TEXAS SALTWATER® FISHING MAGAZINE

Lure Makers That REVOLUTIONIZED Texas Fishing

A Look Into TPWD Redfish Hatchery Program

Effects of Boat Traffic *on* **Shallow Water** Fishing

TSFM

April 2023

Only $4.95

TSFMAG.COM

TIDE PREDICTIONS & SOLUNAR FEED TIMES INSIDE!

Guts and Brains

Defining the future takes creativity and intellect. But It also takes the fortitude to stand behind your ideas in a skeptical world.

Yet, time and time again, Fuji does it.

Fuji has introduced every major performance enhancement in component technology for over 50 years.

Take the KR Concept for example. It required Fuji engineers to step forward in a world full of size 30mm and 40mm reducer guides and demonstrate how a size 20mm, or even a 16mm, could do a better job.

Choose Fuji as your "go-to" components. You'll get rock-solid durability, with the guts and brains to keep you ahead of the competition.

KR Concept's high-frame, small-ring design has revolutionized spinning rod construction worldwide.

Fuji®

AnglersResource

www.fujitackleusa.com

COASTLINE TRAILERS
TBMF
WWW.COASTLINETRAILERMFG.COM
COASTLINE TRAILERS MFG. INC
306 S. Main
Seadrift, TX 77983
Phone 361-785-4073
BIG MAN FENDER STEPS
TEXAS BUILT
We pride ourselves on building each aluminum boat trailer
ONE AT A TIME AND TO EACH BOAT MODEL SPECIFICATIONS.
BUILT BY FISHERMEN
FOR FISHERMEN
WWW.COASTLINETRAILERMFG.COM
AVAILABLE IN SINGLE OR TANDEM AXLE
COASTLINE
Coastline Trailers uses the HIGHEST GRADE ALUMINUM PARTS AND MATERIALS.

BECAUSE THE ONLY THING I LIKE FRIED IS MY FOOD

Ash is wearing the Solstrale PRO Hoodie with UPF 50+, Sidereal pant, and Bootlegger Rolltop Backpack 30L

GRUNDENS.COM

GRUNDÉNS
WE ARE FISHING

21 SPORT

(Image from Interactive Builder)

DRAFT ON PLANE 4" DRAFT AT REST 8" HOLE SHOT DRAFT 10"

Best all-around fishing machine

The SPORT takes on rougher water with an unbelievably comfortable and dry ride. Hands down, the SPORT is our most popular model for guides and seasoned anglers.

www.ShallowSportBoats.com

The Sportsman
www.sportsmanboats.com
San Benito, TX 800.503.4044

Coastline Marine
www.coastlinemarine.net
Seabrook, TX 281.291.0101

Pete Jorgensen Marine
www.jorgensenmarine.com
Beaumont, TX 409.212.1005

Gulf Coast Marine
www.gcmboats.com
Corpus Christi, TX 800.622.2449

South Austin
Since 1974
www.southaustinmarine.com
Austin, TX 512.892.2432

APRIL 2023
VOL 32 NO 12

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE COVER

Talk about a multi-spotted redfish! TSFMag reader Ryan Hernandez caught this most unusual 25-incher in Baffin Bay and submitted the photo, hoping to be on the cover. Almost impossible to count, Ryan reports that is has well over 600 spots. Believing it to be a once-in-a-lifetime trophy he took it to a taxidermist.

FEATURES

8	A Microcosm of April Fishing	Steve Hillman
18	Riding the Hope Wave	Kevin Cochran
24	More Than One Way	Chuck Uzzle
30	Plugging the Past, Pondering the Future	Mike McBride
36	Ling: A Cautionary Tale	Joe Richard

WHAT OUR GUIDES HAVE TO SAY

62	The View from Matagorda	Bink Grimes
64	Mid-Coast Bays with the Grays	Gary Gray
66	Hooked up with Rowsey	David Rowsey
68	Wayne's Port Mansfield Report	Wayne Davis
70	South Padre Fishing Scene	Ernest Cisneros

DEPARTMENTS

42	Let's Ask The Pro	Jay Watkins
46	TPWD Field Notes	J. Ruben Chavez
48	Shallow Water Fishing	Dave Roberts
50	TSFMag Conservation News	CCA Texas
52	Fishy Facts	Stephanie Boyd
56	Extreme Kayak Fishing & Sharks...	Eric Ozolins
59	Science & the Sea	UT Marine Science Institute
78	Boat Maintenance	Chris Mapp

REGULARS

6 Editorial
60 New Tackle & Gear
72 Fishing Reports and Forecasts
74 Catch of the Month
76 Gulf Coast Kitchen

GULF COAST CONNECTIONS
TEXAS SALTWATER FISHING MAGAZINE

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
Everett Johnson | Everett@tsfmag.com

VICE PRESIDENT
PRODUCTION & ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Pam Johnson | Pam@tsfmag.com
Office: 361-785-3420 Cell: 361-550-9918

NATIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE
Bart Manganiello
Bartalm@optonline.net

REGIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVES
Pam Johnson | pam@tsfmag.com
Office 361-785-3420 Cell 361-550-9918

Everett Johnson | everett@tsfmag.com
Office 361-785-3420 Cell 361-550-3637

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Donna Boyd
Donna@tsfmag.com

CIRCULATION
SUBSCRIPTION – PRODUCT SALES
Vicky Morgenroth
Store@tsfmag.com

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Stephanie Boyd
Artwork@tsfmag.com

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR
Jen Shive
Jen@tsfmag.com

Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine is published monthly.
Subscription Rates: One Year (Free Emag with Hard Copy)
Subscription $32.00
E-MAG (electronic version) is available for $15.00 per year.
Order on-line: WWW.TSFMAG.COM

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine Attn: Subscriptions
P.O. Box 429, Seadrift, Texas 77983

** Subscribers are responsible for submitting all address changes and renewals by the 10th of the prior month's issue. Email store@tsfmag.com for all address changes or please call 361-785-3420 from 8am - 4:30pm. The U.S. Postal Service does not guarantee magazines will be forwarded.*

HOW TO CONTACT TSFMAG:
PHONE: 361-785-3420 FAX: 361 792-4530
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 429, Seadrift, Texas 77983
PHYSICAL ADDRESS: 58 Fisherman's Lane,
Seadrift, TX 77983
WEB: www.TSFMAG.com
PHOTO GALLERY: photos@tsfmag.com

PRINTED IN THE USA.

Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine (ISSN 1935-9586) is published monthly by Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine, Inc., 58 Fisherman's Lane, Seadrift, Texas 77983 | P. O. Box 429, Seadrift, TX 77983 © Copyright 1990 All rights reserved. Positively nothing in this publication may be reprinted or reproduced. *Views expressed by Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine contributors do not necessarily express the views of Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine.

Periodical class permit (USPS# 024353) paid at Victoria, TX 77901 and additional offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine, Inc., P. O. Box 429, Seadrift, TX 77983.

EDITORIAL
EVERETT JOHNSON

GETTING INTO THE "SPRING" OF THINGS

VIEW THE VIDEO
Open Camera & hover over QR Code. When link appears, tap to open in YouTube.

April Issue Highlights

Spring is in full bloom all across Texas and fishing interest is rising right along with the daily temperatures. If participation on our local bays and attendance at the recent Houston Fishing Show might be good indicators, I would say we are in for a busy spring season. Speaking of the Houston Fishing Show, if you did not attend you missed a dandy. Be sure to mark your calendar for next year – February 14-18, 2024.

Middle and lower coast speckled trout regulations are creating quite a clamor; lots of fishing folks are keen to see the fishery continuing to recover in the aftermath of the devastating freeze back in February 2021. Count me among them. Many are questioning why at this stage of recovery TPWD would even consider allowing the current "emergency" regulations to expire on August 31, 2023. Well, the answer, though perhaps disappointing, is really quite simple. They were enacted to conserve spawning biomass through two consecutive spawning seasons and this will have been achieved later this summer. To change course at this time would require advertising the intent via the Texas Register and the usual round of scoping meetings to gather public comments.

This is not to say such might not happen in the future, given results of regular population sampling TPWD has been conducting since the late-70s. So, if you have genuine concerns regarding continued recovery of the fishery, the answer is again quite simple – continue practicing catch and release – just as we have been under the current emergency regulations. We owe it to ourselves, our fellow anglers, and future generations.

Reading through this issue you will find it packed with springtime fishing strategies and tips to improve your fishing success. We are certainly blessed to have such a great team of contributors. I would also like to encourage following the QR links included in the articles. Please be sure to like and share with your fellow anglers and don't be bashful in contacting the authors to express your appreciation for the fishing information they willingly provide.

If you haven't already done so, I heartily recommend renewing your CCA Texas annual membership today. Ditto registering for the CCA Texas 2023 STAR Tournament, and don't forget the family while you're at it. CCA membership achieved a record recently, surpassing 77,000 members in Texas alone. CCA does an amazing work in creation and restoration of critical habitat in Texas bays from Sabine to Port Isabel. Get involved in your local chapter's grassroots activities. The best way to insure future Texans can enjoy the many resources we have enjoyed during our lives is to get involved today.

Be safe on the water and…Take A Kid Fishing!

Everett Johnson

GETTING YOU WHERE YOU

NEED TO BE

SUZUKI MARINE DF300 DUAL PROP

The DF300B is the world's first 300 hp four stroke outboard with dual contra rotating propellers. The combination of the Suzuki Dual Propeller System and the Suzuki 2-Stage Gear Reduction successfully produce better torque which is engineered especially for heavy boats. Built for every-day use on larger boats, the DF300B has been engineered to run on 87 octane fuel. The DF300B is worthy of carrying on the tradition of The Ultimate Outboard Motor.

SUZUKI MARINE

SUZUKI MARINE 5 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY

THE ULTIMATE OUTBOARD MOTOR

†5 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY applies to qualifying purchases of Suzuki outboard motors sold and delivered to the retail purchaser, for pleasure (non-commercial) use only, from April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023. See Suzuki Limited Warranty for additional details. The Suzuki "S" and model names are Suzuki trademarks or ®. Don't drink and drive. Always wear a USCG-approved life jacket and read your owner's manual. © 2022 Suzuki Marine, USA, LLC.

Kyle Stone was able to trick this very nice speck on a Chicken On A Chain Saltwater Assassin rigged on a 1/16 jig head.

a microcosm of April Fishing

STORY BY STEVE HILLMAN

It was our second and final stop of the afternoon. I noticed only a few mullet flipping here and there as I slipped the anchor over the gunwale. Other than that there were no slicks, bird activity, or much of anything to get me excited. I only stopped in this particular spot because I had caught many big trout there during the same time of year and under similar conditions. Additionally, we were fishing on a slack tide two days after a full moon, so not seeing much surface activity was not necessarily surprising.

Ancil jumped out and waded toward some shoreline drains while I made my way out to a sand flat that gradually tapered off into a deeper and softer bottom bowl shaped area. Around 1:45 the tide finally started coming in. The water movement coupled with the 18 mph ESE wind began to create mud streaks across the flat leading to the mushy trough. Ancil was working tight to the cord grass while throwing a MirrOlure Lil' John XL. He was hooking up occasionally on 14 to 16 inch flounder. Every time I'd see his rod bend I would get this feeling of relief that our trout were finally beginning to feed…only to become disappointed when he would bring to hand yet another flounder.

We couldn't see any slicks but we would get the occasional whiff of trout and bait was starting to become more active. I usually don't change lures a lot but at this point I felt like I was field testing baits for every major lure company in existence. I opened my wading box once again in an effort to find that magical bait that would somehow trick one of these stubborn specks. This time I chose a MirrOlure Paul Brown original Corky in the OR-91 pattern (chartreuse back, gold flake sides, white belly). Through the years this bait has saved my bacon when things got tough. After slightly bending the tail and head downward I made a long crosswind cast into a mud streak. After counting down about 4 Mississippi's I turned the handle of my reel three or four times then gave it a little twitch-twitch with the soft tip of my custom Waterloo HP Lite rod, and then let it sink back down. Holy Jesus! That thump felt so good! Finally! She wasn't a big trout by any means at just under five pounds but a solid one none the less. More importantly, it broke the ice. After a quick photo and release I was fired up and got right back out there yearning for that next bite.

One more swing and a miss was all I could muster on my old trusty Corky, however. Something just wasn't right. I knew the fish were there but why wouldn't they cooperate? I decided to tie on a chartreuse back pearl Corky Devil as I've had really good success tricking finicky trout through the years on them. Bam! Another thick five pounder came to the Boga on my very first cast. I was thinking okay; let's get this thing going. I waved Ancil out to where I was standing thinking that

Ancil Mitchell with a solid one that fell for a Texas Chicken MirrOdine on an afternoon when trout were feeding upon tiny forage.

Another thick one that annihilated my MirrOdine as soon as it hit the water!

With the right twitch, the trusty ol' Paul Brown Original Corky by MirrOlure can stay in the strike zone long enough to trick even the most finicky trout.

things were getting ready to finally kick into gear. Unfortunately, no more strikes were to be had on that particular bait. As I'm scratching my head and wondering what on earth is going on with these fish I notice terns and a few gulls diving and hovering on the other edge of the flat. Ancil and I made our way in that direction. However, we didn't have to go far because they were actually moving towards us. As the smell of trout became stronger my confidence increased.

Initially, I couldn't tell what these birds were feeding on. I saw mullet that were barely breaching the surface under the birds, then I noticed a tiny, pink-colored worm as it drifted along with the current. Upon closer examination I realized that the silver flashes at the surface weren't mullet at all. They were trout and very nice ones at that! We were now reaching the edge of all of this activity at the end of every cast. But our casts came back empty as we failed to entice these tiny forage-feeding trout.

Once again I popped open my box. This time I grabbed the smallest slow-sinking twitchbait I had. After tying what felt like my hundredth loop knot of the afternoon I made a long cast back into the foray we were witnessing. Before my MirrOdine even had a chance to sink it was inhaled by a thick six pound trout! This particular MirrOdine was the 17MR 51SBG (White back, silver broken glass sides and white belly) but I'm not sure the color pattern was as important as the bait's tiny profile and sink rate. I went back to the boat and grabbed another one for Ancil and he immediately started catching nice trout and reds. I should've known better than to just have one of those baits in my wading box. Lesson learned.

We were only able to trick eight or nine more trout after that but we lost almost as many as we hooked, and all but two of our trout weighed more than four pounds. Eventually the worms that were being carried along by the tide and wind made their way down the shoreline as indicated by the diving birds. As this happened our trout bites faded. This is not at all uncommon for this time of year as trout (especially in Upper Texas Coast bays) tend to follow hordes of tiny forage species such as worms, glass minnows and shad.

With about an hour of daylight remaining I decided to tie on a pink Skitter Walk to see if I could at least get a reaction strike. This approach has been productive for me in the past as bites begin to wane. This time would be no different. The only difference was that this time my topwater was getting attacked by redfish instead of trout. Oh well. It was still a fun way to close out our day. After all, I'm not all that picky these days when it comes to species. I've learned to just enjoy the tugs on the line and the appreciation for God's beautiful sunsets.

I was able to catch this beauty on a Chicken On A Chain 5" Assassin while casting over shallow patches of oysters near a bayou drain.

The six hours that Ancil and I fished that afternoon were a microcosm of the month of April here on Galveston Bay. April is often referred to as a transitional month and for good reason. Water temperatures are rising coming off the heels of winter. Small forage species are filtering out into the main parts of our bays from the bayous, rivers and marshes. Trout tend to become more spread out and on the move, making them hard to target at times. Specks won't always show us where

ONE RULE

SHRED ALL THE RULES

Introducing a new chapter in Total Boat Control with the Power-Pole MOVE™ Brushless Trolling Motor. These two models conquer the harshest conditions with unrivaled power, unmatched durability and unbelievable efficiency that operates with near absolute silence. Go farther. Fish harder. Make every move count.

POWER-POLE® | MOVE™ | Power-Pole.com

Billions of tiny glass minnows like this one can make for a tough trout bite sometimes, but downsizing our lure selection can increase our chances for success.

they are and even when they do they can be a challenge to catch. The best advice I can provide when it comes to tricking these hard-to-catch full-bellied trout is to throw baits that will stay in the strike zone longer and fan your casts to cover as much water as possible. My favorite lures this time of year are MirrOdines, Saltwater Assassins (rigged on 1/16 ounce jig heads), MirrOlure Lil' Johns, LeLe's, Double Ds, and a variety of topwaters ranging from Super Spook Jrs to Rapala Skitter Walks.

The highest percentage areas to target are near shoreline bayou drains and coves early in the month, then open bay oyster reefs as water temperatures climb towards the end of April and on into May. Sometimes the bite is better during the afternoon and evening hours this time of year. Patience and confidence are paramount along with being highly cognizant of what's going on around us while we're fishing. A slight, wind-induced off-color streak in the water with a few terns diving could change the entire outcome of your day. It can certainly be a grind this time of year but it can be well worth it if we play our cards right. Best of luck to everyone!

View The Video

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

Twitchbaits for Finicky Trout

CONTACT

STEVE HILLMAN

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.

Phone 409-256-7937
Email captsteve@hillmanguideservice.com
Web www.hillmanguideservice.com

FIN-NOR

IT'S YOU VS. THE FISH.

beneath & beyond

FIN-NOR®

THE SUN CAN STAY THE HELL OUT OF IT.

Introducing the all-new high-performance sunglasses from Fin-Nor that were designed specifically for anglers no matter the elements. The Lateral Line Lens Technology™ delivers unparalleled comfort, eye protection, and image separation on the water. Delivering 99%+ polarization, nearly eliminating direct glare created by light reflected off the water and allowing anglers to see beneath and beyond the surface to spot the fish they came to catch.

Boat Dockter

Viaggio's Diamante Series stands alone in the market as the most luxurious and well-built pontoon boat available! With our exclusive Matte Metallic finish and heavy 3" rail system, the Diamante is built to last and turn heads every time you hit the water.
[dee-a-mont-eh] (noun), Italian for Diamond

Boat Dockter
7650 PARK ROAD 4 WEST
BURNET, TX 78611

2nd Location Opening March 2023
525 FM 1431
KINGSLAND, TX 78639

512-756-5000
boatdockter1@gmail.com
boatdockter.com

Honda Marine
Premier Dealership

HONDA MARINE

For optimum performance and safety, read the Owner's Manual before operating your Honda Marine Product. Always wear a personal flotation device while boating. -OR- Always wear a personal flotation device while boating and read your owner's manual.

WINNER SPOTTED

CCA TEXAS STAR

MAY 27-SEPT 4

TWO TAGGED REDFISH DIVISIONS,
INSHORE DIVISION, OFFSHORE DIVISION,
GUIDES DIVISION AND
YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP DIVISIONS

CCA MEMBERS AGES 6-17 FISH STAR FREE!

PHOTO COURTESY OF MAC ELLIOTT

$1,000,000 IN PRIZES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN UP TO 18 BOATS · 5 TRUCKS · 5 UTVs AND $325,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

BEST IN TEXAS

TILSON CUSTOM HOME BUILDERS

Academy SPORTS+OUTDOORS

PHOTOS ARE FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

Hoffpauir POLARIS

WHATABURGER

Shiner BOCK

MERCURY

MUSTANG CAT

TRANSPORT BOATS

Shoalwater

HAYNIE CUSTOM BAY BOATS

Dargel BOATS

KRYPTEK BATTLEFIELD TO BACKCOUNTRY

abc 13 HOUSTON

COASTLINE

McClain TRAILERS

startournament.org ★ ccatexas.org

By entering the CCA TEXAS STAR you have a chance to win a 2023 FORD F-150 XLT SuperCab, Boats, Prizes, Scholarships and more!

