

TOWA

The Official Publication of the **Texas Outdoor Writers Association**

TOWA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Executive Director Search Committee Formulating Plan, Recommendations

David Sikes, TOWA President

The committee charged with revamping and recommending a new set of executive director duties has nearly completed the task. Next, the board will vote on whether to accept it as is or tweak it before we put it to a full membership vote, scheduled in the fall.

In our deliberations, we have come full circle.

A review of the bylaws suggested this process was necessary in light of new technology and changes in the organization.

I'm not sure any single person could have handled the duties penned in the bylaws decades ago. TOWA's newly acquired nonprofit status and more complex finances certainly played a role in the Executive Director Search Committee's decision to update these responsibilities.

Initially, the committee entertained the possibility of hiring a management firm to handle many of the financial and clerical duties. Our thinking was this would free up the executive director to pursue other responsibilities. Then we considered hiring an accountant who specializes in nonprofit organizations to handle all IRS and financial chores.

But ultimately we rejected these options based on our desire to maintain

management within the organization rather than outsourcing such duties. Cost also was a consideration.

But we did not throw out the basic needs these suggestions aimed to satisfy. Yes, we wanted greater and more professional financial oversight. And yes, we wanted to demonstrate a higher level of accountability.

So the committee plans to recommend to the Board that we better define the duties of a treasurer, to include separate responsibilities and to provide a system of checks and balances within the organization. We envision this to be a paid position. And at the same time, we plan to recommend the inclusion of an outside accountant who would regularly review our books and provide a quarterly report on finances. This, of course, would result in an added expense to TOWA.

The executive director, among his or her other duties, would be the primary spokesperson for TOWA in everyday matters, and be charged with active and supporting member retention and acquisition, as well as conference sponsorships, planning and implementation. He or she would maintain a central office, permanent phone, P.O. Box, write news releases, manage the membership database, produce the annual directory, organize

conference registration and compile/edit the newsletter.

The committee also is recommending adding a financial incentive to the executive director's compensation package, in the form of a sales commission, based upon meeting and/or exceeding recruitment goals to be set by the Board of Directors.

For the most part, these recommendations represent a refinement rather than an overhaul of the executive director duties. The committee system worked the way it should.

As a final stipulation, the committee is recommending that this TOWA management system be implemented for one year, after which the full board or designated committee would review its merits and failings. After review, the board and full membership would consider how to proceed. We could reject the system outright and start over. We could tweak it and suggest minor changes. Or we could accept it as is and move on to the next item on the TOWA to-do list in our effort to improve the organization's credibility and function.

The date for the Summer meeting and mail-in ballot will be published in the August 2012 edition of the TOWA newsletter, 30 days in advance of the meeting, as stipulated in our bylaws.

TOWA OFFICERS, BOARD

PRESIDENT

David Sikes (361) 886-3616
sikesd@caller.com

PRESIDENT-ELECT

TJ Greaney (512) 789-3838
tj@countrylinemagazine.com

TREASURER

Bill E. Mills (281) 448-5811
offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Larry J. LeBlanc (936) 445-9438
904 W. Montgomery, Ste. 4 cell (936) 524-0761
Willis, TX 77378

towa@suddenlink.net

BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD CHAIRMAN

John Goodspeed (210) 573-7460
john@johngoodspeed.com

Susan Ebert (2013) (512) 431-2013
susanebertink@gmail.com

Cody Greaney (2014) (512) 576-2200
cody@texasoutdoorzone.com

Kendal Hemphill (2013) (325) 347-6440
jeep@verizon.net

Bob Hood (2015) (817) 228-5952
bobhoodoutdoors@yahoo.com

Judy Bishop Jurek (2014) (979) 541-7776
redhawkconsulting@yahoo.com

Peggy York (2012) (210) 647-7053
peggy.york@sbcglobal.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

David Sikes (361) 886-3616
sikesd@caller.com

CONFERENCE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRMAN

TJ Greaney (512) 789-3838
tj@countrylinemagazine.com

SCHOLARSHIP

Judy Mills, Marianne Odom (281) 448-5811
offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net;
marianneodom27@hotmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

