take a photo. Also,

record the call if it's vocalizing. If a photo is not conclusive, an audio recording can be important."

Who sifts all those photos and calls? The Texas Bird Records Committee of the Texas Ornithological Society is the authority that confirms or denies a rare bird sighting. A great resource in Texas is the TEXBIRDS listserv, which anyone can join, where people report and discuss bird sightings online. Another big online tool is Texas eBird, where backyard birders as well as those who travel for birding can report what they see year-round, contributing to an international database of bird sightings.

Texas is a particular "birdy" state, with 639 bird species recorded (a number that may increase once review of recent new bird sightings is complete). That's the second highest of any state, after California. This birdiness is the reason Texas is home to the Great Texas Wildlife Trails, the first birding and wildlife trails created in the USA, and hosts the annual Great Texas Birding Classic, a popular birdwatching event that raises money for bird conservation in Texas.

For more about birding in Texas, or to sign up for the Great Texas Birding Classic running April 15-May 15, 2015, see TPWD's Birding in Texas web pages. Or, for a focus on Texas State Parks by region, see the Birding in Texas State Parks pages.

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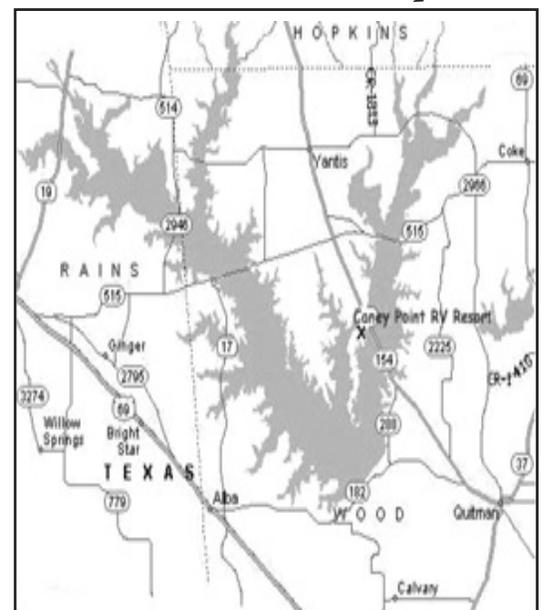
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## "Pack of Knowledge" Tips for Targeting Big Bass

By Andrew Grills

It's hard to believe another year has flown by and here we are in January once again. 2014 was an unusual year here on Lake Fork. With record breaking cold weather throughout the first four months of the year, relatively mild summer temperatures, and seemingly skipping fall altogether; it was a challenge to stay on the fish to say the least. While it wasn't my best year for overall numbers of bass, it was probably the best year for big bass I have had.

There may be some luck involved when someone comes along and catches a double digit bass on their first trip to Lake Fork. However, when someone regularly catches big fish, it isn't an accident. There are a few things that I believe increase the odds of catching bigger fish on a consistent basis. Here are some tips that seemed to pay off for us this past year, and resulted in some big catches.

One thing we spent more time doing this year than ever before was throwing big baits. We've all heard the saying that big baits catch big fish. Once in a while there are times and circumstances where the opposite can be true, but in most cases bigger lures produce bigger bites. More often than not, we erred on the side of using larger than normal lures this past year.

For instance, in a scenario where we would've normally used a regular sized fluke, we rigged a magnum fluke instead. When we would've reached for a 5 inch flutter spoon, we opted for the biggest spoon we could get our hands on. Rather than tossing a 5 inch paddle tail swim-bait, we found ourselves throwing much larger swimbaits on tackle that could be mistaken for deep sea fishing equipment. In many cases this meant sacrificing quantity in place of quality.

We were also careful about location. We all

know big bass feed and position near structure. Points, creek channels, humps, and roadbeds are among favorite big bass hangouts. This year, more than ever before, we resisted the temptation to aimlessly cover water in order to satisfy our craving for a bite. Focusing on areas with key structure, and often a combination of more than one type of structure paid off. For example, a point with a roadbed crossing it and a creek channel bending against it will hold big bass when the time is right. Spending more time in areas like this resulted in some big catches for us.

Another thing we were mindful of was our equipment. Sometimes a customer doesn't want to hear that their favorite new rod and reel is insufficient to handle a lunker. In some cases we spent the first portion of the day learning to use baitcasting equipment, or replacing light line with 20lb test. Reminders to check the drag and make sure it was tight, and to double check that knot... all of the little things we can easily overlook are things that can make the difference between someone catching the biggest fish of their life or just another one that got away.

