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"Lines To Get Hooked On"*

2 Sections

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Vol. 16

July, 2015

No. 191



Walter Thomas from Alba, Texas won the Skeeter Owner's Tournament held on Lake Fork on June 20, 21, 2015 besting over 2,100 anglers with his catch of a 10.66-pound bass. Even Fish Fishburne was envious. (See Story on Page 15-A)



At the Annual Kidfish Day held at SRA Headquarters on Lake Fork on June 6th, 433 children along with their parents came to enjoy the festivities which included fishing, prizes, lunch and refreshments. (See Story on Page 4-A)



The Top 7 winners in the 7th Annual Catfish Classic held on Lake Fork on June 20th & 21st (lt. to rt.) were Larry Jenkins tournament winner 10.59-pound blue catfish, George Hearn with his 2nd place 9.75-pound channel catfish, Will Stroman with his 3rd place 9.56-pound channel catfish, Andrew Taylor with his 9.47-pound channel catfish, Rick Elliott with his 8.93-pound channel catfish, Bobby Driskell with his 8.44-pound channel catfish and Robby Richardson with his 8.39-pound channel catfish. Not seen in the photo was Top Senior, Ricky Blackburn with a 5.83-pound catfish, Top Female, River Miller with a 5.98-pound catfish, and Top Youth, Will Stroman (above) with his 9.56-pound channel catfish. (See Story on Page 13-A)



Kenzli Todd in the 4-year old and under age group won the heaviest fish award during the 2015 Wood County Kidfish. She caught this carp weighing 10.84-pounds while fishing the event with her parents. She even got a little wet trying to reel it in. For her outstanding catch she not only won the age group division and received a trophy but also won the "Traveling Trophy Award" for heaviest fish in the tournament. Her name will be engraved on the trophy and will be kept in the glass case at the Wood County Sheriff's Department. Quite the honor.

Bubba has rhythm if it is fishing or isn't more than two steps

By Don Hampton

Bubba has rhythm. If you had ever seen him work a Texas or Carolina rig, you most definitely would agree.

He will most deftly slowly lift the rod tip with a couple of subtle twitches until he has the rod tip at 12 o'clock and then without creating any slack in the line or moving his bait, reel down to 4 or 5 o'clock in one smooth motion to begin again. He has the same methodical rhythm when he is cranking a chatter bait, spinning bait, deep water crank, or a lipless crank. With a smooth stop of the reel he will gently raise the rod tip or tweet it a bit, let it set for a second and then begin again.

When it comes to dry land and music, Bubba isn't quite as adept as he is fishing. You might could say that Bubba is just too content in being old fashioned. He even comments a lot that the old fashions are coming back in style. He just believes that if he can hang around long enough, heck, he might be back in style!

If it isn't a waltz or involves more than a two-step, he could care less and just doesn't want to get involved. Bubba is countrified, through and through. When he was younger he'd tear the dance floor up! Now he prefers fishing to the dance floor. When asked why he told me, "Dancing, I'm good for about 5 minutes, fishing I can go night and day!" I wonder if that is what he was really talking about?

Bubba loves music, but restricts himself to only

country and golden oldies. I think he listens to golden oldies because it makes him remember about once being young. He even knows some of the words to some of the songs. If you have ever had the displeasure of hearing him sing, you know what I mean. He does halfway alright singing along, (until he runs out of the 4 or 5 words he knows of the song), then you hear a lot of da da da's or do do dooo's.

Never get into a conversation with Bubba about music unless you wish to stick with Hank's, Lefty's, or Willie's. With Bubba the best conversations are about fishing, lakes, and his outlook on life. (The last can be quite amusing.)

Music and the art of music is not Bubba's forte' or strong suite. I know this because I made the mistake of engaging him once in a lengthy conversation about it.

To Bubba a symphony is something you give to a person in time of grief or to his buddies when their wife won't let them go fishing, or to himself when Bubbette makes him go to WalMart with her.

"Rock", to Bubba, are the rocks. The ones he has to dodge! Just like the one Bubbette hit him with when he brought home a \$300 fishing rod, or the ones he dodges when he says he is going fishing and doesn't want to go to WalMart unless he can buy some 'fishing stuff'!

"Rap", now that is something Bubbette does to his new stuff he gets for his birthday, Father's Day, or Christmas or does to him on the top of the head when he says he needs some new "Fishing Stuff"!

The "Blues", now this was a good one. The "Blues" to Bubba is part of the color spectrum and consists of five shades and he has fishing lures with every shade on them!

"Classical", well, go figure. Every year the BASS Classic is held, last year's was the classical.

If you have the pleasure of riding with Bubba in his car or boat, you will listen to KMOO mostly. This is because that is Bubba's music. I believe it is because he can pronounce it so well and he likes saying it. Since Bubba heard the pretty lady on the station say, "Go ahead say it, KMOOOO, now doesn't that make you feel better", he does just that.

Sometimes when it is quiet Bubba will blurt out as loud as he can K-MOOOO, scaring everyone around him half to death. When asked why he did that, all he will say is "I feel better now!"

So if you are out on the lake or even in a public establishment and you hear a loud K-MOOOO, don't be too alarmed. It isn't the cows coming home. It is Bubba "just feeling better now!"



According to the International Game Fish Association, the heaviest fish ever caught was a 2,664-pound great white shark, caught by Alfred Dean in 1959.



As a flounder grows, the eye on its lower side moves gradually around to the upper side of its head.

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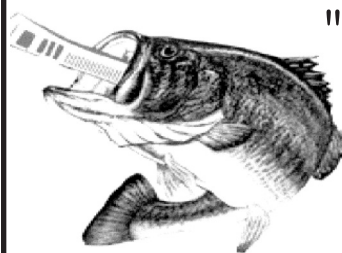
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2015 Wood County Kidfish on Lake Fork

By Don Hampton

There were plenty of smiles to be seen at SRA Headquarters on June 6th, not only by the children catching fish, but also by the parents seeing their children experience the joy of fishing.

At the Wood County Kidfish held at Lake Fork on June 6th there was a record number of 433 kids to come out and display those smiles. For some of the children this would be considered their first tournament of many more to come in their lifetime. The love of fishing for these children could be accredited to Kidfish.

Wood County Kidfish celebrated its 20th Anniversary of introducing children to the sport of fishing. The first Saturday of June is the design-

ated time for this event celebrating the first of June being National Kidfish Week. During this event no one participating in the event is required to have a fishing license. This gives parents that do not usually fish an opportunity to spend this time with their children and perhaps introduce the love of fishing to the whole family.

Each year this event is hosted by the Wood County Sheriff's Department, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Sabine River Authority, and Game Warden Peace Officer's Association and is held at Sabine River Authority Headquarters on Lake Fork. All are to be commended for their diligent hard work and the many hours they put in to make this event such a success for our children.

