

CURRENTS

August / September 2023

“Bringing Baffin Back” Initiative, spearheaded by the Harte Research Institute (HRI) and the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP).

CURRENTS IS INTERACTIVE!

This issue is equipped with clickable links. Try clicking one to open it in your browser.

CCA-supported Water Quality Monitoring Program is Vital to Restoration Efforts in Baffin Bay

By Michael Wetz

Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Baffin Bay is the “jewel” of the Texas coast, with salty waters that are home to world-class spotted seatrout, abundant redfish, and an impressive black drum fishery. However, Baffin Bay is exhibiting symptoms of water quality degradation that were historically unprecedented, but which have been increasing in frequency and intensity in recent years. Without good water quality, it becomes harder and harder for an ecosystem like Baffin Bay to support critical habitat and a healthy fishery.

In 2013, the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI) initiated a rigorous water quality sampling program in Baffin Bay with assistance from the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA). This program, which has incorporated 21 citizen

scientists over the years, documented nutrient (nitrogen, phosphorus) pollution as a primary driver of water quality degradation. Much of the pollution comes from human sources: minimally treated wastewater, fertilizer runoff, failing septic tanks and even stormwater runoff. Nutrient pollution is a key promoter of the algal blooms and other

symptoms of water quality degradation and must be addressed to restore Baffin Bay back to good health. In short, Baffin Bay needs to go on a nutrient “diet”.

In 2013, the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI) initiated a rigorous water quality sampling program in Baffin Bay with assistance from the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA).



Expanding water quality monitoring and understanding nutrient pollution inputs will help to address problems in the bay.

In 2022, CCA made another generous three-year funding commitment to meet the growing needs of the water quality program. The earlier baseline data that has been collected, as well as new data, will guide efforts to address pollution sources in the Baffin Bay watershed and ensure that both water quality and habitat



restoration targets are met in the bay. This restoration is a key component of the new “Bringing Baffin Back” initiative, spearheaded by HRI and the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP). Bringing Baffin Back is unique in that it represents the first whole ecosystem

restoration project of a bay in Texas. Over the coming years, there will be ample opportunities to participate in Bringing Baffin Back. To learn more about these opportunities, visit: www.bringingbaffinback.org.



David McKee and project leader Michael Wetz conducting water quality sampling.



The Spotted Seatrout Situation

By Shane Bonnot, CCA Texas Advocacy Director

Winter weather the week of February 14, 2021, led to fish kill events along the entire Texas coast, serving both as a reminder and an opportunity. It was a reminder that we can only control what we can control, and it continues to serve as an opportunity to shape the future of the Spotted Seatrout fishery in Texas.

"Damon Patrol" by Sam Caldwell



(CPUE) for Spotted Seatrout in a given bay system (i.e. the average number of fish caught in the gill nets per hour) compared to the numerical year.

In both the Upper and Lower Laguna Madre, gill net data found that the spring 2021 Spotted Seatrout catch rates were both approximately 30 percent lower than the 10-year average. The same data also indicated noteworthy Spotted Seatrout catch rate declines in the Matagorda and San Antonio Bay systems. Those catch rates were approximately 40 percent lower than the 10-year average.

For Aransas, Galveston, and Sabine Lake the data showed catch rates that were at or near the 10-year average catch rates. Corpus Christi, in fact, saw a 10 percent increase in catch rates for 2021. Considering the natural annual variation in populations, the freeze impact to these systems appeared minimal.

What Happened

On April 1, 2021, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (TPWC) enacted an emergency ruling, temporarily changing the bag and size limits for Spotted Seatrout in the Upper and Lower Laguna Madre Bay systems. The rule reduced the Spotted Seatrout bag limit to 3 fish and restricted the allowable size to 17-23 inches. Since it was an emergency ruling and wasn't subject to the normal rule-making process, the changes were effective for only 120 days, with a 1-time extension for another 60 days.

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Analysis of the spring 2021 data and other anecdotal reports from recreational anglers prompted the TPWC to instruct TPWD staff to publish a proposal to extend the regulations, and at their January 2022 meeting, TPWC passed temporary regulation changes for Spotted Seatrout. Again, the rule reduced the spotted seatrout

The Resulting Data

In mid-June 2021, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department - Coastal Fisheries Division (TPWD) biologists completed their routine gill net surveys and began analyzing the data for trends and freeze impacts. That complete data set is available to view [here](#) and is summarized in Figure 1. The graphs shown in the [linked data](#) illustrate the mean catch rate per hour or Catch Per Unit Effort

bag limit to 3 fish and restricted the allowable size to 17-23 inches, with a goal of leaving more spawning fish in the water for two spawning seasons to help the populations recover quickly from the 2021 winter storm. These regulation changes affected all coastal water bodies south of FM 457 in Sargent. Barring emergency action by TPWC, the temporary regulations will expire August 31, 2023, and the fishery will once again be subject to the historic 5-fish bag limit with a

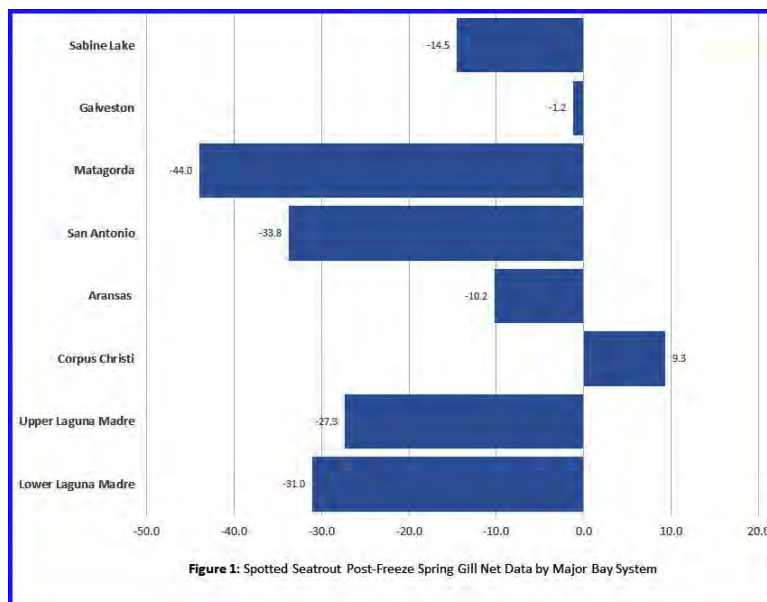


Figure 1: Spotted Seatrout Post-Freeze Spring Gill Net Data by Major Bay System

15-inch to 25-inch slot, with 1 fish over 25-inches. CCA Texas was supportive of the temporary regulation changes and testified in favor of having an expiration date so that new data could be analyzed and factored into future regulations developed using the statewide proclamation process.

The intent of the regulation was to help the fishery recover from the freeze and based on previous freeze recoveries ('83 & '89), it takes 2-3 years to get back to pre-freeze abundance (it takes much longer to get back to historic size distribution and age classes). While it is fair to debate whether the trout fishery has recovered, the expiration date was set in statute, therefore outside of an emergency ruling, any future changes will be subject to the rule-making process. Meaning, any additional regulation changes will take time.

How Has the Trout Fishery Responded to the Changes?

According to the spring 2023 TPWD gill net data (Figure 2), with exception to the Lower Laguna Madre, bay systems that were either near the 10-year average spring gillnet CPUE following the freeze (in other words, bay systems that weren't dramatically impacted by the event) or bay systems that received the benefit from the initial emergency ruling (Upper Laguna Madre), appear to be on the path to recovery. The Lower Laguna Madre is trending in the right direction but is still 13.6% below the 10-year mean.

The bay systems that didn't get the initial protection from the spring 2021 emergency ruling, Matagorda and San Antonio Bay, are still well below the 10-year mean, 32% and 34% respectively. It does appear however that Matagorda Bay could benefit from a substantial number of juveniles coming into the fishery with a 238% increase in CPUE in 2022 TPWD bag seine surveys (Figure 3).

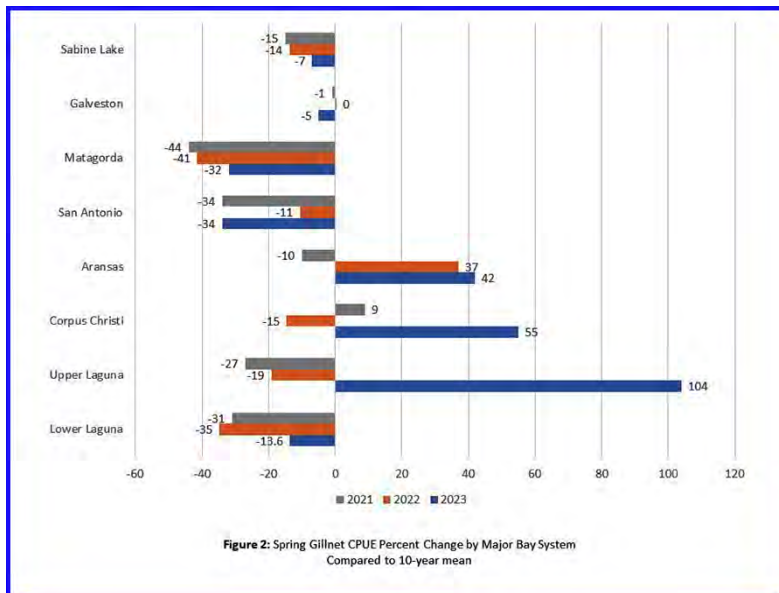


Figure 2: Spring Gillnet CPUE Percent Change by Major Bay System Compared to 10-year mean

those who are concerned that “once they take something away, they never give it back” regarding TPWC enacting a regulation, and those who are concerned that the fishery will spiral into the abyss after a conservation measure expires.

To the former camp, TPWC should hold true to their word, maintaining credibility for the next time it is necessary to use an emergency or temporary regulation in response to an unforeseen disaster.