EXCEL
BOATS
THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
METICULOUS ATTENTION TO DETAIL, PRECISE HAND WELDS AND EXCEPTIONAL PAINT AND FINISH MAKE THE BAY PRO ONE OF THE MOST STUNNING ON THE WATER.
A STANDARD .160 THICK ALUMINUM HULLS MAKES THE BAY PRO ONE OF THE TOUGHEST.
MISS LISA LYNN
YAMAHA
Excel
YAMAHA
EXPERIENCE THE SMOOTH OPERATION, HANDLING AND LEGENDARY TRUSTWORTHINESS OF YAMAHA AND AN EXCEL BAY PRO
SCAN ME

Ultra-strong, long-lasting vinyl-fiberglass composite EcoPiles from American Pole & Timber are quickly becoming the top piling choice for docks, piers, and beach homes

Homeowners and contractors are choosing EcoPiles over other piling options more than ever.

Why? Availability, uniformly clean lines, unmatched longevity, and engineered strength. Basically, they're just a smart choice!

Next time you see them, take a closer look! Knock on them and you'll immediately understand how heavy and rigid they are.

Exclusively available from American Pole & Timber.

For specs, more info, and fast quotes...

www.PoleAndTimber.com ::: 1 (800) 882-6691

American Pole & Timber

RIDING THE Hope Wave

STORY BY KEVIN COCHRAN

During the first full month of spring, hope reveals itself abundantly in nature and human culture. Azaleas, magnolias and dogwoods bloom. In our part of the world, migratory birds return from their winter homes in Central and South America, headed for their breeding grounds. The world's best golfers gather in Augusta, hoping to earn one of the top trophies in the sport—the Masters' green jacket. In stadiums across the nation, major league baseball players start a new season. And in the coastal waterways of the Lone Star State, speckled trout take advantage of some of the year's most favorable conditions for spawning.

Specks spawn repeatedly throughout the warm part of the year, usually starting sometime in March and extending into autumn, normally ending around October, depending on weather and other environmental conditions. Female trout produce and release eggs quickest in moderate water temperatures and when salinity levels run in the moderate to high range, at least as salty as the water in the open ocean. They don't show such fecundity in really hot water, nor in water with low salinity levels. In Texas estuaries, bays and other salty waterways, April weather normally generates marine chemistry highly favorable for the reproductive needs of one of the state's most revered sport fish.

A single large female trout can produce up to one million eggs and hold them in her body cavity before releasing them. Obviously, so many eggs add weight to the fish carrying them. For this and other reasons, Texas Parks and Wildlife data indicate trout weigh more, on average, per inch, in this month than in any other on the calendar. Appropriately, many anglers rank the Masters' month near the top of best ones for chasing the trophy trout of a lifetime. Given the moderate water temperatures normally occurring in the state during this time-frame, artificial lures usually work well for folks targeting monster trout.

Trout over about twenty inches in length prefer to feed mostly on other fish. Smaller trout, mullet, pinfish, croakers and other finfish make up the majority of their diet. So, lures which mimic these fish work well to draw the attention of mature specks. Topwaters, crankbaits, slow-sinking twitchbaits and large swimbaits all present profiles which look much like small fish. Consequently, many of the state's best trophy trout specialists fish almost exclusively with lures and plugs like these as the prevailing weather conditions transition from cooler to warmer in spring.

Matt Mauger with one of about a dozen solid trout he caught while wading in April with the captain.

Bright, cool conditions elevated the effectiveness of soft plastics on the April day when the captain caught this 8.5 pounder on a MirrOlure Provoker.

Consistently successful anglers share several traits. One of the most significant, especially for anglers devoted to using artificial lures exclusively, relates to the nature of the way they go about executing their strategies. Most good lure-chunkers display consistency in various aspects of the endeavor, including the manner in which they attempt to finish the game and earn strikes from the fish. In spring, effectively urging mature trout to bite on a daily basis generally means employing lures which look like small fish and presenting them in ways which not only draw the attention of the targeted fish, but trigger them to strike.

All accomplished anglers accept truths about their methods. They typically understand the need for maintaining a balance between reliance on expected norms and the need to adjust tactics as conditions change. In spring, moderate water temperatures result from weather patterns which create wildly disparate conditions from day to day, or even within the hours of one day. Late-season cold fronts passing over the coastal waters reduce temperatures somewhat from their average values this month, and spin the winds to blow in the opposite direction from their normal sweet, southeast bearing.

Astute anglers recognize a need to respond to these rapid changes in air and water temperatures, also wind direction and speed, just as they would in fall and winter, but with variations to the specific ways in which they adjust their strategies. These same anglers, the ones focused specifically on bringing mature trout to hand, also realize a basic truth about trophy trout fishing in spring, and implement slow-sinking twitchbaits most of the time in April. They do so because water of moderate temperatures elevates the potential of these types of lures to the optimal value, despite a widespread and misguided mantra related to their use.

Many anglers, even ones with high rates of success, believe slow-sinking twitchbaits work best in cold water. The genesis of this idea perhaps traces back to the fact Jim Wallace used an original Corky to catch the then state-record trout in Baffin Bay in February of 1996, in water temperatures below sixty degrees. Regardless of its origins, the myth related to the best time to deploy lures like Paul Brown Lures, Catch 5s, Soft-Dines and others which sink at a super slow rate persists to this day. As someone who's caught thousands of trout on such lures, and who ranks the Paul Brown at the top of my list of favorites, I have plenty of evidence to debunk the myth.

The optimal water temperatures for deploying slow-sinking twitchbaits fall between about sixty and eighty degrees, especially when we measure their effectiveness by considering how likely they are to earn a strike on each cast, when presented in a useful manner, compared to other lures we might choose. Moderate water temperatures elevate the ease of catching on slow-sinking twitch baits to the highest level. In colder water, these lures sometimes work well too, and I've got an extensive catalog of pictures of giant trout to prove it, but catching fish on soft plastics in cold water is generally easier than catching them on Brown Lures and similar twitchbaits.

I tell customers this repeatedly, when they express a desire for me to teach them how to better use slow-sinking twitchbaits in the coldest months, meaning December through March. "If conditions are conducive to throwing them, we might get that done," I'll say.

600+ RED BOATS ON CALL 24/7

The biggest and best fleet of towboats are on your waterways, ready to jump into action when you need help on the water. For a year of worry-free boating, be sure to get Unlimited Towing from TowBoatU.S.

Get Towing and Get Going!

BoatUS.com/Towing
800-395-2628

BoatU.S.®

Details of services provided can be found online at BoatUS.com/Agree. TowBoatU.S. is not a rescue service. In an emergency situation, you must contact the Coast Guard or a government agency immediately.

Rick Brill tricked this 30-inch trout on a sinking Paul Brown Fat Boy on a relatively warm, calm spring day.

On an April day some years ago, Tim Zbylot learned to appreciate the effectiveness of slow-sinking twitchbaits in spring, catching a few dozen on Fat Boys while fishing with the captain.

"But those conditions occur more often from March through May than in January. If you want to improve your skills with slow-sinking twitchbaits, your best chance is to book a trip with me during spring." This truth doesn't mean the months of January and February rank lower on a lure-chunker's list of best months for catching a trophy trout, nor that slow-sinking twitchbaits don't work at all during those months, but it is definitely easier to catch trout, including big ones, on these lures in water of moderate temperatures than in cold water.

Smart anglers display consistency when making their choices and executing strategies, deploying specific types of lures in precise ways, to account for the time of year and conditions, and adjusting once conditions cause the need for deviation from the basics. Generally, catching trout at a fast rate on slow-sinking twitchbaits involves mastering the ability to present them with rhythmic twitches of the rod tip, using what's known as the "walking the dog" method. In spring, most accomplished trophy trout hunters start off a day expecting to find the catching on slow-sinking twitchbaits worked in a somewhat generic, rhythmic pattern fairly easy, so they present the lures by creating ample side to side turns of their heads. On lots of days, especially when some stimulator elevates the feeding mood of the trout, this works great. If and when the feeding mood of the fish wanes, adding pauses and speed bursts to the presentation often keeps the bites coming at an acceptable rate.

Additionally, if the ease of catching on twitchbaits runs high enough, those same anglers also regularly switch "up" to conventional topwaters like Super Spooks, Skitter Walks, One Knockers and She Dogs, hoping to attract the attention of the biggest trout around them. On the other hand, if alterations to presentations with the slow sinkers don't bring about positive results when the catching slows down, they also remain ready to switch "down" to soft plastics, in attempt to keep the bite-rate at an acceptable level. Warm, cloudy, relatively calm conditions increase the likelihood topwaters will work well, while cool, bright, dry conditions associated with north winds generally elevate the relative effectiveness of soft plastics.

These ideas resemble ones in play during winter, but with an important difference. In the coldest season, most anglers assume a need to start each day with soft plastics and work up when they find the catching easy, while in spring, they assume lures presented in the middle of the water column will work well and start with slow-sinking twitch baits, then adjust up or down to acknowledge the truth of the moment. This kind of planning and execution reveals their reliance both on norms and the need for flexibility, also their acceptance of truths related to how the seasons and related weather conditions affect the habits of the fish.

In a month like April, when birds and fish and people all feel the buoyancy of the season in their bodies, minds and souls, trophy trout anglers head out with high hopes, and rightly so. But they don't allow their eagerness to encounter a monster trout to cloud their perception and taint their judgment. Like a master golfer in contention on the back nine on Sunday, they realize the need to consistently commit to proven principles, while remaining ready to make subtle adjustments to their strategies, acknowledging the vagaries of the moment.

View The Video

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

Alazan April Monster

KEVIN COCHRAN

CONTACT

Kevin Cochran is a long-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.

TROUT TRACKER GUIDE SERVICE

Phone 361-688-3714
Email kevincochran404@yahoo.com
Web www.captainkevblogs.com

okuma
INSPIRED FISHING
www.okumafishingusa.com

DTR Custom
INSHORE RODS

INSPIRED BY
THE GULF

Designed in Venice Louisiana, DTR Custom Inshore rods were developed for the harsh conditions associated with the Gulf Coast. With 11 technique-specific models to choose from, the DTR Custom Inshore rods are built on light and responsive 24/30-ton low resin carbon blanks and are created to withstand even the toughest fighting fish.

FISHLAB
SCIENCE OF THE STRIKE

AN INSHORE BAIT
FOR EVERY ANGLER

FishLab's Inshore line of baits are the perfect choice for anglers looking to land big game fish. With like life-like body shapes and the hottest colors on the market, FishLab has you covered no matter what species you're after. Super sharp treble hooks ensure that your catches make it to the boat, while their ability to mimic injured or dying baitfish gives you an edge over other anglers. Suitable for "match-the-hatch" vertical or casting presentations over schools of bait, you'll be ready to take on any challenge nature throws your way!

SEE OUR FULL RANGE OF BAITS AT
FISHLABTACKLE.COM

The weedless frog revolutionized my approach to catching redfish in the heavily vegetated brackish marshes.

MORE THAN ONE WAY

STORY BY CHUCK UZZLE

As fishermen we are always looking to improve our resume, so to speak. To become better at our craft in order to enjoy our sport in every way possible. Some of the finer traits that fishermen possess are patience, perseverance, creativity, and the ability to solve problems. After all, a huge part of being a successful fisherman is being able to piece together a plan and then execute that plan to the best of your ability. Every now and again there comes a time when your gut tells you to go against the conventional wisdom and try something out of the ordinary. In some cases that idea never produces, but in others it provides epic results that lead to memorable days on the water. Experimenting with different lures, tackle, and techniques is a great way to find new opportunities to enjoy the sport and it has become one of my favorite things to do, especially when I travel. I have always found it interesting to learn new methods of fishing and to find new lures or baits that I could bring back and use in my home waters. You might find a blend of curiosity and discovery can sometimes be a powerful combination.

Without a doubt the most useful discovery or alternate technique that I have ever found has to be the use of weedless topwater lures such as plastic frogs for catching redfish in our brackish marshes. Just like the old saying, "necessity is the mother of invention," the plastic frog became the new solution to a difficult problem. Here on the Upper Coast we are blessed to have hundreds of square miles of marsh and estuary that hold great numbers of both fresh and saltwater fish. But these marshes can sometimes become impossibly clogged with vegetation – so the solution to the problem was to take a page from the bass fishing playbook and put the

weedless frog to work. To this day, if you told me I could only catch fish one way for the rest of my days, throwing a weedless frog to big shallow-water redfish would probably be on top of the list, or at worst a close second. For years I have shared this technique with clients and friends alike only to sit back and enjoy their reactions as the violent strikes and seductive follows keep most folks begging for more. This was easily my greatest experiment that has paid tons of dividends.

On a recent trip to Mexico I got the opportunity to share a new technique with my friends from south of the border. We were in the Pacific, forty miles north of Cabo San Lucas, searching for marlin – but decided to take a break and catch a few fish for dinner. As we began to troll some nearshore reefs we stumbled upon some Sierra mackerel of very impressive size. The gear we were using was a little

The diamond shaped bill on the Yo Zuri Inshore Fingerling provides erratic wobbling action and helps keep the bait from snagging structure.

Experimenting with different lures and tackle can lead to all sorts of rewards…like this solid Cabrilla.

heavier than necessary and the bites were rather hard to feel. The single hook jigs we were trolling were catching a few fish, so I decided to see if we could improve our hook-up rate by downsizing tackle and changing lures. I had a 7-foot Laguna travel rod rigged up with 30-pound braid and fluorocarbon leader attached to a chrome half-ounce Rat-L-Trap and it did the trick. As soon as the vibration of the 'Trap got going these hard-fighting Sierras, and a few other species, absolutely jumped on it…and the fight was on. The 'Trap on lighter line not only out-fished the heavier jigs by a wide margin but also provided some fantastic light-tackle action highlighted by awesome drag-testing runs. By bringing a little "redneck and Cajun ingenuity" to the boat we were able to make a great trip even more enjoyable.

Another example of finding a new way to achieve the same result for me has to be my affinity for jerkbaits or stickbaits. The baits I'm talking about are the shallow diving plugs with a small bill such as the tried and true Rapalas. For years we would get anglers on our boats that struggled with presenting baits such as Corkys; they weren't sure about the technique and lacked confidence to fish it properly. They were also overly cautious about hanging up in the shell and breaking them off. I'm not going to lie; when I was supplying the lures I wasn't too keen to see them losing them, either. At $10 to $15 a pop, losing them gets old real quick.

James Burkart with a very nice Sierra mackerel.

The solution to the problem was to let the client's fish a jerkbait and it worked like a champ. The simplicity of the plug allowed those who were not comfortable with the Corky to just slowly retrieve the jerkbait and allow the built-in action of the plug to do the rest. The strikes were unmistakable and on most occasions when you hung up on shell and broke the line trying to get it off, it would float back to the surface for easy retrieval. It was the perfect answer to the problem and is still one of my favorite ways to fish. In recent years I have really relied on the Yo-Zuri 3D Fingerling for this technique for several reasons, chief among them is the diamond-shaped bill that deflects readily off oyster shell and structure and gives the bait incredible action. If you don't already have a few jerkbaits in your arsenal I highly recommend that you rectify that situation because these baits produce in all sorts of situations.

As fishermen we are always looking for ways to catch more fish and probably one of the biggest things that hold us back is being unwilling to experiment with certain ideas, lures or techniques. Basically, I believe there are two primary times and reasons to experiment – when fish are really biting and when they just won't bite for anything. I enjoy messing around with different baits or techniques when fish are schooling because it gives you some instant feedback. In the late summer or fall when the fish get ganged up under the birds and you really start catching them, that's a perfect time to try different colors or bait sizes. Obviously, it helps to have another fisherman in the boat so you have a "constant" and some sort of basis for comparison. At times when nothing seems to work you have nothing to lose, so trying something new really costs you nothing but could provide you with some valuable information for future trips. The main thing is to not be shy of trying something new; it could only make you better. The discovery of a new technique just may put you a few steps in front the rest of the fishing world… and that's definitely a risk worth taking.

View The Video

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

Surprisingly Effective Lures & Techniques

CONTACT

CHUCK UZZLE

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.

Phone 409-697-6111
Email wakesndrakes@yahoo.com
Website wakesndrakes.com

www.foreverlast.com
FOREVERLAST
Introducing the new
RayGuard
line of Boots and Shields
WITH VELCRO
FOREVERLAST
FILET Trio
For
SPECIAL DEALS
Like us on facebook
Innovation..not imitation..since 1998

PLUGGING THE PAST, *Pondering the Future*

STORY BY MIKE McBRIDE

Artificial Lures! Of all the fishing tackle we collect, I would wager that lures can create as much frenzy as the fish do. I also suspect that most readers here, have at least at some point, enjoyed using them in saltwater. For some of us it's the whole point, and many of us have built proverbial shrines dedicated to hundreds of brightly colored, hopeful offerings. A recent visit with Dr. David McKee got me thinking about where we pluggers of today came from, and perhaps where we're going.

McKee is a renowned 30-year professor of Marine Biology at Texas A&M Corpus Christi, now retired. Aside from many other accomplishments and contributions to the sport, he is an absolute walking Wikepedia concerning the history of Texas saltwater lures, rods, reels, old fishing line, all of it. His personal collection of highly-sought-after antiques is perhaps unrivaled, and it made me curious about reviewing some of the older stories from some of the pioneers who blazed our current trail of coastal lure fishing. I say 'review' because most everything here is simply cut and paste of things I found interesting from McKee's previous and highly comprehensives articles. Two very widely read were titled "Plugging Shorty" and "Speaking English" (published in *TIDE Magazine*, Sept. 1992 and 1996 respectively).

Artificial lures have been around forever, but similar to the theme of last month's piece about how the construction of ice plants radically changed the fishery of the Mexican Laguna Madre, singular events can radically change what always was. While not exactly a singular event, there was indeed a singular timeframe that brought us to where we as pluggers are today, which was the appearance of new materials after the WWII effort. I am equally interested in looking back at a few of the more colorful characters who helped revolutionize our fishery. To avoid diving into a bottomless rabbit hole, for now, let's just peek at two of the most prominent innovators of the time, these being Anton "Plugging Shorty" Stettner and Doug English. They have been the subject of many pens over the years, but their stories and credited quotes remain quite entertaining, at least to me.

Before World War ll, most lures were mostly hand-carved of wood, and mostly all unique. I remember one inspiring old timer's story where back in the day they would whittle a plug out of cedar, then wrap it with a lacquered-up bullfrog skin they harvested for that purpose. That was their topwaters. Intriguing to me, and made me start experimenting.

Fast forward; when the War ushered in great material advances, early forms of plastic and other options became available. It enabled these men to more easily create what they envisioned. It seems they were after more than just fish however, as they appeared to want to slay a bigger dragon, solve mysteries of the deep, and figure out the best way to make things happen in their insatiable love of the outdoors. They were, indeed, consummate outdoorsmen.

Plugging Shorty began carving wooden lures at night in the 1930s during times of bait shortages. When he happily found that his crude plugs were catching more fish than bait, well of course he continued. His early models were simply cedar, with very few embellishments except for perhaps some glitter and red fingernail polish, but they did well for his rod and reel commercial fishing. Back then there was quite the competitive fish market, supplied by rod and reel fishermen. His first creation was a "perch-type" lure, which is understandable. It's said that only the fish and his best friends got to see his lures, and if another wade fisherman got too close, he would cup the bait and just walk off. He was quoted as saying, "If others got my lures, they'd catch more fish, flood the market and ruin the price." They went for three cents per pound back then.

Shorty only threw his own designs and was constantly experimenting and making innovative changes. A classic example would be when he began incorporating "wings" after plastics came out to slow the sink rate of heavier plugs. He also went with three line tie positions to better control the depth. Amazing to me that he put his new lures through four seasons of testing before going into production. I'm thinking we don't see such extreme vetting today. Also interesting is that Stettner believed all his lures should be slow-pulled rather than jerked or hopped in any way, that a slow and steady retrieve would produce five times more strikes. Quoted as saying he knew surface plugs worked, but that more fish wanted a slow presentation over a fast one, and that most were near the bottom.

