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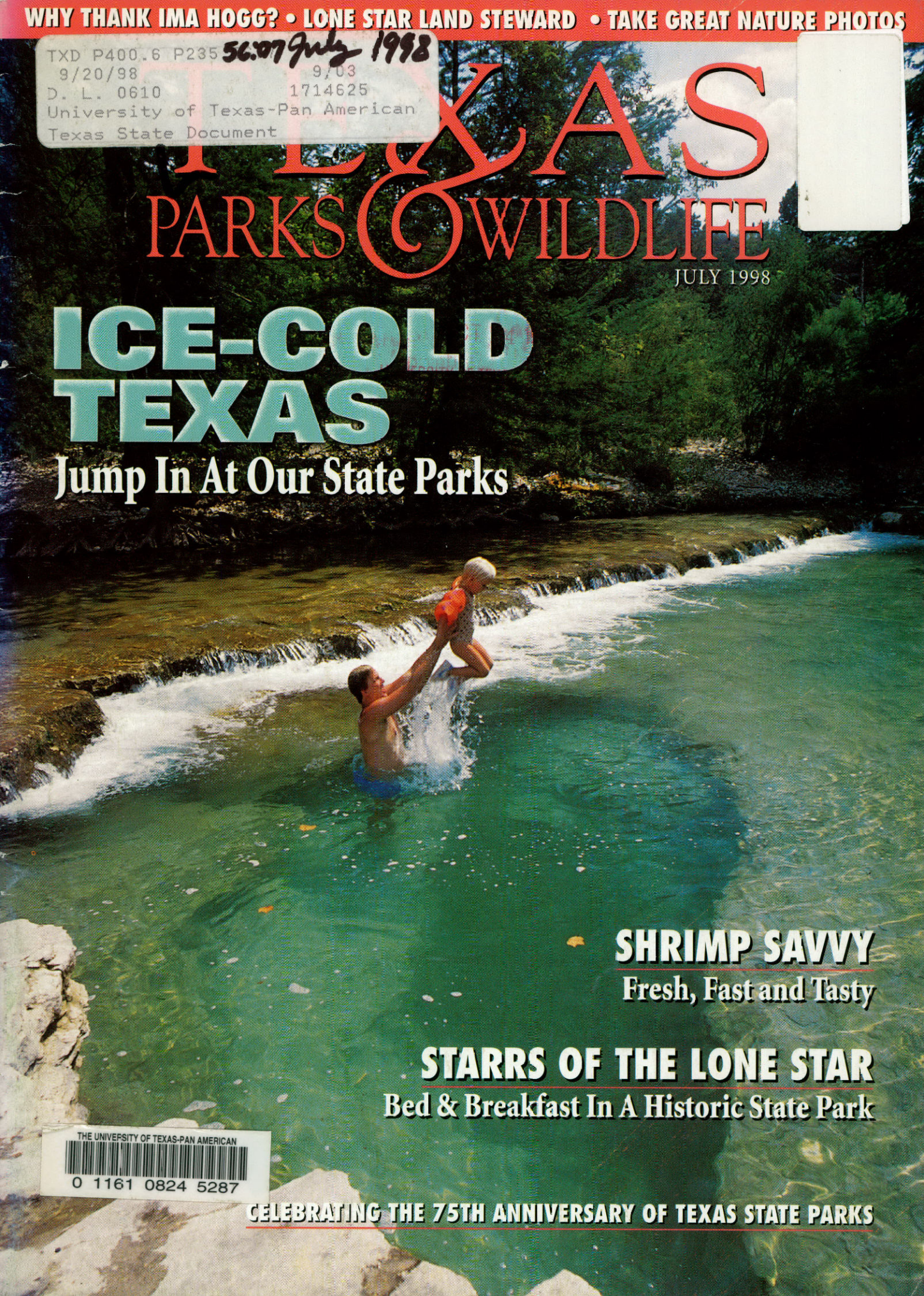
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# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

JULY 1998

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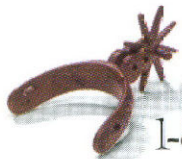
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★ GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION ★

- ★ **14 Pools of Paradise** Rising summer temperatures won't get you down when you chill down at your favorite state park swimming hole. *by Dale Weisman*
- ★ **22 Starrs of the Lone Star** Starr Family State Historical Park offers more than a routine guided tour through a state-ly old home: it gives visitors the opportunity to experience the genteel Victorian era first-hand. *by Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*
- ★ **26 Birth of the Parks** Relive the journey of the Texas State Park System, beginning with the purchase of San Jacinto Battleground in 1897, through legislation passed in 1923 and critical help from the CCC in the 1930s. *by James Wright Steely*

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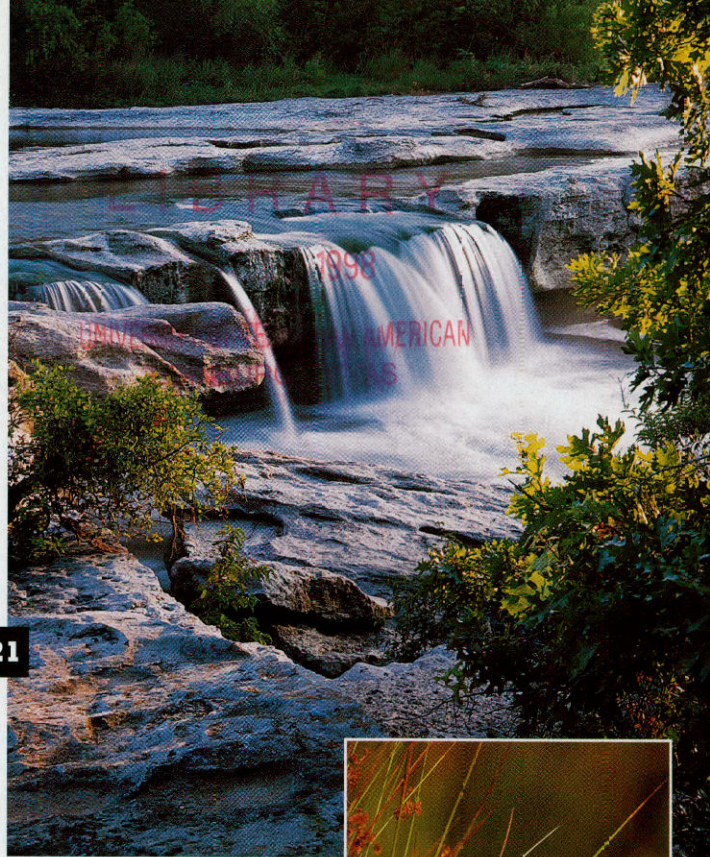
COVERS