If you fall into the latter camp, the best path forward is to use your voice during upcoming scoping opportunities this fall as TPWD explores the issue of trout abundance, population dynamics, angler preference and potential regulations. **With the end of the temporary rule, the proper process is in motion, creating opportunities to have your voice heard and giving you a moment in time to shape the future of the Spotted Seatrout fishery.**

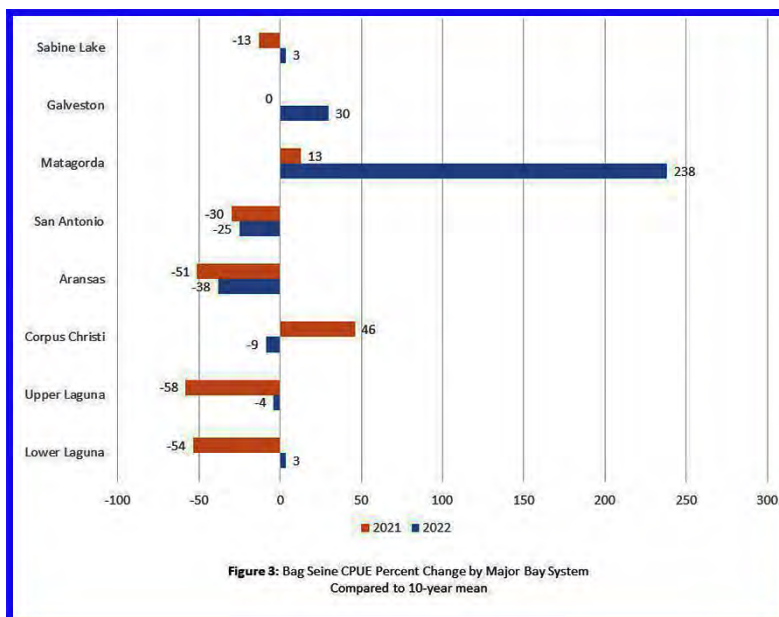


Figure 3: Bag Seine CPUE Percent Change by Major Bay System Compared to 10-year mean

So Now What?

There has been vocal opposition from components of the recreational fishery stating that the rule shouldn't revert to the historic bag and slot limit. **Remember, as required by statute, the temporary rule expires and barring another emergency order, any future regulation would be subject to the regular statewide proclamation rule-making process.** In situations like these, there are typically two camps:

Key drivers in the upcoming scoping meetings will include things like TPWD data on fishery sustainability, resilience, and economics. Working through our committees and state board of directors, CCA Texas will be deeply engaged in this critical process to determine the future of this iconic fishery.



St. Charles Bay Big Tree Unit Living Shoreline Reefing Continues

By John Blaha

CCA Texas and Tito's Handmade Vodka recently teamed up to add an additional five reef beds in the Goose Island State Park Big Tree Unit Living Shoreline project. This recent effort is the fourth phase of deployments into the permitted site, bringing the total number of reef beds to forty-four within the twenty-plus acre reef site. The Phase IV cost was \$226,250 and was funded by CCA Texas and Building Conservation Trust (BCT) and included a contribution of \$50,000 from Tito's Handmade Vodka.

CCA Texas originally partnered with Harte Research Institute for this living shoreline project in St. Charles Bay along the Big Tree Unit of Goose Island State Park in August of 2017. CCA Texas and BCT originally funded \$75,000 along with funds from TXGLO, USACE, NMFS and others. Phase I resulted in seven reef beds constructed along the Big Tree Unit. The second phase of this restoration and creation effort took place in the spring of 2020. CCA Texas once again provided funding

in the amount of \$50,000. These funds were secured through the Harvey Relief Fund donation from Lone Star Breweries and were part of an effort that created an additional ten reef beds. In the spring of 2022, Phase III placed an additional twenty-one reef beds at the site. In Phase III CCA Texas contributed \$360,000 to the project. This included \$100,000 from Lone Star Breweries and \$60,000 from Cheniere Energy. This additional funding allowed HRI to expand the Phase III effort by an

additional six beds, from the fifteen planned. To date, CCA Texas has funded \$711,250 for the St. Charles Bay Living Shoreline project. The funds have included those from grassroots banquet fundraising efforts from across that state and supporters such as Tito's Handmade Vodka, Lone Star Breweries, Cheniere Energy and others.

The original deployments of materials to the site took place in early August of 2017. Seven reef beds were built only weeks before Hurricane Harvey. Not only did these freshly deployed beds survive the force of Harvey, but the storm also kicked off

"At Tito's Handmade Vodka, we are always looking for opportunities to keep Texas flourishing. That's why we're so excited to support the work that the CCA Texas is doing to benefit Texans and our coastal ecosystems for years to come." — **Lindsey Bates,**
Director of Philanthropy Operations for
Tito's Handmade Vodka



Contractors place rock cultch into the St. Charles Bay Big Tree Unit reefing area. Each reef bed is checked continuously through construction to ensure proper amounts of material are placed and settled properly.



Members of Harte Research Institutes Coastal Conservation & Restoration Lab on hand for observation while out in the Aransas Bay system completing oyster reef surveys.

a large oyster spawn, leaving the new beds covered in fresh oyster spat only weeks after Harvey's passing. The site now boasts forty-four reef beds that supply many ecosystem services to the immediate and surrounding areas, and critical shoreline protection to the Big Tree Unit, which is a major wintering ground for whooping cranes.

This project exemplifies the importance of healthy and growing reefs, and the need for sanctuary reefs. These designated reefs provide seed source for adjacent reefs; serve as habitat for over 300 aquatic species; offer numerous ecological benefits; determine currents; slow water surges and shoreline erosion; and provide recreational fishing opportunities.

On any given day, one will see recreational anglers fishing these reef beds in St. Charles Bay by kayak, boat or simply walking to them from Lamar Beach Road. While oyster reefs do not carry the glamour of seagrass meadows or marsh shorelines, they provide 4.5 times more aquatic biomass than seagrass beds and 11 times more aquatic biomass than estuarine marsh shorelines. Oyster reefs are the bedrock of the ecology and health of Texas' coastal resources.

CCA Texas, BCT and our partners are dedicated to continuing the support of the restoration and creation of sanctuary and conservation oyster reefs up and down the Texas coast. For more information about CCA Texas and our efforts with oyster reefs, please visit www.ccatexas.org/oysters.



Derrick Construction puts the finishing touches on five reefs beds in St. Charles Bay Big Tree Unit reefing area. After the initial rock culch is layed, contractors then place a coating layer of recycled oyster shell from area restaurants and shucking houses. Photo Courtesy of Janae Evans



HABITAT TODAY FOR FISH TOMORROW

CCA Texas Projects

1. Cedar Bayou/Vinson Slough Restoration	\$1,600,000
2. Nearshore Reefing - Sabine Pass	\$ 906,000
3. Nearshore Reefing - Rio Grande Valley Reef	\$ 861,000
4. ** Oyster Reef Creation - St. Charles Bay (Rockport)	\$ 711,250
5. Nearshore Reefing—Port O'Connor	\$ 700,000
6. Oyster Restoration - East Galveston Bay	\$ 500,000
7. Nearshore Reefing - Galveston / Big Man & Kate's Reef	\$ 329,000
8. HRI Nearshore Reef Enhancement Study	\$ 250,000
9. Dagger Island Shoreline Protection & Marsh Restoration (Redfish Bay)	\$ 250,000
10. Shoreline Stabilization - Oyster Lake (West Galveston Bay)	\$ 230,000
11. Oyster Restoration—Deep Reef Sabine Lake	\$ 215,000
12. Nearshore Reefing - Matagorda	\$ 200,000
13. Shoreline Stabilization - San Bernard NWR	\$ 200,000
14. Sink Your Shucks Oyster Recycle Program	\$ 152,000
15. Marsh Restoration - Bird Island Cove (West Galveston Bay)	\$ 150,000
16. Shoreline Protection/Marsh Creation - Moses Lake (Galveston Bay)	\$ 138,000
17. Baffin Bay Serpulid Reef Habitat Conservation/Restoration Study	\$ 135,000
18. Oyster Restoration—Pepper Grove / Galveston (BCT)	\$ 130,000
19. Aransas National Wildlife Refuge Shoreline Protection (San Antonio Bay)	\$ 125,000
20. HRI Oyster Restoration Site Locator Mapping Study	\$ 120,000
21. Marsh Restoration - Dickinson Bayou	\$ 100,000
22. Nearshore Reefing - Corpus Christi	\$ 100,000
23. Bahia Grande Restoration (Port Isabel / Brownsville)	\$ 95,000
24. Oyster Reef Restoration - Aransas Bay (Rockport)	\$ 75,000
25. Oyster Reef Restoration - Copano Bay (Rockport)	\$ 75,000
26. Marsh Restoration - Egery Island (Copano Bay/Bayside)	\$ 70,000
27. Marsh Restoration - Matagorda Island	\$ 70,000
28. Nueces Bay Delta Water Management Gates	\$ 70,000
29. Nearshore Reefing - Freeport / Vancouver	\$ 60,000
30. Nueces Bay Demonstration Oyster Reef	\$ 60,000
31. Marsh Restoration - Goose Island (Rockport)	\$ 50,000
32. Nearshore Reefing - Port Mansfield	\$ 50,000
33. Shoreline Stabilization - J. D. Murphree WMA	\$ 50,000
34. Shoreline Stabilization - Cow Trap Lake (Brazoria County)	\$ 50,000
35. Dollar Bay Shoreline Protection and Marsh Restoration	\$ 50,000
36. Galveston Bay Foundation Headquarters Living Shoreline Restoration	\$ 50,000
37. Marsh Restoration - Oxen & Gang's Bayou (Galveston)	\$ 42,000
38. Marsh Restoration - San Bernard Wildlife Refuge	\$ 41,000
39. Trinity Bay Discovery Center Living Shoreline	\$ 40,000
40. Sweetwater Preserve Shoreline Protections and Oyster Reef Enhancement	\$ 30,000
41. Marsh Restoration - Nueces Bay (Corpus Christi)	\$ 24,000
42. Marsh Restoration - Snake Island Cover (West Galveston Bay)	\$ 20,000
43. Weed Eradication for Water Flow Restoration (Guadalupe River Delta)	\$ 15,000
44. Sink Your Shucks Oyster Recycle Programs Trailer	\$ 10,000
45. Bay Debris Removal - Aransas Pass	\$ 5,600
46. Building Conservation Trust's Texas Habitat Fund (BCT & CCA Texas Secured Funds)	\$ 399,066

** 2023 Projects Contributed to as 02/01/23

TOTAL FUNDED THROUGH 2022: \$9,603,916

If you are interested in contributing to our Habitat program,
Contact John Blaha at jdblaha@ccatexas.org