Finally, timing is a very important factor we tried to keep in mind. We all know being at the right place, at the right time pretty much sums it

(See Pack of Knowledge....Continued on Page 21-A)



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## Game Warden Field Notes

The following items are compiled from recent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department law enforcement reports. **--See You Later, Alligator--** A Chambers County game warden responded to a call on High Island, where an alligator had been shot in one of the Houston Audubon Society bird sanctuaries. One of the workers came across a few young men pulling a flat-bottom boat out of one of the ponds. They had a rifle and an alligator more than 8 feet long. The worker detained the shooter until the Galveston County Sheriff's Office and Chambers County game warden could arrive. The subject was arrested for

hunting without landowner consent and cited for hunting in closed season. Cases and restitution pending. **--A Bad Eyedea--** A game warden was patrolling a rural area of Kent County where hunting camps had recently been burglarized when he noticed a white pickup truck leaving private property. Knowing the road headed to a main highway, he decided to take a different route to meet them. The warden gained probable cause to make a traffic stop and noticed nervousness and signs of deception from both the driver and passenger. After receiving consent to search the vehicle and interviewing both subjects, the war-

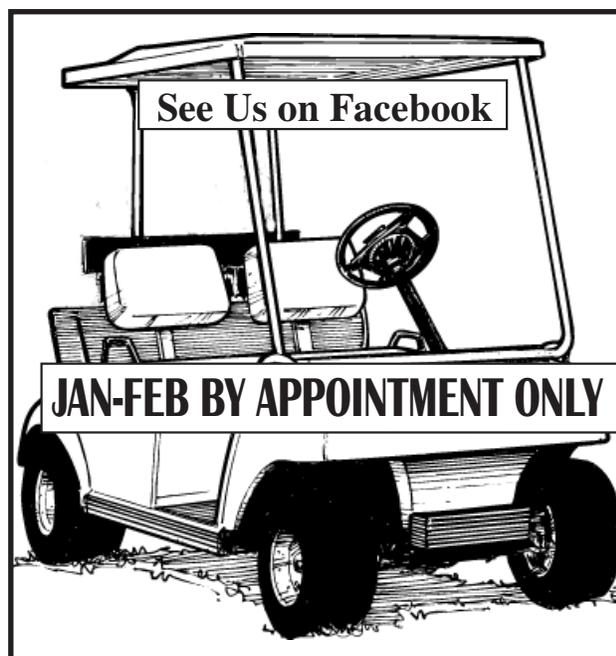
den noticed the driver's pupils were constricted to the size of a ballpoint pen, triggering him to search the vehicle once more. This time he found the butt end of a glass pipe inside a foam cup holding an iced-down soft drink, along with a meth pipe and a plastic bag containing 0.7 grams of meth. Also found in the truck were items matching the description of stolen property from the burglarized hunting camps. The driver was arrested on charges of possession of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia and littering. **--Feeling Crabby--** An Orange County game warden responded to a call in Mauriceville from the sheriff's of-

fice concerning illegally taken fish and crabs. When the warden arrived, he made contact with two subjects who possessed a boat full of fish and blue crabs. The pair admitted to illegally running someone else's commercial traps at night and steal-

ing the crabs along with the 59 fish that the warden located. Only one of the suspects had a valid fishing license. Cases were filed for possession of over the daily bag limit of red and black drum, possession of undersized red drum and floun-

der, running commercial crab trap at night, commercial crabbing without a commercial crab license and several warnings for water safety equipment.