(Continued on Next Page)

Tournament Winners In The 2015 Wood County Kidfish

AGES	BASS	CATFISH	BREAM	CRAPPIE	OTHER
4 & UNDER	Jesse Petrea 1.42-lbs.	Landon Williams 1.50-lbs.	Delilah Pugh .45-lbs.	Likiya James .74-lbs.	Kenzli Todd 10.84-lbs.
5-8 YR. OLD	Brennan Lewis 3.52-lbs.	Brendan Waters 3.01-lbs.	Preslee Pugh .34-lbs.	Labria James 1.08-lbs.	Gavin Pierce 1.82-lbs.
9-12 YR OLD	Jeamus Davis 3.15-lbs.	Dooley Anders 3.20-lbs.	Chad Norris .34-lbs.	Brianna Swain 1.36-lbs.	Cheyane George .58-lbs.
13-16 YR OLD	Ty Patterson 6.55-lbs.	Hunter Horner 2.52-lbs.	Brantley Allen .22-lbs.	No Entry	Madelynn Whitehurst .48-lbs.



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The event is free to all children and their parents. If the children do not have their own fishing equipment, rod n' reels are furnished along with all bait and tackle. Cold drinks, refreshments, hot dogs and chips are provided for the parents and children. This year serving the children, parents, and guests were the Mineola and Holly Lake Kiwanis Clubs.

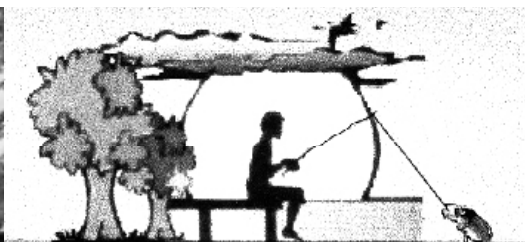
The format of this event is a mock tournament, and divided into age group divisions. These divisions included 4 years old and under, 5 to 8 year old, 9 to 12 year old, and 13 to 16 year old. Each child weighing in the heaviest fish of the tournament wins a trophy and a year's worth of bragging rights. Wood County Sheriff, Jim Brown was present to congratulate the winners in each age category and present them with their trophy. Weight Masters

for Kidfish are all members of the Lake Fork Texas Trails Bassmasters.

This year's winner of the 'Traveling Trophy' was Kenzli Todd. This trophy is awarded to a child that catches the heaviest fish in the tournament. The trophy will have her name engraved on it and kept on display at the Sheriff's Office. Kenzli won this year with her catch of a carp weighing 10.84-pounds.

No child leaves the event without a prize furnished by the many sponsors. This year's prizes ranged from bicycles, fishing equipment, and many other items for each child's enjoyment. All of the children and parents always have an excellent time at the event.

A special thanks goes out to all of the great sponsors that made this event possible, after all, our children are the future.



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Mid Summer Pattern

By David Ozio

"Mid summer is approaching and with it, warm outdoor temps. Plenty of my clients don't let this discourage them as they know July has a history of being a great month to tackle giant bass on Lake Fork. A breeze generally blows throughout July so it's not as hot on the water as most would think. The main focus is how hot the fishing will be.

The lake is beginning to recover from the influx of high water and the deep fish have been ganging up for the past few weeks in search of their next meal. Timing has been the topic of all conversations amongst the guides as fish will show up on certain spots at specific times of the day. Match

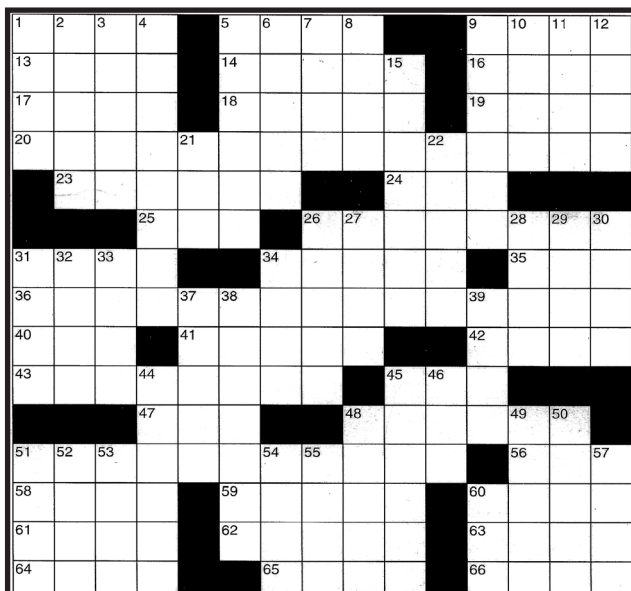
up with their arrival and it's game on. The early morning top water bite has been a great place to start. Main lake points tend to draw a lot of fish and the Yellow Magic is delivering some awesome explosions for the first forty-five minutes of each day. Buzzbaits and Zara Spooks have also bagged their share of hawgs as the sun starts to peek over the trees. Eastern shorelines with subtle points are also important as they will buy you some additional minutes as the trees block the sun's arrival to the water's edge. Transition out from there with a Talon swimjig. Fire it at the base of the willow trees and button willows and work it out. Prepare to feel the jig jolt to a stop as the green machines attack the bait and tail walk on the pristine surface. Natural colors are in vogue at this point. Stick to the watermelon or pumpkin hues for the best success.

As mid morning approaches, it's time to start scouring the depths in search of bass grouped up on the bottom. Find the sand bass and most likely the big girls will be hanging close. At this point, the Carolina rig becomes the tool of choice. Pitch a marker buoy onto the school that you have found then rig up a creature bait on the C-rig and let it rip. Lake Fork Trophy Lures has any number of baits to fit this and it's worth a visit to their shop in Emory to select a creature bait that will do the



trick. You can also use a 3/4oz stand up rig with a Zoom magnum trick worm to give the beasts a different look. I will also use the same magnum trick worm on a drop shot once I see the arches on the bottom. You should also focus on points with deep trees where the monsters will tend to hang out. If they don't bite the bottom baits, hurl a big crankbait or huge spinnerbait through the branches and see what happens. It's just a matter of finding out where they are positioned in the water column. A ten inch worm rigged Texas style will also work for this application and experiment with the weight you may need to get the

(See Mid Summer....
Continued on Page 20-A)



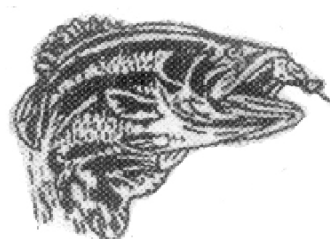
CLUES ACROSS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Painful sore | 36. Pittsburgh and Seattle baseball teams |
| 5. Canned meat | 40. Before |
| 9. Stem | 41. Murdered |
| 13. Thomas ____, British composer | 42. Russian city |
| 14. Carpet | 43. Loses hope |
| 16. Ancient Greek city | 45. Plant habitat |
| 17. Dandy | 47. Sunup in New York (abbr.) |
| 18. Fragrant resin obtained from tropical trees | 48. More comfortable |
| 19. Government officers (informal) | 51. Capable of being understood |
| 20. American League baseball teams | 56. Skeletal muscle |
| 23. Profoundly | 58. ____ Erikson, psychologist |
| 24. Auricle | 59. Towers |
| 25. Can | 60. Incline from vertical |
| 26. Oozed, in a way | 61. Magnitude relative to a time unit |
| 31. Jai ____, sport | 62. ____ Carta, British charter |
| 34. Monetary units of Samoa | 63. Powerful operating system |
| 35. ____ de cologne | 64. Not new |
| | 65. Poses |
| | 66. Copyreader's duty |

