

CURRENTS

August / September 2026



Independence Day Release

Peter Lange released this 17-inch trout in Shoalwater Bay on the 4th of July. Photo, Wildlife Graphics / Sam Caldwell

TPWD Science-Based Gillnet Program One Step Closer to Resuming

By Shane Bonnot, CCA Texas Advocacy Director

For nearly five decades, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Science-Based Gillnet Program has provided an unparalleled, science-based view of coastal fisheries and estuarine health. That continuous dataset, one of the largest and longest-running marine resource databases in the world, has driven

major management decisions, supported academic research, and underpinned the economic value and sustainability of Texas's coastal fisheries.

Recently, the program has taken an important step toward resumption: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has finalized a 5-year rule authorizing incidental take of bottlenose dolphins for TPWD fisheries research beginning August 1, 2026 — but TPWD still lacks a separate incidental-take permit (ITP) for ESA-listed sea turtles, leaving the monitoring program only partially permitted and its future vulnerable.

TPWD's standardized gillnet sampling, in place since 1975, provides spatially unbiased, repeatable measurements of key species such as red drum, southern flounder, and spotted seatrout. Nets are deployed on randomized shorelines across Texas's major bays each spring and fall, with strict limits on how many nets can be set in a given bay. That random-design with repeated sampling is uniquely effective at detecting trends in adult and sub-adult fish, and it complements angler-survey data and other sampling methods to give managers a comprehensive picture of fish population status and ecosystem conditions.

The program's data has driven difficult and sometimes controversial regulatory and/or management actions: bag and size limits, designations and gear restrictions to limited-entry programs, and commercial license buybacks, to name a few. Beyond regulation, the long-term dataset underpins hundreds of peer-reviewed studies, graduate theses, and agency reports documenting shifting baselines, habitat changes, and responses to restoration

and freshwater inflow decisions. Economically, TPWD's fisheries science supports a coastal recreational fishery generating billions in annual economic impacts across Texas's coastal communities.

Over several decades of sampling, interactions with protected species have been extremely infrequent. From 1983–2023, TPWD recorded 41 bottlenose dolphin encounters across more than 30,000 gillnet sets—an average near one encounter per year, with many years having none. Sea turtle encounters have likewise been uncommon and typically nonlethal; increases in some turtle counts reflect successful conservation measures and population recovery.

In part because of actions and comments provided by CCA members and Gulf conservation partners, NMFS has

issued a final rule (effective August 1, 2026–July 31, 2031) authorizing the issuance of a Letter of Authorization (LOA) for incidental take of bottlenose dolphins during TPWD's fisheries research in Texas coastal bays. However, NMFS added some key provisions to the rule, including the following:

- Required Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops for TPWD staff and collaborators before conducting research.
- Permanently eliminated ("no-go") sampling grids where bottlenose dolphins have been taken more than once, and updates to the excluded grid list to reflect 2024 encounters.
- Reduced soak times via a "last out/first in" protocol in six grids with recent dolphin encounters to cut soak time by up to ~6.6 hours.
- Gear standards: use of new or fully repaired nets (no holes >6 in/15 cm stretched mesh),

minimal slack, short marker buoys at the deep end, and modification to avoid gaps >4 in (10 cm) between float/lead line and net when set.

- Mandatory pre-set marine mammal observations of at least 15 minutes and avoidance of setting gillnets if dolphins are observed at or approaching the survey area.
- Immediate response to observed net disturbances and a 24-hour reporting requirement for dolphin encounters (corrected from an earlier 48-hour reference).
- NMFS expects TPWD to set up to 780 gillnets annually across 10 major bay systems, with spring and fall 10-week seasons.

NOAA Fisheries (NMFS) previously declined to grant TPWD incidental-take authorizations multiple times since 2011, and in May 2024, NOAA opened a formal inquiry into alleged MMPA and ESA violations tied to rare

TPWD's highly standardized gillnet sampling program, which has been in continuous operation since 1975, provides spatially unbiased and repeatable measurements of important key species such as red drum, southern flounder, and spotted seatrout in Texas waters.



encounters, prompting TPWD to suspend sampling. The NMFS final rule resolving bottlenose dolphin incidental take represents a major, positive regulatory development and recognition that mitigation can reduce risks while allowing monitoring to continue.

However, TPWD still lacks the separate ITP for sea turtles (the other federal permit required), and what this means is that this critical program needed for proper fisheries management is still on hold. Without that sea turtle authorization, the program cannot be fully reinstated, so the long-term, structurally unbiased time series remains at risk until both federal permits are in place.

Suspending science-based gillnet sampling fractures an irreplaceable dataset. In the last decade alone, TPWD gillnet data supported dozens of peer-reviewed papers, many graduate theses and dissertations, and countless management actions. Continued absence of routine, randomized sampling will degrade the ability to detect population shifts, evaluate regulation effectiveness (for example, recent harvest changes for speckled trout), and identify emerging threats from coastal desalination facilities, channel deepening projects, industrial development, or altered freshwater inflows. Fragmented monitoring increases management uncertainty and risks social and economic harm from poorly informed decisions.

Reinstating a fully permitted, responsibly managed science-based gillnet program is consistent with conservation goals and essential to preserving the



Without science-based gillnet sampling, fisheries management loses a critical tool, public transparency erodes, and academic and agency research stalls.

long-term health, economic value, and scientific integrity of Texas's coastal fisheries. NOAA/NMFS should promptly complete their review and issue the separate incidental take permit for sea turtles so that TPWD's long-running, unbiased monitoring can operate without additional interruption. If they do so, we should expect TPWD to be able to resume gillnet sampling no later than Spring 2027.



Since 1975, standardized gillnet sampling has provided accurate data that led to management actions of gamefish regulations and bay gillnets being banned. Photo from 1985 by Wildlife Graphics/Sam Caldwell

What Happened to All the Seagrass in East Matagorda Bay?

By Shane Bonnot, CCA Texas Advocacy Director

Longtime anglers who've fished East Matagorda Bay before its relatively recent, unprecedented decline have asked this question for the past several years. What happened to all the seagrass in East Matagorda Bay? **The loss of seagrass habitat is almost certainly not due**

to a single cause but to a combination of stressors that have led to a decline in water quality and made conditions unsuitable for seagrass. These include land-use changes (historic rice fields converted to other crops with higher inputs), reduced freshwater inflows and/or estuarine mixing, hard winter freezes, sedimentation, rising numbers of herbivorous sea turtles, and physical disturbance from boats running shallow flats and uprooting grass. Boat damage is an avoidable factor—uprooting seagrass with a propeller is illegal and a responsibility every shallow-water boater should take seriously.

A bit of local context: East Matagorda Bay is a small lagoon-type estuary between Sargent and Matagorda, Texas. It separated from West Matagorda Bay in the early 1900s after the Colorado River log jam was removed and a flood-relief channel was dredged. More than 15 years ago, the bay's southern shoreline featured robust shoalgrass beds and drift algae that extended 75–180 ft from the barrier island shore and spanned nearly 16 miles from Spring Bayou to Brown Cedar Cut.

Those beds were valuable habitat—nursery and feeding grounds for larval organisms, shrimp, crabs, and gamefish, foraging areas for birds, and providers of ecosystem services like sediment stabilization, water clarity improvement, shoreline protection, and carbon sequestration. I

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remember wading near 3-Mile Cut in the late 1990s and swearing at the dense seagrass while sight-casting for redfish—at the time I didn't fully appreciate how critical the habitat was and blamed it for my day's failures.

Can seagrass be re-established, and do the physical and water-quality conditions still exist along the southern shoreline to support recovery? To begin answering that, the Matagorda Bay Foundation (MBF) launched a pilot seagrass study funded by Phillips 66. After anglers and community members raised concerns, MBF surveyed the southern shoreline, confirmed the dramatic decline, and documented loss of submerged aquatic vegetation in the shallow fringe.

With Phillips 66 support and required research permits in hand, MBF and volunteers collected shoalgrass plugs (sediment, roots/rhizomes, and leaves) from a small donor site near Eidelbach Reef. That donor site will serve as the control, while transplanted plugs were moved to three study locations between Eidelbach Reef and the now-submerged Hog Island. All transplant plots and the donor site are protected inside mesh enclosures to reduce mechanical removal by animals and are clearly marked to help boaters avoid them. MBF will monitor these sites for at least 12 months and will share results with Phillips 66, academic partners, and

state and federal resource agencies. CCA Texas is partnering with MBF on this pilot study.

What else needs to happen to answer, “What happened to all the seagrass?” and do we improve recovery prospects?

The list is long and exhaustive, but **priorities include increasing estuarine mixing and improving water quality in the bay.** Additional freshwater inflows and some connectivity between the bay and the Colorado River off Beach Road would help (for example, near St. Mary’s Bayou or Parker’s Cut). We also need more research to build on MBF’s pilot work; if transplants can be shown to survive across the bay, then larger-scale restoration should be considered. And, of course, shallow-water boaters must avoid uprooting grass and follow best practices.

The pilot study is a critical first step—testing transplant survival and whether local conditions support regrowth. Long-term recovery will depend on coordinated science, active management of land- and water-based stressors, sustained monitoring, and community stewardship. If you fish, boat, or live around East Matagorda Bay and want to help, consider supporting MBF and CCA Texas, following shallow-water boating practices, reporting seagrass regrowth observations to local groups (CCA, MBF, TPWD), and joining citizen-science and volunteer restoration efforts. Those collective actions will improve the chances that the bay’s seagrass beds can return.