English is said to have "caught the bug" in 1931. His early wooden creations transformed after plastics became available, and began carving his prototypes out of toothbrush handles. His most recognized creation was of course his Bingo series, but there were more. I read where the first one he shaped was clear with silver scales and a purple back. The story is that he caught quite a few "large" trout in a cold Conn Brown Harbor, and hollered "Bingo" every time he hooked up. It didn't take long to hear "Bingo" echoing across the Harbor and soon thereafter the entire Corpus Christi Bay. In my earlier years when men lined up by the scores, all wearing a Styrofoam helmet adorned with all sorts of colors, you still heard that 'Bingo!' exclamation coming from all up and down the line.

English claimed he probably gave away more lures than he sold, but with some specific provisions. He only gave them to men who could fish, and said he could tell by the way they talked. (Thinking we can still sniff some of those out.) They were to use them, tell their friends, and because of that marketing plan he rarely had to advertise. Didn't have to. He and Anton Stettner tagged up for a few years and created the Old English and Plugging Shorty Lure Companies. Later Stettner agreed to produce them and they became quite the success.

Leon Cunningham, business manager of the Doug English Company, also had a few worthy quotes and interesting theories. One was why he thought lures could often out-fish bait. His idea was that fish only ate bait when they were hungry, but you could still get reaction strikes with lures when they weren't. I tend to agree with the reaction strike thing, and also want to believe we can make them eat when they don't want too. Concerning colors, he was quoted somewhere (and please excuse the lack of credits) saying that a productive color in one saltwater bay or stretch of beachfront might not be worth a dime in others. He didn't believe that held as true in freshwater, which might help explain the plethora of saltwater color

A small part of Dr. McKee's vast lure collection.

All in day's work for commercial rod and reel fisherman, Anton "Plugging Shorty" Stettner. Suffice to say Ol' Shorty was a very accomplished angler.

The Plugging Shorty Shrimp; one of McBride's favorite collectible lures.

schemes. Cunningham also commented on a "trade secret." Most colors, he quipped in an interview, especially the gaudy ones, are deigned just to catch fishermen. "They want them like that so we give it to 'em." I think we can all agree that's still a prevalent business model.

We have come a long way from secret spots, Styrofoam hats, gutting and gilling at the boat, khakis, polaroid pics, spoons and loons, but when we reflect back we can see where some things have changed and others have not. Unlike much of today's market, most of the earlier designers were actual users, just not sellers of lures. They were true fishermen who experimented to make productive lures for themselves, finally sharing them after extensive testing. Many of their early color schemes are still used today. (Y'all think Texas Chicken is new?) Today we are more likely to see Japanese designers using CAD programs and Chinese manufacturing. Quite possible none of them have ever flung a rod and reel.

We might wonder where the world of plugging is going. The designs and materials have become crazy futuristic. I mean really, we now have hyper-realistic, articulated designs with sound-producing chips. We might ask ourselves though, do we really need all that stuff we see in those heavily stocked tackle aisles? A quote from friend Rick Kersey says, "Fishermen change, fish really don't." I tend to agree, for the most part. Quite cliché, but is it the arrow or the Indian, or perhaps a little bit of both? I suspect for men like Stettner and English it was both. Those early pioneers almost singlehandedly popularized lure fishing and introduced it to the masses. At their heyday during the 50s and 60s, the production from three of the six Corpus Christi lure companies alone, pushed out more than one million baits per year, and they were sold across many states. We can only imagine the exploding level of participation and subsequent long-term effects. Several things have made all of us more effective, but I'm thinking those guy's contributions were truly historic. Who knows the future…

One thing for certain, there will probably be other "singular events"

Dr. McKee storyteller; let's keep those stories alive!

This document appears to be part of a patent application of Plugging Shorty's first artificial lure.

Dr. McKee is heavily involved in the soon to open museum in Port Aransas. For tackle donations contact Ashley@FarleyBoatworks.com.

TAILS YOU WIN

Our new A1A collection has been tested by seasoned captains and guides all along our nation's coastal waters. With its superior breathability, advanced UV protection and proprietary cooling fibers, it is designed to keep you comfortable day-after-day – even in the most extreme heat and humidity.

Huk A1A

Huk

hukgear.com

Ever seen a wade fisherman wearing one of these? Back in the day all well-equipped anglers had one.

Many color schemes are still used today. Y'all think Texas Chicken is new?

that will change things as we know them. There have been several over the past few decades; fish-killing freezes, red tides, hurricanes, GPS with satellite overlays, tower drive burn boats, etc. Heck, there might even be some foreign engineer who makes it so easy the fish won't have a chance, so let's enjoy whatever precious time we have left on the water as we know it now. Let's keep those old stories alive though, remembering the past to appreciate the future, where hundred fish days was considered weak.

You might enjoy viewing an impressive Corpus Christi-Texas Class collection, and Dr. David McKee is heavily involved in a new museum scheduled to open late-2023 in Port Aransas.

For fishing tackle and other unique maritime donations, which would be greatly appreciated, contact Ashley Harris at the Preserve at the Farley Boat Works in Port Aransas at Ashley@farleyboatworks.com.

See y'all out there; but I might cup my plug if you get too close!

WWW.TURTLEBOXAUDIO.COM
A SPEAKER AS TOUGH AS YOUR BOAT
TURTLEBOX

LING

A Cautionary Tale

STORY BY JOE RICHARD

Author with ling caught on a jig and worm combo.

April marks the beginning of "ling" season in Texas, which is our regional nickname for cobia. The current population of these fish is a red flag, with their population a fraction of what it was 50 years ago. A recent assessment of Gulf stocks shows that it's down to less than five percent from the 1950s. These days it feels like one percent, but then I don't fish everywhere. Fewer fish is the main reason we've been releasing cobia for a long time, even tagging and releasing 107 during the 1987 season. (Made up of a few big ones and lots of 30-inchers caught when they "go back to school" in September.) Since that year, I've had no problem releasing ling of any size.

And hopefully more Gulf anglers will do the same. The Feds and Texas Parks and Wildlife are getting more serious about saving or even rebuilding stocks of ling, with new proposals that will likely go into effect Sept. 1. Twenty years late, in my view.

Furious action around a shrimpboat off Freeport.

Subduing and tagging an uncooperative ling before heaving it overboard.

From the TPW website*: "The proposed changes would match federal regulations of a one fish per person, per day bag limit and a vessel limit of two fish per trip, not to exceed the per person bag limit, for the recreational and commercial fisheries. This change is proposed to address declining stocks of cobia in the Gulf of Mexico and to facilitate ease of enforcement with federal regulations."*

Prior to the early 1970s, there was little fishing pressure compared with today. Boats were few, small and slow. You could sign up for a partyboat trip and in the Central Gulf off Mississippi, sometimes bring in a hundred cobia in a single day, fishing around anchored shrimpboats. That was serious ling action we never saw aboard Texas partyboats, which were aimed at red snapper around offshore rocks. At the time, there weren't many production platforms out there, although those big boats began fishing them later. It was ironic we saw few ling on Port Arthur's partyboats, when that area clearly has more ling than anywhere else on the Texas coast, because it's so close to fish-and structure-rich Louisiana. When we began checking small platforms to the east in our own small boats, it was a different story.

Ling population chart shows how sharply ling stocks have fallen.

Young Texas anglers today don't know what they missed, which is *schools* of ling.

We didn't start seeking them off Sabine Pass until 1970, so I have no stories prior to then. However, we sometimes saw as many as 50 ling on the surface, creating a brown patch of water in 30-foot depths off Sabine Pass. These were all 30 to 60 pounders, no runts. They were greedy and busted us up real good because we were rookies with these fish. Once a fish was gaffed and dragged aboard, we beat on them with a fire extinguisher, next trip a Louisville Slugger and later trips with a .22 rifles when alongside the boat.

One memorable day I was on the platform with bass tackle and a handful of homemade striper jigs. The boat drifted away, my two buds had hooked a 50-pounder and wisely moved into open water. That fish was stubborn and fought for a long time, leaving me free to cast at this horde of big ling. I hooked up and lost all 10 of my jigs to big fish; my 20-pound abrasion-resistant Ande line was a joke while standing over that much underwater structure. Ling often head for cover when given the chance, and mine certainly did; they couldn't be stopped.

EL PESCADOR BOATS

Now Sold Exclusively at Rockport Marine

Available in 21' & 24' Models 361-729-7820

Recognized as Texas' Premiere Custom Boat

EXPERIENCE THE ULTIMATE!

Fast, Dry, & Smooth Ride

EL PESCADOR BOATS · MERCURY · SUZUKI MARINE · YAMAHA · EVINRUDE · BRP

ROCKPORT® MARINE INC

SALES
PARTS
SERVICE

Call Today!

2910 Hwy 35 S., Rockport, TX 361-729-7820

And so it went for a few years and we rarely saw another boat out there. Even by the 1980s we were seeing fewer ling. There were more boats offshore. The big beach runs of these fish along the Florida Panhandle were getting decimated. Some of the Texas fish even migrate down to the Yucatan each winter, with one of my tagged fish ending up in a gillnet there. These ling really roam and migrate, looking for water 70 degrees or higher, putting them in harm's way. I think the rare 100-pounders live mostly offshore, hanging around deep structure, either rocks or sunken wrecks. In 1970 I saw one of those giants while sitting in shade on a platform 35 miles off Sabine. It cruised by with a few followers half its size. It was a ling I wanted no part of.

Even by the late 1980s, finding cobia during a Galveston tournament became a sketchy proposition, maybe not worth putting $100 down in the "ling pot." Ling were still out there, however. In 1987 we discovered a lone shrimpboat anchored in 90 feet of calm water with an acre of fish around it. We caught 11 ling up to 70 pounds, tagged and heaved them overboard. There were lots of kingfish, big sharks and bonito that wore us out. Back at Galveston Yacht Basin, another boat won $5K for a modest ling of 30 pounds. Whoops. You never know when or where these fish will appear. Even on overnight two-day trips, we might only see one ling. And they might ignore your presentation for good reason.

Captain Butch McQueen with a charter and their modest catch of 17 ling, called lemonfish there in Mississippi. No limits, in those days. At left is his daughter/deckhand Linda.

In 2002, I interviewed several elder Mississippi captains and/or mates for my book *The Cobia Bible*. They'd caught thousands of ling, known as "lemonfish" in their area. These guys had forgot about more ling than we ever dreamed of—countless ling from the 1940s to 1970s right off their beaches. Their accounts below are edited for brevity:

Donald Catchot: "In May, shrimpboats started working offshore, and we'd fish around them. You could catch 50 or even 75 cobia in a day around shrimpboats anchored in 40 to 70 feet. We'd fish wherever the fleet happened to be. One day we caught 26 cobia from under those shrimpboats and we never thinned them out in the least. We had no room to ice the fish, so we had to head in early. Biggest fish we ever saw was off Chandeleur Island and we estimated at 120-130 pounds. Saw him three times that day, but he [most likely a she] wouldn't take a bait. We were fishing a wreck in 37 feet of water. I got one shot at him, threw a jig in front of him, but he ignored it. Later in 1979, Hurricane Frederick covered that spot with sand, the place now marks 34 feet, and no fish."

Linda McQueen, daughter of charterboat captain Capt. Butch McQueen: "Early in the season, the first of April back then, we'd chum and spot them on the beach off Horn Island. Two or three weeks later (through summer) we'd chum in deeper water or fish the buoys or structures. My dad believed even back then, when fish were everywhere, that we should watch what we do to conserve them. He said before the year 2000 local fishermen would be surviving on sharks and redfish, and that's exactly true here today for charter fishing."

Alvin Baker's dad was a charterboat captain and young Alvin worked on the boat. "If the shrimpboats were working, we sometimes put a hundred lemonfish on the boat in a day. Or about that many kings. A hundred of each, on one trip. We had two baskets of nice, white trout for bait, and our fishermen knew what they were doing *that* day. Some days, we'd put out a whole bonito and just drift. We'd hook a big gray shark, there were plenty of them, and often a dozen lemonfish came up swimming with the shark. You won't see that again; the big sharks are long gone. We had no favorite tide or conditions out there. We had so many lemonfish out there (sigh) it didn't matter. Nowadays, I don't even target these fish unless I'm in a tournament."

Capt. Chuck Guillford was raised in Port St. Joe, Florida. He said the cobia were so thick in the late 1940s and early '50s they were like "herds of hogs." You could head out on a spring afternoon and catch them until you just about sunk the boat. He would then fill up a pickup truck and drive over to the poor side of town, called the "quarters." Anyone who wanted fish could have some. "These were 40- to 60-pounders, nearly enough to feed a family for a week," he said.

He said there was only one local vessel that fished offshore, where those fish spent their summers. Today there are hundreds of charterboats, many with spotting towers (to spot surface ling) in Destin alone. Texas has its fleet of boats, too. With so many Gulf fishermen out there today, it was inevitable that tighter restrictions were needed.

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

FLATS® CAT

SMOOTHEST–DRIEST–SHALLOWEST

$70,100.00

As Pictured + TTL

21' Flat Cat

All Composite No Wood Construction

Flats Cat boats are the smoothest, driest, and shallowest boats available.

Whether you are an experienced angler or just starting out, a Flats Cat fishing boat can provide a comfortable and enjoyable fishing experience.

www.flatscat.com

Available Models

17' Flat Cat | 19' Flat Cat | 21' Flat Cat

SUZUKI MARINE

Get a **FREE** GPS with your Boat Purchase

Discount Code: TSFM

Financing Available

Gulf Coast Marine
Corpus Christi, TX
800-622-2449

Coastal Bend Marine
Port O'Connor, Texas
361-983-4841

Flats Boats Florida
Dunnellon, Florida
678-485-5485

JAY WATKINS

ASK THE PRO

THE SMALLEST DISCOVERIES CAN CREATE THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES

I love the place I am at in my career. That is the answer I give clients when they ask how long I plan to continue guiding. I say this mostly because I am not yet where I want to be. It is true I have logged thousands of days on the water and hundreds of thousands of hours. I have cleaned who knows how many thousands of fish, owned twenty-one boats, guided thousands of anglers, and waded some to the banks of the Jordan. Through the course of all this I have ruined four or five relationships and probably dropped the ball with my boys more than a few times. Fishing, the way I have approached it, has always grounded and fixed me; but that would not have been possible had I just looked at fishing as a career. Fishing is more than a sport or career, but it is not the most important thing in my life. God, family and a very few friends top the list.

Fishing has been and remains to be one of my lifeworks. This body of work will never be done because our fishery is ever-changing. There are not enough pages afforded me here to discuss all that I have seen over my 43-plus years of guiding, not to mention my younger days fishing with my father and grandfather. I honestly don't remember not fishing but there were times in my early years that I took a break from it. I don't see myself taking a break from guiding as long as I can physically do what must be done to fish in the manner that I do. Mental health is of course something else that needs to stay sharp, and I believe my brain is actually better than the rest of my body. Perhaps I haven't used or abused it as much. I continue to learn and discover small things each year that allow me to create better opportunities for my clients. In the following paragraphs I will try to cover some of these.

One of the most significant changes over the past several years has been the effects that boating pressure has created. Years ago we would notice that schooling redfish would move from one area to another on shallow grass flats when boating pressure was high. Because there were so many fish in the school it was easy to observe the movement. Taking note of these movements I was able to form a pattern, a pattern that still works today. However, with increasing numbers of boats running shallower than ever, our back lakes and shallow grass flats are now subjected to more intense traffic. This traffic moves fish but does not spook them to the point where they will leave the flat or the lake completely. Spooked fish seem almost constantly in high-alert mode, which can certainly make them more difficult to catch.

One thing that I see occurring often on shallow flats is the way trout react to boat traffic. Several times last week in an area that we have some nice fish located, we noticed that during down periods in the feeding cycle, when boats ran on either side of us within a minute or less the angler on that end of the line would receive a bite. This is something I learned and truly have tried to fine tune throughout the past twenty or so years of my career. The reason for the continued development of a so-called spook pattern is the fact that I often fish in highly-trafficked areas. I see the amazement in the reaction of my anglers when I call the shot as a boat runs past us.

The main key to one's success with this pattern is where you set up and the size of the area necessary to create your QUIET ZONE. I am not a fan of blocking or dropping anglers off in attempt to block other anglers. I do spread my groups out on the flats but try to rein them in if they get too much of a spread working.

Shawn Dinwiddie just being Shawn - CPR.

One day last week I was bouncing my thoughts off my sons Ryan and Jay Ray. I engage them in these conversations trying to create Dad time to be honest, but I also learn a ton from listening to them. The salt and freshwater worlds are different in more ways than just salinity and pH, but bottom line is that fishing is fishing and fish remain to be just fish. That said, pressure is pressure, and all fish today are experiencing increased fishing pressure and are reacting accordingly.

Are we to a point where these increases are changing fish movement and habits? I am a believer that this is occurring,

SHIMANO

DOMINATE THE INSHORE REALM

ROY'S BAIT & TACKLE
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX
roysbaitandtackle.com

and therefore I am a huge proponent of the "fish smart" concept. This concept gets me back to the comment that I like where I am at in my career, which is a place that demands me to continue to work to find better ways of predicting where that next movement will be. I have tools in my wading box that allow me to fish every level within the water column. The mental picture that I have of what my lure is doing and needs to be doing is well engrained in my mind. One simply cannot fish effectively without this vision.

Chuck with another solid trout - CPR.

Adam Todd showing off a good one on Double D Fatty - CPR.

I fished an older gentleman one time that was losing his eyesight. His mental picture and focus were unbelievable, his near blindness had heightened all his other senses; it was amazing to see and watch. I relate this story so that you will know just how important it is to develop your mental picture of what it is you need to be doing with the lure to create that instinctive reaction we call a take.

I am constantly watching and testing my lure actions as I fish and paying close attention to the way I am working the lure when I get a take. Never is this more critical as when we are working suspending or swimming styles of lures. I know, I did not mention topwaters, but we can see that action, so mental image is not as important. You have heard me say many times that each angler develops their own rhythm or cadence in their retrieve. The key here is to be able to recognize the depth, speed of retrieve and action imparted to the lure that draws your strikes, and then be able to repeat it.

I once had a guy ask if all lures from a given maker work the same. Today's precision molds and injection processes would reflect that most do but that was not always the case with some of the more well-known Texas lures. Sink rates often varied due to lack of consistency in materials and quality control, even though many fishermen (me included) never noticed. Not until Cliff Webb schooled me on it. See, this is a prime example of great anglers picking up on tiny details and passing the info to others…which is part of what makes them who they are. Thanks, Cliff!

I started fishing with spoons, Bingos, and 52M MirrOlures. The Bingos and MirrOlures required that anglers develop specific presentation rhythms of retrieve speed, twitches and pauses in order to draw reactions from fish. For me, trout were trickier than reds. I remember standing on a reef one day watching large schools of mullet glinting. Glinting is what I call it when we see mullet or menhaden showing their silvery sides as they move through the water. I thought; that is what attracts the strike, so how do I make this lure do that?

I began way back then the process of trying to coordinate my rod tip action and my reeling rhythm to emulate that glint. I found the reason the old salts removed the eyelet from the top of the MirrOlure 52M to the nose was to make the lure run shallower. Lo and behold it also allowed them to create more reflection (glint) from the foil insert inside the bait. It was genius, I thought; so I started removing the eyelet, filling the hole with Mom's clear fingernail polish and then screwing the eyelet into the nose. Today MirrOlure has the 51MR series, so your mom's fingernail polish is safe.

So, I am in total learning and rediscovery mode these days, knowing that the ever-changing fishery that I love is going to force me to continue to expand and improve all my fishing skills. Custom Corky and Texas Customs saved me. I tell the owners Dee Dee and Lowell Odom this all the time.

