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# texas parks & wildlife news

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78744

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EDITORS: This will be the final news packet of 1988. The next packet will be mailed the week of Jan 4. The I&E staff hopes you have a wonderful 1989 in the outdoors

## PARKLAND EXPANSION LED OUTDOOR NEWS IN 1988

AUSTIN -- Acquisition of the Big Bend Ranch in Presidio and Brewster Counties and drydocking of the Battleship 'Texas' for major repairs were two headline events for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department during 1988

While these two events mainly concerned the department's Parks Division, significant news also was generated by the agency's other major divisions. The Big Bend Ranch acquisition, however, seemed to cause the most interest because of its size, some 215,000 acres, and its magnificent natural features that so far have been viewed by relatively few Texans

The ranch property is being hailed as one of the most significant natural areas in the nation, with outstanding geological features and archeological resources. It has mountains, waterfalls, an extinct volcano and 15 miles of frontage on the Rio Grande. The land provides habitat for at least 11 endangered species of plants and animals

Shortly before the Big Bend Ranch acquisition was announced, the

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department completed acquisition of another major West Texas site, Dolan Creek Ranch. This 11,000-acre site, combined with adjoining properties, formed a new state natural area of almost 20,000 acres along the Devils River about 30 miles above Amistad Reservoir in Val Verde County. This site also contains significant resources including evidence of habitation by prehistoric cultures.

The Battleship 'Texas' has been moored at San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site since 1948, and 40 years of battle with rust and corrosion had taken a toll on the 74-year-old dreadnought.

Drydocking and major repairs to the "Texas" were made possible by a U S Navy grant, fundraising efforts of Texas schoolchildren and contributions of manpower, equipment and expertise from a wide array of individuals, organizations and industries. The battleship was towed from her berth this month for the long-needed repairs.

The battleship and San Jacinto Monument complex is the state's most-visited park site. The entire state park system set an all-time record in 1988 with 20.9 million visitors.

Here is a wrapup of major news events affecting the Parks and Wildlife Department during 1988.

#### WILDLIFE

-- Wildlife Division crews accomplished the largest white-tailed deer trapping and relocation operation ever attempted in Texas, trapping more

than 1,000 deer from ranches with surplus deer in South Texas and moving them to Type II wildlife management areas in East Texas

-- The first legal hunt for desert bighorn sheep in recent times was held at the Sierra Diablo Wildlife Management Area in Culberson County. The department issued two permits to allow hunters to attempt to take one surplus ram each. One of the permits was auctioned for \$61,000, and the money was earmarked for use in the bighorn restoration program. The other hunter was one of 1,046 Type II permit holders who participated in a drawing. Neither hunter harvested a ram during the hunt.

-- The Texas white-tailed deer harvest continued its record-setting trend as hunters during the 1987-88 season harvested an all-time record 504,900 whitetails. This was the fourth consecutive record, and the total was 13 percent above the previous season. The bumper harvest was attributed to continuing high deer populations and a dramatic increase in harvest of antlerless deer. The 210,000 antlerless deer taken was 46,000 more than ever before, and it represented a 28 percent increase over 1986-87.

-- The either-sex system of white-tailed deer bag limits was expanded by 40 East Texas counties. The change in effect made it unnecessary to issue antlerless permits to landowners in most of East, Central, South and West Texas. In those areas, hunters are required only to use the appropriate tag from their hunting license to tag antlerless deer.

-- Other changes in deer regulations during 1988 were aimed at increasing hunter opportunity. In most of Texas the whitetail season

opened on Nov 5, which was a week earlier than in the past. In South Texas, one week was added to the end of the season. Both changes were intended to allow hunters to hunt during the peak of the whitetail rutting season. The Parks and Wildlife Commission also authorized lengthening the mule deer season from nine to 16 days. The commission also added 17 counties to those having the late antlerless-only whitetail season in South Texas.

