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ABOUT THE COVER

We located a school of snook with multiple specimens in the 30 to 40-inch range. The first day we had fourteen hookups, including five that we tagged for Harte Institute, none longer than 26-inches although several larger were seen. We accomplished 16 hookups the second day and tagged 4 more. Fishing without a charter on day three, I lucked into this beauty that measured 34-inches and weighed 13 pounds on a KWiggler Wig-A-Lo. Another tag and release for Harte Research Institute. -Capt. Wayne Davis

APRIL 2022
VOL 31 NO 12

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APRIL SURE GOT HERE QUICK!

Bay waters are warming and the fish are becoming more active, feeding for longer periods when weather and tides are favorable. Hopefully we will see only a few late-season northerns.

Anglers are reminded of the revision to speckled trout regulations enacted March 16, 2022 for middle and lower coast bays. The daily bag is reduced to three fish measuring 17 to 23-inches, with no fish longer than 23-inches. This action comes in response to last February's freeze and includes East Matagorda through the Lower Laguna until August 31, 2023. Galveston and Sabine are not included.

Oysters have been grabbing lots of headlines, with more likely to come as TPWD seeks to implement permanent closures in certain areas in order to conserve critical reef habitat from continued degradation.

Oyster abundance varies year to year depending water conditions and 2021 was not favorable with prolonged fresh-water inundation in middle-coast bays. The harvest season that traditionally runs November-thru-April was closed almost entirely by mid-January, due to scarcity of market-size oysters – an action TPWD deemed necessary to conserve habitat upon which oysters grow.

By the time you read this; TPWD commissioners will have decided whether to permanently close harvest in the Mesquite Bay Complex. Besides being a seafood delicacy, oysters serve many roles in estuarine ecology, too valuable to many commercially and recreationally important species to risk jeopardizing the benefit.

Great news for Texas anglers: The popular summer-long CCA STAR Tournament will be sporting a brand-new hybrid look for 2022, featuring the return of sheepshead and gafftop in the STAR Kids and STAR Teens divisions. A new black drum category has been added for adult anglers, while the "Clip the Tag" redfish divisions will include the release of 60 blue-tagged fish and 60 with red tags along the Texas coast, with great prizes to winners in each tagged-fish category.

Also of special importance, especially to families with youth anglers, is a restructuring of the STAR Scholarship Award Program. Originally created in 1995, when a STAR Scholarship would go a long way toward funding a four-year degree, the award structure has been updated to include accredited trade, technical, and vocational programs for winners who might not be interested in attending college or university.

STAR will again open during the Memorial Day weekend and continue until Labor Day. The way I see it, getting your family involved in fishing is one of the greatest ways to accomplish bonding and fellowship that will pay dividends for life, not to mention the possible benefit of a youth scholarship to help fund their education. Don't miss the opportunity, get them registered today!

Everett Johnson



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April Issue
Highlights

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Derrick Lens caught a few bonus reds while casting into dirty water streaks after a great morning of trout fishing!

How to Turn CHALLENGES INTO Success Stories

STORY BY STEVE HILLMAN

There are two months here along the Texas Coast that cause some folks to cringe every year when it comes to tricking speckled trout. This is especially true for those of us who choose to throw the counterfeit stuff at 'em. April seems to be the one most dreaded while September runs a close second. Both are commonly referred to as transitional months as noticeable changes are brought about by substantial temperature fluctuations when going from one season to the next. Some would also argue that March should be included as well and I'm inclined to agree depending upon weather patterns for that particular year. This seems to be especially true when it comes to trout fishing here in the Galveston Bay Complex.

Some of the most extreme changes take place this time of year affecting the behavior of our fish, particularly speckled trout. As cold fronts become less frequent, water temperatures rise sometimes 6 or 8 degrees in a matter of days. Then just when it seems that winter is over and done with a late front pushes through dropping temperatures again. Winds tend to blow hard from every direction. Tides can rise way above normal which can spread out the fish. This time of year can be filled with numerous challenges but we can actually turn them into success stories by understanding the seasonal behavioral patterns of the fish we target.

Strong easterly winds can create unpleasant fishing conditions if we intend to fish open bay reefs or other structure. However, fishing out in the middle shouldn't necessarily be our target area this time of year, especially early in the month. Easterly winds and higher than normal equinox tides tend to pull trout closer to shorelines. Barring too much north in the wind there are plenty of high percentage areas to jump out even in 20 mph winds in most of the bays along the Texas Coast. Furthermore, increased wind creates streaky water which helps us trick those finicky springtime trout.

Higher than usual tides also help us fish areas we wouldn't otherwise be able to target. Such areas may include spartina (cordgrass) shorelines

in back lakes, shallow oyster reefs, and other natural and man-made structure. One type of man-made structure that comes to mind here in Galveston Bay are some of the erosion control and marsh restoration "living shoreline" projects that currently span more than 20 miles of shoreline (www.galbay.org). We've caught some pretty impressive trout in recent years casting near revetment rocks along shorelines that may otherwise be too shallow to fish.

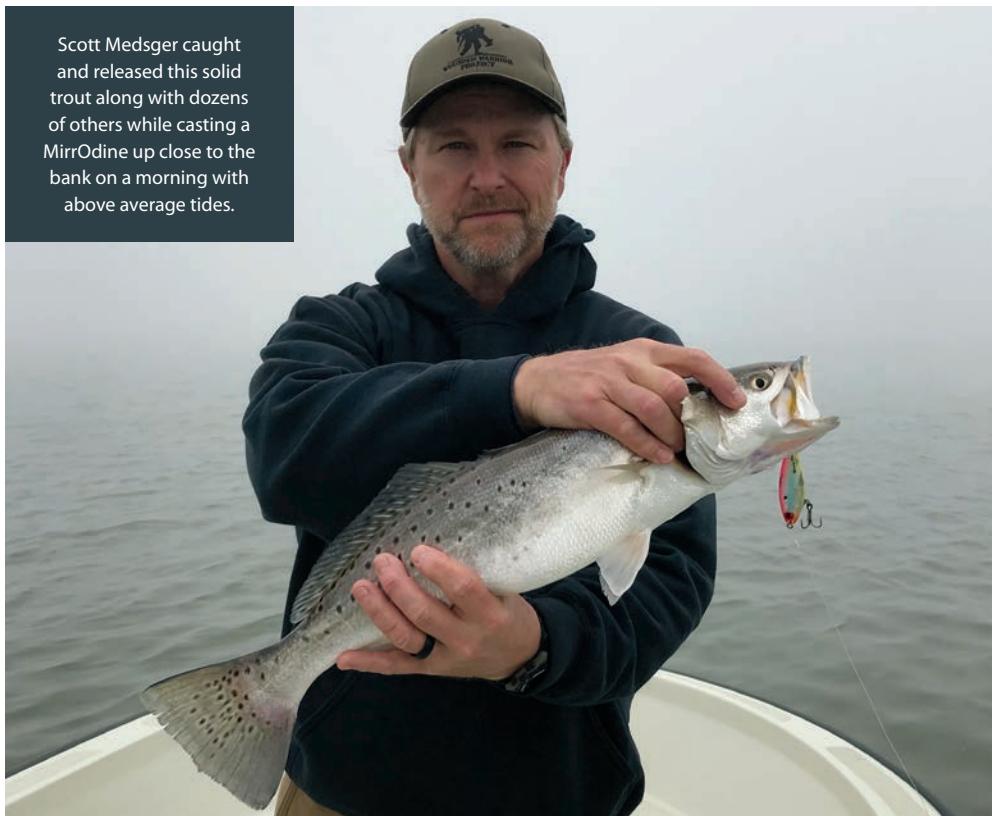
As mentioned, trout tend to become more dispersed during this seasonal transition. While this may be a disadvantage for catching high numbers of fish in a tight area there is a benefit. The warmer water temperatures that tend to scatter the trout also increases their metabolism. Obviously, with increased metabolism comes more frequent feeding. This is the good news. The sometimes not so good news is their food choices.

This is the time of year when billions of tiny shad and glass minnows are hatching and filling the water column. Trout and other predator fish will simply swim through clouds of these tiny morsels with their mouths open until they're content, sometimes making them extremely difficult to trick with artificial lures. There is a benefit, however, to what seems like yet another roadblock to a good catching experience.

These high lipid (fat) content shad that may be responsible for one of the most finicky bites of the year also help add weight and girth to trout that are already heavy because they still haven't lost their winter fat. Then there's the added bonus weight of roe as trout approach the beginning of their spawning season – April through September. For these reasons April can be a special time of the year for catching heavyweight trout. This can be especially true as a full moon approaches.

Shad offer another benefit when it comes to locating trout. When specks regurgitate after feeding upon these super oily menhaden they produce some of the most well-defined slicks of the year. Once they so generously show us where they are we have to find a way to trick these full-bellied, tiny morsel-eating specks. My good friend,

Scott Medsger caught and released this solid trout along with dozens of others while casting a MirrOdine up close to the bank on a morning with above average tides.

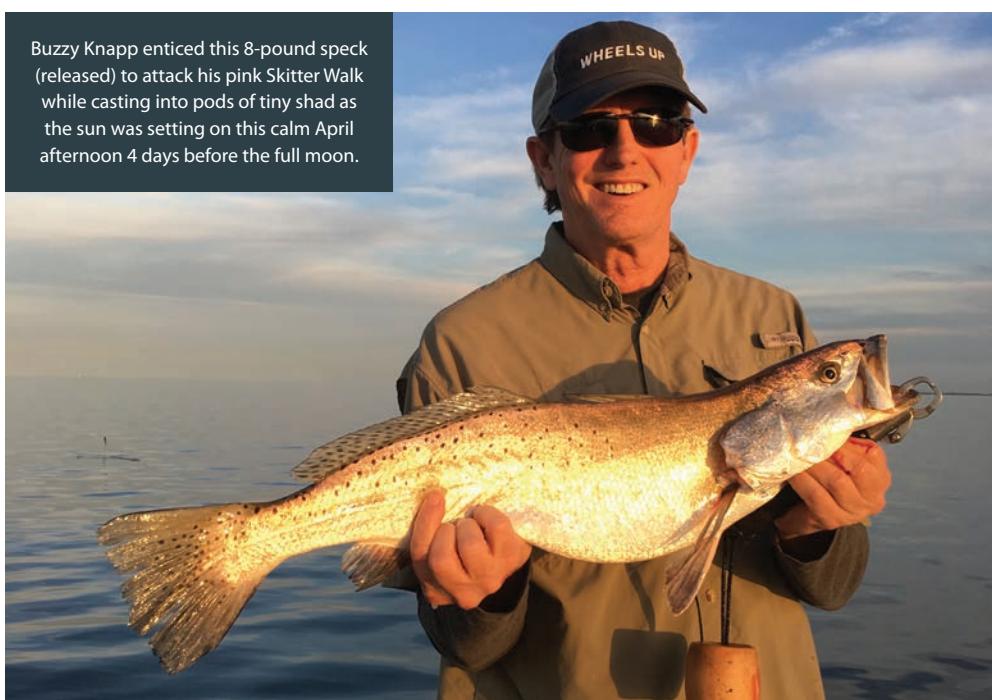


Captain Mickey Eastman, says that the best time to fool big trout this time of year is just before dark, especially leading up to the full moon, and I couldn't agree more. Lord knows he's caught his fair share of them through the years.

Not only is the timing imperative but lure choices are probably more important during this period than any other time of the year. I have two schools of thought on how to entice transitional trout and they are completely opposite of each other.

There are two characteristics possessed by springtime trout. One is that they are typically suspended in the water column. This is mainly because the prey upon which they are feeding is so small that it gets carried by the currents and wind. Opportunistic trout wait for the food to come to them as they wait with their mouths open without necessarily singling out any one target in particular. The other characteristic is that they spend a great deal of time in a negative feeding pattern. Because

Buzzy Knapp enticed this 8-pound speck (released) to attack his pink Skitter Walk while casting into pods of tiny shad as the sun was setting on this calm April afternoon 4 days before the full moon.



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of these two factors I've had great success using baits that stay in the strike zone longer than say a soft plastic rigged on a 1/4 or 3/8 ounce jig head. MirrOlure Lil Johns, Provokers and Saltwater Assassins rigged on 1/16 ounce lead heads work really well for suspended tough-to-trick trout.

Another advantage of throwing a soft plastic is that we can cover a lot of water, thus hitting more of those scattered fish on the head. The more natural the presentation the better. If the lure sinks straight to the bottom then our chances of getting bit are far less. Using braided line also helps keep our baits suspended because of its slower sink rate. I also believe in using a fairly long (4-6 feet) 20-pound fluorocarbon leader for its invisible properties and abrasion resistance. Seaguar Gold label is my preference because it's smaller diameter than other brands and it has very little memory so it never ends up looking like a Slinky. One thing I might add is that 20-pound test is plenty – 15-pound would even be enough. 30-pound is overkill in my opinion as it does not allow for as natural a presentation.

My other strategy is more of the bull in the china cabinet variety. Like most predator fish, trout are reaction feeders. Because of this, high-pitched topwaters such as MirrOlure She Dogs and Rapala Skitter Walks can draw reaction strikes even from the most stubborn ones. We've had times when our hook-up to blow-up ratio wasn't all that impressive but at least we knew the fish were there. From that point



Haley Mathews was able to trick this beautiful 8lb. 5oz. trout (released) on a limetreuse Saltwater Assassin Sea Shad one day before an April full moon while casting near submerged rocks next to the shoreline.



Jake White was able to anger this chunky red with a high-pitch topwater (Skitter Walk) on a morning when nothing really wanted to feed.

we'd experiment with floating and subsurface twitchbaits such as the Double Ds and Barboleta Lele. More often than not we could figure out a way to catch enough of them to justify standing there.

As I mentioned earlier April trout patterns can change in a matter of days, and sometimes even over the course of the same day. All types of structure and bottom habitat can come into play. During cooler weather stretches trout will hang close to shell and softer bottom areas, especially near deeper guts. Warmer periods and higher tides may push them into sand-bottomed coves and tight to cordgrass-lined shorelines. Regardless of location, focal points should be where all or some of the following signs are present: bait, slicks, birds, and color streaks.

By learning to take what many consider challenges of April and using them to our benefit we can not only maximize our opportunities but maybe even latch on to one of those hefty pre-spawn sows we all dream about.

Good Luck! 



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Steve Hillman is a full-time fishing guide on his home waters of Galveston Bay. Steve fishes the entire Galveston Bay Complex, wading and drifting for trout, redfish, and flounder using artificial lures.

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Lessons IN THE



Lagging

STORY BY
KEVIN COCHRAN

Ibought the swine from my granddad after he made some cash selling pigs thrown by two sows he kept in a pen on our property. At the time, I lived with my parents at the family homestead in Leon County, while pursuing a teaching certificate at Sam Houston State University. My folks had moved from the big city to the country, in search of a quiet life.

Dad and I built a pen for my sows, which I named Weezy and Helen. Somewhat crudely constructed by men who'd lived most of their lives in Houston and its suburbs, the enclosure did work to keep the animals captive. We rotated three buckets of souring wheat shorts on the back porch at all times, since each took a couple days to ripen. A wooden chute on the fence closest to the house allowed us to pour the mash into a trough for the ever hungry beasts.

The first time I went to the tiny town of Flynn to buy a sack of feed, I had a strange conversation with the lady who ran the store. "Why'd you put that hog pen so close to your mamma's back door?" she asked me in a condescending tone, staring at me with derision. I could tell she harbored no love for outsiders, especially city folks.

I wasn't previously aware the woman knew about our new hog farming venture. "What are you talking about?" I asked her. "We put it pretty far out there."

With a deep sigh, she looked down at the money I'd placed on the counter. While processing the transaction, she claimed, "Your mamma ain't gonna like the mess." Her head shook from side to side as she handed me my change and we made eye contact again.

I didn't appreciate a stranger being so nosy, but I didn't really know what to say, so I just took my money, picked up the sack and left. "That lady needs to mind her own business," I mumbled to myself as I cranked up my old Cutlass.

I fed those pigs every day while I lived at Mom and Dad's place; in mere months, both blew up like balloons, into big fat hogs. We bred them with Granddad's boar, and soon enough, we had fourteen little piglets in our pen. By then, the hog's home had evolved into a mushy mud hole with a distinctly sweet and sour odor. Time came for me to move to Huntsville to finish my work at the University.

