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OCTOBER 1998

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TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

October 1998

★ GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION ★

- ★ **14 Colors** Take a photographic tour of autumn in Texas state parks, accompanied by Richard's expressive prose hinting of the clean, crisp days ahead. *by Richard Reynolds*
- ★ **22 Shelters with Style** From rustic cabins built by the Civilian Conservation Corps to a pueblo-style lodge and an inn reminiscent to a visit to Grandma's, state park accommodations can be relaxing and nostalgic. *by Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*

FEATURES

- ★ **32 Nocturnal Knights** Go along on a nocturnal jaunt to learn how to spot the regal and captivating owl, from long-eared to great-horned and from screech to barn. *by Paul Cañada*
- ★ **38 Barrier Treasure** At Padre Island National Seashore, an 80-mile-long, undeveloped stretch of barrier island, anglers can surf fish on the Gulf side or sample the wade fishing on the azure waters of the Laguna Madre. *by Phil H. Shook*
- ★ **44 Texas Grand Slam** Could you be the lucky hunter to win a dream hunting package this year? *by Steve Lightfoot*
- ★ **46 Whitetails on Kerr and Engeling** After a year of ideal weather conditions, white-tailed deer on these two management areas attained peak body condition. *by Steve Lightfoot*
- ★ **49 Wildlife Expo Gear & Go Guide** Here's a preview of some of the gear and services that will be available at this month's Texas Wildlife Expo. *by Jaelyn Hardy*

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COVERS

Front: A mullein plant and fallen maple leaves create an autumn tableau at Lost Maples State Natural Area. For more scenes of the season in state parks, turn to page 14. Photo © Richard Reynolds. Wista SP 4x5 camera, Symmar 135mm 5.6 lens, 1 second @f/32, Fuji film.

Inside Back: The courtyard at Indian Lodge extends a warm welcome to guests. For more on state park accommodations turn to page 22. Photo by Earl Nottingham. Nikon N90S camera, Nikkor 35-135 zoom lens, 1/125 @ f/8, Fuji Provia film.

Back: Flyfishing in the Gulf of Mexico awaits visitors to Padre Island National Seashore. See story on page 38. Photo © David J. Sams. Nikon F-4 camera, Nikkor 35-70mm zoom lens, 1/250 second @ f/11, Fuji film.

For the latest and greatest parks and wildlife information, check out our web site <<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>>.

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© DAVID J. SAMs

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© GRADY ALLEN

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TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

OCTOBER 1998, Vol. 56, No. 10

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These warm autumn days are the beginning of the year for us. The beginning of our new fiscal year fell on September 1 and, like the other New Year, it is a time for us to take stock and look ahead. With good rains in August, and returning flights of teal and mourning doves, it is also a time to remind ourselves how blessed we are to live in a state so profoundly blessed with heritage, beauty and natural diversity.

We celebrate the blessings of our outdoor heritage at Texas Wildlife Expo on our headquarters grounds in Austin each year during the first weekend in October and everyone is invited. Expo, now recognized nationwide as one of America's premier outdoor festivals, is the primary symbol of a culture at Texas Parks and Wildlife based on outreach and our commitment to selling the virtues of conservation and outdoor recreation to all who will listen.

This commitment is vividly reflected on the pages of this magazine as the fine hand of our new art director, Mark Mahorsky, manifests itself in this issue. Mark comes to us with a distinguished publishing background at Rodale Press, where he designed for both *Bicycling* and *Prevention* magazines.

The commitment is also expressed in our aggressive

marketing this year of the Super Combo license and Texas Grand Slam, both of which are doing great!

But even as new recruits arrive in our ranks and successes mount, there continue to be rough spots in the road. My colleagues increasingly struggle to provide all of the quality opportunities the people of Texas have come to expect and we ask more of them each day, not less. This past year, their efforts met the additional setback of a punishing drought.

These stresses have caused some to question the businesslike approach adopted by Parks and Wildlife to fund its operations and to serve you as its customers through sound fiscal management, revenue generation, proactive marketing and more. The bottom line is that quality of the outdoor experience in Texas has never been better — and I believe there are better days ahead.

We face many serious conservation challenges in Texas in the coming years, but we will meet them head-on with your help.

We survived the drought and Texas Wildlife Expo is here. It's time to be thankful, to celebrate and to look ahead.

Not behind.

ANDREW SANSOM, *Executive Director*

COMING NEXT MONTH



EARL NOTTINGHAM

PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER

Russell Browder touts the three virtues — largemouth bass, saltwater redfish, and channel catfish — that lure anglers to Waco's Tradinghouse Creek Reservoir. Browder argues that this "power plant lake in a plain brown wrapper" proves that there "is more to lakes than meets the eye."

TALLY HO, Y'ALL

Jerry the CPA, Sydney the pharmacist, and Noah the ranch foreman are among the riders on an East Texas foxhunt. Nobody gets "hacked off," even though the hunt takes no foxes.

A FORD, A .410,
AND A FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND

The keys to wisdom and happiness, according to Childress school teacher Russell Graves, are simple and few, and are to be found in his photos of hunting with dogs.

Next month we'll follow the bounds along with Ruth O'Hara's Longacre Hunt of Marquez.



RUNNING THE GAMUT

You would need only to walk down the short hallway of the editorial offices here at *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine to experience a microcosm of the diverse interests we serve among our readership. A collection of vintage *TP&W* covers decorates Mary Bevill's office, while Mary-Love Bigony adorns hers with illustrations of birds and mammals. (Mary-Love also reigns as our queen of state history.) Bill Reaves toils beneath the gaze of two buck mounts flanked by plaques of antlers; and state maps (not one, but two) cover



Front: Mary-Love Bigony, Jennifer Wallace (Stone/Wallace Communications); Back: Susan L. Ebert, Rebecca Behan (editorial research assistant), Mary Bevill, Jim Stone (Stone/Wallace Communications), Dick J. Reavis, Mark Mahorsky, Bill Reaves, Elaine Acker (retail marketing manager).

the back wall of Dick Reavis' office, along with an "endangered resource" poster of Volkswagen Beetles (of which Dick has not one, but two). Dick professes to be a "bug man" in more ways than one, as he's discovered he has a latent interest in entomology. A look around my office hints at my love of hiking and horseback riding, as well as interests in wing shooting and angling. We've kept our newest staffer, Mark Mahorsky, too busy for him to be decorating yet, but know that he's a passionate mountain biker as well as an angler. Perhaps the one activity we all agree on is birding.

In this small group, we run the gamut of ways we Texans enjoy the outdoors. With the diversity of the viewpoints that each of us brings to our labors, and the

commonality of our love and respect for the natural world, we strive to bring you the very best writing and photography in celebration of the Texas outdoors experience. Sometimes, we even agree how to do it!

David J. Sams, whose photographs illustrate this month's "Barrier Treasure," recently informed us that he has won two awards in the 1997 Outdoor Writers of American Association (OWAA) competition for photographs appearing in *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. His photograph "Family Camp" from the January 1997 issue brought him a 1st Place in the camping/backpacking category and "Panfish People" (February 1997) won a 1st Place in the boating category.

Well done, David!

NOT JUST HUNTING

➤ I understand, respect and empathize with you for presenting an outdoors magazine that appeals to the hunter and nonhunter alike. You do a great job. I must take exception to the caption that accompanied your August back cover of a sandhill crane. While it's understood in the context of an article on hunting that the crosshairs might as well be on the animal in the photo, this is not the case for photos elsewhere in your magazine. When you captioned the sandhill crane as a hunting target you took away the option of nonhunters to enjoy a fine photograph of a magnificent bird.

Greg Pasztor
San Antonio

MORE HUNTING

➤ I am a 33-year-old Texan who has grown up with your magazine. I live to fish and hunt and I love Texas. Each month I eagerly look forward to getting your magazine in the mail.

I would like to see you do more on hunting in Texas, maybe a once-a-year special hunting review. I know you already do a hunting forecast, but I'm talking about a thick magazine with last year's kills, neat hunting stands, regional forecasts, maps and other good hunting stuff.

Please keep up the good work.

Rick Underwood

LESS HUNTING

Sadly, your magazine has become another hunting- and fishing-oriented publication. If that were what I wanted, there already are plenty to choose from. I valued the wonderful photography and the information about our Texas parks and wildlife and the conservation thereof. My renewal is due in November, and I rather doubt I will be responding.

Linda S. Bailey
Katy

THROUGH THICK AND THIN

I took advantage today of your two-year offer for \$19.23. That makes my subscription good until August 2001!

I received my first issue in 1950, which makes it more than 50 years that I have been a continuous subscriber. I know that isn't a record, but I believe it should be above average.

I am almost 78 years old and have enjoyed many fine issues of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*. I hope this makes your letters

Stuart Fink
Carrollton

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Thank you for your bowhunting article ("The Heart of A Bowhunter," September 1998). It was refreshing to read a well-written article as well as get some good advice. It would be nice to read some more articles that have a this "personal experience" flavor and raise the bar on hunting skills.

I have grown weary of the "this is a bow, it has cams, this is an arrow, it is made of aluminum" articles. I would like to see more articles on how to be a truly great hunter. Articles on how to stalk, trail wounded game, train a dog to hunt and set a decoy spread would be great.

section so I can show my grandkids!
Keep up the good work.

Joe Peschka
Vidor

■ Susan Ebert, Publisher & Editor:
"Thank you for making my day, Mr. Peschka! As we seek and examine the best ways to serve a growing constituency of outdoors lovers, it's wonderful to know that ones such as yourself have known and loved this magazine for so long. May your grandchildren become life-long readers as well!"

FOLLOWUP ON CATCLAW ALERT

✂ I read with interest the letter "Catclaw Alert" in the February issue. I had never heard that the catclaw mimosa is highly toxic. I wonder if our Arizona variety, *Mimosa biuncifera*, is also toxic. Here in Arizona we call the cat-clawed mimosa the wait-a-minute bush. The plant we call catclaw is *Acacia greggii*. A friend of mine had a localized hemolytic reaction after falling on a branch of this acacia and getting many punctures in her leg. I haven't been able to find out anything about the toxin in my field manuals. Do you know of a publication where I could find information on the toxicity of the toxic mimosas and acacias?

Sylvia Lee

■ Jackie Poole, TPW botanist: "You're not the only one who never heard that catclaw mimosas are highly toxic. I have searched through books on Texas flora and the World Wide Web, and I found nothing on the toxicity of mimosas. However, catclaw acacias are toxic to livestock. But there are no reports of human reactions. You might be interested to know that the University of Arizona maintains a web page on poisonous plants and animals in Arizona."

CORRECTION

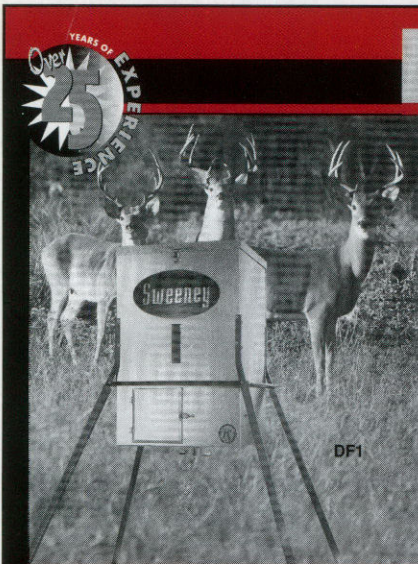
The photograph of the devil's cigar fungus in the September issue should have read: © James Murray.

We regret the error.

Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Our address is 3000 South IH 35, Suite 120, Austin, TX 78704. Our fax number is 512-707-1913.

✂ Letters preceded by this symbol were delivered to us via e-mail. Our e-mail address is: <magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us>

We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity.



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**TEXAS
OUTDOOR
ADVENTURE
SERIES**



Trail Mix

Edited by Mary-Love Bigony



© PEGGY PARKS

Cowboy Up at Big Bend



Saddle up for an up-close encounter with the many natural splendors of the Chihuahuan Desert high country during a guided trail ride this fall through Big Bend Ranch State Park. Trail ride dates are October 15–18 and November 13–15.

The horseback trek takes riders from the corrals at Saucedo, ranch headquarters, to the scenic backcountry of this still mostly wild, 275,000-acre state park along the

Rio Grande operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The trail riders have a chance to view picturesque canyons, desert springs, Indian rock art and a dazzling array of fauna and flora in rugged areas of the park that are difficult to access by other means. Visiting saddle tramps will sleep in the ranch bunkhouse, eat cowboy breakfasts and country-style dinners and hear Western tunes performed by live cowboy entertainers.

The routes are customized by the guides to take advantage of the best display of desert flora and recent sightings of notable birds and other wildlife. Photographers Jim Carr of Houston and Peggy Parks of Lockhart will lead the trail rides.

The \$475-per-person fee includes overnight accommodations, meals, horse and tack. For more information or to reserve one of the limited spots, call Carr at 281-486-8070 or Parks at 512-398-7627.

Mariners Are Saying "Buoy, Oh Buoy!"

Mariners can obtain the latest coastal and offshore weather observations through a new phone service called Dial-A-Buoy.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Data Buoy Center began posting observations on its website <<http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov>> in 1996. With Dial-A-Buoy, reports are now accessible without a computer.

The reports include the latest wind direction, speed, gusts, air temperature, water temperature and sea level pressure. Buoys also provide details on significant wave height, swells, wind-wave heights, and some provide wave direction.

To access Dial-A-Buoy, dial 228-688-1948 using any touch-tone or cell phone. Enter the five-digit (or character) station identifier to hear the latest buoy or Coastal-Marine Automated Network observations.

A complete list of station identifiers is available on the website. Telephone users can search an index of stations by geographic area to find the appropriate station identifier. The search requires the latitude and longitude for the area of interest. Callers also have the option to receive a location map by fax that lists station identifiers.

Numerous boaters combine these observations with forecasts to determine their sea-voyage risks. Many have said the reports have saved wasted trips — even lives.

Splendor In The Sky

Texas State Photographer Wyman Meinzer turns his gaze upward from the Texas landscape in his new book, *Texas Sky*, set for publication this month by the University of Texas Press.

Whether capturing the ferocity of a blue norther or the ephemeral sheen of a rainbow, Wyman showcases the magnificence of the skies above us that shape and color our view of the land beneath our feet.

"Recording the vibrant and sometimes forbidding nature of the sky has been one of the most enjoyable endeavors of my career," remarks Wyman. Accompanying more than 100 of Wyman's photographs are observations from those who also have witnessed what he has captured through his lens. Quotations include comments from nineteenth century frontiersmen such as George Kendall, Captain Randolph Marcy, and cavalymen from the Red River wars of the 1870s as they first gazed upon an unfenced Texas, and encompass present-day impressions from Lubbock poet Andy Wilkinson, Fort Belnap archivist Barbara Ledbetter and our own Executive Director Andrew Sansom.

An introductory essay by John Graves sets the stage for Wyman's breathtaking photos. The 132-page hardbound book will sell for \$29.95.



Rock Art Rally

The Sixth Annual Rock Art Rendezvous and Celebration of the Land, a tribute to the Lower Pecos rock art and its creators, will take place October 9–12.

Pictographs along the region's canyon walls are dated at 2,500 B.C., older than the Egyptian pyramids, and comprise the largest repository of prehistoric rock art in North America. The Rock Art Foundation, sponsor of the rendezvous, is spearheading their preservation.

The event is centered at the Galloway White Shaman Preserve,

40 miles west of Del Rio. On October 10, specialists in the lifeways of early Pecos peoples will present demonstrations, and guided tours to the White Shaman and Casper pictographs are scheduled. Seven different tours to rock art sites will be available on October 11.

Camping is available at the Galloway Preserve and Seminole Canyon State Historical Park. For more information, including costs, call the Rock Art Foundation at 1-888-525-9907 or visit their website: <www.rockart.org>.



The Warden Chronicles

"But, I was practicing my casting technique, Your Honor!"

Johnson County Game Warden Joe Bostick appeared in court for a fishing license ticket he had written a subject. The female subject, who had been fishing with her husband on the Brazos River, pleaded "not guilty." When questioned why she was not guilty, she stated she had indeed been fishing; but when she saw the game warden approaching, she tried to reel the line in, but it had gotten snagged on a log. She was found guilty.

