

preparation and processing steps that occurred in the United States upon which the claim is made.

USDA encourages stakeholders, both domestic and international, to comment on the proposed rule. The proposed rule will be open for public comment for 60 days after publishing in the Federal Register.

Public comments can be submitted at regulations.gov.

ShareLunker Program Produces Third Legacy Class Entry in Four Days

O.H. Ivie was back at it again on Monday with its third Legacy Class fish submitted by an angler in four days. Mechelda Criswell of Hobbs, New Mexico, landed her catch of a lifetime with 14.08-pound ShareLunker 646. Criswell is the first female angler of the 2023 Toyota ShareLunker collection season to reel in a Legacy Class Lunker.

This also marks the second year in a row that a female angler donated their fish to the ShareLunker program. Kellie Renfro of Lufkin was the first since 2018 to catch a Legacy Class Lunker when she boated 13.27-pound ShareLunker 628 on March 10, 2022, at Lake Nacogdoches.

Criswell's catch boosted O.H. Ivie's season total to 12, matching the lakes' output from the 2021 and 2022 seasons. Lake Alan Henry and Nacogdoches are the other two waterbodies with Legacy Class entries this year. Their contributions put the overall tally at 14 heading into the final month of the collection season.

It has been great to see the momentum of Legacy Lunkers continue through the month of February," said Natalie Goldstroh, Toyota ShareLunker program coordinator. "It has been

impressive to see 12 Legacy Class Lunkers produced from O.H. Ivie in just two months. It will be exciting to see how many are produced during the final month of the collection period."

Criswell used to fish offshore in Cabo San Lucas but has only had her own bass boat for three years. She began using her husband's 16-foot Jon boat to troll Oak Creek Reservoir for fish a few years ago where they own some property.

"I just love and have been fascinated with fishing my whole life," said Criswell. "I caught white bass, catfish and crappie and then I started catching largemouth bass. I began getting more interested in largemouth bass, and before I knew it I was standing in the boat drifting and casting for bass. Bob Dennis was my boat mechanic and he really taught me how to bass fish. Four years ago, on my birthday he gave me some spinner baits and told me to learn how to use a bait caster. Once I did, he took me fishing and taught me 'old school' — how to read the land, how to visualize — and I started catching bass, so I went and got a bass boat."

Criswell drives to Texas every Friday to fish for the weekend. Last weekend she participated in her first bass tournament and won it, along with catching the biggest bass of the tournament. Criswell read about the ShareLunker program last year and made a goal to be a part of it. Fast-forward to Monday when her dream of catching a ShareLunker became a reality.

"I went out fishing with Brady Stanford, and the wind was horrible to start out," said Criswell. "We had to fish according to the weather, so I was using a deep dive crankbait and caught a seven-pound fish. There were some other big ones, and I tried a lot of different things, but they just wouldn't react."

Criswell said they weren't

ready to give up, so they went back to a few spots.

"I was using an A-rig and initially threw at and missed the fish, who was by herself in 15–20 feet of water," said Criswell. "I let Brady give it a try and the fish didn't take his bait either. However, I cast again and she attacked it. I did everything in my power not to scream with excitement."

Once the fish was in the boat, Criswell made the call to the ShareLunker program and headed to Concho to get the official weight for entry into the program.

"My experience with the program was phenomenal," said Criswell. "I learned a lot from Brady — and, of course, the TPWD staff — on how to take care of the fish. TPWD does an excellent job; I know the fish is going to 'spa heaven.' It was really neat to see the whole process firsthand. I hope this encourages anybody to go out and try to chase their dream because my goal last year was to catch a ShareLunker and I did it. I've had wonderful support from many people and my husband on the journey. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this."

Since January 2021, O.H. Ivie has been on an unprecedented run, thanks to a combined total of 36 Legacy fish. ShareLunker 644 has been determined to be a recapture from previous seasons; some genetics data are still being analyzed.

During the first three months of the season (January through March), anglers who reel in a 13-plus pound bass can loan it to TPWD for the ShareLunker selective breeding and stocking program. These anglers can call the ShareLunker hotline at (903) 681-0550 to report their catch 24/7 through March 31.

Anglers who catch and donate a 13-plus pound Lunker earn Legacy Class status, a catch kit filled with merchandise, a 13-



Service! Captain Larry Martin was recognized recently by the Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Department for his 34 years of continued service and dedication to the department.

plus pound Legacy decal for their vehicle or boat, VIP access to the Toyota ShareLunker Annual Awards event and a high-quality replica mount of their Lunker from Lake Fork Taxidermy. These anglers will also receive entries into two separate contests — a Legacy Class drawing and the year-end Grand Prize drawing. First place in either wins a \$5,000 Bass Pro Shops shopping spree and a resident (or non-resident) annual fishing license.

The year-round Toyota ShareLunker program offers four levels of participation for catching bass over eight pounds

or 24 inches in Texas. In addition to Legacy Class (13-plus pounds between January and March), ShareLunker entry classes include the Lunker Class (8-plus pounds), Elite Class (10-plus pounds), and Legend Class (13-plus pounds from April to December).

Anglers who enter data for any Lunker they catch (greater than eight pounds or 24 inches) during the calendar year 2023 also receive a catch kit, a decal for their vehicle or boat and an entry into the year-end Grand Prize drawing to win a \$5,000 Bass Pro Shops shopping spree and annual fishing license.

(Continued on page 8)

Pick Up Your Issue!



- Bronte - Shirley's Place & Bronte Supermarket**
- Robert Lee - Coke County Feed & Ranch Supply**
- Blackwell - Jerry's Tool Shed**

Email your news or pictures to ObserverEnterprise@gmail.com or call/text to 325-277-9210.

Drop boxes also available at Shirley's in Bronte and Coke County Feed in Robert Lee.

WHERE your needs matter!

Yes, right here! We are here to assist you with your financial assets and show you how our banking services can work for you. Come by and talk to us about saving. Certificates of Deposit, loans, and much more. You'll be glad you did!

For your future, we're your bank!



Robert Lee State Bank

621 Austin Street Robert Lee, Texas

453-2545

MEMBER FDIC



IT'S OUR PLEASURE TO SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY!