Restoring and protecting Texas bays: a forty year journey continues
Abandoned Crab Traps:
15 years of CCA Successes

From the March 26 Houston Chronicle feature by Shannon Tompkins

Ronnie Luster: "I just kicked the rock," Luster modestly said of the move to address the derelict crab issue. CCA picked it up and ran with it."

33,000 traps later …

This annual exercise in environmental improvement began in 2002 and is aimed at extracting some of the thousands of wire-mesh crab traps abandoned or lost and left littering Texas bays. The program has proven to be a heartening success, getting at least 33,000 derelict traps out of the water, preventing the wasteful loss of as many as one million blue crabs as well as untold numbers of fish and other marine life that would have fallen prey to these fatal attractions.

In the bargain, the effort has made Texas bays safer for all human users by stripping the water of these slime-coated, often rusty mesh-wire boxes that tangle and foul boat propellers and cause serious punctures and cuts when stumbled into by wadefishers and others.

"Getting out there and pulling abandoned crab traps is one of those rare instances where you can see you’ve had an immediate positive impact on the bays," Ronnie Luster said. "The volunteers get a real sense of satisfaction out of that. They make a difference."

Luster would know about the crab-trap removal program and making a difference. The 74-year-old Houston businessman and lifelong coastal angler and waterfowler participated in the first 14 consecutive crab-trap removal programs, missing the 2016 cleanup effort only because of knee-replacement surgery.

But his involvement with the crab-trap cleanup effort goes much deeper. A seven-mile run Luster took in his airboat near Port O'Connor 17 years ago played a seminal role in Texas creating the crab-trap removal program - an enterprise so successful it has been copied in other coastal states.

When Luster began fishing out of Port O'Connor in 1961, the shallow waters of Shoalwater Bay in which he regularly wade-fished held an abundance of redfish and speckled trout and not a single crab trap.

But by the 1980s, the bays had seen an explosion in the number of commercial crabbers, many of whom set as many as 300 or more traps.

Crab traps were regularly lost - some to storms that swept the wire cages far afield, some because the line and float came loose or were cut, and others simply were abandoned. A 1997 Texas study indicated the average commercial cracker annually lost about 100 traps. And there were well over 300 commercial crabbers working the bays.

Those crab traps may be lost to their owners, but they do not lose their effectiveness. Crabs and other marine life continue entering a trap's funnel-like opening and can’t find their way out. Eventually, they die, becoming bait that draws other crabs and fish into the trap. This “ghost fishing” continues until the trap eventually deteriorates, something that can take years.

The toll is tremendous. Research indicates a functioning derelict crab trap annually catches (and kills) 20 to 60 blue crabs. And the traps don’t attract only crabs. Sheepshead, speckled trout, redfish, drum, and other fish enter the derelict traps and their cycle of death. More than 40 species of marine life have been documented in abandoned crab traps, including diamondback terrapins, a relatively rare coastal species. As many as 50 fish have been found in a single derelict trap. Even otters, raccoons, and other terrestrial life have been found in the traps.

By 2000, Texas bays were littered with tens of thousands of abandoned crab traps. "There just got to be more and more of them," Luster said, adding that the traps became so numerous they became a significant hazard to anglers, boaters and even retrievers used by duck hunters.

State law was a problem

Luster, like many who fished, hunted and boated on Texas bays, became increasingly frustrated with the flood of derelict traps and the toll they took on marine life. One winter day in 2000, he decided to see just how many traps were out there.

"My wife and I were in my airboat, and we made a seven-mile run down Shoalwater Bay," he said. "We counted 1,800 crab traps. I knew something had to be done."

But his frustration concerning derelict traps was amplified by the roadblocks preventing Texans from doing anything about it. Under Texas law, all crab traps, even obviously derelict traps that had been sitting for years, were considered private property. Only their owners or law enforcement officers could legally touch them.

Texas game wardens were allowed to collect abandoned crab traps but had to store the traps and post notices in local courthouses soliciting owners to claim the traps. If the traps were not claimed, and they never were, wardens had
Texas wardens occasionally made sweeps to collect derelict traps, but, with only a limited number of wardens, they made little dent in the problem. Luster figured out a way to address the problem he saw in Shoalwater Bay. He worked with Texas game warden Capt. Rex Mayes to coordinate a cooperative effort to remove any traps that did not have the annual state-issued tag required to be attached to the trap. Mayes provided a number of Texas wardens.

Luster, who was an active member of the Coastal Conservation Association, got the organization involved, and dozens of CCA members volunteered to help wardens remove derelict traps from the waters around Port O’Connor on a winter weekend.

“We had close to 20 boats involved,” Luster recalled. “We picked up 800 traps. A few weeks later, we did it again, and picked up another 750. There was not a single legal trap among them.”

The effort illustrated the severity of the problem and suggested a solution.

“There were people who would gladly volunteer to help remove the traps, but the law wouldn’t let them just do it,” Luster said. “Something had to change.”

He did. “I just kicked the rock,” Luster modestly said of the move to address the derelict crab issue. “CCA picked it up and ran with it.”

The Houston-based conservation organization whose membership is almost exclusively made up of coastal anglers pushed for changes in the law that prevented private citizens from removing derelict crab traps. In the 2001 session of the Texas Legislature, a bill by State Sen. Buster Brown, R-Lake Jackson, did just that. The bill authorized Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to set a short closure of all Texas bays to crab traps and designated any traps in the water during the closure as “litter” that could be removed by anyone.

The first closure and cleanup effort came in February 2002, with timing set to coincide with the slow season for commercial crabbing and when winter’s northerly winds often shove tides lower than normal, exposing many derelict traps. The effort, coordinated by TPWD’s coastal fisheries division and supported by CCA and other sponsors, was a stunning success. Almost 600 volunteers fanned out in Texas bays, removing 8,000 derelict traps.

TPWD designated locations in each major bay system as drop-off sites for collected traps, with many of those sites serving as gathering spots for volunteers, said Zack Thomas, crab-trap cleanup coordinator for TPWD’s coastal fisheries division. The Coastal Conservation Association, Galveston Bay Foundation, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, San Antonio Bay Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are providing volunteers and support for the effort. “If it wasn’t for the volunteers, this program wouldn’t be the success it’s been,” Zack Thomas said. Without Luster and a handful of other determined coastal anglers, it might never have happened at all.”

The crab trap cleanup is one of those great stories of a CCA member recognizing a problem in our bays, then getting the help behind him to do something about it.

Due to Ronnie Luster’s passion for our Texas coastal fishery, he was able to start one of the most successful and beneficial programs our Texas bays have seen.

This cleanup initiative has not only removed thousands of derelict crab traps, but has also saved a tremendous amount of marine life.

CCA is fortunate to have so many members like Ronnie, who care enough about our coastal resources to help make a difference.

—Robby Byers CCA Texas Executive Director
In 2004, like every other morning of fishing, we gathered our gear and set out before the sun was up. Later, I got a bite that seemed to be a fairly large flounder. Unaware of all the rules of the tournament, my dad hands me the net and says “You’re going to have to net this one yourself.” I set the hook and landed the biggest flounder of my life at that time. As a nine-year-old kid, I was ecstatic, but was clueless to what this flounder would do for my future. The fish I caught won the Starkids Scholarship Division, and I was awarded a $50,000 scholarship.

After high school, I decided to continue my education and attend Texas State University. My love for the outdoors and conservation led me to pursue a degree in Resource and Environmental Studies with a minor in Geology. I graduated in December 2016, and I’m currently searching for opportunities to work with the environment.

Thank you CCA Texas and the STAR tournament for providing the opportunity to advance my education and set a strong foundation for me, as well as other CCA members. —Dylan Ybarra, Texas State University, 2016

Remember, YOUNG ANGLERS ages 6-17, just like Dylan, FISH FOR FREE with a CCA Youth ($10) membership!! A $10 CCA Youth membership and free CCA STAR registration for a chance to win one of many $25,000 or $50,000 chunks of free college is a great deal. We could not offer this without the help of our many great sponsors that we hope you will continue to support so that we can continue to “Get Kids Off the X-Box, and In the Tackle Box!”

Just like putting off your ‘honey-do’ list, putting off your STAR registration can come back to bite you. Let Nick Elliott’s story speak for itself!

On the morning of June 13, 2015 Nick decided to run out and fish the Port O’Connor jetties. After putting a red in the box and fishing a little while longer, Nick decided they better count to thirty. As Nick picked up his last fish he saw what thousands of anglers hunt for...a small tag that simply said 2015 CCA Texas STAR TAG #TA694! The extreme joy of this discovery soon turned into manic depression. Nick’s usual launch spot offered no chance for instant STAR registration, but not seeing their live game warden felt his pain. Even the one at the cleaning table let Nick know it. Even the game warden felt his pain.

