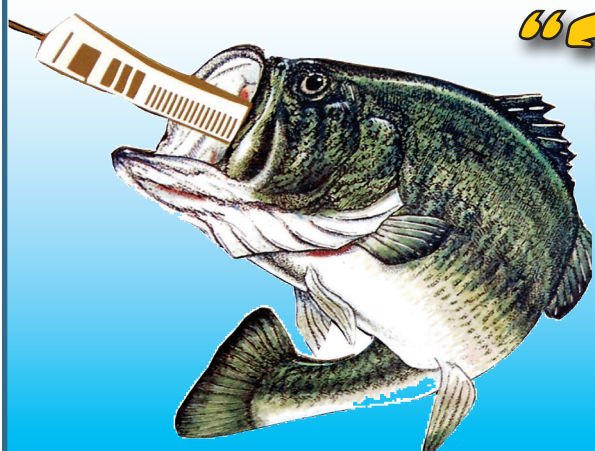


# LAKE FORK "The Big Bass Capital Of Texas"



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

1 Section

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Free

Vol. 23

December, 2021

No. 268



From all of us at "The Fisherman's Guide News" we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! God Bless and be safe.



Cale Eldridge, from Bellaire, Kansas, caught his personal best fishing with Lake Fork guide Whitt Smith on Sunday 11/21/21. C.P.R.



Don (Bubba) Hampton caught this nice bass fishing Lake Fork on Monday 11/15/21. C.P.R.

### Greet the Holiday Season at a Texas State Park

Texas State Parks and the Texas Historical Commission are hosting their biggest holiday season yet with more than 80 unique holiday events happening across the state.

Events started in November with 47 Texas State Parks and eight State Historic Sites presenting themed guided walks, scavenger hunts and more. Anyone planning a trip

to a Texas State Park is highly encouraged to reserve their day pass in advance since some parks are expected to reach their capacity.

(See Greet the Holiday....  
Continued on Page 4)





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# Bubba Claus Sworn in to Replace Santa for East Texas Lake Areas

By: Bubba B. Tuff

Well boys and girls, Santa's contract has been renegotiated and it directly effects the East Texas Lake Areas.

Due to the influx of new homeowners and the overwhelming amount of tourism to the lake areas, Santa regrets to inform us he will no longer be the bearer of good tidings. His contract has been renegotiated by the State of Texas Fairies and Elves Local 101.

Set forth in the new contract, Santa's responsibilities will no longer include the East Texas lake areas. Cookie breaks will be shortened to assure satisfactory work ethics and quality.

In a press release to "The Fisherman's Guide News", sent out November 26, 2021, Santa's replacement was named. Everyone can rest assured we will be in good hands. The replacement for the East Texas lake areas will be his third cousin, "Bubba Claus"!!

Bubba Claus is originally from the South Pole. There he attended Equator High and went on to further his education by attending night school majoring in Chimney Dropping and Fire Safety.

"I share the same goal as my cousin Santa. I will deliver toys to all the boys and girls in the East Texas lake areas," said Bubba Claus in an interview with "The Fisherman's Guide News"!!

In the interview, to relieve concerned parents, the differences in the method of delivery were discussed at great length. Bubba Claus assured, "Christmas would be better'n' ever and jus' dog-gone good!"

The differences in delivery will include the following:

\*There will be no danger of a Grinch stealing your Christmas. On Bubba's sleigh he has a loaded gun rack and a bumper sticker that reads: "These toys insured by Smith and Wesson".

\*Instead of milk and cookies, Bubba Claus prefers that children leave a Michelob Ultra Light, fried crappie and hushpuppies on the fireplace mantel.

\*When Bubba Claus's sleigh lands on your roof, do not be alarmed by the sound of barking. Bubba Claus's sleigh will be pulled by floppy-eared flying coon dogs instead of reindeer. (It seems Santa once loaned Bubba his reindeer and now Blitzen's head overlooks Bubba's fireplace).

\*No longer will you hear "On Comet, on Cupid, on Donner, on Blitzen... instead in a southern drawl you will hear, "Buedro, Jake, Snake, Goober, Gomer les' git 'er done!"

\*For that night only and for Bubba Claus only the local speed limits will be waived. Also, in accordance with local tradition, Bubba's bumper will have a sticker on it saying "Made in Texas by Texans, So Don't Mess With Bubba!"

\*Bubba Claus does not wear a belt. If the children are present when he bends over to put the presents under the tree, make sure they turn their heads.

\*Out of respect for Bubba, the traditional Christmas songs like "Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer" and "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" will be replaced by "Bubba Shot the Jukebox" and "Grandma Got Ran Over By A Reindeer"!!

After extended negotiations, it was determined by all agencies involved, Bubba Claus would definitely fit and exceed the 'slot'...thus he was judged a "Keeper"!!



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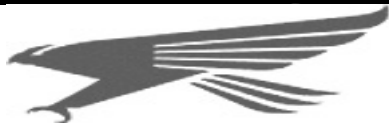
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## Greet the Holiday Season *(Continued from Page 1)*

ity limit. Day passes can be reserved online through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) website or over the phone by calling (512) 389-8900.

Anyone visiting Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site Dec. 11-23 can grab a self-guided tour packet, walk the grounds for free and learn about how Christmas was celebrated in north Texas during the 1890s (when Dwight Eisenhower was born) and 1940s (when the Denison community preserved the Birthplace house). Children's craft kits will be available while supplies last. For more information, call

(903) 465-8908.

In South Texas, families can pick a spot in the day use area of Falcon State Park to view the Third Annual Falcon Lake Christmas Boat Parade from 7 p.m. -10 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11. Visitors will be able to see decked out boats float by in cheerful holiday lights.

Celebrate Boxing Day and stretch your legs at 9 a.m. Dec. 26 at Franklin Mountains State Park with an easy 1.5-mile hike to Agave Loop. Visitors should bring good hiking shoes, plenty of water and a Santa hat.

The grounds of Kreische Brewery and Monument Hill State

Historic Sites are being transformed with holiday lights during the evenings from 5:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Dec. 4, 10, 11, 17 and 18. Guests will be able to enjoy the walking trail with holiday lights, live entertainment, refreshments, family activities and visit with Santa.

For more information about these and other holiday activities at Texas State Parks, visit the TPWD website. A full calendar is available online on the TPWD calendar page. For more activities at THC's State Historic Sites, visit the Texas Historical Commission website.



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## Remainder of Powderhorn Ranch Donated to TPWD

The entirety of Powderhorn Ranch is now in the hands of the people of Texas. In a land transaction that closed Oct. 27, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) donated the final 1,360 acres to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). In 2018, TPWF donated 14,998 acres of the property to TPWD for Powderhorn Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The remainder of the property that transferred recently will one day become a state park.

"The donation of Powderhorn Ranch is a promise kept," said Mike Greene, Chairman of the TPWF Board of Trustees. "This historic investment was made possible by an exceptional public-

private partnership and exemplifies how landscape-scale conservation can be achieved in Texas and beyond."

