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CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEXAS STATE PARKS

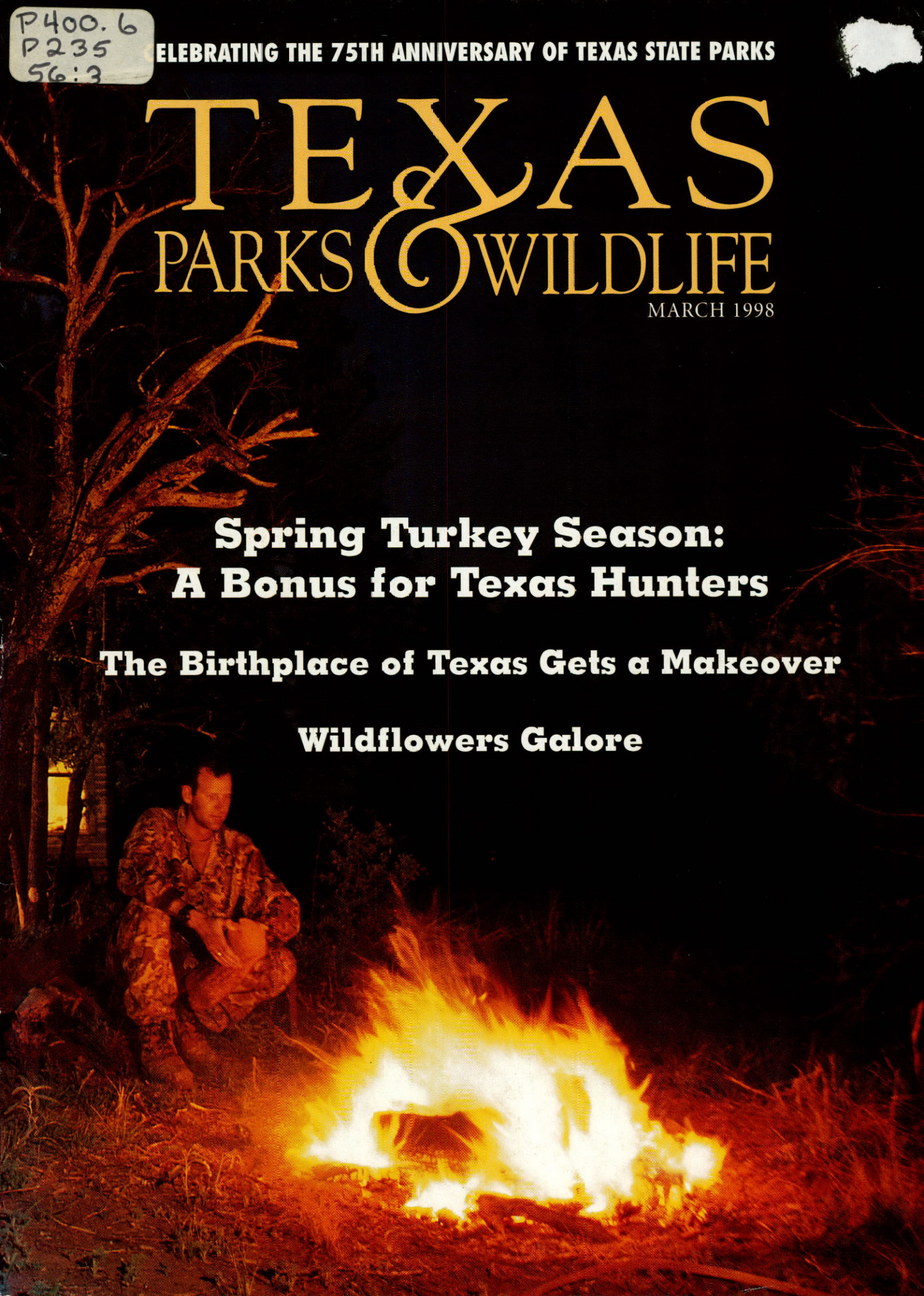
TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

MARCH 1998

**Spring Turkey Season:
A Bonus for Texas Hunters**

The Birthplace of Texas Gets a Makeover

Wildflowers Galore





TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

March 1998

★ GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION ★

★ **14 Texas State Parks Celebrate 75th Anniversary** This year marks the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Texas State Parks Board. From that modest beginning three-quarters of a century ago has grown a network of 123 state parks encompassing 671,484 acres. *by Rob McCorkle*

★ **18 A Texas Star is Reborn** Washington-on-the-Brazos's \$6 million facelift should leave no doubt that this often unheralded historical site belongs more than ever among the pantheon of shrines of Texas independence, along with the Alamo, San Jacinto and Goliad. *by Mary-Love Bigony*

★ **24 State Parks in Bloom** Texas state parks offer some of the best spots for seeing wildflowers this spring.

FEATURES

34 Hunting Texas's Boss of Spring When a tom turkey's got lovin' on his mind, the time is right to go after this wily bird. *by Brandon Ray*

40 Spring Ho! Texans from Alpine to Victoria prove that while spring officially starts on March 20, the spirit of the season is in the eye and ear of the beholder. *by Roland H. Wauer*

44 The Race is the Place If you're boatless but still want to catch some fish, all is not lost. For people who like to catch a wide variety of fish, as well as quality-sized ones, the best places are the tailrace areas below dams. *by Paul Seidensticker*

DEPARTMENTS

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50 Outdoor Datebook **52 TV and Radio Schedules**
56 Parting Shot

COVERS

Front and Back: Spring turkey season is a bonus for Texas hunters. This year's spring season for Rio Grande turkeys is April 4–May 10 in most of North Texas and March 28–May 3 in most of South Texas. A spring season for eastern turkeys is April 13–26 in 17 East Texas counties. Check the TPWD Outdoor Annual for specific regulations. See story on page 34. Photo © David J. Sams. Nikon F4 camera, 20mm 2.8 lens, Fuji Velvia film, f/5.6 with exposure set by camera meter.

Inside Front: A Mexican ground squirrel on a blooming strawberry cactus is a sure sign that spring has arrived. For other spring heralds see page 40. Photo © Larry Ditto. Canon T90 camera, 500mm 4.5 Canon lens with extension ring, 1/250 second at f/4.5.

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

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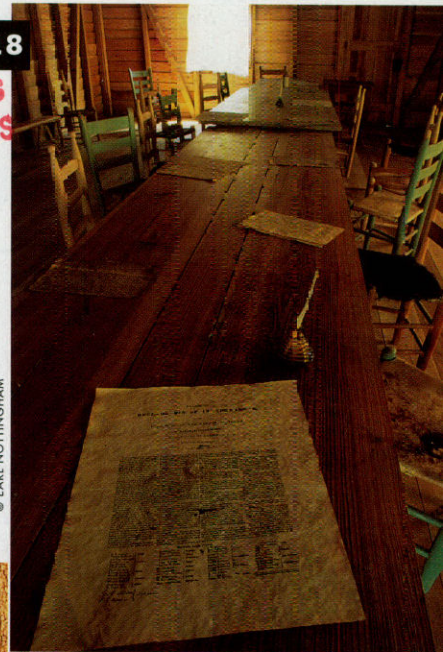
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On the first day of March, a distinguished group of Texas leaders, including Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock, will commemorate the anniversary of Texas independence on the site of its birth at Washington-on-the-Brazos. This year's observance will be dramatically enhanced by the unveiling of a spectacular series of capital improvements that will greatly expand the ability of all Texans to honor and better understand the epochal events that took place there 162 years ago. The centerpiece of a six-year redevelopment program is a new visitor center that tells the story of the Texas revolution and features the original handwritten journal from the constitutional convention in 1836.

This treasured document comes to this site thanks to the generosity and commitment of the Summerlee Foundation and the Dallas Historical Society. Summerlee, along with Lieutenant Governor Bullock, has led the way in strengthening the commitment of state government to preserving and interpreting our rich Texas heritage.

The most precious reminders of that heritage, including Washington-on-the-Brazos itself, are historic sites within the Texas State Park System, which is celebrating its own birthday this year after 75 years of service to Texas. The Diamond

Jubilee, which will be commemorated throughout 1998, not only has given us a wonderful opportunity to honor those who had the courage and vision to establish the state parks, but also to apply that same vision and courage to preparing for the next 75 years. Toward that end, the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives has appointed a joint committee, chaired by Representative Edmund Kuempel of Seguin, to study the continued changes taking place in outdoor recreation and conservation. The committee's recommendations will guide Texas Parks and Wildlife in meeting the increasing demands for facilities and access to the outdoors. Their work is being augmented by a major study underway at Texas A&M, and will constitute the most thorough analysis of our system undertaken since John Connally was governor.

Thus, for those of us who cherish the outdoors and the places where our history was made, 1998 will also be a historic year. While we celebrate our heritage, we will reaffirm our commitment to the future and rekindle our determination to save the best of Texas for our children.

ANDREW SANSON, *Executive Director*

I N A P R I L



© GEORGE L. HOSEK

Texas State Parks are excellent birding areas, as we'll show you in the April issue. Pictured above are tricolored herons, which you might see at any of the coastal state parks.

GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION

We'll continue our celebration of the 75th anniversary of Texas State Parks with coverage of birding in state parks, a look at the state's historic sites, plans for a 50th anniversary celebration of the Battleship *Texas* and a visit to Longhorn Cavern in the Hill Country.

O.H. IVIE RESERVOIR

More than 50 years in the planning, this 19,000-surface-acre lake between San Angelo and Ballinger holds promise for West Texas bass fishermen, turning out a succession of larger bass each year since the lake opened in 1990.

FROM SUBDIVISION TO SANCTUARY

A prestigious Houston-area subdivision that suffered a series of calamities—including Hurricane Carla in 1961, Hurricane Alicia in 1983 and serious subsidence—today is a wildlife sanctuary that attracts wildlife enthusiasts from around the country.

SEA STINGERS

April signals the return of ocean-swimming season along the Texas coast. Here's a handy guide to jellyfish and other stingers to help you "see and avoid" when you swim.

**TEXAS
PARKS & WILDLIFE**

MARCH 1998, Vol. 56, No. 3

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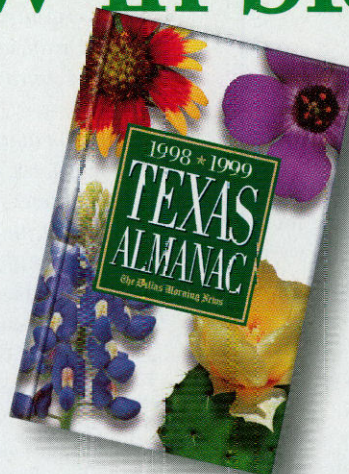
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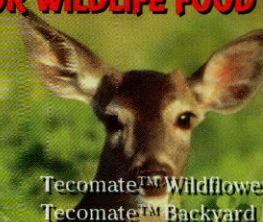
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The Dallas Morning News

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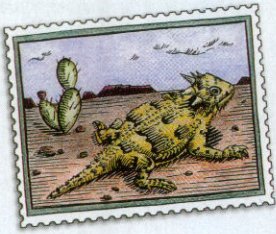
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LIBERTY SHIPS

You sure brought back a bunch of memories with the January article about Liberty Ships. Many of these ships were built at the Sparrows Point Ship Yard at Baltimore, Maryland. I worked at the Glenn L. Martin bomber plant just a few miles from the shipyards. On our days off we would be fishing out on the Chesapeake Bay and we usually would see one or two of the Liberties as they were heading out to sea.

We knew a seaman who sailed on the Murmansk Run. He told about unloading 10-gallon cans of butter on the docks at Murmansk. The husky Russian women stevedores would open a can or two and grease their boots with the butter. Butter was rationed here at home.

I came home from Japan in January 1946 on a Victory ship. They followed the Liberties, but were somewhat bigger. The one I was on was the U.S.C.C.N.Y. (City College of New York) out of Baltimore.

Also in the January issue, the Operation Game Thief article perhaps ought to have given credit to the original organizer of this type of program. Officer Gregg MacAllise of the Albuquerque Police Department came up with the idea for "Crime Stoppers." From his program, Operation Game Thief was created by the New Mexico Game and Fish Department. Both programs were highly successful and the last I heard they were being used in at least 36 states.

Ralph A. Fisher, Jr.
Silver City, New Mexico

The article shows a picture on page 18 of the Liberty Ship *George Vancouver* with the caption "off Galveston." However, the map on page 17 shows the *George Vancouver* being off Freeport, as do the coordinates given on page 21.

I do not believe we have any Liberty Ships off Galveston. Can you tell me why not? And could Galveston acquire some off its coastline?

P. Urbani
Galveston

■ Dale Shively, Coastal Fisheries Division: "You are correct that several ships are listed in the table on page 21 as being off the coast of Freeport. That is the closest major port from which we measured the distance from the shore to the artificial reef site. In the caption on page 18, I stated that one ship was off the coast of Galveston. I made that statement on the assumption that many people reading the article would not be familiar with the location of Freeport, whereas most people know where Galveston is. Technically, we do not have any ships directly off Galveston, but you could leave the Galveston jetties and navigate to them.

"The only close artificial reef structures off Galveston are the Galveston Pipe Reef clusters, 11 nautical miles offshore. We have a number of reef sites from 50 to more than 100 nautical miles off Galveston. The Liberty Ships were placed in the mid-1970s and their locations were determined by the U.S. Navy and the Texas Marine Council. Their decisions were based on economics, habitat suitability and existence of pipelines and shipping lanes. We continually are looking for suitable material to develop new sites and enhance existing ones, keeping in mind the needs of user groups. In fact, we just placed 100 concrete reef balls about four feet in height at the Galveston pipe reef site. For a listing of all sites with GPS coordinates, you may write to me at 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744."

BOBCATS

I enjoy your magazine, and just had to write in response to the Parting Shot in the November issue of a bobcat carrying a rabbit it had killed. I live in Mansfield, a small town just south of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Our small town is on the grow, and a new highway is being constructed to link us to the big cities. This highway is going right through country that has seen little traffic. And although it is convenient for us drivers, it obviously has impacted the wildlife.

Shortly after the access road opened I saw a big cat crossing right in front of my car. Its face and size made it unmistakable as a bobcat. Although my sighting was questioned by some, your photo convinced me that I was not crazy!

Like the bobcat pictured in your magazine, this cat was having a "varmint" to go also. I would be interested in knowing why this might be occurring. Perhaps it is a survival mechanism as

roads and houses encroach on the animals' living and hunting grounds.

Jan Cox
Mansfield

■ Matt Wagner, Nongame Program leader: "The bobcat is Texas's most common wild feline, occurring in essentially every county of the state. Rabbits, squirrels, wood rats, porcupines, pocket gophers and ground-nesting birds make up most of their diet. Rabbit-sized prey items typically are killed and consumed on the spot, but not always. Bobcats, as well as mountain lions, Texas's other common cat, often carry larger prey to a spot to be covered with leaves, sticks or soil. As new roads lead to further urban development, wildlife are forced to seek new habitat, often becoming more visible to those of us occupying their former home."

SHALLOW WATERS

After reading the letter entitled "Shallow Water Preserves" in the December issue, I was reminded of a letter I wrote to John Sharp in 1981. At that time Sharp was our state representative in Austin. Representative Sharp was very much in agreement with my comments, and told me he was making copies of my letter and distributing it to all 150 members of the Texas House of Representatives.

I wholeheartedly agree with the letter you published. Since my observations in 1981 I have seen activity in our bays increase ten-fold. Jets and jacked-up rigs have replaced most airboats, with every owner bragging about how shallow his boat will run.

I see no solution to this problem as long as these "pot-bellied Bubbas" are too lazy to walk the mud flats. Back in the fifties an old-timer told me, "If you want to catch redfish in shallow water, cut your

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, Texas 78704. Our fax number is 512-707-1913.

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TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE magazine (ISSN 0040-4586) is published monthly by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.

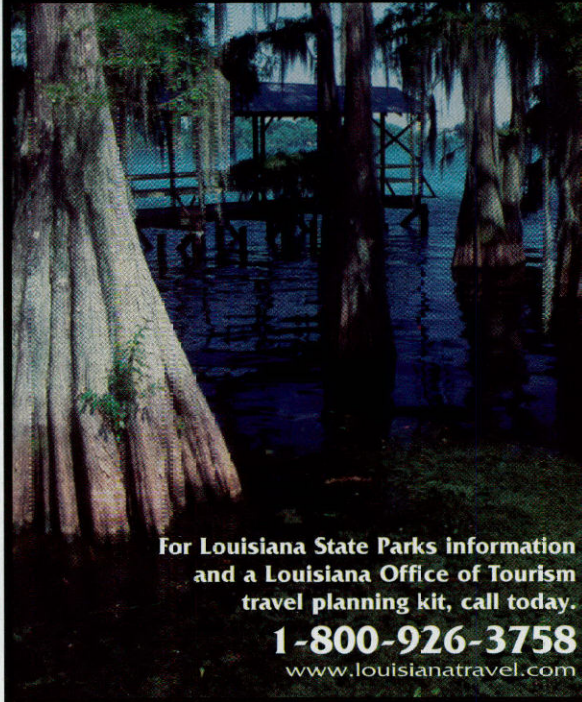
SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$14.95 per year.
 Foreign subscription rate: \$22 per year.

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motor off at least 200 yards from the area you want to fish and walk in quietly." I heeded his advice and many times I have walked up on two, three and even four bunches of tailing reds. That was a real thrill to work each bunch.

Clarence L. Albrecht
Port O'Connor

PHEASANT T-SHIRT

I understand that you recently advertised a T-shirt that had pheasants featured on the back, which was taken from one of your "vintage magazine covers" painted by my late husband, Orville O. Rice. If this is true I am very flattered and hope that it is enjoyed by all.

Mrs. Orville Rice
Topeka, Kansas

■ It is indeed an Orville Rice painting featured on the T-shirt. The art originally appeared on our February 1947 front cover. Orville Rice's wildlife art appeared on this magazine's covers during the 1940s and 1950s. A native of Yoakum, in South Texas, Rice was an architect by profession who pursued an interest in wildlife art throughout his life. Bird paintings he completed while at the University of Texas are part of the permanent collection of the Texas Memorial Museum in Austin. He continued to paint wildlife during his 33-year career in architecture, and on his retirement in 1981 he devoted almost all his time to painting. He died in 1986.

Ernie Gammage, director of TPWD's Wildlife Expo, chose the design for the shirt. "I discovered a company that did a brilliant job of screening images onto shirts, not an easy thing to do with fine art," he said. "We settled on this particular cover partially because we had a pristine copy of the magazine from that year that we could photograph for the screening process. One change we had to make was to remove the old title of the magazine, Texas Game & Fish. By using computer technology we were able to remove the name and insert Texas Parks & Wildlife. Mr. Rice's work continues to be appreciated to this day and new generations of Texans are admiring his artistry for the first time."

To buy a shirt, see the ad on this page.

CORRECTION

For the record, the animals in the photo

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on page 27 of the January issue in the poaching article are identified incorrectly. They are gemsbok, not scimitar-horned oryx. Scimitar-horned oryx are white with some rufous coloring.

Still a great magazine, though!