Gulf Identification Guide



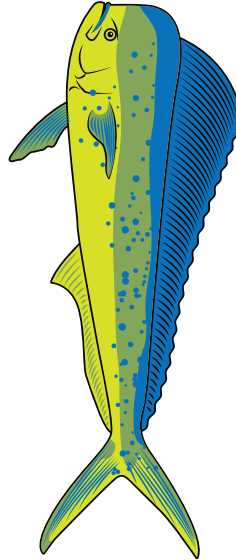
Tito's Bloody Mary



Grouper



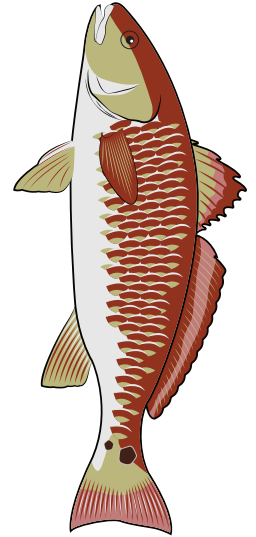
Tito's Martini



Mahi-Mahi



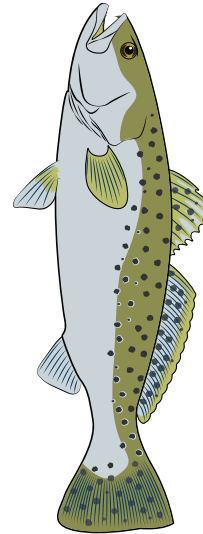
Mo-Tito



Redfish



Tito's Salty Dog



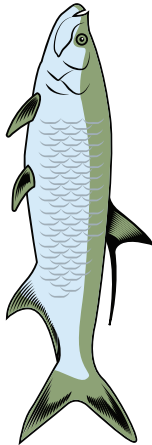
Speckled Trout



America's Original Craft Vodka



Tito's Screwdriver



Tarpon



Tito's All-American Lemonade



Tito's All-Time Favorite



Flounder



Tito's American Mule



Tito's Handmade Vodka is a proud supporter of CCA Texas

* TitosVodka.com * Crafted to be savored responsibly. DISTILLED & BOTTLED BY FIFTH GENERATION INC. AUSTIN, TEXAS 40% ALC./VOL. © 2022 TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA.

STAR STORIES



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We all know it takes a hardy breed to endure the Texas outdoors in summer. But this one is arguably on steroids. My oh my....“just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water,” here comes another heat dome, parked on top of us. When in Academy or wherever, shopping for just the right baits, and thinking: “Have the fish seen this? If I was a fish, would I eat this?” — you can’t help but wonder if they, too, are looking for a popsicle. At least something cool, and the coolest water will be on the bottom.

Evidently, that’s where the last three tagged redfish have been caught on artificial baits, and kudos to the anglers below for making it happen. Be sure to slooow down your presentation. Like us, this high heat makes the fish lethargic, so give’ em a chance and back off a typical higher speed retrieval.

The fish are there. As of two days ago (at this writing), David Hill caught the 23rd tagged redfish this year, breaking last year’s record on total fish caught. So far, the last 10 tagged reds have been caught **during** the heat wave, proving that our Texas redfish are prehistorically tough. Still amazing to think that even during the other climate extreme, the February 2021 freeze that killed about 3.8 million fish, less than 10,000 were redfish coastwide. What titans they are. No wonder we love to go after these brawny critters!

With the last five tagged fish coming from all over, from South Bay in RGV up to Bastrop Bay in Galveston and two more in the Corpus area---there are still at least 90 swimming in Texas waters right now. As the stories below attest, it can happen anytime and has.... these fish have been caught all the way up to the last day of the tournament.

Stay hydrated, and GOOD LUCK!



Steven Bledsoe - RED TAG WINNER

As we drove to South Texas, my son Chris and his friend Justin read the rules and playfully discussed who would catch the first-tagged redfish. I mostly listened to their banter without saying much but interjected with the thought that someone catches these tagged fish every year, so why not one of us? Although, I secretly had my doubts.

We started our journey from Copano Bay and traveled around 15 miles to reach one of our favorite fishing spots. While approaching the spot, I observed another boat moving alongside



BEST IN TEXAS



us towards the same location. To avoid any interference, we waited to see where they would anchor. Two fishermen from the other boat got off and waded towards the south, while one stayed in the boat and followed them using a trolling motor. We noticed the water was filled with bait, and some fish were under it. Therefore, we decided to wade around 1,000 yards from the other boat. I went towards the south while the other two went towards the north. We managed to catch and release an 18-inch trout, but unfortunately, the wind died down, and we didn't get any other bites.

After returning to the boat, we set off towards the North. The wind started to increase, but it was blowing in a new direction. We decided to pause at Allyns Bight as there seemed to be some bait activity. Despite this, the three of us managed to catch three undersized trout. We continued our journey and headed further North towards the Spalding Bight area. We found an area with some bait, and Chris spotted a redfish tailing by the shore near some drains. He chased after it for around 100 yards and eventually managed to get the fish to bite. It was a 24-inch redfish, but we didn't catch anything else.

Around 1 pm, the temperature was rising. We noticed the wind picking up, but instead of heading back, we returned to our initial spot where we knew there was bait. Fortunately, we found no other boats within a mile of our desired fishing location. I began wading towards the south, fishing the parallel guts along the shoreline. Unfortunately, I accidentally stepped into a hole about 50 feet from the boat, causing me to fall and flood my waders. I had to return to the boat to remove my waders and get back into the water.

I continued walking in the same direction and stumbled upon the same hole, causing me to fall once again. Thankfully, I was already soaked from my previous fall. While wading towards the south, I noticed 20-30 redfish swimming towards me, but they were too far away to cast my line. I made my way towards them as they came closer to me.

I cast my line towards the left side of the school and quickly caught a fish. I shouted to Chris, trailing me by 75 yards, to hurry up and join me because the school is still together, and we might be able to catch a few more. I am more focused on the school than the fish I just caught. However, as the hooked fish circles around me at about 20 yards, I take a closer look at it and notice what appears to be a tag on its back.

I yelled at Chris to hurry over because he carried a net and suspected the fish I caught had a tag. Chris was walking on water for the last 25 yards before he reached me, and his description of my actions at the time is, "For some reason, Dad became laser-focused on this fish." Amidst all the commotion, we somehow missed sight of the school. We get the fish in the net, which has a tag, and we start hollering, but we can't read the tag.

As we were looking at the tag, full of algae and slime, I commented, just my luck; I caught a tagged fish from previous years. We secured the fish while keeping it in the net and returned to the boat. The first thing we do is wipe the tag clean, and it says CCA 2023- RE1461. At this time, Justin had also just returned to the boat, and serious hollering, high-fiving, and jubilation ensued. We carefully clip the tag, revive the fish, video the release, and swiftly return to the dock.

Justin and I were searching for weigh-in stations, and he mentioned Indianola and Fishing Center in POC. I agreed to go to POC. However, halfway through our journey, I asked Justin to look up weigh stations again. He found weigh stations in Rockport and Port Aransas, but we decided to proceed to POC since we knew we could reach it before the 5 PM closing time.

I want to credit Beverly Clifton at the POC Fishing Center for her outstanding service. This was our first tag processing, and she went above and beyond to ensure that we were following all the necessary requirements. She even called STAR to confirm the procedures and even had us follow her to the post office and watch her drop the tag in the mail. I highly recommend visiting the POC Fishing Center as they were extremely helpful and accommodating, staying late to ensure we completed everything correctly.

Sharing this experience with my son was truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that will forever be priceless. We made decisions and took actions that were out of the ordinary for us, such as traveling to Rockport, returning to a previous spot, falling into a hole twice, wading back in the same direction, and staying committed even when it was tempting to give up. I believe the outcome resulted from divine intervention, as we were at the right spot and encountered a school of fish at the right time. Additionally, meeting the Cliftons in POC was a highlight of the day, as they went above and beyond to assist us. All of these events were truly incredible and made for an unforgettable experience.

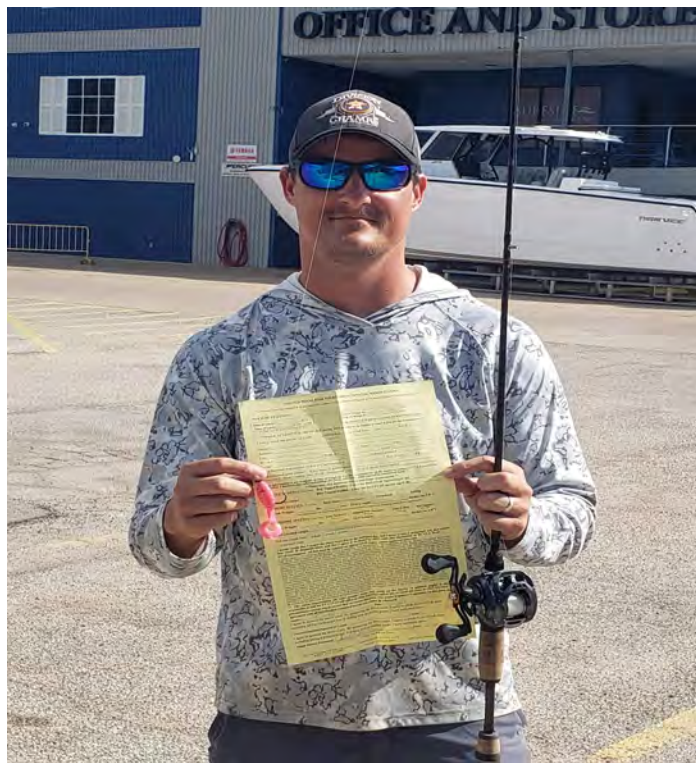


Alonso Guerrero - RED TAG WINNER

On July 14, 2023, I woke up bright and early at 6:30 am in San Benito, Tx, eagerly anticipating a fishing trip with Sergio Saenz at 9 am. Before heading to LIV, I stopped at Laguna Vista Circle K to grab a delicious taco and refreshing drinks for our adventure. Upon arriving at LIV, I quickly prepared the boat, loading two fishing rods, coolers, drinks, and ice. We set off onto the water just after 9 am.

Once out on the water, we used a cast net to catch some mullet in the channel. Despite the high tide and scorching hot weather with wind speeds of around 18mph, we persevered and were rewarded for our efforts. We headed to our first spot, Mexiquita Flats, where I caught a beautiful 19-inch red that I released back into the water. Sergio also had some luck and caught a toadfish and catfish.