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Pamper | 31. Copied |
| 2. Mountain nymph (Greek) | 32. French city |
| 3. Mindless | 33. Area units |
| 4. Blood-related disease | 34. Despot |
| 5. Tempered | 37. Hebrew letter |
| 6. Loss of the ability to move a body part | 38. Superiority |
| 7. Copier | 39. Difficult situations |
| 8. Act out | 44. Nagged |
| 9. Previously | 45. Angiospermous trees |
| 10. Genus of very spiny shrubs | 46. Compass point (abbr.) |
| 11. Queen of Sparta | 48. Black |
| 12. Sea or striped ____ | 49. African antelope |
| 15. Cocktail with lemon juice and brandy | 50. Spokes, in a way |
| 21. Environmental agency (abbr.) | 51. South American country |
| 22. Athabaskan | 52. Geological times |
| 26. Lapps | 53. Any customary observance or practice |
| 27. Ardor | 54. Bottle that contains a drug |
| 28. To pour out | 55. Protoctist |
| 29. Pinnae | 57. Words of something printed or written |
| 30. Follows sunset | 60. Color |

Answers on Page 21-A



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Individuals or organizations that have made a lasting contribution to freshwater fishing in Texas may be nominated through November 1 for induction into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

The nominee must be a Texan or Texas organization. Individuals may be either living or deceased. Selection will be made by an independent committee; induction will take place during the annual Hall of Fame banquet at the Texas Freshwater Fisher-

ies Center (TFFC) in Athens.

The most recent additions to the Hall of Fame are fishing guide Mark Stevenson and the Guadalupe River Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Videos about prior inductees may be viewed in the Texas Freshwater Fish-

ing Hall of Fame at TFFC; some are also available on YouTube. Brief biographical sketches of past inductees and links to videos and the nomination form may be found at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/spdest/visitorcenters/tffc/visit/virtualtour/halloffame/inductees.phtml>.

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"The Moon Report" The Ulterra Dream & Crappie

By Terri Moon

Minn Kota has done it! They are finally making the trolling motor I've dreamed of! I haven't been this "excited" about something in a long time. It does it all – absolutely everything I've needed a trolling motor to do – "Auto Stow/Deploy and Power Trim" along with a new foot pedal and remote buttons with i-pilot that will lock in on GPS coordinates. Absolutely perfect for fishing my open water brush piles! It's called "ULTERRA"!

I just saw it for the first time at the "Skeeter Boat Owner's Tournament" and when I saw the demonstration, it was like the "Heavens Opened Up"!! For every feature he showed me – all I could say was "SHUT UP" and giggle!! I couldn't believe what I was seeing. This was everything I needed in a trolling motor. The answer to all the issues I'd had daily while fishing especially on the windy days when I'm trying to stay on a spot while retying lures, netting and taking fish off. The next thing you know you're a 100 yards away from your spot! The "spot lock" feature is "PRICE-LESS" – let alone to be able to push a button and



your trolling motor goes up and down by itself!

Every trip I've had since I saw this – throughout the day I just keep mumbling to myself – "I need an Ulterra!" (It just might extend my guiding career another 10 years!!!) So, if you want to see how awesome this is, you can go to MinnKotaMotors.com and check it out! I bet you'll be as excited about it as I am! I'd be even more excited if all the people using anchors to hold them would get an Ulterra so they would quit dragging their anchors through other peoples brush piles and tearing them up! I don't think they realize the damage they are doing or the hard work it takes to rebuild them. So, my dream is for everyone to have an Ulterra! LOL!

Now as far as the crappie fishing goes – it's been an AWESOME few weeks and seems to get better every day and its sure

getting hotter every day. The depths are subject to change daily and even throughout the day we've caught them as shallow as 12 ft. and as deep as 20 ft. in 16 to 28 ft. of water. Just keep an eye on that graph. It will tell you the depth you need to target. Colors working for us – black shiner, chartreuse and pearl or cricket color. Speaking of crickets, the bream are moving in this week 1 – 8 ft. of water – night crawlers are working too using slip bobbers or tight lining around grass lines or lily pads, or docks. Have fun!

Congratulations to Skeeter Boats for putting on another impressive tournament here on Lake Fork! It was so great to get to see and visit with all of Jerry's buddies in the fishing industry that he thought so much of over the years!

My best to you all!

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Ashley & Courtney, Mansfield, TX.,



Ashley Bartholomew,
Mansfield, TX.,



Herman Herrlein, Yankton, So. Dakota,
with Bryan & Curtis, Dallas, TX.,



Terry Moore, Houston w/friends
Chris, Lake Fork, Sparky, Baytown



Jerry & Gary Brooks, Lake Fork
with buddies Mike, No. Carolina



Kyle Buzzard,
Dallas, TX.,



Jim Atwood w/granddaughter
Sara & her dad Robert



Betty Doughtie,
Sulphur Springs, TX.,



Camryn Cartwright,
Frisco, TX.,



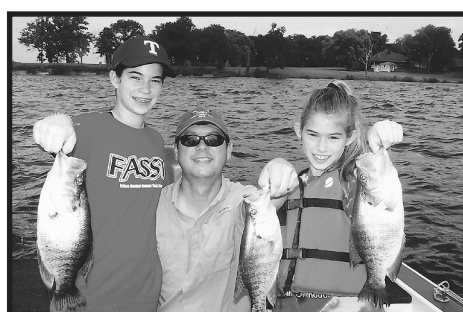
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East Texas River Bottom Conservationist is 2015 Leopold Conservation Award Winner

A self-proclaimed "East Texas river rat" with Harvard undergraduate and medical degrees whose lifelong love of bottomland hardwood country ignited landscape conservation along the Trinity River Basin, Dr. Robert McFarlane is the 2015 recipient of the Leopold Conservation Award.

Dr. McFarlane accepted the Leopold crystal award, the state's highest honor for private land conservation, and a check for \$10,000 at the 20th Lone Star Land Steward Awards dinner in Austin on May 6.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the prestigious award is conferred each year by Sand County Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to private land conservation, in partnership with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) as part of its Lone Star Land Steward Awards program. In Texas, the Leopold Conservation Award Program is sponsored by the Lee and Ramona Bass Foundation, DuPont Pioneer, The Mosaic Company and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.

During the past 20 years, The Lone Star Land Steward Awards program has recognized nearly 200 landowners across Texas for conserving more than 3 million acres of fish and wildlife habitat. Dr. McFarlane's journey to conserve and restore critical bottomland hardwood habitat on his Anderson County ranch, The BigWoods on the Trinity, also began 20 years ago.

Dr. McFarlane or "Doc" as he's known to friends began his quest in 1995 with an initial purchase of 1,500 acres 90 miles southeast of Dallas along the Trinity River near where he hunted and fished as a kid. Since then he has pieced together an additional 6,000 acres of river bottom, open marsh wetlands and upland hardwoods. A practicing cardiologist in nearby Palestine, Dr. McFarlane named his BigWoods after William Faulkner's 1955 novel by the same name.