-- Texas waterfowl hunters, along with those in other states, had to be aware of more restrictive duck bag limits during the 1988 season. The three-duck limit regulation of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service was a response to continued poor nesting conditions in the northern U.S. and Canada, and record low numbers of several important duck species. In addition to the reduced bag limit, the special early teal hunting season was cancelled.

-- Hunters harvested 1,644 alligators during the September 1988 season for a new record. The season was authorized for portions of 15 counties in East, Southeast and South Texas. The controlled harvest had an estimated worth of some \$592,000 to Texas gator hunters and landowners.

## FISHERIES

-- Because of extensive hybridization by native Guadalupe bass with introduced smallmouths in some Texas reservoirs, the Fisheries Division established a genetic refuge for Guadalupes in the Sabinal River at Lost Maples State Natural Area. The refuge is intended to assure that the pure

strain of Guadalupe can be preserved. A research study on the endangered paddlefish also was initiated during 1988.

-- Catches of trophy-sized bass continued apace during 1988. A total of 11 of the 20 largest bass ever caught in Texas were caught during the year. The largest of the year weighed 17 pounds, 4.16 ounces. It was caught at Lake Fork by Larry Barnes during February, and it ranked second on the all-time list. Troy Johnson of Houston was named Lone Star Angler of the Year for catching a 16-pound, two-ounce largemouth bass from Gibbons Creek Reservoir and donating it to the department's Operation Share a Lone Star Lunker program. Participating anglers receive fiberglass replicas of their catch, and the fish usually are returned to their lakes of origin after being spawned.

-- The rainbow trout stocking program was expanded, with 300,000 catchable-sized fish being stocked during the 1988-89 winter stocking period. In all, 28 public sites and 15 state parks are receiving the fish. Many of the fish were purchased with revenues from \$5 State Trout Stamps, required of all trout fishermen.

-- The new Ben F. Vaughan Jr. Hatchery and Research Center was opened June 17. This addition to the GCCA/CPL Marine Development Center included almost 14,000 square feet of indoor space and 19 acres of rearing ponds for production of red drum and other saltwater sport fish at the Corpus Christi facility. The center is a unique cooperative effort involving the department, Central Power and Light Co. of Corpus Christi and the Gulf Coast Conservation Association.

-- During 1988, the commission placed all "black" basses (largemouth, smallmouth, spotted and Guadalupe) under the statewide 14-inch minimum length limit and bag limit of five per day. Formerly, only largemouths were under the 14-inch minimum, while a 10-inch minimum was in effect for the other species. The commission also prohibited the use of gill nets, trammel nets and drag seines in salt water to benefit fishermen in Texas. The daily bag limit for red drum was changed from five to three fish, and the length limits were changed from 18 and 30 inches to 20 and 28 inches. Similar reductions were established for black drum, flounder and sheepshead.

-- The Fisheries Division expanded its state fish records program to include a listing of the largest fish caught from lakes, rivers and coastal bays.

-- A seven-pound, 11-ounce smallmouth bass caught by fishing guide Ron Gardner at Lake Whitney during November was certified as the new state record, surpassing a six-pound, eight-ounce smallmouth caught at Whitney a year before.

-- The Parks and Wildlife Commission during 1988 adopted the new Texas Oyster Fishery Management Plan and accompanying economic impact analysis. The plan resulted from the combined efforts of industry officials, conservation groups and department biologists.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

-- Game wardens embarked on a new method for discouraging road hunting for deer during 1988. Using mounted deer as decoys, game wardens in several parts of the state surprised some would-be road hunters who took shots at the ersatz deer from public roadways

-- Operation Game Thief (OGT) continued to be an effective program for catching game and fish regulation violators. During 1988 the program passed the \$311,000 mark in fines paid since 1981. By the end of 1988, more than 1,450 violators had been arrested and the OGT committee had disbursed \$67,350 to 365 persons that called the toll-free number, 1-800-792-GAME.

