



By Bill Kinney, CCA Texas
STAR Tournament Director

A STAR Like No Other

Important news on changes to the 2021 Texas STAR Tournament

It is an exciting time for CCA Texas' STAR Tournament as we celebrate its 32nd successful year. In response to the February 2021 freeze and in an effort to help our state's marine resources recover as quickly as possible, the volunteer and staff leaders of the tournament have created the most exciting, no-take inshore format ever. We are proud to launch a new Catch-Clip-Release format on schedule by Memorial Day weekend with more prizes than ever.

Led by the most durable, rod-breaking fish in Texas inshore waters, redfish take center stage this year. As the only fish in play for the inshore division, we knew we needed to increase the number of fish we tag and release. Rather than tagging 60 reds, we decided to double it. And then we thought about it some more and decided to triple it to 180 tagged redfish swimming the Texas coast.

Statistically, there could be a tagged redfish released about the equivalent of every three miles - all along 600 miles of Texas shoreline. Thanks to the vision and hard work of our incredible volunteers, a brand-new STAR Tournament will be ready to roll this summer along the Texas coast.

What that means for CCA members who have registered for the tournament is that your chances of catching a tagged redfish have tripled, and we anticipate a lot of incredible and inspiring stories.

STAR-tagged redfish will have one of three different colored tags, all corresponding to different prizes. Definitely check out what the color scheme means by visiting our [PRIZES](#) page, and perhaps most important of all, check out the [NEW RULES](#) that require mandatory release of tagged reds, no matter the condition.

Anglers MUST clip as much of the tag as they can and release the fish back into the water to be eligible to claim a prize.

Our catch records show many of these fish are caught within a week to 10 days of their release. The CCA Release Teams (who are disqualified from participating in the tournament) typically wait to release the fish until one to four days before STAR kicks off. However, that is a logistical impossibility this year with so many tagged fish. To make this work, STAR-tagged redfish will begin to be released 12 days before the tournament officially starts. Any 2021 STAR-tagged redfish caught before 6:00 a.m., Saturday May 29 is not eligible for prizes. If you catch one before the tournament begins, we ask that it be carefully released where it was caught. The best news is that you know its recent location and are not required to let any of your friends know where. It is very likely that this situation will occur a number of times before the tournament officially starts and for anyone tempted to hold onto that fish for a couple of days, we'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that all STAR winners are required to take a polygraph.

We are really excited about the new format and all the opportunities for anglers to win. We appreciate all of our members and are looking forward to an epic STAR this summer. Good luck and good fishing!

The Tagged Redfish Are
Coming....Are You Ready?



The CCA Texas 2021 STAR
Tournament kicks off May 29!

CLICK HERE & REGISTER TODAY

Must be a CCA member and registered in the tournament to win.



By Dylan Sassman, CCA Texas STAR
Tournament Assistant Director

STAR Tournament Tactics

Tips to improve your odds of finding a tagged redfish

By now you have probably had some time to think about this year's greatly expanded STAR Tagged Redfish format. While most years we have our hands full catching, tagging and distributing 60 tagged redfish from South Padre Island to Sabine Lake, this year's goal of at least 180 tagged redfish with three different tag colors is an even larger task. Thankfully our resourceful group of volunteers is up for the task although it will change how we distribute these prize-packing fish.

Typically, our release spots don't change too much from year to year, but it can be a little difficult to fit 30, versus 10, redfish on a boat to distribute. Due to this, our tagged redfish haulers will be looking for ways to lighten their load going down the road more than ever. While we have always had a fair number of tagged redfish claims come from anglers fishing spots such as jetties, beachfront, or other areas that can be accessed without a boat (over 50 percent in 2019 alone), the chances have never been higher that someone standing on solid ground will be catching, clipping and releasing a prize-winning fish.

Redfish are known for the broad diversity of baits and techniques that they respond to. From a piece of cut mullet along a jetty or channel to a topwater on a shallow grass flat, redfish are often one of the least discriminating of game species. To capture both flexibility in presentation style while appealing to their sense of smell, it is hard not to choose a scented soft plastic like a Gulp! Alive! Saltwater Jerk Shad or Gulp! Saltwater Shrimp on a jig head.

Perhaps the best tip to all land-based anglers would be to identify areas that someone pulling a trailer would be able to access. Maybe even look for tire tracks from a tandem axle trailer...



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One Expert - One Redfish Bait

An ongoing series asking guides, scientists, outdoor writers and other experts what one bait they would use to catch a tagged redfish during the STAR Tournament.

By Pat Murray, CCA National President



There is nothing that builds an angler's confidence like getting a lure recommendation from a true expert. Since childhood, looking into the lure box of an acclaimed guide, outdoor writer or marine biologist always felt like a treasured glimpse of a magician's trick box. Surely those lures would make me a better angler....surely.

Through various articles and blogs through the years, I have queried a diverse group of anglers what their best bait would be if they could only fish one lure. The answers are incredibly useful, but the best part is the almost existential decision loop it puts them in. It is actually tortuous to some, as though you are asking them what finger they'd keep if it would be the only one. The answers are often labored and always troubled, but they begrudgingly give you their desert island pick.

With the launch of the Texas STAR Tournament, I have asked several experts to share the single bait they would use if they were fishing for a tagged redfish. I ran my normal path of targeting guides, marine scientists and outdoor writers and jumped from upper coast to lower to get a broad perspective. I recently asked **longtime, acclaimed Rockport-area guide Capt. Brian Holden** what one bait he would use if he was fishing for a tagged redfish. Without pause, he would choose a **Coastal Marsh custom Corky Devil in High Cotton pattern**. I would describe the "high cotton" color pattern, but there is just too much going on there to capture in the written word. For the unacquainted, these custom painted lures have become increasingly popular through recent years. The premise in this case is a Paul Brown's Devil Suspending Twitchbait that has been custom painted and is available through the Coastal Marsh website. Holden noted that its uniquely slow sink enables him to almost suspend the bait, and he has found it to be incredibly effective through this spring and early summer.

So next time you are hitting your favorite coastal grass flat in hopes of winning the clip-claim-and-release Texas STAR Tournament, you might want to invest in a custom bait...or ten.

STAR
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