

work as the end but will rework it—are really the people who sell your program for you. The hack who just runs your release, per se, without any attempt to make them fit his locale or to expand them from personal experience isn't much of a writer—any desk man can do that kind of job.

I feel that OWAA and the I & E sections of all the states of the nation must cooperate with each other to the fullest extent. We have a job to do—an almost impossible one, I might add, if we are to preserve any of the great outdoors for coming generations.

Your job is to supply the factual information and our job is to sell the public on the needs and fulfillment of those needs. Let either of us fall down on the job and we will see the great outdoors become a barren wasteland even faster than it seems to be turning into that now.

Now, if I may—and really there isn't much you can do about it at the moment since I have the mike—I'd like to get a bit personal and ask again for your help.

As most of you know, I am editor of Southern Outdoors magazine. In it we carry a feature each issue entitled State Forecasts and each month you receive a request from me for information applicable to the issue I'm closing out. Granted I work on atrocious deadlines—all magazines do—but I do feel that this section of the magazine is a worthwhile one. My mail proves this when a state does not furnish the information for a particular issue.

It helps the magazine but I'd also like to point out that this is not a one-way street as the section is also a free publicity blurb for your state. After all, publicity for your state and your game and fish department is the real reason for your job.

So, I'd like to ask your full cooperation in furnishing me with this information promptly for each issue.

And I like to ask also that you keep up the good work you have been doing over the years. I'll help you all I can so we can have places to *always take a boy hunting and fishing with us!*

Thank you.

## WE ARE MISSING THE BOAT

BY CAPT. CHARLES SEBASTIAN  
Grand Isle, Louisiana

To show some of the ways we are missing the boat I would like to start by reading an article which appeared in the 1966 Grand Isle Tarpon Rodeo Handbook. It was written by Jan Sebastian, my wife, whom many of you Southern outdoor writers and public relations people know and love—not as I know and love her—but I am sure you are very fond of her and are grateful to her when she does some of your work for you. Many things she sends out you can and do use verbatim thus saving hours of slaving over that hot typewriter. (Come to think of it—many times she has saved me a little work, and this is one of those times.)

This article of Jan's was originally part of a talk before the Louisiana Tourist Development Commission in Baton Rouge in February, 1966. It shows quite vividly, I think, one way we are missing the boat (especially in Louisiana). That is in failing to recognize some of the best fishing in the world as a Number 1, Grade A tourist attraction.

From time to time as I read, I will add my comments.

Any loyal Louisianian, fisherman or not, hates to admit that he can be outsmarted by (1) a Texan or (2) a Yankee. Yet when it comes to selling our visitors and tourists on the bounty of game and

edible fishes in our segment of the Gulf of Mexico with its bays and passes, we could take lessons.

One winter evening, I held up a magazine, *The Saltwater Sportsman*, and asked Jan, "What's strange about this ad?" The half-page spread in this widely read fishing magazine pictured a man holding up a fish with the bold caption: FISH STORIES COME TRUE IN NEW JERSEY.

"Obviously," she joked, "they have stolen my line. You know, Fish Stories Come True Aboard the Sea Hawk."

"Not the line," I said, "look again at the fish. It's a gafftop catfish."

As for the Texans, their *Texas Game and Fish Magazine* which parallels our own *Louisiana Conservationist* features sand trout in hand-painted color on the cover of the August 1961 issue with a laudatory article inside.

What do you tell your visiting fishermen about sand trout, or silver trout, or white trout, or correctly *weakfish*? You hold out for speckles, don't you? Even when your guests are having fun catching weakfish, rather than *spotted* weakfish, you keep right on until you give them the idea their trip is ruined because you don't catch the specks.

Are you right sure you can tell the difference at the table? Assuming, of course, that you have handled the weakfish properly. Most sand trout are practically ruined by careless treatment and lack of prompt and adequate icing before the cook ever gets a chance at them.

Well, now, from the standpoint of tourist promotion, why should the State of New Jersey spend perfectly good money to buy a series of ads in a specialized kind of magazine and of all the fish that swim in the sea—our sea at least—select the picture of a gafftopsail catfish, a fish most Louisiana fishermen consider a trash fish and throw back?

First, of all, dollars spent convincing tourists that fishing is better in our State than anywhere else will bring at least as much, and we believe more, return on the investment than any facet of promotion that anybody can dream up. Why?

Because a survey by Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in 1963 affirms conclusively that fishing is the nation's most popular and widely practiced sport activity. This report shows that in the South 44 percent of the population (nearly half) expressed a preference for fishing over all other recreation.

Remington Arms Company asserts that, compared to fishing and hunting, "baseball, often called our national sport, is mere peanuts." "In fact," Remington continues, "you can take money spent on baseball and add to it boxing, football, movies, theater, concerts, and all other spectator amusements, and it still amounts to less than half of what went for hunting and fishing."

So we begin to understand why little New Jersey aims her promotion at those freespenders, the fishermen. The point is that the moment a fisherman hits the road to get to the ole fishing hole, then he is more than a fisherman. He is a tourist.

