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# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

APRIL 1998

## 7 SUPER STATE PARKS FOR BIRDWATCHERS

### SECRET STASH OF SAM BASS

Delving Down Under in Longhorn Cavern

### FROM MESS TO MARSH

Reclaiming Baytown's Brownwood Marsh

CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEXAS STATE PARKS

APR 15 1998

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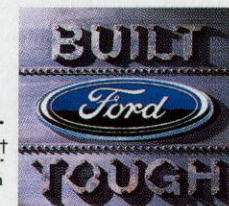


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April 1998

## ★ GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION ★

★ **19 Preserving the Past, Serving the Future** With care, our state historical parks provide a window to the past that will continue to be a source of inspiration and direction into the new millennium. *by Wilson E. Dolman, PhD*

★ **26 Walkin' in a Winger Wonderland** A Texas Parks and Wildlife expert divulges some of the best birding spots among the state parks. *by Noreen Damude*

★ **34 Touring the World 'Down Under'** With features such as the Hall of Marble, the Chandelier Room and a rock figure called the Watch Dog, Longhorn Cavern in the Hill Country is one of the state's most popular show caves. *by Kyle R. Wood*

## FEATURES

**40 Home of the West Texas Whoppers** The future's bright at O.H. Ivie Reservoir near San Angelo. Seven years after the lake's opening, records for largemouth bass continue to be topped each year. *by Bud McDonald*

**44 From Subdivision to Sanctuary** Once a prestigious neighborhood, Baytown's Brownwood subdivision was assaulted by nature and man, eventually becoming uninhabitable. The land sat as an eyesore until an unusual coalition pulled together to transform it into a thriving nature center. *by Charles Lockwood*

**50 Sea Stingers** A look at the creature to watch out for as beach swimming season gets underway. *by Melissa Maupin*

## DEPARTMENTS

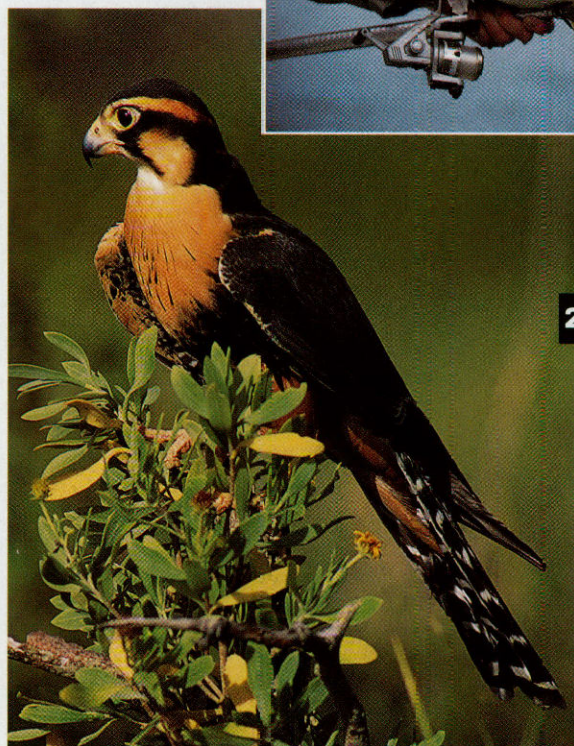
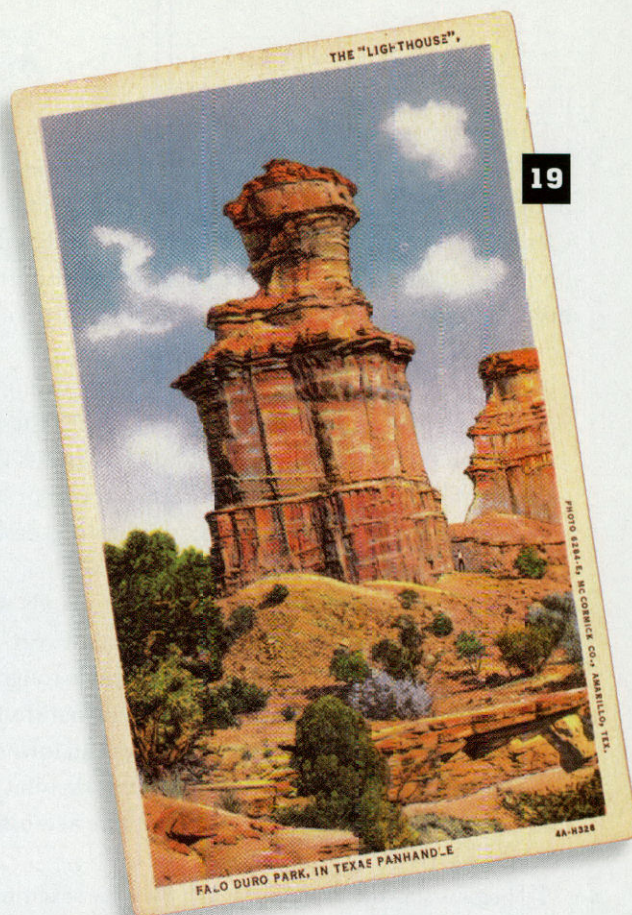
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## COVERS

**Front:** The rare tropical kingbird announces his identity by a territorial song. The tropical kingbird, along with the almost identical Couch's kingbird, can be seen nowhere else in the U.S. but Texas's Lower Rio Grande Valley. Photo © Larry Ditto. Canon T90 camera, Canon 500mm f/4.5 lens, 1/500 second @ f/4.5, Kodachrome 64 film.

**Back:** Bundled up against a foggy, morning chill, two anglers try their luck at O.H. Ivie Reservoir near San Angelo, a lake becoming increasingly popular with bass fishermen. (See story on page 40). Photo © David J. Sams. Nikon F4 camera, 300 mm f/2.8 lens, 1/250 second @ f/2.8, Fuji 100 film.

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This month, my good friend and colleague in conservation, John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society, will be in Texas to kick off the Second Annual Great Texas Birding Classic. Last year at the inaugural event, 27 different teams involving more than 100 participants traveled up to 3,000 miles each along the Texas Coast in search of America's greatest array of avian diversity.

As Noreen Damude writes in her story on birding in state parks in this issue, Texas is the epicenter of the fastest-growing sport in the world and the Birding Classic is its Olympic Games. Birding increased by 155 percent last year in America, and Texas is now thought to be the number-one destination in the world for birders.

The fruits of this spectacular growth are already nourishing our economy and the landscape itself. Last year, wildlife viewing, angling and hunting each accounted for roughly equal contributions to the coffers of Texas's hot nature tourism economy. In response to this growth, cities and towns up and down the coast have invested millions into habitat protection and other enhancements to attract these new binocular-carrying tourists.

To help us stay up with this and all the other exciting trends in the outdoors, Susan L. Ebert takes the helm of *Texas Parks*

& *Wildlife* magazine as publisher and editor beginning with this issue. With extensive experience at *American Way* magazine, Rodale Press and *Texas Monthly*, Susan brings a wealth of talent and skill to the best outdoor magazine in the country. We welcome her, and eagerly look forward to her touch and perspective on these pages as we face the changing times ahead.

And the times they are changing. But even as new trends, ideas and pursuits seem to overtake us, traditional values are also on the rise. Hunting and fishing actually increased slightly in Texas last year for the first time in more than a decade and a consensus is beginning to form among all those who enjoy the outdoors that we all have much more in common than in conflict. These pages will continue to reflect both the unity and diversity of the Texas outdoor experience and the responsibilities, which transcend all outdoor sports.

In 1997, the first Great Texas Birding Classic pumped needed conservation funding into key habitat projects in Galveston and the Rio Grande Valley and provided crucial aid for coastal waterbirds throughout the Texas Coast. We're grateful that conservationists have always been, and continue to be, people who put their money where their mouths are.

ANDREW SANSOM, *Executive Director*

C O M I N G N E X T M O N T H



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TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE!

Wilderness writers Laurence and Patricia Parent share seven parks for hiking, including the close-in wonders of Franklin Mountains and the Deep South aura of Village Creek.

THE PULSE OF THE PINES

Our "cycling historian," Thad Sitton, takes us on a calf-clenching, roller-coaster ride through the Lost Pines of Bastrop and Buescher state parks.

HOOKED ON LURE COLLECTING

The stampede is on to round up everything from the Texas Mouse Bait to the Creek Chub Crawdad and the Piggy Perch.

OH, GIVE ME A HOME...

Texas State Photographer Wyman Meinzer captures the historic transfer of bison from the famed JA Ranch to Caprock Canyons State Park.

A MASON GRACE

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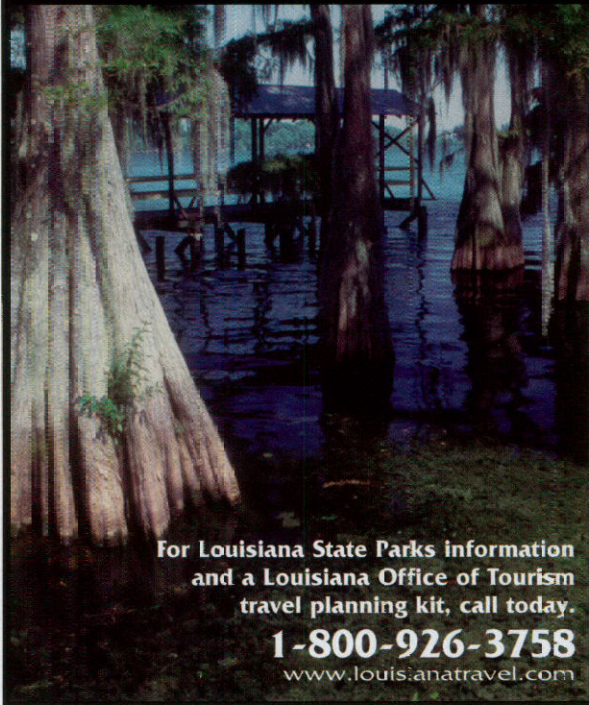
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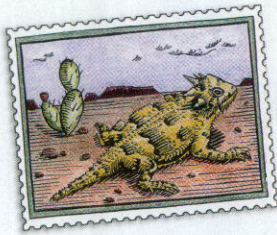
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Last Sunday, I rounded up my two kids and the dog and headed off for a hike along the upper reaches of Austin's Barton Creek.

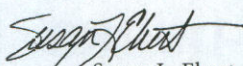
We pulled off Loop 1—a-whir with traffic even on a Sunday morning—and rollicked on down the trail. Before long, the angry buzz of automobiles had all but disappeared, replaced with the lively chatter of water over rock.

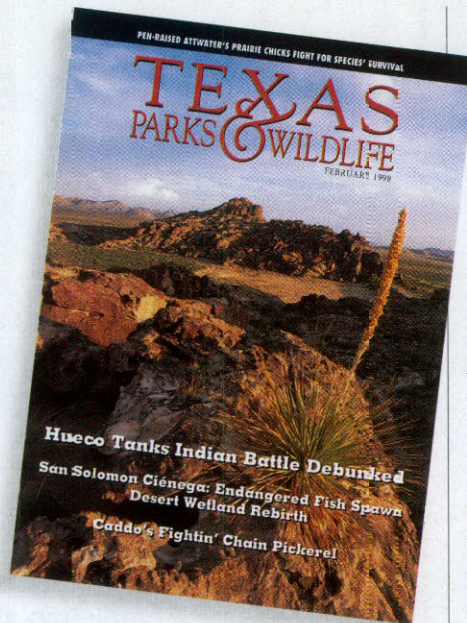
That descent to the creek is a pretty good metaphor for this magazine, I think. If you can pick up a copy of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, and the manmade world around you melts away, then we here on the staff are doing a darned good job. And if we can get you to put down the magazine, and get out to someplace wild to hike, fish, hunt, birdwatch, bike, canoe, whatever—then we're achieving our mission!

This issue in your hands is my first following David Baxter's well-earned retirement. We're hoping, as I'm sure you are, that after a bit of R&R we can coax him into becoming a regular contributor.

Thanks to those of you who write in to swap your hunting stories, share your historical recollections, divulge a great spot for birdwatching or fishing (or even to point out that we mistook a *Sabal mexicana* for a *Washingtonia robusta* palm)! Moreover, when you write in to argue your side of an issue or comment on an article we've published, you help us see more clearly what is important to you and what you'll want to see in future issues of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*.

So keep writing, okay? After all, this is your magazine.

  
Susan L. Ebert  
Publisher & Editor



ROCK ART AND INDIAN BATTLES

"A Tale of Two Indian Battles" (February) makes for some interesting reading. The author obviously did considerable research on the subject before writing the article, but there is one thing he is wrong on and that is the spelling of Mangus Colorado, the great Apache chief.

The name should be Mangas Colorados, Spanish for red sleeves. The Mexicans called him Mangas Colorados, but his Apache name was Dasoda-hae—"he who is just sitting there." This was shortened by the Anglos to Don-ha.

Mangus was Mangas's son, a minor chief with a small band of about 20 people including his two wives and children.

I have lived at Mangas Springs in Grant County, New Mexico, for 15 years. I got curious about the name and did considerable research into the subject to find the origin of the name, since there are folks here who claim it is Mangus. Topographical maps of this area all show nothing but Mangas, but Mangus is used incorrectly by several different organizations here, such as Mangus Bowman and Mangus 4-E. The New Mexico State Place Names Committee is trying to get the incorrect uses changed, which will, no doubt, take some time.

Ralph Fisher  
Silver City, New Mexico

■ Author Jay Sharp: "You're right, the spelling should have been 'Mangas.' Somewhere along the way, I confused the spelling of Mangas Colorados' name with that of his son, 'Mangus.' Mangus rode with Geronimo, Juh, Loco, Chihuahua, Chato and others who broke out of Arizona's San Carlos Reservation during the 1880s."

We're glad to know you're not just "Dasoda-hae" when you're reading *Texas Parks & Wildlife*!

⚡ I've heard the story of Hueco Tanks told and retold many, many times, and never once did I hear a different version of the story. I enjoyed the article.

Texas history is replete with examples of the battles of the Indians and the whites. I am Indian (Cherokee) and have good reason to believe that one of my ancestors (Bear Paw) was in East Texas and fought with Chief Bowles in the final battle between the Cherokees and the white settlers. I remember Grandpa Charley (a full-blood Cherokee) telling stories of East Texas and some of the things that his great-grandparents told him about the problems.

I worked with the Kiowas for many years before my retirement from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Oklahoma. I enjoyed listening to their war stories about the 19th century. In every case, they start the story the same way: "We left Indian Territory and went to Fort Richardson to have some fun. The Cavalry came out and we had fun for two or three days. So-and-so was wounded or killed and we killed or wounded so many. We really had a good time."

I really enjoyed Jay Sharp's story. Keep it up!

Bob Cowger  
Poteet

⚡ We recently visited the Three Rivers, New Mexico, petroglyph site at the foot of Sierra Blanca Mountain ("Baldy"). This site contains more than 21,000 petroglyphs, attributed to the

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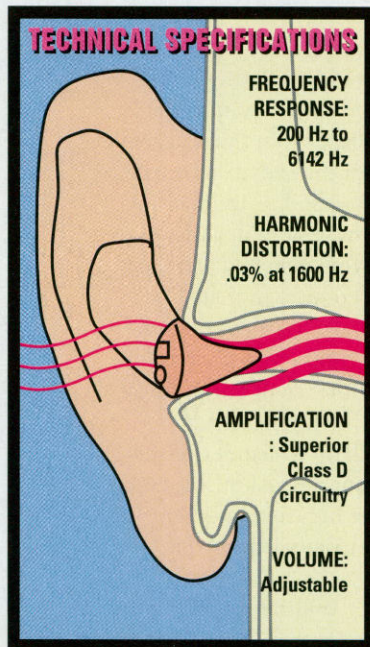
by Harold Sturman

One day a friend asked my wife Jill if I had a hearing aid. "He certainly does," replied Jill, "Me!" After hearing about a remarkable new product, Jill finally got up the nerve to ask me if I'd ever thought about getting a hearing aid. "No way," I said. "It would make me look 20 years older and cost a fortune." "No, no," she replied. "This is entirely different. It's not a hearing aid...it's Crystal Ear!"

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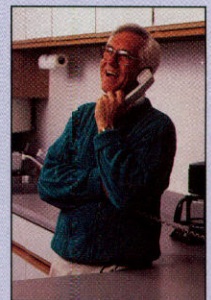
most cases it goes completely untreated. For many millions of people, hearing devices are way too expensive, and the retail middlemen want to keep it that way. What's more, treating hearing loss the old retail way can involve numerous office visits, expensive testing and adjustments to fit your ear. Thanks to Crystal Ear, the "sound solution" is now affordable and convenient. Almost 90% of people with mild hearing loss, and millions more with just a little hearing dropoff, can be dramatically helped with Crystal Ear. Plus, its superior design is energy-efficient, so batteries can last months, not just weeks.

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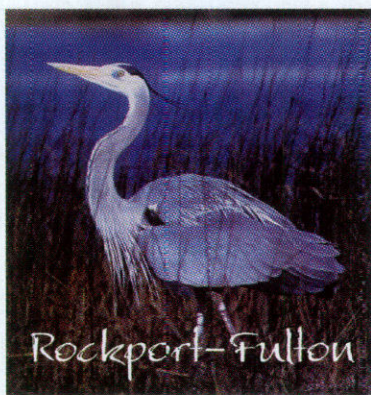
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Jonada Mogollon people, which are very similar to the rock art shown in the Hueco Tanks article. The Three Rivers Site is good for an entire day or week of exploration and is a great way for the weekend anthropologist or archaeologist to view primitive artwork and attempt to guess what motivated the artist. We plan on stopping at the Hueco Tanks site in the near future. Mr. Sharp's article on both the Indian battle and the rock art indicates to me that your magazine is for everyone who enjoys outdoor activities. Thanks for a great magazine.

John Botter  
San Antonio

"A Tale of Two Indian Battles" was entertaining, but only to a point. The author's illogical leap from the exaggerated body count at the Indian skirmish to the Vietnam War and its inflated weekly kill count was, at best, a disservice to the many fine men and women who served their country in that conflict. If Mr. Sharp has a fixation on Vietnam and the conduct of the war, he has to look no further than our political leadership at the time, if he's truly searching for a villain to slander. If the author must pursue a revisionist agenda on our history, let him find another medium and not discredit your fine magazine.

William G. McManus  
Lampasas

#### FAIR CHASE AND GAME FENCES

⚡ I appreciated Blair Dishman's comments in the February issue concerning fair chase of deer.

As trophy deer hunting has become more popular and expensive, the volume of corn and other types of bait has exploded. Two consequences of this are that adjacent owners are forced to buy food to retain deer and turkey on their property and the deer are no longer wild; they are partially tamed by the regular feedings. I support banning the practice except for persons relying on deer for food. I can attest that it is

more thrilling to stalk or still hunt even a small doe than it is to harvest a big rack hanging around a feeder.

Brian M. Smyth  
Houston

In response to Mr. Dishman's letter, the real reason for game fences is not greed. The real reason is that in some areas of Texas we have a legal excess harvest of bucks. This has to do with the multiple buck tag. We obviously need to harvest enough deer to keep the population to safe levels. Conservation-minded hunters do what the biologists recommend, namely, harvest does. They provide excellent meat. In our own group we donate quite a few pounds of meat to local food banks every year.

