

**The East Ascension SPORTSMAN**

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East Ascension Sportsman's League Publication

March 2019

## Guest Speaker Ashley Ferguson, President/Founder, Dose of the Coast

Ashley Ferguson is the President and Founder of a local non-profit organization, Dose of the Coast, The Donald R Walker Memorial Foundation. Her main responsibility is to coordinate fishing, sailing, and sunset cruises for individuals and families who have been impacted by a life-altering illness.

Ashley has raised over \$10,000 to fund coastal opportunities for VIPs, has partnered with local hospitals such as the Mary Bird Perkins - Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Center, and has been awarded the D. Jensen Holliday Memorial Award for making a difference in the fight against cancer.

Ashley is a full-time fisheries biologist for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries where she plans and



designs inshore artificial reefs. She was born and raised in New Orleans and currently resides in Baton Rouge with her husband Adam and dog, Blenny. Please email [ashley@doseofthecoast.org](mailto:ashley@doseofthecoast.org) or [www.doseofthecoast.org](http://www.doseofthecoast.org) to contact.

## March President's Report

Hello again fellow members of EASL. The months are flying by. It seems like I just finished writing the President's Report for February yesterday. Now here it is March.

I want to start out by saying how much I like our new meeting space. I would like to see more people there so I ask all of you to join us and bring a guest with you. The different space also brings a few changes to the normal way things are done. You have to bring your own drinks. We may work out something in the near future to have drinks there but for now we haven't gotten to that yet.

It would also be great if the guest you bring to the meeting would join the club. Even better than that, they would like to be The EASL Sportsman newspaper editor. What could be better.

Seriously though we are asking for anyone's help in this area. Our organization could not exist without the help from the many members who have volunteered through the many years the club has been in existence. In past years it has gotten harder and harder to find people who will answer the call for service to this fine cause. I'm not asking for a lifetime commitment like a priest or nun or anything like that, but some of our officers and board members have spent a good part of their life making sure this club continues to do the things for our environment and our way of enjoying the outdoors and preserving our way of life in south Louisiana. They will get old and want to let new blood take our places and continue the mission of EASL.

There is a great need for groups like ours to make sure that our outdoors and the rights that we have to enjoy them are protected in the future for the next generations. We are all just a small part of the overall scheme of things but as a group we have influenced law makers and have made a difference in many other ways that I can't even imagine. I'm not complaining that I have to do so much

and I am sure that the other officers and board members feel the same way. It is an honor to help an organization such as ours. None of us has to work hard we just have to work together. But we need all the pieces to be a whole organization. There probably isn't one of us that does not wish we could do it all. But it takes the whole combined board to make the club work without putting too much burden on anyone.

Please search in yourself and ask yourself if it is worth it. Again, you will not be alone. You will be a part of a dedicated group of like minded people who will help you to be the better than you can know. David has offered to give you his time to train you to gather the articles and get every thing to the printers. I don't like to have to write articles like this. I'd rather write about a fishing trip or a trip I took or something more fun but I hope I can strike a nerve with someone out there who feels that they will take this opportunity to volunteer their service for our cause. Think about it. Pray about it. Talk to someone about it. What ever it takes and consider this opportunity to be more than you thought you could be. Again, it is not a lifetime deal. If it don't work for you it's OK. We will look some more. You won't know till you try.

I can tell you from my experience, I wasn't to sure how I would do as president, and I'm sure it was easy to see that I wasn't real sure of myself a lot of the time, but there are many people who set me straight when I need it. I thank them and thank all of you for your patience. I'm learning and you could too. Well I have said enough for this month. I've used a lot of big words and again wore out my two typing fingers. Thank you for listening and I hope to see you at the meeting.

Yours truly Michael Lambert

## The EASL Meeting

Held every 3rd Monday of the month at  
The Gonzales Fire Department  
724 Orice Roth Road, Gonzales, LA 70737  
Monday, March 18, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

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## Sportsman's Calendar

- March 18 Board Meeting, 6pm
- March 18 EASL Regular Meeting, 7pm (3rd Monday)
- March 23 Silhouette Match (4th Saturday)
- May 18 EASL Pan Fish Rodeo (tentative date)
- June 8 Terry Melancon Salt Water Challenge
- July 27 EASL Kid's Fishing Rodeo
- Oct. 5 EASL Squirrel Rodeo

# The East Ascension Sportsman

P.O. Box 446 • Gonzales, LA 70707

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Editor: David Miles, editor@easlonline.org