Sadly, Nick did not get to pick up a new F-150 “Texas Edition” XLT SuperCab towing a new 23’ Haynie Big Foot with a Mercury 150L Pro XS Opti-Max and Coastaline trailer prize package. Remember, you have to be IN IT TO WIN IT!!

To be eligible to win one of $1,000,000 in prizes being offered in Texas’ largest, richest, summer-long fishing event, you must be a CURRENT member of CCA, in addition to being registered in the 2017 Texas STAR tournament. CCA membership is $30 annually and the 2017 STAR Tournament fee is $25, for a total of only $55. Remember though, YOUNG ANGLERS FISH STAR for FREE.

Anglers between the ages of 6-17 can register for STAR for free with a $10 CCA “Youth” annual membership. We want to help get all young people out on the water and we wouldn’t be able to offer our CCA “Youth” members the chance to win one of a $1,000,000 in prizes for free if it wasn’t for our great sponsors. To be eligible to fish STAR for free, “Youth” members MUST be at least 6 years of age in 2017 and under age 18. It is the “Youth” member’s responsibility to make sure their CCA membership is current and that they are registered for the current year STAR tournament.

As you make your plans to head off to stock up on gear and register for STAR if you haven’t already, be sure to be on the lookout for a very special bonus from our great sponsor Academy Sports + Outdoors, where you can find any gear you might need and register in person in one quick stop.

2017 Early Bird Drawings! Remember, if you sign up by April 28th at midnight you are automatically entered into our “Early Bird” prize drawings. We are again offering the awesome

Act now to own ONE of these signed, limited-edition prints! Renowned artists Sam Caldwell and David Drinkard showcase their unique styles exclusively for CCA Texas STAR 2017. Pick your favorite or BUY BOTH!

CCA Membership and STAR registration included with your purchase ★ ccatexas.org ★ startournament.org ★ (713) 626-4222

2017 STAR early bird drawing deadline to enter is April 28th

**Grand Prize**
Dargel 210 Skout, Mercury 150 hp ProXS OptiMax, and McClain Trailer (must be 21 or over to win boat package)

**20 More Great Prizes**
9.9 hp Mercury Kicker Motor Three (3) rod and reel combos Thermo-Electric Travel Cooler & Warmer

Fifteen (15) CCA Special Edition Posters

210 Skout with a Mercury 150 ProXS OptiMax and a McClain trailer. See a list of some of the other great “Early Bird” prizes that we are offering below!

CCA TEXAS MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS- On top of helping to make this event what it is, our amazing sponsors continue to add value to your CCA Texas Membership. Remember to take advantage of the following benefits our sponsors provide through your CCA membership!
Ford X-Plan Pricing: CCA Texas members will again have the great honor from Texas Ford Dealers of using X-Plan pricing. For just a $30 membership any CCA member can purchase (or lease) a Ford vehicle at Ford employee pricing!!! Our Ford Partner Code # is CCA 61; go to www.fordpartner.com, if you are considering a purchase.

SIGN-UP EARLY AND RECEIVE A SPECIAL BONUS FROM ACADEMY SPORTS + OUTDOORS- Just one of many great reasons to register for STAR is that Academy Sports + Outdoors will be mailing a $10 gift card in May just in time for fishing season!! Thanks again to Academy Sports + Outdoors for this great benefit… and sponsoring THREE $25,000 SCHOLARSHIPS!!

TEXAS FISH & GAME MAGAZINE “BONUS ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION!” Texas Fish & Game Magazine” is back again this year offering a FREE one-year (12 issues) online subscription to all 2017 CCA Texas STAR participants. This subscription gives you access to the latest and most in-depth outdoors information anywhere. Whether you are lying in bed or sitting in the office, you will always have access. Include your email address on your registration form to receive your free subscription! If you prefer the print version don’t worry! You can still receive a print version, while still having online access, for only $8 a year (vs. $17.99). Be on the lookout in your email or mailbox for details on how to activate this offer! If you have any questions regarding your past or current subscriptions, please call (800) 725-1134 or email subscriptions@fishgame.com.

TILSON HOMES $1,000 IN FREE UPGRADES!- Every CCA Texas member who purchases a Tilson Home is eligible for $1,000 in free upgrades such as ceramic tile, hardwood floors, cabinets and more. See their ad in the CCA Texas Currents newsletter for more details or call 1 (888) 540-6705.

CCA Texas is pleased to announce Mustang® Cat has joined our family of sponsors. As the authorized dealer for Caterpillar, Mustang Cat is a Houston-based, family-owned business that has been active in the community since 1952. The company has recently invested in the region to upgrade its footprint. These enhancements include Mustang’s headquarters on U.S. 290 and a facility expansion in El Campo that will serve the company’s customers for years to come. As lifelong Texans, they also recognize the value of investment in the great outdoors of the region they are proud to call home. CCA Texas is grateful to welcome Mustang Cat as a partner in our mission to ensure our marine resources are available for the enjoyment of future generations to come.

CCA Texas STAR Platinum Print Membership Package, Series VII- We’re pleased to announce the new prints being offered for the 2017 CCA Texas STAR Platinum package are It’s On and Scholarship on the Line, created by renowned artists David Drinkard and Sam Caldwell. We hope you love these prints as much as we do!
Your CCA Texas Platinum package includes your CCA membership (new or renewal), your 2017 CCA Texas STAR entry, plus one signed, limited-edition print of your choice created exclusively for STAR, all for only $125!! These are one-of-a-kind prints worth this price alone. If you are considering one, or several, of these limited edition packages, go to: www.startournament.org for more details or to place your order with the STAR Department, call 713-626-4222.

See above for images of both great art prints and full details.

2017 Prize Line-Up- Our goal has always been to keep STAR fees as reasonable as possible. We would not be able to do this without our great sponsors! In 2002, we were able to begin offering youth (ages 6-17) the opportunity to fish the tournament for FREE! We have been blessed for 28 years to offer members of all ages amazing prize packages and college scholarships. This year’s tournament will be

STAR continues on page 6
no different as we will be offering another spectacular prize line-up! This includes over 100 prizes including trucks, boats, motors, trailers and $325,000 in college scholarships in the following categories:

Texas Ford Dealers Redfish Division- Texas Ford Dealers continue to make this division the “Best in Texas”! The first five registered STAR participants who catch a tagged redfish will receive a tough 2017 Ford F-150 Texas Edition truck to tow their awesome Haynie 23 Bigfoot, rigged with a Mercury ProXS OptiMax sitting on a Coastline trailer. The next five anglers will receive the same boat, motor, and trailer package. Registered young anglers not of legal driving age who land a STAR tagged redfish, will receive the boat package plus a $25,000 college scholarship, in lieu of the truck.

Trout Division Prize: Mowdy 22’ V boat with a 150 HP motor and Coastline trailer.

Trout Division- Again this year, upper, middle, and lower coast region winners will each drive home with an awesome Mowdy 22’ V boat, 150 HP motor and Coastline trailer. (Eight pound minimum weight, please release all fish under 27”)

Offshore Division- Hoffpauir Auto & Outdoor Store is back again providing anglers who land the heaviest Kingfish, Dorado and Ling an awesome Polaris Ranger Crew 570 EPS UV in Polaris Pursuit Camo on top of a Big Tex 35sa trailer to cruise around in when you’re back on shore!

Inshore Division- Registered anglers who turn in the heaviest flounder, gafftop and sheepshead will get to drive off into the sunset pulling a new Shoalwater 19’ Cat boat with a 115 HP motor, all on top of a McClain trailer.

Academy Sports + Outdoors Trout Division- $25,000 scholarship for heaviest trout in upper, middle and lower coast divisions!! (Minimum weight requirement of six pounds for entry)

Gafftop, flounder and sheepshead- Anglers with heaviest fish in each category will receive a $25,000 college scholarship!!

THE PRIZES DON’T END THERE!
First through fourth runners-up in all divisions will receive various gift cards from our longtime partner ACADEMY SPORTS + OUTDOORS!!

Youth Member Drawing- All youth STAR participants (age 6-17) are eligible for a bonus drawing for a $25,000 college scholarship, even without wetting a line!!

Member Bonus Drawing- One lucky STAR entrant will also take home a brand new Dargel 210 Skout, 150 HP motor, and McClain trailer simply for registering!

Major sponsors for the 28th Annual CCA Texas STAR Tournament include:
Texas Ford Dealers, Tilson Home Corporation, Capital Farm Credit, Mercury Marine, Academy Sports + Outdoors, Whataburger, LP Building Products, Hoffpauir Polaris, Shiner Beer, KTRK-abc13, Haynie Boats, Mowdy Boats of Texas, Shoalwater Boats, Dargel Boats, Texas Fish & Game Magazine, Coastline Trailers, McClain Trailers, Chris’s Marine, Mt. Houston Marine

For more information, go to www.startournament.org.