Our situation is typical of what's happened to many people in Texas. We practice conservative hunting and follow the rules. Our neighbors don't break the law, but they overharvest bucks and don't harvest any does. Although our lease is in Cotulla, in prime deer country, and we always have plenty of food due to the lack of overgrazing and doe harvest, we never see bucks older than 1½ to 2½ years.

Reluctantly, we put up enough high fence to close off 40 to 50 percent of our perimeter. With just this, we've seen a dramatic increase in bucks and just this past season we saw large numbers of young mature bucks.

When we went to that lease for the first time three years ago, we could barely find a horn rub. Now there are plenty of them. The deer all are in good shape and the male to female ratio is getting closer to what it should be.

There are many cases like this one, which is why the use of high fences will continue. It's the only way to have ethical hunting while preserving the bucks so they attain their mature size.

Hunting behind a high fence is definitely ethical and is fair chase, unless you are dealing with very small acreages. All the fence does is prevent the overharvest of bucks while they are young and naive. The true hunter enjoys the challenge of the wise old buck.

Carlos E. Menendez, M.D.  
San Antonio

## YOUTH HUNT

In 1997, Game Warden Jim Ballard came to the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge in Sherman with a proposal to host a deer hunt for the youth of the Grayson County area. Last December I had the pleasure of seeing his vision bear fruit as 10 young men experienced hunting alongside a cadre of dedicated volunteers and members of the Texas Game Warden Association.

I can't even begin to express how gratifying it was to see the tremendous support for the hunt from the local community. Jim and others sought out community leaders, businesses and organizations and offered them the opportunity to support the endeavor, from food to firearms, gloves to guide service. More than \$10,000 in donations was received to help kids who probably wouldn't have had the opportunity otherwise.

I was impressed to see the high level of importance the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Game Warden Association put on the event. Knowing how busy game wardens are during the hunting season, I realized how big a commitment it was to have so many of them devoting their time to provide a positive outdoor experience for these young people.

I had to leave before the end of the hunt, but after seeing the smiles from one lucky nimrod, I left knowing the hunt was a success. My hat is off to the game wardens, sponsors and volunteers who made the weekend—and perhaps the lifetime—so enjoyable for the hunt participants.

David Maple  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Keenesburg, Colorado

■ *Editor's note: David gets an "A" for the correct use of "nimrod," defined as 1) the great-grandson of Noah and 2) a person expert in or devoted to hunting.*

## HUNTSVILLE STATE PARK

⚡ A remarkable opportunity exists to enlarge Huntsville State Park, a beautiful

and heavily used Walker County area of 2,100 acres. Addition of 900 acres would connect it along 2.5 miles to 3,000 acres of Sam Houston National Forest, effectively creating a 6,000-acre tract of forested public land.

Making this broad connection between the state park and national forest would be an outstanding example of good conservation policy. It also would protect the primary watershed, now on private property, for Huntsville State Park's Lake Raven. And it would open a tremendous recreation potential, with the area quickly becoming available to bicycles and hikers. Two trails connecting to the national forest could be inexpensively maintained.

The whole idea seems to lie in a distant realm, however, because TPWD has no funds for acquisition. And support for upkeep of the current park already is stretched too thin.

Still, even the existence of this opportunity is almost unbelievable and local citizens are looking for a way to carry through the park expansion. Need ideas, help.

Guy Nesom  
Huntsville

■ *Readers may contact Nesom at 2978 Redbird Lane, Huntsville 77340, telephone 409-294-3581 or 409-291-6352 or by e-mail at env\_gln@shsu.edu.*

## THE CHINATIS

As a strong believer in preserving our wonderful natural diversity that we as Texans enjoy, I applaud the foresight of the TPWD, the Mellon Foundation, The Conservation Fund and, above all, the Friedrichs in the creation of the Chinati Mountains State Natural Area (December).

Great magazine, keep up the diverse articles. Although I am not a hunter, I enjoy hunting articles as much as the other issues you present. Please don't let the negative, narrow-minded viewpoints of the selfrighteous few eliminate or reduce the quality of these articles. As someone who loves nature, animals,

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# 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 Centra. 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.



A Central and South West Company

camping and the outdoors, I learn as much from the hunting and fishing articles as I do from the other articles. I feel *Texas Parks & Wildlife* is well-balanced and well-written. Keep up the great work!

Sandra Forster  
Garland

## BIRD ID

In February an unusual bird was perched on our fence. We were able to get within about 15 feet from it, and it looked like a gray parrot to me. It did not seem alarmed by our presence until one of our cats came down the fence-line. The bird flew across the road and stayed in the tree for quite a while.

As luck would have it, my husband was reading the February issue of your magazine and on page 11 is a picture of the bird we saw on the fence—a peregrine falcon.

We live in a rural area of Galveston County between Dickinson and Texas City, and have lots of wildlife to enjoy. Has a peregrine falcon ever been in this area before? We have lived in this area more than 20 years and have seen hawks, buzzards and many other birds, but not falcons.

Your magazine is wonderful. We wouldn't be without it.

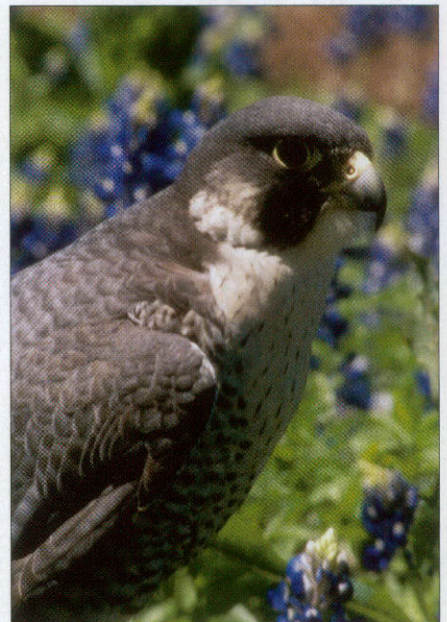
Betty and Lee Chambers  
Dickinson

■ *Noreen Damude, Wildlife Division: While peregrine falcons do winter in your area (often you can see them near the coast, especially in open, grassy areas, patrolling for shorebirds and ducks), I wonder whether this is really the bird you saw. My guess from its behavior is that it might be an adult sharp-shinned hawk. They also are dark gray on the back and have a raptorial bill similar, but not identical, to the falcon's. Sharpies are like peregrines in that they, too, specialize on birds as prey items. However, their expertise is to hunt them in woodlands and other closed habitats.*

*Folks who have lots of activity at their bird feeders occasionally will see a sharp-shinned hawk perched quietly and almost motion-*

*less on a fence or tree limb close by. It sits and waits until the foraging birds have "let their guard down," so to speak. Suddenly, it will swoop in with agility and nab an inattentive or not so healthy individual.*

*Unlike the peregrine, the sharp-shinned is able to tilt and glide and maneuver in cramped spaces. Its wings are relatively short and wide, allowing it to twist and turn in heavily wooded areas, as well. A peregrine, with its long, pointed, windswept wings never could do this. Incredibly swift, the peregrine normally hunts from the air in wide-open spaces. Reaching speeds of up to 150 m.p.h., it catches its prey by stooping, usually dropping from above and behind to seize its unsuspecting victim. It can snatch a bird easily in mid-air, killing it instantly with powerful claws. This hunting strategy will not work in small, closed wooded areas or at backyard feeding stations.*



Peregrine falcon © Andrew Burns

*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.

⚡ Letters preceded by this symbol came to us via e-mail. Our e-mail address is: [magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us)

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

# Trail Mix

*Edited by Mary-Love Bigony*

## Clean River, Clean Fun at Riverfest

Cookoffs, canoe races, water festivals, live music and other outdoor fun continue through May 15 in communities along the Colorado River as part of the Lower Colorado River Authority's fourth annual RIVERFEST.

Events along a 500-mile stretch of the Colorado range from a cow camp cookoff in San Saba to a tube race in Bay City. Although this is the fourth year for Riverfest, some of the individual events have been going on for many years. The

events are planned and hosted by individual communities, with promotional and other assistance from LCRA.

For Riverfest information, or to receive a brochure listing the events, call 1-888-TEXAS-FUN.



PHOTO COURTESY LCRA

### A Close-up Look at Birds

**B**irders gearing up for the spring birding season might want to consider Nikon's ED78 fieldscope.

This fieldscope is equipped with a 78mm ED (extra-low dispersion) lens for excellent image resolution, color and contrast. Available in straight or 45-degree angled eyepiece with rotatable body, these fieldscopes offer bright, clear images at far distances, even in low light. A wide, textured focusing ring makes the scope easy to use even with damp or sweaty hands.

This rugged fieldscope is sealed with O-rings for water resistance and comes with a case that doubles as a cover to protect the scope when mounted on a tripod. Fieldscopes ED come without an eyepiece but accept all Nikon fieldscope eyepieces, which let you choose your magnification.

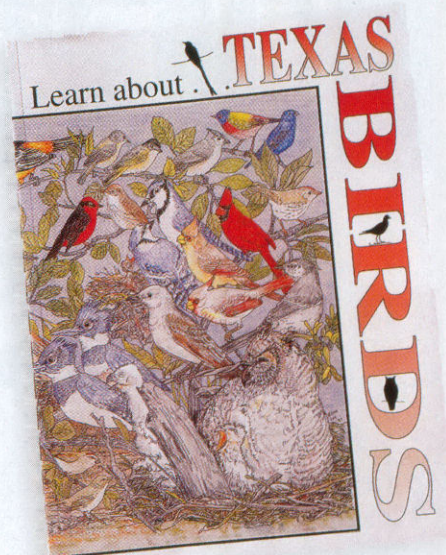
For the name of a nearby authorized Nikon retailer call 1-800-645-6687; press 1, then 5.



BILL REAVES

### 6,500 Wild Turkeys to the Better

**T**wenty eastern wild turkeys from South Carolina were released into the Davy Crockett National Forest in February, bringing to an end a 20-year program begun in 1978 to bring back the eastern wild turkey in Texas. The program moved slowly due to lack of broodstock from 1978 until 1987, when the private, nonprofit National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) launched its Target 2000 program to stock wild turkeys in all suitable habitat in the U.S. by the year 2000. With funding from hunter turkey stamps, and with help from NWTf, timber companies and other states, about 6,500 eastern wild turkeys have been released in Texas in the past 20 years.



### Up in the Air, Junior Birdman!

**Y**oungsters have a fun way to learn about many of Texas's 600-plus bird species with a new book from Texas Parks and Wildlife Press.

*Learn about... Texas Birds* is the third in a series of educational activity books from TPW Press. It introduces children ages six to 12 to the most frequently seen and interesting Texas birds. They can color eye-catching line drawings of various birds in typical habitats. Easy-to-read text gives important facts about the birds, and the book includes several fun and challenging games. A 17-by-22-inch poster included with the book will be fun to color and an attractive addition to the Junior Birdman's bedroom.

*Learn about... Texas Birds* is available for \$7.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling. Send check or money order to *Learn about... Texas Birds*, 3000 South IH 35, Suite 120, Austin, Texas 78704.

The other two books in the series, *Learn about... Texas Dinosaurs* and *Learn about... Texas Indians* also are available for \$7.95 each from the address above.

## Trail Mix

### Dinosaurs Invade Corpus

Romp, stomp animated dinosaurs will invade Sunrise Mall in Corpus Christi on Friday, April 24.

**DINOSAURS AT SUNRISE: CREATURES FROM THE DAWN OF TIME**, a joint educational program of the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History and the Mall, will run through August 3.

The exhibit's dinosaurs were manufactured in Los Angeles by Kokoro Dinosaurs, using the latest robotic technology. A computer-controlled air compressor gives each dinosaur its own unique sequence of movement. Eight nearly life-sized dinosaurs, including an adult and juvenile Apatosaurus, an adult and juvenile Chasmosaurus, a Stegosaurus, a Tyrannosaurus rex and two Portoceratops with a nestful of hatching eggs will be featured.

The exhibit is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday noon to 6 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for children two to 12, \$3.50 for adults over 60 and military with ID, and \$2 for members of the World of Discovery and school children with their classes. Sunrise Mall is located at 5858 South Padre Island Drive. For more information call 512-883-2862.



PHOTO COURTESY CORPUS CHRISTI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY

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[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/birding/bclass/gtbc.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/birding/bclass/gtbc.htm)

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### Final Call for Birders

**B**irding teams who want to be part of the biggest, longest and wildest bird-watching tournament in the United States have until April 6 to submit their registration forms.

The Second Annual GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC will take place April 25 through May 2 and will span the Texas coast from Harlingen to Port Arthur. Teams can compete in one of three geographic zones—Upper Texas Coast, Central Texas Coast and Lower Texas Coast—or all three. There are four age categories: Roughwings, ages eight through 13; Gliders, ages 14 through 18; Adult, age 19 and over and Seniors, over age 55.

Birding enthusiasts are encouraged to participate in community events taking place in conjunction with the Birding Classic.

For more information call 1-888-TX-BIRDS.

### The Warden Chronicles

*So, Sean, whatcha doin' on day two?*

**G**regg County warden Sean Reneau reported to the regional office in mid-December for his first day of duty as a game warden. His first call concerned possible game violations. After an all-night investigation, three subjects were apprehended with a freshly killed doe. One of the subjects confessed to killing four illegal deer in recent weeks. A fourth subject was found in possession of two illegally taken antlerless deer. A fifth subject was found in possession of an untagged deer. By daylight, a truckload of evidence, including fresh and frozen deer meat, doe heads, antlers, firearms, and bloody shirts had been seized. Not bad for a first day on the job.



### Why Surf the 'Net When You Can Fish It?

**H**ow would you like to swap fishing stories, get fishing tips from the pros, learn new recipes and shop for outdoor equipment, all without leaving your computer? Well, actually, it would be pretty boring indeed never to leave your computer, and there's not a computer in the world that can take the place

of being out on a shimmering lake on a perfect Texas day. But for fishing resources, point your browser to <http://fishing-the-net.com/fishing/>

Bob Failla and Ray Davies, creators of FISHING THE NET, say it's the largest single source of fishing information on the Internet. It covers all 50 states and you

can get state licensing information, tidal information, water conditions, sunrise, sunset, moon phases, humidity and temperature as well as travel information.

For more information about Fishing the Net, contact Failla and Davies at 813-843-0510 or [srf@fishing-the-net.com](mailto:srf@fishing-the-net.com) or [rd@fishing-the-net.com](mailto:rd@fishing-the-net.com).

### Did You Know?

There are six different species of bluebonnets in Texas and all are the state flower.

Pampa, in Gray County, was named by the manager of the White Deer Land Company, who had seen the pampas of South America before bestowing the name for "flat rolling plain" on this Panhandle town.

Rain contains vitamin B<sub>12</sub>.

Trees cover approximately 13 percent of Texas's land area, or 22 million acres.

Spring usually is well underway in Texas by the time April arrives, but on April 5, 1996, Sweetwater received 18 inches of snow. The same cold front broke an all-time 24-hour snowfall in Abilene, with 9.3 inches falling there. Midland received two inches of snow, the first time since 1982 that it had snowed there in April.

Every ton of recycled paper that Americans buy saves 17 trees, 7,000 gallons of water and enough energy to heat and aircondition a live-room house for six months.

Texas has 141 species of native terrestrial mammals. Only California and New Mexico have more.

## Converted Rice

Pierce Ranch has found an innovative way to supplement the rice crops that have been their mainstay for decades. Their new venture, Karankawa Plains Outfitting Company, has converted the ranch's 20,000 acres of natural habitat to a novel nature tourism destination.

Positioned along the Central Flyway and with three distinct ecosystems—wetlands, coastal prairie and Columbia bottomland—Pierce Ranch hosts numerous shorebirds, raptors, neotropical migrants and migratory waterfowl. Located 60 miles southwest of Houston off Highway 59, their accommodations include the ranch's lodge and five camphouses. For more information, write Karankawa Plains Outfitting Company at P.O. Box 587, Pierce, Texas 77467 or call 409-534-0100.



© GRADY ALLEN

## March for Parks

Lace up those walking shoes! The National Parks and Conservation Association's **MARCH FOR PARKS** takes place April 18 through 26.

Begun in 1990 on the 20th anniversary of Earth Day, March for Parks has become the largest nationwide Earth Day event, involving citizens in more than 800 communities in all 50 states. Together they raise awareness of park issues—as well as hundreds of thousands of dollars in much-needed funds for park improvement projects—for local, state and national parks in their communities.

All funds raised through March for Parks stay at the local level to support the projects identified by local organizers. Past marches have raised money for building and repairing trails, planting trees and gardens, restoring historic park buildings and building trails for handicapped park users.

For information on how to organize or participate in a March for Parks near you, call 1-800-NAT-PARK, ext. 225.





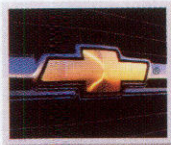
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# Preserving the PAST Serving the FUTURE



Even in the headlong rush toward the new millennium, Texans—including adopted ones—will continue to look back on Texas's rich past for inspiration and direction.

by Wilson E. Dolman, PhD



EARL NOTTINGHAM

The hunter-gatherer life ways of the Trans-Pecos region are captured in pictographs at Seminole Canyon.

**O**ur sense of heritage here in Texas goes much deeper than mere “braggin’ rights.” It goes to the core values associated with a sense of place and a sense of self.

Consequently, it should be no surprise that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department takes its mandate to manage and operate the historic sites program for the people of Texas very seriously. This mandate derives from the passage of legislation in 1969 authorizing TPWD to “acquire by purchase, gift, or other manner historical areas....” In many respects, this legislation recognized the long history of historical parks within the state park system.

### Treasured Texas Shrines

In 1998 the Texas State Parks System celebrates its 75th year. In exploring the roots of the park system, it is important to note that historical parks were the first to be publicly owned and that several predate the creation of the park system in 1923. The first acquisition of a historic site in Texas occurred at San Jacinto Battlefield in 1883. In the same year, the Alamo was purchased by the state from the Catholic Church and transferred to the City of San Antonio until 1905, when it reverted to state ownership, although under the stewardship of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. These actions by the legislature provided appropriate recognition of the roles of the Alamo and

San Jacinto in securing the independence of Texas. A third major site of the Revolution, the “Birthplace of Texas” at Washington-on-the-Brazos, came into public ownership in 1916.

### Fabled Frontier Forts

The addition of three frontier fort sites, beginning in 1967, strengthened the historical component of the state park system. Forts Lancaster, McKavett and Richardson joined Fort Griffin to represent the Indian Wars period of frontier settlement, an era that continues to fascinate Texans. These sites also provide an opportunity to interpret less-known aspects of the story, such as the conflict of cultures between Native-



TPWD PHOTO

Excavators work on the remains of Kreishe Brewery, built by German immigrant Heinrich Kreishe on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River in the 1870s.

American and Anglo-American lifestyles that resulted in an often intentional effort to destroy Native American culture. A second theme is the role of recently emancipated black soldiers in frontier military regiments in putting down the Indian threat. The record of the all-black units stationed at the frontier posts matched and often exceeded that of their white counterparts. Fort Leaton, a privately held trading post, offers the venue for interpreting relations not only with the Native Americans but also with the Hispanic occupants of the region. Knowing the past in these broader contexts offers the key to building cultural understanding for the future.