Dr. Dale Rollins
San Angelo

SELLING WILDLIFE

⚡ The "selling" of our wildlife, which really is owned by the citizens, has concerned me for many years. It used to be that people went hunting and fishing for relaxation and enjoyment of nature. Bass tournaments started the problem by offering cash for the biggest fish or the heaviest stringer. More recently, prizes have been offered for the largest deer or turkey. All this puts undue pressure on the wildlife and encourages illegal activity. The awards programs, sporting goods stores' contests, Pope & Young and Boone & Crockett all contribute to the incentive to bag the biggest and best, irrespective of whether the taking is legal, morally right, or conforms to "fair chase."

The bass clubs, stores and organizations do not own the wildlife and have no right to "buy" or "sell" species with particular characteristics by offering prizes, cash awards, or your name in the record book.

The solution I propose is to eliminate all award programs for the taking of wildlife. Remove the reward, and the financial incentive to cheat is removed. Remove the reward, and it will no longer be lucrative to take wildlife. Remove the reward, and I think you will find that the poaching problem, with the attendant infiltration of organized crime, simply will go away.

J.N. Wooten
Richardson

LITTER PROBLEMS

⚡ It saddens me to write this letter but I feel that I must. I've just returned from a day hunting lease in Travis County and it appalls me to see the amount of trash that some of the hunters leave on and around the deer camps. I feel that if we don't do our part as sportsmen and women some day we will see "Warning: no hunting" signs on this ranch and others. Remember, just because you paid for a place to hunt,

that doesn't give you the right to destroy someone else's property. So please remember, conservation is everyone's job. We all must clean up after ourselves so as to preserve our chances for future hunting and fishing.

Louis Benevento
Burlison

⚡ When my husband and I married almost three years ago, I was 30 years old and had never been camping in my life. We bought a tent for a gift to each other (since he has always enjoyed camping/outdoors). Since this time, we have frequented many of the close-by state parks, and a few much farther away.

We have never been disappointed with the rangers, workers, hosts or anything. We enjoy hiking and biking at all of the parks. Along the hiking trail you want to see nature, plants, streams, caves, animals and dirt, but many times you see candy wrappers, soft drink cans and just plain trash. I was very disappointed at Garner State Park, which is in a beautiful location with beautiful campsites and a terrific river flowing through it. We hiked a two-mile trail up to a very high peak and when we got to the cave, graffiti had been painted everywhere. It really disappointed me. It was not the fault of the park workers, just of the inconsiderate nature of a few of the guests.

My husband and I both are educators with 31 years' experience between the two of us, and we both feel that the majority of the litter and graffiti is probably done by youth. Perhaps your magazine could do an article encouraging parents to discuss with their children the importance of keeping the park nice. We totally believe in leaving only footprints and taking only pictures! I sure wish everyone else did too.

One weekend, we camped by a family that washed every dish they had in the restroom sink. There was a sign saying "no washing dishes in the sink" plain as day, and a ranger told them at least twice to quit, but they continued. When I went in to brush my teeth, the sink wouldn't drain because of all the oatmeal and other food in it. I don't think an article in your magazine would help people like this, but I believe most people who visit the state parks are considerate and would, with just a little urging, teach their kids to be considerate, too.

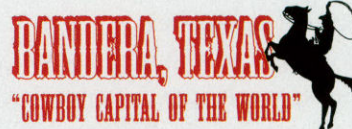
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Trail Mix

Edited by Mary-Love Bigony

Mountain Lion Study Sheds Light On Habits, Range

Mountain lions in South Texas tend to have smaller home ranges than their western counterparts, and prey mostly on white-tailed deer, according to a recently released research report begun in 1993 and completed last year.

"We've gained a couple of significant findings about mountain lion ecology in South Texas," said Matt Wagner, TPWD nongame program leader. "One of the most important things is that mountain lions in South Texas have little effect on

cattle in that area. We also learned these mountain lions have a relatively small home range—about one-fourth the size of cats in West Texas.

"Because there is such an abundance of deer in South Texas, mountain lions don't have to travel very far to find prey," added Wagner. "This information will assist the department in future efforts to create a statewide mountain lion management plan."

Analysis of data from this study suggests the home range of male mountain

lions in South Texas averages 82 square miles, whereas females average about 34 square miles. The study found young mountain lions usually disperse to new areas. Two radio-collared males moved from their maternal home range to areas 50 miles away, while two females moved only about 10 miles.

Since 1993, researchers have received reports of 22 lions taken by hunters in the same 1,600-square-mile study area, indicating there are a lot of mountain lions in this part of South Texas.

TPWD Seeks Volunteer Boater Education Instructors



TPWD PHOTO

If you know a lot about boating, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department would like to put that knowledge to good use to help keep the water safe.

Faced with the prospect of educating thousands of boaters affected by the recently implemented mandatory boater education law, TPWD is recruiting vol-

unteer instructors.

"We don't require teaching experience, just a love of boating and the commitment of teaching at least one class per year," said Tim Spice, boating education coordinator for TPWD. "The experience itself is extremely rewarding. To know that you have made an impact on boating safety

in a tangible way is very gratifying."

For information about the boater education program or to become a volunteer instructor, contact Tim Spice, TPWD boater education, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas, 78744 or call 512-389-8141, or 1-800-792-1112, or e-mail tim.spice@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Would the Boll Weevil Have Been the State Insect?

The bluebonnet had to beat out the cotton boll and the prickly pear blossom to become the state flower.

According to *Legends and Lore of Texas Wildflowers* by Elizabeth Silverthorne: "In 1901, when a resolution proposed by the Colonial Dames of Texas to adopt the bluebonnet as the state flower was introduced in the Texas House of Representatives, a business leader suggested that the open cotton boll, 'the white flower of commerce,' be adopted

instead. Jack Garner, future vice president of the United States, rose to support with glowing praise the prickly pear, a prominent inhabitant of the area near his Uvalde home. The Dames marshaled their forces to lobby the representatives, and as a visual aid they brought into the House a bluebonnet picture painted by Miss Mode Walker of Austin. The opposition, including 'Cactus Jack,' was overwhelmed, and the bluebonnet won the day."

Angler Art

Science and art are combined in a new edition of *Warmwater Gamefish of North America* by Windsor/Nature Discovery: the 24-inch by 36-inch poster is an accurate chart for fish identification as well as an attractive addition to any fisherman's office or den.

The colorful poster features 30 individual illustrations by artist Joseph Tomelleri. Species include sunfish, crappie, black and white bass and all the catfish.

Warmwater Gamefish of North America is available for \$10.95 plus \$4 shipping and handling. Call 1-800-635-4194.



What's So Great About A GREAT Horned Owl?



The Great Horned Owl, the most powerful of North American owls, uses its huge, light-gathering eyes for hunting at night. It's an endless effort to ensure the well-being of his family. Not unlike the mission of Central Power and Light, and we feel a definite connection with this strong bird. That's why we're a proud sponsor of the Great Horned Owl for The Great Texas Birding Classic 1998. This year's tournament is going to be bigger and better than ever. Hope to see you there.

Land Conservation Conference Scheduled

"Conserving Texas Landscapes: Strategies For Landowners" is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 17 and 18, at the McAllen Hilton in McAllen.

This third statewide land conservation conference will feature presentations on conservation management, conserva-

tion tools for landowners, landowner incentive programs, Federal Farm Bill programs and land trust operations.

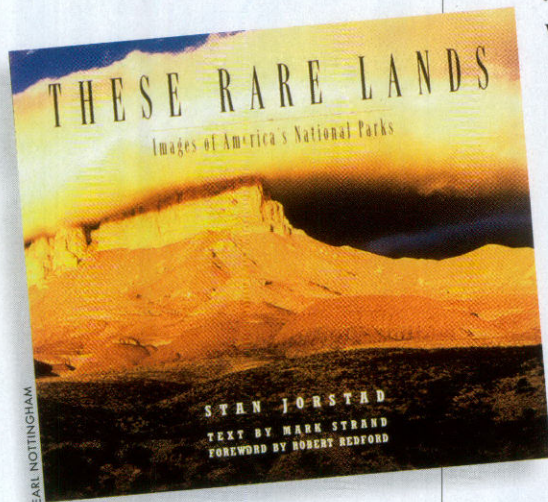
Registration is required. Contact TPWD at telephone number 512-389-4868, fax number 512-389-4469 or shirley.hoes@tpwd.state.tx.us.



A Central and South West Company

These Rare Lands

Each year, More than 60 million people from all over the world flock to America's national parks. Visitors describe their experiences as inspirational, overwhelming and unforgettable, but often their personal photographs fail to capture the majestic wilderness and breathtaking beauty of the parks.



A new book from Simon & Schuster, *These Rare Lands, Images of America's National Parks*, showcases national parks from Acadia in Maine to Haleakala in Hawaii in the work of photographer Stan Jorstad. The stunning photographs are complemented by reflections on the images by former American poet laureate Mark Strand. Robert Redford wrote the foreword.

Images representing Big Bend National Park include panoramic views of low clouds over the Rio Grande and lightning seen from Sotol Vista. Golden-tinted clouds over El Capitan represent Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

These Rare Lands is 11 inches by 9 1/4 inches and contains 145 color photographs, 50 of them panoramic images. It sells for \$40.



The Warden Chronicles

All's well that ends well.

We need more "violators" of this nature. Capt. Bill Magee received a call about violators in the national forest running deer with dogs. Upon arrival, he encountered two elderly men, complete with orange vests and no guns, walking four bird dogs. The gentlemen were even going so far as to pick up trash and remove it from the area.

Did You Know?

Earthworms can grow up to 22 feet in length.

During the last ice age—23,000 years ago—there were giant icebergs in the ocean as far south as Mexico City.

Dame Juliana Berne, an English nun, is credited with authorship of the first-ever serious publication on sportfishing in 1496.



Correction

The photo on page 11 of the December 1997 issue is a sea nettle, not a Portuguese man-of-war, as stated. Here is a photo of a Portuguese man-of-war.



Rancher, breeder, field hand.



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land, making improvements, or purchasing capital equipment.

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1-800-922-5263 Call now for information, or to apply for a loan to buy or refinance land, capital equipment, or even a home. You can also visit us at www.farmcreditbank.com.



Call 1-800-950-2438 or visit www.chevrolet.com Suburban is a registered trademark and Chevy is a trademark of the GM Corp. ©1998 GM Corp. Buckle up, America.



Rodeo arena in remote Lajitas, Texas.

*So remote in fact,
Lajitas proudly claims
it's not close to anything.*



The Chevrolet Suburban.

*Pretty easy to locate
anywhere in Texas.
But still not close to anything.*

CHEVY SUBURBAN  LIKE A ROCK

TEXAS STATE PARKS
75TH ANNIVERSARY
{ 1923 - 1998 }

Celebrate



BY ROB McCORKLE

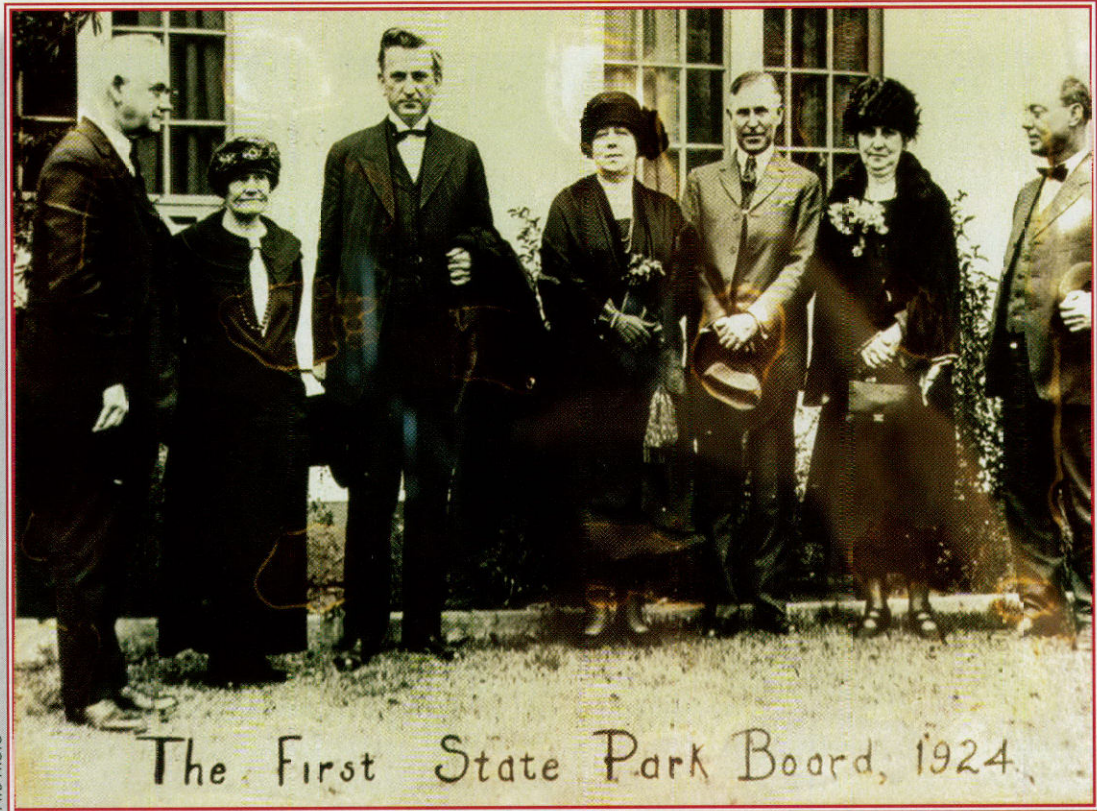
THE CALL OF THE OPEN COUNTRY IS EVER A NATURAL ONE OF THE HUMAN HEART, AND THE MASSES OF LIFE IN THE CITIES SHOULD NEVER CAUSE IT TO BE CRUCIFIED OR TO BECOME DORMANT... CAMPING AND OUTING PLACES, BREATHING SPOTS FOR HUMANITY, SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED ALONG OUR HIGHWAYS THROUGHOUT THE STATE, AT DISTANCES NOT GREATER THAN 100 MILES APART.

PAT NEFF AS QUOTED IN THE *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, DECEMBER 27, 1925

THE IMPASSIONED WORDS SPOKEN BY GOVERNOR PAT M. NEFF MORE THAN 70 YEARS AGO AS HE AND FELLOW LEGISLATORS STUMPED FOR SUPPORT OF A FLEDGLING STATE PARK SYSTEM IN POST-WORLD WAR I TEXAS SEEM EERILY PROPHETIC ON THE EVE OF A NEW MILLENNIUM. THEN, AS TODAY, PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND EVEN RURAL COUNTRYSIDE REPRESENTED MUCH-DESIRED RESPITES FOR THE HARRIED AND CROWDED RESIDENTS OF THE STATE'S BUSTLING CITIES.

As Texans gather this year at the State Capitol and in state parks from Amarillo to Athens and El Paso to Galveston to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Texas State Parks System, hallowed cultural shrines and natural gems alike face a host of challenges no less daunting than the political hurdles confronting Governor Neff and his colleagues during the first quarter of this century.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Beginning this month and running through the rest of 1998 we will have a special section as part of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's year-long celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Texas State Parks. This month we'll show you some of the favorite parks for wildflower viewing and the newly refurbished Washington-on-the-Brazos, with Rob McCorkle's introduction to kick off everything.



TPWD PHOTO

MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL STATE PARKS BOARD IN 1924, LEFT TO RIGHT: D.E. COLP, CHAIRMAN; PHOEBE WARNER OF THE PANHANDLE; GOV. PAT M. NEFF; MRS. W.C. MARTIN OF DALLAS; BOB HUBBARD OF THE HIGHWAY COMMISSION; MRS. JAMES WAELDER OF VICTORIA AND HOBERT KEY.

“This year will not be just a celebration of the 75th birthday of state parks,” notes Andrew Sansom, executive director of Texas Parks and Wildlife, “but an unparalleled opportunity to share with the people of Texas the message that our state parks stand at a crossroads and need their support now more than ever.”

Although Governor Neff and David Colp of San Antonio get the yeoman’s share of the credit for pushing through the May 1923 bill that created the Texas State Parks Board, it is Neff’s mother Isabella, known affectionately as Mother Neff, who planted the seeds of a state park system. She did so by designating in her 1916 will that six acres of the family’s Leon River bottomland homestead near present-day Moody be dedicated for public use for “religious, educational, fraternal and political purposes.”

When Mother Neff passed away in 1921, the six-acre tract came under the control of Pat, youngest of her nine chil-

dren. True to his mother’s legacy, Pat Neff called for a state parks program, saw it established and deeded to the state the family land on Mother’s Day, 1934. Considered the forerunner of the state park system when turned over to the state in 1923, Mother Neff State Park was preceded by several other public lands, including 10 acres on the San Jacinto River bought by the state in 1883.

To appreciate just how far the state parks system has come, consider the contrast between the Texas of today and the Texas existing at the time the state parks system was born. In 1920, 25 percent of the state’s population lived in the cities; Today, 80 percent live in an urban area. Texas’s population has quadrupled in the past 75 years, from 4.6 million to an estimated 18.5 million. It is estimated there will be 20 million Texas residents by 2000. By the early 21st century, the majority of them will be non-Anglos; Anglos traditionally have been the primary con-

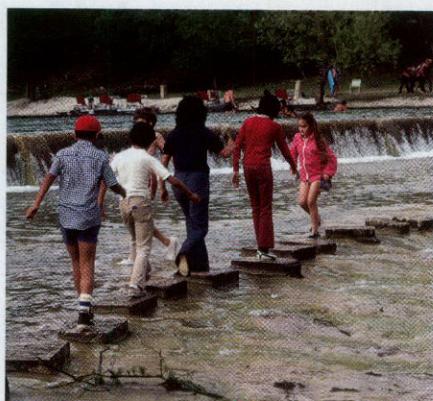
stituency of state parks. By 1927, the State Parks Board oversaw 24 donated sites totaling 1,858 acres. Ironically, Mother Neff was not among them. Today, TPWD administers 123 parks encompassing 671,484 acres, ranging from .01-acre Acton, where Davy Crockett’s second wife, Elizabeth, is buried to 280,000-acre Big Bend Ranch State Park.

THE CCC DAYS

Texas State Parks developed slowly at first, kicking into high gear in the 1930s with President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Civilian Conservation Corps program designed to lift the nation from its economic doldrums. At the program’s peak in 1935, 27 CCC companies were in Texas building the backbone of today’s state park system. Former Governor Neff, a member of the State Parks Board, recognized an opportunity when he saw one and in 1934 deeded 252 acres of family land to the state. Consequently, Mother



TPWD PHOTO



TPWD PHOTO



TPWD PHOTO

TODAY'S STATE PARKS RANGE FROM NATURAL AREAS SUCH AS LOST MAPLES, LEFT, TO RECREATIONAL PARKS SUCH AS GARNER, MIDDLE, AND PARKS THAT INTERPRET THE STATE'S COLORFUL PAST. SEE DINOSAUR TRACKS AT DINOSAUR VALLEY, RIGHT, AND MORE RECENT HISTORY AT THE NUMEROUS AND VARIED STATE HISTORICAL PARKS.

Neff became one of 31 CCC-developed sites that formed the core of the state park system. Many of Texas's popular parks today, such as Bastrop, Davis Mountains and Garner, were CCC parks built of sturdy native materials with trademark craftsmanship.

