

Farmers, ranchers urged to sign up for CFAP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) provides much-needed financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline or who had losses due to market supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19 and face additional significant market costs.

The program, announced by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue in mid-April, is currently accepting applications, and Coke County Farm Bureau urges eligible farmers and ranchers to apply.

“Our farmers and ranchers are hurting right now,” Coke County Farm Bureau President John Ross Copeland said. “The pandemic has damaged the agricultural economy, and without some assistance, some of our food growers may be out of business forever.”

How to apply

Farmers and ranchers should apply through their local Farm Service Agency Service (FSA) office. FSA is working with farmers and ranchers by phone and using email and online tools to process applications. Call the FSA county office to schedule

an appointment.

Applications can be submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing, according to USDA.

Farmers and ranchers self-certify when applying for CFAP, FSA said. Documentation is not submitted with the application. Additional documentation to support the certification of eligible commodities may be requested later, however.

Other materials may be necessary. Please check with FSA for further details.

For more information on CFAP, visit <http://farmers.gov/cfap>.

A CFAP Call Center is available for farmers and ranchers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP application process. The number to call to speak directly with a USDA employee is 877-508-8364.

“Don’t wait to sign up for CFAP,” John Ross said. “We appreciate the amount of funding made available, but it’s not going to be enough to go around, so we are urging eligible Texas farmers and ranchers to get their applications in as soon as possible.”

Applications are due on August 28.

waters. It will also take advantage of what the catfish populations in those locations can provide based on fish growth rates and abundance.”

Terre added, “We recognize that limiting the number of catfish 20 inches or longer that could be harvested will be a new idea to many anglers. Impacts from that change will be low as we know from our angler harvest data that few anglers harvest more than 10 catfish over 20 inches on any given trip. We believe this new statewide

regulation will be well suited for many water bodies and provide the type of fishing that the majority of anglers want.”

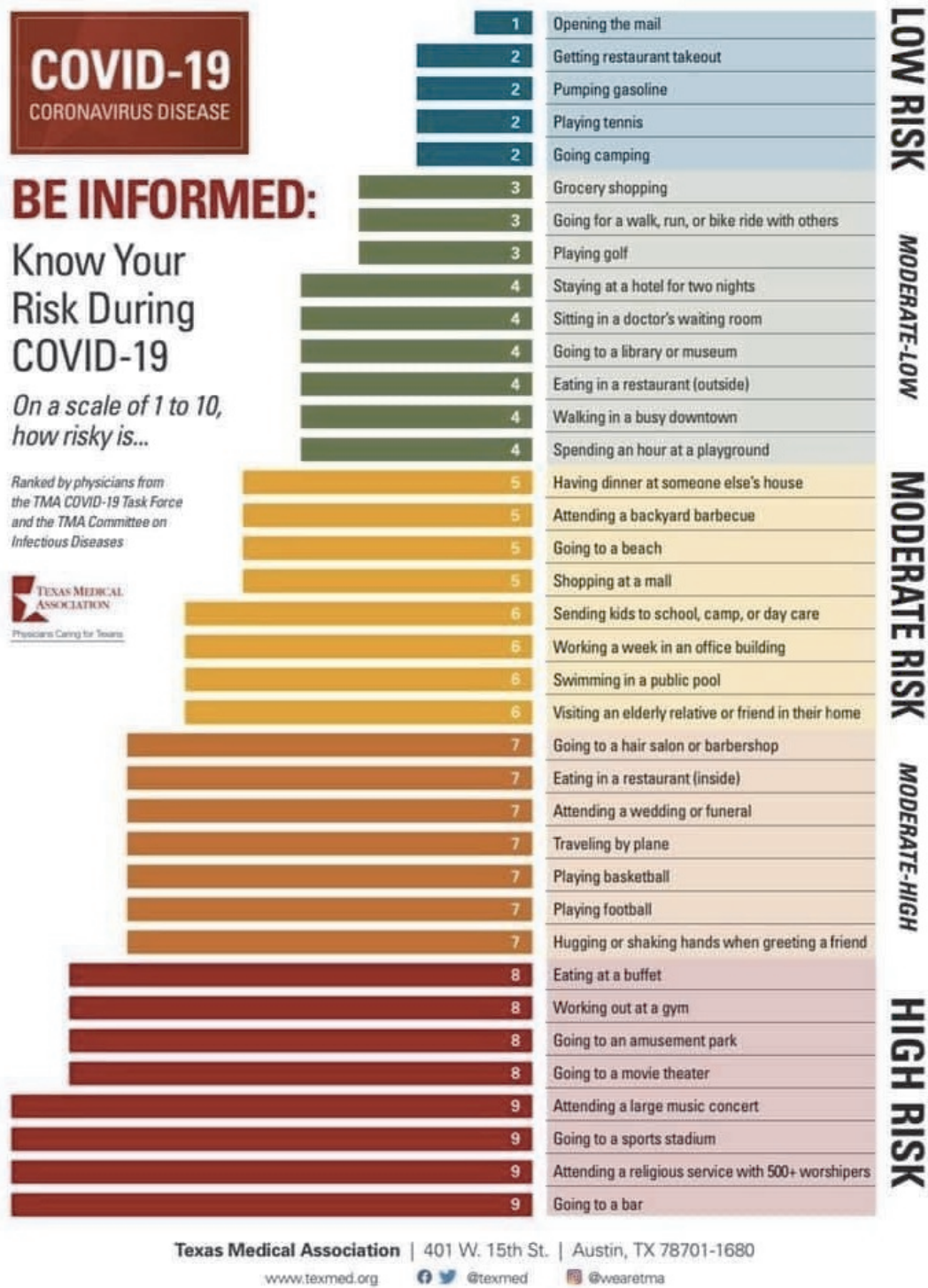
The next potential option focuses on catfish populations where reproduction and survival of fingerling catfish is low. Some of these populations also experience high angler harvest. The regulations being considered for these waters are a 14-inch minimum length limit and a 15-fish daily bag that combines both species. “This is applicable to only a few reservoirs and rivers,” said