### Rich Cultural Heritage

Major themes of Texas history are found in other historical units of the system. Cañadon Mounds in the eastern part of the state preserves archaeological rem-

nants of a sophisticated agriculture-based Native American culture that broadens our understanding of the richness of Texas's native heritage. By way of contrast, the hunter-gatherer lifeways of the Trans-Pecos region are captured in the pictographs of Hueco Tanks and Seminole Canyon. An understanding of the complexity of a hunter/gatherer life-way can be gained with a visit to Lubbock Lake Landmark. Although generation after generation of native peoples survived by harvesting what nature offered, the notion that they were primitive quickly evaporates as one contemplates the artistic richness of their pictographs.

The cultural, social, economic and architectural diversity of the historic homes in the system reflect more of the diversity of Texas. The Territorial-style adobe home of Joseph Magoffin in El Paso brings together traditional Southwestern building materials with the

stylistic preferences of Anglo-America. The French Second Empire mansion George Ware Fulton built on the Gulf Coast demonstrates that Texan tastes were influenced by styles and pretensions associated with the eastern seaboard. The Italianate villa constructed by Civil War General Sam Bell Maxey in Paris provides yet another example of diversity found in the architecture of the state.

The lessons and values these historic sites offer make it critically important that they be preserved and interpreted for the public. While there is widespread agreement on this point, historic sites must compete with other pressing needs for financial support. The sources of funding that built the park system have not kept up with the growth in the system but have declined. In its effort to be a good steward, the agency has undertaken a strenuous effort to improve the operating efficiency of all parks; to

increase revenues generated from user fees and to build volunteerism and private support. TPWD has begun a long-term partnership with the Texas Historical Commission to prepare a comprehensive assessment of the historic sites. This partnership will address maintenance needs, heritage tourism promotion, interpretive programming and funding needs to protect these valuable resources for future generations.

### Growth in Tourism

The historic sites of the state park system play a vital role in a growing industry in the state—heritage tourism. Tourism has developed into the third largest industry in Texas, and heritage tourism and ecotourism are two major components. Increasing interest in heritage tourism is a nationwide phenomenon, and Texas stands to benefit significantly. In 1997 the state's legislative leaders recognized this fact and appropriated a significant increase in the budget of the Texas Historical Commission for the purpose of promoting heritage tourism. The state historic sites play a major role by becoming destinations for that increased tourism. To serve a growing demand for heritage tourism, TPWD has accepted the charge to maintain the sites in good condition and present them to the public in an informative and entertaining manner.

### The Cost of Preservation

Nonetheless, supporters of historic sites have to face some hard facts. Restoration and maintenance of historic sites is an expensive proposition. The Battleship *Texas*, despite generating revenues of approximately \$400,000 per year, cannot build up reserves of several millions of dollars that are needed for dry-docking and hull repainting every 10 to 15 years.

Anyone who has purchased a historic home with the intent to restore it is familiar with the expense of restoring roofs, exteriors and interiors using historical materials. Electrical, plumbing and other utility systems frequently have to be replaced in their entirety to meet modern building codes. Public facilities must have parking, entrance and restroom facilities accessible to the mobility-impaired. In order to tell the story of the site, historic furnishings often are needed and require expensive restoration. Interpretive programs, often including exhibits, guided tours, brochures and audio-visual presentations, bring the site to life. Fulton Mansion is a good example. The development costs of restoring and interpreting the 100-year-old home exceeded \$2 million in the early 1980s. The mansion currently is undergoing its second repainting since that time at a cost of \$25,000. Annual visitation is about 30,000, which is near capacity for

a small site. These numbers illustrate the relatively high operational and development expenses of historic sites.

Because of the costs involved, the decision to take on a historic site is not made lightly. From the beginning of the program in the late 1960s, TPWD adopted a policy that emphasized statewide significance as the first standard for acquisition. Together with the limitations of budget, additions to the system have been infrequent. In recent years, the emphasis has changed from acquisition and development to maintenance of existing facilities. Nonetheless, the designated historic sites account for almost one-third of the total number of parks in the system.

The experience of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is consistent with that of other preservation entities around the nation—the historic site that supports its own operation from site-generated revenues is rare indeed. Consequently, the challenges for managers of historic sites today are clear. With both private support and individual effort, Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Historical Commission will succeed in preserving our legacy and keeping Texas a premier destination for heritage tourism. ★

WILSON E. DOLMAN is the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's senior advisor for historic sites.



TPWD PHOTO

*Fort McKavett is one of five state historical parks representing the Indian Wars period of frontier settlement, an era that continues to fascinate Texans.*

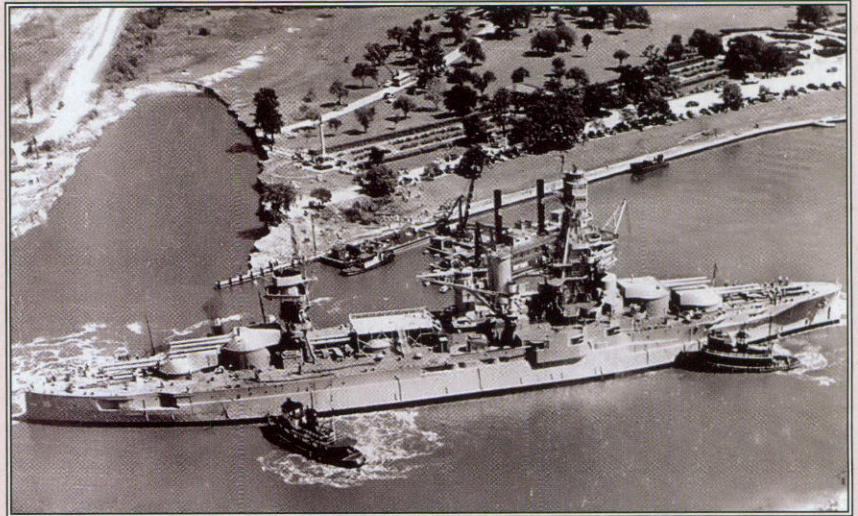
# "Secure the WATCH!"

by Barry Hutcheson

**O**n April 21, 1948, just three years after she fired thousands of shells at the island of Okinawa during the World War II Pacific campaign, the USS *Texas* became a state memorial in her new berth at San Jacinto State Park. Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester officially accepted the ship from Assistant Secretary of the Navy Mark Edwin Andrews in a special ceremony on a bunting-covered platform on the ship's main deck. Special dignitaries included Captain Charles A. Baker, who commanded the ship from 10 March 1944 to 17 August 1945, a period that included the Normandy invasion and the final actions in the Pacific. Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet during the war, delivered a message of welcome.

With the ceremonies, the *Texas* became the first U.S. warship to be designated a state memorial. Originally commissioned in 1914, the *Texas* was refitted in the late 1920s and served well in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters during World War II. She last served as a "Magic Carpet" ship bringing troops home at the end of the war. The *Texas* then sailed to the East Coast in February 1946 and was laid up at Hawkins Point in Baltimore.

Destined for the scrap yard, the ship was saved by the citizens of *Texas*. The Navy prepared the ship for memorialization by removing much of the main deck weaponry, placing one of the propellers on the main deck, sealing the propeller shafts and giving the entire ship a new coat of paint. In January 1948, the *Texas* was towed from Virginia to an ordnance depot on the Houston Ship Channel. She was moved to her newly dredged berth at San Jacinto State Park a day before the dedication ceremony. Her tanks were filled with sea water,



TPWD PHOTO

*Tugboats slowly move the Battleship Texas into her new berth at San Jacinto Battleground, April 1948.*

and she settled into her new home in time for the April 21 formalities.

In the years following, the Battleship *Texas* Commission, created by Governor Jester, administered the ship with limited funding. In 1983 she was transferred to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and was towed to a Galveston shipyard in December 1988 for structural restoration work. She reopened at San Jacinto in September 1990. The continuing, long-term work of restoring and interpreting interior compartments eventually will recreate the 1945 wartime appearance of the *Texas*.

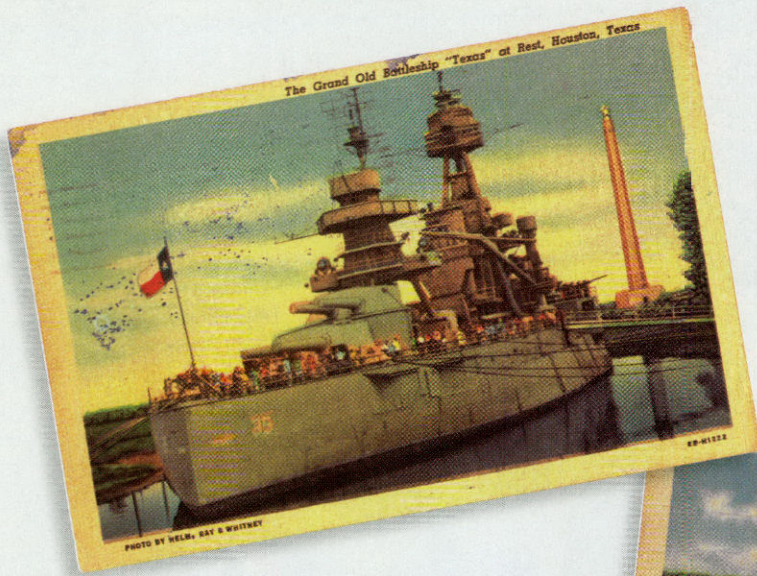
In June 1997 a new support group, the Battleship *Texas* Foundation, was formed to work in partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife to restore and interpret this historic vessel. Current efforts are focused on a new capital campaign aimed at raising \$15 million to restore 90 additional compartments for public viewing, create a maintenance endowment fund and establish a visitor center for the ship. The foun-

ation actively seeks individual and corporate members, whose donations will be an important part of the future of the ship. For more information on how to help, contact the foundation office at 281-542-0684.

The 50th anniversary of the ship's arrival at San Jacinto will be the subject of a special event at the park: "Rededication of the USS *Texas*: Celebrating Fifty Years at San Jacinto," April 18 and 19, 1998, complete with living history participants to help give the ship a period naval setting. The rededication ceremony on April 18, in coordination with the department's Admiral Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, will feature elements of the 1948 program. Speeches and music will recreate the spirit and national pride that 50 years ago honored the retired dreadnought, the men who served on her and her place in the history of the United States Navy. ★

BARRY HUTCHESON is an interpretive planner in TPWD's Interpretation and Exhibits Branch.

# STATE PARK Scrapbook

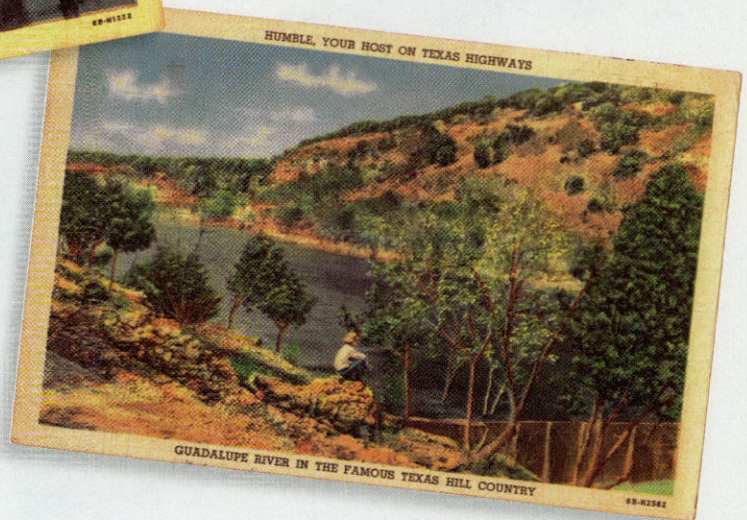


## Battleship Texas State Historical Park LA PORTE

This card was sent from Houston on February 3, 1953, from a "snowbird" to her friend in Iowa. The caption of the card claimed the Battleship "was permanently berthed at San Jacinto Battle Grounds near Houston where she will rest as a monument to her valiant deeds while in service to her country." Officially transferred to the state in 1948, she already was being viewed by "thousands of visitors daily."

## Guadalupe River State Park SPRING BRANCH

This seemingly ordinary scenic view of Guadalupe River was produced in the 1940s as an advertising postal for the Humble Touring Service, Houston, Texas. Many fishermen must have been hooked by the pacific view on the front and enticed by the caption on the back: "The Guadalupe River, originating in the famous Hill Country of Texas and known for its excellent year-round fishing, is fed by the perennial springs of the Edward Plateau..." Guadalupe River became a state park in 1974. A resident fishing license originated in 1957 for \$2.15; today it is \$19.



## HOPE YOU WERE THERE

BY ARLINDA ABBOTT • POSTCARDS COURTESY OF JULIANN POOL

What were Texas State Parks really like in the 1930s, '40s and '50s, when their motto was, "Trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle?" Certainly different than they are today, as many structures have been altered to keep pace with the needs of the modern visitor, and a number of the natural features have been reshaped by the environment. Waxing nostalgic about

inevitable change, travel reporter Ernie Pyle wrote in 1937:

*"I wanted to be impressed and excited, when I came around the bend and saw this sight of my grandfather's day. But I don't even have that privilege. The skeleton is there, but progress has slipped inside the bones and made a mundane stirring. . . . Why, I wonder, can't an old place really die? Why can't it lie down amid its old drama and wrap its romantic*

*robes about it and pose there, unstimulating and ghostlike for the trembling contemplation of us latecomers."*

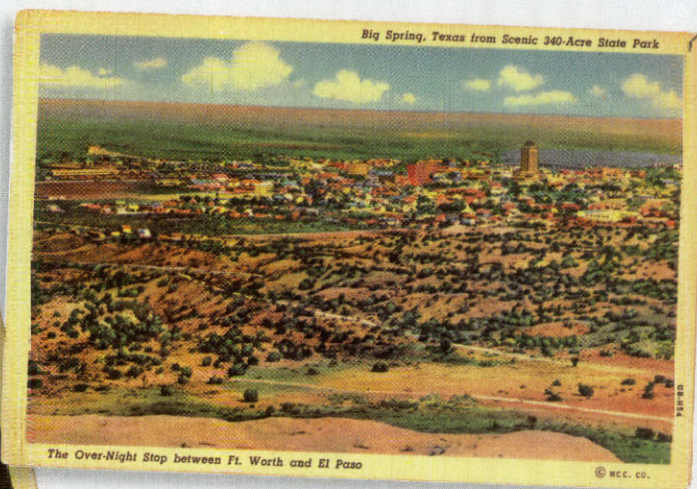
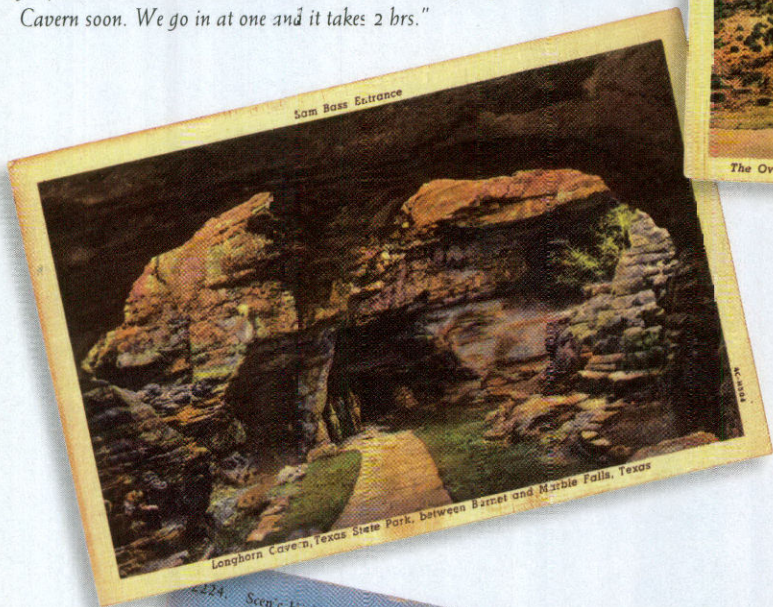
Enshrined in postcards, the state parks pose for us now as they appeared in the past. Here are eight postcards from the '30, '40s and '50s for you who were there and for "us latecomers." The cards are attractive and evocative chronicles of pleasant memories. Hope you were there.



*Longhorn Cavern State Park*

BURNET

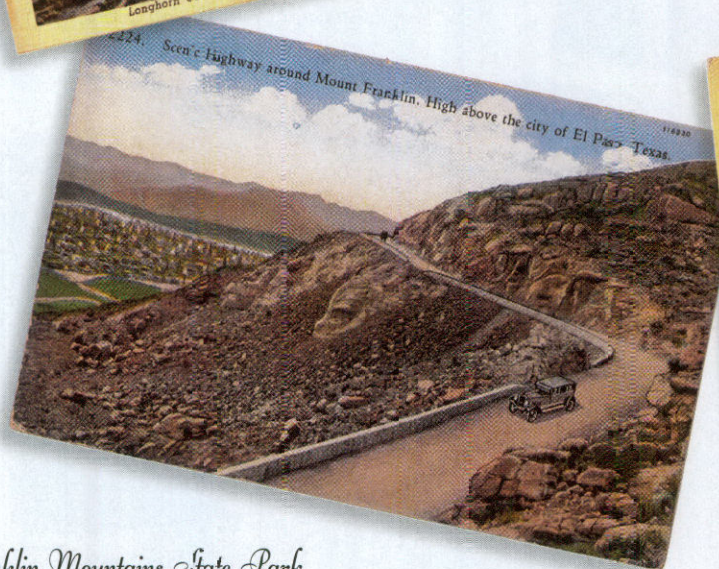
Longhorn Cavern State Park was acquired in 1932 and developed during the Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Men of Company 854 hauled several tons of sediment, debris and bat guano from the cavern, installed two miles of lighting and built trails for public access. One 1940s visitor wrote, "We are going in the Cavern soon. We go in at one and it takes 2 hrs."



*Big Spring State Park*

BIG SPRING

Big Spring State Park was acquired by the state in 1934 and developed by the CCC during the Depression. Company 1857 built a six-mile scenic loop capped by an open-air group pavilion at the summit of the 400-foot mountain. On the back of this 1942 postcard, an overnight visitor named Harold bluntly described Big Spring to his friend Don in New Jersey. "The country looks just like this picture—nothing but flat sandy land with the plateau of the Rockies [sic] way off in the distance."



*Franklin Mountains State Park*

EL PASO

Motor tourism created a demand for modern, high-quality roads. The City of El Paso developed the Scenic Highway, pictured in this 1928 postcard, in May 1919 to harmonize with its surroundings. The State Parks Board collaborated with the Highway Department in the 1940s and '50s to improve the approach to state parks, as well as provide regular maintenance on park roads. In 1946, according to the State Highway Department, travelers were streaming into Texas in volume exceeding the pre-war peak of 1941. Franklin Mountains acquired state park status in 1981.