The acquisition of the 17,351-acre Powderhorn Ranch in Calhoun County forever conserves a spectacular piece of property that is one of the largest remaining tracts of unspoiled coastal prairie in the state. The purchase was made possible by a coalition of conservation partners and donors led by TPWF.

"This transformational project conserves irreplaceable wildlife habitat and brings an exciting new recreational opportunity to the people of Texas," said Dan Friedkin, Chairman Emeritus of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. "It

demonstrates how Texas's community of conservationists can work hand-in-hand with the state to preserve an extraordinary piece of our natural heritage for generations to come." Friedkin served as chairman of TPWF's \$100 million "Keeping it Wild: The Campaign for Texas," which included funding for Powderhorn. Friedkin made the lead gift for the campaign, which was the largest individual gift in TPWD's history.

Conservation organizations and TPWD have had their eye on Powderhorn for many years. In 2014, significant funding became available from the National Fish and Wildlife Found-

(See Powderhorn Ranch....  
Continued on Page 7)



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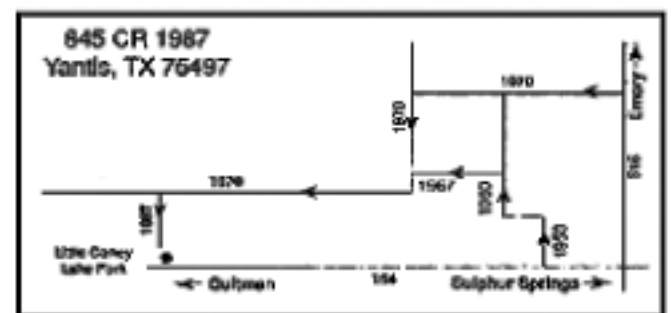
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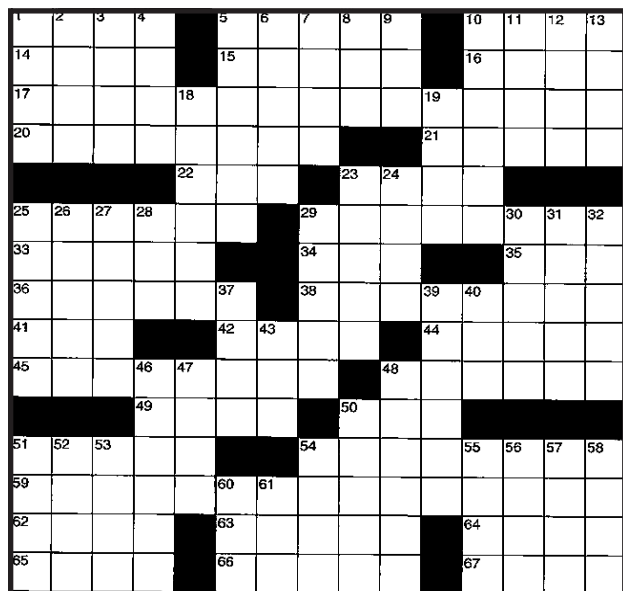
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## "Lake Fork Water Temps On Par!"

By David Ozio

"Cold temps are right around the corner and the "not so fun" winter season is upon us. As with the fall of 2020, Fork is on par with last years fall water temps which are hovering in the low 60's and way ahead of years past. You might consider it a mild fall and let's hope it doesn't turn into the winter of last year. This lake doesn't need thick sheets of ice again and I'm leery on how these Florida bass adjust to that type of curve ball. Time will tell. Meanwhile, adjusting to the current conditions is what we will talk about today. The key is what the baitfish are doing and, as with last fall, things seem to be a little late. Barfish normally show up on points,



### CLUES ACROSS

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Anger                                  | 38. Monkeys' vantage points     |
| 5. Degrade                                | 41. Obeah                       |
| 10. Catch sight of                        | 42. Primates                    |
| 14. Collect                               | 44. Manservant                  |
| 15. Outdoes                               | 45. Renew                       |
| 16. Orthodox Islam                        | 48. Mixture                     |
| 17. Like a new father                     | 49. Opera feature               |
| 20. Work surface                          | 50. One of 12 sons of Jacob     |
| 21. Understands through intuition (slang) | 51. Old World lizard            |
| 22. Allow                                 | 54. Suffers a nervous breakdown |
| 23. Vegetable root                        | 59. Like a newborn babe         |
| 25. Delays                                | 62. Hawk                        |
| 29. Power unit                            | 63. Bewilder                    |
| 33. Tailor                                | 64. Czech river                 |
| 34. They _____                            | 65. Privation                   |
| 35. Hoof                                  | 66. Cola                        |
| 36. Ordered around                        | 67. Interpret                   |

### CLUES DOWN

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Acknowledgment (abbr.)         | 30. Coral island                      |
| 2. Light                          | 31. Pith helmet                       |
| 3. Clod                           | 32. Petulant                          |
| 4. Hebrew calendar month          | 37. Iranian                           |
| 5. Decreases                      | 39. Smoothly                          |
| 6. Muddle                         | 40. Small amount                      |
| 7. As fast as can be done (abbr.) | 43. Field or snow                     |
| 8. Engine additive                | 46. Most unexciting                   |
| 9. Compass pt.                    | 47. Toward the mouth                  |
| 10. Part of some contracts        | 48. African country                   |
| 11. Turn away                     | 50. Martial-art places                |
| 12. Open a lock                   | 51. Afresh                            |
| 13. Laughs                        | 52. Indian sacred city                |
| 18. Expunge                       | 53. Kwa                               |
| 19. North-central Indian city     | 54. Raise an objection                |
| 23. Districts (abbr.)             | 55. Cain and _____                    |
| 24. Phil _____, former CIA agent  | 56. Type of tree                      |
| 25. Small drum                    | 57. Nuclear near reach weapon (abbr.) |
| 26. Brick                         | 58. Promised land                     |
| 27. Rationale                     | 60. Nucleotide (abbr.)                |
| 28. Lasting records (abbr.)       | 61. The woman                         |
| 29. Family unit                   |                                       |

Answers on Page 21

humps and roadbeds as of this writing and I can only report that there are only small amounts visible especially in the afternoon. The fishing has been reasonably poor so I might wonder if the lake is still turning over even at this late date.

