



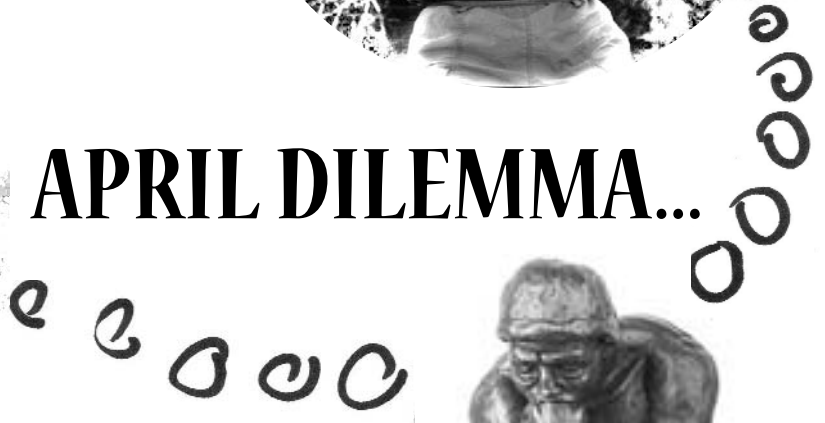
# **OPEN SEASONS**

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR CENTRAL TEXAS OUTDOOR FOLKS

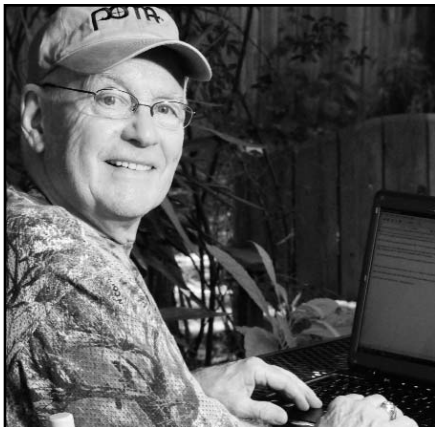
**APRIL 2009**



## **APRIL DILEMMA...**



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## From the Publisher...

The cover picture says it all. There are two major seasons open at once here in Central Texas - Spring Turkey Season and the largemouth bass spawn on all our lakes and streams! If that's not enough to make Rodin's sculpture of "The Thinker" get a headache trying to figure out what to do, nothing will.

Of course, some will decide there's no problem at all: just split the time between the two. That's what I'd do. And if you'll read the next page, my friend, Eddie Stevenson, is planning to do both, as well, even though the only picture I have of Eddie was taken on a turkey hunt two years ago. Eddie is with Remington Arms media staff and spends a lot of time turkey hunting during the spring. When he moved here from North Carolina a few years ago, he called and asked me about the fishing. I made a few recommendations, and one of them was to give Fayette County Lake a try-out. The first

day he was on the lake, he boated thirty bass, and was hooked. So he'll be spending some time at Fayette County in April, as well. His article divides time between giving some sage turkey hunting and bass fishing tips. Heed 'em!

In case you haven't been afflicted by the spring turkey hunting bug, a new video from Hunters' Specialties might just push you over the edge.

It's called "Cutt'n and Strutt'n 13" since I guess this is the 13th edition of it. The Hunter's Specialties Pro Staff and friends cover hundreds of miles and endure serious sleep deprivation to bring viewers some of the best turkey hunting footage available. I've hunted with a couple of them --Eddie Salter and Alex Rutledge - and these boys are the real deal. Rob Keck, former NWTFF President, is also featured on the video, and is no stranger to Texas hunting.

The intent is for the H.S. Pro Staff to share their helpful tips and make you a better turkey hunter. Or to create a new one out of you! With over 3-1/2 hours of action, I'll bet it works. It's probably available at McBride's, Sportsman's Warehouse, Cabela's or Sportsman's Finest, or you can log onto the Hunter's Specialties website at [www.hunterspec.com](http://www.hunterspec.com). Suggested retail price is \$12.99.

