

shop complaining about the "idiots" he was taking fishing. You guessed it- he was our guide.

At that point, we began exploring all the things we should have done to keep the nightmare trip from ever happening.

A few of the suggestions should make your next guided trip more enjoyable:

Before you leave the dock, talk with the guide about the nature of the group. If you're relatively inexperienced; tell him.

If your guide doesn't offer some opening remarks that include a basic safety brief, and short tour of the boat - including dry storage areas where you can store your gear and where the water and/or snacks are located- you can bet he's not going to be much more helpful once you're underway.

Talk about your expectations for the charter -and ask questions.

Ask if he normally fishes when he takes a group out. If he does, make it clear that his primary job - on this trip - is to guide, instruct and help your group catch fish, not demonstrate his fishing skills. If he objects, remind him you are paying him to guide, not to fish.

If he has a problem with that, let him go fishing - alone. Get another guide.

Ask about the most popular game fish in the area. If you want to fish for something other than the local preference, make certain you communicate that clearly.

If you're after redfish and the local preference is spotted trout, make it clear to the guide that redfish are the primary target- but the other fish would cool as well.

Why? Because the bites might be entirely different. Redfish hit baits hard; spotted trout are a much more subtle bite.

If you're looking for an easy hookup and brisk fight, you're looking for redfish. Redfish might be the choice that turns a frustrating trip into an enjoyable one. If you



New Mexico fisherman Kirby Babb loves to come to Oak Creek Lake. He caught this beautiful 20 pound catfish on August 13, 2011. He is also shown with two of the sixteen crappie he pulled in.

happen to catch trout, they're just a bonus. We might call it fishing, but when you're paying for a charter, "catching" is the ultimate goal.

If your guide puts you on schools of fish and you can't catch them, he should offer suggestions and encouragement. Suggestions and encouragement do not mean pointing at a spot somewhere out on the water and screaming, "dang it, throw it right there, right now."

This should be the guide's goal: a happy client.

A "guide" is supposed to be the knowledge-filled expert that gets you to your goal - and makes the trip enjoyable.

If your instincts tell you that won't be the case with a particular guide, either get another one or don't go.

It's your money - and making it enjoyable is, ultimately, the guide's job.

TPWD Game Warden Field Notes

The following items are compiled from recent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department law enforcement reports.

Dad joins kids on illegal hunt: Zapata County Game

Wardens Stevan Ramos and Carson Wardlow were patrolling in San Ygnacio on Aug. 18 when they saw a pickup truck stop a couple of blocks in front of them. Warden Wardlow stopped his truck when he saw what appeared to be a gun barrel sticking out of the passenger-side window. As the wardens watched, the passenger shot twice, and the driver got out to retrieve a white-winged dove from the bushes just off the road. The wardens quickly made contact and found that the passenger and driver were both juveniles. Their father was also in the vehicle. One citation was issued for hunting in a closed season and a warning issued for using illegal means and methods. Civil restitution was filed for one white-winged dove.



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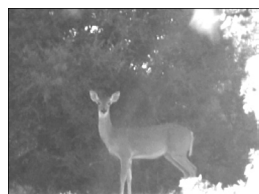
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