More than a month ago shad were starting to migrate to the backs of the creeks where hungry bass were stocking up for the cold days ahead. Most disappeared in early November. The years lack of rain has the lake over two and a half feet low and this may have something to do with it compared to past seasons. The change in water temps should have helped the shallow bite and, oddly enough, these same cooler water temps haven't allowed the big bass to gang up deep as of this writing. This changes our focus to mid depth water patterns and this will continue into December while we are searching for the next ShareLunker. Provided the water continues to slowly cool heading into Santa month, good electronics will play a key roll in the search of these groups of monster green fish and the best place to start your search will be at the mouth of the major creeks, Birch, Penson, Mustang, Williams, Wolfe and Dale. Focus on the shad and scan for hooks that are surrounding the clouds of bait. All these bass will be suspended so target these fish with a flutter spoon if the wind is an issue or a weightless fluke if the water is calm. Count



the bait down to the level where you marked them at the rate of a second per foot. At that point, twitch the fluke or rip the spoon. Stay in touch with the shad and see what happens. Any flutter spoon will do the trick if you are in the mouth of a creek that is inundated with timber. Let it flutter to the bottom and experiment with different retrieves to isolate what the fish favor. A standard spoon in the same silver or gold works better if you are in open water with no obstructions. Pay close attention to your graph and direct your efforts in areas where there are schools of sand bass or bar fish. All year, the big black bass have been mixed in with the schools feeding on the unwitting small bar fish. C-rigs

(See Lake Fork Water....  
Continued on Page 20)

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## Remainder of Powderhorn Ranch Donated to TPWD (Continued from Page 5)

dation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, which resulted from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and TPWF committed to raise \$15 million to complete funding for the project. In addition to the \$37.7 million purchase price, TPWF raised funds for initial habitat restoration and an endowment to fund long-term maintenance, which brought the total project cost to nearly \$50 million. The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy provided interim financing, and The Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement that will forever protect the property. With numerous partners

and donors coming to the table, the decades-long goal of conserving Powderhorn Ranch became a reality.

"Powderhorn Ranch conserves pristine wildlife habitat in an area of Texas that is facing increasing development pressure," said TPWD Executive Director Carter Smith. "The investment in this property forever protects a remarkable diversity of species and habitat and connects a patchwork of protected lands from the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to Mad Island Wildlife Management Area and the recently expanded Matagorda Peninsula Coastal Man-

agement Area that are vital to the resilience of a healthy Gulf Coast ecosystem."

Powderhorn Ranch conserves in perpetuity unspoiled coastal land with forests of coastal live oak and intact wetlands. The property also includes thousands of acres of freshwater wetlands and salt marshes that offer vital fish and wildlife habitat, provide natural filtering to improve water quality and shield people and property from storm surges and sea level rise. Powderhorn Ranch encompasses more than 11 miles of tidal bayfront on Matagorda Bay, which is home to hundreds of species of birds and animals,

including the endangered whooping crane.

Since the 2014 acquisition, TPWF has stewarded the property to prepare for the donation to the state. Thousands of acres of running live oak have been cleared, revitalizing Powderhorn's native prairie. Three new solar wells were installed, providing permanent water sources for terrestrial wildlife, wading birds and waterfowl and creating the transitional wetlands necessary for a complete coastal ecosystem. In addition, TPWF constructed buildings now being used by WMA staff, built miles of fence, and also oversaw the restoration of the

historic camp house on the property, including replacing an aging cistern with a new rainwater collection system. In the future, the camp house will become a state park interpretive center, with the rainwater collection system serving as a demonstration of sustainable water management and conservation practices.

Before the property was transferred, TPWF worked with numerous partners to facilitate access for recreational opportunities such as birding, hunting, camping, and fishing. Since 2019, Powderhorn WMA has provided scheduled access for conservation education, research, bird-

ing, and public hunting. While there is no timeline yet for development of the state park, it typically takes many years for a master plan to be developed and for state funding to be identified for park development.

"We're thrilled to mark this milestone of donating the final Powderhorn acreage to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department," said TPWF Executive Director Susan Houston. "We are deeply grateful to the many generous donors and partners who made this historic conservation acquisition possible."

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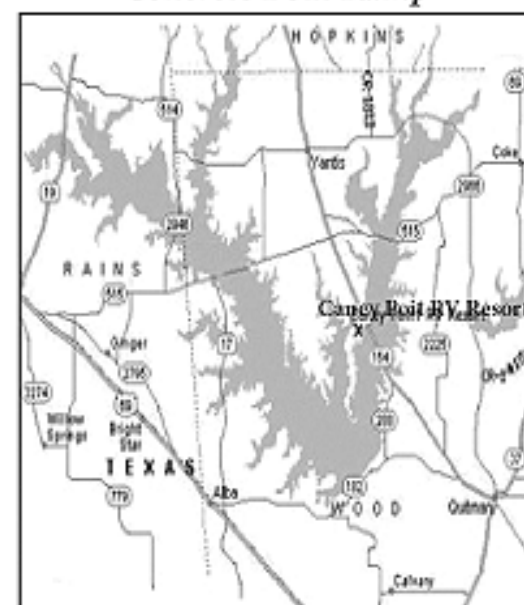
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# "The Moon Report"

## "Fork's Winter Transition"

By Terri Moon

Well – as much as I hate to say it – the cold weather has finally arrived! These 30 some degree mornings will sure remind you how old your getting! But, the motivation of knowing how good the fishing gets when the temperature falls and the crappie start their winter feeding frenzy – it's enough to make you power through the cold!

The surface temperature has dropped into the 50's so the crappie are making a big push out deeper. We are targeting 24 to 40 ft. depths – but, how deep they might be in those depths can change daily and throughout the day. They might be 12 ft. down or 25 ft. down. Just keep a close eye on the graph and target accordingly. Also make note of how deep the baitfish are running. If your fishing with Livescope, you will know exactly how deep to fish and in what direction! All you have to do is figure out what size and color jig they want that day. But, fair warning – you have to be able to take "rejection" with the Livescope because some days they are just not interested and just turn and swim away! Try your best to keep your bait above them and don't spook them by crashing down through them or erratically hopping your bait. This will definitely make them scatter. Try to hold your bait as steady as possible and maybe a light twitch now and then. If you see a fish headed for you, just slowly lift away



from it and generally that will trigger a strike!

Not all the crappie are deep – especially around a new or full moon. The last full moon when everyone was catching them in 30 to 40 ft., I found some nice ones in 10 to 15 ft. (I was very grateful because there was 4 ft. rollers out on the main lake!) Oh my gosh, the winds have been brutal! So, if you see a forecast of 5 – 10 or light and variable, take advantage of it – they have become rare!

Check your main lake points, creek channels, timber lines, brush piles and bridges. I am seeing giant shad in their stomachs so you might want to up-size your bait – like a Bonehead 3 inch bait with a 1/4 oz. Bonehead jig head. Or you can tip a minnow on a Skipper 1/4 jig. The colors producing have been black/chartreuse, LSU, white/chartreuse and blue/white.

Before I forget – December 1st to March 1st you have to keep the first 25 you catch – no culling. The 10 inch minimum

does not go back in effect till March 1st.

It's hard to believe this year is coming to an end. It's been another year of great challenges and heartbreaking losses for everyone. But, so grateful for all the blessings that came through during these tough times!

Heartfelt thanks to all that came to fish with me this year and especially those that have fished with me my whole career! (They were as happy as I was when the Skeeter Solera boat came along!) – they call it my "Luxury Liner"! So, a "BIG" thank you to Skeeter Boats for making my customers so comfortable on our fishing trips!

Also, be sure and check out Lake Fork Marina for your holiday shopping for all of the fishermen in your life. They have some great gift ideas and gift baskets!