-- An undercover game warden posing as a commercial fish dealer conducted a "sting" operation that resulted in a series of convictions against commercial fishermen, fish dealers and restaurants in many areas of the state. The officer purchased illegally-caught red drum and sold the undocumented fish to dealers and restaurants

## RESOURCE PROTECTION

-- During 1988 the division assisted the National Research Laboratory staff in its search for a site for the Superconducting Super Collider. Data gathered by division staff was instrumental in the selection of the Waxahachie site over sites in several other states. Specific work performed included reviewing reports and compiling fish and wildlife

information, aerial surveys, developing a vegetation map and a resource report

-- Division staff hosted an Instream Flow Workshop attended by officials of the Texas Water Commission and Texas Water Development Board. The workshop focused on instream flow issues and techniques for evaluating streams to determine fish and wildlife needs.

-- The division worked with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority to develop a drought plan for the newly-constructed Canyon Hydropower Project at Canyon Dam. The plan provides for reduction of flow during periods when rainfall is low, but also provides for flows up to 120 cubic feet per second when additional water is available.

-- The division worked with other state and federal agencies to protect seagrass beds and shallow bay waters by locating upland disposal sites for dredge material from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

-- Volunteer workers from throughout the department's divisions picked up more than 15 tons of trash from four miles of Matagorda Island beach during October.

-- Two remnant native prairie grassland sites were saved through the efforts of the division's Heritage Program. In both instances, the staff persuaded officials of the All American Pipeline Co. to re-route lines to avoid crossing the sites.

-- The Heritage Program staff prepared a publication listing endangered, threatened and protected plants, developed a classification of native plant



communities, and completed field work on a three-year natural community evaluation at four Texas National Forests and two National Grasslands

## PARKS

-- The state park system experienced a record year in visitation, hosting approximately 20.9 million persons during 1987-88. The previous high was 20.5 million in 1985-86. The increase was attributed to a gradual improvement in the economy, opening of several new parks during the past two years, increased popularity of coastal parks, fish stocking, generally good weather and increased public awareness of available facilities.

-- "Quiet Shadows -- Women in the Pacific War," an exhibit honoring the role of women during World War II in the Pacific, opened at the Admiral Nimitz State Historical Park in Fredericksburg. The exhibit includes donated artifacts from around the world.

-- The new Colorado Bend State Park opened during spring 1988, although development of facilities is not complete. The early opening was done to accommodate fishermen, who visit the area each spring for the white bass "run" up the Colorado River above Lake Buchanan. The park is on the former site of Lemons Fishing Camp, a well-known Central Texas fishing spot.

-- Purtil Creek State Recreation Area near Athens opened in November as large crowds sought limited boat reservations for the lake. Purtil Creek is a catch-and-release-only largemouth bass fishery that already has trophy-sized bass. Its unique recreation plan attracted an average of 937

telephone calls per hour during the first few weeks of operation.

-- The Parks Division coordinated a state effort to determine the value and management needs of Texas wetlands. The Texas Wetlands Plan as approved by Gov. Bill Clements provides guidance and recommendations for the legislature and others interested in wildlife, fisheries, resource protection and development.

#### INFORMATION--EDUCATION

-- The department's mandatory hunter education program began during 1988, affecting hunters born on or after Sept. 2, 1971. The age groups affected by the requirement will be phased in during a five-year period.

JC 12/21/88

KING MACKEREL SEASON  
CLOSED OFF TEXAS COAST

AUSTIN -- The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has closed the season on king mackerel off the coast of Texas and other Gulf states until June 30.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) officials said the closure is identical to the one imposed last year. NMFS surveys estimated that the recreational catch quota of 1.5 million pounds for the Gulf group of king mackerel was reached during December.

C. E. Bryan of the TPWD said king mackerel usually are absent from state and federal waters off the Texas coast during winter and early spring, but the closure will prohibit the retaining of kings that will be caught in federal waters during May and June 1989.