Manager & Advertising Sales: Robbie Lambert

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### From the Scrapbook – Gonzales Weekly, Gonzales, La., 1971

submitted by Warren Singer

#### Outdoors with The Sportsmen League By Sonny Guice

The East Ascension Sportsmen's League will put on its 10th annual kid's fishing rodeo and its 7th annual adult rodeo this June says League President Wade Abadie. The kid's rodeo will be at Dutton's Pond at Prairieville on June 5th. The adult rodeo will be held in the Atchafalaya Spillway June 19-20 with the weighing station at Oudrys Restaurant at Belle River. According to Abadie, the two events will be the best ever. There will be plenty of prizes for each rodeo and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the local merchants and individuals for donating the prizes and money for these two events. Without our local merchants' help, the Sportsman's League would be hard pressed in putting on a fishing rodeo. Wade Abadie Jr., our president's son, has been making some fine catches of goggle-eye and bass back in the spillway. Bud Broussard our local bass champion, is catching his limit with regularity in the Spillway also. It looks like Bud will be the man to beat again this year in the rodeo. My wife Catherine, my son James, and yours truly, went into the spillway and caught a box full of goggle-eye. Catherine and James like to fly fish and believe me those big goggle-eye are good sport on the fly-rod.



#### EASL Wild Game Recipe

#### Chef John Folsie's brining method for turkey (or other fowl)

- 1 (12-14 pound) turkey or other fowl
- 2 gallons cold water
- 1-1/3 cup kosher salt or 2 cups table salt
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 4 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup dried thyme leaves
- 1/4 cup dried basil
- 2 tablespoons dried sage
- 1/2 cup granulated (or dehydrated) garlic
- 1/2 cup ground black pepper

Begin brining 1 day before cooking turkey. Use a fresh turkey or other bird, completely thawed. Check label to ensure that the bird has not been injected with salt or other flavorings; otherwise it will be over-sea-

soned.

Wash bird completely, removing giblets and neck. In large stockpot, dissolve 1 cup kosher salt or 2 cups table salt in 2 gallons cold water.

Add brown sugar and honey and stir until completely dissolved. Add bay leaves, thyme, basil, sage, granulated garlic and pepper.

Place 2 trash bags inside a large metal bowl, and place turkey breast down in bags. Add brine mixture, tie bags with wire ties and place in bottom of refrigerator. Chill 12-14 hours.

If desired, cut chill time in half by doubling all ingredients except water. Remove turkey from brine, rinse well inside and out under cold running water. Completely dry bird using kitchen or paper towels. This step allows skin to become crisp during roasting.



### Sportsman Comic Corner

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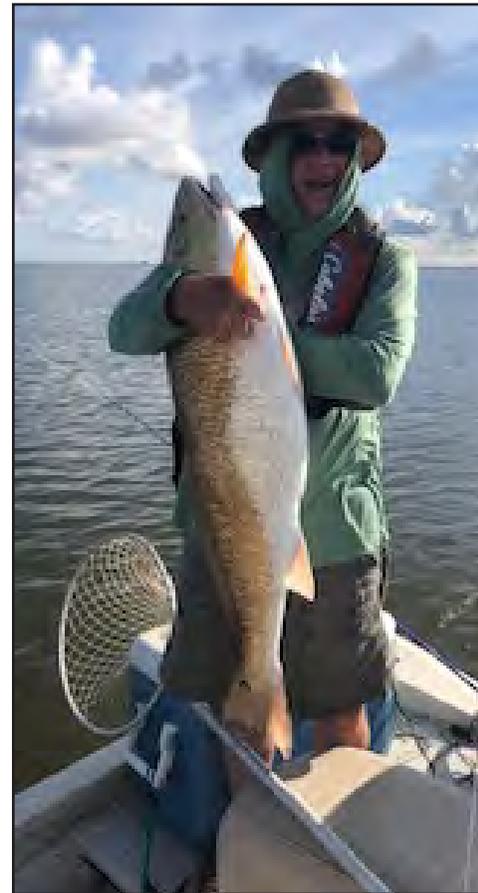
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## EASL Big Fish Contest Contacts

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call Jim Hebert at 225-717-  
6037.

