



Delta Wildlife

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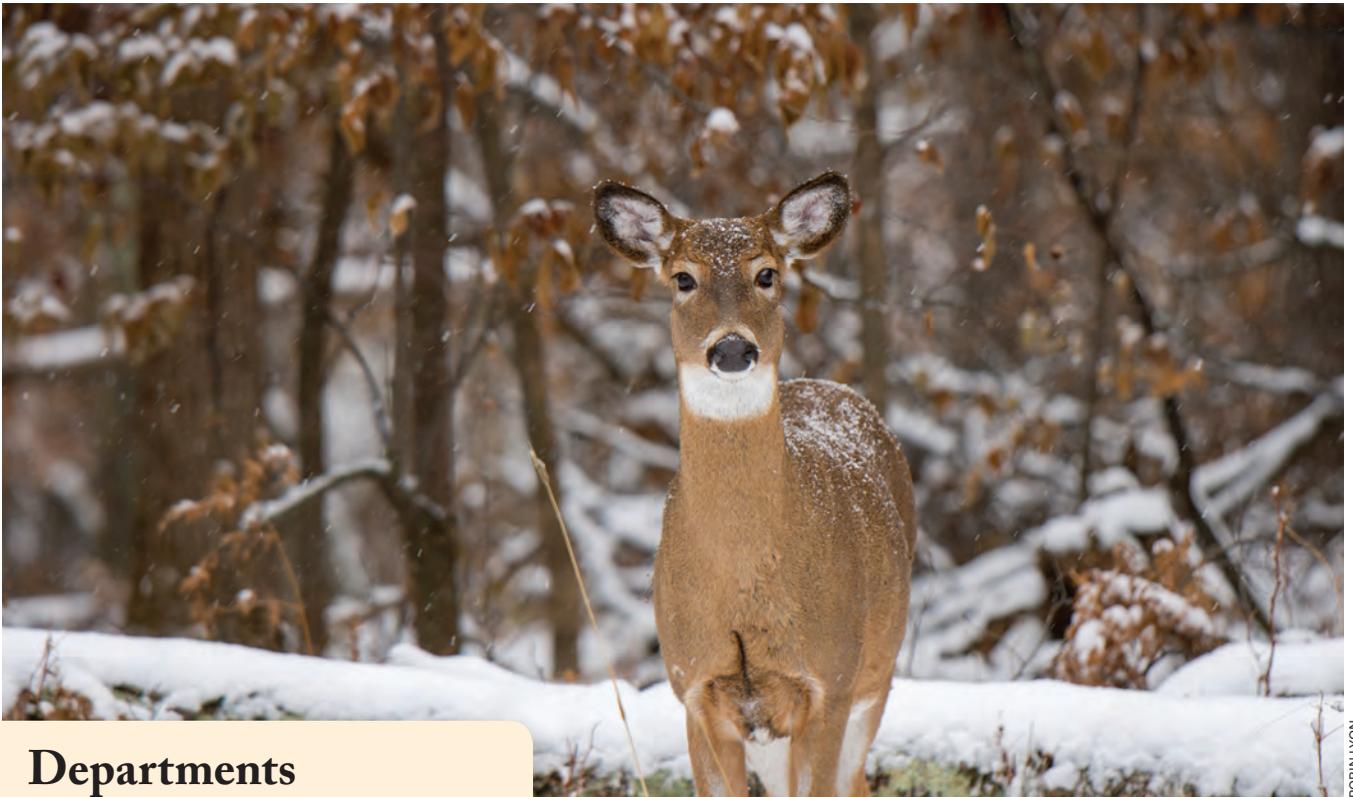


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Cover Photo by Joe Mac Hudspeth

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Tim Huggins Named Executive Director

BY ALLAN GRITTMAN



It is my pleasure to announce that Tim Huggins has been named the new executive director of Delta Wildlife and our sister organization, Delta F.A.R.M.

A full profile of Tim will be featured in the next issue of *Delta Wildlife Magazine*, but I am confident that our members understand the reason he was the unanimous choice of our Search Committee for the position. He understands the role and mission of our organization and articulates a vision for the future that will resonate with all of our members and friends.

Many of you probably already know Tim. He has been with us on staff now for a decade as a very respected and valuable part of the Delta Wildlife and Delta F.A.R.M. team, so he was the obvious choice for this position. We have full confidence that he will work diligently to ensure the growth and stability of this organization.

A native of Greenville and a current resident of Chatham, Tim graduated from Delta State University and has been a vital part of our team since.

We are all enthusiastic about Tim's hire, and I hope that our members will reach out to him at 662-686-3359 or tim@deltawildlife.org.

I want to thank the people who served with me on the Search Committee — Bobby Carson and Austin Jones. They joined the Delta F.A.R.M. leadership — Bubba Simmons, Travis Satterfield, and Mike Sturdivant — in the work it took to obtain a new Executive Director and we thank them. We also received a lot of positive feedback from membership and the Board of Directors of Delta Wildlife.

Thank you for your engagement and support, and I hope that your holidays are filled with big bucks, limits of greenheads and wonderful family time.

Allan Grittman

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PHOTOS BY MSU EXTENSION/GARY BACHMAN

LEFT: Lichen is an unlikely combination of fungi and algae that live in a symbiotic relationship using the tree and shrub bark for support. It does not feed on the plant. MIDDLE: While seen most often on trees and shrubs, lichen will grow on any hard surface outdoors. RIGHT: Although lichen does not harm its host plant, its presence is an indicator that the tree or shrub is under some kind of stress.

Unusual Lichen Does Not Harm Host Plants

DR. GARY R. BACHMAN
MSU Extension Service

A lot has changed during this year of the COVID-19 pandemic. For one thing, there has been a dramatic increase in interest in the home landscape and garden. People are spending more time in the garden and actually taking a look at what's going on.

In fact, gardeners are taking very close looks, which can result in them finding things that some think can only occur in the crazy COVID year. And believe me, I get calls and emails about them all.

One thing that causes the most landscape consternation is lichen. Generally, lichen sightings are most common in January or February, but I've been getting panicked calls all year about this greenish-gray mold that people are afraid is killing their trees and shrubs. It's understandable that this unnatural-looking "stuff" seems to be the cause of the problem.

The good news is that lichen is not the cause of whatever is going on. Let me say that again: Lichen is not killing your plants!

Lichen is an unlikely combination of fungi and algae that live in a symbiotic relationship using the tree and shrub bark for support. They are not feeding on the plant.

Lichen actually can feed itself. The algae act like the leaf of a plant and use photosynthesis to convert sunlight into sugars to supply the food, while the fungi act like plant roots to gather water

and other needed nutrients.

These interesting organisms are found throughout the world. There's always lichen on tree trunks, and these organisms will grow on any hard surface outdoors, from wooden fences to rocks and birdhouses.

While lichen does not harm the host plants, its presence is an indicator that the trees and shrubs are under some kind of stress. This stress could be from temperature or from over- or under-watering.

Stress causes the canopy of the trees and shrubs to thin out, which allows more light to get into the canopy. In response to the higher light levels, the lichen becomes much more noticeable.

Adding to the confusion surrounding lichen is the fact that it can be present in different forms and structures, from wavy folds to hairy-looking balls of fuzzy growth.

If you have lichen on your trees and shrubs, you don't have to remove it. Remember, lichen is not causing any problems.

The best strategy to ward off lichen is to keep your landscape plants in optimum condition. A healthy and well-growing plant will have a canopy that discourages lichen growth. Be sure to follow Mississippi State University Extension Service recommendations for watering, fertilization and other best management practices. Light pruning of damaged branches encourages new branch growth, which, in turn, helps to establish a denser canopy.

Delta Wildlife Board Member Highlight

Bill Ryan Tabb

BY AMY TAYLOR

Delta Wildlife Board Member Bill Ryan Tabb has enjoyed the natural resources of the Delta for a lifetime. Raised in Rosedale, his first hunting experiences were dove hunting in sunflower fields on the family farm with his dad. Soon after, he was introduced to duck hunting and since his dad was also the principal at Rosedale High School, Bill Ryan had the opportunity to frequently hunt with legendary Rosedale football coach and avid duck hunter, Leland Young.

"I learned to love the great outdoors at an early age, from dove and duck hunting and later to deer hunting at Beulah Island," he recalls. Still a member of Beulah Island Hunting Club, Bill Ryan reflects on a lifetime of hunting there with his dad, the camaraderie of friends and the simple quiet time to contemplate life and just enjoy the moment. He comments, "I still love to hunt but I find myself at the stage where I just enjoy watching my son, Collins, and my nephew, Daniel Dye, and their friends hunt. I will admit I still get buck fever when they have a successful hunt, but mostly I'm just the photographer!"

Bill Ryan received a degree in Ag Business from Mississippi State University in 1996. Throughout college, he had the opportunity to experience several jobs, including an internship in Washington, D.C., working under Dr. Mark Keenum in Senator Thad Cochran's office, but he ultimately made the decision to return home to the Delta and join his family's farming operation in Bolivar County. He explains, "I was just drawn back home to farm because I love being outdoors (except for July and August!), and I had the opportunity to be my own boss.

"I've been connected to Delta Wildlife as well as Delta Council and Delta F.A.R.M. for years. They have been instrumental in leading conservation efforts throughout the state and addressing the devastation of flooding in the South Delta, not to mention their hard work in controlling nutria and feral hog issues." He adds, "And I've personally witnessed their conservation efforts here at home. For instance, at Beulah Island, Delta Wildlife has installed water structures to enhance our duck habitat, and on our farm, they've helped guide the installation of our pollinator plots for honeybees and provided assistance in planning, proper management and maintenance.

"We farmers have to be conservationists." He adds, "It is our responsibility to leave the land in better shape than we found it, whether we're farming or restoring and preserving our wildlife habitat."

Currently the Chairman of the Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board, Bill Ryan is also a board member of Beulah Island Hunting Club. Previously, he served as president of the Bayou Academy



Board of Directors and as a board member of Delta Council, the Rice Council and the Mississippi Soybean Association. He has also been a member of the Mississippi Farm Bureau county board for 21 years, having served as its president as well as on its Board of Directors. A member of the First Baptist Church of Cleveland, Bill Ryan is married to the former Leslie Collins of Cleveland, and they are the parents of two children, Collins and Annsley.

"I've had people outside of the Delta ask why we live here, and I tell them how fortunate we are. This is home—a place where our roots are firmly planted and a place small enough that we can develop close personal friendships and uphold the values that have been instilled in us for a lifetime," Bill Ryan comments. "The Lord has also blessed us with great resources such as our rich soil, and we have to be good stewards of our blessings, preserving the land for our children and the generations to come."

CWD Update, Rules and Regulations

CWD SAMPLE DROP OFF LOCATIONS AND MANDATORY SAMPLING DAYS

During the 2020–2021 hunting season Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) will continue efforts to monitor for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) within white-tail deer populations. This year, hunters will have access to 46 freezer drop off locations to submit samples for testing.

Hunters should be aware that this hunting season will include mandatory sampling weekends for three separate regions of the state on three separate weekends. During these weekends, temporary freezer sites and physical check stations will be made available in addition to permanent freezer locations.

