

CURRENTS

December 2017 / January 2018



CCA Texas
Conservation Hero Award
*"Representative Dennis Bonnen
proceeded to take a good bill
and turn it into an outstanding bill."*

Representative Dennis Bonnen Receives CCA Texas Conservation Hero Award

By Advocacy Director Shane Bonnot

In 1981, the Texas Legislature passed the Redfish Bill, designating redfish and spotted seatrout as “game fish” to provide protection from commercial harvest.

The bill, coupled with sound fishery management practices that include a robust hatchery program and conservative bag/slot limits, resulted in the recovery of those species and helped create a world class fishery in our coastal waters. The Redfish Bill also paved the way for decades of effective legislative measures, such as the crab trap removal program and the inshore shrimp license buyback program. Members of our Texas Legislature have long understood the need to conserve our present and future availability of coastal resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public; and Rep. Dennis Bonnen (R) of the 25th Legislative District has been one of the biggest advocates for Texas coastal conservation.

Rep. Bonnen’s district encompasses southern Brazoria County and all of Matagorda County. He serves as Speaker Pro Tempore and Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means. He is also a member of the House Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee. He has been a force in the Texas Legislature for over 20 years, and in this past legislative session, Rep. Bonnen demonstrated his prowess by championing effective legislation that will have long-lasting positive impacts on our bays and estuaries.

On March 28, 2017, the aforementioned committee on Culture, Recreation & Tourism convened with a full agenda, ranging from the placement of sound producing devices on vessels to the designation of the Bowie knife as the official State Knife of Texas. About 1 hour and 25 minutes into the meeting, the subject of House Bill 51 (HB 51), relating to the management of commercial oyster boats, was introduced by that bill’s author, Rep. Ryan Guillen (D) of the 31st Legislative District.

As presented in this committee hearing, HB 51 was a bill that simply allowed the state to establish a commercial oyster license buy-

back program and gave the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission the authority to require the use of vessel monitoring devices on oyster boats. Recognizing that the oyster fishery was in need of a lifeline, 16 individuals from the oyster industry and conservation organizations, including CCA Texas, voted and/or testified in favor of the bill. What should have been a relatively short showing of support for HB 51 turned into a rather lengthy and at times heated exchange between committee

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members and witnesses. Leading much of the discussion was Rep. Bonnen.

Just a few weeks prior to this committee hearing, the commercial oyster harvest in Christmas Bay (Brazoria County) was a fiasco. Pristine coastal habitat was destroyed, leaving elected officials wanting answers and conservationists demanding that our state do more to protect our public oyster reefs. Needless to say, Rep. Bonnen was keenly aware of the trends in the oyster fishery and was determined to fix it.

Early on in the hearing on HB 51, in response to controversial testimony, Rep. Bonnen said, “You have made a massive mistake. You have disrespected me and disrespected the chairman of this committee. I am offended that you think me wanting to represent my constituents from Brazoria and Matagorda County is somehow not acceptable to you.”

Later in the hearing he echoed that sentiment to another witness by adding, “I will continue to represent my constituents. I will continue to listen to my constituents. It is my job, it is what I have been elected to do.”

Rep. Bonnen takes his job seriously and expects a

clear answer to a simple question. When trying to get clarification as to who was responsible for the reckless oyster harvest practices in Christmas Bay, he clearly was not satisfied with the response. “This is the problem with the game you guys play,” he said. “You want to pretend you have no role in the overfishing of the oyster reefs. You want to pretend you’re above it all, and that you don’t have anything to do with it. You are the single greatest problem.”

Towards the end of public testimony, Rep. Bonnen summed up his thoughts on the industry’s actions prior to, and behavior during, the testimony by stating, “Here’s the problem: You all do thuggery and intimidation. This [legislative] process is based on people being able to represent their positions.”

HB 51 was left pending for two weeks before being voted out of committee and moving to the House floor for a vote. Rep. Bonnen proceeded to take a good bill and turn

it into an outstanding bill. Recognizing that public oyster reefs needed additional protections, he masterfully added amendments that would enhance the penalties for possession of undersized oysters, hold seafood dealers accountable for the possession of undersized oysters (previously a loophole in enforcement) and require that shellfish certificate holders/purchasers (oyster dealers) return oyster shell (or approved cultch material) back into waters approved by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) at an amount equal to 30% of the total volume of oysters purchased. (Alternatively, oyster dealers can pay TPWD an amount calculated equal to the current cost of shell acquisition and deposition at the same 30% level).



Rep. Dennis Bonnen’s presentation was made at Sea Center Texas in Lake Jackson, a marine aquarium, fish hatchery and educational center, funded in part by CCA Texas.

After passing in the House of Representatives, HB 51 moved to the Senate where it was sponsored by Sen. Chuy Hinojosa (D) of the 20th Legislative District. The bill was amended on the Senate Floor, making some minor changes to the penalties for undersized violations, and on June 12, 2017, Gov. Greg Abbott signed HB 51 into law.

Rep. Bonnen’s amendments to HB 51 will result in transformative changes to the oyster fishery and will go a long way in the recovery of public oyster reefs. They will force players in the oyster industry to either abide

Rep. Bonnen’s amendments to HB 51 will result in transformative changes to the oyster fishery and will go a long way in the recovery of public oyster reefs.

by the regulations or get out of the fishery. Perhaps most importantly, returning 30% of the shell back into the water will have monumental impacts as our bays



Sea Center volunteer Janet Jackson-Ellis, a retired School Teacher, thanked Rep. Bonnen for his work on education legislation.

are currently experiencing a scarcity of hard substrate for oyster larvae to set upon.

Even though HB 51 was a great victory for our public reefs, Rep. Bonnen wanted to do more. Knowing that TPWD was considering establishing oyster sanctuaries (closing some minor bays and creating shoreline buffers) and decreasing the undersize tolerance from 15% down to 5%, he scribed a poignant letter to TPWD this past summer, asking them to do more to conserve oyster resources (see Rep. Bonnen's letter in adjacent column). His words were read aloud by Vice Chairman Ralph Duggins to the entire Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, and there is no doubt that they resonated with those in attendance, as the Commission promptly adopted a suite of changes in regulations for the oyster fishery. More information regarding these changes can be found on our website or in the October/November 2017 edition of *Currents*.

Conservation efforts are not always easy. They can be complicated. They can be tricky, particularly in our current political climate. It takes fortitude, tenacity and grit to navigate a contentious bill through the legislative process. Sometimes you need a champion. Sometimes you need a hero. We had heroes in the late '70s and early '80s who effectively passed legislation, saving the redfish and speckled trout. We have one now who is saving our oysters. For all of his efforts this past year, CCA Texas would like to recognize Rep. Dennis Bonnen as our Conservation Hero. 🐚

Billy Phenix, Joey Park, Rep. Dennis Bonnen, Shane Bonnot and CCA Texas Executive Director Robby Byers. Fittingly, the award was made in the Sea Center Oyster Habitat area.



Dear Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission,
I am writing to express my concerns regarding the status of our public oyster reefs in Texas. Oysters are a vital component of our coastal landscapes, serving as the foundation of our entire aquatic ecosystem, positively impacting other marine species and keeping our bays healthy by providing numerous ecosystem services.

Oysters on Texas public reefs have been under enormous pressure and I fear that we are at a critical point in the management of this species. My constituents have personally observed commercial oyster fishermen overharvest our bays, destroy our reefs, deplete our oyster supply, and cost taxpayers millions of dollars while repeatedly denying their abuse of our coastal waters. This past March, an oyster company caused a massive marine pile-up in my district while challenging our local elected leaders when asked to rectify the situation. What has happened in Brazoria County, Christmas Bay and in other sensitive coastal areas is a travesty and should never happen again.

