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### Strollin' With Stroman \_



#### **By Dean Stroman**

As you read this, most of Fork's big'uns are in or very close to shallow water spawning sites. Some will be at back ends of major creeks. Others will be staging up next to their spawning sites. Catching these older-age class bass is easiest when they first pull up to shallow water spawning sites. They start cruising their new home site getting themselves familiar with their new surroundings. Once they become familiar with their new surroundings, they will set up their core area on or near the deepest available water, normally in six to ten feet depths. Some of these staging areas will hold large numbers of bass until they get ready to spawn, and then move on to their spawning site. Water temperature will be the key factor as to when bass will actively start their spawning activities.

Lake Fork will normally have three spawns, one in February, March and April with a few left over in May. Older age class bass are normally the first group to spawn in late February and March with younger and more numbers peaking at the end of March through April. For February spawn water temperature will play a key role together with the moon phase. When water temperature reaches that magical sixty-five degree range, spawning activity will start in earnest.

For early spawn key in on areas that have the warmest water temperature. Find those areas that get the most available light and are the warmest. Weather conditions also play an important role. The northwest side of coves and creeks are generally the first to warm up. If Mother Nature gives us a warming trend the last week of February, the spawning activities will begin in earnest. This activity will be best on Fork's upper ends of Lake Fork Creek. Garrett, Elm, Magee Bay, Broad Tree, back ends of Birch, Little and Big Caney and the Glades will also have early spawning activity. Find the areas that have the warmest water temperature that is protected from prevailing winds, sloping banks in back of major creeks, secondary points that

> have creek channels that come closest to shallow water areas or drainage, back ends that have two to four feet of water, on the edge falling to six to

ten feet in creek channels. Bass will be either in or on the edge of these channels. Find these and you should be in "hawg heaven."

During warming trends and during the start of a cold front, fish the shallow sides two to four feet after the fronts. Fish the deeper areas until water temperature warms back up. A few days of seventy degree weather can warm these shallow areas quickly. The biggest key is water temperature. Every creek and cove will have a different temperature. Find the warmest and you will get bit.

When fishing these areas, lipless cranks in red color, suspending jerk baits with black/blue chrome or gold sides with an orange belly, and spinner baits in chartreuse and white with a touch of red or burnt orange is hard to beat. When bass become inactive and you can't get bit on these reaction lures, switch to jig/craw, plastic Texas-rigged or split-shot lizards, or Senkotype baits. On really tough days a split-shot French fry-type bait will be your best bet.

Gene Larew is my plastics sponsor. They have been around a long time and consistently produce the best plastic there is...period!! From crappie jigs to little and giant worms, from creature type lures to soft jerk baits, if it is made of plastic, Gene Larew has it covered with the best colors and lure collection there is.

If you are planning a trip to Lake Fork, I'll be more than happy to help make your trip a successful one. If you want to book a trip or just need up-to-date information, give me a call at 903-850-5083 (cell) or 903-383-7214 (landline) or email me at dstroman@ peoplescom.net. If you are wanting a guided trip, I still have openings for fall and winter trips. Good luck and good fishing!





Dean is a professional guide on Lake Fork and is sponsored by Legend Boats, Mercury Marine, Century 21 Lake Country, Gene Larew, V&M the Ultimate Bass Bait, Mossy Oak and Easy Step Systems.



Grasshoppers can jump over twenty times their length. Fleas can jump eight feet. Humans could leap the length of a football field, if they had the same skill proportionate to their size.

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## **Game Warden Field Notes**

The following items are compiled from recent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department law enforcement reports.

--Shock on the Border- A Red River County game warden received a call from the Red River County Sherriff's Office about a landowner who said several subjects were shocking fish in the Red River. The warden had dispatch called the warden in McCurtain County, Oklahoma before he went to the river. When he arrived at the river, the warden saw the suspects exit the river on the Oklahoma side. The warden relayed a description of the suspects' vehicle to the McCurtain County officers, who stopped and held the suspects until Oklahoma wardens arrived. The wardens didn't find any fish with the suspects, but they did confiscate a shocking device.

--You Look Familiar-- As a Delta County game warden and a Hunt County warden patrolled Greenville City lakes early one morning, they contacted a man who was sitting in his parked truck. One warden immediately recognized the man as someone he had arrested on a warrant for aggravated assault of a peace officer in 2011. During the arrest, the warden had found methamphetamine when he searched his vehicle. The man served three years in prison and was released on parole. The wardens noticed the suspect seemed very nervous as they spoke to him, though he consented to a vehicle search. The wardens found a he glass pipe and methamphetamine. The suspect said he would be going back to prison for violating his parole.