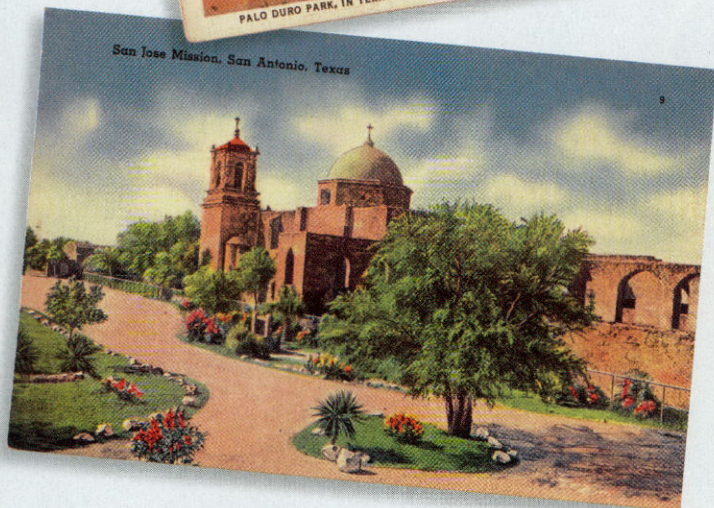
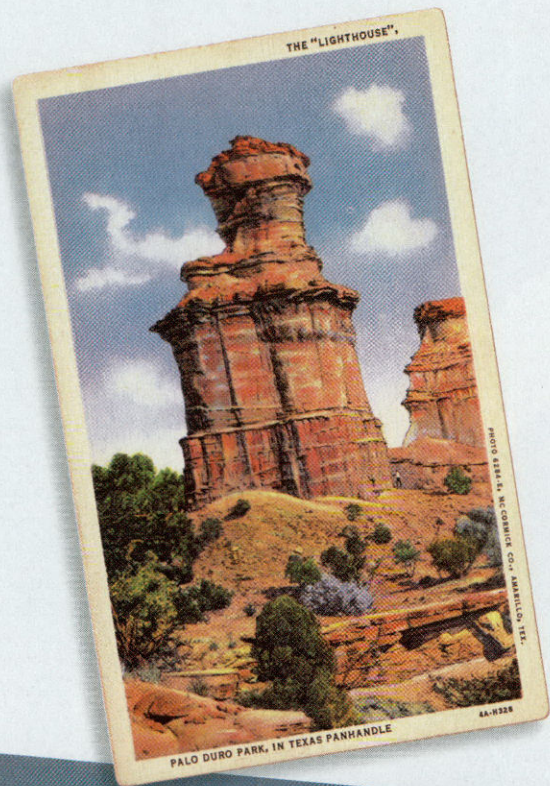
*San Jacinto Battleground and Monument State Historical Park*

LA PORTE

The San Jacinto Monument was a popular subject in the 1940s. The 570-foot-tall shaft was built in the Art Deco style in 1937-39 to commemorate the heroes of the Battle of San Jacinto. This postcard (showing the Texas flag flying upside down) claimed the memorial was 570 feet and four inches high—the world's tallest monument. Another contemporary postcard waxed more romantic "the magnificent structure is 567 feet 4 inches high towering 12 feet nearer the heavens than the famous Washington Monument."

*Palo Duro Canyon State Park*  
CANYON

One of the largest and most famous state parks in Texas, Palo Duro Canyon has been described as the first gorge of magnitude going west from the Atlantic. This postcard sports the Canyon's trademark, The 'Lighthouse'. Enshrinement in postcards, however, has not protected the



*San Jose Mission*  
SAN ANTONIO

This card, made during the late 1940s, touted San Jose Mission as one of the most picturesque of four missions founded in San Antonio from 1718 to 1731. "Redolent with Old World Atmosphere and charm," the missions of San Antonio were built as places of conversion of Indians and then later used as fortresses. The state acquired San Jose in 1941. The monthly attendance record for May 1946 reported 4,420 visitors came in 389 Texas cars and 291 out-of-state cars. San Jose became part of the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park in 1978.

**ANNIVERSARY EVENTS**

**APRIL**

**PANHANDLE-PLAINS**

**APRIL 25:** 75th Anniversary Celebration, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 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, Bastrop, 512-321-2101  
**APRIL 24:** Arbor Day, Buescher SP, Smithville, 512-237-2241  
**APRIL 25:** Earth Day and Trail Dedication, Fairfield Lake SP, Fairfield, 903-389-4514

**PINEYWOODS**

**APRIL 11:** Kids' Fishing Day, Rusk/Palestine SP, Rusk, 903-683-5126  
**APRIL 12:** Easter Sunrise Service, Mission Tejas SP, 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 18-25:** Tribute to the Texas and Texians, San Jacinto Battleground SHP, La Porte, 281-479-2431  
**APRIL 18:** Earth Day Celebration, Brazos Bend SP, Needville, 409-553-5101

**HILL COUNTRY**

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

**BIG BEND COUNTRY**

**APRIL 4:** Spring Birding Tour, Devils River SNA, Del Rio, 830-395-2133  
**APRIL 17-19:** Longhorn Cattle Drive, Big Bend Ranch SP, 915-229-3416  
**APRIL 25-26:** Phantom Springs Cave Tour and Dive Photo Contest, Balmorhea SP, Toyahvale, 915-375-2370  
**APRIL 25-26:** Annual Franklin Mountains State Park Expo, Franklin Mountains SP, Canutillo, 915-566-6441

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**

**APRIL 26:** 75th Anniversary Celebration, Choke Canyon SP, Calliham, 512-786-3868

**MAY**

**PANHANDLE-PLAINS**

**MAY 1-3:** Civil War Weekend, Big Spring SP, Big Spring, 915-263-4931  
**MAY 9:** 75th Birthday Celebration, Lake Brownwood SP, Brownwood, 915-784-5223  
**MAY 13-14:** Living History Celebration, Lake Arrowhead SP, Wichita Falls, 940-528-2211  
**MAY 16:** Living History Celebration, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331

**PRAIRIES AND LAKES**

**MAY 23:** MADD Bike Rally, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Isle du Bois Unit, Pilot Point, 940-686-2148

**PINEYWOODS**

**MAY 2:** Caddo House Dedication, Caddoan Mounds SHP, Alto, 409-858-3218  
**MAY 23:** Living History Day, Jim Hogg SHP, Rusk, 903-683-4850

**HILL COUNTRY**

**MAY 1:** Earth Day, South Llano River SP, Junction, 915-446-3994  
**MAY 2-3:** Spring Walkfest, Lost Maples SNA, Vanderpool, 830-966-3413  
**MAY 9:** Ira Caswell Nature Trail Opening, Blanco SP, Blanco, 830-833-4333

**BIG BEND COUNTRY**

**MAY 2-3:** Davis Mountains Complex Celebration, Davis Mountains SP/Indian Lodge, Fort Davis, 915-426-3337

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**

**MAY 5:** Cinco de Mayo, Goliad SHP, Goliad, 512-645-3405

**CALL FOR MEMORABILIA**

For several years, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Interpretation and Exhibits Branch has been accepting donations of TPWD-related memorabilia. Currently they are curating items relating to the State Parks Division, all other divisions of the agency and all previous incarnations of the agency, such as the State Parks Board and the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission. Their goal is to build a collection of photographs, artifacts and documents that will preserve the culture of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Anyone interested in donating to TPWD's history collection may call Joanne Avant at 512-389-4885.

Dates are subject to change. Call 1-800-792-1112 for more information or check our website ([www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)) for updates.



# WALKIN' IN A WINGER WONDERLAND

A Texas Parks and Wildlife expert divulges the avian havens among our state parks.

by Noreen Damude



EARL NOTTINGHAM

**W**hy is Texas able to boast so many different birds? A subtle interplay of several factors has conspired to mold Texas's enormous bird diversity. Geographically and thus biologically, North meets South and East meets West, as species from the Southern Great Plains meet the dazzling denizens of northern Mexico; and forest species of southeastern mixed pine-hardwoods meet birds of the southwestern desert scrub. Also contributing to diversity is the wide range of climates, soils, elevations and geological profiles existing in our state. Finally, a complex patch-

work of mountains, basins, prairies, plateaus, deserts, wetlands and long coastline, cloaked in an intricate mosaic of distinctive vegetational landscapes, all have worked their alchemy over geologic time to give rise to the spectacular array of birds we have today.

All our state parks claim fine to excellent birding opportunities, and each has a "Texas-sized" bird checklist. Matagorda Island State Park has the most species, with 329.

Here are a few of the parks that rank as incredibly productive, especially to those birders who are seeking Texas specialties and rarities.

**ABOVE:** Ornithologist Noreen Damude takes every opportunity to share her love of birds with anyone who will listen.

**LEFT:** Arguably the most beautiful raptor in the U.S., the swallow-tailed kite nests in very small numbers near rivers and associated bottomland hardwoods in East Texas.



© JOHN AND GLORIA TVETEN/KAC PRODUCTIONS

**S**een on the upper Texas coast during spring migration, the golden-winged warbler refuels on caterpillars, often swinging upside-down from twigs like a chickadee, singing its bee buzz, buzz, buzz song.



## EAST

Situated near the western edge of the southern pine belt in East Texas, **HUNTSVILLE STATE PARK** in Walker County hosts a total of 223 species of birds of which 187 have been observed either within the park or seen overhead. The rich East Texas Pineywoods habitat is dominated by loblolly and shortleaf pines, with rich mid- and understories and a generous mixture of overstory oaks. In the spring, a host of dazzling wood warblers, grosbeaks, tanagers and orioles pass through the park on their way north to their summer breeding grounds. Your

“must-see” birds for this park include the rare and endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, the pileated woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, brown-headed nuthatch, brown creeper, gray catbird, prothonotary warbler, northern parula, yellow-throated warbler, Kentucky warbler, Louisiana waterthrush, American redstart and purple finch. Occasionally you may see anhingas and wood ducks and, perhaps, a hairy woodpecker, larger and rarer cousin of the more widespread and easily seen downy woodpecker.

## COASTAL

With sandy beaches, tidal flats, salt and brackish coastal marshes, as well as scrub and woodland habitats, **GALVESTON ISLAND STATE PARK** offers visitors an intimate view of a barrier island ecosystem with its rich mosaic of coastal habitats and wide variety of birds. You will see American white and brown pelicans, several species of gulls, terns and black skimmers. With luck you can tick off northern gannets, pomarine and parasitic jaegers in the winter or young magnificent frigatebirds in the late summer to early fall. Plan to spot sea ducks off-

shore, such as oldsquaw, black, white-winged and surf scoters, as well as hordes of migrating tricolored herons, white ibis, fulvous whistling ducks and blue-winged teal in the spring.

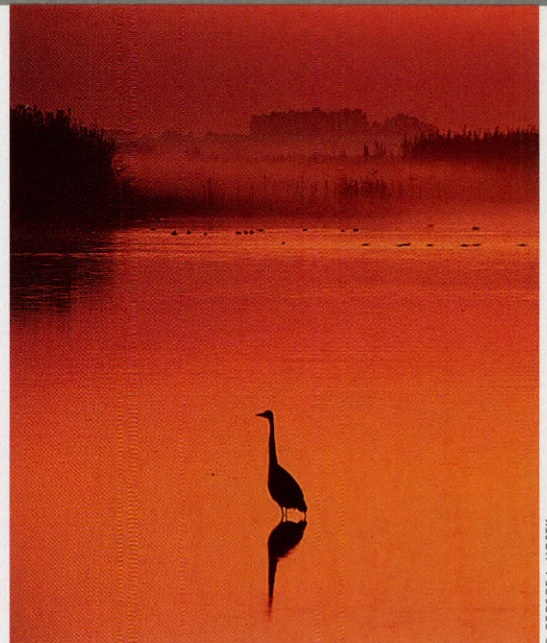
On the sandy beaches and dunes you can glimpse merlins and peregrine falcons in winter and during migration. Short-eared owls, Sprague's pipits and, if you're lucky, bobolinks may grace the coastal grasslands, as well as large numbers of migrating grassland shorebirds such as the long-billed curlew, upland sandpiper and buff-breasted sandpipers.

Finally, the tidal sloughs and salt-marshes may produce the elusive black rail. You'll spot seaside sparrows, wintering sharp-tailed sparrows, clapper rails, black-bellied plovers, migrating whimbrel and many other shorebirds. Gull-billed terns, black skimmers and Forster's terns all set up breeding colonies within the park during the spring, while common nighthawks nest in small scrapes on the shell and gravel roadways through the park. All and all, a great and "birdy" state park. Birders still talk about the far-flung kelp gull that showed up not too far from here.

Houstonians know **BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK** is a gem of a birding destination. Graced with rich riverine bottomlands, remnant Gulf coastal prairies, and extensive freshwater marshes, it's a veritable birding wonderland, despite its relative proximity to a major urban area. Located along a meander scarp of the Brazos River in Fort Bend County, the parkland supports three major terrestrial habitats including majestic live oak woodlands, bottomland hardwoods, and coastal tallgrass prairies.

Lakes, sloughs and freshwater marshes are almost "crowded" with wonderful and sometimes gawky waterbirds. You can see anhingas, little blue, great blue, tricolored and green herons and snowy and great egrets. Black-crowned and yellow-crowned night-herons, American and least bitterns, king rails, white and white-faced ibises, roseate spoonbills

# C O A S T A L



© GEORGE L. HOSEK

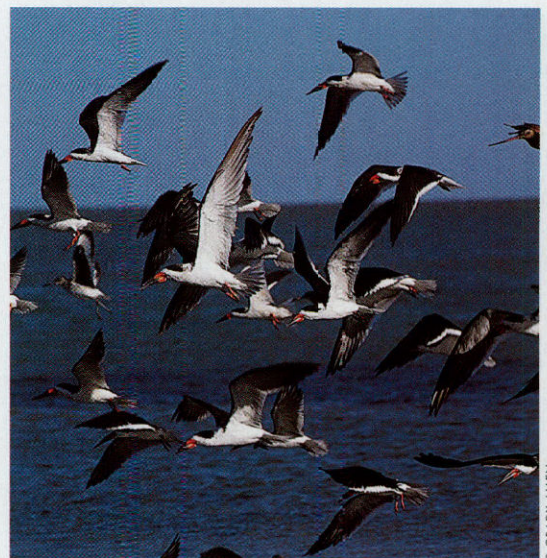


© MASLOWSKI PHOTO

**TOP:** Starkly silhouetted against the watery mist in the golden-orange afterglow of sunset, a great egret prepares to roost after a successful day's foraging in the fish-rich bays along the Gulf coast.

**MIDDLE:** The boldly patterned American oystercatcher feeds on mussels, oysters and other mollusks, deftly prying them open with its long, laterally compressed bill.

**BOTTOM:** Black skimmers take to the air, darting, dipping and wheeling over the water, later to land as one on a spit of beach or sandbar to loaf like black and white sentinels in the sun.



© GRADY ALLEN



© MASLOWSKI PHOTO



© LARRY DITTO



© DAVID J. SAMS

# CENTRAL

and the odd wood stork forage in the water or along the edges. Brazos Bend is guaranteed to provide lots of vivid birding memories.

## CENTRAL

Known for the splendor of its fall colors, thanks to large stands of bigtooth maples from which it derives its name, **LOST MAPLES STATE PARK** lies in the heart of the Hill Country. This beautiful patchwork of steep scarps, canyonlands, mesic slopes, scenic bottomlands and riverine habitat supports a wealth of Hill Country specialties, giving you a chance to add the endangered golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo to your list. Green kingfishers also are a specialty of the park and, though uncommon, are still reliably seen with persistence. Lost Maples also features majestic golden eagles, red-tailed hawks and many songbirds common to the Hill Country.

## WEST

**PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK**, located on the cusp of the High and Rolling Plains ecoregions, presents spectacular scenery in a part of Texas not usually known for its scenic landscapes. For Texas birders, this breathtaking park is a winter "must." The color is provided by the rocks, and the birds are species hard to get elsewhere in Texas. You can see wintering golden eagles, the ghostly prairie falcon, electrifying mountain bluebirds, evening grosbeaks and perhaps a northern shrike or bohemian waxwing. You may see nesting Swainson's hawks, rock wrens, canyon wrens, golden-crowned kinglets and small noisy groups of busy bushtits.

**DAVIS MOUNTAINS STATE PARK**, lying within the northern portion of the vast Chihuahuan Desert region in the Trans-Pecos, is a premier birding hotspot. The park features stark habitats including rugged mesas, sharp peaks and jagged escarpments, interspersed with the gentle, rolling hills of the Davis Mountains.

**TOP:** Gold and ebony jewel of the Hill Country, the golden-cheeked warbler is perched on his song post. There he sings a wheezy courtship song to attract a mate, thwart a foe or dazzle any birder who catches sight of him.

**MIDDLE:** Dressed to kill, the glitzy male painted bunting surveys his territory. Blue, red, chartreuse and green, he graces the fields and woodlands of Central Texas.

**BOTTOM:** Not as comfortable in urban settings as his cousin the blue jay, the western scrub jay roams the pristine canyonlands, often in small family groups.



© MASLOWSKI PHOTO

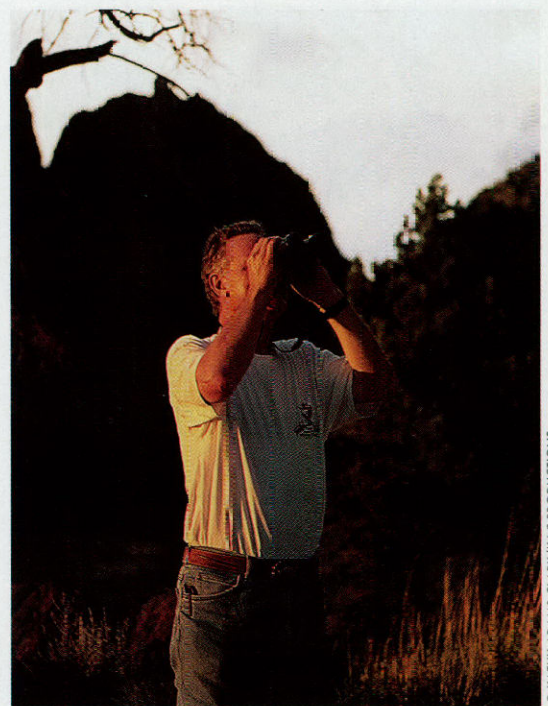


© MASLOWSKI PHOTO

**ABOVE LEFT:** *Pale hunter of the western prairies, the ghostlike prairie falcon hovers over the grasslands like a kestrel in search of ground squirrels, jackrabbits and ground-dwelling birds.*

**ABOVE RIGHT:** *Perched atop empty yucca capsules, the jaunty cactus wren looks out over its desert domain, its dry, churring song the characteristic sound of the desert Southwest.*

**RIGHT:** *Taking advantage of the last vestiges of light in an attempt to add just one more bird to his list, a sunset birder strains to identify that shadow silhouette of a mystery bird. It's just so hard to call it a day.*



© KATHY ADAMS CLARK/KAC PRODUCTIONS



Found exclusively at the higher elevations are the rare-in-Texas flammulated owl, northern saw-whet owl, band-tailed pigeon, nesting whip-poor-will, Williamson's sapsucker, magnificent and blue-throated hummingbirds, gray and cordilleran flycatchers, violet-green swallow, Steller's jay, house wren, hermit thrush, plumbeous, Hutton's and warbling vireos, Virginia's, Grace's, (Audubon's) yellow-rumped warbler, painted redstart,

western tanager, green-tailed towhee, red crossbill and pine siskin. Moving down slope and not far from park headquarters is an excellent location to see the highly sought-after Montezuma quail.

Other specialties of the park include the mistletoe specialist, the phainopepla. Males are glossy black with white wing patches, red eyes and jaunty crest, females being a chic slate gray version of the male. Red-naped sapsucker,

Cassin's kingbird, Townsend's solitaire, Scott's oriole, pyrrhuloxia, varied bunting, hepatic and western tanagers, black-chinned and black-throated sparrows, as well as Baird's sparrow are a few of the other good Trans-Pecos birds to be seen here. Pinyon jays occur sporadically as an irruptive species, lucky when you can spot them. As a special bonus, here you can see the largest number of hummingbird species possible in Texas.