"When it comes to the land Doc is one of those consummate lifelong learners," said TPWD Executive Director Carter Smith. "He is as innovative, creative and committed to the stewardship of his beloved BigWoods and the fabled Trinity River as anyone possibly could be. As a steward of the land, water and earth, there simply is no one finer and we are deeply proud to have his work acknowledged with this award."

When Dr. McFarlane acquired the property, it was highly-fragmented and over-grazed. During the last 20 years, he has worked tirelessly to enhance the aquatic resources on the property and the terrestrial systems that are associated with them using adaptive management strategies.

"Dr. McFarlane's efforts to restore this remarkable area of the Trinity River are a great representation of what it means to be a good steward of the land," said Brent Haglund, Sand County Foundation President.

In addition to improvements on his own property, Dr. McFarlane has reached out to neighboring landowners in an effort to conserve habitats throughout the Trinity River Basin. He founded the Middle Trinity River Conservation Cooperative (now Trinity Waters) and served as president for five years.

An avid duck hunter, much of Dr. McFarlane's

work has focused on waterfowl. He is dedicated to long term stewardship and has secured perpetual conservation easements on the property through the Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetland Reserve Program and Ducks Unlimited.

A video commemorating Dr. McFarlane's accomplishment at The BigWoods on the Trinity can be viewed online at <https://youtu.be/TpII71X1jGk>.

Initiated in 1996 by the TPWD Private Lands Advisory Committee, the Lone Star Land Steward Awards set out to recognize private landowners for excellence in habitat management and wildlife conservation; as well as, to illustrate the important role that landowners play in the conservation of Texas' natural resources. The program also focuses on encouraging youth education and in the importance of engaging future generations of Texans in responsible habitat management and ecosystem

(See East Texas River....Continued on Page 19-A)



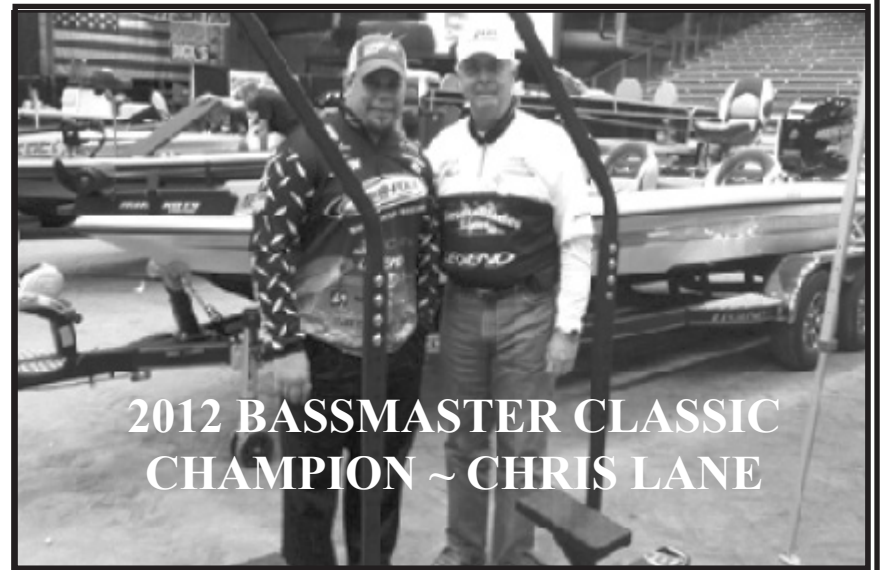
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Larry Jenkins of Daingerfield, Texas Wins the 2015 Lake Fork Catfish Classic

By Dick Walker

Lake Fork's Seventh Annual Catfish

Classic concluded on Sunday, June 21st, with Larry Jenkins of Daingerfield, Texas taking the \$5000 bonus prize for the largest fish weighed in the two-day tournament. Jenkins landed his 10.59 pound blue catfish on Sunday during the 12:00 to 1:00 hour.

Jenkins and all the other tournament anglers competed individually for big catfish with cash prizes awarded for the four largest fish weighed each hour and bonuses paid to those catching the largest seven fish overall. Including the hourly payout, Jenkins collected a total of \$5400 for his

fish. This year's payout for all hourly and tournament top finishers was \$24,000.

George Hearn of Irving, Texas took second place and pocketed \$2,400 in hourly and bonus money for a 9.75 pound channel cat weighed during the seventh fishing hour on Saturday. Will Stroman of Emory, Texas captured third place and a \$2,300 reward for his 9.56 pound channel cat that he caught on Saturday along with a first and 3 seconds during the hourly payouts. Andrew Taylor of Emory, Texas placed fourth with a 9.47 pound channel worth a \$400 payday. Rick Elliott of

Granbury, Texas pocketed \$300 for his 5th place 8.93 pound cat. Bobby Driskell of Grape-land, TX followed in 6th place with an 8.44 pound catfish and rounding out the top seven was Robby Richardson of Point, Texas, with a nice 8.38 pounder.

The most active hourly winners were Will Stroman of Emory, TX and Rick Elliott of Granbury, Texas with 4 fish weighed during the course of the two-day tournament. The top youth angler was Will

(See Lake Fork.....
Continued on Page 17-A)



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Displaced Wildlife Show Up as Flood Waters Recede

Things that live on the ground typically aren't adept at treading water for long. In the aftermath of flood events that have hammered much of the state recently, biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department say encounters with various wildlife will not be uncommon.

Recent storms also coincided with the time of year when newborn wildlife start showing up on the landscape. As flood waters recede, wildlife of-

ficials anticipate seeing more young wild animals unnecessarily being picked up by the general public and referred to game wardens or wildlife rehabilitators for treatment and rearing.

According to the National Weather Service, during the month of May Texas received 35 trillion gallons of rain, enough to cover the entire state in eight inches of water.

"It is not uncommon for wildlife encounters

to increase after flood events," says Andy Gluesenkamp, a herpetologist with TPWD. "People should be aware that snakes and other wildlife, including skunks and raccoons, may approach or enter yards and houses where they do not normally occur. Over time, displaced wildlife will return to their usual habitats."

Common sense precautions should be practiced; be aware that snakes and other animals may seek shelter in debris piles and caution should be used during cleanup efforts.

"A snake in the yard is not a cause for panic," he says. "They don't want to be there, either, and if left alone will usually leave on their own. You're more likely to come upon a skunk, a mound of fire ants or a wasp nest in a brushpile than a venomous snake. If you do have an encounter with a problem snake, seek help from local animal control or licensed snake removal experts."

The most commonly referred animals are baby birds and deer fawns. Recent flooding will likely increase the temporary displacement of these and other wildlife. The compulsion to help or investigate an animal that looks abandoned can be overwhelming, but interference could harm its chances of rejoining its caretaker. While most of these animals are picked up by well-meaning persons, it is important to realize that many such human-animal encounters are unnecessary and can even be detrimental to the wildlife concerned.

Tips and precautions about encounters with wildlife are available online at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/rehab/orphan/>.

Flooding will cause some immediate impacts to nesting efforts of grassland bird species such as bobwhite quail and turkeys. But biologists indicate those species will still have time to re-nest and the species will capitalize on the overall improved health of the grasslands.