**Front:** Take the plunge in a swimming hole this summer. This one's on the Frio River above Garner State Park. For more, see the story beginning on page 14. Photo by Earl Nottingham. Nikon FE2 camera, 24mm Nikkor lens, 1/125 second at f/11, Fujichrome 100 film.

**Inside Back:** A returning shrimp boat means a good meal is on the way for some lucky seafood connoisseurs. See pages 40 and 56. Photo © David J. Sams. Nikon F3 camera, Nikkor 300mm 2.8 lens, 1/500 second at f5.6, Fuji Provia 100 film

**Back:** Lauren Loveland knows how to cool off on a summer day in this swimming hole on Salado Creek. Photo by Earl Nottingham. Nikon FE2 camera, 24mm Nikkor lens, 1/125 second at f/16 with flash, Kodachrome film.

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



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TPWD PHOTO



© DAVID J. SAMS



Paul Mathews was 19 years old when Governor Pat Neff signed legislation creating the Texas State Park System 75 years ago. I think they would have liked each other.

In his first byline in our magazine, distinguished Texas writer Dick J. Reavis, now senior editor of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, introduces Mr. Mathews, Texas' Lone Star Land Steward of 1998. Mathews is the owner of a 100-acre native meadow in the Blackland Prairie of Texas that has never felt the plow.

When settlers from Tennessee, the Carolinas and Kentucky first broke out of the Pineywoods heading west, they confronted a sea of grass that essentially was unbroken all the way to the Rocky Mountains. Of this vast expanse at the southern reaches of the Great Plains, the Blackland Prairies of Texas comprised some 20 million acres. Today, less than 5,000 acres remain, most of the rest having been tilled in the 19th century for King Cotton. What remains is there for us today only because of the certainty that no matter what catastrophe the fickle weather of Texas might bring, the tiny remnants of unbroken sod would always produce hay for the animals.

One such place is Mathews Prairie which, thanks to Mr. Mathews' vision and generosity, is protected forever through a conservation easement he has donated to the Texas Nature Conservancy. In this partnership, Mr. Mathews continues to own and make use of his land with the certainty that its more

than 250 species of native Texas plants in their pristine state will be there forever.

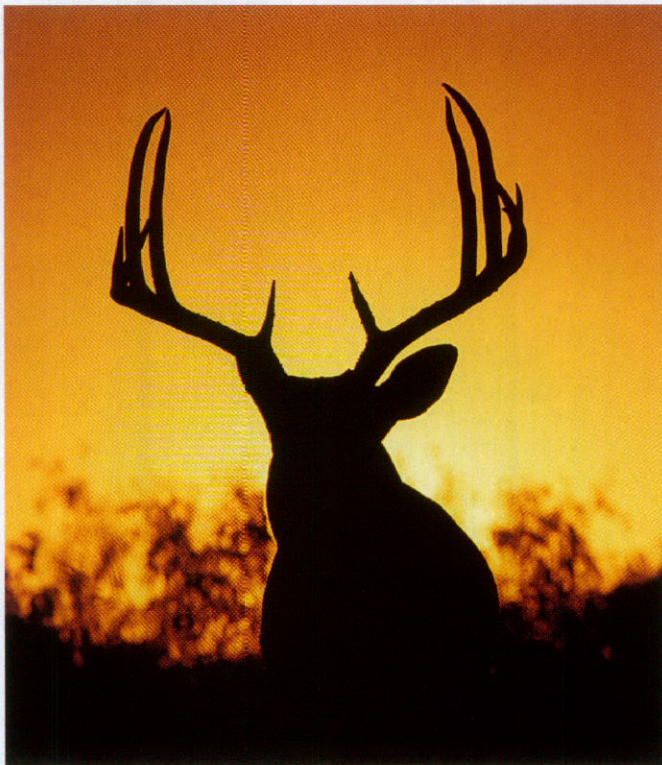
It was this same dedication to future generations that led Governor Pat Neff, with the support of newly enfranchised women in Texas and the Good Roads and Transportation Association, to establish the Texas State Park System. Few know the history of Governor Neff and the movement he led as well as Jim Steely of the Texas Historical Commission. Jim's account of events leading up to the creation of the best State Park System in America provides a fascinating insight into the unique events, people and conditions that laid the cornerstone of a great legacy, which today is enjoyed by millions each year.

I had the great privilege and honor a while back to be present at a Rotary Club meeting in Greenville, Texas, on Paul Mathews' 92nd birthday. He has not missed a meeting in 54 years. After lunch, Paul and I went quail hunting together on a North Texas meadow. I will never forget it for the rest of my life.

More than anything else, this 75th anniversary of our state parks is a time to celebrate the vision, courage, dedication and love of Texas exemplified by past leaders such as Pat Neff, of whom we have the good fortune to be reminded today by the likes of my friend Paul Mathews.