Federal officials said the increased restrictions are necessary to protect broodstocks of the popular fish which have been declining in recent years

JC 12/21/88

WATERFOWL DIE-OFF  
INVESTIGATIONS CONTINUING

EAGLE LAKE -- Waterfowl biologists and volunteers are hoping that habitat manipulations now underway will help forestall further spread of the avian cholera outbreak that already has been fatal to some 6,000 birds in the rice prairie country of Southeast Texas

Officials of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), U S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Texas Water Commission (TWC) were spending Christmas week attempting to provide "clean" roosting sites for waterfowl by draining some infected areas and flooding new sites

Dale Witt, migratory bird program director for the TPWD, said as coordinator for the habitat work he is collecting data from field staff about locations where additional water is needed, and relaying the data to the TWC where permits can be issued for emergency pumping

Meanwhile, USFWS officials at the Attwater's Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Colorado County continued to collect and incinerate birds found during what is considered one of the largest waterfowl die-off incidents in recent Texas history. The refuge has been designated as headquarters for collecting birds and directing recovery efforts, according to Steve Labuda, refuge manager.

Most of the dead and dying birds are have been collected from a five-county area west of Houston, centered roughly around Katy and Eagle Lake. One problem spot is Longenbaugh Reservoir, a shallow lake north of Eagle Lake where 1,500 carcasses have been picked up. The latest aerial surveys, conducted Tuesday (Dec 20), found an additional 200 to 300 dead geese in the Garwood area and about 150 to 200 in the Katy area.

Labuda said about 64 percent of the birds collected so far have been snow geese, with another 25 percent white-fronted geese. The remainder consisted of several species of ducks, grebes, cormorants, herons and egrets.

"This situation basically is a result of dry weather that has caused thousands of waterfowl to congregate in large numbers in limited roosting areas," Labuda said. "Also, many of the birds could have been weakened already by aflatoxin poisoning."

Labuda explained that geese in some areas have consumed corn or other grain infected with the fungus that produces aflatoxin. "With the birds' immune systems already weakened by aflatoxin, it makes them more vulnerable to other diseases," he said.

TPWD workers, assisted by volunteers, have been assisting with the handling of birds at the refuge. Dick Tinsley, chairman of the Waterfowl Habitat Alliance of Texas (WHAT Ducks) organization, also organized a workforce of volunteers to collect and dispose of carcasses. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is making some funds available to reimburse landowners for expenses related to flooding clean areas for waterfowl roosting areas, Labuda said.

Private industry also is assisting with the effort, as energy-related businesses have indicated they will donate fuel and electricity for emergency pumping, according to Witt.

Officials point out that avian cholera is not considered a threat to humans, either from consumption of the birds by hunters or discharges of water used by infected birds into streams.

Persons observing dead or dying waterfowl in the Southeast Texas area should call Labuda at (409) 234-3021, or use the TPWD's toll-free line, 1-800-792-1112.

JC 12/21/88

AUSTIN: Here is the weekly fishing report as compiled by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for Dec. 22:

CENTRAL

BASTROP: Water clear, 79 degrees, 10 inches low black bass fair to 3 1/2 pounds on purple worms in 8-9 feet of water off points; crappie good to 25 fish per night on small minnows in 18 feet of water; catfish fair to 38 pounds on jug line baited with live perch. Few fishermen on the lake midweek.

BELTON: Water clear, 52 degrees, 6 feet low; black bass good to 3 pounds on white spinners in 3-10 feet of water hybrid striper fair to 5 pounds on white Jiggin Spoons in 10-30 feet of water; crappie good to 15 fish per string on minnows; channel catfish good to 5 pounds on dough baited trotlines.

CANYON: Water clear, 59 degrees, normal level largemouth bass fair to 9 pounds, 3 ounces on black Jig-N-Pig in 20 feet of water; smallmouth bass fair to 4 1/2 pounds on brown Pig-N-Jig in 15 feet of water, no limits; striper slow; crappie good on minnows to 15 fish per string; white bass are very good in 60 feet of water early and in 15 feet of water in the late afternoons on Jiggin Spoons; catfish slow.

FAYETTE: Water clear, 68 degrees, 1 foot low; black bass fairly good in the afternoons since last weekend with several over 6 pounds on gold and orange Rat-L-Traps, worms and water dogs; crappie slow on minnows; catfish slow.