No more than ten days after I left my parent's place, Mom called on the phone. We had a short, pointed conversation; mostly, I listened. "You need to come up here and help Dad load these animals in the trailer. They got to go. All of 'em. I want this stinkin' mess out of my yard."

I knew better than to argue, so I agreed to drive there and help dad load Weezy, Helen and their offspring into the trailer, so we could take them to the market and end our short-lived stint in the hog raising business. When I pulled off the highway into their front yard, I could see Dad had started the process of loading the livestock without me.

Before I could even don my mud boots and start trying to help him, Mom came storming out the back door, her face flushed, the veins in her neck bulging and pulsing. "Kenneth, that is NOT going to work. You need to figure out some other plan."

"Trish, go back in the house. I told you I'd take care of this. Just stay out of the way," Dad said from where he stood, leaning on a shovel, ankle deep in shiny hog pen mud. He addressed me after Mom whirled around and left, slamming the back door behind her. "Get that rake over there. They're kinda quick. They keep jumpin' around me when I try to force 'em into the trailer."

I noticed he'd already caught all the piglets and placed them in a wire cage. I then assessed the rest of his plan. He'd backed the trailer up to the gate of the pen and opened both, to create a kind of funnel. By walking toward the two hogs, we would get them started moving, convince them to circle the perimeter of the pen, so they would eventually arrive at the open door of the trailer and jump in. Plan seemed logical and easy enough, that is, until we tried to execute it.

Weezy and Helen had no way of knowing where we intended to take them, but they knew they didn't want to go. Time after time, the savvy sows cooperated fully with our desire to make them move a certain direction, until they came to the trailer. Then, they turned to face us, juked left and right until they had us off balance, then sprinted past us into the center of the pen, forcing us to start the process over again. This they accomplished despite our heroic efforts, waving the shovel and rake at them. Our sweat poured into the mud, adding salt to its pungent perfume.

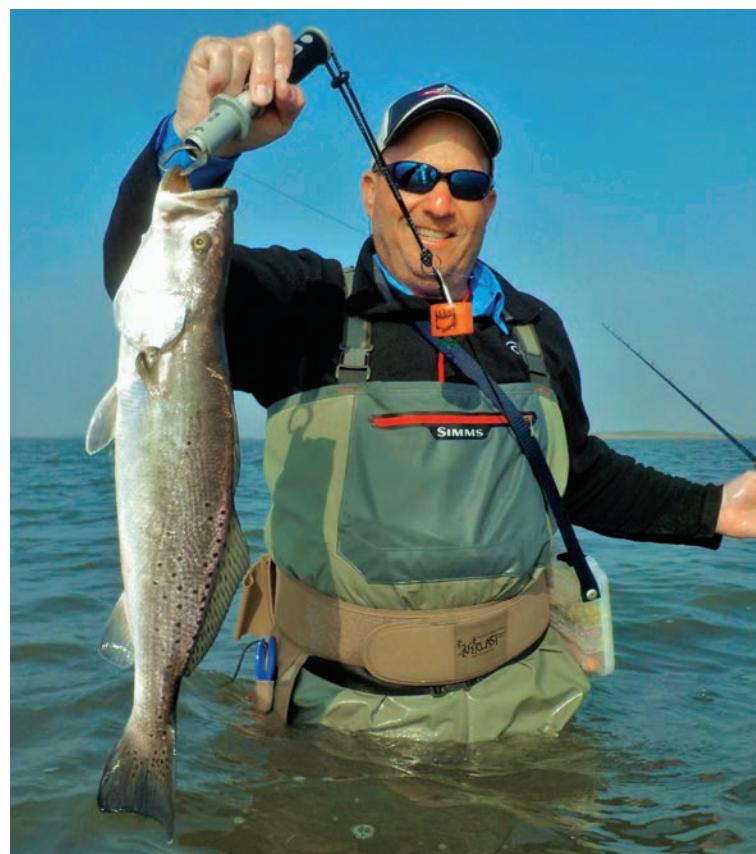
Eventually, Dad and I became winded, and I started laughing.

"They're fat, and it don't seem like they would be, but they're quick!" Dad didn't seem to share my amusement. About that time, the back door opened again, and Mom walked out, more calmly this time. Dad met her at the fence separating the yard from the pen, as though she had summoned him. There, they faced off.

"Go get the deer rifle and shoot 'em," she said, through clenched teeth.



Captain Kev with an 8.5-pound trout caught on a cool April day a few years ago.



Scott Benzman caught the biggest fish on a recent day when the group with the captain caught well over 100 trout.



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Dad's chin dropped to his chest; I could see he might indeed do what she wanted.

I had to intervene, so I said, "No, Mom, we're not gonna shoot 'em. How would we even get 'em out of the pen if we did? Just go back inside. We'll figure it out."

"This just burns me up! Get those filthy animals outta here!" she yelled, making a sharp upward gesture with her right arm as she whirled around and stomped away. As luck would have it, my grandmother pulled up in the driveway right then.

I greeted the family matriarch, "Hey Nanny. Us city folk ain't havin' such an easy time loadin' these hogs."

Nanny chuckled and sat down on a lawn chair to "supervise."

I took a moment to reassess the situation. Weezy and Helen looked pretty fresh, despite the calisthenics. Dad and I did not; the reeking mud had migrated up our pants' legs, threatening to merge with the sweat on our shirts. We turned back into the pen, got the hogs going again, herded them to the back of the trailer and failed once more to force them to jump in. The end of the process resembled a drill at a high school football practice, with fakes and starts and quick changes of direction, all accompanied by snorts and squeals and the sounds of squishing mud. The swine triumphed because hogs have much better moves than wanna be hog farmers.

Nanny watched us for a few minutes, as we started again. Then she called time out. "Son," she said, pointing with her walking stick, "take one of them little ones outta the cage." While I caught a piglet, she turned to my dad and said, "Kenneth, back away from the gate."

Dad had too little energy left to ask why. He just moved.

When I had one of the little piggies in my hands, Nanny pointed at the front of the trailer, "Take it over there." I did what she said.

She turned and directed my dad, "Kenneth. Be ready to close the trailer gate once they go in." Then the old country queen made a circling motion with her cane and said, "Flip it upside down."

When I did, the squirming critter in my hands screamed like a banshee in a B-grade horror movie. Weezy and Helen raced across the pen, leaped into the trailer, and rushed to its front so fast they crashed in a pile on top of each other, mere feet from where I stood with the squealing piglet. Casually, Dad strode over and clamped the back door of the trailer shut, almost triumphantly, as if taking credit for the win.

The two agitated sows stood on their hind legs and stuck their snouts through the sides of the trailer, snorting and growling at me. I flipped the piglet back over, and it stopped screaming. By the time I put it back into the pen, the two hogs realized the mistake they'd made, also that they could not correct it. We had them where we needed them.

"How'd you know to do that?" I asked Nanny.

She chuckled, "Heh heh! Maybe some things are easier to see from this side of the fence."



Bob Cromwell caught this handsome trout on a Paul Brown Fat Boy while fishing with the captain recently.

Mom came out the back door and stood on the porch, beaming from ear to ear.

The events of this narrative might seem irrelevant on the pages of this publication. For me, this isn't the case. I glean at least three pertinent lessons from the story of how two city slickers managed to make a muddy exit from the hog farming business that day. One relates to the need to recognize a bad plan sooner than later.

When an angler tries something enough times without any success, said person should change the plan in some significant way. This might mean changing locations, tactics, lures, or presentations. Continuing to do something unproductive and expecting the outcome to change devolves into a form of insanity. Some might certainly find such a crazy scenario amusing, but in the end, it's just sad and stupid.

Another lesson I take away from the tragicomedy which unfolded in a county with more cows than people relates to the willingness of folks with more experience at something to give advice to those with less. When an experienced angler sees someone in the group doing something unlikely to produce desired results, the

more experienced one should offer helpful advice to the other.

And when someone who has ample knowledge of something suggests changing a plan to a beginner or novice, following the instruction makes more sense than sticking with what isn't working. Surely, some of my fellow fishing guides can relate to this. Maybe because some things are just easier to see from where we stand. 

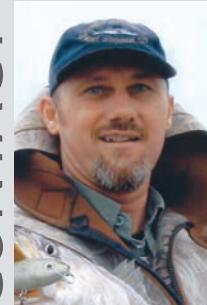


VIEW THE VIDEO

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Choosing color in low light conditions

KEVIN COCHRAN



CONTACT

Kevin Cochran is a full-time fishing guide at Corpus Christi (Padre Island), TX. Kevin is a speckled trout fanatic and has created several books and dvds on the subject. Kevin's home waters stretch from Corpus Christi Bay to the Land Cut.

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When you no longer get excited about catching fish or sharing the experience it's time to find something else to do.

PERSPECTIVE

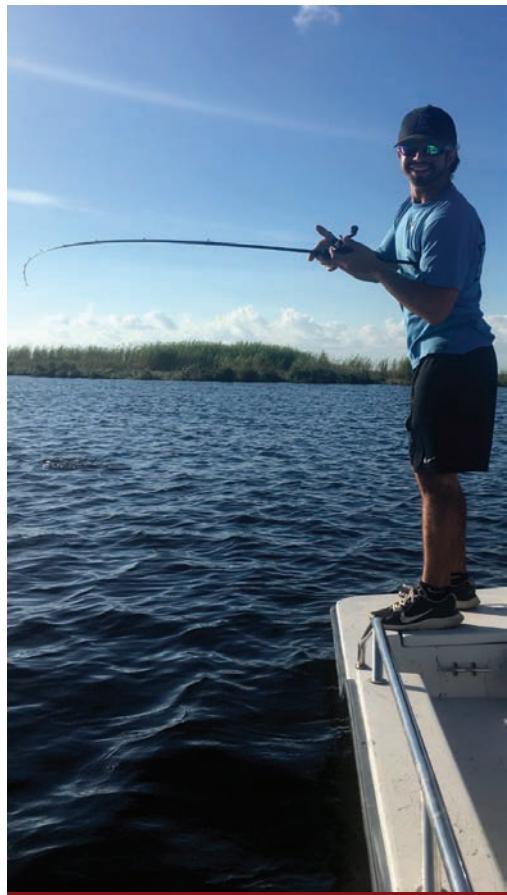
STORY BY CHUCK UZZLE

I have always held a belief that everyone, at some point in their life, should work in a service industry, if for nothing else than just for the lessons that can be learned. Being a fishing guide is no different. You are a service oriented business and the best customers are happy customers. Easily, most of the best advice regarding fishing, guiding or just angling in general, came from my long time mentor and friend, Dickie Colburn. Perhaps one of the most influential bits of advice he shared with me was, "You have to treat every day on the water with a client as their special day because tomorrow they will go back to their life and you will be back out here on the water. You may not remember that trip in five years, but they will. So keep that in perspective."

I think about those words often and time after time they ring true. Too many of us, myself included, get complacent about the sport in one way or another. I think to myself every time I see a post on social media about a trout or redfish from another state or bay being classified as a "trophy" while the same fish would likely be dismissed as merely a "solid" in other places by other anglers. It's a shame when this happens because it inevitably turns into a chest-thumping session where nothing good ever comes of it. Maintaining a healthy appreciation for the fish and keeping complacency out of the picture sets a great example for other fishermen to follow. For years I have told my clients that the day I do not get excited about a quality fish is the day I need to sell my boat.

Another example of perspective that comes to mind often revolves around water clarity. On the upper coast our definition of good water is very different than that of our friends to the south. On occasion I get folks who frequent the bays on the lower coast and one of the first things they get nervous about is water clarity. A common question when they first see our water is, "How in the world are we gonna catch fish in that stuff?" I can completely understand where their questions come from when you compare the water they normally fish to ours, it's night and day most of the time. Upper coast fishermen are perfectly fine with less than a foot of visibility while most lower coast folks wouldn't dream of wetting a hook in such nasty stuff. Again, it's all about perspective and neither side is really wrong or right because each one has valid points and concerns.

Speaking of off-colored water, I got a fantastic lesson one day from a client who helped me put water clarity in a better perspective. While making some long drifts in some deeper water along the east side of Sabine Lake, I made the comment that perhaps we should look for some better water after our bite slowed down. My customer, who was a commercial lake and pond manager, asked me what I didn't like about the water we were fishing as he knelt



Bent rods always produce the biggest smiles.



Sabine water clarity has not been an issue the past several months.



While we're praying for a big recovery of Sabine's trout fishery, solid redfish like these caught by Bryan Burtsfield lead the charge into spring.

and filled an empty water bottle from the lake. I told him the visibility was bad and waited to see what he might say. He held the bottle up to the sunlight and said, "Look through this water instead of looking at it – the way a fish does. It's not nearly as bad as you think." I was blown away when I considered the clarity in those terms. An eye-opener for sure. He went on to explain several scientific factors that contribute to this way of thinking such as sunlight reflection, turbidity, as well as others that supported his point. With a sly smile he announced, "Off-colored water scares away more fishermen than fish." That lesson has served me well ever since.

As for right now, and for trying to put things in perspective here on Sabine and Calcasieu, I can say we've had a very angler-friendly winter and early spring. I know just as soon as this goes to print we will catch another freak of nature ultra-polar ice or snow storm, but for the time being we have dodged the winter bullet. The current water conditions couldn't be much better on both bays and the outlook for this month just continues to get better.

Most fishermen are currently focusing on one of three programs. First is the deep water bite over shell along the channels. Soft plastics in 4" models fished on the lightest jigs you can stand is a solid spring pattern. Option two would be redfish along the shorelines and near the marsh drains during tide changes. Small crankbaits and swimbaits are top choices. Last, but certainly not least, is the hunt for big trout. So far I haven't seen or heard of any really big trout, meaning 7 pounds or better, but I cannot believe that trend will continue. The water conditions and warmer temperatures will certainly kickstart those

bigger fish into more activity and that will mean more big bites for those willing to chase them.

I truly hope that this spring will see Sabine finally turning the corner and transforming back into something resembling what it once was. The last several years have been mighty tough on both Sabine and Calcasieu but the immediate future looks brighter than it has for quite some time. I know I'll be happy with any type of positive progress. Get out there and enjoy it, and take a kid fishing! 🐟



VIEW THE VIDEO

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Springtime Lure Tips

CHUCK UZZLE



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Chuck fishes Sabine and Calcasieu Lakes from his home in Orange, TX. His specialties are light tackle and fly fishing for trout, reds, and flounder.

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Poling a boat ranks high at covering acres of water, with minimal sound.

Boat Noise

STORY BY JOE RICHARD



The relationship between saltwater fish and underwater noise is complicated. Some fish spook easier than others and, depending on location and water depth, other fish are actually attracted to sound. Knowing the difference can go a long way toward a successful day of fishing.

Tripletail, for example, are on the shy side. I learned this the hard way after spotting several in the waves, turned the boat around and tried to approach from downwind. They were completely spooked by waves slapping under the bow, and wisely disappeared. Ideally we would have had calm water and an electric motor, to stalk tasty tripletail. Once they spook into the depths, they're gone for good.

At the opposite end of the spectrum: when we first started fishing for ling, we always heard you should slap the water with a paddle, circle the oil rig, gun the motor in neutral, and generally put up a ruckus that would attract these curious fish. And it sometimes worked, though I'm not so sure today, when a much smaller population of ling may have learned to avoid boat noise. As we observed while diving the rigs for many years, they don't seem to mind rig-noise, with that loud airhorn sounding off every 20-30 seconds some five stories above. That noise punishes fishermen more than fish.

Further out in the open Gulf with a vast expanses of quiet, blue water, boat noise actually *attracts* pelagic fish. How else to explain the many years of angler success at trolling up marlin, sailfish, mahi, wahoo and tuna? Some boats are said to be better fish attractors than others, because each has its own engine and hull vibration.

Opposite of that, I think shallow water bay fish are the most noise-wary. Burning a shoreline with the boat will send fish sprinting up to 100 yards out in the bay; they won't put up with that. That's why you see the silent poling with a long stick like skiff guides use, especially for ultra-wary bonefish. A long pole has many advantages, and their silence (if you can avoid thumping the gunnel) is often the key to a great day on the water.