STATE PARK Scrapbook

A LEGENDARY TEXAS DANCE

BY EMILY CARTER

My first experience with the dance at Garner State Park occurred many years before I began working for Texas Parks and Wildlife and the state parks. Thanksgiving 1961, during my freshman year at college, I spent the holiday in Leakey visiting my roommate's family. Her brothers took us dancing on Saturday night and with great excitement she and I began teaching them the newest dance craze from San Antonio: the Twist! In no time at all we were asked to leave — the Twist was just too wild for the Garner Dance in 1961.

Although dance styles come and go, the Garner Dance has roots deep in country and western. For more than 60 years, boys and girls have been two-stepping and waltzing under the stars in the rustic stone dance pavilion. Beloved country tunes are never out of date on the park's jukebox: *Fraulein*, *Tennessee Waltz*, *Waltz Across Texas* and *Blackland Farmer*.

The dance began when young men from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) arrived in the Frio River Canyon in the 1930s to establish a construction camp for developing the state park. It was a grim era, with more than half of the male population under age 25 out of work. But the CCC employed them to build parks, rehabilitate forests and control soil erosion.

In January 1937, Tex Rodes, a *San Antonio Express* reporter, motored out to the construction site. "In the rugged hills we found, at Garner State Park, a village in which not a woman resides but in which every stick and stone is in its right place and every one of the ... cabins is spotless...."

The men worked hard six days a week building roads, cutting trees, laying stone by hand. But they played hard, too. Ball games, boxing and tennis were a significant part of camp life and they also hosted dances for their neighbors from local towns.

"In the 1930s country folks all went dancing," says Bill



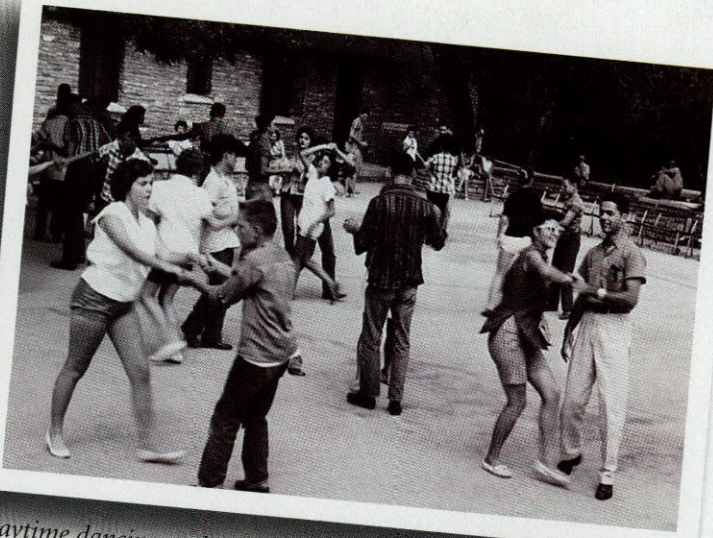
CCC-era dances gave young people a chance to have some fun during the grim days of the Depression.



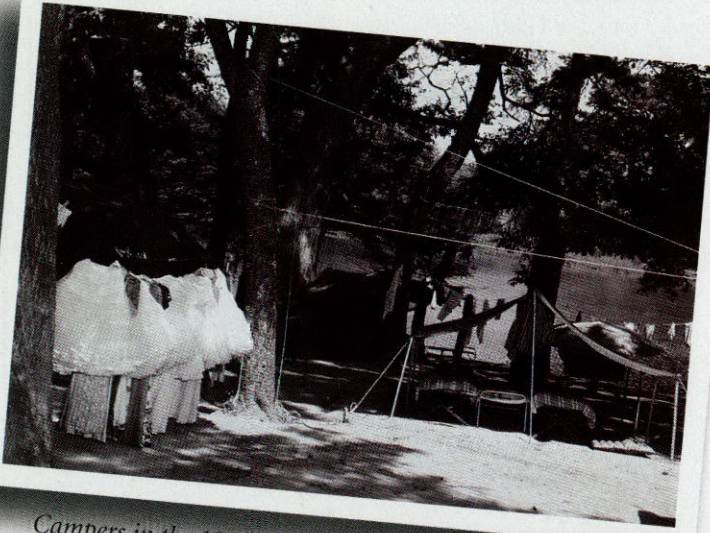
The camp recreation hall served as a dance floor on weekends and a classroom in the evenings after work.

Adair, a retired construction foreman for Texas Parks and Wildlife. "I was just a boy but since we lived in Uvalde, I tagged along with my father, who worked as a carpenter at the park site."

"Dances were held about once a month at the camp recreation hall," says Rosco Bowers, who was a National



Daytime dancing at the Garner Park Pavilion ca. 1950s.



Campers in the 1950s came with petticoats for the nightly dance at the Pavilion.



Line dancing at the 1988 Roy Head dance reunion.

Park Service foreman at the camp. “We danced to fiddlers and sometimes to a band. The Adolph Hoffner Band is one I remember.”

And, romance bloomed. “The girl I married came to the dance with another boy and I took a shine to her, so I got him real drunk and I took her home,” says Henry Culp, one of the CCC men. “We’ve been married 61 years!”

His wife, Ollyne Gorden Culp, says, “The girls around here all looked forward to the dance; we always had a good time.”

And some, like the Culp, found love, started a family and returned to the dance every summer.

“When the cement slab was poured for the dance pavilion, we had a big dance out there,” says Bill Adair. The pavilion is nestled into a bluff overlooking the Frio River and presents expansive vistas of the canyon.

“The cement made a real nice dance floor. My kids were raised up learning to dance out there. When they were in high school, I didn’t want them to drive so I would load up the car with girls and take them to the dance. In the 1950s girls wore those big crinolines; what a sight, all those skirts stuffed into the car and flared up! My grandkids are in their 30s now, and they still go out to the dance when they come back here. They all think it’s the best place in the world,” says Mrs. Culp.

“Folks as far away as San Antonio and Houston knew that Garner State Park was the place to go if you wanted to hang out with friends and see great talent perform,” says Bill Adair. B.J. Thomas, Roy Head, Johnny Rodriguez, Neil Ford and the Fantastics and Dean Scott all appeared at the park early in their careers.

By the late 1980s, I was working for Texas State Parks and had the opportunity to help put together a special dance reunion featuring Roy Head’s Band.

Mr. Head faced a personal family tragedy the day before that performance but he not only kept his show date, he went up on stage and turned on his performer’s magic. He sang and played, thoroughly entertaining the 1,500 visitors who had traveled out to see him. To me it was a powerful lesson in showmanship to see this man, clearly distraught, quietly walk on stage and give a professional performance.

The Garner Dance bloomed under the stars when lonely young men invited their neighbors over for Saturday night. It surely is the longest running outdoor dance in the state, one that is deep in the hearts and lives of many Texans — y’all come! ☆

The Garner State Park Song

By Ronnie Riggs and Gary Goss

*In the western park of Texas,
90 miles from San Antonio,
there's a place I go each summer,
when I get the urge to roam.*

*I'd stand out on the highway,
if I couldn't get the ride I want,
to Garner State Park.*

*Let's go to Garner State Park!
C'mon along to Garner State Park!*

*The cutest girls from Texas,
and from everywhere,
they trade their city slicker clothes,
for some boots and western wear.*

*We swam all through the day,
and we danced when it got dark,
at Garner State Park.*

*Let's go to Garner State Park!
We gotta go to Garner State Park!*

*At the dance I met a girl,
she was from ol' Houston town,
she loved to two-step to the songs,
she was the cutest girl around.*

*We walked down to the water,
found a big rock,
began to talk,
at Garner State Park.*

I wanna go to Garner State Park!

*Next thing I knew it was 4 a.m.,
She said my mother's surely worried,
you know about where I am.*

*And with the Texas sky above,
we couldn't help but fall in love,
at Garner State Park.*

We love Garner State Park!

*Well, the summer it was over,
and we had to say goodbye,
We said, "We'll see each other next year,"
as a tear fell from her eye.*

*When I came I knew no sorrow,
Now I'm leaving with a broken heart,
From Garner State Park.*

*Let's go to Garner State Park!
We gotta go to Garner State Park!*

*Oh, but I'll be back again next year,
I'll be back again next year,
I'll be back again next year,
I'll be back again next year,
I'll be back again next year.*

ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

OCTOBER

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

- Oct. 3: 75th Anniversary Celebration, Fort Griffin SHP, Albany, 915-762-3592
Oct. 3: 75th Anniversary Celebration, Lake Colorado City SP, Colorado City, 915-728-3931
Oct. 17: 75th Anniversary Celebration, Lubbock Lake Landmark SHP, Lubbock, 806-765-0737

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

- Oct. 3: 75th Anniversary Open House, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100
Oct. 10: Dedication of National Historic Landmark, Bastrop SP, Bastrop, 512-321-2101
Oct. 14: Eisenhower Birthday Ceremony, Eisenhower Birthplace SHP, Denison, 903-465-8908
Oct. 24: Fall Festival, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215
Oct. 31: 1998 Ottine Swamp-Fest/Open House, Palmetto SP, Gonzales, 830-672-3266

PINEYWOODS

- Oct. 3: Annual Emmaus Christian Service Center Walk-a-Thon, Daingerfield SP, Daingerfield, 903-645-2921

GULF COAST

- Oct. 10: Come Fly With Us, Galveston Island SP, Galveston, 409-737-1222
Oct. 17: Scout Appreciation Day, Lake Houston SP, New Caney, 281-354-6881

HILL COUNTRY

- Oct. 2-4: Texas Wildlife Expo, TPWD Headquarters, Austin, 1-800-792-1112 (in Austin, 389-8950)
Oct. 10: Equestrian Ride, Hill Country SNA, Bandera, 830-796-4413
Oct. 17: 75th Anniversary Celebration, Kerrville-Schreiner SP, Kerrville, 830-257-5392
Oct. 17: 75th Anniversary Celebration, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, Stonewall, 830-644-2252
Oct. 31: Haunted History Evening, Landmark Inn SHP, Castroville, 830-931-2133

BIG BEND COUNTRY

- Oct. 17: Fort Lancaster Annual Living History Day, Fort Lancaster SHP, Sheffield, 915-836-4391
Oct. 24-25: 4th Annual Interpretive Fair, Hueco Tanks SP, El Paso, 915-857-1135

NOVEMBER

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

- Nov. 3: Stephen F. Austin's Birthday Celebration, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 409-885-3613

HILL COUNTRY

- Nov. 28: Classy Coyote Run, Garner State Park, Concan, 210-232-6132

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

- Nov. 14: 75th Anniversary Celebration, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, Mission, 210-585-1107



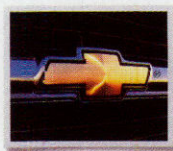
*The largest
sport utility vehicle
on the face
of the planet.*

Always was.

Still is.



CHEVY™ SUBURBAN®



LIKE A ROCK

COLORS

A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY BY RICHARD REYNOLDS

Autumn bursts forth in a heady rush of remembrance — the air becomes crisp, scents seem more pronounced and the colors around us become more vivid. Here, Richard Reynolds offers his artistic interpretation of the season we all anticipate.



ABOVE: After a productive day of photographing russet-hued baldcypress trees in the swamps of Martin Dies, Jr. State Park, I spotted some blazing patches of color through the dense pine forest. Pushing my way through the green thicket I found this scene of neon cypresses ignited by the setting sun.

RIGHT: Atlanta State Park is a lush jewel of parkland on the southern shore of Wright Patman Lake. The rich mix of conifers and hardwoods makes for spectacular color in the fall. One of my favorite autumn trees is the American sweetgum. Crimson, orange, gold, rust, green and even purple leaves can be found on one tree. These leaves, found under one such specimen on a misty, cold morning last November, had formed a mat completely covering the ground.







LEFT: As I hiked through Lost Maples State Natural Area one chilly November morning, I passed through a grassy meadow adjacent to the Sabinal River. Sporadic bursts of wind had blown numerous fallen maple leaves about and deposited them in random patterns on the verdant carpet.

ABOVE: Working my way up the Sabinal River canyon in Lost Maples State Natural Area a few years ago, I came upon these absolutely white, bare trees near the water's edge. In the bracing cold of a November morning they provided such a stark counterpoint to the tapestry of autumn maples behind them that I was concerned the transparency film I was shooting might not be able to handle the contrast range. It took several different exposure brackets, but I was able to capture the rendition pictured here.





BELOW: Daingerfield State Park in Northeast Texas typically puts on one of the finest displays of autumn color in the state. The beauty of this shoreline scene is enhanced by its reflection in the waters of Lake Daingerfield, with maples, oaks, gums and dogwoods contributing to the spectacle. I stationed myself in 12 inches of cold water on the north end of the lake one crisp November morning and captured this shot just a few minutes after sunrise.

RIGHT: As I hiked along a nature trail at Martin Dies, Jr. State Park I noticed a black gum tree shedding a few of its leaves with each gentle gust of wind. Some of them landed on a nearly solid carpet of duckweed covering a swampy inlet of B.A. Steinhagen Lake. The result was this image of contrasting colors and shapes.





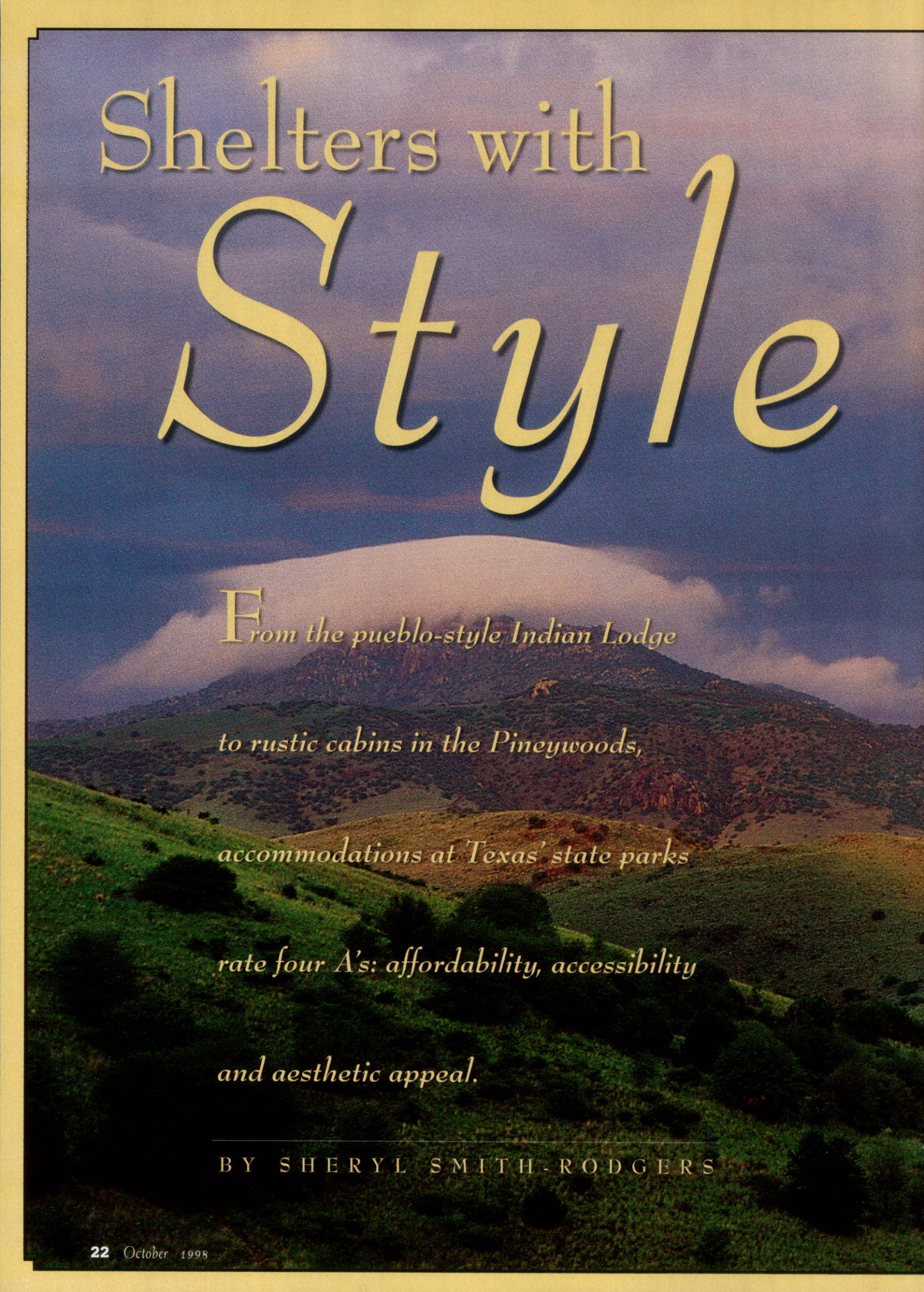




LEFT: Palo Duro Canyon State Park in the Texas Panhandle typically provides stark contrasts between the rich reds of its formations and the azure skies above. One October day I was stunned to find this scene along the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River, which winds its way through the canyon. The brilliant, deep yellow and lush greens of the cottonwood tree were accentuated by the brick red of the bluff and the clear blue of the cloudless sky.