The creation of new colors, styles of lures, and jigheads has brought us to thinking about how we can modify our presentation techniques and skills in order to draw more strikes with them. It has also partnered me with many of Texas's best fishermen, anglers that teach me something every time they open their mouths. Open your mind, close your mouth and listen. There are new patterns and techniques being discovered all the time.

I will close with this. As a youngster I accompanied my dad and Bobby Flanagan while they scouted another team for a playoff game. On the way home I asked why they didn't say anything to all the other scouts at the gym that night sitting around us. They told me, we know what we know…and now we also know what they know. Brilliant, right?

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.

Still Learning; Even After 43 Years!

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.

Telephone 361-729-9596
Email Jay@jaywatkins.com
Website www.jaywatkins.com

Made For
TROPHY TROUT.
NEW
CRAZY CROKER
MANIAC MULLET
CC-06
4 1/2"
5/8 OZ.
MS-07
2 3/4"
5/8 OZ.
PAUL BROWN'S ORIGINAL SERIES
B&L MFG
SHOPMIRROLURE.COM

Seaguar®
VALUE-PACKED & BUDGET FRIENDLY
GET ALL THE SEAGUAR PERFORMANCE YOU COUNT ON AT PRICES EVERYBODY WILL LOVE
BASIX 100% FLUOROCARBON
Seaguar 101
PERFORMANCE FISHING LINES
STRONG, SOFT & SMOOTH CASTING
LANZAMIENTO SUAVE, UNIFORME Y RESISTENTE
LANCER EN DOUCEUR, FLUIDE ET ROBUSTE
15 LB 6.8KG 200YD 183M Dia .014"/.350mm
BASIX 100% FLUOROCARBON
STRONG, SOFT & SMOOTH CASTING
15BSX200
SEAGUAR.COM
BONUS 5YD SEAGUAR FLUORO LEADER
TACTX BRAID & FLUORO KIT
PRECISION CASTING, 4-STRAND CAMO BRAID
LANZAMIENTO DE PRECISIÓN, TRENZA CAMUFLADA DE 4 HILOS
LANCER DE PRÉCISION, TRESSE CAMOUFLAGE À 4 FILS
15 LB 6.8KG 150YD 137M Dia .009"/.229mm
FLUORO LEADER 8LB 3.6KG
15TCX150
SEAGUAR.COM
BASIX™ STRONG, SOFT, SMOOTH CASTING FLUORO
TACTX™ PRECISION CASTING, 4-STRAND CAMO BRAID
© 2023 KUREHA AMERICA INC.

By J. Ruben Chavez | Hatchery Biologist,
CCA Marine Development Center

FIELD NOTES

MORNING GLORY

Hatchery Biologist, CCA Marine Development Center

Most coastal anglers in Texas know that the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) stocks millions of fingerlings representing a "Texas Slam" (Red Drum, Spotted Seatrout, and Southern Flounder) into Texas' bay systems. TPWD uses stock enhancement as a fisheries management tool by operating three saltwater hatcheries: Sea Center Texas (SCT) in Lake Jackson, Perry R Bass Marine Fisheries Research Center (PRB) in Palacios, and the CCA Marine Development Center (MDC) in Corpus Christi. Annually, the hatcheries release around 15 million Red Drum, 10 million Spotted Seatrout, and 50,000 Southern Flounder into Texas bays. Sea Center Texas focus their stocking efforts on the upper and middle coast from Sabine Lake to San Antonio Bay, while MDC stocks the lower coast bay systems from Aransas Bay to the Lower Laguna Madre. PRB stocks fish from both the upper and lower coast fish primarily focused on Matagorda Bay to Aransas Bay.

The hatchery production of fish for stock enhancement is a three-phase process, beginning with collecting and spawning wild adult fish (broodfish). Sea Center Texas maintains the broodfish for the upper Texas coast, and MDC has the lower coast fish. A responsible approach to stock enhancement always includes taking broodfish genetics into consideration. Therefore, 25% of hatchery spawning broodstock are "cycled out" and replaced with new wild-caught fish each year to help support genetic diversity. Upon entry to their hatchery homes, new broodfish go through a quarantine period before they become part of the spawning stock. All hatchery brood fish are conditioned to spawn using a 150-day maturation cycle (Figure 1). The temperature and photoperiod (daylight hours per day) are adjusted to simulate an entire seasonal year in six months. After undergoing this 150-day maturation cycle, they are ready to spawn.

The next phase of this process begins with collecting and incubating eggs for stocking outdoor ponds. Red Drum and Spotted Seatrout eggs are collected by staff and placed in 100-gallon incubator tanks, where they will hatch within 24 hours of spawning. When larvae are approximately three days old, they are harvested from incubators and transported to outdoor grow-out ponds. Fish from MDC and SCT are stocked in the ponds at their respective facilities, while PRB ponds are stocked with fish from both facilities. These grow-out ponds are filled with filtered seawater and fertilized to promote the primary productivity of phytoplankton and, subsequently, zooplankton, a natural food source for larval fish. Once a pond has enough zooplankton, they are ready for a new batch of larvae.

The final phase of fingerling production is pond grow-out and, ultimately, the pond harvest. Red Drum and Spotted Seatrout fingerlings are grown to a target size of about 1.5 inches. Fingerling growth is monitored weekly by measuring a subsample of fish from each stocked pond. Depending on how fast they grow, fingerlings can reach the target size in 35-40 days and are ready to be harvested from the ponds and stocked into Texas coastal waters. Personally, I think pond harvest is the best part of the job because it is the fruits of our labor! It is fun, yes, but easy; I'll leave that up to interpretation. A harvester's (TPWD staff assigned to a harvest) circadian rhythm is interrupted once it's time to start harvesting grow-out ponds. After months of a "standard daytime routine," harvesters are charged with pulling an "all nighter" to harvest the fingerlings from their ponds. Hatchery team members tasked with harvest responsibilities leave work at 3 pm only to return at midnight to harvest all fingerlings before sunrise the next morning. What's the story? Morning glory is right! Loading 150 pounds or more of healthy fingerlings into a trailer destined for one of Texas' bays is nothing less than glorious!

Fingerling harvest begins with the opening of the drain valve of the pond. Depending on the size and number of ponds being harvested, it can take up to three days from the opening of the drain until the last fingerling is loaded into a trailer. Each pond consists of a harvest kettle which is a concrete basin where the drain is located with adjacent concrete steps leading down into the pond. As fingerlings reach the kettle, they are dipped out using nets, weighed (around 3-5 pounds

per net), and placed in the buckets. Once in the bucket, they are re-weighed, and the displacement is the recorded weight. A transport trailer can haul 150 pounds of fingerlings, and during harvest, there can be more than 100 pounds of fingerlings in the kettle, which is exciting and nerve-racking at the same time! However, screens are in place to prevent fingerlings from exiting the pond via the drain, and oxygen is added to the water throughout the harvest to keep the fingerlings alive.

So, let's do the math. If a pond produces 150 pounds of fish, and there are an average of 1,200 fish per pound, then 180,000 fingerlings are loaded in the transport trailer. A harvester can walk up and down the steps of a pond around 30 times when they are "running buckets." This can become quite a workout. The harvester takes five random sub-samples of 100 fingerlings during each harvest. These fish are counted and weighed as a group of 100. The average weight of the five samples is used to determine the number of fingerlings produced (per pound) during a harvest. From these 500 fingerlings, 20 are measured individually from each sample group, and the total length and weight are recorded. This data calculates the number of fingerlings produced and the percent return of fingerlings from the original number of larvae stocked in the pond.

The final step in a successful harvest is transporting and releasing the fingerlings into their new home, one of Texas' bays. Hatchery biologists work closely with the Ecosystem Management team biologists to select stocking sites to release hatchery fish. These sites can be accessed by both land and boat, with excellent habitat being the driving factor. Some research has suggested that about 6% of the fishable Red Drum stock in Texas are of hatchery origin, with a range of 3.8% - 17.4%, which varies by bay and year. So, the next time you see a TPWD truck and trailer loaded with fingerlings along some bay shoreline on the Texas coast, you can rest assured we are doing our part to ensure great fishing for future generations of Texans.

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

DAVE ROBERTS

SHALLOW WATER FISHING

CONSISTENTLY FISHING THE INCONSISTENT

Looking at the Gulf of Mexico coast, there is more shoreline available than an angler could fish in a lifetime. Even if we were to focus only on Texas, you could fish every body of water in the state but you may never see every aspect of it. From the Sabine to the Rio Grande, our state has more coastline features than you can shake a stick at. There are oyster reefs, grass flats, sand bars, islands, ditches, bayous and more. Even though our coastline seems to be one consistent piece of land, the inconsistencies are where anglers should focus their efforts.

A few years back I had a buddy that wanted to come down and learn some of the marshes around Sabine. I told him to pick a day that works for him and I would be happy to show him around. We finally got a chance to go and on the way out to some of my favorite ponds I gave him a rundown of what we are going to be doing and looking for. We caught a few fish and as the morning went on he finally asked me a question. "What exactly are we targeting?" I was as confused by the question as he was with what we were doing. My reply was simple and the only one I had at the time. "The marsh," I told him. I didn't really know how else to explain it but as the conversation continued I began to understand what he meant. He kept saying that since there are not any oyster clumps on the shorelines and grass is at minimum, what are we targeting? To be fair, that is a completely reasonable question because we were sitting in a pond about two feet deep with a mud bottom all the way across, and with no specific or defining underwater features. This is when the lightbulb in my head came on.

I turned the boat around and dropped the Power Pole to provide a clearer view from which we could view the path we had traveled. I began to point out where the three fish that we caught that morning came from. I explained that the last fish came off that little point; it may not look like much but it is enough for a fish to get behind and stage for an ambush. Our second fish came from a slight depression in the bottom, very subtle but enough of a pocket or pothole with slightly less grass to influence how water currents would flow across it. With the proper wind or tide, water draining off the adjacent flat could form a swirl or eddy, enough to influence bait movement and catch the attention of a hungry fish. And

make the transition to catching fish in our marsh? He told me that no matter where he goes he targets the Three Ps—Points, Pockets and Patches of grass. That concept was not new to me but I have never heard it phrased as such. He is 100% correct though; you should cast at every point, pocket and patch of grass that you may happen upon. One of these three variables may be the only distinguishable features in an area but quite often will be just enough to hold a fish or two on a consistent basis.

Another place I like to put this concept to work is at the jetties or other rocky structure. If you have ever spent anytime fishing these types of structure you likely have noticed certain spots that seem to always hold fish. Odds are there is something unique about that one section of structure that provides an ideal place to attract bait or ambush point for predators. One of my favorite things to look for are sections that are sunken just enough to allow water to flow across the top. With tide or even wakes of passing barge and ship traffic, water will drain across the rocks and fish will be waiting for bait to flow over for an easy meal. This subtle difference is something to target when you are looking at mile-long stretches of what seems to be the same rocks.

There are plenty of ways to target and catch fish but for me, I have learned to pay attention to the subtle differences in the areas I fish. They may not look like much but they are certainly worth taking note of and always worth a few casts. These inconsistent or irregular features can be a huge help to consistently catching fish.

then I pointed across to the other side of the pond at the little group of bushes growing randomly on the shoreline and casting a shadow on the water. I said that is where our first fish came from.

From that day forward, I began paying greater attention to the layout and features of the areas I was fishing and correlating these with the places I was seeing and/or catching fish. This is when it started to click for me that the minor differences in a pond or shoreline can make all the difference in the world when it comes to targeting fish.

The thing about this concept is that it doesn't just work here on the Upper Texas coast, it can be implemented everywhere. One of the most valuable lessons I have been taught came from Jamie Hough who drove from South Carolina to fish a tournament on Sabine. I asked him how does someone drive halfway across the country and

View The Video

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

Popping Cork Tactics

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.

Email: TexasKayakChronicles@yahoo.com
Website: www.TexasKayakChronicles.com

Volunteers from CCA Texas Aransas Bay Chapter and others worked a section of the beach during the Billy Sandifer Beach Cleanup. Over 2,500 volunteers cleaned 32 miles of beach and filled 7 roll off dumpsters with debris removed from the beach.

SHANE BONNOT

TSFMAG CONSERVATION NEWS

2023 IN FULL SWING

Advocacy

The 88th legislative session is in full swing, and at the time of writing this update, the March 10th bill filing deadline is fast approaching. While this isn't an all-encompassing bill watch review, there are a few noteworthy items that deserve our immediate attention.

Senate Bill 1

Senate Bill 1 is the general appropriations bill which appropriates monies from the Treasury to support branches of state government and state agencies, including Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
This session, TPWD has approached the legislature requesting for help with inflationary cost increases, staff compensation, capital construction and repair needs, oyster fishery concerns, land conservation, and game warden needs. To partially address concerns with the oyster fishery, TPWD has requested three million dollars to expedite participation in the voluntary oyster license buyback program.

Oyster Leases: Senate Bill 1032/House Bill 2475

Sponsored by Senator Lois Kolkhorst and Representative Todd Hunter, this bill would clarify the definition of a "natural oyster bed" and clearly give TPWD authority to expand oyster leasing opportunities for both harvestable commercial operations and non-harvestable restoration activities. There has been overwhelming support from both the commercial oyster fishery and the conservation community to expand leases, a suggestion that was clearly communicated in a letter that was submitted to the TPW Commission in 2021. Passage of this bill would be a huge win for our bays systems, guaranteeing more oysters in the water and more opportunities to invest in the health of our bays.

Oyster Mariculture: House Bill 1260 and House Bill 1809

Currently, two oyster mariculture (oyster aquaculture/farming) bills have been filed and both aim at improving efficiencies within the industry. House Bill 1260 by Representative Coby Vasut would allow oyster farmers to clean their cages on the water, rather than bring them to land. Cleaning oyster cages on the water is a very common practice in other states but has been discouraged here in Texas because of existing TCEQ regulations. House Bill 1809 by Representative Hunter would create a Cultivated Oyster Mariculture Advisory Board with appointments made by the Governor's Office. As currently written, the bill would prescribe the board makeup with four members being in the oyster mariculture or seafood industry and the other three being in the scientific and conservation community.

First Quarter Happenings

The first quarter has been a busy one as usual. At the time of this writing, CCA Texas has held six local chapter events. Attendance and support have both been strong and are signaling another successful year on the fundraising standpoint. We encourage our local chapter membership to be involved with the local chapters, whether it is in the banquet planning process, attending our Angler's Night Out events, or taking part in a local community conservation projects.

CCA Texas members and recreational anglers all along the Texas coast participated in the Annual Crab Trap

Cleanup held on February 18, 2023. The Galveston, San Antonio, Copano and Aransas Bay systems continued to be prime target areas for derelict traps. While there are traps every year, the numbers continue to dwindle down for the annual event. Outreach to the industry with shared data collected from the events has helped educate and encouraged the industry to be good stewards of the resource, and continue working towards a minimal derelict trap issue. Many thanks to all our CCA Texas members and those of other organizations that continue to participate in this effort annually.

The bounty of derelict crab traps removed by volunteers from the Aransas Bay Chapter.

The 28th Annual Billy Sandifer Big Shell Beach Cleanup was held February 25, 2023. A large turnout of volunteers from across the state turned out for the annual event. The 2023 event was a resounding success as an amazing 2,500 people showed up and cleaned the beach. It was a beautiful day, and 32 miles of beach were cleaned, filling 7 dumpsters full of trash. Thanks to all that showed up for this event, and a special thanks to all of the support sponsors that help make this event happen.

CCA Texas and other like organizations offer many opportunities to be involved in the conservation of our Texas coastal resources. We all encourage you to take the time and be a part of the effort to conserve these resources for present and future generations. For more information about CCA Texas, be sure to visit www.ccatexas.org, search us Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Brittle stars with arms raised from bottom in feeding posture. Photo by NOAA, Lophelia II 2008: Deepwater Coral Expedition. Licensed by CC BY 2.0.

STEPHANIE BOYD

FISHY FACTS

BRITTLE STARS

With over 2000 described species, Ophiuroidea is the largest class of living echinoderms, found in all oceans from intertidal to the greatest depths. It includes brittle stars and basket stars (species with branching arms) as well as snake stars (non-branching arms). The name Ophiuroidea is derived from the Greek words *ophis*, meaning snake, and *oura*, meaning tail, describing the often thin, snail-like winding or coiling arms.

Brittle stars are a quirkier, more slender version of sea stars. They are composed of a central disk and (usually) five slender arms that radiate out like skinny ribbons or strings. The central disk is made up of a skeleton of calcium carbonate and contains all the internal organs. The digestive and reproductive organs never enter the arms, like they do in sea stars. Brittle stars don't have brains or eyes, but they do have a large stomach, genitals, muscles, and a mouth surrounded by five jaws. Additionally, they have several types of nerve endings in their skin that are touch-sensitive and can sense chemicals in the water, as well as the presence or absence of light. The nervous system consists of a main nerve ring which runs around the central disk. At the base of each arm, the ring attaches to a radial nerve which runs to the end of the limb. They have tube feet on their underside, like sea stars, but the feet do not have suction cups at the end and are not used for locomotion. Rather, they are used for feeding and to help the brittle star sense its environment. The tube feet at the ends of the arms may also sense light and odors, allowing the brittle star to detect and retreat into crevices.

Like sea stars, brittle stars have a vascular system that uses water to control locomotion, respiration, and food/waste transportation, and their tube feet are filled with water. The madreporite, a trap door on the brittle star's underside, controls the movement of water in and out of the brittle star's body. It acts like a pressure-equalizing valve. A brittle star's arms are supported by calcium carbonate plates that function as ball and socket joints (like our shoulders) to give the brittle star's arms flexibility. The plates are moved by a type of connective tissue called mutable collagenous tissue (MCT), which is controlled by the vascular system. So, unlike a sea star, whose arms are relatively inflexible, the brittle star's arms have a snakelike quality which allows the creature to move relatively quickly and squeeze into tight spaces. In most species, the joints between the endoskeleton and superficial plates allow the arm to bend to the side, but not upwards. (However, in the basket stars, the arms are flexible in all directions.)

Even though their bodies are radially symmetrical, they tend to move like a bilaterally symmetrical animal. One lead arm points the way forward, and the arms on the left and right of the pointer arm coordinate the rest of the brittle star's movements in a "rowing" motion so that the star moves forward. This rowing motion looks similar to the way a sea turtle moves with its flippers. When the brittle star "turns," instead of rotating its whole body, it just picks a new pointer arm to lead the way. Sometimes, instead of rowing, they will simply twist and coil along the sea floor, the arms reminiscent of squirming snakes. The arms give the brittle star its common name. When a predator grabs hold of an arm, the arm easily snaps off, allowing the creature to escape. This process is known as autotomy or self-amputation. When the star is threatened, the nervous system tells the MCT near the base of the arm to disintegrate. The wound heals, and then the arm regrows, a process which can take weeks to months, depending upon the species. As long as its central disk remains, the brittle star will continue to function. Brittle stars are measured by the diameter of their central disc and the length of their arms. Brittle star discs range in size from 0.1 to 3 inches; their arm length is typically a function of their disc size, between two to three times the diameter, in general (although some have lengths up to 20 or more times). Though the typical brittle star body plan has a pentagonal to round central disc that is offset clearly from the five arms, a considerable number of species depart from this generalized shape. Species with six, seven, and up to ten arms are known. A few of the brittle star species found in our waters are *Microphiopholis atra, Hemipholis elongata* (banded brittle star), and *Ophiolepis elegans* (rosette-scaled brittle star).

Microphiopholis atra has a tan or gray, round disk, 5 arms, with 3 spines on each side of its arm segments. They reach a maximum of 6 inches. The banded brittle star, *Hemipholis elongata*, has a mottled brown or gray disk with 5 lobes, 5 arms, and also 3 spines on each side of its arm segments. The arms sport dark banding and the tube feet are red. (Another brittle star has red tube feet, but it has 6 arms instead of 5.) They reach a maximum size of 4 inches. The rosette-scaled brittle star, *Ophiolepis elegans*, has a round disk that is brown on top and beige underneath, 5 banded arms with 4-6 spines on each side. These brittle stars are easy to distinguish from other brittle stars by the rosette pattern plate formation on their disk. They reach a maximum size of 1 inch disk width, 7.5 inch arm span.

