

Border Lakes Fuel Bass Tackle Boom

Lake Amistad

- Bassmaster Elite Series angler Todd Faircloth had a magical day here in 2008 that propelled him to his second Elite Series win.
- Plenty of offshore cover and structure makes this lake a bass fisherman's dream.
- Whether your anglers drag a Carolina rig, sling crankbaits or chunk big spinnerbaits, this is the spot where the next fish can be the catch of a lifetime.

Falcon Lake

- This is the location where Bassmaster Elite Series angler Paul Elias broke the BASS four-day, five-fish tournament record with a whopping 132 pounds, 8 ounces in 2008.
- The lake has quickly become one of the hottest big bass fisheries in the country.
- The bass here love big baits, including crankbaits and worms, so make sure to have plenty in stock.

■ **Gene Larew**
12-inch El Salto Grande

■ **Berkley**
10-inch Power Worm

■ **Owner**
TwistLock

■ **Gary Yamamoto**
Senko

■ **Yum**
Dinger

■ **Gene Larew**
Biffle-O Lizard

■ **Silver Thread**
Fluorocarbon

■ **PowerPro**
Braid



■ **Revenge Lures**
Heavy Duty Spinnerbait

■ **Zoom**
10 1/2-inch Ole Monster

■ **Gene Larew**
8-inch Biffle-O Lizard,
6-inch HooDaddy

■ **Strike King**
King Shad

■ **Luhr Jensen**
Hot Lips Express



■ **Talon Lures**
Weedless Football Jig

■ **Norman Lures**
DD22

The big bass being taken from lakes Amistad and Falcon have area retailers excited.

BY DARL BLACK

If ever there was a doubt that bass fishing tournaments move the retail needle, the tackle flying off the shelves at retailers located near lakes Falcon and Amistad are proof. Since the Bassmaster Elite Series tournaments were held on these two Texas lakes last year, retailers have basked in the glow of staggering sales of gear for big bass.

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The World's Largest Sportfishing Trade Show Heads to Orlando

July 15–17, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida

Given the challenges in the global economy, making smart choices about how and where to do business is more important than ever. The International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST), the world's largest sportfishing trade show, is being held at the Orange County Convention Center, July 15–17, in Orlando, Fla.

From its Orlando location, ICAST 2009 will provide unparalleled networking and sales opportunities. ICAST truly is "where sportfishing means business."

From buyers to media to exhibitors, ICAST annually attracts more than 7,000 members of the international sportfishing community to conduct business, network with members of the sportfishing industry and see all the latest innovations in gear and accessories.



The Sportfishing Market

One in every 10 dollars spent in the United States on fishing is spent in Florida. Even more impressive is the fact that 43 percent of anglers in the United States call the southeast region home. Overall, nearly \$20 billion in fishing retail sales are realized annually in the southeastern market. In fact, more than half of the United States sportfishing dollars are spent east of the Mississippi River.

ICAST and MAATS

In 2009, ICAST will once again co-locate with the Marine Aftermarket Accessories Trade Show (MAATS), produced by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA). The combination of these two shows

Why you should attend ICAST

ICAST attendees receive more than just the ability to walk the show floor. As an ICAST attendee you will be part of the world's largest sportfishing trade show, enabling you to network and build your business at the show.

- See manufacturers complete product lines: ICAST is the only sportfishing trade show where all major manufacturers display their entire product lines.
- Visit the New Product Showcase to preview the latest fishing gear and accessories before they are unveiled next season.
- Participate in free seminars with industry leaders that will help you grow your business.
- Take advantage of ICAST-only specials that hundreds of exhibitors offer.
- Enter raffles for cash and other prizes by writing orders at ICAST.
- Build relationships with industry leaders and reconnect with your business partners.
- Learn how you can contribute to ensuring the success of the sportfishing industry for future generations of anglers.
- Network with new exhibitors and attendees. As ICAST will be located in the heart of the powerful Southeastern sportfishing

market, there will be many new exhibitors and attendees with whom you can network.

■ Speak to the leaders in our industry, many of whom will be able to answer your questions and give you advice on how your product can be successful in the market place.

■ Take part in the New Product Showcase Preview Reception. Buyers and Media-editorial can vote for the Best of Show winners and be entered to win cash and other prizes just for voting.

■ Walk two show floors with your ICAST badge. For the second consecutive year, ICAST will co-locate with the Marine Aftermarket Accessories Trade Show.

■ Attend the Industry Breakfast where ASA President and CEO Mike Nussman will give his state of the industry message.

■ Visit with exhibitor's during the Exhibitor's Social Hour on the show floor.

will provide access to more of the industry's hottest products and companies. In 2008, ICAST and MAATS combined to attract nearly 10,000 attendees.

ICAST Show Hours

Wednesday, July 15
9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 16
8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, July 17
8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Register Now!

Whether you're an exhibitor or an attendee, all the information you need about ICAST can be found on the new ICAST Web site at www.ICASTfishing.org.