To report weight for Big  
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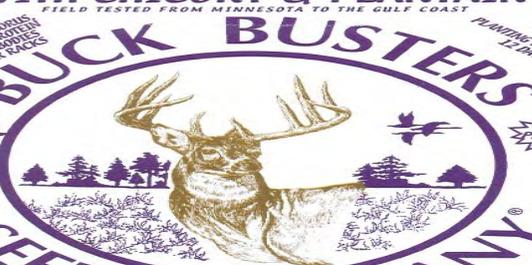
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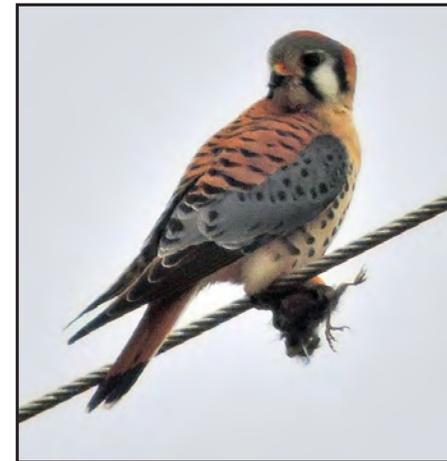
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## SPARROW HAWKS AREN'T SPARROW HAWKS ANYMORE!

Jay V. Huner, Louisiana Ecrevisse, Boyce, LA

I wasn't much of a bird watcher in my formative years unless the bird was legal game! But my mother did have a Golden Book field guide and I did learn some obvious birds. Sparrow Hawks were easily identified, small, colorful raptors found along most roadsides in southern Louisiana during the fall-winter-spring.



Sparrow Hawk Photo

Fast forward to this day and not only does the Sparrow Hawk have a new name – American Kestrel – but it's not even found in field guides with hawks! Always considered falcons, they and their close cousins the Merlin (once Pigeon Hawk), Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon (rare in Louisiana), and Gyrfalcon (never seen in Louisiana) have been reclassified as closer relatives to parrots than hawks!

DNA studies coupled with examination of feet and bills moved falcons a long way from hawks in the taxonomic hierarchy of birds. Yes, falcons catch prey with their talons but they are very weak and cannot crush prey with them as do hawks. If you look closely at the bill of falcon, you'll see a notch, something characteristic of parrots. Once falcons catch something, they snap the neck using that notch!

American Kestrels are our smallest raptors being about the size of a Blue Jay. Males are smaller than females, a trait shared by all raptors. They are especially colorful having sharply pointed, bluish wings, reddish brown backs and tails and streaked breasts. Their tails end in black bands. Females and young birds are basically reddish brown above with barred tails. Both sexes have paired black "mustaches".

Look for American Kestrels on utility lines, poles and fence posts in open country. Numbers are greatest in the fall-winter-spring when migrants from farther north come south to avoid winter cold. However, we do have nesting birds in Louisiana but primarily in piney woods in northwestern and northeastern Louisiana. However, reports of nesting in Baton Rouge and even the New Orleans area have been documented in recent years. Prominent Ponchatoula birder Jane Patterson found a pair nesting high on the state capitol building in a secluded niche.

American Kestrels nest primarily in tree cavities or sometimes in protected niches

in building faces. They don't make their own cavities. They use abandoned woodpecker cavities. They'll also use specially designed nest boxes as well. According to some accounts, the parents "relieve themselves" while in the nest cavity by voiding against the walls generating an odiferous nursery!

So, what do American Kestrels

eat? Having once been called Sparrow Hawks, one could surmise that they do eat small birds including sparrows. That's true but they are more likely to eat large insects especially grasshoppers and dragonflies. In fact, it's not unusual to see a kestrel flying along eating a dragonfly it had recently caught. I wasn't surprised to read that they eat crawfish. After all they are first cousins of grasshoppers and regularly crawl along roadside ditches out of the water. Of course, they do eat small rodents and can apparently see traces of urine using ultraviolet vision.

American Kestrel researcher Professor David M. Bird of McGill University recently wrote a report about them citing that they would prey on Barn Swallows and Purple Martin nestlings, pulling them from nests. He found this most unusual but, I read John James Audubon's account of American Kestrels from the 1800s. Audubon noted that they would attack Cliff Swallow nests, break open the clay tubes and extract the Swallows.

Take time to watch American Kestrels when they are hunting. They can fly into the wind and "hover" much like a kingfisher or hummingbird watching for prey. Perhaps you'll hear their loud, excited "klee, klee, klee" call? Some describe this as "killy, killy, killy" and the birds are sometimes called "killy hawks".

American Kestrel numbers are declining. According to Professor Bird, ornithologists are perplexed about the decline because other raptors, especially Peregrine Falcons, are doing very well these days. There is some suggestion that other raptors are preying on these diminutive raptors but the Peregrine Fund which oversaw the recovery of Peregrine Falcons is now studying American Kestrels. To find out more about American Kestrel conservation, consult the Peregrine Fund.

