

# Outdoors briefs: East Texas guide stoked for first FLW Cup

By MATT WILLIAMS/Outdoors writer | Posted: Sunday, July 20, 2014 12:15 am

Stephen Johnston of Hemphill is set to make his first trip to the Forrest Wood Cup next month on Lake Murray in Columbia, S.C., but he won't be feeling like the little fish in a big pond full of sharks when FLW's big show gets underway on Aug. 14.

Technically, Johnston is considered a rookie among a star-studded field of FLW salts who will be casting for bass fishing's richest payday -- \$500,000. But don't be fooled by the lack of experience the title implies. Johnston's resume says he can fish with the best in the business.

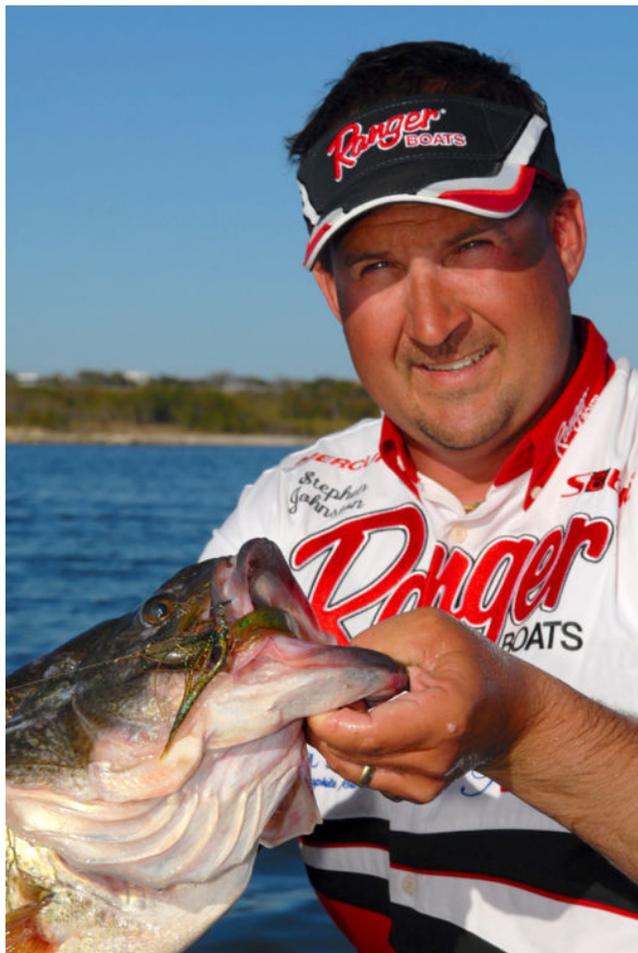
A veteran on several Triple A Texas tournament trails, Johnston is a two-time FLW Rayovac Texas Division Angler of the Year. He qualified for his first 'Cup by virtue of nailing down the 2013 Rayovac AOY title during a season when he finished no lower than 15th in four regular season events.

"It's just fishing," says Johnston, 43. "I know most of these guys and I have been around them for years. It's the best of the best and I'm excited about the chance to go up against them for this kind of money. All I know to do is go out there and do everything I can to win. You get a good check just for being here, but you've also got the opportunity to change your life."

Johnston thinks the winner of the tournament will be the one who figures out the bait fish. Lake Murray is full of blue herring, a nomadic forage fish known for roaming offshore structure and taking big numbers of bass with them wherever they go.

Johnston, who was on water last week familiarizing himself with the lake before it goes off limits, says the court sets up nicely for his style of fishing.

"I like to fish offshore and I like to fish deep, so it suits my style," he said. "This is just a different lake and a different tournament. I'm just going to put my head down, do my homework and see how it



Stephen Johnston

Hemphill's Stephen Johnston is one of four Texas bass pros who will compete in the Forrest Wood Cup.

comes out.”

Johnston will be competing against 44 other qualifiers, including five former ‘Cup champions and six AOY title holders. He will be joined by three more Texas qualifiers, Shiniche Fukae of Mineola, Austin Terry of San Angelo and James Biggs of Eules.

### **Spotted bass grabs world record**

A 10.48 pound spotted bass caught last February from New Melones Reservoir in California was recently declared the new official world record for that species by the International Game Fish Association records committee.

The fish was caught by Keith Bryan while competing in a regional bass tournament. The fish reportedly hit a Senko in about 10 feet of water.

### **Pineywoods NWTF banquet set Aug. 16**

The Pineywoods Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation will host its 26th Annual Hunting Heritage Banquet on Aug. 16 at the Pitzer Garrison Civic Center in Lufkin.

Recognized as one of the top NWTF chapters in the nation, the Pineywoods group always throws a great party that draws plenty of attention from across East Texas and beyond. This year’s banquet will feature multiple gun giveaways and bucket raffles as well live and silent auctions for all sorts of cool stuff including turkey hunts, deer hunts, fishing trips, knives, ladies items and a variety of hunting equipment.

Tickets are \$85 for couples and \$60 for singles. Early bird entries received by Aug. 10 are eligible for an exclusive rifle drawing. For more info, contact Dale Bounds at 937-637-4972.