Thanks for supporting CCA Texas and the STAR Tournament!!
CCA Texas and BCT to invest $530,000 towards habitat in 2017

By Kim Ogonosky
Director of Communications and Media-CCA Texas

Partnership with several conservation groups will benefit over $4 Million in coastal habitat

The Building Conservation Trust has a target of investing over $3.5 million towards Texas marine habitat projects by the year 2021, equating to $10 million in projects with similar partner organizations.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is also no stranger to the CCA Texas/BCT partnership. This year, TPWD will be receiving an $85,000 investment from them that will be put towards a grass planting event at Bird Island Cove. BCT and CCA Texas have provided previous support to the Bird Island Cove Marsh Restoration project, which will directly benefit approximately 114 acres of existing coastal wetlands in the Bird Island Cove area.

In 2017, Galveston Bay Foundation is receiving $150,000 from CCA Texas and BCT towards the Moses Lake Shoreline Protection project, which will provide shoreline erosion protection for 1.3 miles of shoreline and restore up to 10 acres of intertidal marsh complex within Moses Lake.

“The projects receiving our investments in 2017 reflect BCT and CCA Texas’s shared mission, cover a diversity of marine conservation goals and are spread along the state coast,” said Sean Stone, executive director of BCT. “They will restore degraded habitats, create new habitats, advance the science of habitat restoration and conservation, and educate coastal communities on the value of conservation.”

Through a highly successful matching funds program, BCT has garnered over $9 million towards more than 37 coastal projects in the United States. In 2016, CCA Texas provided funds of $1.8 million to BCT, which they are leveraging to bring in more funds. The Building Conservation Trust has a target of investing over $3.5 million towards Texas marine habitat projects by the year 2021, equating to $10 million in projects with similar partner organizations.

“CCA Texas and BCT are providing support to projects all along the Texas Gulf Coast,” said Robby Byers, executive director of CCA Texas. “We are proud to partner with all of these like-minded marine conservation organizations, continue to build upon valuable relationships and be a part of the important habitat work they do.”

The Harte Research Institute (HRI), a longtime partner of CCA Texas and BCT, is conducting two scientific studies this year that the pair is supporting. The first is a study on the Port O’Connor “Keeping it Wild” Reef, which will provide an opportunity to substantially advance the science of artificial reef creation and show the value of this type of restoration work. The second is an Oyster Restoration Site Locator and Identification Mapping study, which will create a restoration tool for identifying suitable sites for restoration efforts. CCA Texas and BCT have invested $50,000 and $120,000 in these studies, respectively, in 2017.

BCT has created a model for the successful collaboration of business, non-profit organizations and government agencies to revitalize critical habitat and establish a vibrant foundation for the marine ecosystem.
The Eastern Oyster is perhaps one of our most valuable coastal resources, providing critical habitat for fish and invertebrate species, shoreline stabilization, water quality enhancements and numerous other ecological functions. Sadly, oysters on Texas public reefs are under enormous pressure from commercial interests. Make no mistake, the commercial oyster industry is a big business, and historically oysters rank just behind shrimp as our most valuable commercial seafood product.

The public oyster season is open from November 1 – April 30 to each year with harvest hours set from sunrise to 3:30 pm, coast-wide. There are a total of 35 public oyster harvest areas dually managed by Texas Health and Human Services (THHS) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

THHS can close a harvest area if there are any public health concerns, and typically you will see an approved area closed as a result of high rainfall, excessive runoff and/or harmful algae blooms. TPWD, on the other hand, manages the resource based upon abundance and can close an area if there are resource concerns or enforcement issues.

We are seeing a shift in the way the commercial oyster industry is conducting its fishing operations. Many of the vessels utilized nowadays are small, draft little water and are very mobile. They are pushing further back into secondary bay systems (i.e. St. Charles Bay, Carancahua Bay and Christmas Bay) that historically have not been fished, harvesting adjacent to home owners’ fishing piers and getting out of boats to hand pick oysters from shallow waters.

The simple truth is that there are not enough oysters remaining in Texas to fill our nation’s demand for this delicacy. TPWD routinely samples oyster reefs and will close a public harvest area if more than 65% of the sampled oysters are smaller than the legal size, which is currently set at three inches.

At the time of this article submission, 23 of the 35 public harvest areas have been closed by TPWD. So let’s look at it another way: Currently in the large majority of public harvest areas, less than 35% of our oysters measure greater than three inches. That statistic should alarm us all and certainly begs the question: Is there more that we could be doing to manage the oyster fishery?

CCA Texas is concerned about the status of the oyster fishery and is working with TPWD to develop solutions to this critical problem.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns about a commercial oyster boat engaging in any illegal activity, such as harvesting in a closed area or keeping undersized oysters, please call Operation Game Thief at (800) 792-GAME (4263). If you would like to check on the status of a public harvest area, call the THHS hotline at (800) 685-0361.

Oyster boat photos by Rick Melcher
Carancahua Bay Reef photo by Friends of RGV Reef
Painting for Dallas 2017 banquet by Sam Caldwell
Upper Coast

By Capt. Ruben Garza

More wind, more crowds, more catches

Upper Galveston Bay in April/May means warmer weather, more wind, more crowds, and more catches—if mother nature is on your side. I will start in April on the south shoreline on West Galveston near San Luis Pass and on certain days work up to the North shoreline of Alligator Point depending on the wind. I prefer to start wade fishing with top water lures (bone) and if nothing is chasing or blows up, then I go to Down South Lures (Chicken on the Chain). We will key in on bait, slicks or birds, fishing guts, drains or shell. If no luck, then we get back in the boat and move to Confederate or run to Campbells.

As we get into May we will be moving into East Galveston Bay checking Mosquito island, Half Moon reef and moving toward deeper shell along the south shoreline. We will be fishing deeper reefs so I prefer heavier jig heads (Down South Lures), but live shrimp under popping cork is going to be hard to beat this time of year. We will try some of the more popular reefs early like Peppers, Hannas or Deep and see if we can get a bite going. If we start getting bites then I will let some anchor rope out and start working the grass beds.

West Bay is my go-to bay for wading, but for drifting I usually opt for East Bay. Last year East Bay yielded some major league trout drifting in 5 to 6 feet of water, throwing live shrimp under a Mid-Coast popping cork using a 3-foot leader or tossing a 1/4 ounce lead head rigged with a Chicken on a Chain paddle tail. Areas to try are the scattered shell on the west end in the Raymond’s Shoal reefs or the big mud flats south of Bird Island on the east end.

By May, start taking a hard look at the surf any time it gets flat and green. In Matagorda we have access to the beach front for 21 miles to the east and 8 miles to the west. Tripletail! I’ll be looking for them starting around the first of May in West Matagorda. The best way to get one on your line is to be standing in my boat with your check in my pocket.

April and May are magical months on the Texas coast and if you aren’t a part of it then you just don’t have your priorities in order. —Capt. Tommy Countz (281) 450-4037 tcountz@sbcglobal.net

Kenneth Ryman sent this daybreak shot of nine-year old twins Hunter and Nicole. Look close and you’ll find the spot on the red’s tail. The fish went back for further duty.

Middle Coast

By Capt. Tommy Countz

Bruiser redfish and feisty specks, oh my!

Get your hooks sharpened and get all your “honey do’s” done, because West Matagorda Bay is notorious for giving up big bruiser redfish and feisty specks in April and May. Running across that south shore as the sun breaks over the horizon is a religious experience.

Early on, wet wading and topwaters are going to be the ticket. In West Bay I like to cruise near the shore, scanning the water for tell tale signs, then mount an attack. Work near shore with a pink Skitter walk keying on active bait fish and slicks. Later, tie on a 1/16 or 1/8 ounce leadhead rigged with a Morning Glory (black) Mirrolure Marsh Minnow and start working the grass beds.

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April and May are magical months on the Texas coast and if you aren’t a part of it then you just don’t have your priorities in order. —Capt. Tommy Countz (281) 450-4037 tcountz@sbcglobal.net

Lower Coast

By Capt. Rene Hinajosa

Shedding of the waders and sightcasting

Although some areas along the Texas coast didn’t get that cold, shedding those heavy waders for the upcoming months will really feel great. Spring is upon us and the warmer weather will make for some great fishing as the water clears and the big girls start chasing baitfish. Clear April skies are beneficial for sight casting those elusive leftover monster fall trout looking to start sunbathing, but there will surely be some aggressive reds sunning as well. The shallows will be the place to hunt down those bay predators. Norton sand eels and bull minnows of your choice and color combined with your precise casts and stealth moves will bring on that tight line and bent rod bend. Be sure and give your favorite topwater a try early in the morning.

