

Spor

FRIDAY, June 15, 2012



PHIL DIFATTA

First-time gator hunters successful

WARNING: This (excuse for a) column may be offensive to hundreds of my readers, especially those who hunt alligators.

Oh, wait - I forgot. I have no friends. And with only three or four readers, I really shouldn't worry. Whew!

Regardless, one of my friends (and that's questionable), Lee ~~_____~~, decided he'd apply for one of Mississippi's alligator tags. And, lo and behold, he drew a couple.

But my question is: Why on Earth would anybody in his or her right mind want to hunt alligators? Lee, however, I can assure you, is NOT in his right mind.

To wit, although alligator meat (the tail) is mighty tasty, one could save himself a lot of trouble and money by going to the supermarket and buying a fine angus steak for much less than the cost of hunting alligators. Besides, why risk getting your hand (or worse) bitten off by a gator?

Maybe it's the challenge. After all, how many of you have ever killed, captured or otherwise caught an alligator? Could be that's the reason he applied for a \$10 tag ... and was drawn. And he chose as his partners Billy ~~_____~~, 5-year-old nephew, Lance ~~_____~~, and as his boat captain, Scott ~~_____~~. ~~_____~~ says this is the "Longleaf Camo Crew."

Trouble at the outset

But, all was not good from the git-go. Right off the bat, the key to

year-old nephew, Lance [redacted], and as his boat captain, Scott [redacted]. [redacted] says this is the "Longleaf Camo Crew."

Trouble at the outset

But, all was not good from the git-go. Right off the bat, the key to the boat was lost and they had to purchase a replacement at Rough + Water Marine on U.S. 90.

Once they had a key and finally launched the boat, the crew traversed upstream to try and find a gator. And find a gator they did.

After several attempts to snag the critter with hooks flung from fishing rods, Captain [redacted] eventually set a hook in the reptile. [redacted] tried to get a second hook in the quarry, but wound up with a backlash from hell because he (the dummy) forgot to "thumb" the reel's spool.

But calm prevailed. [redacted] quickly set a second hook, as [redacted] fought with his terrible backlash, and [redacted] attempted to get a snare over the gator's head. Fun City, I'm sure.

Young hunter

Eventually the gator was subdued, so Captain Womack asked the youngest of the crew, 5-year-old Landon [redacted], if he'd like to shoot the gator.

Of course the kid said, "Yes," and it was all over in a minute. Landon put a super shot on the gator, and they hauled it back to the dock, where high-fives were exchanged.

All's well that ends well, they say, and once the congratulatory remarks and all that stuff ended, the self-described Longleaf Camo Crew set out for another gator, which they never caught. Back finally at the motel, Womack found the lost boat key.

In retrospect, can you even IMAGINE being on a gator hunt with these people? I can't, particularly because I know Taylor and Reynolds. I pick at them for being dummies, but that must have been some kind of a fun trip for all involved. However, it is my sincere prayer ... that none of them will

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sue me for having fun with them concerning their gator hunt.

Seriously, I'd really like to get a gator myself. And if you'd like to, you'd better

hurry, because I understand the application for a tag is today, June 15. Call the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks for more details.

Gators are becoming a nuisance in lots of areas. You can help thin 'em out, and get some tasty gator tail in the process. Apply for a

tag today ... or you'll be too late. Literally!

Look forward, both of you, to reading about a catfish-catching dog next week. Until then, be sure to take a kid fishin' with you every time you can.

Contact outdoors columnist
LD@Mississippi.com
Mississippi.com



Submitted photo

LANDON (front) and, back row, left to right, Scott, Amber, Lee and Billy caught this nearly 9-foot alligator last season that weighed in at 165 pounds.