

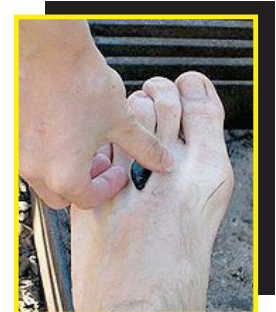
It is only legal in few states. Whether you call it Grabbling, Hogging, Fisting, Handfishing or Noodling, what has developed from a way of survival is now known as an extreme sport. Let us go back before hooks, lines, spears, or nets to the early days of man. Hunters and gatherers carved on cave walls making records of when and where to go for food. The first documented origins of Noodling go back to Native Americans, who would wrap clothes around their hands and arms, wrestling these massive mottled zeppelins to shore. Though times have changed, the method is still the same. It just takes a strong grip and nerves of steel.

In Oklahoma, the Noodling season begins in May, goes through July, and can carry into August. Normally the Channel and Blue Cat start spawning in May. The Flathead will begin after. The Blue and Channel Cat are much more aggressive with a very powerful bite. They are game fish and must be released when caught. However, Flathead are not a game fish in Oklahoma, and you may keep those - 3 per person per day at a 20-inch minimum.

▶ **Leeches**

A leech attaches itself when it bites, and it will stay attached until it becomes full, at which point it falls off to digest. Due to the hirudin that leeches secrete, bites may bleed more than a normal wound after the leech is removed. The effect of the anticoagulant will wear off several hours after the leech is removed and the wound is cleaned.

Leeches normally carry parasites in their digestive tracts, which cannot survive in humans and do not pose a threat. However, bacteria, viruses, and parasites from previous blood sources can survive within a leech for months, but only a few cases of leeches transmitting pathogens to humans have been reported.



▶ Removal and Treatment

▶ **Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac**

Contact with the oil of poison ivy/oak/sumac plants can cause an allergic rash. Mild rashes can be treated at home, and mostly cause discomfort from itching, burning, or blistering. Severe, widespread rashes require medical treatment.

Signs and Symptoms

- ▶ an itchy red rash that appears within 4 hours to 4 days after touching the plant oil
- ▶ blisters that ooze clear fluid
- ▶ bumps and blisters that may be different sizes and look like streaks on the child's skin
- ▶ rash may begin to look crusty as it heals

What do Do:

- ▶ Remove any clothing that has touched the plant or rash and wash all clothing recently worn
- ▶ Gently wash skin and scrub under fingernails right away with soap and water.
- ▶ Cut fingernails short to keep the child from breaking the skin when scratching.
- ▶ Place cool compresses on the child's skin as needed.
- ▶ For itching: add oatmeal to the bath; use calamine lotion (avoid using on the face or on the genitals); and, if needed, give the child diphenhydramine.

Seek Medical Care If:

- ▶ the rash covers a large portion of the body or is on the face or genitals
- ▶ the rash is getting worse despite home treatment
- ▶ the skin looks infected (increasing redness, warmth, pain, swelling & pus)

Seek Emergency Medical Care if the Child:

- ▶ has a known severe allergy to poison ivy/oak/sumac
- ▶ develops swelling of the tongue or throat
- ▶ complains of chest tightness or difficulty breathing
- ▶ develops widespread redness or swelling
- ▶ was given a shot of epinephrine (EpiPen)

Think Prevention!

- ▶ Teach kids what poison ivy/oak/sumac look like and how important they are to avoid.
- ▶ Make sure they always wear long-sleeved shirts and pants whenever playing close to these plants.
- ▶ Have kids wash their hands well when they come in from outside.

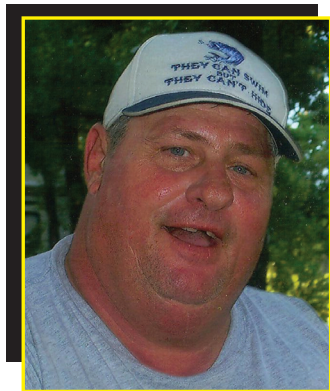
This is for informational purposes and no liability is assumed in its use. Always consult with a competent medical professional regarding health related issues.

▶ *Bobby Leon Sparks*

Is the owner and guide for Sparks Noodling. He lives in Walters, OK, with his wife Brandy Sparks of 15 years, and their two children, Bethany and Baylor. He is a 3rd generation noodler with over 20 years' experience. He enjoys the outdoors with his family, camping, hog hunting, pole fishing, and rodeos. His belief in Noodling is different from many others. He prefers to *Noodle Green*, which means he catches, photographs, and releases. The times he would keep a fish would be for a tournament, after which he releases it back to the waters it came from. Bobby has been featured in Okie Noodling 2, ESPN timeless, Glutton for Punishment, teaching Jeremy Wade from River Monsters, and news articles.