I spoke out strongly against these actions during the past legislative regular session and devoted a good deal of time to ensure that we effectively passed House Bill 51. This bill will not only help reduce the pressure on the fishery by establishing the buy-back program but will also achieve some more immediate impacts to the fishery such as returning oyster shell back into coastal waters and deterring illegal activities by enhancing the penalties for violations, including illegal possession of under-sized oysters at the dealer level. However, this bill alone will not be enough to offer public oyster reefs and sensitive coastal zones needed protections.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department must take actions to protect the resource and stop the destruction of reefs that are required to maintain our marine ecosystems. I have reviewed the proposed changes to the statewide oyster fishery proclamation and support these measures. Collectively, we have an obligation to relieve the pressure on this resource and reverse the current trends in this fishery. In my estimation, these additional protections will help to foster a sustainable commercial fishery and preserve our public oyster reefs to the greater benefit of Texas.
—Representative Dennis Bonnen



Bedrock of the bays: a clump of oyster shell is a center display in the Sea Center Texas Oyster Habitat area.



Merry Christmas!

The CCA Texas STAR Tournament gives special thanks this holiday season for our generous sponsors and the CCA members who support them.



startournament.org



A STAR shines bright

Whether you are gearing up for big trout season, chasing deer or chasing feathers, we at STAR want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! If you haven't already heard, this year's STAR set the record for most entries and tied for the highest number of prizes claimed. Many thanks to each and every one of you who make this event so great, long standing members and new! As evidenced by the pictures, a great time was had by all at the CCA Texas State BBQ and STAR Awards Banquet. We hope to see you at the awards banquet next year claiming YOUR SHARE of over \$1,000,000 in prizes and scholarships! Here's to all of this year's winners and runner-ups!

Be on the lookout for new and exciting things coming from STAR for 2018!!!!

STARKids \$50,000 Scholarship Winners

Flounder-Cayla Cloudt of Clute
Sheepshead-Ethyn Ybarra of Houston
Gafftop-Austin Bellanger of Orange

STARTeens \$25,000 Scholarship Winners

Flounder- Landon Winton of Freeport
Sheepshead- Kobe Tedrick of Baytown
Gafftop- Cameron Brooks of Orange

Academy Sports + Outdoors STARTeen Trout Division

Upper Coast Trout-Colton Murante of Spurger
Middle Coast-Dayne Macha of Wallis
Lower Coast- Jamie Sifford of Corpus Christi

Youth Scholarship Drawing Winner- Cole Moore

Early Bird Drawing Winner- Juan Hernandez Jr.

Member Bonus Drawing- Michael Polasek

Inshore Winners

Gafftop- John Landrum of Nederland
Flounder- Robert Goode of Alvin
Sheepshead- Rodolfo Ibarra of Dayton

Offshore Division

Dorado- Chris Brzozowski of Corpus Christi
Kingfish- Jeffrey Stultz of Brazoria
Ling- Nicholas Garza of San Antonio

Texas Ford Dealers Redfish Division

Winner #1- Juan Ibarra of Pearland
Winner #2- Jose Mendoza of Corpus Christi
Winner #3-Ryan Pyburn of Beaumont
Winner #4- Holly Clark of Port Arthur
Winner #5- Mike Laskowski of La Vernia
Winner #6- William Latham of Baytown
Winner #7- Kevin Gorski of Houston
Winner #8- Steven Harlan of Lake Jackson
Winner #9- Justin Lowry of West Columbia

Speckled Trout Division

Upper Coast- Leonard Knopp
Middle Coast- George Hinojosa
Lower Coast- Juan Ramirez of Harlingen

*Congratulations STAR Runner-up Winners,
gift card prizes provided by
Academy Sports + Outdoors*

Inshore Division Runners-Up

1st Flounder-Jimmy Chain, Texas City
2nd Flounder-Christopher Marmolejo,
San Antonio
3rd Flounder-Patrick McGary, Aransas Pass
4th Flounder-Michael French II, Columbia
1st Gafftop-Ty Sonnier, Orange
2nd Gafftop-Tina Guernsey, Lumberton
3rd Gafftop-Jerome Ard, Lumberton
4th Gafftop-Johnny Milich, Port Arthur
1st Sheepshead-Diego Ponce, Baytown
2nd Sheepshead-Javier Gallardo, Baytown
3rd Sheepshead-Roland Flannel, Crosby
4th Sheepshead-Judy Wong, Sugar Land

Offshore Division Runners-Up

1st Dorado-Kolby Scott, Aransas Pass
2nd Dorado-Chad San Juan, Alvarado
3rd Dorado-Taylor Schuster, McAllen
4th Dorado-Chad Dobbs, Austin
1st Kingfish-Jackson Schwank, Sugar Land
2nd Kingfish-Cole Divin, Plantersville
3rd Kingfish-Mark Terrell, Brazoria
4th Kingfish-Colin Thomas, Dallas
1st Ling-Kyle White, Houston
2nd Ling- Matthew Smith, Dickinson
3rd Ling- Brian Quebedeaux, Port Arthur
4th Ling- Ryan Wong, Fulshear

Speckled Trout Division Runners-Up

1st UC Trout-William Hendrix, Angleton
2nd UC Trout- Marc Aguilar, Houston
3rd UC Trout-Nolan Haugenator, Mont Belvieu
1st MC Trout-John Rachunek, El Campo
2nd MC Trout-Kyle Pierce, Louise
3rd MC Trout-Joseph Friedrichs, Lake Jackson
4th MC Trout-Allen Hill, Brazoria
1st LC Trout- Dirk Tengge, Laguna Vista
2nd LC Trout- Matthew Harper, Caldwell
3rd LC Trout-Frank Cavazos, Harlingen
4th LC Trout-Matt Fields, Alice

STARKids Inshore Runners-Up

1st Flounder-Alex Aguilar, Corpus Christi
2nd Flounder-Cason Parrish, Abilene
3rd Flounder-Hailey Mladenka, Corpus Christi
4th Flounder-Gunnison Gadeke, El Campo
1st Sheepshead-Taner Basci, San Antonio
2nd Sheepshead-Logan Elledge, La Porte
3rd Sheepshead-Joseph Ponder, Mont Belvieu
4th Sheepshead-Lee Dolch, League City
1st Gafftop-Bella Bartram, Portland
2nd Gafftop-Blair Butler, Orange
3rd Gafftop-Masen Bouse, Winnie
4th Gafftop-Alejandro Rivera, Baytown

STARTeens Inshore Runners-Up

1st Flounder-Landon Mosely, Bay City
2nd Flounder-Skylar Haddock, Friendswood
3rd Flounder-Cameron Starnes, Kyle
4th Flounder-Hunter Fesco, Lumberton
1st Sheepshead-Taylor Moreno, Port Lavaca
2nd Sheepshead-Camryn Kotlarz, Baytown
3rd Sheepshead-Jake Bozeman, Katy
4th Sheepshead-Benjamin Stephenson, League City
1st Gafftop-Ty Downham, Kingwood
2nd Gafftop-Cody Oetken, Houston
3rd Gafftop-Walter Kilgore, Houston
4th Gafftop-Matthew Horne, Missouri City

Academy Sports + Outdoors STARTeen Speckled Trout Runners-Ups

1st UC Trout- Kain Pollock, League City
2nd UC Trout- Cade Johnson, Lake Jackson
3rd UC Trout-McKade Massengale, Baytown
1st MC Trout- Thomas Gully, Cypress
2nd MC Trout- Faith Bannert, El Campo
3rd MC Trout- Charles Hill, Jr., Cedar Lane
4th MC Trout-Hunter Rachunek, of El Campo
1st LC Trout- Hank Smith, Austin
2nd LC Trout- Austin Buckner, New Waverly
3rd LC Trout- John Schnautz, Kingsbury
4th LC Trout-Zoe Peterek, College Station



STAR has reached \$6,175,000 in scholarships awarded to children 6-17 years of age. Many thanks to our sponsors for making this happen. Without them, it would not be possible.