Bob Hood (817) 228-5952
bobhoodoutdoors@yahoo.com

SITE SELECTION

Jonette Childs (361) 729-0239
saltex@pyramid3.net

AUCTIONS

TJ Greaney (512) 789-3838
tj@countrylinemagazine.com

EIC AWARDS

Kendal Hemphill (325) 347-6440
jeep@verizon.net

TOWA PHOTOGRAPHERS

Gerald Burleigh and David Redwine

TOWA HISTORIAN

John Thompson

TOWA News is published monthly by the Texas Outdoor Writers Association and edited by Susan L. Ebert. Layout by SusanEbertink, SusanEbertink@gmail.com. Contributors are urged to submit material by the 15th of each month. For advertising information, contact Susan L. Ebert at (512) 431-2013 or SusanEbertink@gmail.com. TOWA News is emailed to members and mailed first class, if requested, from Porter, Texas. TOWA was formed in 1958 as a professional/social organization for those who communicate about hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits, as well as those in business and industry connected with the outdoors.



The TOWA Newsletter is proudly sponsored by Gulf States Toyota. For information, go to www.buyatoyota.com.



NOMINATE A CONSERVATIONIST FOR THE DSC CAPSTICK AWARD

DALLAS — Nominations are being accepted through July 30 for a prestigious award that recognizes significant contributions to wildlife and habitat conservation, as well as sustained commitment to the heritage of hunting.

The Peter Hathaway Capstick Hunting Heritage Award is the top conservation and service award given by the Dallas Safari Club (DSC) and Dallas Ecological Foundation.

If you're a hunter, you probably know someone who deserves special recognition for their efforts in conservation. There are thousands of sportsmen, women and organizations playing major roles in keeping America's wildlife populations strong and habitats healthy. We'd like to hear their stories," said Ben Carter, DSC executive director.

DSC will present the award during its annual convention and expo, Jan. 3-6, 2013, in Dallas.

The Capstick Award is named for the well-known American author whose defense of hunting and conservation made him a household name. Capstick's widow, Fiona Claire, remains a DSC life member and is involved in award presentations. Recipients are selected based on their involvement in education, hunting, conservation organizations, humanitarian causes, research, permanent endowments and/or charitable giving. Criteria are summarized as follows:

The objective of this award is to bring honor and recognition to an individual, organization or group whose achievements reveal a sustained and significant contribution to the conservation of wildlife and its habitat. Additionally, the winner will have shown long-term commitment to our hunting heritage by pursuing that goal for the benefit of future generations.

Nominations can be made via mail or e-mail. Send to Dallas Safari Club, 13709 Gamma Rd, Dallas, TX 75244, USA, or info@biggame.org.

In 2012, the Capstick Award was presented to Christiane Underberg of Rheinberg, Germany. Underberg has hunted all over the world including North and South America, Europe and Africa. Her experiences afield gave her a deep environmental ethic and thoughtful, respected voice in resource conservation and management. She is active in the International Council for Game and Wildlife Management, World Wildlife Fund and Council for Sustainable Development of the German Government. She holds numerous honors from different countries for her work and contributions to ecological, cultural and scientific causes.

Previous recipients also include Harry Tension of Fort Worth, Texas; the late Baron Bertrand des Clers of France; President Theodore Roosevelt (posthumously); Dr. Ian Player of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa; Boone and Crockett Club, Hubert Thummler of Mexico City, and Dan Pedrotti of Corpus Christi, Texas.

For more information, visit biggame.org.

About Dallas Safari Club (DSC)

Desert bighorns on an unbroken landscape, stalking Cape buffalo in heavy brush, students discovering conservation. DSC works to guarantee a future for all these and much more. An independent organization since 1982, DSC has become an international leader in conserving wildlife and wilderness lands, educating youth and the general public, and promoting and protecting the rights and interests of hunters worldwide. Get involved at www.biggame.org.

CALENDAR

June 1- July 17 — The 2012 Gulf of Mexico red snapper federal recreational harvest season has been extended to 12:01 a.m. on July 17, due to anglers having been pinned to the shore by Tropical Storm Debby. In Texas — the only Gulf Coast state with an open season to date — the season remains open year round within nine nautical miles, with a four-fish limit per person and a 15-inch minimum; a two-fish limit applies in federal waters.

July 11-13 — ICAST 2012 in Orlando, Fla. Obtain media credentials by registering at icasting.org/icast-press-room. Contact Mary Jane Williamson, Communications Director, at (703) 519-9691, x227 for more information.