A black and white banded brittle star. Photo by NOAA, Lophelia II 2008: Deepwater Coral Expedition. Licensed by CC BY 2.0.

Brittle stars occupy a variety of benthic habitats in all oceans of the world, from the deep sea to intertidal zones, salty and brackish waters, from polar climes to tropical waters. There are an estimated 73 brittle star species in the Arctic alone. The Indo-Pacific region sports an impressive 825 species. In one deep water region discovered off Antarctica several years ago, dubbed "Brittle Star City," researchers found tens of millions of brittle stars crammed together. Off the coast of Southern California, millions of them can cover large areas of the sea floor in layers up to an inch thick. In the Gulf and bays, they inhabit shell, sand, or muddy bottoms. The first deep-sea animal ever to be reported on was supposedly the brittle star, *Gorgonocephalus caputmedusae,* accidentally dredged up by Sir John Ross in 1818 while sounding the bottom of Baffin Bay in his attempt to find the North West passage.

Brittle stars are bottom dwellers, so they mostly scavenge off the ocean floor, feeling around for leftovers, and using their tube-feet to sweep the particles along grooves on their arms toward the mouth, located on their underside. They feed on detritus and small oceanic organisms such as plankton, mollusks, worms, small, suspended organisms if available, and occasionally fish. In crowded areas, brittle stars eat suspended matter from prevailing seafloor currents by lifting up their arms to trap tiny particles and algae ("marine snow") using the mucous strands on their tube feet. The mouth has five jaws around it, and crunched-up food particles are transported from the mouth, then through a short esophagus to the stomach, which takes up much of the brittle star's central disk. There are 10 pouches, or infolds, in the stomach where the prey is digested. Brittle stars don't have an anus, so any wastes must come out through the mouth. Brittle stars are often eaten by their larger relatives, the common starfish and the spiny starfish. They hide in cracks and crevices to avoid being eaten, but they can also detect a type of chemical produced by their starfish predators which gives them a head start to escaping. Other predators include gastropods, fish, and crabs. They are also vulnerable to attacks by parasites, including protozoans, nematodes, and algae. Brittle stars play an important role in the food web. They are known as "seafloor ecosystem engineers," meaning they reshape the seafloor sediment and influence the distribution of other seafloor species.

The sexes are separate in most species, although the sex is not obvious without looking at the brittle star's genitals, which are located inside its central disk. A few species are hermaphroditic (both male and female in a single individual) or protandric (sequentially hermaphroditic: the individual changes its sex at some point in its life - male to female). The gonads are located in the disk, and open into thin, fluid-filled pouches between the arms, called genital bursae. Fertilization is external in some species, with the eggs and sperm being released into the surrounding water. This results in a free-swimming larva called an ophiopluteus. These larvae have four pairs of rigid arms lined with cilia. They develop directly into an adult, without the attachment stage found in most starfish larvae. Many species brood developing larvae in the bursae. In this case, eggs are held near the bursae, and then fertilized by sperm that has been released into the water. The embryos develop inside these pockets and eventually crawl out. A few species are truly viviparous, with the embryo receiving nourishment from the mother through the wall of the bursa. Some brittle stars reproduce asexually through a process called fission, which occurs when the star splits its central disk in half. Regrowth of both the lost part of

the disk and the arms occur in both halves, yielding two stars. Brittle stars reach sexual maturity at about 2 years of age, become full grown by 3 or 4 years of age, and live up to 5 years.

Brittle stars are rarely harvested directly by humans, although some species are sold as marine aquarium specimens. However, as they are a dominant component of seafloor faunas, they can be impacted by other human activities such as mining or trawling. Though some species have blunt spines, no brittle star is known to be dangerous or venomous. The brittle star's only means of defense is escaping or discarding an arm. Scientifically, brittle stars have emerged as a key group for macroecological studies, because they occur in all marine habitats, have a range of feeding and life history strategies, and have just the right amount of diversity and abundance to statistically analyze without becoming a major taxonomic headache. (Macroecology deals with relationships between organisms and their environment on large geographical scales to characterize and explain statistical patterns of abundance, distribution, and diversity.)

Where I learned about brittle stars, and you can too!

Texas Marine Species
txmarspecies.tamug.edu/invertdetails.cfm?scinameID=Microphiopholis%20atra
txmarspecies.tamug.edu/invertdetails.cfm?scinameID=Hemipholis%20elongata
txmarspecies.tamug.edu/invertdetails.cfm?scinameID=Ophiolepis%20elegans

Ocean Conservancy
oceanconservancy.org/wildlife-factsheet/brittle-star/
oceanconservancy.org/blog/2016/03/30/arctic-wildlife-get-to-know-brittle-stars/

World Ophiuroidea Database
www.marinespecies.org/ophiuroidea/aphia.php?p=stats

Science & the Sea
www.scienceandthesea.org/program/200711/brittle-stars

National Center for Biotechnology Information
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3292557/

Marine Education Society of Australasia
www.mesa.edu.au/echinoderms/echino02.asp

ThoughtCo
www.thoughtco.com/brittle-stars-2291454

The Wildlife Trusts
www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/marine/starfish-and-sea-urchins/common-brittlestar

Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brittle_star

View The Video

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

Burtal Brittle Stars

Barndominiums • Metal Buildings • Boat and Mini Storage • Metal Frame Homes • Commercial Buildings

Call us for custom buildings and homes on your own property!

361-576-3825 Office | 361-576-3828 Fax
36 Hunters Circle, Victoria, TX 77905
www.RafterJConstruction.com

EXPERIENCE UNFORGETTABLE ACTION AT TROPIC STAR LODGE

Enjoy the action-packed inshore and offshore angling experience that has made Tropic Star Lodge one of the most celebrated fisheries in the world over the last 60 years, without needing to travel too far from home. Insane fishing opportunities, fully-fitted fleet options, an expert crew, luxurious lodging and first-class dining - you'll want for nothing during your time spent at this remote paradise. With Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, Sailfish, Yellowfin Tuna, MASSIVE Mahi Mahi, Roosterfish, Cubera Snapper and over 15 other inshore species, **Tropic Star is a true angling bucket list destination.** Visit us and experience our all-new accommodation and fleet options, including a 47' Viking, 45' Hatteras, and the luxe 3-bedroom Presidential Villa overlooking the famous Tropic Star *"Bay of Dreams"*. **Get ready to experience what makes Tropic Star the fishing destination of choice for anglers all over the world!**

Ready for action? *Share the code "TEXAS2023" with us when booking for our Blue Marlin or Inshore Seasons (March - Sept 2023) and you'll get your overnight stay in Panama City on us.*

tropicstar.com • 800-682-3424 • reservations@tropicstar.com

Here's a great hammer headed back to sea following a successful capture and release.

ERIC OZOLINS

EXTREME KAYAK FISHING & SHARKS FROM THE SAND

SUPER SHARK TRIO

Up and down the Texas Coast, from Port Isabel to High Island, true to life sea monsters prowl the inshore waters. In the marine ecosystem of the Gulf of Mexico, sharks reign supreme in the food chain. The toothy critters play an important role in maintaining balance in the system, by preventing other species from overpopulating and depleting resources.

Nearly half our shark species reach maximum lengths of six feet or less. But, we do have giants roaming the waters as well. Out of all these sharks, Texans are generally most proud of and fascinated with what we might call our Big Three. These are the big sharks most likely encountered by anglers in the Lone Star State. At various times, serious land-based shark anglers target each of the Big Three. Most would consider an encounter with any one of them a rewarding, treasured memory.

Of these Big Three, one appears before the others each year. Aptly named, this species has a reputation of being one of the most aggressive and dangerous sharks in the world. Bull sharks can display a downright menacing demeanor. Here in Texas, we have plenty of bulls; the opportunistic predators reside in our waters for about nine months of the year.

Bulls range far offshore, but also venture well into the backs of the bays and miles up the rivers. They're most abundant in the surf, where mature individuals normally begin to show up sometime in April. By May, our encounters with the largest bulls of the year become most frequent. Some of these sharks are pregnant, roaming and feeding vigorously.At the end of spring, female bulls drop their pups in shallow nursery zones where the youngsters find ample food sources.Some of these zones lie in the protected waters behind our barrier islands.

Bulls are not the fastest sharks, but they possess ravenous appetites. They aren't especially picky in their dining habits; they'll eat stingrays, jacks, and just about any other large prey they can find. Ironically, sharks are one of these monstrous carnivore's favorite meals. It's not uncommon to reel in just the head of a five-foot blacktip that has been devoured by a hungry bull.

When fishing for these incredible predators, I like to run the biggest baits I can. Whole stingrays or large sections of jack crevalle have proven to produce plenty

of bites from bulls. While bull sharks max out at just over nine feet in length and weigh a shade more than five hundred pounds at most, their relative abundance when compared with larger, more rare species, has earned them a spot on the podium with the other two members of our Big Three.

The great hammerhead is the evolutionary masterpiece among our trio of revered sharks. The longest coastal sharks we have in Texas, we see some specimens which measure more than fourteen feet in length. My personal best great hammer ranks among the largest land-based sharks caught in the United States—a 14′ 8″ monster caught in 2020.

Arguably the strongest, fastest fighting sharks in the world's oceans, giant hammers have stripped all the line off the spools of some of the world's largest reels. I've been spooled twice by powerhouse behemoths I simply could not turn. The last 13′ hammer we landed on a charter was turned with less than fifty yards of line left on the reel.

Leah Ozolins poses proudly with her largest catch thus far in her young career.

The optimal baits I've found for mega hammers are large whole rays of any species. Great hammerheads love to eat rays of all kinds. When these giant predators move into the shallows late in the spring, their arrival coincides with the time when pregnant southern and roughtail rays bear their young. Both of these stingray species grow to weights exceeding 200 pounds.

The hammerheads use their flat, wide heads to pin down the rays and eat them alive, one gigantic bite at a time. We catch plenty of healthy hammers with multiple stingray barbs stuck in the corners of their mouths. While the hammers rank high among the largest sharks in the ocean, they're also somewhat fragile and must remain in the water as much as possible and released in a timely manner to enhance their odds of surviving after they're caught. Anyone experiencing the luck and

Oz prepares to release a large bull shark landed in the PINS surf.

Alexis Anthony with summertime tiger ready to be released.

Mating scars on large female bull shark.

luxury of landing and releasing one of these unique, regal creatures alive will have earned a thrilling, lifelong memory.

The last of our Big Three is the species of shark which sparked my interest in the sport, as it did for numerous other sharkers in the state. This magnificent creature is the tiger shark. Like bulls, tigers will devour just about anything.

This is the only species of shark known to be capable of crushing the shells of large sea turtles. Tiger sharks have teeth seemingly designed specifically for purposes like these. Their serrated fangs, when powered by their muscular jaws, can chomp right through just about any food source, even cut through heavy steel cable, if positioned right. Tigers are known to feed on birds such as gulls and pelicans. Decades ago, when these sharks were regularly killed and cut open on Texas beachfront piers, anglers found all kinds of birds, fish, turtles and other items in their stomachs.

In terms of mass, tigers are kings among kings. When they reach lengths around thirteen feet, they attain weights approaching 1,000 pounds. Last summer I helped a lucky client catch one of these mythical monsters. Like the hammers, the tigers venture into the surf during the summer months to feed on mature, birthing stingrays. Whole stingrays and whole or half jack crevalle have always been ideal baits for big tigers.

Smaller tigers have some brilliantly vivid stripes, while the larger, duller ones have massive, almost square heads and rows of long, jagged teeth. They aren't speed demons like the hammers, so they use their mass in the fight after being hooked, to go where they want, when they want. Sometimes, monster tigers stubbornly run parallel to the beach. All who manage to land a massive tiger and gaze into its wide, black eyes will likely feel energized, their souls connected with the creature forever. Many will become obsessed with sharking.

We're fortunate here in Texas to have such a healthy shark fishery. The Big Three have taken many hits over the years because of ignorance and negligence, but thanks to strong conservation efforts, their numbers are finally starting to slowly climb.Tigers have always been my reliable go-to shark species to target every year. But every time I land a hefty hammer or busty bull, I'm equally happy.

All three of these impressive species generate appreciation for sharks as a whole, the bulls with their nasty reputations and relative abundance, the great hammers with their sonic speed and unique design, the tigers with their mighty size and grisly smiles.I try hard to help my clients catch all of our Big Three. Though it doesn't happen often, we sometimes manage to land all the members of the Super Shark Trio on a single trip.

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.

Email oz@oceanepics.com
Websites oceanepics.com | catchsharks.com

Science and the Sea™

Staying Home for Dinner

A colony of garden eels often looks at first like sea grass swaying in the current—until you get closer. As you approach, you might get a glimpse of the big googly-like eyes on either side of their pencil-thin bodies before they disappear into the safety of their burrow. Though social animals, each eel remains rooted to the burrow its muscular tail carved out of the sand. Glands in their skin secrete a mucus that fortifies the sand around their burrow and seals the entrance when they dart in to avoid danger. And when the coast is clear, they straighten up and out, using their relatively large mouths to catch zooplankton floating past.

Garden eels live in burrows and poke out to feed on zooplankton that passes by. Credit: Sonse, Wikimedia, CC BY 2.0.

While this homebody strategy is great for avoiding predators, scientists wondered how garden eels cope in stronger currents, which require more energy to hold steady in, and carry zooplankton past more quickly. To find out, scientists placed a garden eel in a tank with a sandy bottom, and three cameras. Then they added zooplankton and filmed the eel's behavior at four different flow rates. A computer-learning program analyzed the footage and revealed the eels' trick for staying fed.

As the current speeds up, the eels extend less from their burrows and curve their bodies more. This reduces the drag on their bodies and the amount of energy they need to resist the current. They also limit their catches to the zooplankton that are closest to their burrow. But they still catch plenty of prey because a shorter striking distance means greater success in snatching their meals, and the faster current carries more critters past them. If the current gets too strong—0.25 meters per second or greater—they take the day off from feeding because they would spend more energy feeding than they would get from the food. But most of the time, staying home to eat suits these eels just fine.

www.ScienceAndTheSea.org

© The University of Texas Marine Science Institute

FISH MONKEY HUNT MONKEY
PERFORMANCE GLOVES AND SOCKS

We are
HUNT FISH

INTRODUCING
PERFORMANCE WOOL
FISHING SOCKS
Made in the USA

100% Satisfaction Guaranteed
fishmonkeygloves.com

NEW

Okuma Salina Spinning Reel

Salina spinning reels feature a hybrid carbonite and Japanese felt DFD drag system that outputs more than 33 pounds of fish stopping power. Constructed from advanced LITECAST body material that is 15% lighter than diecast aluminum, these reels are built for both light inshore and heavy offshore use. With an interchangeable screw-in handle system and six available models from 4000 to 14000, Salina spinning reels are designed to maximize your success on the water. Salina Spinning Reel | Okuma Fishing Tackle Corp
OkumaFishingUSA.com

KillerDock Filet Tables

The folks at KillerDock have made cleaning fish great again! Not only do these filet tables look great, but the thoughtful design makes cleaning fish more enjoyable than ever before. Made in the USA from high quality, ceramic coated marine grade aluminum, these tables are engineered to outlast the elements. Key features include using only 8 inches of dock space with the 90° base plate option, King Starboard cutting surface, built in hoses, patented "leg drain" system, patented water manifold, cup holders, built in knife sharpener, knife holder, 2 degrees of slope and a lip on the front of the table to keep you clean while cleaning fish. Tired of cleaning fish in the scorching sun? The Slam models have a patented canopy design that will keep you cool, or you can add an umbrella and holder to the upscale model. KIllerDock has truly revolutionized the process of fish cleaning. If you would like to learn more about the "Best Fish Cleaning Stations Known to Mankind" simply visit our website, **KillerDock**.com or call 251-207-1748.

Falcon Rods – The Falcon Marsh

The Falcon Marsh came to life with Redfish Tournament anglers in mind. These fishermen demand a "no compromises" approach. So, we took our proven saltwater actions, material that hits the sweet spot in terms of lightness and strength, plus super-strong Recoil guides for the ultimate series of inshore rods. Add all those elements together and you have the perfect combination for whipping tough marsh reds!
www.**FalconRods**.com

King Sailfish Mounts

Introducing the unparalleled craftsmanship of King Sailfish Release Mounts. Our individually handcrafted and hand-painted replicas are created by skilled artisans without stencils, allowing us to capture the minor details of your fish, making each mount a one-of-a-kind work of art, perfectly capturing its unique characteristics.

Unlike tourist mounts, which are quickly produced with little attention to detail, we take pride in creating high-quality and individual replicas. We work closely with our customers to understand their needs and preferences, ensuring each reproduction is as beautiful and unique as the real thing. Whether you caught your trophy yesterday or several decades ago, our high-quality mounts will allow you to celebrate and immortalize your catch for years to come.

KingSailfishMounts.com

TrophyChasers | ForEverlast

With over 25 years in the outdoor industry, ForEverlast is proud to announce our latest addition to our lineup of offerings by way of TrophyChasers, a web based app that will clear a new path for virtual tournament hosting. In an evolving world of social media and digital based platforms we have created an innovative way to host both hunting and fishing contests virtually thru use of smart phone technology as well as analytics to keep the playing field fair and competitive for the most novice of anglers or even the most skilled anglers. This tournament is for all walks of life that love to hunt and fish, and we intend to keep it fun, competitive, and offer only the best in prize winnings. Come along and join in on the fun as we revolutionize the world of tournaments for both hunting and fishing!!! ***"We Live Hunting & Fishing"***

www.**TrophyChasers**.net

Instagram trophychasers_ | Facebook TrophyChasers.2023

Fish Monkey and Hunt Monkey Performance Fishing Socks

The leading maker of performance fishing and hunting gloves is adding performance to your feet with the introduction of wool socks to their offering. Premium wool socks reduce leg fatigue after a long day standing on the deck of a boat.

Made in the USA, the complete line includes light weight, medium weight and heavy weight socks for any fishing situation an angler encounters from sweltering heat to ice fishing.

The Guide Series is the premier line of moisture wicking, premium cushioned, light weight performance socks. Featuring UltraSpun® Polyester body and Merino Wool Heel/Toe, ventilation panels, arch compression, and a cushioned heel and toe. Plus, a seamless toe prevents chafing!

FISH MONKEY HUNT MONKEY NO SHOW SOCK

WEIGHT: Lightweight

MATERIAL: 60% Merino Wool

SIZES: M, L, XL, XXL

www.**FishMonkeyGloves**.com

THE VIEW FROM *Matagorda*

BINK GRIMES

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

Telephone
979-241-1705
Email
binkgrimes@sbcglobal.net
Website
matagordasunriselodge.com

Spring just puts a smile on my face. The possibilities of a great year of fishing normally begins with a good catch in April. Tides bull up, flowers bloom, waders are often put up for the year and consistent topwater action makes us silly.

For some reason I catch some of my largest trout of the year in April. For the past decade there have been numerous legit 30s caught and released in my boat while drifting. Yes, while drifting.

I wrote a how-to wadefish book some twenty years ago but times and anglers have changed and more clients than ever would rather drift over deep shell with a little 80s country in the speakers. So, I have adapted, as all captains have, and gotten better at boat fishing.

March was a solid month for drifting with soft plastics. We have been tossing plum Bass Assassins, Down South Lures, and the Knockin Tail baits with the small rattles. Trout this time of year will fool you at times. One day they bite, one day they don't. I really watch the solunar tables for the best bites of the day and try to be where I think we have the greatest opportunity to catch when the fish want to eat.

Yes, we still wade and still love it.