The good news, say wildlife officials, is that recent excessive rainfall is being viewed as a "drought buster" event that is going to be fantastic for the health of many ecosystems and habitat-types across Texas. For instance, the state's bottomland hardwood forests will receive flood waters deep across the alluvial plains that deposit rich nutrients for lots of native vegetation. Coastal estuaries will get a much-needed flush of fresh water, soil, and nutrients, which will help sport fisheries.

TPWD wildlife biologists remind private landowners across the state of federal farm program benefits through the Texas Farm Service Agency that may be available to help eligible ranchers and farmers recover from recent heavy rains and flooding. For more information on disaster assistance programs and loans visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ or contact your local FSA Office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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Skeeter Owners Tournament on Lake Fork

By: **Conor Harrison**

More than 2,100 anglers – all of them driving Skeeter bass boats – hit the water early Saturday morning, June 13th on Lake Fork for their chance to win hourly prizes and a new Skeeter FX 20 or TXZ 190 at the Skeeter Owners Tournament.

When the tournament ended Sunday afternoon, Alba angler Walter Thomas, Jr. was admiring his new Skeeter FX 20 after bringing a 10.66-pound largemouth bass to the scales on Saturday afternoon. Thomas' bass was the biggest caught during the two-day event, but it didn't come without some anxious moments for the local angler.

"I know my side of the lake pretty well, but I haven't done a lot of fishing recently – just a few times crappie fishing with my son or friends," Thomas said. "I fished three main creeks on my side of the lake and I caught her around 1 p.m. using a swimbait." Thomas said he has caught big fish in the area before, and knew about where the fish were hanging out, although he doesn't prefish much. He finds it messes him up more than helps when he has a spot in mind before the tournament, only to find other boats or changing conditions on the day of the tournament have caused the fish to move.

"I was fishing in about 35 feet of water and she was suspended in about 15 feet," he said. "I didn't realize she was as big as she was. I had the drag all the way down when she went on a run. The first thing I thought was I needed to lighten the drag, but she headed for cover and I was able to get her turned. It actually helped to have the drag set where I did. If she would have gotten to the cover, I would have lost her for sure."

Thomas, who was fishing with his brother, Larry, headed to the weigh-in to turn his big fish in, and then had to wait another day before getting the final word he had won.

"It was awesome," he said. "This was the first time I have ever spent any time sitting in the first chair. I led for the entire second day. I never really got nervous until that last hour. Finally, with about three minutes to go, my brother looked out on the lake and said, 'I don't see any other boats coming.' That is when I got really excited."

As for the new boat, Thomas said, "I'm going fishing in it!" Thomas said he has a 2010 Skeeter, but this one has all of the bells and whistles and he can't wait to get it out on the lake. "This one is so much better," he said. "I've got two boats now, so I need to get rid of one, but that is a good problem to have."

Thomas added he'd like to thank Bass Champs and Skeeter for doing a heck of a job. "I fish several Bass Champs hosted events every year like the Ford Mega Bass and Berkley Big Bass, but if I could only fish one tournament each year, it would be this Skeeter tournament," he said. "It's a customer appreciation deal, and that is the feeling you get when you fish it. It has a reasonable entry fee and it is just a no-brainer for me. I'd also like to thank my brother, Larry. He did a great job on the net."

Also winning a Skeeter bass boat for the biggest bass under the slot limit was Belton angler Steve Meyer. Meyer brought in a fish weighing 2.92 pounds, just edging out the next biggest under at 2.90 pounds.

Meyer fished with his two sons, Travis and Richard, during the tournament. "I threw a Carolina rig most of the time," Meyer said. "I'm not sure baits made a big difference, but I

went with a Lake Fork Tackle Carolina-rigged Ring-Fry. I had my two sons in the boat with me, and they were beating the front of the boat to death with crankbaits, jerkbaits and everything else. I caught my only fish at 20 minutes before noon on Saturday."

Meyer said one of his son's likes to fish shallow water no matter what time of year it is, but he did manage to position the boat where he could target some deeper main lake points. He thought his bass was going to be a slot fish when he pulled it into the boat, but his son measured the fish and told him it was just under.

"We had to sweat it out the rest of the afternoon on Saturday, and then we listened to the radio all day Sunday," he said. "I'd like everyone with Skeeter to know how much I appreciate this tournament. Bass Champs does a great job, as well. I like to thank everyone, right down to the people working the barbecue line."

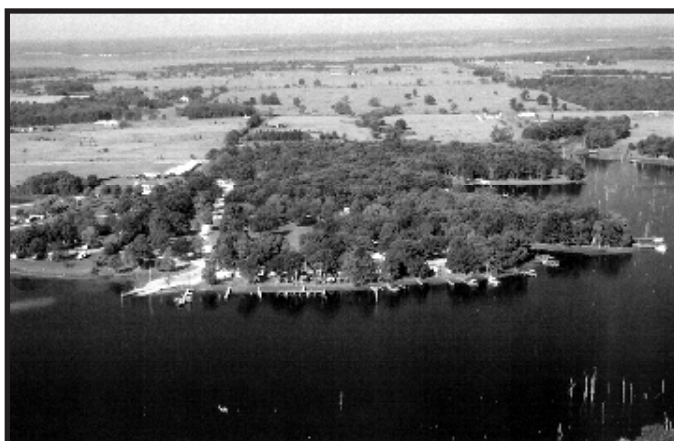
Skeeter Vice President Jeff Stone said the event is a way for Skeeter to thank their clients and they enjoy putting on a great tournament.

"Each year, it just amazes me how much this tournament grows," Stone said. "The turnout from all over the country is incredible. We had good weather – not too hot – and the anglers caught more overs than in the past tournaments."

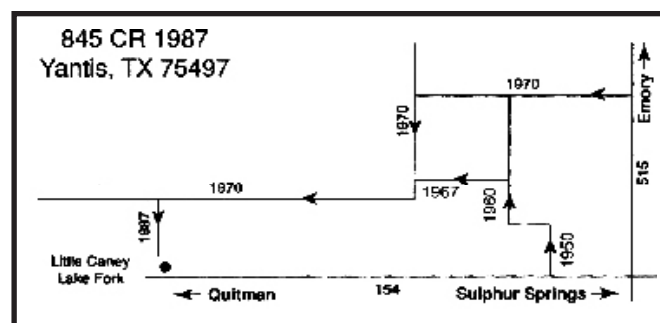
Stone said Skeeter is already working on next year's tournament, and with the 40-percent year-to-year growth of the event, expect next year to have more boats and more anglers competing.

"This is a great opportunity for us to thank our customers," Stone said. "Next year, we expect it to be just as much fun and we will continue the traditions we've established."

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Contestant(s) weighing in the first 2.50 exact weight bass each day of the tournament will win \$5,000 and the contestant(s) who weighs in the heaviest bass under the slot during the 3-day tournament will be awarded \$2,500. In addition, all contestants are eligible to win a 2015 Triton 189 TRX Bass Boat in the famous "Elimination Drawing".

Enter by the "Early Bird" Deadline, September 4 and be eligible to win one of five \$200 Academy Sports + Outdoors Gift Cards.

"You Can't Win if You Don't Play" Optional Bonus Games such as the Bonus Card "AKA" In-

surance Card & Bonus Shirt Hours can win you additional cash.