A tip o' the TOWA brim to John Goodspeed, winner of EIC Category 11. Below is his feature "Buddy Rivalry" as published in the March 25, 2011 edition of the San Antonio Express-News.

Buddy Rivalry

NFL Hall of Famers trade barbs in joke-packed day on the bay

John Goodspeed

ROCKPORT, TEXAS — When old friends go fishing, a little ribbing and teasing are sure to follow.

But these were not your run-of-the-mill high school chums or longtime co-workers.

They were Pro Football Hall of Famers Elvin Bethea and Kenny Houston, who tackled angling with football-like intensity — whether landing a pigskin-size redfish or a piggy perch.

The jokes rolled on as nonstop as the wind and waves on this recent blustery day in San Antonio Bay.

Some examples:

Houston: "Elvin lost two fish and part of his mind."

Bethea: "Kenny's a big-time fisherman. Or so he thinks."

Houston: "Elvin quit betting with me a long time ago. He ran out of money."

Bethea: "Kenny's setting the hook on every third wave."

Houston, watching Bethea untangle a line: "The reason I fish next to Elvin is because I know he'll be out of the water 80 percent of the time."

Football analogies flew, too, such as when Houston — who was scoring more fish than Bethea — told him he was not casting close enough to the oyster reef.

Said Bethea: "I know what's wrong. I'm not leaning into that last yard."

"It's like having two kids in the boat the way they tease and joke with each other. It's great," said Petra Schultz of Green Hornet Guide Service. "You know it's not going to be a boring trip, that's for sure."

She and her husband, Don

Schultz, have been guiding Bethea and Houston for about five years, since Bethea fell in love with the Rockport area.

They've been fishing together since 1968, while playing for the Houston Oilers — Bethea as a defensive end and Houston a defensive back.

While both live in Houston and often fish for redfish and speckled trout in nearby Galveston Bay, they relish trips to Rockport, where they have made friends and always make time for fans.

"We're always competing with each other," Bethea said. "It's a carryover from football. Now, instead of taking pride in making the most tackles, we try to catch the biggest fish."

Said Houston: "I don't care if we're fishing, golfing or shooting marbles, we're always in competition. If I don't catch the biggest fish, I'd rather ride the bus home instead of going with him in the truck."

Their friendly rivalry has a serious side, too.

They are planning to invite fellow Hall of Famers to their own golf and fishing tournament in the Rockport-Corpus Christi area later this year to raise money for children's charities.

"We'll bring some great guys, and we always meet a lot of good people at these kinds of events," Houston said.

Added Bethea: "We'll see how many Hall of Famers we can get at the same time telling lies — (about how) every one of them is the greatest golfer and fisherman in the world. We'll have a lot of fun."



Pro Football Hall of Famer Elvin Bethea proudly displays his catch. Photo by John Goodspeed.

Monumental Sportsmen’s Act of 2012 Introduced in the Senate

ALEXANDRIA, VA. — The sportfishing industry applauds the introduction of a large package of pro-sportsmen legislation in the Senate as an amendment to the Farm Bill. Introduced by co-chairs of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus, Senators Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and John Thune (R-S.D.), the Sportsmen’s Act of 2012 addresses several key issues that are impacting the sportfishing industry and anglers. The package features two bills that recently passed the House of Representatives as a part of the Sportsmen’s Heritage Act, including legislation that prevents a federal ban of lead fishing tackle and ammunition. The Sportsmen’s Act of 2012 features several other provisions that will advance the conservation of fish habitat and populations and increase recreational fishing opportunity.

“The Sportsmen’s Act of 2012 is the largest, most diverse pro-sportsmen legislative package introduced in recent memory,” said American Sportfishing Association Vice President Gordon Robertson. “The sportfishing industry thanks Senators Tester and Thune for addressing some of the biggest issues that are affecting sportsmen and women. From improving habitat conservation to increasing public access, passage of the Sportsmen’s Act of 2012 would represent one of the biggest advancements for recreational fishing in years.”

The Sportsmen’s Act of 2012 features 19 bills that promote our nation’s recreational fishing, hunting and shooting heritage, eight of which will have significant specific impacts on the sportfishing community. Of particular note are:

The Hunting, Fishing and Recreational Shooting Protection Act (S. 838) — This section will block ongoing attempts to ban lead in recreational fishing equipment and ammunition by clarifying the Toxic Substances Control Act. Recent attempts to overregulate sportfishing equipment in a non-scientific fashion by anti-fishing interests represent one of the largest threats to the sport.