STAR NOTE: You can see all 21 prize winners in the 2017 Early Bird Drawing at

www.startournament.org/about-star/prizes/early-bird-prizes/



2017 Ford F-150 "Texas Edition" XLT SuperCab with Haynie 23 Bigfoot, the Redfish Division prize.





Leonard Knopp



BEST IN TEXAS



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**Congratulations to the
STAR 2017 winners!**



Speckled Trout Division Boats



Ford truck winners present at STAR presentations



Robert Goode



Austin Bellanger



Cole Moore



Leonard Knopp



John Landrum



Cayla Cloudt



Michael Polasek



Holly Clark



Steven Harlan



Ethyn Ybarra



George Hinojosa, Bill Kinney



William Latham



Justin Lowry



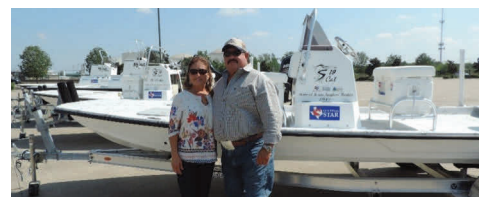
Landon Winton, Juan Ibarra, Kobe Tedrick



Chris Brzozowski



Kevin Gorski



Rodolfo Ibarra



Cameron Brooks
Colton Murante, Jamie Sifford,
Dayne Macha



Jeffrey Stultz



Juan Ramirez



Juan Ibarra



Nicholas Garza

Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow

BUILDING A FUTURE FOR TEXAS MARINE HABITAT

2017 Habitat in Review

By John Blaha

CCA Texas's Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow (HTFT) and CCA National Habitat Program (BCT), continue to work with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF), Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, San Antonio Bay Foundation, Texas A&M and Harte Research Institute (HRI), Friends of Rio Grande Valley Reef, and others to restore and create new coastal habitat up and down the Texas Coast. Since the creation of HTFT in 2009, CCA Texas has contributed over \$6.2 million dollars to Texas habitat restoration and creation.

In February 2017, HTFT and BCT partnered to provide \$530,000 for six habitat projects which equated to \$4.28 million in habitat along the Texas coast. These projects included:

Moses Lake Shoreline Protection

Galveston Bay Foundation – \$2,000,000 project
As of September 25, 2017, grants have been executed by GBF and an agreement has been signed to AECOM to assist in bidding and project management.

CCA Texas/BCT Funding: \$150,000

Oyster Restoration Site Location and Identification Map Project

Harte Research Institute – \$120,000 project
Work is progressing with multiple disciplines.

CCA Texas/BCT Funding: \$120,000

Bird Island Cove Marsh Restoration Grass Planting Project

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – \$85,000 project
Project completed the week of September 18, 2017.

CCA Texas/BCT Funding: \$85,000

Egery Island Marsh Restoration Project in Copano Bay

Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program – \$1,270,000 project

Contractual agreements are currently being solidified with TxDOT. Project delays are most likely certain due to Hurricane Harvey, as an assessment of project site is made.

CCA Texas/BCT Funding: \$70,000

Rio Grande Valley Nearshore Reef

Friends of RGV Reef – \$555,000 project

Two boats, 50 pyramids, 67,000 cinder blocks and 3,000 tons of rubble materials have been deployed at the site and reefed to date.

CCA Texas/BCT Funding: \$55,000

Nearshore Reef Enhancement through Science Project

Harte Research Institute – \$250,000 project

The first post deployment sampling was made in June, and a post-Hurricane Harvey assessment on the POC reefing site is currently being made. A status report from HRI is coming soon.

CCA Texas/BCT Funding: \$50,000 (5 year study totaling \$250,000. Committing \$50,000 per year).

Photos courtesy of Lisa Laskowski



Good science makes for good fisheries management and habitat creation/restoration decisions.

The CCA Texas and BCT partnership is a natural one that will have lasting effects on the health of the Texas coast for generations to come. Our staff at CCA Texas and BCT wish all of the CCA Texas members, sponsors and donors a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We are excited as we begin the process of moving forward into 2018 to restore and create coastal habitat in Texas for the benefit of the resource for the Texas recreational fishing community. 🐟

CCA and BCT remain committed to creating a healthy nearshore fishery by working with the TPWD reefing program.



CCA Texas Social Happenings

CCA Texas is wrapping up banquet season and setting our sights on 2018 for more work on Texas Gulf Coast habitat projects. Visit youtube.com/CCATexasProjects to view our habitat video page, which includes recent footage from a deployment at the Rio Grande Valley Reef, done in partnership with Friends of RGV Reef and CCA's National Habitat Program, Building Conservation Trust!

With cooler weather and the holidays upon us, we hope that you can spend some quality time on the water with your loved ones. It's because of passionate members like you that we are able to enjoy the resource now and for many generations to come.

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! And please check out our blog at ccatexas.org/blog, and listen to our podcast, "Coastal Advocacy Adventures."

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 kphilippi@ccatexas.org for consideration!



Twitter:

@CCABCT: Thanks to all who came to last night's Oysters, Blues & Brews fundraiser! Swim over to our FB page for more photos.



Facebook:

The Bird Island Cove marsh restoration project is restoring lost marsh in West Galveston Bay. 32,000 spartina plugs were recently planted at the site, and this planting was completely funded by CCA Texas and CCA's National Habitat Program, Building Conservation Trust. We are happy to report the grass is growing well, and this habitat project is doing exactly what it was created to do!



Instagram:

Happy #ThrowEmBackThursday! The weather is cooling down, but that won't stop us from getting out on the water! We hope you are getting lots of fishing in this fall with family, kiddos and friends. Photo: Ursula Mireles Harris

Facebook: facebook.com/CCATexas

Twitter: twitter.com/CCA_Texas

Instagram: instagram.com/ccatexas

YouTube: youtube.com/ccatexasprojects

CCA Texas blog: ccatexas.org/blog

Podcast: Coastal Advocacy Adventures

Caught Redhanded!

Reports from TP&W Game Wardens

In mid-September, Galveston County Game Warden Ross Sidman received a call from a local police officer in Bayou Vista stating that one of the residents noticed several individuals in the marsh nearby using what appeared to be some sort of seine.

Warden Sidman brought on Game Warden Mack Chambers for assistance, as he had previous experience in working gill netters in this particular area. Warden Sidman and Warden Chambers arrived on the scene to notice four individuals in a mini-van on the side of the road near the marsh.

Upon contact, the four individuals admitted to fishing and opened the back of their van to show their catch. From there the violations began to unfold. Their fishing equipment consisted of two gillnets and two oversized cast nets.

These individuals were in possession of red drum, black drum, sheepshead and speckled trout, several of which were undersized. They also had a large amount of mullet and croaker. All four individuals were from Burma where these are common legal fishing methods. They were educated on Texas Law and the severity of this type of fishing. Each person received citations as well as being charged with civil restitution and were released. The fish were confiscated and donated to a local women's shelter. The illegal nets were confiscated and destroyed. Charges are pending.