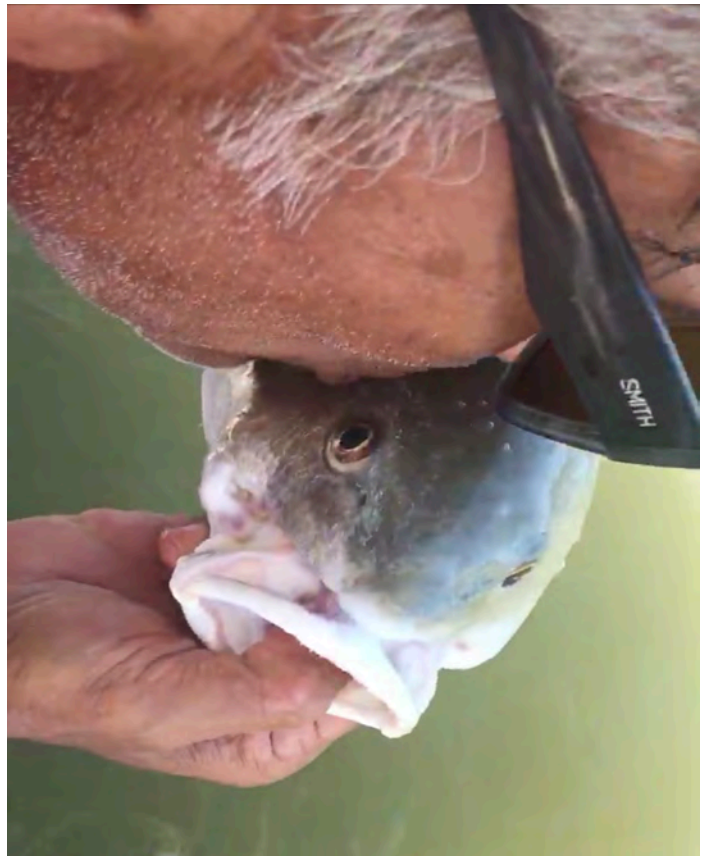
We moved to my favorite spot in the middle of South Bay on the right of the tabletop after not getting any bites for about 45 minutes. Once at the spot, we anchored, and I had two lines out, one with live finger-size mullet and the other with cut mullet. The rod with live finger-size mullet got a strike pretty quickly, and I caught my first-ever snook, a keeper measuring 24.5 inches. It was exciting to catch the fish, and it put up a good fight. After that, I re-baited my line, cast it out, and caught a small redfish. The bite slowed down after that, and we caught several catfish, which we released. The wind was picking up, and the bite slowed down even more. At that point, Sergio suggested we try another spot, but I suggested we wait another 10 minutes. Soon after, I got a good bite on my line with cut mullet, but the fish needed to take the bait. However, it returned shortly after and got hooked. I reeled it in, and it fought me for a few minutes before Sergio netted it. Once on the boat, I noticed that it had a CCA red tag covered in seaweed on one side. I removed the seaweed and realized what it was, so I had Sergio record the catch, tag removal, and release of the fish on my phone. I called my wife to tell her the good news, and we headed to South Shore B&T to turn in the tag and fill out paperwork. After that, we cleaned the boat and called it a day. It was a one-in-a-million opportunity, and I'm grateful for God's blessings.



Dustin Durbin - RED TAG WINNER

I set out at 5:30 am and arrived at Bastrop Marina, where I noticed a low tide, west wind, and murky water. Normally, these conditions would not bode well for my brother Donald

and me. Despite this, we launched the boat and discussed our options for the day. We decided to head towards Bastrop, focusing on redfish while waiting for the tide to come in and the sun to rise. At approximately 6 AM, we anchored our boat and began wading. While crossing a reef that is usually submerged, I had a feeling to fish in a pocket of water next to the reef. With the wind pushing the water into the pocket, it looked like the perfect spot to catch a redfish. After only 20 casts, I was hooked. When I netted the fish, it jumped out, revealing a string of algae. I thought, "This couldn't be a tagged redfish, could it?" After confirming the tag, I excitedly shouted to my brother, who initially thought I was joking. However, he soon realized the truth and shared in my amazement. What started as a less-than-ideal day became a dream come true, especially since we were fishing in an area where we often fished with Geeb Leman. We felt that Geeb was watching over us that morning.



Tom Amberson - BLUE TAG WINNER

There's a bit of a backstory worth sharing before I get into the day of the bite. Me and my wife Michelle are avid anglers. Our first taste of redfish came during a visit to New Orleans in 2016. Our visit happened to coincide with the "bull run," so we hooked up with some local guides and had a day of days! All of us caught giant redfish. At that time, I started having real thoughts about making redfish our "bread and butter" fish. You see, we were living on the west coast at the time, and although we have good to great fishing, these redfish really resonated with me – hard pulling and will crush a topwater bait. Suits our style of fishing perfectly.

Fast forward a few years. My son and his bride brought us not one but two grandchildren! The urge to be closer (they live

in Houston) combined with a looming retirement date got us looking to relocate to Texas with seriousness. And, of course, the entire time, I was thinking about where we could land to provide us with the best possible chances of enjoying these amazing fish. After a year of research, we decided to make the move to Padre Island/Corpus Christi. We made that move in October 2020. We eased into our fishery. One of the cool things about living down here is all the land-based fishing/wading that is available. We have a good foundation in the development of our game with Capt. Larry Bell of Artificial Action Guide Service. One day with Capt. Larry gave us an awesome starting point, particularly throwing soft plastic jerk baits. We took what we learned and built on it, fishing the jetties, beaches, and various spots on the Upper Laguna Madre. We had a ton of fun and caught many nice fish. And it was not long before we started making new fishy friends, many of whom have fished here their entire life. My buddies Derek, Aaron, and Bob were awesome about sharing their knowledge and spots with me. I owe those dudes a huge debt of gratitude as well. A local legend and guide, Joey Farah, is among their circle of friends. Joey writes a regular column in the local paper, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention how his words, both written and in person, helped us tremendously. I truly feel blessed to have these guys in our circle of fishy friends. One very important lesson I learned from all of them is that to get on the best fishing around here, a boat helps.... a lot!

We found a decent used boat in early July this year to get us out there on the flats and beyond. It's a slick little sled - Shallowport 18' Bahia. After an initial shakedown/evening cruise, we loaded for bear the next day and gave it our first real shot at slaying some fish. We got out late - we didn't do our first drift until 1:30 pm. Super-hot day with water that was almost as hot! As we sled into our first drift, I looked at my wife, Michelle, and said, "Today is the day we get that tagged fish. Let's fish hard." Of course, those were just words - words I uttered quite a bit since signing up for the Star Tournament. We both agreed that we would use the tournament as motivation to get out there every opportunity we had. Truth be told, we were no different than anyone else fishing the tournament - we all want to win, but we also understand that the odds are not favorable. Still, we have a saying on our boat: "Hope is the last thing to die." The first half hour of our drift was exactly what I anticipated. Hot, with not a lot of action or sign. And then, like a bolt from the blue - a double hook-up for us! Two nice slot-sized reds that attacked our lil John XL presentations. Nothing stokes hope more than a hook-up, and a double really gets things going. We got our pics and decided to harvest these two good-eating-sized fish. This proved to be a prelude to what remained for us the rest of the day. We continued to do drifts on this corner of the flat, with every drift seemingly eclipsing the last. When the redfish didn't bite, the trout filled in the blanks. We ended up releasing many redfish and specks - all good-grade slot-sized fish.

We were thrilled with the day we were having - The fish were willing, and our new-to-us boat fished well. Perfect drifts and plenty of room to make casts. There isn't a fisherman alive that wouldn't be stoked to have the kind of day we were having.

Little did we know that a good day was about to become one we will not soon forget.

We got set up for our last drift. I positioned the boat on top of the grass close to a 1' ledge that takes the depth from 2' to 3' ft. As soon as the boat drifted off the grass, I made a cast. I got an instant bite, and that fish ripped some good drag on my trout rod. The thing about these redfish is that some pull a lot harder than others. This fish was, indeed, spirited. As they often do, this redfish fought me the whole way, including not digging the net as she got out of a time or two. Even as we brought the fish on the boat, we had no idea it was a tagged fish. When we laid her on the deck, my wife said, "It's a tagged fish!" I initially didn't see it since there was some algae growth on the tag, but I saw a flash of blue upon closer inspection! Let me tell you, that was a moment for us! We have done a lot of amazing fishing over the years, but I can say with certainty that this moment will be one we will never forget. We never win anything! But this day.... we came up huge!

Regarding any advice or suggestions, do everything you can to increase your luck. One thing I focus on is fishing confidently. Trust in the baits, techniques, and zones you are fishing in. We had all of that going on this day, and pretty much every day when we go looking for fish. Lady Luck did indeed shine on us brightly, but as some say, "Luck is where preparation and opportunity collide." I find some truth in that, and if there was anything I could claim that led to our success, it is to trust in your efforts and always understand that the fish you are looking for could be there on the next cast. 🍀

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Jarett Everett & Mac Elliott!

We are so grateful to everyone on the various release teams who took pictures and sent them to us!

***For a visual treat, tour memorable images of STAR
release adventures by clicking on this page***

HABITAT TODAY FOR FISH TOMORROW

CCA Texas and Building Conservation Trust Nearshore Reefing Support

• Sabine Pass HI20 (2021 deployments: Culverts & pyramids)	\$ 906,000
• Rio Grande Valley (2021 deployments: Railroad ties & boats)	\$ 861,000
• Port O'Connor	\$ 700,000
• Galveston Big Man & Kate's (2021 deployments: Pyramids)	\$ 329,000
• HRI Nearshore Reef Enhancement Study	\$ 250,000
• Matagorda	\$ 200,000
• Coprpus Christi	\$ 100,000
• Freeport / Vancouver	\$ 60,000
• Port Mansfield	\$ 50,000
Total contributions to Nearshore Reefing:	\$3,456,000

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Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow

1. Sabine Lake Deep Reef Oyster Restoration
2. Sabine HI20 Nearshore Reef
3. Sabine Lake Oyster Reef Expansion
4. J.D. Murphree Breakwater
5. East Galveston Bay Oyster Reef Restoration
6. Trinity Bay Discovery Center Living Shoreline
7. Dickinson Bayou Marsh Restoration
8. Moses Lake Shoreline Restoration
9. Sportsmans Road Wetlands Restoration
10. Big Man's Reef
11. Bird Island Cove Marsh Restoration
12. Snake Island Cove Marsh Restoration
13. Oyster Lake Shoreline Stabilization
14. Vancouver Nearshore Reef
15. Cow Trap Lake Shoreline Stabilization
16. San Bernard NWR Shoreline Stabilization
17. Matagorda Nearshore Reef
18. Port O'Connor Nearshore Reef
19. HRI Nearshore Reef Enhancement Study
20. Weed Eradication for Water Flow Restoration
21. HRI Oyster Restoration Site Locator/Mapping Study
22. Matagorda Island Marsh Restoration
23. Cedar Bayou/Vinson Slough Restoration
24. St. Charles Bay Oyster Restoration
25. Aransas Bay Oyster Restoration
26. Goose Island Marsh Restoration
27. Copano Bay Oyster Restoration
28. Aransas Bay Debris Removal
29. Nueces Bay Marsh Restoration
30. Nueces Bay Delta Water Management Gates
31. Nueces Bay Demonstration/Restoration Oyster Reef Project
32. Corpus Christi Nearshore Reef
33. Baffin Bay's Unique Serpulid Study
34. Port Mansfield Nearshore Reef
35. Rio Grande Valley Reef
36. Bahia Grande Restoration



● Completed
● Upcoming
● Ongoing

Leaving It Better Than You Found It

Fourth Annual San Antonio and Espiritu Santo Shorelines Cleanup

Planning underway for an expanded effort. Save the Date — Saturday, September 30, 2023

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Leave it Cleaner!