Who is the Matagorda Bay Foundation?

Founded in 1995, The Matagorda Bay Foundation (MBF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the wise stewardship of the Matagorda Bay ecosystem and the watersheds that sustain it. MBF’s first initiative was to support critical freshwater inflow needs for Whooping Cranes near San Antonio Bay, Texas. In 2018, MBF hired it’s first employee to establish the Foundation on the ground as a full-service, non-profit community and regional partner. Today, MBF restores and conserves the region’s shoreline and near-shore ecosystems, oyster reefs, coastal wetlands, marshes, and the freshwater rivers and streams that flow through the area to the Bay. MBF works closely with local and county governments, commercial and recreational fishers, nature enthusiasts, state and federal resource agencies, and academia to educate and advocate for research, planning, and conservation of Matagorda Bay’s habitats and resources. The Foundation has become the region’s leader in conservation, restoration, and outreach for Matagorda Bay.



Improving the Sustainability of our Texas Oyster Fishery: Certificate of Location Conservation Reefs

By Director of Habitat John Blaha and Advocacy Director Shane Bonnot

What is the Certificate of Location (CoL) Program?

The Certificate of Location (CoL) Program is jointly administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas General Land Office (GLO). The program leases designated areas in Texas coastal waters for private, on-bottom oyster cultivation and harvesting.

Historically, the program was limited to commercial oyster production and included only approximately 43 lease areas totaling 2,318 acres, all located in Galveston Bay. However, significant changes made during the 88th Texas Legislative Session through Senate Bill 1032, along with recent rule revisions approved by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (TPWC), have expanded the program's purpose. The CoL Program can now support both commercial oyster production and large-scale oyster reef restoration projects.

Why is the CoL Program Important?

The recent legislative and regulatory changes represent a major advancement in the management and restoration of Texas oyster resources. The expanded CoL Program provides an opportunity to generate both significant ecological benefits and long-term economic value.

Qualified nonprofit organizations, research institutions, and other conservation organizations

may now lease degraded bay bottoms—up to 100 acres per site—to restore oyster reefs under active use requirements established by TPWD. During the lease period, these restoration areas are closed to commercial oyster harvest, allowing oyster populations and reef habitat to recover.

Commercial CoLs operate under similar leasing requirements but grant leaseholders exclusive harvesting rights within their designated areas. Together, these two types of leases create a balanced approach that supports both habitat restoration and a sustainable commercial oyster industry.

CCA Texas and the CoL Program

CCA Texas is actively partnering with organizations across the Texas coast to advance conservation-focused CoL projects. To date, the CCA Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow and CCA Texas Management Committee has approved **\$1.951 million** in funding for three Conservation CoL projects as part of the Association's **\$5 million Oyster Restoration Commitment**.

East Galveston Bay

Funds Committed: \$951,000

The recent legislative and regulatory changes represent a major advancement in the management and restoration of Texas oyster resources. The expanded CoL Program provides an opportunity to generate both significant ecological benefits and long-term economic value.



"Bedrock of the Bays" Wildlife Graphics, Sam Caldwell

CCA Texas has approved **\$951,000** for a new 10-acre Conservation CoL in East Galveston Bay. The Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) will serve as the permit holder and project manager.

Following completion of site surveys and engineering, the GBF will submit all required permit applications to move the project into the construction phase. Final reef design and construction quantities will be based on survey results, engineering recommendations, permit requirements, and competitive construction bids.

The anticipated project schedule:

- Complete site surveys – Fall 2026
- Begin engineering and design – Winter 2026
- Complete 30% design and submit permit applications – Spring 2027
- Construct reef – Fall 2027 or Spring 2028, pending permit approvals

Ranch House Reef (Mesquite Bay)

Funds Committed: \$500,000



Materials staged and ready for Phase III of the St. Charles Bay Big Tree Unit Living Shelter Oyster Restoration Project. Photo by John Blaha

This 10-acre Conservation CoL has received approval from TPWD Coastal Fisheries to move forward. CCA Texas is partnering with Gulf Trust, which will serve as the permit holder for the project.

With approval from the Texas Historical Commission secured, Gulf Trust and CCA Texas have completed side-scan sonar surveys and will soon begin biological resource surveys in coordination with TPWD. Once these studies are completed, the project team will begin the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permitting process.

CCA Texas has committed **\$500,000** to this project, while additional funding is being pursued through other conservation and local industry partners to complete construction.

East Matagorda Bay

Funds Committed: \$500,000

A 15-acre Conservation CoL located east of the Matagorda oyster farm has also been approved by TPWD Coastal Fisheries. CCA Texas is working alongside the Matagorda Bay Foundation (MBF) to advance the project.



CCA Staff (Ted Venker and Robert Taylor) work with volunteers and Sink Your Shucks to recycle oyster shells.

Following approval from the Texas Historical Commission, the project team initiated side-scan sonar surveys and will soon begin biological resource surveys with TPWD guidance. After these studies are completed, the project will enter the USACE permitting process.

CCA Texas has allocated **\$500,000** toward this effort and continues to seek additional funding partners to support final construction.

Looking Ahead

To date, CCA Texas has committed **\$1.951 million** toward Conservation CoL projects as part of its **\$5 million Oyster Restoration Commitment**. These investments are made possible through the generosity and dedication of CCA Texas's local chapters, volunteers, and supporters who tirelessly raise conservation dollars through chapter banquets across the state.

The expansion of the Certificate of Location Program marks an exciting new chapter for oyster restoration in Texas. CCA Texas is proud to partner with conservation organizations, resource agencies, and local stakeholders to restore critical oyster habitat and strengthen the health and productivity of Texas bays for generations to come.



CCA TEXAS AND BUILDING CONSERVATION TRUST: NEARSHORE REEFING SUPPORT

PROJECT

FUNDED AMOUNT

SABINE REEFS	\$1,503,500
RIO GRANDE VALLEY	\$1,068,000
PORT O'CONNOR	\$700,000
GALVESTON BIG MAN AND KATE'S	\$329,000
HRI NEARSHORE REEF ENHANCEMENT STUDY	\$250,000
MATAGORDA	\$200,000
CORPUS CHRISTI	\$100,000
FREEPORT / VANCOUVER	\$60,000
PORT MANSFIELD	\$50,000

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
TO NEARSHORE REEFING** **\$4,260,500**



COASTAL
CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION

TEXAS

CCA TEXAS: LEADERS IN OYSTER REEF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

PROJECT

FUNDED AMOUNT

AYERS REEF RESTORATION AND SHORELINE PROTECTION	\$1,126,204
CARANCAHUA BAY OYSTER REEF RESTORATION	\$1,000,000
CARLOS REEF RESTORATION PHASE II	\$1,000,000
OYSTER LICENSE BUYBACK PROGRAM	\$1,000,000
OYSTER REEF CREATION - ST. CHARLES BAY (ROCKPORT)	\$711,250
EAST MATAGORDA COL (EIDELBACH FLATS REEF)	\$500,000
MESQUITE BAY COL (RANCH HOUSE REEF)	\$500,000
OYSTER RESTORATION - EAST GALVESTON BAY	\$500,000
COMO LAKE DANA COVE OYSTER RESTORATION/CREATION	\$400,000
SINK YOUR SHUCKS OYSTER RECYCLE PROGRAM	\$352,000
MESQUITE BAY OYSTER REEF MONITORING (HRI)	\$225,000
OYSTER RESTORATION - DEEP REEF SABINE LAKE	\$215,000
OYSTER RESTORATION - PEPPER GROVE / GALVESTON	\$130,000
HRI OYSTER RESTORATION SITE LOCATOR MAPPING STUDY	\$120,000
OYSTER REEF RESTORATION - ARANSAS BAY	\$75,000
OYSTER REEF RESTORATION - COPANO BAY	\$75,000
NUECES BAY DEMONSTRATION OYSTER REEF	\$60,000
GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION OYSTER RECYCLE TRAILERS	\$10,000
SINK YOUR SHUCKS OYSTER RECYCLE PROGRAM TRAILERS	\$10,000
FUNDS APPROVED AND EARMARKED FOR OYSTER RESTORATION AND CREATION IN AREAS CLOSED TO HARVEST ON THE TEXAS COAST (BALANCE OF \$5,000,000 COMMITMENT)	\$931,774