*Texas Game Wardens,
Serving Texans since 1895*



*Law Enforcement Off
the Pavement*

Now in action—new Airboat provided to TP&W Wardens by CCA Texas

I took the custodian of the new airboat and our mechanic with me last Wednesday and Thursday to retrieve the boat from the J.D. Murphree WMA and took it back to American Airboats in Orange for training and orientation. We met with Faron and went over maintenance and operation with him

and his mechanic. We then took the boat out for driver training. The boat performed phenomenally, and I can't say enough about the customer service we got from Faron and the other folks at American Airboats. The boat is now in its new home in Rockport. I have attached some photos of the boat. Please let me know if you have

any questions. I want to again thank you and CCA Texas for making this happen. We have plans to take it to Cedar Bayou tomorrow.

Perry F. Trial
*Regional Director- Lower
Coast Region
Texas Parks and
Wildlife Dept.
Coastal Fisheries Division*



Upper Coast

By Capt. Ralph Frazier

A new set of opportunities

After Harvey, everything changed for a while, but here comes December and January and a new set of opportunities on the Upper Coast. There will be a lot of days when the wind howls out of the north, so when planning, you will take wind direction and speed into account. We look forward to see if normal patterns change. As I write this in mid-November, there seem to be plenty of fish, but just not very big.

For early December and into January, how much fresh water Trinity Bay has been receiving will dictate if Jack's Pocket will be holding a large number of fish. When the water salts up, the Pocket is a crown jewel for good numbers of big trout in the winter. Wherever you are finding bait with clamshell and mud conditions nearby can be the key to getting on a number of big fish.

My personal favorite is to wade, and my favorite lures are always topwaters and Corky lures. Watch for conditions that can mean the surf is flat and green, and keep an eye on the coves in West Bay. Those huge rocks called The Jetties can provide shelter and a big variety of fish, but as always, wind conditions will determine your locale.

Remember in the winter months to slow the retrieve, and as I've said in the past, try to remember what you were doing with the bait when you got the strike. Presentation can be a key to a big box, but especially in the winter.

As you phase into wintertime fishing, you will always know the weather before you go. Have emergency gear for all on board, remember the limits and consider turning the big spotted ladies back for further duty. Please don't keep more than you can personally eat, let your neighbors catch their own and let's try to replenish the numbers of fish.

Many of us have lost something during Hurricane Harvey, so let's help someone else with our own skill set.

Hope this helps you put a few more fish on the stringer, and hopefully a wall hanger.
Tight Lines—**Capt. Ralph Frazier** (281-337-0321)
ralph2fish@aol.com

Middle Coast

By Capt. Mike O'Dell

Boat maintenance, planning, safety first

Christmas, New Year Holidays; what is there better to do than go fishing with the family? Great idea: Buy a gift certificate for a fishing or hunting trip from your favorite guide or outfitter. Maybe your friends will invite you along!

Trout and reds, plus sand trout, flounder, and black drum are all in great shape, filling up with fat to make it through the winter. Shrimp has been my go to live bait. Plastics are still working well in deeper water and drop offs. It is getting time to go to topwater and shallow water baits.

Please be careful and watch the weather. The fronts are starting to push through now, and will get very pushy in mid-December. Always have a plan to get out of the wind, even if it is not blowing hard, and be careful of open water runs. Take some extra clothes on the boat, as the water will be cooling off now, and it is inevitable that you will get wet.

Lots of people turn their nose up at sand trout, but the fight sand trout put up is exciting and there are lots of them. Prepare them properly and they freeze well. Leave the skin on!

Now is a good time for maintenance on your gear, boat and trailer (don't forget the wheel bearings). For those who pull boats several miles, check the born-on-date of your tires and tire pressure. Nothing is more aggravating than to head out on a trip and blow a tire or bearing. Also important to maintain are the water pump, bilge pumps and live well pumps. Check your batteries, so when you get ready to go fishing everything is ready and working correctly.

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May 2018 be the year of catching the fish of your dreams and making memories for the family and friends who fish and hunt with you. Of course, you will send the larger spotted ladies back for further duties, and send those oversize-reds back to make more beautiful little reds. —**Capt. Mike O'Dell** (361-438-1866)
www.afishingfantasy.com

Lower Coast

By Capt. Sally Black

Ducks! Trout! Redfish!

The magical combination of fishing and duck hunting is perfect for the outdoor adventurer on the lower coast and Baffin Bay. While fishing, scout for the next duck hunt; while duck hunting, watch the water and decide where a great fishing spot is going to be. Be ready for the opening of the duck season split on December 9, 2017 and ending on January 28, 2018.

Early December means big trout move up shallow and are feeding to survive winter and prepare for the spring spawn. After a long, lazy summer with so much food in the system, fish get into gear and are eating big mullet. So, tie on the Saltwater Assassin "Die Dapper" or the Morning Glory (black with a chartreuse tail). These two lures are go-to for targeting big trout. These wide-bodied paddle tails, hooked up on the 1/32 oz jig head, "Black's Magic" are deadly because they can swim along the bottom or even be suspended with the light weight of the jig head. Big trout cannot resist this natural "mullet" action.

Topwaters can be very productive on the right days. One-Knocker Spooks, She-Dogs, Yozuri 3DB, Skitterwalks and Super Spook, Jr.'s in various colors tossed up shallow can be hugely beneficial.

Winter comes quickly in South Texas and can include cold temperatures or a step back to warm weather. Get geared up and ready for anything because Baffin Bay is bringing it all! It's the home of the largest and heaviest trout on the Texas Coast and it's usually the end of the road for most ducks coming down the flyway because of the lack of pressure on the saltwater and the abundance of fresh water on the King and Kenedy Ranches. What a privilege to have access to this outdoor paradise!

Recently, we received the great news that the Orvis Company has endorsed our lodge for Wingshooting and Fly Fishing! This will open up so many doors and a knowledge base for both of these sports that is second to none. The lodge is ready to host groups of up to 20 people, including a cozy fire ring and fine food served up by Chef Adam.

BBR&G is upping their game and all hunters and anglers will benefit! Come to Baffin Bay Rod and Gun and experience this all-inclusive sportsmen's dream combination of fishing and hunting this winter! See you soon—**Capt. Sally Black**
Baffin Bay Rod and Gun
(361) 205-0624, office: (361) 720-9394
Sally@CaptainSally.com
www.BaffinBayRodandGun.com
Facebook: Baffin Bay Rod and Gun
Instagram: Baffin_Bay_Rod_Gun
Twitter: @CaptainSally
LinkedIn: Capt. Sally Black

Editor's Note: Captains Sally and Aubrey Black are longtime CCA members who speak and donate to chapters across Texas. It's good to see their efforts recognized by the Orvis Company.



Get a load of that hat. Angler Adam Gilvarry is a frequent donor of Great Photos to Currents, as well as a dedicated CPR fan. Adam is always looking for the unique photo angle, but this photo credit goes to Jeremy Chavez with Casting Tales Fishing Charters.



Need a Christmas Gift? Ladies Necklace for New **LIFE MEMBERS**

Image Enlarged
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Chain Length: 17-in.
Clasp: Lobster

For a limited time, a CCA Texas Life Member
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a 14 karat white gold Twisted Fish necklace.
Tax Deductible amount: \$344

Please expect 3-4 weeks for delivery. No P.O. Box addresses

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CCALifeMember Application

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____
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☐ Cash ☐ Check Credit Card: ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ AmEX ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number Exp. Date Signature

CCA Texas | 6919 Portwest Dr., Ste. 100 | Houston, TX 77024
Phone 713.626.4222 | ahoy@ccatexas.org | www.CCATexas.org

CCA Texas Adds a 7th Graduate Scholarship in Marine Science

CCA Texas' Board approved another \$5,000 Annual Graduate Scholarship at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi earlier this year. This will make the 7th CCA Graduate Scholarship awarded to a student studying marine science. Each student is selected by the universities.