But 60 years later, the state's CCC parks are showing their age. Many of the structures require constant attention and the parks' electrical, water and wastewater systems suffer from age and overuse. Fortunately, the 75th Texas Legislature in 1997 authorized the issuance of \$60 million in revenue bonds to start tackling \$75 million in critical repairs needed at Texas Parks and Wildlife facilities. A majority of those bonds will be sold to finance desperately needed renovations to the CCC parks and other parks whose infrastructures cry out for attention. In addition, lawmakers allocated \$5 million per year for the next two years in state general revenue to TPWD to pay debt service on the bonds.

During the 1990s, Texas Parks and Wildlife has pushed away from the public trough, eschewing general tax revenues for a more entrepreneurial approach to funding its outdoors programs, state parks operations and maintenance. Unlike many state agencies, TPWD gets very little undedicated general tax revenue, instead relying mainly on user fees, such as hunting and fishing license sales,

Texas Conservation Passports, purchases and state park use fees. The agency also receives up to \$32 million annually from the sales tax generated on sporting goods that is split equally between local parks and state parks. Even so, Texas ranks 48th in per capita state government spending on parks and recreation, averaging \$3 per person versus the national average of \$13, according to the State Comptroller's Office.

INNOVATIVE PARK MANAGERS

Throughout the sprawling Texas State Parks System, park managers at most sites have learned in recent years to do more with less staff and money, adopting innovative means to keep bathrooms clean, lawns mowed and customers satisfied. Volunteers, bicycle clubs, community friends groups and even state inmates have pitched in to help as state parks have seen tax-supported state funding fall from roughly \$19 million in 1983 to approximately \$15.5 million today. Predictably, new park openings have slowed to a trickle during the past decade and park acquisitions have been put on hold. The recent exception is the Chinati Mountains State Natural Area, which was accepted last year as a donation from the Mellon Foundation by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in a package deal that included an endow-

ment to pay Presidio County for lost property taxes and an offer to help pay most of the park's future maintenance. Even with the addition of the Chinatis' 38,000 acres, the 672,000 acres of state park lands represent only a fraction of Texas's 170 million acres in a state where 97 percent of the land is privately owned.

The relatively small size of the state parks system, however, belies its immense importance to Texas. Some 40 historic properties under TPWD's purview, including the San Jacinto Battlefield, Goliad and Washington-on-the-Brazos, preserve the rich cultural heritage of the state that present-day Texans can see and touch to better understand the state's colorful past—from its prehistoric days captured in dinosaur footprints and Native American rock art to the Texas Revolution days, frontier era and Victorian times. And, whether your interests lean toward rock climbing, canoeing, camping, fishing, horseback riding, mountain biking, photography or birding, there's a state park in which to enjoy that pursuit amid some of the most awesome scenery imaginable.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Challenges to our parks and their natural and cultural treasures loom on two fronts. The state's soaring population will exacerbate man's encroachment upon the

state's woods and waters, drive up maintenance costs and nibble away at the diverse habitat so important to sustaining wildlife and wild places often taken for granted by our ancestors. Andrew Sansom, the state's most visible conservation spokesman, addresses such concerns in his book *Texas Lost: Vanishing Heritage*. He writes: "At the same time, 3 percent of Texas that is set aside for the public is also under stress.... Because of the reduced opportunity imposed by the sheer paucity of land in Texas, what we have is taking a beating even as a new generation of city dwellers increasingly desperate to enjoy the outdoors places more and more demands on it."

Sansom and other TPWD officials are assessing, as well, the changing demographics of the state, which will have far-reaching effects on state parks and recreational trends. The Texas of tomorrow (by 2030) is projected to consist of a populace that is older (49 percent will be 45 years of age and older), a racial mix that is more than 50 percent non-Anglo and households increasingly headed by a single parent. Add to that the fact that park visitation surveys show African-Americans and Hispanics comprise only 17 percent of today's state park visitors, and that single-parent families are among the least likely to visit state parks, and the dilemma becomes obvious—how to attract more non-tradi-

tional users to state parks and foster greater interest in outdoor activities.

Kevin Good of the State Parks Division says several outreach programs have been launched by the agency in recent years to appeal to the non-traditional user of the outdoors. The Buffalo Soldiers program, for example, interprets for school children and others the African-American soldiers' and Mexican vaqueros' contributions to the taming of the Texas frontier. Becoming An Outdoors-Woman workshops have proven popular with women seeking greater outdoors skills and knowledge. A number of state parks have sponsored camps for troubled urban youth to introduce them to the benefits of fishing, camping and other outdoor pursuits. And, the agency's Community Outdoor Outreach Program has fostered partnerships with local churches, social agencies and parks and recreation departments to expose city youngsters to the outdoor experience that can help shape core values.

"We're trying to develop better ties to local groups to reach kids in the inner city to expand their recreational pursuit from more traditional sports like basketball and softball to outdoor recreation like camping, canoeing and hiking," Good explains. "We also want people to realize that there's a natural world all around to be enjoyed, whether it's Lost Maples or Lake Houston State Park." ★

NEW FRIENDS OF STATE PARKS SOUGHT

Good, a seven-year TPWD veteran, spends much of his time working to expand the parks' constituency base by helping with the formation of local friends groups to assist state parks in their area through fundraising and volunteer support. Today, 50 friends groups exist in Texas. During this year, the department has set a goal of every state park establishing a friends group.

Other cornerstones of the year-long celebration are Texans for State Parks and Lone Star Legacy. Texans for State Parks is a new non-profit organization that will provide input to Texas Parks and Wildlife on state parks issues and will serve as a statewide voice for state parks. Lone Star Legacy is a fundraising campaign being kicked off by the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas. The campaign is designed to establish permanent endowments for every state park in Texas.

State parks leaders are confident that the legacy left by Mother Neff and others 75 years ago will be protected and enhanced in the coming century, so that Texas Parks and Wildlife remains true to its mission: "To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations." ★

COME HELP US CELEBRATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Texas State Parks are throwing parties across the state to celebrate their 75th birthday and you're invited.

State parks all across Texas will have anniversary events and also will host an open house to show off the best of the Lone Star State's historical and natural treasures. Some parks on those days will be accepting donations in lieu of park entry and tour fees. See page 33 for a listing of the events scheduled for March and April. This calendar will appear in

every issue of the magazine in 1998.

Also be sure to watch in your part of the state for the arrival of the Texas State Parks' 75th anniversary traveling exhibit that tells the story of state parks and features historical photographs, postcards, brochures and other memorabilia. These rare pieces of state park nostalgia are sure to amuse and bring back treasured memories of past visits.

In addition, more than a dozen state parks, from Amarillo to El Paso to

Houston, will host special diamond anniversary blowouts throughout the year celebrating the diversity of the state's wild places, its abundant wildlife and rich cultural tapestry. Special park tours, wildlife and fishing demonstrations, living history performances and recreational opportunities will be offered.

Resolve this year to visit your mother—Mother Nature, that is—and help celebrate 75 years of Texas state parks. We'll save a piece of cake for you.



© EARL NOTTINGHAM

ABOVE: A replica of Independence Hall gives visitors to Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park a sense of the place where delegates declared Texas's independence from Mexico in March 1836. Exhibits in the park's new visitor services complex will further enhance understanding of the dramatic events surrounding Texas independence. **RIGHT:** The home of Anson Jones, last president of the Republic of Texas, was moved to the park in 1936. It will be part of the new Barrington Living History Farm, scheduled to open in January 1999.

A TEXAS STAR IS REBORN



© GRADY ALLEN

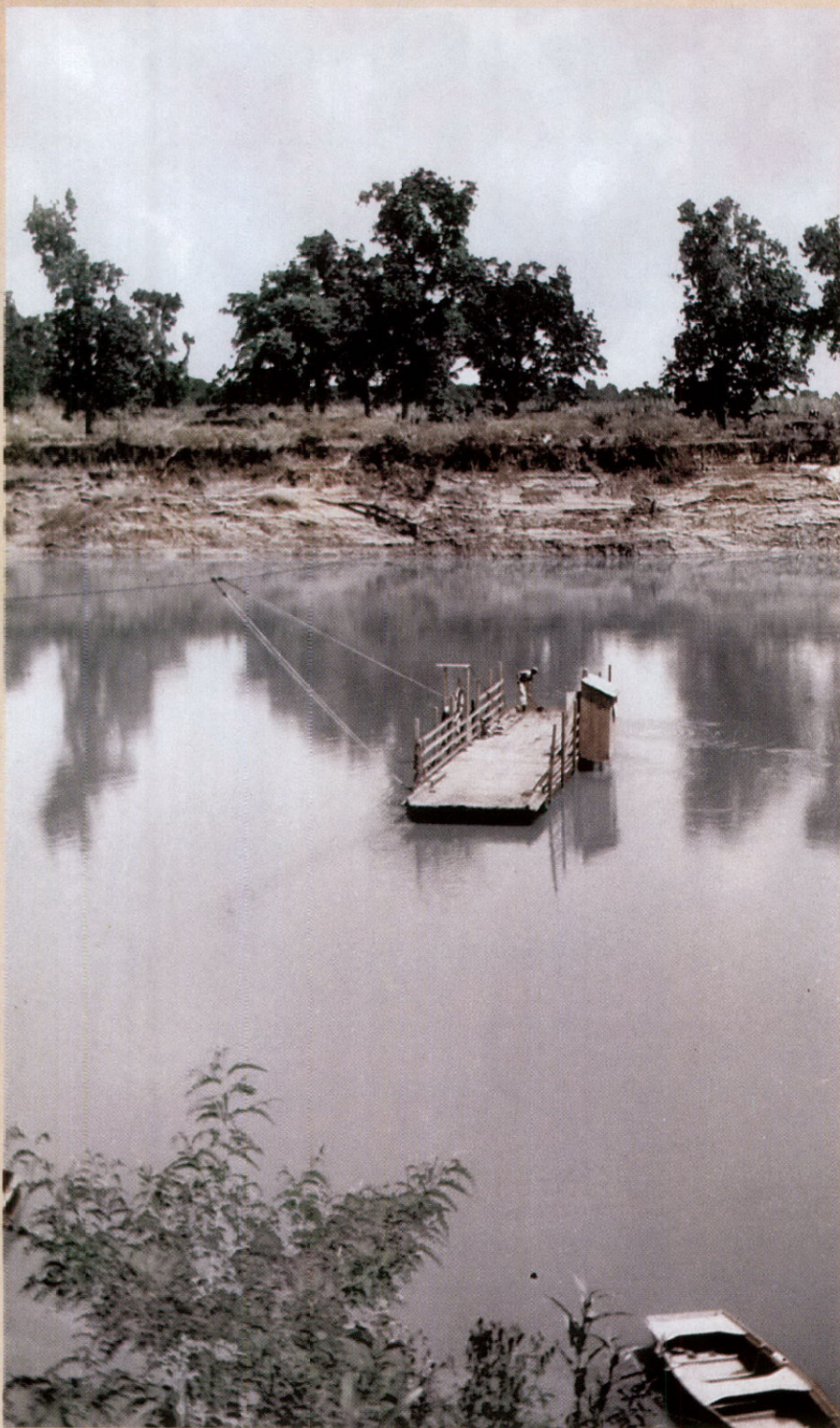
Washington-on-the-Brazos's \$6 million facelift should leave no doubt that this often unheralded historical site belongs more than ever among the pantheon of shrines of Texas independence, along with the Alamo, San Jacinto and Goliad.

by Mary-Love Eigny



Let the citizens of the East march to the combat. The enemy must be driven from our soil or ruin and desolation will accompany their march upon us. Independence is declared! Prompt action, united with valour, can alone achieve the great work. The services of all are forthwith required in the field. It is rumored that the enemy has entered the colonies. The fate of Bexar is unknown.... The patriots of Texas are appealed to in behalf of their bleeding country.

Sam Houston, March 2, 1836, Washington



TPWD PHOTO

This ferry across the Brazos River on the La Bahia Trail helped found the town of Washington.

The troops at the Alamo had been under siege for eight days when delegates gathered at Washington, on the banks of the Brazos River. Temperatures were frigid on that first day of March 1836 as delegates from every municipality in Texas assembled in an unfinished frame building. On the previ-

ous day, they had received a message from William Barrett Travis, commander of the Alamo, written on February 24:

To the people of Texas & all Americans in the world—

Fellow Citizens and compatriots

I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have

sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man— The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison is to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character to come to our aid...If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & state of his country.

Victory or Death

William Barrett Travis

Lt. Col. Cmdr.

The delegates' mood was somber as they contemplated the fate of the soldiers at the Alamo and the importance of the actions they would take there in Washington. George C. Childress, James Gaines, Edward Conrad, Collin McKinney and Bailey Hardeman were appointed to draw up a declaration of independence.

The next day, March 2, Childress presented the document to the convention. It charged that the government of Mexico had ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people; that the government had failed to provide a system of public education, trial by jury, freedom of religion and other essentials; that the Indians had been incited to massacre the settlers; that the Mexican government had "exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt, and tyrannical government." Finally, it declared Texas's independence. Members of the convention unanimously approved the document.

Four days later, on March 6, the Alamo fell. William Barrett Travis, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and more than 180 other Texans lay dead. Forty-six days later, on April 21, the tables were turned as the Texans prevailed over the Mexican army on the banks of the San Jacinto River, with Sam Houston's victory over



© GEORGE L. HOSEK



© GRADY ALLEN

LEFT: The Star of the Republic Museum, located in the park, tells the story of the Republic of Texas. **RIGHT:** The Independence Hall replica stands at the site of the original, as determined by archaeological work done in the 1960s.

Santa Anna's troops.

In the decades that followed, the Battle of the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto assumed almost mythical status, becoming better known than the Convention of 1836 at Washington, where 59 delegates declared Texas's independence. But although the convention lacks the bloodshed and turbulence of the battles, there is no shortage of drama in the events that unfolded at Washington in early March of 1836.

A recently completed \$6 million redevelopment project at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park will bring new attention to the site where Texas was born. New exhibits, including interactive and hands-on displays, will tell the story of Texas independence. Visitors will learn about the town of Washington and its citizens. New roads and trails will offer an organized way to see the park and to experience the site at its fullest.

The project is the result of a 1991 "vision summit," organized to explore ways to heighten recognition of Washington's historical importance. Participating were the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association and the Star of the Republic Museum. Construction began

in 1996, and the new features will be unveiled at the park's Texas Independence Day celebration, February 28 and March 1 (see sidebar).

Entering the park, new roads lead directly to the new visitor services complex. The centerpiece of the visitors' center is a broadside featuring the Texas Declaration of Independence and the original journal from the convention. Interactive exhibits will offer a glimpse into the lives of Washington residents of the era and the events leading up to March 1836. A gift shop will be part of the complex, as will a full-service restaurant. A group meeting facility and an education center round out the visitor services complex.

To the west of the complex is the historic townsite of Washington, which is part of the park. Washington was part of an early land grant, first settled in 1821. It was a major political center in early Texas, and it grew steadily in the early years of the republic. By 1839 it had numerous commercial establishments, including two hotels and four general stores. Washington declined rapidly in the 1850s when the railroad bypassed it and steamboat shipping ceased on the Brazos River.

A new interpretive trail will take visi-

tors from a replica of Independence Hall along Ferry Street where the town of Washington stood, allowing them to visualize the town as it appeared in the 1830s. The original Independence Hall has not survived, but archeologists determined the precise location during excavations between 1964 and 1958, and the reconstructed hall stands at the same site as the original.

Also getting a facelift is the Star of the Republic Museum. Operated by Blinn College in Brenham and located on the park grounds, the museum contains exhibits, collections, artwork and audiovisual presentations that tell the story of Texas. The museum is housed in a distinctive star-shaped building with an observation deck that provides a panoramic view of the park, river and surrounding farmlands.

Another new feature at Washington-on-the-Brazos is Barrington Living History Farm, scheduled for completion in January 1999. Barrington Plantation was the home of Dr. Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic of Texas. Jones's Washington County home was moved to Washington-on-the-Brazos in 1936, and it will be the centerpiece of Barrington Living History Farm. Bill Irwin is assistant manager of



A kitchen representing the 1840s era was built and furnished in 1971 and placed alongside the Anson Jones home.

Washington-on-the-Brazos and manager of Barrington Farm. "There will be a barn with a pasture behind it," he said, "a carriage shed, two slave quarters, an orchard and demonstration fields. We're going to farm our three to five acres just like Anson Jones farmed his, using the same tools, the same types of plants. Ours will just be on a much smaller scale."

Another park improvement includes stabilization of the Brazos River by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. "We lost a little bit of land in the flood of 1991," said Irwin. The project entailed constructing rock groins or jetties to slow the water and create eddies that will add silt to the bank. "They used a series of 'willow pillows,'" said Irwin, "taking several thousand little willow trees and planting them in the bank to stabilize it."

These improvements and new features at the park add up to an enhanced experience for visitors and a clearer picture of Texas's beginnings. The events at Washington in March 1836 set Texas on a course that is still unfolding today. Out of that turbulent era came a state rich in history, tradition and pride. Washington-on-the-Brazos captures that spirit and brings Texans together with the events, emotions and drama of their state's early years.

WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS STATE HISTORICAL PARK

To reach Washington-on-the-Brazos from Brenham, take State Highway 105 to FM 912, then go northeast on FM 912 for five miles; from Navasota, go south on State Highway 105 to FM 1155, then south on FM 1155 for one mile.

The park is open daily from 8 a.m. until sundown. In addition to the historical attractions there are numerous picnic tables in the scenic pecan groves near

the Brazos River and two covered pavilions that may be reserved. Call 512-389-8900 to reserve the pavilions

Star of the Republic Museum is open daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information call 409-878-2461.

Large groups can rent the newly renovated conference center, which seats up to 400.

The park hosts a variety of special activities throughout the year. For information about the park, or to rent the conference center, call 409-878-2214.

RENOVATED STATE PARK HOSTS TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY FETE

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park will host the 162nd birthday of the Birthplace of Texas on February 28 and March 1. The dedication of the new state-of-the-art visitor center will highlight weekend festivities preceding the March 2 anniversary that pays homage to the 59 Texans who in 1836 gathered in the Brazos River town of Washington to forge Texas's declaration of independence from Mexico.

On Sunday afternoon, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock will give the keynote address and preside over the cutting of a Texas-size birthday cake. Houston television personality Ron Stone will serve as master



Barrington, the home of Anson Jones, as it appeared after its move to Washington-on-the-Brazos in 1836.

of ceremonies. Both days will feature a host of special activities at the park, including living history programs, live music, traditional crafts, a historic writing demonstration and tours of the new visitor services complex. The Star of the Republic Museum will feature a new exhibit on the Texas mystique during the two-day event.

es of garden roses, many brought to the area by settlers, along with native plants, old-fashioned garden perennials and herbs all planted in beautiful display gardens. The nursery is located on an early settler's homestead in Independence. The homestead's restored stone kitchen is the focal point of the garden. The Antique Rose Emporium is open Monday

ulation suffered greatly from the yellow fever epidemic of 1867, and the town never completely recovered. More than 25 homes and buildings bear historical markers. The Chappell Hill Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Call 409-836-6033.