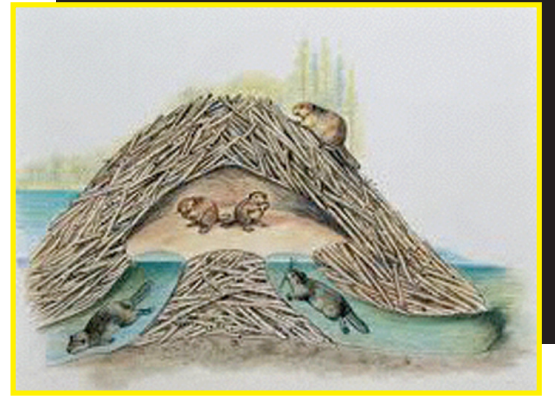
▶ *Bobby Lee Sparks*



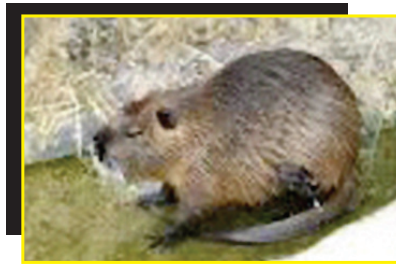
Is Bobby's Dad, business partner, consultant, and guide for Sparks Noodling. He lives in Walters, OK, with his wife Dorothy Sparks of 35 years. He is a 2nd generation noodler with over 40 years of experience. He learned how to noodle from his father, Harold "Skipper" Sparks, in Louisiana. He later came to Oklahoma, honing his skills on the creeks, lakes, and rivers. Bobby's roots run deep in Cotton and Comanche Counties, teaching many individuals how to noodle. Those include Champion noodlers David and Red Baggett of Okie Noodling

1 and 2, and Jeremy Wade of River Monsters. He has been featured on ESPN timeless, River Monsters and news articles.

Though this beaver den, imagine this as a burrow in the bank of a creek, or river. Remember if the hole goes up, you need to get out.



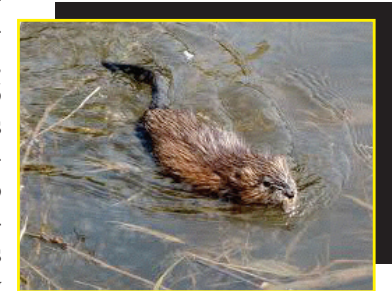
Nutria ◀



Are much larger than muskrat and weigh from 11 to 22 pounds. Their front legs are short. Their small feet have five toes, four of which are long with claws; a fifth toe is reduced in size. The fur has two distinctive layers, an outer layer of coarse guard hair often yellowish in color, and a soft under fur. The muzzle usually is covered by white coarse hair, a distinctive identifying characteristic. The tail is round and hairy, not compressed from side to side and hairless as is the muskrat's. *Nutria* are primarily night feeders, resting and grooming during the day.

▶ *Muskrat*

This semi-aquatic rodent has the distinction of having its native range expanded by human introduction of the species to many areas of North America, South America, and Europe. A muskrat will be 16 to 25 inches in total length with a tail 7 to 12 inches long. The tail is a distinctive identifier of this species because it is rat like, but flattened from side to side, rather than round. An adult weighs about 3 to 4 pounds.. They seldom inhabit fast-flowing streams with rocky bottoms or banks. *Muskrat* are largely nocturnal, spending about 80 percent of their time moving and feeding after darkness. They can be aggressive and have been known to attack a person, dog or mink, when cornered.



▶ *Baylor Sparks*

This cowboy is a 4th generation noodler with 2 years' experience. He caught his first fish last year weighing 5 lbs. When Baylor is not competing in junior rodeos, steer riding and goat tying, he keeps everyone busy sharing his point of view on things. Baylor is a all-around stringer man, hole blocker, and future outdoorsman.



▶ *Assistant* ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ *GUIDES*

▶ *Marty Ragsdale*

Lives in Walters, OK with his wife Christy of 3 years. He is a 1st generation noodler, with 5 years' experience. He has been featured on River Monsters with Jeremy Wade. Marty's favorite thing about Noodling is watching first-timers squeal.



▶ *Larry Valdez*

Lives in Lawton, OK, with his wife Christy and their two children, Holden and Lailah. He is a 1st generation noodler with 7 years' experience. He also assisted with Jeremy Wade of River Monster. He is an avid outdoorsman. Larry's favorite thing about Noodling is the anticipation of being bitten.

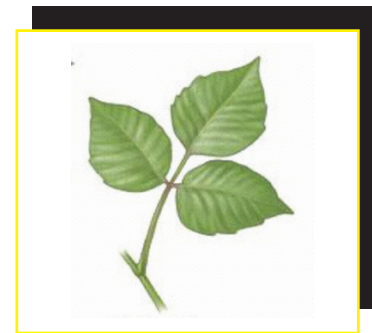


▶ *Plants* ▶ ▶ ▶

POISONOUS

▶ *Poison Ivy*

Poison Ivy usually has three broad, spoon-shaped leaves or leaflets ("Leaves of three? Let it be!"), but it can have more. It may grow as a climbing or low, spreading vine that sprawls through grass (more common in the eastern United States) or as a shrub (more common in the northern United States, Canada, and the Great Lakes).