Following the discovery of CWD, Mississippi adopted CWD Management zones that have regulations pertaining to deer carcass transportation and supplemental feeding.

CWD MANAGEMENT ZONES (SEE MAP)

North MS Management Zone:

- » Includes Alcorn, Benton, Carroll, Desoto, Grenada, Lafayette, Leflore, Lee, Marshall, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Union and Yalobusha counties

Issaquena Management Zone:

- » All portions of Warren County
- » All portions of Issaquena and Sharkey counties defined as:
 - All areas east of the Mississippi River
 - All areas south of Highways 14 and 16
 - Areas west of the Yazoo River

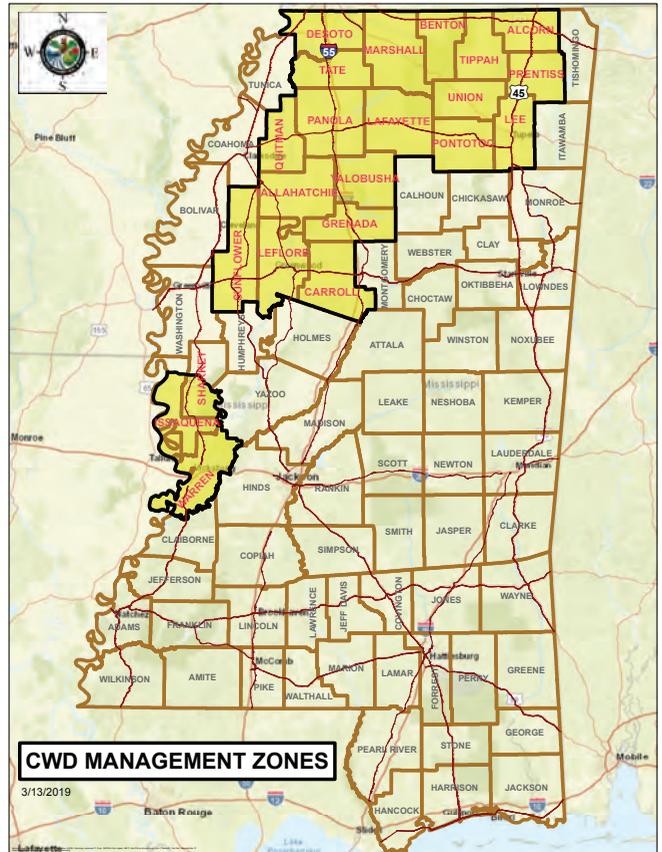
REGULATIONS

1) Carcasses may not be transported outside of any CWD Management Zone. Research has shown that decomposed carcasses of infected animals can also contribute to transmission when prions bind to soil and plant material. Thus, movement of carcasses may introduce CWD into previously uninfected areas. Any harvested deer may be



taken directly to a taxidermist or meat processor within the CWD Management Zone. Only the below products may leave a zone:

- » Cut/wrapped meat (commercially or privately)
- » Deboned meat
- » Hides with no head attached
- » Finished taxidermy
- » Antlers with no tissue attached



- » Cleaned skull plates (no brain tissue)
- » Cleaned skulls (no lymphoid or brain tissue)

2) Supplemental feeding is banned in all CWD Management Zones (salt licks, mineral licks and feeders). Direct contact with prions is the most effective means of transmitting CWD. Research indicates saliva may have the highest concentration of prions. Thus, to minimize concentration of deer and potential spread of CWD, supplemental feeding is banned within all CWD Management Zones.

For more information CWD in Mississippi and submitting CWD samples visit www.mdwfp.com/cwd.

2020-2021 MANDATORY SAMPLING DAYS (SEE MAP)

During the 2020–2021 hunting season, all deer harvested in the respective counties and dates listed below must be submitted for CWD sampling by 10 p.m. on the day of harvest. Permanent freezers will be available during these weekends, as well as the below respective temporary freezer sites and physical check stations.

Hunters should preserve the head with at least 6 inches of neck attached. Antlers and skull plate may be removed without affecting the lymph nodes used for testing. If antlers are not removed, they cannot be returned to the hunter.

CWD Zones

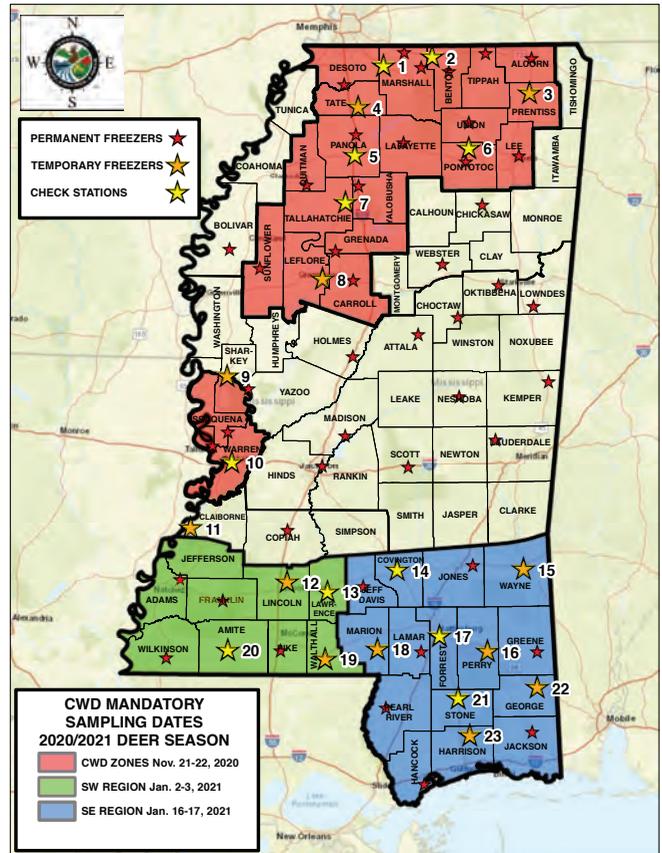
Nov. 21–22, 2020

TEMPORARY FREEZERS

- ▶ Prentiss County Ag Center
2301 N 2nd Street, Booneville, MS 38829
- ▶ Tate County Barn
18670 Hwy 4, Senatobia, MS 38668
- ▶ Fire Department #4
308 MS Hwy 7, Greenwood, MS 38930
- ▶ USFS Office
68 Frontage Rd, Rolling Fork, MS 39159

CHECK STATIONS

- ▶ Byhalia VFD
114 MS-309 N, Byhalia, MS 38611
- ▶ North Benton VFD
3491 Hwy 7, Lamar, MS 38642
- ▶ Batesville Civic Center
290 Civic Center Dr, Batesville, MS 38606
- ▶ Ecu Fire Department
154 Main Street, Ecu, MS 38841
- ▶ MDOT Maintenance HQ
32950 Hwy 32, Tillatoba, MS 38961
- ▶ Communications Specialist
760 Hwy 61 North, Vicksburg, MS 39183





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Game Cameras: A Management Tool for White-Tailed Deer?

BY BILL HAMRICK

*Senior Extension Associate, Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Aquaculture
Mississippi State University*

White-tailed deer management involves more than just managing habitats and planting supplemental food plots. Deer management “done right” requires managing populations as well. However, population management is not as simple as just maintaining deer numbers within carrying capacity of the land. Estimates of deer population characteristics and developing good harvest management strategies based on this information also are important for maintaining a healthy and productive deer herd.

So, how does one go about estimating deer population characteristics? Much of the information needed to make management decisions regarding deer populations can be gathered from a properly conducted game camera survey. What began as a cool gadget for photographing bucks and monitoring food plots or game trails has since become an important survey instrument for deer managers. Deer population characteristics, such as buck-doe ratio, fawn crop and age structure, provides biologists and deer managers with insight into the demographics and productivity of a particular deer population. Biologists then use this information to make recommendations that help landowners or hunting clubs reach their management goals.

Buck-doe ratio is simply the number of adult males compared to the number of adult females in a deer population. Deer populations with buck-doe ratios skewed heavily toward females (five adult does for every one adult buck), is a strong indicator of over-harvest of bucks and under-harvest of does. Such a heavily skewed buck-doe ratio might also mean there is an overpopulation problem. Increased doe harvest would thereby reduce forage intake and allow the habitat to provide more food per individual deer, which would improve deer quality and productivity.

Annual fawn crop estimates are a good way to gauge deer herd productivity or recruitment. This information helps form the basis for harvest recommendations. For example, if one of your management objectives is to stabilize population growth, then adult deer harvest should be about equal to that of the previous year’s fawn crop.

What if the estimated fawn crop numbers are low in proportion to adult doe numbers in the population? Low fawn recruitment can be a result of several different factors or a combination of factors. Habitat conditions may be poor as a result of overpopulation or from lack of habitat management. Poor habitat can translate to poor physiological condition of does, which negatively impacts their re-





production and/or fawn survival. Maybe fawn predation rates are high because of inadequate fawning cover or too many predators, such as coyotes.

The age structure of a deer population is simply the proportion of animals in each age class (1 year-old, 2 years-old, etc.). If producing larger-antlered bucks is one of your management goals, then knowing something about buck age structure is critical. What most deer managers like to see in a buck population is an even age structure, which is a somewhat equal number of young and older bucks. An even age structure indicates that young bucks are being produced and many of them are surviving to reach the 3- to 5-year-old age classes. On the other hand, a deer population that consists mostly of 1- to 2-year-old bucks and very few 3-year-old and older bucks indicates many bucks are being harvested at a young age. While nutrition is certainly a factor in antler growth and development, the best formula for producing large antlers is to allow young bucks to reach those older age classes.

When compared with other survey methods, game camera surveys provide the best potential for a reliable, cost-effective method to estimate deer population characteristics. What's more, using trail cameras to gain valuable information about the deer herd you are managing is a lot of fun! In addition to deer photos, you will photograph a lot of other interesting critters. For more information about deer surveys, see our Extension publication 2788, *Conducting Camera Surveys to Estimate Population Characteristics of White-Tailed Deer*. Also, before conducting a deer survey, be sure and check with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks regarding regulations and required permits.

EAT MORE RICE... HAVE MORE SHRIMP.



**Rice makes shrimp better...
and not just on your plate.**

Mississippi rice farmers are doing their part to ensure that Gulf shrimp populations are healthy and plentiful. How might you ask? Mississippi rice producers are working to reduce the amount of nutrients that leave their fields. This ultimately helps to reduce Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico, creating a healthier and more productive fishery.



Trapping: The Fading Footprint

BY PATRICK MCINTIRE

Trapping has always been a part of man's life dating back to prehistoric years.

Originally, trapping was used for subsistence and survival. During this period nothing from ones' catch was wasted. The prey was turned into food to feed families and villagers. The entrails were used for bait on the next set of traps. The hides were made into clothing and shelter. Bones were forged into tools and weapons.

As the world advanced and times began to change, so did the art of trapping. Trapping turned from a survival skill into a business venture for many. Value was placed on the hides and furs of many creatures and, depending on the species, the values were more than could be imagined at the time. The bartering of resources for furs drove man into creating territories and borders to establish their personal trap lines. The fur trade was soon seen as a great occupation if you were in the right part of the country. Unfortunately, due to the high prices on furs, many animals were taken for their hides alone and strictly for profit.