The following observations are from years of noticing the affects of sound on various species of fish and their habitats. There are all sorts of ways of sneaking up on noise-wary fish, including wading, walking the jetties, surf fishing, kayaking, electric motors, or tying the boat to offshore oil rigs and sitting quiet.

I've fished several boathouses on the bays either with or without a howling diesel generator, and certainly did better without the noise, at least during daylight hours. (Plenty of slot-sized redfish). Where it was quiet enough to hear sheepshead tugging and splashing beneath the planks. At night with lights attracting, the fish behave differently, with smaller trout and ladyfish content to put up with the noise and vibration, as long as passing, tasty baitfish and shrimp do the same.

Walking the jetties is about as quiet as it gets, either by hiking from shore or anchoring the boat and climbing onto the rocks, which we did for countless summer afternoons. Sometimes we even anchored the boat and *swam* to the rocks when waves and wind weren't right. In that regard we were true jetty rats. Those trout and redfish and countless sheepshead had no clue we were standing right over them, watching them swim by. We could walk and sling spoons all day, and the fish never heard a sound from us, not even a landing net. Those fish weren't exactly gun-shy, since they put up with daily ship and boat traffic. They were quite the opposite of tailing redfish or trophy trout in some placid, backwater pond in the salt marsh.

As mentioned, wave slap on a boat hull can be a problem. Big trout on expansive, open flats can somehow detect a boat quietly drifting sideways or being poled. Near South Padre Island, drifting in a light breeze, we'd spot big trout leaving the scene some 50 yards downwind, pushing a v-wake like a shark, another sow trout headed for deeper

water. It was frustrating, too. We finally caught one on a long cast, a 28-inch sow soon released. You can bet those big trout haven't survived for so long, dodging boats and hooks for what, ten years without learning a few smarts. A trout of 28 inches takes ten years to grow that big, according to the TP&W growth chart.

In the bays I still anchor the boat manually, often by the stern, which is more work than the boats with stern-mounted Power Poles. I may have the quieter edge in wave-slap noise, because a boat bobs and tilts when anchored, while power poles hold each boat more rigidly. Maybe those two techniques are too close to matter, noise-wise, and only a big trout could tell us, if only they could talk. With an anchor in



In shallow water with cruel oyster reefs favored by black drum, an inexpensive kayak is the best option.



Nobody ever accused kayaks of being loud. These tarpon don't seem to mind.

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the wind, sometimes I get a little water over the transom, and a salty splash on the stern reels, preferably avoided when possible. My favorite trick, mentioned here before, is to park snug against a high-tide shoreline, anchored amidships. Or by the bow and stern with two anchors, if wind and current are a problem. That way we can fire a broadside of baits and spoons way out there, with zero boat noise. We've found that 8-foot spin rods are ideal; they throw farther and never really backlash. You need only one ounce of lead to deliver a bait a long ways, when using 12-pound line. The boat sits quiet as a church mouse, and those fish 30-35 yards away, once again, have no clue. Several times, I've tried anchoring out from shore there, to shorten our casts, but we never got a bite.

Not sure about electric motors or their pitch of sound, (probably high) but some fish might be wary of it. I know low-frequency sound carries in the water as a distress signal, like a croaker or pigfish will make. Sharks are certainly attracted to low frequency vibrations, even explosions. (Bad news for many during WWII).

Some of today's bay boats have expensive sound systems with thumping bass, and I'm not sure how that affects their catches. Surely the fish hear it; that thumping carries a long ways. I don't play loud music while fishing shallow bays, not even ACDC that has became so popular with the big POC boats, audible for a half mile. Yes, we all miss Bon Scott, but most of us prefer quiet on the bays while escaping stress back on shore. Slamming boat lids in the boat is a no-no, of course. Even offshore, I couldn't tolerate that uncalled-for noise when we were anchored and fishing for tournament kingfish. Many kings are caught while trolling, but about 90 percent of our tournament winners happened while the boat was anchored silent or tied to an oil rig. Not trolling. Big kings are not exactly ocean wanderers, they live on the coastal shelf where boat traffic is more common. From 10 to 15 years and older, big kings have seen plenty of hooks and boats.

A few final tips: think about the extra noise, when shifting gears. I was snorkeling inside a rig one day and another boat approached to tie up. Every time they shifted gears, hundreds of fish inside the rig within 20 feet of the surface would all bolt several feet, before settling down again. The noise was very distinct, a loud "clunk" over the engine noise. To this day, that's why I never shift gear when approaching a honeyhole; instead I cut the motor while still in forward gear and coast in to anchor. Preferably from upwind, though that's not always possible.

I've also shortened my anchor chain to three feet, for less rattle on the gunnel. You don't need six feet of chain when fishing shallow water. I drive from the back of the boat, so anchoring by the stern saves me from climbing over people to drop the bow anchor. Another advantage: Unseasoned anglers have been known to rattle the anchor chain something terrible. Or worse, heave the anchor out there with a hearty splash, making me wince. I'm thinking stealth, while they're thinking, *Heave ho, me hearties!*



Author landing a Port Aransas trout. Jetty fish have no clue that spoon-tossing anglers are walking close by.



In shallow water with cruel oyster reefs favored by black drum, an inexpensive kayak is the best option.

CONTACT



JOE RICHARD

Joe Richard has fished the Gulf since 1967, starting out of Port Arthur, but his adventures have taken him up and down the entire coast. He was the editor of Tide magazine for eight years, and later Florida Sportsman's book and assistant magazine editor. He began guiding out of Port O'Connor in 1994. His specialty is big kingfish, and his latest book is *The Kingfish Bible, New Revelations*. Available at Seafavorites.com



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JAY WATKINS
ASK THE PRO

TAKING IT TO THE MATS!

This month I want to talk about sight-fishing. Not actually casting to a certain fish, but to a specific type of structure. We can all relate to targeting specific areas of bottom structure and then focusing our casts to those specific areas. The types of bottom structure will vary depending on where you're fishing. In many areas of the Middle Coast where I fish the majority of my days, I have the luxury of fishing multiple types of bottom structure each day and sometimes even during each wade. The more standard types of bottom structure are oyster reefs, submerged grassbeds, potholes, shoreline guts, drains or creeks, and shoreline drop-offs.

One of the most overlooked types of structure are areas of floating or suspended algae mats. These mats are actually forms of brown algae called DRIFT ALGAE. In the Upper Laguna, these forms of algae actually form temporary small islands. The algae that is actually attached to the bottom and commonly attached to oyster shell is called grassalaria. The wind moves these floating grass mats, if that is really what they are. Floating seagrasses of other types collect and stack around the edges and increase the size of the mat over time. During strong winds; both from the SE or NE, these mats will roll in the direction the wind pushes them.

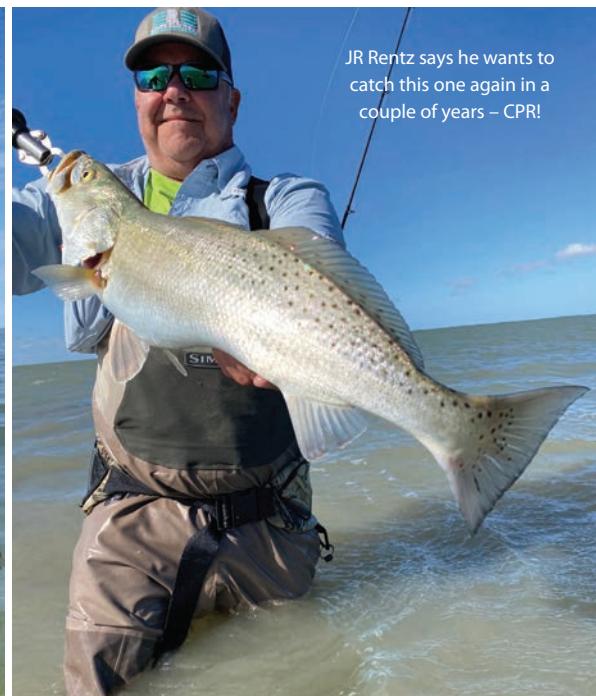
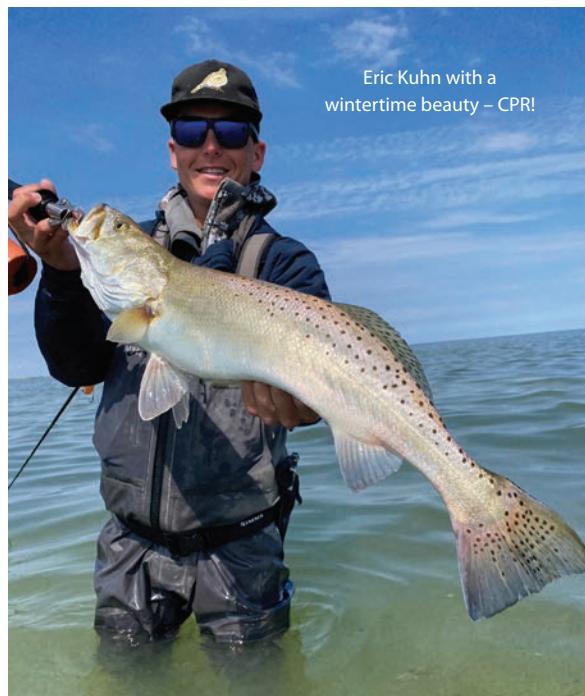
There's also a stringy, brown algae that fouls our lures and is much harder to fish. So, it's true algae, not grass. Thanks for the insight, Dr. Greg Stunz. I started fishing him many years ago and he always answers

my questions without hesitation, and even a certain amount of excitement it seems. Texas is lucky to have the entire crew at the Harte Institute and Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi.

Over the last couple of days I have seen a growing number of algae mats and when I get in close and start looking carefully I find that these mats are loaded with small fish and crabs. Obviously, there are also smaller organisms, even microscopic, that contribute in their own way to the food chain. Our approach to these areas must be slow and stealthy; fan-casting as we inch forward, never closer than we can present a lure accurately on a long cast. I actually suggest stopping after a few casts and observing the water around you; giving the area time to settle.

Many times in the shallow water fisheries along the middle to lower coast we see a shut down after stopping and getting out of the boat. Our fish are way more educated today than they ever have been when it comes to boat and fishing pressure. If fish did not have the capability of adjusting to change, there would probably be way fewer of them.

Smart might not be the proper word, maybe more aware of their surroundings would be better. I know I have definitely seen a change in the way they react to our presence in my career. With that said, we have to be in stealth mode more often than not, which is a problem for many. Stomping around in softer bottom and



Never Use Non-Gulf Shrimp as Bait in Texas



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If you use imported shrimp as bait, you could be introducing one of several deadly viruses to native shrimp, crab and crayfish populations. Many of these viruses—like the white-spot syndrome virus—can survive the freezing process and do not die when the imported shrimp is packaged. Though not harmful to humans, if a virus is introduced, native shrimp, crab and crayfish populations could quickly die which would have devastating consequences for the entire ecosystem and the Gulf shrimp food industry.



Photo: Dr. Lightner

What is imported shrimp?

Imported shrimp includes all shrimp species not native to the Gulf of Mexico, like shrimp from other countries and non-Gulf states.



The most common imported shrimp species is the Pacific white shrimp which is found in food stores.

Is it against the law?

Yes. Introducing imported or non-native shrimp to the aquatic environment is illegal under Texas law, regardless of whether it is alive or dead, whole or in pieces.

How do I know if shrimp is native to the Gulf of Mexico?

If you're buying bait shrimp, ask if its Gulf shrimp. Common shrimp species native to the Gulf of Mexico include pink shrimp, white shrimp, brown shrimp and mantis shrimp or sea lice. You can also check the label of frozen packaged shrimp for place of origin. If shrimp is not from the Gulf of Mexico, then it is illegal to use it as bait.

Where can I learn more?

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stepping forward or to the side with every cast creates noise and makes the fish aware that we have entered the area.

I don't believe noise above the water spooks them nearly as much. If it did I would have ended up in some other career long ago. I do however believe that on extremely calm days, fish in very shallow and clear water can be spooked by normal voice tones. At the first sign of a fish being present I tell my guys to stop and work the area that is offshore of the mat itself. I believe that fish will stage offshore of the mat when they are not actively hunting. And yes, I think we can sometimes get fish to eat when they are not actively feeding. This can be especially true when there are significant numbers of fish staged offshore of a feeding zone.

When fish are actively feeding, I like the windward sides and points versus the leeward (downwind) sides. I once believed that fish circled the mats but further observation has led me to a stronger notion that they move up and down the windward side or from point to point.

The algae mats form very distinct walls that begin on the bottom and extend upward to the surface, much of the time. This type of formation requires accurate casts and the ability of the angler to allow the lure to fall straight down the windward face of the mat. Many times the bite comes just before you decide to lift the rod tip to impart action to the lure. The fish are focused on looking into the edges of the mat and along the face.

These mats actually move or roll along during periods of high wind. Wind will cause the size of the mats to grow as it stacks free-floating algae and grass along the edges.

Given a choice, I prefer the smaller mats for the higher percentage of success I seem to achieve there.

These unique areas of structure are more likely to appear during months with cooler water temperatures. The warmer waters of late-spring and summer are not favorable for this type of algae. I definitely recommend planning your day around working these areas during solunar feeding periods, but I have to say I also have confidence in working these areas between feeding periods, provided that you keep your distance and fish in stealth mode. The smallness of the structure attracts me mentally. I just feel that smaller structures concentrate predators. This can be especially true if the smaller structures are scattered throughout larger expanses of water where bottom structure is limited. I try not to overthink things when conditions and feeding tables are not favorable.

I don't really have a favorite lure for these areas. Everything I have in my wade box will work. In many cases I will swim or short twitch a Texas Double D, Custom Corky Fat Boy, or Soft-Dine along the edges of the mat allowing the bait to swim for short distances and



Author with one of three on the same wade that weighed more than six pounds – CPR!



Directly in front of the bow is a floating algae bed.

then slowly rise or fall through the strike zone. Recently, during a period of slack wind with low tide and between solunar feeds, I noticed small pinfish umbrella out of the water around one particular mat. As I moved into casting range I began seeing very small pushes (surface bulges) as the pinfish breached. A quick cast to the area along a windward wall was met with an instant take from a 4-pound trout. A few minutes later the pinfish rose again and small pushes were observed. A short pitch to the area and another even better trout was up and shaking on the surface against my drag. Over the next hour- to hour-and-a-half we sight-casted to the perch as they came to the surface and fish were caught almost instantly every time. The Double D worked very well, probably because its profile mimicked the pinfish so well.

Looking back, it was uncommon to see pinfish this active in the winter months. Guess I don't know what I thought I knew about pinfish not being readily available in winter on the flats. I see this in the spring and summer months when targeting redfish and this pattern has actually won me and the boys some serious cash and boat prizes in redfish tourneys. The MAT THING is definitely something you need to add to your diary of game plans when fishing the middle to lower Texas Coast.

The video attached to this article speaks about and shows the mats I am talking about. I refer to the mats as grass mats in the video. That was prior to speaking with Dr. Stunz and Mike McBride. I am still learning and thankful that I still want to. Follow us on Instagram at jaywatkinsfishing for our weekly tips and monthly lure giveaway.

May your fishing always be catching. -Guide Jay Watkins



VIEW THE VIDEO

Open Camera and hover over QR Code. When link appears at top of screen tap to open in YouTube.

Live Floating Mat Fish Structure

CONTACT

Jay Watkins has been a full-time fishing guide at Rockport, TX, for more than 20 years. Jay specializes in wading year-round for trout and redfish with artificial lures. Jay covers the Texas coast from San Antonio Bay to Corpus Christi Bay.

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Fishing near a Port Aransas wetland - Chase A. Fountain, TPWD

By Savannah Horton | Coastal Ecologist, Dickinson Marine Lab

FIELD NOTES

GIVE ME SHELTER – PROTECTING COASTAL WETLANDS THROUGH HABITAT ASSESSMENT

Those who have spent time wading, or rather sinking, into the depths of marsh muds, maneuvering a kayak through fields of cordgrass, or casting a line where marsh transitions to bay, have surely appreciated the natural beauty of Texas' coastal wetlands. These fields of salt tolerant grasses live at the intersection of terrestrial and aquatic habitats and fringe the shorelines of Texas bays. Their distinctive aroma signaling to visitors that they are transitioning into the tidal zone. Coastal wetlands provide an absorbent buffer against coastal wave action, stabilize shorelines from erosion, and lessen the impact of storm surge and floods. As one of the most diverse ecosystems in Texas, wetlands are home to a wide variety of plants and animals. If you enjoy catching fish in Texas bays, then you have reaped the benefits of a healthy coastal wetland.