Oak ◀

Poison oak has leaves that look like oak leaves, usually with three leaflets but sometimes up to seven leaflets per leaf group. It grows as a vine or a shrub. Poison oak is more common in the western United States, but it is also found in the eastern United States and, rarely, in the Midwest.



▶ *Sumac*

Poison sumac has 7 to 13 leaflets per leaf stem. The leaves have smooth edges and pointed tips. Poison sumac grows as a shrub or small tree. It is found in wooded, swampy areas, such as Florida and parts of other southeastern states, and in wet, wooded areas in the northern United States.



Noodling is the taking of nongame fish by use of hands only. Possession of hooks, gaff hooks, spears, poles or ropes with hooks attached while in the act of noodling shall be proof of violation of the “hands only” noodling law. Noodling shall be lawful year-round in all waters unless restricted under “*Special Area Regulations.*”

- ▶ It is unlawful to use and/or place into lakes and reservoirs of this state any container, including but not limited to drums, cans, tubs, boxes or barrels which attract, entice or lure fish into an open cavity within the container.
- ▶ Noodlers and scuba divers from May 1 through August 31: Daily limit of three, 20-inch minimum. Statewide limits apply remainder of year.

▶ **Catfish**

Statewide Daily Limit:

- ▶ Channel and / or Blue Catfish combined – 15
- ▶ Flathead Catfish – 10

Statewide Size Limit:

- ▶ Channel Catfish – None
- ▶ Blue Catfish – Only one over 30”
- ▶ Flathead Catfish – 20” minimum

Oklahoma’s three most popular catfish species can be identified by either the shape of the anal fin or the shape of the tail. A channel catfish will have a curved anal fin, but the same fin on the blue catfish will be straight across the bottom. Both of these species have a forked tail. In contrast, a flathead catfish’s tail will not be forked.

Game fish - largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass, black and white crappie, rainbow and brown trout, sauger, saugeye, walleye, striped bass, white bass, blue and channel catfish.



Flathead Catfish
 ▶ Tail not forked
 ▶ State record: 78 lbs., 8 oz.

Blue Catfish

- ▶ Straight anal fin
- ▶ State record: 98 lbs.



Channel Catfish
 ▶ Curved anal fin
 ▶ State record: 35 lbs., 15 oz.

▶ **Turtles**

Oklahoma is home to 15 types of aquatic turtle species, per the Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation. These turtles spend most of the time in water. The largest in Oklahoma are the **alligator snapping turtle**, which can be as long as 25” and weigh around 100 lbs. Other big turtles include the common snapping turtle, **spiny softshell turtle**, smooth softshell turtle and eastern river cooter, which may all exceed 13”. Medium sized turtles in the 5-10” range include the painted turtle, map turtles and western chicken turtle. Smaller species less than 5” are types such as the razor-backed musk turtle and the stinkpot. The upper shell will differ on each species. Snapping turtles have a shell featuring ridges, while those of the yellow mud turtle and Mississippi mud turtle are smooth. Map turtles have a distinct ridge down the middle of the shell and lines that look like roads. The shells of the softshells have a leathery look and are flat. Painted turtles have red, orange and yellow stripes that occur on places like the legs, tail and neck. The softshell turtles have an olive-brown skin and a yellow stripe running through each eye. The **red-eared slider's** bright red area of skin behind both eyes gives it away. The common map turtle has green skin accentuated by yellowish lines on its exposed parts such as the legs and head. The river cooter requires rivers, reservoirs or streams that offer plenty of aquatic weeds for cover, food, and shallow areas so it avoids ponds and lakes. The alligator snapping turtles prefer deep streams and rivers where trees overhang the banks. The stinkpot turtle will live where the bottom is muddy in small ponds, swamps and other wetlands. The softshell turtles can swim with unexpected speed to escape a threat, while the snapping turtles will bite to defend themselves when caught out on land, but they will swim away harmlessly when discovered in the water.



Alligator Snapper ◀



Softshell Turtle ◀



Red Ear Slider ◀

▶ **Alligators**

American alligators reside nearly exclusively in the fresh-water rivers, lakes, swamps, and marshes of the southeastern United States, primarily Florida and Louisiana. Heavy and ungainly out of water, these reptiles are supremely well adapted swimmers. Males average 10-15 ft (3-4.6 meters) in length and can weigh 1,000 lbs (453 kg). Females grow to a maximum of about 9.8 feet (3 meters). Hatchlings are 6-8” (15-20 centimeters) long with yellow and black stripes. Juveniles, which are on the menu for dozens of predators, including birds, raccoons, bobcats, and even other alligators, usually stay with their mothers for about two years. Adult alligators are apex predators critical to the biodiversity of their habitat. They feed mainly on fish, turtles, snakes, and small mammals. However, they are opportunists, and a hungry gator will eat just about anything, including carrion, pets and, in rare instances, humans.



Alligator ◀