May is usually a hot month, both in weather and trout numbers. Trout start to look for deeper grass beds, drop offs, and any kind of egg-laying areas to bed down for their first spawn of the season. When you also find those areas and fish properly, your numbers and quality of trout will be satisfying. Please remember to fish conservatively in these situations because the ladies and their gentleman friends are spawning. Take care of our precious resource.

Whatever April or May brings in fishing or weather, remember to be safe, conservative, and respectful of our bay systems. Be vigilant in the water and respect your surroundings; the great outdoors belongs to all of us. Thanks to all of those fine folks who have just done a great job helping Miller and Kathie Bassler clean that plastic-strewn beach. Tight lines to all, and have a great spring on and kin the the water, with or without those heavy waders. —Captain Rene Hinajosa, Jr. (956) 966-0719
CCA Texas Social Happenings

2017 has been exciting so far – from a busy spring banquet season, to the announcement of the $530,000 habitat investment by the CCA Texas/Building Conservation Trust (CCA’s National Habitat Program) partnership!

Follow along on all of our social media platforms, listen to our podcast and subscribe to our YouTube channel, which features our award-winning habitat videos, to stay updated on the latest conservation coverage!

In each issue of Currents, CCA Texas will feature a recent Facebook photo, Twitter Tweet, and Instagram photo. Please “Like” our Facebook page and follow us on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to get the latest updates from CCA Texas and become a part of the conversation! Want to submit a photo of a great catch or fun times at a CCA Texas event to be featured on one of our social media platforms? Email it to kogonosky@ccatexas.org for consideration!

Facebook:
CCA Texas is proud to have partnered on Galveston Bay Foundation’s Oyster Lake Shoreline Stabilization Project, with many other great organizations. It was an honor to be included in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Region Annual “Partnership of the Year” Award for 2016, which was presented last week.

Thank you to our wonderful partners and dedicated members who make important projects like this possible!
Photo: Galveston Bay Foundation

Twitter:
@TexasGameWarden: Cameron County Game Warden Colby Hensz received Coastal Conservation Game Warden of the Year at the Corpus Christi
@CCA_Texas

Instagram:
@shanebonnot: Really enjoyed talking with Dr. Lee Fuiman and Jeff Kaiser @utmsi in beautiful @portaransastex about all things #fisheries #aquaculture #snook #redfish #trout #marine-science #portaransas #baitfish and #spawning fish. Link to @cca_texas podcast is in bio.

Facebook: facebook.com/CCA1exas
Twitter: twitter.com/CCA_Texas
Instagram: instagram.com/cca_texas
YouTube: youtube.com/ccatexasprojects
CCA Texas blog: ccatexas.org/blog

CCA Communicators Dominate Top State Awards—Again

La Toreta Lake Resort on Lake Conroe—The Texas Outdoor Writers Association (TOWA) presented awards for excellence in communications.

Kim Ogonosky, Heather Peterek and Pat Murray took great wins against tough competition.

Outdoor Television Video

Judge’s Comments: It’s not always easy to shoot a commercial video or short documentary but Kim Ogonosky seems to have found the formula. Her two videos are very good. There is an attempt at creativity, which is not easy, and the interviews are excellent. The angles for the shots,
both on people and landscape, are also excellent. Sound did not seem to be a problem, even shooting outdoors. Quality work for sure.

Outdoor Illustration/Graphic
Judges’ Comment: Excellent!

Outdoor Publication – Under 25,000
Judges’ Comments: “Rising Tide” is the perfect magazine for young outdoors enthusiasts. It has everything from how to dress to what to do in a science class.

Outdoor Publication – Over 25,000
1. “TIDE” – September 2016, Pat Murray, Publisher.
Judges’ Comments: It was an honor to judge these magnificent publications. TIDE is as good as they come – fantastic photography, excellent and pertinent articles and an up-to-date review of what is happening in the outdoors scenario.

Outdoor Column/Opinion Writing

Outdoor Webpage
3. Heather Peterek “buildingconservation.org.”

Special Projects - Conservation
Judges’ Comments: Heather Peterek’s spread on raising white sea bass in the classroom is simply excellent.”

The TOWA Keynote Spokesman, TPWD Warden Grahame Jones, talked about the challenges wardens face on coastal waters, and expressed his gratitude for all that CCA does to make the Texas outdoors a better place.

The TOWA Scholarship Committee said that one person stood out for her ability to communicate, exemplifying the qualities that the Dan Klepper Memorial Scholarship seeks to reward. Jessie D. Story of El Paso was the winner of the scholarship for the second consecutive year.

David Sikes of the Corpus Christi Caller Times and Shannon Tompkins of the Houston Chronicle, both contributors to CCA, won top awards. Both are past recipients of the L.A. Wilke Award, TOWA’s highest honor for service to the Texas outdoors. This year’s recipient was the Laredo CCA Chapter’s Marty Malin. —Sam Caldwell

Above: CCA communication rock stars Kim Ogonosky and Heather Peterek.

Below: David Sikes, Pat Murray and Ted Venker consider a Wyoming mule pack flyfishing trip offered as part of the TOWA Scholarship Committee Live Auction, benefitting Student Scholarships. The new TOWA Student member holding the sign is Louisa Torrance of Corpus Christi.

Right, TPWD Warden Grahame Jones provided an overview of the upcoming Texas legislature at a CCA Board Meeting, and also as Keynote Speaker at the TOWA conference in La Toretta.

Lower left, coastal writers David Sikes and Shannon Tompkins won primary awards.

President “Lefty” Chapa and Judy Mills present the Dan Klepper Scholarship Award to Jessie Story of El Paso. See page two of this Currents for Tompkins’ feature article about CCA Crab Trap successes. And finally, one of the true greats of outdoor communications, Marty Malin of Laredo CCA, was presented the L.A. Wilke Award, TOWA’s highest honor.
Caught Redhanded!

Reports from TP&W Game Wardens

After hearing rumors of flounder being caught over the bag limit, Calhoun County Wardens Robert Dominguez and Ben Bailey began an investigation. After several hours of patient waiting they made contact with two local men.

The men were in possession of 32 Flounder over the bag limit. The men were also in possession of three undersized flounder. Multiple cases were filed and bids were taken for the over bag limit fish.

Here's to two new CCA-Texas supporters

CCA Board of Director’s Meeting, Houston, Feb. 21 — Exec. Dir. Robby Byers said, “We are extremely excited to have Papas Pilar and Dripping Springs come on board as sponsors this year. They will be attending many of our upcoming banquets offering sample tastings, so please let them know how much we appreciate their support.” Ryan Forsyth, left, and John Lamey hosted a short Happy Hour after the meeting.

Forsyth offered samples of the various types of rum from Key West, Florida, named in honor of Ernest Hemingway. He said PAPA’S PILAR® is proud to welcome CCA members as sponsors this year. They will be attending many of our upcoming banquets offering sample tastings, so please let them know how much we appreciate their support.” Ryan Forsyth, left, and John Lamey hosted a short Happy Hour after the meeting.

Lamey noted that Dripping Springs Vodka won Gold Best in Class and the Vodka Purity Trophy at the International Wine & Spirit Competition in 2008, the ONLY American Vodka to have won the Vodka Purity Trophy in 47 years of the IWSC. He suggested CCA members visit San Luis Spirits at the Dripping Springs website: www.drippingspringsvodka.com/
Thursday of the month at Mike Hopkins Distributing. The 2017 Brenham Chapter Annual Banquet will be held at Silver Wings Ballroom on April 27. Thanks, — Brandon Marth

**Brush Country**

**Brenda Ballard 361-296-4037**

Once again the Brush Country chapter of CCA Texas will be hosting our Annual Dean Ash Memorial Baffin Bay Shoot-Out on May 27, 2017. The tournament entry fee is $20, and you must be a CCA member. No entry fee is required for New Tide members. This is a great way to start the STAR Tournament! For more information please contact Brenda at brushcountryrca@gmail.com. — Brenda Ballard

**Centex**

**Wayne Webb 254-405-1300 skeyhunt@aol.com**

Central Houston’s 2011 18’ Hell’s Bay Waterman powered by a 2011 Yamaha 70 hp outboard.

Central Houston **Todd Buster 713-545-1897**

The 41st Annual Central Houston Chapter Banquet will be held on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at the Bayou City Event Center, located at 9401 Knight Road, Houston, Texas. Thanks to a very generous member, this year we will be raffling off a 2011 18’ Hell’s Bay Waterman powered by a 2011 Yamaha 70 hp outboard. If you are interested in purchasing a table for 20 People” which we sold at last year’s banquet.