I like a MirrOlure Soft Dine this time of year in the guts and over mud and shell. Although I am probably going to try and force a topwater down their throats more often than not. That's just me - It is what keeps me smiling.

When the wind blows we will look for redfish. It will blow a lot in April. Deal with it.

When the wind blows use it to your advantage. Look for windblown shorelines. Step out of your comfort zone and fish off-colored water. Often waters are too clear in West Matagorda Bay and I look for stained water to find the fish. Trout swim in dirty water. Trout still eat in dirty water. Trout still bang topwaters in dirty water.

We will target redfish on those high-tide, windblown days. There is lots of real estate in Matagorda when our tides bull up from easterly winds. Both bays provide lots of shell and deep thoroughfares for traveling redfish.

Glass minnows on the south shoreline of West Bay was once a staple of April. Diving brown pelicans pointed the way to afternoon wading sessions on the incoming tide. A mild March could point the way to another solid year of minnow production. The days of yesteryear gave us so many redfish gorging on minnows they would swim between your legs and never spook. The quickness of a trout would burn down a plug, but if it missed a redfish was right behind with a splash rivaling a junior high belly-buster at the city pool.

I am an optimist; I believe it can happen again.

Let's all continue to practice sound, conservative judgement for life and our fishery. The days of killing everything we catch should be a thing of the past. It is evident change is necessary, so look inside and please do what's best for the fishery. We cannot expect our bays and oceans to continue to give us a bounty when more anglers are better at catching more fish than ever before.

Please help protect our trout. Please help protect our redfish. Please help protect our beaches. Please help protect our country. Take pride in our coastal resources and treat it like it's you own back yard. If you had a pond in your backyard you wouldn't fillet every bass in it. Control what you can control - yourself.

Texas is a great place to live and play. What a blessing to fish her waters.

Sunrise Lodge is a full service lodge on the water offering fishing, hunting and vacation rentals. Sunrise Properties is a real estate company specializing in coastal properties and farm and ranch.

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

Big Trout Top Matagorda
Angler's Options

Academy
SPORTS+OUTDOORS
Get the most out of your outdoor adventures with the reliable power of an Interstate® battery. Find yours today.
POWER THE GOOD TIMES
INTERSTATE BATTERIES
Outrageously Dependable
MARINE / RV
PART #
27DC
840 MCA
180 RC
12-Month Free Replacement Warranty
©2023 Interstate Batteries

FALCON®
marsh™
Precise, strong, and durable. The Marsh series from Falcon meets the demands of competitive saltwater fishermen or any challenge you can throw at it. Precise and trust-tested actions cover all the fish-catching presentations. Super-tough Recoil guides, a Fuji reel seat, and Falcon's quality construction make the Marsh series the total package in saltwater fishing.
Recoil Guides | Fuji reel seats | Falcon T2 graphite blanks | Non-slip Grips
1823 West Reno St, Broken Arrow, OK 74012 | 918. 251.0020 | falconrods.com

MID-COAST BAYS *With the Grays*

CAPT. GARY GRAY

Captain Gary Gray is a full time guide, born and raised in Seadrift. He has been guiding the Seadrift/Port O'Connor region since 1986. Gary specializes in year 'round wade fishing for speckled trout and redfish with artificial lures.

Telephone
361-785-6708
Email
bayrats@tisd.net
Website
www.bayrat.com
Facebook
@captsgaryandshelliegray

Fishing in the Port O'Connor/Seadrift area has been very good and it looks as though April is going to be right on par with previous years. I still consider April a prime month to catch a lifetime trout in our area. I will go over a few of what I call "secrets" that I use to help me locate and catch these speckled beauties. I call them secrets because I have not read about them anywhere. I have witnessed these things unfold in front of me on an annual basis and have been rewarded with two trout over 10 pounds and 31 inches. I have lost count the number of 28-plus fish my customers and I have landed applying these tips to our fishing strategies. These are based on my experience in the Seadrift/Port O'Connor area but could apply to most any location on the Texas coast.

This time of the year I target mostly main bay shorelines with irregularities: oyster reefs, drains leading to back lakes, grass patches, or maybe a cove protected from the brutal southeast wind we will see so much of this month. These areas will have lots of mullet and good current flowing through the guts along the shoreline. We will not worry about incoming or outgoing; but you must have current one way or the other. I prefer the incoming when possible, though.

When you are fishing and everyone is hooking up, pay attention to the gender of the fish you are catching. Are they grunting? If so, they are male. I have noticed many times when we are catching predominantly males in any given area, within a few days we will start catching the bigger females. I don't know exactly what is going on and no science to explain it; this is what I have witnessed the past thirty-seven years as a fishing guide.

Pay attention to the species of bait that is most abundant. Try and target areas that have large concentrations of menhaden. I have caught many large trout following rafts of menhaden along sandy shorelines of area bays. I also key in on mullet when I haven't been seeing menhaden schools. Bigger trout will hang right under or in the shadows of the schools of baitfish.

Another tip some anglers do not consider but more are becoming aware of is timing. We cannot always plan our trips around specific tides or moon phases, but when you do go, try and position yourself in the best place possible. Meaning find an area that has a large amount of rafted bait whether it is menhaden or mullet, and follow the schools. Make casts all around them until you discover whether the specks are under, on the sides, or behind the rafts of bait. Once discovered, continue casting into those same areas. If by chance there are many rafts cruising the shoreline you can just stand in one spot and make casts around them as they pass by. With an outgoing tide, try to position in front of or around the mouth of a drain that leads to a back lake. Fish will follow the bait as it is flushed from the back lake into the main bay.

Another scenario I see often goes like this. You've been catching reds one after another and you decide to leave because you're tired of them, or maybe they've already destroyed too many of your MirrOlure Fat Boys. Leaving could be a big mistake. I remember several trips we kept plugging away until the redfish thinned out and the larger specks took over.

Nice trout on Texas Custom Lures Double D Mirrodine.

A very memorable trip with Shellie and longtime customer Kris Krause; it was a windy day in April and hard-pumping southeast had bait stacked in a cove. Redfish after redfish until I grew tired of catching them. So, I made a move fifty yards toward Shellie who had caught a few larger trout earlier, and Shellie moved to the area I had vacated, hoping to get into the reds. Within a short time she began catching trout longer than 27-inches. Long story short – it didn't take long for me to join her.

If you are into big reds and don't want them destroying your Texas Custom Double D MirrOdines or Fat Boys, switch to a 5-inch Saltwater Assassin. You will still catch fish but without the stress of losing expensive lures, although I can think of worse things that could happen. Pictures from that April trip can be seen on our brochure cover or on our website www.bayrat.com.

Fish hard, fish smart!

Most fishermen don't have a place to clean fish that they are proud of or enjoy.

WWW.KILLERDOCK.COM

We make the greatest fish cleaning stations known to mankind.

Made In The USA
Built-In Hose Stations
Patented Draining Systems

Clear Ceramic Coating
Marine Grade Aluminum
King Starboard Cutting Surface

WWW.KILLERDOCK.COM
(251) 207-1748

Babes on the Bay

ROCKPORT–FULTON
MAY 19/20, 2023

Go to BabesontheBay.com for Rules & Details

Scan & Register

HOOKED UP WITH *Rowsey*

DAVID ROWSEY

Upper Laguna/ Baffin

David Rowsey has 30 years in Baffin and Upper Laguna Madre; trophy trout with artificial lures is his specialty. David has a great passion for conservation and encourages catch and release of trophy fish.

Telephone
361-960-0340
Website
www.DavidRowsey.com
Email
david.rowsey@yahoo.com
@captdavidrowsey

I recently discovered an app on my phone that will allow me to write an article from anywhere. Right now, I'm on the boat, fishing a little honeyhole I save for windy days. Everything looks great as far as water clarity and bait. Normally I would be right in the middle of it, but my Power-Pole has something going on, rising on its own, leaving me stranded once already this morning. I was rescued by a fine man from Halletsville that got me back in my boat – Thank You! Lucky for me I have excellent sticks on the boat today and I can just turn them loose.

As expected, the winds have been parting our hair on a daily basis. Utilizing spoil islands, the south shoreline of Baffin, and the eastern shoreline of Padre Island has kept us in the game as far as catching in less-than-ideal conditions.

Anyone that has spent time in Roy's Bait and Tackle knows that there are a ton of lures that might catch a fish. As the old saying goes, "Lures do most of their catching at the cash register."

Kelly Dickens with a solid fish to be released. C&R is our future if y'all ever want to see trophies on a daily basis again. It's not rocket science, folks. Please do your part and influence another.

Funny and true. Of late, I've been going back into the wood pile and using older lures that are not necessarily the "hot" ones of today. Two in particular have been so much fun to fish – MirrOlure's Catch 2000 in original size and the junior, along with the Catch 5. Fifteen to twenty years ago these were staples in every wade box. Not so much anymore as so many good MirrOlure products have hit the market and gained almost cult-like following. But the way I see it, today's fish have never seen that super slow fall of the 2000s or the super wide walk of the Catch 5, and I'm here to tell you they still catch as well as ever. On days that we have a chance on top, I've been doing the "same old thing" with the original Top Dog. A real hard-knocking lure that emits a low thud versus the higher-pitched topwaters that seem to be more popular nowadays. It's good to be different and do things outside of the norm. Try it and you might be as surprised as the seven-year-old trout that hits it.

I mentioned last month the trout regs that were enacted following the February 2021 freeze. These will expire and revert back to the regulations that were in place prior to the freeze on August 31,2023. Being in the water every day, I (and some others) really have our finger on the pulse of what is going on and where our fishery stands at present.

What we must keep in mind is that the regulations we are currently fishing under were in response to the freeze and were never intended to replace the older regulations. Saying that, post-freeze regulations is where the fishery needs to be to have not only lots of fish, but quality fish as well. As captains and guides we will have to continue to police ourselves and do what needs to be done. As we have learned on a national level, rare is the day that government ideas are what is best. Let 'em go if you want to catch trophy trout in the future. It's that simple.

Trout are now in full spawn mode and tend to favor shallow, grassy areas for this activity. I will be looking specifically for these fish in areas that have all of the right elements to conduct their business and at the same time trying to stay away from as many tower boats as possible. This spring has taught me something that I never had even a passing thought of in the past, and that is with so much boat traffic on shorelines these days, these trout just do not utilize the shallows (less than two feet) during daylight the way they used to. As much as I try to catch them skinny, they just seem to be out in deeper water, away from the froth of the whizzing props and hip-hop stereos. Humans do a lot of stupid shit to screw up a good thing.

I'm closing, just remember the spawn is on! Every female trout put back in the water plays a huge role in our ongoing recovery to right the ship following the 2021 freeze. If you ever want to see days again of multiple trout over seven pounds, catch and release is our only tool to get back there. Fish like a sportsman and treat the bay like a lady.

Remember the buffalo! -Capt. David Rowsey

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

Landing Another Great Upper Laguna Trout

SEE WHAT
YOU'VE BEEN MISSING

Lithium pros
THE ONE BATTERY YOU NEED

THERE'S ONLY ONE BATTERY YOU CAN TRUST
for reliable, long-lasting power. Each battery undergoes rigorous validation and testing to ensure you don't get caught dead in the water. Lithium Pros N Series incorporates the BM-21 built-in computer battery management system that continually monitors and protects the battery for peak performance.

- NMea 2000 micro port on the battery itself
- Display battery data on all NMEA 2000 MFDs*

LITHIUMPROS.COM

*MFD must support the battery related PGNs. See website for more information.

HUFF MARINE
Family owned since 1955

SUZUKI MARINE

REPOWER WITH SUZUKI – CHECK OUT THE WARRANTY!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO

DARGEL USED RIGS

www.HuffMarine1955.com
5918 So. Staples * Corpus Christi, TX * 361.991.0369

Gone Coastal Jewelry

Specializing in Fishing, Nautical, Coastal, & Custom Jewelry

www.gonecoastaljewelry.com | 713-927-1193

WAYNE'S *Mansfield Report*

WAYNE DAVIS

Port Mansfield

Captain Wayne Davis has been fishing the Lower Laguna-Port Mansfield for over 20 years. He specializes in wade fishing with lures.

Telephone
210-287-3877
Email
captwayne@kwigglers.com

Greetings from Port Mansfield! Boy, what a winter we had. I absolutely love winter fishing and the more years I spend guiding the more I see the ebbs and flows in the productivity of our bay systems. We've seen a substantial recovery of our speckled trout fishery since the freeze of February 2021 as evidenced by the numbers of middle and upper-slot fish coming to hand, along with occasional eight and nine pounders. We have also seen a noticeable increase in flounder numbers, which in a strangely beneficial way can also be attributed to the freeze two years ago. So, winter was good to us and now it's time to face the coming of spring and what it might offer. One caveat regarding April, it's not too late to get that personal best trout (heaviest) you may be after. As a matter of fact two years back we caught a 10-pounder. Keep that in the back of your mind if you are thinking about big trout in April.

What can we expect moving forward? Certainly, it goes without saying strong southeast winds that can provide challenging boat rides, wind-driven floating grass lines and chalky water, but it also provides some darn good fishing. During this time of year fish are loving the warming trends in the water temps, pretty much like we respond to those "feel good" springtime days. Those fish are out and about chasing small baitfish, up in the tide swollen back lakes and drains where I will soon be spending a lot of time. I love the knee-deep back lakes where reds will be tailing and busting glass minnows along shorelines. This is the time of year when I like to get out earlier rather than my "wintertime hours" of leaving the dock after sunup. I'll be tossing the all-new junior-size KWigglers 4-inch Ball Tail Shad at those skinny water fish along with topwaters if the grass isn't too bad. Keep in mind, while doing this there is a solid chance you will catch that big trout you've been hoping for while playing tug of war with the reds.

In addition to working over the back lakes we will be spending some time high on the flats where you will find pods of reds and of course those few big trout cruising the sand and chasing mullet. Generally, there should be less grass in these areas and tossing topwaters will be an excellent choice. Since the water will likely be clear consider a Mansfield Knocker in Glass Minnow or G.O.A.T. colors.

Daily strong winds are to be expected during April and May so plan accordingly. I've learned to use the wind to my advantage and am not as discouraged as I used to be dealing with off-colored and perhaps even muddy water. If I find myself in an area where I feel fish are holding but the water is dirty, I'll resort to ol' faithful – the KWigglers 4-inch Paddle Tail. This is the only bait that I know of that puts off as much vibration when given short bursts during the retrieve. You will definitely know you are working it correctly when you feel the vibration through the rod.

I've recently taken ownership of my new SCB by Shallow Sport Boats and absolutely love it. Many of you may know I've been down this road before back in 2019 but reverted back to a 24-Shallow Sport Classic after a year or so. However, after providing input to SCB/Shallow Sport about a few ideas on the SCB and being willing to be a risk taker (aka field tester) I feel confident we've made some solid improvements. We will just have to wait and see if SCB incorporates the ideas. Another note and certainly a benefit on the SCB are those long runs in higher wind situations aren't so long anymore, and the ride is remarkable. Now don't get me wrong, I am still a lover of the 24-Classic and always will be. So don't be surprised if you see me back in one again in the future. But for now, the ride in the SCB on those long windy days sure is nice. That said, these spring winds this year won't slow me down one bit.

In closing I want to thank all of you who came out and visited during the Houston Fishing Show. It was great seeing everyone and I always look forward to renewing friendships and making new ones. If anyone ever has questions about fishing, rods, reels, lures etc…feel free to reach out.

Remember, fresh is always better than frozen!

Austin Rents with a healthy Lower Laguna trout – KWigglers Ball Tail Shad – CPR!

The new KWigglers 4-inch Ball Tail Shad alongside the 5" original.

View The Video

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

Redfish Love KWiggler's Paddletails

EST. 1979
FISHING TACKLE UNLIMITED
THE SOURCE FOR THE ULTIMATE CUSTOM ROD

1000'S OF BLANKS, COMPONENTS AND TOOLS TO CHOOSE FROM!

FEATURING
RAINSHADOW
ALPS
FORECAST

OFFSHORE TO INSHORE, BASS TO REDFISH, EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR THE ULTIMATE CUSTOM ROD!

13831 Southwest Freeway
Sugar Land, TX 77478
281-201-2141

12800 Gulf Freeway
Houston, TX 77034
281-481-6838

10303 Katy Freeway
Houston, TX 77024
713-827-7762

FishingTackleUnlimited.com

GET FREE E-MAG WITH HARDCOPY PURCHASE!

Order today and receive a 12-month subscription for $32.00. Hurry and sign up family members and/or friends at the same rate!

ORDER NOW!

SUBSCRIPTION FORM SUB0423

To order subscriptions simply fill this form out below & mail it to the address below, fax, email or go online.

Mail to: Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine
P.O. Box 429, Seadrift, TX 77983

Phone: 361-785-3420
Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Fax: 361-792-4530

E-mail: store@tsfmag.com

Please make all checks payable to
Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____
Credit Card No: _____
Exp.Date: ____/_____
(Need VCode on all cc's _____)

VISA MasterCard DISCOVER AMEX

We accept most Major Credit Cards.

Please Check All That Apply

SUBSCRIPTIONS

- ❑ 12 months print - **$32.00**
- ❑ 12 months digital only - **$15.00**
- ❑ 24 months print - **$56.00**

Auto Renewal available with all subscriptions!

Subscribing for more than yourself? Please write additional information on a separate sheet of paper.

FISHING TACKLE UNLIMITED

Certified Warranty Repair Center

SHIMANO SERVICE CENTER

PREMIER
Platinum Premier Service Plan

Clean, Service and Repair Rods and Reels

SHIMANO Satellite Service Center
All Store Locations are fully staffed with experienced and certified staff.

10303 Katy Fwy
Houston, TX 77024
713-827-7762

13831 Southwest Fwy
Sugar Land, TX 77478
281-201-2141

12800 Gulf Fwy
Houston, TX 77034
281-481-6838

WE ALSO SERVICE
PENN DAIWA

WWW.FISHINGTACKLEUNLIMITED.COM

SOUTH PADRE *Fishing Scene*

CAPT. ERNEST CISNEROS

Arroyo Colorado to Port Isabel

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.

Cell
956-266-6454
Website
www.tightlinescharters.com

April and I have a love-hate relationship. I love that April marks the beginning of the speckled trout spawning season and females that are still winter-fat can attain peak weights as developing roe can add a pound or even more before those eggs are released. What I hate is that April's wind can blow your socks off, even if you're standing in the water. If you do not have a pair of drift anchors or twin Power-Poles on your boat you could be in for some frustrating moments.

Finding suitable water clarity this month is one of the keys to success with artificial lures and that's where protected shorelines enter the picture. But let's not get too hung up on the clarity thing; the fish are still there and still need to eat. We experienced many days with strong wind in March and we tackled it using topwaters such as the Z-Man Hellraizer and the five-inch Diezel Minnowz paddletails. Fish are definitely attracted to lures that produce surface commotion, sound, and vibration in murky water conditions.

No question that our Lower Laguna redfish fishery is thriving. Crossing grass flats on both the east and west sides recently on calm days, we found them so thick that we had to take care not to run over them. Another very promising sign is the number of undersize reds we are catching.

This month, many anglers might ask, "Where should we start targeting redfish with these windy conditions?" As mentioned above you can begin by focusing on protected shorelines holding decent water clarity. Edges of color changes can also be very good. But like I said earlier, don't get too hung up on water clarity. The presence of active bait – even in downright nasty water conditions – can be all you need. Tie on a noisy topwater or paddletail that produces lots of vibration and get busy.

Another thing I love about April is the abundance of small shrimp. Reds will be grubbing bottom and shrimp fleeing ahead of them at the surface will point the way to tight lines. Keep your eyes peeled for diving gulls and terns, and redfish tails wagging above the surface. Z-Man's Salty Nedz Shrimpz can be especially effective while all this is going on.