**TOTAL DOLLARS SPENT AND
COMMITTED TO OYSTER
RESTORATION AND CREATION**

\$8,941,228

HABITAT TODAY FOR FISH TOMORROW

\$1,600,000 | CEDAR BAYOU/VINSON SLOUGH RESTORATION
\$1,503,500 | NEARSHORE REEFING - SABINE PASS
\$1,068,000 | NEARSHORE REEFING - RIO GRANDE VALLEY REEF
\$1,000,000 | AYERS REEF RESTORATION AND SHORELINE PROTECTION (AYERS BAY)
\$1,000,000 | CARANCAHUA BAY OYSTER REEF RESTORATION (CARANCAHUA BAY)
\$1,000,000 | CARLOS REEF RESTORATION PHASE II
\$1,000,000 | OYSTER LICENSE BUYBACK PROGRAM
\$711,250 | OYSTER REEF CREATION - ST. CHARLES BAY (ROCKPORT)
\$700,000 | NEARSHORE REEFING—PORT O'CONNOR
\$630,000 | OYSTER LAKE SHORELINE PROTECTION (WEST GALVESTON BAY)
\$502,000 | SINK YOUR SHUCKS OYSTER RECYCLE PROGRAM
\$500,000 | EAST MATAGORDA COL (EIDELBACH FLATS REEF)
\$500,000 | MESQUITE BAY COL (RANCH HOUSE REEF)
\$500,000 | OYSTER RESTORATION - EAST GALVESTON BAY
\$400,000 | COMO LAKE AND DANA COVER SHORELINE PROTECTION (WEST GALVESTON BAY)
\$329,000 | NEARSHORE REEFING - GALVESTON / BIG MAN & KATE'S REEF
\$250,000 | HRI NEARSHORE REEF ENHANCEMENT STUDY
\$250,000 | DAGGER ISLAND SHORELINE PROTECTION & MARSH RESTORATION (REDFISH BAY)
\$225,000 | MESQUITE BAY OYSTER REEF MONITORING (HRI)
\$215,000 | OYSTER RESTORATION—DEEP REEF SABINE LAKE
\$200,000 | NEARSHORE REEFING - MATAGORDA
\$200,000 | SHORELINE STABILIZATION - SAN BERNARD NWR
\$200,000 | GORDY MARSH LIVING SHORELINE (TRINITY BAY)
\$150,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - BIRD ISLAND COVE (WEST GALVESTON BAY)
\$150,000 | NUECES BAY DELTA SHORELINE RESTORATION
\$138,000 | SHORELINE PROTECTION/MARSH CREATION - MOSES LAKE (GALVESTON BAY)
\$135,000 | BAFFIN BAY SERPULID REEF HABITAT CONSERVATION/RESTORATION STUDY
\$130,000 | OYSTER RESTORATION—PEPPER GROVE / GALVESTON (BCT)
\$126,204 | AYERS REEF ENGINEERING AND MONITORING PLAN (AYERS BAY / MESQUITE BAY COMPLEX)
\$125,000 | ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SHORELINE PROTECTION (SAN ANTONIO BAY)

\$120,000 | HRI OYSTER RESTORATION SITE LOCATOR MAPPING STUDY
\$100,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - DICKINSON BAYOU
\$100,000 | NEARSHORE REEFING - CORPUS CHRISTI
\$95,000 | BAHIA GRANDE RESTORATION (PORT ISABEL / BROWNSVILLE)
\$91,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - BRAZORIA & SAN BERNARD WILDLIFE REFUGE
\$85,000 | NEWCOMB BEND MARSH RESTORATION (TPWD)
\$75,000 | OYSTER REEF RESTORATION - ARANSAS BAY (ROCKPORT)
\$75,000 | OYSTER REEF RESTORATION - COPANO BAY (ROCKPORT)
\$70,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - EGERY ISLAND (COPANO BAY/BAYSIDE)
\$70,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - MATAGORDA ISLAND
\$70,000 | NUECES BAY DELTA WATER MANAGEMENT GATES
\$60,000 | NEARSHORE REEFING - FREEPORT / VANCOUVER
\$60,000 | NUECES BAY DEMONSTRATION OYSTER REEF
\$50,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - GOOSE ISLAND (ROCKPORT)
\$50,000 | NEARSHORE REEFING - PORT MANSFIELD
\$50,000 | SHORELINE STABILIZATION - J. D. MURPHREE WMA
\$50,000 | SHORELINE STABILIZATION - COW TRAP LAKE (BRAZORIA COUNTY)
\$50,000 | DOLLAR BAY SHORELINE PROTECTION AND MARSH RESTORATION
\$50,000 | GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION HEADQUARTERS LIVING SHORELINE RESTORATION
\$46,204 | AYERS REEF RESTORATION REEF PROJECT PHASE I
\$42,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - OXEN & GANG'S BAYOU (GALVESTON)
\$40,000 | KATE'S HOLE LIVING SHORELINE (CORPUS CHRISTI BAY)
\$40,000 | TRINITY BAY DISCOVERY CENTER LIVING SHORELINE
\$30,000 | SWEETWATER PRESERVE SHORELINE PROTECTIONS AND OYSTER REEF ENHANCEMENT
\$24,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - NUECES BAY (CORPUS CHRISTI)
\$20,000 | MARSH RESTORATION - SNAKE ISLAND COVER (WEST GALVESTON BAY)
\$15,000 | WEED ERADICATION FOR WATER FLOW RESTORATION (GUADALUPE RIVER DELTA)
\$10,000 | SINK YOUR SHUCKS OYSTER RECYCLE PROGRAMS TRAILER
\$5,600 | BAY DEBRIS REMOVAL - ARANSAS PASS

TOTAL FUNDED THROUGH 2026:
\$17,081,758

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.



REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING!

STEALING YOUR FISH. SHORTENING YOUR SEASON.

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING IN GULF OF MEXICO:
 Inside 9 nautical miles – Texas Parks & Wildlife • 800.792.4263
 Beyond 9 nautical miles – US Coast Guard • 361.939.0450

COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION TEXAS

Catches from illegal fishing of red snapper in Gulf of Mexico is estimated to be **greater than the entire recreational allocation**.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: Panga style fishing boats, large totes and 3-4 man crew.



REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING!

STEALING YOUR FISH. SHORTENING YOUR SEASON.

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING IN GULF OF MEXICO:
 Inside 9 nautical miles – Texas Parks & Wildlife • 800.792.4263
 Beyond 9 nautical miles – US Coast Guard • 361.939.0450

COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION TEXAS



YETI BUILT FOR THE WILD.

UNDERSTANDING VIBRIO INFECTIONS TO STAY SAFE IN MARINE WATERS

What Is Vibrio?

Vibrio is a group of bacteria naturally found in the bays and coastal waters of Texas. If you've been in saltwater, you've encountered *Vibrio*. *Vibrio* encompasses a number of different species, but when most people hear "*Vibrio*", they think about the rare, but traumatic flesh and limb destruction that it can cause, informally referring to it as "flesh eating bacteria."



How can you be exposed?

Infection occurs when *Vibrio* enters the body through open wounds, even minor cuts or insect bites. Common activities like swimming, fishing, or handling raw seafood can lead to exposure. Risk of infection is most pronounced when water temperature is at or above about 70°F, although infection can occur year-round. A recent study by researchers at the Harte Research Institute also found that *Vibrio* populations temporarily increase sharply during Saharan Dust deposition events.

Symptoms of a Vibrio infection

Symptoms of a *Vibrio* infection can develop rapidly, including pain, swelling, redness, and fever. In severe cases, loss of limbs or death can occur within 24–48 hours if left untreated.

What to do if you are infected?

If you suspect a *Vibrio* infection (pain, swelling, fever), seek immediate medical attention. Inform healthcare providers about recent saltwater exposure and potential *Vibrio* infection.

MINIMIZE VIBRIO RISKS



Avoid Saltwater with Open Wounds:

Refrain from swimming or wading if you have cuts or abrasions.



Use Protective Gear:

Wear puncture-resistant gloves when handling seafood and closed-toed shoes in water.



Wound Care:

Immediately treat any wound that has been exposed to saltwater by flushing and cleaning with warm water and antibacterial cleanser; Chlorhexidine -based products such as Hibiclens® can be purchased at your local pharmacy and provide lasting antibacterial effect. Apply a topical antibacterial ointment and cover the wound with a clean dressing or Band -Aid. Fishermen, bathers, and others should carry, or have immediate access to, small bottles of Hibiclens and antibiotic ointment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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Chair for Coastal Water Health

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The Final Countdown Is On!

By Drew Adams, CCA Texas STAR Tournament Co-Director

We're heading into the final stretch of the 2026 CCA Texas STAR Tournament, and, much like our summer temperatures, the competition is heating up! The Tournament officially wraps up on Monday, September 7 at 6:00 p.m., and we expect quite a few weigh-in forms to be turned in between now and then.

This is because August typically brings some of the calmest weather of the summer, providing plenty of opportunities to get on the water. So, if you've been waiting for the right conditions to go fishing, give August a chance, and who knows, you may catch that fish of a lifetime that lands you a spot on our STAR leaderboard!

PROGRESSIVE

Opportunities in the Hoffpauir Offshore Division

Looking at our Hoffpauir Offshore Division, two species stand out: Kingfish and Ling. The Kingfish category currently has only two submissions, while Ling has just three. For all you offshore anglers, there are spots for the taking!

Here are the Hoffpauir Offshore Division leaders (as of this writing). Can you take their spot?

- Kingfish: 43 lbs. 5 oz. | Daniel Row of Corpus Christi, Texas
- Dorado: 41 lbs. 10 oz. | Tate Schuster of McAllen, Texas
- Snapper: 22 lbs. 0 oz. | Robert Bage of Texas City, Texas
- Ling: 68 lbs. 6 oz. | Ruben Hinojosa, Jr. of Mission, Texas

Winners in each of these species will drive off with a brand-new Polaris Ranger Crew 570EFI in Pursuit Camo with Big Tex Trailer.

Intense Competition in the Inshore Division

As you may imagine, we've got an exciting Inshore

Division competition this year. While we've already seen some impressive weigh-ins, history shows that the biggest catches can often come during the final weeks of the tournament. Just because the Leaderboard is full doesn't mean it's final!

Here are the Inshore Division leaders (as of this writing). Can you take their spot?