Brenham's Blue Bell Creamery offers a 40-minute plant tour that includes product sampling. The tour is available year around on weekdays only. Call 1-800-327-8135.

Lake Somerville State Park, northwest of Brenham, consists of two units, Nails Creek and Birch Creek. (See *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, January 1998.) Both offer a multitude of recreational opportunities such as camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, hiking and biking, volleyball, backpacking, and horseback riding. More than 20 miles of trail are open to hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Lake Somerville offers excellent boating, fishing, swimming and skiing. The Lake Somerville Trailway System, located around the west end of the reservoir, connects the two units by 14 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, backpacking, birding, and nature study. Campgrounds for equestrians and backpackers are located along the trailway. Call 409-535-7763 (Birch Creek) or 409-289-2392 (Nails Creek). Call 512-389-8900 to reserve a campsite.



The Brazos River, which runs alongside the park, has a significant place in Texas history, with many of Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" families settling on its banks.

For additional information, call the park at 409-878-2214 or the museum at 409-878-2461.

WHILE YOU'RE THERE

The area around Washington is rich in Texas history, and many of the towns in the area reflect the state's early years. In the spring, the rolling hills are covered with thick carpets of bluebonnets.

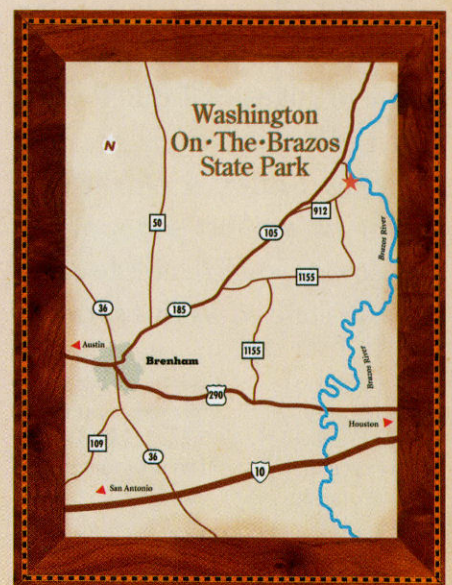
Fanthorp Inn State Historical Park in Anderson is the site of a way station that hosted stagecoach travelers. The renovated inn contains furnishings typical of the 19th century. It is open for tours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday and holidays. Stagecoach Days, on the second Saturday of each month, includes rides on the stagecoach from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Call 409-873-2633 for information.

The Antique Rose Emporium in Independence specializes in older class-

through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. For information call 409-836-5548.

Legend has it that French explorer La Salle left his settlement near the Texas coast in 1687 and traveled up the Brazos River to near the mouth of the Navasota River, where he was murdered by a fellow Frenchman. A statue on State Highway 90 in downtown Navasota honors the French trader-explorer. The Horlock History Center is located in a two-story Eastlake home built in 1892. It is authentically furnished, with three rooms devoted to exhibits that reflect the ethnic diversity of the area. Open Friday and Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Sunday 1 to 4 p.m. Call 409-825-7055.

Chappell Hill, located 20 miles south of Washington on F.M. 1155, was founded in 1847. The town became a center of Methodism in early Texas. The pop-



★ C E L E B R A T I N G 7 5 Y E A R S

s t a t e p a r k s

in bloom

All across the state, spring is announcing its impending arrival as wildflowers begin to dot the landscape. Soon fields and roadsides will explode with color — bluebonnets, Indian blankets, Mexican hats, black-eyed Susans, Indian paintbrush and dozens of others. 🌱 Some of the best places for seeing wildflowers this spring are the state parks. You can picnic or hike amid the flowers, watch birds and enjoy the best Texas has to offer. 🌱 On the next few pages are just some of the wildflowers you'll be able to enjoy in Texas state parks this spring.

RIGHT: Brilliant white dogwood blooms brighten East Texas parks in the early spring.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Verbena blooms on a scenic hillside in Davis Mountains State Park.



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© EARL NOTTINGHAM



© 2014 Texas State Parks





ABOVE: Indian blankets grow thick at Cleburne State Park.

LEFT: Iris blooms amid the lush vegetation of Palmetto State Park.



© RUSTY YATES



© LAURENCE PARENT

© RUSTY YATES

TOP: Leaves of a dwarf palmetto frame a spiderwort blossom at Palmetto State Park.

ABOVE: Blooming cacti are a treat for visitors to many parks across the state; this one was at Inks Lake State Park.

LEFT: Phlox and scullcap bring springtime color to Central Texas parks.

FOLLOWING: Bluebonnets and a variety of other colorful wildflowers grow amid the granite outcroppings at Inks Lake State Park.



© EARL NOTTINGHAM



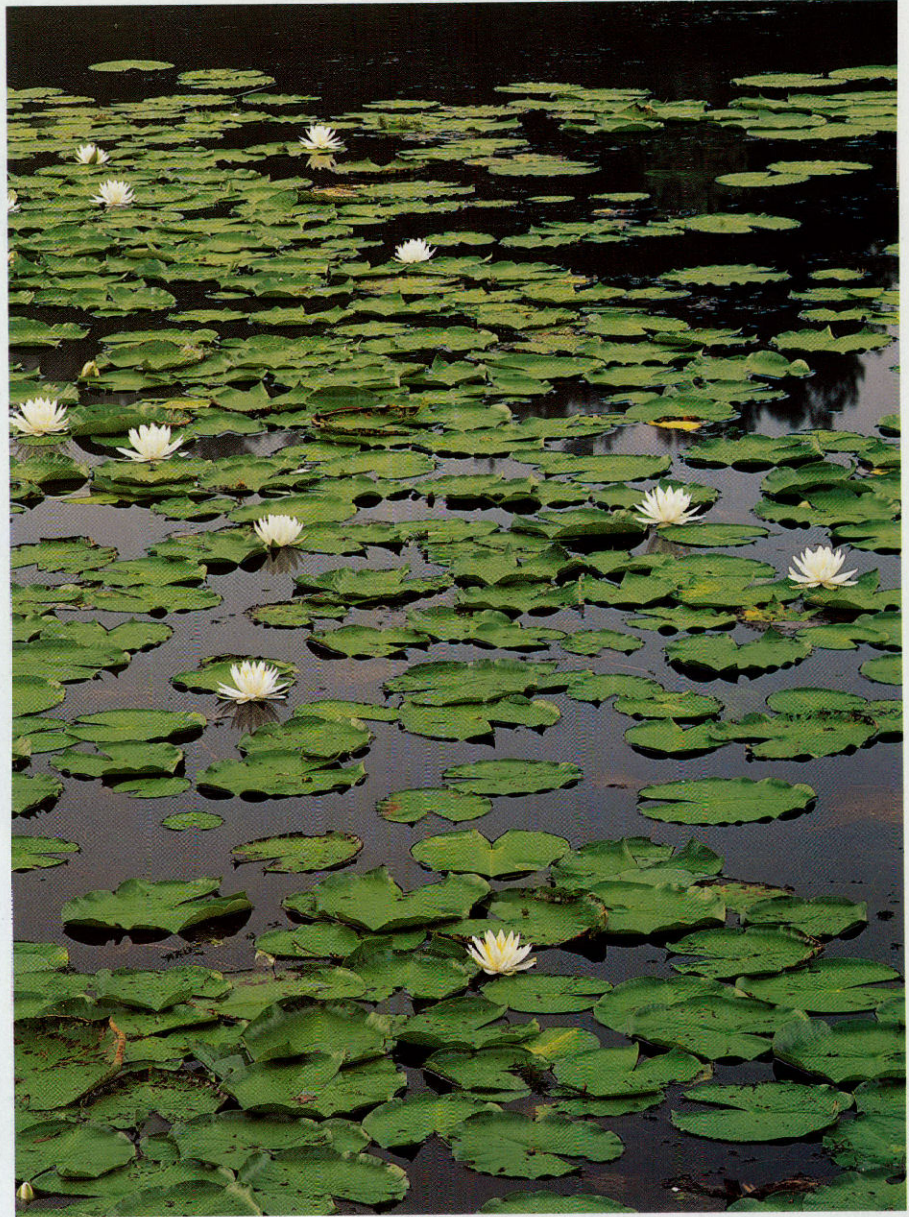


LEFT: Evening primrose and verbena are among the many blossoms showcased in Hill Country parks.

RIGHT: Water lily flowers such as these at Huntsville State Park open in the early morning and close about noon.

BELOW LEFT: Claret cup cactus blooms bring color to parks in arid West Texas.

BELOW RIGHT: A single primrose can be as striking as a field of wildflowers.



© EARL NOTTINGHAM



© EARL NOTTINGHAM



© RUSTY YATES

© EARL NOTTINGHAM

STATE PARK Scrapbook

1. Whose mother donated land to the State of Texas that became the first state park site?

- A. GOVERNOR PAT NEFF'S MOTHER
- B. SAM HOUSTON'S MOTHER
- C. IMA HOGG'S MOTHER
- D. WHISTLER'S MOTHER

2. Which national park once was a Texas state park?

- A. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS
- B. PADRE ISLAND
- C. YELLOWSTONE
- D. BIG BEND

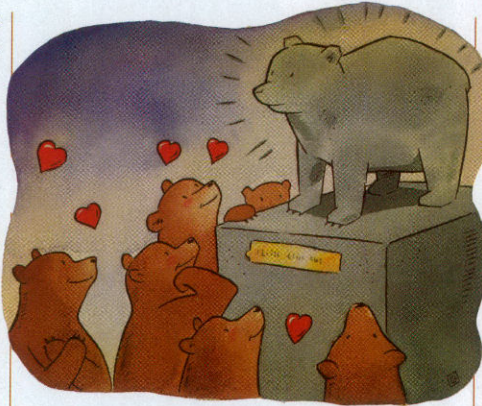


3. Which state park has the world's largest spring-fed swimming pool?

- A. BIG SPRING
- B. BALMORHEA
- C. BARTON SPRINGS
- D. HUECO TANKS

4. Which state park almost became a national park?

- A. PALO DURO CANYON
- B. CAPROCK CANYONS
- C. WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS
- D. TEXAS STATE RAILROAD



5. Which state park has a statue of a giant short-faced bear?

- A. LUBBOCK LAKE LANDMARK
- B. PALO DURO CANYON
- C. SEMINOLE CANYON
- D. SMOKY BEAR

6. Which state park was renamed "36th Division State Park" after World War II in honor of the Texas National Guard Division that trained nearby?

- A. FORT MCKAVETT
- B. KERRVILLE-SCHREINER
- C. SIX FLAGS
- D. LAKE BROWNWOOD

7. Which state park is on the only naturally formed lake in Texas?

- A. LAKE LEWISVILLE
- B. LAKE ERIE
- C. LAKE SOMERVILLE
- D. CADDO LAKE

8. Which park is named for a former vice president of the United States?

- A. EISENHOWER STATE PARK
- B. RICHARD M. NIXON STATE PARK
- C. GARNER STATE PARK
- D. MARTIN DIES JR. STATE PARK

9. Which state historical park served stagecoach travelers in the 1850s?

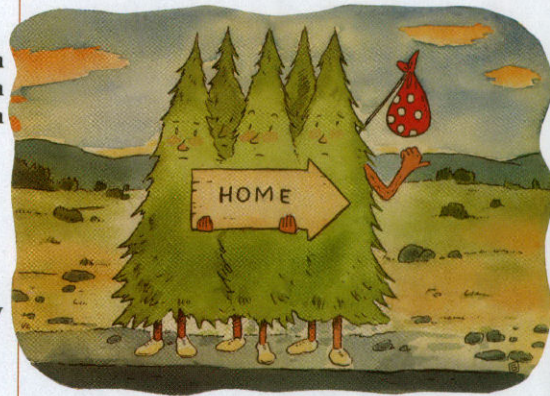
- A. FANTHORP INN
- B. LANDMARK INN
- C. RAMADA INN
- D. INDIAN LODGE

10. Which state park is near the home town of a former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives?

- A. BONHAM
- B. ATLANTA
- C. LOCKHART
- D. MERIDIAN

11. Who is buried at the smallest state park?

- A. TOM THUMB
- B. JOSE ANTONIO NAVARRO
- C. IMA HOGG
- D. DAVY CROCKETT'S SECOND WIFE



12. Lost Maples State Natural Area is home to a "lost" stand of bigtooth maple trees. Which state park is home to a "lost" stand of loblolly pines?

- A. DINOSAUR VALLEY
- B. BASTROP
- C. MCKINNEY FALLS
- D. PINE ISLAND

To help celebrate the 75th anniversary of Texas State Parks, Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine will feature a special section in each issue through December 1998 highlighting parks across the state. Part of the special section will be this State Park Scrapbook. ☆ Over the next nine months you'll find old photos, historical tidbits, memorable incidents and special events taking place all across the state here in the State Park Scrapbook. This month we have a quiz to let you see just how much you know about Texas State Parks.

☆ Illustrations © A.J. Garces



13. Which park is home to the state champion coastal live oak?
- A. MUSTANG ISLAND
 - B. GALVESTON ISLAND
 - C. GOOSE ISLAND
 - D. TREASURE ISLAND
14. Which of the following state parks was not a military fort?
- A. FORT RICHARDSON
 - B. FORT GRIFFIN
 - C. FORT LEATON
 - D. FORT MCKAVETT

15. Which state park is used for regular church services?
- A. GOLIAD
 - B. SEBASTOPOL
 - C. MISSION TEJAS
 - D. MORMON TABERNACLE
16. Which state park is near the site of the last battle of the Civil War?
- A. CONFEDERATE REUNION GROUNDS
 - B. SABINE PASS BATTLEGROUND
 - C. PORT ISABEL LIGHTHOUSE
 - D. APPOMATOX
17. Which state historical park was built in the Alsatian style of northeastern France?
- A. THE LOUVRE
 - B. MONUMENT HILL/KREISCHE BREWERY
 - C. LANDMARK INN
 - D. SEBASTOPOL
18. Which state park was part of a Vietnam-era helicopter training school?
- A. LAKE MINERAL WELLS
 - B. FANNIN BATTLEGROUND
 - C. LYNDON B. JOHNSON
 - D. FORT HOOD

19. Which state park has the name of a confederate general?
- A. CLEBURNE STATE PARK
 - B. EISENHOWER STATE PARK
 - C. BONHAM STATE PARK
 - D. ROBERT E. LEE STATE PARK
20. What state park can be reached only by boat?
- A. GALVESTON ISLAND
 - B. MUSTANG ISLAND
 - C. MATAGORDA ISLAND
 - D. FANTASY ISLAND



ANSWERS:
 1. A; 2. D; 3. B; 4. A; 5. A; 6. D; 7. D; 8. C; 9. A; 10. A; 11. D; 12. B; 13. C; 14. C; 15. A; 16. C; 17. C; 18. A; 19. A; 20. C.

ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

FEBRUARY

HILL COUNTRY

• February 26: 75th Anniversary Kick-off Celebration, State Capitol, Austin, 512-389-4560

GULF COAST

• Feb. 28: 2nd Annual Kid Trout Fishing Day, Lake Corpus Christi SP, Mathis, 512-547-2635

MARCH

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

• March 28: Possum Pedal 100, Possum Kingdom SP, Caddo, 940-549-1803

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

• Feb. 28-Mar. 1: Texas Independence Day Celebration, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHP, Washington, 409-878-2214
 • March 7: Western Days Bar-B-Que Cookoff, Fort Parker SP, Mexia, 254-562-5751

GULF COAST

• March 21: Varner-Hogg Plantation's 40th Anniversary, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHP, West Columbia, 409-345-4656

HILL COUNTRY

• March 6-8: Wings and Wildlife Over Texas, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, Stonewall, 830-644-2252

• March 21: Living History Day, Fort McKavett SHP, Fort McKavett, 915-396-2358
 • March 27: Stars at Pedernales, Pedernales Falls SP, Johnson City, 830-868-7304

APRIL

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

• April 25: 75th Anniversary Celebration, San Angelo SP, 915-949-4757

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

• April 4: Texas Draft Horse & Mule Association Annual Plow Day, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, 972-291-3900
 • April 22: Day in the Pines, Bastrop SP, 512-321-2101
 • April 24: Arbor Day, Buescher SP, Smithville, 512-237-2241
 • April 25: Earth Day and Trail Dedication, Fairfield Lake SP, 903-389-4514

PINEYWOODS

• April 11: Kids' Fishing Day, Rusk/Palestine SP, 903-683-5126
 • April 12: Easter Sunrise Service, Mission Tejas SHP, Grapeland, 409-687-2394
 • April 24: Community Open House, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322

GULF COAST

• April 4, Free Ferry Day, Matagorda Island SP, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215
 • April 18: Earth Day Celebration, Brazos Bend SP, Needville, 409-553-5101
 • April 18-25: Battlemania, Battleship Texas SHP, La Porte, 281-479-2411
 • April 18-25, Tribute to the Texas and Texians, San Jacinto Battleground and Monument SHP, La Porte, 281-479-2431

HILL COUNTRY

• April 25: Earth Day 1998, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240
 • April 25: Earth Day, Guadalupe River/Honey Creek SP, Spring Branch, 830-438-2656

BIG BEND COUNTRY

• April 17-19: Longhorn Cattle Drive, Big Bend Ranch SP, 915-229-3416
 • April 25-26: Phantom Cave Springs Tour and Dive Photo Contest, Balmorhea SP, Toyahvale, 915-375-2370
 • April 25-26: Annual Franklin Mountains State Park Expo, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, 915-566-6441

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

• April 26: 75th Anniversary Celebration, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, 512-786-3868

Dates are subject to change. Please call the parks for more information.





HUNTING TEXAS'S

BOSS OF

SPRING

WHEN TOM TURKEY'S GOT LOVIN' ON HIS MIND, THE TIME IS RIGHT TO GO AFTER THIS WILY BIRD.

BY BRANDON RAY

THE SUN'S PINK GLOW WAS JUST BREAKING OVER THE EASTERN HORIZON when I first heard it. *Gobble-gobble-gobble!* My hunting partner and I charged through the dark Panhandle river bottom to try to intercept the old bird before he quit talking. My partner ducked behind an old, rotten cottonwood stump and rested his shotgun against the fallen tree in anticipation of what could happen next. I jabbed my hen decoy into the soft mud only 20 yards from our hideout. With the gobbler still screaming from somewhere down the creek, I ducked under the shade of a large cedar bush and pulled two nearby tumbleweeds in front of me to help break up my outline. We were less than 200 yards from the noisy gobbler's roost and knew from previous hunts which way

RIO GRANDE TURKEYS ARE THE MOST PLENTIFUL, BUT EASTERN TURKEYS CAN BE FOUND IN THE PINES OF EAST TEXAS AND A SMALL POPULATION OF MERRIAM'S TURKEYS LIVES IN THE MOUNTAINS OF FAR WEST TEXAS.