ABOVE: One of the things that makes autumn leaves stand out so spectacularly is the contrasting green of the conifers around them. The enveloping cold mist of a late-October morning had made the colors of Lost Maples State Natural Area even more saturated. I found the emerald green of this juniper to be stunning in itself, but even more so against the background of reds, oranges and yellows of the Sabinal River.

T H E  E N D



Shelters with *Style*

From the pueblo-style Indian Lodge

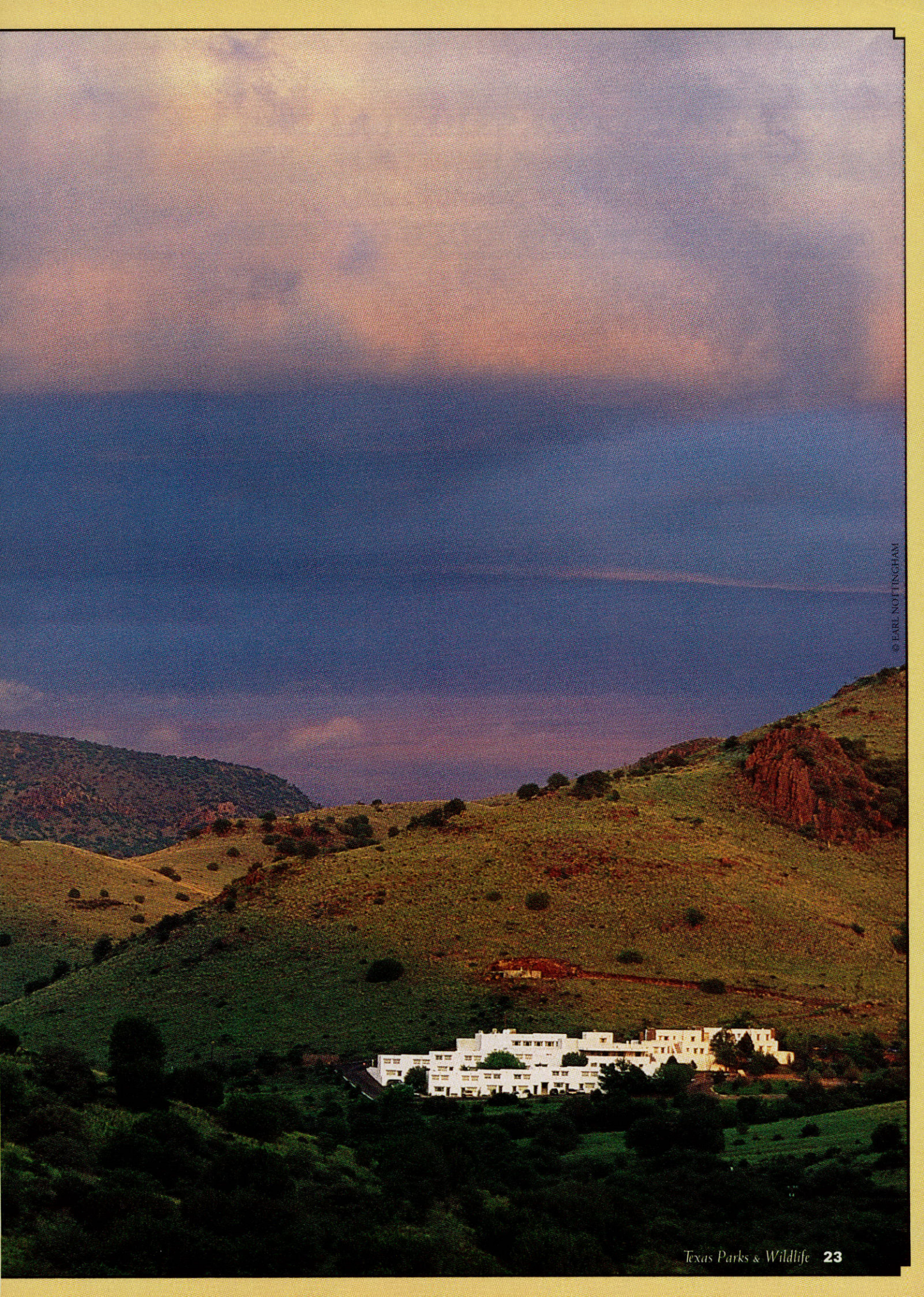
to rustic cabins in the Pineywoods,

accommodations at Texas' state parks

rate four A's: affordability, accessibility

and aesthetic appeal.

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS



© EARL NOTTINGHAM

Two or three times a year,

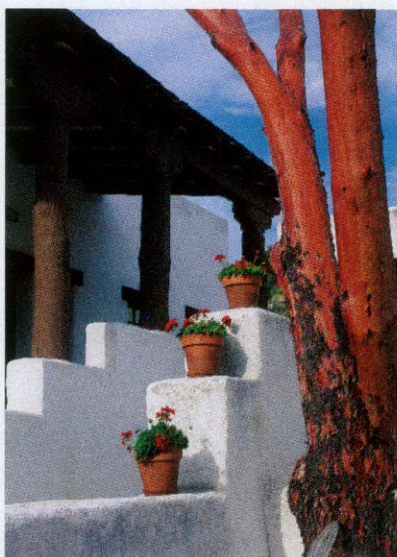
Louis Rodriguez and his family pack their suitcases, lock their home in the Houston suburb of Bellaire, and hit the highway to visit relatives who live west of San Antonio. The trips give Rodriguez, his wife, Barbara Thorwegen, and their one-year-old daughter an excuse to stay overnight at one of their favorite places — Landmark Inn State Historical Park in Castroville.

"It's nostalgic, like visiting Grandma again," he says of the two-story inn, built in stages beginning in 1849. "That's the feeling I get. We love sitting on the porch, visiting with the other people who stay there, and watching the fireflies in the summer."

night at Grandmother's house with rocking chairs on the front porch — that's the kind of memory innkeeper June Secrist hopes guests will take back home with them. "We want to give people a chance to stay in a past time period," Secrist says. "There are no televisions or phones here, and most of the people who come like that."

From a trip back in time at Landmark Inn to a spectacular view of the Palo Duro Canyon from a cabin window, Texas State Parks offer more in the way of overnight accommodations than traditional campsites. For visitors who prefer not to rough it, "our lodges and cabins provide an opportunity to experience the natural and cultural resources of Texas without having to leave all the comforts and conveniences of home," says Robert Moss, reservations director with the Central Reservations Center in Austin.

In addition to Landmark Inn, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department operates two other hotels, the pueblo-style Indian Lodge in Davis Mountains State Park and the Spanish-style San Solomon Springs Courts in Balmorhea State Park. TPW also offers 85 cabins in North, East and Central Texas. Scattered among 10 state parks, the cabins vary in architectural style from rustic log structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Depression to contemporary wood-frame cottages constructed within the past decade.



Indian Lodge, previous page, lies nestled in the Davis Mountains. CCC crews built the original lodge, and much of the CCC-built furniture remains in the rooms, below, and lobby, right. Cozy rooms welcome guests to Landmark Inn, far right. Cabins at Lake Brownwood, bottom right, are rustic but comfortable.



EARL NOTTINGHAM

HOTELS

Vistas of the canyon and quiet interludes on a rugged mountain trail entice visitors to Indian Lodge in West Texas. Encircled by Davis Mountains State Park, the original 15 rooms of the lodge were constructed by the CCC during the 1930s, with smooth white walls of adobe bricks more than 18 inches thick. Pine logs form ceiling beams, window frames and door frames. Heavy cedar furniture, constructed at Bastrop State Park by CCC workers, remains in use today.

In 1967, TPW modernized the lodge and added 24 rooms, a swimming pool, a meeting facility and a restaurant. Some rooms open onto a central courtyard planted with native cacti and flowers. Wooden benches offer a place to sit and perhaps catch a glimpse of a passing hummingbird.

All rooms include telephones, televisions with cable and daily maid service. "People love Indian Lodge because it's rustic and charming," says manager David Bischofhausen. "And for a lot of our visitors, it's a family tradition to come here. We have grandparents who come with their children and grandchildren." Reservations can be made one year in advance and should be acquired at least three to four months ahead of a visit.

Near the foothills of the Davis Mountains, San Solomon Springs Courts at Balmorhea State Park provides conve-





EMERSON NOTTINGHAM

nient accommodations for visitors planning to jump into the park's number-one attraction. "People come here to swim in one of the world's largest spring-fed pools," says Bischofhausen. "A lot of folks SCUBA dive, too, because of the water's clarity. We have SCUBA instructors in the region so people stay in the courts and take lessons."

Built by the CCC in 1940, San Solomon Springs Courts has whitewashed plaster walls and a red-tiled roof. Ten of its units include kitchenettes (no cooking utensils or dishes provided). All have televisions, but none have telephones. To guarantee a room, visitors should make reservations at least three months in advance for a weekend stay and two weeks in advance for an overnight visit.

West of San Antonio, Landmark Inn State Historical Park in Castroville perches above the banks of the Medina River. Constructed of plaster and stone, the two-story hotel/store in the 1870s served travelers and immigrants who passed through on the old San Antonio-El Paso road. In the 1940s,

Balmorhea State Park's huge spring-fed swimming pool tempts desert travelers, and San Solomon Springs Courts provides convenient accommodations for pool-going park visitors. At Landmark Inn State Historical Park in Castroville guests take a step back into the past with no televisions or telephones. The inn and its gardens offer country charm and a getaway from the frantic pace of city life.



EARL NOTTINGHAM

Ruth Lawler, a sister of the owner, restored the main building and renamed it Landmark Inn.

Today, the eight-room inn, restored to reflect Miss Lawler's era, welcomes guests eager to experience a slower pace of life. Simply furnished with a mix of antiques from the 1850s through the 1930s, the small rooms sleep two or three adults. Four have private bathrooms while the other four share bathrooms. In the summer, innkeeper June Secrist picks figs, peaches and loquats to accompany guests' continental breakfast.

For special occasions, Landmark Inn offers a one-night, "romantic weekend for two" (\$99) complete with dinner and wine at a nearby restaurant, flowers in the room, and breakfast delivered in the morning. A two-night, "romantic tour of Castroville for two" (\$399) includes two evening meals plus wine, a gourmet lunch, flowers, a gift basket, and a private tour of two local homes and the state park. Visitors wanting to stay at Landmark Inn should make reservations at least three months in advance for a weekend and two weeks in advance for a weekday.

C A B I N S

CENTRAL TEXAS

Constructed by the CCC of native red sandstone with pine and cedar logs, the cabins at Bastrop State Park are a feature of the Lost Pines region. "When people think of cabins, they think of pine trees, too, so they just naturally come here," says park manager Brent Leisure. "They also come to golf, swim in the pool, fish in our 10-acre lake and use our hiking trails. We're busy throughout the year so it's best to make cabin reservations for a weekend 11 months in advance."

Built in the architectural style deemed "National Park Service rustic," the cabins are patterned after structures built in national parks across the country during the same period. "Their walls are as thick as three feet at ground level so they seem to mushroom out of the ground," Leisure says. "Each one has a unique floor plan and a different character." The cabins, which sleep from two to six people, have air conditioning, wood-burning fireplaces, and microwave ovens. Linens and towels are provided.

TPW's most popular cabins — also built by the CCC — are at Garner State Park on the Frio River in the Hill Country. "We have visitors who came here as newlyweds and are still coming as grandparents," says manager Jim Wilson. "They especially love the cabins because they're so close to the pavilion, where we have outdoor dances in the summer, and because they're in a shady area with lots of pecan and live oak trees." (For more on the Garner dances, see this

month's State Park Scrapbook.)

Thirteen of the 17 one-bedroom cabins, constructed of limestone and cypress planks, have rock fireplaces. All sleep six on three double beds and have attic fans. Kitchens have stoves, ovens and refrigerators. Linens and towels are provided. Because of the park's popularity, Wilson recommends that people make cabin reservations 11 months in advance.

At Kerrville-Schreiner State Park, staffers converted a former office building into a one-bedroom, furnished cabin that sleeps six. Tucked beneath a canopy of gnarled live oaks, the surrounding grounds and a large concrete water trough behind the cabin attract a regular parade of wildlife. A stone walkway winds up to the front door of the cabin, which is covered with natural cypress siding. "The cabin is located as far back as you can get on paved roads in the park," says manager Tim Hufstedler. "It's somewhat secluded so it makes you feel like you're out in the middle of nowhere, even though you're not."

Central air and heat make the inside temperature comfortable year around, and the cabin's television has satel-

lite programming. The kitchen is equipped with a microwave oven, double hot-plate stove top, a small refrigerator, a toaster and a coffee maker. Visitors should bring their own cooking utensils, towels and sheets. Hufstedler recommends that people make cabin reservations six months in advance for weekends and holidays, and eight weeks in advance for weekday visits.

Though not as secluded, the stone cabins built by the CCC at Lake Brownwood State Park sit on a ridge overlooking the lake. "Visitors who rent them get the best of both worlds — air-conditioning and the rustic atmosphere of the CCC era," says manager Mike Krahn. "People use the cabins for everything from honeymoons to family reunions and everything in between." As many as 102 people can sleep in 17 one- and two-bedroom cabins plus two large lodges. With exposed beam ceilings and stone interiors, the cabins have kitchens with stove and refrigerator, wood-burning fireplaces and central heat. Reservations are easier to obtain during winter months, though Krahn recommends that people make them at least six months in advance year around. Linens and towels are provided and all cabins and lodges have restrooms with showers.

NORTH TEXAS

Among the state's newest, most modern cabins are those at Cooper Lake State Park in the South Sulphur Unit northeast of Dallas. "The majority of them overlook the lake so you can sit on the back porch and watch the sun set over the water," says manager Paul Harris. "We have a great swimming beach plus hiking and equestrian trails. And the fishing in Cooper Lake is unbelievable."

Completed in 1996, the 15 wooden-frame cabins have one bedroom with two double beds. Each has central air and heat, a kitchen with a microwave oven, range top, refrigerator, coffee maker, and a rear deck with a barbecue grill and picnic table. During the summer, visitors usually can book a weekday visit at least one week in advance. However, weekend stays require at least a two-month advance reservation and major holidays (such as Labor and Memorial Days) at least 10 months in advance.