Although trapping led some men to be extremely successful during the fur trade era, this also led to huge decreases in the populations of targeted species. While beaver were, in the Mississippi Delta, the most plentiful targeted species due to the water ways and wetlands, other animals were also trapped for their furs such as: fox, mink, bear, skunks, otter and deer. And, believe it or not, the Mississippi Game & Fish (precursor to the current MDWFP) actually re-introduced beaver back into Mississippi to establish viable populations.

Trapping became less essential as new skills were developed and possibilities discovered. The fur business slowly gave way as agricultural technologies developed and logging took over the marketplace. When people understood that one seed could make many seeds and many seeds had much worth, the business of fur trapping and its footprint began to fade across the country. Industrialization began to expand, and technologies began to rise while the need of trapping was on a downward slide. The introduction of synthetic fabrics, and farms dedicated to raising animals that were traditionally targeted by trappers rang the death knell for the age-old skill.

What was once the main source of living for many quickly became just a hobby or conversational past time for a few. With the lack of trappers taking part in the traditions of the past, the population of many fur bearing animals once again began to rise.

For those who still take part in the targeting of specific animals, hoping to catch them in a carefully laid trap, it has become more of a sport or hobby. It is done mostly by individuals seeking that one-on-one interaction with Mother Nature and to protect their investments.

There are many obstacles modern trappers face when trying to capture their prey. Understanding an animal's habits and habitat are the two easiest to comprehend. Yet that same behavior and the reasoning for it are also the two most problematic to understand. While some trappers are able gain the needed knowledge to help target their catch, some never do. Nevertheless, the ones that never can quite grasp the "whys" and "why nots" of the animal's actions can still enjoy the chase and the elusiveness of their prey.

Modern day trapping in the Mississippi Delta is most commonly used to mitigate areas and properties of nuisance animals and as a land management tool. Trapping can be and is used to manage habitat areas and aid in the growth of other desired wildlife. A vast number of hunting clubs and management areas utilize trapping to help their habitat areas thrive and help the population of many other game animals increase.

These same management principles are also applied in the agricultural and timber industries. Protection is the service that trapping provides to the farmer and timber owners. The prehistoric trade protects the farmer's time, investments and livelihood. The same goes for the timber industry. Trapping helps protect their future profits and lifestyles. As a trapper myself, it would be a safe statistic to state that 90 percent of all of the individuals that I have contact with and/or assist with control measures are farmers and timber owners.

Beaver are easily the number one targeted animal that I am asked to assist with throughout the state, followed by hogs. Beaver, a semiaquatic rodent, are said to cause on average of \$100 million



PATRICK MCINTIRE

in damages to farm and timber lands annually, while hogs trail the beaver's devastation by claiming on average \$60 million in damages a year. These damages are not contained to any certain land types. They range from woody to wetland, from hilly terrain to flat lands and from public property to privately owned tracts.

By gaining knowledge from working in a large range of habitats and by furthering my skills by facing off with different pest animals that I chase, the more successful I have become in capturing my targeted prey. Because of this success, more crops can be planted and harvested, and more timber tracts are able to thrive and grow tall. Artificial high water is lowered, less ground is wasted, more cambium lining is left alone and ground is saved from becoming a rooting pot and pigsty.

These skills are not only effective in the agricultural and wooded areas. There is always that special need to assist in apprehending critters in urban neighborhood and rural dwelling settings. There is also the occasional need for dispatching of coyotes and foxes stalking house pets, hungry raccoons raiding chicken coops and garbage cans and the random otter attempting to make a den under someone's home.

It seems even though the footprint of trapping is fading with the times, the heel is still visible. The trade is still known, and the need is still relevant for others who need it to reach their goals in today's market. Trapping is still used for what one can call survival but is just in a different magnitude from what it once was. As long as there is a need, there will be a calling, and as long as there is a calling, the footprint can never fade away.

Patrick McIntire is an owner/operator of his animal damage control business "Precision Trapping" and works throughout the Mississippi Delta. Contact him at precisiontrapping@yahoo.com or (662) 336-7714.

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Delta Wildlife Member Highlight

Meredith Allen

BY AMY TAYLOR

A native of Indianola, Meredith Allen's entire life has evolved around agriculture as well as the abundance of wildlife in the Mississippi Delta.

He attended school in Indianola until 8th grade and spent the following years at McCallie School in Chattanooga, Tennessee. After graduation from McCallie, he attended college at the University of Mississippi, where he earned his Bachelor of Business Administration in 1974.

"After I graduated from Ole Miss, I came home to join my family's farming operation in Sunflower County, but plans have a way of changing," he laughs. "That fall, you might say, I harvested a crop I didn't plant, and the following spring, I planted a crop I didn't harvest." Soon after Meredith came home to farm, he began working with V & M Cotton Company (later ContiCotton) where he served as Vice President of Marketing for that company.

A decade later in 1985, Meredith joined Staple Cotton Cooperative Association (Staplcotn) and Staple Cotton Discount Corporation (Stapldiscount) headquartered in Greenwood, Mississippi. After 33 years of service, he retired from Staplcotn as President and CEO in 2018. Meredith, however, continues to work in the agriculture industry as the chairman of AMCOT, a trade association representing the combined interests of

America's major cotton marketing cooperatives. He explains, "I've been involved in agriculture all my life, either farming or working for farmers. I love it and wouldn't want to do anything else!"

An avid outdoorsman, Meredith grew up dove, deer and rabbit hunting. "My first memories of hunting doves and rabbits were with my dad, Julian Allen. Due to so many soil conservation measures at that time, rabbits were in abundance. I remember it was much like dove hunting; we'd all surround a field, the tractors with bush hogs would start running, and we'd start shooting." He adds, "My first deer hunting experience was with my uncle, David Allen, who took us with him to Hurricane Point adjacent to the Mississippi River. There are some fond memories there as well. It really wasn't until I moved to Greenwood in 1985 that I was introduced to duck hunting, which is now my favorite."

A member of Backwater Brake in Money, Mississippi, Meredith has turned to Delta Wildlife for their expertise in waterfowl management. He comments, "The Delta Wildlife organization is an invaluable resource for hunters and landowners. Not only have they installed in-ground structures to enhance our duck habitat at Back-



Meredith with longtime friend and hunting buddy, Dr. Charles Nause, after a successful morning in the blind.

water Brake, they were here just recently trapping hogs for us. They harvested 25 to 30 hogs in just one small field. The feral hogs have caused such devastation to our wetland acreage, but Delta Wildlife's efforts are helping keep them under control.

"I've been a member of Delta Wildlife since its inception," Meredith says. "With their vast knowledge and expertise, their guidance is vital to the preservation of our abundant natural resources. And it's not only about the services they provide, but also the educational

programs for our children who represent our future generations."

In addition to membership in Delta Wildlife, Meredith was previously a Director and a past Vice President of the National Cotton Council. He is currently a Director of Delta Council. He has served on the Board of The SEAM as well as the cotton committees of both the National Council of Textile Orga-

nizations and the Intercontinental Exchange.

He was also a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Agribusiness Industry Council. He served as a Board member and Chairman of the Memphis Branch Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis from 2003 to 2009 and Past President and Past Chairman of Cotton Council International.

Meredith and his wife, the former Margaret Capps of Cleveland, are the parents of three children—Meredith, Jr. (Kimberly), Alinda Guynes (Sumpter McGowin II), and Charles (Ann Elize)—and are grandparents of eight.

"My father-in-law, Charlie Capps [Mississippi House of Representatives 1972-2005], was such an inspiration to me. He loved the Delta and worked tirelessly to improve the Delta's natural resources for all residents to enjoy—whether on private or public land." Meredith continues, "Like Charlie, I'm very thankful for God's beautiful creation, and feel that we all have an obligation to protect it and pass it on to future generations. We also have a responsibility to teach our children to appreciate and take care of what our Creator has given us. This is a tremendous blessing that is available to everyone, and it's a very special part of the Mississippi Delta."

Doc's Duck Poppers

Below, Meredith shares a favorite duck recipe from the kitchen of Dr. Nause:

- ½ duck breast, quartered
- Sliced jalapeno pepper
- Sliced bacon
- Wishbone Italian Dressing

Place sliced Jalapeno pepper on either side of duck breast. Wrap with ½ slice of bacon secured with toothpick. Place in large pan. Fill pan with Wishbone Italian Dressing to cover. Refrigerate for 24 hours. Smoke on charcoal grill until bacon is done.

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Conservation Tracker

BY SAM FRANKLIN

This year has been climatically closer to normal as compared to the previous three years. There have been periodic rain events, of course, and we've had more hurricanes than in recorded history. But in general, the late summer and early fall dried out like it is supposed to. Most producers had dry harvest conditions, and now everyone's mindset is changing to recreational and hunting gear. This sentiment can be further validated by the annual migration of side by sides, small tractors and other necessary hunting camp equipment. Here are a few items for your to do list as you are de-wasping your stands and doing other chores around the camp.

Deer

Make sure to view and comply with the statewide CWD regulations. The mandates are changing all the time according to how sample results come in. The county you live in could be different than the one you hunt. So be aware.

Follow all feeding protocols as they could have changed drastically with CWD regulations. Also, be aware of the regulations as to how the supplemental feed can be administered, i.e. from a spin feeder and not piled on the ground and other specifications.

Clean your jaw bones thoroughly as the harvests come in. The cleaner your samples are, the less time your consultant has to wait to handle them and the sooner your data will come back. I've been told by some DMAP consultants that they won't even touch them until August when they have completely dried out.

Also make sure your data tags are securely fastened to the jaw bone. If they become separated, it's no problem for just one (that can be matched up) but if it's two or more, it gets difficult and ultimately diminishes the integrity of the data.

Ducks

As we've had a historical hurricane count this year, it makes duck hole preparation and management difficult. If you timed planting, fertilization and spraying with the rains, then you're in really good shape. But if you're like most people, maybe you got some of the work done and a flood came from one of the many hurricanes. That's especially hard to manage for those implementing moist soil management. Landowners almost have to inventory each flush of growth as they come and apply the right management regime until the desired plant canopies and shades out undesirables. It's not a one and done process.

Most duck hunters know certain duck species like particular depths of water. Watch your risers as the season goes, not only for

leaks. Once the winter rains set in, you may get too much water for your intended target species. An obstruction may plug your riser and ultimately make the hole too deep for dabbling ducks, if that's what you're after, so you will need to either clear the obstruction or have an alternative outlet to keep your hole at the desired level.

One of the most important things to remember is don't get frustrated. I see landowners that take on too much and then get frustrated and give up, myself included. But I have learned that if you identify one thing and say, "I'm going to get that done today or this



year no matter what and focus on that task," it's not long and you will have your place shaped up and have a real sense of accomplishment.

Hogs

As always shoot 'em if you got 'em.