National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (S. 1201) — This section will authorize the National Fish Habitat Partnership, an initiative that seeks to protect, restore and enhance fish habitat on a range-wide scale. This non-regulatory partnership is the most comprehensive effort ever attempted to voluntarily conserve freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats nationwide.

Billfish Conservation Act (S. 1451) — This section will conserve declining billfish populations by prohibiting the commercial sale and importation of

billfish throughout the U.S., with an exception in the state of Hawaii and the Pacific Insular Area islands to preserve traditional fisheries. It is currently illegal to harvest or import Atlantic-caught billfish into the U.S., but billfish from other oceans come into U.S. markets in substantial numbers.

Report on Artificial Reefs in the Gulf of Mexico — This section would require the Department of the Interior to develop a report on its Idle Iron policy, which requires the removal of idle drilling platforms, in order to develop a coordination strategy between agencies and states. These platforms represent the world’s largest network of artificial reefs and provide habitat for marine species on an otherwise barren seafloor.

Making Public Lands Public Act (S. 901) — This section will address one of the most significant obstacles to sportfishing — lack of access to public lands and waters. This language will increase access to angling, hunting and recreational shooting opportunities on federal lands, by directing 1.5 percent of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to ensure that fishing, hunting and other recreational activities are accessible.

“There is no doubt that the thousands of anglers who have supported these individual provisions through KeepAmericaFishing™ played an important role in the introduction of this amendment,” said Robertson. “This clearly demonstrates the impact that anglers can have when speaking collectively with one voice. With passage of this bill, anglers will see the rewards of their efforts on the water.”

The Senate voted on June 7 to advance the 2012 Farm Bill discussions, which will cover the potential inclusion of the Sportsmen’s Act of 2012.

“While Sportsmen’s Act of 2012 addresses many of the key issues impacting recreational fishing today, there are still other legislative measures important to the sportfishing community that we hope to see move this year. With Congress’s support, we can overcome the obstacles facing sportsmen and women and improve conservation efforts nationwide,” Robertson concluded.

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is the sportfishing industry’s trade association. ASA invests in long-term ventures to ensure the industry will remain strong and prosperous as well as giving America’s 60 million anglers a voice in policy decisions that affect their ability to sustainably fish on our nation’s waterways through KeepAmericaFishing™, our angler advocacy campaign. America’s anglers generate over \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$125 billion impact on the nation’s economy creating employment for more than one million people.

DUCK POPULATIONS HIT ALL-TIME RECORD











Breeding Survey estimates 48.6 million ducks; Mallards at highest level since 1999

North America’s total spring duck population is the highest ever recorded, according to the just-released annual Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey.

Conducted each May by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service, the survey puts the duck population at 48.6 million birds. That represents a 7 percent increase from 2011’s record number of 45.6 million.

“This is the highest duck count since we started the survey in 1955,” says Dr. Frank Rohwer, Delta Waterfowl’s scientific director. “We had excellent wetland conditions in 2011, the second-highest pond count ever. So last year, we made a pile of ducks. This year, we’re counting them.”

Mallards, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, gadwalls, canvasbacks, northern shovellers and scaup are all up significantly from last year, with both species of teal and shovellers at all-time highs. Blue-winged teal are estimated at 9.2 million, green-winged teal number more than 3.4 million and shovellers now top 5 million.

Species	2012	2011	% change from 2011	% change from LTA
 Mallard	10,602	9,183	+15	+40
 Godwit	3,586	3,257	+10	+96
 Wigeon	2,145	2,084	+3	-17
 Green-winged	3,471	2,900	+20	+74
 Blue-winged	9,242	8,948	+3	+94
 Pintail	3,473	4,429	-22	-14
 Shoveler	5,018	4,641	+8	+111
 Redhead	1,270	1,356	-6	+89
 Canvasback	0,760	0,692	+10	+33
 Scaup	5,239	4,319	+21	+4
Total Ducks	48,575	45,554	+7	+43

All numbers in millions. LTA is long-term average.

