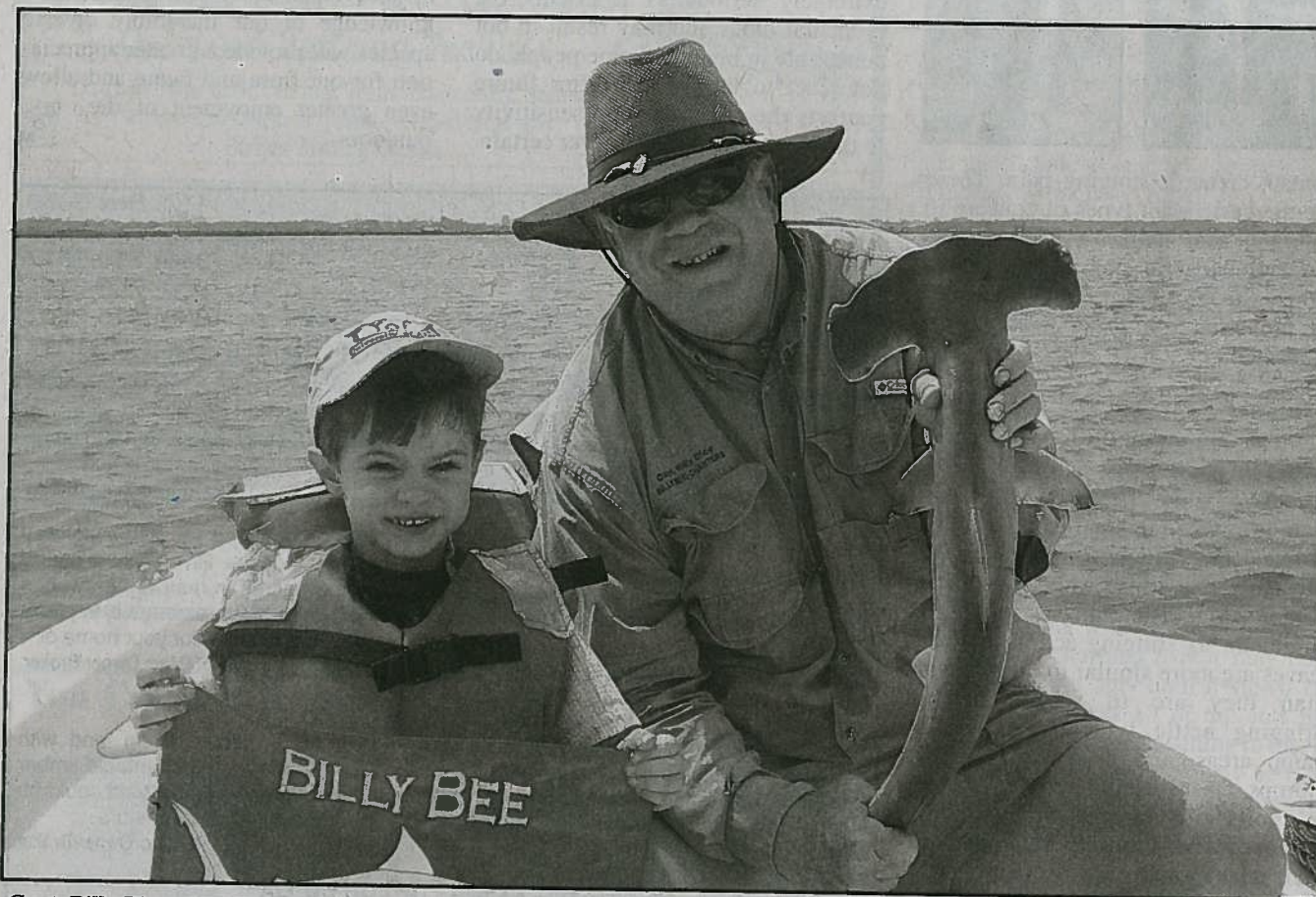


*Makin' Memories...*

# Kids & Saltwater Fishing

Whether they're catching crabs or sharks, youngsters find great adventures on Georgia's coastal waters.



Capt. Billy Bice of St. Simons Island caters to families and discourages from keeping sharks, saying he has a deal with the sharks where he doesn't eat them, and so far they haven't eaten him. "The kids usually get a kick out of that. I do put the small sharks in the boat for a photo opportunity with the angler holding my Billy Bee Capture Flag."