CCA funds three scholarships at The University of Texas Marine Science Institute (UTMSI) in Port Aransas, two at Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi and two at Texas A&M University- Galveston. If you are interested in applying for any of these scholarships or know someone who would, the contacts for each University are listed below:

UTMSI
Georgia Neblett
gneblett@utexas.edu

A&M Corpus/HRI
DR. Greg Stunz
greg.stunz@tamucc.edu

A&M Galveston
Jamie Alvarado
alvaradj@tamug.edu

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Conserving the Texas Gulf Coast



With the holiday season upon us, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to CCA Texas members. 2017 was an exciting year of growth for CCA's National Habitat Program, Building Conservation Trust (BCT). Together, CCA Texas and BCT invested \$530,000 towards habitat projects, equating to \$4.28 million in coastal habitat. This is no small feat, and it could not have happened without you.

BCT was created to provide vital funding for grassroots-driven projects that achieve one or more of five key objectives: Restore degraded habitats; Create new habitats; Advance the science of coastal habitat and marine fisheries conservation; Foster habitat stewardship; and Educate coastal communities of the value of conservation.

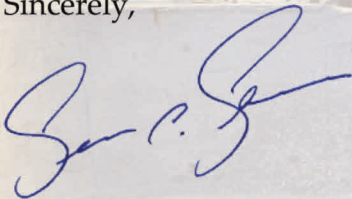
Building Conservation Trust strives to be the largest marine habitat restoration, enhancement and creation entity in the United States. BCT is a development and major gift program that multiplies and maximizes funds raised to restore and enhance marine habitat.



We need your help. We receive the majority of our funding from corporations and foundations that support marine conservation work. If you are a part of, or have any connections to, corporations or foundations with an interest in marine conservation, please reach out to me so we can establish a working partnership in conservation. These connections are vital to building strong relationships that ultimately create and restore marine habitat.

Together, BCT and CCA Texas are enhancing marine life along the entire Texas coast, which will be appreciated and enjoyed by local communities for many generations to come. This partnership continues to strengthen, thanks to the commitment of CCA Texas members. On behalf of BCT, I sincerely appreciate your support and dedication to conserving our marine resources. I wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,



Sean Stone
Executive Director
Building Conservation Trust
sstone@buildingconservation.org
(713) 626-4234

A Natural Partnership



Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow

Photos courtesy of Lisa Laskowski and Kim Philippi

CURRENTS is a membership benefit of the Coastal Conservation Association-Texas. It is published bi-monthly, alternate months from the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) TIDE Magazine. Address: 6919 Portwest, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77024. Phone: 713-626-4222. FAX: 713-961-3801. www.ccatexas.org

Editor, Sam Caldwell
sam@samcaldwell.com

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Vol. 36, Issue 1

Chapter Updates

If you submitted images
and they're not all published, you may
find them on your chapter's webpage, and
on the CCA website:

www.ccatexas.org/chapters

Alvin-Pearland
Rex Richards 281-923-3050

Aransas Bay
Bud Kittle 210-279-7309
ernestkittle@gmail.com

Austin
Josh Cook 512-656-2964

With football and hunting seasons well under way, it is nice to move into the cooler side of the year in Texas. Before we know it, May banquet season will be upon us. Specifically, the **2018 Austin Chapter Annual Banquet will be held on May 10!**

The 2018 banquet boat is very close to being delivered. Please keep an eye on our chapter website (www.ccaaustin.org) for up-to-date details regarding timing and ticket sales. And did I mention our banquet boat is going to be a **2018 SCB Recon 23'** fishing machine with an **Evinrude 300** this year? Tickets and additional details will be available soon!

If for any reason you are not receiving communications from our fun and active chapter, please call the CCA Texas office at (713) 626-4222, and ask them to put you on the Austin mailing list. Also, be sure to **Friend us on Facebook**

www.facebook.com/CoastalConservationAssociationAustin

It's a great way to keep up with everything in the Austin Chapter and to make sure you don't miss anything. Happy Holidays from CCA Austin!

– Josh Cook josh@ccretx.com

Bay Area
Curtis Anderson 832-435-0257

Brazoria County
Wes Dingee 979-299-8245

Brazos Valley
John Ben Strother 979-220-1738

Brenham
Brandon Marth 979-277-0151

Brush Country
Brenda Ballard 361-296-4037

Centex
Wayne Webb 254-405-1300
sheyhunt@aol.com

Central Houston
Todd Buster 713-545-1897

Colorado Valley
Eugene Ulrich 979-249-7425

Corpus Christi
Jake Herring 361-244-0258

Is it finally fall? The tides say so...I don't think the thermometer is so sure. I hope each of you are well. The Corpus Christi Chapter would sincerely like to say a HUGE THANK YOU to all of the sponsors, vendors, participants, and especially to our volunteers who helped pull off our annual Babes on Baffin fishing tournament. Impacts from Harvey and coastal flooding didn't keep the ladies from coming out to participate in this fun and exciting event. We had a great turn out and a number of happy anglers walked away with bragging rights, door prizes, and raffle items. Again a big thanks goes out to our sponsors. TITLE SPONSORS: Majek Boats, Premier Yamaha Boating Centers, Stinky Pants Fishing, Waterloo Rod Co., and John Arnim at Lonestar Gallery. Babes on Baffin Platinum Sponsors: Marker 37 Marina, Pipe Pros, LLC., Sierra Pacific Mortgage, Cheri Sperling with Coastline Properties, AutoNation Saltwater Roundup, Catering by Water St, and Mark's Cleaners.

As 2017 comes to a close our chapter is busy kicking off preparations for our **40th annual banquet. The event is being held at the American Bank Center in Corpus Christi on February 22nd.** We are going to make this a great event and we would really like to have a strong showing from all the folks who have helped us get to where we are today. Some of our key sponsors have already committed to helping us pull this one over the line. Many thanks go out to: **AutoNation Corpus Christi South, Andrews Distributing, L&F Distributing, Flint Hills Resources, Majek Boats, Premier Yamaha, and Corpus Christi Cycle Plaza.** This banquet has sold out the past 4 years in a row so please get your tickets early. Table sales are open if it is a benefit to secure your table in 2017 we are ready to help please email ccacorp@hotmial.com or call **Courtney** at 361-882-5199. Our banquet chairs, **Judy Arnold and Valerie Chilton**, have some great plans to make the 40th special for all of our guests. One of our special projects involves YOU...we are looking for pictures of CCA members with their family and friends fishing. If you have one please submit your pictures to

judyarnoldcca@gmail.com

One last thing please do not forget to get your raffle tickets for our **Andrews Distributing Bull Red Raffle** and our **L&F Distributing Sow Trout Raffle.** **Bull Red Raffle Prize** is a Majek M2 pushed by a 200 hp Yamaha on a coastline trailer. The **Sow Trout Raffle Prize** is a Lifted 6 passenger **Yamaha Gas golf cart** complete with a 14ft trailer. Only 1500 tickets are being sold for each prize. If you are interested in purchasing raffle tickets please get in touch with a CCA Corpus Christi board member. Tickets are also available through our **Boat Chairman Alex Tompkins** atompkins@islander.tamucc.edu or **Jake Herring** jakecherring@hotmail.com
Yours in conservation -**Jake Herring**

Dallas / North Texas
Matt Scherer 214-995-6777
matthew.scherer@ryan.com

On November 9, 2017 the Dallas Chapter held a General Membership Meeting at Tailwaters Fly Fishing Company. **Shane Bonnot**, Advocacy Director for CCA Texas, gave an excellent presentation on the various conservation efforts happening on the Gulf Coast. We were excited to welcome multiple new faces to the chapter and look forward to their continued involvement!