# EASL BASS CLUB NEWS

By: Jim Hebert

## Mike and Corey Guitreau win out of the Ditch

The EASL Bass Club met at the Gonzales FD in Gonzales on February 12th to plan for the upcoming Tournament on the 16th. Before the meeting got started we enjoyed a delicious Jambalaya with potato salad and drinks with Oreos for desert. The meal was provided by Terry Molea and we thank him for being one of our volunteer cooks. I would like to remind everyone that the volunteers who cook for each meeting pay for the ingredients themselves and they are not reimbursed by the Club, so the \$5 that the cook collects from each member is to recover their costs for providing the meal.

After the meal, George signed up 15 boats to fish the tournament while Terry collected the optional Big Bass side pot and Micha signed up the optional \$20 jackpot participants.

We had another rod and reel combo donated to the Club by Byron Mire so after drawing the boat numbers we drew numbers for the combo and Mike Guitreau won the Rod and Reel. He said that it would go to his young daughter who would undergo surgery



Scott & Julian Day, 2nd Place



Brandt Fairchild & Dirk Anderson, 3rd Place

later that month. Byron, thank you for donating the Rod and Reel.

Mike opened the meeting and took nominations for Tournament location. The nominations were Bayou DesAllemands, Attakapas Landing and the Ditch. After voting, the club decided on the Ditch. We also voted on a 3:00 PM weigh in time. The weigh masters chosen were Chris Keller and Clark Sanchez.

Mike then held a short discussion to let everyone know about the optional \$20 pot for anyone who catches a Bass weighing 5.5# or greater. The meeting was adjourned and after a short cleanup, everyone left anticipating a good Tournament on Saturday.

Saturday morning we arrived at the Launch and were surprised to see the great amount of vehicles already in the parking lot. Turns out they were mostly early arrivals who left the area heading to Bayou Black.

We gathered and again had to wait out the fog that had hampered visibility and created

a less than safe condition for running a boat. Finally it cleared up a short time after daybreak and Chris called out the numbers while we left one at a time. Mostly everyone went North with a few boats going toward the Marsh.

We went northward and slowly made our way to our first location. The water didn't look that great there and the fishing was like-wise. We left after about an hour after catching one short fish. Our second location looked promising but the fish weren't there either. We spent a good amount of time there and we caught one keeper and missed two others that would have kept.

Our next stop produced another keeper and another missed keeper. Our third stop looked more promising than anything we had seen yet but we fished it quickly without a bite. Our two keepers would weigh in at 3.21 lbs. Even if we had not missed a fish this day we would not have placed.

At 3:00 everyone had arrived back and were loading up the boats. Chris had the scale ready and the fish were coming in. It was a great day for the top three teams and others like us had struggled to catch their limit or had small limits. 9 boats did have their limits of fish.

When the weigh in was complete, George announced the winners. First place went to Mike and Corey Guitreau with 5 fish weighing in at 14.30 lbs. They also won Big Bass side pot with their largest fish that weighed 4.24 lbs.

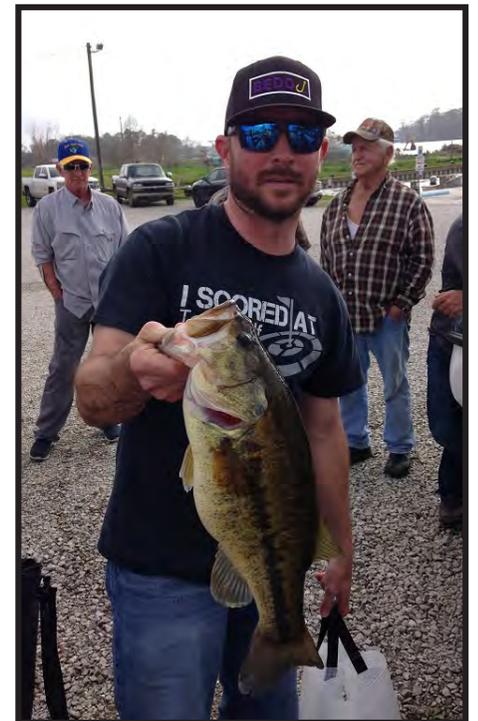
Second place with 5 fish that weighed 13.2 lbs. went to Brothers, Julian and Scott Day. Third place went to Dirk Anderson and Brandt Fairchild with 5 fish that weighed in at 12.40 lbs. Big Bass winner of the Tournament was Jason Beck fishing with Tony Arceneaux. His fish weighed 4.55 lbs.

Congratulations to the winners of the



Corey & Mike Guitreau, 1st Place & Side Pot Winners with 4.24 lb. Big Bass

February Tournament. Our next event is scheduled for March 16th. For more information on the EASL Bass Club visit [www.easlonline.org](http://www.easlonline.org).