## By Capt. Spud Woodward

At 10 years of age, I was introduced to saltwater fishing. I didn't do anything all that sophisticated, just caught blue crabs, catfish, small sharks and whiting from the pier, bridges and beaches of Jekyll Island. Compared with catching small bluegill, that first 3-foot shark was quite exhilarating. So were the blue crabs, which always seemed to escape the bucket, creating a momentary panic as they ran, claws raised in defiance, amongst us barefooted kids. I believe those early experiences are the reason I ultimately became a marine-fisheries biologist and a fanatical saltwater angler.

It shouldn't be news to you that many children of the 21st century learn

about nature from a television show or some type of computer-based virtual reality program, not by getting wet, dirty, cold and fishy-smelling like most of us old-timers. Saltwater fishing offers youngsters a chance to directly interact with nature, to feel the wind in their faces, the swirling surf around their feet and the mixture of fascination and fear that comes from catching a blue crab or shark.

**Get Crabby:** Georgia features numerous kid-friendly saltwater fishing experiences, but perhaps one of the most basic and enjoyable outings involves catching crabs. Blue crabs can be caught from creek banks, docks, piers, bridges and the surf throughout the year, although summer through fall is the peak period for recreational crab-

bing. Crabbing doesn't require expensive equipment or advanced fishing skills like accurate casting and knot tying. That's why kids and crabbing go together like peanut butter and jelly.

Crabbing gear can be as simple as a length of baited twine or as sophisticated as a wire trap with a float that rises to the surface after a crab grabs the bait. The baited-twine method works best when you're crabbing from a creek bank or the beach where you can get a dip net under the crab before it's lifted from the water. Lift rings and traps can be used in these same areas, but are absolutely necessary when crabbing from elevated structures like bridges and piers.

Chicken necks are popular bait, but any kind of meat scrap on a bone



will work. Often, butchers at grocery stores and meat markets will give you trimmings with bits of meat and gristle. Fish heads also work but get picked over pretty quickly. Some manufacturers like Killer Bee Bait make brined, non-perishable crab bait.

The baited-twine method requires a 20-foot length of twine, a 4-oz. weight, some bait and a long-handled dip net. Securely tie the bait to one end of the twine along with the 4-oz. weight. Weighting the baited end helps keep it on the bottom and improves your youngster's ability to toss the bait accurately for a distance. Throw the baited end of the string into a crab-by-looking spot and tie the opposite end to a stake or other solid object leaving some slack in the line. Set out several lines, and wait.

A jerking line is an obvious sign that a crab has found the bait. However, it pays to check the lines frequently as a crab may not move the line even though it's enjoying a free meal.

Once you think a crab is on the line, the fun begins. If you have two children let one of them slowly pull in the line while the other stands by with the dip net. If it's an adult and child, let the child pull in the first crab while the adult handles the net. Switch roles for the next crab.

As the end of the line gets closer, the suspense builds. How big is it? Is it a boy or girl crab? Will it stay on the line? Crabs will usually hold on if the baited line moves slowly. Keep the net away from the water until the crab is within reach. Then, quickly scoop it up before it lets go and heads for the bottom. It can be a challenge to get the dip net to the crab before it panics, but that's part of the game.

Another kid-friendly method is a lift ring — two metal hoops, one larger than the other, connected and covered with flexible netting. Tie the bait to the center of the netting, and lower the lift ring to the bottom with a hand line. Once on the bottom, the device lies flat. Tie the hand line to a solid object to prevent it from accidentally dropping into the water. The unsuspecting crab walks onto the net to get the bait. When the net is lifted, the larger, outer ring

comes up and traps the crab. This method doesn't require the teamwork of the baited-twine method, but it's still pretty exciting. A feisty blue crab, claws lifted in a menacing gesture, is always sure to get a kid's attention.

Keep crabs alive by placing them in a bucket or crate covered with a wet burlap sack. When it comes time to cook the crabs, you can slow them down by placing them on ice. As the temperature drops, their metabolism slows along with the speed of their claws. This allows the youngsters to

the seagoing equivalent of a bluegill. They're easy to catch on light tackle and make great table fare. In an average year, more than a half million are harvested from Georgia waters. The minimum-size limit for whiting is 10 inches, and there is no daily limit.

Whiting can be scaled, gutted, headed and fried whole like freshwater panfish. They have few small bones and can be eaten like a fried catfish. The larger "bull" whiting of 12 to 15 inches can be filleted. Many coastal residents prefer fresh whiting to better-known species such as flounder.

