

Quarterly News Letter

Fall 2010



Summer 2010 is on its way out. The Texas dove season opened September 1st and it has rained almost every day I could go since. A few mornings were a big change from the 80's for lows and triple digits for highs we have been experiencing the past two months, as it was 64° two mornings and peaked in the mid 80's a couple days. I was just telling a friend the other day it has been so hot I was not in the mood to shoot bows or train dogs (the dogs second that one), but we have already started those things several weeks ago. Folks in South Carolina have already opened their gun deer season and many of you have begun to dove, teal and/or bow hunt throughout the south. We hope this year brings you many enjoyable days afield with family and friends. I know I have several hunts lined up and am looking forward to each one, not so much to fill the coolers, but to be outside enjoying the fruits of our labor and experiencing friends being successful at whatever they are doing. I can say I have been with several friends for their first, and I honestly remember some of those times better than some of my own milestones and none are more rewarding than when my son reaches another sportsman milestone.

During my Summer tour throughout the Southeast in July I worked a few days at Ochwalkee Creek Plantation building and deploying several fish attractors ([plans to build your own are here](#)), scouting, checking stands, and shed antler hunting. I know it is the wrong time of year for shed hunting, but I missed doing it in the spring due to work and I did find the best antler yet; just 100 yards from one of my bow stands, which is always encouraging. After the work was done we caught a mess of channel catfish for dinner with light tackle and a bobber. Add some hot grease, grits and good friends, and it's an evening that is hard to beat!



I also met this girl near the lodge. Not sure what her deal is other than she was not afraid of humans yet. She just walked around me getting within 8 yards, and letting me follow her around while she was eating in the food plot just outside the back door. She did it again with another friend a week later while he was relaxing having a beverage sitting on his tailgate.

Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management is proud to announce our new

Lunker Fish & Bruiser Buck Programs. A commemorative plaque will be presented to landowners who experience an exceptional fish being caught from their waterbodies or whitetail deer harvested that we manage lakes and/or land on a regular basis. The landowner need not be the successful angler or hunter, but we do need a quality photo, date and time caught or harvested, the length, girth and weight of the fish or antler measurements of the deer. The categories for fish are bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, channel or blue catfish and largemouth bass. The size categories are as follows: largemouth bass ≥ 25 " or 10 lbs, channel or blue catfish ≥ 33 " or 20 lbs, bluegill ≥ 10 " or 0.75 lbs, redear sunfish ≥ 11 " or 1.0 lbs and black crappie ≥ 14 " or 2.0 lbs. Whitetail deer qualify if it scores ≥ 140 . Plaques will be presented to qualifying land owners during winter site visits for achievements the previous year.

We have also started a [Southern Sportsman Aquatics & Land Management Blog](#). We are just getting into it, learning how to operate it and trying to find time to keep it updated with what we are doing and how, in case you want to try it on your property yourself. We will try and set it up so all our clients and friends can post successes or things that didn't work as expected that they are having fishing, hunting and managing their lakes and land. We hope it will also be a place for followers to ask questions and receive feedback so others can see solutions in case they are experiencing similar issues.

Aquatics

This summer has been relentless with heat at many of our client's properties. Seems algae blooms and filamentous algae are heavier this year than the past few both in large river systems and small waterbodies. Fish kills have been non-existent thus far on our client's lakes, but there have been some major fish kills in Florida, particularly the St Johns River. I believe and state biologist concur, the harsh winter and excessive vegetation die-offs have contributed to higher than normal nutrient levels (decomposing vegetation) which feeds algae and/or vegetation. We have one client with a lake that has never had an algae bloom, and this year they have a beautiful bloom with 36 inch visibility and did not fertilize all year.

During these hot periods paying close attention to not over fertilize or over feed is very important. If visibility is 18-36 inches do not add fertilizer. When water temperatures get near or above 90° F, reduce feeding to twice per day just before daylight and right after dark, when fish are most active and feeding. This reduces waste and nutrient loading into possibly an already nutrient rich system.

We have one client that has accidentally over fertilized and are holding their breath hoping a fish kill does not occur. Several cloudy days can trigger an algae die-off, which removes dissolved oxygen (DO) from the water and if severe enough, kills fish. Large surface aerators are generally used to fight off fish kills like these, but one needs to be handy, or purchased, and depending on the type (electrical vs. tractor driven) can be costly. Properly managing beforehand in most situations will prevent these types of scenarios.