And if you haven't discovered Central Texas bass fishing - maybe are one of those who think that fishing is boring - get out on one of the lakes or streams this month and find out what you've been missing. Don't let lack of a boat stop you either. Call one of the guides listing on page 10, or just fish from the bank. With the spawn still ongoing this month, finding bass near the shore is easier than you might think.

John Jefferson

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## News Briefs

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### **ATTY. GEN. HOLDER ACKNOWLEDGES OBAMA WILL SEEK 'ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN'**

The U.S. Attorney General has affirmed that the Obama administration will seek to reinstate the ban on so-called "assault weapons." The National Shooting Sports Foundation issued a press release reminding Congress and all Americans that such a ban would result in a loss of jobs, have no effect on reducing crime and would deprive millions of law-abiding sportsmen and gun owners of their Constitutional right to own the firearm of their choice. Holder made his comments at a news conference covering the issue of criminals smuggling illegal guns from the United States to drug dealers in Mexico, a situation that NSSF President Steve Sanetti says would not be "remedied by legislation that would violate the rights of Americans to own semi-automatic firearms" for hunting, sporting or personal defense purposes. In response to Holder's remarks, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said he would oppose any effort to revive the ban, while House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) told The Hill she had not talked to administration officials about the ban, saying, "On that score, I think we need to enforce the laws we have right now."

**OPEN SEASONS** is edited and published by John Jefferson at 10433 Firethorn Lane, Austin, Texas 78750.

IT Editor Vicky Jefferson. Editorial and advertising copy and art should be sent to [jj@johnjefferson.com](mailto:jj@johnjefferson.com). For information, organizational page rates or other questions, contact the editor at [jj@johnjefferson.com](mailto:jj@johnjefferson.com) or at 512-219-1199. There is a rate that will fit frequent or occasional organization page subscribers. Copy and ad deadlines are the 10th of the month prior to publication.

All photos not otherwise credited were taken by John and Vicky Jefferson.

# April in Texas -- Big Bass or Longbeards? - A Sportsman's Dilemma

By  
**Eddie Stevenson, Remington Arms**

April is a magical time for the Texas sportsman. What's more appealing-matching wits with a hard gobbling Rio or the possibility of combat with a double-digit largemouth? Fortunately, if you live in the state of Texas, you can do both! The hard part is figuring out which to target!

The following are a few tips to help you out this April:

## Rios

Don't rush the roost- All turkey hunters love to hear that thunderous gobble! For most, having a bird come in to the call, gobbling all the way, defines turkey hunting. But resist the urge to crowd the roost at daybreak. Every once in a while, a bird will answer your calls and sail right off the roost into your setup. Most times, you will hear lots of gobbles and the old boy will hit the ground and head in the opposite direction. He knows where his hens are and doesn't need you!

It's a fact that more birds will commit to the call between the hours of 9am and 1pm. They have made it through the morning rituals, their hens have gone off to nest, and they will be looking for love.

Know where the hens are going - Make no mistake, turkey hunting is ALL about the hens. Everything a gobbler does during the breeding season revolves around hen activity. If you know where the hens like to feed and water prior to heading off to the nest, be there!

Leave a stubborn bird - We've all been there; a gobbler answers every call and doesn't move a muscle or heads in the opposite direction. He either already has hens or he's in his comfort zone. If you're a patient hunter, wait him out and call sparingly - just enough to let him know you haven't left the area. He might eventually come in. If you're not a patient hunter, leave that bird and come back a couple hours later. If he answers your call then, knock the safety off and get ready!

## Largemouth

Back off the bank - Many Texas bass will be post-spawn in April. Lots of fish will stay shallow, but a tremendous amount of fish will move out to off-shore structure in the 10-25 foot depth zones where they will spend the duration of late spring and summer. Target road beds, creek channel shelves and humps. Find brush piles or grass on this structure and you've hit pay dirt! Don't be afraid to visit the same spot multiple times throughout the day.