But why the picture of the gafftop? Why not? Let's consider why maybe the Yankees and the Texans are smarter than we are. What's wrong with a gafftop? "Well," you say, "he has to be skinned." Not in Jan's kitchen. She wants her fish filleted. So what matter whether skin or scale? (True—he is covered with a thick slime. But so is a tarpon. The slime is easily explained away. It is Nature's protection against entry of harmful bacteria. It also helps him slip more easily through the water. OK?)

The gafftop is excellent for eating, he is game on light tackle, and he strikes in those seasons and on those rare days when the fish with more social status get snooty. Most important, if he can attract tourists to cold-climated New Jersey, he can do as much and more for our temperate Gulf coast.

In Louisiana we have so many kinds of fish for every month of the

year that we sit back and feel smug about other places where it may actually be necessary to promote those fish which haven't moved up to top ten in our hit parade. Offhand you'd think this is no problem in tourism. Yet, when we encounter tourist fishermen, often we very foolishly disparage some of the fish they catch. Our chance remarks deflate them. Thereby we dilute their pleasure in the fishing trip and we detract from their visit to our shores.

Consider a typical example. A Louisianian who takes the world's finest all-round, year-round fishing for granted as a birthright had guests aboard our Sea Hawk on a winter's day. While it wasn't warm by our standards, for Chicagoans it was like Spring. With spinning tackle, every one aboard was having a wonderful time with the bluefish and *big sand trout*. As is so often the case, the host himself ruined the day, because the pompano weren't biting. I knew they wouldn't bite. It wasn't a suitable day for persnickity pompano—too rough.

So I had the tourists quite happy with what they considered unbelievably fine fishing. Finally with their host grouching all morning, the Chicagoans decided it just wasn't sophisticated to enjoy anything but pompano.

Most of all this fellow hurt himself and his out-of-state guests. But, in the last analysis, he hurt every businessman in Louisiana who profits by satisfied tourists.

The sad but true fact is that we find his kind all around us. We can't, in fact, escape them. Many a time, particularly in winter, we have been dispatching fishermen happy and excited with a catch of ten or twelve varieties of excellent fish only to have some joker stroll up to the stern of the Sea Hawk and drawl, "W'atsamatta, Cap, red snapper won't bite?"

This is patently ridiculous. Why do our own people persist in this costly habit of downgrading fish which are game and good? Those of us who sincerely want to build up tourism (and, believe me, fishing is one of the most important parts of it) have a full-time job on our hands just to educate our fellow citizens to all of our blessings.

Let's take another example.

The bluefish is our most misunderstood, maligned, underrated, unappreciated and slighted fish. In the Atlantic, fishermen go to great trouble and grind up bushels of stinking menhaden or other fish and make a vile, watery soup which is ladled behind an anchored boat in the hope of attracting a few bluefish to this oily chum line.

Here in the Gulf you can pull up to almost any platform (incidentally, there are more than 2,000 such oil platforms in Louisiana waters alone), tie up and start flipping any plug that will sink. Spin tackle or casting rods are ideal, but don't bring any of that 10-12# test line or you can't tie lures on as fast as they will be broken off. The blue is a jumper, a hard fighter who will make you go home and throw rocks at the black bass.

One authority states, "The specie reaches a maximum weight of 45#; the rod and reel record being 24#, 3 ounces." But even in the five to ten-pound range, the battling bluefish is a favorite of the saltwater angler—not only because of its fight, but because of its taste.

Yet how many times have I had local people entertaining out-of-state guests who would be ecstatic over fighting and boating a 4 or 5# blue and have the host say, "Throw it back, it's no damn good." Or, "Captain, take us somewhere else. We don't want bluefish."

Let's correct this erroneous impression at once:

1. A bluefish should be bled when he is caught.
2. He should be kept very cold.
3. He should be filleted and skinned, a simple job with a knife.
4. He should be broiled.

Then you have a gourmet's item.

In tourism every day someone is paying the price for that kind of reporting that touts a few fish and forgets others or plays down one section of the State in order to promote another.

Tourist Development Commissioner, Louisiana's Secretary of State Wade O. Martin, Jr., has said that tourism is Louisiana's third largest industry but that we spent only \$285 thousand to Florida's \$2.6 million for promotion in the same period. Arkansas spent better than three times what we did. Last week, Morris Ford, Louisiana's brand-new director of tourist development, said in an interview that the Bahamas spend \$6.90 for every tourist they get to visit there; then the tourist spends enough to return 70 tax dollars to the government. That's a pretty good return on an investment. And to hear Mr. Ford come on so strong was music to our ears.

We don't have to advertise all of our fish. If we did, though, and had the facilities for the influx of sportsmen with their families, imagine the boost to our tourist income. If there were some way to show how much out-of-state fishermen spend in New Orleans, in Louisiana and along the Gulf Coast on their way to the fishing grounds, how amazed many public officials and businessmen would be.