For those unaware, Delta Wildlife, in conjunction with USDA Wildlife Services, have an ongoing hog damage abatement program in the South Delta with hopes of expanding it to additional areas in the future. Should you need technical assistance, please feel free to call the office at 662-686-3370.

Going into this hunting season is an unprecedented time with lock downs from the summer, current social distancing practices, personal protective equipment and just a general uncertainty of what the future holds. But, that's what huntin' camps are for. To have a place to escape all the world's pressures is truly a luxury. People need to decompress and that is true throughout history, from kings and rulers to the common man. So get out and go to your escape, and enjoy all that Mississippi has to offer.

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Firearm Safety

BY ROBERT DALE

As hunting season is now upon us, we should all review some basics about hunter safety that we should already know. Especially if you are fortunate enough to be introducing a new hunter, child or adult, to the shooting/hunting sports, teaching and emphasizing firearm safety is of the utmost importance.

In my emergency medicine career, I have seen my share of gunshot victims. Some victims of careless and needless accidents remain vividly in my memory, a few involving children.

One little boy presented with the proverbial BB in the eye from a careless playmate. Another victim, a 12-year-old child came in with a BB in his chest, thankfully not puncturing his lung. This boy was engaged in a “play” BB gun fight with two other kids. The worse thing about it was his mom was aware of this activity and allowed it to happen. That fact landed her before the Department of Human Services.



Then there was the young son-in-law who was shot in his lower legs while rabbit hunting. His father-in-law told him to go into a briar thicket to see if he could flush a rabbit. In doing so the young man caused a rustling in the thicket that his father-in-law said he thought was caused by a rabbit. So, he blindly shot at the sound peppering him with 6-shot pellets in both lower legs, thankfully not serious, even though painful for the victim.

The worse “accidental” gunshot was a man shot at close range during a turkey hunt. He and his young son were leaving the field in mid-morning in full daylight and talking in a normal tone of voice when he was knocked off his feet by a shotgun blast. The shooter turned out to be a poacher on the property where only the victim had permission to hunt. The child thankfully was spared, except for the emotional trauma of his dad being shot, a trauma that caused him to never go hunting again. Thankfully, they were brought to our ER by the poacher who told us he thought he was shooting a turkey. The dad sustained several shot pellets in the left side of his face, barely missing his eye. He had shots in his left lung collapsing it, and one shot severed one of the arteries in his neck which supplies blood to the brain. We were able to stabilize him and transfer him to a trauma center. He eventually recovered but reiterated to me years later the event ruined his hunting relationship with his son.

Now, as you read these accounts, please do not think you are too safe afield. Picture yourself in these victims’ places and think how a senseless firearm accident can ruin your or someone else’s life.

Without question shooting sports are becoming more popular. The National Shooting Sports Foundation, NSSF, reports nearly five million first time gun buyers in 2020, 40 percent of whom are women. Whatever the reason for these purchases, gun safety should always be a priority. NSSF, among other organizations, promotes firearm safety courses for beginning shooters and states require hunting safety courses for hunting license purchases. As a result, there has been a decline in preventable/accidental firearm deaths,

now statistically approximately one percent of all gun deaths.

Go to the NSSF website for several articles of interest. (www.nssf.org/safety/lit) To summarize the Foundation’s 10 recommended safety points, especially important for instructing beginner firearm handlers:

- ▶▶ Always point the gun muzzle in a safe direction. Upward is usually safe.
- ▶▶ Firearms should be unloaded when not in use.
- ▶▶ Do not rely on a gun’s safety. (I am aware of a child who thought he would check to see if his shotgun’s safety were engaged by pulling the trigger. The gun fired, thankfully not injuring anyone.)
- ▶▶ When shooting, be sure of your target AND what is beyond it.
- ▶▶ Use correct ammunition.
- ▶▶ If your gun fails to fire, handle it with extreme care. Take it to a gunsmith if necessary.
- ▶▶ Always use eye and ear protection when shooting.
- ▶▶ Be sure the barrel is clear of obstruction before shooting.
- ▶▶ Do not alter or modify your firearm and have it serviced regularly.
- ▶▶ Learn the mechanical and handling characteristics of your firearm.

I would also add not to enter a ground blind or climb into a tree stand with a loaded firearm. And never handle any firearm when under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Always treat every firearm as if it is loaded!

In closing, I reiterate firearm safety cannot be overemphasized. Shooting sports are wonderful recreation opportunities. Invite someone, a novice shooter you know, to join you on the practice range or on a hunting adventure. Get them involved and be sure to teach and insist to your new shooter firearm safety.

Be safe!

Early Winter Bass Fishing

BY PARKER FREW

As the leaves start to change and the air begins to cool, anglers all around switch their mindsets about bass fishing. A lot of anglers will slowly recede back into camo and start their descent into the deer stands in hopes of bagging the first deer of the year. While some anglers slowly transition back to the hunting camp, others begin to truly get excited about the months to come. Fall bass fishing can be absolutely phenomenal all the way into the early winter months. Bass will also begin to transition just as hunters do. Colder weather and shorter days signal a feeding frenzy is on the way. While the boat ramp may appear thin compared to just weeks earlier, don't be fooled. This can mean the whole lake is all yours and they are biting everywhere.

Stay on top of them

To me this can be one of the most important aspects of this time of year. I love running down the lake on the first cold morning with a north wind and thinking the bass should be right on the bank feeding everywhere. More times than not, this is not the case. One thing I try to tell myself day in and day out is that a bass does not have the internet. He doesn't know that in 14 days there is a random cold front headed in during the first part of October. All a bass knows is that it has been a long hot summer, and he is still worn out. Bass will remain in their summer homes until the water temperatures truly begin to fall. I tend to follow this rule strongly when I am targeting larger fish. There will always be "bank runners," as I call them, that live in shallow water 365 days a year.

While these fish can prove to be very predictable and fun to catch, they are not the biggest fish in the lake. A large fish needs to have optimum water temperatures that hold an adequate amount of oxygen to survive. I see a lot of people that shy away this time of year because they believe that fishing has gotten really tough. In a way that is true if you are not where the fish are. Finding the exact location and stage that bass are in is crucial this time of year. Be ready for them to make their move shallow, but know that it may take a little longer than you believe.

Change your presentation

Summer tends to push us towards using slow moving methodical baits that will trigger a big lazy lethargic bass into biting. While this is pure dynamite during the summer, it may not be the best choice as winter approaches. Fish will begin to focus intensively on bait fish

this time of year. Shad will begin to push shallow as the nights get longer and the water cools. Bass will slowly be more willing to chase a bait a longer distance than they would just weeks before. Baits such as a crankbait, spinnerbait, lipless crankbait or a topwater really begin to shine during this period. These will offer the image of a bait fish while also making key moves that will trigger them into biting. Most of these baits can be fished from 20 feet deep all the way to just 1 or 2 feet deep with slight variations. Another thing that is very critical about the lineup of baits is the ability to cover a lot of water. Moving baits allows you to locate a school of fish much faster than slowly probing with others.

Be ready for changes in the water

Just as fast as fall fish can turn on, they can turn off. Around December to January you will generally see the fall pattern dwindle away. A large storm system such as a major cold front during this time of year can really change things up. As the water begins to get below 55 degrees, bass will become once again very lethargic and slow down. This is when you will need to change your approach when it comes to your bait choice and your retrieve. Fish will begin to suspend in columns of the water that tend to suit them best. In the south this section of water tends to be around 5-8 feet in most lakes. Just deep enough to avoid drastic changes in water temperature, but shallow enough to still be able to absorb the warm sunlight. This is when baits such as a jerk bait or a flat sided crankbait really begin to shine. The jerk bait can be worked slow enough to entice a strike while still maintaining the baitfish profile. When it comes to the flat sided crankbait, what makes this bait work so well is the thin profile that allows it to have a really subtle tight action. When the bass get cold, so do the baitfish. Small baitfish such as shad begin to be very slow with their moves. You will quit seeing huge schools of shad on the bank frantically running from their predators. Slowing your retrieve and making key stops or twitches are now more important than ever.

All in all, fall and winter can be some of the best days of your life when it comes to bass fishing if you approach it the right way. Slow down just a little before you head to the base of the tree or to the duck blind and utilize the patterns of a fall feeding frenzy on the lake. Keep the bass located, tie on your favorite spinnerbait, be aware of the subtle changes and you will absolutely forget about that big deer on camera. These are the days where your dream of that huge fish can come true all without the sweat and sunburn of the summer.



Day in The Life

BY STEELE HENDERSON

Delta Wildlife Intern

Mississippi State University Senior studying Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

A day in the life of a Delta Wildlife nuisance and invasive species intern can be hectic but exciting at times. The two programs that my co-workers and I operate under consist of assisting landowners with feral swine population control using electronic cellular linked traps and working with catfish producers throughout the Mississippi Delta with the harassment of Double-Crested Cormorants using pyrotechnics. These programs are in place to combat the damage done by these animals to our natural ecosystems. Thousands of acres of crop lands, land placed into the conservation programs through Delta Wildlife, such as the Wetland Reserve Program are heavily harmed. We battle daily against the feral swine and the cormorants as they migrate from the neotropics. The cormorants make quite an impact on the aquaculture industry as they can essentially eat hundreds of metric tons of fish meant for the market. In some situations, working as an agent of the fish farm using lethal take is necessary due to the cormorants habituating to our harassment techniques.

If you love what you do, it is not really work, in my opinion.

As I stated earlier, days can be hectic especially as the migration of cormorants begin and these two programs begin to collide, quite literally turning it into a 24-hour workday. One of my most memorable days began at 6:30 a.m. I traveled to three different trap sites in three different counties across the Delta to rebait the traps and replace the batteries in two of the traps while troubleshooting the other for signal issues. This took up a large majority of the daylight hours on this day. Upon arrival back home, I began monitoring the eight different traps that we had activated across multiple counties. It was around 1:45 a.m. the following day when a large sounder of feral swine appeared on one of our trap locations. Once the trap is dropped, I followed protocol which is to be at the trap location within an hour and a half to humanely dispatch the animals as fast, safe and efficiently as possible.

Ensuing this process, I reset the trap and properly disposed of the swine in a pre-designated dump location. On the way back home, a lone boar came into another trap location at 3:45 a.m., which I also dropped on and proceeded to follow the same protocol as previously stated. This is the part where it gets a little hectic as the programs converge, requiring rescheduling and additional planning. I received a phone call from an aquaculture facility that had a large influx of double crested cormorants which had descended on their catfish ponds. At this point, 24 hours later, my intended destination was altered from home to the catfish ponds where I harassed cormorants until 11 a.m. So, 24 hours later with hundreds of miles traveled, I can finally lay my head down and hope for sleep before the next call comes in.

Many people may read this and think that we may be out of our mind, but if you love what you do, it is not really work, in my opinion. This internship has not only allowed me to do what I love; it has also allowed me to gain and sharpen some valuable skills such as



time management, organization, communication and adaptability. I would not change this job for the world.