--Voices in the Bushes-- A Freestone County game warden received a call from a landowner, shortly after midnight, about a possible road hunter. He had seen a truck drive slowly past his property several times, shining headlights into his pasture. The warden went to the property, and as he was getting a description of the suspect's vehicle from the landowner, the truck he was looking for happened to drive right by the warden's vehicle. The warden observed the truck shine its headlights into the landowner's pasture several times before following the truck. When the truck stopped in the middle of a public roadway for a few minutes, the warden initiated a traffic stop. Although the warden did not find any hunting equipment in the truck during a consensual search, he did find a glass pipe and methamphetamine. The driver said it looked like a drug pipe but it wasn't his. The warden asked the suspect why he was shining his lights in the pasture. The man said he was "looking for the voices in the bushes." When the warden asked what the voices were saying, the man said he kept hearing a highpitched "Whoooooop!" The warden arrested the suspect for possession of a controlled substance. --Captain America Lives in Texas-- As a Wharton County game warden patrolled a field during the South Zone dove season opener, he came across one hunter dressed like Captain America, wearing flag shorts and a Captain America T-shirt. The hunter harvested 15 birds opening morning. When the warden checked the same field later that afternoon, he saw a familiar face: Captain America was still there, shooting dove, even though he had reached his daily bag limit that morning. The warden walked over to the hunter and asked him how his hunt was going. Captain America said it was "going great" and that he had already harvested 10 birds that afternoon. When the warden asked him how he did that morning, the hunter paused before realizing he had talked to the same warden that morning. The warden advised Captain America to consider wearing camouflage next time he was out hunting. The warden seized his 10 birds and issued a citation.

--Don't Lie to the Wardens-- As two Atascosa County game wardens checked dove hunters in the special white-winged dove area of Atascosa County, they saw a hunter cleaning six mourning doves. The wardens saw the hunter toss something in the brush as they drove up. After inspecting his pile of cleaned birds, the wardens saw two quail carcasses. The hunter denied harvesting the quail, even though

(See Game Warden .... Continued on Page 6-B)



#### "The Fisherman's Guide. News You Can Use" Dage 4-B February Quick Meal **Tips** Day For Game Entertaining

#### **By Sue Hampton**

If the gang is headed to your house to watch the super bowl, chili is a great crowd pleaser that's easy to make.

Cooking chili in a slow cooker is simple and it gets the host out of the kitchen and into the game. Just place a disposable liner in the cooker, add the ingredients, cover and set the controls. When the whistle blows, you have a meal your team will love. Slow cooker liners from Reynolds make cleanup a snap. Just toss the disposable liner when you're done - no scrubbing



Chili made in a slow cooker is a treat for guests and hosts.

or soaking required.

Put assorted toppings such as sour cream, grated cheese, chopped onions and more in bowls before everyone arrives to serve with this hearty game day favorite.

Super Bowl Chili 1 Reynolds' Slow Cooker Liner

1 pound lean ground beef 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped

1 small onion, chopped 2 cans (15 oz.) pinto beans, undrained

2 packages (1.25 oz.) chili seasoning mix

1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce

1 can (10 oz.) diced tomatoes and green chilies Cheese and sour cream (optional)

Open slow cooker liner and place it inside a 5 to 6-1/2 quart slow cooker

against the bottom and sides of bowl; pull top of liner over rim of bowl. Brown ground beef, bell pepper and onion in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until beef is no longer pink. Drain well, Place beef mixture into slow cooker liner. Combine remaining ingredients in a medium bowl. Pour over beef mixture; gently stir with wooden or plastic spoon to combine. Place lid on slow cooker. Cook on low for 6 to 7 hours or on high for 3 to 3-1/2 hours until heated through. Carefully remove lid to allow steam to escape. Serve food directly from slow cooker liner. Do not lift or transport liner with food inside.

Cook's tip: Store your

bowl. Fit liner snugly slow cooker liners in the vou'll have them when cooker itself. That way,

you need them.



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#### February

# Game Warden Field Notes (Continued from Page 3-B)

was hunting alone. The wardens looked in the brush where they had seen the hunter throw something and found two quail breasts. The wardens gave the hunter a citation for exceeding the daily bag limit of mourning dove and for possessing quail in closed season.