- Sheepshead: 9 lbs. 15 oz. | Ramon Zapata of Baytown, Texas
- Gafftop: 5 lbs. 15 oz. | Orin Ellis, Jr. of Houston, Texas
- Black Drum: 14 lbs. 2 oz. | Roselyn Biano of Sour Lake, Texas

Winners in each of these species will drive off with a brand-new 2026 Shoalwater 19' Cat Boat with a Mercury 115HP L Pro XS and a McClain Trailer.

Kids/Teens in Scholarship Divisions Setting Down the Xbox and Getting into the Tackle Box

We all understand the importance of introducing the next generation of anglers to our incredible fishery.

The legend himself, former CCA Texas STAR Tournament Director Bill Kinney, always said,

Academy
SPORTS+OUTDOORS

"All you have to do is put a kid on one redfish, and move on to the next kid, because they are hooked for life." The Kids/Teens Scholarship Divisions have become our staff's favorite to watch because many of these catches include a photo submitted of a young angler with a fish ALMOST as big as their smile. Winning in these divisions is certainly rewarding because STAR awards \$375,000 in scholarships yearly and has awarded over \$8,700,000 since 1995! So, parents, this is your call to action – get your kids out on the water to earn a spot on the Leaderboard for life-changing scholarship prizes!

Here are the Kids/Teens Scholarship Division leaders (as of this writing).

- Kids Sheepshead: 5 lbs. 11 oz. | Faith Lavender of Alvin, Texas
- Kids Gafftop: 6 lbs. 0 oz. | Jake Tortorice of Sour Lake, Texas
- Teens Sheepshead: 8 lbs. 14 oz. | Zoey Dubois of Montgomery, Louisiana
- Teens Gafftop: 5 lbs. 8 oz. | Kenley Jordan of Winnie, Texas

Four Huge Member Bonus Giveaways

August is a busy month. School starts back up, work gets busier, and fall sports get underway, so fishing might



not be at the top of mind. Even if you can't spend much time on the water, or even wet a line this summer,



you can still WIN BIG. That's because all eligible entrants (who do not win a top prize) in the CCA Texas STAR Tournament will be automatically entered in the Member Bonus Giveaways to win one of four incredible prizes:

- 2026 Ford F-250 Super Duty XLT 4x4 Diesel with the Black Appearance Package
- Dargel Attacka Flat 203 powered by a 150 HP Mercury Motor on a



McClain Trailer

- \$25,000 ABC-13 Scholarship (STAR Kids or Teens Angler)

- \$50,000 Bill Kinney Conservation Scholarship (STAR Kids or Teens Angler)

All four prizes will be awarded following the conclusion of the tournament.

Tagged Redfish Continue to be the STAR of the Show

Our Tagged Redfish Divisions have been on fire this year! So far, 25 tagged redfish have been caught—but unfortunately, only eight were caught by registered STAR anglers. The phrase we hear over and over is:

"I didn't think it would ever happen to me."

This year has proven that it absolutely can. Of the eight winning tags:

- Four Texas Ford Dealers Red Tag Division Winners
- Four Tags of Texas Division Winners

All three 22' Tran Sport 220 SVT CAT boats in the Tags

of Texas Division have been claimed, but anglers can still win Academy Sports + Outdoors gift cards along with sponsor prize packages. In the Texas Ford Dealers Red Tag Division, four grand prizes have already been claimed, each consisting of a 2026 Ford F-150 XLT SuperCrew Cab paired with a 23' Haynie Amigo powered by a 150HP Mercury on a Coastline Trailer.

Still up for grabs:

- One 2026 Ford F-150 XLT SuperCrew Cab paired with a 23' Haynie Amigo powered by a 150HP Mercury on a Coastline Trailer
- Five 23' Haynie Amigo Packages

There's Still Time to Win

If you can find a day to get on the water before September 7, make it count, and make sure you're registered. Take it from the 17 anglers who caught tagged redfish this year but weren't registered. Every one of them thought it would never happen to them—until it did. And if life is too busy to take a fishing trip, don't forget that registering still gives you a shot at one of our four incredible Member Bonus Giveaway prizes. There's still time to get registered. There's still time to catch the fish of a lifetime. And there's still time to become a 2026 CCA Texas STAR Tournament winner! 



This big Ranger Crew UTV will go to a Texas coastal guide.

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT CONSERVATION EFFORTS





Release photos courtesy of Mac Elliott Media



STAR Volunteers caught, tagged and transported reds to all areas of the Texas coast.





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GET YOUR \$40 CCA MEMBERSHIP (OR RENEWAL) NOW.
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Thank you Mercury Marine!

Our friends and partners at Mercury Marine were the first-ever CCA Texas STAR partner in 1990. They recognized the future benefits of our mission in marine conservation, even before it became popular.

We are grateful for their generous support for 35 years, and we know that we can always count on them. If you want to support those who support the things we love, scan this QR code to let Mercury know if you're interested in repowering.



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POLARIS



Christmas Bay Receives Official Approval For ADA-accessible Viewing Platform

Below is the official Letter of Support from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Coastal Fisheries Division, signed by Robin Riechers, Director of Coastal Fisheries.

TPWD has formally approved the Christmas Bay Foundation's ADA Bird Viewing Platform proposal at the Drum Bay kayak launch on Follets Island CMA property. It's real, it's official, and it's happening.

This has been a long road, and moments like this make every bit of it worth it. Excited for what comes next! — **Jim Olive, Christmas Bay Foundation**



🎉 WE GOT THE GREEN LIGHT! 🎉

The wait is over — Christmas Bay Foundation has officially received approval to move forward with an **ADA-accessible viewing platform at the Drum Bay kayak launch**, we could not be more thrilled!

These concept renderings give you a glimpse of what's coming: a beautiful, elevated platform where *everyone* — paddlers, wildlife lovers, families, and first-time visitors — soak in the breathtaking views of Drum Bay, catch a golden Texas sunset, watch the wildlife, and witness coastal habitat restoration in action. ♿ 🌅 🦅

This is more than a structure — it's a statement that the Texas coast belongs to *all of u*

🔧 **We need YOUR help to make it happen.** This project is community-powered, and we are announcing exciting fundraising opportunities very soon. Whether you donate, volunteer or just spread the word — every bit of support moves us closer to breaking ground.

Stay tuned for updates as we kick off the next phase of planning and development.

It's just the beginning. 🌿



San Antonio Bay
Partnership

SHORELINES Cleanup

— REGISTRATION NOW OPEN —

Working Together for a Cleaner, Healthier San Antonio Bay!



September 21- 25

Group Opportunities

Bring your group, organization, or business and make a difference!

Schools, civic groups, businesses, families, and community organizations are invited to schedule a cleanup at a location that works best for you.



Saturday, September 26

Main Event

Join volunteers across the bay for a region-wide cleanup!

*Celebration of a
Cleaner Bay to Follow!*



Boat Based Cleanup

- ✓ Protect wildlife and habitats
- ✓ Keep our bay beautiful
- ✓ Build a stronger community
- ✓ Make a lasting impact

Clean Shorelines. Strong Communities. A Healthier Bay For All.



WWW.SABAYPARTNERSHIP.ORG

Leaving It Better Than You Found It

This Earth Day, the Christmas Bay Foundation rolled up its sleeves to restore one of Galveston Bay's most treasured natural assets — the Paddling Trail across TPWD/Christmas Bay and Drum Bay.

Through a hands-on effort and a shared commitment to conservation, our team worked to restore and improve access for kayakers while protecting the surrounding habitat.

As part of this project, we installed 30 PVC trail markers across 19.1 miles of paddling trail, creating clearer navigation and a safer, more enjoyable experience on the water.

This project isn't just about recreation — it's about stewardship. Healthy, accessible waterways connect people to nature, support local wildlife, and preserve the ecological balance of the bay.

If you paddle Christmas Bay, you'll see the difference — clearer paths, better flow, and a renewed connection to this incredible ecosystem.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and energy to making this happen. —**Jim Olive**



Special thanks to:

The Gulf Coast Rescue Squad / Angleton Boy Scout Troop 13 / P.A.C.K. (Paddling Anglers Canoe Kayak) / Texas A&M Students / Christmas Bay Foundation Board. *Paddle it. Protect it. Preserve it.*





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Caught Redhanded!



Reports from Texas Parks & Wildlife Game Wardens

On 7/3/26, a Jefferson County Warden was patrolling Sabine Pass ahead of conducting an offshore patrol with other Jefferson County Wardens. During the patrol, the Warden observed several larger recreational boats coming into the local boat ramp and stopped to conduct water safety inspections and subsequent recreational fishing inspections. One of the vessels was found to be (3) red snapper over the daily bag limit and all three were also undersized. Citations issued, cases pending.



On Saturday, 07/18/26, a Jefferson County Game Warden was patrolling for night fishing violations near Port Arthur and inspected an individual who was using a 24ft diameter cast net to catch fish. The individual was found to be keeping everything caught with the net. Multiple violations were found, including no fishing license, illegal cast net, undersized black drum, keeping game fish caught in a cast net (sea trout), shrimping in a closed area, and shrimping at night. Several citations and warnings were issued and cases are pending.

On Tuesday, 07/21/26, Jefferson and Orange County Wardens were patrolling the Gulf of America off Sabine Pass, Texas. They inspected a Commercial Gulf shrimp



boat and found all four Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) to be in violation. The TED's and the entire cargo of shrimp, approximately (45,000) pounds, were seized and sold to the highest of three bidders. Cases pending.