Our next General Membership Meeting will be held in January once again at Tailwaters. Our Guest Speaker will be **Lance Robinson** with Texas Parks and Wildlife. More information on the meeting will be announced in December.

In closing, I would like to encourage anyone who is interested in getting more involved with the Dallas Chapter to contact me at matthew.scherer@ryan.com – **Matt Scherer**

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

Fort Bend
Donnie Powers 281-850-9023

Fort Worth
Hunter Baird 817-437-8351

First I would like to say, our thoughts and prayers are with our friends affected by the recent hurricanes. We wish you a fast recovery.

Our chapter recently held our annual **Fall General Membership event, a fish fry at Panther Island Brewing in Fort Worth.** There was an incredible turnout by our members – your support is what we count on, and we thank you very much for your continued support. Thank you to all who shared their evening with us. A big shout out to **Jennifer Ermis and family who won a fishing trip in Port Aransas!** You can find more pictures from the event on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/CCAFortWorth Look us up, and give us a follow so we can keep you informed about future events!

The big one is on the line, and our **2018 Fort Worth Chapter Annual Banquet is scheduled**

for May 3 at the historic Joe T Garcia's in the Fort Worth Stockyards. More details to come in the future. Also, be on the lookout for updates to our spring calendar, as we begin to plan the Spring Fish Fry for you all. Make plans to come and bring a guest as well as your own family – food and beverages are covered by your local chapter and board. We wish you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving and a cheerful Holiday Season as well! – John Black

Galveston

Dr. Ken Ellis 713-962-7731

Happy Holidays to all! With this warmer than usual winter weather, the fishing has been very nice in the Galveston bays. The flounder have been on their run, making that aspect of our fishing really enjoyable. If you're on the water, please be respectful of other boats that may be drifting, and look for waders at all times. I hope to see you on the water. Merry Christmas, and as always tight lines to all!!!! – Hook'em... Ken

Golden Triangle

Jason Kuchera 903-780-8618

jlkuchera@yahoo.com

Greater Sugar Land

Robert Bailey 713-819-5534

rbailey@robertbaileypc.com

We held a Kid's Fish on October 22 in conjunction with a program sponsored by the Riverstone Home Owners Association. Thank you Bob Nipper, Weems Turner, Mike Bracikowski and his crew, and Kay Bailey for helping make



Greater Sugar Land had a fine Kidfish. Left to right, Bob Nipper, Bob Bailey, Weems Turner and Mike Bracikowski:

it a success!

We are working on rescheduling Shane Bonnot after canceling our November meeting so everyone could watch what we then hoped would be a World Series win in game 7. Good call! WAY TO GO, ASTROS! What an exciting World Series!

Our General Meetings are the first

Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at Otto's Barbecue in The Fountains Shopping Center in Stafford. We have a door prize raffle. Phil Ortiz spoke at our October 4 General Meeting and shared his flounder tips. It was a great talk and was enjoyed by all. Thank you, Phil for your support! I hope to see you at our meetings! – Robert G. Bailey

Greater Woodlands

Charlotte O'Dell

832-368-8263

Guadalupe Valley

Chuck Howard

361-275-9464

chuck.howard@att.net

Hays County

Tim Young

512-573-7939

hayscountyycca@gmail.com

Heart of the Hills

Kelly Parks 210-669-3732

bucksdelucks@yahoo.com

The Heart of the Hills Chapter wrapped up the summer season with our 2017 Annual Chapter Banquet on October 5 in the Cana Ballroom at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Boerne, after being postponed on September 7 due to Hurricane Harvey. Attendees enjoyed the picturesque Hill Country views from the ballroom while feasting on fresh boiled Gulf shrimp prepared by Cajun

Cookers. Many thanks to the following sponsors who provided beverages for our event: Pedernales Brewing Company, Keg 1 O'Neal - Lone Star Beer, Dripping Springs Vodka and Ben E. Keith. Also, thanks to HEB for all of the gourmet cookies!

We had active bidding in the live auction, and many participated in the \$5 raffle which produced solid results that will greatly benefit our conservation efforts.

Thank you to the following Bull Red Sponsors: All County Home Care & Hospice, Aqua-Man Water Conditioning, Sports & Family Medicine of Boerne/Sterling Electric, Burkholder A/C, Good Times Ranch, Howard Skeels, In-Line Fence & Fabrication, Jennings Anderson Ford, KCM Cabinets and Westward Environmental Inc. Trophy Trout Sponsors were Bohnert Lumber and Supply, Inc., Dumas Hardware, Dry Creek Custom Homes and Esser Ranch.

We would also like to recognize Academy Sports + Outdoors, Apache Rifleworks in Comfort and Boerne Marine for their continued support of the chapter.

This function would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers and the staff from CCA Texas – I appreciate your service. I hope you all had fun, and we look forward to seeing you again in 2018! – Kelly Parks, (210) 669-3732

Hill Country

Miles Engelke 210-260-8968

Hill Country wrapped up 2017 with the one and only Jay Watkins on October 24, 2017 as our Guest Speaker. WOW what an evening and what a crowd! Jay spoke to us about the areas in and around Rockport before and after Hurricane Harvey – Thanks for a great evening, Jay. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my officers and directors for their time and efforts, which they contributed throughout the year – Without you, our chapter would not be so successful. I would also like to thank all of our meeting and tournament sponsors for their support. If you would like to get involved in our chapter, cast me a call at (210) 260-8968!

As for 2017, it is beginning to fade in my rear view mirror. We will begin to plan for 2018 and keep you on the "Hook."

I want to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God bless you and your families in all you do. Treasure the Trips – Miles

Houston Homebuilders

Mack Davis 832-381-6130

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

Lower Colorado Stephen Zapalac

972-244-6633

stephen.zapalac@capitolfarmcredit.com

Lower Laguna Madre

Oscar Garcia 956- 491-8148

oscar@shallowssports.com

Mainland

Eric Minor 409-370-7379

Matagorda Bays

Chad Hensley 979-541-3239



MidCoast's 22'-6" Seafoam Green Mowdy with a 175 HP Suzuki motor and Coastline trailer.

MidCoast Danny Goyen 361-564-7471

goyenfishing@yahoo.com

Welcome, Midcoast Chapter board members and fellow CCA members! I know at this time numerous families are still trying to put together their lives after Hurricane Harvey. Hopefully by now you have received insurance money or other help to at least start or finish repairs.

Our chapter was able to pull off a very successful **Guides Cup Tournament in October out of Port O'Connor**, thanks to the sacrifice of all available board members, 20 Guides Cup captains and 20 Guides Cup buyers. **A big thanks also goes to the Port O'Connor Community Center, the Sanctuary and to the awesome food catered by Francis Marie's Restaurant.** Congratulations goes to the first place team, guided by Kolby Peyton, and his team, which included Ken Lester of Lester Contracting. David Jenkins, our Boat Chairman, has again found our chapter another awesome boat to be given away at our **2018 Midcoast Chapter Annual Banquet On April 27**. It will be a 22'-6" Seafoam Green Mowdy with a 175 HP Suzuki motor and Coastline trailer. There will only be 700 Tickets sold at \$100 apiece. Please call me at the number listed, or David Jenkins at (361) 648-9185 if you would like to purchase a ticket. You do not need to be present to win.