Smaller baits early in the month - Early post spawn bass can be pretty tough to catch. They're stressed out and just looking for a place to rest. The good news is that they will be ready to bite after a brief rest period and there's no better way to catch them than with a small offering like a finesse worm, or one of my favorites, a four inch lizard.

A long-leader Carolina rig tipped with a four inch lizard and 2/0 hook will do the trick when larger offerings fail.

Go large later - Late April is a great time to switch gears and start tossing the big guns. Big Bass will be looking for a big meal. Ten inch worms, big jigs and large profile crankbaits will catch the attention of big bass that have recuperated from the rigors of the spawn. Water temperature will be higher and so will their metabolism.




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## News Briefs

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### **AS IF YOUR TACKLE BAGS WEREN'T FULL ENOUGH!**

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is bringing the International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST), the world's largest sportfishing trade show, to Orlando, Fla. on July 15 - 17. From buyers to media to exhibitors, ICAST annually attracts more than 7,000 representatives from the international sportfishing community to conduct business, network with industry leaders and see all the latest innovations in gear and accessories. [ICASTfishing.org](http://ICASTfishing.org) has all the information exhibitors and attendees need to have a successful show.

### **MAYBE THE LEGISLATURE IS NEUTERING THE WRONG ANIMAL**

California sportsmen again face legislation mandating the spaying or neutering of accomplished hunting dogs.

Senate Bill 250, by Sen. Dean Florez (D- Fresno), requires all dogs to be spayed or neutered or to have a license for keeping a dog capable of reproduction,

A dog capable of reproduction would need an "unaltered dog license." However, the bill fails to define who is eligible to receive such a license or what the cost would be. There is, then, no guarantee for sporting dog owners that their hunting dogs will be protected.

Sic 'em!

