

# ***Quarterly News Letter*** ***Spring/Summer 2010***

I hope this finds you doing well and you have been enjoying the spring working and/or recreating on your property. This was our busiest quarter to date, and are just finally starting to slow down and catch our breath, which is why this is so late getting out.

It is hard to believe we have been in business for three years. We have gathered quite an array of properties where we now manage the aquatics and a few upland natural resources. Some clients were already managing, but were unhappy with their present management company and some decided to start using a management company and chose us off the internet or most were referred by my friends or clients. I am proud to say we have retained almost 100% of the clients who we have worked for over the past three years, which tells me we are doing something right. I want to thank those of you who gave us a chance when we first started, and to all those who have referred us to relatives, friends and associates that has helped grow our business at such an accelerated rate. I cannot believe how well business is, and we appreciate all of our client's patronage no matter how large or small. We have clients with a few acres of land and one acre ponds, to plantations and ranches with thousands of acres of land and hundreds of acres of water, housing development and golf course communities, timber and mining companies, and we are doing research on public waters monitoring fish and vegetation communities. We now have clients in Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida. It has been very enjoyable and rewarding. I owe many thanks to all my close friends who have provided business advice and promoted the company and assisted in getting clients by speaking on our behalf on our integrity and quality of work we perform. Without my friends, this would have never worked! I look forward to serving our current client base and growing at a reasonable rate for many years to come.



## **Aquatics**

This quarter I want to discuss if grass carp are right for you? There are many opinions on the uses of grass carp. What they will and will not eat, and if they will be a cure-all for reducing or eliminating the need for herbicide use. Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management tries to use as little herbicide as possible and still achieve the client's goals and objectives. I have always felt that more weeds (up to a point) are better for water quality and filters the water before it runs into your lake and out to the next whether it be a creek, canal, lake, or river and provides needed habitat for fish and wildlife. Many private lake consultants from day one advise the stocking of grass carp, and in some cases the plant desired for the carp to remove is not on their diet, or they are stocked at too high of a rate and once they remove the target plant they move onto another and another until they are flopping their heads onto the bank trying to eat grass on land because the lake is void of plants. That has been documented. The use of grass carp as a management tool is really difficult because as they grow, they need more nutrition up to a certain size, then they actually begin eating less and less. One misconception is that huge grass carp eat more than intermediate sized and that is not true. Twenty-five, four pounders consume much more vegetation than 25, twenty pounders, which is why these should be restocked once individuals reach above 20 lbs if the problem still exists. Grass carp can live 10-15 years. One should not be alarmed if large

multiple individuals are found floating between those years of age - this is a natural die off. We always get calls from folks wanting us to move big grass carp. If you are doing lake restoration, you are better off restocking 10-12 inch fish rather than moving large ones above 20 lbs to a temporary site and trying to move them back when the work is done. You end up spending much more to relocate the fish and get less return than restocking with smaller fish that will eat more when the waterbody refills, if they are even necessary at that time. Another big mistake is not properly identifying the target plant(s) before stocking. Grass carp have a preference for plant species from desirable to plants they rarely eat. One of the most common misconceptions is filamentous algae – most literature says they rarely eat it! It would be great if they did, because there is lots of it out there, both in urban and rural settings. A document listing aquatic plants and grass carp preference levels can be found on our company web site.

We like to use grass carp in a habitual situation; in a waterbody that always have a plant problem and is requiring retreatment for the same species. Whether the plant is annually or one that gets out of control every three to four years. We currently have one client who has a pond that has fanwort and duck weed in it all the time. We treated with the proper herbicides to reduce those species then followed up with a stocking of grass carp to maintain it as it comes back. We do see both those plant species every year in the waterbody, but the carp have kept them in check and has not needed retreating with herbicides in three years.

Always get a fishery biologist's opinion or do your own literature search before ordering grass carp. There are a few hatcheries that will be honest with you and direct you in the right direction, but there are also many that want to sell you fish. Before stocking grass carp check with your state agency for rules for possessing and permit requirements.