Despite their ecological, recreational, and economic value, wetland habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate. It is estimated that Texas has lost more than 7 million acres, the equivalent of Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio combined. One significant driver of this loss is rapid coastal development. Coastal

development can destroy wetlands and exacerbate the effects of sea level rise. The compounding effects of sea level rise and coastal development shrink available land, altering natural wetland zonation (Figure 1). This loss of space impairs natural wetland function and degrades habitat quality. If we wish to continue successful fishing in our bays and to protect our shorelines for ourselves and future generations, we must balance development with the conservation of wetland resources.

One approach used to protect wetlands is the regulation of coastal development by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) through section 404 of the Clean



Spotted seatrout among marsh grass - Chase Fountain, TPWD

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Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. These programs regulate construction and the discharge of dredged and fill material associated with coastal development activities into waters and wetlands. TPWD advocates for coastal wetland conservation through participation in the permitting process of coastal development. We use field habitat assessments to review the quality and quantity of fish and wildlife habitat proposed for impact and then provide recommendations to the USACE to minimize those potential habitat impacts.

Field habitat assessments are an evaluation of the biotic factors present in the wetland and an observance of the species using it as habitat. A productive, and sometimes muddy, field visit to a wetland involves the observation of species present to evaluate the functioning of the wetland habitat. Identifying what plant and animal species are inhabiting or using a wetland can also tell us how healthy the habitat is and if it has been disturbed by previous human activity. A healthy wetland will have a wide array of native species and adequate water exchange with a watershed. We can determine whether we are in low marsh habitat or high marsh habitat based on what plant species are present because wetland plant species distribution is influenced by the timing, quantity, and duration of water flow. For example, we know we are standing in low marsh when smooth cordgrass is present, because smooth cordgrass is a wetland plant species that occurs in areas with daily tides (Figure 1).

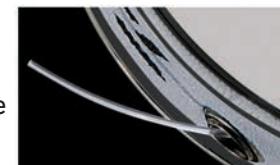
During site assessments, it is important to also

observe fish and wildlife species utilizing the habitat for foraging, nesting, or cover to better understand the health and quality of a particular wetland. Lower quality, disturbed marshes will have fewer species using the wetland, whereas an abundant and healthy marsh is home to many species. We might observe fiddler crabs or stone crabs burrowing into the mud, or wading birds, like the snowy egret, patiently waiting to snatch small fish and invertebrates. Sometimes, we will see a mammal, like a deer, drawn in to feed on the leaves of marsh vegetation, or we may even spot a juvenile flounder or shrimp sheltering in the



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marsh as they grow.

Through our assessment of identified species and the role that they play in community interactions, we can use collected field data to understand the role that a specific marsh plays in an environment. This information strengthens our recommendations to avoid or minimize impacts to fish and wildlife habitat. If wetland loss cannot be avoided along the coast, there are steps we can take to ensure that the loss of important wetland habitat is accounted for. The Section 404 Program of the Clean Water

Act requires developers to replace lost habitat with a habitat of similar function through restoration of a historical wetland, establishment of a new wetland, or enhancement or preservation of an existing one. The goal of these measures is to replace the lost wetland habitat with similar, high-quality fish and wildlife habitat. Thus, ensuring we will continue to have access to the beneficial resources that a lost wetland provided.

These regulatory review processes are an important component to the conservation of coastal wetlands and the values they provide along the Texas coast. Healthy coastal wetlands are essential habitat for the early development of many recreationally important fish such as red

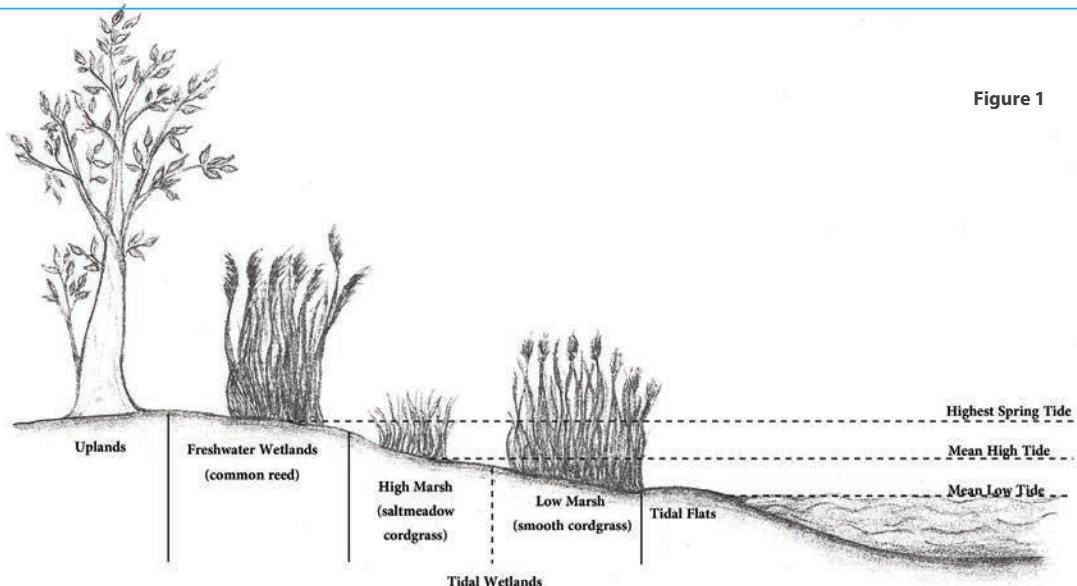
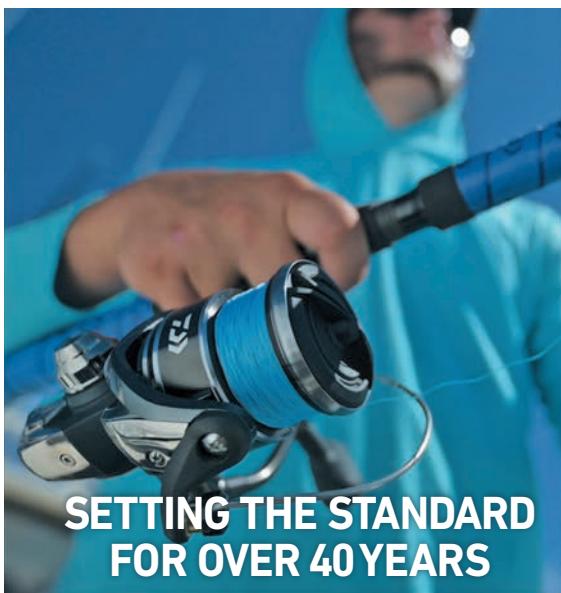


Figure 1

drum, spotted seatrout, and southern flounder. Therefore, we must consider how wetlands are impacted by development and how we can advocate for the conservation of wetland resources. Perhaps you will be inspired to get involved in local conservation efforts or attend public meetings regarding local development. The next time you are fishing near a marsh, take a closer look at this living, breathing ecosystem and appreciate its role in our ability to enjoy fishing along the Texas coast.

Check the TPWD Outdoor Annual, your local TPWD Law Enforcement office, or tpwd.texas.gov for more info.



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A late start is OK in some seasons
but I try to never miss a springtime
sunrise on Sabine Lake.



DAVE ROBERTS

SHALLOW WATER FISHING

SPRING IN FULL SWING

I think it safe to say that the cold days of winter are finally behind us and the seasonal changes toward spring are already occurring. There may be a few mornings that require a light jacket for the boat ride but the days of being bundled up are over. As much as I enjoy fishing during the colder months I am happy to see some warmer days in my future.

Another thing anglers can rejoice about is that the days are getting longer. This means that we can spend more time on the water fishing and I know that everyone agrees this is a good thing. The only bad thing is that we tend to get a few rainy days in April but if you can manage to dodge them it is worth getting out there.

Being that my first love is sight-casting redfish, I will admit that I have become accustomed to "fly fishing hours." That means sleeping in and taking your time to get ready. There is no point getting out there before the sun is up high enough to allow us to see the fish. That being said, the one thing I miss is being on the water while the sun is barely peeking over the eastern horizon and watching the world wake up. There are times throughout the year I will sleep late, but not during springtime. I try to never miss a springtime sunrise.

The reason being is that there is something special about having a peaceful calm morning interrupted by a trout blowing up a topwater. And odds are, you will usually find many more than just one fish. This is a great time of the year to have some fun catching a few fish to get your day started out right before hitting the marsh.

Fishing this time of the year is great and no matter what you do, you can't go wrong. The trout fishing is great and you can find schools of them scattered across Sabine Lake. The flounder should have moved back in from their spawning run to the gulf and will be stacking up in marsh drains. Along with that, redfish should be back in the marsh. Plenty of options for everyone.

Over the past several years it has taken me a little bit of studying to find redfish during this transition to warmer weather. Their diet is changing from mostly mullet to shrimp, shad, and crabs. This in turn changes their daily habits and patterns and it forces an angler to transition as well. The first thing to do is figure out where their prey is hiding.

As it gets warmer, one of the first signs I look for is ponds where new seagrass is growing. Winter causes a die-off of the majority of aquatic vegetation in our

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Sight-casting marsh redfish on fly can be as rewarding as it is challenging.

marshes. However, once the temperature starts to rise, grass will begin to grow and it will do so quicker in some ponds than others. I have come to find that the first ponds that show seagrass recovery will consistently hold the most fish. One thing that I can never figure out is that these grassy ponds tend to be inconsistent year after year. The same pond that grew grass first last year will sometimes not be the first the following year. It is never a recurring pattern. That being said, it may take a few trips out to find them but once you do, you can be certain that there will be fish there. The grass in the marsh provides a perfect refuge for all forage species and this will definitely attract hungry redfish.

When it comes to lure selection for springtime, I personally like to stick to what I know. I will always have a 1/4 oz. Johnson gold spoon tied on; it is tried and true and been around for a long time. Along with that, and likely since I just got done targeting daylight trout, I will also have a topwater on one of my rods. My favorite for both trout and reds is the She Dog; it has the perfect size profile and the hooks are sturdy enough for a big redfish. When it comes to color, my preference leans toward the glow or a chartreuse and black patterns.

Another rig I will almost always have tied up is a popping cork. I know what some people think about this but it just flat out catches fish. Especially this time of year when you may be blind-casting more than sight-casting due to poor water clarity, there is not a better setup to have. I know there are several different styles of corks out there but my best advice is to avoid the cheapest ones. Redfish are brutes and will ruin even the best of gear. When it comes to rigging, I believe leader length under the cork for marsh fishing is one of the

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What's not to love about springtime in the marsh?

most common mistakes anglers make. Fishing water that is two feet or less in depth, I have found that a leader of ten to twelve inches will impart better action to your soft plastic lure tied below, and at more-or-less eye-level to the fish. My standard rigging includes 20-pound fluorocarbon leader material and a 1/16 ounce jighead. Never underestimate the power of the popping cork!

As I said earlier, there are plenty of angling options in April, highlighted by warmer and longer days. Be sure to get out on the water because it won't be too long before the dog days of summer will be here before you know it. Enjoy your time with family and friends and remember that catching is always a bonus. 



VIEW THE VIDEO

Open Camera and hover over QR Code. When link appears at top of screen tap to open in YouTube.

Using Scented Lures for Picky Fish

CONTACT

Dave Roberts is an avid kayak-fishing enthusiast fishing primarily the inshore Upper Coast region with occasional adventures to surf and nearshore Gulf of Mexico.

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Volunteers from CCA and other organizations teamed up once again to make a difference on Padre Island National Seashore.



Story by John Blaha | Photos by Aransas Bay CCA

TSFMAG CONSERVATION NEWS

BE THE CHANGE

If you want to make a difference, you have to be a part of the solution. Grass-roots efforts are the strongest of all, and Coastal Conservation Association Texas (CCA Texas) has benefited from the strength of grass roots efforts dating back to that first meeting of a few recreational anglers in 1977. The Gulf Coast Conservation Association (GCCA), which later became Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) has now been a force in coastal fisheries management issues for 45 years. The success of the organization has been possible because of dedicated, energized, and driven members who are the energy of the organization. National, state and local chapter level leadership are driven by those that have like minds, and a desire to make a difference.

Every recreational angler has an opportunity to make a difference, no matter how small it may seem. The simple act of stopping as you cross the bay to pick up a piece of trash; only keeping one or two fish for a fresh meal; or participating in an organized beach or bay cleanup all leave lasting impressions on those around us, especially younger generations. Many anglers across the state take it a step further and get involved with a local CCA chapter. Some volunteers are there no matter what. Always willing to help out with the local chapter fundraiser, youth fishing events, outreach in the local community, secondary chapter events and much more. Every chapter is led by volunteers all working for the vision of CCA. This vision is to ensure the health and conservation of our marine resources and anglers' access to them. The users of a resource are its strongest advocates, and CCA is blessed with strong leadership from top to bottom.

CCA Texas fundraising season will be beginning to hit full stride when this issue hits the newsstands. Now is a great opportunity to get involved with a local chapter and help with their banquet, and/or other secondary events

that they hold. Most recently, CCA Texas chapters up and down the coast participated in the annual TPWD Crab Trap Cleanup and the Padre Island National Seashore Beach Cleanup, also known as the Billy Sandifer Beach Cleanup. Both of these events are classic examples of volunteers that had a vision to make a difference.

The TPWD Crab Trap Cleanup was born after longtime CCA member Ronnie Luster was enlisted by local game wardens in Port O'Connor to help pull some derelict crab traps. Ronnie quickly realized this was a big issue. Ronnie was quoted in a 2017 Houston Chronicle article, "I just kicked the rock," Luster modestly said of the move to address the derelict crap issue. "CCA picked it up and ran with it." In the 2001 session of the Texas Legislature, a bill by State Sen. Buster Brown, R-Lake Jackson, made the annual Crab Trap Cleanup official. The bill authorized Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to set a short closure of all Texas bays to crab traps and designated any traps in the water during the closure as "litter" that could be removed by anyone. This annual closure is still in effect today and volunteers from across the state and along the coast are still making a difference.

As this article is being written, TPWD has begun the public hearing process for a proposal that would close Ayers, Mesquite and Carlos Bays (the Mesquite Bay complex) to all harvest of oysters. TPWD Commission will make their decision at their March 24th meeting. This decision could be a generational change for oyster habitat and overall ecosystem health in this area. TPWD Coastal Fisheries staff has worked diligently to put this proposal together, and local volunteers in the Aransas Bay Chapter and others have taken an active role in advocating for change that will help ensure a healthy resource. CCA Texas looks forward to working with TPWD and the oyster



Educating and getting the youth of today involved is the key to healthy habitat and resources in the future.



industry to ensure a vibrant fishery for future generations.

CCA volunteers have made a difference from day one and are still the back bone of the organization. CCA Texas has been blessed to have the leadership it has had, and at the Annual Board meeting in February, Chairman Mark Ray announced that he was stepping down from his CCA Texas leadership role. Mark has been a fixture within the leadership of CCA Texas, and his love of the organization was never more evident as he announced the decision to step down. Mark has been the Chairman of CCA Texas for the past 15 years and leaves this role in the extremely capable hands of Immediate Past CCA Texas President John Carlson, another longtime member and leader. Mark and John are also both active members of CCA National leadership and the organization wishes to thank them for their past, present and future leadership roles. Mark and John are both great examples of local chapter volunteers that have grown within the organization over time and continue to provide a committed grass roots effort. Mark and John are the perfect example of.... "Be the change."

For more information about CCA Texas and how to get involved, be sure to visit www.ccatexas.org.



