

Quarterly News Letter

Winter 2008



Holiday Greetings! I hope this finds you doing well, and your aquatic and upland habitats progressing towards your management goals or maintaining a quality state. Hunting season is in full swing and I hope you have found time to enjoy the fruits of your time, labor and money spent to create quality natural environments.

It has been a very busy fall. Several new clients were added entailing many hours of electrofishing and several large reports being compiled. I want to thank all the new clients that have given me an opportunity in 2008 and the ones that retained me for another year. It has been a pleasure for me to work with you all and I look forward to many years to come.



A nice Largemouth Bass caught on rod-and-reel at the Ford Property in South Central Alabama

Due to the overwhelming influx of clients, I will be adding another Biologist/Manager to Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management. Mr. Steve Lopez, who worked with me at Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for ten years and has been with the agency 15 years, will be joining me full-time in January 2009. He will reside in Jacksonville, Florida. Steve is extremely competent in fish biology and aquatic habitat management. Most of the current client base will still see me quarterly, but on occasions Steve may conduct your site visit. Steve will be handling some of the new clients coming on in spring 2009 in Florida, Georgia and parts of Alabama. Some of you have already met him, as he has assisted me on several projects with herbicide applications and electrofishing. As in the past, I look forward to many good times working together with him in the future.

Addressing an Unbalanced Fish Population

Manipulating a fish population from unbalanced to balanced requires fish removal, additional food and possibly adding predators. This holds true for either a stunted bream or largemouth bass population. Our objective in balancing a population is to reduce numbers, flood with appropriate food so remaining individuals grow and the forage reproduces and establishes its own population so repeat stockings are not required. To accomplish this requires time fishing (removing fish), money spent on forage (fish and/or feed) and the presence of quality habitat.

A stunted bream population usually means too many bream, too few predators (largemouth bass or catfish) and not enough food the size bream present can eat. Stocking minnows and/or adding fish feeders increase food sources for bream. Stocking largemouth



21 lbs Blue Catfish electrofished from the Barnes Property in Lone Oak, Texas

bass and/or channel or blue catfish will increase predation on bluegills. Hook-and-line, cast netting or electrofishing can also be used to reduce numbers in the bream population.

A stunted largemouth bass population usually means “snake-like” bodies due to too many bass, and not enough forage the size the bass present can consume. Stocking forage species such as bream, minnows, golden shiners and/or threadfin shad increases food. Hook-and-line or electrofishing is the means for removing bass, which reduces numbers in the population.

Generally reducing numbers first then stocking forage is the order. Feeders can be turned on immediately while reducing bream numbers, and can be points to cast net. When stocking, stock enough forage so that they cannot all be consumed in one year and they reproduce naturally, which reduces or eliminates additional stockings in the future. This is where quality shoreline and open water habitat (structure) is desperately needed. A balanced combination of these will correct the

problem. If quality habitat is missing then supplemental stocking of forage may be necessary annually or every other year to maintain a quality fishery.

Addressing an Unbalanced Deer Population

Managing for trophy deer requires all the same principles as for big fish, with a few subtle differences. With deer a 1:1 buck to doe ratio is desired. You must annually remove individuals (generally a lot more does than bucks), provide additional feed for the ones remaining and provide quality habitat including food, water and cover. Fewer does and more bucks, more food (energy), heavier deer and better antler development is the objective. When managing deer you must remember genetics and other uncontrollable factors that will dictate the size antlers that can be achieved. Do not manage for something that is unattainable for your particular area of the state or country.

This time of year, the best management tool you have for deer is the rifle. Removing does and cull bucks are an absolute necessity to get a population balanced, and keep it balanced. Once



Josh Brown and Dash waiting for Mallards & Pintails in North Texas

balanced, you will see more bucks, heavier deer and larger antlers.

To obtain accurate white-tail deer counts using the game camera census technique, contact the staff at [Westervelt Wildlife Services](#). Dave Edwards and his knowledgeable staff can help you assess and manage the deer on your property.

Upcoming 2009 Events of Interest

- National Wild Turkey Federation National Convention, February 19th – 22nd Nashville, Tennessee
- Ducks Unlimited National Convention, May 20th – 24th Denver, Colorado.
- Forest Landowner Association National Convention, May 27 - 29th, Fernandina Beach, Florida

I hope you find these News Letters informative and your feedback is always welcome for suggested topics and upcoming events that readers may be interested in attending. Anyone with fish or game pictures please submit to me and we can start including them in the Quarterly News Letter and/or add them to the “Photos” page of the company web site. All



Eight year old Dylan Lageman with his first deer off Ochwalkee Creek Plantation

previous Quarterly News Letters and links of interest are at: southernsportsmanaquaticsandland.com if you would like to observe past editions or forward them to a friend. If you wish to be removed from this mailing list please E-Mail me and you will not receive these in the future.

If you are pleased with the services and products you receive from Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management, please tell your friends and associates about us. We are looking for additional clients from Texas to Florida. Also, if you are inclined to write a short paragraph to be published on the “Testimonials” page of our web site, please do, as we are in the process of updating it and would like to have more of those now that we are heading into our third year of business.

I will be in Florida and Georgia working the week prior to Christmas and Florida and Alabama for two weeks shortly after New Years. I will be making quarterly site visits in Texas the last two weeks of January. There is water chemistry to be monitored, plants to plant, aeration systems to install and landowners to meet with and plan for the 2009 year. I will be contacting you before the Holiday Rush to set up site visits and meetings. If you want me to order or bring fertilizer, feeders (parts), aeration (parts), etc. please contact me ASAP so I can make all the necessary arrangements.

Have a Merry Christmas and Safe & Happy New Year!
Scott G. Brown