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## SPORTS

### Looking ahead...

By Luke Clayton

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My column last week focused on some of the highlights of my career as an outdoors writer; I was “looking back” over the past quarter century. Now, with the coming of a brand new year, it’s time to “look ahead.” We Texans are lucky to live in a state with myriad outdoor opportunities. We can hunt mule deer in the mountains of West Texas, catch flounder down on the coast or in some places, enjoy white wing dove shooting that rivals the glory days of the grand Mexico bird hunting lodges. We have a great deal of outdoor opportunities right here at home but it’s still fun to travel to distant destinations in pursuit of fish and game.

This past summer, I journeyed up to the northern reaches of Saskatchewan and enjoyed fishing for northern pike, walleye and Arctic grayling in pristine waters surrounded by wilderness, I’m sure many of you remember reading my accounts of the awesome fishing, scenery and people I encountered on this trip. Shane Owen with the Saskatchewan Department of tourism was instrumental in setting me up with Cree River Lodge, located just a few miles south of the Northwest Territories. Shane wanted my first fishing trip to Saskatchewan to be special and representative of what this big, wild country has to offer. My fishing adventure to the ‘North Country’ provided fodder for many articles this past year. My first fishing trip to Saskatchewan was absolutely amazing, the highlight of a long and adventurous writing career. I am currently working with Shane Owen with the Saskatchewan Department of Tourism, making plans for round two to this outdoor paradise. I’m sure you will be reading more about my experiences right here and as always, I promise to give you enough information to help get you started planning your own trip.



The new year is full of all sorts of adventures. There is much to do in the outdoors, both close to home and at distant destinations. Luke is making plans to return to the far north this summer to experience more of what

Saskatchewan has to offer. Shore lunch was a daily event for five straight days last summer at Cree River Lodge. Can you smell the fish frying? *photo by Luke Clayton*

Closer to home, I'm eagerly awaiting my annual trip on the Sabine River below Longview with guide Seth Vanover for spawning white bass during the annual "run." Seth is watching water levels closely on the Sabine. The really good fishing depends on the river being at normal level or just below normal but presently, thanks to heavy rainfall upstream the past few months, the Sabine is raging. Hopefully a couple of weeks without rain and the river will be closer to normal level and those spawning "Whites" from Toledo Bend will begin their journey upstream.

Snow geese are beginning to show up in the farm country south of Corsicana and a close to home goose hunt with another friend, Rick Hrcir with Family Affair Guide Service, is in the works for later this month. For the past decade or so, many geese have stopped over in this area, feeding on the abundant winter wheat and roosting on the big conservation lakes on adjacent farms. Rick has leased some of these farms and late season goose hunting has been good in past years.

This week, at the Dallas Safari Club Convention in Dallas, I'll be one of the judges for the Rattling Forks Antler Rattling Contest which will be held on the Zeiss Stage at 1:30 January 9. I've worked closely with my friend Larry Weishuhn and Steven Ray, inventor of the Rattling Forks in helping organizing this event. Some of the best antler rattlers in the state will be competing. It will be fun and I'm sure somewhat challenging to choose the winner. If you've never attended a DSC Convention, you should make plans to attend at least one day; it truly is the greatest hunting show on the planet! If you are a "regular" at the convention, I'm betting you have already made plans! For more details, visit [www.biggame.org](http://www.biggame.org).

Another big part of my life that I enjoy very much is outfitting archery elk and bear hunts on a private ranch in northern Colorado, just a few miles from the Wyoming border. For the past six years, my friend Larry Large and I have devoted the month of September to hosting these three, 5 day hunts. We both have been blessed with good health and we're still guiding hunters. I'm in my mid sixties and Larry is a few years older. We have incorporated some "young blood" into our operation to do some of the heavy work that guiding requires. I'm planning on doing more and more work around the camp and less time actual guiding in upcoming years. My body is beginning to tell me that guiding elk hunts is a younger man's game and... I'm listening! It's one thing to hunt elk or bear on your own, quite another to spend a total of 15 days in the woods with clients.

Larry and I began guiding our archery deer hunts in northern Kansas last year. With a ten thousand acre farm under lease just a few miles south of the Nebraska border, we are eagerly awaiting our hunts here next October. There are some monster bucks up in Kansas and the big farm we have leased has several live creeks that provide year around water. Locating deer concentrations is easy here. The crops are planted within a hundred yards or so of the wooded creeks and CRP land. The creek bottoms are deeply rutted with deer trails that I'm sure have been use for many years. I'll be spending a week guiding hunters here and Larry will devote three weeks to these Kansas hunts. Again, we have some "younger blood" to help out!

I'm planning on expanding my radio shows to several new stations this coming year. I'm currently doing the hour long show that airs on many radio stations, mostly in Texas with a spill over to Oklahoma and Louisiana. I also do a couple of other outdoor shows for public

radio each week, one for KETR in Commerce and one for High Plains Public Radio that airs from Nebraska to Texas.

Back in the mid nineties, I wrote my first book while holding down my “day” job. I worked with a big publishing company and after the project was completed, I swore I would never write another. This past year my new book, “Kill to Grill, the Ultimate guide to wild hog hunting... and cooking” was published. I would say “self published” but a good friend who is also an excellent book builder/publisher took on the task of turning my words into book form. I have never enjoyed a writing project more! I’m contemplating beginning work on another book about the outdoors this spring but for now, the book is just some thoughts rattling around in my head!

If all this sounds to you as though “Ole Luke” is working himself to a frazzle, not to worry. Rest assured I enjoy every minute of what I do, and it never seems like work to me. There are no finer people in the world than those that love the outdoors, whether it be hunters, fishermen or “camera bugs,” those that do their hunting with a camera and long lens!

Come join me for a book signing Saturday, January 23 in Emory, Texas at Hootens Hardward. I’ll be there from ten am. until two pm. I would enjoy hearing your stories about the outdoors. For more information, drop me an email through [www.catfishradio.com](http://www.catfishradio.com) you will see an icon at the top of the home page, “email Luke”.

Listen to Outdoors with Luke Clayton on radio stations from Nebraska to Texas on weekends or anytime via the internet at [www.catfishradio.com](http://www.catfishradio.com).

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