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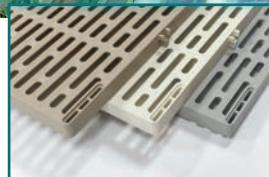
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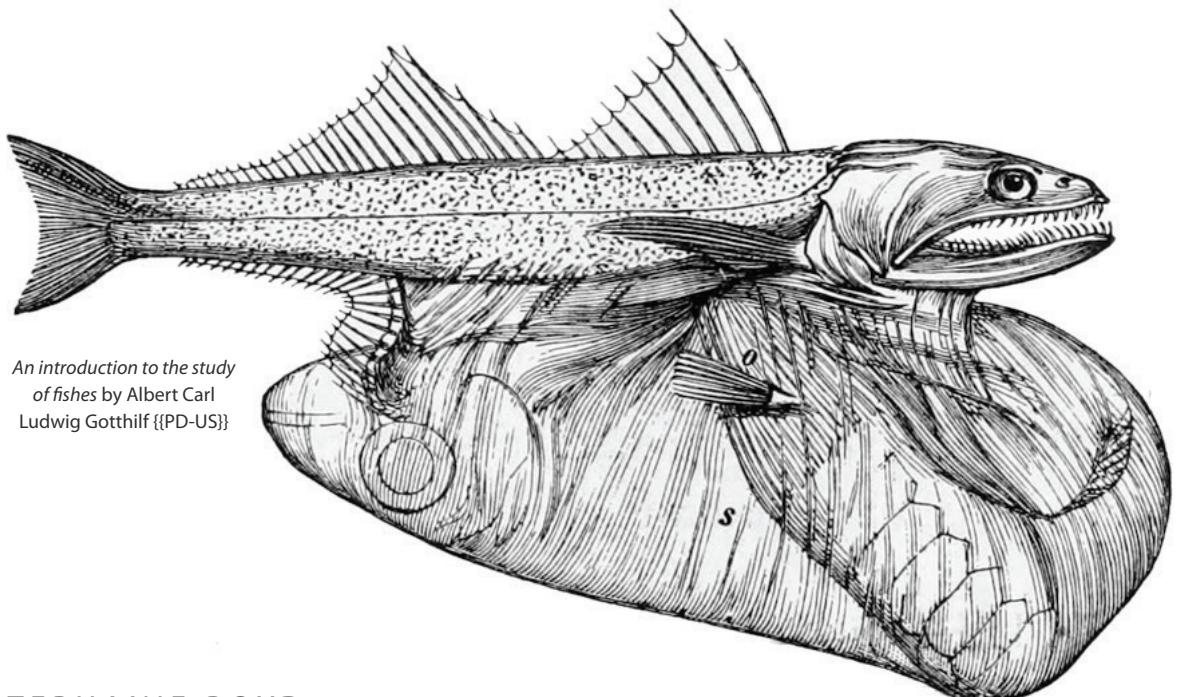


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STEPHANIE BOYD

FISHY FACTS

BLACK SWALLOWER

The black swallower, *Chiasmodon niger*, is a small deep-sea fish found in the North and Southwestern Atlantic, including the Gulf of Mexico. Of its genus, it is the most common species in the North Atlantic. Adults live in the mesopelagic and bathypelagic zones (twilight and midnight zones), up to about 2 miles deep. Juveniles are found in shallower water, from near the surface down to about half a mile. They belong to the family of snaketooth fishes, *Chiasmodontidae*; even their own genus name means 'diagonally arranged teeth.' The common name, however, reflects their eating habits. More on that in just a minute... The first specimen of this talented fish was obtained in 1830 at Madeira (Portugal), at a depth of 312 fathoms (nearly 1900 feet), by Lowe, who neglected to describe it. The species was rediscovered, and described, at the same locality by Johnson twelve years later. Black swallowers have long bodies that are laterally compressed. They reach about 10 inches in length and have smooth black skin (no scales), a long head with a blunt snout, and a large mouth. The lower jaw extends past the upper, and both are lined with sharp, depressible teeth, which interlock when the mouth is closed. Some of the teeth are so long that opposites on the jaw cross when the mouth is closed. They also have a small number of fixed canine teeth. Their eyes are a standard size, which is surprising considering where they live. They have long pectoral fins and two dorsal fins: the first has 10-12 spines, and the second is longer with only one spine. There is also a spine on their underside, just in front of the gills. Their lateral line is continuous with

two pores per body segment. I think the best description comes from Frank Thomas Bullen in his book published in the early 1900s, *Creatures of the Sea: Being the Life Stories of Some Sea Birds, Beasts, and Fishes* – “The next monster down for notice is a very good specimen of the deep-sea chimaera, *Chiasmodon niger*. It is a veritable nightmare in appearance, being entirely black in color, with a mouth that cleaves the head asunder laterally for its whole length, so that vulgarly speaking, when its mouth is wide open it has no profile.”

Many deep-sea fishes have distensible stomachs. An expanding stomach certainly benefits a fish that must gulp down whatever crosses its path. Such a stomach can even enable a predator to swallow prey larger than its own body. Enter the black swallower. These fish can not only swallow fish whole that are larger than themselves, they can swallow fish *twice* their length and *10 times* their mass. Their upper jaws are articulated with the skull at the front via the suspensorium (bones and cartilage that normally attach just the lower jaw to the skull), which allows the jaws to swing down and encompass objects larger than the swallower’s head. The two prevailing theories on how they accomplish this are 1) they capture prey by the tail, then slowly engulf the fish until it is fully coiled inside the stomach, or 2) they bite onto the head of the prey, suffocating it; their teeth prevent the prey from getting away, and they are eventually able to swallow the fish whole. If the first, one can only imagine the wild ride it’s in for once it has latched onto a larger fish. Due to their backwardly depressible teeth, they’re probably unable to

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release a victim that has entered the mouth and are forced to swallow whatever they seize, whether they want to or not.

The distensible stomach can stretch so far down that the stomach tissue actually becomes transparent. However, just because you *can* swallow a fish larger than you, doesn't always mean you *should*. Their special stomachs can stretch so much that digestion becomes a race against time — and the swallowers sometimes lose. Overly ambitious black swallowers sometimes swallow prey so large that decomposition sets in before the meal can be digested. This results in a release of gases which inflate and burst the swallower's stomach. They then float up to the surface, dead. Oops. At the depths in which they live, though, food is relatively scarce, which is perhaps why the black swallower eats so much, a get-it-while-you-can strategy. In the sparsely populated deep, they can take time to digest these larger prey items without much fear of being harassed.

Two early accounts seem to be the basis for most of our current assumptions about the black swallower's eating habits. One, the aforementioned book by Frank Bullen, and an earlier book published circa 1888 by John Sterling Kingsley and Friedrich von Hellwald, *The Riverside Natural History*.

Bullen's account: the "immense mouth is furnished with equally effective teeth, which are not only found in the jaws but on the palate also. Its front teeth are hooked and movable, so that while they may be pushed inward to admit the entrance of prey, they effectually prevent it from coming out. This peculiarity is explained by a slight examination of the creature's feeding habits. It can and does swallow entire fish actually larger than itself – which sounds impossible, but it is not. For the belly of this atrocious glutton is like an India-rubber bladder which may be expanded amazingly. And consequently by dint of perseverance *Chiasmodon* can and does draw himself on to the body of another fish, as it were, until the visitor is snugly coiled away in that expanding bag, which being transparent, shows plainly from the outside the position of its occupant."

Kingsley/Hellwald's account: "It espies a fish many times larger than itself, but which, nevertheless, may be managed; it darts upon it, seizes it by tail and gradually climbs over it with its jaws, first using one and then the other; as the captive is taken in the stomach and integuments stretch out, and at last the entire fish is passed through the mouth and into the stomach, and the distended belly appears as a great bag, projecting out far backwards and forwards, over which is the swallower with the ventrals dislocated and far away from their normal place. The walls of the stomach and belly have been so stretched that they are transparent, and the species of the fish can be discerned within. But such rapacity is more than the captor itself can stand. At length decomposition sets in, the swallower is forced belly upwards, and the imprisoned gas, as in a balloon, takes it upwards from the depths to the surface of the ocean, and there, perchance, it may be found and picked up, to be taken home for a wonder, as it is really. Thus have at least three specimens found their way into museums – one being in the United States National Museum – and in each the fish in the stomach has been about twice as long, and stouter in proportion, than the swallower – six to twelve times bulkier!"

Black swallowers are oviparous (eggs develop and hatch outside of the body). The eggs are pelagic and measure about 1.1 mm in diameter. Each egg contains a clear oil globule and six dark pigment patches, which become distributed along the newly hatched larva. These patches eventually disappear, and the body darkens overall

to black. Eggs are mostly found between June and September off South Africa; juveniles have been found from April to August off Bermuda. Both larvae and juveniles are covered in small spines. Most of what we know about this species come from dead specimens, juveniles, and eggs – though as a creature of the deep sea, we know a surprising amount.

Where I learned about black swallowers, and you can too!

World Register of Marine Species

www.marinespecies.org/aphia.php?p=taxdetails&id=126840#distributions

Ocean Biodiversity Information System

obis.org/taxon/126840

Biodiversity Heritage Library

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/4375472#page/20/mode/1up

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/28863420#page/39/mode/1up

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/60381604#page/193/mode/1up

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/37329923#page/617/mode/1up

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/58961559#page/118/mode/1up

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/12043484#page/270/mode/1up

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/2105699#page/364/mode/1up

IUCN Red List

www.iucnredlist.org/species/190310/21914202

Fish Base

www.fishbase.de/summary/10192

Marine Species Identification Portal

species-identification.org/species.php?species_group=fnam&id=1806

Smithsonian

ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/fish/black-swallow

Live Science

www.livescience.com/57302-twitter-famous-deep-sea-fish.html

University of Melbourne Student Union

umsu.unimelb.edu.au/weird-fishes/

National Geographic

www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/animals-carry-own-food-deep-sea-fish

All That's Interesting

allthatsinteresting.com/black-swallow

Exequy's Blog

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ERIC OZOLINS

EXTREME KAYAK FISHING & SHARKS FROM THE SAND

KAYAKING TO ROCKY SNAPPER SPOTS

For nearly twenty years now, I've had the opportunity to explore little-known structures lying off the beaches of South Padre Island. The geological forces which shaped South Texas created a stretch of about thirty miles in which small patches of hard sediments and stones pepper the bottom of the gulf, fairly close to the coast. I love the freedom of searching for these locations solo and fishing them hassle-free. Floating alone on the open ocean creates a feeling of isolation. Looking down at the depth finder and seeing it suddenly light up when the craft passes over a prehistoric sanctuary loaded with fish snaps one back to reality.

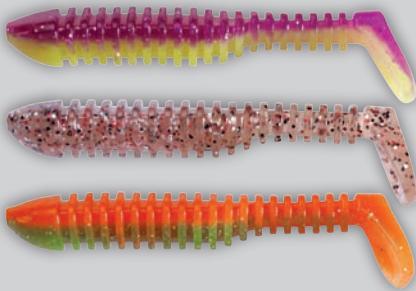
Some of these anomalies rise a few feet off the bottom; others disrupt the generally homogeneous bottom more subtly. All provide reasons for a variety of fish to gather. For many years, I've primarily targeted

one species around these natural reefs—red snapper—and the quest usually begins with launching a kayak from the beach.

When I plan a snapper trip, I prep heavily with bait and chum. When on the beach, I use a cast net for gathering a load of mullet or whiting, some to cut and use for bait, some to use for chum, to attract various predatory fish.

Another very nice red snapper aboard the kayak.





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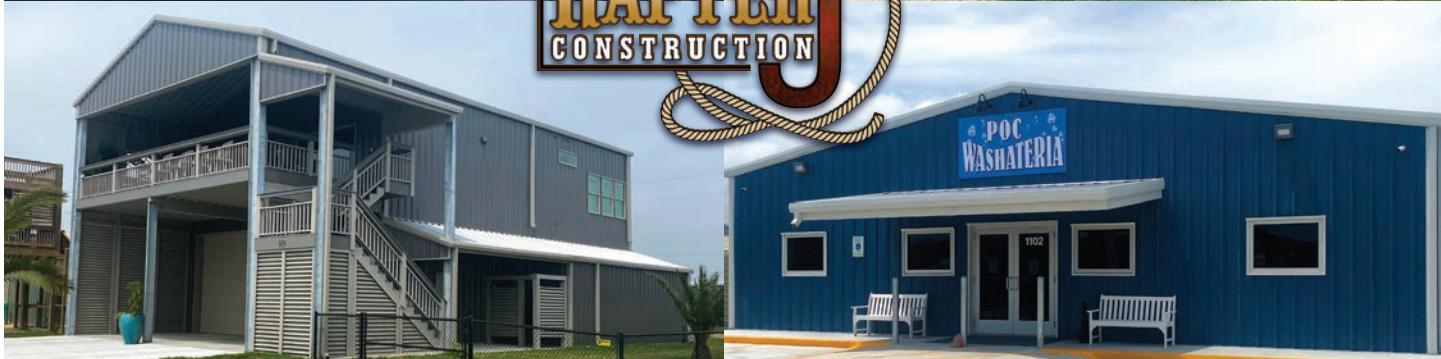
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Chumming helps bring snapper right under the kayak, quite often with several other species also being attracted. I've caught gag grouper, cobia and large mangrove snapper while fishing these areas.

I utilize fresh cut-bait and drop it down on a single hook rig; 9/0 circle hooks are a personal favorite. Jigging will also work well to trick red snapper at times, for those who prefer finesse over natural bait. Jigging also improves the odds for hooking a grouper or mackerel, both king and Spanish. Slow drifting ribbonfish increases the chances of catching bigger snapper.

Landing any of these species on a kayak requires caution and careful planning. Many of these fish have dangerously sharp spines and gill plates; the dangers increase for anglers miles away from the beach, sitting atop a kayak. Fish handled properly and brought aboard should be thrown immediately into an iced fish bag or chest to ward off the spoiling effects of warm temperatures, especially during summer months.

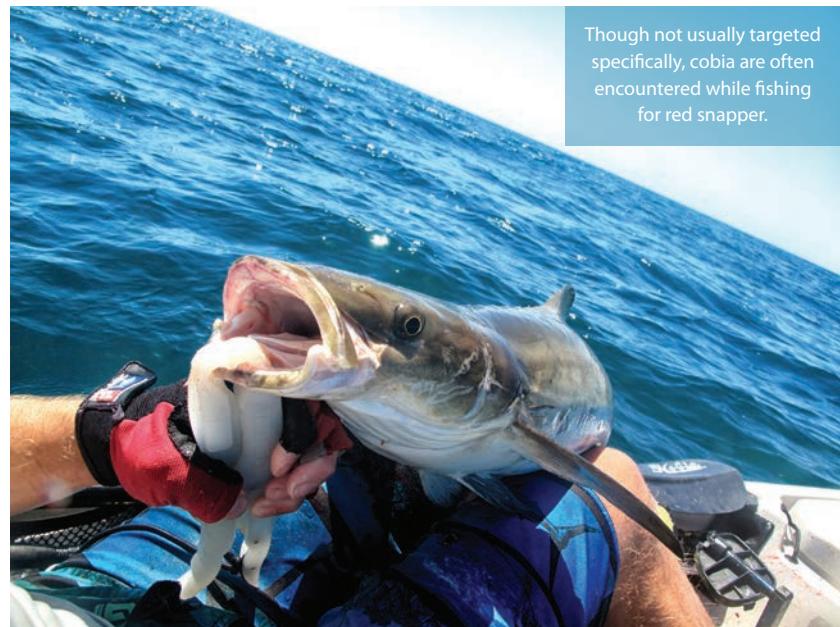
I normally venture anywhere from half a mile to over four miles from the beach, always targeting the natural, rocky bottom formations. The precise locations of many of these are highly guarded within the fishing community. Diligent newcomers can do a little research to reveal the locations of some of the better known ones. Various maps have quite a few of them marked, in depths ranging from twenty to about sixty feet. Regardless of the depth, red snapper swim laps around the structures in schools, not necessarily right above or next to them.

These hidden gems receive less pressure from boaters, who normally wind up fishing at oil and gas platforms. While offshore platforms do attract a tremendous amount of sea life, fishing them can become tedious, due to fish running into the legs of the rig and breaking lines. Fishing rock structures generally results in fewer hang ups and more fish landed. Whether rocks or platforms, out in the open waters of the gulf, any structure can be a gold mine.

