

Discovering *THE* Delta



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Delta region crucial to Sportsman's Paradise

By Jack Montoucet
Secretary of
Louisiana
Department of Wildlife
and Fisheries

Louisiana's outdoors is as diverse as you'll find anywhere. From the Bird's Foot Delta at the end of the Mississippi River in southeast Louisiana, to the prime bass fishing lakes in northwest Louisiana.

And the Delta region of eastern Louisiana is a big reason why we're called the "Sportsman's Paradise," the envy of the nation when it comes to everything outdoors.

With spring approaching, folks around here have easy access to a variety of outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, boating, kayaking and birding.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is proud to manage the resources in the Delta which includes wildlife management areas and public areas that provide numerous opportunities.

Here are a few.

Catahoula Parish **Public Lands**

Dewey Wills WMA is one of the most popular spots for spring outdoor recreation. Traditionally, fishing March through April at the water control structure on the diversion canal provides bank fishermen with excellent white bass barfish action.

Campgrounds in the WMA include Muddy Bayou and Ski Point, which offer great camping plus access to the Saline-Larto complex, an excellent fishery for crappie, bass, bream and catfish.

The woods return to life in April and May when mayhaw berries ripen. Check out Alligator Bayou Road and be the first to collect the gallons needed for that spectacular jelly.

Hunters can enjoy a spring squirrel season from



Jack Montoucet

May 1-9, with or without dogs on Dewey Wills where fox squirrels are abundant.

J.C. Sonny Gilbert Wildlife Management Area is located in Catahoula Parish. Spring activities include turkey hunting (April 2-4, 5-7, 8-10 by lottery only) and squirrel hunting (May 1-9) as well as fishing, birding, wildlife viewing, hiking, horseback riding and berry picking.

The Big Creek, St. Mary's Falls, Rock Falls nature trails on J.C. Sonny Gilbert WMA pass many scenic points of interest, including several waterfalls. One waterfall along the Rock Falls Trail measures near 17 feet, one of the tallest in the state.

Concordia Parish **Public Lands**

Richard K. Yancey WMA, in Concordia Parish, offers good fishing opportunities during the springtime. Largemouth bass, white/black crappie and bluegill are abundant.

Some of the best spots on the WMA are Hog Pen Lake, lower Sunk Lake, Silver Lakes, Lac A'Sostein, Grand Bay, and the Scar Lakes in the batture.

The adjoining rivers and bayous also provide excellent opportunities for catching catfish, white bass, largemouth bass and numerous other fish species.

There are six primitive campgrounds on Richard K. Yancey WMA available year round. Hiking, sightseeing, photography, berry

picking, viewing wildlife or just enjoying a day out in nature on this WMA are also very popular.

Turkey hunting is available on the WMA. Turkey season opens the last weekend in March for the Youth Turkey hunt which is by lottery with applications available on-line on the LDWF website.

The general turkey season is a 10-day season, open to all turkey hunters, and begins the first Saturday in April. Spring squirrel hunting is available May 1-9 and dogs may be used.

Franklin and Tensas **Public Lands**

Big Lake Wildlife Management Area is located in Madison, Tensas, and Franklin parishes. Spring activities include spring turkey hunting (April 2-11) and squirrel hunting (May 1-9) as well as fishing, birding, wildlife viewing, hiking, horseback riding and berry picking. There are seven small lakes and six small bayous.

Fishing Opportunity

Concordia Parish has many fishing opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. Concordia Lake and Lake St. John are popular largemouth bass fishing destinations. The department stocks these lakes with hybrid striped bass.

LDWF's "Get Out and Fish" Program stocks the William T. Polk City Park Pond in Vidalia with rainbow trout in the winter and channel catfish in the spring and fall.

Franklin Parish has fishing opportunity at Turkey Creek home to largemouth bass, crappie, sunfish and catfish.

Tensas Parish fishing opportunity includes Lake St. Joseph with cypress trees along the shoreline. Popular species include largemouth bass, crappie, sunfish and catfish.