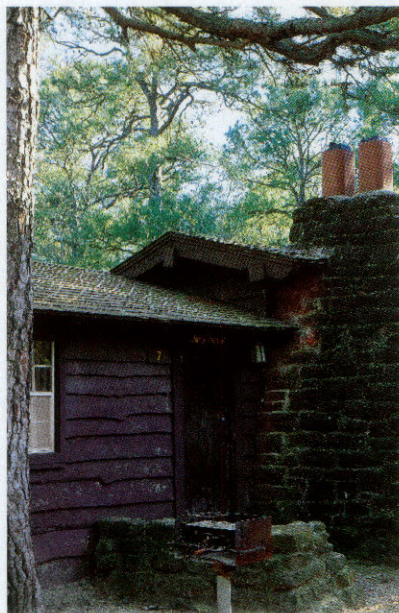
South of Amarillo, three stone cabins constructed by the CCC cling to the canyon's rim at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. "They have quite a view because they're literally hanging on the edge of the canyon," says manager Larry Scruggs. "Each has a stone patio that's built just as close to the rim as you can build them. Families use them during the summer when they come to see the play, *Texas*. There's no other lodging other than in Amarillo 25 miles away so the cabins are really sought-after."

Because half a million people visit the park annually, cabin

reservations should be made 11 months in advance of a visit. Each two-bedroom, air-conditioned cabin sleeps four. There are no kitchens, and towels and linens are not provided. Visitors may bring wood to burn in the fireplace.

Rolling hills dotted with juniper overlook Possum Kingdom Lake at Possum Kingdom State Park, where the CCC established one of its last camps and constructed a complex of cabins with clay tile exteriors. "They're not very secluded, but they're conveniently located a short walk away from the lake and marina," says manager Charles Gray. "A lot of white-tailed deer graze through the cabin area, and visitors love that."

Completed in 1941, the six cabins, which sleep four each, lack the detail and craftsmanship of other CCC cabins in the park system. Each has central air and heat, linens and towels, and a kitchenette with a stove top and refrigerator. Five have fireplaces. Visitors should make reservations three months in advance.



© KYLE R. WOOD

The "Lost Pines" shade Bastrop State Park's cabins, left and above right. CCC crews built them in the 1930s using native red sandstone and pine and cedar logs. Each cabin has a unique floor plan and a different character. Near the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Cooper Lake State Park's cabins, below right and inset, are the newest in the system, having been completed in 1996. Each of the frame cabins has kitchen facilities and a deck with picnic table and barbecue grill. Most of the decks overlook Cooper Lake.

EAST TEXAS

Not far from the Louisiana border, log cabins built by the CCC offer a respite at Caddo Lake State Park. Tucked away in a wooded area of the park away from Caddo Lake, the nine cabins draw lots of visitors from the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. "They come to get away from it all and fish," says manager Tommy Pritchard. "The lake is among the state's top five for trophy bass."

The cabins, which sleep from two to six people, have air-conditioning and kitchenettes with stoves and refrigerators. Towels and linens are provided. "We stay busy year around so people need to make reservations at least three months in advance," Pritchard advises.

South of Longview in the Pineywoods, Martin Creek Lake State Park has both furnished cabins and less elaborate cottages, outfitted with only beds and central air/heat. "The cottages are a good alternative for someone who doesn't want to go all the way back to nature," says manager Barry



© WYMAN MEINZER

© WYMAN MEINZER

Townsend. "And they're nice in the summer when it's too hot to camp. In our cabins, people really enjoy the screened porches with ceiling fans."

The park's two one-bedroom cabins, both with central air/heat, sleep six people on two double beds and a sleeper sofa. The kitchens are equipped with four-burner stoves, ovens, refrigerators and coffee makers. Though the cottages have no indoor plumbing, they're located only a short walk away from the park's shower facilities. Weekend visitors should make cabin and/or cottage reservations at least two to three months in advance.

Manager Kim Ochs wishes the CCC had constructed more cabins among the pine trees to meet the year-round demand at Daingerfield State Park. "We have people who come the same time every year and stay in the cabins," Ochs says. "Families especially love swimming in the lake. We also have paddleboats, canoes and a lighted fishing pier. And there's a nature trail around the lake." Two cabins, both with cedar-sided exteriors and one large room with a kitchen, sleep four people each. A third cabin, constructed of stone blocks, sleeps six people and has two bedrooms plus a kitchen and a fireplace. All three have window air-conditioning units and baseboard heaters, and the kitchens are equipped with stoves and refrigerators. Towels and sheets are provided.

For large groups, Bass Lodge sleeps 20 in five bedrooms. The cedar-sided lodge, also built by the CCC, has a full kitchen, two bathrooms, and a fireplace. During the park's busy season, March through November, Ochs recommends visitors make cabin reservations four to six weeks in advance for weekend stays and at least three weeks for weekday visits. Major holidays require reservations 11 months in advance.

For the past two decades, Darwin and Jan Thomas of Duncanville have made the three-hour trek from their Dallas suburb to this East Texas park in the pines.

"It's a place where we can relax," says Darwin Thomas. "We get out for walks and forget about the world. The park staff is friendly. It's like going back home every year. ★

Writer SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS of Blanco and her family, including her parents, escape real life and spend a week at Indian Lodge every summer.

■ Staying the night ■

Cabin and hotel reservations may be made a maximum of 11 months in advance. An exception is Indian Lodge, which allows a maximum one year in advance. Any cabin reservation for either Friday or Saturday must include both nights. Hotel/motel taxes are added to cabin, cottage and lodge rates. A reservation deposit equal to one day's fee for each facility reserved is required. Visa® and MasterCard® are accepted. No pets (except animals aiding physically challenged persons) are allowed in or around the cabin areas.

Cabin reservations may be made through the Central Reservation Center, 512-389-8900, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

H O T E L S

INDIAN LODGE, DAVIS MOUNTAINS STATE PARK. For reservations/information, 915-426-3254. Rates: \$55-\$85. Check in, 3 p.m.; check out, noon.

LANDMARK INN STATE HISTORICAL PARK. For reservations, 512-389-8900. For information, 830-931-2133. Rates: \$45-\$55. Check in, 2 p.m.; check out, noon.

SAN SOLOMON SPRINGS COURTS, BALMORHEA STATE PARK. For reservations, 512-389-8900. For information, 915-375-2370. Rates: \$35-\$45 (\$5 more with kitchen unit, 10 available). Check in, 3 p.m.; check out, noon.

C A B I N S

BASTROP STATE PARK, 512-321-2101. Twelve cabins: one sleeps two people (\$50); one sleeps three (\$55); three sleep four (\$60); five sleep five (\$65); two sleep six (\$70); Lost Pines Lodge sleeps eight people (\$80). One cabin wheelchair accessible. Check in, 5 p.m.; check out, 1 p.m.

CADDO LAKE STATE PARK, 903-679-3351. Nine cabins: two sleep two people (\$40); four sleep four (\$50); three sleep six (\$60). Check in, 5 p.m.; check out, 2 p.m.

COOPER LAKE STATE PARK - South Sulphur Unit, 903-945-5256. Fifteen cabins: all sleep four (\$75). Several cabins are wheelchair accessible. Check in, 3 p.m.; check out, 11 a.m.

DAINGERFIELD STATE PARK, 903-645-2921. Three cabins: two sleep four (\$50); one sleeps six (\$60); Bass Lodge sleeps 20 (\$150). Check in, 2 p.m.; check out, noon.

GARNER STATE PARK, 830-232-6132. Seventeen cabins: each sleeps six; one cabin is wheelchair accessible. Thirteen cabins have fireplaces (premium) and four do not (regular). From Friday before Memorial Day through Labor Day, premium cabins cost \$75 and regular cabins cost \$70. From the day after Labor Day through the Thursday before Memorial Day, premiums are \$65 and regulars are \$55. Check in, 2 p.m.; check out, 11 a.m.

KERRVILLE-SCHREINER STATE PARK, 830-257-5392 or 830-257-CAMP. One cabin: sleeps six (\$75). Check in, 2 p.m.; check out, noon.

LAKE BROWNWOOD STATE PARK, 915-784-5223. Seventeen cabins: three sleep two (\$35); six sleep three (\$40); two sleep four (\$45); five sleep five (\$50); one sleeps nine (\$75); Fisherman Lodge sleeps 10 (\$90 — minimum two-day rental required); Beach Lodge sleeps up to 26 (\$145 — minimum two-day rental required). Check in, 3-5 p.m.; check out, noon.

MARTIN CREEK LAKE STATE PARK, 903-836-4336. Two cabins: both sleep six (\$60); both wheelchair accessible. Two cottages: both sleep five (\$30). Check in, 2 p.m.; check out, noon.

PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK, 806-488-2227. Three cabins: all sleep four (\$65). Check in, 2 p.m.; check out, 11 a.m.

POSSUM KINGDOM STATE PARK, 940-549-1803. Six cabins: all sleep four (\$60). Both Friday and Saturday night rentals required March through November. Check in, 2 p.m.; check out, noon.

TOUCH THE OUTDOORS WITH TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE PRESS

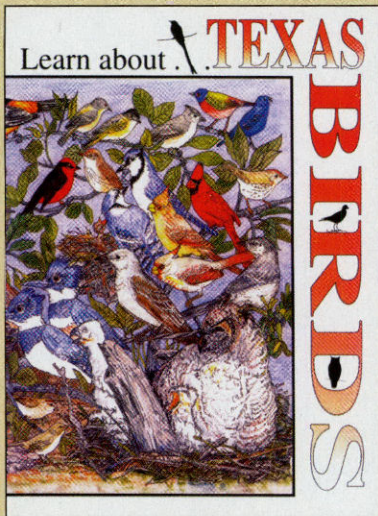
Learn About...Texas Birds

by Mark Lockwood

Illustrated by Elena Ivy

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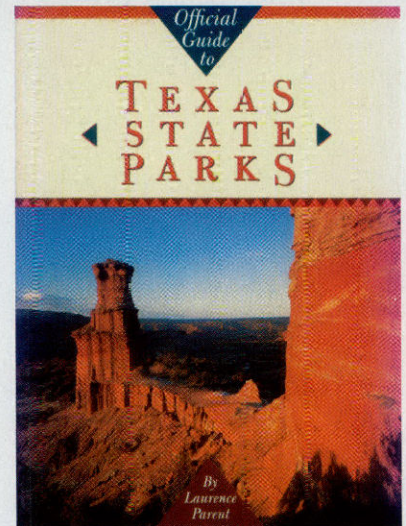
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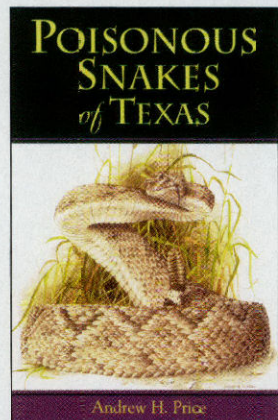


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NOCTURNAL KNIGHTS

*As the cloak of night settled uneventfully
over the lower Chihuahuan Desert, the bitter-*



B Y P A U L A . C A Ñ A D A



© MASIŁOWSKI PHOTO

sweet smells of the desert seemed to creep, ever so slowly, back over the sparsely vegetated Black Gap Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Bonnie McKinney settled down, with notes in hand, for another quiet night of observation.

The deep bass call of the great-horned owl, below, is lower-keyed and softer than that of the barred owl, above.



© GRADY ALLEN

The barn owl is one of the rare land birds that ranges naturally on all continents (except Antarctica) and most large islands.



© GRADY ALLEN

The subjects of her study, a pair of elf owls, *Micrathene whitneyi*, were busy working the night shift. The female sat in the nest, awaiting the male's return. Occasionally, she poked her head out of the cavity a ladder-backed woodpecker had conveniently placed in a power pole.

Instantly, the male appeared from the darkness and zipped into the nesting cavity. McKinney dutifully took notes, unaware that she wasn't the lone observer on this warm desert night. The tiny male gave up his insect catch to the female, turned and took to wing.

Seemingly out of nowhere, a great-horned owl, *Bubo virginianus*, swooped down from its perch atop a nearby shed. In mid-flight, the massive talons of the larger predator dispatched the diminutive owl. Before McKinney could catch her breath, the violent encounter was over. Admittedly stunned, it took a moment for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department wildlife technician to realize she had just witnessed a rarely seen natural event.

McKinney's opportunity was due not only to chance but also to the hundreds of hours she has spent quietly observing the nocturnal predators. As common as owls are, very few people see more than a passing glimpse of an owl winging overhead.

David Dauphin, president of the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS), finds that "everybody likes owls and

wants to learn about them. Yet, most birders simply don't take the time to get out in the field to look for them. Naturally, much of this reluctance is due to the fact that owls are predominantly nocturnal. For obvious safety reasons, birders shy away from wandering afield at night. However, the best time to see owls is at dawn or at dusk, when the majority of them are most active.

"If you know their feeding behavior and preferred habitat, you can find owls during the daytime. Additionally, by learning what trees they prefer and how to identify their calls, you can find most of Texas' owls during the daylight hours," continues Dauphin.

An excellent example of Dauphin's point is the elf owl. Although the elf owl is most active after dark, the male typically leaves the cavity at dusk and, perching near the nest site, begins calling. These winged predators, the smallest owl in North America, have small territories and so it's not unusual to hear several males calling in a four- to five-acre area.

"The easiest way to find them is to wait until dusk," explains McKinney, "when they begin calling. Their calls consist of a series of yelps that sounds like a little puppy. They will do this all night long during the breeding season. If a birder simply follows the yelps, they often will find the male perched on a power line near the nesting site and the female popping her tiny head out of the cavity."

The elf owl winters in Mexico but returns to West Texas in spring to nest

An eastern screech owl is well camouflaged in this tree cavity, but these misnamed owls can be found in mail boxes or martin houses and utter various sounds, none of which is a screech.



PHOTOGRAPH BY KACI BERTHOLDSON



Late afternoon shadows grow long as these birders use the remaining light to look for owls venturing out before nightfall.

and rear young. Although this neotropical migrant can be found as far north as San Angelo, many birders consider the TPW's 105,708-acre Black Gap WMA one of the best places to see the small predator.

Arriving around mid-March, elf owls seek out abandoned ladder-backed woodpecker cavities in dead trees and fence posts.

Many find the barred owl, *Strix varia*, with its dark eyes and dark brown feathers, similar in appearance to the spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis*. However, the vocal barred owl has bars on its upper breast and head, while the spotted owl has spots on its upper breast and head. Although most active at night, the barred owl will call during the day, making it

birders learn to recognize the owl's call. "At dusk and in the early morning, the barred owls are very vocal and so are easy to locate," he explains.

One of the best ways to see owls is to call them in. Using the appropriate call, birders may draw the bird in to their area or, at the very least, get the bird to reveal its roosting location. "I have been teaching birders how to call owls for more than 20 years and I knew first-hand — it works," Dauphin says. "Most owl calls are easy for people to learn to imitate. If you're looking for the elf owl, great-horned owl, barn owl, barred owl, ferruginous pygmy owl or the western and eastern screech owls, calling the birds is an effective way to locate them." However, this method is not recommended for more than five to 10 minutes or during breeding season.

The call of the barred owl, described as a *who-cocks-for-you*-sounding hoot, is relatively easy to identify. The barred owl is found in densely forested bottomland habitat, such as the Catfish Creek area, designated a National Natural Landmark by the Department of the Interior, on the Gus Engeling WMA. Haucke typically finds the owl roosting away from the trunk and in the dense canopy of the



© PHOTOS BY GRADY ALLEN

A more serious spectator uses a telephoto lens to capture an infrequent daytime owl sighting.

easier to find the roost.

Hayden Haucke, manager of the Gus Engeling WMA, located 21 miles northwest of Palestine in East Texas, says barred owls are easier to find if

tree. Haucke warns that the WMA is closed to traffic at dark and during scheduled hunts. "However," he notes, "there's a road that goes down to the river bottom which allows birders to get in at dusk and out before dark."

Although WMAs provide birders with opportunities to observe many of Texas' owls, birders need to know that there are special restrictions associated with the WMAs. Visitors who are 17 years of age and older must possess either an Annual Public Hunting Permit, Limited Public Use Permit or a Texas Conservation Passport. Because access to the WMAs is restricted during scheduled hunts, it is important to call prior to any visit.

Many WMAs, several owned by the state and others leased to the state by various agencies, are overlooked by birders. That's unfortunate, because WMAs often present the best chance to observe rarely seen species of owls. The 5,821-acre Gene Howe WMA, eight miles outside of Canadian, provides birders one such opportunity. Admittedly, the Gene Howe WMA is better known for its prairie dog towns; however, mixed in with the popular mammals are numbers of burrowing owls, *Athene cunicularia*.