ANDREW SANSON, *Executive Director*

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



The sight of this trophy white-tailed buck should put all you deer hunters in the mood for fall. Next month we'll have a special section to kick off the upcoming hunting seasons.

SHOW ME THE FISH!

Novelist Turk Pipkin, a self-described "weekend klutz" angler, samples the fishing at Matagorda and Goose Island State Parks by dock, pier and boat. A guide to coastal state parks accompanies his account.

DARK SKIES, BRIGHT STARS

From cloudy Brazos Bend to the always-clear skies over the Davis Mountains, Ann P. White surveys state parks, looking for darkness and stars in the heavens, professional and amateur stargazers on the ground. Elaine Acker profiles the McDonald Observatory and Texan Debbie Byrd, astronomer of the airwaves.

REWARDING RECLAMATION

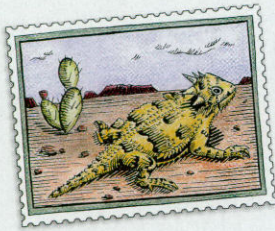
A new program administered by Texas Parks and Wildlife pays landowners for setting aside agricultural acreage to preserve rare plant and animal species. Sheryl Smith-Rodgers tells how the program has allowed a South Plains farmer, as well ranchers in the Hill Country and South Texas, to benefit by protecting wildlife.

FALL HUNTING GUIDE

A packet of four stories includes predictions for deer, fowl, and javelina populations, instructions for patterning a shotgun by Larry Hodge, an introduction to bowhunting, advice on leases and resorts, and an unusual tout for Texans: that snipe are worth hunting!

© GRADY ALLEN





HUMMING ALONG

We at *TP&W* magazine are fortunate to have both a fine mission and a rich history since the magazine's inception in 1942.

We're also fortunate to have a large, wise (and vocal!) contingent of readers, many who have been with us for decades, and let us know how well we achieve the promise stated in our name: *Texas Parks & Wildlife*.

Thanks, Mr. Tipton, for reminding us of the elegant simplicity of our mission — we're humming the same tune!

'Til next issue,

Dear Editor:

I have been a subscriber to *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine and its predecessor, *Texas Game & Fish*, for close to 40 years now, and I would like to tell you why. Most issues were packed with authoritative, factual articles and superb photographs dealing with fish and game, and then with state parks and wildlife. I not only enjoyed the magazine, I benefited from it in terms of how I dealt with the outdoors and outdoor life plus the sheer pleasure of having the knowledge.

I have two suggestions. My first suggestion is based on the adage. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" Which is a plea to channel your creativity into making good things better. In my mind, you have taken one positive step in that direction by euthanizing "Three Corners." I did not subscribe to the magazine for creative vernacularized storytelling, and in truth I was never able to read an episode all of the way through. So, good riddance.

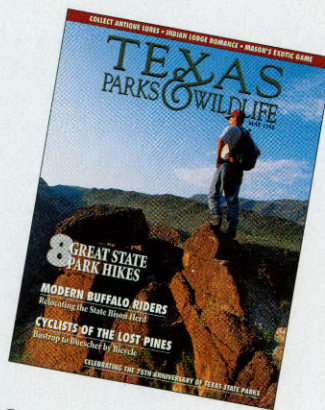
My second suggestion is to think: "Parks and Wildlife." You have an unparalleled access to both theoretical and workaday experts in the fields of parks and wildlife. It is almost a crime not to exploit that resource, and I doubt that I am singular in my desire to see the magazine filled with their knowledge and experiences. In that respect, I sincerely hope that "Legend,

Lore & Legacy," will not be another "Three Corners" in a different garb. Legends, lores and legacies are of interest and appropriate as sidebars that illuminate some article on our parks or wildlife. But as a full length feature? For my part, when I want to learn about or to investigate those types of things, I go to the library.

Nostalgia is fine, but a little goes a long way, and it is a topic that is also appropriate for sidebars. Two nostalgia articles that consume 6 1/2 pages of a single issue strikes me as a little much in a magazine devoted to Parks and Wildlife.

If you got this far, thank you for your patience, and let me close with the thought that "If it ain't broke don't fix it; think Parks and Wildlife," wouldn't make a bad mantra to hum at work! Here's to a lot more years of good, informative, entertaining, enlightening *Texas Parks & Wildlife* issues.

Charles D. Tipton  
Garland



RIISING TO THE BAIT

The story about antique lures in the May issue brought back wonderful memories of the Heddon Bait Company. I grew up in Dowagiac, Michigan, just two blocks from the Heddon factory and a block from the Heddon residence.



In 1996, a Heddon museum was opened in part of the original Heddon factory building. Here's a photo of the famous Heddon Basser bait on a sign at James Heddon Memorial Park in Dowagiac, Michigan.

Graham Schadt  
Arlington

I now know of a Texas lure made before the Mouse Bait of Fort Worth (1924). The Barnes lure or Barnes Bottle lure was made in Corsicana, Texas, in 1905. It was made by Edwin Barnes and Barney Dack Barnes and was patented (No. 830,404) on September 4, 1906.

I am trying to locate any relatives of these two men. I will greatly appreciate it if anyone who has information about them, or about any Texas lure, will contact me at P. O. Box 1405, Boerne, TX 78006.

Colby Sorrells  
Boerne

DIFFERENT VIEWS ON MASON MOUNTAIN WMA

The article about Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area (May) was great. I'd love to see the place, it sounds wonderful. The crusty benefactor did a great thing. I'd love to volunteer just to be able to see Mason Mountain WMA.

Hats off for the wonderful job y'all are doing.