I hope everyone has a safe and wonderful holiday season. I am personally looking forward to cold water fishing for my personal best trophy-sized speckled trout. – Capt. Danny Goyen

Northeast Houston
Jason Law 713-898-8594
jlaw1899@yahoo.com

Northwest Houston
Alan Massey 281-414-6341

At press time, our **December General Meeting Speaker will be Captain Allan Scott**. He is an

inshore saltwater guide specializing in Galveston's West Bay and owner of **Tiki Bay Fishing, LLC**. Capt. Scott has USCG ratings of OUPV and Master. Licensed by TPWD as an All Water Fishing Guide, Capt. Scott fishes primarily West Bay from the Texas City Dike to San Luis Pass, and he has experience fishing East Bay as well. Capt. Scott will present on fishing Galveston's West Bay. Discussion topics will include guide qualifications, selecting the right guide for your expectations, navigating West Bay, understanding seasonal transitions, fishing tips, tactics and how to maintain your bait casting reel for top performance. A free guided trip will be raffled at the meeting. There will be a whole lot of very good information, and of course our usual Christmas raffle with some great prizes, so I hope you are able to attend!

Our sincere thanks to both **Houston Distributing and Academy Sports + Outdoors**. They are active sponsors of our meetings and many events. We are especially fortunate to have such great support. See you at the next meeting!
– Alan Massey

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

WOW, this has been a fast year for our Chapter! We had some ups and downs, but all in all, we are still grateful for what we accomplished this year, and look forward to making it a better year in 2018.

As we look forward, it's time to rebuild our community again, as 70% of us had a home or business flooded during the storm. Fishing rods and fishing trips have been traded in for hammers and trips to the locale hardware store for weekend adventures. For the lucky ones who can make it out to the waters, it's been some good fishing out there. Reds, flounder and trout have found their way back to the freezers.

As a chapter, we plan to get back into our normal meeting routine after the first of the year, so look for our email blast to stay informed on

when and where meetings will take place.
Thanks for your patience. –
Scott Bandy
scottbandy77@yahoo.com

Port O'Connor
Bill Moore
361-983-4690

As mentioned in the last issue of *Currents*, we were getting ready for our October banquet, when along came Harvey. Due to the damage inflicted by Harvey, the banquet had to be rescheduled.

The banquet will again be held at the POC Community Center on Saturday,

March 24, 2018. It will include great trips, a silent auction, live auction, door prizes and several card games.

The chapter wishes to express our appreciation to several POC Businesses for assisting in our table/tickets sales. These include: **Coastal Boat Services, Coastal Bend Marine, Port O'Connor Rod and Gun, Sonny's Marine and Tigrett Real Estate**. Tickets may also be purchased from CCA Assistant Director **Taylor Rieck, (713) 626-4222** or from any POC CCA Board Member.

POC CCA has another nice golf cart that is being raffled off for this banquet, and tickets purchased prior to Harvey are in the hopper, as they were rescued before the storm made landfall. The golf cart has been on display at Coastal Bend Marine, and tickets are currently available. So, as we continue to support our coastal resources, pencil in Saturday, March 24, 2018 in POC, **"Where it all began."** – Bill Moore

Prairie
Patricia Walters 979-877-5598
manager@wpprint.com

Redfish Bay
Norman Oates 361-758-0266

The CCA Texas Redfish Bay Chapter is finishing 2017 as the most successful year in memory. Our **2017 Annual Banquet** far exceeded our goals, and the **Take a Kid Fishing and Beeville Fish Fry** events were, as always, great successes! We could not be more proud of **our board members, John Blaha (our real CCA guy), donors and members**. Thank all of you so much for your support – most of our donors and sponsors have literally supported us year after year for as long as I can remember. It is such a relief to know that we can count on your support each year. A special shout-out to **Chris's Marine**, who has been our Title Sponsor for fourteen years in a row!

As you can imagine, most of our banquet

donors and sponsors have businesses in Port Aransas, Aransas Pass, Rockport and Ingleside. Hurricane Harvey devastated these areas with high winds and flood waters. Most of our donors and sponsors are still not back in business and have walls stripped down to studs. In some cases, the buildings no longer exist. Many of our board members, donors, sponsors and members are still making repairs to their homes as well, if there are homes left. To all of our CCA family, we wish you a safe and speedy recovery.

In another sad turn for the chapter, **Keith Hargrove** passed away. Keith was an active Redfish Bay Chapter board member; he worked hard to make the banquet a success. He will be missed by all who knew him. Our sympathies to Lynn, his wife.

2018 is just around the corner. Mark your calendar: **The 2018 Redfish Bay Chapter Annual Banquet is scheduled for April 21.** As always, it will be a fun family event!

The Redfish Bay Chapter wishes a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our members! – **Norman Oates**

Rio Grande Valley
Louis Zimmerer 956-373-0799
Lmz01@yahoo.com

Sabine-Neches
Darin Johnson 409-790-9855
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Sabine-Neches Chapter! Our area is slowly but surely getting back on its feet after the effects of Harvey. Our venue in Port Arthur suffered flood damage but we aren't going to let that get in the way from having our banquet – **Save The Date: Thursday March 1, 2018!** Our location for the event is still being discussed but rest assured the show will go on.

Fishing on Sabine was getting good in November, let's hope this trend continues. Stay Texas Strong, and we look forward to seeing you on the water or at the banquet! Tight lines to all!
– **Darin M Johnson**

Sam Houston
Brandon Kolaja 281-797-6908

San Antonio
Mike Sarosdy 210-863-7288
urodoc@satx.rr.com

Wow! As we close out another great year for CCA and fish on into 2018, all I can say is, **THANKS to all the volunteers and chapter members who make this the biggest and best CCA Chapter!** And thanks to all the old geezers who launched our chapter 40 years ago and matured it, many of whom continue to go way beyond the call of duty.

Many thanks to **John Blaha, Amie, Robby, Patrick and staff** for what they do. And thanks to our sponsors and auction buyers - Without them we could not support CCA Texas in the way that we do.

We had many events this year, including **Hooked on Clays, Hooked on Golf, five great social events, and of course, a really great banquet (Thank you Rick Neitzel and Banquet Committee).** This could not have been done without great volunteers and enthusiastic chapter members, all of whom care about fish, kids and the future of our coastal habitat and fisheries, both inshore and offshore. We literally saw several hundred new faces at those events, and many want to get more involved. I would encourage all to do so!

Your next opportunity will be to step up and join the Banquet Committee at the early meetings in January, the first of which will be at **6:00 pm on Tuesday, January 9, at the Barn Door Restaurant.** Everyone has something to offer, and it is a fun and very worthwhile experience. **Contact me or Banquet Chair Robert Lozano (robertlozano129@yahoo.com)** with any questions.

The Hooked on Clays Committee also will crank up in January for our 5th Annual Jimmy Gibson Sporting Clay Shoot, to be held in late March, under the very capable leadership of Bob Brumby (brumbo@gut.com)

Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas. Thanks for all you do to support CCA. And remember, **TAKE A KID FISHING!** – **Mike Sarosdy**

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

In the aftermath of the storms this summer, the coast is back up and running with some changes. As parts of the coast are rebuilding, everyone is learning and adapting to the changes caused by the storms. Be careful when running the Intra-coastal Waterway. Parts have sanded in due to the amount of water forced through the channel, and there is debris to be on the lookout for. Make sure the kill switch is attached while running.

On October 26 we had our second round of the "Speaker Series" with Leslie D. Hartman as the keynote speaker. Leslie is the Matagorda Bay Ecosystem Leader for the CCA. His address of the state of the bay system in Matagorda sparked a frenzy of questions and led to an informative discussion for the entire group to enjoy. Topics included fish sampling, salinity levels in the bays, past proposals and future efforts to restore Parker's Cut. The meal consisted of ribeye steaks and lobster, joined by dirty rice and salad. Thank you to everyone for their help getting this event planned and executed. Stay tuned for info on our third event!