© GRADY ALLEN



© LARRY DITTO

**ABOVE:** A raft of deep rufous black-bellied whistling ducks loafs in a shallow resaca in far South Texas.

**LEFT:** A dependable sight at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, the splashy orange and black Alamira oriole lights up a tree like a South Texas Christmas ornament.

**BELOW LEFT:** Bold and beautiful for a flycatcher, the great kiskadee is an expert angler, supplementing its diet with minnows, tadpoles and small frogs.

**BELOW:** Birders at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley, an ambulating information network at work. Word has just gotten out, "Blue bunting feeding on the ground, just behind the trailer at RV campsite 32. Wow!"



© LARRY DITTO



© DAVID J. SAMS



© LARRY DITTO

**LEFT:** Gorgeously feathered in colors of cinnamon brown and aplomado, Spanish for leaden blue, the aplomado falcon has made a modest but noteworthy comeback in South Texas, thanks to the cooperation of farmers, ranchers, wildlife biologists and local industry.

**BELOW:** Occurring throughout the state, a male greater roadrunner erects his crest to display his showy eye-skin patch during courtship.



© BILL BURNS

**SOUTH**

**BENTSEN-RIO GRANDE STATE PARK** is perhaps my favorite for the surprises it holds. In the heart of the Lower Rio Grande Valley delta, the park hosts an array of Mexican subtropical birds, which reach the northernmost limit of their range here just across the river. Vegetation is a thick tangle of vines and thorny scrub dominated by mesquite and prickly pear. Special permanent residents include least grebe, neotropical cormorant, plain chachalaca, white-tipped dove, pau-raque, great kiskadee, long and curv-

billed thrashers, green jay, tropical parula, Alamira oriole, and olive sparrow. In spring, black-bellied whistling-ducks, elf owls, white-winged doves, groove-billed anis, and Couch's kingbirds all nest in the park. Winter finds the occasional lingering neotropical migrant, such as black-throated gray, black-throated green, blackburnian, Nashville and black-and-white warblers. With regular return visits you may see gray hawks, hook-billed kites, red-billed pigeons, ferruginous pygmy-owl, rose-throated becard, ringed

kingfisher, clay-colored robin, blue bunting and northern beardless-tyrannulet. Your persistence may be rewarded with such species as stygian owl, crane hawk, collared forest-falcon, and crimson-collared grosbeak. The biggest drawing card of this productive little park is that you never know exactly what's going to show up, but you know it will be good and probably will be a new bird for your life list. ★  
  
NOREEN DAMUDE is a nongame biologist in TPWD's Wildlife Division.



# Touring the World DOWN UNDER

**VENTURE IN, IF YOU DARE, AND BE CAPTIVATED BY ONE OF TEXAS'S MOST POPULAR SHOW CAVES.**

**- BY KYLE R. WOOD**

**A** stone path plunging deep into a massive sinkhole welcomes visitors to Longhorn Cavern State Park. As we line up for one of the park's regular guided tours, guide Otto Gruetzner pauses to tell how the cavern was formed, before he unlocks the gate to the dark treasures that lie ahead.

"River-formed caves such as this one are unique," explains Otto. "In fact, if you classify all the caves in the world by the way they were formed, less than 5 percent were formed like this one." Other caves such as Natural Bridge Cavern are seepage caves and more common. Mammoth Cave in Kentucky is the world's largest river-formed cave, extending 238 miles. Only about three miles of Longhorn Cavern have been explored and mapped.

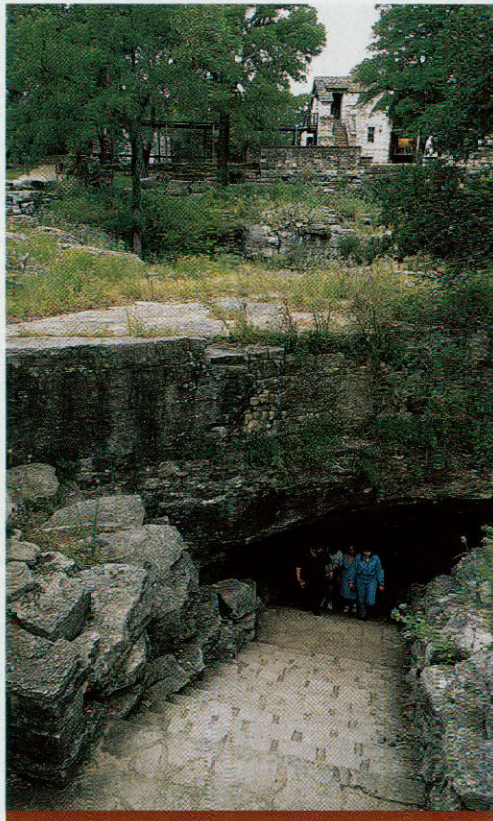
Longhorn Cavern and the hills surrounding it are known as Backbone Ridge. The ridge is made of Ellenburger Limestone, formed 800 million years ago by the rise and fall of many shallow seas. Some 280 million years ago, the Llano Uplift caused the limestone to fracture. Water began to drip through the fractures and erosion set in. This caused the cracks in the limestone to become larger, allowing more

water to enter the cave, which eventually created a high-velocity river flowing through it.

Unlike many Central Texas caves, Longhorn Cavern does not flood during heavy rains such as those that occurred in 1997. "The cavern is located above the Edwards Aquifer, but far enough above not to be affected by its rise during floods," said Park Manager Ronnie Waggoner. "The concrete trails in the cave allow runoff water to exit quickly to the lower levels."

Our first stop on the tour is Crystal City. "These soft calcite crystals are formed by pockets of standing water with a lot of calcium carbonate (lime) in them," says Otto. "It's a process very much like the way rock candy is made." On a scale of one to 10, diamonds being 10 and quartz being seven, these crystals only rank around three. They do not possess any real value.

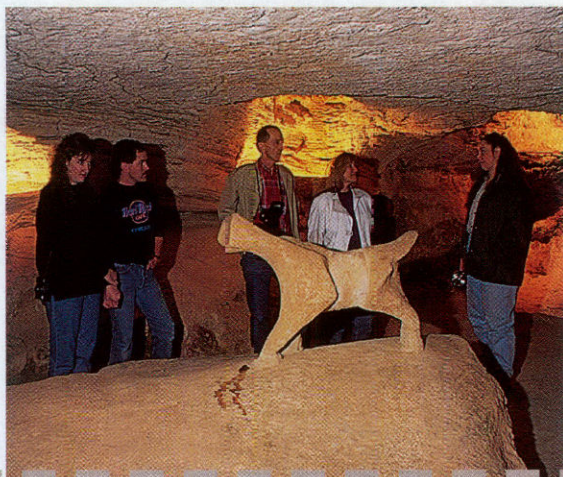
Next we come to a rock figure called the Watch Dog found deep inside the cavern and brought to the front room by Civilian Conservation Corps workers while renovating the park in the 1930s. Speleologists say it was formed by water. Others think Indians might



**ABOVE:** A group emerges from Longhorn Cavern following one of the guided tours.

**OPPOSITE:** The Hall of Marble, a winding contour of polished rock, was created by a swiftly moving river.

**RIGHT:** A rock figure called the Watch Dog was found deep inside the cavern and brought to the front room by CCC workers while renovating the park in the 1930s.



© LAURENCE PARENT

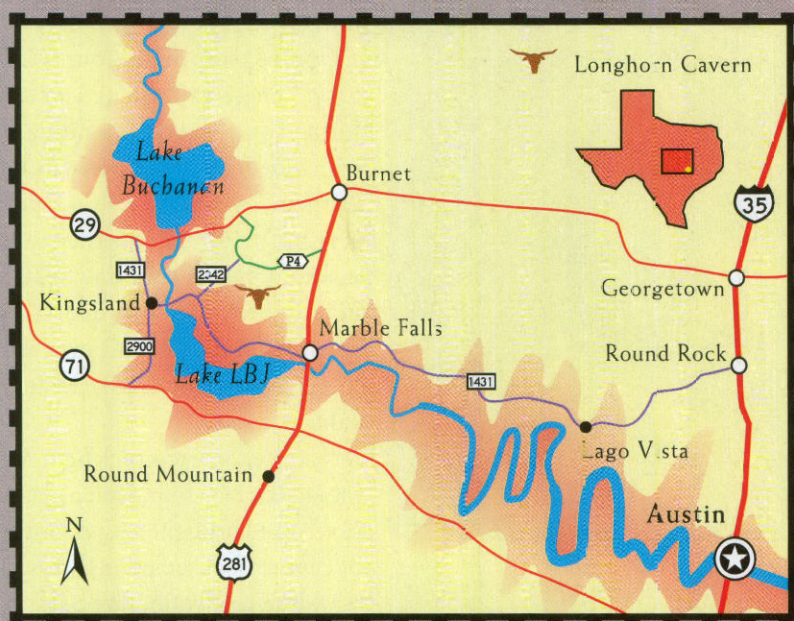
## GETTING THERE

Longhorn Cavern is the most highly developed of the state park caves open to the public. Its smooth pathways and elaborate lighting system create a friendly atmosphere. No flashlights, hard-hats or boots are needed at this historic cave. Along with the cavern, the 637-acre park has plenty of hiking trails, historical buildings and picnic areas to pass the time.

Longhorn Cavern State Park is located on Park Road 4, approximately six miles west from U.S. 281 near Burnet.

The park visitor center is open from 9 a.m. until sunset daily, except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Cave tours begin around 10 a.m. with the last tour at 4 p.m. The tours last about 1 hour 25 minutes. For your safety, rubber-soled shoes are recommended. For tour information, call 512-756-6976.

The cost to tour Longhorn Cavern is \$7 for adults and \$4.50 for children age 5-12. Children under 5 are admitted free. The cost for adults owning a Gold Texas Conservation Passport is \$6.



have carved it with the river washing away the markings. No matter how it was formed, its resemblance to a dog is amazing. Across from the Watch Dog is a giant flowstone formation called the Queens Throne, which was formed 800,000 years ago when water started to seep in from the ceiling after the river dried up.

We move along to Little Holland, a series of dikes formed by residues of calcium carbonate left behind when pools of water evaporated. "After a rain these dikes fill up with water and become one of the prettiest sites in the cave," says Otto. The dikes also act as a natural flood-control system for the cave.

The magnificent domed room called the Indian Council Room lies ahead. This room, and the next one (the Church Room), contained most of the cave's history. Before the CCC workers came, these were the only rooms accessible; all others were full of dried mud.

The last half of the tour starts in the Chandelier Room. This massive flowstone resembles a frozen waterfall. It was formed millions of years ago by water constantly running in waves along its walls.

"The next rooms are called the bat rooms," says Otto. "These rooms held about 200 to 300 Mexican freetail bats per square foot." The bats were driven out because of the nonstop activity caused when the CCC started cleaning out the cave. All that remains now are black oil stains on the ceiling left behind from their wings and feet.

Next is the Hall of Marble, with its pale pinks, tans, and whites that create a winding contour of polished rock. "A very fast-moving river created this part of the cavern," explains Otto. "Above, you can see where whirlpools created domelike openings all along this part of the cave."

After the Hall Of Marble come the Giant Icicle, the Eagle's Wing and the Vikings Prow, the oldest living formations in the cave. Otto points out that the Giant Icicle is the cave's longest stalactite, the Eagle's Wing is the biggest stalactite and

## WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Burnet, named the Bluebonnet Capital of Texas by the 67th Texas Legislature, offers antique shopping on its historic town square, as well as other attractions. The Highland Lakes CAF Museum, headquarters for the Confederate Air Force Hill Country Squadron, features World War II fighter planes, firearms and memorabilia. Call 512-756-2226. At Fort Croghan Museum are exhibits and relics depicting local frontier days. The Vanishing Texas River Cruise takes visitors on a tour of Lake Buchanan's Colorado River Canyon. Bald eagles are seen frequently November through March. Call 1-800-728-8735.

For information about Burnet call the Chamber of Commerce at 512-756-4297.



© LAURENCE PARENT

**LEFT:** The massive flowstone in the Chandelier Room resembles a frozen waterfall. It was formed by water constantly running in waves along its walls.

**ABOVE:** Calcite crystals in Crystal City were formed by pockets of standing water with a lot of calcium carbonate (lime) in them.

© KYLE R. WOOD

## FROM COMANCHES TO OUTLAWS

For decades, Indians such as Comanches occupied the Longhorn Cavern because of its large rooms and constant 65-degree temperature. They also found the cave walls lined with chert, or flint rock, which they could use for making tools and weapons.

During the Civil War, the Confederates used the cave as a secret gunpowder factory. The soldiers knew millions of Mexican freetail bats occupied the cave. By mixing the nitrate-rich bat guano with charcoal and sulfur they could make a crude form of gunpowder.

In the late 1800s the cave was thought to be used as a hideout for Texas's most notorious outlaw, Sam Bass. "Legend

has it Bass used the cave when he traveled from Denton to San Antonio," explains Otto Gruetzner. "Some think it he stashed millions of dollars worth of gold in the cavern from earlier train and stagecoach robberies."

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Indian Council Room was used as a night club and dance hall where live bands entertained Burnet County residents. A natural hole in the roof provided these rooms with plenty of sunlight and ventilation. The Church Room, complete with bleachers, was used for religious services and theater presentations.

In 1931, ranchers sold their land to the State of Texas. All this land became

Longhorn Cavern State Park and Texas's fourth state park. Most say the park got its name from all the longhorn cattle bones found inside. It wasn't long after the park began offering tours that visitors wanted to see the unexplored portions of the cave that were still packed with mud.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt started the CCC to give people work during the Depression. A "company" of about 200 young men, earning \$1 a day, used picks and shovels to clear out 1½ miles of cave and 2½ million cubic yards of mud. The CCC finished the park in 1938, just before WW II.

## THE SAM BASS MYSTERY TREASURE HUNT



**ABOVE:** The Sam Bass shoot-out is part of the park's Sam Bass Mystery Treasure Hunt held in late January each year.

In late January the park offers a Sam Bass Mystery Treasure Hunt. Participants divide into teams to discover buried clues that will answer the question, "Did Sam Bass hide \$2 million dol-

lars' worth of gold inside the cave?" Along the hunt are living clues—people dressed in period costumes—relating stories from the past.

Following is the Round Rock Bass shoot-out held at the CCC museum, a historically accurate version of the shoot-out in Round Rock, in which Bass was wounded and later died. Afterward, participants discuss the actual events of the shoot-out.

When done, all participants gather for dinner in the visitors' center. The cost can range from \$90 to \$200 per couple, depending upon the lodging you choose. The park offers special rates in Burnet or Marble Falls for those wanting to stay in a motel, while Inks Lake State Park offers plenty of overnight camping.

Reservations are required. Call the park business office at 512-756-4680 or write Route 2, Box 23, Burnet, Texas 78611.



© KYLE R. WOOD

the Vikings Prow resembles a prow (front) of a Viking ship.

The cave comes to an end at the Rock of a Million Layers, which was formed by centuries of rainy periods and drought that left mineral deposits behind. However, speleologists can't explain how all the vertical, horizontal and circular layers of limestone came to rest in this part of the cave. Their best conclusion is they must have fallen from some other section of the cave with the river lodging them deeper into the cavern.

As we walk back, Otto stops and turns off the lights. "This is what total darkness would be like! Wiggle your fingers in front of your eyes. You won't be able to see them. After a long period of time like this you would become totally blind."

We were all relieved when the lights were turned back on.

Taking a different path back, we make our last stop at the Hall of Gems. This is a large hall lined with calcite crystals and spectacularly lit by red, blue and yellow lights. These are the same type of crystals found in Crystal City.

As we leave the cave, someone asks what other state parks offer cave tours. Otto suggests exploring Colorado Bend State Park or Kickapoo Cavern State Natural Area. Both of these caves are more difficult to explore than Longhorn Cavern, but Texas's amateur speleologists say the rewards are worth the effort. ★

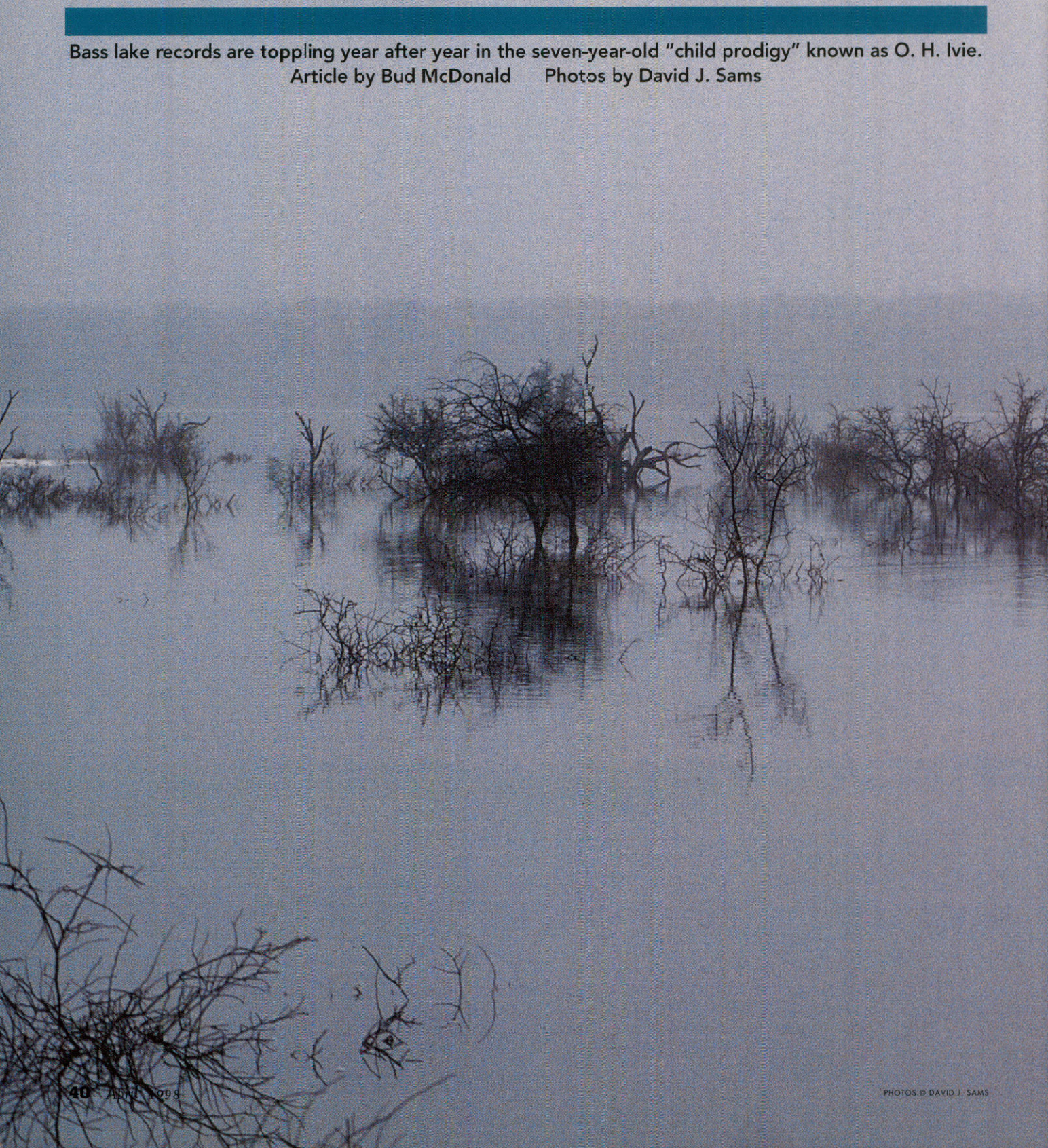
KYLE R. WOOD is a freelance photographer and writer living in Austin.