Jason Beck, Big Bass at 4.55 lbs.

# THERE'S NOTHING LIKE LOUISIANA FAMILY

## Outdoor Corner with Lyle Johnson

I know I'm probably a bit prejudiced as I've lived in Louisiana all of my nearly 66 years and most of you reading this might feel just the same. A person would be hard-pressed to find a place on the earth where our culture, that begins with family, could be topped.

This past weekend Goosie and I were invited to film a show for Ascension Outdoors TV on a rabbit hunt hosted by Trent Bourgeois and the Bourgeois family on some family property in Greensburg. Gerald "Chicot" Foret supplied the pack of rabbit dogs for the hunt, a longstanding tradition in South Louisiana.

A pretty good chance of rain was in the forecast so after a little prayer for it to hold the rain off some, the Ascension Outdoors entourage headed north to Greensburg. The small town is few miles northwest of Amite City.

It's so country that after we got through Walker we only saw a handful of vehicles on our early morning ride. In fact when we turned on Gaylon Allen Lane the road was gravel. I knew this would be a special day when we saw the camp a couple hundred yards away.

The porch was lit up and you could see the hunters that were already there drinking their morning coffee. There was a big pond in front of the place, it just felt like home. After introductions that included some hand shaking and even a few hugs, we loaded up and headed for the woods.

Chicot unloaded his three dogs, a red-tick beagle named Tiny with two blue-tick beagles called Becky and Shirley. Trent explained the lay of the land so the hunters stationed themselves to get a shot should a rabbit get jumped and take off trying to outwit the dogs hot on the trail.

After everybody was in place the dogs were turned out. It probably didn't take a minute or two and the first chase was on. The dogs jumped the rabbit and beagle music filled the air. The sound was electrifying as the pack trailed the

rabbit as it tried all the tricks it knew to lose the dogs.

A shot rang out and a whoop from the shooter let everyone know the deed was done as Ricky Hood shot a cottontail rabbit. The score was dogs and hunters 1, rabbits 0. The story on chase # 2 was quite different. One of the hunters saw a rabbit cross an opening so the dogs were put on its trail.

This rabbit was a big swamp rabbit that was not as cagey as the cottontail. It took off and led the dogs on a half-mile chase and lost the dogs. The score was tied 1-1 as the rabbits caught up.

That episode took about 40 minutes so Chicot and his son Tristen rounded up the dogs and got them back to our starting place and turned them loose again. Once the two year old dogs got hot on the trail of another bunny. Once again Ricky Hood was in the right place at the right time. Hunters 2, rabbits 1.

The next time the dogs jumped, it was a classic chase. Zack Gautreau got the first shot and missed. I was next to him so the

rabbit passed by me. I saw its head as it jumped a little hill. I hollered to Goosie as it was heading his way. It crossed the lane where he was but it was going too fast to get off a good shot. Tristen was next in line and took the bunny out when it hit the opening. Hunters 3 rabbits 1.

The scenario repeated itself twice more. Zack finally got his rabbit in the very same spot as his miss was. The dogs jumped for the 6th time and lost the trail so the score ended hunters 4



**Rabbit Crew—Here's the gang of rabbit hunters with our take of four rabbits. Chicot Foret along with Tiny, Becky and Shirley hosted us to a great hunt. Photo by Brennen Normand**

and rabbits 2. We called it a day and headed back to the camp.

The comradery started when we first arrived and continued after the hunt. When we returned there more vehicles and lots more "family." Seth Fontenot of The Jambalaya Shop fame was cooking up a pork & sausage jambalaya assisted by Laverne Bourgeois over a wood fire.

We got a good look at the place for the first time and the scene brought me back to my youth when our family gathered at grandma Hebert's in Cornerview for our family reunions. She lived to be 105 and was alive during the Civil War.

The scene at the Bourgeois place was the same. There were a couple of horses, four dogs, a lot of kids playing and a pond where some folks were catching bass. Plenty of social activity was going on among the adults,

especially around the fire where the jambalaya was cooking.

One of the young ladies was tending to her new baby. A comment was passed about her being the same age as the child not that long ago and now she has one of her own. A pair of young high school girls were mud riding on a four wheeler having the time of their lives.

One of those girls was helping to stir the jambalaya was not a Louisiana native. Trent and his family have been hosting foreign exchange students for five years. CiCi Mill is from Bonn, Germany and is attending St Amant High while here. She has fallen in love with our culture and food. She'll have a hard time going back home.