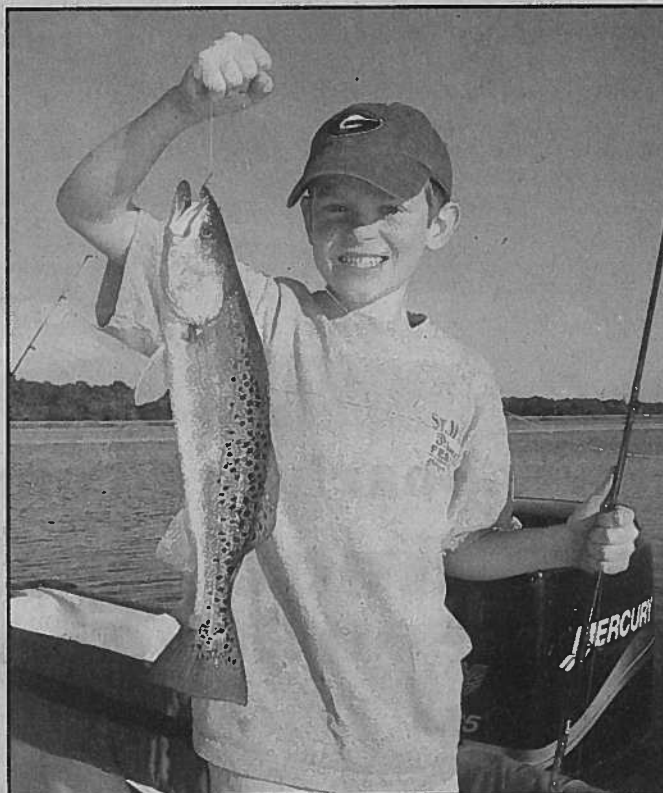
Boating anglers account for the majority of the whiting caught from deeper areas of tidal rivers, sounds and the Atlantic Ocean just east of the barrier islands. You don't have to get into rough water to catch whiting. However, if you feel your child isn't quite ready for a saltwater boating trip, don't worry. Whiting are also caught from the fishing piers located on Tybee, St. Simons and Jekyll islands and along barrier island beaches.

Whiting have chin barbels similar to those of a catfish. These sensory organs allow them to scavenge along the bottom looking for anything with food value. For that reason, terminal tackle that keeps the bait on the bottom is the best way to catch a whiting. Your choices are a double-hook bottom rig, Carolina rigs and fish-finder rigs.

Double-hook bottom rigs made from vinyl-coated cable or mono are sold at coastal tackle shops. The Carolina and fish-finder rigs limit you to one hook but can offer the advantage of allowing a fish to take the baited hook without immediately feeling resistance from the weight. Regardless of your choice, you'll need 2- to 4-oz. weights to keep the bait pinned down.

Whiting have small mouths located on the underside of their heads, so use small hooks. Aberdeen-style and wide-bend-styles such as the Eagle Claw L141 are good choices for conventional hooks. I highly recommend using thin-wire circle hooks such as the

*Continued on page 71.*



**Sea trout take natural and artificial baits, they jump when hooked and they're found in coastal Georgia throughout the year, which makes them a great target for young anglers, like Jacob Haymans, 11, of Brunswick.**

take a close look without getting a pinch from the powerful claws. Go to <[www.bluecrab.info](http://www.bluecrab.info)> for photographic instructions on how to clean a blue crab, as well as other info on this tasty crustacean.

Adults who fish for crabs must have a valid Georgia fishing license. The daily possession limit is one bushel per person (approximately two 5-gallon buckets full), and the season is open all year. It's unlawful to harvest a blue crab less than 5 inches from spike to spike across the back of the shell. Female crabs with visible eggs must be released.

**King on the Bottom:** Whiting, also known as Southern kingfish, are

sharks  
sharks

expensive fishing  
and knot  
bing go  
jelly.  
mple as  
ophisti-  
boat that  
b grabs  
method  
ng from  
ere you  
before  
ngs and  
e areas,  
when  
res like

ar bait,  
a bone

R NEWS



Continued from page 69.

Eagle Claw L787 when fishing with children. This hook sets itself, increasing the odds that the youngster will catch a fish — something very important for new anglers. Bait choices range from fresh dead shrimp to a small piece of squid to one of the new non-perishable, scented, synthetic baits such as Berkeley GULP! ALIVE. Use just enough bait to cover the hook.