**ABOVE:** Tours begin at the Sam Bass entrance beneath a natural rock bridge.



# HOME *of the* WEST TEXAS WHOOPPERS

Bass lake records are toppling year after year in the seven-year-old "child prodigy" known as O. H. Ivie.  
Article by Bud McDonald    Photos by David J. Sams



THE EXCITEMENT OF DISCOVERY remains high at O.H. Ivie Reservoir. Since the floodgates closed in April 1990, this 19,000-surface-acre lake between Ballinger and San Angelo has been turning out a succession of larger bass. There are healthy populations of other gamefish, as well, and the lake's chief biologist calls Ivie, "the premier bass, crappie and catfish lake in this part of the state."

Bobby Farquhar, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's regional inland fisheries supervisor stationed in San

Angelo, said that although he had been a little concerned about the forage condition at the lake, it now appears that a massive shad spawn in 1996 has more than taken care of the problem.

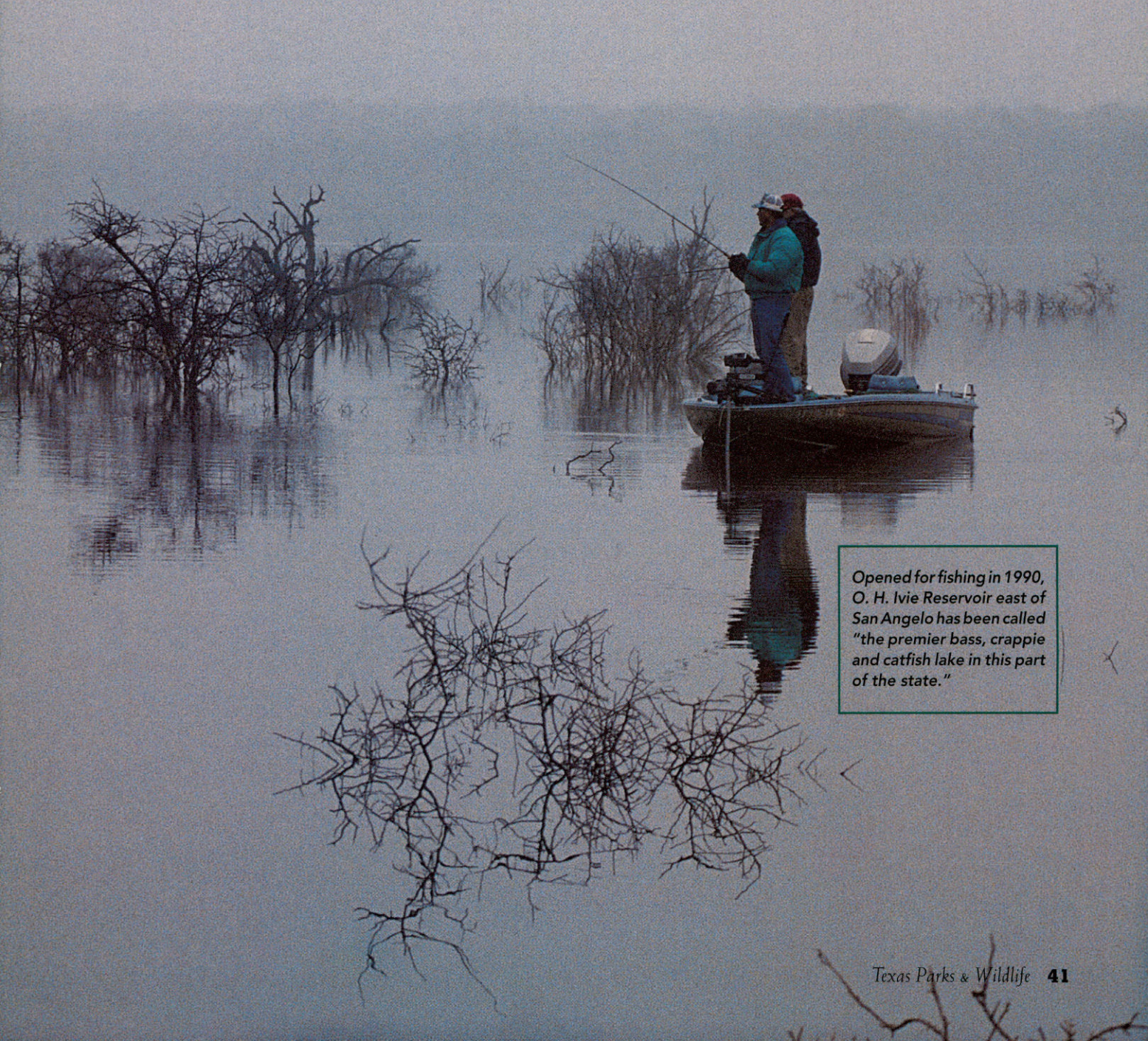
"I think Lake Ivie has done as well as could have been expected by now," he said. "The bass lake record has been broken each year, a situation I expect will continue at least for the next two or three years."

The current lake record of 12.75 pounds was caught March 4, 1997, by Bobby

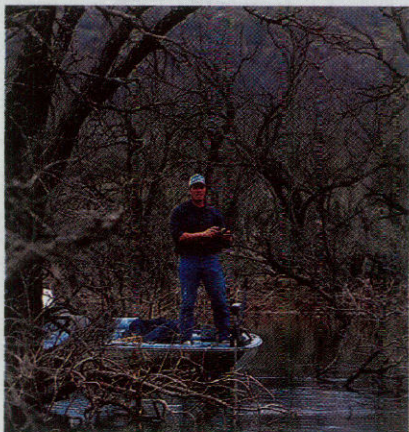
Gayle, a Plains, Texas angler. Another important record smallmouth bass stands at 3.88 pounds for a fish caught in 1996. Farquhar said all indications are that black bass populations are reproducing naturally and doing very well.

"The lake has held its water level very well even during the most severe periods of drought," he said. "However, this may change when all the communities having access to it begin pumping."

Farquhar said that although it's still a little too early to make any lasting



*Opened for fishing in 1990, O. H. Ivie Reservoir east of San Angelo has been called "the premier bass, crappie and catfish lake in this part of the state."*



Brush clearing was kept to a minimum, and anglers can try a different area of brush and vegetation each time they visit.

When its floodgates closed on April 24, 1990, and the rising waters of the Concho and Colorado rivers began inching their way over the flat countryside of Concho, Coleman and Runnels counties in West-Central Texas, a project more than 50 years in the planning finally was realized.

In June 1965, a report from a consulting engineer indicated a reservoir at the confluence of the Concho and Colorado rivers was "the best solution to the future water supply problems of the Upper Colorado River Authority and the upper basin."

Several years of negotiations followed until in 1984 the Colorado River

Municipal Water District filed a permit to impound 554,000 acre-feet of water on the Colorado River near Stacy, a ghost town a few miles south of the proposed dam site. Two months later the cities of San Angelo, Midland and Abilene each approved a contract for 16.5 percent "safe yield" of the water from what then was to be called Stacy Reservoir to be piped into their cities.

At that point the Stacy project seemed a certainty. The next year, however, a dilemma concerning the Concho water snake reared its head and delayed the project. Actually a subspecies of the more-or-less common Harter's water snake, *Natrix harteri*, the Concho water snake, *Natrix h. paucimaculata*, at that time was known only to the Concho-Colorado River system in Central Texas. The problem was somewhat relaxed when biologist Okla Thornton later released a report that the Concho water snake has at least 131 square miles of critical habitat.

When at its conservation pool, O.H. Ivie Reservoir contains some 19,200 surface acres of water with an average depth of 40 to 50 feet. The deepest point, just over 116 feet, is found south of the flood gates in the old river channel.

At various times Texas Parks and Wildlife Department technicians have stocked more than 500,000 Florida largemouth bass and 300,000 smallmouth

bass fry and fingerlings in the lake, along with quantities of channel, blue and flat-head catfish plus other species such as walleye, crappie and various sunfish. The Parks and Wildlife Commission adopted a regulation for Ivie to join eight other Texas impoundments for more restrictive, 18-inch minimum length and three-per-day bag limits on black bass.

Even with the exceptional bass limits, Ivie Reservoir has become one of the state's premier fishing lakes. Joe Pickle, former information officer with the CRMWD, said that in deference to fishermen and requests by the TPWD, brush was cleared only in the lake's main basin.

"We cleared about 10,000 acres and left another 10,000 acres intact," he said. "Most of the clearing was done from the Leaday crossing to the dam, with other clearing mostly in Coleman County."

Although much of the brush and timber since have rotted away, there still are enough stickups and snags to keep a bass angler occupied. Anglers new to the lake can try a different area of partially submerged vegetation, old tank dams, submerged buildings and roadbeds nearly each time they visit the lake. Just looking over a map of the lake and its flooded timber, bushes, islands, roads and fencelines can send even an armchair angler running for the tackle box.

observations, it appears walleye obtained from an Arkansas river and stocked by the millions in the lake's early days are not fulfilling their expectations.

"We've had no indications of a natural spawn, nor have we had any reports from anglers about good walleye catches," he said. "In 1998 we'll probably take a good look at the lake's walleye program and decide whether or not to continue it." In any case, the veteran biologist said the TPWD has no intentions at present to liberalize the 18-inch minimum length limit for black bass, nor the

diminished smallmouth bass catch rate of three per day.

Besides dropping about a foot as a result of area-wide drought, the level of Lake Ivie had to be drawn down about 11 feet during the summer of 1996 in order to fulfill a contract with the lake's downstream user, the Lower Colorado River Authority. However, area rains in early 1997 helped the lake to regain all but about four feet.

Although it seemed earlier that a more restrictive approach might be necessary at the lake, Farquhar said that a "slot limit"

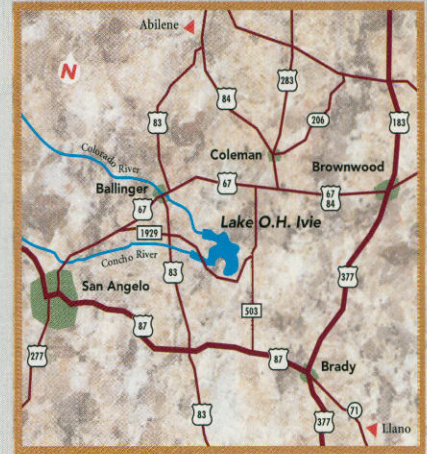
has been put on a back burner. "Actually, the lake's tremendous population of sublegal largemouth bass is providing a lot of catch-and-release recreation and enough fish are growing through the size limit to provide the good possibility of catching a keeper," he said. He added the situation could change in the future, particularly if the lake begins dropping rapidly after those authorized to begin pumping start doing so.

"We will keep this (18-inch minimum) regulation on the lake unless our samples indicate we have too many small bass

## GETTING THERE

As is the case with other Colorado River Municipal Water District lakes, a recreational user fee is charged at O.H. Ivie for campers, fishermen and boaters at the rate of \$2 per person per day. A season pass costs \$20, while a \$50 "boater's" pass may be purchased that covers all boat passengers from January 1 through December 31. The recreational fees may be paid at either marinas or at several tackle stores in San Angelo, Ballinger, Valera and others, or the fee may be inserted in an envelope with the user's name written on the outside and deposited in a steel box for that purpose at each recreation site.

Five recreation areas are planned for the lake. However, at present only three are operational, two with full-service marinas. The Concho Recreation Area (915-357-4466) and Elm Creek Village (915-357-4776) sites both have live bait and tackle, gasoline, snack bars, motels and full-hookup campgrounds. The Padgitt site has improved boat ramps, chemical toilets and primitive camping.



and our growth and condition decreases," he said. "If and when that happens, we will consider a 14- to 18-inch or 14- to 21-inch slot limit, or a different minimum size limit, whichever is determined to be the best for the lake."

While many Central Texas anglers now are making O.H. Ivie their home waters, none have fished there long enough to know where the continuing honey holes will be. These and other future bits and pieces of information will be exchanged for years.

However, far from the 150 undersized bass caught and released per day by O.H. Ivie anglers in its early days, the lake has "flattened out" in its advanced age and requires more of its fishermen than simply tossing a line into the water.

Fisheries biologist John Dennis of the San Angelo TPWD office said recent angler surveys conducted at the lake indicate that hours spent by the fishing public have dropped as much as 50 percent from previous years. However, Dennis cautioned that the figures don't mean that O.H. Ivie should be removed from the list of great fishing lakes. It only means the lake's fish have become smarter and harder to catch.

Dennis added that the decline in catch rates was expected, because when the reservoir opened in 1990 there was a tremendous number of young bass which had never seen a hook. Of course they



*Ivie anglers must observe the 18-inch minimum length limit on largemouth bass, but a "slot limit" has been put on the back burner for now. Catch rates are more than twice as high as the state average.*

were aggressive, numerous and easy to catch. Dennis explained that the trends uncovered at O.H. Ivie are not unexpected, as new reservoirs always draw tremendous numbers of anglers for the first few years. The excitement of something new and stories of hundreds of easy-to-catch fish pull in anglers from all over. However, as the reservoirs age, catch rates usually decline and the number of people who come to fish also declines. Dennis was quick to point out that while the lowered catch rates at O.H. Ivie

might seem skimpy, they are more than twice as high as the state average catch rate for largemouth bass.

"Over the last few years Texas anglers have done an outstanding job of educating O.H. Ivie bass about hooks," he said. "Now the larger and older bass have seen just about every lure known to man and are much more wary about biting things that fall into the water from the sky and start wiggling." ★

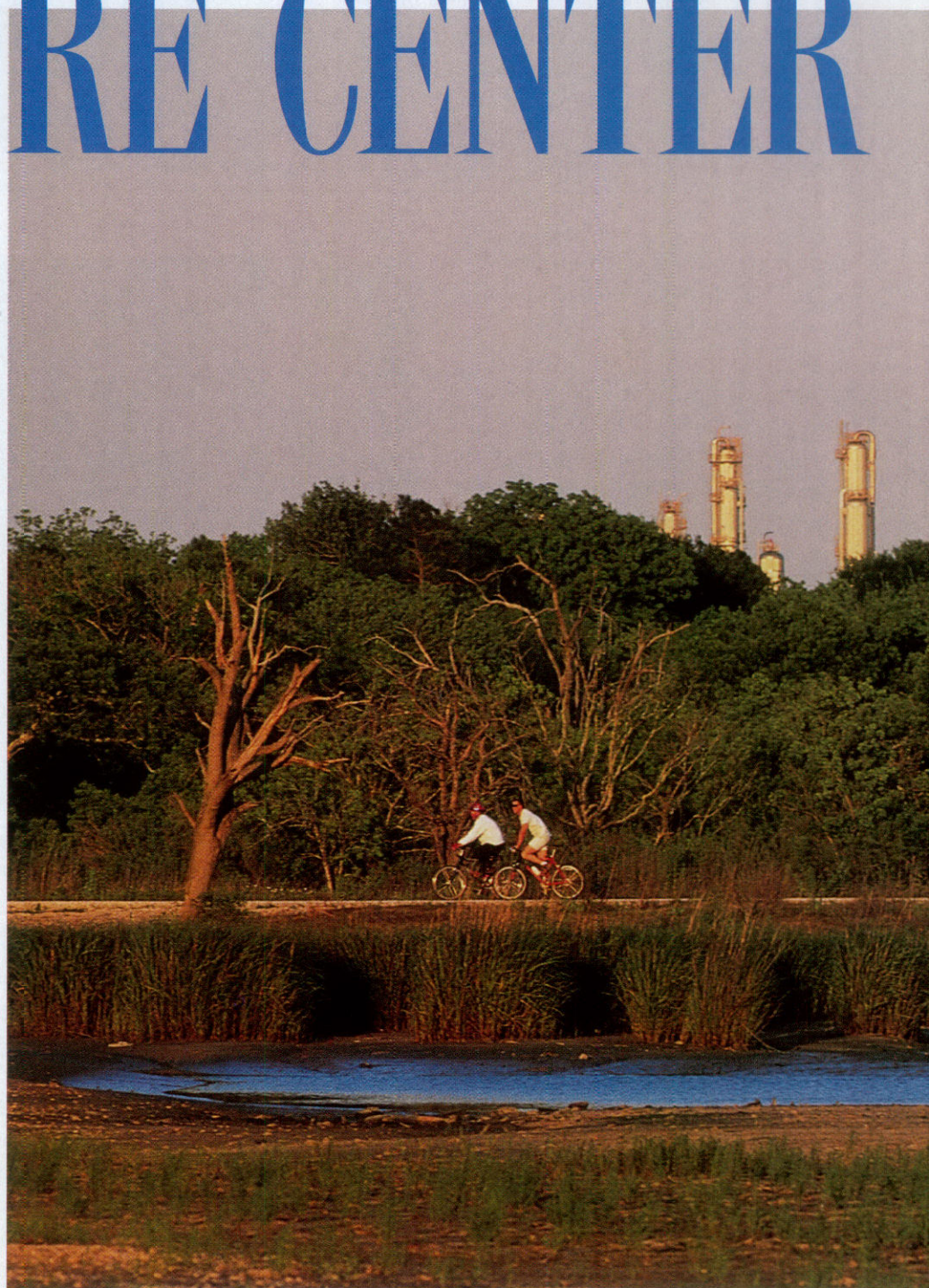
BUD McDONALD is outdoors editor of the San Angelo Standard-Times.

FROM SUBDIVISION TO SANCTUARY:

# THE BAYTOWN NATURE CENTER

**Former adversaries  
become allies to  
transform an  
eyesore into a  
wildlife-rich  
wetlands sanctuary.**

**by Charles Lockwood**



**C**yclists enjoy a sunny afternoon at the Baytown Nature Center, a thriving marsh ecosystem located in the shadow of oil refineries and chemical plants.

**A**cross America, suburban development consumes vast expanses of land every year. Here in Texas, the Brownwood Marsh Restoration Project is transforming what once was a suburban neighborhood into a wetlands and wildlife sanctuary known as the Baytown Nature Center, directly across the San Jacinto River from the San Jacinto Monument. The 60-acre first phase was completed in fall 1995. Work on a 50-acre second phase is planned. The center, which already has become home to endangered species like the wood stork and 275 other bird species, is attracting wildlife enthusiasts from around the country.

### **Origins of The Nature Center**

The City of Baytown, 20 miles east of Houston along the Houston Ship Channel, includes a peninsula surrounded on three sides by Galveston Bay. In the 1940s and 1950s, almost 400 homes were built on this 500-acre peninsula in what became the Brownwood subdivision. The neighborhood was considered so prestigious it was popularly known as the "River Oaks of Baytown," in reference to the upscale Houston neighborhood.

But a combination of natural and manmade calamities left the neighborhood not merely undesirable, but uninhabitable. In 1961, Hurricane Carla devastated the Texas Gulf Coast, flooding Brownwood and ending any further development in the area. Subsidence also became a serious problem, because oil and chemical facilities along the Houston Ship Channel, as well as domestic water suppliers, were pumping out groundwater faster than natural forces could replenish the water table. Thus, during the 1960s and 1970s, Brownwood, like much of the Texas Gulf Coast, sank a total of 10 to 15 feet, leaving it vulnerable to high tides and storms.