On Sunday, 7/26/2026, Jefferson County Game Wardens were patrolling Sabine Pass and observed a large vessel coming to the boat ramp from offshore. After conducting a water safety inspection, they found 5 individuals to be in possession of 20 red snapper. When asked where the fish were caught, the fishermen explained they were all caught in federal waters over a two-day period. Each fisherman was issued a citation for an importation violation since they had exceeded the federal bag limit. The 10 red snapper were seized and restitution assessed. Cases pending.



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.

Get yours TODAY by going to ccatexas.org and clicking the link on the homepage.

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!

Supporters of CCA Texas

I have my NEW CCA Texas license plates. Do you have yours?

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



Illegal fishermen target red snapper, sharks and red drum, using primarily **long lines and gill nets which often hook or entangle endangered sea turtles.**

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING!

STEALING YOUR FISH. SHORTENING YOUR SEASON.

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING IN GULF OF MEXICO:
Inside 9 nautical miles – Texas Parks & Wildlife ▶ **800.792.4263**
Beyond 9 nautical miles – US Coast Guard ▶ **361.939.0450**

COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION TEXAS

PHOTO: TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

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 full-color newsletter to our statewide membership 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.

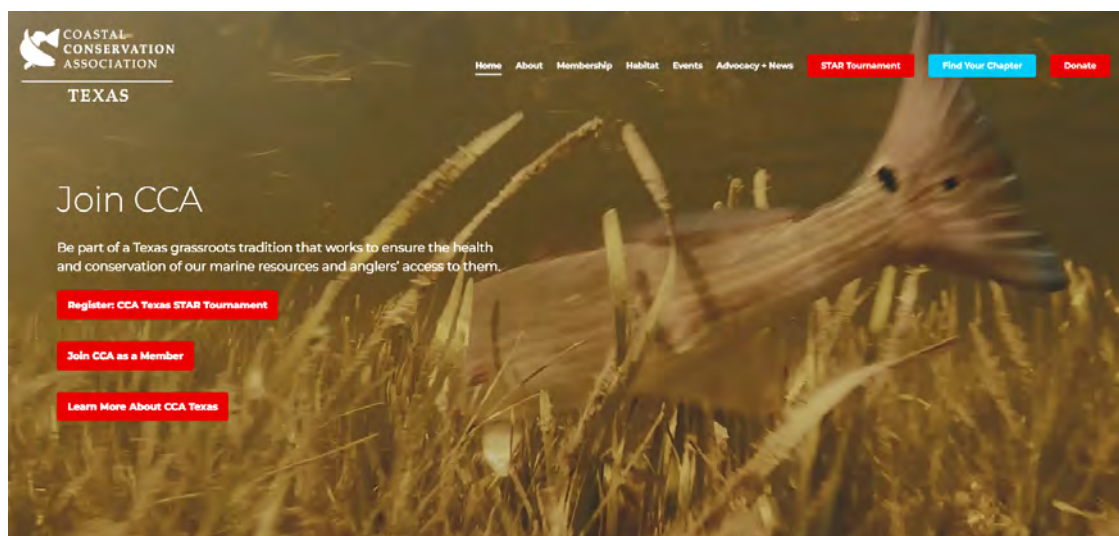
[Click here for CURRENTS Newsletters.](#)



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 X. 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 continues to **GROW FAST**, so join thousands of CCA Texas members around the state by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) now! Each time our members **FOLLOW** CCA Texas and **LIKE** our posts, it helps to 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!

FACEBOOK



Featured Social Media Highlights

Join over 48,000+ Texas anglers by **FOLLOWING** our [CCA Texas Facebook page](#) to be the first to know about important updates, check out incredible photos, and watch amazing reels and videos! [LIKE us on Facebook TODAY and help us out by sharing our posts!](#)

NEARLY 30% OF TEXAS OYSTER LICENSES REMOVED BY SUCCESSFUL BUYBACK PROGRAM IN A HISTORIC CONSERVATION WIN FOR TEXAS COAST

159 COMMERCIAL OYSTER LICENSES RETIRED AFTER TWO SUCCESSFUL ROUNDS, SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING POTENTIAL PRESSURE ON PUBLIC REEF SYSTEMS.

"We remain firmly committed to advancing strategic initiatives that safeguard Texas' coastal resources, strengthen our fisheries, and preserve healthy, productive ecosystems for future generations. Together, we're proving that conservation works, especially when we work together."
- Executive Director of CCA Texas Robby Byers

After two productive rounds, the successful Oyster Buyback Program has reduced pressure on our public reef systems by removing nearly 30 percent of all commercial oyster licenses from the fishery.

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS POST ON FACEBOOK!

Weekend views...hopefully...

Tight lines to all y'all fishing our CCA Texas STAR Tournament this weekend!

📷: Mac Elliott Media

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS POST ON FACEBOOK!

Working deep on a mid-bay reef on a summer afternoon down in

📍 Mesquite Bay, Texas

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS POST ON FACEBOOK!



CCA Texas on Instagram

We just reached 26.7K+ followers, now help us get to 30K! 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!](#)

INSTAGRAM

\$17,081,758
Our total funded amount from the inception of our Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow Program through 2026!

CCA Texas has a long history of supporting and participating in conservation and restoration projects. We created the Habitat Today for Fish Tomorrow Program to positively impact the health and sustainability of our Texas coastal resources.

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM!

Reminder: Always be aware of your surroundings, especially when wading!

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM!

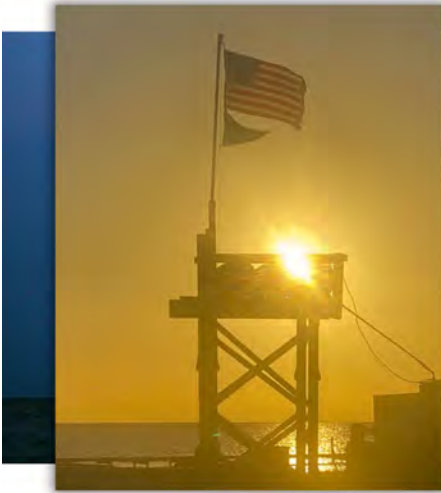
Summer nights down in Copano Bay, Texas

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM!



CCA Texas on X

Get important recreational angling-related news and updates filtered into your feed by following us on X! In addition to posting our own updates, we make sure to repost content that we know you want to see! FOLLOW us on X TODAY!



🎵 O say does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave 🎵

Happy Birthday 🇺🇸, 250 looks good on you! Y'all have a safe and Happy 4th of July!

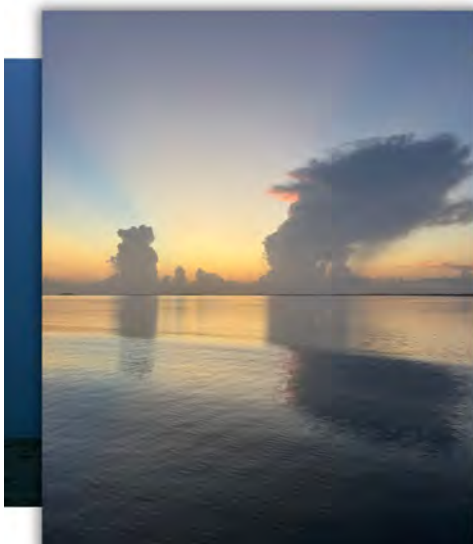
[CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS POST ON TWITTER / X!](#)



Tight lines to all our STAR-registered anglers chasing tagged reds this weekend in our CCA Texas STAR Tournament!

📷: Mac Elliott

[CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS POST ON TWITTER / X!](#)



Nothing like watching the sun come up over our beautiful Texas Coast on a summer morning.

📍 Carlos Bay, Texas

[CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS POST ON TWITTER / X!](#)

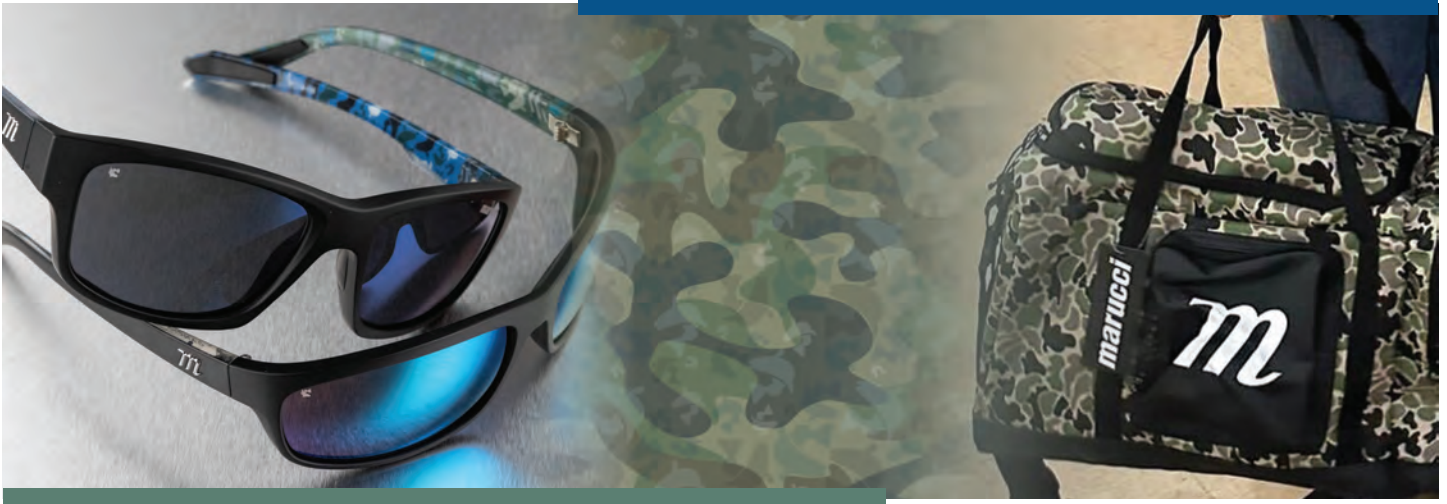
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CCA DUFFEL

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Alvin-Pearland Rex Richards

The 2026 Alvin Pearland Banquet/Fundraiser was another great success! It is always exciting to see everyone joining in and raising 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. These folks step up year after year and their support is much appreciated by CCA and the Alvin Pearland Chapter. Shout out to all our other donors, table buyers, hard-working board members, and volunteers. We thank you as well!