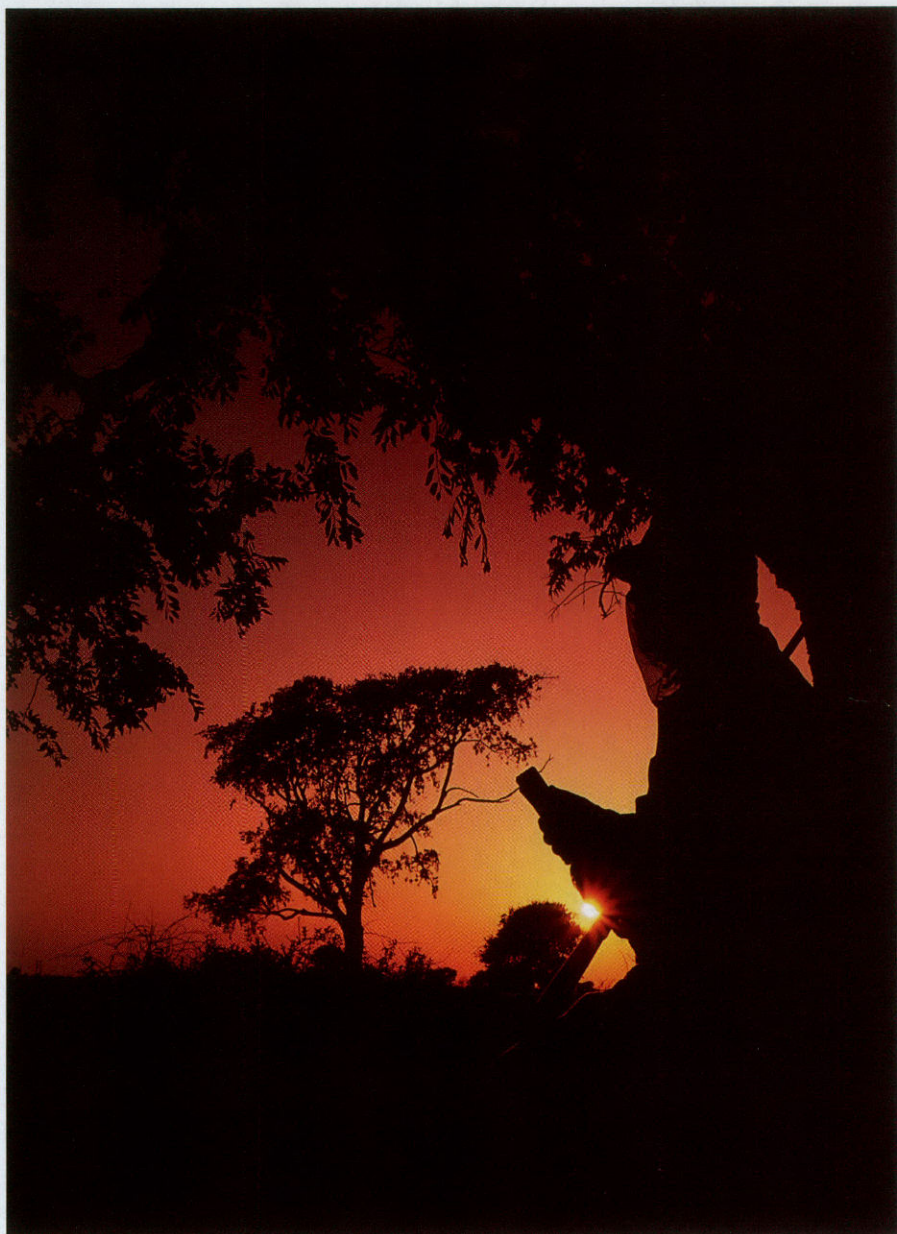


© DAVID J. SAMS

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Patience, stealth and judicious use of a call pay off for a hunter.*

ABOVE: *A liberal dose of chalk dust on a cedar box call helps generate the sound that only a tom turkey could love.*

ABOVE RIGHT: *Relatively simple to use, the box call's only drawback is it monopolizes a hunter's hands, which could be problematic when it's time to pick up a weapon while a sharp-eyed turkey is only yards away.*



© GRADY ALLEN

he would leave the river bottom. I only hoped that he was in the mood for love.

With enough light to barely see the decoy in front of me, I let out a chorus of soft, seductive yelps with my box call. *Uurp-uurp-uurp*. The response was immediate. *Gobble-gobble!* I resisted the temptation to answer his aggressive call immediately and waited. Three minutes later I called again. *Uurp-uurp-uurp*. The response was aggressive and echoed throughout the tall cottonwoods along the river. *Gobble-gobble gobble, gobble-gobble!* Minutes dragged on without either of us talking. Then I could hear something moving through the brush. I could hear the sound of the old tom

“booming” as he inflated himself with air and the dragging sound of his wings against the ground as he strutted back and forth just out of sight.

Then I saw him—his vibrant-colored head bobbing through the brush. He paused on the edge of the clearing where our decoy stood. He ballooned with air and paced back and forth just out of range of my bow and arrow, dancing and strutting for what he thought was a frisky hen. A gentle breeze caused the soft foam decoy to spin slightly, giving the painted plastic the illusion of life.

When the minutes dragged on and it appeared the gobbler was not coming any closer I gave my partner a smug wink



© GRADY ALLEN

through my camo headnet. We had agreed that I would have first shot with my bow, but if the tom stayed out of range my partner would take the shot. A single blast from his shotgun, and my partner exploded from his hideout and pounced on the bird like a giant cat. I paced the shot distance off to 35 yards. The fat Rio Grande gobbler weighed 22 pounds and sported a thick, 10-inch beard. The vocal tom obviously had been the boss of this isolated river bottom.

Spring turkey season comes just in time for serious Texas sportsmen. When the fall hunting season still seems years away and chunky largemouth bass are somewhat reluctant to clobber a topwater bait,

turkey season comes to the rescue. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologist and avid turkey hunter Gene Miller in Canyon, Texas is home to three subspecies of wild turkey. Rio Grande turkeys are the most plentiful, but eastern turkeys can be found in the pines of East Texas and a small population of Merriam's turkeys lives in the mountains of far West Texas.

You do not have to be an expert turkey hunter to be successful. Some basic knowledge of turkey habits and tools for the hunt can improve your odds. I consider myself an average turkey hunter at best, but by learning some turkey habits and using a few key pieces of equipment,

LEFT: *The leading man in this springtime play of passion emerges into the spotlight of center stage. Call it vanity, call it hormones, a turkey tom's puffery for the sake of procreation is one of spring's greatest displays.*

I usually manage to have at least one turkey cookout every spring.

CALLS

Many potential turkey hunters avoid the sport because they think they have to be an expert caller to be successful. In fact, in most situations calling sparingly and using simple calls are very effective. "I recommend that beginning turkey hunters start with a box call," said Gary Roberson at Burnham Brothers Calls in Menard. "A box call is easier to learn than other calls."

Roberson also suggested that beginning turkey hunters listen to tapes of wild turkey hens so they can better duplicate those sounds. Another thing Roberson recommends is calling sparingly. Calling once every five or even 10 minutes is usually about right. Don't expect a tom to answer you every time. In windy conditions you must increase the volume of your calls to reach the ears of distant gobblers. Roberson's favorite approach to calling is to locate a tom on the roost in the evening, then return early the following morning to call him within range. He sets up about 150 yards from the roost and starts talking to the tom before the bird ever leaves the tree. If Roberson knows a tom is in the area he will spend up to two hours calling occasionally to try to lure him in. He says that sometimes it takes a while to convince an old tom that you are worth investigating. Remember to call sparingly and use simple sounds like yelps and purrs until you get more experience.

DECOYS

Decoys provide another excellent tool. Placement of the decoy is critical. Lee Hortenstine of San Angelo has bagged



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close to a dozen Texas Rios in the last several years with both bow and shotgun. "I put the decoy in an opening where it is easy for an approaching tom to spot it," said Hortenstine. "A decoy won't do you any good if you put it in an area that is too thick for the gobbler to see easily. I usually position the decoy about 20 yards from my blind. Most toms will stop and strut just on the other side of the decoy, but occasionally one will come in behind me or to the side and end up right in my lap strutting between my blind and the decoy! That's fun." One or two hen decoys added to some effective calling is a deadly combination on toms. Using a decoy on my own spring hunts has dramatically increased my own success of luring smart toms within range.

CAMOUFLAGE

Turkeys have exceptional eyesight and quickly will spot a hunter's uncamouflaged hands or even the slow movement of a hunter turning his head. Make a conscious effort to camouflage every part of yourself and your equipment. Camo patterns with several shades of green, tan and yellow blend with Texas's spring colors. Beyond what you wear, you can further camouflage yourself from sharp-eyed

gobblers by calling from dark, shadowy places. Avoid calling from areas where you are exposed to direct sunlight.

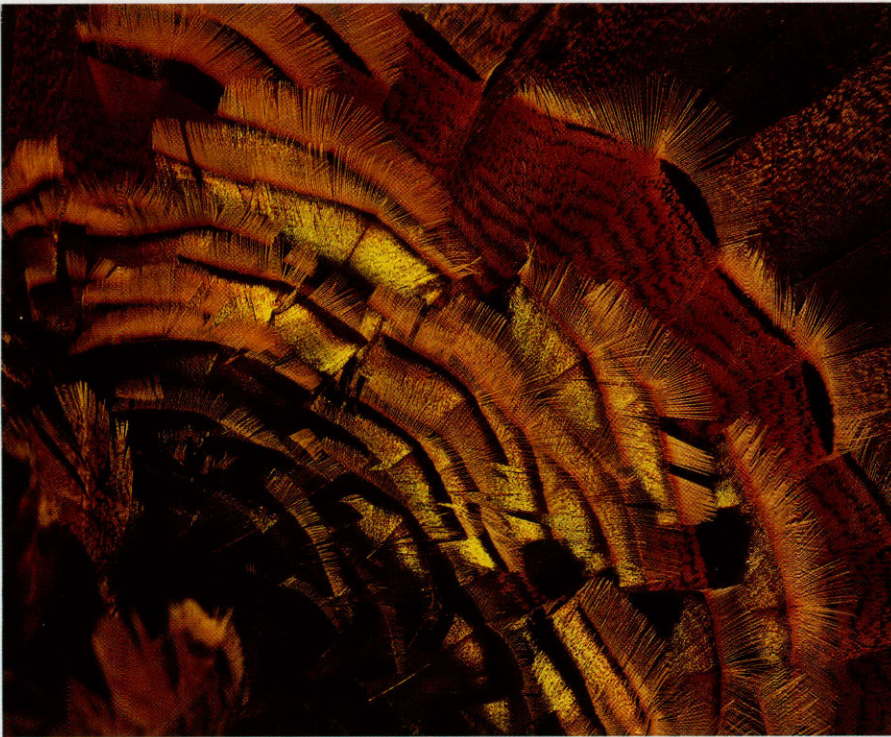
BLINDS

An alternative to pursuing gobblers on foot and calling from the available natural cover is the use of a blind. Setting up a portable blind within 200 yards or so of a gobbler's roost and calling from within the blind can be effective. An enclosed blind allows the hunter to get away with more movement than if he were sitting or kneeling in the brush. Broken Arrow Hunting Specialties out of Blanco manufactures a roomy blind appropriately called the Taj Mahal and a more portable blind called the Turkey Taj. I asked owner Andy Milam about the benefits of these blinds. "Taj Mahal blinds are popular with outfitters because they allow hunters to make more mistakes or movement within the blind than they could in the brush," Milam said. "Less experienced hunters can still be successful because they are totally concealed." Milam's Turkey Taj is made up of three camouflage panels that fold up for easy transporting. This blind features a large shooting window in the center panel and a smaller peep window on each

side. Both blinds are available in several camouflage patterns.

Spring in Texas is beautiful. Wild flowers are blooming, trees are budding and the woods are alive with the sounds of talking turkeys. Spend some time this spring locating turkey roosts in your hunting area, then use these tactics and equipment to lure a tom within shooting range. Potential roost sites are any tall trees and even power lines in areas where trees are rare. Don't get too close to the roost, and always be patient. Don't give up just because a gobbler does not run you over in the first 15 minutes of calling. The successful hunt mentioned at the start of this article was actually my second time to try to bag a tom in that location. Timing is important, but when the time is right and a gobbler is "in the mood" you will know why they call him the boss of spring! ★

BRANDON RAY is a 1994 graduate of Texas Tech University, where he received a bachelor's degree in Range Management and a minor in Art. He has successfully hunted Texas Rio Grande gobblers with both gun and bow and lives in the Texas Panhandle.



© DAVID J. SAMS

OPPOSITE PAGE: Good camouflage and the patience to sit still are perhaps more important to turkey-hunting success than skill with a call. Turkey toms, even those partially blinded by testosterone, have some of nature's keenest vision.

ABOVE: A close-up view of a tom's tail feathers. The fanned tail is an important part of the springtime courting display.

SPRING TURKEY SEASON

Springtime turkey hunting in Texas is mainly for the Rio Grande subspecies found in the western two-thirds of the state, but 17 East Texas counties will be open for a brief April 13-26 season on eastern turkeys. Hunt dates for Rio Grandes are April 4 - May 10 in North Texas and March 28 - May 3 in South Texas. Consult the 1997-98 *Outdoor Annual* for county-by-county specifics.

TURKEY HUNTING GEAR

Burnham Brothers

(calls, cassettes and decoys)
 Gary Roberson
 102 San Saba
 P.O. Box 1148
 Menard, Texas 76859
 915-396-4572

Broken Arrow Hunting Specialties (blinds)

Andy Milam
 HC4, Box 90
 Blanco, Texas 78606
 1-800-370-8452

Bushlan Camouflage

(camouflage clothing)
 Prestige Apparel
 14214 Atlanta Drive
 Laredo, Texas 78041
 956-724-8933

Cabela's

(calls, decoys, blinds and camouflage)
 812 13th Avenue
 Sidney, Nebraska 69160
 1-800-237-4444

GUIDED TURKEY HUNTS

Texas's abundant turkey population means there are good hunting opportunities throughout the state. All the prices listed with the hunts below are for full-service hunts with food, lodging, transportation and guide service. Some of the listed turkey hunts can be combined with hunts for javelina, wild hogs and even nilgai antelope. If you never have hunted turkeys before, going on a guided hunt and hunting with an expert caller can teach you more in two or three days than you ever could learn from any books or magazine articles. Check the Texas Parks and Wildlife *Outdoor Annual* for details on season dates and bag limits. Contact the following for more details and a great spring hunt!

Kiowa Hunting Services (New Mexico, Colfax County; Merriam's turkey)

Tim Barraclough
 403 Hill
 Raton, New Mexico 87740
 505-445-9330

Three-day hunt: \$650, two gobblers

La Esperanza Hunting Services

(South Texas, Kenedy County; Rio Grande turkey)

Mark Fullingim
 P.O. Box 35
 Petersburg, Texas 79250
 806-667-2245

Three-day hunt: \$2,495, turkey, wild hog, javelina, nilgai antelope

Nail Ranch (North Texas, Shackelford County; Rio Grande turkey)

Craig Winters
 Route 1, Box 106
 Albany, Texas 76430
 915-762-2974

Three-day hunt: \$750, two gobblers

Spring Ho!

The advent of springtime in Texas is in the eye and ear of the beholder.

by Roland H. Wauer

For many Texans, spring is a favorite time of year. It signifies renewal, a fresh start. It seems to make everything young again. Spring brings with it an anticipation of good things to come.

In *The Song of Hiawatha*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote:

*Come the Spring with all its splendor,
All its birds and all its blossoms,
All its flowers and leaves and grasses.*

But the first sign of spring varies with the beholder. It can be an early flower, green leaves, a bird or just a feeling that spring has arrived. Anne Morrow Lindberg once wrote, "Today I went out. It smelled, it felt, it sensed spring. I had for the first time faith—not intellectual belief, but a sudden feeling of turning tide. Yes, there will be spring."

Officially, spring begins at the spring equinox, on March 20. On that day, the earth's axis is at a right angle to the sun so that both poles receive equal illumination from the sun and the days are of equal length, hence the term equinox. Thereafter in the Northern Hemisphere, the days continue to grow longer and the weather becomes warmer. Spring continues until June 21, the summer solstice, when the earth's axis makes its greatest angle to the sun, when the noon sun is directly overhead at the Tropic of Cancer, and daylight lasts 24 hours north of the Arctic Circle.

Springlike days do not necessarily sig-



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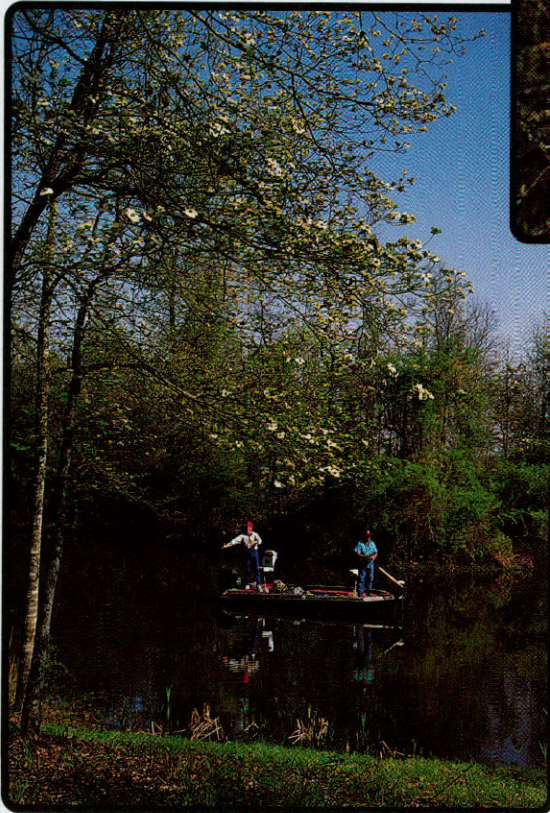
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© GRADY ALLEN

OPPOSITE: A blooming yucca means spring has arrived in deep South Texas.

© GRADY ALLEN



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Bees arrive, attracted by the new flowers; huisache bushes sport sunny yellow blooms; dogwood trees bloom in East Texas; a litter of baby raccoons symbolizes the sense of renewal that comes with spring; birds such as this Carolina wren begin nest-building activities.

nify the arrival of spring. The fickle weather still can bring more cold. But for me, living near Victoria along the central Gulf Coast, there are certain signs by mid-February that clearly indicate a change in the season. The resident northern cardinals and Carolina wrens are beginning to sing their love songs. Bright purplish-red blossoms of redbud trees are beginning to appear. And during the

for Sue Wiedenfeld of Comfort and John Gee of Dripping Springs. John wrote, "The first anemone blossoms are white, but as the blooming season progresses, other colors appear—lavender, deep bright purple and, less commonly, pink. Some years anemone season lasts only three or four weeks, but when we have a cool spring, blossoms still can be found as late as early April."

Another early blooming spring shrub is elbow-bush, Devil's elbow, or downy forestiera. Charles and Betty Crabtree of Granbury adopted this flowering shrub as their symbol of spring, pointing out that it was Ned Fritz of Dallas who introduced them to this plant, saying that it should be called "spring herald: it is the very first native woody plant to bloom in our part of Texas. In Dallas, it is the most reliable herald of spring."

