

Mission of the Organization

- Promote sportsmanship and the protection of natural resources
- Promote the quality of Lake Fork fishery and other outdoor recreational activities
- Promote the future of angling through youth programs
- Promote a spirit of cooperation with local, county, state, and federal governmental agencies, and other civic organizations for the purpose of improving Lake Fork and its surrounding communities
- Promote items of interest of the membership at large

Next LFSA General Meeting

Our next regular meeting will be February 8th. We will meet at Oak Ridge Marina. The meeting will start at 7:00 pm. See you there.

David Campbell Addresses LFSA



As the Lake Fork Sportsman's Association gears up for the coming tournament season President Micheal Rogge invited David Campbell to speak to the membership. David is the guy who gets the call when a Lunker needs to be picked up. David gave a brief history and some of the accomplishments of the program since its inception.

The Toyota ShareLunker Program (formerly called Operation Share a Lone Star Lunker and sponsored by the Lone Star Brewing Company, Jungle Labs and Cajun Boats) was established in 1986 to promote catch-and-release of large fish and to selectively breed trophy largemouth bass. The first fish entered into the program was also a new state record, a 17.67-pounder caught from Lake Fork in November of that year.

In 1993 the name of the program was changed to Share a Lunker, Inc., and it was merged with the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas. Anheuser Busch was the official sponsor from 1996 to 2008, providing prizes for anglers and a specially equipped truck used to pick up and return Lunkers. During that time the program was known as the Budweiser ShareLunker Program. The name was changed to the Toyota ShareLunker Program in 2009 when Toyota became the new sponsor.

Since the program's inception, more than 400 largemouth bass have been donated from 55 public reservoirs and more than a dozen private lakes.

As the program grew, it became obvious that the Tyler hatchery was inadequate, but there was no state money available to build a new hatchery, one tailored specifically to the needs of the program. It was decided to let cities bid to become the site and help raise the money for it.

Specifications called for the facility to be built within 50 miles of Lake Fork, because the majority of big fish are caught there. The Athens community pledged more than \$4 million to win the bidding for the site, and the balance of the cost came from federal Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration funds and donations.

No state money was used for construction. The Edwin L. Cox, Jr., Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center was built around the ShareLunker program. The Visitor Center complex, including the Lunker Bunker, was completed in 1996, and the exterior hatchery ponds went into operation in 1998.

The ShareLunker program has been instrumental in illustrating the importance of catch and release fishing in the development of trophy largemouth bass fisheries. Data collected by the program shows that it takes 8 to 10 years for a bass to grow to 13-pound size. Slot limits that protect large fish have been proven effective in increasing the quality of fishing. Science-based fisheries management has been shown to be the best method for managing Texas public waters.

Bass fishing has enjoyed an increase in popularity in Texas that parallels the increase in the number and quality of fish in Texas reservoirs. Communities near popular bass fishing lakes reap a significant economic boost from anglers.

Even the fish have benefited from the ShareLunker program. When the program began, little was known about the procedures needed to care for big bass. Early in the program, many entries died while at TPWD facilities. Over time better care has increased survival to the point that nearly all fish entered into the program survive to be used for spawning or are returned to the wild. Even more importantly, proper fish handling techniques have been publicized as part of the program, so that anglers are now able to take better care of any fish they catch.

In the course of caring for more than 500 largemouth bass weighing over 13 pounds, the ShareLunker Program has:

- improved knowledge of proper handling and care of big fish
- developed and communicated to anglers recommendations for handling fish in ways that improve survival
- established weigh and holding stations at major reservoirs around the state to improve the survival of big fish by providing the proper environment for them until pickup by trained TPWD personnel
- generated nationwide interest in Texas bass fishing and increased tourism, as evidenced by 74 ShareLunkers having been caught by residents of 20 states other than Texas
- documented the number of lakes producing 13-pound or larger bass from one in 1980 to 61 by 2010
- created awareness of the value of catch-and-release fishing
- developed a selective breeding program that produces broodfish used throughout the TPWD hatchery system, helping spread ShareLunker-derived genetics to all public waters stocked with Florida largemouth bass by TPWD
- generated free publicity for bass fishing in Texas worth millions of dollars by providing the basis for thousands of newspaper, magazine, television, radio and electronic media stories
- provided funding to develop cutting-edge genetic fingerprinting techniques that makes it possible for TPWD to identify ShareLunkers and their offspring stocked into public waters. These techniques also make possible:
 - genetic identification using a minimally invasive fin clip;
 - positive identification of ShareLunker offspring and confirmation of previously caught ShareLunkers should implanted tags be unreadable;
 - more accurate identification of intergrades (crosses between Florida and northern largemouths) and easier determination of parentage and relatedness among ShareLunkers, including identification of sisters submitted to the ShareLunker program;
 - genetic analysis of scale samples archived from ShareLunkers submitted to the program before the DNA fingerprinting techniques were available;
 - the search for genetic markers associated with ShareLunkers and for gender determination. Samples are being analyzed in an attempt to determine if there is a specific gene that influences growth differences.
- Using genetic fingerprinting techniques developed in the last five years, TPWD has begun studies in selected public reservoirs using tagged ShareLunker offspring (referred to as Operation World Record or OWR fish) to determine the growth rate of OWR fish compared to other largemouth bass in those reservoirs. Results so far show OWR fish grow bigger faster.