**I want to wish everyone a "Wonderful Holiday Season" and many Blessings to you all and especially to my family!**



## Big Time Texas Hunts Winners Announced

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has selected the winners of this year's Big Time Texas Hunts. The winners were selected in a random drawing from 145,585 entries and the 14 lucky individuals have been notified.

More than \$1.3 million dollars were raised this year from Big Time Texas Hunts entries and proceeds from the drawing support wildlife research, habitat management and public hunting across the state.

"Big Time Texas Hunts continues to be an important conservation fundraiser for TPWD and we greatly appreciate the support of our Texas hunters that purchase entries each year," said Kelly Edmiston, TPWD Public Hunting Coordinator. "If a hunter is lucky enough to win, they will experience the hunt of a lifetime. If they don't, they can feel good knowing the funds from their entry go

directly to wildlife conservation and public access projects on public hunting lands in Texas."

This year's winner of the Texas Grand Slam hunting package, Kyle Kerstetter of Scottsville, Virginia, is making plans for four separate guided hunts for the state's top four premier big game species – desert bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer, pronghorn and mule deer.

Following are the other category winners of this year's Big Time Texas Hunts:

Ultimate Mule Deer Hunt – Donald Duncan, Victoria, TX

Nilgai Antelope Safari – Thomas Harman, Lewisville, TX

Premium Buck Hunt – Hector Garza, Laredo, TX

Exotic Safari – Trevor Baume, Fulshear, TX

Whitetail Bonanza – Charles Woodside, Kearney, NE; Gary Dupnick, La Vernia, TX; John McCraw,

Sonora, TX; Jeffrey Hanselka, La Vernia, TX; Russell Wilkins, San Antonio, TX

Big Time Bird Hunt – Ronnie Miller, Farmersville, TX

Gator Hunt – Terry Warriner, Big Lake, TX

Powderhorn Cast and Blast – Michael Solis, Houston, TX

Wild Hog Adventure – George Schofhauser, Bend, OR

"We want to congratulate the winners, but also thank all the hunters who bought an entry this year," said Janis Johnson, TPWD Marketing Specialist. "They are the ones who made the Big Time Texas Hunt's 25th Anniversary year a success. They helped us raised \$1,328,071, the highest amount in the history of the program, to support wildlife management, research and conservation efforts in Texas."



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## Texas Winter Tradition of Rainbow Trout Stocking Began Nov. 24

November is known as a time to give thanks, but in Texas the month also marks the beginning of a winter tradition for anglers of all ages across the state. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department kicked off this tradition when it began stocking thousands of rainbow trout Nov. 24. The easy to catch rainbow trout are delicious table fare and can be found on many restaurant menus.

"TPWD stocks catchable sized fish during winter months to create angling opportunities throughout Texas," said TPWD's rainbow trout Program Director, Carl Kittel. Rainbow trout love cold water, can be caught on a variety of baits and lures (worms, commercially available pastes, corn, spinners, spoons, flies and more), and are great to take home and eat. Our winter rainbow trout program has been a favorite with anglers for over forty years."

TPWD plans to stock a total of 352,563 rainbow trout in Texas from Nov. 24 through Mar. 6, 2022. Because rainbow trout are unable to survive in Texas after the winter, anglers are encouraged to keep up to their daily bag limit of five trout. Rainbow trout are an attractive, tasty fish and anglers can easily find recipes to prepare these fish online.

The Neighborhood Fishin' program offers some outstanding opportunities to catch rainbow trout for families and new anglers in and around major cities. TPWD manages 18 Neighborhood Fishin' lakes statewide in most major urban centers, including Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio. These lakes are frequently stocked with rainbow trout during the winter stocking season and offer plenty of amenities so that family members of all ages can enjoy a fun and relaxing day fishing and connecting in nature.

Tailrace fishing is popular during trout season and for anglers interested in going that route, TPWD will stock rainbow trout into the Canyon Tailrace on the Guadalupe River below Canyon Lake, and the Possum Kingdom Tailrace on the Brazos River below Possum Kingdom Lake. Those locations often have very cool water and provide excellent

conditions for trout fishing.

Other stocking locations include dozens of local city and county managed park ponds, the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center casting pond, and several rivers including the Frio, South Llano and Guadalupe rivers and the Clear Fork of the Trinity River.

In addition, anglers can pursue a fish in a Texas State Park for free without a fishing license. Anyone planning a trip to a Texas State Park should keep in mind that reserving a day pass in advance is highly recommended. Day passes can be reserved online though the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department website or over the phone by calling (512) 389-8900.

The good news is it doesn't take a lot of sophisticated fishing equipment to reel in a rainbow trout. They can be caught using simple, light tackle or on hand-tied flies using a fly rod. However, keeping an array of baits and lures nearby while having ice available when harvesting trout to keep them fresh are good points to keep in mind before heading out to the water. For more tips on how to catch rainbow trout, gain some insight from TPWD staff on the TPWD YouTube channel.

In Texas, children under 17 fish for free, but a

fishing license with a freshwater fishing endorsement is required for adults in the family. An angler fishing in a Community Fishing Lake or from a dock, pier or jetty within a Texas State Park may use no more than two poles. The statewide bag limit is five trout, except on parts of the Guadalupe River where special limits are in effect.

The dates and locations are subject to change due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Be sure to check the 2021-22 Trout Stocking Schedule online before you go fishing to confirm the stocking date, check fishing regulations and to find other winter trout stocking program angling tips.



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## Biologists Ask the Public to Report Rabbit Mortality Events

In early 2020, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) received test results confirming that Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV) was found in several species of wild rabbits in Texas. Since April of this year, TPWD, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) have not confirmed any new cases in wild rabbit populations in the state. However, TPWD is seeking input from the public, especially hunters, asking that they report any dead rabbits found this fall and winter, similar to practices encouraged last year. Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV) is a highly contagious viral disease that can affect both domestic and wild rabbit species. RHDV has been known to exist in all biological tissues and fluids within rabbits. In addition, RHDV has been known to survive on the landscape for more than 120 days and can withstand freezing temperatures. This disease is nearly always fatal and primarily affects infected rabbits or carcasses, contact with their meat or fur, contaminated food or

The disease can spread between rabbits through direct contact with other

(See *Biologists Ask....*  
Continued on Page 15)

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## TPWD Announces Grants to Enhance Angler Access, Fish Habitat (Includes Lake Fork)

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Inland Fisheries Division has selected 21 projects to be supported by the new Habitat and Angler Access Program (HAAP). The program, which launched in June 2021, is primarily funded by the purchase of freshwater fishing licenses.

"The Habitat and Angler Access Program offers us a new opportunity to support much needed fish habitat enhancement initiatives and shoreline-based access improvements that will improve conservation of fisheries resources and quality of angling for Texans," says Michael Homer,

Abilene District fisheries biologist and HAAP coordinator. "We anticipate these projects will be successful for increasing fishing access, expanding and restoring crucial habitat for important fish populations, as well as developing and fostering partnerships with local partners who can benefit from this new program in the future."