Rochelle Murray  
Lake Jackson

I have always had mixed feelings about the fact that Texas has so little public land. While I appreciate our Texas spirit of individualism and private property ownership, I am also frustrated by the lack of hunting opportunities for those of us who cannot afford to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars for a lease. That is why I found the article about Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area so alarming.

Mr. Schwertner, the biologist in charge of managing Mason Mountain, stated that "I don't manage this area as a hunting area." Instead he wants to manage the area for nonconsumptive users. Meanwhile, the exotic stock that was on the ranch when it was turned over to the TPWD are being sold to pay for native ecosystems research as well as these nonconsumptive programs. According to the article, all of the exotics eventually will be removed.

It hardly seems fair to tightly limit (with plans to eliminate) a unique opportunity for hunters, in a state with few such opportunities, especially since "consumptive users" provide the vast majority of TPWD's funding through license sales, user fees, etc. The success of the Texas Exotic Safari and Texas Grand Slam programs have demonstrated that funding can be generated while still providing quality public land hunting. Can't consumptive and nonconsumptive users coexist without jeopardizing the integrity



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# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

JULY 1998, Vol. 56, No. 7

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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

G. Elaine Acker, Larry D. Hodge, Steve Lightfoot, Rob McCorkle, Earl Nottingham

### ADVERTISING SALES

JIM STONE, *Advertising Director, 512-912-7007*

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### MAGAZINE OFFICES

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of Mason Mountain?

The Mason Mountain article seems to suggest the beginning of a dangerous trend for TPWD. Hunting is being set aside in favor of more politically correct outdoor activities. Hunting already seems to receive far less attention in your magazine than nonconsumptive sports. I hope this is not an omen of times to come.

Mike McCurdy,  
Waxahachie

■ T. Wayne Schwertner, Area Manager, Mason Mountain WMA replies: "I appreciate Mr. McCurdy's concerns. There is ample evidence indicating that some species of exotic wildlife directly compete with native species. While TPWD recognizes the popularity of exotic hunting, when faced with a choice between increased exotic hunting opportunity and potential damage to the native wildlife resource, it is our legal obligation and responsibility as wildlife professionals to decide in favor of the resource.

"Hunting will always be a valuable tool in wildlife management, and there are no plans to discontinue hunting on the area. Because of the unique circumstances under which Mason Mountain WMA operates, managing the area is a series of balances and tradeoffs. Every management decision we make on the area is based on this simple question: 'In the long run, will this benefit the wildlife resource?'"

WORTH EVERY PENNY

➤ Last year I purchased a Texas Conservation Passport. At the time I hesitated to spend the extra money. I had a Passport from the previous year that cost \$25, and the new one at \$50 seemed a little much. We've enjoyed Texas State Parks for several years, so I went ahead and spent the money.

We've camped in several state parks since then and haven't had a bad experience. Last spring we were returning from a family spring break trip that was essentially rained out. We decided to stop at Atlanta State Park for the night and continue home the next day.

When I got to the park I was tired and ready to stop and didn't really care where. The park ranger greeted me like a long-lost family member and made me feel like I was home! Within minutes I felt uplifted and ready to tackle anything. I found myself sharing the troubles of the previous five days and discovered that they were melting away.

This was by far the most hospitable gentleman I've ever met. I decided on the spot that the \$50 I spent on the Conservation Passport was worth every

penny. I enjoyed his enthusiasm so much, we spent an extra day in his park.

The park is a gem and so is the ranger. Kudos to the staff of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for the finest state park system I've ever encountered.

Bill Beattie  
Flower Mound

TUFTS FOR THE TITMOUSE

On April 3, the day before the opening of spring gobbler season, my wife Judy and I and our ranch partners, J.T. and Oradell McMahon, were out enjoying the beautiful day and wildflowers at our Hamilton County ranch.

We stopped in a motte of large live oaks. J.T. noticed what he initially thought was a raccoon on a large limb nearby. A second look revealed it was a gray fox curled up on the limb.

To our astonishment, a tufted titmouse was perched on the fox's back, pulling out fur as fast as it could. The fox didn't move a muscle during the 10 minutes we watched from 15 to 20 feet away.

The titmouse continued to pluck fur even though its beak was so full it began to lose as much as it gained. It eventually flew off with a fur ball about half its own

size and delivered it to its mate at the top of a tree.

As luck would have it we did not have a camera. I wonder whether the fox tolerated this behavior because of our close proximity, hoping we would not see him if he remained still. Or did the bird just get lucky? Or could this have been a symbiotic relationship that benefited both during the bird's nesting and the fox's shedding period?

Whatever the case, we were fortunate to have witnessed one of nature's unique situations.

Ray Cromer  
Horseshoe Bay

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

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# Trail Mix

Edited by Mary-Love Bigony

## Diamonds in the Rough Country

If the state parks are Texas' crown jewels," said Penny Bartnicki of TPWD's Wildlife Division, "the wildlife management areas are her uncut gems." Bartnicki said the 50-year-old WMA system long has been known for its exceptional hunting. Less well known, however, are the spectacular wildlife viewing, primitive camping, bicycling, hiking and fishing to be found in the ecologically diverse WMAs.

While most Texas travelers have visited one or more of the 123 state parks, many have yet to explore the less developed, wilder WMAs set aside for wildlife management and research, as well as recreational opportunities, said Bartnicki, WMA coordinator.

While WMAs offer fewer amenities than state parks, they offer exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities and a more natural outdoor experience away from the hum of many state park campgrounds. Don't expect restrooms, drinking water or trash receptacles at most WMAs. In addition, many wildlife management areas are not staffed, so visitors should call first.