In desperation, the City of Baytown installed pumping stations and built a seven-foot-high elevated road around the



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neighborhood to serve as a protective levee. Two months after the road's completion in 1973, a tropical storm hurled water over the top and filled the subdivision like a giant swimming pool.

Finally, in 1983, extensive damage from Hurricane Alicia led to Brownwood's abandonment. The City of Baytown began buying out neighborhood residents. In 1984, it prepared the first of several master plans to transform Brownwood into a public park. But financing proved an impossible hurdle. The peninsula sat for nearly a decade, a festering eyesore of half-submerged houses and rotting trees.

### **An Unexpected Benefactor**

Then, an unexpected benefactor—the French Limited Task Group—came to the rescue. A United States District Court

ordered this consortium of 200 companies led by ARCO Chemical Company to carry out a 21- to 24-acre marsh restoration project to replace natural resources that had been damaged or destroyed because of members' dumping activities.

The Task Group hired Greg Crouch of Crouch Environmental Services, a Houston-based environmental consulting firm that specializes in wetlands design and construction, to find suitable wetland sites. They began by looking at 70 to 80 potential restoration sites in the Houston area and evaluating each one.

On March 10, 1994, the agency oversight committee gave the go-ahead to the Brownwood Marsh Restoration Project. By then, subsidence at the site had virtually stopped, thanks to the creation of a subsidence district a decade earlier. Of the original 500-acre peninsula, 400

acres remained. The \$1.4 million first-phase budget was funded by ARCO and the French Limited Task Group, along with \$300,000 from a City of Baytown bond issue. Crouch Environmental Services was the primary consultant and contractor. The Houston office of the SWA Group provided land planning and landscape architectural services.

"We knew when we began designing the Nature Center," said Kevin Shanley of the SWA Group, "that birds, mammals, fish, and crustaceans don't really care what the site looks like, just as long as it functions properly. But the Baytown Nature Center also was intended for human enjoyment. So, it was important to make the center look as beautiful and as interesting as we could within the ecological requirements for the site."

Collaboration was the key. "I think Kevin Shanley is a genius," Greg Crouch

**T**he Brownwood subdivision in Baytown was located on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by Galveston Bay. Decades of subsidence caused Brownwood to sink 10 to 15 feet, leaving it vulnerable to high tides and storms. Of the original 500-acre peninsula, 400 acres remain.



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**A**lmost 400 homes were built on the peninsula in the 1940s and 1950s. By 1983, following Hurricane Alicia, all of the once-prestigious homes were uninhabitable and Brownwood was abandoned.

© TOM FOX



said. "I'm a biologist, so I know wildlife and marshes. The SWA Group knows land planning. I gave SWA my vision, what I wanted to create. Kevin came up with renderings and suggestions. I provided some technical input and we modified the plans again. We brought our different areas of expertise together to create a final plan."

The collaboration didn't end there. Former adversaries became allies in transforming into reality what many considered the Task Group's audacious vision for the Baytown Nature Center.

"You never used to see oil companies working together with state, federal, and environmental organizations," said David Dauphin, president-elect of the Texas Ornithological Society and an Exxon lab technician. "The Gulf Coast Initiative at High Island really turned things around. High Island is a major rest stop on the

upper Texas coast for neotropical birds exhausted by their migration across the Gulf of Mexico. It united the Houston Audubon Society, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Phillips, Tenneco, and ARCO and proved to be a tremendous success. Now, at the Baytown Nature Center, we're seeing the same sort of cooperation and it's all geared toward benefiting the environment."

"The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and four other natural resource trustee agencies (the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Texas General Land Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Department of the Interior) were responsible for determining the size and general characteristics of the restoration required to compensate the public for injuries to nat-

ural resources," says Don Pitts, coordinator, Trustee Assessment and Restoration program. "These agencies, in working with the French Limited Task Group and their contractors, also were responsible for project site evaluation, site selection, project design and wetland construction oversight. In addition, the department provided much of the wetland vegetation planted in the project from the San Jacinto State Park complex directly across the Houston Ship Channel from the project site."

### The First Phase

As a first step in the restoration project, work crews sealed the inlets into nearby Scott Bay so they temporarily could pump the water out of the site. Then, workers removed the remaining houses, utilities and most of the roads from the site. Afterwards, they graded the



**T**he Baytown Nature Center was carefully designed to be attractive and interesting to human visitors as well as ecologically sound for wildlife populations.

**P**lantings of trees and bottomland shrubs and the creation of freshwater ponds lure a variety of birds, including the beautiful and unusual roseate spoonbill.



**M**uch of the wetland vegetation planted in the first phase of the project came from the San Jacinto State Park Complex directly across the Houston Ship Channel from the site. It will take five to 10 years to transform the entire Brownwood peninsula into the Baytown Nature Center.



land and dug three 60-foot-wide channels through the property. Once work was complete, these channels were used to reflood the site and provide good cross-current flows to encourage the natural restoration activity and feed the returning wetlands wildlife. The channels also allow enough tidal exchange of nutrient-rich, oxygenated waters to help create important “edge” habitats for crustaceans, fish and birds.

Two elevated areas, which included hundreds of mature trees, were transformed into islands. “Those hills are important,” said Sharley, “not simply because they’ll provide food and nesting areas for the animals, but because they’ll also serve as refuges from the seasonal storms. When the peninsula floods, the animals can stay high and dry.”

Four new freshwater ponds also were created. These ponds and the planting of live oaks, as well as beneficial bottomland shrubs and trees such as red maple and green ash, were established to lure a wide variety of migrant and resident birds, reptiles and small mammals to the site.

Construction was largely completed in fall 1995, and the property was reflooded. “I wanted to stand out there,” said

Sharley, “and personally welcome back all of the shore birds and animals.”

### **The Birds and the Alligators**

A year after first-phase construction ended, plant and animal life already have claimed the Baytown Nature Center for their own. The 275 different bird species already identified at the Nature Center include six endangered species—American bald eagles, peregrine falcons, piping plover, wood stork (“Half of the state’s wood stork population is spending a lot of time at Baytown,” said Crouch); American ospreys and brown pelicans—as well as two species on the state’s threatened list—the white-faced ibis and reddish egret. In fact, the Nature Center has the most reddish egrets of any inland location on the Texas coast.

But these birds don’t have the place to themselves. The Baytown Nature Center has one of the very few freshwater marshes on the Texas coast. As Dauphin put it, “When you have anything that’s fresh and wet on the Texas coast, you’re going to have an alligator in it.” American alligators have moved into the center, as have white-tailed deer, raccoons, opossums, armadillos, bobcats, gray foxes,

rabbits and squirrels.

When human visitors come to the center, they find a dense outer ring of trees and other plants, while the interior looks like a sea of sand, bisected by curving water channels and dotted with lush green islands. That sand soon will be covered by vegetation. Chunks of concrete excavated from the subdivision have been used along the shoreline to prevent erosion.

The city currently is building a new entrance road and a visitor information center. Signage, including animal identification, will be added to both phases of work. Some of the former subdivision’s original roads are being used for hiking and jogging trails.

### **The Second Phase**

On October 16, 1996, the City of Baytown formally designated the entire Brownwood peninsula for future nature center development. Work already is moving forward to create what could be one of the most important wetlands sanctuaries in the country.

“For the 50-acre second phase of the restoration project,” said Crouch, “we are a little more focused on building hiking trails, boardwalks and things like that

for the human visitors. We're adding more salt marsh and freshwater ponds. Then we'll take that excess soil and create three mounds. One will be an observation pavilion area for bird and wildlife watching. The other two will be revegetated to create food, cover and nesting areas.

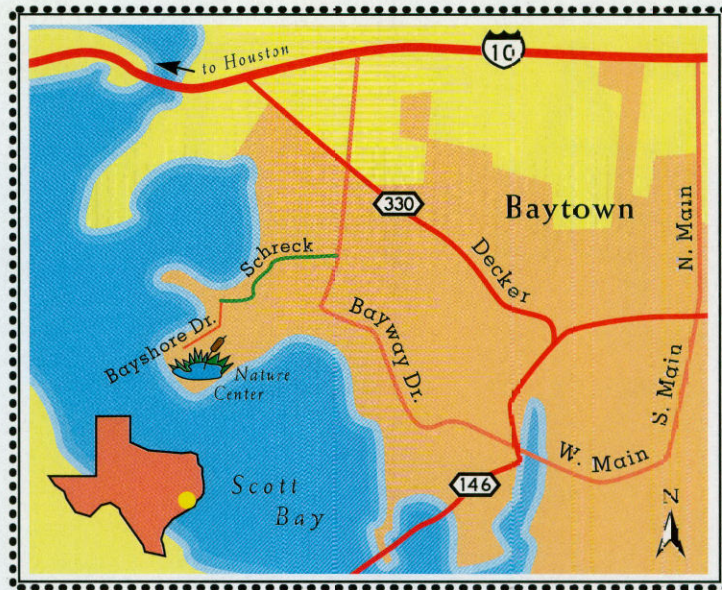
This time, the City of Baytown is not relying on a single "big purse" funding approach for the work. Instead, it has formulated a phased strategy, so that corporations, nonprofit groups, high school classes, universities and local businesses and residents can complete various pieces of the overall project through cash or in-kind contributions. A large oil company can supply the equipment and manpower to reshape five acres, for example, or it can make a cash donation to match a challenge grant from a foundation. A local business club or neighborhood group can build a footbridge or section of pathway.

"We're finding a lot of interest in this approach," said ARCO's Dick Sloan. "If you get more people involved, the whole thing just takes on a lot of momentum and becomes self-perpetuating."

### Ecotourism and the City of Baytown

"Birdwatchers, nature photographers, and wildflower enthusiasts were all taken for granted for years and years," said Dauphin. But no longer. Recently, Texas and federal agencies announced that \$23 billion was spent on ecotourism in Texas in 1994 alone. Baytown's biggest funding hopes for future restoration phases at the nature center lie in an expected influx of some of those ecotourist dollars. "I think the nature center is going to have a significant impact on the area," said Dauphin.

A lot has to do with location. The most direct way to get from Houston to High Island—rated the 10th most desirable birding site in North America by *Birdwatcher's Digest*—is to pass through Baytown. Also, the popular Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge is only 30 miles away.



### Getting There

The Baytown Nature Center is open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day. Admission is free. Take I-10 to Spur 330/Decker exit and, at the first street light, turn right onto Bayway Drive. Turn right on Schreck. Turn right on Brownwood Drive and follow it to the Nature Center. Park along the road. Call 281-420-6597 for further information.

Vacationing families and history buffs should come calling at the Baytown Nature Center, because it also is close to a number of important historic sites, including the San Jacinto Monument. "When visitors climb to the top of the monument," said ARCO's Dick Sloan, "they look out over beautiful wetlands right across the river." They're looking at the Baytown Nature Center.

Baytown's biggest hopes, however, rest on being included in the Galveston Bay Loop of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, a 500-mile trail of birdwatching sites from Beaumont to Brownsville, drawing birders (and their tourist dollars) from one site to the next. A Coastal Birding Trail sign could be worth up to \$1 million a year to a community like Baytown.

### Future Plans

Greg Crouch estimates that it will take between five and 10 years to transform the entire 400-acre Brownwood peninsula into the Baytown Nature Center. As the elevation rises as the project moves farther north, the draft master plan calls for fewer marshes and more forested areas to serve neotropical birds, mammals and

other species. There also will be nature trails so Baytown residents, students and visitors can fully enjoy the sanctuary.

As for traditional amenities, "We've got plans to develop no more than 10 acres within the nature center for recreational uses like fishing piers, walking trails, and picnic sites," said Scott Johnson, Baytown's superintendent of parks. "That's it. And those two sites are isolated on the very narrow finger of the peninsula."

The Baytown Nature Center offers a unique habitat for wildlife and humans. "What really impresses me when I'm standing out at the Nature Center," said Sloan, "is watching the oil tankers going up and down the river. In the background I can see major oil refineries and chemical plants, and all the while I'm standing in the middle of a living marsh complex. Many believed we couldn't turn an eyesore into self-sustaining wetlands. They believe now" ★

CHARLES LOCKWOOD, the author of seven books about American architecture and cities, often writes about parks and environmental issues.

# 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.

by Melissa Maupin



SEA WASP  
*Carybdea*

**AT THE ENTRANCE TO PADRE BALI PARK** in Corpus Christi, signs are posted that warn: "Caution—Blue Jellyfish." Most beachgoers are uncomfortably familiar with these "blue jellyfish," or Portuguese man-of-war, with their deep blue, balloon-like floats. Although they resemble a harmless toy, they pack a powerful sting when swimmers brush against their tentacles. Even touching the tentacles of ones that have washed up on the beach can bring a rude awakening since the stinging cells, or nematocysts, remain active even after the animal dies.

Cynthia Turner, an employee at the park's office on North Padre Island, said stings from man-of-war and jellyfish are one of the most common medical situations they see. "We get people who come in here hollering and screaming after they're stung. Some even ask if they're

going to die. The first thing we do is calm them down and then ask if they are allergic to bee stings. Usually, if you are allergic to bee stings, you also will be allergic to jellyfish." If the person reports an allergy or shows an allergic reaction, such as shortness of breath, the employees quickly refer them to a doctor.

Although they are often called jellyfish, the Portuguese man-of-war, along with the by-the-wind sailor and less familiar *Porpita*, are really just close relatives. Unlike jellyfish, which are a single animal, man-of-war and by-the-wind sailors consist of a colony of polyp-shaped individual animals called zooids that are attached to floating membranes. They do share the same phylum with jellyfish, Cnidaria, which appropriately means "nettle" or "to sting," along with anemones and coral.

The **Portuguese man-of-war** is recognized most easily by its float, which can extend up to a foot in length. The float is filled with gas and serves as its sail. In calm seas, the crest of a man-of-war's float will collapse and then rise again when wind picks up. Other than this basic movement, though, the man-of-war is pretty much at the mercy of the wind and water currents.

Two types of tentacles suspend under the man-of-war's float: short tentacles and long ones used for fishing. The longer ones may extend and spread out up to 60 feet and contain the poisonous stinging cells that they use to grasp and immobilize prey. The cells on both the man-of-war and jellyfish resemble a small balloon with a long pointed extension. They remain coiled until they are triggered to release by touch. Once the

## Taking the Bite Out of a Sting

While it's a relief to know they normally are not fatal, stings can be very painful, depending on where they occur and how much of the skin area is involved. For most people, the sting will cause redness of the skin and may burn for up to 24 hours. In some cases stings can cause shock, fever and, in extreme cases, even heart or respiratory distress, especially

for those sensitive to the sting. Waste no time seeking medical attention if shortness of breath or other serious symptoms occur. A statewide poison control information line can be reached by calling 1-800-POISON-1.

For common cases, rubbing unseasoned meat tenderizer that contains papain on the sting area will relieve the pain. (Papain is an enzyme that

breaks down toxins in the victim.) Other remedies include washing the area with salt water, vinegar, lemon juice or diluted household ammonia or applying a thick paste of baking soda for 30 minutes followed by rubbing alcohol. If a tentacle is attached to the skin, gently pat sand on it and then remove it with a towel or t-shirt to avoid contact with your hands.

PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR  
*Physalia physalia*

BY-THE-WIND SAILOR  
*Verella velella*

SEA NETTLE  
*Chrysaora quinquecirrha*

CABBAGEHEAD  
*Stomolophus meleagris*

cells discharge their poison, they are useless but will be replaced by new ones in 24 hours.

The **by-the-wind-sailor** is bright blue and disk-shaped, its oval raft rigged with a translucent sail and tentacles dangling underneath. Found worldwide in warm waters, they sometimes wash up on Texas beaches with other jetsam. Beachcombers are likely to find only the disks of these animals however, since their fragile tentacles deteriorate rapidly.

**Porpita** look much like by-the-wind-sailors except they have no sail. Although they do live in the Gulf of Mexico, they generally prefer warmer waters to the south.

In contrast to the man-of-war, true **jellyfish** have either a flat or rounded bell shape and a jelly-like substance, which gives them their name, trapped between their inner and outer layers. Their one

large body cavity serves as both an entryway for food and an exit for waste. While jellyfish float and are wind and current-driven, they also can propel themselves through the water by contracting and then relaxing the base of their bell.

Of the approximately 250 species of true jellyfish in the world, the **cabbage head** is one of the most commonly spotted on the Texas coast. While they live in the Gulf of Mexico, they seasonally enter inland waters in the late summer and early fall, and thousands may drift past jetties into bays. Unlike other jellyfish on the Gulf Coast, such as the **sea wasp** and **sea nettle**, the cabbage head is not a threat to humans. Its nematocysts are located on short, clustered oral arms and are only powerful enough to harm very small prey.

While Turner and other beach employ-

ees sympathize with victims of these sea stingers, she said that visitors often don't understand that all park employees can do is post warnings and treat stings when necessary. "Some people ask us if we will go clean them out of the water so they can swim or put up a net to keep the jellyfish out," Turner said. "We explain that these animals live there, and we are just visitors."

Since jellyfish and man-of-war always will be present in the water, the only way to avoid a sting is to use good judgment. Stay clear of waters that obviously are crowded with the animals, swim away from ones you see in the water, and refrain from touching dead ones on the beach. As the swimming season gets underway, make sure all you take home from a beach outing is pleasant memories. ★

MELISSA MAUPIN is a freelance writer living in Corpus Christi.

### Jellyfish Exhibit

The Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi will open its new 1,700-square-foot jellyfish exhibit, "Jellies: Floating Phantoms," on Memorial Day 1998. The aim of this unusual exhibit is to educate the public about these creatures, celebrate their unique appearance and alter the negative perception many people have of them.

Keeping jellyfish alive in captivity

is challenging. Traditional filter systems, for instance, tend to suck in the jellyfish tentacles, killing the animals, so the aquarium had to design special ones for the nine new displays. The six different species of jellyfish will live in round acrylic tanks instead of rectangular ones, and elaborate water flow patterns will keep the jellyfish in perpetual motion. Plans call for the exhib-

it to be dramatically dark except for the tanks where special lighting will highlight the translucent beauty of these marine animals.

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, the Texas State Aquarium is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. For more information call: 1-800-477-GULF.

# THE FOLKS AT THREE CORNERS

BY EZRA WARD

## FISHING AS A METAPHOR FOR LIFE

Charlie Thornton and Zeke Warner were in the old river channel down below the dam, trying their luck at Blue Cat Hole, a wide, deep spot in the river favored by fishermen. The hydroelectric generators had been running for several days, passing water downstream, and they knew this often brought fish up toward the dam.

They had been right, too; shortly after their arrival, just at dawn, a school of striped bass had pinned a swirling mass of shad up against the steep bank of Blue Cat Hole. The shad swam back and forth while the stripers struck quickly, repeatedly and viciously from the depths, the surface frequently exploding in showers of spray from their fury. For Charlie and Zeke, it was exciting, exhilarating, extremely rare fishing, to be able to try from the bank for the big fish, which literally were right at their feet.

They already had minnows and floats on and they pitched them into the turbulence stirred up by the stripers. Charlie's bobber dove first and his reel sang as the big fish ran out the line.