Children ages twelve and under may participate in the Little Anglers Division and win Academy Sports + Outdoors gift cards and ribbons for their winning catches of bass, catfish, crappie or perch.

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Registration is now open online for the Big Bass Splash presented by Sealy Outdoors and B.A.S.S. benefitting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. To enter, visit sealyoutdoors.com. Onsite Registration will be at Lake Fork Marina in Alba, TX from 10 AM-8 PM on Thursday, September 17th. Registration will continue each morning from 5 AM until 6 AM on days of the tournament. Tournament Entry Fees are \$160 for One Day, \$210 for Two Days and \$260 for Three Days: Little Anglers Division entry fee is \$10 per day.

All participants and spectators ages 18 years of age and up can get in on the action. Come out to the tournament site, enjoy the festivities and get your free ticket for the Surprise Drawing begin-

ning at 12 PM Sunday, September 20.

The Big Bass Splash events are considered to be the World's largest grassroots big bass fishing tournament of its kind. Sealy Outdoors attracts thousands of amateur anglers to these weekend events. It's what we call "Fishing, Family and Fun" for everyone. A portion of the proceeds from registration fees will go directly to help children and their families at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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Lake Fork Catfish Classic *(Continued from Page 13-A)*

Stroman of Emory, Texas with a 9.56 pound channel cat. Six year old River Miller of Kaufman, Texas took top ladies honors with 5.98 pounds. Ricky Blackburn of Lone Star, Texas, topped all other seniors with a 5.83 pound channel.

The Lake Fork Catfish Classic was organized by the Lake Fork Sportsman's Association and Lake Fork Chamber of Commerce. Oak Ridge Marina served as its host. The Lake Fork Sportsman's Association is a non-profit organization that was formed in 1999 to promote and help conserve Lake

Fork as a world-class fishery. Its members are mainly lake-area homeowners, businesses, and guides. More information on the association and its mission can be found on facebook and its website, www.lakeforksa.com.

The Lake Fork Catfish Classic's major underwriters are the Wood County Industrial Commission, City National Bank, Peoples Telephone and Scotty's Magic Bait. Other contributors included Brookshires of Emory, and Rains County Economic Development. KMOO 99.9 FM served as the event's official ra-

dio station.

The 2016 event is tentatively scheduled for June 18 and 19. Details and other information will be posted on the Lake Fork Sportsman's Association facebook page and web-site as they are developed. The

Sportsman's Association and Lake Fork Area Chamber of Commerce are both non-profit organizations dedicated to conserving and promoting Lake Fork as a world class fishery.

More on the Association can be found at www.lakeforksa.com and more on the Chamber can be found at www.lakeforkchamber.org.

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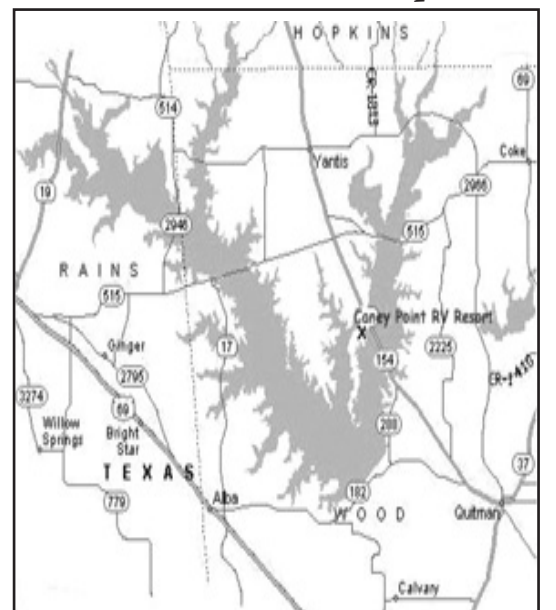
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"Pack of Knowledge" Summertime Football Season

By Andrew Grills

In the heat of the summer here in east Texas, trophy bass can be hard to come by with any measure of consistency. However, one technique comes to mind that has produced numerous double-digit sized bass for us during the summer months, and that is the football jig. While other techniques might put more fish in the boat, its hard to beat a football jig for quality fish.

Football jigs are popular across the country.

Most of the various brands of football jigs are designed for lakes with less cover and smaller fish than what we're used to here in east Texas. Many come with a light weedguard and a light wire hook. While these characteristics are great for the hookup ratio in deeper water, they're not ideal for the size fish and cover here. That is why I choose to fish football jigs made with our bodies of water in mind.

My favorite jig is the M-Pack Lures jig. M-Pack Lures offers a fantastic flipping jig, but their football jig is the one I use most this time of year. One of the most frustrating things about jig fishing is getting hung up. The M-Pack Lures football jig has the structure guard weedguard which is very convenient when fishing heavy cover because it doesn't hang up nearly as often as other jigs.

The first thing I look at when choosing a football jig is the hook. I like a big, sharp, beefy hook because we're dealing with big fish here on Lake Fork. The last thing you want is to lose a giant bass because the gap wasn't big enough or the hook straightened out. The M-Pack Lures jig features a 5/0 Gamakatsu hook which is more than enough to handle the biggest fish our lakes have to offer.

Choosing the right equipment is very important as well. I use 20lb test fluorocarbon line and a

long, heavy action rod. The fluorocarbon line is a bit more sensitive than monofilament line. You'll need all the added sensitivity you can get when you get a light bite in deep water. As for the rod, I prefer a long rod so I can quickly take up slack on the hookset. When fishing the bottom in 25-30' of water, there's going to be a significant bow in the line. A longer rod will help make up for this. The rod I'm using now is 7'9", and I feel like it is just right.

My color selection is pretty simple. I feel like many of us put too much emphasis on subtle color variations. During the summer, I like to stay with natural colors. Shades of green pumpkin, watermelon, and brown are great choices. M-Pack Lures offers a wide variety of great summertime colors. If I had to choose only one, it would probably be "mean green".

I use two types of retrieves with a football jig. If the fish are on or near the bottom I simply drag the jig back slowly. I feel like the rocks and roots along the bottom impart plenty of action, so I rarely do much with my rod other than a slow, steady crawl. The other retrieve I use is a "stroking" retrieve. Stroking a jig is ideal when fish are suspended a few feet off the bottom, or when its