Register now for ICAST 2009!

Contact Information

To obtain more information about ICAST 2009, please contact us at icast@asafishing.org or call 703.519.9691, or visit us online at www.ICASTfishing.org. ■



"A new big bass boom? Heck, it has been going on here at Falcon forever. But the cat is out of the bag now," says James Bendele, owner of Falcon Lake Tackle. "The BASS event on Falcon, with all the national exposure, was just about a year ago.

"The limelight has not changed what we sell. We've always specialized in hefty tackle for big bass. However, the demand for big worms and heavy spinnerbaits is up because the number of visiting anglers has increased. Over the Christmas holidays, I had people from more than 20 different states in the store."

Big-body soft plastics and spinnerbaits are king on Falcon.

He lists Zoom's 10 1/2-inch Ole Monster Worm and 6-inch Brush Hog, along with Gene Larew's 6-inch HooDaddy and 8-inch Biffle-O Lizard, as the top selling plastics.

When it comes to spinnerbaits, however, you won't find any of the usual suspects making the grade.

"We don't sell many national brand spinnerbaits. Anglers here need tougher-than-average models," says Bendele. "One of the local favorites is Joe Baby Spinnerbaits, which are made right here in Zapata. Another one is S.O.B. Fishing Products out of San Antonio. Slow rolling is the productive technique, with sizes ranging from 3/4 ounce to 1 1/2 ounce."

Down the street at Robert's Fish N' Tackle, you hear the same story: beefy spinnerbaits.

"You've got to stock spinnerbaits that stand up to the abuse of Falcon's 6-, 7-, 8- and 9-pounders without breaking," says owner Robert Amaya. "Our top three heavy-wire strong-hook baits are from S.O.B., Talon and Revenge."

He says flipping jigs, football jigs and grass jigs from Talon, Oldham and Revenge are also quite popular.

Many of the anglers in the area are dressing the jigs with Strike King's Rage Tail Craw.

After Paul Elias' record-breaking win on Falcon in 2008, when he used a Mann's 20+ crankbait to crush the field, it makes sense that crankbaits would be the hottest sellers at local retailers.

The top three cranks in the area are the Norman DD22, 3/4-ounce Hot Lips Express and, of course, Mann's 20+.

If you are looking for a shallow runner, Strike King's King Shad is the deal, according to Bendele.

Retailers located near Lake Amistad have been no less busy with big-bass tackle sales.

At Patch's Enterprises, there have long been two schools of thought on fishing the impoundment.

"With water clarity here being much greater than on Falcon, about 50 percent of the locals feel you should use normal-size bass baits — our version of finesse. The other 50 percent say to go with big baits for big bass," says owner Patch Mason.

»» "The hottest ticket is swimbaits ... Storm WildEye Swim Shads and assorted Optimum swimbaits are the top sellers."

— Patch Mason



Mason says the 10-inch Berkley Power Worm and Gene Larew's 12-inch El Salto Grande battle for first place in worm sales, followed closely by the 8-inch lizards from Gene Larew and Zoom.

The top soft plastic hook is the Owner TwistLock, which he stocks in sizes up to 11/0.

Oldham makes the most popular jig at the store. And in the line aisles, the mainstays are 20- or 25-pound-test Silver Thread Fluorocarbon for plastics, and 65- or 85-pound-test PowerPro Braid for jigs.

"But the hottest ticket is swimbaits," continues Mason. He says the Storm WildEye Swim Shads and assorted Optimum swimbaits are the top sellers.

Amistad Marine owner Jim Criswell concurs on the swimbait mania.

He stocks a number of brands and sizes to match the consumer's pocketbook, from the affordable Yum Money Minnows to hard-bodied swimbaits from Reaction Strike and Matt Lures.

Criswell says 7-inch stickworms, such as the Gary Yamamoto Senko and Yum Dinger, remain staples on Amistad.

In rods and reels, several brands kept showing up as top sellers at local retailers. At Patch's Enterprises, the All Star Big Boy series rods are the hottest sticks. And most retailers claim the Shimano Curado and Abu Garcia Revo are the most sought-after reels.

Lure manufacturers, too, say the Falcon and Amistad boon has been a one-two punch for sales.

"Our sales have been impacted positively by the big bass press recently," explains Bill Dee of S.O.B. Fishing Products. "Tilapia is the main forage for bass at Falcon Lake, and it also contributes to the forage base at Amistad. So we created a 3/4-ounce spinnerbait in a tilapia pattern. Fishermen and fish went crazy for it. The next thing I know, we are doing nothing but making tilapia spinnerbaits to keep up with the demand at Falcon Lake Tackle."

Talon Series Custom Lures owner Andrea Sanders agrees.

"Is there an increase in demand for our products on the border lakes? Oh gosh, yes!" she says. "We even introduced a new heavy-duty spinnerbait, the Shibui. It's made with a special wire that is a cross between stainless steel and titanium. It provides awesome vibrations and is superstrong."