GIBBONS CREEK: Water clear, 56 degrees, 2 feet low; black bass slow; crappie fair to 5 fish per string on minnows; catfish slow.

SOMERVILLE: Water clear, 62 degrees, 3 1/2 feet low; black bass slow; striper slow; crappie good to 25 fish per string on jigs in 10-12 feet of water; white bass slow; catfish fairly slow.

STILLHOUSE: Water clear, 59 degrees, 13 1/2 feet low; black bass slow; striper slow; white bass good to 10 fish per string on jigs and minnows; crappie good at night to 8 fish per string under lights on minnows and jigs; channel catfish good to 1 1/2 pounds on shrimp, cut bait and liver on trotline.

TRAVIS: Water clear, 60 degrees, 12 feet low; black bass good to 1 1/2 pounds, with an occasional 3 pound bass, on cranks, black and brown bucktail jigs in 15-20 feet of water; striper fairly good down rigging on white or yellow bucktail jigs with the same color trailer; white bass very good at night under lights with minnows or small crappie jigs in 25-35 feet of water; catfish slow.

WACO: Water clear in lake, murky in Bosque Flats, 58-60 degrees, 1 foot low; black bass fair to 5 pounds on Jig-N-Pig; striper slow; crappie good in 12 feet of water with limits on minnows; catfish slow.

WHITNEY: Water clear, 55 degrees, 12 1/2 feet low; largemouth bass good to 6 1/2 pounds on cranks, Jig-N-Pigs; smallmouth bass good to 4 pounds on cranks and jigs; striper good in the 10-14 pound range, a single 17 pounder landed, on live bait; crappie good on minnows and jigs to 15 fish per string to 1 3/4 pounds with some limits; white bass good on spoons and slabs under the birds with a few keepers, no limits; catfish good in shallow water on worms and perch baited trotlines; blue and yellow catfish good to 12 pound on trotlines baited with live bait. Both boat ramps are still usable.

NORTHEAST

ATHENS: Water clear, 55 degrees, 10 inches below overflow; black bass good to 6 1/2 pounds on black jigs with green or chartreuse pork rind trailers; crappie excellent to 25 fish per string on minnows in 40 feet of water; white bass slow; catfish fair to 14 pounds on trotline baited with live bait. Few fishermen on the lake over the weekend, good numbers of fishermen over last weekend.

BOB SANDLIN: Water clear, 51 degrees, normal level; black bass fair to 6 pounds on jigs; crappie fair in 15 feet of water on minnows; white bass excellent to 25 fish per string on spoons; catfish slow.

BRIDGEPORT: Water clear, 15 feet low; black bass fair to 5 1/2 pounds in 13 feet of water on cranks; striper fairly slow in number and small in size; crappie good with limits on minnows; white bass slow; catfish slow.

CEDAR CREEK: Water clear, 50 degrees, 4 1/2 feet low; black bass fair to 4 1/2 pounds in 20 feet of water on Bloodline worms; hybrid

striper slow; crappie fair with strings to 10 fish in 22 feet of water on minnows; white bass slow; yellow catfish fair to 43 pounds on live bait, channel catfish fair to 4 pounds on shrimp

FORK: Water clear, 58 degrees, normal level; black bass fair to 7 1/4 pounds on black and blue jigs; crappie good to 2 pounds on minnows in 30-35 feet of water; catfish slow.

LAKE O THE PINES: Water clear, 53 degrees, 4 inches above normal level; black bass fair to 6 3/4 pounds on black and blue jigs with port rind trailers, and white spinners in 6-8 feet of water; crappie slow; white bass slow; catfish slow.

LAVON: Water clear, 58 degrees, 6 1/2 feet low; black bass good with limits to 3 pounds on chartreuse and black worms along the riprap at the spillway; striper slow; crappie good around baited holes and in the creeks and around bridge and below the dam on minnows and jigs with limits; white bass slow; catfish good to 43 pounds on trotline baited with shad, several strings to 2 pounds each drifting shrimp near the power plant.