You don't need heavy, bulky tackle for inshore saltwater fishing. As with novices in freshwater fishing, a spin-cast reel is the best choice for introducing youngsters to saltwater fishing. Shakespeare's Synergy and Zebco's 33SW matched with medium-action rods are both good selections. Although made from corrosion-resistant materials, they'll need a freshwater rinse at the end of every trip. Having to take care of their fishing gear helps a child learn responsibility.

**Speckled Trophies:** If whiting are the bluegill of the marine world, then spotted seatrout, also known as speckled trout, are the saltwater equivalent of a largemouth bass. They take natural and artificial baits, they jump when hooked and they're found in coastal Georgia throughout the year, although autumn is the peak season.

The minimum-size limit for speckled trout is 13 inches, and the daily possession limit is 15 per person. There is no closed season for speckled-trout fishing. Quality fish run in the 15- to 18-inch range and weigh between 1 1/2 and 2 pounds. When properly dressed, they yield boneless fillets that can be prepared in a variety of ways from fried to baked.

Boating anglers account for the majority of the Georgia's annual half-million-fish harvest. Much of the prime seatrout habitat — oyster shells, marsh-grass points, rock jetties and docks — is out of reach for shore-based anglers. Plus, a boat provides mobility to switch locations with the twice-daily rise and fall of the tide.

If you have a choice, avoid fishing on days when the tide height exceeds 8 feet. The currents will be swift, and the water muddy. Tide-prediction information is available online or from free printed charts available at many coastal businesses.

Hunting seatrout makes for a great saltwater boating trip for young anglers because you're guaranteed to be in protected waters. Bass boats and jonboats can be used for seatrout fishing as long

Continued on next page.

# CRT

## MULCHING SERVICES

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL WAY TO CLEAR LAND

#### SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Right-of-Way Clearing
- Land Management & Pasture Renovation
- Utilities Line Clearing
- Commercial & Residential Lot Clearing
- Survey & Fence Line Clearing
- Horse & ATV Trail Development
- Retention Pond Mowing
- Tree Mulching & Brush Cutting
- After Timber Harvest Clean-up



Supertrak 120 Steel Track



Supertrak 140 Rubber Track

(912) 681-7994

[www.crtmulching.com](http://www.crtmulching.com)



## Souter Brothers Land and Timber

Specializing in high-end recreational properties and retreats.

Each of these properties contain mature hardwoods with absolutely no clearcuts.

These tracts front on major creeks & tributaries of the Flint River.

### MACON COUNTY - 132 ACRES

A one-of-a-kind retreat. 95 ac. of beautiful mature hardwoods and large pine timber surrounding a scenic 12 ac. lake. One small 25 ac. field, paved road frontage with electricity and deep well. Along with the fishing, the deer, turkey and dove hunting is great! **\$650,000**

### TAYLOR COUNTY - 242 ACRES

Without a doubt, this is the finest property I've ever owned. Hardwood timber, pastures and old fields, along with over a mile of frontage on the Flint River. The 70 ft. high bluff overlooking the river may be the most scenic building site in the state. Underground power and deep well. Best deer and turkey hunting I've ever experienced. Your wife will love it, too! **PLEASE CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT.**

### MACON/TAYLOR COUNTIES - 328 ACRES

Tracts Available. Borders Horse Creek w/mature, uncut hardwoods. This property also offers two age-classes of older pines w/lots of paved road frontage. Located in an area known for big deer. Large food plots. Will possibly divide. **\$3,175/ACRE**

Other Tracts Available

Please Call Les Souter at 478-952-8147 (Cell)

"BUY FOR THE LONG TERM..."

THE GREAT HUNTING AND FISHING IS AN ADDED BONUS!"



## Massey Road Farm

### 4 Great Hunting Tracts in Washington County!

Close to Sandersville and Wrightsville in Central-Eastern Georgia  
Conveniently located close to I-16, I-20, and Highway 15

**274 Acres \$2,300 per acre = \$630,200**  
**188 Acres \$2,400 per acre = \$451,200**  
**86 Acres \$2,650 per acre = \$227,900**  
**73 Acres \$2,700 per acre = \$197,100**

- Fully Wooded with 1997 Planted Pine and Huge Hardwood Bottoms
  - Ochoopee River Frontage
  - Dyers Creek Frontage
  - Numerous Beaver Ponds
- Miles of County-Maintained Road Frontage
  - Easily Sub-Dividable
  - Home Sites, Pond Sites
- Deer, Turkey, Hogs, Ducks and Fishing
  - Miles of Interior Roads
  - Planted Food Plots
- Thick Areas, Swampy Areas and Open Areas
  - Private Gates
  - Make an Offer!