Birds and Insects as Spring Heralds

The February arrival of purple martins are Petra Hockey's spring herald at Port O'Connor. Petra wrote:

Come early February I am ready for their return. The martin house is cleaned and raised to welcome them back. My ears are on constant alert to detect the long-awaited chirping and chattering of the first martin scouts. I follow the weather forecast anxiously and hope for no big cold fronts while they might be traveling toward Texas. And then, just when I am beginning to wonder if maybe this year they'll arrive a little late, or if they'll make it at all, there they are. Chirping incessantly, they cruise overhead and check out the house. I run outside to welcome them, and they seem just as happy to be back as I am to have them. Now, spring has arrived!

Purple martins represent spring to numerous other Texans. David Baker wrote from the East Texas Pineywoods that the first purple martins normally "arrive like clockwork on Valentine's Day." But in 1996, "they missed their traditional appointment, and for me it was as though spring didn't happen on time."

Of 50 comments received from all



© MASLOWSKI PHOTO



ABOVE: As spring approaches, redbud trees begin to sport colorful buds followed by pinkish-purple flowers.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Indigo buntings arrive from their winter homes, their turquoise blue plumage brilliant against spring foliage.

warmer afternoons, a few butterflies—sulphurs, fritillaries and hairstreaks—are out and about.

Then suddenly, without any fanfare, the bright yellow flowers of agarita shrubs are blooming. That is when, for me, spring truly has arrived. The sweet-smelling agarita flowers draw me close to admire these early blooms. I linger to see what other life is attracted to these pungent blossoms. Bees and butterflies are most prevalent, as are anoles, fence lizards and scaly lizards that crawl about the shrub in search of insects. A flowering agarita shrub, its own spring ecosystem, is my harbinger of the new season.

Yet, local friends and colleagues claim other springtime heralds. Mark Elwonger tells me that his harbinger of spring is "not a sight or a sound, but a smell." At Victoria's Riverside Park, the subtle smell of wild onions provides Mark his essence of spring. Peter Reisz lays claim to the early flowering false garlic. For Ken Bruns, it is the yellow-flowering huisache bushes. And for Jean Dake, early blooming 10-petal anemones herald spring.

The anemone is also the spring herald

across Texas, more than half mentioned birds as their heralds of spring. No species was mentioned as often as the scissor-tailed flycatcher. Lytle Blakenship of Uvalde wrote that “the brightly plumaged males arrive in late March or early April, followed in a couple of weeks by the shorter-tailed and less gaudy females. But it’s the males that say spring has arrived and it’s time to set up shop once again.”

In deep South Texas, winter often is little more than remnants of a few cold fronts that stalled somewhere north of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Spring simply may merge with late fall, and can be difficult to detect. Nevertheless, four Valley residents identified their spring heralds. Larry Ditto claimed blooming yuccas as his harbinger of spring, especially when birds such as chachalacas and orioles are feeding on the petals. Father Tom Pincelli told me: “The quiet of a spring morning, pierced by the raucous duets of male and female chachalacas, is a clear herald of new beginnings.” Jesse Grantham’s spring is marked by the mass northward migration of broad-winged hawks. And for TPWD wildlife biologist Randy Fugate, it is the breeding season for the Rio Grande turkey.

Returning turkey vultures are spring heralds for Keith Yarborough of Alpine who said that although many people view them with distaste, the turkey vulture is “a magnificent flier, a soaring glider. So when the turkey vultures reappear in our West Texas skies, I know that spring really has arrived.”

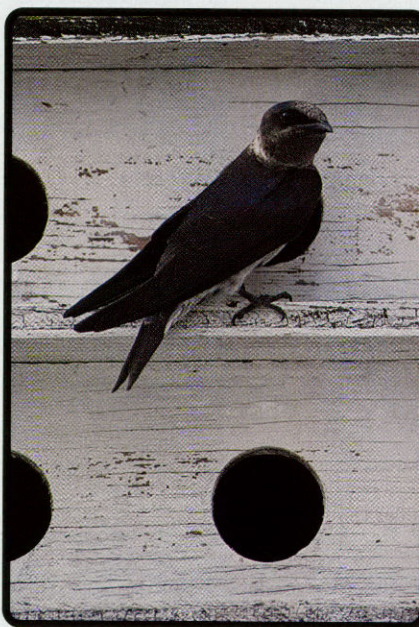
Other birds considered spring heralds include the first field sparrow songs for Dan Baker at Guadalupe River State Park; migrating shorebirds on muddy reservoir shores for Terry Maxwell of San Angelo; migrating whip-poor-wills and upland sandpipers for John and Barbara Ribble of Austin; singing of Cassin’s sparrows for Frances Williams of Midland; nesting eastern bluebirds for Bob Burleson near Temple; return of the endangered golden-cheeked warblers in Hays County for Marjorie Adams; first

spring songs of house finches for Kent Rylander of Lubbock; chimney swifts’ return for David Musselman of Dallas; “geese going north” for Mimi Wolf of Nacogdoches; and for Ken Seyffert in the Panhandle, sunrise on the prairie and the “joyous song of western meadowlarks.”

Even insects can serve as a spring herald. In Baytown, John and Gloria Tveten claim the emergence of the first butterflies mean spring has arrived. The Tvetens point out that the falcate orangetip emerges in the Big Creek Scenic Area of Sam Houston National Forest during late February, the same time that yellow jasmine and redbuds are blooming. These butterflies mate, lay eggs, grow and pupate in about three weeks; then are gone for the remainder of the year.

A Sure Sign of Spring

It is nature’s way that the earliest signs of the spring season are the fresh green buds, leaves and flowers upon which wildlife depend. It stands to reason, then, that for Lynn Drawe, of the Welder Wildlife Refuge near Sinton in South Texas, that the “spring green-up of the clay prairie” is most pertinent. The first green blush on the cottonwoods are the signs of spring for Jeff Selleck at Big Bend National Park. And in the sand dunes



You know it’s spring when purple martins arrive from their southern wintering area.

along the western side of the Llano Estacado, the “reddish new growth of shin oaks, the steady increase of arthropod tracks and greening of willows at water-holes” are indications of spring for Burr Williams.

In the San Antonio area, Nick Jackson’s spring heralds include blooming Mexican buckeyes and redbuds. In the Central Texas woods, it is trout lilies for Fred Gehlbach and blooming mountain laurels for Jim and Lynne Weber. The smell of yellow jasmine and the finding of violets along Caney Creek represent spring for Jonell Buckels of Dayton. And blooming grape hyacinth mean spring to Lee Lemmons of Denison.

But of all the plants, birds and other wildlife that are indicators of spring, none is as certain as the common, widespread honey mesquite. In fact, green leaves of the honey mesquite may be the only sure evidence that winter weather is behind us and spring finally has arrived. Abilene’s Lorie Black claims that greening mesquites are her sure sign of spring. C.C. Wiedenfeld points out that in West Texas mesquite trees “never ever put out leaves until after the last killing frost. Drought or rainfall in abundance has no effect on them.” And Paul Palmer of Kingsville agrees: “Once the mesquite trees begin to leaf out, all danger of freezing weather is gone. Oldtimers in both North and South Texas vow that the mesquite trees never get fooled. So far as I have been able to determine, those folks are right.”

Spring is a wonderful time to be alive—to be outdoors and experience nature at its best. Promise is all around and fulfillment is just ahead. ★

ROLAND “RO” WAUER of *Victoria* retired from the National Park Service in 1989, after a 32-year career. Since 1989, he has served as a member of the National Academy of Science Committee on Science in the National Parks, and is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Parks and Conservation Association. He is the author of 15 books and is working on a book about spring heralds for Texas A&M University Press.



THE RACE IS THE PLACE



© GRADY ALLEN

If you're boatless but still want to catch some fish, head for the nearest dam's tailrace and try your luck. You may be surprised with the results.

by Paul Seidensticker

T rue or False? To catch fish, a fisherman must have at least a 20-foot boat equipped with a 150-horsepower motor and trolling motor, electronic fish finder, GPS or Loran unit, and various electronic meters to measure temperature, dissolved oxygen or pH.

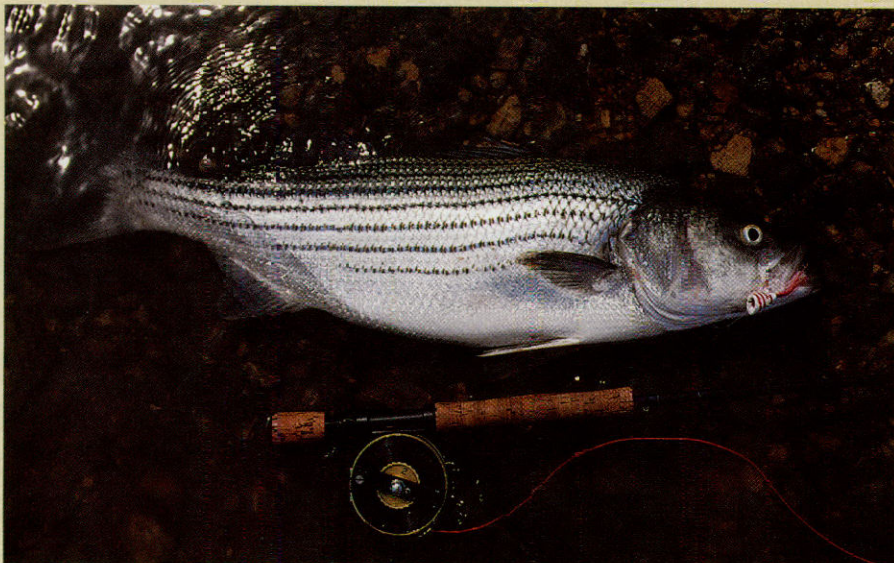
False! All of these items are nice, and are fun to use if you can afford them. But none of them is absolutely essential to catch fish.

Some of the best fishing areas are reached easily by bank fishermen. For people who like to catch a wide variety of fish, as well as quality-sized fish, the best places to fish are the tailrace areas below dams. Whenever water is released, the current attracts most species of fish. Forage fish such as shad congregate in the current and in turn draw predators such as striped bass, hybrid striped bass, white bass, largemouth bass, crappie and catfish. Since the dam prevents the fish from moving farther upstream, they

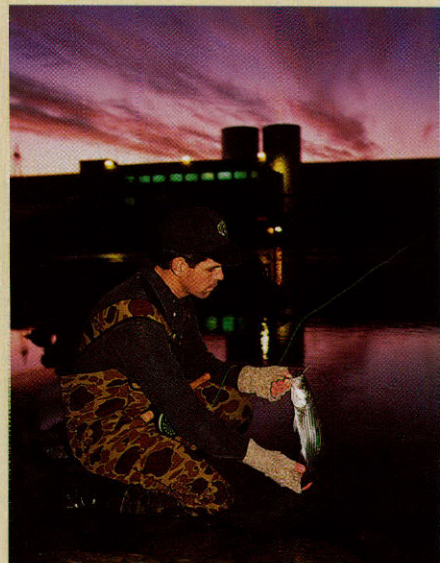
concentrate in a limited area below the dam and are more vulnerable to being caught. Many species also are drawn to these areas for spawning.

At various times during the year, some species are more abundant than others in the tailraces. In the late winter and early spring, white bass, striped bass and hybrid striped bass are the principal species in the tailrace. Crappie, largemouth bass and catfish become abundant later in the spring. During the summer, catfish, freshwater drum and surfish will make up more of your catch. Tailraces also are good areas to catch fish not normally taken on rod and reel, such as flathead catfish, alligator gar, longnose gar, bowfin and large blue catfish.

When you fish a tailrace, look for areas where the current changes or makes an eddy. These areas may be caused by rocks in the channel, walls at the end of the stilling basin, bends in the channel, creeks or coves adjacent to the main channel, bridge



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Left: Tailrace areas such as this one below the Lake Whitney dam are good places to catch a variety of fish as well as quality-sized fish. **Above left:** When water is released from a dam, currents attract forage fish that in turn attract predators such as this striped bass.

Above right: Striped bass are abundant in tailrace areas in late winter and early spring. **Right:** You can meet a lot of interesting people when fishing at a tailrace.

pilings or any other kind of obstruction in the channel. These areas will tend to hold more fish than the main open channel where the current is strongest.

The best fishing tackle to use in a tailrace is a good-quality casting or spinning reel that will hold 150 to 200 yards of 10- or 12-pound-test monofilament line. This will allow you to fight and land some of the large fish you may hook. You never know what might hit your bait in a tailrace. Lighter line is better if you are fishing for white bass or crappie, but you may lose a large fish, and probably will lose more lures on rocks usually found in tailraces. Generally, the best lures are some type of jig dressed with hair, marabou or plastic and the best color probably will vary from day to day. However, white, yellow, chartreuse, pink, clear, charcoal and green are consistent producers. The best weight for your jig depends on the current; start with a 1/16-ounce and go up from there. The lighter



© DAVID J. SAMS

the jig, the better the action. Fish the jig as slowly as possible, just enough to keep it from hanging on the bottom.

If the fish are feeding on the surface, a noisy topwater lure often will produce. If they don't hit the topwater lure, then you can add a small jig on an 18-inch trailer. Simply tie a length of monofilament line to the eye of the rear hook on your topwater lure and tie on a small white or yellow jig. You may catch one fish on the topwater lure and another on the jig.

Live or natural baits also can be used successfully in a tailrace. Shiners, worms, crickets, stink baits, shrimp or other commercial baits can be used to take most species of fish in these areas. Threadfin shad, gizzard shad or sunfishes often can be caught in dip nets or cast nets close to the shore and used for bait. These baits usually are

fished under a cork, but also can be fished on the bottom if you do not mind losing your hooks and sinkers occasionally.

Just remember that when fishing off the bank in a tailrace, you may have to make longer-than-normal casts and you never know what you are going to catch. Be ready to experiment with your lures or bait in case the fish are being picky about what they want to bite. Tailrace fishing not only is fun and productive, but also provides an opportunity to meet a lot of interesting people who love to fish and probably can teach you a few tricks to improve your fishing success and enjoyment. ★

PAUL SEIDENSTICKER is a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department district fisheries biologist stationed in Jasper.

THE FOLKS AT THREE CORNERS

BY EZRA WARD

WHO'S THE BIGGEST TURKEY IN TOWN?

Everyone in Three Corners knew that there was bad blood between E.L. Raines and the inseparable pair of Charlie Thornton and Zeke Warner. Their houses were all in a row on the same street, Charlie's in the middle, and they feuded all the time.

Nobody was sure the precise moment it started. Some say it began when Charlie quit mowing his yard and then bought a goat to keep the grass down after E.L. complained. Others are just as certain it originated before the goats, the time Charlie and Zeke drank too many beers and shot at a covey of quail in the high weeds in Charlie's back yard, peppering E.L.'s roof and causing him to call the city policeman and have Charlie and Zeke arrested. Still others say the hostilities first flared even earlier, when E.L. had to spend thousands of dollars tearing apart his house to remove the dead fish Zeke's tomcat, Ranger, had dragged up underneath it.

The truth was it really didn't matter how it was born. The feud had gone on so long and had been talked about so much it had become part of the fabric of life in Three Corners—as much as other certainties, such as death, taxes and dogs sleeping on Main Street in the middle of the day. And the stories spawned from it, no matter how often retold, never

failed to tickle the bellies of the town-folk with laughter—like the time Zeke and Charlie tricked E.L. into shooting at floating plastic duck decoys after he bragged that he never shot a duck on the water or a bird on the ground; or the time E.L. outdid Charlie and Zeke crappie fishing, aggravating Zeke so much he threw his only fish a good 20 yards and hit E.L. right in the back of the neck.

A lot of the problem, to be sure, came from the fact that E.L. had an inflated opinion of himself and loved to brag about his fishing and hunting exploits, and Charlie and Zeke couldn't stand to hear him do it. Worse still, E.L. was blessed with luck. Even in a crowd, he frequently was the one who caught or shot the most or the biggest.

One morning late in March, Charlie and Zeke walked out of the Three Corners Drug Store, where they had been drinking coffee, and found E.L. Raines and Boyd Ammerman from the Texaco talking at the rear of E.L.'s pickup. And just as Charlie and Zeke were trying to walk past without getting into anything, E.L. reached into the pickup and held up a huge wild tom turkey.

"Feast your eyes on this, boys," said E.L. "It's the closest you'll ever get to a turkey worth taking home."

"We've shot plenty of turkeys," Zeke lied. So did Charlie. "My biggest would match up to that one," he said.

E.L. just laughed. "You two wouldn't know a trophy turkey if it fell on your heads. This one weighs in at 19 pounds. It takes a real hunter to bag one that's got this old and wily. I'm headed over to have my picture taken for the *Three Corners Tattler*, but I'll tell you boys what: if you'll pluck and clean this bird for me afterward, I'll pass along a few turkey hunting tips."

Zeke just couldn't hold himself back. "Shoot, E.L., we could go out and top that one anytime," he said.

"Only reason we haven't," offered Charlie, is that our freezers are full of turkeys already."

E.L. knew in his heart they were prac-

ting prevarication, but their failure to concede his superior hunting prowess and their boasting idly in front of Boyd Ammerman really grated on him and, to his mind, deserved a response.

"I'll tell you what," E.L. said, a hard edge in his voice. "You bring in a tom bigger than this one by the same time tomorrow and I'll pay you \$100 apiece. Boyd, you be my witness." Then E.L. laughed harshly. "But I won't lose any sleep over it tonight. That's the safest bet I ever made."

Well, the die was cast. Charlie and Zeke couldn't resist any challenge that offered the dual bait of folding money and showing up E.L. Raines. They went straight into the store and bought No. 4 shotgun shells to go hunting turkeys.

But the fact was, they hadn't been turkey hunting in several years, and didn't even have a place to go where there was any likelihood of finding any. All they had was their shotguns and shells, Zeke's old turkey call and lots of ambition. They got on the phone at Charlie's that night and called everybody they knew, but every landowner either hadn't seen any turkeys or was locked up tightly by hunting leases.

At 11:30 p.m., Charlie finally decided they should give it up. "We're waking folks up now and we're not going to get any invitations that way," he said.

Charlie's wife, Maribelle, was bringing them another cold beer about this time and asked innocently, "Where did E.L. get his turkey?"

"That's it!" said Zeke. "We'll slip onto E.L.'s place. He's leased the old Johnson Ranch and it's so covered up with brush he'll never know we're there."

Charlie tugged at his beard thoughtfully. "I don't know. Remember how embarrassed you were when we got caught on the Buffalo Gals' place shootin' their doves? You blamed me for that one and you had to take them to the dance to get us off the hook. E.L. would be even worse than that if he found us. He'd file trespass charges on us for sure."

But Zeke wouldn't change his mind

and he convinced Charlie after another beer that they could get away with it.

So there they were the next morning at the first gray light of dawn on a dirt road by the Johnson Ranch. They parked their truck out of sight under a bridge over a small creek, slipped through the fence and walked about a half a mile until they found a spot in some brush up on the creek bank that they figured was as good as any.

Zeke scraped his old cedar box call a few times and before long, believe it or not, six gobblers came walking down that creekbed together. Among them was a pair of big old toms with long beards and Charlie and Zeke were both drawing beads when from somewhere nearby came the sound of a pickup door slamming shut, an engine starting up and then moving unmistakably toward the creek.

The turkeys scattered into the brush. "It must be Raines! We'd better get out of here!" said Charlie. They began running and stumbling through the brush back toward the road.