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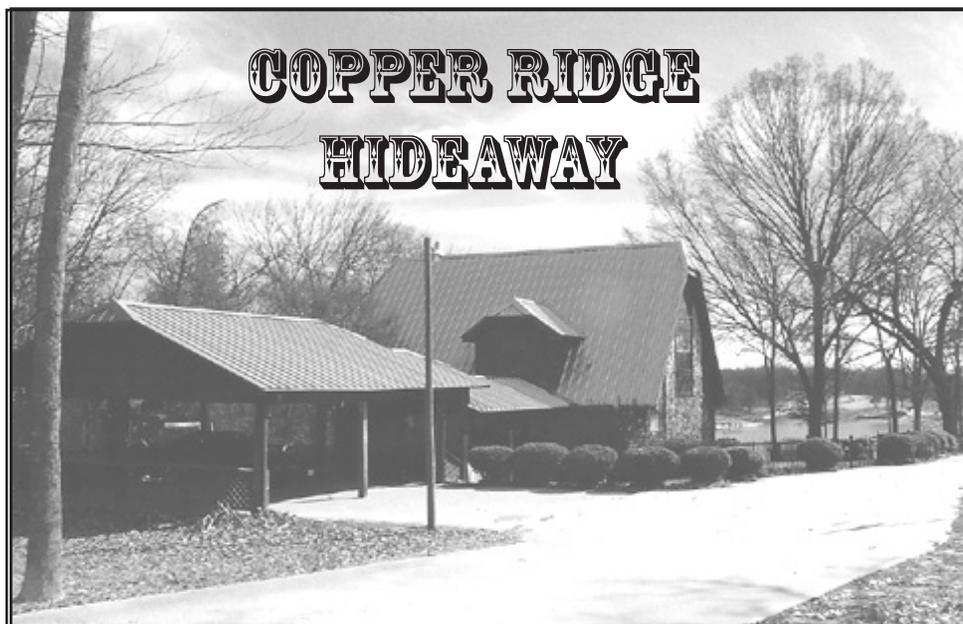
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## 2015 on the Fork Looks To Be Great (Continued from Page 6-A)

in vogue. If you see the fish in 12-ft, count the bait down to 12 because most baits fall about a foot per second. If you get no takers, switch to a magnum fluke with a 7/0 hook. White Ice and Disco Violet are great colors for this tactic and the same count down method applies. If you see the fish close to the bottom mixed in with the bait, a Carolina rig may be the best strategy. The bait of choice should be a fluke, brush hawg or a magnum trick worm. I prefer dark colors in the winter and you can't beat green pumpkin or tomato. Another plan to catch the deep predators will be the swimbait. Rig any five or six

inch bait with a 3/4 or 1 ounce jig head and let her fly. Make a long cast and pull out line so that the bait will sink straight down to cover as much water as possible on the retrieve. Swim it slowly and hang on.

January is also a great month to catch numbers on the power plant lakes. If cabin fever has set in, give me a call and we can wear them out where the water temps are summer like. A ton of fun to say the least. If you are headed out to Lake Fork in January searching for the trophy of a lifetime, I would love to be a part of this trophy quest. I still have a few dates open in January and some in February. I also have gift certificates available if you have friends or loved one's who have dreamt of landing a huge bass. You can contact me at 409-782-4269 or e-mail me at skeet21c@aol.com. You can follow me on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/LakeForkGuideDavidOzio>. I post my daily trip results on this page. I run a Skeeter FX21 with a Yamaha 250SHO and would like to thank Skeeter for making my office on the lake the best in the country. I would also like to thank G-Loomis, Shimano, Lowrance and Talon Lure Company for making my job the blast that it is. A special shout out to H&W Marine in Tyler for all their help in keeping me on the water seven days a week, no issues. I hope to see a lot of you on the water. Romans 10:13. "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". I wish all of you a blessed day."

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## Wanted: Information About Illegal Fishing Along the Border

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Law Enforcement Division and the U.S. Coast Guard are distributing a wanted poster seeking any information related to illegal fishing activities along the Texas-Mexico border.

Both agencies are currently investigating multiple cases of Texas and federal conservation law violations, including illegal long lining, gill netting, crabbing, hoop netting, shrimping and other offenses.

"The Gulf of Mexico, Rio Grande, Falcon Lake and Amistad Lake are included in the affected areas," says Grahame Jones, Chief of Special Operations. "These acts of illegal and unreported fishing adversely impact both the recreational and commercial fishing industries."

Anyone seeing illegal fishing equipment in the Gulf or other border water bodies, or who has any information about individuals involved in this activity, is urged to contact TPWD's Operation Game Thief hotline at 1-800-792 GAME (4263) or via email at [www.ogtx.com](http://www.ogtx.com) Tips also may be sent by text message to 847411. Include the letters TPWD in the text. The U.S. Coast Guard may be contacted at 361-939-6393.

For more information on TPWD's ongoing efforts to confront illegal fishing practices along the border, see [http://www.tpwmagazine.com/archive/2014/oct/ed\\_3\\_poachers/index.phtml](http://www.tpwmagazine.com/archive/2014/oct/ed_3_poachers/index.phtml)

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**Pack of Knowledge** (Continued from Page 18-A)

up. However, the right time can often be the most difficult time to fish. Some of my best days ever have been while a strong front is passing through. This means strong wind, and in many cases rain or snow. There are several reasons fish get active under these conditions, but the main thing to keep in mind is that this is when big bass make mistakes.