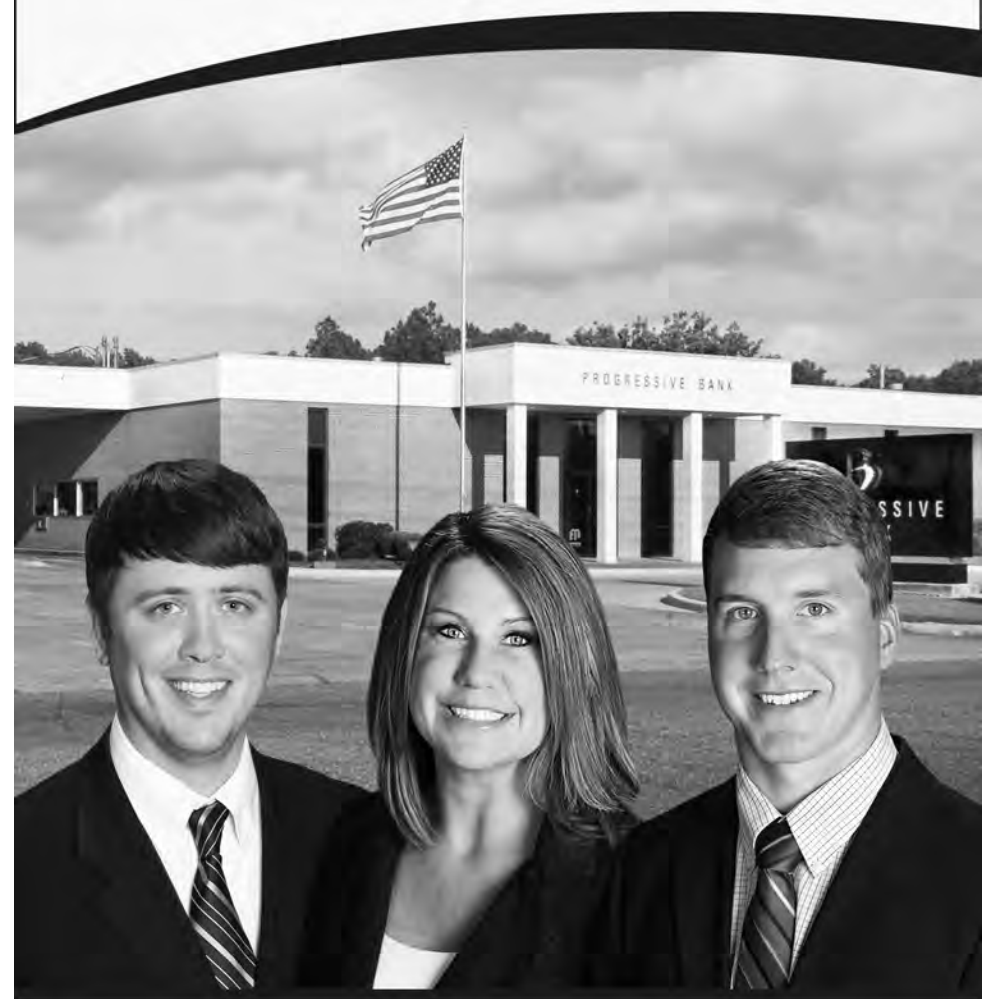
Lake Bruin has cypress

trees and piers around the entire shoreline as well as artificial reefs. Popular spe-

cies include largemouth bass, crappie, sunfish, catfish and stocked hybrid

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Boating fatalities rising, LDWF urges life jacket use

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division is once again reminding all boaters to practice safe boating as we approach the spring and summer boating season.

The reminder comes after two more boating fatalities within the past week, bringing the number of Louisiana boating fatalities in 2021 to seven. At this time in 2020, there were only two recreational boating fatalities.

"We haven't even gotten into the prime boating season in Louisiana yet and we are seeing fatalities climb at an alarming pace," said Col. Chad Herbert, the head of the LDWF Enforcement Division. "We are urging boaters to please adhere to all safe boating laws and practices."

On Feb. 28 a person fell off of a personal watercraft without wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) and drowned in Vermilion Parish. Then

on March 6, a boat with five people on board struck a railroad bridge in Lake Pontchartrain, near New Orleans, that resulted in one fatality and four people being treated for serious injuries at an area hospital.

"A life jacket is the life-saving equipment on a boat. Please, please use it," said LDWF Secretary Jack Montoucet. "We want more people enjoying the water, but there are safety rules that are important to follow."

The LDWF Enforcement Division encourages everyone to wear PFDs (commonly called life jackets) and have a sober operator while on the water. They also recommend that all boaters take LDWF's boating education course.

It is required for anyone 16 years old and younger to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved and properly fitting PFD while underway on a vessel under

26 feet in length. Also, everyone on a vessel less than 16 feet in length, propelled by a hand tiller motor, must wear a PFD while underway. There must also be a PFD for each person on board a vessel and anyone riding on a personal watercraft must wear a PFD.

Operating or driving a vessel in Louisiana while intoxicated has the same penalties as operating a vehicle. A DWI on the water can be issued to anyone operating a moving vessel while impaired.

Boaters are encouraged to take the LDWF-approved safe boating course. It is mandatory for anyone born after Jan. 1, 1984, to operate a motorboat over 10 horsepower. LDWF certified over 9,610 boaters in 2020.

To register for the course, visit www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/boater-education.

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striped bass.

The Saline-Larto Complex, in Catahoula Parish, is popular among anglers for its crappie and largemouth bass fishing in the spring. Bream fishing in the late spring and summer is exceptional. The complex has nearly a dozen boat ramps, including Youngblood's, Saline and Muddy Bayou Campgrounds, Taylor Bayou, Cross Bayou, Open Bayou and Woodson's.

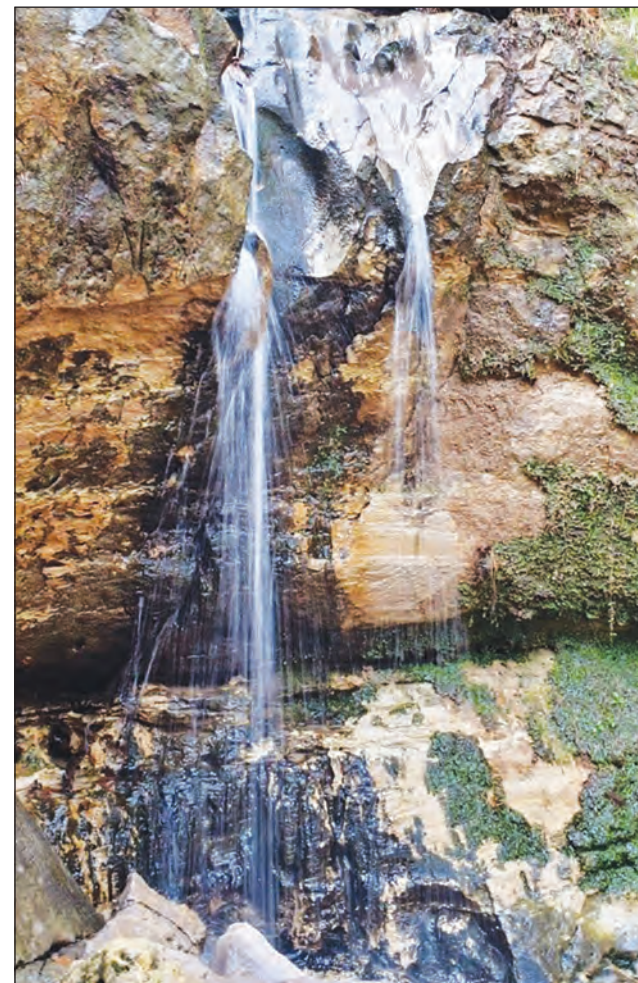
Lake Louis or Bayou Louis is enjoyed by many of the locals. It can be accessed from Louisiana Highway 8 at The Rocks boat ramp.