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Traditional Bowhunting

BY STEELE HENDERSON
Delta Wildlife Intern

As an avid deer hunter, I become restless as October gets near. October 1 is the opener for deer archery season. The use of archery equipment in Mississippi bow hunting has always been a huge passion of mine, as it is more of a challenge. To be successful using archery equipment you must understand your target species to allow you to close the distance to make an ethical shot ensuring a humane kill. This year I decided to do something that I have been

considering for years, which is to further challenge myself by using strictly traditional archery equipment, basically the bow and a string. It was not until my first week into the season that I realized how much of a challenge I was facing.

I began the season with the mindset I have every year. I needed to locate fresh signs in an unpressured area as I hunt public land a majority of the time. The signs could be in a number of places ranging from oak flats, creek crossings, pinch points or travel corridors between bedding and feeding areas. A week into the season I was fortunate to have multiple encounters with deer. It was a couple of small bucks and a few does, but none were in range for my traditional equipment. I am comfortable shooting a target at 30-35 yards; however, 20 yards and below is my comfort range when harvesting a live animal. The reason is because they could jump to string at a distance, any further than 20 yards could cause the point of impact from the arrow to be altered from my aim. This could result in a wounded animal.



After the first week of hunting, I began to think about what I needed to do to be successful with my traditional equipment. I decided to take the knowledge I already had and downsize it. To explain, I needed to locate and focus on areas with micro funnels or pinches in thicker areas, in theory, the deer will be in range. I put this technique to the test, and it was deemed successful on October 15. A doe was harvested at 13 yards. The following day another doe. The feeling of a traditional gear game harvest is more of an adrenaline rush than any other type of hunting I have done. This is largely because you must become closer with the animal you are targeting, both physically and mentally. I believe the trick is to not only look at the big picture of the landscape but to include all of the micro features of the landscape in order to be successful with traditional equipment (such as a travel corridor or funnel between a bedding and feeding area). Once located, find a smaller feature within that larger feature of the landscape. This is what I am referring to as a micro feature, whether it be a creek drainage, small ridge, or even a fallen tree, that you can tell is going to influence the travel pattern of the deer.

The mental aspect plays a huge role, too. Remain calm or you will fall victim to target panic. Target panic is overthinking the moment you have been waiting for hours on and ruining your shot even though you have practiced hundreds of times. Steps I take to keep myself from falling victim includes deep breaths, closing my eyes to say a prayer and then raising my bow while thinking to make the shot with every single step of my shooting routine that I have rehearsed for hours. Once I see my arrow has left my bow and connected with the target's vitals, I can then allow my mind to rest. If I think only about the process and my mind stays clear of other distractions, a precise humane shot will be made. This advice should be

Remain calm or you will fall victim to target panic. Target panic is overthinking the moment you have been waiting for hours on and ruining your shot even though you have practiced hundreds of times.

applied to every shot with any type of equipment not just traditional, yet it is my greatest tool for being successful utilizing traditional gear. Consistency, persistence and patience are key, and letting your body fall victim to your mind during a shot is not an option.

In the words of Steven Rinella, "It's about connecting to the land, it's about the purity of the challenge, it's about life. In each and every one of us there is a primal instinct to hunt and consume. I live to hunt and hunt to live." This is a quote that brings to light my view of hunting. I do not hunt for antlers or just trophies to hang on the wall. Each animal that I harvest, every piece of it used to the fullest degree, from nose to tail.

For those interested, the equipment that I use consists of a 1968 York Thunderbolt recurve bow which has a 54" AMO and is 54# @ 28 in. The arrows I use are Carbon Express Heritage Series 350 spine topped off with 2 blade zwickie eskimo broadheads. I am still learning, but so far I have harvested 2 deer with this combo, both of which crashed within 40 yards of where they fell victim to it.



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Cooking a Great Steak

BY CHEF CORY BAHR

Owner & Founder of Parish Restaurant, Standard Coffee Co. and Heritage Catering
Monroe, Louisiana

Cooking a great steak is almost a God given right as an American. Lots of different factors play into the final product being great, none are more important than choosing high quality beef. At Parish, all of our beef is at least USDA Prime or Wagyu because it just tastes better. If y'all are like me, I grew up with Worcestershire or some variant of a marinade. While that taste will always have a special place in my heart, I've grown to appreciate the nuances of well-aged beef. The flavor deserves to be highlighted, not covered up. Here are a few ways I do just that.

SALT & PEPPER

- ☑ 1 cup Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt
- ☑ ¾ cup Mixed Peppercorns

Method

It's extremely important to get fresh peppercorns, they will have much more flavor. Toast peppercorns in a dry skillet over medium-high heat for 3-5 minutes until fragrant, let cool. Grind cooled peppercorns in a coffee/spice grinder. Combine with salt, place into airtight container for up to 1 month.

SALSA VERDE - *The Best Sauce for a Piece of Grilled Meat, Ever.*

- ☑ 3 cloves Garlic
- ☑ 1 tsp Crushed Red Pepper
- ☑ 1 Lemon Zested & Juiced
- ☑ 1 Anchovy Fillet (Optional but Delicious)
- ☑ 1 cup Italian Parsley Leaf
- ☑ 1 cup Mint Leaf
- ☑ ¾ cup Olive Oil
- ☑ Salt & Pepper to Taste

Method

Hand chop all herbs with the pepper, garlic & anchovy until very fine. Combine herb mixture with lemon juice and whisk in the olive oil. Adjust flavor with salt and pepper. Alternatively, you could add cilantro or fish sauce.... I love both.



Cory inherited a passion for the great outdoors and cooking—spending weekends at the family hunting camp, running fishing lines and hunting whatever was in season. Parish, an homage to what is most important to Cory—community, culture and culinary heritage—presents an inventive take on classic Southern dishes utilizing live fire cooking that makes use of all the flavors, techniques and heritage of his beloved Delta region. He offers honest dishes with a strong sense of place, for which he has earned national recognition.

Cory is a culinary and economic leader in Louisiana, deeply invested in the conservation methods for sustainable foods. He is a Culinary Ambassador for the state of Louisiana, named the “King of Seafood” at the 2011 Louisiana Seafood Cookoff and The Great American Seafood Cookoff, of which he now serves as a host for the yearly events. Cory is on the Board of Directors for the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association and is the only non-New Orleans-based chef serving on the Audubon Nature Institute’s Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Chef Council. As an advocate for the sustainable seafood movement, he promotes sustainable consumption practices, which create a more stable fishing industry for both Gulf fisherman and for the future of Gulf seafood.

Cory has been recognized for his culinary talents both regionally and nationally. He was a Food Network Star Finalist in 2017, he also Beat Bobby Flay, *Food & Wine* named him “People’s Best New Chef” in America in 2015 and “People’s Best New Chef” Gulf Coast in 2014. He was named to the *Taste of the South’s* “Taste 50” in 2015, and in 2012, Cory became a Food Network’s *Chopped!* Champion. Cory was also named to the list of *Louisiana Cookin’* “Chef’s to Watch” in 2011. <http://www.chefcorybahr.com>.





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2020–2021 Hunting Seasons

White-tailed Deer

Delta Zone: Areas west of I-55 and north of I-20 plus areas south of I-20 and west of U.S. Highway 61, excluding the South Delta Zone.

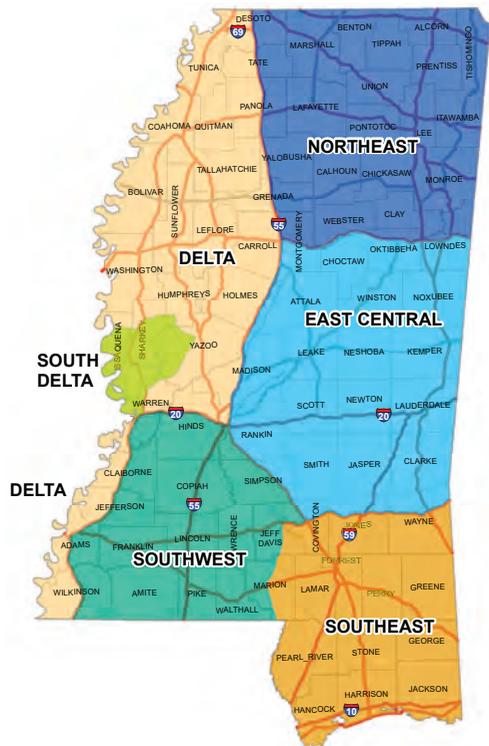
South Delta Zone: All Mississippi lands south of Bunge Road; south of MS Highway 14; west of MS Highway 149; west of MS Highway 3 to Business 61 and to I-20; and east of the state line (in MS River).

Northeast Zone: Areas east of I-55 and north of U.S. Highway 82. Public lands include national forests (excluding Holly Springs NF), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lands, etc., that have statewide seasons without special regulations.

East Central Zone: Areas east of I-55, east of U.S. Highway 49, south of U.S. Highway 82, and north of U.S. Highway 84.

Southwest Zone: Areas east of U.S. Highway 61, south of I-20, west of U.S. Highway 49, and west of MS Highway 35.

Southeast Zone: Areas south of U.S. Highway 84 and east of MS Highway 35.



LEGAL BUCKS			
ZONE	INSIDE SPREAD	OR	MAIN BEAM
Delta/South Delta	12"	OR	15"
Northeast	10"	OR	13"
East Central	10"	OR	13"
Southwest	10"	OR	13"
Southeast	10"	OR	13"

Bag Limits

Antlered Buck Deer: The statewide bag limit on antlered buck deer is one (1) buck per day and three (3) per annual season. One (1) of these three (3) may have hardened antlers that do not meet the zone legal antler requirements on private land and Holly Springs National Forest. Only two (2) antlered deer may be harvested from the South Delta Zone. For youth hunters fifteen (15) years of age and younger, hunting on private land and authorized state and federal lands, all three (3) of the three (3) buck bag limit may be any antlered deer.

Antlerless Deer:

Private lands: The statewide annual bag limit on antlerless deer is five (5). Antlerless deer are male or female deer which do not have hardened antler above the natural hairline. Only two (2) antlerless deer may be harvested from the Southeast and South Delta zones. There is no daily bag limit on antlerless deer in the Northeast, East Central, Southwest, and Delta zones. Only one (1) antlerless deer per day may be harvested in the Southeast Zone.

U.S. Forest Service National Forests: The bag limit is one (1) per day, not to exceed five (5) per annual season except in the Southeast Zone, which is two (2) per annual season.

Legal Weapons

Youth Gun: Youth may carry and use any firearm with which they can safely hunt, and in compliance with other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Archery: Longbows, recurves, compound bows, and crossbows. There is no minimum or maximum draw weight. There is no minimum arrow length. Fixed or mechanical broadheads may be used.

