

TXD
P400.6 P235n 88/11/23

NON-CIRCULATING

TEXAS STATE
DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

texas parks & wildlife news

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78744

In the Nov. 23, 1988 issue:

State Park System Posts Record Visitation Year	1
TPWD Park Interpreters Win Two International Awards	3
Goose Banding Program Planned For S.E. Texas	3
Study Casts New Light On Spike Buck Question	4
Two Saltwater Fish Records Certified By TPWD	7
Bald Eagle Survey Needs Volunteer Helpers	8
Joint Public Information Sessions Scheduled	9
Updated Top 50 Bass List	10

EDITORS: Because of early mailing due to the Thanksgiving holidays, no fishing report is included in this week's packet. The fishing report will be carried by the wire services as usual.

STATE PARK SYSTEM POSTS RECORD VISITATION YEAR

AUSTIN -- More people visited state parks during the 1987-88 fiscal year than ever before, parks officials said.

A record 20,960,284 visitors were counted during the 12-month period ending Aug. 31, according to Wilson E. Dolman, director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Parks Division.

Dolman said the total visitation figure represents a recovery from 1986-87 when visitation fell to approximately 19.5 million. The previous high was 20.5 million in 1985-86.

Overnight visitation also increased by 8.2 percent, climbing to more than 2.2 million.

Dolman said the increased visitation could be attributed to several possible factors, including a gradual improvement in the Texas economy, opening of several new parks during the past two years, increased

U OF NT LIBRARIES 76203

popularity of coastal area parks, fish stocking, generally good weather and increased public awareness of available facilities "Also, a recent trend has been that people nowadays tend to make more frequent but shorter recreational trips," Dolman said "This probably caused more people to visit state parks rather than traveling longer distances out of state "

Recently-opened park facilities include Fanthorp Inn and Lake Bob Sandlin, both during 1987, and Colorado Bend and Martin Creek Lake in 1988

As in the past, the number one attraction in terms of day visitation was the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Park and Battleship "Texas" at Houston, with more than 1 7 million visitors

The popularity of coastal parks was reflected in attendance figures at Mustang Island State Park near Port Aransas, which had the second-highest visitation at over 1 4 million Other popular coastal parks that experienced increased visitation over last year are Galveston Island, 507,337 visitors, and Goose Island with 465,387

Several new inland parks contributed to increases in park visitation figures, Dolman pointed out One of these is Choke Canyon near Three Rivers, where the Calliham and South Shore units hosted more than 500,000 visitors during fiscal year 1988

Another fairly new state park that has proven popular is Brazos Bend southwest of Houston, visited by almost 385,000 during the year Other leading inland parks include Lake Corpus Christi, 612,000 visitors; LBJ, 523,000; Martin Dies, Jr , 493,000; Kerrville, 451,000; Palo Duro Canyon,

416,000; Huntsville, 412,000; and Garner, 363,000.

For full information on facilities available in the state parks, request the state parks brochure by writing the TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744, or by calling toll-free 1-800-792-1112.

JC 11/23/88

TPWD PARK INTERPRETERS WIN
TWO INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

AUSTIN -- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department won two awards at a recent conference of the National Association of Interpretation

The Interpretation and Exhibits Branch of the department's Parks Division captured second and third place awards in the education/gallery exhibits category

The second place award went to "Dinosaurs and the Glen Rose Formation," an interpretive exhibit at Dinosaur Valley State Park near Glen Rose, southwest of Fort Worth

Third place honors went to "Habitats and Niches," an exhibit at Brazos Bend State Park near Needville, southwest of Houston

The competition included interpreters of cultural and natural history from the National Park Service, U S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and local park systems and public and private museums

JC 11/23/88

GOOSE BANDING PROGRAM
PLANNED FOR S. E. TEXAS

ANGLETON -- Southeast Texas area goose hunters may see some birds with odd neckwear this winter

The U S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Texas A&M University are cooperating in a goose banding project at the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge in Brazoria County

Hunters should be on the lookout for lesser snow geese wearing green neck collars imprinted with a three-digit code in white lettering

Anyone spotting a neck-collared goose is requested to note the date, time and location and notify San Bernard NWR personnel. Hunters who shoot neck-collared geese are requested to inform San Bernard personnel when and where the goose was taken, and the collar code; hunters may keep the collar

In addition to neck-collared geese, 12 adult birds will be fitted with lightweight radio transmitters. Hunters who shoot geese with radio transmitters are requested to return the transmitter to the refuge, or notify the refuge of its location

Information on the above should be sent to USFWS, Brazoria NWR Complex, P O. Drawer 1088, Angleton, TX 77516, (409) 849-6062.