Fortunately, in Texas, we have an outstanding red snapper fishery. Since our economy depends so heavily on oil and gas production, we have a fair number of rigs standing in our waters. Over time, these structures become phenomenal artificial homes to a great number of fish species. Snapper and grouper are abundant in many of these locations. The federal snapper season protects the fishery accessible from Texas ports, allowing anglers to retain snapper for just a portion of each year. Closer to the beach, in Texas Territorial Waters, anglers can keep the tasty fish year-round.

Red snapper hold high acclaim at any seafood market. The desirable, clean white flesh of the fish tastes great when cooked several ways and fetches reasonable prices at restaurants. Many things cause anglers to prize these fish so highly, their fillets generally run about the right size for a meal, they're aggressive when schooling, and often easy to catch, not to mention that the bigger ones put up a fun fight. So, wrenching a ten-pound snapper off the ocean floor and landing it from a kayak rewards one with both delicious table fare and a healthy adrenaline rush.

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Though not usually targeted specifically, cobia are often encountered while fishing for red snapper.



Snapper on underwater camera in shallow water (see attached video via QR code).

an expensive power boat. It's possible to catch plenty of quality snapper and other fish without wrecking the bank accounts on fancy outboards and expensive fuel. Fishing from a kayak is certainly work, but it's rewarding work. Joining kayak fishing groups or message boards online to find buddies who share the passion for the game enhances the speed of the learning curve. Wise kayakers always use the buddy system and go out with at least one other partner, placing safety above the quest for an ice chest full of fish. 



VIEW THE VIDEO

Open Camera and hover over QR Code. When link appears at top of screen tap to open in YouTube.

Underwater Video: Red Snapper

CONTACT

For the past decade Eric 'Oz' Ozolins has been promoting shark catch and release and assisting various shark research programs. Eric offers guided shark fishing on Padre Island National Seashore. Also renowned for extreme kayak big game fishing, Eric is the owner of Catch Sharks Tackle Company.

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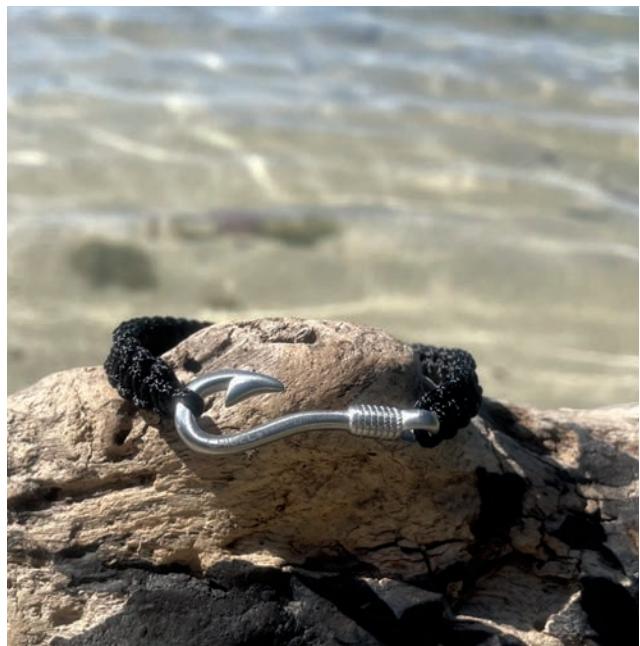
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Bink Grimes is a full-time fishing and hunting guide, freelance writer and photographer, and owner of Sunrise Lodge on Matagorda Bay.

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Time heals. That is what is happening in Matagorda. We are about a year on the better side of last February's freeze and better days have been had. If the freeze taught us anything, it is that there are more anglers concerned about conservation and the good of the fishery than not, and that's encouraging. New bag limits for trout have been established by TPWD to allow our trout fishery to recover; and, I applaud.

Really the best thing that has come out of the freeze is that attitudes have changed. We no longer take our fishery for granted. We no longer kill fish just to show we "caught 'em."

Success on the water is no longer measured by piles of fish on a cleaning table and the goofy grins on social media. We have come a long way in a year.

Redfish along the north shoreline of West Bay should be a mainstay this month. As tides rise reds hang around the reefs

and tight against the grass trying to root out small shrimp. Back lakes like Oyster and Crab lakes are go-to locations for anglers tossing live shrimp under a Mid-Coast popping cork.

Never overlook mud flats in West Bay on the incoming tide. Most of the redfish guides post up with chunks of mullet and intercept moving



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schools around the Diversion Channel and the north shoreline.

Better catches lately have come from along the ICW. Many anglers are using their trolling motors and working all along the drop-off. You can cover a lot of ground and when you find them, hit the "spot-lock" on the trolling motor and work the school.

The familiar question that pops up every April is, "when will the glass minnows show up?" Glass minnows are really just bay anchovies – little white, silver flashes that swim in herds and like to be swarmed by hundreds of brown pelicans, trout and redfish. When the fish go off and gorge on the big balls of minnows along the south shoreline of West Bay it is a sight to behold.

I love to toss a small topwater along the grass and sand humps as well as a MirrOlure Soft-Dine. Some of the best wading happens on the afternoon incoming tide. Get a good night's rest, get up, read the paper, eat a little breakfast and head out. Take your time and wait for the tide to usher the glass minnows to the grassy shorelines of West Bay.

Never overlook the north shoreline of Palacios, including Turtle and Tres Palacios bays. There are piles of shell along the shoreline that holds all kinds of fish in April. Coon Island is also a player.

It's a long ride from Matagorda, but Half-Moon Reef in West Bay holds trout in April. Best bait is live shrimp under a cork, but DOA Shrimp and Gulps work as well. When there is limited boat traffic, drifting over those rocks with a topwater is fun.

April kicks off the sixth season of the Texas Insider Fishing Report on ATT Sports Net and Bally's Sports Southwest. I give the weekly Middle Coast Report and highlight the coast from Freeport to Port Aransas.

Please continue to conserve our fishery. 



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on the wind direction. It will push water across reefs and around points on any given shoreline. I will take a windy day of fishing over a dead calm day any time.

The areas I will be fishing in April are pretty much the same areas I am fishing today in March. Shorelines with back lake entrances are what I am keying in on, mainly on the south shorelines of West Matagorda and Espiritu Santo bays. The bay I will be fishing on any given day will be dependent on the quality of fish the bay has been giving up. As of this writing West Matagorda is my go-to.

Working along the main bay shorelines, what I will be looking for is our annual springtime migrations of menhaden and glass minnows. Normally we get an influx of both running up and down the shorelines during April. You will see the rafts of baitfish easily along the shorelines. To set up and fish these you will want to wade to within casting distance of the rafts and cast towards the approaching rafts and drag your lure along with them. I will make drastic jerks and pauses to cause my lure stand out among the numbers of baitfish and to entice trout to make instinctive strikes.

I will say most of the time you will have to be fishing the southern shorelines of any of the bays mentioned, simply because the gusty springtime winds will likely make it too choppy and muddy to fish other areas.

When fishing these rafts of shad I will generally start out with my tried and true 4" Saltwater Assassin Sea Shad in either Purple Chicken or Magic Grass colors rigged on a 1/16 ounce Bass Assassin jig head. If this lure doesn't entice a strike after giving it a good workout, I will normally switch to a MirrOlure Soft-Dine XL in the (#01) Pearl-Chartreuse or the (#91) Chartreuse-Silver-

MID-COAST BAYS *With the Grays*

Well, we made it through another winter and luckily we never experienced any major fish kills. Fishing in March was very rewarding for anglers in the POC/ Seadrift areas. It didn't seem to matter if you were drift-fishing with arties or bait, or if you were even luckier – wading with arties. Redfish and black drum were very plentiful in the back lakes of San Antonio, Espiritu Santo, and Matagorda bays. The jetty guys did their thing hauling in hefty limits of spawning sheepshead while also bringing in their fair share of redfish. Here is what I expect to be going on in the month of April.

There are a few things we can depend on in April; the most important of these will be wind. I know, we all cuss it, but during those days that we have weak tides the wind will create water movement up and down shorelines at a stronger rate. It will push water into the back lakes, or out of them, depending

White Belly. If I'm still unable to find any takers I would be silly not to try a topwater before leaving the area in search of more cooperative fish. For this I would recommend the MirrOlure She Dog in (GCCRH) color pattern. While I'm not big believer in a topwater's color making a huge difference in the number of strikes we can attract, but I do like the red head of this color scheme and the flash from the chrome body. I'm also a big believer in the high-pitch rattle of the She Dog, even while at rest during pauses in choppy water.

There will be plenty of fish to be caught in the back lake areas of Matagorda Island. Redfish will be patrolling grassy shorelines, and more often than not ready to eat. Look for flounder to frequent the entrances and mouths of feeder sloughs in these backwater areas. Trout should be holding in the sand pockets in knee to waist-deep water.

The primary signal to direct you to feeding fish is bait and/or bird activity. Never pass up any type of activity whether it is a tern (liar bird) or even swirls from a mullet, or even a hopping shrimp. Any of these signs have potential to turn an average fishing day into a great fishing day.

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Boat fishing has been on fire the past several weeks.



Lewis McFadin landing one of many reds during a productive wade.





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WAYNE'S Mansfield Report

Greetings from Port Mansfield!

Settling in to write this article, I am still defrosting from what may have been the coldest day I've fished in several years. We departed at the crack of 9:30am, with air temperatures hovering around 39°F. As we idled from the boat slip you could see and feel the heavy mist as it was building on my windshield and beading on my AFTCO Hydronaut jacket; one could have easily mistaken it for sleet if not paying close attention. A crisp 15-mph north wind greeted us as we exited the harbor. After a lengthy boat ride we settled into our location without a boat in sight. Not a flicker of bait was present, but a tight group of pelicans told me what I needed to know.

With 45.9° water temperature I was skeptical to say the least, but I knew from previous years of experience the fish would be in this draw in this particular area. Within 15 minutes one brave angler connected with a pleasantly plump redfish; its belly covered with sea lice, and the distinct pink discoloration that proved the fish were burrowed into the mud (see photo). Low and slow was the name of the game as we "flickered" and "inched" Wig-A-Lo and Willow Tail plastics along the bottom. The cold was mentally blocked for the next few hours as we caught numerous redfish up to ten pounds.

A deeper dive into the why and how the day unfolded the way it did – You see I have spent a number of days fishing in similar wintry conditions, though not always similar results. Every scenario is different, and one must not expect the same results every time. Pick apart each scenario and load it into your Fishing Equation, then build on it accordingly.

The prelude to this day was a gradual cool down, not a rapid one. It was also later in the winter season, meaning the fish had become acclimated to cold water temperatures. The north wind had been consistently favorable for several days, no greater than 15-mph. The solunar minor feeding period was also in play, and we made note of that as well. Another variable to consider is the anglers schedule, this however should not outweigh any other variable, but it should be part of the conversation. You see if anyone of those few factors were different the results could very well have swayed toward a tough day of fishing.

I discussed all these variables with my group and leaned toward a reschedule; not only for concerns of not catching, but also concern for personal discomfort. That said, and everyone adequately clad in layers of

the best from Simms and AFTCO, we elected to give it a go. It worked this time just like I hoped it would. So, consider reflecting on this scenario the next time you are planning a trip under similar circumstances.

Our trout remain semi-consistent when conditions are right, such as warming trends between cold snaps. However, if it gets too warm they scatter and become difficult to find. The perfect window for finding them grouped up is during the initial warming phase. When this occurs you can even get them to hit topwaters, as was the case when Chris Irwin landed this beautiful specimen (see photo) on one of his Mansfield Knockers. Congrats to him for catching and, more importantly, practicing CPR.

Redfish have been steady, quite often mingling with the trout, and always fun no matter what you are targeting. Additionally, I am pleased to report a few flounder are beginning to show. As we move into April expect water temperatures to gradually increase and water levels to do the same. Winds will shift back to their predominant southeasterly direction which will create good color changes along the flats. Working these wind-lines and color changes will be key this spring when the wind is blowing. As always, bait presence will be an important variable in selecting fishing locations.

If you are reading this in time, I would like to invite everyone to the Houston Fishing Show, March 23-27, at the George R Brown Convention Center. The KWiggler team will be in the Fishing Tackle Unlimited booth where I have been advised there will be tons of specials going on, such as discounts on KWiggler apparel and lures, Costa Sunglasses, and the FTU Xcel GII Next Generation Green Rod. There will be guides from the entire coast at one location so come by and shoot the breeze. 



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HOOKED UP WITH Rowsey

A little over a year has passed since the big freeze last February. That devastation via Mother Nature dropped the hammer up and down the Texas coast, but I can honestly say we are catching lots of fish...in certain areas. Our fall and winter trout fishing was a bit of a shock to me, as we had many days with great numbers of bites. That being the positive, the trophy quality fish (7-pounds plus) are very hard to come by, although we have caught some. The good news is that there are a substantial number of 3- to 5-pounders in the area that have been keeping us busy and our hopes high. Combine some common sense with a conservative mindset and the future looks bright.

So where were these trout after the freeze and throughout the summer? Trout came in from the surf to fill the void and take advantage of all the baitfish that were not being predated upon? I tend to go with that theory, although I could never prove it. Here in the Upper Laguna the resident trout have a very unique appearance – very dark backs, twice the number of spots

that you would see on a trout from, say, Laguna Salada in the back of Baffin, longer and thinner, and almost a tangerine-colored mouth lining. The trout we have been catching are more characteristic of surf trout – stocky, very silver in color, pale yellow mouths, with uniquely strong fighting ability. Honestly, it's a mystery to me, but my clients and I are dang sure happy to have them in the bay system.

March 16, 2022 was the first day of the much-needed revision to trout regs. Through August 2023 the limits will be three fish measuring 17 to 23-inches. Personally, I wish that 23-inch size was closer to 20-inches, but we will take what we can get.

Considering the number of folks utilizing the resource, and many killing whatever they can, these more conservative limits could have been put into affect even without the freeze – in my opinion. The human ego can be a detrimental thing, and that has proven to be the case, more often than not, when it comes to braggarts and social media. Fish hanging on nails to promote a business (that relies on a public resource) is just a small way of thinking when you have a bay in peril, and trying to make a comeback. If your ego is bigger than the resource, you really need to do some soul searching and find a new line of work or recreation. Over 700 licensed guides in the Coastal Bend now, I just learned. Guides with clients plus non-guided rec anglers and you can easily see how many fish come out of the bay in a season. Combine that with a freeze kill scenario and you can clearly see we have an uphill battle to have a great fishery again. Funny thought, the majority of fishermen seem to be good old gun-toting conservatives, but when it comes to killing fish, they're about as liberal

as Bernie Sanders. The same group that doesn't want the government telling them what to do kills the most fish because the government says they can. Baffles my mind.

Much like March, April will have some of the heaviest trout of the year. Typically, they will not have spawned yet, and are gorging daily on a fresh food source making its way in from the Gulf. The topwater bite will be in full swing and towards the end of the month we should be able to wet wade. My mindset will be towards shallow water spawning areas well into May. Like I mentioned last month, windward grassy shorelines will be my first choice when it comes to finding the largest trout that might be taken on an artificial lure presentation.

Lures choices can run the full gamut during April. Floating plugs such as the Fat Boy Floater and all the Dog series from MirrOlure, the Double D by Texas Custom Lures, and Bass Assassins rigged weedless or on the very small 1/16 Pro Elite jighead will be my go-to numbers when searching for big spawners up shallow. I try and keep color selections really simple; muddy/stained water I tend to go with brighter and darker colors, while in clear water I keep it as natural and native-looking as possible, including eliminating lures with bright tails. The bright tails encourage too many piggy perch bites in this area.

Remember the buffalo! -Capt David Rowsey



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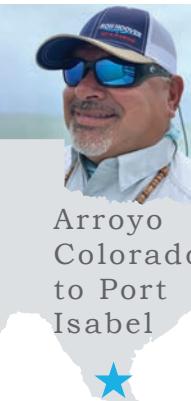
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A Brownsville-area native, Capt. Ernest Cisneros fishes the Lower Laguna Madre from Port Mansfield to Port Isabel. Ernest specializes in wading and poled skiff adventures for snook, trout, and redfish.