MARTIN CREEK: Water clear, 68 degrees, normal level; black bass good in number in the 16-18 inch range; striper slow; crappie slow; white bass slow; channel catfish good on trotline baited with shrimp or stink bait.

MONTICELLO: Water muddy, 6 inches above normal level; black bass good to 10 pounds on cranks; crappie slow; catfish good to 8 pounds each to 10 fish per string.

MOSS LAKE: Water clear, 54 degrees, 2 feet low; black bass slow; crappie fair to 10 fish per string in deep water on minnows, no limits; white bass slow though there are good numbers of birds working; catfish fair to 6 pounds on chicken liver, shrimp and other natural baits.

MURVAUL: Water clear, 62 degrees, normal level; black bass slow to 3 1/2 pounds on worms and cranks; crappie fair under 1971 bridge; catfish fair to 5 pounds on trotline baited with cut shad and nightcrawlers.

NACOGDOCHES: Water clear, 64 degrees, 3 feet low; black bass good to 7 1/2 pounds on chartreuse and white spinners and crawfish colored Rat-L-Traps; crappie good to 20 fish per string on jigs and minnows in 15-20 feet of water; catfish slow.

PALESTINE: Water clear, 2 feet low; black bass fair to 5 3/4 pounds on jigs in the creeks; striper fairly good to 7 pounds around 155 bridge on cranks; crappie picking up to 2 pounds with a few limits on jigs; white bass fairly good around 155 bridge on cranks; catfish good to 22 pounds on trotline baited with chicken blood and magic baits.

RAY HUBBARD: Water clear, 59 degrees, 34 inches low; black bass fairly good to 7 pounds on Fat Getzits; striper slow; hybrid striper slow; crappie excellent with good numbers of limits on black and chartreuse jigs; white bass good early near power plant discharge on white slabs; catfish good in the same area to 3 pounds with shrimp.

TAWAKONI: Water clear, 59 degrees, 36 inches low; black bass fair to 4 pounds on cranks along the dam; striper fair to 17 1/2 pounds on white jigs and worms; crappie slow; white bass fair to 3 pounds to 8 fish per string on slabs; catfish fair to 5 pounds on shrimp and worms.

TEXOMA: Water clear, 54 degrees, 3 1/2 feet low; black bass good to 5 1/2 pounds on Pig-N-Jig; striper good to 19 pounds on jigs, Sassy Shad and live bait; crappie fair to 10 fish per string on minnows; white bass fair to 10 fish per string on topwaters mostly; catfish good to 38 pounds on cut bait.

WELSH: Water fairly clear, 70 degrees, lake full; black bass good to 9 pounds on topwaters, worms and lizards in shallow water; crappie slow; catfish fair on bream, worms and cut bait on trotlines

#### SOUTHEAST

CONROE: Water clear, 56 degrees, 5 feet low; black bass fair to 9.3 pounds on DB#3s and plum colored worms, black worms with blue tails and smoke worms with blue tails in 4-18 feet of water but most caught around 12 feet; striper slow; white bass slow; crappie slow but local anglers stocked 3000 adult crappie to 1 1/2 pounds. This stocking brings to a total of 55,000 crappie in the lake. Catfish are fair in the channel to 1 1/2 pounds on nightcrawlers and prepared stinkbaits on rod and reel. few trotliners out. Fishing pressure is very light.

HOUSTON COUNTY: Water slightly cloudy around the edges, 54 degrees, 6 inches low; black bass slow to 7 pounds, 2 ounces in 12 to 30 feet of water on black worms, black worms, black jig and eel and spoons; striper slow; crappie good near the dam to 40 fish per boat on minnows in 35 feet of water; catfish fair to 5 pounds on trotline baited with live bait; channel catfish good around marinas on goldfish.