Trent and Goosie got a couple of guitars out to play a couple of original songs for us. Trent has recorded two albums. His latest is Louisiana Roadhouse. He belted out his favorite cut, "Louisiana That's Home to Me". Goosie then sang his original "Old Lake Maurepas", the theme song to Ascension Outdoors TV.

We went there for a rabbit hunt but we experienced much more. By the time we left plenty of strangers were now like family. "Y'all come back" is a phrase heard many times in Louisiana. We heard it more than once as we headed out.

Heck they even have a store named Hatfield's with a sign that states "McCoy's are welcome." You can see this story in March on EATEL channel 4 or 704 on Ascension Outdoors or Facebook. It's worth tuning in. Remember to keep the slack out and set the hook hard. Have fun in the outdoors, be safe and may God truly bless you!!



**CiCi Mill from Bonn, Germany helps out Seth Fontenot stirring a jambalaya for her first time. Photo by Lyle Johnson**

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# EUFALA SAC-A-LAIT TRIP

EASL Members Torrey Hayden and Vince Diez made their annual pilgrimage to Georgia to fish Lake Eufala for Sac a Lait this past February. They met up with the Alabama branch of EASL and spent 3 nights fishing from a lighted pier. Approximately 150 fish were cleaned, food was great, weather was nice and a good time had by all. There are unconfirmed reports that a large amount of beer was consumed.



Len deploying sac a lait attracter off pier



Tom, Keelon, Torrey by sac a lait attracter



Len with Nice Sac a lait



Nice catfish caught in Lake Eufala



Vince and Chad frying sac a lait

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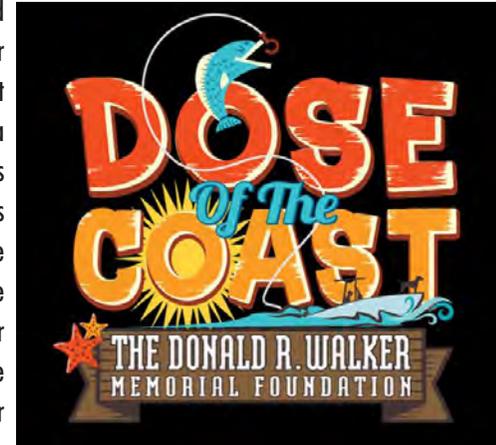
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## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT by Goosie Guice

### JUST THE RIGHT DOSAGE

It wasn't that we had never fished together before, or for that matter never had a good time together. As a matter of fact, it's really amazing that we are still alive and able to make a phone call or be able to answer those calls considering our past life experiences.



sheepshead. Hats off to the captains of these boats for the effort they put in to help make this event successful. Our guide was Jeff Johnson who is owner of the J Sportsman Lodge. He's a great guy and did a fantastic job of rigging, baiting, locating fish and taking fish off of our

On one particular evening I received a call in which I was invited to be a part of a fishing trip to Buras, Louisiana. This phone call invite held a different flavor than most of those from the past. My old buddy Mac, (Edwin Macalusa) had moved out of state for a number of years for employment. After returning home he was diagnosed with a form of throat cancer. Fortunately, after years of treatment and determination he has won the battle with the deadly disease, but it has changed his normal life routine forever.

Mac had been chosen as one of five cancer survivors to be part of an event called "Dose of the Coast." Each chosen survivor could invite three guests to the two day event which consisted of several meals, an overnight stay and a guided fishing trip. I accepted the invitation and it was quite a humbling experience to be a part of. As you can imagine, the hospitality was excellent with the event taking place in Empire/Buras Louisiana. The entire undertaking was well funded and supported by local guides, cooks, restaurants, boat docks, J Sportsman's Lodge, even the Empire/South Pass fishing rodeo were participants.

The weather on that particular day was going to be questionable at best, with rain to the north and south of us. The fishing was great with each of the five boats catching a nice box of reds, drum and

lines during our time on the water.

Dose of the Coast is a non-profit organization that was founded by Ashley W. Ferguson. She created the Donald Walker Memorial foundation that supports the events that Dose of the Coast puts on each year. Chosen participants can choose from sailing, fishing or enjoying a sunset cruise. The mission of Dose of the Coast is to enrich the lives of individuals and families that are impacted by life altering illnesses through spending time on our coast.