Burrowing owls winter throughout most of Texas and are common in the Panhandle and West Texas. They prefer relatively flat, open grassland and often are found with colonies of prairie dogs, where nesting and satellite burrows are numerous. Standing outside a burrow, the owl's long legs, erect posture and "stern-looking" eyes mimic a lanky pitcher standing on the mound with hands behind his back, straining to see a catcher's signals. Birders likely will see the owls standing at the burrow entrances, bobbing their heads at potential trouble. The Gene Howe WMA has an observation shed strategically placed for viewing the animated predator.

Like the great-horned owl, the long-eared owl, *Asio otus*, prefers a densely wooded area for roosting. Both great-horned and long-eared owls roost close to the trunks of trees and are seen easily. Both large owls are very approachable when perched

high on a roost. Their need to sit still probably is due to harassment they receive from smaller birds when they take wing during the daylight hours. "Although both the resident great-horned owl and the wintering long-eared owl feed in dense woodlands," Dauphin reports, "they are mostly open-field feeders. Find an isolated stand of timber, adjacent to large, open fields and you stand a chance of finding a great-horned owl roost."

Although the wintering short-eared owl, *Asio flammeus*, and the resident barn owl, *Tyto alba*, are common throughout Texas, they are tougher than other owls to find during daylight hours. The barn owl usually is seen late at night or just before dawn as it wings to its nest or roost — typically a manmade structure. The best chance to see a short-eared or barn owl is in a field where the owls have been spotted feeding before; waiting and watching will pay off. While the barn owl is most active late at night, the distinct wavering flight of the short-eared owl is most often seen over fields at dusk and dawn. Often the wintering predator can be seen quartering a field, with its wings in a slightly up-turned V that often resembles the "kiting" action of an American kestrel or black-shouldered kite.

A trick birders can borrow from researchers is to look below roosting and nesting sites for an owl's regurgitated pellets, made up of undigested bones, feathers and fur. Many pellets are distinctive enough in appearance for a trained birder to identify the bird that used the roost. For example, a barn owl's pellets typically are grayish-black and firmly compressed ovals. If a birder finds a good number of these pellets below a tree, chances are good that a barn owl is using the roost.

In addition to searching for owls in the WMAs, most East Texas state parks have resident great-horned, barn, eastern screech and barred owls. Birders can find out which owls to look for in a specific park by obtaining the park's bird checklist. Park staff usually can provide information about known roosting sites. ☆



JOHN AND GLORIA EVERENSKI/PRODUCTIONS

The short-eared owl, above, is usually silent except during the nuptial season. During nesting season the male burrowing owl, below, hunts day and night to provide food for the young.



© MASHOWSKI PHOTO

An adult female elf owl posed on Bonnie McKinney's hand. These small birds of prey grow to about five inches and weigh less than two ounces.



BONNIE MCKINNEY PHOTO

Padre's Pristine Paradise:

Barrier TREASURE

*The Padre National Seashore
preserves an 80-mile stretch of sand
and surf delivering a motherlode of
speckled trout, redfish, pompano,
tarpon and Spanish mackerel. Plus,
this pristine, virtually undeveloped
stretch of Padre Island abounds with
wildlife and unusual vegetation.*

BY PHIL H. SHOOK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID J. SAMS







We had traveled down 40 miles of Padre Island beachfront when once again Billy Sandifer brought his rust-cured Suburban to a sudden halt. Doors flew open and we bailed out, flyrods at the ready. There was no mistaking where the fish were — speckled trout and ladyfish had cornered rain minnows in a tidal washout only a few steps from the beach and they were kicking up spray under a cluster of diving terns.



Four of us were on a fall angling safari down Padre Island National Seashore, and the fishing was getting more exciting with every stop. Through binoculars we could see tarpon beyond the breaker line making tight turns through baitfish schools. Close to shore, specks in the 18- to 25-inch range were within easy casting range of a Deceiver fly or gold spoon.

At some stops we found redfish milling around the hulks of shrimp boat wrecks. In other places, mixed in with hordes of ladyfish, were Spanish mackerel, crevalle jack and the occasional pompano or palometa, all drawn to the nearshore Padre surf by the fall baitfish migration.

Padre Island National Seashore, an 80-mile-long, virtually undeveloped segment of the 113-mile-long barrier island, is located about 30 miles below Corpus Christi. Visitors can enter the Seashore on day trips for surf fishing on the Gulf side or sample the wade-fishing on the inside bay waters of the Laguna Madre. The more adventurous can camp out anywhere along the entire length of the beach that runs from the visitor facilities near the entrance southward to the Mansfield Channel, a man-made pass that bisects the barrier island.

Wildlife as diverse as white-tailed deer, ghost crabs and



October brings the delectable Florida pompano far into the Gulf Coast bays, where they can be spotted jumping boat wakes.

kangaroo rats thrive on the island. At sundown, coyotes move out from the inner reaches of the narrow island to scrounge for food along the water's edge, and at night raccoons, oblivious to the waves breaking over them, dig for clams and mollusks in the shallow surf. The showy purple and yellow

flowers on goat-foot morning glory and beach evening primrose brighten the dune vegetation.

The fishing action begins at dawn when a feeding frenzy often erupts along the 60 miles of barrier-island beachfront open to vehicle traffic. What fuels the fireworks are migrating bay anchovies, called rain minnows, as well as menhaden, scaled sardines, finger mullet and other forage fish that march southward through the Padre Island surf, drawing larger predator fish tight to the beach. Speckled trout, redfish, crevalle jack, bluefish, Spanish mackerel and ladyfish hound the frantic baitfish from



Big Shell Beach is strewn with pastel-toned clam shell fragments, such as these. Big Shell provides both camping facilities and excellent close-by fishing.

below, while terns, gulls and pelicans haze them from above. On prime days, an angler needs only take a few steps into the surf to deliver a fly or a plug into the melee.

Even on the busiest summer weekends, there is plenty of solitude in this Texas wilderness. "It's not like Cape Hatteras," says one park ranger. Visiting anglers should look for those summer and fall days when there is a modest surf breaking and clear green water tight to the beach. On days like this, "bull" reds in the 35-inch class run the troughs between the bars, and big female trout cruise around the washouts and dead-end guts — the carved-out ridges and holes that offer ambush points for larger gamefish — waiting to ambush baitfish.

The fall is an ideal time to plan a surf-fishing trek to the barrier island, especially a day or two after a mild, early season norther has calmed the prevailing southeasterly winds and knocked down the pounding surf.

On a recent fall camping trip to the seashore, our party of five hooked, spotted or landed speckled trout, redfish, tarpon, ladyfish, pompano, crevalle jack and Spanish mackerel. The action was virtually nonstop throughout the day and we never had to leave the half-mile stretch of surf right in front of our beach camp.

Anglers on day trips to the seashore can fish the surf on the

Visiting anglers should look for those summer and fall days when there is a modest surf breaking and clear green water tight to the beach. On days like this, "bull" reds in the 35-inch class run the troughs between the bars, and big female trout cruise around the washouts and dead-end guts — the carved-out ridges and holes that offer ambush points for larger gamefish — waiting to ambush baitfish.

Perhaps no other fish says "Texas Coast" like the spectacular comeback of our beloved golden-bronze redfish. Remember, rough weather brings great redfish action!

Gulf side of the island or find excellent walk-in flats fishing at Bird Island Basin, a launch ramp located near the entrance to the seashore. Many anglers and guides use this launch ramp as a jumping-off point for fishing trips down the Laguna Madre.

Greeting anglers making early morning runs down the seashore are arrays of gulls and terns that line up along the water's edge in anticipation of the breakfast rush hour. Out over the first bar black skimmers, the bright red of their bills shining like war paint, will begin their low-flying runs down the beach-break.

Driving along the beach, anglers should look ahead for any irregular patterns in the breaking surf that would indicate pockets or dead-end guts. These fish-attracting features are subject to winds, tides and currents and are constantly changing, disappearing and reappearing along the beach. It takes a sharp eye and some beach savvy to spot them.

Sandifer, a fishing guide and "land captain," says he spends a lot of time inspecting the big schools of ladyfish, or skipjack, that fill the surf in the fall. "The only way you can make sure it is a ladyfish is by wading out in the surf and looking. I have gone out there and immediately, in four feet of water, seen tarpon and crevalle jack right in there with the ladyfish."



The challenge to anglers is that on a good day there might be 150 different places with birds and surface activity to check out. Yarborough Pass is located at the 15-mile marker, about midway between Big Shell and Little Shell beaches. A four-wheel drive is essential to navigate the short stretch of soft sand on the fore-island dune ridge. Once over the hump, it's an easy run of about a mile over a hard sand surface to the lagoon. Some anglers trailer in shallow-draft flats boats and launch from the old dock at Yarborough. This provides access to prime bay and flats fishing on Baffin Bay, the Kenedy Land Cut and the boat hole, or "Graveyard," a shallow, remote stretch of flats behind the Land Cut that draws big schools of tailing redfish during the summer months.

A popular stop for surf fishing and camping on a trip down the seashore is at Big Shell. So named because of the large accumulation of clam shell fragments, Big Shell and its neighbor, Little Shell Beach, offer excellent beach camping and fishing options within a relatively short drive from the visitors' center. At the 29-mile marker, beach travelers come to Codo del Diablo, or the Devil's Elbow, the name Spanish explorers gave this wind- and current-lashed stretch of the Gulf because it is shaped like a man's arm bent at the elbow. This is where the Texas Coast makes a left turn — a feature that creates good things for

A lone coyote strolls along the beach. Coyotes hunt rabbits and mice among the dunes during the day and at sundown scavenge along the water's edge.



Getting There

Visitor facilities, a grocery, rinse-off showers, an interpretive center and a paved campground for trailers and recreational vehicles are located at Malaquite Beach, about five miles south of the Padre Island National Seashore entrance. A \$10 entry fee per vehicle is good for seven days' admittance to the Seashore, and an annual pass is \$20. Parking at the Bird Island Basin launch ramp area is \$5 per day per vehicle or \$10 for an annual pass. For information on current beach conditions and park services, call the Padre Island National Seashore at 512-937-2621 or 512-949-8068, or call 512-949-8175 for a recorded message, updated each day, on surf, beach and fishing conditions.

Four-wheel-drive vehicles are required for travel on all but the first five miles of the beach due to soft sand and loose shells. Oversize tires inflated to around 25 pounds of pressure help a vehicle gain purchase in the sand. Park rangers recommend that all beach travelers come equipped with shovels, jacks and tow ropes or chains.

surf fishermen. Along this stretch there are many washouts, wader's guts and other nearshore features that will hold game fish.

At mile marker 50, well out in the surf, you can see the smoke-stack of the *Nicaragua*, a Mexican steamship that ran aground under mysterious circumstances in the fall of 1912. The wreck is located about 10 miles north of the Mansfield Channel. Here the beach takes on a different look with dogleg turns and sharp ridges at the water's edge. The sand dunes are much lower than on the upper end of the seashore because there is less rain and less vegetation to hold the dunes together. At times along this stretch, you will spot solitary redfish in the 25-inch class cruising the clear, shallow guts a few feet from the beach.

When Sandifer sees anglers wading out past the first bar along this stretch of beach, he will remind them gently that this is near the spot where one of his clients caught an 820-pound tiger shark back in November 1990. The 12-foot-long shark had a 78-inch girth and is one of the largest sharks ever landed in the western Gulf of Mexico.

"Don't believe what you hear on the Discovery Channel," Sandifer tells his clients about the unpredictability of sharks in these waters. "Down here if you are in knee-deep water, you are an integral part of the food chain." ☆



The crevalle jack sports a blotch on the gill cover and a steep, pugnacious forehead. These feisty fighters often enter the bays in October; smaller jacks run in schools.

TEXAS GRAND SLAM

Offers Big Game Hunts Of A Lifetime

BY STEVE LIGHTFOOT

There are two ways to claim Texas' four most sought-after big game animals: spend a lifetime hunting and hope to get lucky, or apply that luck on the \$10 purchase price of a ticket for a chance to win the Texas Grand Slam.

The Texas Grand Slam is a unique program administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPW) in which applicants are entered into a drawing for one person to win a dream-trip hunting package, consisting of separate hunts for desert bighorn, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope and desert mule deer. Proceeds generated from the Texas Grand Slam are

Even applicants who don't win the grand prize this year have a chance to be first-place prize winners. In addition to the Grand Slam winner, three additional names will be drawn, each of whom will receive a white-tailed buck hunt on the Kerr Wildlife Management Area and a Lifetime Texas resident Hunting and Fishing License (valued at \$1,000).

Texas Grand Slam tickets may be purchased wherever Texas hunting and fishing licenses are sold. Or they can be bought through TPW's toll-free, 24-hour number (1-800-TX-LIC-4-U) using Visa or MasterCard; from the menu select number 2 and ask for license type 444. Official rules and reg-

7, 1998. The drawing will be conducted in mid-November.

The Texas Grand Slam hunts will be conducted on TPW-managed lands or private ranches known to produce trophy animals. The lucky winner will embark on two hunts during the upcoming season: a desert mule deer hunt in late November or early December, and a white-tailed deer hunt between mid-November and early January. The pronghorn antelope hunt will be conducted in early October 1999, and the desert bighorn ram hunt in November 1999, or at a time determined by the availability of the next harvestable sheep.

Hunting guides, food, lodging, local

The Texas Grand Slam is a unique program administered by Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) in which applicants are entered into a drawing for one person to win a dream trip hunting package, consisting of separate hunts for desert bighorn, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope and desert mule deer. Proceeds generated from the Texas Grand Slam are returned to fund Texas desert bighorn sheep restoration, big game research, habitat conservation and public hunting projects in Texas.

returned to fund Texas desert bighorn sheep restoration, big game research, habitat conservation and public hunting projects in Texas.

"Not only is this an opportunity to win a set of hunts of a lifetime," says Kirby Brown, Texas Grand Slam program coordinator for TPW, "but all the proceeds go back to restoring and managing these species."

istration form also are available on the Internet at <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hunt/pubhunt/slamrule.htm>.

The Texas Grand Slam prize is not transferable, although tickets may be purchased as gifts in the name of other individuals. Applicants in the Texas Grand Slam must be 17 years of age or older and may enter as often as they like. The deadline for entry is November

transportation and complete shoulder-mount taxidermy services by Woodbury Taxidermy will be provided. The winning applicant will be awarded the right to participate in all four hunts and may take along a non-hunting companion.

Both past winners have completed their Texas Grand Slams, with last year's recipient, Bill Britain of Amarillo,



TPW PHOTO

taking a Boone and Crockett record-book-quality desert bighorn ram and pronghorn antelope. With a B&C score of 174 5/8 points, Britain's desert bighorn ram is the second largest ever taker in Texas.

As North American big game trophies go, the desert bighorn sheep is arguably one of the toughest to come by. Just the opportunity to hunt the desert bighorn is a rarity and draws serious national interest from big game hunters. For example, Arizona boasts a much larger, established sheep population than Texas, with a good number of Class 4 trophy rams in its ranks. A permit to hunt desert bighorn sheep in Arizona was auctioned off for \$300,000 at a recent Federation of North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS) annual conference.

In comparison, only a handful of Texas desert bighorn sheep permits have been auctioned since 1991, at prices

ranging from \$40,000 to \$70,000. Most of the auction price is returned to Texas Parks and Wildlife to promote conservation and management of wild sheep populations in far West Texas.

At the same FNAWS conference, a permit to hunt a Texas bighorn desert sheep was auctioned for \$51,000. Daniel Boone of Lubbock, president of the Texas Bighorn Society, submitted the winning bid and last winter killed a new state record desert bighorn in the Sierra Diablo Mountains that scored 176 B&C points.

Efforts to restore bighorn sheep populations to their historic ranges in Texas have been ongoing since the late 1950s, after populations had dwindled to near extirpation. Bighorn sheep once were widespread in the mountain ranges of the Trans-Pecos ecological region of Texas, but by 1939 the bighorn population was concentrated in the Baylor, Beach, Carrizo and Sierra Diablo

mountains and the total population was estimated at 300 animals.