Senate Passes Farm Bill; Sportsmen Urge House to Follow Suit

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 21, 2012 — The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and other leaders in the sportsman-conservation community commended the U.S. Senate for its vote giving final passage to the Farm Bill, the wide-ranging legislation that represents the largest federal investment in agricultural and private lands conservation in the nation.

“Thanks to Senators Debbie Stabenow and Pat Roberts, who forged bipartisan agreement under trying budgetary circumstances, and to Majority Leader Senator Reid and Minority Leader McConnell advancing today’s vote, we are one step closer toward finalizing a new Farm Bill,” said Steve Kline, director of the TRCP Center for Agricultural and Private Lands. “The Senate Farm Bill invokes sportsmen’s values, helps sustain fish and wildlife habitat and makes the conservation title more user friendly and more efficient.”

Voting on 73 amendments to the massive bill – narrowed down by Senate leaders from a list of more than 300 that had been proposed – began on Tuesday afternoon and continued during a marathon session that concluded the following afternoon.

Notable amendments approved by the Senate include a measure re-linking conservation compliance and crop insurance, which was introduced by Sen. Saxby Chambliss of Georgia and passed in a close 52-47 vote. The amendment helps ensure that taxpayer funds support sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices. In addition to the “sodsaver” provision already included in the bill, it will strengthen the farm safety net by focusing crop production on traditionally productive acres.

With the Senate Farm Bill now finalized, all eyes now turn to the House of Representatives, which has yet to release its version of the bill.

“Waiting only increases budget pressures, while rural landscapes continue to be diminished and fish and wildlife populations and the

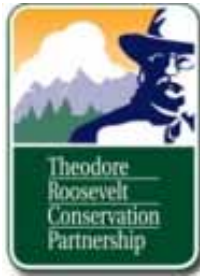
economies they support suffer,” said Jennifer Mock Schaeffer, Farm Bill coordinator for the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. “The Farm Bill has helped conserve and enhance millions of acres of fish and game habitat, and we urge the House to follow the Senate’s lead and finalize its version of the bill without delay.”

“Sportsmen spend \$76 billion annually to hunt and fish on lands like those maintained under the Conservation Reserve Program,” said Dave Nomsen, vice president of government affairs for Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever. “While taking a cut to programs like CRP is not easy, the Senate-passed Farm Bill maintains an efficient, effective conservation title that assists farmers and ranchers in being good stewards, boasting as it does a suite of voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs that no doubt will remain popular with landowners. Given the value of these programs, the need for the House to move forward swiftly in passing its own Farm Bill cannot be overstated.”

“American hunters and anglers must work diligently to ensure that Congress continues to press forward in finalizing the new Farm Bill – and that critical conservation program functions are maintained,” said Russ Schnitzer, agricultural policy advisor for Trout Unlimited. “As the single-largest source of federal funding for conservation on private lands in our country, the conservation title of the Farm Bill is one of our most valuable tools to bolster fish and wildlife, sustain important habitat and uphold outdoor opportunities in partnership with agricultural producers across the country.”

Three sportsmen’s bills introduced as possible amendments to the Farm Bill were determined not germane and not included in measures voted upon by the Senate. The future of these bills is unclear at this time.

— Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership



Study Says Outdoor Industry Has Larger Economic Impact than Pharmaceutical Totalled \$645 Billion in Spending in 2011

A new study has shown the outdoor recreation industry to be much bigger than some think. Taking into account not only sales of gear and equipment, but also expenditures on services such as product designers, web developers, marketers, management, outfitters, and more, the industry is an “economic giant” in the United States.

According to the study, spending on outdoor recreation in the United States totaled \$645.6 billion in 2011. By comparison, consumer spending on pharmaceuticals for the same year was \$331 billion. Only two industries examined were bigger spenders than the outdoor industry, financial services and insurance (\$780 billion) and outpatient

health care (\$767 billion).

Western states generated \$256 billion alone in sales and services along with 2.3 million jobs, according to the report. “The numbers are better than we expected,” Washington Governor Christine Gregoire, chairwoman of the Western Governors’ Association, said in a statement. “We knew that outdoor recreation was a growth sector and that it creates jobs, but this study documents just how important it is to our national and Western economies.”

The outdoor recreation industry jointly commissioned Southwick Associates to conduct a survey of American spending on outdoor recreation equipment and activities. Participating in the

survey and release of the report on June 10 were: The Western Governors’ Association (WGA), Outdoor Industry Association, Motorcycle Industry Council, Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America, and National Marine Manufacturers Association.