HAAP grants of up to \$50,000 are awarded to support individual fish habitat improvement and angler access projects on public ponds, large reservoirs, creeks, and rivers. These projects include the development or improvement of fishing piers, installation of underwater dock lighting, bank and shoreline stabilization, the creation of jet-

ties, installation of erosion control features, native plant restoration, deployment of artificial fish attractors, dredging of excessive silt and organic materials from waterbodies with a high potential for quality fishery development, as well as the construction of non-motorized boat launches for kayaks, canoes, and other small watercraft for fishing access.

This first round of projects is expected to be completed by summer of 2023. The next request for proposals for fiscal years 2024-25 will be announced in the spring of 2023.

Projects selected for 2022-23 are listed below:

\*Angler Access Improvements on the Colorado River at the Texas River School's Camp

\*Angler Access Improvements on the Nueces River at Cooksey Park

\*Bandera Angler Park on the Medina River

\*City of Early Town Center Fishing Piers

\*City of Early Town Center Pond Fish Habitat Establishment and Shoreline Stabilization

\*Central Texas Streams Riparian Reforestation Program

\*Fish Habitat and Angler Access Improvements at Old Hidalgo Pump House Channel

\*Flatrock Angler Access Project on the South Llano River

\*Lady Bird Lake Habitat and Access Im-

provements

\*Lake Dunlap Habitat Improvements

\*Lake Fork Fish Habitat Enhancement

\*Lake Lewisville Kayak Angler Access

\*Lake Murvaul Native Plant Restoration

\*Lake Wichita Kayak Launch

\*Neighborhood Fishin' Program Water Quality Improvements in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Area

\*Neighborhood Fishin' Program Shoreline Habitat and Fishing Access in the Houston Area

\*Fish Habitat Improvements at Resoft Park in Brazoria County

\*Riparian Restoration & Bank Re-Stabilization on the Paluxy River in Dinosaur Valley State Park

\*Riparian Restoration at San Felipe Creek

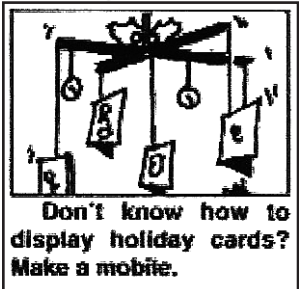
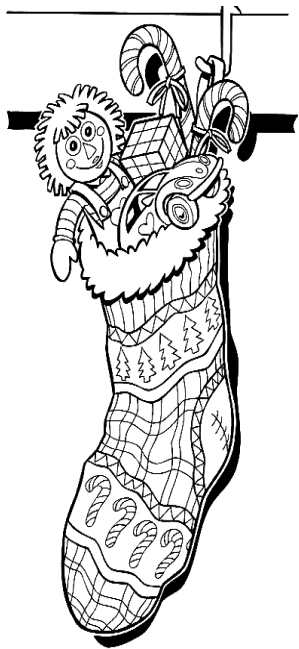
\*Small Craft and Shoreline Access on Middle Bosque on Lake Waco

\*Waco-Area Fish Habitat Improvements

For detailed information about the projects being supported during 2022-23, visit the HAAP projects webpage. More information about the Habitat and Angler Access Program, including future requests for proposals, can be found under the Fisheries Grants section of the TPWD Grants and Assistance web page.

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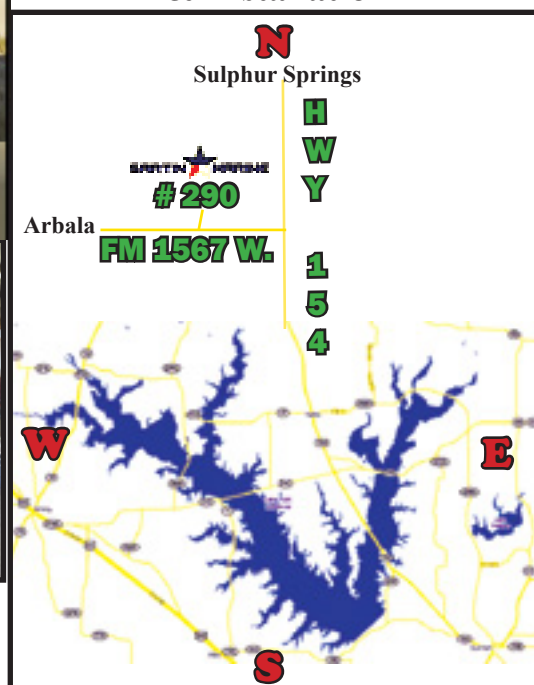
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## Biologists Ask the Public to Report Rabbit Mortality Events (Continued from Page 11)

water or other contaminated materials. These factors make disease control efforts extremely challenging.

As deer, waterfowl and quail hunting seasons are in full swing, TPWD asks that hunters report any rabbit mortality events, especially in areas of the Panhandle and Trans Pecos regions where previously positive cases were confirmed by both the USDA and TAHC.

To date, counties with known mortality events include the following: Brewster, Cottle, Culberson, El Paso, Gaines, Hale, Hockley, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Lubbock, Pecos, Potter, Presidio, Randall and Ward counties. Reports of dead rabbits should be made to a local biolo-

gist in the county in which they were found.

RHDV appears only to affect rabbit species (lagomorphs). It is not known to affect humans, livestock or pets other than rabbits. However, pets, such as hunting dogs, should not be allowed to consume dead animal carcasses. Often the only clinical sign is sudden death. In less acute cases, clinical signs in rabbits have included the following: dullness/apathy, not eating, bleeding from the nose and eyes or watery, congested eyes. Some may also exhibit neurological signs such as incoordination, excitement or seizure-like episodes.

TPWD advises all rabbit hunters voluntarily clean rabbits in the harvest location and dis-

card non-consumed carcass parts in the same area. Hunters can also minimize the spread of this disease by reducing the movement of biological materials and carcasses across Texas. Hunters are advised to take standard protective measures such as wearing gloves and thoroughly washing their hands after field dressing rabbits. TPWD also requests that hunters thoroughly clean coolers containing rabbits with a 10% bleach solution after use.

More information on RHD can be found on the USDA website and on the RHD page of the TPWD website.

Learn more about domestic rabbit RHDV2 cases and reporting on the TAHC website.



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# "Knowing What To Look For!"

By Michael McFarland

First off I want to wish you and your family happy holidays and a very Merry Christmas. I really love the month of December for many reasons, many of which you would commonly expect. Time off from work, catching up on much needed rest, celebrating Christmas with family and friends, etc..

However from an outdoorsman/fishing guides perspective there is something else that comes to Lake Fork during the month of December or should I say migrates to and arrives here at Lake Fork during the month of December. It is one of

the most majestic and absolutely amazing under water diving birds called the Loon.

The Loon bird can hold its breath for up to twelve minutes and dive reaching depths of more than 60 meters (thats 180 feet).

But why and how would the loon be a benefit to us big bass fisherman you ask?

Well here you go!