## **Upland**

For those landowners that want to obtain a count of deer and generate herd characteristics to create sound harvest decisions for their property now is the time to start planning for a camera census survey this late summer/fall. These surveys can reveal buck-to-doe ratio, over all health, age make-up, recruitment (how many fawns were born) and create an image of what should and shouldn't be harvested during the upcoming deer season. Although many people perform these on their own, it should be done by a professional biologist with the ability and experience to obtain all the information that is present from the photos. Done properly it is an excellent tool, done poorly it is no more than gathering deer pictures. Deer camera census require a lot of planning, a lot of time placing cameras and even more time once the pictures are taken and if you have a large track, it takes many reliable cameras. If you are considering getting a camera census conducted on your property we recommend [Westervelt Wildlife Services](#). Dave Edwards and his staff of biologist have extensive experience with this process and are capable of conducting camera surveys throughout the south on small and large tracks of land. They have written several articles regarding this topic for magazines and various publications. Their expertise at taking camera photos and deciphering what they mean regarding the characteristics of your deer herd is unsurpassed. For those wanting to do it on their own I suggest waiting for the Quality Deer Management Association's (QDMA) next publication due out this fall on camera census techniques written by extremely talented biologist across the country who have years of experience.

I frequently get asked what I recommend to ensure enough does get harvested and making the harvesting of does fun for friends, guests or lease partners. A lot of people do not

like taking does as they need to be processed and they are always afraid when they take that doe the buck of a lifetime was right behind it. Yet most properties need some doe harvest and on large tracts it can become a chore, but needs to be done. At one Georgia plantation there is a \$40 entry fee for all hunters. If you harvest a doe during the season, you take \$20 after your first doe harvested and the remainder stays with the pot whether you take another doe, two, three, or no more. All does harvested must be weighed and the hunter that harvests the heaviest doe for the season takes home the pot. Also you could add if a button buck is taken, the "house" gets money or a new deer stand/feeder/food plot seed for the property as a penalty for the error. You could also add a trophy or plaque that stays at the lodge or gets passed around year to year for the Fat Doe Harvest King or the Jester of Button Bucks. I know of groups that make it mandatory for each member to harvest a pre determined number of does, a buck cannot be taken until the hunter takes their first doe, and they have to pay at the end for every doe they were suppose to harvest and did not, with all money going to land management expenses. This can be done many ways at many monetary levels to suite your particular group, but there are very few that will avoid friendly competition for money, prizes or just bragging rights! If you do not like deer meat, but must harvest does contact your state's Hunters Feeding the Hungry program and donate the meat to the needy. Good luck and don't forget to try and harvest the correct number of does annually. This past season I lost by 5 lbs - better luck next year!

### **Events of Interest**

- The Ducks Unlimited National Convention is May 27-30<sup>th</sup> at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, Texas. Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management will have a booth and display at the accompanying Sporting Expo May 28-30<sup>th</sup> so if you attend please come by and say "Hello!"
- The Allen, Texas Chapter of Ducks Unlimited is hosting their 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Fundraising Banquet August 5<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 PM at the Swingin' D Ranch in Parker, Texas. This is the chapter I am a member of and welcome any of our clients nearby to come and enjoy themselves.
- The Land & Wildlife Expo in Nashville, Tennessee August 13-15<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled due to the recent flooding.
- The Forest Landowner National Conference is June 2-4, in Stevenson, Washington at the Skamania Lodge.

I encourage newsletter feedback and suggested topics, upcoming events that readers may be interested in attending and anyone with fish or game pictures to please submit to me and we can include them in the Quarterly News Letter and/or add them to the "Photos" page of the company web site. All previous Quarterly News Letters and links of interest can be found at: <http://www.southernsportsmanaquaticsandland.com>.

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. The best compliment you can give us is a referral! We are always looking for additional clients from Texas to Florida. We are already filling up our fall sampling (electrofishing) schedule. If someone is interested in our services, they need to contact us sooner than later to assure their work gets scheduled this fall and does not have to be put off until spring 2011. Also, if you are inclined to write a short paragraph to be published on the "Testimonials" page of our web site, please do so, as I am always updating it and would like to have more of those from satisfied customers.

If you want us to order or bring feeders (parts), aeration/fountain (parts), pond fertilizer, build and deploy fish attractors, bird nesting boxes, etc. during summer site visits please contact us well before late June and July so we can make all the necessary arrangements to get things done.

If you wish to be removed from this mailing list please E-Mail me and you will not receive these in the future.

**Scott G. Brown, Owner**

## ***Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management Bragging Board***



Some early season camera work let this hunter know that “Drop-Tine” was somewhere out there, and he was lucky enough to harvest him in the area the camera was placed the last weekend (two months after photo) of the 2009/2010 Georgia deer season on Ochwalkee Creek Plantation near Glenwood. Congratulations Mike!



This 13.5 lbs largemouth bass was caught and released from one of the three ponds on the Hall Farm near Sylvester, Georgia.



Kyle McAfee holds an 8.6 lbs largemouth bass collected while electrofishing their 35 acre lake this spring near Athens, Texas.