For more information please contact Todd Buster at tbuster@busterandcogdellbuilders.com or Ian Belleaux at iBelieveaux@donatominxbrown.com.

— Ian Belleaux

**Colorado Valley**

**Eugene Ulrich 979-249-7425**

Greetings from the Colorado Valley! Our chapter has been working very hard and having a lot of fun doing it. Recently we put on two of the “Fish Fries for 20 People” we sold at last year’s banquet. Our first fry was January 21 in Flatonia, which was purchased for the second year in a row by Cecil Delgado with Masonry Works. A truly enjoyable evening was had by all. Those chapter members in attendance were Stephen, Matthew and Kenneth Madre out of Corpus Christi. We had a great day fishing while fighting the wind and waves, and we really made the fish cleaning guy back at the dock work pretty hard. Wishing tight lines and bent rods to all! — Eugene Ulrich 979-249-7425

**Corpus Christi**

**Jake Herring 361-244-0258 jakecherring@hotmail.com**

Happy Spring Fellow Conservationists. Our chapter is breathing a sigh of relief and also celebrating that our 39th Annual Fundraising Banquet is now behind us. I want to start off by thanking the dedication and commitment of our local board to make our 39th banquet a huge success. The list is too long to name each one of you but I sincerely appreciate all you do for the Corpus Christi Chapter.

We could not celebrate our successes without the steadfast support from our sponsors. The Corpus Christi Chapter would like to give a big thanks to all of our sponsors. No matter how big or how small, each one of you has a part in helping Coastal Conservation Association be the success that it has become.

The organization that was founded some 40 years ago has the same core values today as it did in 1977. I would like to think that those men who set out to “Save the Redfish” would all be proud of what we have accomplished in their wakes. Whether you donated raffle item or sponsored a trip it all helps toward our end goal of conserving, promoting, and enhancing marine resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

Studios, Lamar Advertising, Marker 57, Physicians Premier Emergency Room, Pipe Pros, Ron Hoover Marine, Sentinel Integrity Solutions, The Boat Stop, Total Oilfield, and UTMSI.

The Corpus Christi chapter was also honored to present two awards at the recent banquet. Jace Tunnell received our Conservationist of the Year award and his father Dr. Wes Tunnell received a Life Time Achievement award. Their work spans from ground-up involvement in local volunteer based conservation projects (Jace) all the way to researching Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean coral reef communities (Wes).

Not too often is our chapter given the opportunity to acknowledge a great pair of stewards of our marine resources.

We look forward to seeing everyone soon. Remember as summer approaches and everyone heads out to the water...boat safe, be respectful on the water, and take a kid fishing. Yours in Conservation, — Jake Herrin

Dallas / North Texas

Bill Grasswich 214-226-2118
wbggrasswich11@gmail.com

Hello CCA Dallas Area Members, and welcome to Spring 2017! I hope you’ve had a chance to get “sou’th” for a little inshore or offshore fishing already. Bring your age with school aged kids or grandkids, “Spring Break” was a great time to drive down – maybe with a couple stops along the way to photograph some bluebonnets or paint brushes in bloom. Some of my best memories of family are trips to the Texas Gulf Coast – as I suspect, so are yours. A favorite beach, a favorite pier you fished on with your parents or brother or sister. Going crabbing. How were your sand castle building skills? Feeding those loud laughing sea gulls – it was like a scene out of a Hitchcock movie! It is a conditioning of nature and family, of sounds, even smells. A sunrise walk on the shoreline – wondering what treasure from Jean Lafitte’s pirate ship might have washed ashore during the night. Being There. That is why many of us put so much into supporting CCA Texas and our mission to preserve and keep these “special places” special.

This spring and summer I hope you’ll also be able to come out to some CCA Dallas functions we’re putting together. If you were able to attend the March 12 Fishing and Craft Beer Festival in Plano – you hopefully came by the CCA Dallas booth and said hello.

On Thursday, April 20 – we have the 36th (Thirty-Sixth - wow!) Annual Dallas Chapter Banquet at Frontiers of Flight Museum (over near Love Field). If you’ve been to a few of the other years, I can say that the lineup for this year’s event is even better. The quality of the donations we’ve receiving, the trips and live auction items, and the food and beverage selection are all just wonderful.

And this year’s Banquet Honoree is Mr. Rick Pope of TFO Rods – a great friend of CCA Texas and manufacturer of some of the best casting, spinning and fly rods made today. Thank you to Rick and his staff at TFO for all they do for CCA!

If you summer vacation and out of town, on Thursday, June 22 the second annual “Hooked on Clays” Sporting Clays Shoot will be at the Dallas Gun Club (near Lewisville). If you were there last year you know this is a top of the line shooting facility. We had great food and very cool prizes for the best shooters and teams (and worst shooter), and simply an enjoyable day busting little clay pigeons going high speed in wild directions. WAY cool! Please get with three of your friends (four person teams) and join us this year. If you don’t have three other buddies, we can help you put together a foursome.

Check us out online on our Facebook page, Dallas CCA, as well as the CCA Texas Dallas Chapter Page: www.ccateexas.org/dallas, for information regarding events, dates, ticket prices, the latest updates on how you can participate and news about what CCA Texas is doing throughout the state.

Go share the Texas Gulf Coast with your family and friends this spring and summer. And when you can’t get those few days off to go south, then come join your Dallas CCA chapter for some fun events which is sort of like...Being There. Best Regards, Amigos — Bill Grasswich wbggrasswich11@gmail.com

East Texas

Brent Rogers 936-554-4866 brent.rogers@merck.com

Fort Bend

Welcome new president Donna Powers 281-850-9023

Fort Bend is already off to a busy start for 2017! We had a great number of officers during our election of officers during our January meeting. Blake Tumlinson will continue to serve as our Vice president, Robert Oliver as Treasurer and Jim Black as Secretary. Robb Gaston has moved into a supporting role. I, Donna Powers will be serving as President. I want to thank everyone for having faith in me (I think – ha ha...).

In February, we held our first General Membership Meeting in quite some time. We would like to thank Steve Onstead and The Swinging Door for hosting the meeting, as well as providing beverages and some very tasty sandwiches for us to munch on. We would also like to thank CCA National President Pat Murray for coming out to speak on the general state of the Organization.

Now we are in the process of finalizing all the details for our 2017 Annual Fort Bend Chapter Banquet coming up on April 20 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds.

For our raffle this year, we will be giving away a 2017 Polaris Ranger 570 Crew w/ a 14’ Big Tex trailer, a Kimber Ultra Carry two-tone .45 ACP, a Beretta A300 Outlander Camo 12 ga., a S&W AR-15 M&P Sport II, an Engel 125qt Cooler, an Engel 80qt Cooler, an Engel, 65qt Cooler, a WaterLoo Baitcast Rod & Concept Reel, a WaterLoo Spinning Rod & Shimano Reel and a WaterLoo Ladies Baitcast Rod & Concept Reel. Tickets are $20 each and there will be three tickets for each Fort Bend Board Member or by contacting me (281) 850-9023, Robb Gaston at (281) 239-9755 or Blake Tumlinson at (979) 332-2236. For pre-sale Banquet tickets, contact Kyle Johnson at (713) 545-1147. We are looking forward to having another great turnout!! We are also starting to make plans for our Annual Kid Fish Tournament as well as Lingerie on the Bay. We will announce dates, times, etc. as plans are finalized.

The Fort Bend Chapter meets on the second Thursday of the month at The Swinging Door in Richmond. We welcome all interested in attending. For details, feel free to contact me via call or text at (281) 850-9023 or email at dpowers1145@gmail.com. — Donna Powers

Fort Worth

Hunter Baird 817-437-8351

Thursday, March 23 is our next General Membership Meeting at Wild Acre Brewing at 6:00 pm. Your local board will be providing food and beverages. We will have some raffle prizes to go around as well, if you are interested in purchasing a raffle ticket or two. The Brewery is located at 1734 E. El Paso St. #190, Fort Worth, TX 76102 in the old Ranch Style Beans factory. It is between I-35W and 287 set back off of Lancaster Ave. behind the T. You will go south on Pine St., then east on E. El Paso and come into the brick wall entrance. Wild Acre will be on your right. We use this meeting to meet new friends, say thank you to all of our supporters and encourage folks to get involved.