Primitive Weapons: Weapons legal for use during the Primitive Weapons season are all archery equipment and primitive firearms. "Primitive firearms," for the purpose of hunting deer, are defined as single or double-barreled muzzle-loading rifles of at least .38 caliber; OR single shot, breech loading, metallic cartridge rifles (.35 caliber or larger) and replicas, reproductions, or reintroductions of those type rifles with an exposed hammer; OR single or double-barreled muzzleloading shotguns, with single ball or slug. All muzzleloading primitive firearms must use black powder or a black powder substitute with percussion caps, #209 shotgun primers, or flintlock ignition. "Blackpowder substitute" is defined as a substance designed, manufactured, and specifically intended to be used as a propellant in muzzleloading or other black powder firearms, excluding modern smokeless powder. Metallic cartridges may be loaded with either black powder or modern smokeless powder (cartridges purchased at sporting goods stores). Telescopic sights are allowed while hunting with any primitive firearm during the primitive weapon seasons. A telescopic sight is defined as an optical sighting device with any magnification. During any open season on deer with primitive weapons after November 30, a person may use any legal weapon of choice on private lands only, if the person is the title owner of the land, the lessee of the hunting rights on the land, a member of a hunting club leasing the hunting rights on the land, or a guest of a person specified above. If the person is required to have a hunting license, the person must have a primitive weapon license, Sportsman's License, or a Lifetime Sportsman's License.

Gun: There are no caliber or magazine capacity restrictions on firearms. Primitive weapons (as defined above) and archery equipment may be used during gun seasons.

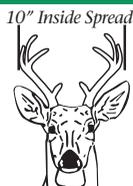
Legal Bucks

Northeast, East Central, Southwest, and Southeast Zones

A legal buck is defined as having EITHER a minimum inside spread of 10 inches OR one main beam at least 13 inches long.

How to estimate a 10 inch inside spread:

Estimating a 10 inch spread is accomplished by observing a buck's ears in the alert position. When in the alert position, the distance from ear-tip to ear-tip measures approximately 14 inches. If the OUTSIDE of each antler beam is 1 inch inside the ear-tip, the inside spread is approximately 10 inches.



How to estimate a 13 inch main beam:

To estimate a 13 inch main beam, the buck's head must be observed from the side. If the tip of the main beam extends to the front of the eye, main beam length is approximately 13 inches.



Delta Zone

A legal buck is defined as having EITHER a minimum inside spread of 12 inches OR one main beam at least 15 inches long.

How to estimate a 12 inch inside spread:

Estimating a 12 inch spread is accomplished by observing a buck's ears in the alert position. When in the alert position, the distance from ear-tip to ear-tip measures approximately 15* inches. If the OUTSIDE of each antler beam reaches the ear-tip, the inside spread is approximately 12 inches. (Therefore, if the outside of both antler beams reach the ear tips, the buck is legal).



How to estimate a 15 inch main beam:

To estimate a 15 inch main beam, the buck's head must be observed from the side. If the tip of the main beam extends between the front of the eye and the tip of the nose, main beam length is approximately 15 inches.



*Due to body size differences in the Delta Zone, ear-tip to ear-tip measurements are slightly larger compared to the other zones.

DELTA, SOUTH DELTA, NORTHEAST, EAST CENTRAL, AND SOUTHWEST ZONES

METHOD	SEASON DATES	LEGAL DEER
Archery	Oct. 1 - Nov. 20	Either-Sex on private land, open public land, and Holly Springs NF
Youth Season (15 and under)	Nov. 7 - Nov. 20	Either-Sex on private lands and authorized state and federal lands.
	Nov. 21 - Jan. 31	Either-Sex on private lands. On open public lands, youth must follow below legal deer criteria.
Antlerless Primitive Weapon	Nov. 9 - 20	Antlerless Deer Only on private lands.
Gun (with dogs)	Nov. 21 - Dec. 1	Either-Sex on private land and Holly Springs NF. Legal Bucks only on open public land.
Primitive Weapon	Dec. 2 - 15	Either-Sex on private land, open public land, and Holly Springs NF. Weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license.
Gun (without dogs)	Dec. 16 - 23	Either-Sex on private land and Holly Springs NF. Legal Bucks only on open public land.
Gun (with dogs)	Dec. 24 - Jan. 20	Either-Sex on private land and Holly Springs NF. Legal Bucks only on open public land.
Archery/Primitive Weapon	Jan. 21 - 31	Either-Sex on private land and Holly Springs NF. Legal Bucks only on open public land. Weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license.

SOUTHEAST ZONE

METHOD	SEASON DATES	LEGAL DEER
Archery	Oct. 15 - Nov. 20	Either-Sex on private and open public land.
Youth Season (15 and under)	Nov. 7 - Nov. 20	Either-Sex on private lands and authorized state and federal lands.
	Nov. 21 - Feb. 15	Either-Sex on private lands. On open public lands, youth must follow below legal deer criteria.
Gun (with dogs)	Nov. 21 - Dec. 1	Either-Sex on private land. Legal Bucks only on open public land.
Primitive Weapon	Dec. 2 - 15	Either-Sex on private and open public land. Weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license.
Gun (without dogs)	Dec. 16 - 23	Either-Sex on private land. Legal Bucks only on open public land.
Gun (with dogs)	Dec. 24 - Jan. 20	Either-Sex on private land. Legal Bucks only on open public land.
Archery/Primitive Weapon	Jan. 21 - 31	Either-Sex on private land. Legal Bucks only on open public land. Weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license.
	Feb. 1 - 15	Legal Bucks only on private and open public land. Weapon of choice may be used on private land with appropriate license.

MANDATORY CWD SAMPLING

During the 2020-2021 hunting season, all deer harvested in the respective counties and dates listed below must be submitted for CWD sampling by 10 p.m. on the day of harvest. Check station and drop-off locations can be found at mdwfp.com/cwd.

DATES	LOCATIONS
Nov. 21-22	In any county or portion thereof in the North Mississippi and Issaquena CWD Zones.
Jan. 2-3	In the following counties: all portions of Adams, Amite, Franklin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Pike, Walthall, and Wilkinson.
Jan. 16-17	In the following counties: all portions of Covington, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Stone, and Wayne.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was discovered in Mississippi in February 2018. Since then, proactive measures have been enacted for continued surveillance and management. Some measures include: *Supplemental feeding of wildlife, (including feeders, salt licks, and mineral licks), is banned within any MDWFP defined CWD Management Zone. *Only cut/wrapped meat, deboned meat, hides with no head attached, finished taxidermy products, antlers with no tissue attached, and cleaned skulls or skull plates may be transported outside the CWD Zones or into Mississippi from any other state or country. *MDWFP urges hunters to submit the heads of harvested deer for CWD sampling, especially if the deer was harvested in CWD Zones.

Fall Turkey

SEASON	DATES	BAG LIMIT
Fall turkey season is open BY PERMIT ONLY from October 15-November 15 on private lands in the following counties or portions of counties where the landowner/leaseholder completes a fall turkey hunting application to the MDWFP Jackson Office and receives tags. The fall season bag limit is two (2) turkeys, which may be of either sex.		
Delta Zone: Bolivar County - west of the main Mississippi River levee and those lands east of the main Mississippi River levee known as 27 Break Hunting Club; Coahoma, Desoto, Issaquena, Tunica, and Washington counties - west of the main Mississippi River levee.		
North-Central Zone: Benton, Lafayette, Marshall, Panola, Tippah, and Union counties.		
Southwest Zone: Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Hinds, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Warren, Wilkinson, and Yazoo counties.		

Spring Turkey

SEASON	DATES	BAG LIMIT
Youth (Private and authorized state and federal public lands. Youth 15 and under)	Mar. 8 - 14	One (1) adult gobbler or 1 gobbler with a 6-inch or longer beard per day, 3 per Spring season. Hunters 15 years of age and younger may harvest 1 gobbler of choice (any age) per day, 3 per Spring season.
Spring	Mar. 15 - May 1	

Small Game

SEASON	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT
Youth Squirrel*	Sept. 24 - 30	8
Squirrel - Fall Season	Oct. 1 - Feb. 28	8
Squirrel - Spring Season	May 15 - June 1	4
SEASON	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT
Rabbit	Oct. 17 - Feb. 28	8
Bobwhite Quail	Nov. 26 - Mar. 6	8
Frog	April 1 - Sept. 30	25/Night
Raccoon	July 1 - Sept. 30	1 per Party/Night
Opossum, Raccoon, and Bobcat	Oct. 1 - Oct. 31 (Food and sport) Nov. 1 - Feb. 28 (Food, sport, and pelt)	5/Day; 8/Party No Limit
Trapping	Nov. 1 - Mar. 15	No Limit

*On private lands and authorized state and federal lands only in those areas open for squirrel hunting.

Migratory Game Birds

SEASON	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Sept. Teal	Sept. 12 - Sept. 27	6	18
Sept. Canada Geese*	Sept. 1 - Sept. 30	5	15
Woodcock	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31	3	9
Snipe	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28	8	24
Gallinules (Common & Purple)	Sept. 1 - Oct. 4 Nov. 26 - Dec. 31	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Rails: Clapper and King	Sept. 1 - Oct. 4 Nov. 26 - Dec. 31	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Rails: Sora and Virginia	Sept. 1 - Oct. 4 Nov. 26 - Dec. 31	25 Singly or in aggregate	75 Singly or in aggregate
Mourning and White-winged Doves (North Zone)**	Sept. 5 - Oct. 18 Oct. 24 - Nov. 21 Dec. 23 - Jan. 8	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Mourning and White-winged Doves (South Zone)***	Sept. 5 - Sept. 20 Oct. 10 - Nov. 8 Dec. 19 - Jan. 31	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Crows	Nov. 7 - Feb. 28	No Limit	No Limit
Ducks, Mergansers, and Coots****	Nov. 27 - Nov. 29 Dec. 4 - Dec. 6 Dec. 9 - Jan. 31	See below****	See below****
Geese: Canada, White-fronted, Snow, Blue, Ross', and Brant	Nov. 13 - Nov. 29 Dec. 4 - Dec. 6 Dec. 9 - Jan. 31	Canada Geese : 3 Snow, Blue, & Ross': 20 White-fronted: 3 Brant: 1	Canada Geese : 9 Snow, Blue, & Ross': No limit White-fronted: 9 Brant: 3
Youth, Veterans, and Active Military Waterfowl Days	Feb. 6 - Feb. 7	Same as regular season	Same as regular season
Light Goose Conservation Order***** (Special Permit Needed)	Oct. 1 - Nov. 12 Feb. 1 - Feb. 5 Feb. 8 - Mar. 31	No Limit*****	No Limit*****

*Sept. Canada Goose season is closed on Roebuck Lake in Leflore county.

** (Dove North Zone) Areas north of U.S. Hwy. 84 plus areas south of U.S. Hwy. 84 and west of MS Hwy. 35.

*** (Dove South Zone) Areas south of U.S. Hwy. 84 and east of MS Hwy. 35.

**** The duck daily bag limit is a total of 6 ducks, including no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females), 1 mottled duck, 2 black ducks, 1 pintail, 3 wood ducks, 2 canvasbacks, 1 scaup, and 2 redheads.

The merganser daily bag limit is a total of 5 mergansers, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers.

The coot daily bag limit is a total of 15 coots.