The study is designed to determine how individual geese utilize coastal marshes and agricultural fields throughout the winter

JC 11/23/88

STUDY CASTS NEW LIGHT ON
SPIKE BUCK QUESTION

AUSTIN -- An ongoing study of mule deer bucks in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas suggests that a high incidence of spike bucks in the yearling age class is normal, and that spikes should not necessarily be considered inferior deer

Bill Russ of Sanderson, a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologist, is in charge of the investigation aimed at determining if mule deer spike bucks are inferior to bucks that have forked antlers during their first year of life. Spike bucks have single antlers with no prongs or forks

Russ wrote in a report that a majority of buck mule deer yearlings are spikes during their first year. This percentage tends to increase during dry years when range conditions are poor

The same is true for white-tailed deer spikes," said Horace Gore, white-tailed deer program leader. "Studies on the Kerr Wildlife Management Area have shown that the percentage of spikes taken by hunters may triple or quadruple following lengthy drought "

A total of 324 mule deer were trapped for the West Texas study during the three years from 1986 through 1988, including 102 fawns and yearlings.

The animals were marked with ear tags and freeze brands for subsequent identification, and then released at the trap site

"Of the 39 known-age yearling bucks we marked, 34 have been sighted or re-trapped," said Russ "A total of 28, or 82 percent, of these bucks were spikes "

On the other hand, 12 of the 18 known-age 2 5-year-old bucks were documented, and only one was a spike A 3 5-year-old eight-pointer was a spike when trapped as a yearling, Russ said

"There has been a great deal of misinformation and misinterpretation of information concerning spike bucks," said Bob West, wildlife regional director in San Angelo "The 'kill all spikes' attitude is now being applied to desert mule deer The department has never recommended culling spike mule deer "

West believes deer management is a complex situation with virtually no easy answers "Poor range conditions almost always produce low quality animals with smaller antlers," he said "Spike bucks have become scapegoats, animals to be blamed for mismanagement of Texas' deer herds The taking of spikes has never been shown to improve deer quality unless the total herd is managed "

West said the mule deer study is not yet complete, but so far the data indicate that the incidence of spike bucks in mule deer populations reflects weather conditions, and that spike fawns and yearlings have a chance to develop into good-quality, fork-antlered bucks later if range

conditions allow

"Shooting spike bucks is no cure-all for lack of quality," said Gore "Trophy bucks, whether mule or whitetail, require two things; age and nutrition If these two requirements are met, everything else naturally falls into place "

JC 11/23/88

TWO SALTWATER FISH RECORDS
CERTIFIED BY TPWD

AUSTIN -- The state fish records committee of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has certified two new saltwater state fish records

A 178-pound spinner shark caught by Bobby Espinoza of Poteet on June 12 near Port Aransas is a new record It was five pounds heavier than the previous record caught in 1986, also off Port Aransas. Espinoza's shark was seven feet, one inch long

Also certified was a 10-pound, 7 3-ounce smooth puffer caught by Kenneth G. Fraser on May 25 in the Gulf of Mexico off South Padre Island The fish bested a five-pound, four-ounce puffer caught in 1986 as the state record

JC 11/23/88

BALD EAGLE SURVEY NEEDS
VOLUNTEER HELPERS

AUSTIN -- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is seeking volunteers to assist in the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey conducted by the department and the National Wildlife Federation

The survey is designed to help assess long-term trends in eagle populations in Texas, according to biologist Catrina Martin

The counts are planned for Jan 13-14, 1989. Local survey coordinators are needed for Lake Wright Patman in Bowie County; Lake Fork in Wood and Rains Counties; Lake Tawakoni in Hunt, Rains and Van Zandt Counties; Toledo Bend Reservoir in Newton, Shelby, Sabine and Panola Counties, and Lake Whitney in Hill and Bosque Counties

Local coordinators will work with the state survey coordinator in setting up the survey, assign observers to specific areas and complete survey forms, Martin said. Volunteer observers are needed for several of the sites

Interested persons should write Catrina Martin, Endangered Species Program, TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744, or call toll-free 1-800-792-1112. Prospective participants should contact the department by Dec 20, and specify the survey site they prefer

JC 11/23/88

JOINT PUBLIC INFORMATION
SESSIONS SCHEDULED

AUSTIN -- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the U S. Forest Service (USFS) will hold joint public information sessions concerning the Type II Wildlife Management Area Public Hunting Lands program and its applicability on the USFS lands in East and North Central Texas

All public information sessions are scheduled for 7 p.m. For additional information call toll-free 1-800-792-1112, ext 4505, or (512) 389-4505. The meeting dates and locations are: Dec 7, Rogers Building, Wise County Annex, north meeting room (basement), 105 E Walnut, Decatur; Dec 8, County Courthouse (third floor), Bonham; Dec 9, Houston Co Courthouse, Crockett; Dec. 12, Angelina Co. Courthouse, Lufkin; Dec 13, High School gymnasium, Zavalla; Dec 14, Sabine Co Courthouse, Hemphill; Dec 15, City Council Chambers, 300 Booth, Cleveland; and Dec 16, Montgomery Co Courthouse, Huntsville