Turkey and other hunting is permitted on private lands during the spring. Parts of turkey hunting Area A and C are located in the Delta region. Area A is open from April 2-May 2 and Area C from April 2-18.

In addition to the regular season, there is a turkey hunt March 27-28 especially for physically challenged and youth hunters on private land.

The spring squirrel hunt on private lands is open from May 1-23.

Birding is very popular during the spring, with neotropical birds moving



ROCK FALL TRAIL is a 0.7 mile lightly trafficked loop trail located near Sicily Island that features a waterfall. The trail is primarily used for hiking, running and nature trips.

through this area. Eagles and raptors can be seen soaring above, nesting and feeding during the spring.

For more information on

wildlife and fishing, or whatever your outdoor passion may be, visit our website at <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/>.

Delta Trail Committee plans 80-mile biking path

District 21 Rep. Travis Johnson of Vidalia announced last month that former Vidalia Mayor Hiram Copeland and the former administrator of Riverland Medical Center Billy Rucker will co-chair the Delta Trail Committee.

Johnson authored legislation last year creating an 80-mile biking/walking trail along the Mississippi River from Vidalia to Lake Providence. He said the trail would result in improved health for Louisiana residents and bring economic benefits as well.

Also serving on the

committee will be Johnson as an honorary member along with the following:

Scott McLemore, Concordia Bank & Trust board member.

Joe Parker, president of the Concordia Parish Police Jury.

Kendall Thompson, president of the East Carroll Police Jury.

Andy Brister, assistant district attorney for the 6th Judicial District.

Jane Sanders, president of the Madison Parish Police Jury.

Leslie Durham, Delta Regional Authority.

Rod Webb, president of the Tensas Parish Police Jury.

Lynette Ewell, Madison Parish advocate.

"This month, I established the Delta Trail Committee which will be responsible for helping bring this project to fruition," Johnson said.

He said the committee met for the first time on Jan. 7 and later met with Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser and officials with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development via Zoom.

"We began talking with

all stakeholders and planning commissioner," he said.

"When we complete this endeavor, this will be one of the longest bike trails in the nation and will bring a huge number of tourists to Northeast Louisiana. But the greatest benefit of all is that this project will help improve the health and welfare of our citizens and beautify the area.

"Imagine what a bike and walking trail along the Mississippi River would mean for all of Louisiana."

Johnson's legislation creating the trail points to

studies indicating that bicycling in northwest Arkansas provides an economic benefit of \$137 million "with bike tourism serving as an economic driver from tourists spending \$27 million at local businesses each year."

One study shows that houses within a quarter mile of the Razorback Regional Greenway "sell for an average of nearly \$15,000 more than houses two miles from the trail."

The legislation also refers to a study by the Outdoor Industry Association that biking trails create

enormous economic benefits throughout the country and support 848,000 jobs.

The trails "provide affordable exercise and recreation opportunities within the community and can aid in increasing the overall health of people in communities due to an increase in outdoor activities," according to the legislation.

CRT and DOTD are to identify trail routes and the benefits of bicycle tourism trails as well as

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St. Joe building revitalization 'snowballs' down Plank Road

By Joe Curtis

jocurtis@franklinsun.com

Donna Ratcliff's love of her father sparked a revitalization of Plank Road in St. Joseph that now boasts numerous businesses nestled along quaint, covered sidewalks.

The Tensas Parish seat has seen a rebirth over the last few years due to residents having the desire for improvement through building rehabilitation, especially through its main thoroughfare, Plank Road.

It started when a previous building owner was tearing a balcony down. The building had deteriorated so much that only a rope was used to bring the structure down.

"It just broke my heart," Ratcliff said. "I was at the stop sign and watched him pull the balcony off the roof. It was just rotten and fell in the street."

The building's demise was especially painful to Ratcliff because her father, Carl Randolph, was past

owner of the premises. The building housed Randolph's store, Western Auto. Randolph bought the building in 1968 and passed away 1986.

"I bought this building to turn it into something," Ratcliff said. "I bought the building back from the person my mother sold it to for \$2,500."

Ratcliff replaced windows and doors. She worked on the roof, gave the building a fresh coat of paint, reworked the stairs and rewired the electrical.

"The wiring came in to a Samsonite suitcase," said Chip Sloan, owner of River Traders and one of Ratcliff's tenants. "That is where the fuse box was. You closed the suitcase to keep the rain water off (the wiring)."

The building now contains separate businesses. Sloans antique shop takes up the first floor while an art studio, massage parlor and graphic design studio takes up the second floor.

Tenants pay for rent through performing work in their space.

"I never thought it would be so successful," Ratcliff admitted.

Sloan and his wife, Val, have operated their antique shop for 10 years on Plank Road. Before moving to St. Joseph, the couple owned L.L. Sloan Antiques in Pensacola, Florida for 27 years.

The Sloan's also own and operate Plank Road Pottery where he gives pottery lessons and sales pottery.

"I just wanted to come home," Val Sloan said.

Chip Sloan's antique business has been a success, and he believes other business can be successful in St. Joseph.