Some clients are concerned about lake levels, but an occasional drought or flood is good for waterbodies, including lakes and ponds. Yes, sometimes the vegetation can either become void or excessive temporarily, but this cycling is necessary. A constant water level is more harmful than good. On occasion, allowing it to get high or low, if you possess that capability is good for the lake bottom and fish population.

This fall look at your largemouth bass target removal number and “Number Removed to Date” to see how many fish you still need removed to reach the annual goal. Catching bass on light tackle between sits on the deer stand can help you achieve the annual harvest number that was prescribed by your lake manager and supply some tasty deer camp meals.

As temperatures drop, have any aquatic vegetation spraying performed you have been putting off during the summer. Some fall treatments of submerged vegetation prove exceptionally good depending on the plant and herbicide used. Generally shoreline vegetation is slowing down, so manually removing in the fall and following up in the spring with a herbicide treatment as it comes back works best and reduces costs. Very little algae and vegetation treatment should occur in the middle of summer, except spot treating for access or in/out flow. We are very conscious of water quality whether managing a retention pond or trophy bass lake and it needs to always be considered when working in the lake or on the surrounding land that drains into the lake. The actions up the hill affect the lake, creek or river down the hill.

Uplands

By this time you should have already set your doe harvest numbers. Every year we stress this importance like having soil tests run prior to planting food plots. On larger tracts of land not harvesting enough does undermines other time consuming and expensive management techniques you implement to improve your herd. We recommend starting early in the season apposed to trying to harvest all does after the rut.



Recent, studies have shown that harvesting does early in the fall may aid in keeping small bucks around and reduce young buck migration off your property. It is also easier to ID mature does in early fall (when 1, 2 or 3 littler ones are standing next to it) apposed to late hunting season when yearlings are on their own and buttons can look like 1 ½ - 2 ½ year old does. Also, it is usually much harder to find does in late December and January if food is plentiful, as it is in some areas of the south. After the rut deer tend to lay low and move a lot less to conserve energy and rebuild fat supplies, and if food is plentiful, this movement can be greatly reduced. In colder, northern climates deer may have to consume more food and travel farther to feeding areas, which make them more vulnerable to harvest during late season.

Creating a game or money pot between members or users can help encourage doe harvest. Create a club trophy or plaque for the heaviest doe taken each year. Also, inviting friends and their children hunting to help with the doe harvest helps lesson the burden of harvesting lots of deer by just a few people. Make it clear that they were invited to have fun and only shoot does if you do not want them to harvest any of your bucks. Many people have a hard time finding quality places to hunt yet enjoy venison and will take you up on the offer. The reasons for not shooting does are numerous including I needed to be home (shooting that

Booner won't make you late?), I don't want to mess with it (lots of meat shops now process deer), I don't need or want the meat (many states have Hunters Feeding the Hungry Programs), etc. The only one I cannot argue against is "What if a Booner is behind the doe when I shoot?" That one is always possible, but if you have too many does, there is no Booner behind that doe, just a buck not reaching his potential! You spend hours and days using your tractor, chainsaw, drip torch, mower, etc, and you need to spend time using your rifle/bow taking the appropriate number of does. In my opinion not harvesting does and not having soils tested are the two most common rules broken in deer management by land owners/weekend managers. If you want to suspend harvesting does during the rut and resume immediately after is acceptable.

I encourage newsletter feedback and suggested topics, upcoming events that readers may be interested in attending and any of our clients with fish or game pictures to please submit to me via E-Mail or through our Blog and we can include them in the Quarterly News Letter and/or add them to the "Photos" page of the company web site. 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 up from our satisfied customers. In future editions of our news letter we are considering adding Landowner Profiles and Merchandise/Manufacturer Spotlight. 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. Our fall sampling (electrofishing) schedule is almost full, but if someone wants a fall sample done we may be able to fit them in. If someone you know is interested in our services, they need to contact us sooner than later to assure their work gets scheduled either this fall or spring 2011.

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 fall site visits please contact us immediately so we can make all the necessary arrangements to get things done. It is also time for fall fish stockings. If you need them ordered, let us know and we will get them delivered, if available.

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