## SPORTSMEN'S CALENDAR

- March 21 - May 3 South Zone Rio Grande spring turkey hunting season open.  
Special youth-only weekend on May 23-24.
- April 1-30 Special one-gobbler-only Rio Grande spring season in Bastrop, Caldwell, Colorado, Fayette, Jackson, Lavaca, Lee and Milam counties.
- April 1-30 East Texas spring eastern turkey season open in 43 counties.
- April 4 - May 17 North Zone Rio Grande spring turkey hunting season open.  
Special youth-only weekend on May 9-10.
- April 1 Austin Woods & Waters Club Monthly Luncheon  
11:30 a.m. Elks Lodge, 700 Dawson Rd  
Open to the public; \$15 meal  
Program: Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson - An April Fool's Day Look at the current Legislative session.
- April 2 & 16 Capital Bass Club meetings -7:30 p.m; VFW Post 8787. - 500 VFW Drive
- April 11 Concealed Handgun Class; Cabela's ~ Buda, TX; Class Cost: \$75  
Sign up in Cabela's at the firearms counter or visit [www.driftwoodchl.com](http://www.driftwoodchl.com)
- April 16 Austin Christian Bass Club Monthly Meeting; Hillcrest Baptist Church --- 3838 Steck
- April 17 Austin Smiles "Shoot for a Smile" Sporting Clays Tournament & Raffle benefiting Austin Smiles, the Austin Plastic Surgery Foundation. Texas Disposal Systems Exotic Game Ranch, at Creedmore.  
Contact Austin Smiles at 512-451-9300 or visit [www.austinsmiles.org](http://www.austinsmiles.org) for more information.
- April 17 - 18 Taxidermy Auction  
Will Rogers Exhibits Bldg 1, Ft Worth, Texas  
Three estates and two museums being liquidating: full body polar bear, huge polar bear rug, Black Rhino with real skin and real horn, several full body brown and grizzly bears, including a Boone and Crockett brown bear, several black bears, two elephant mounts and a 15 1/2 foot marlin. Over 600 mounts in all. Also several great pieces of art in this auction. For information, 512-626-8824(c), 512-451-7633 store.
- April 18 Austin Woods & Waters Club's Wild Game Cook-off and Family Fun Event - Berry Springs Park - Georgetown - 3- 8 p.m.  
See P. 7; All Conservation Clubs invited to compete. Call Terry Meyers: 750-2925.
- April 18 Austin Christian Bass Club monthly tournament  
Lake to be decided. See [www.acbassclub.org](http://www.acbassclub.org)
- April 18 Boat Safety Check at Cabela's  
10a.m. - 3 p.m. on north side of Cabela's  
Bring your boat to be checked for all regulation compliance by TPWD Game Wardens. BOAT REGISTRATIONS WILL NOT BE CONDUCTED. For more information, contact Lloyd Carroll - [Lloyd.Carroll@cabelas.com](mailto:Lloyd.Carroll@cabelas.com)
- April 22 The Fly Fishing Film Tour - Alamo Draft House, 1220 S. Lamar. First time in Austin. National tour showcasing the best independent outdoor and fly fishing film makers. Check out [www.flyfishingfilmtour.com](http://www.flyfishingfilmtour.com) for clips and to buy tickets on-line. TICKETS WILL NOT BE SOLD AT OR THROUGH THE ALAMO DRAFT HOUSE. Adults \$15; Seniors \$12; Kids \$10.  
Doors open at 5:00pm; Films start at 7:00pm.
- April 25 Fishers of Men Bass Club monthly tournament  
Temple Lake Park, Lake Belton; Jeff Cook - 413-4178
- April 25 National Fishing Lure Collectors Club annual tackle show and swap meet. Knights Of Columbus Hall, Temple Texas.  
Call Shane Koehler, 512-825-8148; [shane@lonestarlures.com](mailto:shane@lonestarlures.com)
- April 26 River City Bass Club monthly tournament  
Lake to be decided -- [www.rivercitybassclub.org](http://www.rivercitybassclub.org)
- May 9 Concealed Handgun Class; Cabela's ~ Buda, TX; Class Cost: \$75  
Sign up in Cabela's at the firearms counter or visit [www.driftwoodchl.com](http://www.driftwoodchl.com).
- May 12 Central Texas Safari Club  
Gourmet Chinese Wild Game Dinner; Call Leann: 773-5674
- June 8-11 Central Texas Safari Club  
Wild Pigeon Shoot in Argentina with the Detail Co; Call Leann: 773-5674
- June 13 Concealed Handgun Class  
Cabela's ~ Buda, TX; Class Cost: \$75  
Sign up in Cabela's at the firearms counter or visit [www.driftwoodchl.com](http://www.driftwoodchl.com).

TPWD estimates about 88,000 hunters take part in Texas' spring turkey season and take about 25,000 gobblers. Most of the state's spring turkey hunting activity occurs in South Texas and in the Hill Country, where TPWD turkey program leader Jason Hardin noted timely rainfall could give the bird population a boost.

# News Briefs

## STATE CHAMPS IN BASS!

Sixty-eight collegiate anglers from 12 universities throughout the state of Texas converged on Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir near Killeen in March to determine which Texas school has the best collegiate bass fishing program.

At the conclusion of the weigh in, Jerod Hawkes & Daniel Brock representing Texas A&M Kingsville edged out Clint Nowell and Kevin Burke of Sam Houston State by a mere two hundredths of a pound, 17.82 pounds to 17.80.

The rest of the top eight in the tournament were UT- Arlington (17.03), A&M (16.56), North Texas (15.33), UT- Arlington (14.49), Stephen F Austin (14.17) and Tarleton (13.63).