Prior to TPW reintroduction efforts in the 1970s, the last known sighting of native Texas bighorn sheep occurred in 1960, when two ewes were observed in the Sierra Diablo Mountains near Van Horn. Nearly 40 years later, the desert bighorn has flourished to become the crown jewel in the Texas Grand Slam.

"To call this a Grand Slam is putting it mildly," says Britain. "The quality of these whitetail and mule deer hunts alone are way out of the reach of most Texas hunters, and considering the rarity of a desert bighorn sheep hunt, it's truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." ★

Last year's Grand Slam winner, Bill Britain, with his desert bighorn ram, the second largest ever taken in Texas.

WHITETAILS

on Kerr and Engeling

If you don't like the weather in Texas, stick around. It'll change. Arguably, few can appreciate that old adage more than wildlife. In fact, they live by it.

BY STEVE LIGHTFOOT



On the heels of the 1996 drouth, one of the worst Texas had experienced in years, 1997 by all accounts was a banner year for wildlife. Timely rainfall helped create ideal range conditions across much of the state. And, as census surveys conducted by Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists proved, quality habitat equaled strong populations of game animals, particularly white-tailed deer.

Given the availability of quality, high-protein forage last year to carry animals through the usually stressful late summer months, Texas deer herds attained peak body condition. The bonus brought by additional quality browse plants was that antler development also was maximized.

State wildlife officials forecasted an excellent fall deer hunting season last year. Few, however, could have predicted just how good it might be on two wildlife management areas known more for research into land management practices than for trophy whitetail production.

Encompassing nearly 11,000 acres, the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near Palestine in East Texas has produced plenty of trophies for hunters, but not of the deer variety. With its vast expanses of hardwoods, the Engeling has earned its reputation as one of the state's premier squirrel hunting areas. And the numerous marshes and tributaries that run through the site have created some of the best waterfowl hunting for wood ducks, mallards and wigeons in the East Texas region.

Last fall, however, the whitetail took center stage. According to Engeling area manager Hayden Haucke, deer numbers never have been a concern on the WMA. "We've always had lots of deer here, but no one ever talked of big bucks," he notes. Hunting opportunity on the Engeling was fairly liberal, too, which meant few bucks ever reached old age. "We knew we could produce quality bucks because we had seen them, but not many. Most of the bucks being harvested were in the 1½-year-old class. We wanted to prove we could produce numbers of quality deer in the Post Oak Savannah and made a decision to cut back on the buck harvest for a few years to see what could happen."

In a region of the state where historically any buck is considered a trophy and an eight-pointer is a rarity, limiting harvest to an annual youth-only hunt during the last four years set the stage for a potential big buck explosion on the Engeling.

Speaking from personal experience built upon six generations of East Texans, I doubt that any of my hunting ancestors ever passed up an eight-point buck. Not that they were game hogs, mind you, simply that eight-point bucks in East Texas traditionally have been about as plentiful as hen's teeth. Furthermore, anyone who has hunted public

land likely would be shocked to learn that a legal hunter actually passed up a shot at an eight-pointer during a drawn public hunt in East Texas. But by letting a young eight-point buck walk during his hunt on the Engeling last November, William Miller put himself in position to take instead a mature whitetail with 14 non-typical points and five-inch bases. The heavy-horned buck netted 158 points under the Boone and Crockett (B&C) scoring system.

Miller's trophy easily could have been dismissed as an oddity for the Engeling WMA had it not been for the other huge bucks harvested during two special public hunts held during mid-November. In all, six trophy whitetails that qualified for the Texas Big Game Awards program were taken on the Engeling.

For 14-year-old Mike Fisher of Fort Worth, one of the six almost turned out to be the big one that got away. Hunting with his father during a youth-only special drawn hunt on the Engeling, Mike took a 200-yard shot at a huge buck. Although they believed Mike had missed, the youngster

and his dad searched the area thoroughly, anyway. Despite finding no tell-tale sign that the animal had been hit, the Fishers continued their search and eventually located the deer 75 yards into the woods. The mature buck had 17 points, field-dressed 147 pounds and scored 156 4/8 B&C non-typical points.

"The reason we have what we have on the Engeling is because we manage for wildlife habitat," stresses Haucke. "It's not just by chance. The quality deer harvest that occurred in November 1997 was not by accident. We've got the same scenario set up for this fall. I don't know if we can expect to see six deer in the Big Game Awards, but we should see some."

Haucke is quick to point out that the Engeling is not a trophy deer factory. Trophy deer simply are a product of good land stewardship, which can be attained anywhere in the state.

"Prior to 1977, there were cattle grazing all over the area," he says. "Now, we have an intensive rotational grazing operation on only about 1,000 acres. We conduct extensive controlled burning on the area to stimulate growth of cool season forbs and grasses. We have several branch springs that run year around that we protect from cattle grazing and make sure no geophysical companies operate anywhere near the headwaters."

Haucke also boasts of the ecosystem at Catfish Creek on the Engeling, a site designated by the Department of the Interior as a National Natural Landmark. The area also possesses one of the last known Post Oak Savannah ecological systems.

Hunting isn't the only venue at the area, either. Visitors to the Engeling can take a self-guided vehicle tour of the area, or venture by foot along two self-guided nature trails.

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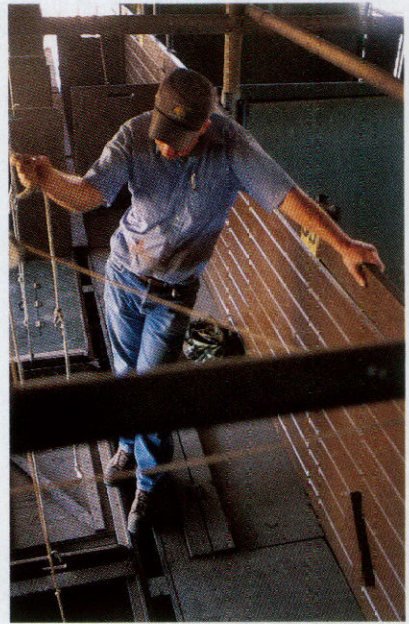
One of the trails sports an observation deck that is accessible to the handicapped. The area is closed only during special drawn public hunts. The deadline for applying for public hunts was September 4. However, Haucke says hunters may call the area three or four days prior to a scheduled hunt to see if standby positions are available. More information is available from the Gus Engeling WMA at 903-928-2251. ★

Mixed hardwoods and Ashe juniper cover the Kerr Area, top. Biologists move deer into working pens for testing, above right. At right, the late Donnie Harmel, manager at the time, oversees operations from a catwalk above the pens. Screened shelters, below, are available at the Engeling Area.



© GRADY ALLEN

© JOHN JEFFERSON



Kerr Deer Part of a Bigger Legacy

The 6,000-acre Kerr WMA near Kerrville in the Central Texas Hill Country has built its reputation on its white-tailed deer research and, as a result, the area has turned out some quality bucks over the years. Perhaps most well-known is the long-term genetic study being conducted at the 16-acre white-tailed research facility. However, wildlife biologists point to a bigger legacy.

"We take an active role in trying to manipulate habitat with an ecosystem approach," explains Kerr WMA area manager Donnie Harmel. "What benefits songbirds just happens to benefit white-tailed deer. At the Kerr, we're always going to have a healthy deer population, but our goal is a healthy ecosystem."

As with all wildlife management areas, the Kerr was purchased and continues to operate with the help of federal funds obtained through the Wildlife Restoration program. The program distributes monies collected from excise taxes on hunting equipment

to the states for wildlife-related plans.

The Kerr has allowed grazing of cattle for 45 years, but only during the last 15 years have managers begun experimenting with different rotational grazing techniques, in concert with controlled burning, to try to discover what works best for the ecosystem. "We kind of backed into the ecosystem approach to managing," offers Bill Armstrong, a veteran wildlife biologist on the Kerr. "We're basically trying to mimic a system that took place on the Great Plains where bison and wildfire impacted the habitat. If we can control those two processes using cattle and controlled burning, then we can manipulate the plant communities to create a desired ecosystem."

The result has been beneficial to a vast array of wildlife, including black-capped vireos and golden-cheeked warblers, as well as white-tailed deer.

Last year, during public drawn deer hunts on the Kerr, five bucks were harvested that qualified for the Texas

Big Game Awards program, including a pair of 140 class typicals and a 13-point non-typical that scored 158 4/8 P&C points.

Like the Engeling, the Kerr is closed to the public during special hunts, but offers a self-guided driving tour, interpretive nature trail and hiking opportunities. More information is available from the Kerr WMA at 830-238-4483.

A complete listing of hunting opportunities on Texas Parks and Wildlife public land, *Public Hunting Opportunities*, and a brochure listing Texas wildlife management areas, *Get Real! Explore WMAs*, are available from Texas Parks and Wildlife, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744, or by telephone, at 1-800-792-1112. (Pressing 51 will bring up the correct choice in the voice mail system.) Information also is available on the Internet at <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>.



TEXAS WILDLIFE EXPO

OCTOBER 3 AND 4
9 A.M. TO 5 P.M.

TPW HEADQUARTERS IN
SOUTHEAST AUSTIN.
ADMISSION IS FREE.
FOR INFORMATION CALL
1-800-792-1112

W I L D L I F E E X P O

GEAR & GO

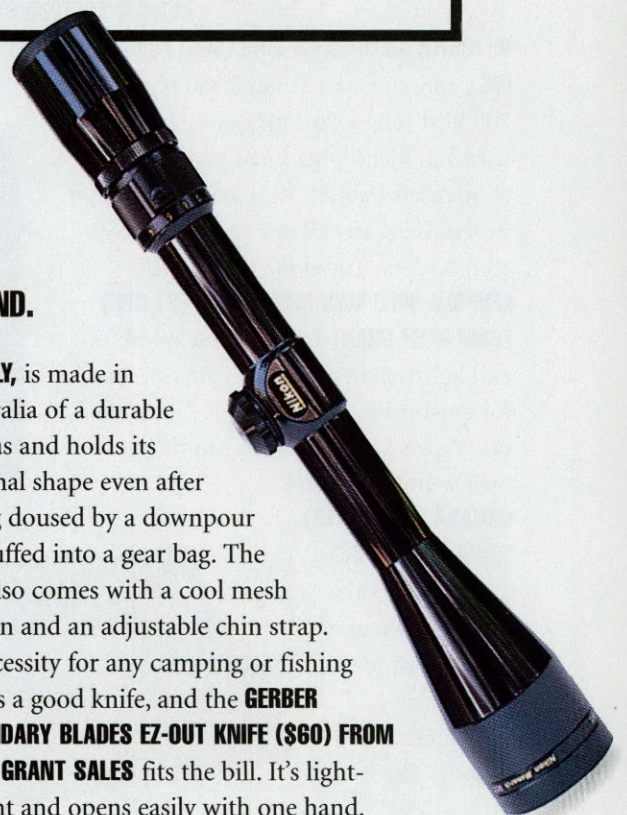
GUIDE

B Y J A E L Y N H A R D Y

PLANNING ON ATTENDING THIS OCTOBER'S WILDLIFE EXPO AT TPW HEADQUARTERS? OUR ADVANCE SCOUT QUERIED A FEW OF THE EXHIBITORS TO PREVIEW THE GEAR AND SERVICES YOU'LL FIND.

Looking for some family fun with no-hassle cooking — either camping or picnicking? You might want to take a look at the **EASY COOKER (\$119, OR \$69 FOR THE EASY COOKER JUNIOR) BY VANDERWOOD ENTERPRISES USA INC.** Easy to assemble and clean, it uses environmentally clean propane fuel. The cooker has a 13- by 18-inch steel cooking plate to prepare a variety of foods, from breakfast to stirfry and seafood to meats. For those who like a little shade while outdoors, the **BARMAH HAT (\$38) FROM AUSTIN OUTDOOR GEAR & GUIDANCE – WILDERNESS**

SUPPLY, is made in Australia of a durable canvas and holds its original shape even after being doused by a downpour or stuffed into a gear bag. The hat also comes with a cool mesh option and an adjustable chin strap. A necessity for any camping or fishing trip is a good knife, and the **GERBER LEGENDARY BLADES EZ-OUT KNIFE (\$60) FROM GARY GRANT SALES** fits the bill. It's lightweight and opens easily with one hand.





The stainless steel blade is 3 1/2 inches in length and serrated. If you need more than a knife, the **KERSHAW MULTI-TOOL (\$75) FROM AUSTIN OUTDOOR GEAR** is made of stainless steel and is unique in appearance and performance. The pliers grip like a vise and lock on, leaving both hands free. It also features a file, blade, screwdrivers, bottle and can opener, wire cutters and more.



And for the birds (watchers, that is) the **THAYER BIRDING SOFTWARE'S BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA CD-ROM (\$65) FROM NATURALLY CURIOUS INC.**, contains more than 2,800 photos and 700 bird songs. This unique CD-ROM is useful in identifying birds and learning about their habitat. It's a valuable tool for new birders, as well as a resource for veteran birders. And don't forget your **LEUPOLD GOLD RING BINOCULARS (\$1,366) FROM GARY GRANT SALES.** These durable and lightweight binoculars are essential for any birder. However, if the birds are not always accessible, you can fly your own with the **JACKITE CANADA GOOSE (\$19) FROM JACKITE INC.** This unique bird can be flown as a kite or a wind-sock, or displayed as a mobile. The

bird is easily assembled and made of a new, durable, water-proof and tear-resistant material called Tyvek®. (Also available: cardinal, blue jay, dove, eagle, osprey and loon.) For the more adventurous, the **DAGGER BAYOU KAYAK (\$489, WITH PADDLES RANGING FROM \$35 TO \$350) FROM AUSTIN OUTDOOR GEAR** has a sturdy design, with a comfortable and retractable seat. It's roomy enough for a cooler or your four-legged friend. The kayak sports a camouflage paint job, and the paddles are made of reinforced carbon fiber, which both strengthen and beautify the look. Also, you'll find a full range of hunting and fishing gear, including the **OUTLAW HUNTING BOAT (PRICES VARY DEPENDING ON OPTIONS) BY IN THE WOODS OUTDOOR PRODUCTS.** Three hunters and a dog can sit comfortably in the 14-foot boat; the 18-foot boat accommodates up to five hunters and a dog. Designed by hunters for hunters, these boats allow you to store your hunting equipment in the boat with rotating locking blind tops. Also for the hunters and fishers, a wide variety of rods and guns will be on view at the Expo. Check out the **ALL STAR CLASSIC BCM6 BAITCAST ROD (\$85)** and the **ALL STAR T38X SPINNING ROD (\$119), BOTH FROM GARY GRANT SALES.** The **HORTON LEGEND SL CORSSBOW (\$349)** and the **MOSSBERG BANTAM**



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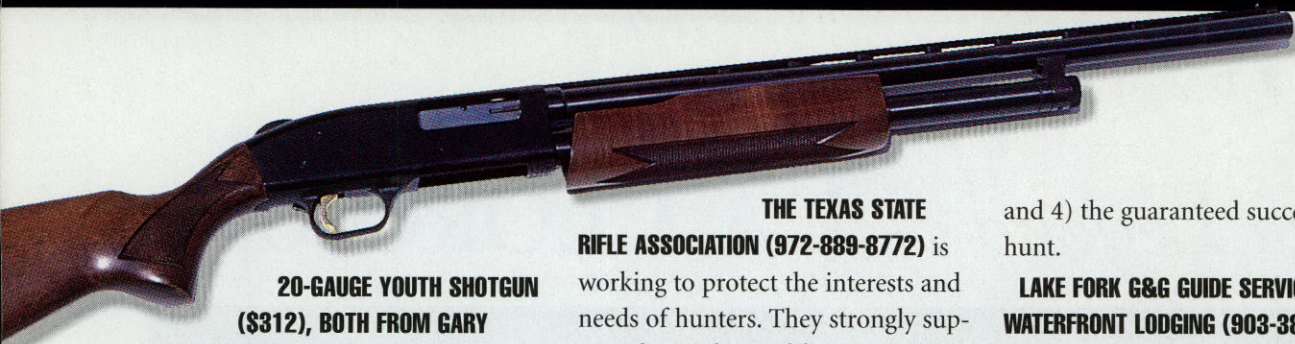
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The **HORTON LEGEND SL CORSSBOW (\$349)** and the **MOSSBERG BANTAM**



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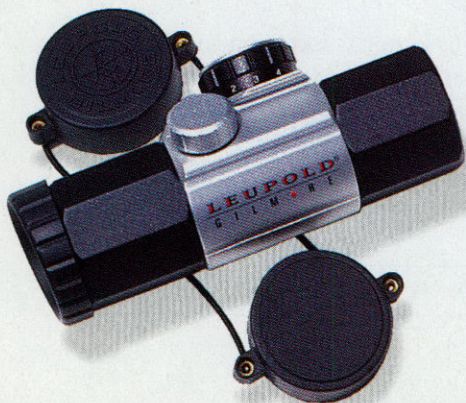
20-GAUGE YOUTH SHOTGUN (\$312), BOTH FROM GARY GRANT SALES, may be on your hunter's Christmas list this year.