These accomplishments have all been made using program sponsor dollars and without additional staff over and above those required for normal operation.

2011 Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Count Lake Fork, Texas



The Eagle count was conducted Saturday, January 8th. The LFSA provided four boats during the count. Boats manned by Arlie Jaeger, David Waddell, Micheal Rogge, Pam Rogge, Sam Lange, Gary DeArmond and Bruce Allen carried counters to all parts of the lake. Unlike last year, mother nature cooperated and spotters found 18 of America's symbol making Lake Fork their winter home. Thanks go out to the volunteers and Oak Ridge Marina.

Live Release Boat

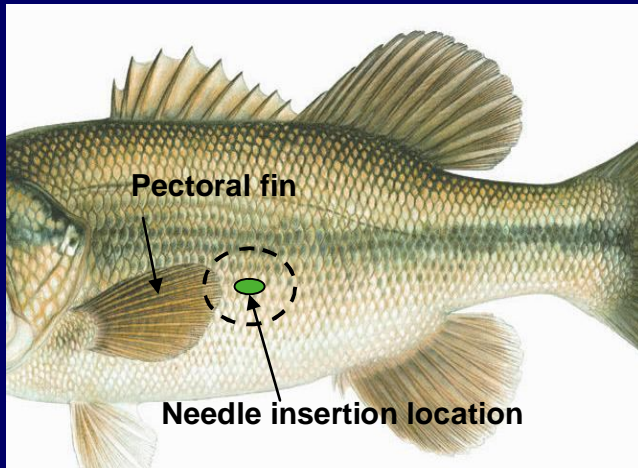


The LFSA Live Release Boat is ready for another tournament season. Remember if you know of or are in charge of a tournament with 50 or more boats we will be happy to provide the LRB in support of your tournament. Contact Micheal Rogge to check availability. E-mail microg@texascellnet.com.

Side Fizzing

Bruce Allen has found a couple of sources on how to fizz a bass from the side. One is from the Texas Fishing Forum: <http://texasfishingforum.com/forums/ubbthreads.php/topics/3782621/1> The other is the following illustration from TPWD. While most of us use the through the mouth technique, this method is becoming more popular. Thanks for the input Bruce.

Venting a Largemouth Bass's Air Bladder – Side Fizzing

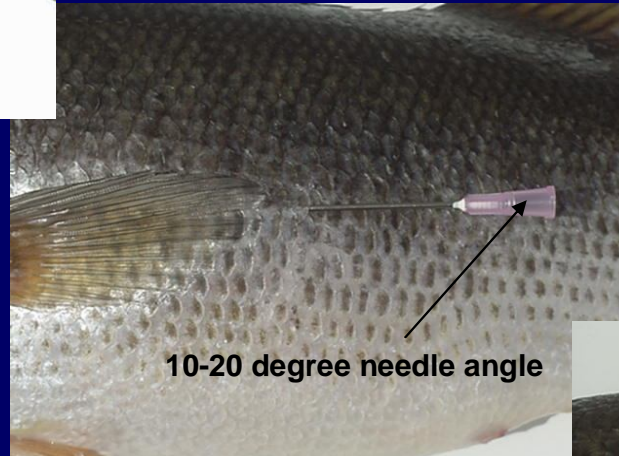


1. Grasp fish by the lower jaw or around the head region, and position fish so its side is facing up and at the water surface.

2. Position the pectoral fin flat against the body in a natural relaxed position pointing toward the tail.

3. Identify needle insertion location which is 2-3 scales behind the tip of the pectoral fin.

4. Orient the beveled side of the 16 gauge 1 ½ inch needle facing up. At about 10-20 degree angle slide needle tip under trailing edge of a scale toward the fish's head.

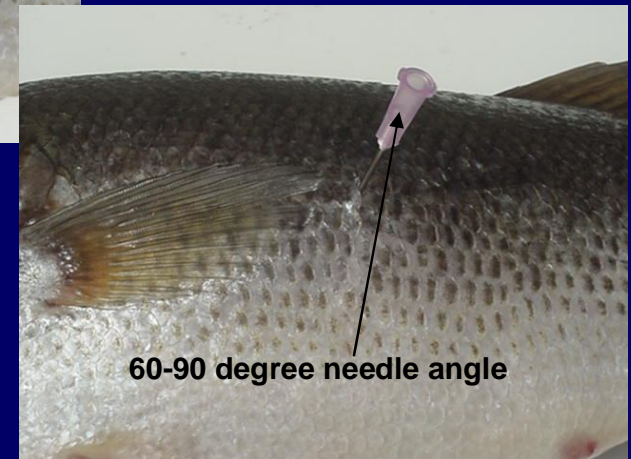


5. Submerge fish and needle, raise the needle to a 60-90 degree angle, and insert needle until air bubbles exit the needle base.

6. Vent small fish (< 3 lbs) for 3-5 seconds and larger fish for 5-8 seconds.

7. Remove the needle and observe the fish. If the fish cannot re-submerge, vent additional gas from the fish's air bladder as described above.

8. If bubbles don't exit the needle, check for blockage by blowing thru the needle. If blockage persists, clear debris from needle using a syringe.



Remember to Fish Friendly