JC 11/23/88

TEXAS TOP LARGEMOUTH BASS

#	WEIGHT (lb)	WEIGHT (oz)	LENGTH (inch)	ID	AGE (yrs)	RESERVOIR	DATE	ANGLER
1 *	17	10.70	27.50		10	Lake Fork	Nov-86	Mark Stevenson
2	17	4.16				Lake Fork	Feb-88	Larry Barnes
3 *	16	14.58	27.63	FLMB	10	Pinkston	Feb-86	Earl Crawford
4	16	12.32				Mill Creek	Mar-88	Herchel Brickey
5	16	9.44	26.00			Lake Fork	May-87	Guy Witherspoon
6	16	2.50	26.00		7	Gibbons Creek	Jan-88	Troy Johnson
7	16	1.00	27.50			Lake Fork	Mar-88	Tom Hallum
8	15	8.50	27.00			Lake Fork	Apr-87	Dennis Canada
9 *	15	8.00	25.75	F-1		Echo (private)	Feb-81	John Alexander Jr
10	15	3.75	27.50			Welsh	Dec-83	Bill Ockerhausen
11	15	3.00	27.00			Houston County	Mar-88	Terry Walling
12	15	2.00	27.50	FLMB		Jacksonville	Apr-86	Melvin Berry
13	14	14.00	27.00			Lake Fork	May-88	Art Keenom
14	14	13.28				Lake Fork	Mar-88	Robby Bickley
15	14	12.25	25.00		6	Lake Fork	Feb-88	M. L. George
16	14	10.00	26.50	FLMB	9	Mill Creek	Mar-86	Mike Reeve
17	14	8.80	28.00			Lake Murvaul	Feb-88	Larry Schubert
18	14	8.48	27.00			Lake Fork	Jul-88	Gaylan Wooldridge
19	14	8.00	28.50			Lake Fork	Apr-88	Jeff Neighbors
20	14	6.75	25.63			Jacksonville	Mar-86	Eddie Lumpkins
21	14	6.50				Houston County	Mar-86	Dan Bush
22	14	6.4	25.25			Mill Creek	Mar-88	James Jordan
23 *	14	5.00	26.63	F-1		Echo (private)	Jan-81	John Alexander Jr
24	14	3.50				Monticello	Feb-84	Jackie Walker
25	14	3.36	25.00			Murvaul	Mar-87	Stan Ritter
26 *	14	1.50	28.00	FLMB		Monticello	Feb-80	Jim Kimbell
27	14	1.00				Monticello	Jan-84	Max Roach
28	14	1.00	28.00			Pinkston	May-85	Ronnie Denard
29	14	0.32	27.25			Nacogdoches	Mar-86	Jimmy Williams
30	13	15.00	26.00			Lake Fork	Jul-87	Tony Clark
31	13	14.50	27.00	F-X	7	Lake Fork	Jun-86	Todd Hunter
32 +	13	14.00				Choke Canyon	Nov-88	T L. Rutherford
33	13	13.00	27.00			Jacksonville	Feb-86	Robert Parker
34	13	13.00	23.66	FLMB	9	Mill Creek	Mar-86	Mike Reeve
35	13	12.00				Houston County	Oct-85	Paul Sivy
36	13	12.00	26.00			Mill Creek	Sep-87	Don Gilley
37	13	11.68	27.00	FLMB		Private Lake	Sep-86	Bennie Boles
38	13	10.56	26.75		9	Mill Creek	Aug-86	Bill Ballard
39	13	10.56	24.75		9	Lake Benbrook	Feb-88	Bill Lynn
40	13	9.92	25.90			Private Lake	Oct-86	Lynn Kelley
41	13	9.76	25.50			Lake Fork	Apr-88	Kirk Balsley
42	13	9.50	25.00			Private Lake	Jan-87	Dan Berg
43	13	9.28	21.50		7	Lake Fork	Feb-88	Michael Kubecker
44	13	9.12	24.50			Lake Fork	Mar-87	Rodney Allen
45	13	9.00				Calaveras	Jul-84	Bill Guilliani
46	13	8.50	27.00		11	Nacogdoches	Apr-87	Keith Drewery
47 *	13	8.00	28.75			Medina	Jan-43	H. R. MaGee
48	13	8.00	26.00			Lake Fork	Feb-86	Alden Clifton
49	13	8.00	27.00			Possum Kingdom	Mar-86	R. Marshall
50	13	8.00	27.00			Houston County	Mar-86	Mark Hill

* State Record Status at one time. + = New Entry 11/8/88
 ID- FLMB = Florida bass, F-1 = 1st generation hybrid, and F-X = Later gen. hybrid.