A new brochure on WMAs is now available free to the public by calling the TPWD Wildlife Information Line at 512-389-4505. The booklet contains a brief narrative on the history and purpose of the state's WMAs, as well as a list of WMAs, the outdoor recreational opportunities offered at each and a locator map. Up-to-date information on WMA access, recreational opportunities and travel directions also may be obtained by calling 1-800-492-1112 or by logging onto TPWD's website: <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)>

*Peach Point Wildlife Management Area offers hiking, bicycling and wildlife viewing on the Texas coast. For a brochure about WMAs call 512-389-4505.*



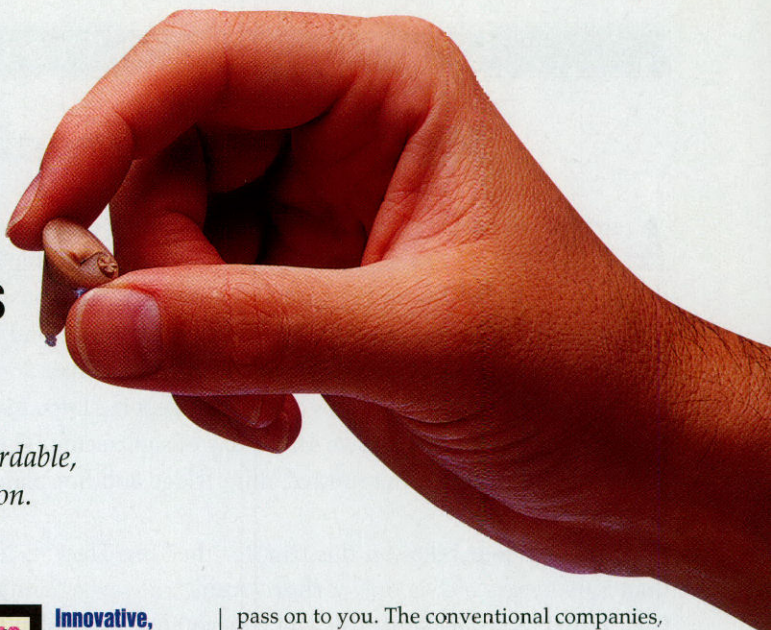
## Champion Trees

A pecan tree with a crown spread that's big enough to shade seven tennis courts holds the number-one spot in the "biggest crown spread" division of American Forests' 1998-99 *National Register of Big Trees*. Located in Weatherford, west of Fort Worth, the mighty pecan is 118 feet tall, 251 inches in girth with a crown spread of 159 feet.

The new register also lists Texas as the number-three state with the most national champion trees, behind Florida and California. And there is a sobering reminder that even giant trees are vulnerable to man and the elements. The number-three crown-spread champ, a coast live oak in California, was toppled by an El Niño-spawned storm just as the register went to press. And the champion American elm in Kansas was firebombed.

For more information about the National Register of Big Trees contact American Forests, 910 17th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, 202-955-4500. Or visit their website at [www.amfor.org](http://www.amfor.org).





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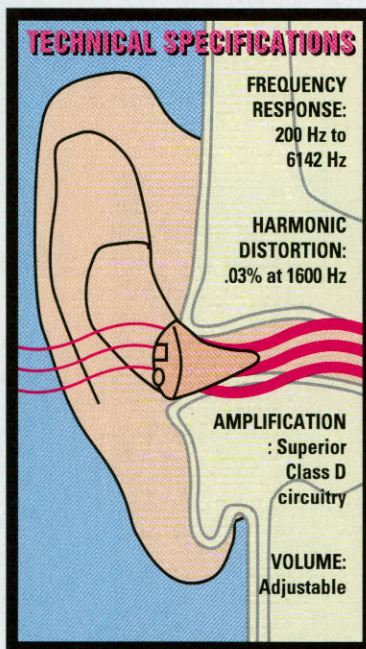
by Harold Sturman

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!"

**No one will know.** Jill was right. Crystal Ear is different—not the bulky, old-styled body-worn or over-the-ear aid, but an advanced personal sound system so small it's like contacts for your ears. And Crystal Ear is super-sensitive and powerful, too. You will hear sounds your ears have been missing for years. Crystal Ear will make speech louder, and the sound is pure and natural.

I couldn't believe how tiny it is. It is smaller than the tip of my little finger and it's almost invisible when worn. There are no wires, no behind-the-ear devices. Put it in your ear and its ready-to-wear mold fits comfortably. Since it's not too loud or too tight, you may even forget that you're wearing it! Use it at work or at play. And if your hearing problem is worse in certain situations, use Crystal Ear only when you need it.

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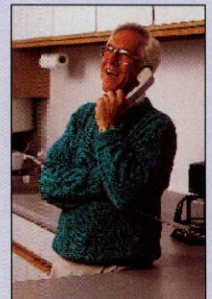
*Hearing loss, which typically begins prior to teenage years, progresses throughout one's lifetime. Nearly 90 percent of people suffering the type of loss Crystal Ear was designed for choose to leave the problem untreated. Crystal Ear is now available to help these people treat their hearing loss with a small and very affordable Class I in-the-canal hearing amplifier.*

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.

**You'll feel years younger!** Wear Crystal Ear indoors, outdoors, at home and at work. Crystal Ear arrives ready to use, complete with batteries, two different fitting sleeves, a cleaning brush and even a carrying case. Crystal Ear is a breakthrough advance in the hearing device field. It is made in the USA, using state-of-the-art micro-manufacturing techniques that cut costs dramatically—savings that we can

pass on to you. The conventional companies, domestic and foreign, don't like that! **Don't be fooled by high prices.** No hearing device, no matter how expensive, can eliminate background noise, despite claims by the manufacturers. Crystal Ear does not promise miracles—just an affordable, sound solution to many common hearing problems.

**DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...**



*"My father spent over \$5000 on another brand. I showed him my Crystal Ear, he tried it, and he decided it worked better than his brand, even though it was a small fraction of the cost!"*

*"It's so easy to put in and out of my ear... I just twist it. It's small and the tone matches my ear, so I can look in my mirror and not even see it in my ear. I'm very happy about that. In fact, no one has ever commented... I don't think anyone realizes."*

—Satisfied Crystal Ear users

**Risk-free.** Try Crystal Ear and hear what you've been missing. It comes with a 90-day manufacturer's limited warranty as well as our risk-free home trial. If you're not satisfied, return it within 30 days for a full refund.

**Crystal Ear®:**

**Three credit-card payments of \$99.95** \$19 S&H  
If not purchasing a pair, please specify right or left ear.

Please mention promotional code **4012-13519**.

For fastest service, call toll-free 24 hours a day

**800-992-2966**



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	MOST IN-CANAL BRANDS	CRYSTAL EAR
Require fitting	Yes	No
Require testing	Yes	No
Battery life	160 hours	320 hours
Impact resistance	Average	Excellent
Whistling/feedback	Frequent	Limited
Telephone use	Yes	Excellent
Retail price	\$1,000-2,000	\$299.85



### Habitat for Serenity

A restful oasis awaits guests at "The Habitat," a seven-acre wildlife haven on the Lamar Peninsula. Owned and managed by Wayne and Robin Nugent, the Habitat's three log cabins nestle on the banks of a two-acre lake bustling with deer, wild turkeys, egrets, blue herons, kingfishers, hummingbirds and ducks.

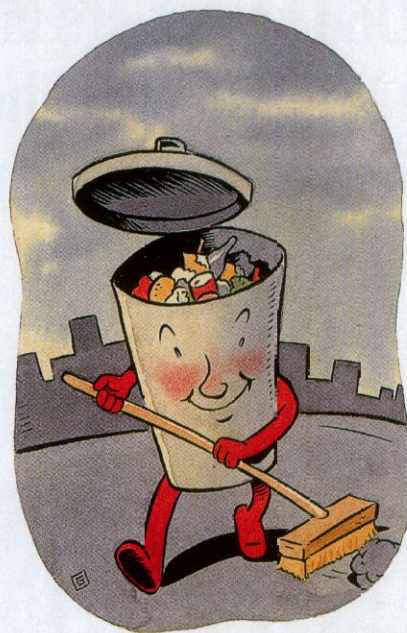
Each cabin sports a screened porch with comfy seating and a spacious interior with a bed on the main floor plus one or two sleeping lofts. An air conditioner and a ceiling fan will cool you down after a day of sightseeing. The kitchen is appointed with a coffeemaker, microwave, mini fridge and hot plate, in addition to the outdoor grill.

Take along your bikes on this trip, for the "Big Tree," a coastal live oak more than 1,000 years old, is only a short, scenic ride away along the edge of the St. Charles Bay. Another short ride will take you to Goose Island State Park or to the bordering Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

For information on the Habitat, call Wayne and Robin Nugent at 512-729-2362 or write to them at the Habitat, P.O. Box 282, Fulton, TX 78358.



© JOHN JEFFERSON



### Houston, We Have a Cleanup

Houston will be the site of Keep Texas Beautiful's 31st annual convention, July 7-10.

The four-day program will feature a variety of new community improvement ideas and workshops. Attendees will learn how to plan effective campaigns in their own communities for the Great Texas Trash-Off, Lake and River Cleanup, Keep American Beautiful Month, Texas Recycles Day and Use Less Stuff Day.

For more information call 512-478-2640.

### Kids Get Greenbacks for Green Grants

Teachers, schools and school organizations interested in pursuing imaginative environmental education projects for the 1998-99 school year can apply for Environmental Challenge grants available from the Texas General Land Office.

Next fall's grant awards will mark the ninth year of the program. Cash grants

from \$100 to \$750 will be available, with a total of \$25,000 to be awarded. More than 30 elementary, middle and high schools from across the state receive the grants each year.

The Environmental Challenge is funded by HEB Grocery Company and administered by the Texas General Land Office in conjunction with the nonprofit Texas

Conservation Fund.

The deadline for applications is October 8. Grants will be awarded in November. For application forms or more information call the General Land office at 512-463-5169 or 210-616-0674. Applications are available on the GLO's website and can be sent through the website as well at [www.glo.state.tx.us](http://www.glo.state.tx.us).





© CRADY ALLEN

## El Niño Brings Fowl Weather

According to Ducks Unlimited, an estimated 92 million ducks flew south in 1997, the largest fall flight in decades.

"This is due in large part to a series of unusually wet years on the birds' prairie breeding grounds," said DU executive vice president Matthew Connolly, "but the habitat work of Ducks Unlimited and other conservation groups all over North America has played a vital role as well. Precipitation is important, but precipitation combined with quality habitat is the magic combination to increasing waterfowl populations."

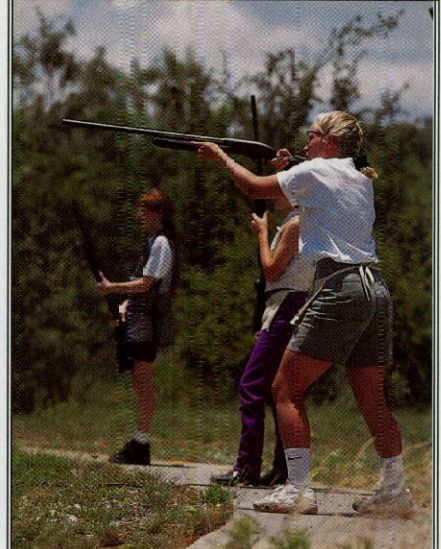
## The Warden Chronicles

*"But warden, Mom said never use electric appliances on the water!"*

While patrolling Lake Belton, Capt. Louis Washington witnessed four youths using a gas-powered yard blower to motor around the lake on a rubber raft. After Capt. Washington talked to the youths, they decided to take the rubber raft and yard blower off the lake. They told Washington they had planned to use an electric blower, but their extension cord wasn't long enough.