## A HECKUVA RAFFLE!

It benefits Buckskin Brigade, the wildlife leadership boot camp conducted by Texas Wildlife Assn. And the neat thing about it is that every ticket purchased has a chance to win every one of the nine prizes, which include three deer hunts, a guided bass trip, a ton of deer feed and some fine merchandise. Tickets are \$20 for one; six for \$100. Click on [h\\_holdsworth@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:h_holdsworth@texas-wildlife.org) or call 1-800-TEX-WILD.

## Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus Introduces Senate Version of FAET Legislation

Senate members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus introduced legislation allowing the firearms and ammunition industry to pay the firearms excise tax (FAET) on a quarterly basis, the same payment schedule as every other industry supporting conservation.

The Firearms Fairness and Affordability Act would reverse the current practice that requires those manufacturers to pay excise taxes more frequently (every two weeks) than other sporting goods industries.

The firearms industry would still pay its full share of taxes, but it would do so in a more equitable manner that is in keeping with other business practices.

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**Edward Jones**  
 MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING



SCI Austin is now in our 6th year, and what a great 6 years it has been! As many of you already know, we are the Austin Chapter of Safari Club International, the world's largest organization for international conservation, sport hunting / hunters' rights, educational and humanitarian services. We have a very diverse group, including non-hunters, those just getting involved, as well as seasoned veterans of the field. Contrary to many beliefs, this is not a group of "Africa Hunters". This is a fun and continually growing group of folks who enjoy the outdoors, care about its preservation, and want to meet other like-minded individuals.

We are not an exclusive club, rather an inclusive organization that welcomes partnerships with other organizations to foster friendships and goodwill in the hunting and conservation community. We host bi-monthly meeting with speakers such as Larry "Mr. Whitetail" Weishuhn, Alan Warren, even Craig Boddington. Keep your ears open, as we schedule our lineup of speakers for the coming months! You won't be disappointed. Last year we hosted a fabulous joint meeting with Austin Woods and Waters Club, and more events such as this are in the works.

While we have a lot of fun, we also get quite a lot accomplished for conservation and education on the local level, as well as internationally. It is very rewarding to see the impact we can have with a little work and a lot of camaraderie and good times.

The pride of our education department is our mobile museum, the Sensory Safari. The trailer is filled with mounts from around the world, and can be taken and displayed at schools, expos, anywhere you can imagine. The reaction is always great, but there is nothing compared to when you are able to walk a visually impaired child through and let them "see" the animals of the world. Partnering with that is the Safari In A Box, which is a box filled with pelts, skulls, replitracks and repliscat of animals indigenous to the majority of the USA. This is a great tool that is being placed in schools and educational venues throughout the country, often at no cost to the schools. Both of these can be in your children/grandchildren's schools, just contact us through [sciaustin.org](http://sciaustin.org) for more details.

We also work with Texas Youth Hunting Program, and can boast several huntmasters as members of ours. All of our events are youth-friendly, and kids 12 and under are always free, with 13-18 being half price. One of our greatest passions is the education of our youth, our future hunters, our future voters.

We work on the humanitarian side, with projects such as SafariCare as well as Sportsmen Against Hunger. The SafariCare program is exciting, and anyone can do it. If you are going on a trip, you can request to borrow the "blue bag" which is a large duffel that you can fill with supplies for the area to which you are traveling. The simple things we take for granted are luxuries in many third world countries. We carry items such as band-aids, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, toys and clothing. The response and appreciation for such a simple gesture is quite overwhelming! We will be hosting our first Sportsmen Against Hunger feast this fall, to feed the needy in our area.

We also host what we consider our most fun event of the year, the Fun Shoot and Family Picnic, which is annually hosted at the Texas Disposal Systems Exotic Game Ranch and Pavilion. This is a great family event, which encourages our youth in the outdoors, has fishing, sporting clays, kids events, as well as educational lectures and fabulous food. This year the event will be on August 8th. We look forward to seeing you at the next event! Be sure to keep your eyes on our website for more upcoming events. You can also join our e-mail list on the website. [www.sciaustin.org](http://www.sciaustin.org) . Now, get outdoors, and get a kid involved!