Shortly after our General Membership Meeting we will have our 2017 Fort Worth Chapter Annual banquet on May 11 at the historic and beautiful Joe T. Garcia’s beginning at 6:00 pm. Be on the lookout for table sponsor opportunities as well as individual tickets. Feel free to contact Hunter Baird at bairdhunter@gmail.com or Taylor Rieck at treiece@ctexas.org if you are interested in attending or being a sponsor. We have some tremendous benefits for our sponsors, and it’s a great event for all who can attend. Each year is always one for the record books, with a wonderful live auction and quite the catch for our raffle and silent auctions as well. You don’t want to miss this! — John Black

Galveston

Dr. Ken Ellis 713-962-7731

Hello all anglers! Spring has come to the Texas coast very early this year, which means the birds are already working in the east and west bays of Galveston, so get out when you can.

We will be having a General Meeting on April 13 at Beerfoot Brewery, located at 2816 Avenue R 1/2 just off the Seawall at 6:30 pm. Please come out for this meeting – We will have different speakers, and it will be very interesting to hear what they have to say.

Mark your calendars for our 2017 Galveston Chapter Annual Banquet, which will be held on July 29 at Moody Gardens! Tickets will be available soon for tables as well as individuals. We also have tickets for our 23’ Haynie Big Foot boat that will be given away at the end of our banquet. Only 500 tickets for the boat will be sold. If you’re in need of a ticket, please call!

Hope to see you all on the water in my orange Transport that turned 16 years old this year! Please only keep the fish you plan to eat, clean up after yourself and be courteous to other boaters and waders. Tight Lines! Hook’em – Ken

Golden Triangle

Jason Kuchera 903-780-8618 jlkuchera@yahoo.com

Spring is here on the Upper Coast! Numbers of fish should start to increase, but with that comes more boat traffic on the water. Make sure that we always remember to stay courteous while out there in search of the BIG ONE! The annual May Banquet meeting was a great catch (pun intended)! Our very own National President Pat Murray spoke, talk about an honor and a privilege to have him there. If you have not heard his message or felt the excitement he portrays about CCA I highly recommend you do so if given the opportunity.

President Murray spoke about the 40 Years of CCA and it will light or re-light that fire of wanting to be a part of this great organization, that is CCA. Save the date, May 25th is just around the corner so get ready for the Golden Triangle CCA Banquet that will be held at the Beaumont Civic Center. Get your table now!

Want a chance of winning this years “BIG TICKET RAFFLE ITEM”? The Golden Triangle Chapter is raffling off a Haynie 23’ Bigfoot Boat at this year’s banquet (need not be present to win). Contact any chapter board member or Drew Adams (dadamscateexas.org) for information on how to obtain raffle tickets. Want to become more active or join CCA for the first time? Don’t hesitate to call, we are currently recruiting new Board Members! — CPT Jason Kuchera

Greater Sugar Land

Robert Bailey 713-819-5534 rbailley@robertbaileypc.com

The Greater Sugar Land Chapter is on the home stretch of preparations for our 2017 Annual Banquet on April 6 at the Stafford Centre! Please join us for dinner (crawfish or catfish) and a fun evening raising money for CCA – We’d love to have you! The bar (wine and beer) opens at 5:00,
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~15~
and dinner is served from 6:00 to 7:30, followed by our live auction and raffle. We’ve got a few surprises in store as well!

I am sorry to report the death of our dear friend and member, David Kveton, on February 2. David was a past Chapter President and an active board member for years. And he was crazy about fishing. He and his wife, Judy, worked hard to make our Kids Fish program a success, most notably by bringing the Kids Fish trailer to fruition last year. David, you will be sorely missed.

We’ve settled into our new venue for our general meetings: Otto’s Barbeque, 11222 Fountain Lake Dr, in Stafford. The ‘Q is good, and they’ve been very accommodating. Our February speaker was Capt. Ralph Frazier, who concentrates on guiding in Galveston Bay. He’s been guiding since 1973 and shared a lifetime’s worth of valuable tips.

Joe Moughon, aka Chickenboy, will regale us at our March 1 meeting with his fishing tips and tall tales. He’s also going to introduce three new lures which will be seen for the first time by the public at our meeting! It’s all good! — Bob Bailey

Greater Woodlands Charlotte O’Dell 832-368-8826

The 10th Annual Greater Woodlands Chapter Banquet will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2017 at The Grand Palace, located at 314A Pruitt Road in Spring (Behind Papa’s Ice House). Doors open at 6:00 pm, so come on out and join us for a REEL fun night of dinner, drinks, auctions, raffles and good old fundraising fun!

There’s still time left to get your individual tickets or sponsor a table. Contact Drew Adams at dadams@ccatexas.org or (713) 626-4222. We’ll have a REEL good time! — Charlotte O’Dell

Guadalupe Valley Chuck Howard 361-275-9464 chuck.howard@att.net

Yoakum, Texas was the site of the first quarterly chapter meeting that featured an awesome fish fry. Chapter members donated fresh fillets, sides, desserts and drinks. Frying all of this fish for 45 people is no easy task, but members stepped up, got the grease hot and fried ‘em. As usual, there was more food than 45 members could consume, so many people left with plenty of fried fish to munch on at a later date!

Michael Okrublik, founder of My Coast Outdoors, brought his Controlled Descent Lure presentation and if you haven’t had a chance to see or use a Controlled Descent lure, do so. The lure is a perfect choice for our coastal area, allowing you to fish over grass in the water column where the fish are - not in the grass. It was a perfect lure presentation for an excellent event! Check it out.

Thursday, April 20 at the Anna Koch Pavilion in Cuero will be the site for the second quarterly chapter meeting at 6:00 pm. We are going to have a massive crawfish boil with all of the trimmings, general meeting and hopefully a drawing for gear. It’s a BYOB event so make plans now to RSVP so we can get a good head count. You need to have a number issued from your RSVP to be able to eat, so RSVP today!

On June 10, 2017 the Guadalupe Valley Chapter will defend the back-to-back CCA/ICC championships against the rest of Texas. We are all excited about trying to “Threepeat” the effort, so we know it will be a hot topic at the general meeting in April. Take a kid fishing and change their life showing them the wonders of nature and stewardship of the resource – and have fun! — Chuck Howard

Hays County Tim Young 512-573-7939 hayscountyycc@gmail.com

Heart of the Hills

Kelly Parks 210-669-3732 buckselfuck@yahoo.com

Hill Country

Miles Engelke 210-260-8968

I met with our Executive Board members on March 2 at Blake’s Restaurant to plan out our 2017 chapter events. They are outlined below:

April 2 will be our 5th Annual Social at the Red Barn in Seguin.

May 12 will be hosting the crawfish boil that was purchased at last year’s live auction by Todd Hoffman.

May 16 will be our first General Meeting. Our speaker will be Captain Nathan Beabout (N&M Sportsman’s Adventures). Nathan has guided fishing trips and duck hunting trips on the Middle Texas Coast in Seadrift, Texas since 2007. He’s fished from San Antonio Bay to Cedar Bayou and Port Mansfield. His preferred method of fishing is to wade fish artificial. Make plans to attend.

June 3 will be our chapter fishing tournament for HCCA members only. For more information contact Darlene Cook at (830) 214-3067. / July 18 will be our second General Meeting (Program TBD).

October 24 will be our 2017 Hill Country Chapter Annual Banquet at the Civic Center in New Braunfels Texas, so mark your calendars! For ticket information call Todd Thetford at (830) 660-8825.

Our tournament and meeting sponsors this year are CEMEX, Creative Eyewear, FAPCO, Fishers of Men RV, KGNB/KNBT, Power Engineering Services, Redfish Bay Boathouse Redfish Willie’s, Reel Um Inn On The Bay, Sanddollar Resort, Stay Tuff, Whittaker Insurance Associates, Kontiki Resort and 1st Source Digital.

All General Meetings will be held at Elks Lodge in New Braunfels, Texas. Looking forward to an exciting 2017! Come join the fun. Cast me a call if you would like to get involved with our chapter. Treasure the Trips — Miles Engelke

Houston Homebuilders

Mack Davis 832-381-6130

Mark your calendars for the 3rd Annual Houston Homebuilding Chapter Banquet on Thursday, April 6, 2017! It will be held at the Norris Center located at City Centre at I-10 and the Beltway.

There will be plenty of live and silent auction items, great food and building and vendors from Houston homebuilding industry. For ticket or table purchase information, call Mack at (832) 381-6130. I’d also like to welcome our new Chapter President, Jimmy Reid of Newmark Homes, who will be taking over chapter responsibilities after our April banquet. Jimmy has been serving as a founding board member since we began the chapter in 2014, and I look forward to working with him in his new role.

— Mack Davis

Houston Real Estate

Dale Couch 281-953-2510

Katy

Gary Mancini 281-850-2212
gman091753@aol.com

Laredo

Javier C. Villarreal 956-206-7953
jcvillarreal13@gmail.com

Lee County

Jake Horne 979-540-6117

Live Oak

T.J. Harkness 832-723-6723
tandmenergy@gmail.com

It’s been a great start to spring with the fishing on the coast being perfect. So get out there and take advantage of the perfect weather to catch that trophy fish.