First off the Loon is a large bird and generally prefers to search for larger profile baitfish like gizzard shad and or large adult threadfin shad on a daily basis. This makes the diving loon a great tool in finding daily schools of larger sized baitfish. Uniquely enough the larger profile baitfish

happen to be the same choice size food for larger more mature giant bass. This is awesome, however the loon is a migrating bird and only spends about 3 to 4 months here at Lake Fork. The loon will tend to first arrive around the end of November first of December and will be gone by May. With that being said, yes, the return of the Loon is the other reason I love the

month of December. Ok so now again from my fisherman's perspective here are some important tips on how I use the Loon to find the giant bass.

The first thing I do each day is find a diving loon and or group of loons and begin by observing the birds behavior. I pay close attention to and study the under water depths, contours and structure the birds are diving into. I prefer to locate a single diving loon because I believe that a single diving bird will potentially work off of a school of bass. In other words using the bass to help them ambush. A large group of diving loons acts as a school of its own thus not needing the aid of the schooling bass.

Here are 3 tips & important behaviors to recognize when your watching the Loon.

1- The Loon is diving, searching at a brisk pace and does not stay in one area for very long ( I call this hunting) if you see this you should keep moving and searching yourself.

(See What to Look For...Continued on Page 21)



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## Whooping Cranes Are Making Their Way to Texas

With the first sightings of iconic, endangered whooping cranes along the Texas coast being reported, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is reminding Texans to be on the lookout for these impressive birds as they move through the state.

Whooping cranes are the tallest, rarest birds in North America. Currently, there is a population of around 506 individuals. Thanks to coordinated conservation efforts, whooping cranes are slowly returning from the brink of extinction.

Whooping cranes make a 2,500-mile journey from their Canadian breeding grounds in northern Alberta's Wood Buffalo National Park to the coastal marshes of Texas each year. The migration south to Texas can take up to 50 days.

During their migration, whooping cranes seek out wetlands and agricultural fields where they can roost and feed. The birds often pass large urban centers like Dallas-Fort Worth, Waco and Austin. Though whooping cranes rarely stay in one place for more than

a day during migration, it is important that they not be disturbed or harassed at these stopovers. As a federally protected species, it is illegal to disturb or harass these birds.

With sandhill crane and waterfowl hunting seasons opening and whooper migration in full swing, TPWD urges hunters to be extra vigilant. Whooping cranes are sometimes found in mixed flocks with sandhill cranes, which are gray and slightly smaller. With their all-white body plumage and black wingtips, whoop-

*(Continued on Next Page)*

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ing cranes may also resemble snow geese, which are much smaller and have faster wing beats. A video detailing the differences between snow geese and whooping cranes can be found on the TPWD YouTube Channel.

There are several other non-game species that are similar in appearance such as wood storks, American white pelicans, great egrets and others, but a close look will reveal obvious differences. More information on look-alike species is available online.

Wade Harrell, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Whooping Crane Coordinator at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), says the first of the season was a family group consisting of two adults and a juvenile on the Aransas NWR, along with another tracked bird that arrived in the Port O' Connor-area, both on Oct. 29.

Harrell says typically most all of the tagged Whooping Cranes he studies are on the move in November as they head for their wintering grounds. The majority of the birds arrive on the Texas Coast in December.

Once whooping cranes arrive on their wintering grounds, many stay in the same general area. Younger birds, however, often haven't paired yet and may wander a little off their usual flight path, using areas quite distant from the Aransas NWR area.

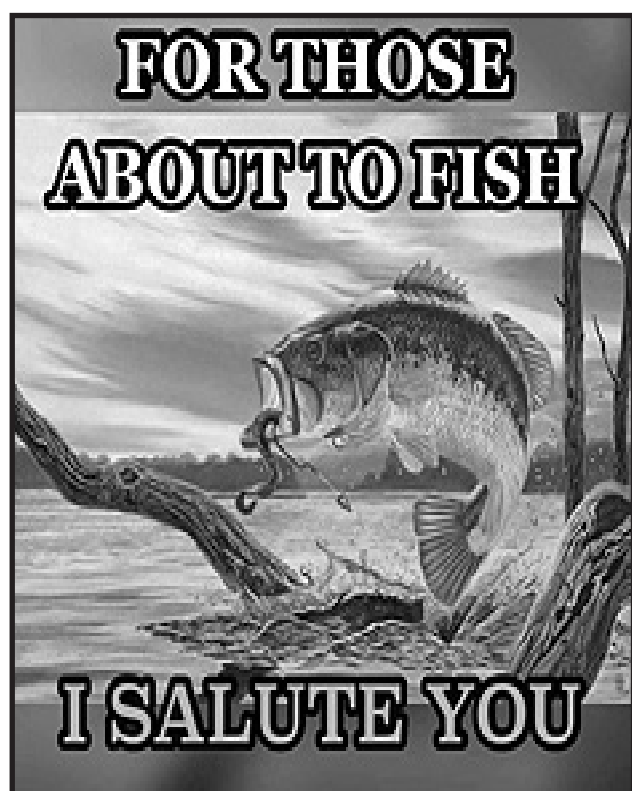
Harrell says due to the La Niña weather pattern forecast for this winter, the Southwest is in for a drier, warmer season.

While this past summer was relatively wet and freshwater wetlands currently have water, a dry winter may require the use of freshwater wells on the Aransas NWR and surrounding areas to provide freshwater to the whooping cranes later in the winter. The USFWS is encouraging landowners to consider providing freshwater on their properties as well to aid the birds during their migration and wintering period.

The public can help track whooping cranes by reporting sightings to TPWD's Whooper Watch, a citizen-science based reporting system to track whooping crane migration and wintering locations throughout Texas. More information about Whooper Watch, including instructions for reporting sightings, can be found online and by

downloading the iNaturalist mobile app. These observations help biologists identify new migration and wintering locations and their associated habitats.

Biologists remain optimistic that continued research and restoration work will ultimately lead to improved numbers of whooping cranes and say that new pending federal legislation, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), could help in a big way. RAWA would provide the funding needed to continue the important conservation work that is vital for whooping cranes and other species throughout Texas. Learn how to help through the Texas Wildlife Alliance's online toolkit. Texas Wildlife Alliance is a grass roots coalition formed to support RAWA.



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## "Lake Fork Water Temps On Par!" (Continued from Page 6)

and drop shots have worked well also using redbug and junebug Talon Carolina Worms. Locate the baitfish and go to work.

Once the water cools into the low 50's the shallow bite will still be relevant on sunny days providing the water temps are warming. Rattletraps, squarebills, chatterbaits and spinnerbaits will all answer the call to duty. Look for vegetation in the skinny water and pay attention to any baitfish activity. There will also be other patterns that will work during this time of the year, one being the jig and craw trailer fished on the creek bends where wood is present. Black and blue is my fav, especially

on cloudy days. If the water is fairly clear, switch to watermelon red front to back. Work it slow, especially through the roots of the trees. Sunny afternoons during this season can also be a gold mine. As the water cools into the mid-fifties, chatterbaits and traps are the go to baits worked shallow and be sure to focus on the 2:00 to 5:30pm window. Water warms during the afternoon and the fish will move up for a free meal. Pay attention to any bird activity and they will lead you to the bass.