Periods of consistent, stable weather are also worth paying attention to. Florida strain bass are not big fans of change, and after several days of stable weather conditions one should expect the bite to be pretty good. During these periods, and the hours leading up to the next front are times to fish as much as possible.

Hopefully these tips give you some ideas that will help you catch more big bass in 2015. Its my goal for this coming year to be even better. I believe paying attention to baits, location, equipment, and timing can help put more lunkers in the boat.

Andrew is a profes-

sional guide on Lake Fork and is sponsored by Skeeter Boats, H&W Marine Tyler, TX, Costa Del Mar, M-Pack Lures, and Simms fishing apparel.



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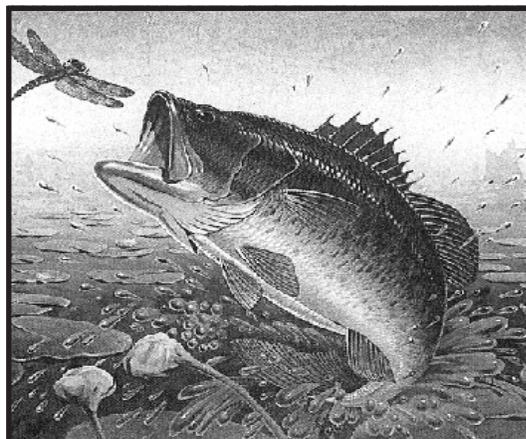
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| 14 | A | L | A | R  |   | 15 | O | P  | E  | R  | A  |    | 16 | N  | A | N | A |
| 17 | E | I | S | E  | N | H  | O | W  | E  | R  | N  | I  | X  | O  | N |   |   |
| 20 | D | O | S | S  | I | E  | R | S  |    |    | 21 | A  | M  | E  | B | A |   |
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| 25 | S | E | T | T  | E | E  |   | 29 | S  | E  | T  | T  | L  | E  | R | S |   |
| 33 | A | L | O | I  | N |    |   | 34 | I  | S  | O  |    |    | 35 | P | A | H |
| 36 | L | A | N | C  | E | S  |   | 38 | S  | E  | M  | O  | L  | I  | N | A |   |
| 41 | A | T | E |    |   | 42 | T | R  | O  | Y  |    | 44 | P  | O  | C | K | Y |
| 45 | M | E | R | I  | D | I  | A | N  |    | 48 | C  | E  | A  | S  | E | S |   |
|    |   |   |   | 49 | B | O  | R | T  |    | 50 | B  | A  | N  |    |   |   |   |
| 51 | B | I | T | I  | S |    |   | 54 | B  | A  | R  | E  | N  | E  | S | S |   |
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| 62 | A | N | N | E  |   | 63 | L | A  | T  | H  | E  |    | 64 | K  | I | W | I |
| 65 | D | A | G | S  |   | 66 | F | U  | S  | E  | S  |    | 67 | E  | R | S | T |

**Science Search**

There are 14 chemistry terms hidden throughout the scrambled puzzle below. See how many you can find and circle. The words go horizontally and vertically, backward and forward.

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| ACID     | MATTER   |
| ATOM     | MOLECULE |
| ELECTRON | NEUTRON  |
| ELEMENT  | NUCLEUS  |
| ENERGY   | OXYGEN   |
| GAS      | PROTON   |
| HYDROGEN | REACTION |

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 I E L E M E N T S D M E  
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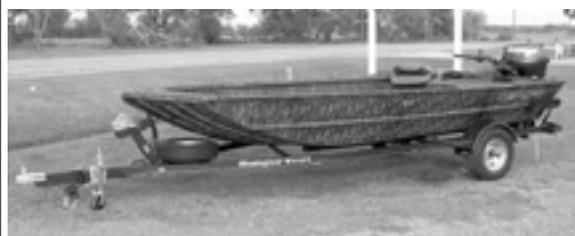
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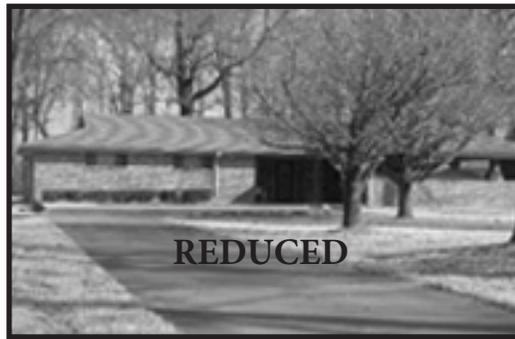
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