After about 200 yards, they were already winded and crouched down to catch their breath. While they were quiet, they were startled to hear one of the gobblers call from nearby. Zeke answered with a scrape on his cedar box and the gobbler called again. They could hear it coming over dry leaves toward them.

"I can't believe it!" whispered Zeke. "He must think we're his buddies and he's trying to regroup."

They could hear the pickup rattling across the creekbed to their side, so they took off again, ran some distance and paused while Zeke called to the turkey again. Once more it answered, still close by.

They made it all the way back to the fence that way, stopping twice more to call to the tom and keep him interested. From all the noise they were making, Charlie and Zeke guessed the gobbler thought the whole flock was just ahead of him and running away from something terrible, so he wanted to catch up and get away from whatever fearful thing

it was. But they really had no idea what prompted the tom's behavior.

The big gobbler burst out of the brush right behind them and Charlie shot it just as it realized its mistake and tried to turn back to the safety of the woods. Charlie went to pick up the bird while Zeke scooped up the stray feathers and the two illicit hunters slipped through the fence, jumped in the truck and roared off before they could be caught, laughing all the way back into town. "And I thought they were supposed to be smart birds," Zeke said.

That tom turkey weighed 22 pounds and had a 10-inch beard, about as long as Charlie's and Zeke's grins were wide as they stood outside the drug store with Boyd Ammerman waiting for E.L. Raines to show up. When E.L. got there and they refused to say where they had shot it, E.L. accused them of being the poachers he had heard that morning, but he couldn't prove it. Red in the face with anger, E.L. had to pay the \$200. It was one time when his famous luck ran short.

Watching this exchange with interest from inside the drugstore was Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Game Warden Kevin Blankenship. After E.L. walked off disgustedly, Kevin came out and engaged Charlie and Zeke in conversation, commenting that he'd seen their truck on the road out by the Johnson

Ranch that morning. He asked if that was where they had shot the bird, or, if not, which ranch they had hunted.

"Oh, no, we didn't set foot on the Johnson Ranch," Charlie said hastily. "I shot it on the road. I didn't even have to get out of the truck" Charlie had jumped out of one trap and into another. Zeke winced.

"You say you shot it from the truck on the road?" Kevin repeated evenly.

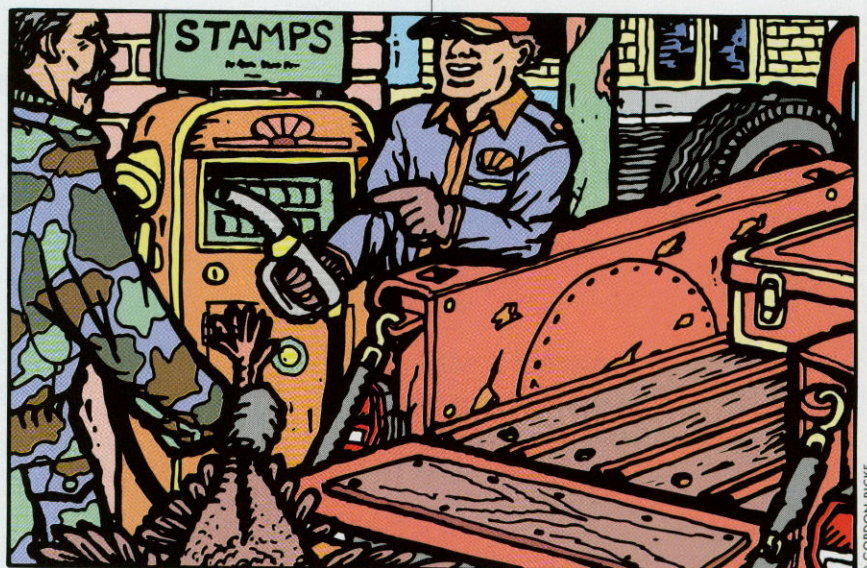
"Oh, yeah, that's right," Charlie agreed.

Kevin invited the hapless hunters over to the office of Justice of the Peace Lightfoot Walker, who, having heard the whole story, fined them \$200 for hunting from a vehicle on a public road, and ordered them to contribute the tom turkey to the town food bank for the poor.

But Charlie and Zeke still had bragging rights, and among the folks in the drugstore and the Blue Plate Cafe, that was worth a lot.

If you have an outdoor story you'd like to share with Ezra Ward, jot it down and send it to his attention at Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine, 3000 South IH 35, Suite 120, Austin, Texas 78704.

But don't be surprised if it looks somewhat different if Ezra decides to use it and you see it in print through the lives and adventures of his characters. Ezra and the fictional folks in Three Corners, after all, have their own way of looking at things.



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**TEXAS
OUTDOOR
ADVENTURE
SERIES**



Birding opportunities abound this month as birds head north from their winter homes. **Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area's Longoria Unit** in Cameron County will host birding events in March, as will **Fennessey Ranch** near Refugio.



© KATHY ADAMS CLARK

MARCH

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

- MARCH 14: **Petroglyph Tour**, San Angelo SP, 915-949-4757
- MARCH 21: **Dinosaur Walk**, San Angelo SP, 915-949-4757
- MARCH 28: **Macey's Ridge Hike**, San Angelo SP, 915-949-4757

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

- MARCH: **Historical Tour**, every Saturday and Sunday, Stephen F. Austin SHP, 409-885-3613
- MARCH 1: **Independence Day Celebration**, Washington-on-the-Brazos, 409-878-2214
- MARCH 2: **Toast to Texas**, Sebastopol House SHP, 830-379-4833
- MARCH 7: **Migratory Waterfowl Viewing Tour**, Fort Parker SP, 254-562-5751
- MARCH 7, 14, 21, 28: **Fairfield Lake Boat Tour**, Fairfield Lake SP, 512-389-8900
- MARCH 7: **Western Days Bar-B-Q Cook-off**, Fort Parker SP, 254-562-5751
- MARCH 9: **Gardening Demonstrations**, Sam Bell Maxey House SHP, 903-785-5716
- MARCH 14: **Stagecoach Rides**, Fanthorp Inn SP, 409-873-2633
- MARCH 21: **Caring for Family Treasures Workshop Series**, Sebastopol House SHP, 830-379-4833
- MARCH 21: **Guided Trail Ride**, Cedar Hill SP, 972-291-6641
- MARCH 28: **Civil War Confederate Camp**, Sam Bell Maxey House SHP, 903-785-5716

PINEYWOODS

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

MARCH 14: **Opening of Texas State Railroad—102 years**, Texas State Railroad SHP, 1-800-442-8951

MARCH 14: **Alligator Etiquette**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, 409-384-5231

MARCH 14, 28: **Ecotour**, Caddo Lake SP, 903-679-3743

MARCH 15: **Night Moves**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, 409-384-5231

MARCH 16: **Take a Walk on the Wild Side**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, 409-384-5231

MARCH 20: **Crazy Hot Air Balloons**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, 409-384-5231

MARCH 20, 21: **Dogwood Steam Train Excursions**, Texas State Railroad SHP, 800-442-8951

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

MARCH 28: **The Art of Foraging**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, 409-384-5231

GULF COAST

MARCH 6, 14, 15: **Beachcombing Tour**, Matagorda Island SP, 512-983-2215

MARCH 7, 21: **Wild Hog Safari Management Hunt**, Fennessey Ranch, 512-529-6600

MARCH 8: **15th Annual Old Car Picnic**, San Jacinto Battleground SHP, La 281-479-2431

MARCH 13: **Birding in the Lower Rio Grande Valley**, Las Palomas WMA/Longoria Unit, 956-383-8982

MARCH 13, 14, 27, 28: **Birding Tour**, Fennessey Ranch, 512-529-6600 or 512-729-7555

MARCH 14, 28: **Mission River Boat Tours**, Fennessey Ranch, 512-529-6600

MARCH 28: **5th Annual Rivers, Lakes, Bays 'n Bayous Trash Bash**, San Jacinto Battleground SHP, La 281-486-9500

HILL COUNTRY

MARCH: **Honey Creek Canyon Walk**, every Saturday, Honey Creek SNA, 830-438-2656

MARCH: **Birdwatching—Sparrow Study**, call for dates and times, Federnales Falls SP, 830-868-7304

MARCH: **Gorman Falls Hike**, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Eend SP, 915-628-3240

MARCH: **Horseback Outing**, call for dates and times, Hill Country SNA, 830-796-3984

MARCH: **Wild Cave Tours**, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Eend SP, 915-628-3240

MARCH 7, 8: **Quilt Show '98**, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, 830-644-2252

MARCH 7: **Dutch Oven Cooking**, Honey Creek SNA, 830-438-2656

MARCH 21: **Annual Living History Day**, Fort McKavett SHP, 915-396-2358

MARCH 22, 29: **Introduction to Birdwatching**, Pedernales Falls SP, 830-868-7304

BIG BEND COUNTRY

FEB. 27-MARCH 1, MARCH 13-15: **Desert Survival Workshop**, Big Bend Ranch SP, 915-229-3416

MARCH: **Birding Tours**, every Saturday, Balmorhea SP, 915-375-2370

MARCH: **Bird Identification Tour**, every third Sunday, Hueco Tanks SHP, 915-857-1135

MARCH: **Rock Art Tour**, call for dates, Hueco Tanks SHP, 915-857-1135

MARCH: **Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour**, every Wednesday and Sunday, Seminole Canyon SHP, 915-292-4464

MARCH 1, 21: **Bus Tour**, Big Bend Ranch SP, 512-389-8900

MARCH 27-29: **Spring Trail Ride**, Big Bend Ranch SP, 281-486-8070

MARCH 28: **Pressa Canyon Tour**, Seminole Canyon SHP, 915-292-4464

MARCH 30-APR. 2: **Spring Photography Workshop**, Big Bend Ranch SP, 281-486-8070

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

MARCH: **Native Plants**, every Tuesday and Friday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, 956-519-6448

MARCH: **Kiskadee Bus Tour**, every other Saturday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, 956-585-1107

MARCH 6-8, 20-22, 27-29: **Coyote and Feral Hog Hunt**, Chaparral WMA, 830-676-3413

MARCH 14, 28: **Bird Identification Tour**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliharn Unit, 512-786-3868

MARCH 21: **Alligator Program**, Choke Canyon/Calliharn Unit, 512-786-3868

MARCH 21: **Battle of Coletto Reenactment**, Fannin Battleground SHP, Fannin, 512-645-3465

APRIL

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

APRIL 4: **Great Texas Trash-Off**, Copper Breaks SP, 940-839-4331.

APRIL 4-5: **Historic Trail Ride**, Fort Griffin SHP, 915-762-3592.

APRIL 18: **Dinosaur Walk**, San Angelo SP, 915-949-4757.

APRIL 25-26: **Civil War Reenactment**, Fort Griffin SHP, 915-762-3592.

APRIL 25: **Petroglyph Tour**, San Angelo SP, 915-949-4757.

April 26: **75th Anniversary Celebration**, San Angelo SP, 915-949-4757.

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

APRIL: **Traditional Cowboy Music Concert**, call for dates and times, Cleburne SP, 817-645-4215.

APRIL: **Historical Tour**, every Saturday and Sunday, Stephen F. Austin SHP, 409-885-3613.

APRIL 4: **Fish Day for Kids**, Lockhart SP, 512-398-3479.

APRIL 4: **Firework Display**, Lockhart SP, 512-398-3479.

APRIL 4: **Texas Draft Horse & Mule Assoc. 1998 Annual Plow Day**, Cedar Hill SP, 972-291-3900.

APRIL 4, 11, 18: **Wildflower/Nature Hikes**, Lake Somerville SP/Birch Creek Unit, 409-535-7763.

APRIL 11: **Kid Fishing Day**, Rusk/Palestine SP, 903-683-5126.

APRIL 11: **Stagecoach Rides**, Fanthorp Inn SHP, 409-873-2633.

APRIL 12: **Easter Sunrise Service**, Fanthorp Inn SHP, 409-873-2633.

APRIL 12: **Sunrise Easter Service**, Lake Whitney SP, 254-694-3793.

APRIL 12: **Kids' Fishing Day**, Rusk/Palestine SP, 903-683-5126.

APRIL 18: **March For Parks**, Sam Bell Maxey House SHP, 903-785-5716.

APRIL 22: **Earth Day**, Bastrop SP, 512-321-2101.

APRIL 22: **Find the Lost Pines Day**, Bastrop SP, 512-321-2101.

APRIL 24: **Arbor Day**, Buescher SP, 512-237-2241.

APRIL 24: **Earth Day**, Fairfield Lake SP, 903-389-4514.

APRIL 25: **Earth Day Celebration**, Fairfield Lake SP, 903-389-4514.

APRIL 25: **Earth Day Wildscape Demonstration and Planting**, Lake Somerville SP/Birch Creek Unit, 409-535-7763.

APRIL 25: **Trail Dedication**, Stephen F. Austin SHP, 409-885-3613.

APRIL 25: **Wildflower Tour**, Cleburne SP, 817-645-4215.

APRIL 28: **Kids' Wilderness Survival**, Cleburne SP, 817-645-4215.

PINEYWOODS

APRIL 3: **Dogwood Railroad Excursions**, Texas State Railroad SHP, 1-800-442-8951.

APRIL 4, 18: **Guided Nature Trail Hike**, Village Creek SP, 409-755-7322.

APRIL 4: **Backyard Birds**, Caddo Lake SP, 903-679-3351.

APRIL 11: **Easter Egg Hunt**, Atlanta SP, 903-796-6476.

APRIL 11, 25: **Caddo Lake Ecotour**, Caddo Lake SP, 903-679-3351.

APRIL 11: **Easter Egg Hunt**, Daingerfield SP, 903-645-2921.

APRIL 11: **Hunters of the Night**, Caddo Lake SP, 903-679-3351.

APRIL 12: **Easter Sunrise Service**, Mission Tejas SHP, 409-687-2394.

APRIL 12: **Open House**, Mission Tejas SHP, 409-687-2394.

APRIL 12: **Easter Sunrise Drama**, Texas State Railroad SHP, 1-800-442-8951.

APRIL 16, 17, 23, 24, 30: **School Steam Train Excursions**, Texas State Railroad SHP, 1-800-442-8951.

APRIL 16, 17, 23, 24, 30: **Great Texas Train Race**, Texas State Railroad SHP, 1-800-442-8951.

APRIL 18: **Get Back to Nature**, Caddo Lake SP, 903-679-3351.

APRIL 18: **Canoeing the Forks**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, 409-384-5231.

APRIL 25: **Open House**, Village Creek SP, 409-755-7322.

APRIL 25: **Wildflower, Native Plants and Herbs**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP/Angelina Neches/Dam B Unit, 409-384-5231.

APRIL 25: **Beginning Birding Class**, Village Creek SP, 409-755-7322.

GULF COAST

APRIL: **Guided Bird Walks**, daily, Goose Island SP, 512-729-2858.

APRIL 3: **Park Day at Port O'Connor Elementary**, Matagorda Island SP, 512-983-2215.

APRIL 3-4, 10-11: **Nature Tour**, Fennessey Ranch, 512-529-6600.

APRIL 4, 11: **All Day Expedition**, Fennessey Ranch, 512-529-6600.

APRIL 4: **Open House and Free Ferry Ride to Island**, Matagorda Island SP, 512-983-2215.

APRIL 11, 12, 18: **Spring Walking Bird Tour**, Matagorda Island SP, 512-983-2215.

APRIL 11: **Easter Egg Hunt**, Goose Island SP, 512-729-2858.

APRIL 12: **Easter Egg Hunt**, Lake Texana SP, 512-782-5718.

APRIL 12: **Easter Egg Hunt**, Sabine Pass Battleground SHP, 409-971-2451.

APRIL 18: **Annual Earth Day Celebration**, Brazos Bend SP, 409-553-5101.

APRIL 18, 19: **USS TEXAS Rededication**, Battleship Texas SHP, 281-479-2431.

APRIL 18-25: **Open House**, Battleship Texas SHP, 281-479-2431.

APRIL 18-25: **"Battlemania," Battleship Texas SHP**, 281-479-2431.

APRIL 18-25: **"Battlemania," San Jacinto Battleground SHP**, 281-479-2431.

APRIL 18-25: **Open House**, San Jacinto Battleground SHP, 281-479-2431.

APRIL 18: **March For Parks**, Lake Texana SP, 512-782-5718.

APRIL 18: **Birding in the Lower Rio Grande Valley**, Las Palomas WMA/Longoria Unit, 956-383-8982.

APRIL 18: **Spring Birding Tour**, Sea Rim SP, 409-971-2559.

APRIL 21: **San Jacinto Day Ceremony**, Battleship Texas SHP, 281-479-4414.

APRIL 25: **Battle of San Jacinto Reenactment**, Battleship Texas SHP, 281-479-4414.

APRIL 25: **Earth Day Celebration**, Lake Texana SP, 512-782-5718.

APRIL 25: **Annual Adopt-A-Beach Clean-up**, Sea Rim SP, 409-971-2559.

HILL COUNTRY

APRIL: **Bird Walk**, every Saturday, McKinney Falls SP, 512-243-1643.

APRIL 2: **Bird Walk**, Pedernales Falls SP, 830-868-7304.

APRIL 2, 4, 17, 18: **Primitive Cave Tour**, Kickapoo Cavern SP, 830-563-2342.

APRIL 11: **Earth Day 1998**, Colorado Bend SP, 915-628-3240.

APRIL 16, 30: **Devils Waterhole Canoe Tour**, Inks Lake SP, 512-793-2223.

APRIL 17, 18: **Green Cave Bat Flight Observation**, Kickapoo Cavern SP, 830-563-2342.

APRIL 18: **Wildflower Day in the Spring**, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, 830-644-2252.

APRIL 25: **Earth Day**, Guadalupe River SP, 830-438-2656.

APRIL 25: **Open House**, Guadalupe River SP, 830-438-2656.

BIG BEND COUNTRY

APRIL: **Bird Banding**, Monday thru Thursday, Davis Mountains SP, 915-426-3337.

APRIL: **Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour**, Wednesday thru Sunday, Seminole Canyon SHP, 915-292-4464.

APRIL 3-5: **Spring Trail Ride**, Big Bend Ranch SP, 281-486-8070

APRIL 4 & 5: **Volunteer Appreciation Open House Weekend**, Hueco Tanks SP, 915-857-1135.

APRIL 4, 11, 18: **Spring Walking Bird Tour**, Devils River SNA, 830-395-2133.

APRIL 17: **Lonehorn Cattle Drive**, Big Bend Ranch SP, 915-229-3416.

APRIL 25 & 26: **Free Tour to Phantom Cave Springs**, Balmorhea SP, 915-375-2370.

APRIL 25: **The Desert Bighorn Sheep in Texas**, Elephant Mountain WMA, 915-364-2228.

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

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

APRIL: **Bird-A-Thon**, every week-end in April starting April 10, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, 512-786-3868.

APRIL: **South Texas Wildflower and Brush Tour**, call for dates, Chaparral WMA, 830-676-3413.

APRIL 1, 15, 29: **Nature Tours**, Bentsen-Rio Grande SP, 956-585-1107.

APRIL 4, 18: **Lomita Ranch Tour**, Bentsen-Rio Grande SP, 956-585-1107.