The San Bernard Chapter will host our 2018 Annual Fundraising Banquet on February 22 at Riverside Hall in East Bernard! Meal and raffle tickets are on sale now. This is the first year we have done a raffle ticket with three major prizes. Tickets are on the street and will be sold out by banquet opening. Contact your local board member today to reserve your seat and raffle tickets. **For advanced tickets, contact**

Jarrold Cavness at (281) 541-5684 or Ross Kutach at (281) 330-0135. Hope to see you all there! Until then, sStay safe, tight lines and fish on! – **Ross Kutach**

San Gabriel
John Melnar 512- 497-8284

San Jacinto
Jim Wilson 713-828-7639

Southwestern
Veronica Oliver 830-765-6228

TAMU
Rudy Mueller 830-765-6228
tamucca@gmail.com

Texas State University
Travis James 832-909-5833
travisj0915@gmail.com

Tomball/Magnolia
Matt Maddox 832-571-7638

Tri-County
Christian Hildebrand 830-534-2730

Trinity Bay
Gerald Payne 281-728-6278

The Trinity Bay Chapter would like to thank our many sponsors for yet another successful year in supporting conservation efforts. In the coming year, we look forward to new faces, unique ideas and surpassing goals from last year.

The Trinity Bay Chapter meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. If you would like more details on becoming a member or sponsor, we'd be glad to hear from you.

Please be safe while on the water, in the field or on a stand, taking in the greatness of the outdoors. To all, we wish you a wonderful Christmas Season, along with a healthy and prosperous New Year. See you in 2018! – **Gerald Payne**

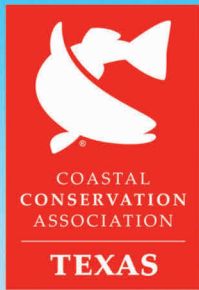
Trinity Valley
John Hebert Jr 936-334-2528

West Houston
Ruben Delgadillo 281-808-1434

West Texas
Craig McDonnold 432-682-3499



LAST CHANCE: Offer Ends December 15, 2017!



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(\$1,000 + \$25 shipping) can receive
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Cooler with 4 (30 oz.) Engel Tumblers
Tax Deductible amount: \$430

Please expect 3-4 weeks for delivery. No P.O. Box addresses

You **MUST** return this form to the CCA office completely filled out to receive your gift (This offer is NOT available online.)

CCALifeMember APPLICATION

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CCA Memeber ID# _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Method of Payment \$1,025.00

☐ Cash ☐ Check Credit Card : ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please Choose ONE of the
following Options:

☐ 123 qt. Engel Cooler

OR

☐ 80 qt. Engel Cooler
& 4 (30 oz.) Tumblers

CCA Texas | 6919 Portwest Dr., Ste. 100 | Houston, TX 77024
Phone 713.626.4222 | ahoy@ccatexas.org | www.CCATexas.org

PHOTO: @STEVE_DOUGHERTY

papa's
PILAR
Ernest Hemingway

PROUD PARTNER OF
 COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

 /CAPTAINWILDBILL
 /OZZY.DELGADO.94

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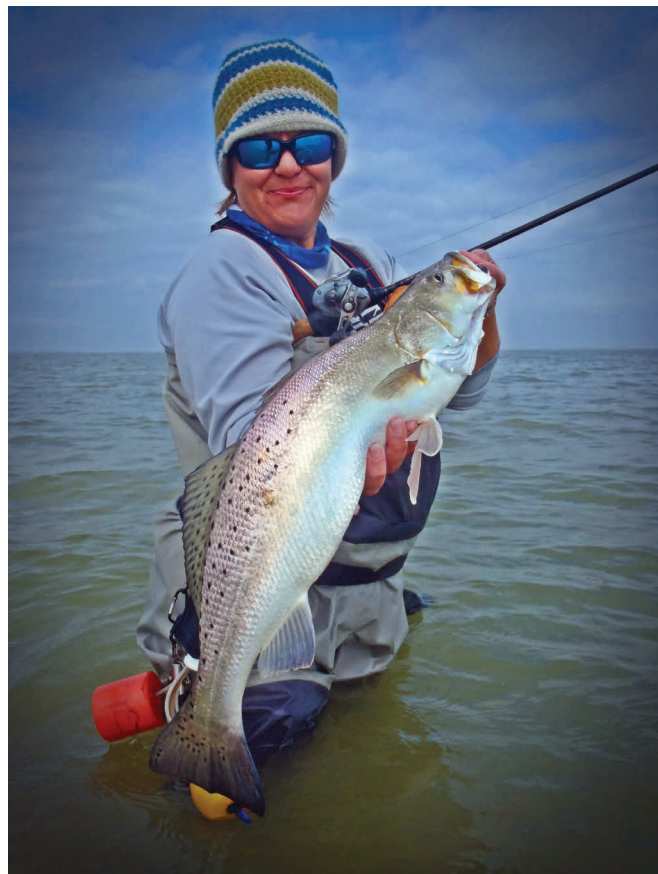
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Example of a GREAT ACTION PHOTO:
Lisa Laskowski has provided many fine photos for *Currents*. This time, she's the subject, with a trophy speckled trout. Photo by John Blaha.

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Christmas Eve

Oyster Stew with Firecracker Oyster Crackers We greeted Papaw with whoops of glee as he stomped off the cold and strode into the kitchen, a gleaming gallon tin clasped under one brawny arm. Once a year, at Christmastime, he would splurge on a treat that surely cost him dearly: a gallon of oysters. And only twice a year did he commandeer Miss Grace's stove; once, to make Christmas Eve Oyster Stew and the other, a post-Christmas turkey hash breakfast. I doubt if he ever wrote the recipe for either down, but hopefully he'd approve of my take on his oyster stew. Serves 4 to 6. Enjoy! **Susan L. Ebert**

Ingredients

1/3 cup unsalted butter
1/3 cup minced green onions
1/3 cup minced celery
2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon, plus more for serving
2 tablespoons minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/2 cup organic all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne
2 cups whole milk
2 cups half-and-half
1 cup oyster liquor
48 oysters

Serve with Tabasco sauce and Firecracker Oyster Crackers

Both the Oyster and Firecracker Recipes are found in *The Field to Table Cookbook* (Welcome Books, 2016) by Susan L. Ebert.

Directions

In a 5-quart stockpot over medium-high heat, melt the butter, then add the green onions, celery, tarragon, and parsley. Sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, until the vegetables are translucent and the herbs are fragrant. Slowly sprinkle in the flour, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Add the salt, pepper, and cayenne.

Exchange the wooden spoon for a wire whisk and slowly whisk in the milk, half-and-half, and oyster liquor. Lower the heat to medium so that the pot barely simmers, but does not boil. Slip in the oysters six or so at a time; you want to keep the liquid hot. Stir gently for several minutes, and when the oysters develop "frilly" edges, ladle into soup bowls and top with a sprinkle of tarragon.

Recipes are from *The Field to Table Cookbook* (Welcome Books, 2016) by Susan L. Ebert. The *Field to Table Cookbook* received first place in the Outdoor Writers of America's 2017 Excellence in Craft Competition, the outstanding achievement award in the Professional Outdoor Media Association's 2017 Excellence in Craft Competition, and a first place in the Texas Outdoor Writers Association's 2017 Excellence in Craft Competition. Order yours on Amazon, or order signed copies at field2table.com.

Great Foods Recipes sponsored by Costa Del Mar

Liz Hewitt, Editor



A Search For Rainbows

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CURRENTS NEWSLETTER

December 2017 / January 2018

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A Surprise Thanks!

Sea Center volunteer Janet Jackson-Ellis, a retired School Teacher, thanked Rep. Dennis Bonnen for his work on education legislation after his presentation as CCA's Conservation Hero.



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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 or 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



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