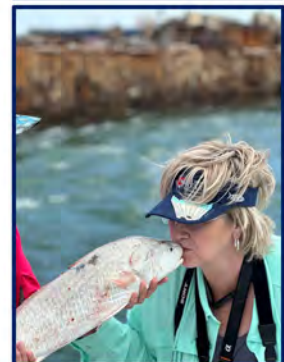
Contact Allan Berger for information:

allanberger@outlook.com

713-829-2852

For an idea of the tremendous efforts by STAR volunteers who catch and release tagged reds, view the 2023 tagged redfish release photos [HERE](#).

Thank You
to the
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who make the
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happen year after year!
(These are just a few of the many)



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Caught Redhanded!

Reports from Texas Parks & Wildlife Game Wardens

Illegal oysters confiscated: 327 cases, 47,000 oysters destroyed

This illegal oyster importation case illustrates the many and varied enforcement responsibilities Texas Game Wardens are required to enforce.
— **Ronnie Luster**

On July 24, 2023, Region 4 District 1 and District 3 Wardens conducted an inspection at

a wholesale fish dealer. During the inspection, the business was found to be in violation for No Wholesale Dealer's License and Possession of Invasive Oysters. A total of 327 cases of the invasive oysters were seized totaling 47,000 oysters. Cases pending. 🚚



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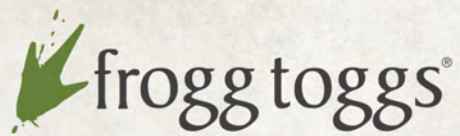


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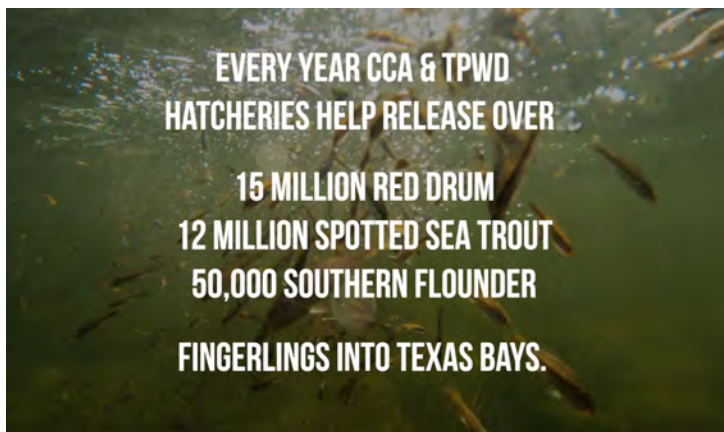


Putting fingerlings back where fish need to be

Hatcheries were an early priority of CCA. Enhancing populations was crucial, but replacing a large percentage of cold-stricken gamefish proved to be a primary benefit of the hatcheries.

Once again, CCA and TPWD are filling the need to mitigate trout, redfish and flounder mortalities. Take a brief voyage with a CCA /TPWD hatchery as technicians replace trout fingerlings. Here's a link to a recent video that will provide an idea of the process:

[CLICK HERE](#)





Presenting the NEW CCA Texas license plates!



We are incredibly excited about this new, updated design which proudly displays our CCA logo to show everyone you're a conservation-minded Texas angler.

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For each plate sold, CCA Texas will receive \$22 which will be crucial support for our work of ensuring the health and conservation of our marine resources and anglers' access to them here in Texas. Additionally, by purchasing your CCA Texas license plates for your SUV, truck, car, or trailer, you'll also be raising awareness for CCA and our conservation efforts each time you're out on the road!

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If not, you can order our NEW CCA Texas license plates with an updated design that proudly displays our CCA logo for everyone to see.

[CLICK HERE](#) to get yours today. Why?

1. Show everyone you're a conservation-minded Texas angler.
2. Raise awareness for CCA and our conservation efforts each time you're out on the road.
3. Support our work of ensuring the health and conservation of our marine resources and anglers' access to them here in Texas. For each plate sold, CCA Texas will receive \$22.

Order yours TODAY by [CLICKING HERE](#).

If you already have CCA Texas plates with the previous design, you can definitely keep them, but you also have the opportunity to get the new one by going to your local county tax assessor-collector's office and ordering a replacement for \$6.50.

Help out CCA Texas and upgrade your car, truck, or trailer by [CLICKING HERE](#) to get your custom CCA Texas plates TODAY at MyPlates.com.

Your friend in conservation, —**Robby Byers**
Executive Director CCA Texas



In 2015, the U.S. Coast Guard estimated over **760,000 red snapper** were illegally fished in Texas and U.S. waters by the lancha fleet from Mexico.

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Enjoying Your Digital CURRENTS Newsletter

CCA Texas' financial responsibilities and goals are ongoing. For the time being, publishing the CURRENTS newsletter requires the internet. There are excellent reasons, with cost being primary.

For 36 years, the printed CURRENTS newsletter has provided valuable two-way communication, as well as being an important tool for affecting environmental change. But printing and mailing a 49-page, full-color newsletter to 70,000 members is time consuming and expensive.

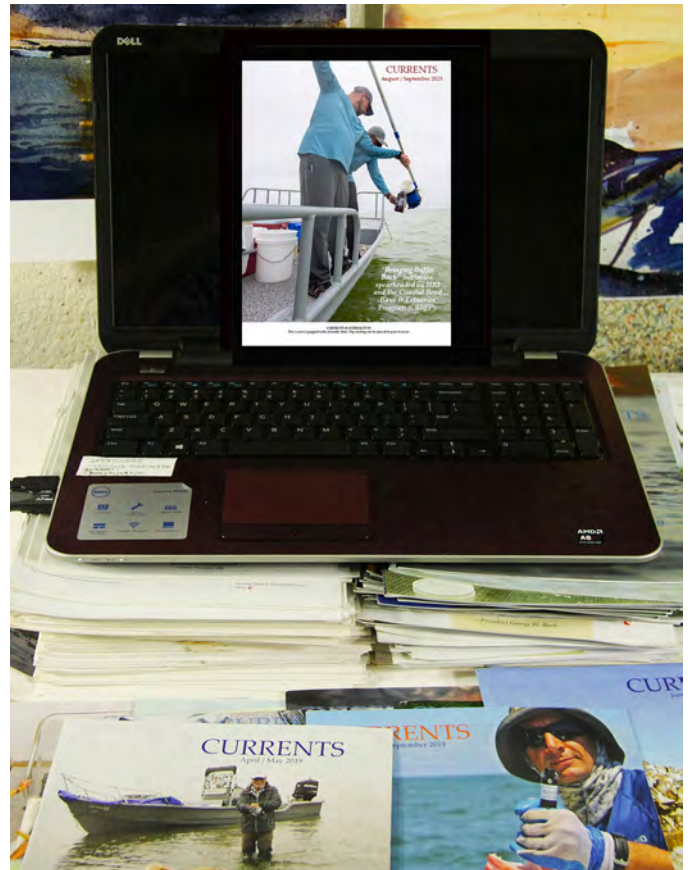
The online CURRENTS newsletter requires no printing nor postage, and delivery is almost instantaneous. An email to members contains a link, with the full newsletter a click away.

Apart from the cost difference, there are many reasons a member can appreciate an internet version of the publication.

- An e-newsletter can be opened in seconds. Articles can be accessed rapidly. Images can be viewed large. Text can be enlarged for easier reading, blocked, copied and shared. Past issues are a click away on the CCA Texas website.
- A favored article can be forwarded to others, readily accessed later instead of having to search through stacks of magazines, and printed for reference.
- Links can be used to connect to advertisers, as well as cross referencing other articles, writers, photographers and artists.

- A link to the CCA Texas website provides comprehensive news and resources. On the website, an array of CCA information is available. View many project-specific videos. Consult the list of CCA-approved guides. Listen to an informative Podcast.

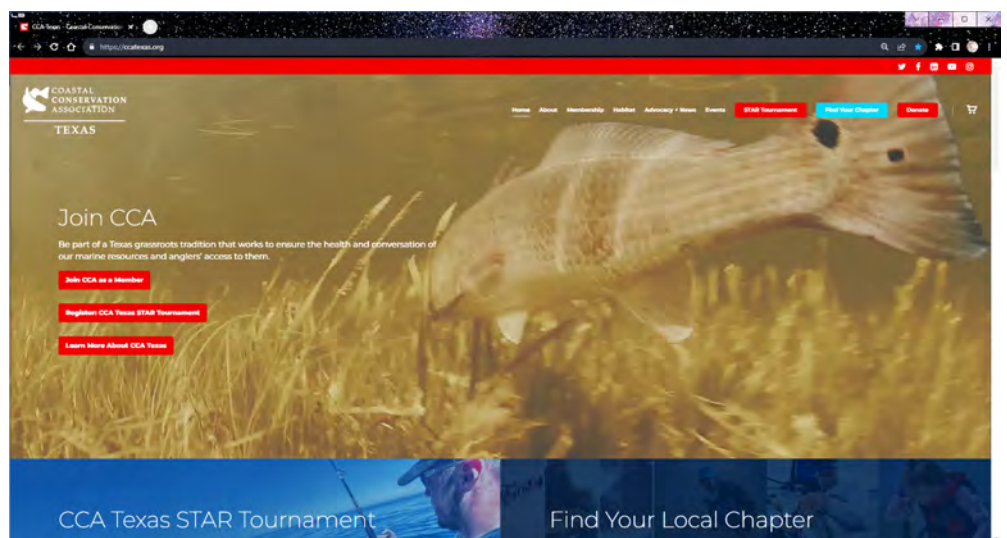
[Click here for CURRENTS Newsletters.](#)



A great way to enjoy indoor time and stay in touch with the outdoors—the CCA Texas website is at your service.