Our upcoming Anglers' Night Out events will be held on **Tuesday, September 15 and Tuesday, October 27. The speaker starts at 7:00 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
Bill Burge 713-828-3823
bill_burge@yahoo.com

We hope everyone is having an incredible summer and finding plenty of time to get out on the water! Whether you're chasing redfish at sunrise, enjoying family days on the bay, or simply soaking up everything the Coastal Bend has to offer, we hope you're making the most of the season.

Our Aransas Bay Chapter has had another fantastic year, and none of it would be possible without our incredible volunteers, sponsors, members, and supporters.



Shots of some local CCA Aransas Bay Members on the water

Your time, generosity, and passion for conservation continue to make a real difference—not only for our chapter, but for the future of our coastal fisheries.

We're already looking ahead to another exciting year and hope you'll join us at one of our upcoming Anglers' Night Out gatherings. These evenings are a great opportunity to catch up with fellow anglers, hear from knowledgeable speakers, and learn more about the conservation work CCA Texas is doing across our coast. Keep an eye on our [Facebook page](#) for details—we'd love to see you there!



and volunteers for their dedication to the cause of CCA! We are proud to have won 1st place this year and in the last 6 years we have placed 1st 3 times, 3rd twice and 4th once. We would like to thank the CCA Texas for putting on this great event each year.

October 15, 2026 – Hooked on Clays 4th Annual clay shoot will be held at Hog Heaven in Dripping Springs. For more information and to register please go

Be sure to save the dates for two of our favorite events:
Aransas Bay Chapter Banquet – April 3, 2027 and **Babes on the Bay – May 14–15, 2027.**

These events continue to thrive because of the amazing people who step up to volunteer, sponsor, and participate each year. If you've ever thought about getting more involved, we'd love to have you! Whether you can lend a hand at an event, join a committee, or simply become a member, there's a place for everyone in the CCA family.

Thank you for helping us conserve the Texas coast for future generations. Every membership, every volunteer hour, and every event helps ensure that our bays remain healthy and our fisheries stay strong. Together, we're making a lasting impact.

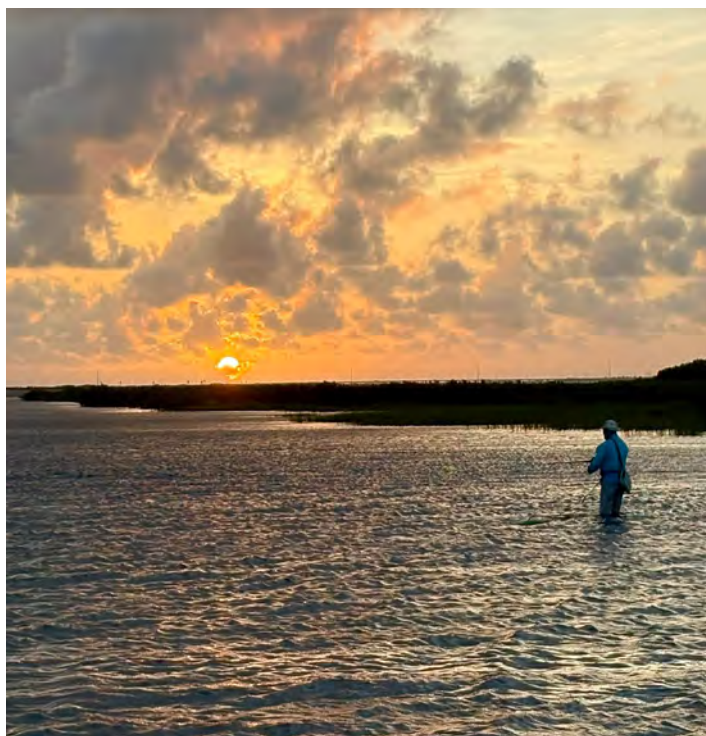
Have a safe, fun-filled summer, and we look forward to seeing everyone soon at an Anglers' Night Out—and again this spring for another great year of conservation, camaraderie, and coastal memories.

Austin
Alex Blackburn 512-565-4939
Atblackburn3@gmail.com

CCA Austin Chapter participated in the CCA Texas Inter Chapter Challenge in June in Port Aransas. The tournament had over 300 CCA Board Members from all over the State participating. This is a thank you to all the board members



A few shots of the CCA Austin Chapter at the 2026 CCA Texas Inter Chapter Challenge



Austin Chapter at the 2026 CCA Texas InterChapter Challenge

to hookedonclays26.givesmart.com or if you have any questions, please contact Garrett Waters or Melissa Harrell at CCAAustinHookedonClays@gmail.com.

Please follow CCA Austin Chapter on [Facebook](#) for updated information on our local chapter.

If you are interested in learning more about the Austin CCA Chapter and how you can get involved, please contact Alex Blackburn at atblackburn3@gmail.com or Cheryl Smith at Cherylccaustin@gmail.com. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at Warren Wildlife Gallery, 1401 Bouldin Ave, Austin at 6:00 p.m. Our next meeting will be on August 10, 2026. We hope to see you there.

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zeke.ulrich@gmail.com

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

Our chapter members participated in the annual ICC fishing tournament and although we had a great time, we unfortunately did not place. Oh well, there's always next year.

Our chapter is preparing for our **annual banquet at the JB Wells Park Event Center in Gonzales on August 7, 2026**. We have been collecting silent auction items from our generous supporters and are planning to have some exciting surprises for our 5th anniversary banquet. In the meantime, we are having some item giveaways so stay tuned to our [Facebook page](#). Thank you for your support in protecting the coastal resources of Texas, and we hope to see you at the banquet.

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Greater Sugar Land
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The Greater Sugar Land CCA Chapter continues to build on an outstanding 2026, and we could not be more excited about the energy and momentum within our chapter. This year has brought tremendous growth to our Board of Directors with the addition of several outstanding and enthusiastic new members. That renewed energy helped contribute to the largest banquet in Greater Sugar Land Chapter history!

And believe it or not, it is already time to mark your calendars for our **27th Annual Greater Sugar Land CCA Banquet, taking place Thursday, April 1, 2027**, at the Stafford Centre. No fooling—it really is April Fool's Day! Guests can once again look forward to an evening of great fellowship, boiled crawfish, fried catfish, an open bar, and plenty of CCA excitement. Stay tuned as we continue planning what promises to be another memorable event.

We are proud to welcome Bobby Boswell as the newest member of the Greater Sugar Land CCA Board of Directors. In addition to being an avid fisherman and supporter of the outdoors, Bobby enjoyed an outstanding career as a professional soccer player. During his time with the Houston Dynamo, he helped the team capture a regular-season Western Conference title and earned several individual honors, including Defender of the Year, Iron Man, and Fan-Voted Team MVP. We are excited to have Bobby bring his enthusiasm, leadership, competitive spirit, and love of fishing to the Greater Sugar Land CCA family.

Our Chapter Board was proud to participate in the 2026 CCA Inter Chapter Challenge, finishing in 7th place in a highly competitive field. Just how close was the competition? We were only one flounder away from potentially moving into 3rd place! Beyond the fishing, one of the best parts of the event was spending time with fellow CCA members and chapters from across Texas. The camaraderie, friendly competition, and shared commitment to our coastal resources are what make events like this so special. We are already looking forward to—and planning for—the 2027 Inter Chapter Challenge!

The competition is heating up for one of our chapter's favorite traditions, the Annual Greater Sugar Land President's Cup Fishing Tournament in Sargent. The coveted President's Cup trophy goes to the chapter member who brings in the heaviest qualifying stringer, earning bragging rights for the year and a place in Greater Sugar Land CCA history. Last year's champion, Bob Hrachovy, currently holds the trophy. Can Bob defend his title—or will a new champion take home the President's Cup? There is only one way to find out! Join the Greater Sugar Land Chapter, come fish with us in Sargent and Matagorda Bay, and enjoy a great day of friendly competition, fellowship, and fishing.

Help us introduce the next generation to fishing: Few things are more rewarding than watching a young angler catch his or her very first fish. Our chapter is proud to support the upcoming Riverstone Communities Kid Fish, and we invite anyone interested in volunteering to join us for this special event. Seeing the excitement on a child's face when that first fish hits the line is something you never forget. Events like Kid Fish give us the

opportunity to introduce the next generation to fishing, conservation, and an appreciation for the outdoors—while creating memories that can last a lifetime.

Get involved with Greater Sugar Land CCA: there has never been a better time to get involved with the Greater Sugar Land CCA Chapter. Whether you are passionate about fishing, conservation, volunteering, helping young anglers, supporting our banquet, or simply meeting others who share a love for the Texas coast, there is a place for you in our chapter.