And the **LEUPOLD RIFLE SCOPE (\$1,569), ALSO FROM GARY GRANT SALES,** is rugged and waterproof. It provides for constant eye relief and carries the highest image quality rating. The maintube is 30 mm and scratch resistant.

The **MGA ULTRA-LIGHT RIFLE (\$1,595) FROM MATCH GRADE ARMS & AMMUNITION INC.** is designed to be lightweight, reduce recoil and provide extreme accuracy. This personalized, custom rifle is easy to carry and comfortable to shoot.

The **SMART FEEDER (PRICES VARY DEPENDING ON OPTIONS) FROM SPECIALTY SYSTEMS INC.** may, at first glance, resemble a lunar module. However, it can feed game, fish and livestock up to 72 times a day, using the Econotimer 2 (Quartz-regulated clock) or the Geotimer (microcomputer timer). This versatile feeder changes feeding times according to the seasons and saves on labor costs with its unattended operation. Their motto: "When you buy the best, it only hurts once."

And remember, Wildlife Expo provides a huge opportunity to network with your fellow outdoors lovers. Here are a few of the organizations that will be recruiting participants:



THE TEXAS STATE RIFLE ASSOCIATION (972-889-8772) is

working to protect the interests and needs of hunters. They strongly support the teaching of firearm and hunting safety, and have plans to develop a shooting program for hunters.

THE DALLAS SAFARI CLUB (800-946-4868) is a not-for-profit, educational, conservation and hunter advocacy organization. New members, joining between now and January 31, 1999, can win a Cape Buffalo safari or a Beretta Silver Pigeon shotgun with 20- and 28-gauge tubes.

Whether you like to hunt, fish, mountain bike, birdwatch or just plain relax, check out the display for the **HOTEL LIMPIA (800-662-5517),** located in the mile-high town of Fort Davis in the



Mountains. Guests can choose from 32 individually decorated rooms and suites. Excursions to many scenic parks and museums are available from the hotel.

TEXAS WATERFOWL OUTFITTERS (800-899-2650) has waterfowl hunting and lodging packages. They travel the entire Texas coast, covering 46,000 acres in 36 different locations. They credit their success to four important aspects of hunting: 1) safety, 2) enjoyment of the outdoors, 3) a variety of hunting areas,

and 4) the guaranteed successful hunt.

LAKE FORK G&G GUIDE SERVICE AND WATERFRONT LODGING (903-383-7636)

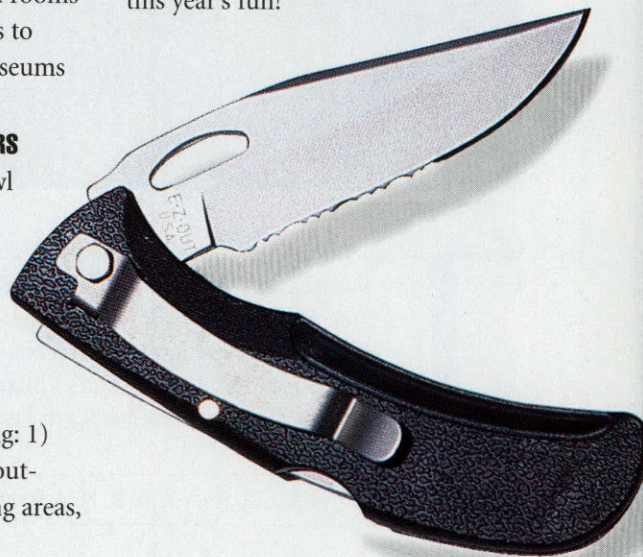
offers one- to four-day packages which include fishing with a professional guide, lodging and home-cooked meals.

BRAZOSPORT CONVENTION & VISITORS COUNCIL (800-477-2505) and the **SOUTHERN BRAZORIA COUNTY VISITORS &**



CONVENTION BUREAU (800-938-4853) invite you to spend some time in their historic and scenic area of the state. Many activities are available, like fishing, SCUBA diving, camping, hiking, picnicking, birding, golfing and museum tours.

Whether you prefer the serenity of the outdoors or roughing it in the wilderness, the 1998 Wildlife Expo will have something that's just right for you. Last year more than 40,000 people attended this free event. Bring your family and join in this year's fun!



The Legend of LA LLORONA



The specters that haunt the abodes of the pilgrims are mere infants to the ghost known as *La Llorona*; in English, “The Weeping Woman.” If there are ghosts walking the excavated ruins of Leif Ericson’s Vinland settlement, they are schoolchildren beside her.

The classic story of *La Llorona*’s inception goes like this. Once upon a time, down deep in Mexico, there was a virtuous virgin of great beauty, but she was very poor. She attracted the eye of an extremely handsome, wealthy, but unscrupulous young man, who began to pay her court. He seduced her, and when he discovered that she was carrying

STORY BY C.F. ECKHARDT • ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC DINYER

a child, he threw her out upon the streets.

She bore the child but — unable to face her family or herself with the evidence of her shame — threw it into a stream and drowned it. Shortly afterward, she herself died. As she came before St. Peter at the gates of Heaven, the saint told her, “You were a virtuous girl who was truly betrayed by an evil and unprincipled man, and you may enter Heaven — but only if you return and find the spirit of your child, whom you must bring with you.”

In yet another version, the babies — twin boys — are legitimately born. As they are being baptized, a formation of soldiers marches by the church. One child is attentive to the priest, but the other turns to watch the marching soldiers. Since Spanish soldiers in Mexico were a symbol of oppression rather than safety, the mother took this to mean that one child was inclined toward the priesthood, but the other would someday be a soldier. She could not later recall which one had turned to look at the soldiers, and because she felt an obligation to rid the world of yet another oppressor she drowned both boys. Saint Peter has sentenced her to look for the soul of the good son or sometimes of both children. Another Mexican version of the story has La Llorona as Malinche, the Aztec wife of Hernán Cortés, Mexico’s conqueror.

However she began, La Llorona is a fixture of the watercourses of the American Southwest. There is scarcely a town with a creek in it or near it where one cannot find someone who hasn’t heard, from the creekbank, the agonized scream of La Llorona — “*Mi niño! Mi niño!*” (My son! My son!) — followed by a long, drawn out wail of despair. It is considered an extremely bad omen — a harbinger of great misfortune if not of death — to hear the wail of La Llorona.

Legend says that Woman Hollering Creek, which crosses IH-10 between San Antonio and Seguin, was named in reference to the ghost of a settler woman who was kidnapped and murdered by Indians. But the creek had a name long before English-speaking settlers ventured into the area. It was called Arroyo La Llorona, or La Llorona Creek.

There may be a natural explanation for at least some instances of La Llorona’s wail. The cry of a panther — usually called a ‘hunting cry’ though the likelihood is that it’s a gal panther in heat calling “Here I am, guys” — sounds almost exactly like the scream of a woman in mortal terror or pain.

Occasionally there have been those who have insisted that they have heard the cry of the child replying to the wail. The wail of a beaver kitten, lost or hungry, sounds almost exact-

ly like the wail of a terrified child. There have been panthers along many of the Southwest’s creeks — some, surprisingly, in built-up areas — in living memory, and beavers were fairly common in the Southwest until the middle of the 19th century. These explanations, convenient as they are, cannot be made to fit all La Llorona occurrences.

Professor John Igo of San Antonio probably has done more research on the La Llorona legend than anyone else. He thinks he’s really found where she comes from.

According to Mr. Igo, there was an Aztec water goddess who had some very bad habits. One of them was to appear, in the form of a young and helpless girl, a-weeping and a-wailing alongside a canal or river. When a hapless male approached her to see if he could be of help she grabbed him and took him with her into her own domain — the water. The next morning his corpse would be found floating near where she’d waylaid him.

The most common manifestation of La Llorona is the weeper by the waterside — the one who cries for her child. Is she the treacherous water goddess? Is she the virtuous maiden who was seduced by the unscrupulous *hidalgo*’s son? Or is she, perhaps, a Spanish import, but far older even than the Aztecs?

The northern Celts, in particular the Scots and Irish, have clung enthusiastically to their ethnic identity, the Gaelic tongue, and their traditions and legends. One of those legends is the B’ean Sighe. Idiomatically translated, that Gaelic phrase means ‘little washer by the ford.’ The tradition states that when a death is imminent, a small woman, usually dressed in white — the ancient mourning color — will be seen kneeling at the side of a stream, usually near a ford or crossing-place, washing the winding sheets of the

one about to die and keening — the high-pitched wail that is the traditional mourning cry of Celtic women.

We know B’ean Sighe better by the English mispronunciation of her Gaelic name. We call her ‘The Banshee.’

Is La Llorona the Spanish-Celtic banshee?

There is another European weeper-by-the-waterside who might well have been brought to Spain in very ancient times and have given birth to, or at least been combined with, the local banshee. In Greece they tell of a woman who walks the banks of watercourses wailing for her children. She is Medea, wife of Jason of the Argo and the Golden Fleece, who is weeping for the children she murdered, cooked, and served to her husband and his companions in a grisly stew. Is La Llorona the Southwestern Medea? ☆

Is the weeping, wailing apparition along the waterside a virtuous woman searching for her lost children or a treacherous goddess from a watery domain? Or is there yet another explanation for her frequent sightings?



OCTOBER

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

- OCT. 3: **Grassland Tour and Plant Identification**, Lake Rita Blanca SP, Dalhart, 806-488-2227.
- OCT. 3: **Harvest Saturday**, Big Spring SP, Big Spring, 1-800-734-7641.
- OCT. 3-11: **Pronghorn hunting by permit**, 512-389-4505.
- OCT. 3-Nov. 1: **Archery season for whitetails and mule deer**, 512-389-4505.
- OCT. 3: **75th Anniversary**, Lake Colorado City SP, Colorado City, 915-728-3931.
- OCT. 9-18: **Celebration Week**, Lubbock Lake Landmark SHP, Lubbock, 806-765-0737.
- OCT. 10: **Stargazing Party**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.
- OCT. 10: **Dinosaur Walk**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.
- OCT. 17: **75th Anniversary**, Lubbock Lake Landmark SHP, Lubbock, 806-765-0737.
- OCT. 17: **Petroglyph Tour**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.
- OCT. 24-25: **NACCCA Reunion**, Lake Brownwood SP, Brownwood, 915-784-

5223.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Special youth hunting season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31: **Quail season opens**, 512-389-4505.

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

- OCT.: **Kreische House Tours**, every weekend, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 409-968-5658.
- OCT.: **Historical Tour**, every other Saturday and Sunday, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 409-885-3613.
- OCT.: **Bald Eagle Tour**, every Saturday, weather permitting, Fairfield Lake SP, Fairfield, 903-389-4514.
- OCT. 3, 17: **Jones Farm Tour**, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Johnson Branch Unit, Valley View, 940-637-2294.
- OCT. 3: **Cowboy Campfire, Poetry and Stories**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.
- OCT. 3: **Sunset Nature Hike**, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100.
- OCT. 3: **75th Anniversary Open House**, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100.
- OCT. 3: **Pioneer Day Fall Festival**, downtown Whitney, 254-694-2540.

OCT. 3-Nov. 1: **Archery season for whitetails**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 9-11: **American Owners & Breeders of Peruvian Horses National Championship Show**, Ft. Worth, 915-558-2059.

OCT. 10: **Astronomy**, Dinosaur Valley SP, Glen Rose, 254-897-4588.

OCT. 10: **Stagecoach Rides**, Fanthorp Inn SHP, Anderson, 409-873-2633.

OCT. 14: **Eisenhower Seminar, Ribbon-Cutting**, Eisenhower Birthplace SHP, Denison, 903-465-8908.

OCT. 17, 24: **Turkey Shoot**, Old Fort Parker SHP, Groesbeck, 254-729-5253.

OCT. 23-25: **Fossilmania XVI**, Somervell County Expo Center, Glen Rose, 214-327-9281.

OCT. 24: **Attracting Backyard Birds**, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100.

OCT. 24: **Fall Festival**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

OCT. 24: **2nd Annual Jones Farm Jam**, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Johnson Branch Unit, Valley View, 940-637-2294.

OCT. 24: **Ducks at Dark**, Ray Roberts WMA, Denton, 940-627-5475.

OCT. 24: **Sebastopol Ghost Watch**, Sebastopol SHP, Seguin, 830-379-4833.

OCT. 24-25: **Fall Orienteering Meet**, Bastrop State Park, 713-880-4640.

OCT. 31: **Halloween Spook-Walk**, Lake Somerville SP/Birch Creek Unit, Somerville, 409-535-7763.

OCT. 31: **Autumn Hayride**, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Johnson Branch Unit, Valley View, 940-637-2294.

OCT. 31: **Ottine Swamp-Fest**, Palmetto SP, Luling, 830-672-3266.

OCT. 31: **Campfire Ghost Stories**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Special youth hunting season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31: **Quail season opens**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Austin Town Festival**, living history reenactment of Anglo Texas in 1830, Bailey's Prairie, 409-864-1208.

PINEYWOODS

OCT. 3: **Annual Emmaus Christian Service Center Walk-a-Thon**, Daingerfield SP, Daingerfield, 903-645-2921.

OCT. 3, 17: **Guided Nature Trail Hike**, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

OCT. 3-Nov. 1: **Archery season for whitetails**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 11, 25: **Take a Walk on the Wild Side**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

OCT. 17: **Murder on the Dis-oriented Express**, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 1-800-442-8951.

OCT. 17: **Canoeing the Forks**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

OCT. 17-18: **11th Annual Harvest Festival**, Woodville, 409-283-2272.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Special youth hunting season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31: **Annual Haunted Halloween Hike**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

OCT. 31: **Quail season opens**, 512-389-4505.

GULF COAST

OCT.: **Plantation House, Barn and Grounds Tours**, Wednesdays through Sundays, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHP, West Columbia, 409-345-4656.

OCT. 2: **Birdwatching**, Las Palomas WMA/Longoria Unit, Edinburg, 956-383-8982.

OCT. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31: **Island Nature Tour**, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

OCT. 3, 24, 31: **Mission River Boat Trips**, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio, 512-529-6600.

OCT. 3: **Fall Hawk Watches**, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio, 512-529-6600.

OCT. 3-Nov. 1: **Archery season for whitetails**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 10: **Come Fly With Us**, Galveston Island SP, Galveston, 409-737-1222.

OCT. 10: **Matagorda Heritage Day**, fishing tournament, parade, birding seminars and more, 409-863-2201.

OCT. 10: **Bird Tour**, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

OCT. 15: **Beachcombing Tour**, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

OCT. 17: **Scout Appreciation Day**, Lake Houston SP, New Caney, 281-354-6881.

OCT. 24: **Wild Hog Management Hunt**, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio, 512-529-6600.

OCT. 24: **Mansion Madness**, Fulton Mansion SHP, Fulton, 512-729-0386.

OCT. 24: **GCCA/CPL Marine Development Center Saltwater Fishing Festival**, 512-939-7784.