December/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. If you are headed out to Lake Fork in December 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 December and some in January. 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 and Instagram at DavidOzioLakeFork-Guide. I post my daily trip results on this page. I would like to thank Okuma Fishing and Talon Custom Lures for making my job the blast that it is and 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."



Gilbert Little with David Ozio



Phil Hennigan with David Ozio



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## What to Look For (Continued from Page 17)

2-The Loon is diving repetitively in the same area and or returns to the area again and again (area is likely to have baitfish present) keep watching and begin dissecting the area as well.

3- The Loon dives and comes up with baitfish in its beak, swallows the baitfish then redives in the exact same area successfully finding bait with each dive. (You may have found a possible sweet hole). Try and use your imagination and look at this scenario similar to a deer feeder, where the food is, the deer come. By watching the loon closely a fisherman can really narrow down areas and make better decisions about where the big bait is therefore increase the odds of catching more and bigger bass. There are

many other important factors like matching the hatch size of bait, color, etc. to consider as well but remember the most important factor is always Location, Location, Location!!! If you would like to learn more about Lake Fork bass fish-

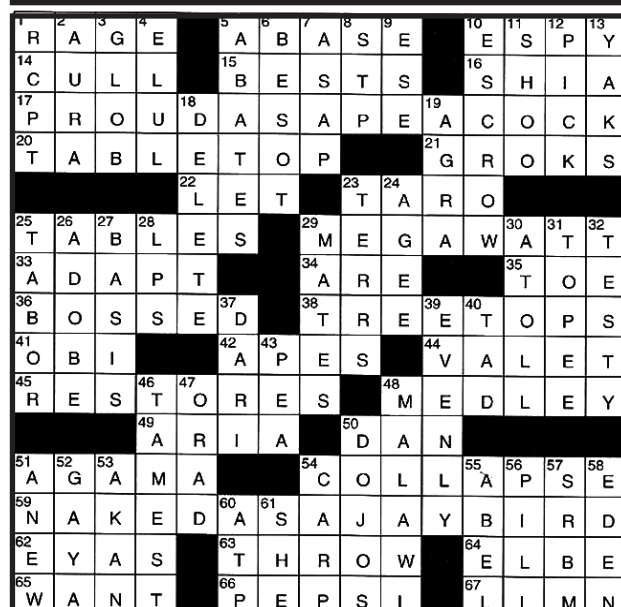
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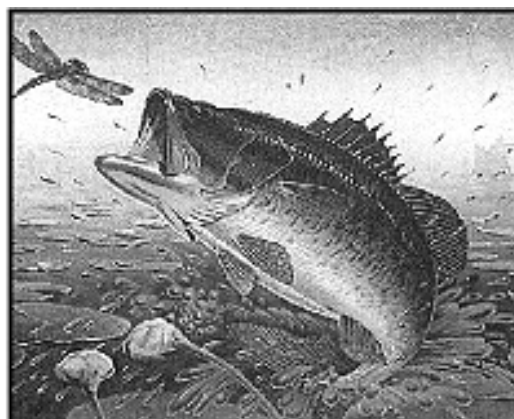
### Fruit Find

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

APPLE  
BLUEBERRY  
CURRANT  
GRAPE  
GRAPEFRUIT  
GUAVA  
HONEYDEW

KIWI  
LEMON  
MANGO  
ORANGE  
PAPAYA  
PEAR  
PINEAPPLE

A H O N Y T R F E P R G  
P O N E N O M E L P P A  
L N A E V L E N O A E V  
E E M L U E R A E P N A  
C Y A P L E B Y R A R U  
U D L P N A R R N Y S G  
E E P A U C U R R A N T  
P W E E G N O E A P P U  
A P A N Y A L B N A V R  
R A N I R R B E K I W F  
G R A P E F R U I T A P  
U A N E G M E L W Y R R  
V Y A P N I P B I E R G  
A L L E A R U L P A Y A  
O E M A R O G N A U M U  
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## Game Warden Field Notes

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

--Sting Operation--In August, a concerned citizen contacted Montgomery County game wardens regarding a neighbor keeping an alligator in his back yard. The wardens responded to the home where the alligator was reportedly kept. The homeowner admitted to capturing an alligator 4 or 5 feet in length from Lake Conroe, transporting it home to show his kids and then releasing it the next day. The

wardens inspected the property and noticed a room full of aquariums. Knowledgeable in aquatic species, one of the wardens identified the animals as freshwater stingrays, which are an invasive species and illegal to possess. Through further conversation, the homeowner also admitted to removing a small alligator snapping turtle from Lake Livingston and keeping it in a tank. As the largest freshwater turtle in North America and a threatened species, it is illegal to capture or possess one without a permit. After discussing the

matter with the homeowner, he agreed to assist game wardens in relocating the animals to better suited facilities. The turtle was donated to the Spring Creek Nature Center, which is permitted to possess native species and display them for educational purposes. The stingrays were transported to Moody Gardens to educate the public about different ecosystems and the harm that invasive species can cause to local wildlife.

--Perception Pays Off--The El Paso County Sheriff's Office Major Crimes Unit released

(Continued on Page 24)

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## Easy Ideas For 'Tasty' Holiday Gifts

By Sue Hampton

Even after weeks of shopping, when you get right down to it, often the most beloved gifts are the simple ones that come from the heart, and not always the most expensive. Looking for a fun, yet inexpensive gift with a personal touch this holiday season? Try this easy, edible cookie bowl...the perfect gift idea!

**Edible Cookie Bowl**



Unique, creative, delicious... this edible cookie bowl is the perfect gift idea for that special friend with a "sweet tooth." It also makes a great table centerpiece for festive get-togethers. Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays from our family to yours!

1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
 1/4 cup blanched, slivered almonds, finely ground  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter, softened  
 2/3 cup sugar  
 1 egg  
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 Assorted cookies

### MAKING THE BATTER

1. Cover the outside of a loaf pan with foil, spray with vegetable cooking spray.  
 2. In a medium bowl, combine flour, cocoa powder, almonds and salt. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer set on medium, beat butter, sugar, egg and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add flour mixture; beat until a dough forms, about 2 minutes.

