

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS



Mexico whitewings

Biologists predict strong numbers this season. **Page 6**

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HUNTING

Kids score at shoot

Cabela's and Cinnamon Creek ranch joined forces to host a 3D archery shoot for youth.

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FISHING

Not too hot for some

Anglers have unique, sometimes colorful ways for cooling off on the boat.

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Fishing just fine

The fishing industry is holding its own, despite the recession and dour economic news.

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Funds flow for boat buyers

Boat dealers facing financial woes, but buyers still out there, finding deals

By Craig Nyhus

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Potential boat buyers are wondering if financing is going to be a problem. Not so much for buyers, dealers say. Dealer financing, though, is another story.

The problem centers around wholesale financing (called Dealer Floor Plan financing), what dealers use to finance the boats on the lot.

"For buyers, money is available," said Rod Malone, president of Sail & Ski in Austin, San Antonio and Lakeway and the past president of the Boating Trades Association of Texas. "The underwriting is more rigorous, but that's probably not a bad thing."

But wholesale financing for dealers is tough.

"The financing on boats has tightened up," said Billy Holmes of Gulf Coast Marine in Corpus Christi and Hitchcock. "Some lenders are loaning the same way they did two or five years ago — they are the more conservative lenders that required 20 percent down. They don't have bad loans."

Others, though, loaned money more liberally.

"They aren't in the finance business for boats anymore, and some are out of any business," Holmes said.

See **FINANCE**, Page 25

FUN IN THE SUN: There's nothing like a new boat for couples in the Texas summer. Deals and financing are available for buyers, but they may see less inventory at dealerships. Dealers are having trouble securing financing for inventory. Photo by David J. Sams, Lone Star Outdoor News.



Drought is bad, but not worst

El Nino could bring enough rain to break long-lived dry spell

By Thomas Phillips

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

People complain about the weather all the time. But maybe this time they're justified. Especially people in the Hill Country.

"It's about as low as it got (before rainy 2007)," said Allen Christenson, a fishing guide on Lake Travis. "It's heading now to where it was in 1984."

The region is nearing two years in drought conditions, lake levels have dropped dozens of feet, and rivers have become chains of pools, not flowing waterways.

Lake Travis, west of Austin, is down about 41.5 feet, and only one boat ramp is open. Canyon Lake, near New Braunfels, is down 14 feet.

"The last time (Canyon Lake) was this low



LIMITED ACCESS: Lake Travis is down about 41 feet, but fish are still biting. Anglers and boaters hope late summer and fall rains bring the levels back to normal. Photo by Erich Schlegel, for Lone Star Outdoor News.

it was a river," said Travis Smith, owner of the Tackle Box at Canyon Lake.

River "flows" have become trickles. Deep pools still hold water, but ripples between some have gone subterranean.

Despite the negative symptoms, though, the

See **DROUGHT**, Page 14

Desert bighorn tag sells for \$84,000

Hunter pays big for chance at grand slam

By Craig Nyhus

LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

J. Michael Lewis of Dallas made the trip July 18 to San Antonio for the Texas Bighorn Society Roundup with his eye on the big-ticket auction item, a desert bighorn ram hunt.

Lewis, an avid hunter and lifetime Dallas Safari Club member, already has three legs of the North American Grand Slam: a Dall sheep, a Stone's sheep and a Rocky Mountain bighorn. The desert bighorn would complete the slam.

"It was something of a sentimental thing," Lewis said. "I'm hung up on hunting the desert bighorn in Texas."

As the auction progressed, worries of the effect

See **BIGHORN**, Page 23

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