We invite you to attend one of our Board Meetings at: El Fogon Mexican Kitchen, 4514 Highway 6, Sugar Land, Texas. Social Time: 6:30 p.m., Board Meeting: 7:00 p.m. For additional information about the Greater Sugar Land CCA Chapter, upcoming events, or volunteer opportunities, contact us at: greatersugarlandcca@gmail.com.

We are proud of what our chapter has accomplished in 2026—but we are even more excited about what lies ahead. Thank you to our Board members, volunteers, sponsors, CCA members, families, and friends whose time and support continue to make the Greater Sugar Land Chapter stronger. Until next time, get out on the water and enjoy... good times and tight lines!

Greater Woodlands
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Guadalupe Valley
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Heart of the Hills
Kelly Parks 210-669-3732
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Howdy from the Heart of the Hills! A group of chapter volunteers fished the Inter Chapter Challenge Fishing Tournament in Fulton in June. Everyone had a great time and we finished in 4th place with a 4 redfish stringer totaling 107.25" - we just couldn't find a keeper flounder... maybe next year. Thanks to the CCA staff for hosting this event.

We are looking forward to our new Academy Sports + Outdoors store opening soon in the Riverhills Mall in Kerrville, Texas. Welcome to the Heart of the Hills!

Make sure to get your tickets at [CCATexas.org](https://www.ccatexas.org) for the **CCA Heart of the Hills Annual Banquet to be held at the Cana Ballroom in Boerne on September 24, 2026**. We have a great meal planned and will have piles of raffle and auction items. If you would like to donate or volunteer for this event, please give us a call.

Two somber notes: Our hearts go out to those who sustained damage and loss in the July 2026 floods

throughout the Heart of the Hills and beyond. We wish you a speedy recovery. We mourn the loss of our dear friend and past Chapter president and treasurer, James Alan "Jim" Simmons, who passed on July 1st. Jim was a founding member of this chapter and dedicated many, many volunteer hours to CCA conservation efforts. He was a big man with an even bigger heart and his presence will be sorely missed. Our condolences to his devoted wife of almost 58 years, Kathy, son Scot Simmons and daughter-in-law Stacy, daughter Molly Simmons Sartors and the entire Simmons family. Tight lines, friend. We will fish together again!

Helotes

Johnny Rayburg 210-535-6810
jrayburg@sbcglobal.net

Highland Lakes

Tim Franke 512-496-9973
timfrankecca@gmail.com

What better way to get ready for hunting season? Mark your calendar for August 22 and gather your team for a fun day of competition, camaraderie, and great prizes at our inaugural 2026 Hooked on Clays Shoot at Copperhead Creek Shooting Club from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Teams of four will compete for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place Team Awards, and a grand prize will also be presented to the High Overall Individual Shooter. The course features 100 sporting clays across 13 stations, and participants are welcome to bring their own shells. Registration is quick and easy at the link above.

Registration opens at 8:00 a.m., where you'll be welcomed with breakfast tacos and coffee before the mandatory safety meeting at 8:45 a.m. Shooting begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. Water and soda will be provided throughout the day, and we'll have sausage wraps and chips for lunch! A limited number of \$500 Station Sponsorships are still available. Sponsorship includes space for company signage and a merchandise or promotional booth, providing an excellent opportunity to support conservation while showcasing your business. We hope you'll join us for a terrific day on the range!

Follow us on Instagram: @ccahighlandlakes. Find us on Facebook for updates and chapter news. For more information about the 2026 Hooked on Clays Shoot, our chapter, or sponsorship opportunities, please contact: Corbin Primrose, Assistant Director, cprimrose@ccatexas.org or Tim Franke, Chapter President, timfrankecca@gmail.com.

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Houston Real Estate
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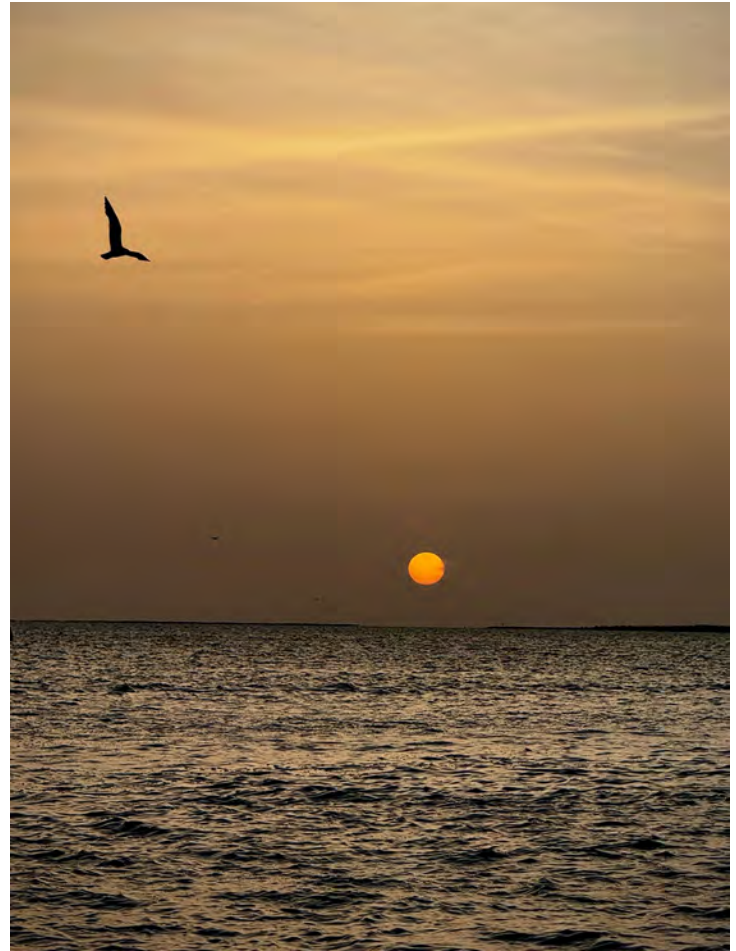
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Mid Coast
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North Texas
Brian Donovan 214-402-3825
brian@firstlightprint.com

CCA NTX made our fourth appearance in the CCA Inter Chapter Challenge fishing tournament, with extremely difficult fishing conditions prevailing. Congratulations to Austin CCA on their 1st place finish.

We are planning our **5th Anniversary banquet on April 29th, 2027, returning to 3R's Ranch in Prosper**, with Babe's Chicken Dinner House again providing dinner. We will have additional details in the last CURRENTS of



Great Kid Photo: Cannon Scherer with his first keeper speck on artificials on a trip with CCA NTX Vice President and Dad Matt Scherer, and his Great Uncle James Heller. Right- North Texas CCA Great Scenic Photo: Saharan dust turns a Port Mansfield sunrise into an 80's album cover.

2026, with tickets going on sale after the first of the year. Thanks again to everyone who attended our 2026 event, helping us set records for attendance and fundraising. If you are interested in volunteering with our committee or sponsorship and underwriting opportunities for the 2027 banquet, please contact chapter president Brian Donovan at brian@firstlightprint.com or CCA Assistant Director Garrett Boehnemann at gboehnemann@ccatexas.org.

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rodhall1253@gmail.com

Rio Grande Valley
Javier Suarez 956-330-9788
javier@eastcapeboats.com

We hope that you are having a great summer with quality family time and fishing. **The CCA RGV board has scheduled the banquet for April 9, 2027**, so please ensure that you save the date. We have also secured the 2027 Chapter Banquet Raffle item, which debuted at the Texas Hunters and Sportsman Expo. The grand prize winner of the 2027 CCA RGV Chapter Banquet Raffle will be taking home a Freedom Boats Chiquita with Suzuki Motor, Coastline Aluminum Trailer, Powerpole and 80qt Engel Cooler. The runner-up prizes include a trip for 2 to Cabo with fishing trip for second place, and a Louis Vuitton Purse (Tag Me Pouch) for third place. Tickets are available for purchase at \$50 each, with special offers for multiple-ticket purchases: three tickets for \$100 or twenty tickets for \$500. To secure your tickets, contact a CCA RGV Board



The 2027 CCA RGV Raffle Grand Prize

Member. At this time, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to our Multi-Year Exclusive Title Advertiser, L&F Distributors, for their ongoing and unwavering support. Additionally, we would like to thank The Sportsman and Freedom Boats USA for their commitment and partnership with us this year by providing us the Freedom Chiquita Boat. Stay tuned as we are working on our Anglers' Night Out event sometime in October or November.

Sabine-Neches

Saltgrass

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Sam Houston

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San Bernard

Jeremy Compton 281-961-0262
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San Gabriel

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The highlight of our year is fast approaching, and the **CCA San Gabriel Chapter is excited to invite you to our 24th Annual Banquet on Thursday, August 6, 2026**, right here in Georgetown!

This is always one of the biggest and most fun nights on our calendar — an evening filled with great food, lively auctions, fantastic door prizes, raffles, and plenty of fellowship with fellow anglers and conservation supporters. Every dollar raised stays right here supporting Texas coastal fisheries and habitat projects that matter to all of us.

We still have tickets, tables, and a few sponsorship opportunities available. Don't miss your chance to be part of this special night! Whether you're bringing a group

of friends, securing a table for your business or family, or becoming a sponsor, your participation makes a real difference for our coastal resources.

