

cypress trees in American Lake, Duck Lake and Grand Lake with tube jigs and Poppa Chops (featured in the December issue of the *Louisiana Sportsman*). The wellheads in the Orange Barrel Canal consistently produce slabs, too, he said.

Also, as soon as it gets cold enough, sac-a-lait pile up around the pilings at the Berwick Boat Landing. It's a phenomenon that happens every winter, said McCarty, attracting fish and fishermen galore.

And sac-a-lait can be caught in 10- to 12-foot depths around pilings and overhanging trees along Bayou Teche at Berwick and Patterson.

Henderson Lake

Dredging in front of private boat landings along the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee by Mandeville's Magnolia Dredge & Dock LLC is well underway.

Laurette Mequet, who along with her husband Mitch Mequet owns Cypress Cove Landing/Houseboat Adventures, said the dredging was finished outside her boat ramp and at McGee's Landing. In the second week of December, dredging activity was taking place at Whiskey River Landing and would proceed to Basin Landing.

Mequet, who also works in sales at BoatCity USA in Henderson, said the dredging was approved in order to deepen the water outside the boat ramps so boaters could access the scenic swamp when the water level is lowered each year in an effort to combat underwater vegetation that has pretty much taken over the lake. Three straight drawdowns should accomplish that goal because the tops of the grass burns off at extremely low water levels.

"It's going well," she reported.

As for sport fishing, it was practically nonexistent. Some of the best sac-a-lait fishing this month should be across the levee in Bayou Amy, Mequet said. Slabs can be caught on black/blue or black/chartreuse 1/48-ounce tube jigs and hair jigs fished 3 feet deep in and around drains from crawfish ponds.

For sure, catfish can be caught on worms and small crawfish near the bridge across from Pat's Restaurant.

Sac-a-lait fishing in the lake probably will be fair at best and will mainly take place around the pilings along Interstate 10 between north and south Lake Bibeaux. Fish 12 feet deep with black/chartreuse tube jigs and air jigs or shiners. Also try the nearby Railroad Pilings north of I-10.

For bass in the lake this month, try shad-colored crankbaits and spinnerbaits along I-10 and in the Butte La Rose Canal.

Bass also can be caught in Bayou Amy on chartreuse/white spinnerbaits in and around the drains.

False River

Some efforts are being made to start turning False River into a viable sport fishing destination like it once was in the '70s, '80s and '90s.

Gill netting of carp has taken out thousands of pounds of the rough fish partially responsible for the downturn in the lake's productivity as far as bass, bream and crappie fishing goes. Carp are blamed by many outdoorsmen for the destruction of chinquapin beds each spring.

Joe Major of Ventress reported from several recent great hauls



Annette Ducote caught this Lafitte redfish with a gold-bladed spinnerbait in a pond off Air Plane Bay in early July.

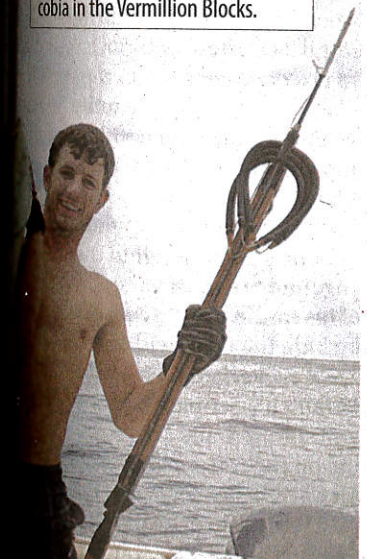


Patrick Hardy was free diving when he speared this monster 52-pound cobia in the Vermillion Blocks.



the redfish
in a pond off

Patrick Hardy was free diving when
he speared this monster 52-pound
cobia in the Vermillion Blocks.



by gill netters — 6,000 pounds on one occasion and 20,000 pounds on another run. But Major still pointed to the siltation that has contributed to the oxbow lake's downfall, which he believes is more related to wide-open boat traffic that's washing out the shoreline as much as other sources.

For sure, bass fishing is at an all-time low, Major said for the umpteenth time. One of his bass-fishing buddies who knows the lake very well spent a week on the water and came up with two keeper bass.

For those who want to try for bass in late December and January, Major suggested getting onto the warmest shoreline you can find, probably in the canals, and target seawalls and small piers while fishing with jig-n-pigs or plastic worms.

Or else fish around piers on the main lake with gold/orange Rogues or Model A Bombers with a slow, twitching retrieve. Or throw a chartreuse/white spinnerbait.

Best bet is to get out on the water between cold fronts. Getting on the parts of the lake that have been bathed in sunlight, thus warming the water, is more important than getting out early, as is the case during the spring and summer.

Chicot Lake

Expect white perch fishing to get better and better as the water cools in Chicot Lake.

White perch fishing already was fair to good as of the second week of December, according to Ike Launey, a sales associate at Industrial Supply & Sports in Ville Platte. Anglers were catching 30 or so bass, and keeping 20 or so.

Launey said limits of white perch should be common if weather and water conditions are right after Christmas and through January and February.

"When it cools off you'll do a lot better," he said the second week of December. "It should get even better in January."

Getting those fish into the ice chest often is as easy as offering them a tube jig or hair jig. Top colors are black/chartreuse, blue/chartreuse, brown/orange and blue/white for the tube jigs and blue/white, brown/chartreuse and black/chartreuse for the hair jigs.

Use a 1/4s-ounce or 1/32-ounce leadhead and fish 5- to 6-foot

Caleb Martin with a 17-inch
drum caught at Elmer's
Island during July.



depths in and around grass beds and around trees in The Branch and Ski Lake areas. Many of the fish will be caught by those tight-lining and dropping straight down in the grass beds.

Bass fishing has been fair, at best. As the winter proceeds, it'll probably be at its best between cold fronts.

Launey advised fishing with 3/8- or 1/2-ounce black/blue or black/chartreuse jig-n-pig combinations around cypress trees, deadfalls and grass beds in The Branch and Ski Lake areas. Also try black/red flake or watermelon/red Zoom Brush Hogs, or 3/8-ounce chartreuse/white spinnerbaits slow-rolled around structure in 3- to 5-foot depths.

Miller's Lake

Ike Launey at Industrial Supply and Sports in Ville Platte reported Miller's Lake will be closed in January for the 2012-13 waterfowl hunting season. ■

Southwest
UP NEXT...