You'll find news and information about chapter events, advocacy and breaking news, plus videos of the progress we're making along the Texas coast. Need a guide? Want to enjoy a CURRENTS feature from years back? Check in with the STAR program?

Go to ccatexas.org and bookmark it now.



Follow CCA Texas on Social Media!

The BEST way to stay informed on the latest with CCA Texas is by FOLLOWING us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We regularly post photo and video updates on our 60 local chapters, conservation projects, member photos, and advocacy efforts to keep you informed and engaged.

Our following is GROWING FAST, so join thousands of CCA Texas members around the state by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) now! Each time our members FOLLOW CCA Texas and LIKE our posts, it helps raise awareness for CCA and our conservation efforts. And don't be shy, share our posts with your friends and family and encourage them to FOLLOW us as well!

Featured Social Media Highlights



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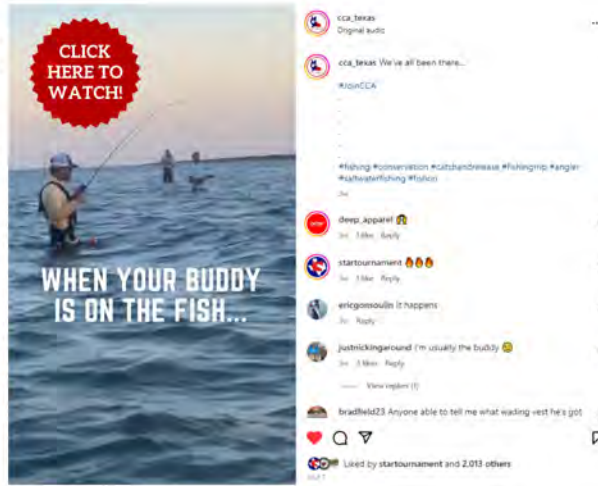




CCA Texas on Instagram

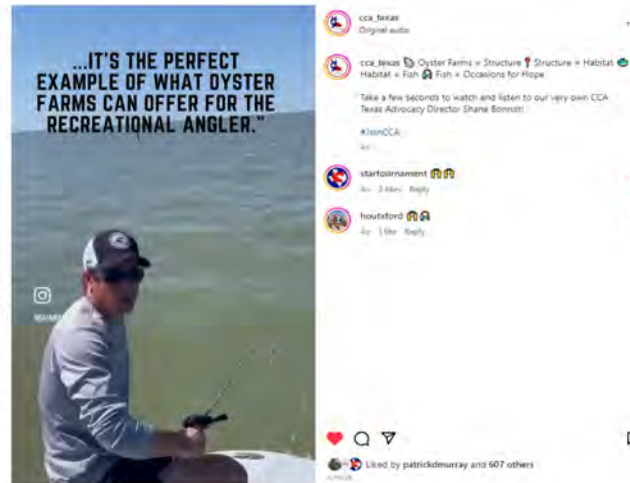
We just reached 17.5K Instagram followers and are nearing our goal of 20,000 followers! Help get us there! If you aren't following us already, add our @cca_texas page to your feed and encourage your friends and family to follow us along with you! [FOLLOW us on Instagram TODAY!](#)

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Angler's Night Out at Poor Man's Country Club

**Alvin-Pearland
Rex Richards
alvinpearlandcca@yahoo.com**

The 2023 Alvin Pearland Banquet was a great success! It was good to see everyone and raise some funds for conservation! We would like to thank all who attended the event, from those who bought a single dinner ticket, all the way to our sponsors who purchased multiple tables, the event would not have been a success without everyone's participation! A special note of thanks to this year's Title Sponsors: **Waypoint Financial, Dashiell Corp, and Academy Sports + Outdoors.** These folks step up year after year and their support is much appreciated by CCA and the Alvin Pearland Chapter. Shout out to **Underwater Green Fishing Lights** for sponsoring our awesome tumblers, and to all our other donors, hard-working board members, and volunteers. We thank you as well!

Our upcoming **Anglers' Night Out** events will be held on **Tuesday, September 5 and Tuesday October 24. The speaker starts at 7 p.m. at Big Horn BBQ in Pearland.** Come early if you plan to eat. Keep an eye out for more details.

The best way to stay up to date with our latest chapter events is to follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/alvinpearland.cca or go to our chapter website at <https://ccatexas.org/find-your-chapter/alvin-pearland/>.

**Aransas Bay
Michael Ferri 361-790-4404
txsprig@yahoo.com**

We are counting down the days to cooler weather and Fall Fishing here in Rockport-Fulton! Our volunteers

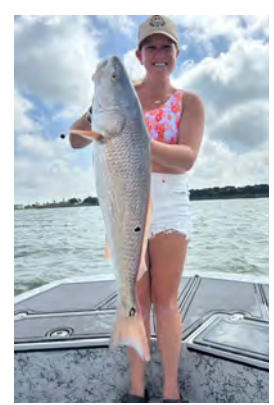
have been enjoying their summer with family and friends and TWO fabulous Anglers' Nights Out! Thank you, Zach Olsen, TPWD Aransas Bay Ecosystem Leader and Pat Cruz, Aransas County Marine Ag Extension Agent for speaking to this wonderful group of conservation minded people here in Rockport-Fulton! These gentlemen discussed the health of the Aransas Bay Ecosystem and more, our chapter had an amazing turnout. Good times and conversations were had! **Next up is Tuesday, August 8, an Anglers' Night Out hosted at Poor Man's Country Club at 6:00 p.m.** We will be welcoming Dr. Kesley Banks, Ph. D., Associate Research Scientist in the Center for Sportfish Science and Conservation at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico studies. We are honored to have these brilliant individuals share their knowledge with our local chapter. Please RSVP to jdblaha@ccatexas.org if you will be attending. Can't wait to see you there!

Save the date for our upcoming Aransas Bay CCA Banquet April 6, 2024 at Fulton Convention Center. Our Banquet is an exciting evening of fundraising for Texas coastal conservation, and we sell out QUICK! For questions regarding banquet and raffle ticket sales, email jdblaha@ccatexas.org or contact President Mike Ferri at (361) 790-4404 or Jane Jackson at (210) 240-7722. Follow our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for the latest details!

Save the date for Babes on the Bay on May 17-18, 2024. Registration opens early January 2024 for our 25th anniversary year, with another fantastic weekend of fishing, live music, vacation giveaways, vendors, and more! We have Guided, Non-Guided, Artificial, Any Bait, Fly Fishing and Babette Divisions! Ladies, book your guides and reserve your hotels ahead of time! Keep an eye on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for updates and details. Registration will open after New Years, link is on babesonthebay.com through Fishing Chaos! This tournament is a catch and release tournament. We can't wait to host you all once again for a fantastic weekend of fishing and camaraderie. If you are interested in being a 2024 sponsor, or have any tournament questions, please



Left to right: Fun Fishing with Weller & Water Outdoors / Rebecca Jaramillo enjoying Summer vacation on the coast / Boots Burluson on a successful Redfish wade in St Charles Bay / Cash Burluson with a beautiful Redfish caught on artificial



Left to right: Mateo Martinez got lucky with a superb Triple Tail fishing / Britney Goodwin on a morning wade in Aransas Bay, this beauty was caught and released to swim / Abby Dykes and Tina Frick with a pretty Speckled Trout / Cristina Crank and her family had the time of their life catching some stunning fish in Rockport this Summer!

contact Tournament Director, Jen Thomasson at (361) 205-0182. For vendor info, please call Tina Frick at (210) 508-6281.

Thank you to a huge group of amazing sponsors for your continued support of CCA Texas Aransas Bay: **Salemi's Ace Hardware, Rockport Tackle Town, Waterloo Rod Company, Yeti, Bay Flats Lodge, Reel Skipper, Guild Mortgage, Orvis Swan Point Landing, L&F Distributing, Rockport Marine, Goin' Coastal Outfitters, Titos Vodka, Poor Man's Country Club, The Reserve at St. Charles Bay, Chris's Marine, Reel Sportswear, Big Tree Realty, Guild Mortgage - Shelley Sammons and Sandy Oaks Kennel & more.** We also welcomed some new very generous sponsors in 2023 including **Smith Optics, Grundens, Sage Fly Rods, and By the Bay Vacation Rentals.** We can't wait to have you back next year!

If you are interested in joining the CCA Texas Aransas Bay Chapter, please contact President, Mike Ferri at (361) 790-4404, Vice President, Bill Burge at (713) 828-3823 or Secretary, Jane Jackson at (210) 240-7722. We have a wonderful crew here in Rockport-Fulton and would love for you to join us!

Austin

Jason Magdalena 512-789-6207

Jason.magdalena@gmail.com

It's been a HOT summer, but I hope that you were able to enjoy time with your family and do some fishing. Our 2023 banquet was a huge success. We want to thank all of our sponsors, supporters and vendors. The Austin CCA Board has started working on our banquet for 2024. **Mark your calendars for May 9, 2024.** We continue to add new and exciting games, raffles and live auction items to provide fun for everyone! If you are interested in being a sponsor and promoting your business, please contact Josh Cook at josh@ccretx.com.

Our First Annual Hooked On Clays Skeet Shoot is September 28, 2023. The event will take place at Capital City Clays, 8707 Lindell Lane, Austin, TX 78724 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. We will only have availability for 30 teams. So, register now and reserve your spot. You can register at <https://ccatexas.org/events/2023-austin-hooked-on-clays/>. More information will be provided closer to the date of the event.

The Austin chapter is creating more ways to raise money to support the mission of CCA! If you have any questions

please contact Drew Adams, dadams@ccatexas.org.
If you are interested in learning more about the Austin CCA chapter please contact our President, Jason Magdalena at jason.magdalena@gmail.com or Cheryl Smith at cherylccaaustin@gmail.com.