"Everything that comes in here has been successful," Chip Sloan said. "Everybody seems to be doing well, and they are welcome to open in St. Joseph. We'll help them figure it out. There is housing here that is very affordable."

Chip Sloan recommends



NATURAL LIGHT pours through the windows in Leslie Ratcliff's second floor art gallery in St. Joseph. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

St. Joseph to anyone wanting to move.

"It is an incredibly wonderful town," Chip Sloan said. "It is the safest place I have ever lived, and I have lived all over the eastern coast of America. It beats them hands down. It's the Mayberry of the Mississippi."

Ratcliff's refurbishing her building seemed to have a "snowball effect" on Plank Road with boutique shops, a Mexican restaurant and art studios opening up, said Morrow Guthrie, Tensas Revitalization board member.

Additionally, St. Joseph amphitheater, antebellum

home library and soon-to-be opened restaurant are located on Plank Road which ends at the town's gazebo.

"It has definitely taken off," Guthrie said.

To keep Plank Road fresh and to continue to draw

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crowds, a group of residents plan events throughout the year.

Events range from Party On the Plank, Revive 5K, holiday events to a farmers market.

Party on the Plank is a gathering with food trucks and live music and where Revive 5K participants can pick up their race packets. The 5K is scheduled for Labor Day this year. Normally, 300 people register for the race.

The farmers market, established 10 years ago, features dips, casseroles, crafts, produce and ice coffee. Plans are to expand to a large parking lot located on Plank Road.

The Father's Day poker run on Lake Bruin also bleeds over to St. Joseph, Guthrie said.

"We would do a party the night before in downtown,"

said Natalie Schauf, owner of the boutique, Shop All Daye. "Then people participate in the poker run the next day."

Additionally, holidays are a busy time for St. Joseph.

"We now raise money during the holidays," said Schauf. "We have huge Christmas trees by the amphitheater and do lighting and cookies with Santa. We have raised enough money to put lighting down the buildings."

Becky Vizard's business, B.Viz Design, is located on Plank Road. It is a boutique and a place where she sells her pillows made from antique textiles.

"People who come in with second homes have a lot of expendable income," Vizard said.

Vizard sees various regional bridge and garden clubs make a day trip to visit her shop and other Plank Road establishments. She also speaks at various



ARTWORK RESTS on the wall in Leslie Ratcliff's upstairs studio at Donna Ratcliff's Plank Road building in St. Joseph. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

clubs where she explains her story and St. Joseph's expansion.

"I can see in five years every storefront full, and (St. Joseph) becoming a destination place," Vizard said. "It is not just for the

summer. Now in the winter, ladies come with their husbands and shop while they hunt."

What else does the future have in store for St. Joseph?

"We want to grow everywhere," Guthrie said. "I



MORROW GUTHRIE, Tensas Revitalization board member, stands with Natalie Schauf, owner of Shop All Daye boutique. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

think the lake speaks for itself. We want our tourism to grow and incorporate the lake and downtown. We want to feed off each other."

Plans are being made to re-establish the Turkey Festival - scheduled for 2022,

said Schauf.

"Which was a huge deal several years ago," Schauf said. "We definitely plan on bringing it back."

With the Plank Road revitalization, St. Joseph is a success story of the Delta region.



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DONNA RATCLIFF stands on the refurbished balcony of her Plank Street building in St. Joseph. Her father, Carl Randolph, was the building's previous owner. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

Right equipment important in Delta fishing spots

Choices of where to fish in the Delta are as plentiful as the choices of baits and lures.

Keith Whitten, owner of Limits Sporting Goods in Winnsboro, said the right lure could make the difference between a successful fishing trip or going home empty.

For bass fishing, Reaction Innovations Sweet Beaver is the way to go, Whitten said. The Sweet Beaver silhouette and action mimics bait fish and crustaceans. Beaver's swirl and two-tone color patterns also gives it an edge over soft plastic baits.

Zoom's Brush Hog is another popular lure for bass fishing, Whitten said. The Zoom Brush Hogs are big, bulky baits with tails, wings and arms for lots of motion and water movement. The lures are made with soft, salty plastic that feels like a meal to a big bass, yet they

are tough enough to stand up to getting bit.

Creature style baits like Sweet Beaver or Brush Hog range in size from four to six inches long, although some lure makers are producing 3-inch versions for finesse fishing. Lure companies have varied the body styles and appendage to make their own unique creature that generates different actions.

The creature baits come in a variety of colors, but usually a handful of hues work best. For clear-water situations, try green pumpkin, watermelon or pumpkinseed. The choice hues for stained to murky water include black-and-blue, black neon, June bug and red shad.

Spinnerbaits cover a lot of water for bass fishing, Whitten said.



KEITH WHITTEN, owner of Limits Outdoor, shows off the many lures offered to fisherman. (Photo by Joe Curtis)



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Bream offers fun fishing, good eating

The term “bream” refers to any narrow, deep-bodied freshwater “panfish,” and includes several different species.

Around the country, the prevalent breams may be known as brim, sunfish, panfish, or bream, but no matter what you call them, it is the first fish many anglers caught and one of the best-flavored fish. They are in many lakes and ponds, are easy to catch and provide hours of fun for all ages.

Bluegill is the most common form of bream in most waters. They vary considerably in color, depending on water color, breeding season and age of the fish.

During bedding time, males take on very bright orange bellies and backs with a dark blue to a purple sheen. Females are less colorful, and we often call them yellow breast, since they look faded when compared to the males.

Bluegill will eat anything they can get in their mouths, including small minnows, bugs, and worms. They spawn on the full moon every month from April through August, and that is a great time to catch large numbers of them.