**Hampton River** Acquisitions, LLC For additional information, please call  
**(478)787-4121**



or for pictures and more info,  
visit us online at:

**www.HamptonRiver.com**

Specializing in Georgia's Timberland and Hunting Tracts

## SHANE WATSON'S Lake Lanier Guide Service

**"The Official Guide Service of Hammond's Fishing Center!"**

**SPECIALIZING IN LIGHT TACKLE STRIPER FISHING OVER 300 DAYS A YEAR**

- Live Bait, Artificials and Trolling
- Full-time Professional Guides
- Corporate Trips of Any Size
- Open 7 days a Week, Year Round
- Gift Certificates Available



**For Rates & Availability Call:**  
**770-235-9829**

**Visit our Web site at:**  
**www.LakeLanierStrippers.com**  
**for more info and to see**  
**Shane's Current Fishing Reports**



**Sponsored By:**

- Carolina Skiff • Sea Chaser • Hydro-Glow • Hammond's Fishing Center • Lowrance • Driftmaster • Capt. Mack's Fishing Products •
- Okuma Fishing • Motor Guide • BRP Evinrude E-Tec • Creek Bank Bait Tanks • Kennesaw Bait Co. • Foot Cush • B&S Sportsman •

Continued from page 71.

as you keep a eye on the weather and stick to the smaller tidal creeks and rivers. An aerated, built-in baitwell or aerated bait bucket is necessary to keep shrimp and other live baits frisky.

The rattling float is perfect terminal tackle for a kid's first speckled-trout fishing trip. It gives the child a visual reference, and being able to twitch the float every minute or so provides a productive outlet for pent-up energy. Plus, child or adult, we all like to see a float suddenly disappear below the water's surface.

Drift a live shrimp around an oyster-shell mound, and something will usually take the offering. Good float choices include the original Cajun Thunder and the depth-adjustable Lowcountry Lightning. Use 36 inches of 12-lb.-test fluorocarbon between the float and the hook.

When rigging for live shrimp, I recommend using the Eagle Claw L787 thin-wire circle hook, the Eagle Claw L141 Kahle hook in a 1/0 size or smaller, or an Aberdeen hook bent into a circle-hook configuration. The hook goes through the head of the shrimp between the horn and the first dark spot. I pinch a small split-shot about halfway between float and leader to help keep the shrimp down in the strike zone.

A 1/8 or 1/4-oz. jig head can be substituted for the hook. This terminal tackle can also be used to present artificials and live baits with equal effectiveness. From late June through February, live shrimp can be purchased from licensed dealers or you can catch them with a cast net. GULP! ALIVE shrimp, the Betts Halo shrimp and Saltwater Assassin shads are all good imitations.

The same spincast outfits used for whiting will work for seatrout fishing. If your youngster has mastered the basic skills with a spincast, move them to an open-face spinning reel. In either case, be patient and help them develop the timing needed to accurately place baits and lures in the strike zone. Remember, someone was patient with you.

**Cue the Scary Music:** Hollywood portrays the shark as a ruthless killing machine just waiting for us humans to enter the water, while the Discovery Channel tells us that sharks are misunderstood creatures that play an important role in the balance of nature. Confused? Most children don't care about the shark debate. They just want to catch one.

Coastal species of shark happens during baited hook through Se guaranteed few-days-of inch bonnet just depend and what Obviously, twisting sp much for a rience. But same spec acrobatics and plenty mates.

Most shark-fishing Billy Bice, specifically Billy fishes and on call to the slough St. Simons "Most a shark. So we're like sharks," Biful, they h and a cha shark.

"Occa about keep this by tell the sharks so far they usually ge one asks a shark. I do boat for a angler hold Flag."

After released a the group special pre "I then each child reminder teeth at a nearly not a real treas

Billy with 20-lb. Stik rods. le is a Car oz. egg si swivel, a monofilan Claw Mod prefers the keeps the leader in tl



Coastal Georgia is home to several species of sharks, and peak abundance happens during the summer. Drop a baited hook on the bottom from June through September, and you're almost guaranteed to catch one. It might be a few-days-old, a 12-inch blacktip, a 30-inch bonnethead or a 6-foot dusky — just depends on where you're fishing and what you're using for bait. Obviously, 75 pounds of jumping, twisting spinner shark might be a bit much for a child's first saltwater experience. But a 30-inch version of the same species doing such boat-side acrobatics can leave a lasting memory and plenty of stories for the school-mates.