Bastrop County
Cole Williams 512-913-3684
colew65@yahoo.com

Brazoria
Dan Johnson 979-481-3907
djohnson@sparklingclear.com



John Ben Strother and Bess in Homer Spit, Alaska

Brazos Valley
John Ben Strother 979-220-1738
jbsunlimited@yahoo.com

The Brazos Valley Chapter participated in the 2023 CCA Inter Chapter Challenge in Rockport June 9-10. The Friday evening captain's meeting was held at the Paws and Taws Fulton Convention Center where we enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, food and fellowship with chapters from around the state. Several of our members won nice door prizes before we headed out to get ready for Saturday fishing.

The ICC stayed with the catch-photo and release format through the Fishing Chaos app. Keeper Redfish were a little hard to come-by, but Mark Fitzjerrell, Tim Mullins and Ben Fort were able to locate some flounder allowing Tim to catch the largest flounder of the tournament. We finished up Saturday with a happy hour awards event at the Fulton Irish Pub & Grill with Tim winning a nice set of Rhineland steak knives for his catch.

On another note, Bess and I just returned from Alaska, where the temps were in the 50's. Salmon were running and good halibut fishing.

Next chapter meeting is Oct 10, 2023. Will be gearing up for the 2024 Brazos Valley CCA Banquet on March 1. Have a great time competing in the STAR Tournament. Stay cool this summer.

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Colorado Valley
Eugene Ulrich 979-249-7425
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Greetings from the Colorado Valley! It sure has been hot in La Grange but hopefully everyone is tolerating the heat enough to get in some early morning or late evening fishing. Hopefully someone from our chapter will win big in this year's STAR tourney.

Our chapter did enjoy putting together a 14 person team for this year's Inter Chapter Challenge in Rockport, consisting of Dave Fehlker, Jennifer Pfannsteil, Bubba and John Gold, Kenneth, Stephen, and Matthew LeFrance, Rusty Kubena, Gary and Lucas Janda, Mike and Norma Petras, and Eugene and Verlene Ulrich. The team put in an honest effort trying to locate some winning fish but were not successful in the red/trout category although we did have one big winner in the 'largest hardhead division' and that was Mike Petras. Mike enjoyed a very nice prize for catching, measuring, photographing, and releasing the fish. Everyone enjoyed the Friday evening event with great food and drinks along with winning some very nice door prizes. After the tough day of fishing, most of our team again enjoyed some great eats and drinks at the tournament concluding results meeting.



The Colorado Valley Chapter at the 2023 Inter Chapter Challenge

Thanks so much to the CCA Texas team for sponsoring this great event!

Just to let everyone know that our banquet is a week earlier next year due to the Easter holidays. Please mark down **March 21, 2024** on your calendar for next year's date. Wishing bent rods and tight lines to all!

Come and Catch It
Jared Brumme 210-825-9088
Jared.brumme@yahoo.com

Corpus Christi
Cody Roesner 916-531-0078
cbrouitters@yahoo.com

We have a busy rest of 2023 planned! **The 2023 Babes on Ba in all women's fishing tournament is October 6-7, 2023 at Marker 37 Marina!** We are excited for our second year of a Catch-Photo-Release tournament format utilizing the Fishing Chaos App! We are expecting another record event and you will not want to miss it! Keep an eye on babesonbaffin.org for updated information. If you are interested in Babes on Baffin sponsorship opportunities, please contact Jessica Arroyo at jessicarroyo1@gmail.com.

Fall **Anglers' Night Out** is planned for **October 26, 2023**. We will have a list of featured speakers discussing CCA, local projects and research relevant to the coastal bend. More information to come soon!

The **Poco Rojo Kid Fish** will take place on **Saturday, October 28, 2023** at the CCA/TPWD Marine Development Center. We would once again like to thank **Flint Hills Resources** for stepping up as title sponsor for this event. More information to come soon!

CCA Corpus Christi would also like to congratulate our long-time board member Dr. Kesley Banks on her recent appointment to the Gulf Council!

As always, let us know if you're interested in volunteering! For questions, contact Heather at ccacorpuschristi@gmail.com or call (361) 882-5199.

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Fort Worth
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Gone fishing – be back soon. Tight lines, FW chapter.

Galveston
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corcarp1@gmail.com

Golden Triangle
Heath Thompson 409-937-4139
Heath.b.thompson@gmail.com

First and foremost, we hope that everyone is having a great summer and has been able to get out on the water. We also hope that everyone has stayed cool because we all know that it has been a hot one! Fishing has been great on the upper coast and has been showing positive signs of a healthy and recovering fishery. Back in May, our chapter held our annual banquet and with massive support, it was the best year we have ever had! We cannot say thank you enough for making that evening what it was. From our whole chapter, we sincerely thank everyone involved! Looking forward to the rest of the year, we have one more event that we would like to send invites out to. **We will be hosting our 2nd Annual Beach Clean-Up on September 16 at McFaddin Beach in Sabine Pass, Texas.** We plan on cleaning a mile of beach from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Once we are done, we will serve lunch and will be doing some surf fishing for the rest of the day. We hope that you and your family and friends will get out and enjoy our wonderful resources of Texas. Cheers!

Greater Sugar Land
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Greater Woodlands
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Hill Country
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Guadalupe Valley
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Ctown75@aol.com

Houston Homebuilders
Jimmy Reid 281-932-3395
jreid@newmarkhomes.com



Left to right: Pescadores Slam Champions 14.03 lbs - Harlen Merks, Matt Metting, Travis Novosad / Trout Stringer Champions 10.05 lbs - Hudson Smith, Travis Dabault, Hallie Byers, AJ Arroyo / Red Stringer Champions 14.05 lbs - Amy Crain, Connor Crain, James Crain



Heaviest Red 7.45 lbs - Connor Crain / Heaviest Trout 4.15 lbs. - Reid Schiffbauer / Heaviest Flounder 4.30 lbs. - Travis Novosad / Heaviest Hardhead 1.89 lbs. - Ashton Johnson

The 2023 Guadalupe Valley Chapter Banquet will be August 17. You can get more information and purchase tickets by going to ccatexas.org/Guadalupe-valley. The DeWitt County Pescadores 25th Annual Fishing Tournament was held July 10, we have some photos of the dinners in each division.

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Lower Laguna Madre
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Mainland Chapter will be having its **Annual Kid Fish on August 12, 2023** at Highland Bayou Park in La Marque, TX. We have 60 kids registered so far. We want to thank our Kid Fish Sponsors:

Leg Up Realty Group-eXp Realty/Ruth Mitchiner, Crowder Funeral Home, Orthopedic Specialist of Texas, Sea Star Base, Cody Dunn Outdoor Adventures, Texas Marine, Seabrook Senior Health Insurance, Boyd's One Stop, Del Papa Distributing, Serious Tackle, Bell and McCoy, and M&G Trailer, Ranch and Marine.

October 10, 2023 is our last Anglers' Night Out of the year. We will have Joe Moughon with Chickenboy Lures come speak about his lures and how to catch fish with his lures for the upcoming flounder run.

Matagorda Bays
Jason Beery 979-578-1106
jwbeery@yahoo.com

Mid Coast

North Texas
Brian Donovan 214-402-3825
brian@firstlightprint.com

An April email seeking volunteers for a new North Texas committee brought a great group of experienced conservationists interested in forming a chapter. CCA North Texas Chapter was formed with the choice to hold an event as fast as possible before the summer banquet doldrums or wait until fall and potentially lose momentum. The North Texas volunteers unanimously chose the former. Our first event was held June 1st at the McKinney Cotton Mill, and our new chapter is off to a roaring start. We received uniformly good feedback on the event, with many guests of sponsor tables announcing their intention for their own companies to become sponsors at the next banquet. We had an excellent event and set a solid foundation for future growth.

Thanks to the sponsors of our first event: **Smith-Garner Construction, Firstlight Printing & Graphics, Finstalker, Glenn Garfield, Matt Scherer, Larry Patterson CPA, Ryan LLC, and Wallace Accounting & Advisory.** Thanks also to our donors: **Ben E. Keith, HEYDAY Outdoor, Strip It Outfitters, Sightcast Safari, Onion Creek Fly Co., Black Forest Reserve Cattle Co., Starbrite, Frisco Patent Services, Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, John Hansen, Automation Integration, Green Belt Guide Service, and Sierra Brava Lodge.** And last, I would like to personally thank the volunteers of CCA NTX, who put forth tremendous effort to make this banquet a success on a timeline that was not in any way reasonable: **Matt Scherer, John Hansen, Larry Patterson, Glenn Garfield, Craig Jones, Mark Wallace, Matt Bordelon, Thomas Pierce, Troy Williams and our treasurer, Richard Pratt.**

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jlaw1899@yahoo.com

Northwest Houston
Jerry Goss 832-457-7535
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Orange County

Port Lavaca
Eric Ellison 361-983-4690
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It's getting close to our annual banquet for the Port Lavaca CCA Chapter! We have some new and exciting things happening this year! Everyone, join us on **Friday, August 11, 2023 at 6 p.m. at the Bauer Community Center in Port Lavaca.** We will have some great food and unique items to in raffle and the auctions to win.

This year we have a special raffle selling only 300 tickets at \$50 each with three chances to win prizes. The grand prize for the raffle will be two, yes you get both Tempest 120P HOODOO Kayaks on a custom trailer built by some of our board members. The HOODOO kayaks are complete with custom aluminum frame seats, paddle, scupper plugs, gear tracks...almost everything you can think of will come with them. 2nd prize is a HOODOO hard sided cooler with 2 Waterloo Rods and 2 Lews fishing reels. The 3rd prize is a pair of Vortex Viper 10x42 HD binoculars.

Special shout outs to our local vendors for stepping up and helping with this year's event. Local boat builders **Freedom Boats USA, Mowdy Boats of Texas, Hoodoo Sports and Waterloo Rods.**

Dinner for this year will be a fish and shrimp dinner made fresh on site by local legend, Cathy's. Individual tickets are \$60, Flounder Tables are \$500, Trout Tables are \$750 and the Bull Red Table is \$1,000. To get more information or purchase tickets and tables, go to ccatexas.org/port-lavaca or contact Carson Vecera at 713.626.4222.

Port O'Connor
Hank Lippold 832-499-1067
hanklippold@gmail.com

Prairie
Patricia Walters 979-885-7464
manager@wpprint.com

On April 9th we celebrated our 25th Annual CCA Prairie Chapter banquet held at the Austin County Fair Convention and Expo Building in Bellville, Texas; and what a great turnout, we had over 425 people.

The evening started with fantastic prime rib,

shrimp and chicken breast dinner with all the trimmings thanks to Mikeskas BBQ for serving the food.