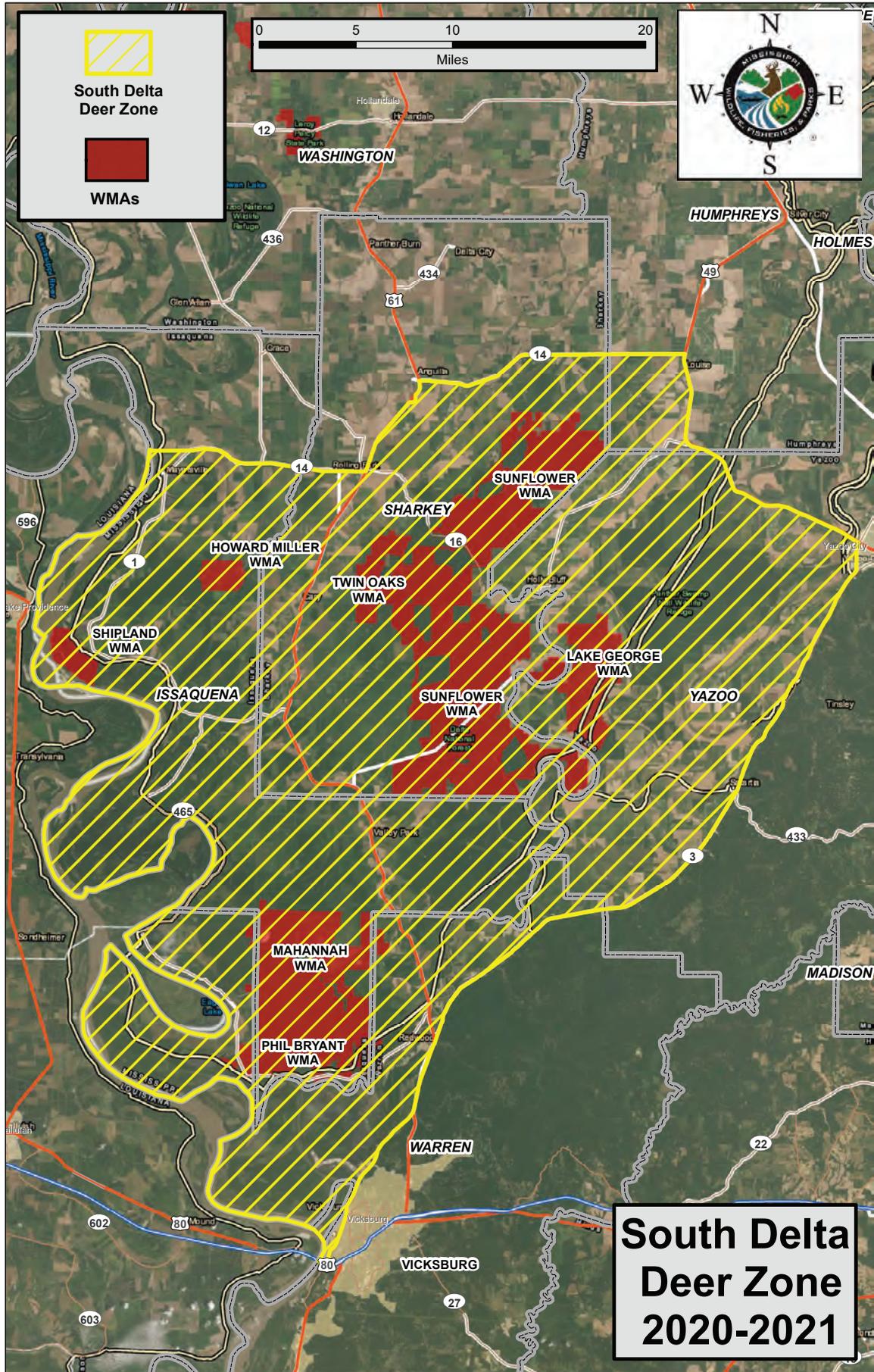
The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit for ducks, mergansers, and coots.

Shooting hours for all migratory game birds are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except for the Light Goose Conservation Order (see below).

***** The Light Goose Conservation Order is a special opportunity designed to reduce the population of overpopulated snow, blue, and Ross' geese when no other waterfowl seasons are open. This order allows for expanded methods of take that are not allowed during regular waterfowl seasons.

To participate in the Light Goose Conservation Order, hunters need a valid Mississippi hunting license, state waterfowl stamp, and a free Light Goose Conservation Order permit number. Hunters can obtain a permit number by visiting mdwfp.com/waterfowl.

Light Goose Conservation Order Methods: Shooting hours are from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. Only snow, blue, and Ross' geese are eligible for harvest. The use of electronic calls is allowed. The use of unplugged shotguns is allowed. There is no daily or possession limit for snow, blue, or Ross' geese. Hunters must use non-toxic shot. Hunters must possess a valid Mississippi hunting license and a Mississippi state waterfowl stamp. Hunters do not need a federal waterfowl stamp.





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Christmas Bird Count

BY TIMOTHY HUGGINS

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is celebrating 121 years of censusing birds across North America. According to Audubon, the ornithologist Frank M. Chapman proposed a Christmas Bird Census that would count birds during the holidays. This tradition has carried on every year, and last year there were more than 2,500 counts that tallied 48,678,334 birds, according to Audubon. A “count” consists of an area, not just an individual. Many counts may have more than 100 people participating. The counts are usually defined geographic regions, and volunteers sign up to count within that area.

Last year there were five counts in the Mississippi Delta and included; Lula, Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge near Cleveland, Sidon, Yazoo Wildlife Refuge near Greenville and Vicksburg.

According to Audubon, the purpose of the count is to collect data that allows researchers, biologists, ornithologists, wildlife agencies and others to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across America. The 121st CBC will take place from Dec. 14, 2020, through Jan. 5, 2021. If you are interested in joining a count, you may find more information at audubon.org.

Local Cover Crop Favorites

BY PARKER FREW

In recent years, cover crop interest in the Mississippi Delta has taken off at an alarming rate. Growers are now focusing more than ever on producing a healthy, sustainable soil that requires much less input. With today's prices on just about everything, we know there is a need to cut costs as well as time. Historically, the Delta has always been accustomed to heavy tillage as well as regular nutrient input. Over time, this will lead directly to poor soil conditions. No matter how good our soils are in the Delta, without proper conservation, we will be faced with a troubling scenario. One way that many producers have begun to cut costs, reduce time and improve soil health is by implementing a fall cover crop. Like most things in agriculture, there is not a universal species mixture or method for every scenario. Learning what works with your soil type and establishing your overall goals are the most important factors when beginning cover crops. However, part of maximizing your success means finding the right cover crops for your land, and that is not always an easy thing to do. Understanding what each species does is a great way to start planning what your cover crop will need to be composed of.

Tillage radish

The tillage radish or daikon radish has been bred and developed to produce a large taproot and penetrate compacted soil layers to increase soil aeration, water infiltration, decrease compaction and increase rooting depth opportunities for successive crops. In the right conditions, a healthy radish will grow a strong taproot that can reach to depths of 6 feet or more. Radishes cycle and sequester nutrients below ground while working to provide wind and water erosion control above ground. Under the soil surface, it's busting up compaction with its taproot, lateral roots and root hairs. These same roots can be storing large amounts of nutrients that will release as the radish starts decomposing. Seeding rates range from 0.5 lbs. per acre to 6 lbs. per acre depending on whether you are using it as a straight product or as a mix. It is recommended to plant tillage radishes three to 10 weeks before the first frost.

Hairy Vetch

Hairy vetch is an annual legume cover crop that is great at fixing large amounts of nitrogen while also helping with soil erosion and organic matter. Hairy vetch is an extremely hardy species that does well in very cold winter conditions. The cover grows slowly in fall, but root development continues throughout the winter months. Growth begins to speed up in spring when hairy vetch starts to become an extensive vine up to 12 feet in length. Plant height rarely exceeds 3 feet unless the vetch is supported by another crop. Its abundant vine biomass can be a benefit and a challenge. The stand

smothers spring weeds and can help replace all or most N fertilizer needs for late-planted crops. The recommended planting rate is 20 to 25 pounds per acre with a seeding depth of 1 inch. This seeding rate will be much lower when mixed with other species. Hairy vetch is often planted with cereal rye, oats or other winter grains for improved winter survival, greater winter annual weed control and increased erosion control.

Cosaque Black Oats

Oats are another economical cover crop that can be used for wind and water erosion control, nutrient sequestering and rapid fall growth for forage and weed suppression. Cosaque is a black grained, winter

oat variety from France that shares many characteristics of cereal rye. Cosaque black oats have a tremendous root system that can combat compaction and help to increase infiltration. They typically winter very well and offer a good stand in poor soil conditions. At a higher planting rate, cosaque black oats offer excellent weed suppression in the early spring especially when fighting broadleaf weeds. Allelopathic compounds that are released through the roots help to inhibit weed growth. They are believed to suppress some nematodes, especially root-knot nematodes. Its allelopathic compounds also help to break disease cycles of other crops. Cosaque black oats are especially beneficial for soybeans in poorly drained soils. This plant does a good job of scavenging for nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. Depending on the goal you are looking to achieve with an oat cover crop,

seeding rates for oats range from 30-120 lbs. per acre. When mixed with other species, something around 40 lbs. per acre is about perfect.

Cereal Rye

Cereal rye is a cool season, annual cereal grain that can be planted later in fall than many other cover crops and still provide considerable dry matter, an extensive soil-holding root system, significant reduction of nitrate leaching and exceptional weed suppression. It has a great combination of winter hardiness and fast growth for farmers in the south. Overall, cereal rye is the most planted cover crop species of all in the United States. Its ability to thrive in poor soil conditions while still providing extensive benefits to soil health makes it one of the easiest species to try as your first cover crop. It is a good idea to air rye with a winter annual legume such as hairy vetch to offset rye's tendency to tie up soil nitrogen in the spring. Cereal rye is a great choice to plant after corn, cotton or soybeans. Rye is one of the best cool season cover crops for outcompeting weeds, especially small-seeded, light-sensitive annuals. Cereal rye should be planted at a rate of 35 to 65 lbs. per acre when planted alone. When mixed with other species, a rate of around 20 to 40 lbs. per acre is sufficient.



Delta Mushrooms in All Seasons: Winter Bloomers

BY A. DAN WILSON

A stroll into Mississippi Delta woodlands frequently reveals rich, diverse habitats of natural mixed-hardwood forests. This article series introduces common mushrooms encountered in Delta forests throughout the year. This first article focuses on species that produce flushes of abundant fruiting bodies during winter, usually the wettest season in the Delta. Mushrooms may form rapidly after a rain, but the fruiting bodies of most fleshy species tend to disintegrate within hours or days after forming. Early visits to forests soon after a rain usually provide the best views of mushroom blooms.

Classifications

Mushrooms belong to the microorganism group, fungi, and are in their own kingdom due to their unique structural characteristics and means of obtaining energy. Fungi use specialized enzymes to obtain food and energy from organic matter of other organisms. Most species are

Part 1 of a series

too small to be seen with the naked eye. However, some form large masses of tissue known as mycelium. These macrofungi form fruiting bodies of various sizes and shapes, growth forms and developmental types. Common names include Agarics, Boletes, Chanterelles, Earthstars, Morels, Polypores, Puffballs, Stinkhorns, Truffles and Trumpets. Others are referred to as fungal groups such as Bird's nest, Coral, Cup, Gill, Jelly, Pore and Tooth fungi.

