

# LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

## 2006

### OUTFITTERS

## Like plenty of bird action? Well, join the club

Thunderbird Hunting Club is located 80 miles southwest of Houston as the waterfowl fly.

And plenty of them do at the private hunting property near the coastal town of Palacios on Matagorda Bay.

The club is the "doorway to the outdoors" for dyed-in-the-wool waterfowlers.

Club owners Todd Steele and Paul McDonald put a hunter's success at the top of their list of goals in making the business successful — and it's working.

"We want to provide a good outdoor experience," Steele said.

And one of the major reasons Steele and McDonald have made the venture fly is they know how to handle the pressure.

"When the hunting pressure goes up, the hunting quality goes down," Steele said.

The club is unlike an uncontrolled, unmanaged private lease "where there may be a fabulous couple of weeks, but after that it drops off," McDonald said.

Thunderbird operates under a unique formula that spreads the hunting pressure around to where there always will be some ponds with plenty of bird action.

"We make adjustments on how to hunt the property," McDonald said. "We may hunt ponds 1, 2 and 3 today and 4, 5 and 6 tomorrow."

This formula makes sure there is "quality, consistent hunting" at all times.

And don't worry about hauling along decoys. All of the club's blinds have decoys.

And no matter how long one may have been a member, "we show zero partiality"



**BIRDFEST:** Thunderbird Hunting Club co-owner Paul McDonald, second from the right, makes sure club members get what they came for — "a good outdoor experience."

to where the hunters are heading out that day to bag some waterfowl.

Club member draw cards to determine what area they hunt that outing. "Like last week we had a party of 11 and the one who drew the ace of spades got first choice," Steele said.

"The formula for our success is: provide good habitat, limit the number of members, work hard and rest the waterfowl," he

said.

Waterfowl hunting is the "bread and butter" of the business, but the club has added amenities to a membership.

A day's outing can consist of some waterfowl hunting in the morning and fishing in the afternoon. Those hunters who quickly reach their bird limit before lunchtime have the opportunity to head to Matagorda Bay with guide Ray Sexton and do some

wade-fishing. "He's probably one of the best teachers I have seen," McDonald said of Sexton.

The club offer members a weekly hunting report of "what was done on the property," the week before, McDonald said.

Outdoor adventures at Thunderbird are year-round.

Membership also includes housing at the lodge, which has 24 bunks, satellite TV, full cooking facilities, barbecue grills, bird-cleaning facilities and high tower skeet shooting.

Having their own day jobs, the owners do not depend on the the club for their livelihood, but operate the club for the pleasure of enjoying the outdoors.

Thunderbird was founded in 1986 and "we've got people who have hunted with us ever since," McDonald said, pointing out camaraderie plays a big role in the club's success.

If one decides to become a member — one has to be ready to handle the success of Thunderbird's great outdoors adventure.

Other activities include;

Dove Hunting

Guided Quail Hunting

Freshwater Fishing

Guided Saltwater Fishing

Guided Hog Hunting

Deer & Hog Hunting on Leases

Guided Alligator Hunts

Guided Off-Season Photography

Skeet Shooting

Off-Season Dog Training Grounds