There is an old saying that if a bluegill got to 5 lb., you could not land it because they fight so hard. The fisherman that landed the world record, a 4-lb., 12-oz. Alabama bluegill, might be able to tell you.

Bream fishing tips

Small bream tolerate an amazing amount of disturbance — a paddle accidentally banged against the boat, a fallen tackle

box, squeaky boat seats. But big sunfish — 9-inch-plus fish — won't abide the slightest bit of commotion. At the first hint of danger, they disappear into the depths.

Be especially attentive to noisy distractions when fishing for big bream. Wear soft-soled shoes when fishing from a boat. Be sure all gear is carefully arranged so there's little chance of creating a disturbance. Fish slowly and “quiet as a mouse.”

Big bream hide where few anglers fish, growing fat in nearly impenetrable sanctuaries of dense brush and vegetation. By using a long pole to fish jigs or live baits in the heart of seldom-fished cover, you can often catch several trophy-class bluegills and redears, even under the toughest fishing conditions.

Head for the thickest, out-of-the-way cover you can find — dense stands of willows, mid-reaches of lily-pad beds, hard-to-reach pockets in big brushy treetops and so forth. Then position your boat so you can reach far beyond the outer edge of cover. Fish without a bobber, pulling the bait up tight against the tip of the pole, then releasing it when you've worked the pole to a small opening. A 10-foot pole works good, but a 12- or 16-footer gives extra reach, eliminating excessive boat movement.

One- to 2-inch topwater plugs resembling natural bream forage such as grasshoppers, small crayfish, little frogs and tiny shad are excellent for catching cagey bream



lurking beneath lily pads. Cast the bantam plug to an opening in or beside the pads; then let it sit, with only an occasional twitch to ripple the water's surface. A curious bream, if one is close by, will soon rush in to hit the lure.

In some waters in summer, the largest bluegills and redears feed primarily at night, just like catfish. Catch these fish on lures like small spinnerbaits, or use a hook, weights and bait with no bobber. Use one or two split shot to carry the bait down; then keep a finger on your line to detect a pickup while tight lining.

Though it seems contrary to commonsense rules, big bream are more likely than small fish to gently nip a bait rather than smacking it with a hard-hitting strike. That being the case, lightweight, sensitive equipment is a must. Use an ultralight spinning outfit or graphite jigging pole with a soft, sensitive tip. This allows you to lift up slightly and watch for the slightest bend in the tip that indicates a fish has taken your bait. Though few anglers use it, 1- or 2-pound-test line will produce many more big bream than heavier line.

Big bream, especially big redears, tend to take a

position below the rest of the school, usually on or very near the bottom, even in shallow water. A tight-line bait setup is the best choice for taking these bottom dwellers. Thread a small egg sinker on your line, and below it, tie on a barrel swivel just large enough to keep the sinker from sliding off. To the swivel's lower eye, tie a 2- or 3-foot leader of light line tipped with a cricket hook. Add your favorite live bait; then cast the rig, and allow it to settle to the bottom. When a fish takes the bait, the line moves freely through the sinker with no resistance to alert fish to a possible threat.

Good eating

Filletted or fried whole, they are the favorite fish to eat for many people.

Many people fry small bream and have a common saying “if they were big enough to make the grease stink they were big enough to keep.”

If you scale a bream then cut its head off and gut it, you can fry them whole. If you can pull the top fin out, it will take out the attached bones. Then the meat will fall away from the backbone.

Bigger bream will be big enough to filet. Some feel a boneless piece of fish are easier to cook. Any leftovers make a great fish sandwich later.

FISHING Continued from Page 7

Spinnerbaits are lures that feature one, two or more spinner blades on an overhead shaft, combined with a lower shaft that has a lead weight and hook covered by a rubber-tentacled skirt.

Primarily cast, spinnerbaits are retrieved so that the blades and upper arm run vertically above the bottom part of the lure. They are different from in-line spinners, which feature a spinning blade on a single shaft, though they are often lumped into the same category. In-line spinners come in a greater variety than spinnerbaits and are used for many more species of freshwater fish.

Spinnerbaits are popular bass fishing lures, especially for shallow-water angling, but can be used in deeper water and for a few other freshwater species besides bass. They are relatively easy to fish, and fairly weed- and tangle-free when retrieved around cover and obstructions. Although their appearance is unlike natural forage, their flash and vibration draw strikes.

Booyah brand is a popular spinnerbaits for local anglers, Whitten said.

Crank baits fall under the category of power fishing lures because of how much water you can cover with them in a short amount of time. This is a significant advantage to fishermen looking to locate and catch fish quickly like tournament anglers for example.

Selecting the best crank bait is a more involved process than with most other bass lures. There are many factors to consider

on these baits. But the most important factor is how deep do you want it to dive. Crank baits can run from just barely below the surface to as deep as thirty-five feet.

One of the more successful lines of crank baits is the Bandit, Whitten said.

For white perch, Bobby Garland Baby Shads are the fisherman's bait, Whitten said.

These soft baits feature a durable fat body with a thin, spear shaped tail to create the ultimate dancing action. Bobby Garland Baby Shads come in a wide variety of colors including some glow-in-the-dark for various water and fishing applications.

Monkey milk and blue grass are top sellers in the Baby Shad, Whitten said.

Additionally, quality rods and reels are important tools to have in a fisherman's boat.

Whitten offers his customers Abu Garcia and Lews.

Lew's American Hero speed spool combo is most popular, according to Whitten.

The combo features a 5-ball bearing American Hero bait cast reel with a one-piece, lightweight graphite frame and side plates. The reel weighs 7.2 ounces. The combo rod features a one-piece premium graphite blank for extreme sensitivity to detect even the lightest of bites. Its guides are gun smoke stainless steel frames with stainless steel inserts.