Macrofungi are further categorized by the method in which they obtain energy and nutrients. The categories are mycorrhizal, decomposers and parasites or pathogens. The majority of larger, fleshy mushrooms growing on forest soils are mycorrhizal. These fungi form a symbiotic relationship, obtaining carbohydrates from the roots, and in return, providing increased adsorption of soil nutrients and physical protection. Decomposers obtain energy by the decay of wood and other plant debris. Parasitic-type mushrooms derive food and energy from living plant tissues, and true parasitic species induce diseases in living trees by attacking and sometimes killing parts or the entire tree.

Mycorrhizal Fungi

A winter-blooming mycorrhizal mushroom is the light grayish to brown-colored Shrimp of the Woods (*Entoloma arbortivum*) that forms pink or gray gills that run down the stalk beneath the cap. The gills discharge salmon to pink spores onto the ground surface. This species can be found singly or associated with and possibly parasitizing Honey mushrooms (*Armillaria species*) near roots of decaying hardwoods such as oak, maple and beech. It is considered edible, but other related *Entoloma* species are poisonous.

Brown deer truffle (*Elaphomyces granulatus*) is common in the U.S. and Europe. Truffles form underground in association with tree roots in lowland and riparian stands of beech and red oaks. Deer can smell the fruiting bodies and may be seen scratching the



Clockwise from top left: Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*); Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*); Hedgehog Fungus or Lion's Mane (*Hericium erinaceus*); Turkey Tail Fungus (*Trametes versicolor*)

ground with their hooves to expose and feed on them. Deer truffles are unpalatable to humans, unlike the highly sought European truffles. Many wildlife species and insects frequently feed on wild mushrooms as they become available during moist periods.

Parasites and Pathogens

Parasites and pathogens are the second group of macrofungi. The Hedgehog Fungus (*Hericium erinaceus*), also known as the Bear's Head, Lion's Mane or Bearded Tooth, has white, soft and spongy fruiting bodies (conks) with distinctive downward-pointing spines (teeth) that turn brown with age. These develop from tree wounds or fallen logs, especially on oaks, maples, sugarberry and beech damaged by fire or logging. The fungus causes white wood decay in the heartwood of the lower trunk. It is edible young, but turns sour with age. Certain chemicals from this fungus have potential uses in medicine for human nerve regeneration.

The golden-yellow to bright orange fruiting bodies of the White-pored Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus cincinnatus*) fungus occurs almost exclusively on oak trees. It causes decay of tree roots, and fruiting bodies develop on or near the base of the tree at ground level, usually in clusters, with furrowed surfaces, cream to white margins and a pore surface instead of gills under the cap. This species is usually edible when young, but may cause gastro-

intestinal issues in some individuals. The related Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*), another edible, forms larger, overlapping clusters of fan or bracket-shaped fruiting bodies with wavy yellow margins in the spring until fall. It causes a brown cubical butt-rot of wood in living trees, particularly oaks, but occasionally on conifers. Bacterial contamination renders older fruiting bodies often inedible or somewhat poisonous.

The familiar Hen of the Woods (*Grifola frondosa*), known locally as Sheep's Head or Maitake, is an edible species forming near the base of healthy oak trees, often repeatedly for many years. It produces compound clusters of brown to grayish fan-shaped fruiting bodies with white pore surfaces under caps on short, thick white stalks. Fresh collections are best for consumption, but dried fruiting bodies may be ground for tea. It has anti-viral, anti-tumor properties and the ability to normalize glucose levels in diabetics.

Decomposers

The third group of macrofungi serve as natural nutrient recyclers. The Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) is a showy white to cream fleshy mushroom with a convex white cap, cream to yellow radiating gills beneath the cap and very short white or absent stalk. The fruiting bodies may be solitary or form overlapping clusters on dead trees, logs or stumps of broadleaf trees, especially oaks and willows. Young fleshy parts are edible and rich in B vitamins, except B-12. Medicinal uses include tumor-inhibiting and blood cholesterol-lowering properties and antiviral proteins for the treatment of HIV. This species also provides environmental benefits by breaking down petroleum-based pollutants and adsorbing toxic heavy metals from soils.

The Turkey Tail Fungus (*Trametes versicolor*) forms thin, fan-shaped fruiting bodies with caps of multi-colored (orange to blue) concentric-rings on fallen broadleaf tree limbs and logs. Among the most studied medicinal fungi, it is included in a protein-bound polysaccharide drug that helps control the spread of human cancer.

A group of decomposers have partial to full transparency, gelatinous to rubbery texture and are flexible to the touch. Witcher's Butter (*Tremella mesenterica*) forms brilliant, yellow-translucent fruiting bodies on dead hardwoods, especially oaks. They are edible, but relatively tasteless. The Wood Ear Fungi (*Auricularia auricula-judae* and *A. angiospermarum*) are two edible mild-flavored species used in Chinese cooking. They appear as light brown flexible ears often in cup-like clusters to a woody substrate. The Amber Jelly Fungus (*Exidia recisa*) develops spherical cinnamon-brown fruiting bodies that frequently occur on small dead tree branches.

Morels (*Morchella* species) are a highly prized edible fungi formed on the ground during winter and spring, producing erect fruiting bodies often with a thick white stalk and a pitted and ridged cap that resembles a sponge. The sponge-like surface appears as clusters of small cups with ridges between them. True morels are among the most delectable of all fungi. Other related fungi such as the Bell Morels (*Verpa* species) are edible and flavorful as well, but the Saddle fungi (*Helvella* species) and False Morels (*Gyromitra* species) are quite poisonous. The false morel (*Gyromitra esculenta*) produces gyromitrin, a water-soluble carcinogenic toxin capable of causing a violent illness or even death.

Wilson is a research scientist (pathologist) for the USDA Forest Service, Southern Hardwoods Laboratory in Stoneville, Mississippi.

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Holt Collier's Ghost

BY JOHN M. BROOKS, M.D., F.A.C.S.

“Holt Collier is probably Greenville’s greatest folk hero,” says Dr. John M. Brooks. “Born a slave, Holt attained renown as a Confederate cavalryman (the only African American to receive a Confederate soldier’s pension from Mississippi), a Texas cowboy, a deputy sheriff in Washington County and as probably the greatest bear hunter in American history, with over three thousand confirmed bear kills, all right here in the Mississippi Delta. To anyone not familiar with Holt’s exploits, I would recommend the book by Minor Ferris Buchanan.” He adds, “And although not a lofty recommendation, this is probably my best attempt at poetry.”

*As I sat up in my deer stand one cold December eve,
The sun’s last rays were fading fast; it was nearly time to leave.
One last look down through the woods showed someone standing there—
An old man on an old black horse, watching me with silent stare.*

*An old Winchester across his arm, a cocked-up cavalry hat,
And on the ground around the horse, four bone-gaunt bear hounds sat.
I had a sense of déjà vu, I was sure, the more I looked,
That I recognized Holt Collier from his picture in the book.*

*I waved, he nodded in response, turned his horse back in the woods,
And in an instant, there was nothing in the place where he had stood.
Dream or real? I had to know—this image boiled my blood,
A quick check revealed horse and dog tracks in the soft woods mud.*

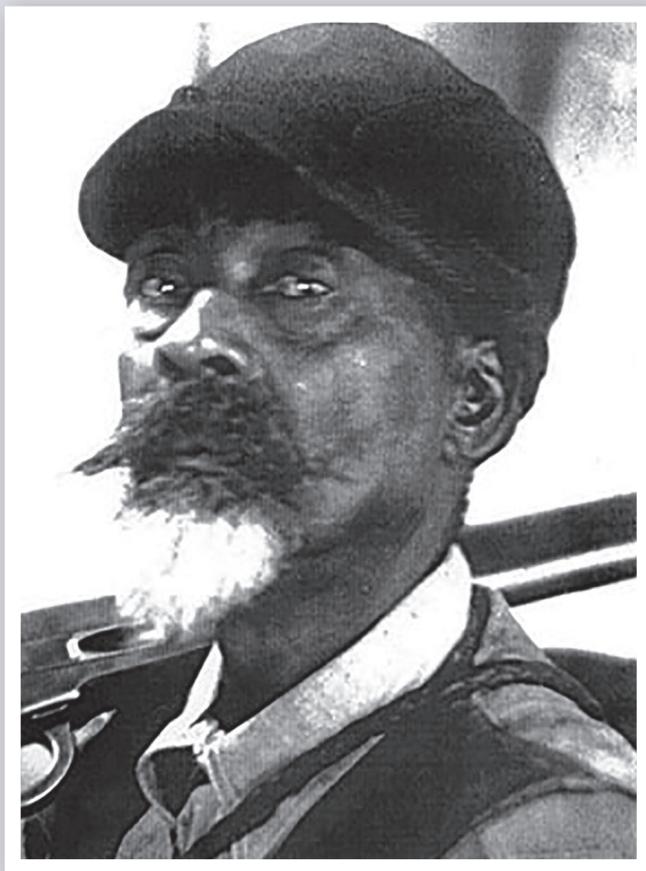
*Who was this man that I had seen, man of legend and of fame?
Greatest bear hunter of all time, over three thousand to his name!
Friend of senators and presidents, the deep woods were his home.
His woodsmanship and tracking skills not matched by any known.*

*When wartime came, though born a slave, he joined the boys in gray,
And with his Confederate comrades-in-arms fought many a bloody fray.
As a sharpshooter, army scout and Rebel cavalry man,
He fought the bluecoat Yankees to protect his dear homeland.*

*One evening back behind my house, I went out to walk my dog.
I found Holt puffing on his pipe, sitting on a log.
His old black mare and four bear dogs were drinking from the creek.
This apparition startled me so that I could barely speak.*

*I said, “Holt, you’re dead these seventy years, how is it that you can roam?”
He interrupted me, “You know, this land here used to be my home.
The land your house stands on was part of old Plum Ridge Plantation,
But in answer to your question, I have an explanation:*

*President Roosevelt sent me word that if I could find some bear
That he would come back to the Delta and that we two could share
A campfire and a bear hunt like a hundred years ago,
But bears around here are scarce these days, a fact I guess you know.*



*I’ve scouted north to Memphis, couldn’t get back here too soon;
No bears, just giant gambling halls and monstrous big saloons.
I’ve scouted east to Greenwood, found no bear sign, not a track—
And nearly got run over on the highway coming back.*

*I’ve scouted south to Vicksburg, where magnolias used to blossom,
But there’s not enough woods that way to hide two squirrels and a possum.
Seems the Delta’s now just one big farm—they’ve cut the big woods down
And burned up all the canebrakes so they can farm the fertile ground.*

*There’s cotton fields that’s two miles long and bean fields three miles wide,
And catfish ponds so big that you can’t see the other side.”
He sighed and looked away with a distant, vacant stare,
“I guess,” he said, “that what this means is there ain’t no more room for
bears.”*

*So, if you’re outdoors in the Delta on a cool, still winter’s eve,
And you see a sight like I have seen that is difficult to believe—
Four big dogs and an old man riding on an old black mare,
It’s the ghost of old Holt Collier, still looking for a bear.*



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