Should the day come when we can't picture a cobia, amberjack, wahoo, sailfish, tuna, barracuda, king mackerel, red snapper, Spanish mackerel, bluefish, pompano, speckled trout, marlin, et cetera, et cetera—then we can photograph a gafftop.

A fish is a fish. Fishing is America's greatest participant sport. So. If it serves our purpose to extoll the virtues of gafftops, or sand trout, or spadefish, or drum, or grouper, or sheephead or countless other Louisiana and Gulf Coast saltwater fish, then let's get on with it.

Now let's consider another way we miss the boat. We're left flat-footed on the dock by failing to promote our marvelous fall and winter fishing intensively and extensively. Right now and for the next three months we will have the best fishing of the whole year off Grand Isle.

To my way of thinking, October and November are our greatest fishing months. Typical weather is exhilarating with calm days such as we are enjoying now. Bright, sunny, neither too hot nor too cool. This is the time of heavy fish migrations. Fish are all around us. The ever-popular red snapper is here in large numbers as indicated by recent catches.

Spanish and king mackerel are nearly everywhere for those who like to troll. However, in a few weeks, Spanish mackerel will congregate around the offshore structures to offer fast, furious sport on spin or casting rods and artificial bait. The winter mackerel run so much larger than the summer Spanish that fishermen sometimes mistakenly think they are taking small kings.

October and November also offer some of the best sailfishing of the year. We see them rise offshore while we are fishing red snapper.

For weeks now many beautiful redfish have been brought to Grand Isle's marinas. Some were caught in the surf, some from outboards in the bays and passes and some from charter boats in the passes and open Gulf. The run this year is tremendous. The fight of a big channel bass is hard to match.

Incidentally, we have two redfish rodeos in October annually at Grand Isle. Both are exciting affairs, growing each year.

Yet, in spite of this, charter boat fishing will drop 'way, 'way down over what it has been all summer. Why? First and foremost, most people just don't know about it except by word of mouth and by some, but not nearly enough, promotion on the local level and this primarily in New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

Who do you think owns one of the few 16 mm color promotional films on offshore winter fishing in Louisiana? Not the Louisiana Tourist Development Commission or any other state agency but me—ole whiskers himself. It was shot by our good friend, Jerry Breaux of WBRZ-TV in Baton Rouge. It has been viewed several times over

Baton Rouge, Lafayette and New Orleans television stations. It should be released nationally. If the State of Louisiana has modern, up-to-date color film on fishing to be sent to civic clubs, sportsmen's leagues or other interested parties, it is a well-kept secret.

By contrast, several other states have large *free* lending libraries of color film for the asking. And this is regularly advertised in national slicks and news media. Knowing what this state has to offer, it is downright embarrassing for us Louisianians to watch Florida promos, for example, rushed in to every time slot that has to be filled on TV.

Actually, back in 1961, when Jan proposed a series of such films to a Louisiana State agency, first the letter—I should say the buck—was passed on to another agency. The PR representative for the second agency replied: "The department . . . has a film on the state's tourist attractions including Grand Isle which has been in use for about five years. We are currently attempting to raise money to make a new film as this one has become outdated. . . . I am sorry to say, however, that we do not feel that we can make films on any single section of the state. . . . I believe you will be able to see the impracticality of this." Why!!!

However, in that interview last week, Tourism Director Ford also told the press that use of a fine photographic library is one way he plans to promote tourism in Louisiana. So once again Hope rears her battered head.

So coverage of fishing news in sports, tourism and recreation must be stepped up. After 21 years as stringers, Jan and I know well how you outdoor writers get bumped out of sportscasts and off of sports pages. That's why we keep hollering "28 million American's prefer fishing."

Another way in which we are missing the boat is in our woefully inadequate and antiquated laws concerning water pollution—both in fresh and saltwater.

Governor McKeithen, as recently as September 7, called his department heads together and stated that recreation, air and water pollution are some of our biggest problems. I wholeheartedly agree and have been trying to awaken and arouse the public to these dangers for years.

Certain interests—oil, agriculture and industry—are using our rivers, lakes and the Gulf of Mexico as a huge refuse dump working on the theory that the Gulf is so vast that it is not pollutable. This simply is not true. But time does not permit my going into that phase.

Perhaps in the question and answer period we can discuss it. Because what will it profit us to recognize fishing's total asset to the area if we throw it away for want of protection?

## WHAT'S NEWS

BY GAY BATSON  
Chief Announcer, WDSU-TV  
New Orleans, La.

Gentlemen: When I was asked to be a part of this panel to talk with you this morning, I reneged and told Mr. Steve Harmon, Director of Education and Publicity, La. Wildlife and Fisheries, that I was much more expert with a fishing rod, compiling statistics for a Fishing Publication, or even acting as Master of Ceremonies of a beauty pageant.

Taking no for an answer and giving me the subject, "What can Television use from the Wildlife Resource Agency?" I was then in a dilemma.

I will have to digress and first say a few words about "What Radio Did to Promote the Wildlife Resources of Our State."