## Did You Know?



© LARRY D. HODGE

About 7.5 million women actively participate in target-shooting sports, an increase of 80 percent since 1988.

According to Fortune magazine, more Americans take vacations to go birding than to play golf.

Turkeys can fly up to 55 m.p.h. for short distances, and up to 35 m.p.h. for sustained flights of a mile or more.

In the 1850s, the U.S. War Department imported camels into Texas to use as pack animals during the Indian Wars.

Texans spent more than \$7 billion on wildlife-related recreation in 1996, second only to Californians.

American Indians put up gourds to attract purple martins. The birds acted as an alarm to warn of any marauding animals that might steal food set out to dry.

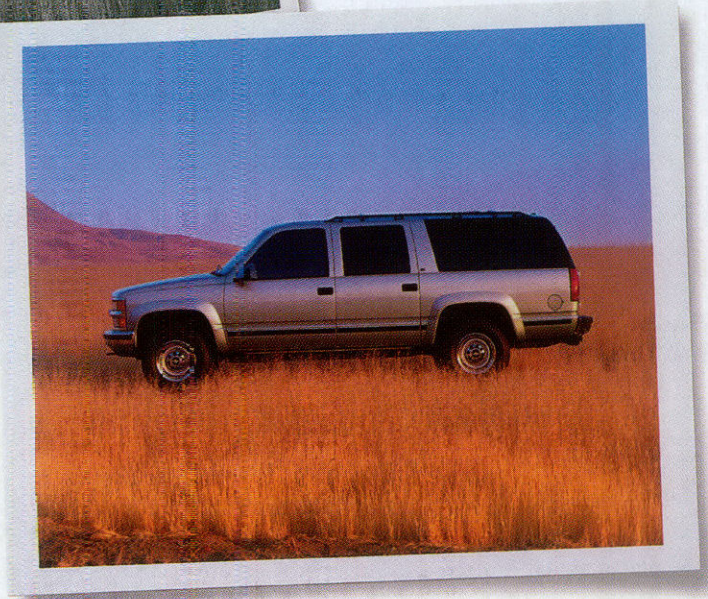




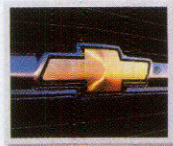
*The largest  
sport utility vehicle  
on the face  
of the planet.*

*Always was.*

*Still is.*



CHEVY™ SUBURBAN®



LIKE A ROCK



# STATE PARK Scrapbook

## Honoring Miss Ima

BY ARLINDA ABBOTT



“Ima dear,” wrote friend and fellow antiques collector Katharine Murphy, “you are being such a blazing trail of good deeds and leaving the world a little better for being here.” Miss Ima Hogg, the only daughter of former Governor James Stephen Hogg, certainly left the Texas State Park System “a little better.” When she was in her 60s, 70s and 80s, Miss Ima was instrumental in the donation and development of three state parks — Jim Hogg State Park in Rusk, Varner-Hogg Plantation in West Columbia and Governor Hogg Shrine in Quitman. High-spirited and energetic throughout her long life, she humbly claimed, “I keep too many irons in the fire to be excellent in anything, but I must say I have a good time.”

Acting for the betterment of the people of Texas instead of commemorating her father was Miss Ima’s intent in all her endeavors. “Our family had innumerable opportunities to memorialize our father, which we always eschewed ... for we

felt it more becoming to let his life and career be his own memorial.”

Ima Hogg and her brothers purchased the acreage in Rusk called Mountain Home, where her father was born, with the understanding it would be a county park for recreation. In 1941, the county deeded the old Hogg Homestead of 178 acres to the State of Texas. The Texas Legislature accepted and agreed to develop and beautify the park and erect a replica of the original Hogg Homestead, which had burned in 1936. Miss Ima adamantly protested. A true preservationist, she admitted, “I think the probable reason I do not get excited about rebuilding a house which I have never seen, is ... reconstruction is ‘doubtful.’ It has been my position from the start, a greater honor would be conferred on my father’s memory by building a recreation hall for the public to enjoy.”

The most ambitious of Miss Ima’s state park projects was

Ima Hogg ca. 1900

COURTESY IMA HOGG PAPERS, CN03832, CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY,  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.





COURTESY IMA HOGG PAPERS, CH00997, CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.



COURTESY FRANKLIN PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTION, 046986, CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.



HOGG MANSION - WEST COLUMBIA, TEXAS

POSTCARD COURTESY JULIANN POOL

Top: "THE VARNER," before restoration.

Top right: VARNER-HOGG after restoration, ca. 1958.

Above: THE JIM HOGG RESIDENCE (Honeymoon Cottage) in 1873.

Right: THE JIM HOGG RESIDENCE (Honeymoon Cottage) after restoration.



TWD PHOTO

the restoration, furnishing and interpretation of the Varner Plantation in West Columbia, which her father bought in 1901. She proposed to donate "the Varner," including 50 acres of land for a state park, in 1956. The gift came with stipulations — she would put the buildings in first-class condition at her own expense and would set aside an endowment to be used for maintenance and capital improvements.