### SHAPING THE COOKIE BOWL

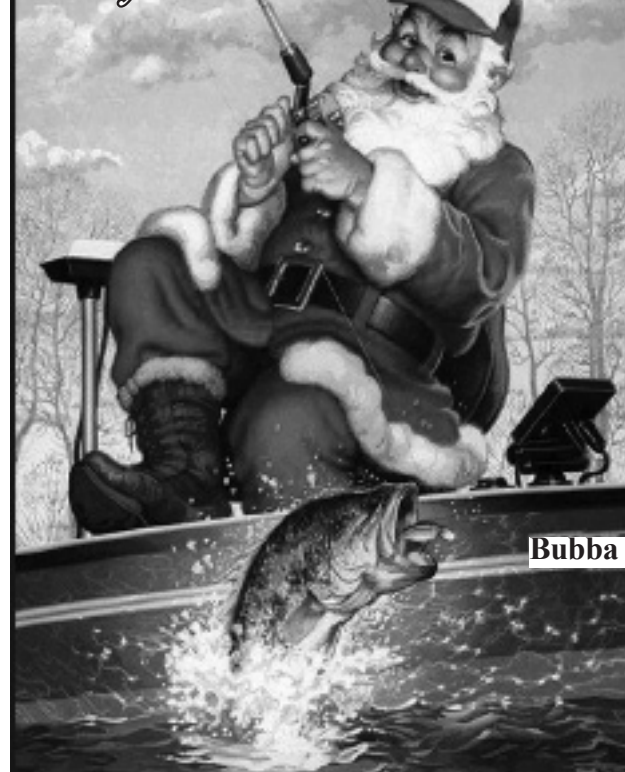
1. Preheat oven to 350F. Roll dough out to 1/8-inch thickness. Using a 1-1/2 inch cookie cutter with scalloped edges, cut out shapes.  
 2 Cover pan with cutouts, overlapping and pressing them slightly.

### BAKING THE COOKIE BOWL

1. Bake cookie bowl until edges are firm, about 15 minutes. Transfer pan to

a wire rack and cool completely.  
 2. To remove the cookie bowl, carefully lift it off the foil-lined loaf pan. Remove foil.  
 3. Arrange other cookies in the cookie bowl. Wrap in colorful cellophane paper and tie with ribbon.

*Bass Wishes To You And Yours Merry Christmas!!*



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# Game Warden Field Notes (Continued from Page 22)

a "Be on the Lookout" bulletin to assist in the identification of an individual and vehicle last seen leaving a crime scene in the San Elizario area. An El Paso/Hudspeth County game warden remembered the vehicle from a recent encounter with fishermen which resulted in the arrest of the individual. The warden contacted the lead investigator and passed along the identifying information. Several days later, El Paso County Sheriff's detectives notified the warden that without firm leads in the case, the information he shared with their office was vital in locating the subject and the vehicle. Due to his inter-agency collaboration, an arrest was carried out.

**--Hold the Pepper--** In September, a Bexar County game warden received a call from Austin communications about dove hunters peppering local residences with shotgun pellets. Upon arrival to the field, the warden observed two gentlemen hunting. As he drove up to the individuals, one of the gentlemen stood up and shot a bird that fell a few yards from him. The warden proceeded to complete a hunting check. He spoke with the individual and asked if he was aware of the type of bird he had just shot. The hunter did not know. The warden informed him that the bird was an American kestrel, a protected bird of prey, and is not allowed to be hunted or harvested. The warden checked the other hunters in the group and

discussed the issues around peppering, ensuring their shotgun pellets did not cross property lines. A citation was issued for harvesting a protected species. The case and civil restitution are pending.

**--Off the Road Again--** An Amarillo district game warden was patrolling in Potter County after dark when he was notified about an injured individual who had been "run over" by an all-terrain vehicle. The warden responded immediately. He found one adult male hit by an ATV and suffering non-life-threatening injuries to his legs. The victim and other eyewitnesses at the scene identified another adult male as the driver of the ATV. Upon speaking with the driver of the ATV, the warden noticed that he had heavily slurred speech patterns, glassy/bloodshot eyes, and the odor of alcohol emitting from his breath. The victim of the collision was transported to an Amarillo hospital. The driver of the ATV admitted hitting the victim with the ATV and was sub-

sequently arrested for driving while intoxicated and deadly conduct. The driver was booked into the Potter County Jail without incident.

**--Caught on Camera--** In September, a Tyler County game warden received information on individuals potentially participating in road hunting. The warden worked with a landowner setting up surveillance cameras in their field. Not long after he set up the monitoring system, he observed a slow-moving vehicle spotlighting and headed towards his location. The warden initiated a traffic stop, determining the subjects were hunting at night. Inside the vehicle, the warden located a loaded .22 long rifle. Additionally, the subject was a minor operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol. Charges are pending.

**--How Trashy--** In Nov., a Lubbock district game warden received a call about several illegally dumped sandhill cranes in a community dumpster. The Lubbock police department officer on

*(Continued on Next Page)*

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scene climbed into the dumpster to confirm that the birds were not breasted out and the warden responded to collect evidence and begin interviewing possible suspects and neighbors. The dumpster was next to a Texas Tech University fraternity and a large apartment complex. After interviewing multiple individuals, the suspect was discovered and admitted that he and his friend left the cranes in the back of his truck the day prior and thought that the temperature was too warm to keep the meat. Waste of game charges were filed on both individuals.

**--Two Hearts That Beat as One--** Anderson County game wardens were patrolling near Highway 155 for deer hunters. While traveling, the wardens noticed a freshly caped whitetail deer hide stretched and tacked on a 4x8 sheet of plywood and a gentleman observing it. After turning around to make an inspection, the gentleman and his wife both noticed the game wardens making an effort to approach their residence and left the scene. After further inspection, two undersized buck heads were found along with the deer hide. Time elapsed and after a brief wait, the female suspect returned to the scene. The wardens questioned her about the deer and the location of her husband. She stated that she dropped her husband off at work. After further investigation

the husband was located at the local Walmart and later returned to the scene. The husband admitted to killing a doe and said that his wife killed an illegal buck a few weeks prior. As for the other whitetail buck, the couple removed its head from the median of Highway 155. Multiple citations were issued including hunting under the license of another, allowing another to hunt under his/her license, and no hunting license. The case is still under investigation and pending.

**--See You Later--** In Nov., a Pecos County game warden acquired a search warrant for a residence in Fort Stockton that was known to have a live American alligator as well as other illegally obtained live species. Unfortunately, the resident of the house had moved out a week prior to another location in town. Left at the house were two ornate box turtles and one red-eared slider which were relocated at the request of the landlord. Later in the day, the wardens were able to meet with the suspect to conduct an interview. The suspect was asked to write and sign a statement about all the animals he has had, where he got them, how he got them, and where they are now. The written statement admitted that he had possessed an American alligator and other species but had released them a week ago near the road where he collected them. The suspect consented

to a search of his new residence to prove he no longer had any other animals. Citations issued, cases pending.

**--SnapTrap--** A Henderson County game warden received information from an individual who said he saw a Snapchat video of a young man shooting off the highway multiple times at night. After reviewing the video, the warden was able to obtain the shooter's name and location. Game wardens interviewed the individual who said that he was shooting at some pigs crossing the road and didn't know that the passenger was recording him with her phone. He was unaware it was going to be posted to social media. Cases pending.

**--Premature Celebration--** In Nov., a Red River County game warden was assisting a landowner in the evening when he heard what he believed to be duck hunters shooting well past legal hours. After relocating and talking to multiple deer hunters, the warden was able to locate a group of duck hunters celebrating their recent kill nearly 45 minutes after legal shooting hours. The five duck hunters killed a total of 21 ducks. Multiple citations were issued for hunting ducks after legal shooting hours and various other violations. Cases and civil restitution pending.

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