Upcoming events

May 13 - Meeting, Dave & Buster's

July 8 - Meeting/ Social, location TBA

August 8 - Fun Shoot and Family Picnic

Texas Disposal Systems Exotic Game Ranch and Pavilion



Did you know...? Austin Woods and Waters is a club of hunters and fisherman and is all about hunting and fishing. We have monthly speakers at our Luncheons, put on hunting and fishing trips, run the State's largest youth hunt in conjunction with the Texas Parks and Wildlife, and raise funds for the future of wild places. You should become a member.

If you have an interest in sports and outdoors, or maybe have a lot of want to and not so much know how, come mix with a great peer group at our monthly luncheon. The Luncheon is held the first Wednesday of every month, 12:00 noon, at the Elks Lodge off of Dawson, just south of Barton Springs. Here you will meet folks just like you, whether you are a semi-professional outdoorsman or a beginner. Each month, we engage a speaker to

speak to us at lunch about a topic of interest to our club, from fishing red fish out of a kayak, to aging whitetail deer on the hoof. You will meet people here to either create or expand a base of hunting and fishing buddies, men and women alike.

If ever you wanted to get more involved in getting out into the field, take part in one of our club hunting and fishing activities. These events are from mild to wild. In addition to the numerous hunting and fishing trips our members go on, on their own, the Club also puts on various trips into the field. We regularly have a cast and blast trip, dove hunting trips, and others. So if getting out in the field has been a problem, come fix it here. Bring your kids, bring your wife, women, bring your husband.

Don't forget about the Austin Woods and Waters Wild Game Cook-off. It is a time for the whole family to come sample some truly wonderful wild game dishes of all sorts. You will get great ideas, your kids can compete in the various games (to include crawfish races), and you get dinner to boot. There are all kinds of teams out there.

You should see the cooking teams out there. Some are very, very serious and take winning seriously. There are others who are just out there to have fun and just come to share. All kinds of people and for a people watching time, it is a good one.

I and a few friends (the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation folks) have competed out there the last couple of years. I say competed. We go mostly to have fun. On top of what ever wild creations we have on the pit, will also be some brisket, ribs, and sausage. Just for filler. Always a good time. Come out and be on our team if you want or bring your own team. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation team is challenging all the other wildlife conservation organizations to come out and try to beat them.

Finally, come to our luncheon on April 1. It is always the first Wednesday of each month at the Elk's Lodge off of Dawson Road and Barton Springs, south of the river. Our speaker will be Jerry Patterson, the Texas Land Commissioner, to speak about the current legislation on the table. If you ever wondered what is mulling around in the minds of our legislators -- and it does affect you and your interests --, you might not want to miss this. Ironically, it's on April Fools' Day!

We will look forward to meeting you. Call me if you have any questions. 512-258-0555.

Aaron Games, President

### NEXT MEETING

Apr. 1 Monthly Luncheon 11:30

Elks Lodge 700 Dawson Road

Open to the public \$15 meal

Program: Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson - An April Fool's Day Look at the current Legislative session.

## Can I Be Frank?

Elks Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Austin Woods and Water, Safari Club (a couple of them), Quail Forever and so on. What's the point? So many clubs, all covering the same thing - why? Let's turn this around, why not? I realize most of you reading this newsletter probably aren't actually a member of any of these clubs. That's a shame. Let's ignore the "do good factor" and forget any positive benefit to our hunting heritage in general, or protecting your rights to own guns and hunt - what's the benefit to you?