LIVINGSTON: Water clear, 53 degrees, 4 1/2 feet low; black bass spotty on dark worms to 9 1/2 pounds in 12-15 feet of water; striper good to 14 pounds with several limits around Pine Island with surfacing and also around 190 bridge on live shad or bream; crappie good in upper end of lake in White Rock Creek, Betsy Creek and Harmon Creek with easy limits culling, a few limits in mid lake; white bass some fair along with crappie in White Rock Creek; catfish excellent in number and size on trotline baited with shad or live bait; yellow catfish good to 85 pounds, blue catfish good to 45 pounds and channel catfish good to 8 pounds.

RAYBURN: Water clear, 12 1/2 feet below pool level; black bass fair in number to 12 3/4 pounds on DB#22 in 8-10 feet of water and 10 1/4 pounds on a jig in 30 feet of water; striper slow; crappie fair in number but few fishermen out; white bass slow; catfish slow trotline.

TOLEDO BEND: Water clear, 5 feet low; black bass slow to 3 pounds on spinners and chartreuse Rat-L-Traps; striper slow; crappie good numbers to 1 1/2 pounds in the Chicken Coop area on minnows; white bass slow; catfish slow.

#### SOUTH

BRAUNIG: Water murky, 53 degrees, normal level; black bass slow; striper slow; crappie slow; catfish fairly good in number, small in size on worms and chicken livers; corvina slow; redfish slow to 13 pounds, several just above 18 inches on Tony Accetta Spoons.

CALAVERAS: Water murky, 70 degrees, normal level; black bass good in number but too small to keep on Rat-L-Traps and purple worms; striper slow; crappie slow; catfish good to 10 pounds on chicken liver and shad; redfish slow; corvina slow.

CHOKO: Water clear, 2 feet low; black bass slow, some in the 5-7 pound range on dark worms around the humps and dropoffs in the river channels; striper slow; crappie fair with some limits in 20-30 feet of water on minnows; white bass slow; catfish excellent to 9 pounds on cheese bait and blood bait.

COLETO CREEK: Water clear, 58 degrees, 2 feet low; black bass fair to 4 pounds on worms and spinners; striper fairly good to 5 pounds on spoons and minnows; crappie slow; white bass slow; catfish slow.

FALCON: Water clear, 18 inches above conservation level; black bass slow to 5 pounds; striper slow; crappie slow, a few off the dock; white bass fairly good up the river, some limits but some are fairly small, good numbers of birds working; catfish good in numbers on frozen shrimp and sponge baits.

MEDINA: Water clear, 12 feet low; black bass and all fishing slow.

TEXANA: Water muddy except in jungle area, 62 degrees, 1 foot low; black bass good in the jungle area on dark worms and Rat-L-Traps in the jungle area; striper and white bass slow; crappie are very slow; catfish are good on trotlines to 12 pounds on cut bait. Fishing pressure is very light.

#### WEST

FORT PHANTOM HILL: Water clear, 56 degrees, 5 feet low; black bass slow; crappie good to 2 pounds to 10 fish per string on minnows; white bass fairly good on artificials to 7 fish per string; catfish good to 30 pounds on trotlines baited with live bait; catfish on rod and reel good to 5 pounds on liver and worms.

GRANBURY: Water clear, 65 degrees, 1 foot low; black bass good to 6 pounds on spinners and jigs with pork trailers; striper good to 5 pounds on grubs; crappie good with limits on crappie jigs; white bass slow; catfish fair to 8 pounds on trotline on shrimp and perch.

HUBBARD CREEK: Water has some color, black bass fair to 4 pounds, most in the 3-5 pound range on Rat-L-Traps; striper slow; crappie good with limits on minnows; white bass slow; catfish fair to 5

fish per string to 22 pounds, most catfish are in the 5 pound range on cut bait.

OAK CREEK: Water clear, 65 degrees, 3 feet low; black bass fair to 3 pounds on worms; crappie good on minnows to 1 pound with some



limits; white bass slow; catfish slow.

PROCTOR: Water murky, 68 degrees, 3 feet low; black bass slow; striped fair in deep water; crappie slow; catfish fair on trotline. SPENCE: Water clear, 28 feet low; black bass slow; striped good to 14 pounds in good numbers on chartreuse bucktail slabs in 18-25 feet of water, some to 23 pounds trolling Bagley DB#3s with limits; crappie are slow; white bass good with limits on slabs; catfish have been fair on trotlines baited with cut bait and minnows.