Ashley Ferguson is a fisheries biologist with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Ashley envisioned the Dose of the Coast events as a memorial to her late father Donald Walker, who passed away in 2015 after a courageous fight with liver cancer. Before his passing she had booked a guided fishing trip which father and daughter enjoyed to the fullest. Although fishing was not an uncommon event for him he told her before his passing that that coastal fishing trip was one of the most appreciated gifts of his entire life. Yes folks, fishing is a powerful dose of medicine.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone you know for a trip, visit [www.doseofthecoast.org/](http://www.doseofthecoast.org/) events. It may be exactly what the doctor ordered...

*Till Next Time,  
Thanks Mac and Good Luck  
James "Goosie" Guice*

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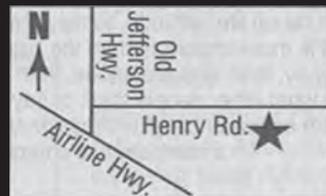
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# EASL MEETING FEB. 18 HIGHLIGHTS



Big Buck award goes to Kent Cicet



Chef Kevin Diez wins 2nd place Bass



Byron Mire Baits & Fishing Tackle



Youth Big Buck award goes to Luke Hackney



Anthony Bonadonna, 3rd place winner



Greg Hackney, out of state Big Buck



Richard Gautreau accepts January prize



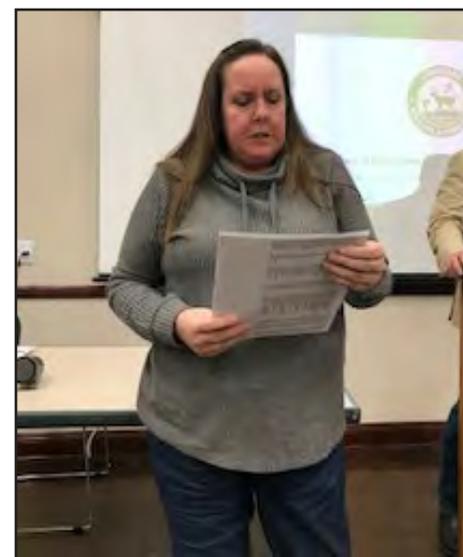
Donald Braud wins 1st place jacket-7.32 lb Bass at Toledo Bend



Guest Speaker  
Todd Baker



Warren Singer Reading the Minutes



Jodie Singer reading the financial report

## EASL BOARD MEETING

February 18, 2019

Present: Mike Lambert, Barney Callahan, Herb Finnerty, Jodie Singer, Warren Singer, Darlene Bourgeois, Kevin Diez, James Guice, Warren Hebert, Marcia Jimmerson, Bettye Lambert, David Miles.

Mike Lambert called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

Mike and David Miles led a discussion on the need for a newspaper editor. David will be unavailable to continue but is willing to train a replacement.

Jodie Singer emailed the financial report to the board and discussed it. She noted we still have not collected meal sponsor money from last September and December. Jodie handed out copies of the 2019 budget she had prepared. After reviewing it with the board she made a motion, second by Kevin Diez to approve the 2019 budget. Motion passed.

Jodie then said we had 343 current members.

Mike said the panfish rodeo will be in May, and Chef KD will let us know a little later on if he will be able to cook. If not, he offered the use of his equipment.

Mike said that Todd is having back surgery so Chef KD will cook dinner tonight for the regular meeting.

Bettye Lambert said the Kid's Fishing Rodeo will be held July 27th.

Jodie said she is going to work with Frog Watch on behalf of EASL to draft their nomination for a Governor's Conservation Achievement Award.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm

## CASUAL OBSERVATIONS MARCH MADNESS

by Torrey Hayden



The term March Madness not only applies to college basketball but also to sportsmen. March is the most infuriating month of the year. The weather will be nice a few days, plans are made for a fishing trip then out of nowhere wind will pick up out of the north and temperatures will drop 40 degrees. When wind is not blowing out of the north it is blowing hard some other direction making being on water miserable and unproductive. Most every hunting season ends starting March 1. Another irritating thing about March for those of us unfortunate ones who are not retired is that we have to start getting up an hour earlier due to daylight savings time. Also if you have allergies the whole month is spent sneezing while outdoors.

James, Keelon and I planned a trout fishing trip in the Ozark Mountains on the border of Arkansas and Missouri during the month of March several years ago. James's brother Rocky also joined us on this trip. He is not an outdoor enthusiast and it was his first and last time to ever go with us anywhere.

None of us had ever freshwater trout fished but I had read an article in Field and Stream and it looked fun. According to the article, March was the best time to catch trophy German Brown Trout on the White River.