APRIL 4, 8: **Bird Identification Tour**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, 512-786-3868.

APRIL 19: **Easter Messiah**, Goliad SHP, 512-645-3405.

APRIL 26: **Open House**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, 512-786-3868.

APRIL 26: **Spring Concert**, Goliad SHP, 512-645-3405.

SP STATE PARK

SHP STATE HISTORICAL PARK

SNA STATE NATURAL AREA

WMA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA





Wetlands and the role they play in maintaining water quality will be one of the topics on "Texas Parks & Wildlife" the week of March 15-22. Check the schedule below for show times in your area.

TELEVISION

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Watch our Emmy Award-winning companion television series on your local PBS affiliate. All times p.m. unless otherwise noted. In stereo where available.

Amarillo		
KACV, Ch. 2	Sun. 4:00	
Austin	Mon. 12:00	
KLRU, Ch. 18		
College Station	Thurs. 7:00	
KAMU, Ch. 15	Fri. 11 a.m.	
Corpus Christi		
KEDT, Ch. 16	Fri. 11:30	
El Paso		
KCOS, Ch. 13	Sun. 6:00	
Harlingen:		
KMBH, Ch. 60	Sun. 12:30	
<i>Also serving McAllen, Mission</i>		
Houston:		
KUHT, Ch. 8	Mon. 7:30	
<i>Also serving Beaumont/Fort Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria</i>		
Killeen		
KNCT, Ch. 46	Sun. 4:00	
<i>Also serving Temple</i>		
Lubbock		
KTXT, Ch. 5	Sat. 7:00	

Odessa		
KOCV, Ch. 36	Sat. 7:30	
<i>Also serving Midland</i>		
San Antonio		
KLRN, Ch. 9	Thurs. 12:00	
<i>Also serving Laredo</i>		
Waco		
KCTF, Ch. 34	Sat. 3:00	

Programming schedules are subject to change, so check your local listings.

Look for These Stories in the Coming Weeks:

February 22-March 1: Longhorn cattle; domestic cats' impact on wildlife; tracks biologists use to discover the secret life of animals.

March 1-8: Efforts to save East Texas hardwood forests; the Texas State Railroad, xeriscaping.

March 8-15: The last of the bayous in Houston, the Bayou City; a turkey calling competition; Eläer Hostel.

March 15-22: Fossil Rim Wildlife Center; wetlands and their role in water quality; tracking mountain lions in Big Bend Ranch State Park.

March 22-April 12: The decline of the small commercial fisherman; rock climbing; Seminole Canyon State Historical Park.

RADIO

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Join Joel Block weekdays for a 90-second Journey into the Texas Outdoors. Kathleen Jenkins, Producer. Check this listing for a station near you.

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Amarillo: KACV-FM 89.9 / 9:20 a.m.	Huntsville: KSHU-FM 90.5 / 11:55 a.m. & 2:55 p.m.
Athens-Malakoff: KCKL-FM 95.9 / 6:40 a.m., KLVQ-AM 1410 / 10:20 a.m.	Jacksboro: / KJKB-FM 101.7 / 12:25 p.m.
Atlanta: KPYN-FM 100.1 / 4:30 p.m.	Jacksonville: KEBE-AM 1400 / 7:25 a.m.
Austin: KUT-FM 90.5 / 1:58, 12:58 p.m.(F), KVET-AM 1300 / 8:55 a.m. Austin American-Statesman's Inside Line 512-416-5700 category 6287 (NATR)	Kerrville: KRNH-FM 95.1 / 5:30 a.m. & 12:56, 9:56 p.m., KITE-FM 92.3 / 11:51 a.m. & 12:51 p.m.
Beaumont: KLVI-AM 560 / 5:40 a.m.	La Grange: KVLG-AM 1570 / 5:45 p.m., KBUK-FM 104.9 / 5:45 p.m.
Big Spring: KBST-AM 1490 / 7:35 p.m.	Lampasas: KCYL-AM 1450 / 7:45 a.m.
Brady: KNEL-AM 1490 / 7:20 a.m., KNEL-FM 95.3 / 7:20 a.m.	Liberty: KSHN-FM 99.9 / 7:13 a.m. & 2:50 p.m.
Brenham: KWHI-AM 1280 / 6:50 a.m.	Longview: KBNB-AM 1060 / 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.
Bryan: WTAW-AM 1150 / 5:45 p.m.	Lubbock: KFYO-AM 790 / Between 8-8:30 a.m.
Carthage: KGAS-AM 1590 / 6:46 a.m., KGAS-FM 104.3 / 6:46 a.m.	Marshall: KCUL-AM 1410 / 7:15 a.m., KCUL-FM 92.3 / 7:15 a.m.
Center: KDET-AM 930 / 5:20 p.m.	McAllen: KHID-FM 88.1 / 4:58 p.m.
Columbus: KULM-FM 98.3 / 7:20 a.m. & 5:20 p.m.	Midland: KCRS-AM 550 / 6:43 a.m. & 1:43, 6:43 p.m.
Comanche: KCOM-AM 1550 / 6:30 a.m.	Mineola: KMOO-FM 96.7 / 5:20 p.m.
Commerce: KETR-FM 88.9 / 10:15 a.m.	Monahans: KLBO-AM 1330 / 8:50 a.m.
Corpus Christi: KEDT-FM 90.3 / 5:34 p.m., KFTX-FM 97.5 / 5:35 a.m.	Nacogdoches: KSAU-FM 90.1 / 3:00 p.m.
Corsicana: KAND-AM 1340 / 5:45 p.m.	Ozona: KYXX-FM 94.3 / 12:09 p.m.
Crockett: KIVY-AM 1290 / 8:15 a.m., KIVY-FM 92.7 / 8:15 a.m.	Palestine: KLIS-FM 96.7 / 7:30 a.m.
Dimmitt: KDHN-AM 1470 / 12:31 p.m.	Pecos: KIUN-AM 1400 / 10:30 a.m.
Eagle Pass: KINL-FM 92.7 / 7:15 a.m.	Rockdale: KRXT-FM 98.5 / 5:04 a.m.
Eastland: KEAS-AM 1590 / 8:30 a.m., KEAS-FM 97.7 / 8:30 a.m.	San Angelo: KUTX-FM 90.1 / 1:58, 12:58 p.m.(F)
El Campo: KULP-AM 1390 / 2:05 p.m.	San Antonio: KXPZ-FM 91.3 / 2:50 p.m.
Fairfield: KNES-FM 99.1 / 7:49 a.m.	Sonora: KHOS-FM 92.1 / 12:09 p.m.
Ft. Stockton: KFST-AM 860 / 12:50 p.m., KFTS-FM 94.3 / 12:50 p.m.	Sulphur Springs: KSST-AM 1230 / 11:15 a.m.
Freeport: KBRZ-AM 1460 / 10:15 a.m. & 7:45 p.m.	Texarkana: KCMC-AM 740 / 12:15 p.m.
Galveston: KGBC-AM 1540 / 1:45 p.m.	Uvalde: KVOU-AM 1400 / 5:33 a.m., KYUF-FM 105 / 5:33 a.m.
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Hereford: KPAN-AM 860 / 2:50 p.m., KPAN-FM 106.3 / 2:50 p.m.	Weatherford: KZEE-AM 1220 / 6:30, 8:10 a.m. & 5:15 p.m.
Hillsboro: KHBR-AM 1560 / 9:30 a.m.	Wichita Falls: KWFS-AM 1290 / 6:15, 7:45 a.m.
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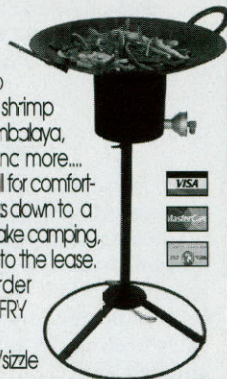
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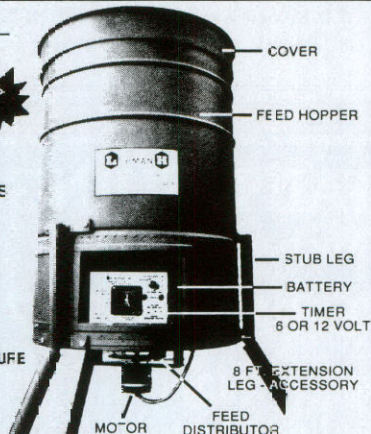
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1859 National Landmark. 15 unique shops in a restored village. 13 rooms & suites. **800-364-2138**

★ CLEBURNE-1896 RAILROAD HOUSE B&B

Restored Railroad Hotel. Come and *do nothing* or visit nearby attractions including State Park and Fossil Rim Wildlife Park. Convenient to Dallas and Fort Worth. **800-668-1896**

★ COLUMBUS-MAGNOLIA OAKS

One hour from Houston. Fireplaces, jacuzzi, guitar serenade, full breakfasts. Revitalizing.

409-732-2726

★ COMFORT-MEYER B&B

On Cypress Creek, Hill Country, Mid 1800's Stage Stop, Texas Landmark. **800-364-2138**

★ DEL RIO-LA MANSIÓN

Romantic 1887 hacienda with fountain courtyard. Tranquil setting of century old palms and magnolias. Backed by Texas' oldest winery.

800-995-1887

★ FREDERICKSBURG-DAS COLLEGE HAUS

Beautifully appointed with antiques and original art. Near downtown. Delicious home cooked breakfast. **800-654-2802**

★ FREDERICKSBURG-DAS GARTEN HAUS

Traditional B&B with sumptuous breakfasts, helpful hosts, private suites. New Orleans style courtyard and gardens. **800-416-4287**

★ FREDERICKSBURG-THE LUCKENBACH INN

"Go Back, Well Fed And Rested."

www.luckenbachtx.com **800-997-1124**

★ FREDERICKSBURG-MAGNOLIA HOUSE

A comfortable, elegant, TRADITIONAL B&B at its best!! 1923 historic home with 1997 comfort. Gourmet breakfast, antiques, fireplaces, relaxing patio, porches. Three diamond rating.

800-880-4374

★ FREDERICKSBURG-SCHILDKNECHT-WEIDENFELLER HOUSE

1870's German limestone house in Historic District. Private. Accommodates one-ten in one party. Antiques, handmade quilts. Fireplace, cellar, porch. www.speakez.net/schildknecht

For reservations: **830-997-5612**

★ FREDERICKSBURG-SETTLERS CROSSING

Fredericksburg's finest! Historic plantation home and seven private guest houses. 35 acres. Fireplaces, antiques, jacuzzis. One of America's great country inns. Featured in *Country Home*, *Country Living*. Color brochure.

www.settlerscrossing.com **800-874-1020**

★ FREDERICKSBURG-WATKINS HILL

FREDERICKSBURG'S MOST BEAUTIFUL GUEST HOUSE™. Privacy and luxury. 1935-1890 in town. Gourmet breakfast to your door. Ten press raves in past year alone. 25% discount Sunday-Thursday & January-February. **800-899-1672**

★ GRANBURY-THE CAPTAIN'S HOUSE

1874 Victorian, on lake. Near square. Special weekly rates. Two meals. **817-579-6664**

★ HOUSTON- ANGEL ARBOR INN

Elegant yet comfortable accommodations near downtown. Whirlpool tubs for two. Special corporate rates.

www.angelarbor.com **800-722-8788**

★ JEFFERSON-PRIDE HOUSE

Breathtaking Victorian Mansion in historic steamboat port-where a weekend is never enough!

www.jeffersontexas.com **800-894-3526**

★ MINEOLA- NOBLE MANOR

East Texas Manor circa 1910. Eight rooms plus private cottage, all with private baths. Minutes from Botanical festivals: Lake Fork and Bald Eagle Festival. AMTRAK city. **903-569-5720**

★ NEW BRAUNFELS-HISTORIC KUEBLER- WALDRIP HAUS

Come Relax! Complimentary refreshments, candlelight breakfasts! Peaceful 43-acre paradise near rivers, Gruene. Deer, birds, gorgeous views abound! Luxuriously restored hand-hewn limestone home. Cozy fireplace, games, vintage books/videos. Private baths, whirlpools. TV's, VCR's, phones. Families/Groups Welcome! Credit cards.

800-299-8372

★ NEW BRAUNFELS-KARBACH HAUS

Turn-of-the-century mansion. Downtown acre estate. Private baths, pool, spa, world-class breakfasts. **800-972-5941**

★ NEW BRAUNFELS-PRINCE SOLMS INN

Murder Mystery Weekend, Romance Packages. Celebrating 100 years of continuous operation.

800-625-9169

★ ROCKPORT-HOOPES' HOUSE

Renovated 1892 Victorian on Aransas Bay in Downtown. National Landmark. Eight guest rooms each with private bath, telephone and TV. Full Breakfast. Pool, Hot tub, Gazebo. Abundant fishing and birding. Credit Cards. Color Brochure.

800-924-1008

★ SETTLEMENT AT ROUND TOP

Eight fantastic log cabins/cottages. Private baths, porches/rockers. Whirlpool for two, fireplaces. Featured in *Country Living*. **888-ROUNDTOP**

★ SALADO-ROSE MANSION BED & BREAKFAST

Beautiful Greek Revival home, cottages & authentic log cabins. Ten rooms, private baths, some with fireplaces. Oak shaded grounds offer hammocks & swings. Full breakfast. **800-948-1004**

★ SAN ANTONIO-ADAMS HOUSE

King William Historic District, Riverwalk, trolley, antiques, full breakfast.

<http://www.san-antonio-texas.com> **800-666-4810**

★ SAN ANTONIO-NOBLE INNS

Downtown/King William. Exceptional luxury. jacuzzis, pools, fireplaces. Riverwalk, Alamo.

www.nobleinns.com **800-221-4045**

★ SAN ANTONIO-THE COLUMNS B&B

1892 mansion and guesthouse. Historic district, Riverwalk, Trolley, antiques, jacuzzis, fireplaces, full breakfast. **800-233-3364**

★ SEGUIN-WEINERT HOUSE

Tip of Hill Country; great food; 1895; fishing and water close. **888-303-0912**

★ SAN MARCOS /

MARTINDALE-COUNTRYSIDE INN

1874 country setting, family-style breakfast, fireplaces. Three rivers-tubing, canoeing, birding, shopping, historic sights. **512-357-2550**

★ TYLER-CHARWOOD HILL INN

The ultimate in overnight accommodations..... Watch for us on the Learning Channel! Tour Charnwood Hill at

www.ballistic.com/~chnwood/ **903-597-3980**

★ LOST MAPLES-TEXAS STAGECOACH INN

Miles from nowhere, in the middle of the surrounding country. **888-965-6272**

★ WAXAHACHIE-BONNYNOOK INN

Smell the roses or other 57 plant varieties, victorian rooms, private baths (whirlpool), full breakfast. **800-486-5936**

★ WINNSBORO-THEE HUBBELL HOUSE

Two- acre plantation estate, 12 bedrooms & baths: candlelight dinner, massage, hot tub house & carriage rides; within 30 minutes are 200 antique shops, seven golf courses & ten lakes.

800-227-0639



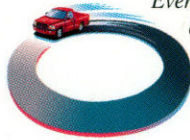
© PAUL M. MONTGOMERY

WHEN NIGHT IS DAY, AND DAY IS NIGHT

Eschewing the more traditional pinhole-in-a-piece-of-cardboard viewing technique to “see” a solar eclipse, Austinite Paul Montgomery grabbed his Nikon F camera and headed for the sidewalk beneath a cedar elm in his yard to permanently record the partial solar eclipse that occurred in 1984. The photograph captures hundreds of tiny luminescent crescents that are images of the partly obscured disc of the sun shining through the chinks between the foliage. Paul captured the surreal moment on Kodachrome 64 film using a 55mm micro Nikkor lens with a setting of 1/60 second @ f/8.



We started with an open mind. And proved how surprisingly responsive, roomy, capable and comfortable a truck can be.



Even though no other truck in its class has a longer wheelbase, Dakota still turns in: a really small circle.

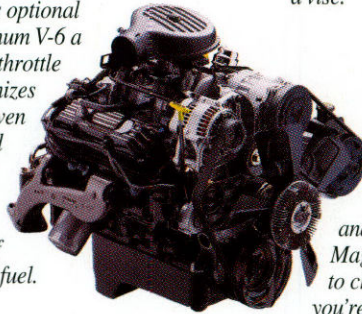
With a wide stance and big tires, Dakota doesn't just grip the road. It puts it in a vise.



This is not a decaffeinated little wheezer of a standard 4-cylinder engine. This is a peppy Magnum® motor. As in Dodge Magnum. Which explains its eye-opening 120 horsepower and 145 lb-ft of torque.



We gave Dakota's optional high-output Magnum V-6 a progressive bore throttle body, which optimizes airflow for any given engine speed. And we utilized swirl port technology to help get more combustion out of every drop of fuel.



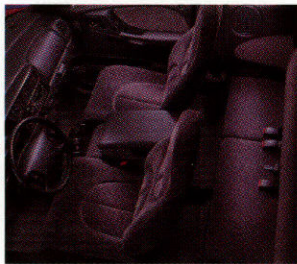
Dodge Dakota is like life. It's full of choices. With three different models and three capable Magnum engines to choose from, you're free to go in just about any direction.



Relax. Four-wheel anti-lock brakes are available on Dakota.

Threedom.

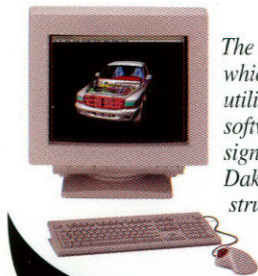
We gave Dakota a roomiest-in-class interior. And we filled it up with conveniences, like an optional mini business console with hidden compartments.



The large, well-illuminated speedometer and available tachometer dials are real easy-to-read. Plus, the instruments are controlled by a microprocessor, for optimum accuracy.



Quick-ratio, variable-assist power steering means parking is easy. Dakota's precise cornering and exquisite road manners, however, make parking something you might never want to do.



The outer-body, which we designed utilizing advanced software, adds significantly to Dakota's surprising structural integrity.

The fact that this 230-horsepower, 5.2L V-8 is the only one available in Dakota's class is nice. The fact that it's a Magnum, a modern legend in truck engines, is even better.



Surprise. Dodge Dakota just received the J.D. Power and Associates award for "Most Appealing Compact Pickup" in the first year since its redesign.*

*J.D. Power and Associates 1997 APEAL Study, Automotive Performance, Execution, and Layout Study™. Study based on a total 29,187 consumer responses.

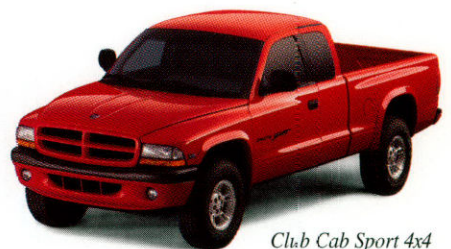
Always use seat belts. Remember a backseat is the safest place for children. Rearward-facing child seats can be used in the front seat only with the passenger air-bag turned off.



Sport 4x2



Club Cab SLT 4x2



Club Cab Sport 4x4

Dakota  The New Dodge

For more info, call 1-800-4-A-DODGE. Or visit our Web site at www.4adodge.com