The recovery of our trout fishery continues to show positive signs even though we are definitely lacking the numbers of heavyweight specimens in the eight to ten, and even eleven-pound-classes we enjoyed in years past. Trout in the seventeen- to twenty-inch class are currently plentiful, however we are also seeing fewer in the twenty-one to upper-twenties size classes than we are accustomed. Sure would be nice if TPWD could find a way to stretch the current three fish limit a few more years although I am told that is not likely to happen. Right now, I would say the best strategy for anglers who long to see a return to historic numbers of trophy class fish in the Lower Laguna Madre would be to continue practicing catch and release as much as possible.

Temperatures will be on the rise and tides will be steadily increasing through April. I expect that our best opportunities for bigger trout will likely come during April's full and new moon periods, which also happen to be what we call two-tide days, days that biologists say are peak times for trout spawning.

So, if you're thinking trophy caliber trout; think shallow grass beds with lots of potholes and plenty of bait present. Reference your solunar tables and fish when tidal currents are strongest…and make a million casts. What lures do I recommend? Topwaters are known producers of large trout and, if it's windy, I have gained a lot of confidence lately in Z-Man's Hellraizer. I believe it annoys them into striking even when they're not feeding. If they won't go on the surface switch to the scented Paddlerz, Streakz, and the five-inch Diezel Minnowz. If the bigger fish are in the shallow grass flats I recommend Z-Man's Texas Eye Jig Heads, which will help a lure glide through the thickest grass.

Please exercise good common sense out there. We hear stories every year of April's winds swamping and capsizing boats. Study your weather apps, learn which areas offer protection from the wind, and which shorelines you can run without going aground or hitting some type of structure or other obstacle in the water. Stay safe and think big this month when dealing with the fish and the wind

Steve Powlowski fooled this trout on a Z-Man PaddlerZ.

Vince Hash scored his personal best trout with this eight-pounder recently.

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

Capt. Ernest Cisneros Launches CARE – Catch And Release Effort

Bulkhead & Seawall Repair

The Deep Foamjection™ process will create a solid barrier preventing future erosion and degradation of sea wall/ bulkhead sub structure.

CONCRETE ALIGNMENT TECHNOLOGY
c.a.t-foam
DON'T REPLACE IT RAISE IT

Benefits:

- Fast/Affordable
- Risk Mitigation
- Environmentally Friendly
- Convenient
- No Heavy Equipment

Concrete Lifting:

- Sidewalks
- Driveways
- Porches & Stoops
- Pool Decks & Patios

1-800-595-1880 catfoam.com

Fishing Reports & and Forecasts
from Big Lake to Boca Chica

Trinity Bay - East Bay - Galveston Bay | James Plaag
Silver King Adventures - silverkingadventures.com - 409.935.7242
James likes the fishing in the Galveston area during April. "This is a consistent month, from year to year," he says. "The fish have settled into their true spring habits, and locating them is pretty predictable. We catch best this time of year by wading, often in areas with a mix of sand and shell on the bottom, sometimes grass too. The shorelines of West Bay on both sides have areas like this. All of the major coves with little islands and sand bars fronting them produce well at times this month. We also begin to see an influx of bait and trout down around San Luis Pass this month. The fishing for trout in particular can be great down there in the mornings, when the tide is gushing in. Best bite this time of year is sometimes on topwaters, more often on sinking baits. I like to throw small topwaters like She Pups, but regular-sized ones work well too. We do really well on hard sinking twitchbaits like Catch 2000s, MirrOdines and old-school 51 and 52M MirrOlures. Assassin Sea Shads also work well. If reds are the target, the interior parts of the coves and back-lakes usually have plenty."

Jimmy West | Bolivar Guide Service - 409.996.3054
Jim ranks the fishing in April in the Galveston area at or near the top, compared to the other months in the year. "I do love fishing in the fall, because of the cooling weather, but April is overall probably the best month, in terms of catching. We will have fish in lots of places, so it spreads the people out. We catch 'em good by wading lots of days, especially early in the mornings. When the tide is moving either in or out, the trout bite is normally good on the protected shorelines in both East Galveston and Trinity bays. We also have plenty of fish out in the middle, in water about four feet deep, around the reefs. We're able to do well with those fish plenty of days this month, since the strong winds of March usually let up some, and allow the water to clear, especially when the tide is rolling in with some strength. The topwater bite is excellent much of the time this month, so that makes for some extra fun. We do have days where the catching is much better on tails, though. Catching limits in a hurry is often just not a problem."

West Galveston - Bastrop - Christmas - Chocolate Bays
Randall Groves | Groves Guide Service
979.849.7019 - 979.864.9323
Randall mentions a variety of productive options for anglers in the area around San Luis Pass during April. "We have good fishing for trout on the sandy flats close to the pass this time of year. Fishing is best there when the tide is moving, but not too strong. A moderate incoming flow during the morning is ideal. Pearl Skitter Walks work great when we're wading for the trout, especially if we get a surge of ribbonfish and big ballyhoo coming in from the Gulf. Fishing for trout along some of the sandy, grassy shorelines in the main bays can also be really good for some of the bigger trout. We usually have some pretty high tide levels this month, and this can make the fishing in the coves and back-lakes really good. We do catch some trout in those places, but the reds are more abundant. We find them under birds on many occasions. Sometimes, we see flocks of gulls working over shrimp pressured by the reds and trout. At other times, we key on shorelines where we find birds like herons and egrets wading in the shallows. The reds are usually easiest to catch on soft plastics like Norton Sand Eels."

Matagorda Bays | Capt. Glenn Ging
Glenn's Guide Service - 979.479.1460
www.glennsguideservice.com
April brings warmer weather, rising water temperatures and green tides to our bays. Waders will find both speckled trout and redfish in good numbers on the south shoreline of West Matagorda Bay, chasing and feeding on the newly arrived glass minnows. Anglers should match the hatch as closely as possible with small soft plastics like the 4" Bass Assassin Sea Shads in salt-n-pepper color or with chrome or clear topwaters like Spook Juniors for best results. Paul Brown Soft-Dines are another great option. In East Matagorda Bay, drifting over shell in depths of four feet or more will produce lots of trout and redfish when the wind and water quality allow for it, meaning when wind speeds fall below about fifteen knots for a while. Live shrimp under Coastal Corks is the old drifting standby, but plenty of fish will be caught on soft plastics as well. In April, try plum or Texas roach Bass Assassins in dirty water and chicken on a chain in green water. Redfish in the back lakes are a good April option as well. The lakes fill up with small shad and newly hatched shrimp, so small topwaters, spoons and paddletails will produce the best catching there.

Palacios | Capt. Aaron Wollam
www.palaciosguideservice.com - 979.240.8204
Good fishing continues as the weather continues to be warmer than normal. Redfish have remained our focus, as the trout bite has not been real consistent. The reds have been moving up on shorelines with shell reefs covered by about two or three feet of water. We've been throwing small, bone topwaters early and pumpkinseed/chartreuse Norton Bull Minnows later in the days for best results. The mouth of the river has been good for tight-lining with cut mullet and/or quartered crabs for reds on falling tides. Our trout bite has been slow for slot fish. We have been catching quite a few fish, but those in the slot have been hard to come by. We've focused on deep shell and have had best success with pearl/chartreuse Fat Boys and pink Skitter Walks. April is one of my favorite months as the bay fills with bait. Shrimp, glass minnows, crabs, shad and mullet all make their way back into the estuaries, creating tons of options. Wading around grass with the glass minnows in the afternoon, fishing around clouds of shad in the marshes, fishing lighted piers in town, and fishing the rigs and wrecks out in West Matagorda all work well at times.

Port O'Connor | Lynn Smith
Back Bay Guide Service - 361.935.6833
Lynn likes fishing around any cut connecting the bays to the Gulf this time of year. "I was down in Mesquite Bay recently and saw the crews working in Cedar Bayou. I like to fish down that way most of the time during the peak of spring. Good tidal flow really improves the catching in those bays down there. Normally, I'm fishing areas with some shell on the bottom, even some of the bigger reefs, and targeting the fish while the tide is flowing. We get a big influx of mullet, shrimp, glass minnows and other prey species this time of year, so finding concentrations of bait is a must. We usually catch some of the biggest trout of the year during April, wading in places like Carlos, San Antonio and Mesquite Bays, throwing slow sinkers like Paul Brown Lures and

lots of topwaters too. Of course, the fishing in West Matagorda Bay, on the shorelines adjacent to the Port O'Connor Big Jetties and Pass Cavallo can be excellent too, this time of year, for the same reasons. In general, if the tides are in a less than good cycle, the fishing is better in backwater areas than in places close to a pass."

Rockport | Blake Muirhead
Gator Trout Guide Service - 361.790.5203 or 361.441.3894
Blake likes to fish a variety of patterns in the Coastal Bend bays during the month of April. "We have good luck with trout in water about knee to waist-deep along the main bay shorelines this month. I like to fish close to the bank, in places where the bottom has a good bit of grass, but also plenty of sandy areas. We throw topwaters as much as we can, meaning as long as we're getting the fish to blow up pretty regularly, but we also throw the old standby Norton Sand Eels in dark colors with chartreuse tails. And, we don't hesitate to switch to the Gulp! lures when the bite gets tough. We do catch some reds in the same places, while targeting trout, and the reds will sometimes take the topwaters aggressively, but they're usually easier to catch on the other lures. If I'm not fishing the sandy, grassy shorelines in the big bays, I'm usually in the coves and back lakes on San Jose Island. In there, the redfish are the main targets, but we do have some big trout in those places. In fact, historically I catch some of the biggest trout of the year in April."

Upper Laguna Madre - Baffin Bay - Land Cut
Robert Zapata | rz1528@grandecom.net - 361.563.1160
Spring is always welcomed by coastal anglers because its arrival ushers in some of the year's best fishing. Our fishery largely came through the cold temperatures we had this winter in great shape. April is a great month to go for trophy trout, partly because this month is when their average weight is the heaviest. The trout will be spawning intensely, so they will be loaded with eggs, and this will add much to their weight. Many of the trout will be found in the shallows along grassy shorelines. Nervous and jumping bait along those shorelines provide evidence that trout are in the vicinity. In the warming waters of spring, my favorite way to catch these fish is with topwaters. I like to start off each day throwing a MirrOlure Top Dog Junior or a She Dog in natural colors, trying different retrieve speeds until I find one that works. I will also have Bass Assassin Die Dappers in colors like chicken on a chain, salt & pepper/chartreuse and plum/chartreuse rigged on a sixteenth-ounce spring-lock jigheads. The same plastics dangled twelve to fifteen inches under Assassin Kwik Korks work well when the bite is more sluggish on the other offerings.

Corpus Christi | Joe Mendez - www.sightcast1.com - 361.877.1230
In April, some of the best fishing in the Corpus Christi area for both trout and redfish can be found on the east side of Corpus Christi Bay, Joe says. "Especially when we have extra windy conditions in the middle of spring, East Flats, Little Flats, Shamrock Cove and the shorelines adjacent to those areas can produce really good catches of trout and reds. Because of the lay of the land, the water stays pretty and green, even clear in pockets along the shoreline and in the coves, even when strong southeast winds muck up the water over much of the rest of the area, including in Baffin and the ULM. In fact, fishing gets better in the protected pockets when it's windy from this direction, probably because the winds create movement in the water and stir up the bait. Calm weather can make the fish in the backwater areas really skittish and spooky. We do well with a variety of lures to target trout on East Flats and in Shamrock this time of year, including topwaters. Bite is best for reds on paddletails, mostly. The best catching in the shallows this time of year occurs on strong incoming morning tides."

P.I.N.S. Fishing Forecast | Eric Ozolins
361.877.3583 - Oceanepics.com

In spring, most of the food chain is present in the surf, with a full range of species, from smallest prey to the largest predators. Jackfish should be storming the surf in great numbers, chasing mullet and other small fish. On a calm morning, sight-casting them is possible as they ambush bait. Topwaters and large spoons both get their attention, as do mullet put out to attract red drum. The pompano are on the tail end of their migration, and their numbers decrease as the water warms, but a few can still be caught on shrimp and/or Fish-bites. These baits also produce large whiting, black drum, and even sheepshead as they begin their migration. Different species will react differently to the water conditions. With good water clarity, any of these aforementioned species will be possible and lures work well. In dirty water, live and fresh-dead baits produce better. Sharks of all sizes invade the shallows, especially scalloped hammerheads and blacktips. In May, the number of large bulls will increase. When targeting the big sharks, deploying the biggest baits possible, like whole stingrays and large chunks of jack crevalle produces best, and discourages the smaller predators from stealing the baits.

Port Mansfield | Ruben Garza
Snookdudecharters.com - 832.385.1431
Getaway Adventures Lodge - 956.944.4000
We have just about reached the time when the waders will come off for good. Water temperatures are up, and we're already wading wet much of the time. There may be the occasional front push in, but it will not be cold enough to affect the water temperatures enough to motivate us to wear waders or effect the fish much either. This month the Saucer Area can be productive. Best fishing is normally around the potholes behind the cabins. Best catching happens with plenty of mullet jumping with the occasional smaller bait flipping. Working a Mansfield Knocker Ruby Tuesday right out the gate is the way to go. KWiggler Mansfield Margarita Ball Tail Shads rigged on eighth-ounce heads also produce well. Close to there, the waist-deep water east of Bennie's Island also holds plenty of fish, mostly in the deeper potholes. south of Port Mansfield, drifting the deep water around Century Point is usually a good plan when winds are light. The sand pockets in the deepest water usually hold some solid fish. The area around the Oak Mottes usually does too. Wagner's Bar can also produce fast catching during the spring, with limits caught on a few drifts when the bite is best.

Lower Laguna Madre - South Padre - Port Isabel
Aaron Cisneros | tightlinescharters.com - 956.639.1941
Spring weather has arrived with full effect on the Lower Laguna and with it comes higher tides and lots of wind. Trout fishing always picks up during spring and we are currently finding them mostly on shallow grass flats, holding in one- to three-foot depths. Trout of all sizes have been taking the Z-Man DieZel MinnowZ readily in Houdini color, rigged on 1/8-ounce Redfish Eye jigheads. The shallow flats sprinkled with potholes adjacent to deeper water has been our main focus. Working our plastics fast over potholes has been a favorite technique as the trout are quite aggressive with the warming water temperature. Redfish numbers remain very solid; windblown shorelines and spoil islands have been holding lots of reds. Topwaters like Spook Jr in bone color have been a great lure during early morning hours. Later, during afternoon in shallow water, we are finding steady action with Z-Man Scented PogyZ in Redbone color on 1/8-ounce jigheads. I expect these patterns will hold through April. Keep an eye on bait as tides will fluctuate, causing both baits to move according.

CATCH OF THE MONTH

KING Sailfish RELEASE MOUNTS

Brought To You By

www.kingsailfishmounts.com

Cadence Arthur
Galveston Bay - first flounder!

Zachary Hinojosa
Port Mansfield - 31" redfish

David Smith
San Lus Pass - bull red CPR

Teresa Dossman
Mitchell's Cut - 27" redfish

Ben Beyer
Port O'Connor - 26" redfish CPR

Christina Sauceda
Charles Bay - 25" redfish

Everardo Gonzalez
Port Mansfield - 26.5" redfish

Miles Gongora
Walter Umphrey State Park - 34" bull red CPR

Jack Goolsby
Galveston Bay - speckled trout CPR

Erick Dewart
Port Mansfield - 27" first redfish!

Ian Steinke
Galveston Bay - personal best trout!

Hudson Mozisek
Cape Carancahua - 36" personal best red!

Braiden Arthur
Moses Lake - first redfish!

Cindy Close
Port Aransas - 42" bull red

Larry Kettler, Jr.
Quintana - trout CPR

Photo Gallery Guidelines

First come – first published!
Photos are judged on artistic merit and sporting ethic displayed. ***No stringer, cleaning table, or hanging board images allowed.*** Digital images only. Adjust camera to high or best quality. All images become property of TSFMag.
Email to: Photos@TSFMag.com
Include short description of your catch with name, date, bay system, etc.

Gulf Coast Kitchen

PAM JOHNSON

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

Julio's Tortilla Chip Crusted Fish Fillets *with Sweet Corn Medley*

This is another unique way fishermen can enjoy catch of the day. The recipe was contributed by Merland Albert and I encourage you to visit JuliosCornChips.com *to learn more about their full product line. Julio's products are available at HEB and Wal-Mart Super Centers. I prepared Merland's recipe recently and my dinner guests absolutely raved about everything. The fillets were crunchy and delicious, and the corn medley was to-die-for! Pam Johnson*

INGREDIENTS

FISH:

3 Pounds fresh fish fillets
3 Eggs
1 Cup all-purpose flour
4 Tbs Julio's Seasoning - divided
6 Ounces Julio's Seasoned Tortilla Chips
(For the flame throwers out there - 9 oz Julio's Freakin' Hot Chips)
6 Tbs olive oil

CORN MEDLEY:

4 Ears sweet corn sliced from cob – or two 16-oz cans whole kernel corn, drained
1/2 Medium white onion, diced
1/2 Green bell pepper, diced
1/2 Red bell pepper, diced
2 Medium white potatoes, peeled and diced
1 Fresh serrano pepper, finely chopped
2 Tbs Julio's Seasoning
1 Tbs Julio's Chipotle or Habanero Pepper Sauce
2 Tbs olive oil

PREPARATION

FISH:

Place chips in gallon size zip-lock bag and crush coarsely with rolling pin.
Dust fillets evenly (both sides) with 2 Tbs Julio's Seasoning.
In separate bowls: combine eggs and 1 Tbs Julio's Seasoning, beat well—whisk together 1 Tbs Julio's Seasoning and flour.
Heat olive oil in a medium-size sauté pan over medium-high heat.
Dip fillets in seasoned flour, shaking off excess—dip in beaten egg allowing excess to drip—coat evenly with tortilla chip crumbs.
Sauté fillets for about 1.5-2.0 minutes per side, or until cooked through.
Note: For breakfast: Any remaining chip crumbs can be stirred into eggs, covered, and refrigerated. In the morning, add two more eggs, stir and sauté. Serve with warm tortillas and Julio's Salsa, or Pepper Sauces (Chipotle or Habanero).

CORN MEDLEY:

Heat oil in large sauté pan, add potatoes, onion, green and red bell pepper, serrano, and seasoning.
Stir often until potatoes are almost cooked through.
Stir in corn and Pepper Sauce.
Continue cooking until corn blackens slightly and serve hot.

Yields – 6 Servings

PLEASE

DON'T GIVE UP Julio's® FOR LENT!

JULIOSCORNCHIPS.COM

Chris Mapp, owner of Coastal Bend Marine and Flats Cat Boat Company. Great Service, Parts & Sales. "What can we do for you?"

CHRIS MAPP

REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

CONSEQUENCES OF RUNNING (TOO) SHALLOW

There seems to be an increasing tendency to accomplish ever-shallower takeoffs, and also to plane at the lowest possible speed in shallow water. Nothing new about shallow water boating; we own Flats Cat Boat Company. The Flats Cat can run shallower than many flats boats, and as a cat hull it is exceptionally stable. The difference is the way our boat planes and where the motor sits between the sponsons. It's about finesse, not horsepower.

The reason for this article is to discuss customized props we see folks using that can be detrimental to the lower unit, not to mention the damage that can be done to seagrass beds.

We frequently see heavily cupped custom three-blade props, and recently a twin-prop setup where two props are welded into a single unit. Others have special tips added to the blades to grab more water.

Many lower units, especially Mercury's higher-horsepower models, are not engineered to withstand the amount of additional torque generated by these – not to mention that no lower unit is designed to be used as a plow. The bearing carrier can spin out of position causing seal damage that allows water to enter the gearcase. We also see prop shafts twisted and snapped from unusual torque loads.

The bearing carrier lock screw should be aligned with the skeg. Note that it has been twisted clockwise, slightly out of alignment. This is evidence that the prop shaft has been subjected to excessive torque from the propeller and a seal failure is likely.