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



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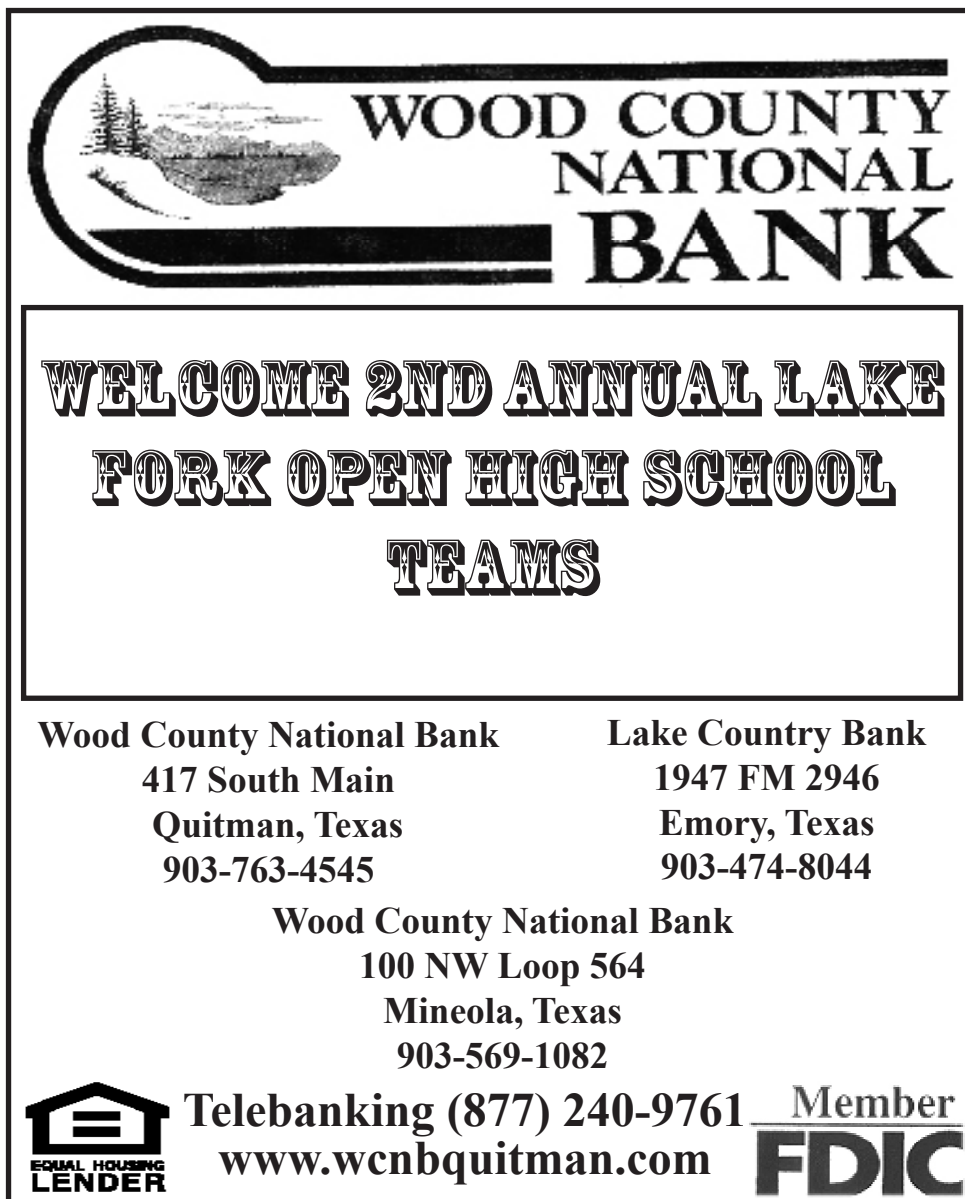


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East Texas River Bottom Conservationist (Continued from Page 11-A)

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Mid Summer Pattern (Continued from Page 6-A)

job done. A 1/2oz tungsten with a 5/0 hook is a good place to start. Those branches will hold a lot of suspended fish during July and it's just a matter of finding what presentation gets their attention.

Flutter spoons and jigging spoons will also hold their own in July along with a weightless magnum fluke. The baitfish rule the roost and it's up to you to follow their lead. Find the sand bass in the late afternoon and you will be on the right track to landing the giant of your

dreams.

If you are headed out to Lake Fork in July 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 July and some in August. 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 run a Skeeter FXi 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 and Talon Lures for making my job the blast that it is. A special shout out to Nautical Mile 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."

DAVID OZIO

LAKE FORK

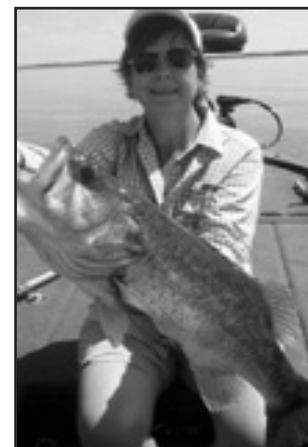
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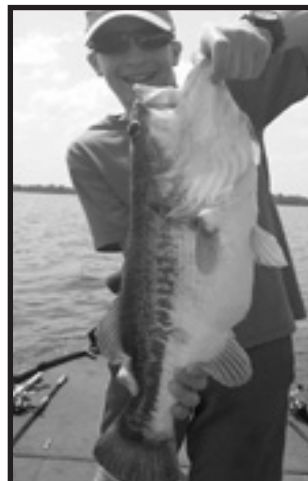
Danneta Grissom
with David Ozio.



James Johnson with
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Mark Spaeth with
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Pack of Knowledge (Continued from Page 18-A)

necessary to trigger a reaction bite. When stroking a jig, I snap the rod upwards on semi-slack line. I repeat this all the way back to the boat. The structure guard on the M-Pack Lures jig comes in handy here because it allows you to fish the jig much more aggressively through cover without burying the hook in timber. I'll usually try both retrieves when fishing an

area.

There are some days when you can load the boat with good numbers of quality fish on a football jig. However, to me it's a tool for bigger fish. There's always at least one rigged up on my deck during the summer months. Hopefully this will give you some ideas that will

help you put a few more big bass in the boat this summer.

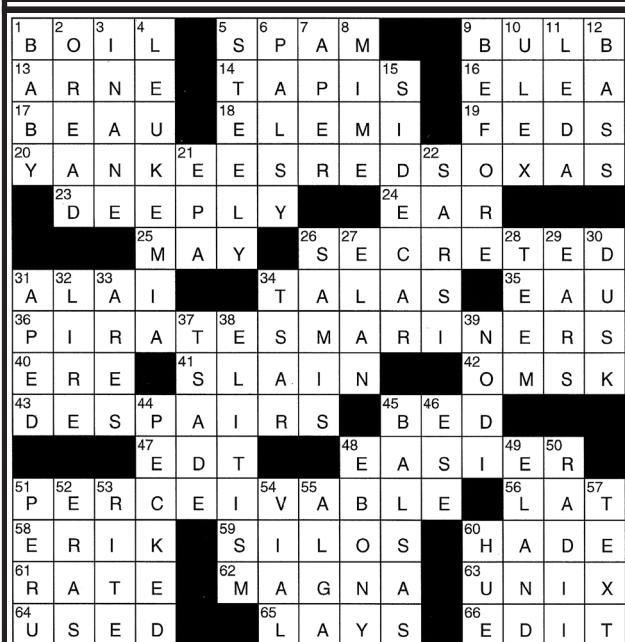
Andrew is a professional guide on Lake Fork sponsored by Skeeter Boats, Nautical Mile Marine (Tyler, TX), Under Armour, Costa Del Mar Sunglasses, and M-Pack Lures.

Just The Right Answers

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Country Find

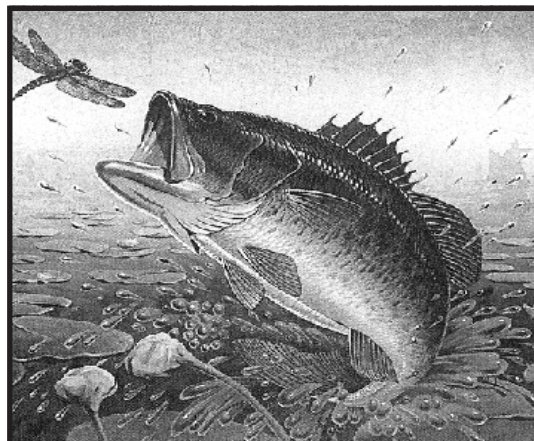
The names of 14 countries are hidden throughout the scrambled puzzle below. See how many you can find and circle. The words go horizontally and vertically, backward and forward.