The date has been set for the Live Oak Chapter annual banquet: June 1st, we open the doors at 6:00 PM. Come join us for好玩 and awesome prizes. The live auction will have something for everyone from costa rica fishing trips to deer hunting in south texas. We will still have the same great food lineup as past years, with stuffed flounder, southwest chicken and all the fixins. Tables are still available for purchase and tickets at the door.

Take a chance at the Sportsmans Raffle with lots of great prizes. To get more information on tables or to buy raffle tickets contact one of our board members or my self. Look forward to seeing you there. Tight lines !!! — T.J. Harkness tandmenergy@gmail.com (832)723-6723

Lower Colorado Stephen Zapalac 972-244-6633 stephen.zapalac@capitolfarmcredit.com

Mainland

Eric Minor 409-370-7739

Matagorda Bays

Chad Hensley 979-541-3239

I am happy to report that the Matagorda Bay Chapter is in full swing for the year! We have finalized a raffle boat and will be printing tickets soon. This year’s boat will be a fully rigged 25’ Dagrle Kuda powered by a 250 Yamaha SHO. The boat sits on a double axle Coasla Trailer.

Cleve Ford and the guys at Dargel did a great job rigging the boat. Polasek Construction has once again stepped up to be a Boat Sponsor – They have been on each of our chapter boats since we started the Boat Sponsor option a few years back. Be on the lookout for the boat around the area and a chance to buy a ticket. If you are not in the area to buy a boat ticket, call Wesley Smolik at (979) 543-2753. Be sure to mark your calendars for our 2017 Matagorda Bay Chapter Annual Banquet on June 29 at the El Campo Civic Center!

The chapter’s 12th Annual Lil’ Salties Fishing Blowout is scheduled for May 14, 2017 at the Matagorda Harbor. Chapter members should receive entry forms in the mail. Parents, be sure to get them filled out and mailed back ASAP so we can plan another great tournament! Last year we had a great year with 225 kids coming out for a day of fun. Every entry receives a prize bag, trophy and t-shirt. If you are interested in donating to this great event, or have any questions, contact Lynn Staff Scientia.
Welcome, MidCoast Chapter CCA members and board members! A big thanks goes to the current Midcoast board members who have already put it in overdrive to make our big 2017 Annual Chapter Banquet on April 28 a guaranteed success. Another big thanks goes to Dr. Burns for putting together a sold out General Meeting on March 2 with speakers Dr. John McNeill and Capt. Danny Goyen at Frances Maries Restaurant. We have two of these events a year to attract and encourage new men and women to get involved and see what CCA is all about.

We are still selling tickets for our awesome 22-6’ Mowdy, and they are going fast. We are only selling 700 tickets at $100 each. If you would like to purchase one, call David Jenkins at (361) 648-9185 or Danny Goyen at (361) 564-7471. Feel free to contact me for more details about the boat or our banquet on April 28. – Thanks, Capt. Danny Goyen

Northeast Houston
Jason Law
713-898-8594

Save The Date for the 2017 Northeast Houston Chapter Annual Banquet on Saturday, April 8 at 6:00 pm! Join us for a night of crawfish dinner, drinks, auctions, raffles and good old fundraising fun! Purchase your tickets online at www.ccatexas.org/2017-northeast-houston-banquet to guarantee your seat. For more information, contact Brian Weaver at (713) 626-4222. Keep an eye on your inboxes and the Northeast Houston Chapter webpage for updates! — Jason Law

Northwest Houston
Alan Massey 281-414-6341

Our next General Membership Meeting is our Annual Member Appreciation Fish Fry on April 4 with all the fixin’s, so everyone come hungry! Our guest speaker is none other than Chicken Boy with Chicken Boy Lures. Do yourself a favor and come and enjoy a very lively and entertaining evening with this speaker. It will be held as usual at Houston Distributing, 7100 High Life Drive off Cuten Road in the Stein Room starting at 7:00 pm.

We want to thank Heather Schiappa from Galveston Bay Foundation who explained the Galveston Bay Report Card and what factors can impact the health of our bay. Everyone should do their part in maintaining the health of Galveston Bay. They need your input to improve and expand the 2017 Report Card at www.surveymonkey.com/r/17GBRC.

Due to a scheduling conflict at Sylvan Beach Park, our 2017 Annual Kid Fish Event is cancelled this year. We will strive to have a bigger and better one next year. But we are always happy to accept donations for our Kid Fish Program. Please let us know of your desire to donate anytime by contacting a director. If you wish to help with our Kid Fish, Fish Fry or Annual Fundraising Banquet, then become a director and join us for every first Tuesday of an ODD month. Our next BOD meeting is May 2nd, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Our June 6 General Meeting will feature Guest Speaker Bryan Slaven, “The Texas Gourmet”. And he will be serving and demonstrating by video how to make a seafood gumbo, so everyone come and join us for a taste of this great dish!!! — Alan Massey

Orange County
Scott Bandy 409-988-3667
scottbandy77@yahoo.com

The 2017 Orange County Chapter Annual Banquet date has been set for August 10 at the Orange County Convention and Expo Center off Hwy 1442 in Orange, Texas! — Scott Bandy

Port O’Connor
Bill Moore 361-983-4690

The 2017 Crab Trap event is now history, and it doesn’t seem like this was the 16th year! The POC Chapter was on hand at the Texas Park and Wildlife Docks to assist on Saturday, February 18.

MidCoast’s 22-6’ Mowdy with a 175 Horsepower Suzuki and dual axle coastline trailer.

or Danny Goyen at (361) 564-7471. Feel free to contact me for more details about the boat or our banquet on April 28. — Thanks, Capt. Danny Goyen

(979) 543-2734

MidCoast
Danny Goyen 361-564-7471
goyenfishing@yahoo.com

Welcome, Midcoast Chapter CCA members and board members! A big thanks goes to the current Midcoast board members who have already put it in overdrive to make our big 2017 Annual Chapter Banquet on April 28 a guaranteed success. Another big thanks goes to Dr. Burns for putting together a sold out General Meeting on March 2 with speakers Dr. John McNeill and Capt. Danny Goyen at Frances Maries Restaurant. We have two of these events a year to attract and encourage new men and women to get involved and see what CCA is all about.

We are still selling tickets for our awesome 22-6’ Mowdy, and they are going fast. We are only selling 700 tickets at $100 each. If you would like to purchase one, call David Jenkins at (361) 648-9185 or Danny Goyen at (361) 564-7471. Feel free to contact me for more details about the boat or our banquet on April 28. — Thanks, Capt. Danny Goyen
It was Chamber of Commerce weather – Weather was beautiful, and it was a good day just to be on the water.

The chapter provided lunch for all who showed up. Thanks to all who participated both at the docks and on the water. The number of participants on the water was up this year. Also, special thanks to Norman Boyd of TPWD for the use of their facilities and for his assistance.

We will be scheduling meetings in preparation for the 18th Annual POC Chapter Banquet, with the first meeting on July 20. Be sure to pencil in Saturday, October 21 on your calendar for our 2017 Annual Banquet.

As the weather warms, and the north winds come see us, if you want to get involved with the chapter and/or banquet, contact us in POC, “Where it all began” – Bill Moore

Prairie
Sharon Goebel  979-877-4103
On February 24 we had our Annual Chili Appreciation Dinner at the Cat Spring Tin Hall. We had a great turn out, and the evening was a success with our homemade chili that was made from scratch by Kirk Hoppe and the board members.

We would like to thank Brian Weaver who made it possible to have Shane Bonnot, CCA Texas Advocacy Director, as our speaker for the evening. His speech was very important for all who fish the chapter and/or banquet, contact us in POC, “Where it all began” – Bill Moore

Redfish Bay
Norman Oates 361-758-0266
The 2017 CCA Texas Redfish Bay Chapter Annual Banquet is set for April 29! As always, it will be a family event with a sit-down meal, beer, wine, cooks and water. The meal will include salad, entree and dessert. We will have raffle, silent auction and live auction items, and our board members are working hard to have a variety of items to fit all tastes. The local merchants provide items of interest for everyone – about 40 percent of our attendees are women, so, in addition to fishing and outdoor equipment, we will have artwork, jewelry and home decorations as well.