John Tibbs, TPWD Statewide Catfish Management

Coordinator. “Our biologists’ assessment is that there are about five percent of reservoirs where this might be needed.”

Next there are some large reservoirs where harvest of catfish by jugline and trotline fishing is popular. For these reservoirs (about five percent of all reservoirs), the harvest regulations would be somewhat similar to the potential new statewide regulations.

(Continued on next page)



TPWD seeks public input on catfish regulations

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is requesting feedback from the public on a new suite of potential harvest regulation options for blue and channel catfish. The goal is to obtain input from anglers on these options before proposing any changes to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission early next year.

“A team of TPWD fisheries biologists have worked for the past two years to review our current catfish regulations with the goals of continuing to provide good angling, meeting current angler needs, and reducing the number of regulations,” said Dave Terre, TPWD’s Fish Management Chief. “Obtaining feedback and making sure any new regulation options are acceptable to anglers is an important step in these ongoing efforts.”

These potential options were recently presented in webinars to a group of catfish anglers, fishing guides, and outdoor writers to discuss and get their input (see link to recording of webinar at end of the release).

The first option would modify the current statewide regulations for blue and channel catfish of a 12-inch minimum length limit and a 25-fish daily bag limit that combines both species. The potential new statewide regulation would remove the minimum length limit (fish of any length could be harvested) and retain the 25-fish daily bag. However, of the 25 blue or channel catfish that could be harvested per day, anglers would be limited to

harvesting no more than 10 fish that measure 20 inches or longer.

Based on population data collected by biologists, this statewide regulation would apply to about 80 percent of reservoirs and rivers. Catfish populations in these waters are generally characterized by average growth and abundance with some of these waters producing some large fish for anglers to catch.

“We know from our statewide catfish survey that most catfish anglers prefer catching a bunch of catfish to eat,” said Dave Terre. “This regulation addresses what those anglers want and can be used on many of our state’s

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