Whatever bait, lure or rod and reel you choose, get out to one of the Delta's many lakes, rivers or bayous and go fishing.



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Museums offer history, exhibits to Delta

The Delta region is rich in natural beauty and resources but also rich in history.

Its rich history is highlighted in several museums located throughout the region. Whether you are looking for information about farming or musical artists, there is a museum for you.

Delta Music Museum and Arcade Theatre is located in Ferriday and is housed in the old post office on Louisiana Ave. The museum chronicles the musical heritage along the Mississippi River Delta region beginning in Memphis and traveling down to New Orleans.

A tour guide offers interesting stories to go along with each exhibit. As an added feature, visitors can view partial performances of celebrities in the museum's video room.

Some artists inducted into the Delta Music Hall of Fame and featured in the museum are: Jerry Lee Lewis, Mickey Gilley, Jimmy Swaggart, Leon "Pee Wee" Whittaker, Gov. Jimmie Davis, Conway Twitty and Linda Gail Lewis.

There are currently 29 artists featured in the museum.

The museum is open Wednesday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Call (318) 757-4297 for Monday and Tuesday tour requests.

Frogmore is a historic, privately owned cotton plantation near Ferriday. The museum offers a historic mansion named Gillespie. On site, are slave row cabins and numerous outbuildings. Frogmore was built in 1843 in Greek Revival style and added to the National Register of Historic Places on May 31, 1980.

An archeological site southwest of the house, named Frogmore Mound, was added July 2004. A working cotton gin was moved to the property in



FROGMORE PLANTATION, located on US-84 west of Ferriday, is a historic, privately owned cotton plantation tourist attraction. The 1,800-acre cotton farm and museum's history goes back to 1815 and is built near Native American mounds. Frogmore's guides take visitors through the plantation's wild backstory, from its heyday as a stop along the Natchez-to-Natchitoches wagon trail, to its prominence as a Civil War encampment to its present life as a working cotton operation. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

January 1999 and named Piazza Cotton Gin.

Frogmore Plantation is located in 11656 La Hwy 84 west of Ferriday. Call ahead for hours of operation.

The Old Post Office Museum in Winnsboro features numerous art exhibits throughout the year and hosts special events such as wedding receptions, class reunions or business gathering.

Built in 1936, the Prairie Street location underwent extensive renovations in early 2000. Much of the building remains the same, from gold post office boxes down to the original wood floors. The building received new lighting and a new front door.

The perimeter of the 2-story brick building houses a permanent display of Franklin Parish history while the museum's interior rotates different exhibits. The original black iron vault with the words, "Diebold Safe & Lock Co" remains in its original state. Dated 1936, it houses scrapbooks and memorabilia donated by local families.



DOZENS OF displays line Delta Music Museum in Ferriday. The museum highlights the Delta's many musical artists from Grace Broussard, a swamp pop performer, to Jimmy Swaggart, an evangelist and a gospel singer. (Photo by Joe Curtis)



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Bass fishing abundant in Delta bodies of water

Many anglers both near and far come to fish the Delta region waters for bass. With so many bodies of water teeming with the fish, here are tips and characteristics.

Adult largemouth bass are solitary fish, although occasionally several bass will congregate in areas with abundant food supplies.

They are usually the apex predator in their habitat, and they will hide between rocks, among water vegetation, or under roots and limbs of sunken trees, striking at their prey from the shadows.

Bass prefer quiet, calm, and warm water but are very adaptable to other conditions. They are found in rivers, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and streams.

Adult largemouth bass prefer to feed on small fish like perch, sunfish, and minnows. However, they are also known to eat crayfish, insects, frogs, and even small aquatic birds.

- The largemouth bass has a number of aliases: the widemouth bass, Florida bass, black bass, bigmouth bass, bucketmouth bass, green bass, green trout, southern largemouth and northern largemouth.

- Largemouth bass do better in the wild than in captivity.

- A bass' average lifespan is about 16 years, but have been known to live more than 20 years.

- Largemouth bass have a highly attuned sense of smell, and can zero in on prey by following scent trails.

- Female largemouth bass are usually larger than male largemouth bass of the same age.

- Largemouth bass will often breach the surface of the water and become air-

borne when hooked in an effort to break free.

- It is encouraged among anglers to release large specimens of largemouth bass, because the larger fish are usually breeding females that contribute to future fishing stock.

- Largemouth bass are very aggressive fish, and are known to strike at nearly anything they consider alive.

- Adult largemouth bass are usually solitary creatures, unless they are males guarding a brood swarm.

- Adult male largemouth bass are responsible for preparing a nest, usually one to five feet below the water. Once the nest is built, a female will lay between 2,000 and 40,000 eggs, which the male will stay to guard over a week. When the babies hatch, they stay in the nest for a week.

- Largemouth fry will stay in a school for three to four weeks, called a "brood swarm," which is guarded by their father.

- The largemouth bass is the state fish of Georgia and Mississippi, official freshwater fish of Alabama and Florida, and the official sport fish of Tennessee.

- A five pound bass is considered large to most anglers.

Fishing tips

- Feeding habits depend on a variety of different factors such as weather, season, and time of day.

- Due to sensitivity to light, largemouth bass are more active early and late in the day.

- Early spring is the easiest time to hook a largemouth because they will start moving closer to the surface.

- Although springtime will give you the most luck out on the water, bass can bite year-round.

- Find the correct fishing reel that you feel most comfortable using. The spin cast reel is the easiest to use for a beginner.

- The most common lures used for bass fishing include plastic worms, jigs, crankbaits, spinnerbaits, and spoons.