For tickets, table reservations, or sponsorship information, reach out to any board member or message us on the [CCA San Gabriel Facebook page](#). Spots are going fast, so secure yours soon.

We can't wait to see you on August 6 for a fantastic evening celebrating our passion for fishing and conservation!

Southwestern

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Sfuqua.sf@gmail.com

TAMU

Blaine Eckert 936-499-1596
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Texas State University

Tate Elder 832-294-1254
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Tomball/Magnolia

Matt Maddox 832-963-5215
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Tri-County

Justin Putz 210-585-0401
putz.stx@gmail.com

Trinity Bay

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jayowash@comcast.net

It's that time of year folks. It's go time. **The Trinity Bay Banquet is on Friday, August 21, 2026, 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. It's looking like a great lineup for the live auction this year. 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 <https://ticketstripe.com/TrinityBAY26>.

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
Bird action will start soon

August fishing in the Tri-Bay Area, the southern area of Galveston Bay includes Chocolate, Bastrop, and Christmas bays. This summer featured south winds. When that direction of wind persists, the tides stay below normal. It also keeps the beach sandy and dirty. Normally, we prefer wind from the southeast.

The amount of rain in central Texas and north of us has caused freshwater run-off in the Chocolate, Brazos, Oyster Creek and San Bernard rivers. Put all that aside, we are catching fish deep at 8 feet. Live shrimp under a cork around oyster reefs has been the ticket early in the mornings. I also recommend night fishing. Fish are stressed from the heat and feed under green lights at night. What a good way to fish and guarantee no sunburn.

In September we are looking for cooler temps and ready for bird action. Christmas Bay is good for mud-boils in the middle of the bay. It takes good eyes to see subtle annual migration out of the bay. It's a fun time of the year because I go with soft plastic. Start with 1/4oz and reduce to 1/8oz depending on the current and presentation I'm trying to achieve. Finesse/work the bait without hooking up on the shell. With cooler weather on the horizon, there's great fishing ahead.

Take a child fishing, practice CPR and help the young to be good stewards of the bay. —**Capt. Glenn Hammond**

You can contact me at 713-208-0683.

Capt. Glenn has been guiding, educating fishermen and writing for CCA many years.



Two Great Kidfish photos: Left, Cannon Scherer from the North Texas chapter. Center photo: Jack Robinson on left. Alex sightcast this red while being poled by Captain Bryan Robinson.

Middle Coast

Capt. Tomnmy Coutz
Pods of reds on shorelines

Head out early, come in early and drink lots of water and Gatorade!

You have a number of great fishing opportunities in the Midcoast. If the surf is flat and green, get there! It's the time of the year when the wind is light. If topwaters aren't working, switch to plastics rigged on a 1/4 ounce leadhead. I like electric blue or Black Magic Norton Sandshad.

August is a good time to wadefish the south shore of West Matagorda Bay. Choose guts running through grass beds or sandbars. I'll go to 1/16 or 1/8 oz lead heads with dark Norton Sandshad or Sandeel JR's. The water will be hot as are the fish, so a slow retrieve gets you more bites.

If I'm drift fishing I'll be in East Matagorda Bay on the West end over deep shell or on the east end drifting over big mud flats, using heavier leadheads with paddle tail baits. If the water is dirty, live shrimp under a Mid Coast popping cork can be the ticket.

September is the best time of the year to find pods of redfish schooling along the grassy shorelines feeding on shrimp. Watch for white shore birds—they will telegraph pods of redfish feeding on shrimp that are being flushed out. I position a hundred yards ahead and let them come to me. It's one of my favorite ways to fish.

Always watch for birds diving over schools of trout. Approach from the windward side quietly. This is when a trolling motor is really handy.

In Matagorda we are fortunate to have over 40 miles of beach front to fish. September is when the "Bull Redfish" run takes place. It's when the big female reds spawn in the surf. It's a time when any angler can catch the biggest fish of his or her life. If you do catch one of these big oversized reds, I encourage you to take a good picture of it and then release her to make millions of babies. August and September afford anglers a number of great opportunities for quality fishing. To book a trip with me you can text or call 281-450-4037.

—**Capt. Tommy Countz** A Rice Institute football star, Capn' Tommy has been finding fish and entertaining fishermen for more than half a century.



Lower Coast

Capt. Bryan Robinson

Fishing as hot as the temps outside

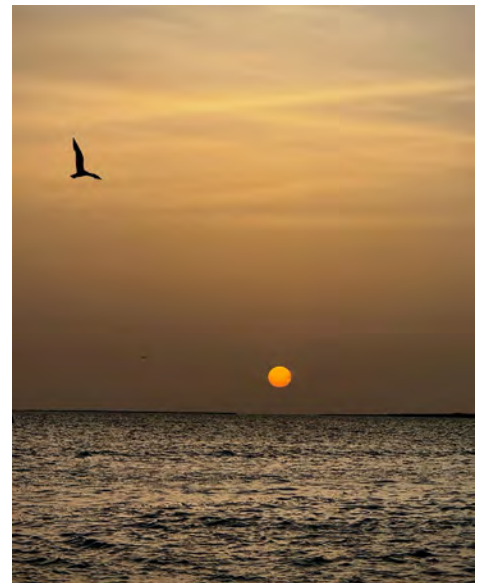
Mucho Caliente down on the Laguna Madre in South Texas so far this year and will continue for a few more months.

The wind hasn't seemed to be slowing down at all this year making it a bit tough for the skiff guys on the flats who are chasing redfish with fly rods. Warmer water has the fish hanging in deeper depths. Wade fisherman have been doing really well and should continue until Fall when the temperatures start coming down.

Use soft plastics with 1/4 ounce jigheads in deeper water when wading. Top water plugs will work well also. When the wind finally decides to calm down try some drift fishing from the boat to cover more water. Remember to look for jumping bait while running to your spot. These areas will hold gamefish.

As for the skiff guys, hang in there! Fish are hanging on flats closer to deeper water in the mornings. Flats fishing will continue to get better as the year goes on. Crab flies in tan and white will work great on grass flats. Clousers in natural colors are the choice on the sand flats.

So grab some sunscreen, sunglasses, plenty of water for the day and get on the water. The fishing will be just as hot as the temperatures outside! Don't forget to take a kid fishing and practice catch and release. Until next time, Adios amigos. —**Capt. Bryan Robinson** 956-241-5520 / bryandrobinson@yahoo.com Captain Bryan is a longtime CCA member, a past President of the RGV chapter, and has served on the CCA Texas State Board of Directors. He loves guiding fly fishers.



Port Mansfield Sunrise: great photo from North Texas chapter.

Big Bayou Shrimp and Pasta Salad

1 1/2 lb peeled and deveined Gulf shrimp / 1/2 tsp salt / 1 tsp baking soda / 1 tbsp Old Bay seasoning
Juice of 1/2 fresh lemon / 2 quarts water / Dressing / 1 rib celery, diced / 1/4 sweet onion, diced
1 tbsp chopped fresh dill / 3/4 cup mayo / Juice from 1/2 fresh lemon / 1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp Old Bay seasoning / Salt and pepper to taste / 1 cup dry pasta (small shells) cooked and cooled

Mix the raw shrimp with the baking soda, salt and Old Bay seasoning. Set aside and make the dressing.
Add the water and lemon juice to a large pot and bring to a boil.

Prepare a large bowl with water and ice for the shrimp when done cooking.

Add the shrimp to the boiling water and cook for 90 seconds. The shrimp will turn slightly opaque. Drain and add immediately to the ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain in a colander and pat dry.

Add the shrimp and pasta to the sauce and gently stir until evenly coated. Cover and chill in refrigerator for at least 2 hours.



Great Recipes Editor Liz Hewitt

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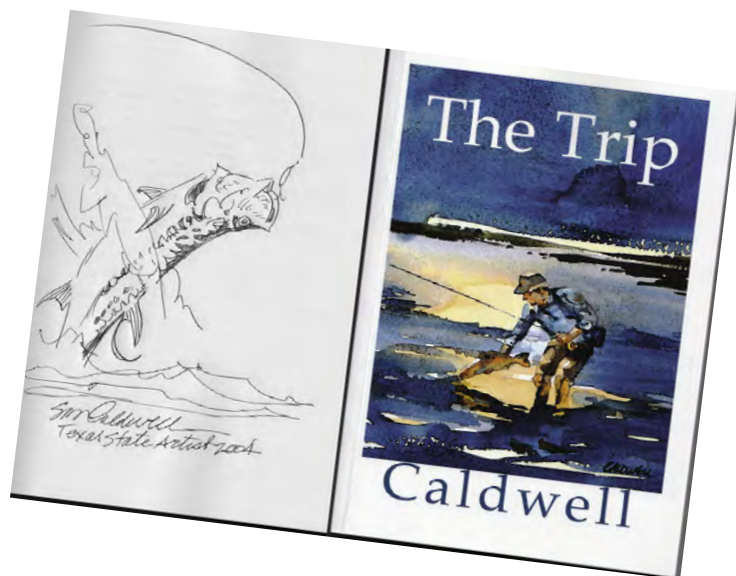
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Coastal Conservation Association

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August / September 2026

Great Photos 2026

Categories: Best In Show / Action / Scenic / Humor / Kids / Wildlife / CPR

Important: Send jpegs and include name of subject, title, your name as well as the names of anyone in the photo **if possible**.

Email jpegs to sam@samcaldwell.com Give us your best shots.

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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

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



COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION TEXAS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (including STAR Entry)

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