As an Eddie Murphy monologue goes "What have you done for me lately?". Lots...think a moment - how important is it to you to hunt and fish? Given the same trip, would you rather spend more or less hunting/fishing? I don't think many people, in fact most members of the clubs, really realize what a clearing house for great bargains your local hunting club represents. Join these clubs, if for no other reason, to get great deals on hunting and fishing trips and packages. Have you been to any of these banquets? It is amazing what you can pick up. I have personally seen people win a \$1,500 rifle for a mere \$20 bucks. You can't get that in a gun store, a pawn shop, or out of the back of someone's trunk in an alley! It's amazing what one can win, the auctions are incredible. Has traveling to Africa always seem an impossible dream? Think again - Leann (my hunter wife) and I bought two weeks in Africa, all our food, lodging, a professional guide every day we were there, maid service, room service, all our drinks, and all of our liquor for \$750.

The fascinating aspect of this, a hunt we had tentatively committed to if conditions were met, finally came together. Now we had two hunts! What to do? We tried and tried to sell this 14 day hunt, we even got as low as \$400 - I tried to give it to a family member. No takers, so I got thinking...and thinking...and thinking.... What if I just stayed a month in Africa? Would my world fall apart? So I spliced my trips together, then added a third trip. It was life altering and incredible. The most expensive thing about this trip was the airfare! We had an incredible time.

Where in the world can a guy buy a 14 day hunt - everything included - the full works for \$750? A weekend camping trip can be more expensive. Yet I can show you over and over hundreds of people who have done just so. Hunting trips to South Africa are selling cents on the dollar at various club auctions. One Austin club just this last January had to pull numerous hunts off the auction block that didn't sell at all! There are deals to be had, jump on them. Guys you can realize your dream through our various hunting organizations - just by attending and being aware. Many members join the clubs, get the newsletters, then skip the banquet. For anywhere from \$50 - \$75, those banquets are a steal. You're missing the best part of being a member of a club.

Various hunting and fishing outfitters donate their hunts or fishing trips, most generously, to support our local clubs and at the same time raise money for our beloved sports. Take advantage of their generosity. It cost far less for an outfitter to donate a hunt or fishing trip than it cost to actually advertise in traditional medias. It works out great for everyone. The bottom line is each club you join actually makes you money. They want you to buy their hunts, they feel bad when they go unsold.

If you love to hunt and aren't a billionaire, then you might consider the various clubs as avenues to stretch your hunting dollars. Further, in each club you have a resource of hundreds of members to get advice, tips and cautions. I can think of few experiences that offer more bang for your buck. Central Texas Safari Club offers wide range of services, check us out, but really, all the clubs in Austin can help you tremendously, you don't have to be a member of just one.

Author David Sefton is President of the SCI chapter Central Texas Safari Club. They have incredible socials, wine tastings, wonderful dinners and group hunts. If your interested in joining contact their secretary Leann Collins at 512-773-5674. Their next function will be a Chinese Wild Game Gourmet Dinner May 12th, A Wild Pigeon Hunt in Argentina June 8-11th, sponsored by the Detail Company, and their Wildlife Conservation Gala October 23rd at the Austin Club, downtown Austin.



# News Briefs

## Babying Big Bass

How you handle a lunker impacts its chances of survival.

One of the biggest factors that influences the survival of fish entered into the ShareLunker program is how those fish are handled prior to being picked up by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

ShareLunker handling and care tips on the TPWD web site emphasize minimal contact with the fish and as much as possible. Removing the fish from the livewell or holding tank for photographs stresses the fish, increases the chance the fish will get fungal infections where touched and multiplies the risk of serious injury such as a broken jaw.

As the person in charge of caring for ShareLunkers while they are at TFFC, biologist Juan Martinez says "Over-handling stresses the fish. If anglers would just take one or two pictures and then leave the fish alone, it might not get as stressed.."