#### COASTAL

NORTH SABINE LAKE: Redfish limits with many too large to keep in the mouths of passes on red plastic worms, redfish are feeding best on low tides early; some redfish caught under birds along with specks; some flounder to 1 1/2 pounds in the outfall canal; mud minnows available.

SOUTH SABINE LAKE: Some specks just above keeper size with some limits on pink and white, motor oil, root beer and strawberry touts and black Gillraker worms over the oyster reefs. fishing has been slow when weather bad; redfish fair in number also on the shell reef; flounder good around the bridge on mud minnows and artificials; a few drum, sheepshead and golden croaker; mud minnows and fresh dead shrimp available for bait.

GALVESTON: Trout to 4 pounds, many just above legal size, in West Bay off Green's Cut, along Duncan's Alley and the causeway, most caught on strawberry Kelley Wigglers some live bait shrimp available; some trout along the south side of East Bay, mostly on flood tide some redfish but most are too small to keep, a few to 23 inches; sand trout plentiful in the ship channel live bait shrimp available in some places.

PALACIOS: Redfish catches are fairly good but no limits or oversized fish in Tres Palacios and Carancahua Rivers also Oyster Lake when tides permit; speck catches have been good with limits to 4 pounds on live and dead shrimp as well as artificial lures in all bays and rivers; pier and wade fishing good; live bait shrimp are available but are becoming scarce. Flounder to 2 pounds have been caught on mud minnows goose hunting has been excellent for snows, blues and speckle bellies as well as Canada geese. Good numbers of ducks including mallards, redhead, pintails and teal.

PORT OCONNOR: Redfish good with limits in the 20-22 inch range on artificials, live shrimp; a few keeper sized trout with many throwbacks in Pringle Lake and around Grass Island; jetties producing sheepshead in good numbers. water clear. live bait shrimp available at \$8.50 per quart; flounder good with fairly easy limits on gigs, mostly in the back bay area; fair numbers of duck hunter in the area, most get limits. Offshore producing good numbers of red snapper to 27 pounds with most fish caught around the old Liberty Ships.

ROCKPORT: Good numbers of trout and redfish on Kelley Wigglers around Mud Island, around Aransas Bay, Traylor Island, California Hole. California Hole is hard to get into because of the low water level; a limit of flounder to 2 pounds each on worms and mud minnows some snapper offshore; some live bait shrimp available.

PORT ARANSAS: Sheepshead plentiful up to 10 pounds off the jetties, butterfly drum mostly in the 3 pound range, good number of trout around the causeway; flounder good off the University Piers; tides low fishing pressure light; live bait shrimp, mullet, perch and mud minnows available. Horace Caldwell pier fishing fairly slow due to lack of fishermen; good numbers of whiting, drum fishing unpredictable.

CORPUS CHRISTI: Winds light, fog heavy midweek; a few redfish scattered in Laguna Madre to 28 inches on artificials; big catches of specks mostly just above keeper size on live shrimp, a few throwbacks; flounder very slow. Oso Pier fishermen catching good numbers of sand trout late on the bottom with dead shrimp; wade fishermen catching trout to 6 pounds but most in the 2 pound range along bay front early with live shrimp; few fishermen out midweek. Bob Hall Pier fishermen catching drum in the 8-10 pound class about half way out the pier; some pompano, speckled trout, whiting, croaker, flounder, a few sheepshead and a few shark in the 2 1/2 to 3 foot range. Drift fishermen catching limits of specks in the 15-19 inch range in the Boat Hole; flats producing some fairly good redfish with some too large to keep.

SOUTH PADRE: Redfish and trout have been fairly good but fishing

pressure light; redfish in the 25-28 inch range around Three Islands with a few limits on artificial baits and live shrimp; trout fair in the 16-18 inch range with a few 6 pounders; live bait shrimp available. Geese and ducks still plentiful in the area; however, there are few duck hunters.

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