OCT. 30: **Halloween Extravaganza**, Lake Texana SP, Edna, 512-782-5718.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Special youth hunting season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31-FEB. 28: **Pheasant season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31: **Quail season opens**, 512-389-4505.

HILL COUNTRY

OCT.: **Honey Creek Canyon Walk**, every Saturday, Honey Creek SNA, Boerne, 830-438-2656.

OCT.: **Devils River Expedition**, call for dates and times, X Bar Ranch, off I-10 near Sonora, 915-853-2688.

OCT.: **Green Cave Bat Flight Observation**, call for dates and times, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

OCT.: **Old Tunnel Bat Emergence Tour**, every Thursday and Saturday, Old Tunnel WMA, Fredericksburg, 830-644-2478.

OCT.: **Wild Cave Tours**, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

OCT.: **Primitive Cave Tour**, call for dates and times, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

OCT.: **Gorman Falls Hike**, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

OCT. 3-4: **Texas Wildlife Expo**, TPW headquarters, Austin, 1-800-792-1112.

OCT. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31: **Monarch Watch**, Honey Creek SNA, Boerne, 830-438-2656.

OCT. 3-Nov. 1: **Archery season for whitetails**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 8, 22: **Devil's Waterhole Canoe Tour**, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.

OCT. 9-11: **Nature Photography Weekend**, X Bar Ranch, off I-10 near Sonora, 915-853-2688.

OCT. 10, 24: **Devil's Sinkhole Observation and Batflight**, Devil's Sinkhole SNA, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

OCT. 10: **Attracting Butterflies to Your Garden**, Landmark Inn SHP, Castroville, 830-931-2133.

OCT. 16-18: **Historical Forts**, X Bar Ranch, off I-10 near Sonora, 915-853-2688.

OCT. 17: **75th Anniversary Celebration**, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, Stonewall, 830-644-2252.

OCT. 17: **75th Anniversary**, Kerrville-Schreiner SP, Kerrville, 830-257-5392.

OCT. 30, 31: **Poe at the Inn**, Landmark Inn SHP, Castroville, 830-931-2133.

OCT. 31: **75th Anniversary**, Landmark Inn SHP, Castroville, 830-931-2133.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Special youth hunting season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31: **Quail season opens**, 512-389-4505.

BIG BEND COUNTRY

OCT.: **Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour**, every Wednesday through Sunday, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

OCT.: **Guided Tours**, every first and third weekend, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, 915-566-6441.

OCT. 3, 17: **Bus Tour**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 512-389-8900.

OCT. 3-11: **Pronghorn hunting by permit**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 3-Nov. 1: **Archery season for whitetails and mule deer**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 9-11: **Longhorn Cattle Drive**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 915-229-3416.

OCT. 16-18: **Fall Trail Rides**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 281-486-8070.

OCT. 17: **Annual Living History Special Event**, Fort Lancaster SHP, 915-836-4391.

OCT. 23-25: **Desert Survival Workshop**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 915-229-3416.

OCT. 24-25: **4th Annual Interpretive Fair**, Hueco Tanks SHP, El Paso, 915-857-1135.

OCT. 24: **Pressa Canyon Rock Art Tours**, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Special youth hunting season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31: **Quail season opens**, 512-389-4505.

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

OCT.: **Nature Tours**, every first and third Wednesday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP,

Mission, 956-585-1107.

OCT.: **Kiskadee Bus Tour**, every Tuesday and Friday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, 956-585-1107.

OCT. 2-4, 9-11: **Public Dove Hunt**, Chaparral WMA, Artesia Wells, 830-676-3413.

OCT. 3-Nov. 1: **Archery season for whitetails**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 10: **Medina Bluegrass Festival and Antique Tractor and Gas Engine Show**, downtown Medina, 830-589-7224.

OCT. 12-16: **Archery Deer Hunt**, Chaparral WMA, Artesia Wells, 830-676-3413.

OCT. 17: **Bird Identification Tour**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, 512-786-3868.

OCT. 23-25: **Texas Butterfly Festival**, Mission, 800-580-2700.

OCT. 30-Nov. 1: **Dove, Quail and Rabbit Hunt**, Chaparral WMA, Artesia Wells, 830-676-3413.

OCT. 31-Nov. 1: **Special youth hunting season**, 512-389-4505.

OCT. 31: **Quail season opens**, 512-389-4505.

NOVEMBER

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

Nov. 7: **Dinosaur Walk**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

Nov. 7: **Turkey season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 14: **Petroglyph Tour**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

Nov. 21: **White-tailed deer season opens**, in six Panhandle counties, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 21: **Mule deer season opens**, 512-389-4505.

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

Nov.: **Kreische House Tours**, call for dates and times, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 409-968-5658.

Nov.: **Historical Tour**, every other Saturday and Sunday, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 409-885-3613.

Nov.: **Bald Eagle Tour**, every Saturday, weather permitting, Fairfield Lake SP,

Fairfield, 903-389-4514.

Nov. 3: **Stephen F. Austin's Birthday Celebration**, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 409-885-3613.

Nov. 7: **White-tailed deer season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 7: **Turkey season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 7: **Migratory Waterfowl Tour**, Fort Parker SP, Mexia, 254-562-5751.

Nov. 7, 21: **Jones Farm Tour**, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Johnson Branch Unit, Valley View, 940-637-2294.

Nov. 14: **Stagecoach Rides**, Fanthorp Inn SHP, Anderson, 409-873-2633.

Nov. 14: **Girl Scout Jamboree**, Old Fort Parker SHP, Groesbeck, 254-729-5253.

Nov. 14: **Victorian Holiday Crafts**, Sebastopol SHP, Seguin, 830-379-4833.

Nov. 21: **Fall Foliage Tour**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

Nov. 28: **Twilight ★ Firesides**, Fanthorp Inn SHP, Anderson, 409-873-2633.

PINEYWOODS

Nov. - Dec.: **A Christmas to Remember**, call for dates and times, Starr Family SHP, Marshall, 903-935-3044.

Nov. 7: **White-tailed deer season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 7: **Turkey season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 1, 8, 15, 29: **Take a Walk on the Wild Side**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

Nov. 7, 14, 21: **Autumn Color Steam Train Excursions**, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 1-800-442-8951.

Nov. 7, 28: **Campfire Interpretive Program**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

Nov. 7, 21: **Guided Nature Trail Hike**, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

Nov. 21: **Canoeing the Forks**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

GULF COAST

Nov.: **Plantation House, Barn and Grounds Tours**, Wednesdays through Sundays, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHP, West Columbia, 409-345-4656.

Nov. 1: **Bird Tour**, Matagorda Island SP

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OUTDOOR DATEBOOK

♣ WMA, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

Nov. 7, 14, 21, 28: **Island Nature Tour**, Matagorda Island SP ♣ WMA, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

Nov. 7: **White-tailed deer season opens**, in northern counties, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 7: **Turkey season opens**, in northern counties, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 14: **White-tailed deer season opens** in southern counties, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 14: **Turkey season opens** in southern counties, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 20: **Birdwatching**, Las Palomas WMA/Longoria Unit, 956-383-8982.

Nov. 21: **Beachcombing Tour**, Matagorda Island SP ♣ WMA, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

Nov. 22: **Whooping Crane Bus Tour**, Matagorda Island SP ♣ WMA, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

HILL COUNTRY

Nov.: **Honey Creek Canyon Walk**, every Saturday, Honey Creek SNA, Spring Branch, 830-438-2656.

Nov.: **Wild Cave Tours**, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

Nov.: **Primitive Cave Tour**, call for dates and times, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

Nov.: **Gorman Falls Hike**, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

Nov. 7: **White-tailed deer season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 7: **Turkey season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 7-8: **Soap-making Workshop**, Landmark Inn SHP, Castroville, 830-931-2133.

Nov. 7: **Photo and Artist Outing**, Honey Creek SNA, Spring Branch, 830-935-4730.

Nov. 13-15: **Kid 'n Ewe Central Texas Wool Market**, Johnson City, 512-288-9845.

Nov. 14, 21: **Jelly-Making With Native Plants**, Honey Creek SNA, Spring Branch, 830-935-4730.

BIG BEND COUNTRY

Nov.: **Fate Bell Cave-Dwelling Tour**, every Wednesday and Sunday, Seminole

Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

Nov.: **Guided Tours**, every first and third weekend, Franklin Mountains SP, Canutillo, 915-566-6441.

Nov. 7: **White-tailed deer season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 7, 21: **Bus Tours**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 512-389-8900.

Nov. 13-15: **Hiking Through Time**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 915-229-3416.

Nov. 13-15: **Fall Trail Rides**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 281-486-8070.

Nov. 14: **Pressa Canyon Rock Art Tours**, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

Nov. 20-22: **Desert Survival Workshop**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 915-229-3416.

Nov. 28: **Mule deer season opens**, 512-389-4505.

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

Oct. 30-Nov. 1: **Dove, Quail and Rabbit Hunt**, Chaparral WMA, Artesia Wells, 830-676-3413.

Nov.: **Nature Tours**, every first and third Wednesday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, 956-519-6448.

Nov.: **Kiskadee Bus Tour**, every Tuesday and Friday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, 956-519-6448.

Nov. 11-15: **Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival**, Harlingen, 800-531-7346.

Nov. 14: **White-tailed deer season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 14: **Turkey season opens**, 512-389-4505.

Nov. 6-8, 13-15, 20-22: **Public Quail Hunt**, Chaparral WMA, Artesia Wells, 830-676-3413.

Nov. 7: **Bird Identification Tour**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, 512-786-3868.

Nov. 27-29: **Youth Javelina Hunt**, Chaparral WMA, Artesia Wells, 830-676-3413.

Nov. 28: **Wildlife Tour**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, 512-786-3868.

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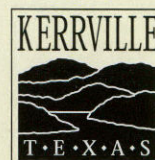
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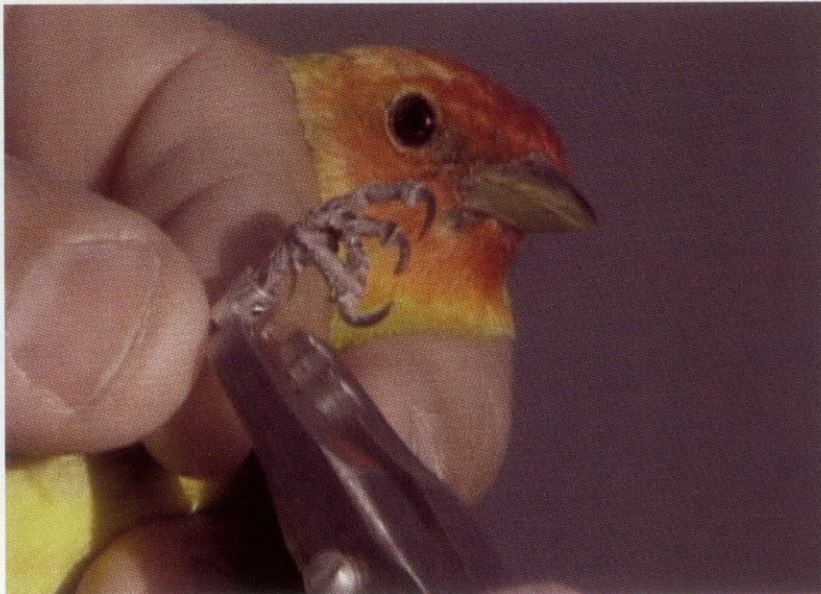
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KNCT, Ch. 46	Sun. 4:00	
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KLRN, Ch. 9	Thur. 12:00	
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KCTF, Ch. 34	Sat. 3:00	
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Look for These Stories in the Coming Weeks:

September 20-27: Paddlers who find freedom on the open water; beach-combing; looking for black bears in the mountains of Mexico.

September 27-October 4: Veteran tracker Ab Taylor; how to protect yourself from the sun; moving large and not-so-cooperative wildlife.

October 4-11: How scientists discover intimate details about wildlife; getting found after getting lost in the woods; following in the footsteps of European travelers across Texas.

October 11-18: Game wardens in the Panhandle; what lives in a cave; the Intracoastal Canal.

October 18-25: Getting outdoors is easier for some people than for others; hot fishing in cool weather; the next generation of wildlife biologists.

October 25-November 1: Helping injured and abandoned wildlife at a Houston mall; who pays for fisheries restoration; state parks where people are literally living in the past.

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La Grange: KVLG-AM 1570 / 5:45 p.m., KBUK-FM 104.9 / 5:20 p.m.

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McAllen: KHID-FM 88.1 / 4:58 p.m.

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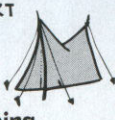
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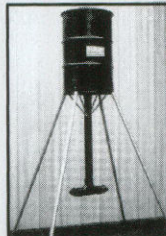
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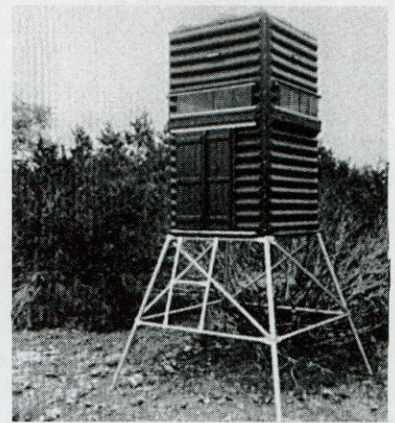
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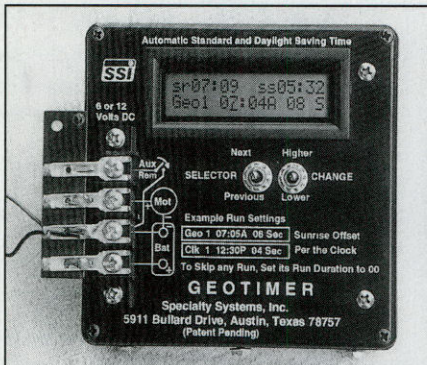
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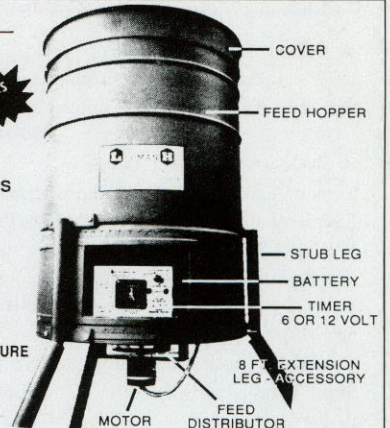
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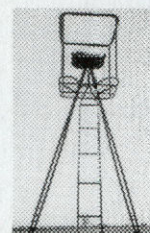
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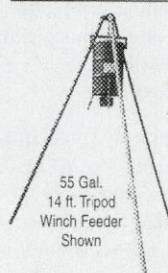
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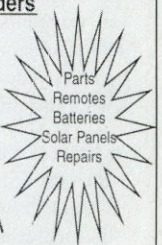
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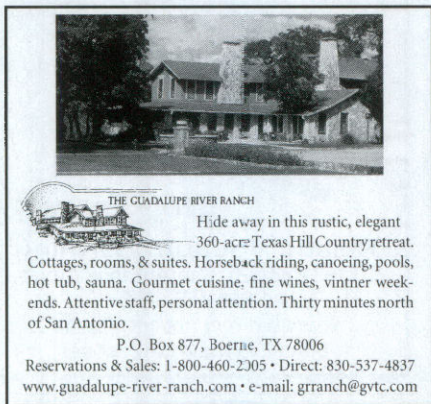
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Stealth antenna. Recently, a scientist in Colorado developed an antenna that would maximize reception without being overly conspicuous. Emerson, a leader in electronic technology, has now made this innovation available to the public.

At a lab in Colorado, they developed two patented design improvements that made the Optima antenna possible. First, they created a flexible circuit board with a serpentine antenna, resulting in a large surface area confined to a small space. Second, they developed a technique



that converts the copper shielding on the attached cable to an additional signal receiver that results in an antenna almost 10 feet long. This greatly enhances the antenna's reception power and allows you to tune the antenna by simply moving the cable! The antenna works best at a range of up to 30 miles from the signal

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