The study looked at the following outdoor activities:

- Trail sports
- Biking
- Camping
- Snow sports
- Water sports
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Wildlife watching

- Motorcycle riding
- Off-roading

The study marks the first time that motorized and non-motorized sectors of outdoor recreation worked together to document the total size of the outdoor industry. The National Marine Manufacturers Association said it would continue to work with the coalition to analyze and release state-by-state data later this year. State-by-state data would help members of the outdoor recreation industry better inform policy-makers and show the importance of the outdoor industry in the North American economy.

— Agnieszka Spieszny,
Outdoor Hub Reporters

Binoculars.com Awards Bushnell Legend Ultra HD with Second Consecutive "Binocular of the Year" Award

OVERLAND PARK, KAN. — Bushnell Outdoor Products, an industry-leader in high performance sports optics for more than 60 years, has been awarded the Binoculars.com 2012 Binocular of the Year award. The popular online optics retailer recognized the Bushnell Legend Ultra HD 10x 42mm binocular with the top honor for the second consecutive year.

Introduced in 2010, the Binocular of the Year Awards includes six different categories along with the top performing Binocular of the Year designation. To determine the winners, each model is given a thorough visual inspection and graded according to specific criteria established by the in-house optics experts at Binoculars.com. The team then subjects each binocular to exacting tests in the field to rate its performance, including build quality, overall brightness, edge clarity and trueness of color.

The Legend UHD 10x 42mm binocular features premium ED Prime Glass and Ultra Wide Band anti-reflective coating, resulting in superior light transmission and the ultimate high-definition viewing experience. Built with a durable, rubber-armored housing, the 100 percent waterproof and fog proof Legend UHD also features the patented RainGuard HD lens coating - a permanent, water-repellant coating that causes moisture to bead up and scatter less light in inclement weather.

"Binoculars.com is proud to recognize the Bushnell Legend Ultra HD 10x 42mm as the first-ever back-to-back



winner of the Binocular of the Year Award. This game-changing binocular provides incredible light transmission and clarity at an accessible price," said Jason Mulek, Hayneedle's Binoculars.com senior buyer.

With the Legend Ultra HD binocular, consumers not only receive the Bushnell limited lifetime warranty, the entire line is also backed by the Bushnell Bulletproof Guarantee. The 100 percent, no-questions asked money back guarantee is valid up until one year from the original date of purchase.

For more information about Bushnell Legend Ultra HD line, visit the product section online. To learn more about Bushnell Outdoor Products, visit www.bushnell.com or call (800) 423-3537.

Bushnell Outdoor Products is a global manufacturer and marketer of branded consumer products based in Overland Park, Kansas. Bushnell Outdoor Products sells its products worldwide under the Bushnell, Tasco, Serengeti, Bollé, Uncle Mike's Law Enforcement, Stoney Point, Hoppe's, Butler Creek, Cébé, Millett, Uncle Mike's, Final Approach and Simmons brand names. For information about any of these brands or products, please contact Mike Capps, Howard Communications, at (573) 898-3422 or mcapps@howardcommunications.com, or Paul Arnhold, Bushnell Outdoor Products, at (913) 752-6105 or parnhold@bushnell.com.



SeaLife Introduces Fisheye Wide Angle Lens

MOORESTOWN, N.J. (July 2, 2012) — SeaLife, a leader in underwater photographic equipment, has announced the introduction of its new Fisheye Wide Angle Lens, the company's widest angle and most advanced external lens to date.

The SeaLife Fisheye Wide Angle Lens allows the underwater photographer to come very close to the subject and capture all of its amazing surroundings by increasing the field of view by an astounding 80 percent. With its universal-fit design, it quickly and easily snaps onto any SeaLife DC-series camera for breathtaking seascape images, and it creates a 16mm effective focal length when attached to the DC1400 digital underwater camera. That's an increase from 61 degrees to 111 degrees with the Fisheye Wide Angle Lens attached to the DC1400. On the DC1200, you can almost instantly increase your standard 44-degree field of view to 86 degrees.