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956-266-6454

Website

www.tightlinescharters.com

SOUTH PADRE *Fishing Scene*

April is a great month for landing a personal-best speckled trout. Not only are they still winter-fat, they are also carrying lots of eggs. I often recommend February as the best trophy month, given that trophy fish are often staged together in sizeable numbers. I follow by saying that while they may be scattered due to higher tide levels, the additional egg weight in April can easily push an eight-pounder to nine pounds.

Peak trout spawning occurs on two-tide days, which generally fall a few days before, during, and after the new and full moon. This is nature at work, the stronger tidal currents help transport the fertilized eggs to grassy flats where the hatching larvae have greater chances of survival.

I loved April as a young boy. We were really into kites, even building some of our own. However, as a fishing guide, I no longer have such fondness for windy days. Extreme wind churns bottom sediments that turn the water muddy and seagrasses get uprooted and collect on the surface in many of our most productive areas. Working topwater lures becomes all but impossible. While we cannot stop any of this, we can learn how to use the wind to our advantage.

Springtime winds also churn up lots of tiny shrimp, crabs, and other crustaceans, and their presence in the water column can produce frenzied feeding by trout and redfish. This activity alerts seagulls that will hover above them. I have experienced this phenomenon mostly in late afternoon and early evening. Another benefit of wind is the way it increases the oxygen content of the water, which helps increase fish metabolism and feeding activity.

Over the year that has passed since the big freeze, I have concluded that our bigger trout took a very bad hit. Don't get me wrong; there are still some big trout out there, but definitely not in the numbers we have seen in the past. In general I would say our trout population is rebounding very well, but it's going to take another year or two to fully recover. We have seen schools in the four to six-pound range where they should be this time of year, but the seven, eight, and nine-pounders are conspicuously very few in number. Hopefully the new trout regulations and continued efforts of conservation-minded anglers will speed the recovery.

This past winter, including March, I have observed trout migrating more than I've ever seen between cold fronts and warming trends. Here one day and gone the next, only to return as the winds begin to lie and the temperatures started climbing.

Air and water temperatures will soon be on the rise and the tendency for surface feeding will follow. Changing topwater hooks from treble to single is recommended to deal with floating grass. Look for active bait along shorelines. Potholes will continue to attract trout on grassy flats. Areas near the ICW will hold good numbers of trout although smaller on average.

Redfish are thriving. A year after the freeze; we're catching redfish everywhere they should be and lots of them. Sizewise, I cannot recall slot redfish as large on average as we have been landing the past several months. In addition, we are also seeing plentiful numbers of smaller reds, which is great news for the future of the fishery.

Reds have been taking topwaters with a vengeance, and this pattern should only continue into April. When they will not take a surface lure, changing to any of the Corky family or the old reliable plum-chartreuse KWiggler Ball Tail has worked well for us. Back bays will bring excellent opportunities as tides will be running considerably higher. Edges of shorelines along any landmass or spoils off the ICW will also hold plenty of redfish. Finally, don't dismiss the sand flats on the east side; they always come alive in springtime.

Flounder are showing sporadically. Incidental catches have increased over the last month and hopefully will become more numerous with warmer temperatures. Snook continue to thrive as they seek deep water in winter and were unaffected by the freeze. I expect they will become increasingly available throughout the spring months.

Prepare for windy conditions. If your preference is drift-fishing, have two windsocks handy. I'm looking forward to wet-wading season but jackets will be necessary for at least another month, maybe more. I recommend keeping only enough for a fresh meal, which gives good reason to go fishing more often. And if you're not into fishing windy days...go fly a kite! ☺



Elisa Mares displaying one of many redfish she caught this day.



VIEW THE VIDEO

Open Camera and hover over QR Code. When link appears at top of screen tap to open in YouTube.

Tips to Avoid Stingrays

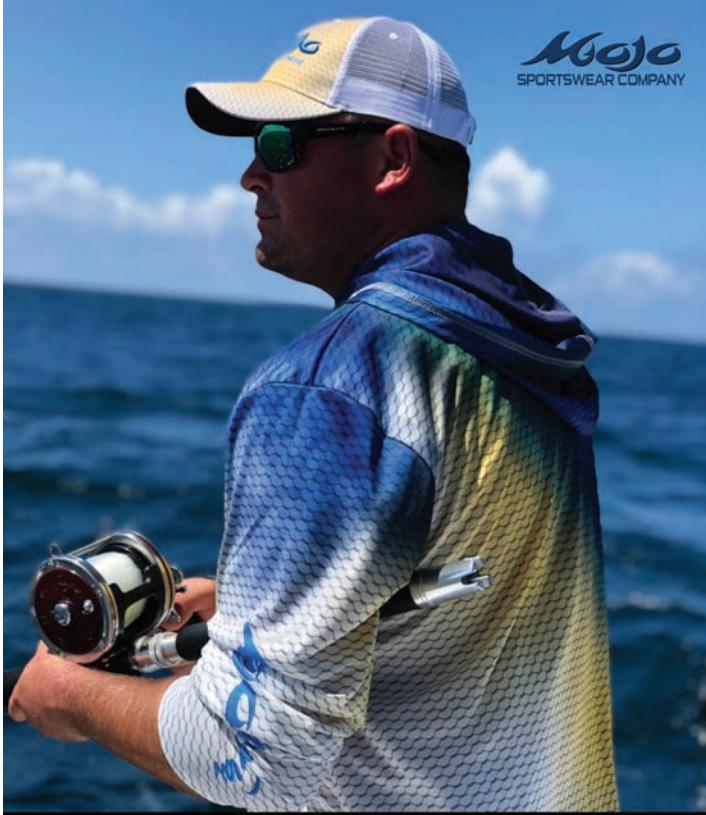
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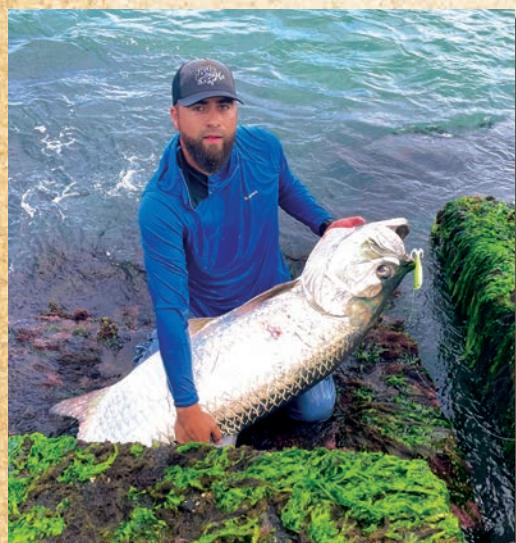
Stephanie Dobos
POC - 28" redfish CPR



Bolin Mahaffey
Gulf - 25" red snapper



Doug Ervin
Rockport reefs - 36" redfish CPR



Eddie Garcia
South Padre jetties - first tarpon!



Frank Garza
Port Mansfield - 28" bull red CPR



Mike Vella
Galveston - 27" 6.5 lb trout CPR



Hayes Ledger
Rockport - 23" redfish



Daniel Solano
Rockport - 41" bull red



Jack Reyna
Laguna Madre - 25" redfish



Donna Shelton
West Matagorda Bay - 43" 26 lb jack crevalle



Cody Mackey
West Matagorda Bay - 41" 24 lb jack crevalle



Walter Sanchez
Port Aransas - redfish



Nina Garrett
Gulf - kingfish CPR

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Include short description of your catch with name, date, bay system, etc.

FISHING REPORTS & FORECASTS from Big Lake to Boca Chica

Trinity Bay - East Bay - Galveston Bay | James Plaag

Silver King Adventures - silverkingadventures.com - 409.935.7242

James says the fishing has been good for him in the West Bay area lately, and they're catching most of their fish wading. "We have been wading in places with mud and shell on the bottom, catching some of our trout on top, some on Leles and some on the MirrOlip, which is a floating/diving lure. Takes most people a while to master the technique with it, but it works great. The other day, I was catching twice as many as my customers on it. They were throwing tails. If the bite's really tough, reeling a paddletail straight in works best. In April, we'll continue to wade as much as we can, and fish out of the boat some too. In the past, when we had lots of grass in the coves and on the north shoreline, the fishing in those places was more consistent. The cold weather we've had the last two years has killed most of the grass. Until it comes back, the patterns we fished twenty years ago will work better. We'll be wading the big sand flats with scattered shell and fishing out in the middle, drifting mud streaks, around slicks and working birds."

Jimmy West - Bolivar Guide Service - 409.996.3054

"Fishing has been excellent lately, in a variety of locations. We've been catching plenty of trout in the bayous, on shorelines, and out in the middle. The topwater bite has been hot on a lot of days. We're catching lots of fish on tails too. Basically, we are watching birds, keying on slicks and concentrations of bait. The numbers of keeper trout have been impressive, with pretty fast action. We're not catching any big trout, nothing over about five pounds. The reds, on the other hand, have been big, on average. And we're catching some of them right up tight to the banks, on topwaters, so it's been a hoot. It's not unusual to catch a few over thirty inches. In such shallow water, that is fun, to say the least. In April, we usually do have better luck on some of the bigger trout in the back parts of East Bay, especially when winds allow us to wade the north shoreline areas. Wading will definitely be the only way to catch much at all when it's windy out of the southeast. The boat drifts off the bank too fast, and it becomes tough to stay in the fish if you don't wade."

West Galveston - Bastrop - Christmas - Chocolate Bays

Randall Groves - Groves Guide Service

979.849.7019 - 979.864.9323

Every spring, Randall eagerly awaits the arrival of several species which serve as food sources for the trout, reds, and other fish he targets. "We've already had a huge hatch of shad this year, which will set the table nicely for all the fish that feed on them. Soon, we'll have glass minnows laying their eggs on stalks of grass in the marshes, rafts of mullet flipping on the flats, and hordes of shrimp moving through the pass, with gulls and other birds hovering and diving around them. Lately, I've been wading mostly, doing best on bone/silver Paul Brown FatBoys. In March, I usually fish mostly in places with a softer, muddy bottom and some scattered shell around, or around the larger reefs. In April, I usually make a transition to fishing around a harder, sandy bottom more of the time. Of course, if people want to fish out of the boat, we do that too. When we're fishing slicks and schools of bait and birds out of the boat, red shad Norton Bull Minnows have been working great. All these patterns are reliable in one of my favorites time frames for fishing the San Luis Pass area."

Matagorda | Bay Guide Service

Tommy Countz- 979.863.7553 cell 281.450.4037

The higher tides which normally rise soon after the spring equinox make the fishing in the Matagorda area different in several ways than it is during the winter months. "Once the bull tides come in, we start seeing a lot more bait, of different kinds," Tommy says. "We usually have a good many glass minnows, which we find by watching for diving gulls and pelicans, also brown shrimp, which means working gulls. The number of mullet usually increases too. And with the higher water levels, we're able to get into the back corners of the shoreline coves easier. All this contributes to make the fishing in West Bay good. We catch lots of reds on grass beds in the coves this time of year. The drains can be good too, especially on falling tides. I like to throw topwaters most of the time in April, especially early in the mornings. Sand Eels on light jigheads work better if it's sunny. Fishing in East Bay can be good too, and we do catch some big trout this time of year, usually out in the middle, over a muddy bottom with some scattered shell, in areas with lots of jumping mullet."



Palacios | Capt. Aaron Wollam

www.palaciosguideservice.com - 979.240.8204

In the Palacios area, the glass minnow run which kicks off in West Matagorda, Keller and Turtle bays usually becomes the highlight of our excellent fishing. When the giant clouds of minnows show up in the grassy areas in the shallows of these bays and all the others in the area, the trout and reds go on a feeding frenzy, and fishermen catch plenty on a daily basis. Brown pelicans and laughing gulls lead people to the most active areas, so using binoculars to find the birds makes good sense. Clear paddletails with flakes of glitter and chartreuse tails mimic the look of the glass minnows well. Bone and clear topwaters in junior versions also work well, at times. Tripletails start showing up late in the month, if water temps rise above 75 degrees for a while. Any structure out in West Matagorda Bay can hold a fish or two. Sight-casting them with live shrimp rigged about four feet under popping corks works best. Fishing for black drum also picks up this month around reefs and shorelines with decent concentrations of shell lying close to the bank. They'll bite both dead and live shrimp dangled a couple feet or less under popping corks.

Port O'Connor | Lynn Smith

Back Bay Guide Service - 361.983.4434

In April, Lynn typically makes a transition to fishing some of the shallow areas along shorelines and in backwater areas. This year, with Cedar Bayou open, he'll be making many of those efforts south of Port O'Connor. "April is a great time to fish the areas close to Pass Cavallo, and I will do that some, but with Cedar Bayou enhancing the potential in bays like Mesquite, Carlos and Ayers, I like to head that way most of the time. In spring, the trout and redfish spend lots of time tight to the shorelines of the main bays and in shallow corners of the lakes. So, we do a lot of wading, throwing at grass beds and sandy spots close to the bank. The long stretch of the south shoreline in San Antonio Bay between here and Ayers Dugout has great potential this time of year, as do the shallow flats on both side of the mouth of Cedar Bayou, in Mesquite Bay. Any of the lakes and coves can hold good numbers of reds and some of the bigger trout. The key this time of year is bait. Normally, there's plenty of mullet, minnows and shrimp in places where we're catching."

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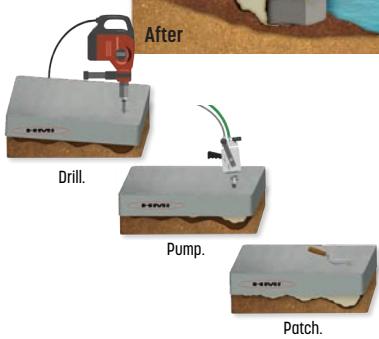
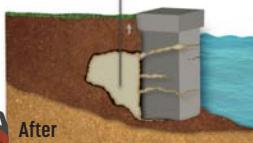
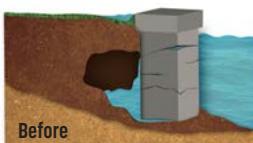
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Rockport | Blake Muirhead

Gator Trout Guide Service - 361.790.5203 or 361.441.3894

April is a fun month to fish in the Coastal Bend bays, Blake says. "This time of year, with strong onshore winds blowing most days and high tide levels most of the time, the fishing on the south shorelines of our local bays becomes more consistent. In some stretches, from Corpus Christi Bay to San Antonio Bay, the water in the lee of the islands holds up clear, no matter how hard the southeast wind blows. Fishing for trout and reds in the shallows tight to the banks can be great in that situation. We usually throw small topwaters and soft plastics up there, focusing on sandy spots and isolated grass beds close to the shoreline. If the bite is tougher, we'll throw the Gulp! split-tails, but they aren't usually required. We also fish around the drains coming out of the marshes and the entrances of backwater lakes some, especially if the tide is moving out. With Cedar Bayou open and running, the flats and reefs in Mesquite Bay have lots of potential. On incoming tides, the grassy flats on the shorelines on both sides of the entrance to the bayou produce well. On outgoing tides, ripples in the reefs work better."

Upper Laguna Madre - Baffin Bay - Land Cut

Robert Zapata - rz1528@grandecom.net - 361.563.1160

The arrival of April brings some welcome changes to both the weather and the fishing patterns. For one thing, we start to have fewer of the cloudy, windy days. Since the days last longer, and we have more sunny days, air and water temperatures begin to climb, and winds calm. The fish move into the warmer, shallower water, but on most days, the water stays cool enough to require us to wear waders and of course, our ForEverLast RayGuards. The trout spawn intensely this month and often carry lots of eggs, so studies show this is the month when the average weight of the large female trout runs highest, making it a prime window to try for the trout of a lifetime. Look for the big trout in water two feet deep or shallower, along grassy shorelines with some sandy potholes and some bottom hugger rocks. The topwater bite is often great this month, so it's good to always have a MirrOlure SheDog at the ready. If too much floating grass makes using the topwaters troublesome, try Bass Assassin Die Dappers in colors like opening morning, salt & pepper/chartreuse, trickster or plum/chartreuse rigged on sixteenth-ounce Assassin Spring-lock jigheads.