Most coastal fishing guides offer shark-fishing trips, and some like Capt. Billy Bice of St. Simons Island cater specifically to families and children. Billy fishes the tidal rivers and sounds, and on calm days he will take kids out to the sloughs and sandbars north of the St. Simons ship channel.

"Most of my clients want to catch a shark. So, I do a combo trip where we're likely to catch whiting and sharks," Billy said. "If we're successful, they have some fish to take home and a chance to catch and release a shark."

"Occasionally someone will ask about keeping a shark, but I discourage this by telling them I have a deal with the sharks where I don't eat them, and so far they haven't eaten me. The kids usually get a kick out of that, and no one asks a second time about keeping a shark. I do put the small sharks in the boat for a photo opportunity with the angler holding my Billy Bee Capture Flag."

After each child has caught and released a shark, Billy announces that the group must stop all activities for a special presentation.

"I then pull out a shark's tooth for each child to give them a small reminder of their catch. I buy these teeth at a shell shop on St. Simons for nearly nothing, but for the kids they're a real treasure!"

Billy uses Zebco 733 reels spooled with 20-lb. mono on Shakespeare Ugly Stik rods. His choice for terminal tackle is a Carolina rig built with a 2- or 3-oz. egg sinker, a plastic bead, a large swivel, about 12 inches of 50-lb. monofilament leader and an Eagle Claw Model 072 long-shank hook. He prefers the long-shank hook because it keeps the small sharks from getting the leader in their mouths. His bait of pref-

erence is squid because it stays on the hook in the strong currents.

Billy's strategy creates a good game plan for introducing kids to saltwater fishing for sharks. If you decide to freelance for these toothy critters, just be sure to handle them carefully. Don't be fooled into thinking that small sharks can't do any harm. Even newborn sharks have a healthy set of teeth that can severely lacerate fingers and hands. Sharks, particularly the smaller specimens, have amazing flexibility and can literally bend in a circle. So, never grab a shark by the tail thinking you're in control of the situation.

Coastal Georgia offers these and many other great fishing adventures for youngsters. With a bit of planning and a moderate investment in equipment, it's possible to give children a saltwater-fishing experience that'll teach them some valuable life lessons while making lasting memories with family and friends. Most adult anglers were introduced to fish as young children. Do your part to create the next generation of anglers. Without them, the future of our natural resources will be in the hands of folks who learned nature from a television and not a fishing rod.



## HUNTING LAND FOR LEASE

### AVAILABLE PROPERTIES:

- Clinch County, GA — 1,878 acres near Fargo. Excellent deer, turkey, hog & bear populations. QDM tract. \$9.00/acre.
- Clinch County, GA — 2,160 acres near Fargo. Excellent deer, turkey, hog & bear populations. \$9.00/acre
- Baker County, FL — 1,149 acres near I-10. Thinned pines with deer and turkey. \$6.50 per acre.
- Charlton County, GA — 2,042 acres west of Folkston. Near Okefenokee Refuge. \$6.75/acre
- Long County, GA — 1,289 acres east of Ludowici. \$5.75/acre
- Ware County, GA — 655 acres west of Waycross. \$5.50/acre
- Sumter County, GA — 2,865 acres west of Cordele with house. Timber and crop land (corn, wheat, soybean). Good deer, turkey, quail and doves. \$14.00/acre
- Clinch County, GA — 1,942 acres with 3bed/2bath house and pond. Thinned pines and swamp with deer, turkey, hogs and bear. Borders Okefenokee Refuge \$14.00 per acre.
- Harlan County, Kentucky — 4,200 acres of beautiful mountain hunting land. Deer, turkey & elk ONLY \$4.00 per acre.
- 11,000 acre horse trail riding lease in Clinch County, GA available

### ALSO SEVERAL CLUBS IN FL & GA LOOKING FOR MEMBERS



WILDLIFE SERVICES  
A Division of Natural Resource Planning Services, Inc.

For more information contact:  
Jeff Bewsher at 352-378-8966  
[hunting@nrpsforesters.com](mailto:hunting@nrpsforesters.com)

or

Gator Banks at 352-318-2820  
[www.LegacyWildlife.com](http://www.LegacyWildlife.com)