The aspherical Fisheye Wide Angle Lens features fully multi-coated and anti-reflective deposition coated precision optics on all of its air-to-glass surfaces for maximum light transmission. With four elements in four groups, its dome-shaped objective lens maintains maximum field-of-view underwater. Simply snap the lens onto your camera housing's external lens ring, purge any air bubbles, and you're ready to go wide.

Individually depth-tested and guaranteed waterproof to 200 ft., the Fisheye Wide Angle Lens also includes a Lens Dock that quickly and securely attaches to your flash-mount base, and a lanyard that attaches to the camera. A neoprene lens cover is also included. With slightly negative buoyancy, the Fisheye Wide Angle Lens weighs 13.8 ounces above water, and it measures just 1.8 X 3.8 X 3.8 inches.

The SeaLife Fisheye Wide Angle Lens (SL975) is available for pre-order now, and will be delivered this September. The lens has an MSRP of \$299.95, and it is backed by a one-year warranty.

For additional information on SeaLife, contact Karen Lutto at Karen@hunteroc.com or (830) 755-4308.



Aplomado Falcon Chicks Released at Texas State Park for First Time

Goal is to increase habitat for endangered bird of prey

The colorful Aplomado Falcon is regaining a foothold in parts of Texas where they disappeared more than a half-century ago. On July 1, biologists began releasing captive-bred Aplomado Falcons to the wild for the first time at Mustang Island State Park to take advantage of additional habitat that the endangered birds of prey need to survive.

“We are delighted to have Mustang Island State Park as a partner in this recovery effort,” said Bill Heinrich of The Peregrine Fund, an Idaho-based conservation organization focused on birds of prey. “The park helps fill in a gap in habitat between falcon populations that are already well-established and self-sustaining in South Texas.”

Since 1984, The Peregrine Fund has released Aplomado Falcons in wide-open grassland areas that provide native food and shelter. They are raised in captivity at The Peregrine Fund’s World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho. When chicks are about a month old, they are flown to the release sites by LightHawk, a volunteer aviation group that donates flights for conservation projects. Fast flights on private aircraft are the best way to ensure that the chicks arrive with little stress and in good overall health, Heinrich said.

Over the past three years, LightHawk volunteer pilots have transported more than 200 Aplomado Falcon chicks to support the reintroduction effort. This latest flight to Texas is being donated by Carl Mattson and Julie Boyd, of Denver, Colo., who will be piloting their Cessna 210 turbo.

Currently there are about 34 nesting pairs in South Texas, spread to the north and south of Mustang Island, including the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge Complex and Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. Aplomado Falcons were widespread in the American Southwest until the 1950s when their range was restricted to a few areas in Mexico, most likely due to the combined effects of habitat changes, pesticides and human persecution.

Aplomado Falcon recovery is a cooperative program with federal, state, and private partners, including The Peregrine Fund, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program. Media contacts are: Brian Mutch, The Peregrine Fund, (307) 752-6336; Tom Harvey, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, (512) 389-4453; Rob McCorkle, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, (830) 866-3533; Damon Reeves, Mustang Island State Park, (361) 749-5246; Bev Gabe, LightHawk, (207) 222-2227; Beau Hardegree, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (361) 994-9005; and Beth Becerra, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, (361) 885-6246.



Martin, Stanley Inducted into Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame



ATHENS, TEXAS — Anglers Tommy Martin, left, and Lonnie Stanley were inducted into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame at a banquet in Athens on June 2, 2012. Martin, of Hemphill, and Stanley, of Huntington, were joined by about 100 friends and family as they received their awards and viewed videos recapping their careers.

The two were the twenty-third and twenty-fourth inductees into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame, which was established in 1996 and inducted its first honorees in 1997. The purpose of the Hall of Fame is to recognize and honor those who have made a lasting contribution to freshwater fishing in Texas, and to foster a sense of appreciation, awareness and participation in the sport of fishing. Tommy Martin photo courtesy of Matt Williams.

Aplomado Falcon Facts

- Northern Aplomado Falcons were put on the U.S. Endangered Species List in 1986.
- Aplomado is a Spanish word for dark grey, the color of the bird’s back. Adults have a long banded tail and a black cummerbund, contrasting with a white upper body. A distinguishing characteristic is a white dash above each eye. They are 15-17 inches in length and weigh 9-14 ounces.
- The falcons feed primarily on small birds and insects caught in the air. They require open grasslands and savannahs where tall cacti, yuccas and taller pines and oaks grow in open stands.
- Aplomado Falcons nest in old stick nests of hawks and other birds constructed in tall yuccas and lay usually two or three eggs.