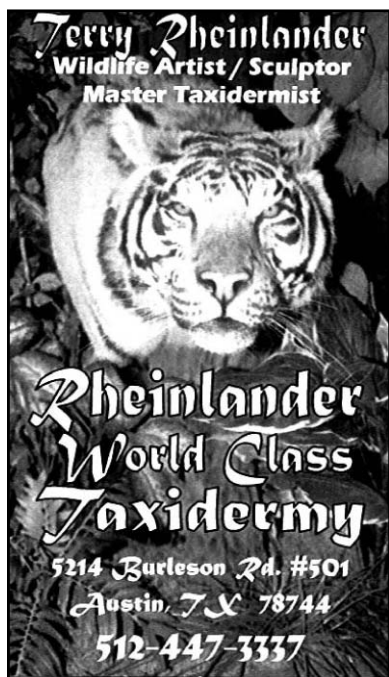
Martinez agrees that broken jaws are usually caused by the fish being held incorrectly when being landed or photographed. "A misconception is that the mouth of a fish with a broken jaw will remain open," he says. "This is not always the case. If the jaw is broken in the middle and not where the jaw is connected to the skull, the mouth will remain closed. This type of injury is common when fish are held in a vertical position with the lower body not being supported."

David Campbell, ShareLunker program manager, offers the following tips for handling big bass to avoid injuring them.

- Wet your hands before touching the fish.
- Using your dominant hand, grip the fish with your thumb inside the mouth and your fingers locked on the outside of the mouth.
- Support the rear of the fish with your other hand placed beneath the fish just forward of the tail.
- Lift the fish out of the water in a horizontal position using both hands for support.
- DO NOT hold the fish by the lower jaw in a vertical position. This can dislocate or break the jaw, practically guaranteeing the fish will not survive, since it will not be able to eat.
- Handle the fish only when putting it into a livewell or holding tank. Do not keep the fish out of water or keep removing it from the water for photographs.
- Remember that the fish has to be in the water to be able to breathe," Campbell says.
- The fish is already stressed by being caught and put into a different environment, and

holding it out of the water increases the stress level. Taking photos is okay if everyone gets ready before the fish is removed from the water and is put back within thirty seconds."

A 13- or 14-pound bass is the equivalent of a 170-class whitetail buck, with the difference being that the buck goes on the wall, while the fish, if properly handled and cared for, can live to continue to produce more fish.



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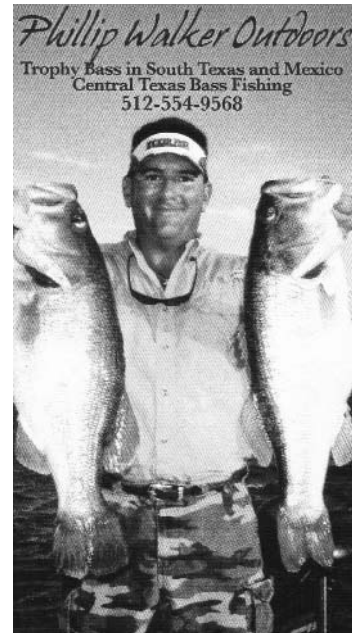
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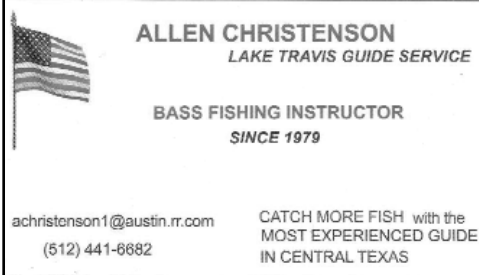
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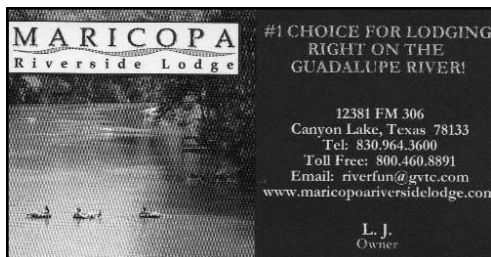
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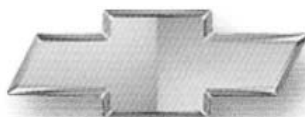
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