James drove and appointed himself quartermaster and told us what we could pack into his vehicle. As we were loading it was over 70 degrees sunny and very pleasant in Alabama. James made us leave all of our coats, gloves, warm hats etc. "We ain't got no room for that crap. It's 75 degrees"

As we pulled into Mountain Home Arkansas we noticed everyone was wearing heavy jackets, caps, gloves. We pulled into the local grocery store to get provisions and we stepped out of the car for the first time since we filled up with gas in Memphis. We all jumped back in as we re-evaluated James' directive to leave all of our warm clothes at home.

We had to acquire additional protection against the elements and found a local Wal-Mart. The only warm clothing still available had cartoon, wrestling or comic book characters on them. I went with a Loony Toon ensemble with a Bugs Bunny sweatshirt and a Marvin the Martian sweatshirt, an Elmer Fudd hat with Foghorn Leghorn gloves which made great fishing gloves after I cut the finger tips off. James was able to get outfitted in all Spider Man gear. Keelon went with Hulk Hogan's Hulkamania's line of apparel. Rocky refused to get any

of this stuff and said we looked ridiculous. "But Rocky you are going to get cold""Got some chicken skins" (long underwear) "OK".

We awoke early the next morning and it was a beautiful scene. Snow was coming down heavily in the Ozarks. The White River flowed through the scenery in stark contrast to everything else covered in white.

Our guide met us at the place we were staying. When Charley showed up we were all pelting James with snowballs for making us leave our warm clothing at home. He had been sentenced to face a firing squad.

Charley then asked, "Are you the Alabama boys I am supposed to take fishing?" "Yes we are" then he noticed the cartoon characters on our clothing. "Oh boy it's going to be a long day" was Charley's reply. Then he said "two of you can go in the boat with me and the other two can take this here other boat. Has anyone had any experience boating in fast moving water". I volunteered to captain the other boat because I had earned canoeing merit badge in the Boy Scouts. Charley did not seem impressed with my credentials.

As Rocky and I launched we noticed a very nice walleye splashing around on the surface. The fish had just been sucked through the hydro electric turbine on the dam just upstream. Rocky positioned himself on the bow to grab the fish and soon we had our first fish of the Day and by far the best tasting of the trip. Our guide Charley who was a trout purist just stood there still on the bank staring at us with his mouth moving but no words coming out.

Keelon made a strategic move by putting all of the food and drinks in their boat insuring both boats would stay together going down the river. After a couple of hours Rocky turned to me and asked if he could wear one of my two sweat shirts I had on. His teeth were chattering. I gave him a negative reply reasoning I did not want him to suffer a fashion faux pas by wearing a Bugs Bunny sweat shirt. He then proceeded to attempt to take the shirt I was wearing away from me.

Charley was quite concerned to see us standing in the middle of a long narrow Jon Boat fighting as we shot a long stretch of class 3 rapids. He commented to Keelon and James "don't them boys get along?" James informed Charley we were getting along.

Even though we were cold the entire time it was a great trip and we caught several nice rainbow and German brown trout.

## Terry Melancon Memorial Saltwater Challenge Set for June 8

The East Ascension Sportsman's League has set the date for the Terry Melancon Memorial Saltwater Challenge for June 8, 2019 in Grand Isle. Please mark your calendars, make your reservations, and plan on another fun weekend with fellow EASL members. Since EASL no longer pre-rents cabins for this event, we strongly suggest that you get with fellow members you've roomed with in past years and coordinate and reserve accommodations as early as possible.

The Cajun Holiday Motel has three main camps that can be rented by groups, along with room rentals in the motel. They have graciously let

us host the event at camps EASL members have rented, so we hope this relationship will continue. If you'd like to book a camp or motel room at the Cajun Holiday Motel, please give Ms. Millie a call at 504-787-2002. The motel and cabins are a short distance on the left after crossing the Grand Isle bridge



at 1737 LA Highway 1, Grand Isle LA 70358. Motels and rental camps are found throughout the island if you prefer other accommodations.

The tournament will have a new rule for 2019 as voted by the board of directors at the August 20, 2018 meeting. After debating and getting feedback from members, the board voted not to allow professional guides to participate on the day of the tournament. All other team rules, fishing guidelines, tournament categories, and 100% payout calculations will remain the same. These will be outlined in more detail as the tournament approaches.

For now, buddy up with your favorite

fishing partners and make your plans. Most folks come out on Friday for the required registration, and to enjoy a jambalaya or pastalaya meal. But, come early if you can. Maybe we can get a bourré game up after an early day of fishing. Just sayin'! – Jodie Singer, Chair

# It's A Fact!



**There are five distinct subspecies of wild turkeys: Eastern, Osceola, Rio Grande, Merriam's, and Gould's. Subtle plumage differences and different ranges distinguish these birds.**