After the meal we started with the live auction with many items to bid on prints, fishing and hunting trips and many more and thanks to Mark Switzer for being our auctioneer. There was also a silent auction with some great items donated and this year.

We had several games; this year's favorite was the cap and card game. For \$25 you had a choice of a cap with a playing card attracted and if your card was drawn you won a sporting prize.

We would like to thank all the banquet donors and sponsors for their help and thanks to our board members for their hard work to make this a great success. A special thanks to Taylor Rieck and his CCA team for all their help.

On August 19, 2023 we will have our 20th annual CCA Prairie Chapter Kids Fishing Tournament from 4 – 7 p.m. at Don and Patricia Walters' residence. It is open to the public and everything is free. We will be serving hot dogs drinks. Bring your fishing poles and chair and enjoy the tournament and the worms and bait will be provided.

Redfish Bay
Norman Oates 361-758-0266
noates01@gmail.com



CCA RGV board members pictured with the 2024 raffle 1st prize boat

Rio Grande Valley
Ruben Arcaute 956-453-6966
rjarcaute@gmail.com

2024 CCA Rio Grande Valley Boat Raffle tickets are available now. 1st Prize: 2023 Majek Illusion 22 ft, 200 HP Suzuki Engine, Coastline Trailer, 2nd Prize: Trip for 2 to Los Cabos with 1 Day Offshore Fishing, 3rd Prize: 2024 CCA Gun of the Year Plus Scope. 4th & 5th Prize: Custom

Laguna Salt Rod. The drawing will take place at next year's **banquet on March 1, 2024**. Tickets are \$100 each. Contact Erich Schneider for raffle tickets and information at 713.626.4222 or eschneider@ccatexas.org.



CCA RGV Chapter President Ruben Arcaute with Mr. Marcus Loreda, the winner of a TurtleBox for purchasing a boat raffle ticket at the recent Texas Hunters & Sportsman Expo



Photos from the 2022 San Gabriel Banquet

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By the first week of August, the San Gabriel Chapter of CCA Texas will be amid our annual banquet preparation and execution. We are thrilled that this year's banquet, which will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2023, is officially SOLD OUT. Thank you all for your incredible support and enthusiasm for this much-anticipated event.

This year, we were genuinely delighted by the overwhelming response and the tremendous ticket demand. Your support speaks volumes about our incredible community in Williamson County. Together, we're making an impact and fostering a sense of purpose that is truly remarkable.

For those who will attend, it promises to be an unforgettable evening of delicious food, drinks, games, and fellowship with like-minded conservationists and

outdoors enthusiasts. For those who missed out, don't fret, as next year promises to be a bigger and better event. Make sure you stay tuned and keep an eye out for updates on upcoming gatherings of the San Gabriel Chapter of CCA Texas.

We want to express our sincere gratitude and a huge THANK YOU to our esteemed sponsors, who have played a vital role in making the San Gabriel CCA Banquet successful. Together, we are making a significant impact on preserving our coastal resources for a brighter future.

Special thanks go out to our Title Sponsor, **Don Hewlett Chevrolet**, whose unwavering support has been instrumental in furthering the mission of growing this event to one of the best in Texas. We would also like to thank our Platinum VIP Reception Sponsor, **Independence Title**, for their generous contribution that added exclusivity to our event. Additionally, we extend our gratitude to **Morris Glass**, our Live Auction Sponsor, for their invaluable support in ensuring the success of our thrilling auction. Your dedication, enthusiasm, and sponsorship inspire us to continue our efforts toward the mission of CCA Texas.

Like all of you, we look forward to cooler weather and the opportunities to land the catch of our dreams. Enjoy, and stay safe!

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TAMU

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Tri-County
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Trinity Bay
Jayo Washington 281-960-7064
jayowash@comcast.net

Greetings fellow supporters, it is go-time. The **Trinity Bay Banquet is on Friday, August 25, 2023, at Armenta's Reception Hall located at 825 Sheldon Road, Channelview, TX.** We have a bunch of tables sold but have plenty of room for you also. Don't hesitate now, pick up the phone or click the link below and let's get you set up. Grab seven friends and get ready to party with us. Get your tables reserved at catexas.org/trinity-bay.

I have no empirical data to support this, but dang it's hot this summer. Remember to stay hydrated. We'll be back soon...

Trinity Valley
John Hebert Jr 936-334-2528
jjhebert@imsday.com

West Houston
Ruben Delgadillo 281-808-1434
Castaline@icloud.com

West Texas
Craig McDonnold
432-682-3499
Craig@McDonnold.net



Upper Coast

Capt. Glenn Hammond
Go early or late, fish in comfort

Welcome to the Tri-Bay region in August. Go early for a fine sunrise, or late in the evening for a pleasant sunset. At mid-day—sunstroke! Nice part of going early or late, both times offer topwater action. I favor the big Super Spooks or Spook Junior early in bone. Later, a Skitterwalk, usually in bone. Later in the morning, go to freelining live shrimp, deep with a Carolina rig. Deeper currents around San Luis Pass are payoff regions. Or, choose a leadhead attached to my favorite plastics, down-south Roach or Glow chartreuse.

September will be right along. Here come the cool fronts, so keep an eye on weather reports. Go a couple of days before or especially after a big one. You may catch that great southeast wind, when the water will be green to the beach and gamefish get pushed into the back bays.

Late September is time for the small fish imitations like Leles and Corkies. If the fish are not at one reef, I'll go knock on the door of another reef.

Remember to practice catch and release-- CPR means that beautiful fish you sent back will be there for further duty. Tight lines and heavy stringers—
Capt. Glenn Hammond 713-206-0683



Aransas Bay's Cristina Crank CPR'd this beautiful redfish.

Middle Coast

Capt. Tommy Countz
Pop a cork, ring the dinner bell

My advice for fishermen in August is, "Go early, stay hydrated, (I'm talking about water, not beer) and come in early. I much prefer to wade fish in August. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that it's cooler.

You can find me wading the south shore of West Matagorda Bay on the outer grass beds and sand bars. I like to work along the dropoffs that run between the bars. Like us, fish get hot and spend more time in deeper, cooler water.

I like to throw Mirrolure Little Johns rigged on 1/16 ounce lead heads, slower to feel a bite better. If I'm fishing from the boat I'm usually in East Matagorda Bay drifting with live shrimp under a popping cork. Make sure you pop that cork and ring the dinner bell. Keep the surf in mind. Anytime it's flat and green to the beach, I'll be there.

In early September, expect a few weak fronts that can drop temperatures a bit. Look for birds working over trout and pods of redfish schooling along grassy shorelines. Remember that on September 1st we revert back to a 5-fish bag limit with a 15-inch to 25-inch slot, with 1 fish over 25-inches.

If you've never fished Matagorda, then you owe yourself a trip down here. Give me a call and I'll be happy to show you my piece of God's green earth. —**Capt. Tommy Countz** 281-450-4037 tcountz@sbcglobal.net

Lower Coast

Capt. Bryan Robinson
Blast on topwaters early

Mucho Caliente, as we say down here in south Texas, and the fishing has been hot as well! Since the beginning of June, Mother Nature has had her foot on the heat pedal and doesn't seem to be letting up. As we get into August, the tides will get back to "normal" conditions.

We have been experiencing low tides all summer and the fish know it. Because of low water and hot temperatures the fish have taken sanctuary in deeper water. If our conditions stay like they are into August, use the same tactics that have working for you.

We have had a blast using top water lures lately and I don't see the action slowing down. Bone-color plugs seem to work the best. Look for the redfish in skinny water early in the day. Z-Man jerk minnows in natural colors and pink are getting their attention.

Targeting fish with a fly rod should be heating up as August moves into September. Lighter winds and calm conditions can yield some great action chasing pods of tailing fish. Crab patterns and small clouser flies will work best. Try the surf and find something cool swimming around. Remember to take a kid fishing and respect other boaters and fishermen. Stay cool! —**Capt. Bryan Robinson** / 956-241-5520 bryandrobinson@yahoo.com Captain Bryan is a longtime CCA member, past President of the RGV chapter. He loves guiding fly fishers.



Laguna Madre Daybreak trout, thanks to Capt. Rene Hinojosa.

BAFFIN BAY BBQ SHRIMP

- Melt 4 sticks of unsalted butter, 1/3 cup of olive oil, 4 tablespoons of Worcestershire sauce, 6 cloves of garlic chopped fine, and ½ jar or 8 tea spoons of River Road Barbequed Shrimp seasoning in a shallow baking dish.
- Place 3-5 lbs of head-on shrimp (or use headless if you prefer) in the dish (only a single layer, do not double stack) and bake at 350° in preheated oven. Be sure to pierce the shrimp heads with a knife or fork before cooking to release extra flavor. Cook at 350° until done. Should take about 5-6 minutes on each side. You will want to cook the shrimp in batches or use two pans. Once cooked through, use a spoon remove the shrimp and put into a holding pan. Leave the butter mixture in pan used to cook the shrimp to reuse for the next batch. The butter mixture gets better with every batch you cook.
- When you have cooked all the shrimp, pour all of the butter mixture used to cook the shrimp over the cooked shrimp in the holding pan.
- Serve with plenty of French bread to soak up the sauce.

Liz Hewitt says, "Kimberly Gaido was our chef, Sally Black and I were her helpers."



Great Recipe Editor Liz Hewitt



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Dawn Patrol



A Search for Rainbows



**A Popping cork boat
offshore, a
magnificent fish,
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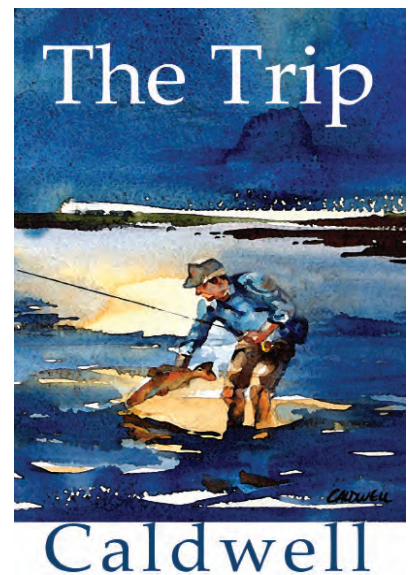
The TIDE Magazine Editor disagrees with an artist about the fate of a magnificent ling. The locale, a tiny boat offshore.

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August / September 2023



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oil spills: 361-888-3162
Port Aransas: 361-749-5217
Port O'Connor: 361-983-2616
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



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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.ccatexas.org