There are many excellent propellers available that can do the job without risking damage to the lower unit.

Seagrass is the foundation of the marine food chain. Save the seagrass and save yourself a few bucks in the process. Be mindful of water depth when entering shallow water!

Stop in any time for a discussion of "proper" propping.

Chris Mapp
Coastal Bend Marine
361-983-4841
CMapp@coastalbendmarine.com

MATAGORDA BAY
Speckled Trout / Redfish

Fin Tastic
COASTAL CHARTERS

USCG Licensed
Captain Stan Sloan

832.693.4292
www.fishfcc.com

Reel Magic
GUIDE SERVICE
Galveston & East Matagorda Bay
CAPT. JAMES CORTINAS
281-727-6220
jhereelmagic@hotmail.com
Wiggles Pro-Staff

Getaway Lodge
Port Mansfield, TX
Where you can relax and let us take care of the details!
www.getawaypm.com
956-944-4000
Follow us on Instagram
Follow us on Facebook

Fishing Charters Galveston
Offshore & Bay
Trips: 5,8,10,12 hours. Captain & Mate.
Full electronics & Bathroom. Included: bait, ice, ice water. Bring your own food and drink. Kingfish, Tuna, Mahi Mahi, Grouper, Snapper, Redfish, Flounder, Trout & more...
409-919-0833 | topgalvestoncharter.com

Conner's
Guide Service
Captain Rick Conner
U.S.C.G Licensed Captain
rconner2@peoplepc.com
Matagorda Bays
Phone: (281) 685-2122
Wade and Drift Fishing
Trout, Redfish and Flounder
Connersguideservice.com

Back Bay
Guide Service
TROUT
REDFISH
FLOUNDER
Capt. Lynn Smith's
Back Bay Guide Service
Port O'Connor Area
Wade & Drifting the Back Bays & Surf
Call 361.983.4434 (cell 361.935.6833)
Email lynn@tisd.net (tswf.com/lynnsmith)

CORPORATE TRIPS
FAMILIES WELCOME
Gary Gray's
BAY RAT
GUIDE SERVICE
SPECIALIZING IN
TROPHY TROUT & REDFISH
GARY GRAY
LICENSED CAPTAIN
SHELLIE GRAY
LICENSED CAPTAIN
FISHING & DUCK HUNTING GUIDE SERVICE
PORT O'CONNOR SEADRIFT AREA
(361)785-6708 · Mobile: (361)-550-4577
P.O. Box 626 · Seadrift, Texas 77983 · www.bayrat.com

NEW for 2023
Dixie Jet Falcon Spoon
Silver Shiner
Shattered Glass
Shattered Glass
Sexy Shad
Prism Shad
Nickel
DIXIE JET
www.dixiejetlures.com
or order by phone at 573.774.0631

SUNRISE LODGE
ON MATAGORDA BAY
• Bay Fishing, Offshore, Floundering, Waterfowl, Dove
• Night Fishing off Lighted Pier
• Right On The Water
• Lodging with/without Meals
www.matagordasunriselodge.com
979-241-1705

Check out our
YouTube Channel!

First Light
FISHING CHARTERS
Jared McCulloch
USCG Licensed Captain
210-478-6519
www.firstlighttexas.com
Rockport, Port Aransas TX

MINN KOTA

MORE PRIZES.

MORE FIGHTERS.

FISH FOR

MORE

© 2021 Johnson Outdoors Marine Electronics, Inc. All Rights Reserved

There's always more out there. Bigger fish. Bigger challenges. Bigger moments. So we build the gear that helps anglers do more. Trolling motors and shallow water anchors that let you find fish, stay on fish and bring them in. Advanced technology that's tough as hell. Because when you fish with us, you **fish for more**.

› minnkotamotors.com/more

AVAILABLE AT Academy

BACKED WITH OUR
10 YEAR
HULL WARRANTY

DESIGN YOUR SCB ONLINE

SCB®

A DIVISION OF
Shallow Sport®

956-233-9489

www.scbboats.com

FISHING TACKLE UNLIMITED

WWW.FISHINGTACKLEUNLIMITED.COM

Fishing Tackle, Rods & Reels, Tackle Boxes, Camping Supplies, Hunting Equipment, Athletic Gear, Outdoor Accessories, Clothing and Much MORE!

SALESMAN SAMPLE SALE

2 DAYS ONLY

Factory Representatives Selling Thousands of Showroom Samples at

12800 Gulf Freeway @ Fuqua Houston, TX 77034

APRIL 21ST & APRIL 22ND

9AM - 6PM | 9AM - 4PM

In-Store SALE 10% Off

THOUSANDS OF REGULAR PRICED ITEMS.

In-Store sale prices good at ALL locations.

SALE PRICES GOOD APRIL 21ST AND 22ND ONLY.

THIS IS NOT A COUPON.

OVER $200K IN CASH & PRIZES INCLUDING NEW MAJEK 18M2 STARCRAFT PONTOON

3rd Annual

RON HOOVER

RV & MARINE CENTERS

FISHING TOURNAMENT

LUBBOCK
ODESSA
BRECKENRIDGE
GEORGETOWN
LAKE CONROE
HOUSTON
GALVESTON
SAN ANTONIO
LA MARQUE
ROCKPORT
CORPUS CHRISTI
LAREDO
DONNA

CONCERT FEATURING

LOS LONELY BOYS

"HEAVEN"

BENEFITING Make-A-Wish®

South Padre ISLAND

Corona PREMIER

SPI CONVENTION CENTER

COME REGISTER AT RON HOOVER RV & MARINE CENTERS

JULY 14-15

OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WWW.HOOVERFISHING.COM

CONTACT INFORMATION

OMAR	JOHNNY	JERRY
956-393-8051	956-821-4731	956-314-4459

TEXAS SALTWATER® FISHING MAGAZINE

SOLUNAR TABLE
APRIL 2023

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

Galveston Bay Entrance N. Jetty
29.3573°N, -94.7248°W
April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 07:41 AM 0.132 L 03:57 PM 1.422 H 09:13 PM 1.094 L
2 01:13 AM 1.213 H 08:28 AM 0.211 L 04:12 PM 1.362 H 09:27 PM 0.974 L	3 02:28 AM 1.291 H 09:13 AM 0.321 L 04:21 PM 1.313 H 09:44 PM 0.812 L	4 03:30 AM 1.376 H 09:59 AM 0.459 L 04:25 PM 1.282 H 10:04 PM 0.619 L	5 04:25 AM 1.466 H 10:44 AM 0.620 L 04:25 PM 1.272 H 10:27 PM 0.408 L	6 05:15 AM 1.558 H 11:26 AM 0.801 L 04:27 PM 1.282 H 10:53 PM 0.194 L	7 06:03 AM 1.641 H 12:06 PM 0.999 L 04:32 PM 1.305 H 11:23 PM -0.004 L	8 06:59 AM 1.709 H 12:50 PM 1.205 L 04:37 PM 1.339 H 11:57 PM -0.168 L
9 08:11 AM 1.767 H	10 12:37 AM -0.278 L 09:30 AM 1.824 H	11 01:25 AM -0.324 L 10:43 AM 1.860 H	12 02:24 AM -0.305 L 12:10 PM 1.869 H	13 03:32 AM -0.233 L 01:24 PM 1.851 H	14 04:49 AM -0.120 L 02:06 PM 1.785 H	15 06:18 AM 0.014 L 02:35 PM 1.677 H 08:19 PM 1.261 L
16 12:03 AM 1.437 H 07:34 AM 0.172 L 02:59 PM 1.558 H 08:29 PM 1.015 L	17 01:59 AM 1.569 H 08:39 AM 0.380 L 03:20 PM 1.456 H 08:52 PM 0.714 L	18 03:21 AM 1.734 H 09:47 AM 0.621 L 03:37 PM 1.391 H 09:26 PM 0.405 L	19 04:31 AM 1.886 H 10:57 AM 0.859 L 03:50 PM 1.368 H 10:04 PM 0.130 L	20 05:32 AM 1.995 H 11:55 AM 1.078 L 04:00 PM 1.380 H 10:43 PM -0.077 L	21 06:28 AM 2.040 H 12:51 PM 1.271 L 04:06 PM 1.413 H 11:22 PM -0.195 L	22 07:29 AM 2.031 H 02:01 PM 1.419 L 04:07 PM 1.453 H
23 12:00 AM -0.219 L 08:36 AM 1.991 H	24 12:39 AM -0.162 L 09:42 AM 1.935 H	25 01:24 AM -0.045 L 10:45 AM 1.864 H	26 02:18 AM 0.101 L 11:59 AM 1.793 H	27 03:20 AM 0.250 L 01:09 PM 1.731 H	28 04:30 AM 0.389 L 01:48 PM 1.664 H	29 05:53 AM 0.512 L 02:12 PM 1.587 H 08:10 PM 1.178 L 11:39 PM 1.280 H
30 07:03 AM 0.625 L 02:28 PM 1.512 H 08:18 PM 1.023 L						

Port O'Connor - Matagorda Bay
28.4459°N, -96.3956°W
April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10:02 AM 0.126 L 08:38 PM 0.751 H
2 10:47 AM 0.186 L 08:36 PM 0.684 H	3 11:28 AM 0.273 L 08:05 PM 0.606 H	4 12:11 AM 0.553 L 04:33 AM 0.610 H 12:06 PM 0.381 L 06:43 PM 0.544 H	5 12:06 AM 0.441 L 06:52 AM 0.642 H 12:48 PM 0.502 L 04:27 PM 0.553 H	6 12:20 AM 0.320 L 08:49 AM 0.718 H	7 12:42 AM 0.205 L 10:07 AM 0.806 H	8 01:11 AM 0.111 L 11:18 AM 0.879 H
9 01:47 AM 0.048 L 01:10 PM 0.931 H	10 02:33 AM 0.020 L 03:59 PM 0.992 H	11 03:34 AM 0.022 L 05:01 PM 1.037 H	12 04:54 AM 0.037 L 06:00 PM 1.059 H	13 06:22 AM 0.050 L 06:59 PM 1.049 H	14 07:39 AM 0.074 L 07:56 PM 0.998 H	15 08:45 AM 0.131 L 08:38 PM 0.898 H
16 09:48 AM 0.232 L 07:26 PM 0.765 H 10:02 PM 0.752 L	17 12:30 AM 0.761 H 10:49 AM 0.370 L 06:27 PM 0.650 H 10:38 PM 0.576 L	18 05:33 AM 0.747 H 11:53 AM 0.530 L 04:16 PM 0.616 H 11:18 PM 0.394 L	19 07:58 AM 0.831 H 11:56 PM 0.235 L	20 09:32 AM 0.930 H	21 12:34 AM 0.118 L 10:45 AM 1.005 H	22 01:12 AM 0.057 L 11:58 AM 1.041 H
23 01:52 AM 0.048 L 01:41 PM 1.047 H	24 02:38 AM 0.079 L 03:24 PM 1.046 H	25 03:33 AM 0.132 L 04:25 PM 1.037 H	26 04:42 AM 0.186 L 05:12 PM 1.017 H	27 05:59 AM 0.231 L 05:49 PM 0.984 H	28 07:04 AM 0.274 L 06:14 PM 0.932 H	29 07:56 AM 0.332 L 06:20 PM 0.859 H
30 08:41 AM 0.415 L 05:59 PM 0.773 H						

LEGEND

MOON RISE/SET

MINOR FEEDING PERIODS (+/- 1 HR}

MOON OVER/ MOON UNDER

MAJOR FEEDING PERIODS, +/- 2 HRS

☆STARS INDICATE BETTER☆ THAN AVERAGE POTENTIAL

Minor Feeding Periods coincide with the moon on the horizon, and last from 1.0 to 1.5 hrs after the moon rise or before moon set. **Major Feeding Periods** are about 1.0 to 1.5 hrs either side of the moon directly overhead or underfoot. **Many variables encourage active feeding** current flow (whether wind or tidal driven), changes in water temp & weather, moon phases, etc. Combine as many as possible for a better chance at an exceptional day. Find concentrations of bait set up during a good time frame, and enjoy the results.

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.

Port Aransas
27.8397°N, -97.0725°W
April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 06:56 AM 0.279 L 05:40 PM 1.005 H 09:10 PM 0.948 L 11:44 PM 0.980 H
2 07:47 AM 0.336 L 05:03 PM 0.923 H 08:49 PM 0.874 L	3 01:03 AM 0.992 H 08:29 AM 0.413 L 03:35 PM 0.884 H 08:50 PM 0.765 L	4 02:18 AM 1.015 H 09:10 AM 0.514 L 03:15 PM 0.884 H 09:11 PM 0.634 L	5 03:27 AM 1.055 H 09:54 AM 0.638 L 03:12 PM 0.904 H 09:41 PM 0.494 L	6 04:28 AM 1.105 H 10:47 AM 0.777 L 03:14 PM 0.938 H 10:16 PM 0.353 L	7 05:26 AM 1.157 H 11:58 AM 0.918 L 03:15 PM 0.988 H 10:56 PM 0.222 L	8 06:30 AM 1.201 H 11:39 PM 0.110 L
9 08:15 AM 1.238 H	10 12:26 AM 0.027 L 11:45 AM 1.315 H	11 01:16 AM -0.017 L 01:25 PM 1.372 H	12 02:11 AM -0.018 L 03:02 PM 1.401 H	13 03:12 AM 0.027 L 03:59 PM 1.385 H	14 04:26 AM 0.108 L 04:38 PM 1.310 H	15 05:53 AM 0.210 L 04:54 PM 1.176 H
16 07:12 AM 0.331 L 02:31 PM 1.034 H 08:10 PM 0.941 L	17 12:29 AM 1.130 H 08:20 AM 0.483 L 02:07 PM 0.989 H 08:25 PM 0.725 L	18 02:13 AM 1.169 H 09:23 AM 0.663 L 02:15 PM 0.991 H 08:54 PM 0.502 L	19 03:47 AM 1.234 H 10:32 AM 0.848 L 02:28 PM 1.024 H 09:31 PM 0.305 L	20 05:08 AM 1.297 H 11:52 AM 1.008 L 02:41 PM 1.075 H 10:11 PM 0.156 L	21 06:28 AM 1.336 H 10:54 PM 0.066 L	22 09:07 AM 1.363 H 11:38 PM 0.037 L
23 10:42 AM 1.388 H	24 12:24 AM 0.058 L 11:48 AM 1.380 H	25 01:10 AM 0.116 L 12:57 PM 1.348 H	26 01:56 AM 0.197 L 02:19 PM 1.304 H	27 02:45 AM 0.289 L 03:22 PM 1.252 H	28 03:40 AM 0.385 L 03:56 PM 1.181 H	29 04:46 AM 0.478 L 03:54 PM 1.090 H
30 06:02 AM 0.567 L 01:47 PM 1.017 H 08:16 PM 0.884 L						

South Padre - Brazos Santiago Pass
26.0674°N, -97.1548°W
April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 06:34 AM 0.278 L 04:32 PM 1.377 H
2 07:32 AM 0.391 L 04:34 PM 1.297 H 09:14 PM 1.130 L	3 01:12 AM 1.245 H 08:23 AM 0.529 L 04:00 PM 1.223 H 08:58 PM 1.012 L	4 02:29 AM 1.333 H 09:11 AM 0.687 L 03:31 PM 1.183 H 09:08 PM 0.845 L	5 03:38 AM 1.429 H 10:01 AM 0.855 L 03:19 PM 1.166 H 09:29 PM 0.647 L	6 04:40 AM 1.520 H 10:58 AM 1.020 L 03:06 PM 1.165 H 09:57 PM 0.432 L	7 05:41 AM 1.594 H 12:14 PM 1.169 L 02:31 PM 1.194 H 10:30 PM 0.219 L	8 06:49 AM 1.644 H 11:09 PM 0.026 L
9 08:19 AM 1.676 H 11:55 PM -0.126 L	10 10:28 AM 1.719 H	11 12:48 AM -0.222 L 12:02 PM 1.771 H	12 01:47 AM -0.249 L 01:15 PM 1.799 H	13 02:53 AM -0.202 L 02:15 PM 1.781 H	14 04:07 AM -0.084 L 02:58 PM 1.701 H	15 05:26 AM 0.092 L 03:17 PM 1.561 H
16 06:46 AM 0.313 L 02:59 PM 1.395 H 08:09 PM 1.152 L	17 12:41 AM 1.361 H 08:00 AM 0.566 L 02:29 PM 1.276 H 08:13 PM 0.885 L	18 02:29 AM 1.497 H 09:11 AM 0.833 L 02:19 PM 1.227 H 08:38 PM 0.591 L	19 04:01 AM 1.643 H 10:28 AM 1.079 L 02:15 PM 1.232 H 09:10 PM 0.317 L	20 05:22 AM 1.754 H 09:46 PM 0.096 L	21 06:39 AM 1.809 H 10:25 PM -0.052 L	22 08:02 AM 1.810 H 11:06 PM -0.124 L
23 09:30 AM 1.778 H 11:50 PM -0.129 L	24 10:47 AM 1.729 H	25 12:38 AM -0.079 L 11:52 AM 1.674 H	26 01:30 AM 0.012 L 12:50 PM 1.617 H	27 02:25 AM 0.133 L 01:38 PM 1.558 H	28 03:25 AM 0.276 L 02:12 PM 1.489 H	29 04:31 AM 0.436 L 02:27 PM 1.402 H
30 05:42 AM 0.605 L 02:07 PM 1.310 H 08:15 PM 1.037 L						

Tidal Corrections

Location	High	Low
Calcasieu Pass, La.	-2:14	-1:24
Sabine Bank Lighthouse	-1:46	-1:31
Sabine Pass (jetty)	-1:26	-1:31
Sabine Pass	-1:00	-1:15
Mesquite Point	-0:04	-0:25
Galveston Bay (S. jetty)	-0:39	-1:05
Port Bolivar	+0:14	-0:06
Texas City, Turning Basin	+0:33	+0:41
Eagle Point	+3:54	+4:15
Clear Lake	+6:05	+6:40
Morgans Point	+10:21	+5:19
Round Point, Trinity Bay	+10:39	+5:15
Point Barrow, Trinity Bay	+5:48	+4:43
Gilchrist, East Bay	+3:16	+4:18
Jamaica Beach, Trinity Bay	+2:38	+3:31
Christmas Point	+2:39	+2:38
Galveston Pleasure Pier	+2:32	+2:33
San Luis Pass	-0:09	+2:31
Freeport Harbor	-0:44	-0:09

WELCOME TO PIRATE'S LANDING FISHING PIER

AT THE BASE OF THE CAUSEWAY, PORT ISABEL

PIRATES_FISHING_PIER

THE LONGEST FISHING PIER IN TEXAS!

OPEN 24 HOURS
All Year Long
(weather permitting)

CHARTER CAPTAIN'S AVAILABLE HERE

TACKLE SHOP

SNACKS • SANDWICHES
COLD DRINKS • BEER • ICE
BAIT, LIVE & FROZEN • TACKLE

PENN
SHIMANO
Huk PERFORMANCE FISHING
Bimini Bay OUTFITTERS LTD.

LOCATED AT THE PIER:

KRISPY KRUNCHY CHICKEN
FRESHLY MADE • PERFECTLY CAJUN
956-943-3883
Patio Dining and Take-Out.
Full Service Bar at the
CANNON BAR
Featuring Summer Entertainment on the Weekends

PIRATE CRUISES
DOLPHIN WATCH AND
BAY FISHING AVAILABLE

LOCATED AT THE HISTORIC LIGHTHOUSE SQUARE WHERE GREAT SHOPPING AND RESTAURANTS ARE ONLY STEPS AWAY!

Waterfront at the Historic Lighthouse • 501 E Maxan St., Port Isabel
956-943-PIER (7437) • Facebook: Pirate's Landing Fishing Pier