- Bass are opportunist foragers, so experiment with different types of bait and lures.

- Although artificial lures are the most ordinarily used, good baits also include nightcrawlers and small shad or crayfish.

- Bass are known for being tough fighters when reeling them in.

- Largemouth bass are most attracted to the color red.

- To correctly hold a bass, put its bottom lip between your thumb and bended pointer finger. Be sure to maintain a tight grip.

- Each state has varying fishing regulations. It is important to educate yourself on them before going out to fish.

- Remember to acquire a fishing permit if taking up this sport. Fishing without a permit is illegal and could result in a fine. Many states allow young children or veterans to fish without a permit.

- Although many fish have an open season of all year, there are some that do not. Look at your state's regulations to find out when you are allowed to fish.

- Most states have a length limit for their fish. If the fish you caught does not measure the minimum, it is required that you let it go. There are sometimes maximum limits for certain fish as well.

- Most states also have daily limits, or the amount of a certain fish you can keep in one day.

Delta walking trails provide exercise, views

From hilly to swampy, from paved to dirt, the Delta region has a walking trail to meet a specific person’s interest.

Walking trails give opportunities to get outside, breathe fresh air and enjoy nature.

According to “The Economic Value of Walkability,” walking works hard against diseases that result from inactivity: heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, depression and some types of cancer.

And according to studies about walking:

- Regular, brisk walking can reduce elevated blood fats or blood pressure and improve digestion.
- Regular walking will help you maintain a healthy weight and a positive body image, especially when combined with healthy eating.
- Brisk walking trains your heart, lungs and muscles to work more efficiently.
- Walking strengthens bones and helps prevent or control osteoporosis (a condition where bones become brittle and fragile).

People can take advantage of several trails at local, national and state wildlife refuges.

Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Rainey Lake Trail, located in Tallulah, offers a four-mile boardwalk trail with a gentle grade. It also offers observation decks, hunting and photography blinds, fishing piers and boat launches.

When visiting Tensas River NWR, also take a walk on the Hollow Cypress boardwalk, located in Franklin and Tensas parishes, to the observation tower.

Bayou Cocodrie National Wildlife Management Area (WMA), located in Ferriday, offers several trails ranging from 1/4 mile to four miles. The grades are all ranked gentle.

J.C. “Sonny” Gilbert WMA in Sicily Island, has three trails: St. Mary’s Falls Trail, Rock Falls Trail and Big Creek Trail.

St. Mary’s Falls Trail is located on the north end and travels through upland mixed pine hardwoods and passes several smaller waterfalls and scenic views. Length is one mile.

Rock Falls Trail is a trail through mature stands of mixed hardwoods. The waterfall along this trail measures near 17 feet and is reported to be the highest waterfall in Louisiana. The length is 0.7 mile.

Big Creek Trail winds through seven miles of stands of mature, mixed pine hardwoods and passes many scenic points of interest including several waterfalls. Estimated time



VIDALIA’S RIVER WALK offers walkers beautiful scenic view alongside the Mississippi River. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

to complete is three hours.

If refuge trails are a little too “wild” for your taste, check out the municipal park paths in Vidalia and Winnsboro.

In Vidalia, the river walk winds its way 1.5 miles along side the Mississippi River.

Civitan Park walking path in Winnsboro is a one mile long loop and winds its way through woods and a playground.

FISHING Continued from Page 4

design criteria and estimate costs. Additionally, the agencies are to suggest ideas for stakeholder engagement as well as for sustainability and best practices, and also outline challenges with bicycle trail planning and development.

The agencies will address objectives “for the tourism trail routes that establish the criteria for route locations, map routes, and connect exiting bicycle, transit, rail, vehicle, and pedestrian networks with potential tourism trails.”

Safety, the coordination of bikeway trial connections statewide and costs associated with develop-

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Delta farmers market offer healthy food choices

Farmers markets are scattered throughout the Delta Region with large ones located in Winnsboro, Vidalia and St. Joseph.

In Winnsboro, the farmers market is located on Adams Street under the pavilion. Vidalia's farmers market is located on the Old Court House's premises, and the farmers market in St. Joseph is located at the large parking lot on Plank Road.

The markets offer fresh farm-to-table food that support healthy lifestyles and diets.

Farmers markets reconnect communities to their food system. They create an opportunity where farmers can simultaneously sell fresh, local food and serve as food educators, revitalizing the way consumers shop and eat. They are also places where farmers and neighbors meet to socialize and exchange ideas around cooking, nutrition and agriculture.

Unlike other food retail outlets, farmers markets foster a sense of community among their customers. Not only do patrons shop for farm fresh food, but they also engage in conversation, meet

neighbors for lunch and enjoy a festive atmosphere with family and friends.

Research indicates people thrive and are naturally happier when socially connected. Farmers markets support emotional health by creating a cheerful space where people come together for laughter, fellowship, food and fun.

Studies show that nutrient density of produce begins to decline the minute it's harvested.