"Whooo!" Charlie yelled. "I think I done hooked Jaws!"

But Zeke had no time to watch anything but his own line paying out as another striper took the bait and ran downriver.

The fun was over in less than an hour. Zeke had three fish on the stringer, and Charlie two, all of them around 10 to 15 pounds. It had been a chore landing them and they had each lost several bigger fish because, having come looking for white bass and crappie, their low-test line and light rigs had been overmatched. It was a chilly morning for April and Charlie started a campfire while Zeke watched their bobbers on the now-quiet surface of Blue Cat Hole.

As they warmed themselves, Zeke told how he had read in a fishing magazine that stripers actually will herd shad into such predicaments to make feeding easier. When the big fish aren't hungry, he quoted the article as saying, they will follow the schools of shad around, lurking in the depths until feeding time, then swimming up for an easy meal.

"You know," Zeke added, "it must be terrible to be a shad, to know those big fish are down there and to be helpless to do anything to save yourself."

They were both quiet awhile, and then Charlie, tugging thoughtfully on his beard, suggested that the human race is much the same. "Think about it, Zeke," he said. "It's the same with people. Some of us are shad and some of us stripers. Some people just take and take, seems like they never get enough; and other people, well, all they can do is give, because it just ain't in 'em to take at all. And it's like that with things people make, like companies and governments. Big companies gobble up little companies; big countries swallow up little countries."

Charlie stopped to stir up the fire again and warm his hands. Zeke moved so that his feet were closer to the coals. He had gotten them wet when he was landing one striper.

"Well, it's easy to see which we are, which is shad, since we ain't got nothin' between us," said Zeke. They both laughed.

"I don't know, Zeke," said Charlie, smiling. "We ain't rich or powerful people, sure enough, but I'll bet those stripers we're going to gut and fillet don't think

we're shad. We got them."

"That's right," Zeke agreed. "On top of that, we've got this fire here, and some fine mornin' sunshine that's warmin' our cold backsides, and heads full of memories of probably the best fishin' either of us will ever have. No rich or powerful fella has anything better than any one of those, I'll tell you right now."

Some time passed. Charlie caught a white bass and then, casting a fresh minnow out to the same spot, quickly hooked another.

This prompted Zeke to renew the conversation. "Have you ever thought about what suckers fish are, to keep goin' for the same bait, over and over? You haul in fish and then go back and haul in the one that was right next to it. He saw his buddy get caught and then he goes for the same thing. You'd think they'd learn."

Charlie couldn't pass up the opportunity to extend his rhetorical parallel to the human race. "Shoot, people are no different, for all the big brains they've got," he said. "Every person who buys a lottery ticket thinks he's got a chance to win, even though his brain tells him different. Look at how they lay their money down for carnival games! Every guy there is sure he can win the ring toss, or knock down the milk bottles, or keep track of the pea under the shells."

Zeke joined in. "Yeah, and how about all those folks who buy magazine subscriptions because they think they'll win \$10 million? No matter how hard their brains work to get the message through, they just keep writin' checks. Another one is those scams where you go somewhere to listen to a sales pitch for some land you don't want, because they promise everybody will get 'One of three prizes—\$10,000 cash, a vacation to Acapulco, or a car' and everybody winds up gettin' the 'car', which turns out to be a tiny plastic model car worth about 49 cents. People hear about that scam from their neighbors, they read about it in the paper, and then they still go out and listen to the sales pitch, because they're just sure it will be different in their case."

"Yup, people are every bit as foolish as fish," Charlie said. "More so, maybe. I think a bass is harder to catch than most people."

They were out of minnows by now and Charlie tied on a white Hula Popper with a red skirt. Zeke, who thought lures ought to bear some resemblance to food for the fish, shook his head. "Is that all you got in your box?" he asked.

But Charlie ignored him and, on his third cast, caught a small but frisky black bass. As he reeled it in, he worked it right into the conversation.

"These fish I caught today on minnows and this lure are just like guys who get reeled up by women offerin' a good

home-cooked meal and wearin' a sexy red skirt," he said. "In neither case is fish or man usin' the sense God gave him. They give up their lives for a little food and a shiny lure. They know better, but they just can't help themselves."

"Yeah, I know what you mean," said Zeke, brightening. "It's just like you and Maribelle. Didn't you tell me she cooked you fried pork chops and turnip greens, your favorite, the first time you went out with her? And I seem to recall you sayin' she was wearin' a red dress that showed a little more than you thought she meant to show every time she leaned over to refill your plate. Remember that? And next thing you knew she was

your wife and has been now nearly 30 years."

"Shut up, Zeke!" said Charlie, his face reddening. "I think you can only take these things so far."

*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 folks in Three Corners, after all, have their own way of looking at things.*



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**College Station**

KAMU, Ch. 15 Thurs. 7:00

**Corpus Christi**

KEDT, Ch. 16 Fri. 11:30

**El Paso**

KCOS, Ch. 13 Sat. 6:00

**Harlingen:**

KMBH, Ch. 60 Sat. 12:30

Also serving McAllen: Mission

**Houston:**

KUHT, Ch. 8 Mon. 7:30

Also serving Beaumont/Port Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria

**Killeen**

KNCT, Ch. 46 Sun. 4:00

Also serving Temple

**Lubbock**

KTXT, Ch. 5 Sat. 7:00

**Odessa**

KOCV, Ch. 36 Sat. 7:30

Also serving Midland

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KLRN, Ch. 9 Thurs. 12:00

Also serving Laredo

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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:**

**March 22–March 29:** Lengthy cattle; how domestic cats threaten wildlife; the secret life of animals.

**March 29–April 5:** The Kemp's ridley sea turtle; making jelly from cactus; wildlife straggling.

**April 5–12:** The decline of the small commercial fisherman; rock climbing; a trip back in time at Seminole Canyon.

**April 12–19:** Birding in the Rio Grande Valley; Dinosaur Valley State Park; Explorer Scouting

**April 19–26:** Sailing; saving injured birds of prey a second chance; biodiversity.

**April 26–May 3:** Rock art providing a window to the past; turkey; at South Llano River State Park; artificial reefs.

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**Athens–Malakoff:** KCKL-FM 95.9 / 6:40 a.m., KLVQ-AM 1410 / 10:20 a.m.

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**Center:** KDET-AM 930 / 5:20 p.m.

**Columbus:** KULM-FM 98.3 / 7:20 a.m. & 5:20 p.m.

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**Commerce:** KETR-FM 88.9 / 10:15 a.m.

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**Lampasas:** KCYL-AM 1450 / 7:45 a.m.  
**Liberty:** KSHN-FM 99.9 / 7:13 a.m. & 2:50 p.m.  
**Longview:** KBNB-AM 1060 / 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.  
**Lubbock:** KFYO-AM 790 / Between 8-8:30 a.m.  
**Marshall:** KCUL-AM 1410 / 7:15 a.m., KCUL-FM 92.3 / 7:15 a.m.  
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**Nacogdoches:** KSAU-FM 90.1 / 3:00 p.m.  
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**Palestine:** KLIS-FM 96.7 / 7:30 a.m.  
**Pecos:** KIUN-AM 1400 / 10:30 a.m.  
**Rockdale:** KRXT-FM 98.5 / 5:04 a.m.  
**San Angelo:** KUTX-FM 90.1 / 1:58, 12:58 p.m. (F)  
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**Waco:** KBCT-FM 94.5 / 6:20 a.m.  
**Weatherford:** KZEE-AM 1220 / 6:30, 8:10 a.m. & 5:15 p.m.  
**Wichita Falls:** KWFS-AM 1290 / 6:15, 7:45 a.m.  
**Yoakum:** KYKM-FM 92.5 / 8:15 a.m.

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Every weekend in April, starting April 10, **Choke Canyon State Park's Calliham Unit** will host a Bird-A-Thon. Check the listings below for dozens of other birding-related activities scheduled for this spring.



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## APRIL

### PANHANDLE-PLAINS

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

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

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

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

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

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

### PRAIRIES AND LAKES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

APRIL 12: **Sunrise Easter Service**, Lake Whitney SP, Whitney, 254-692-3793.

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

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

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

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

APRIL 24: **Arbor Day**, Buescher

SP, Srnithville, 512-237-2241.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### PINEYWOODS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**GULF COAST**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

APRIL 21: **San Jacinto Day Ceremony**, Battleship Texas SHP, La Porte, 281-479-2431.

APRIL 25: **Battle of San Jacinto Reenactment**, Battleship Texas SHP, La Porte, 281-479-2431.

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

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

**HILL COUNTRY**

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

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

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

APRIL 4: **Spring Gardening Symposium**, Mayfield Park, Austin, 512-453-7074.

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

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

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

APRIL 18: **Cibolo Nature Center Plant Sale and Festival**, Boerne, 830-249-4616

APRIL 18-19: **Wildflower Days Festival**, National Wildflower Research Center, Austin, 512-292-4200.

APRIL 25: **Earth Day 1998**, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

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

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

**BIG BEND COUNTRY**

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

APRIL: **Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour**, Wednesday thru Sunday, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 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, El Paso, 915-857-1135.

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

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

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

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

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

APRIL 26: **Open House**, Choke

Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, 512-786-3868.

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



**PANHANDLE-PLAINS**

MAY 1, 2, 3: **Big Spring Civil War Weekend**, Big Spring SP, Big Spring, 1-800-734-7641.

MAY 1: **75th Anniversary Open House**, Big Spring SP, Big Spring, 1-800-734-7641.

MAY 2 & 3: **Civil War Weekend**, Big Spring SP, Big Spring, 1-800-734-7641.

MAY 9: **75th Birthday Celebration**, Lake Brownwood SP, Brownwood, 915-784-5223.

MAY 9: **Free Day**, Lake Brownwood SP, Brownwood, 915-784-5223.

MAY 9: **Dinosaur Walk**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo. 915-949-4757.

MAY 13: **Living History Celebration**, Lake Arrowhead SP, Wichita Falls, 940-528-2211.

MAY 13-14: **Buffalo Soldiers**, Lake Arrowhead SP, Wichita Falls, 940-528-2211.

MAY 15, 16: **Buffalo Soldiers Living History Encampment**, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah. 940-839-4331.

MAY 16: **Petroglyph Tour**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

MAY 23: **Cowboy Campfire Breakfast**, Fort Griffin SHP, Albany, 915-762-3592.

MAY 25: **Copper Breaks Appreciation Day**, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah. 940-839-4331.

**PRAIRIES AND LAKES**

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

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

MAY 2: **Basket Weaving Workshop**, Sam Bell Maxey House

SHP, Paris, 903-785-5716.

MAY 2, 9, 16: **Wildflower/Nature Hikes**, Lake Somerville SP/Birch Creek Unit, Somerville, 409-535-7763.

MAY 3: **Wildflower Tour**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

MAY 9: **Stagecoach Day**, Fanthorp Inn SHP, Anderson, 409-873-2633.

MAY 9: **Bird Fly-In**, Lake Whitney SP, Whitney, 254-694-3793.

MAY 13: **Open House**, Mother Neff SP, Moody, 254-853-2389.

MAY 16: **Endangered and Threatened Species**, Sam Bell Maxey House SHP, Paris, 903-785-5716.

MAY 19: **Kids' Wilderness Survival**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

MAY 23: **"MADder 'N Hell" Bicycle Rally**, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Isle du Bois Unit, Pilot Point, 940-686-2148.

MAY 30: **Cowboy Campfire Poetry and Stories**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

**PINEYWOODS**

MAY: **Canoeing the Forks**, the third Saturday of May, Martin Dies, Jr. SP/Angelina Neches/Dam B Unit, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

MAY 1, 7, 8, 14, 15: **School Steam Train Excursions**, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 1-800-442-8951.

MAY 1, 7, 8, 14, 15: **Great Texas Train Race**, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 1-800-442-8951.

MAY 2: **Caddo House Dedication**, Caddoan Mounds SHP, Alto, 409-858-3218.

MAY 2: **Birding Tour** Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

MAY 2: **The Things That Matter**, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3351.

MAY 9: **Third Annual Southeast Texas Spring Migration**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP/Angelina Neches/Dam B Unit, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

MAY 9: **This is Your Land**, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3351.

MAY 9, 23: **Caddo Lake Ecotour**, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3351.

MAY 16: **Get Back to Nature**, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3351.

MAY 16, 30: **Guided Nature Trail Hike**, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

MAY 17: **Jet Boat and High Performance Outboard Races**, Atlanta SP, Atlanta, 903-796-6476.

MAY 23: **Hunters of the Night**, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3351.

MAY 23: **Composting and Recycling Class** Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

MAY 24: **Wildlife in Your World**, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3351.

MAY 30: **Predators**, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3351.

**GULF COAST**

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

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

MAY 3: **History Tour**, Matagorda Island SP, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

MAY 3: **8th Annual Monumental "Bug Bash,"** Battleship Texas SHP, La Porte, 281-452-6585.

MAY 23: **Mayfest**, Fulton Mansion SHP, Rockport, 512-729-0386.

MAY 23: **Beachcombing Tour**, Matagorda Island SP, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

**HILL COUNTRY**

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

MAY: **Painted Bunting Walk**, every Saturday, McKinney Falls SP, Austin, 512-243-1643.

MAY: **Black-capped Vireo Seminar and Field Tour**, every second Tuesday, Kerr WMA, 915-247-1072.

MAY 1, 2, 15, 16, 29: **Green Cave Bat Flight Observation**, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

MAY 1, 2, 15, 16, 29: **Primitive Cave Tour**, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

MAY 2, 3: **Spring Walkfest**, Lost Maples SNA, Vanderpool, 830-966-3413.

MAY 9: **64th Anniversary of the Ira Caswell Nature Trail**, Blanco SP, Blanco, 830-833-4333.

MAY 14, 28: **Devils Waterhole Canoe Tour**, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.

MAY 22-25: **Memorial Day Weekend Celebration**, X Bar Ranch, off I-10 near Sonora, 888-853-2688.

MAY 30: **Devil's Sinkhole Observation and Batflight**, Devil's Sinkhole SNA, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

**BIG BEND COUNTRY**

MAY: **Bird Banding**, call for dates, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, 915-426-3337.

MAY: **Birding Tour of San Solomon Cienega and Phantom Cave Springs**, every Saturday, Balmorhea SP, Toyahvale, 915-375-2370.

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

MAY 2 & 3: **Davis Mountains Complex Celebration**, Davis

Mountains Complex, Fort Davis, 915-426-3099.

MAY 2: **Bus Tour**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 512-389-8900.

MAY 2: **Spring Walking Bird Tour**, Matagorda Island SP, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.

MAY 16: **Bus Tour**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 512-389-8900.

MAY 23, 24, 25, **Desert Survival Workshop**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 915-229-3416.

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**

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

MAY 2, 16, 30: **Lomita Ranch Tour**, Bentsen-Rio Grande SP, Mission, 956-585-1107.

MAY 2, 23: **Wildflowers and Brush Identification Tour**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, 512-786-3868.

MAY 6, 20: **Nature Tours**, Bentsen-Rio Grande SP, Mission, 956-585-1107.

MAY 9: **All About Alligators**, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, 512-786-3868.

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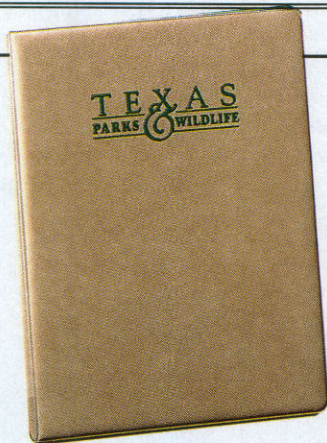
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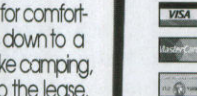
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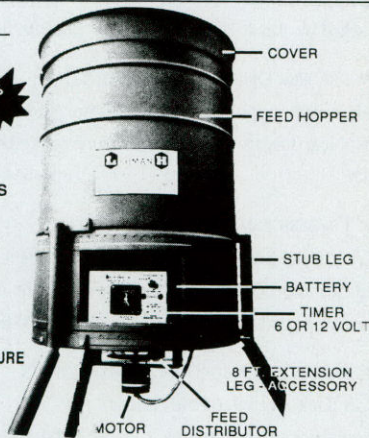
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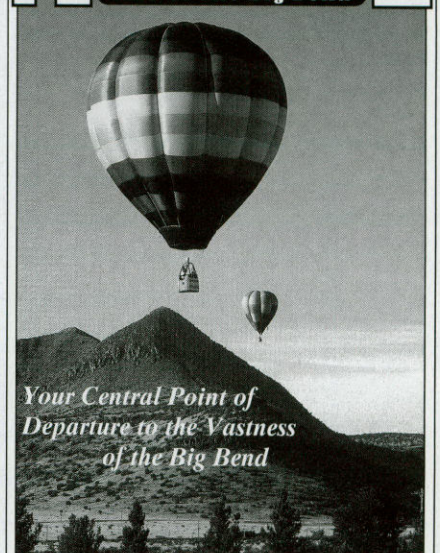
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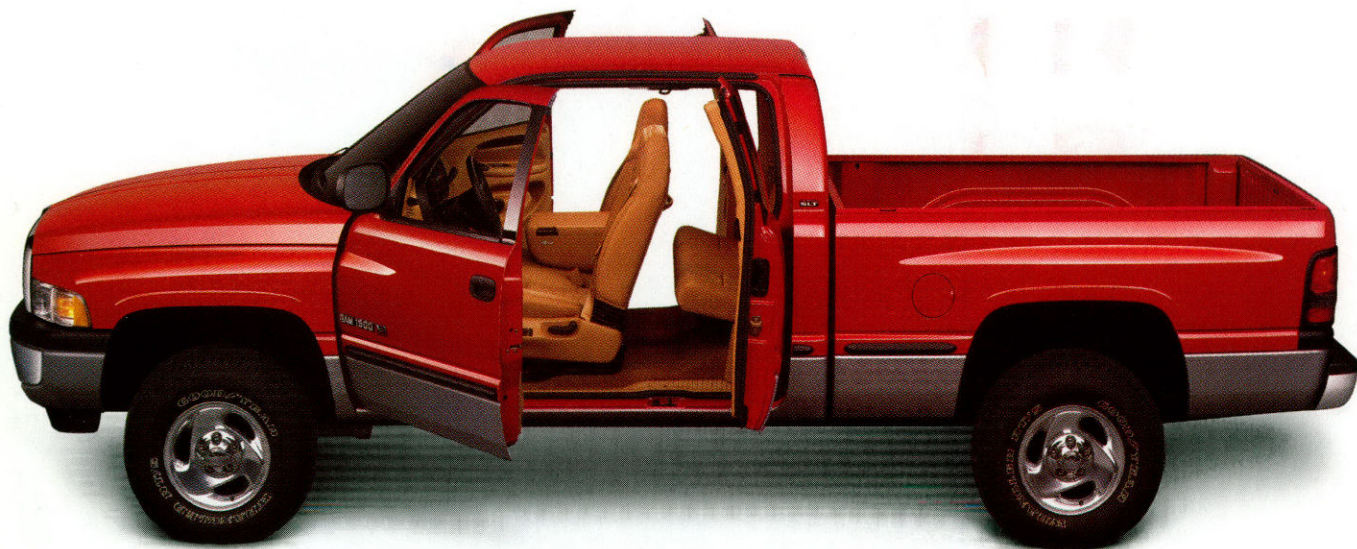


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## THE STATE BIRD OF TEXAS?

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