

people and regular places. Striving to rise to the occasion, for family and community, will make both us and our places better as a result.

Next week: Larry McMurtry and the accidents of mythology.

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Ivie churns out 15th Legacy Lunker

O.H. Ivie Lake's historic run of Legacy Class Lunkers charged forward on Saturday with another massive largemouth bass. Kevin Winchester of Ballinger reeled in 13.08-pound ShareLunker 650, giving the lake its 15th Legacy Class fish of the 2023 Toyota ShareLunker collection season. Winchester's catch was also the 18th overall Legacy Lunker that anglers across the nation have landed in Texas this season.

Since January 2021, O.H. Ivie has been on an unprecedented run, thanks to a combined total of 39 Legacy fish. The lake produced 12 Legacy fish in both the 2021 and 2022 collection seasons and shot past that total with a record of 15 and counting in 2023. The current three-year run of Legacy Lunkers at O.H. Ivie has helped make it a destination lake for anglers across the nation and the world. Anglers from seven states (including Texas) have etched their name into the program record books during this year alone.

"The run of Legacy Class ShareLunkers continued strong from February into March and O.H. Ivie continues to attract anglers and tournaments to this reservoir," said Natalie

Goldstroh, Toyota ShareLunker program coordinator. "This reservoir has become a must-fish location for many anglers."

Unlike several anglers this year, Winchester didn't have to travel far — living just down the road in Ballinger — to land his catch of a lifetime. He was competing in a tournament on Saturday and had a tough start. Winchester was teamed up with his brother, who was having success catching fish, and he switched to the same bait.

"I finally started catching fish and about 30 minutes before I caught the ShareLunker, I lost one that was just as big and maybe bigger," said Winchester. "I decided to throw to another spot and caught the ShareLunker in about three feet of water. I saw a big swirl and a bunch of mud come up, but I didn't know for sure what I had. About 20-feet from the boat, she finally came up and I knew it was a bass. We got her in the net and put her in the livewell."

The catch was a personal best for Winchester, who previously boasted a 12.98-pounder at O.H. Ivie in May of 2009. His long-time goal of landing a Legacy Class Lunker was fulfilled on Saturday along with a second-place finish and big fish accolades in the tournament.

"The experience with the ShareLunker program was amazing," said Winchester. "The process of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) staff coming to pick up the fish and how they cared for it was excellent."

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.



Poster Contest! Peyton Cline (left) and Seeley Maddox recently represented Coke County in the local conservation poster contest. Seeley placed first with Peyton following in second. Seeley also placed first at area and will be moving on to the next round of competition.

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

Once a Lunker is reeled in, anglers need to enter the catch data on the Toyota ShareLunker mobile app — available for free from the Apple App Store and Google Play — or on the Toyota ShareLunker online app at TexasSharelunker.com.

In addition to basic catch information, anglers can also provide a DNA scale sample from their Lunker bass to TPWD researchers for genetic analysis.

A new procedure is in effect for the 2023 season. Legend Class ShareLunkers no longer need to be weighed on a certified scale for entry. Anglers must include a photo of their Lunker on a digital scale to qualify for Legend Class.

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