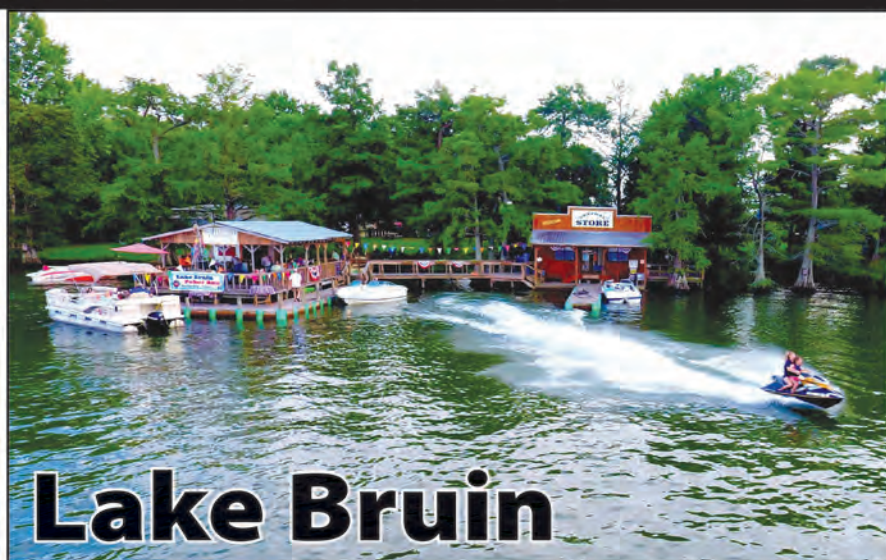
In North America, the average piece of produce stays in transit for five days, traveling up to 6,000 miles from places like Mexico and Chile. Produce then sits on grocery store shelves for up to three to four days before you purchase it. That means your fruits and vegetables are up to 40 percent less nutrient dense by the time you eat them, as opposed to when it's fresh.

Additionally, buying locally from smaller vendors gives you the opportunity to ask questions and gain insight into how your food was grown and harvested. More information means that you can make smart buying decisions for you and your family.



OLD POST Office Museum in Winnsboro hosts numerous exhibits each year including "I do! I do!" pictured above. The exhibit featured 30 wedding dresses loaned by Franklin Parish brides. The cherished garments include styles from the 1940s to 1990s. The museum is located at 513 Prairie Street. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

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BOATS ARE on the bank ready to take people fishing at Turkey Creek in Franklin Parish. (Photo by Joe Curtis)



PEOPLE CAN fish off the public pier at Turkey Creek. The lake is an excellent place to fish for white perch, brim or bass. (Photo by Joe Curtis)

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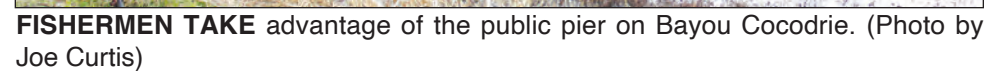
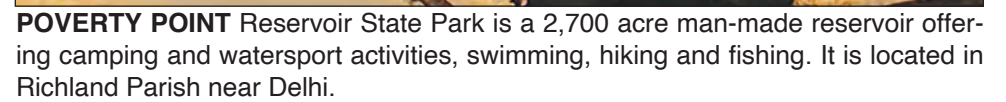
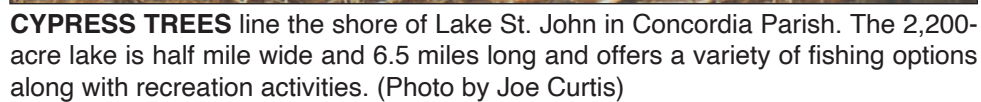


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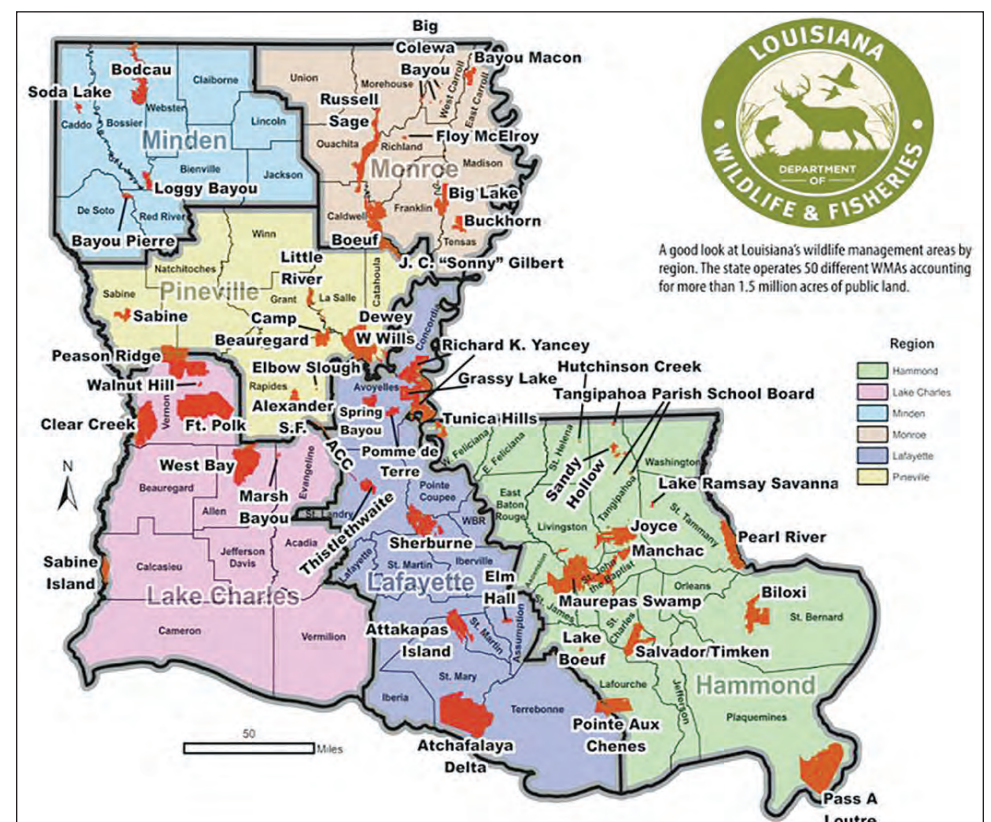


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