--You Really Should Have Hunted Legally-- While setting up on a suspected baited area, a LaSalle County game warden and a Dimmit County game warden heard some shots nearby and decided to investigate. Upon arriving at a tank dam where they heard the shots, they saw three individuals standing on top of the dam hunting dove. After talking to the three people, the wardens found a sack of milo in the back of the men's vehicle and all over the ground around the hunters. The wardens also found one of the hunters was over his daily bag limit of mourning dove, another hunter was hunting without a license and all three were hunting over a baited area. The man without a hunting license reluctantly gave his ID to the wardens, who discovered the man had a warrant for child neglect. The wardens took him to the LaSalle County Jail.

--It Was Supposed to Sink-- A Red River County game warden and the Clarksville Chief of Police responded to a call about a car submerged in the Clarksville City Lake. The officers took a boat out to the car and saw the doors of the vehicle were shut and the windows were down. A Bowie County game warden arrived on scene with a side scan sonar unit to check the area around the car for bodies, but they didn't find any. After a dive team hooked up the car to tow it out of the lake, the officers discovered a metal brace holding down the gas pedal. The Clarksville Police Department is investigating possible motives for dumping the car.

--Remains Remain-- A Denton County game warden responded to a call to Lake Lewisville about the discovery of possible human remains. When he arrived on scene, along with the Denton County Sheriff's Investigations and Medical Examiner, the warden found several remains that had been revealed as the area eroded from flooding. An anthropologist the officers consulted said the remains were most likely Native American in origin. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers anthropology team will investigate the find.

--Don't Deny It-- A Tarrant County game warden was checking fishermen around Lake Worth when he noticed two men standing outside a truck. As the warden approached and identified himself, both men looked at each other. The warden, who could smell marijuana, asked the men if they had any illegal substances. Both men denied having anything illegal in their possession. After a consensual search, however, the warden found a meth pipe, marijuana, a scale commonly used for weighing drugs, and 7.4 grams of methamphetamine. One of the men was arrested, and the case is pending.

-- Location, Location-- An Upshur County

game warden was out patrolling on an ATV when he received an Operation Game Thief call. The anonymous caller said a suspect was selling crappie across the street from the Game Warden office. The warden headed to the office, and as he pulled into the parking lot, he saw the suspect moving a cooler in the trunk of his vehicle. When the warden questioned him, the suspect admitted to selling crappie. After seizing 24 quart bags with 174 crappie fillets, the warden filed citations and civil restitution.

--"We Didn't Know"-- Two Henderson County game wardens responded to an Operation Game Thief call about hunters baiting migratory waterfowl. The wardens arrived at the suspected blind, in a slough attached to Lake Palestine, where they found two hunters. The wardens noticed a pile of corn behind the blind, as well as some corn floating in the water nearby. When the wardens asked them about the bait, the hunters said, "We didn't know it was baited, and if we did, we would not have hunted it." The wardens filed charges for hunting migratory waterfowl over a baited area.

--"Steeling" Metal-- A Montgomery County game warden arrested two individuals for felony theft of metal. The pair had been stealing copper from buildings on private property. The pair is also suspected of stealing four air conditioning units, three window units, copper piping from the attics of some of the buildings and numerous other items in the area over the course of two weeks. After arresting the two suspects for stealing the copper, the wardens are investigating their connection to the prior thefts.





### February

### "The Fisherman's Guide, News You Can Use"

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"Every child deserves a chance to fish!" Children diagnosed or who have experienced a life-threatening illness or accident sometimes do not have that opportunity. Now through the "Wish to Fish Foundation" they can have that day in the sun with their family. Any family with a child between the ages 3 to 18 years of age that has been diagnosed or treated for a life-threatening illness or accident is invited to come fish Lake Fork for any species of fish at <u>NO COST!</u> Lodging, meals, and fishing are provided for. This allows the family to spend quality time together fishing without worries or expenses. The outing includes one night lodging, meals, refreshments, snacks, all on a 26' Tritoon Pontoon, (accompanied with a 9-1-1 chase boat for any emergency that may occur. All bait and fishing equipment provided. If you are, or know of a family that meets the above criteria, contact us! Help us spread the word, we are here for the children!

For Scheduling or More Info Contact: Don Hampton, Founder & Program Director visit our website: www.wishtofishfoundation.com

#### **Dage S-B**

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February

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