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AUSTRIA
BELGIUM
CANADA
CHINA
FRANCE
GERMANY

IRELAND
ITALY
MEXICO
POLAND
PORTUGAL
SPAIN

UNITED STATES

B E L G I U M E Y L A T
E U A L R N E X L G I U
G S N G E I X I A T E O
U T D E L A G U T R O P
M E N I A P S T I T C O
R F R A N O P A N A I L
I R L N D L A C H I N A
A L G E R M A N Y S E N
I A N I C N N E A U X D
R N E C N A R F S A I T
T D G A L Y E O P L C A
S U A N O A L C A G A N
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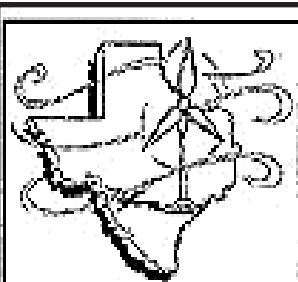
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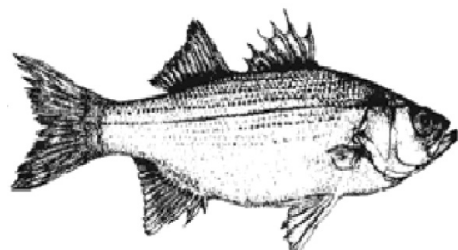
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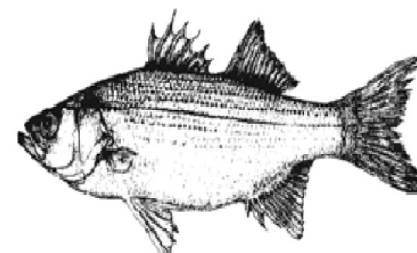


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Hook N' Cook Sand Bass Tournament



Saturday, August 8, 2015

Benefitting "The Wish To Fish Foundation"

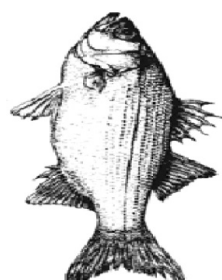
Tournament Headquarters: Fisherman's One Stop • Hwy 515 CR 1970

Tournament Committee: Don Bubba Hampton, Scott Fruge

Guaranteed Pay-Out Based on 100 Entries
Drawings will be held after weigh-in for door prizes

1st Place	\$600.00
2nd Place	\$500.00
3rd Place	\$400.00
4th Place	\$300.00
5th Place	\$200.00

80%
Payback



There will be a big bass pot ~ \$10 per person entry
Big Bass will pay Three (3) places. (Based on 100 entries)

1st Place	\$500.00
2nd Place	\$300.00
3rd Place	\$200.00

100%
Payback

**Entry Includes Free Fish Fry With All The Fixins' Starting at 5 P.M.
Bring The Family & BYOB • Donations Accepted For W.T.F.F.**

Fishing Hours: 6 A.M. to 12 P.M. Weigh-In Between 12 & 1 P.M. Must Be In Line By 1 P.M.

1. Entry fee is \$25.00.
2. Early entries optional (No Discount)
3. All entry fees must be paid before 6 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 8, 2015.
4. Sign Up: Friday, Aug. 7, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday, Aug. 8, 5 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. at Fisherman's One Stop.
5. Tournament is open to any person with a Valid Texas Fishing License. Minors can compete but must have signed release form.
6. All State and Local Laws Apply.
7. No alcohol or drugs allowed during tournament hours.
8. Trailering is allowed.
9. Iced Fish Will Be Allowed.
10. Trolling with big motor is allowed.
11. Each contestant may weigh-in only 5 fish.
12. 10" Minimum Length. Live bait is allowed.
13. No pooling of fish, all persons in boat must be paid entry.
14. Contestants can only fish with as many rods as they can.
15. Contestants must agree to submit to a polygraph.
16. Tournament Director & Committee Decisions Are Final.
17. Mail in entries must be received by July 31, 2015
18. All fish become property of tournament to be fried.

Entry Application

Entry fee of \$25 must accompany mailed entry and must be postmarked on or before July 31, 2015 to Wish To Fish Foundation, 538 PR 5861, Yantis, TX 75497, or you may pay \$25 at tournament headquarters before starting time of tournament. \$10 extra for Big Sandie (optional). Print clearly. No Checks Accepted at Tournament Sign In.

Name _____ Email _____

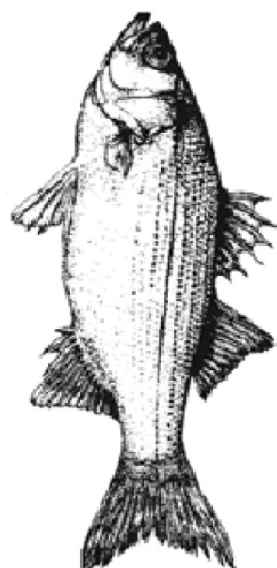
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Having read and understood the tournament rules, by my signature I agree to accept all decisions of the judges as final. By my signature I waive, release and hold harmless all members, officials and sponsors of any and all alleged liabilities to me and/or my equipment.

Contestant Signature _____

Minor's release: Signed by _____ Parent/Guardian



Wish To Fish Use Only

Entry # _____

Entry Fee _____

Big Sandie _____

Cash _____ Ck# _____



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HOURLY PAYOUTS \$160,650

FIFTEEN PLACES will be paid in cash each hour
of each tournament day beginning with the 7-8 AM
hour and continuing through the 1-2 PM hour for
the 15 single heaviest bass weighed in.

HEAVIEST BASS... \$1,000

2nd Heaviest	\$900
3rd Heaviest	\$800
4th Heaviest	\$700
5th Heaviest	\$600
6th Heaviest	\$500
7th Heaviest	\$450
8th Heaviest	\$425
9th Heaviest	\$400
10th Heaviest	\$375
11th Heaviest	\$350
12th Heaviest	\$325
13th Heaviest	\$300
14th Heaviest	\$275
15th Heaviest	\$250



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3RD PLACE . . . 2015 Triton 18 TRX Powered by Mercury, equipped with
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4TH PLACE . . . \$8,000 CASH **5TH PLACE . . . \$6,000 CASH**

* **OVERALL AWARDS . . .** Five Places will be awarded for the five single heaviest bass weighed
in over the 3 Day Tournament!

2.50 EXACT WEIGHT BASS: The contestant(s) who weighs in the first 2.50 exact
weight bass each day of the tournament will be awarded **\$5,000**.

HEAVIEST BASS UNDER THE SLOT: The contestant(s) who weighs in the heaviest
bass under the slot during the 3 day tournament will be awarded **\$2,500**.

ELIMINATION DRAWING: All contestants will be eligible to win a 2015 Triton 189 TRX
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