

Quarterly News Letter

Fall 2009



I hope this finds you doing well and you have things ready for the fall hunting season, but still had some time to enjoy your property this summer. I had the pleasure of partaking in an Old Fashion catfish fry at Ochwalkee Creek Plantation in Georgia, back in July. It had been years since I skinned a mess of catfish, but I managed and did an even better job of eating them. We have added several new clients and properties to our client list in Georgia and Alabama this quarter and would like to welcome and thank you for the opportunity. We look forward to many years of helping you improve and maintain quality ecosystems and outdoor recreational opportunities on your properties.

Aquatics

This quarter I want to cover whether adding threadfin shad (*Dorosoma petenense*) is right for you? Many of our clients ask if they can improve their largemouth bass fishery by stocking threadfin shad? If conditions are right largemouth bass, black crappie and Morone Hybrids (sunshine bass/palmetto bass/wipers) can all greatly benefit from the stocking of threadfin shad. Too often we hear of pond owners stocking these expensive forage fish under the advisement of a hatchery, only to be disappointed in the results and asking us where did they all go? If these fish are present they can usually be seen schooling at the surface in spring, summer and fall at sunrise and sunset while predators are frantically feeding on them.

Threadfn Shad



Gizzard Shad



Threadfin shad are a silver fish that grow between three and five inches total length, never getting longer than six inches their entire lives. Which is why they are preferred over gizzard shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*), that can reach lengths greater than that their first year and can exceed 15 and 20 inches depending on your location. We never prescribe stocking gizzard shad as they grow too fast and reach lengths too large to be consumed by predators too quickly. The average life span of threadfin shad is three to four years. Threadfin shad live and thrive on the planktonic algae that create green water. Threadfin shad do suffer die offs when water temperatures get below 42° F. If you know the entire water column reaches those temperatures in your water body, then reconsider stocking or realize you may have to periodically restock if a winter die-off occurs. This is where knowing the water chemistry of your waterbody comes into play, as the surface may be 40° F, but five to seven feet below the surface it may be 60° F with plenty of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) to support a threadfin shad

population over the winter. They are also usually the first to start floating if a low DO fish kill is in progress.

To establish a self sustaining population of threadfin shad, an algae bloom is necessary whether it is natural or induced from a fertilization program. If a water body does not have an algae bloom threadfin shad normally only survive as long as they can without eating. When stocked into a clear lake they become a very expensive fish food, no different than what comes out of your fish feeders, except these come out of a hatchery truck, they attract different species and in case you misread – they cost a lot more than pellet feed. I never recommend stocking threadfins in clear lakes, even though in some situations they have been known to survive. An initial stocking of threadfin shad, or any forage species (food for other fish), needs to be excessive to ensure some survive and naturally reproduce to replenish themselves while predators are reducing their numbers. Sometimes it may take a year or two to get a population established. When creating a quality fishery we recommend establishing multiple forage species (bream, threadfin shad, golden shiners, silversides (glass minnows), minnows, etc.) to spread out predation on multiple species, sometimes by multiple predator species. If one forage species gets depleted, predators can switch targets and the previous target forage species may have a chance to recover. Also having a variety of forage species is beneficial by ensuring multiple predator species at various life stages always have food available for optimal growth.

Uplands

If teal hunting on your duck area is desired slowly begin flooding waterfowl designated food plots. If possible, only flood about 1/3 of the area. This leaves much of the area to continue to grow and seeds to germinate, and will leave you food for November and December when regular duck season opens.

Perform any activities on the property that may be invasive to deer hunting now, before bow season begins. Things like major road work, water crossings, shooting house installations, etc. should all be completed if possible to let deer drop their guard somewhat to become more relaxed.

Make sure all stands are wasp free and safe before bow season begins. In the dark or after someone falls out of a stand is too late to assess any needed repairs, so check all stands now. Make sure to check strapping, cloth seats and wood for weaknesses and replace anything that is questionable.

Mark recently planted trees that have been dead for two growing seasons with flagging tape before leaves drop so they can easily be identified and replaced during the winter prior to spring. If wanting to transplant trees this winter also mark trees and write the species on the flagging before leaves drop, this helps identify tree species other than by bark only, this coming winter.

Go through all the late summer/fall trail camera photos. If conducting a census, the evaluation needs to be done as soon as possible; to set deer harvest goals prior to or shortly after gun season begins.

Finish up prepping and planting any fall food plots. Try to have all plots in by early to mid October. This will take advantage of fall rains in the Southeast and ensures food still being present in mid December and not all consumed in early hunting season.

Prior to archery season opening move or install all deer stands. Maybe move that stand on the food plot approximately 50-100 yards back into the woods, where the bucks hang out until hard dark hits prior to them entering the food plot. Or place a stand several

hundred yards from where that camera keeps taking the photo of the Booner (Boon & Crocket candidate) three hours after dark that has never been seen during daylight hours.

Events of Interest

1. I would like to congratulate my good friends Kevin Faver and Jeff Lageman at [The Outdoors Show](#), who will be syndicated on Saturday morning radio with [The Hunt Life Hour](#). They will be on in Jacksonville, Gainesville and Ocala, Florida; Savannah and Macon, Georgia; Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama between 7:00 and 8:00 AM, Eastern Time, starting October 3rd. I know they are excited and I am for them. If you have a chance to listen in please do as they will usually have a special guest for the majority of the show, usually someone popular in the hunting, shooting, wildlife management or conservation industry. Check the web sites for stations in your particular area or listen on the web if you do not live in the areas listed. I wish them all the best and I look forward to continue working with them with the radio shows and website.
2. The 2nd Annual Westervelt Wildlife Services continental-style pheasant shoot to benefit Alabama's Hunters Helping the Hungry Program is scheduled for late February, 2010. If interested in participating or sponsoring a blind contact Dave Edwards at 1-800-281-7991. Who knows, you may even see a familiar face with a chocolate lab hustling up birds for folks.

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 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: southernsportsmanaquaticsandland.com in case you wish to observe past editions or forward them to a friend.

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. 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 continually updating it and would like to have more of those now that we are in our third year of business.

I will be in Florida, Georgia and Alabama working most of October and will be making site visits in Texas and Louisiana the last couple weeks of September. I will be contacting you a couple weeks before my next tour setting up site visits and meetings. If you want me to order or bring fertilizer, feeders (parts), aeration/fountain (parts), build and deploy fish attractors, bird nesting boxes, etc. please contact me ASAP so I can make all the necessary arrangements.

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