We are holding our Take-a-Kid-Fishing event at Woody’s Sports Center the first week-end of June. This is a great event for young fishermen! There will be a shrimp boil on Friday night with fishing Saturday morning. Weigh-in starts at 11:30 am, and the awards ceremony starts around noon. Each kid gets a rod and reel, and a trophy. – Norman Oates (361) 790-2748

Rio Grande Valley
Louis Zimerer 956-373-0799
Thank you Ron Hoover RV & Marine, Majek Boats, L&F Distributors and the chapter for making this year’s Rio Grande Valley Chapter Boat Raffle possible! Only 500 tickets are being sold for $10 each and are available at Glick Twins in Pharr and Johnny’s True Value Hardware in Pharr and Johnny’s True Value Hardware in Pharr.

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Ray of Hope
Norman Oates (361) 790-2748
As the weather warms, and the north winds come see us, if you want to get involved with the chapter and/or banquet, contact us in POC, “Where it all began” – Bill Moore

Sabineneches
Darin Johnson 409-790-9855
A very big thank you to everyone who attended the 2017 Sabine-Neches Chapter Annual Banquet on March 2! Thank You, Thank You, Thank You! This was a good old fashioned crawfish boil, and we raised a little bit for CCA while we were at it! The fantastic event was made possible by some of our generous sponsors: Classic of Southeast Texas, Pete Jorgensen Marine, Evinrude Outboards, Del Papa (Bad Guys), Giglio (Miller/Coors) Shane Chesson and Pure Cajun for the awesome crawfish!

Thank you to American Airboat, Texas Marine, Premier Yamaha and Pete Jorgensen Marine for putting the boats on display! This was truly an event that you had to see to believe! We aren’t done yet, KID FISH 2017 coming soon! Until then, tight lines!
– Darin Johnson

Sam Houston
Brandon Kolaja 281-797-6908
Well, the light winter we’ve had has passed. With warmer temperatures approaching, I personally cannot wait to get on the water. From seasoned fishermen to the ones who just like to be outside, make the time to get out there on the water. Also, please look for

~18~
Your banana is not the Plague in a Peel.
Or Poseidon’s Yellow Middle Finger of Doom.

It’s a fruit.
From the tropics.
Beloved by babies, monkeys,
and baby monkeys.
Despite popular myths,
bananas possess no fish-frightening powers.

Just vitamins. And potassium.

So go ahead.
Bring your snack aboard.

Forget superstition. You have science.
You have the clarity of 580 technology.
Finally, we are going to start a summer monthly CCA Happy Hour/Liars Club to just visit and hang out the second Tuesdays of June, July and August at the Barn Door at 6:00 pm. As a bonus, email your best recent pics of you and your catch, your kid’s catch or your spouse’s bigger catch to Liz Hewitt (lizhewitt@qb3mfg.com) by Saturday prior to each Happy Hour, and we will spool those and similar photo-shopped fish pics on the overhead screens.

Thanks to CCA sponsor and friend Randy Stokes, who not only facilitates our meetings at the Barn Door, but has graciously extended his Happy Hour prices from 6:30 to 7:30 for our CCA socials. The first one will be on Tuesday, June 13.

Thanks to all of you who actively volunteer or otherwise support the mission of CCA. And, remember to take a kid fishing. — Mike Sarosdy

San Bernard
Ross Kutach 281-330-0135
rosskutach@yahoo.com

The San Bernard Chapter held our 10th Annual Fundraising Banquet and Dinner on February 23, 2017 at Riverside Hall in East Bernard, Texas. The event was a success with a great turnout by our community and surrounding neighbors. Thanks to all who participated through donations and in person at the event!

The grand prize Polaris Ranger Crew 570 went to Darrell Palmer originally of Wallis and currently residing in League City. The second major prize of the night which was a custom golf cart went to local East Bernard resident Chris Prakaz. Winning tickets were sold by Dylan Macha and Brian “possum” Domel, respectively.

Rounding out the Pre-Sale Raffle in the winners’ circle were Josh Mangum, Jeff Cook, Charles Toman, Kenneth Schatz and JP Pope. A lot of preparation and hard work went into everything the day and night of the event by the San Bernard CCA members. Without your help, this event would not continue. Thanks to Team Burnside and Todd for their help the night of the event.

Thanks to our sponsors Johnny’s Sport Shop, Hoffpauir Polaris, Fairway Golf Carts, Academy Sports + Outdoors and Riverside Hall for their support of the San Bernard Chapter. Thank you to Slade Stary of El Campo for another great job on the rib eye dinner. A big thanks to everyone else who contributed to making the event successful. It has been a rollercoaster this winter/spring with the weather. With extremes in temperature and pressure, the fish have been especially active. This has been one of the best beginnings of the year and without a doubt the best top water bite I have ever been a part of. Chartreuse paddle tails have also been proven winners over deep scattered shell. I hope to see everyone on the water! Be sure to “Like” us on Facebook, and share your pictures and fishing experiences with us. Put a rod in a kid’s hand and teach them to love our passion — Ross Kutach

San Gabriel
John Melnar 512-497-8284
johnmelnar@sanantoniostar.com

San Gabriel is now in the planning stages for our 15th (yes, 15th!) Annual Banquet that will be held on August 3, 2017 at the new Sheraton Conference Center in Georgetown, Texas. This will be a FUN-filled event, with significant opportunities to mingle and network with donors and attendees who share...
Great Foods Recipes sponsored by Costa Del Mar

Liz Hewitt, Editor

**Classic Spicy Shrimp Cocktail**

6-8 fresh, large boiled shrimp
1 ripe avocado
1 c chili sauce
½ c ketchup
1 tbsp chopped cilantro
2 tbsp diced white onion
1 tbsp minced garlic
2 tbsp fresh lime juice
1 tbsp diced Jalapeno

Tortilla chips for dipping

Scoop out avocado and dice into fairly large pieces. Mix all ingredients. Cover and let sit for 1 hour.

Spoon mixture into martini or similar glass, taking care with the avocado pieces. Place the shrimp around the rim of the glass and garnish with a slice of lime.

*Serve with extra tortilla chips, and expect a second order.*
Caldwell
FINALIST!
You can vote for Sam's painting, and have a lot of fun doing so.

Messina Hof Wine & Roses Festival
Eat, Drink, Stomp
All day celebration
Bryan, Texas Saturday, April 22

Drop by the website for full details, and some new Caldwell art

www.samcaldwell.com
Texas State Artist 2004
DU State Artist 2010-2011
Dallas CCA Sportsman Conservationist 2015
2016 Perry R. Bass Wall of Fame
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Offer available for new contracts only. Not retroactive. Cannot be combined with any other offers.

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boating emergencies, chemical and oil spills: 361-888-3162
Port Aransas: 361-749-5217
Port O’Connor: 409-983-2616
Freeport: 979-233-3801
Houston, Galveston: 409-766-5620
Sabine: 409-971-2195

The Texas Parks & Wildlife website is your starting point for almost anything you need to know about outdoor Texas, including links to many areas. Visit www.tpwd.texas.gov
To focus on fishing and boating, visit www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish
www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/boat

Current size, bag and possession limits are now available through the Texas Parks & Wildlife website: TPWD has a number to report game violations. 1-800-792-4263.
A partner with CCA in aiding Texas game and Game Wardens is Operation Game Thief. Drop by and put this website on your favorites list: www.ogttx.com

Protecting Texas Bays: a forty year journey continues

COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION TEXAS
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (including STAR Entry)

Name _______________________________ Phone ___________________________ Date _________________
Address ______________________________ City __________________ State __________ Zip _______________

NEW MEMBER _______ RENEWAL _______ (Member ID for renewing members only) __________________________ EMAIL __________________

Method of payment
________________________ Charge to my:
_____ Check/Money order
_____ MASTERCARD
_____ VISA
_____ AMEX
_____ DISCOVER

MEMBER: $30 ___ Membership card, decal, bumper sticker, Texas CURRENTS newsletter & TIDE magazine.
ASSOCIATE: $15 ___ Per each family member. All membership privileges except TIDE and CURRENTS.
PRINT MEMBER: $100 ___ All of the above plus CCA Texas print of your choice.
LIFE MEMBER: $1000 ___ CCA Life Membership piece, print, plus member gifts. Payable in four $250 installments.
STAR ENTRY FEE: $25 ___ Tournament entry fee. Must be a current CCA member.
NEW TIDE: $10 ___ Tide newsletter, decal.
NEW TIDE / Star: $10 ___ Same as above, plus “FREE” STAR Tournament entry. Age: ______ Date of birth: ______

Members 17 and under only

Age: ______ Date of birth: ______

Credit card number __________________________ Signature __________________

Credit card expiration date __________________ By entering this tournament, I agree to be bound by the STAR Tournament Rules, Release and Indemnity Agreement. I understand that there are specific rules governing the conduct of the tournament and that upon request a copy will be mailed to me. 6919 Portwest, Suite 100 / Houston, TX 77024 / 713-626-4222 / Website: www.cccatexas.org