Corpus Christi | Joe Mendez - www.sightcast1.com - 361.877.1230

April is a great month to fish several famous places in the Corpus Christi area, Joe says. "We have great fishing in the middle of the spring from Corpus Bay to the Land Cut. Up north, Shamrock Cove and East Flats produce lots of redfish and a few big trout every spring. Fishing in those places is usually best when a southeast wind is cranking, mucking the water up in other places. People who like to sight-cast love the clear water on those flats. Other good places to get out of the wind down south include Yarbrough Flats and Summer House. In both those areas, it's possible to make controlled drifts and throw at visible trout and redfish. The west side of the Land Cut is also productive in April. Most of the best catching is done by people who keep the boat in the middle of the ditch and cast at the shelf on the west side. If it's not so windy, the fishing in Baffin and on the King Ranch Shoreline closer to Corpus can also be great. This time of year, staying really shallow is a big key to catching both redfish and the bigger trout."

P.I.N.S. Fishing Forecast | Eric Ozolins

361-877-3583 | Oceanpics.com

Fishing in the surf became pretty tough at the end of winter, with

really unpredictable weather and rapidly changing temperatures. March brought a much-needed warming trend and a return to easier fishing. April is normally a month with many different kinds of fish available in the surf zone. We're optimistic about a run of jack crevalle this year. If the water's clear, they show up in good numbers



chasing bait. They can be seen cruising the waves over the bars and readily attack large spoons, swim baits and topwaters. Red drum of all sizes will be caught along the beaches this month too, feeding on mullet mostly. Sharks will be plentiful, especially pregnant female blacktips. Bulls, scalloped hammerheads and other species will also be present. Little tunny may run the beach for a while too, if the water runs cool and clear. These fish average three to six pounds and feed on extremely small prey. The best lures to use when targeting them are tiny spoons and flies. These need to be tossed right into the middle of a visible feeding frenzy, if possible. This kind of fishing is purely for sport, since these fish aren't edible, but it's really fun.

Port Mansfield | Ruben Garza

Snookdudecharters.com - 832.385.1431

Getaway Adventures Lodge - 956.944.4000

In spring, the area behind the cabin in the Saucer is a great place to start the day. Early in the morning, it's best to target the shallows east of the cabin, where the bottom is sandy. Throwing topwaters like One Knockers or Boyos first is the best bet, in natural colors. As the day progresses, slowly moving toward the cabins to fish the potholes in slightly deeper water works better. In the area around the Pipeline, the drill is much the same. Heading up north from town, the area east of the weather station where the grass and sand create a visible edge works well. Lots of mullet in an area usually indicate the presence of reds. The mullet are usually up shallow early, then make their way toward deeper water, and the reds follow them. Topwaters, soft plastics and weedless spoons all work well to trick the reds. The new improved paddletails made by KWiggler rigged on eighth-ounce heads in colors like Mansfield Margarita, salt and pepper and red/white work really well when the reds aren't blowing up on top regularly. When winds allow, the west shoreline and the spoil humps close to the entrance to the Land Cut have great potential.

Lower Laguna Madre - South Padre - Port Isabel

Aaron Cisneros | tightlinescharters.com - 956-639-1941

With water temperatures climbing and tide levels rising, we are finding the trout moving into shallow areas along shorelines and on grassy flats covered by shallow water along the ICW and on the east side. Many of the fish are in water less than a foot deep, so stealth is a key to catching them. Wading slowly without making a wake is the best way to get within casting range. They're feeding on small shrimp and fish, and the topwater bite has been great. Small ones like Spook Juniors in bone have worked best. As the winds pick up, KWiggler Ball-tails rigged on eighth-ounce screw-lock jigheads have worked better, tossed into potholes with a foot of two of water covering them. We're focusing on actively jumping bait to target the fish. The redfish have been cruising the flats in the shallows, creating visible wakes on calm mornings. Like the trout, they're blasting off on topwaters early in the mornings along area shorelines, and we're catching more on KWiggler Willow-tails rigged on light jigheads farther away from the bank later in the day. Soon, the back bays will fill up with bait and the trout and reds will follow.

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Science and the Sea™

A 5-Star Year

Every year scientists discover new species in the oceans, and 2021 was no different. In fact, researchers from the California Academy of Sciences alone found a dozen new sea slugs, seven new fish species, five new sea stars, four new sharks, two new sea pens, and a new pygmy pipehorse.



Uokeaster ahi is one of five species of sea stars discovered in 2021.

Credit: Ariadna Mecho © 2021

One of the new sea stars is the brilliant orange *Uokeaster ahi*, found in the waters of Rapa Nui, the native name for Easter Island. Ahi, referring to the sea star's color, means "fire" in the language of Rapa Nui. The new echinoderm's genus is also related to the culture of the island: *Uokeaster* is a combination of Easter and *Uoke*, the mythological sea god who sunk the island of Rapa Nui so that only its tallest mountains poked out of the water. This new sea star lives in the reefs just under the surface of the "original" Rapa Nui land.

But this fiery sea star wasn't the only new one found in Rapa Nui's waters. The scientist who discovered *Uokeaster ahi* also discovered the *Hacelia raaraa* and *Linckia profunda* sea stars. Also brilliant orange, the *Linckia profunda* sea star has slender, lanky arms compared to the stout thickness of *Uokeaster ahi*. And the *Hacelia raaraa* sea star falls somewhere in between, with arms that are thicker than *Linckia profunda* but more slender than *Uokeaster ahi*, and with a mottled orange and white coloring that probably helps it blend into the reefs.

In the nearby waters of New Caledonia, the researcher also discovered *Ophidiaster colossus*, a member of a group of very large sea stars, and *Astrolypha pyramidata*, only the second sea star of the genus *Astrolypha* and the first from the Pacific Ocean...rounding out a collection that makes 2021 a 5-star year.



www.ScienceAndTheSea.org

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Got ideas, hints or recipes you'd like to share? Email them to pam@tsfmag.com or send by fax: 361 792-4530

GULF COAST KITCHEN



Randy's Shrimp Diablo

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs medium shrimp – peeled and deveined
 1 cup mayonnaise
 1/2 cup Heinz Chili Sauce
 1 Tbsp paprika
 1/2 tsp curry powder
 1/2 tsp dry mustard
 1/2 tsp (or more to taste) Tabasco Sauce
 Fresh grated parmesan cheese (make it as cheesy as you like)
 White rice prepared per package instructions

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place raw shrimp in single layer in baking dish. Combine the next six ingredients in a bowl and mix well, spread over shrimp. Sprinkle with grated parmesan and bake 20 – 25 minutes or until browned and bubbling. Serve over rice.

Yields – 6 Servings



Shrimp Diablo comes in many versions with lots of opportunity for chefs and seafood lovers to indulge the goodness of fresh shrimp. This recipe was contributed by Randy VanderNaillen and we found it quite appealing. Of course, if your taste runs toward fiery, all it takes is a table-spoon of crushed red pepper flakes added to the mixture to elevate the heat.

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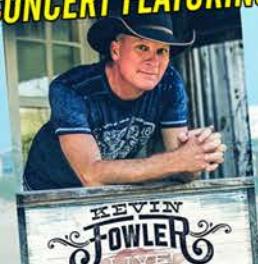
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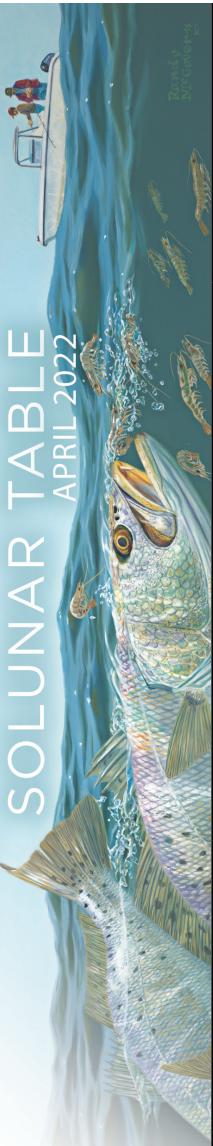
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SOLUNAR TABLE
APRIL 2022



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New	2
					Sun R:07:10AM S:07:40PM Moon R:08:05AM S:09:15PM Majors 01:14AM-03:14AM 01:40PM-03:40PM Minors 07:35AM-08:35AM 08:45PM-09:45PM ★ ★ ★	Sun R:07:09AM S:07:40PM Moon R:08:05AM S:09:15PM Majors 01:14AM-03:14AM 01:40PM-03:40PM Minors 07:35AM-08:35AM 08:45PM-09:45PM ★ ★ ★
3	4	5	6	7	8 First Qtr	9
Sun R:07:08AM S:07:41PM Moon R:09:10AM S:11:10PM Majors 02:44AM-04:44AM 03:10PM-05:10PM Minors 08:40AM-09:40AM 10:40PM-11:40PM ★	Sun R:07:06AM S:07:42PM Moon R:09:46AM S:10:13PM Majors 03:31AM-05:31AM 03:57PM-05:57PM Minors 09:16AM-10:16AM	Sun R:07:05AM S:07:43PM Moon S:12:07AM R:10:27AM Majors 04:17AM-06:17AM 04:43PM-06:43PM Minors 11:37PM-12:37AM 09:57AM-10:57AM ★	Sun R:07:03AM S:07:43PM Moon S:01:03AM R:11:13AM Majors 05:08AM-07:08AM 05:34PM-07:34PM Minors 12:33AM-01:33AM 10:43AM-11:43AM ★ ★	Sun R:07:02AM S:07:44PM Moon S:01:56AM R:12:03PM Majors 05:59AM-07:59AM 06:25PM-08:25PM Minors 01:26AM-02:26AM 11:33AM-12:33PM ★ ★ ★	Sun R:07:01AM S:07:44PM Moon S:02:45AM R:12:57PM Majors 06:51AM-08:51AM 07:17PM-09:17PM Minors 02:15AM-03:15AM 12:27PM-01:27PM ★ ★	Sun R:07:00AM S:07:44PM Moon S:06:55AM R:08:00PM Majors 12:01AM-02:01AM 12:27PM-02:27PM Minors 06:25AM-07:25AM 07:30PM-08:30PM ★ ★
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Full
Sun R:06:59AM S:07:45PM Moon S:03:29AM R:01:54PM Majors 07:42AM-09:42AM 08:08PM-10:08PM Minors 02:59AM-03:59AM 01:24PM-02:24PM ★	Sun R:06:58AM S:07:46PM Moon S:04:46AM R:03:52PM Majors 09:19AM-11:19AM 09:57PM-11:45PM Minors 04:16AM-05:16AM 03:22PM-04:22PM	Sun R:06:56AM S:07:47PM Moon S:05:19AM R:04:52PM Majors 10:06AM-12:06PM 10:32PM-12:32PM Minors 04:49AM-05:49AM 04:22PM-05:22PM ★	Sun R:06:55AM S:07:47PM Moon S:05:51AM R:05:53PM Majors 10:52AM-12:52PM Minors 05:21AM-06:21AM 05:23PM-06:23PM ★	Sun R:06:54AM S:07:48PM Moon S:06:22AM R:06:55PM Majors 11:39AM-01:39PM 05:52AM-06:52AM 06:25PM-07:25PM ★	Sun R:06:53AM S:07:49PM Moon S:06:55AM R:08:00PM Majors 12:01AM-02:01AM 12:27PM-02:27PM Minors 06:25AM-07:25AM 07:30PM-08:30PM ★	Sun R:06:52PM S:07:53PM Moon R:07:34AM S:12:58PM Majors 06:46AM-08:46AM 07:12PM-09:12PM Minors 02:04AM-03:04AM 12:28PM-01:28PM ★ ★
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Last Qtr
Sun R:06:52AM S:07:49PM Moon S:07:30AM R:09:07PM Majors 12:52AM-02:52AM 01:18PM-03:18PM Minors 07:00AM-08:00AM 08:37PM-09:37PM ★	Sun R:06:51AM S:07:50PM Moon S:08:09AM R:10:17PM Majors 01:47AM-03:47AM 02:13PM-04:13PM Minors 07:39AM-08:39AM 09:47PM-10:47PM ★	Sun R:06:50AM S:07:51PM Moon S:08:54AM R:11:28PM Majors 02:45AM-04:45AM 03:11PM-05:11PM Minors 08:24AM-09:24AM 10:58PM-11:58PM ★	Sun R:06:49AM S:07:51PM Moon S:09:46AM Majors 03:37AM-05:37AM 04:03PM-06:03PM Minors 09:16AM-10:16AM 10:16AM-11:16AM ★	Sun R:06:48AM S:07:52PM Moon R:12:36AM S:10:46AM Majors 04:41AM-06:41AM 05:07PM-07:07PM Minors 01:09AM-02:09AM 11:21AM-12:21PM ★	Sun R:06:47AM S:07:52PM Moon R:01:39AM S:11:51AM Majors 05:45AM-07:45AM 06:11PM-08:11PM Minors 01:09AM-02:09AM 11:21AM-12:21PM ★	Sun R:06:46AM S:07:53PM Moon R:02:34AM S:12:58PM Majors 06:46AM-08:46AM 07:12PM-09:12PM Minors 02:04AM-03:04AM 12:28PM-01:28PM ★
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 New
Sun R:06:45AM S:07:54PM Moon R:03:21AM S:02:05PM Majors 02:43AM-09:43AM 08:09PM-10:09PM Minors 02:51AM-03:51AM 01:35PM-02:35PM ★	Sun R:06:44AM S:07:54PM Moon R:04:01AM S:03:09PM Majors 08:35AM-10:35AM 09:01PM-11:01PM Minors 03:31AM-04:31AM 02:39PM-03:39PM ★	Sun R:06:43AM S:07:55PM Moon R:04:36AM S:04:11PM Majors 09:23AM-11:23AM 09:49PM-11:49PM Minors 04:06AM-05:06AM 03:41PM-04:41PM ★	Sun R:06:42AM S:07:55PM Moon R:05:07AM S:05:10PM Majors 10:08AM-12:08PM 10:34PM-12:34AM Minors 04:37AM-05:37AM 04:40PM-05:40PM ★	Sun R:06:41AM S:07:56PM Moon R:05:37AM S:06:08PM Majors 10:52AM-12:52PM Minors 05:07AM-06:07AM 05:38PM-06:38PM ★	Sun R:06:40AM S:07:57PM Moon R:06:36AM S:08:02PM Majors 12:19PM-02:19PM 06:06AM-07:06AM 07:32PM-08:32PM ★	Sun R:06:39AM S:07:57PM Moon R:06:36AM S:08:02PM Majors 12:19PM-02:19PM 06:06AM-07:06AM 07:32PM-08:32PM ★

LEGEND

MOON RISE/SET

MINOR FEEDING PERIODS (+/- 1 HR)

MOON OVER
MOON INDEP

**MAJOR FEEDING
PERIODS, +/- 2 HRS
★ STARS INDICATE BETTER
THAN AVERAGE POTENTIAL**

Port O'Connor
28.4517°N, 96.3883°W

April 2022

Bent, America

PORT AFANASAS
27.8267°N, 97.0500°W

April 2022

Port O'Connor
28.4517°N, 96.3883°W

April 2022

Dort Lachot

POL. ISABEL

April 2022

Please note that the tides listed in this table are for the Galveston Channel. The Tidal Corrections can be applied to the areas affected by the Galveston tide.

For other locations, i.e. Port O'Connor; Port Aransas; Corpus Christi and Port Isabel please refer to the charts displayed below.

100

Tidal Corrections

Calcasieu Pass, La. -2:14 -1:24

Sabine Bank Lighthouse -1:46 -1:31
Sabine Pass (jetty) -1:26 -1:31

Sabine Pass (Jetty) -1:20 -1:15

Mesquite Point	-0.04	-0.25
Galveston Bay (S. jetty)	-0.39	-1.05

Port Bolívar
Tucumán, Tumaco, Bogotá

Texas City, Wurting Basili + 0.33 + 0.4
Eagle Point + 3:54 + 4:1

Clear Lake + 6:05 + 6:4
Mortans Point + 10:21 + 5:1

Round Point, Trinity Bay + [0:39 + 5:1

Point Barrow, Irnity Bay +5:48 +4:4
Gilchrist, East Bay +3:16 +4:1

Jamaica Beach, Trinity Bay + 2:38 + 3:3
Chiribiquete Point + 2:39 + 2:3

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