David Sikes of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times (center) is presented the Charly McTee Outdoor Media Award by the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) on June 30. Presenting the award to Sikes at WildLife 2012, TWA's convention, is TWA President Glen Webb (left) and TWA Director Dr. Neal Wilkins (right).

Sikes Honored by Texas Wildlife Association

David Sikes of the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* has been honored by the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) with the Charly McTee Outdoor Media Award.

TWA presents the Charly McTee Outdoor Media Award to a person in media who has made outstanding contributions in their field and shares the philosophies of TWA. The award is presented in years when only a deserving candidate is identified. Sikes was honored with the award on June 30 at WildLife 2012, TWA's convention, at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort and Spa.

"The Texas Wildlife Association is thankful for David Sikes' outstanding work and his passionate interest in the stories and issues that are of high importance to TWA members and to the entire wildlife and outdoor community," said TWA President Glen Webb of Abilene. "He is most deserving of this prestigious award."

Sikes is a longtime member of the board of directors of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association (TOWA), and he currently serves as the association's president. He has received numerous awards from TOWA, and he was named the 2012 Professional Conservationist of the Year by the Harvey Weil Foundation.

Sikes' articles range in topics from hunting, camping, paddling, scuba diving, nature photography, conservation, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department regulations and federal/state legislative issues that might impact the outdoors or the folks who enjoy it.

The TWA award is named after Charly McTee, who was a lifelong hunter, angler and supporter of young people, who served as TWA's general manager until his death in 1997. He was an exceptional outdoor writer and radio talk show host who dedicated his great energy and intellect to educating the public about the positive effects of hunting, fishing, and generally getting outdoors.

DEADLIEST ANIMALS IN THE UNITED STATES

Whether it's by stinging, crushing, biting, butting, kicking, or any other variety of accidental or nefarious means, animals injure millions and kill hundreds of people every year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) keeps a database of the fatalities. Here are the top ten:

No. 10. 9: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with crocodiles and alligators.

No. 9. 10: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with marine animals. The International Shark Attack File counts 8 fatalities from 2000 to 2007.

No. 8. 59: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with venomous snakes or lizards.

No. 7. 63: The number of deaths resulting from interactions with venomous arthropods that weren't spiders, scorpions, centipedes and millipedes. "One known cause is fire ants in the South that can preferentially cause increased risk of death in the elderly and very young," says Forrester. "Our data seems to support this with the majority of deaths due to other specified venomous arthropods occurring in the two older age groups and in the South region." 80 percent of these deaths occurred among people 35 or older. And 65 percent of these deaths occurred in the South.

No. 6. 70: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with venomous spiders.

No. 5. 77: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with reptiles that weren't venomous snakes and lizards, alligators, or crocodiles. "The CDC WONDER database casts a broad net again for this category (other reptiles) by including lizards and non-venomous snakes and the cause of death being bitten or crushed by the animal," says Forrester. "Unfortunately, they do not specify the most common types of lizards or snakes."

No. 4. 85: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with nonvenomous insects or nonvertebrates.

No. 3. 250: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with dogs. About 885,000 people a year require medical attention after being bitten by a dog. Each year, the U.S. loses \$1,000,000,000 as a result of injuries or deaths from dog bites. 34 percent of all deaths caused by dogs occurred to children younger than four. The victim is usually the owner or a member of the owner's family. "To reduce these attacks, better education on dog behaviors and proper restraint of dogs around toddlers need to occur," says Forrester. "The sad part about the animal attacks is that it seems like common sense, don't keep children around potentially aggressive dogs unsupervised, but the reality is parents don't seem to appreciate how terrible a dog bite to a child's face can be."

No. 2. 509: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with hornets, wasps, or bees. The yearly average was 79. 80.9 percent of those who died were men and 93.1 percent were people over the age of 35.

No. 1. 655: The number of deaths that resulted from interactions with other mammals, a category that includes cats, cows, horses, pigs, raccoons, and other hoofed animals. "We looked at previous papers regarding this category and it seems like the largest are most likely cows and horses," says Forrester. "Unfortunately, we do not know the exact percentages, but the livestock majority seems to fit with which areas of the country have the most farms and farm workers."