Miss Ima's greatest challenge at Varner was furnishing the "big house," dining room and kitchen, "to give the visitor a

respect for the chronological development of our social, economic and political life as it has developed under the six flags." She did have a "good time" outfitting the buildings, but was discriminating in her choice of artifacts and scrupulous in her acquisition transactions. In May 1952, the Hitching Post Antique Shop in Dallas invoiced her for several items totaling \$262.75. Her secretary wrote the company stating "Miss Ima Hogg approved payment ... with the exception of the item of \$5.00 for mending the finger on Meissen Musical Group. Miss Hogg made the fol-

lowing notation: 'or ... your bill — unfortunately, the finger is still missing! Some mistake.'" When Miss Ima ordered a manikin from the New Style Studio in New York City, she specified it to represent a young woman, 25 years old, five feet, two inches tall with light brown hair parted in the center. All details concerning materials and construction were discussed through lengthy correspondence. She obviously was not satisfied with the final product. In April 1958, Ima wrote friend Mary Hill, "The exquisite fichu [shoulder scarf] just makes the costume for the





COURTESY IMA HOGG PAPERS, CH070350, CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



COURTESY IMA HOGG PAPERS, CH070350, CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

*Above: MISS IMA playing the piano that belonged to her grandmother in the refurbished parlor of the Honeymoon Cottage, Governor Hogg Shrine State Park, 1952*

*Left: Photograph of a painting of Ima Hogg, 1955, about the time she was actively restoring Varner-Hogg Plantation in West Columbia and the Honeymoon Cottage in Quitman.*

mother in the front room — and I only wish she were a better manikin to go with it.” She was particular about every detail because she wanted to leave Varner-Hogg in “apple-pie condition!”

In the 1950s, Miss Ima directed the restoration and refurnishing of the Honeymoon Cottage, the first home of James Stephen Hogg and his bride, Sarah Ann Stinson. She restored her Grandfather Stinson’s home in the 1960s with equal enthusiasm. Both houses were moved to the Governor Hogg Shrine State Park in Quitman from other locations.

Finally, in 1969, when Miss Hogg was 85 years old, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department honored her by building and furnishing The Miss Ima Hogg Museum at the state park in Quitman. At the dedication Miss Ima proclaimed, “How does one say thank you! I wish I knew how. When I think of the time, effort and generosity that you have put into this beautiful Museum which bears my name, I am overwhelmed... Please accept my profound gratitude for your tribute.”

Miss Ima’s generosity is unparalleled in Texas. How do we say thank you? ★

## ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

### JULY

#### PANHANDLE-PLAINS

**July 4:** 75th Anniversary Celebration, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, 806-488-2227

#### PINEYWOODS

**July 4:** Texian Celebration, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 903-683-2561

**July 19:** Outlaw Boat Race, Atlanta SP, Atlanta, 903-796-6476

**July 28:** Music of the Past Display, Governor Hogg Shrine SHP, Quitman, 903-763-2701

#### HILL COUNTRY

**July 4:** Independence Day Celebration, Admiral Nimitz Museum & Historical Center SHP, Fredericksburg, 830-997-4379

#### GULF COAST

**July 4:** Beach Bash, Sea Rim SP, Sabine Pass, 409-971-2559

#### SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

**July 4:** Coca Cola Concert, Lake Casa Blanca International SP, Laredo, 956-725-3826

**July 12:** Fun in the Sun Run, Choke Canyon SP/South Shore Unit, Three Rivers, 512-786-3538

### AUGUST

#### PINEYWOODS

**Aug. 8:** Celebration at Lake Raven, Huntsville SP, Huntsville, 409-295-5644

**Aug. 8:** 75th Anniversary Celebration, Tyler SP, Tyler, 903-597-5338

#### HILL COUNTRY

**Aug. 1:** Lava Fest, McKinney Falls SP, Austin, 512-243-1643

**Aug. 5:** Roy B. Inks Birthday Celebration, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223

**Aug. 12:** Meteor Shower, Enchanted Rock SNA, Fredericksburg, 915-247-3903

**Aug. 22:** Bat Flight at Green Cave, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342

*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.*



DALE WEISMAN

# POOLS OF PARADISE

Once in a lifetime, if one is lucky,  
one so merges with the sunlight  
and air and running water that whole eons,  
the eons that mountains and deserts know,  
might pass in a single afternoon  
without discomfort."

LOREN EISELEY, *The Immense Journey*

Summertime abounds with simple pleasures: backyard barbecues, homemade ice cream, Fourth of July picnics, fresh peaches and garden tomatoes. But come August, any shred of nostalgia shrivels up in the scorching Texas sun. Here come the dog days, muggy nights and mosquito bites. Not a cloud in sight. Air-conditioning bills soar. No rain. Lawns turn toasty brown. Still no rain. It's 9 a.m. and already 90 degrees.

Thankfully, there's a cooling antidote to Texas' summer heat that's more satisfying than cranking down the thermostat. Simply do what Native Americans, pioneers and settlers did long before the advent of air conditioners and frozen margaritas: laze away the hottest days at your favorite swimming hole — perhaps a spring-fed oasis like Spicewood Springs in Colorado Bend State Park.

"Spicewood Springs is the best series of swimming holes in the park," says Robert Basse, superintendent of Colorado Bend. Here, spring-nourished Spicewood Creek tumbles through a craggy canyon in an ever-flowing chain of pools and falls. The largest pool, a stream-polished travertine basin a half-mile hike in from the visitor's center, brims with burbling springwater.

## NEAL'S SWIMMING HOLE

*This swimming hole just upstream of Garner State Park demonstrates why the icy-clear Frio River is simply irresistible on a scorching summer day.*







© RICHARD REYNOLDS





© STEVEN D. GLENN



A jaunt to a swimming hole like Spicewood Springs does more than cool the body. It renews the soul. For countless kids, a foolhardy plunge into some rock-quarry pool or algae-encrusted stock tank remains a rite of passage, a natural part of growing up in the spirit of Tom Sawyer. "If you grew up without a swimming hole," observed the late travel writer Ann Ruff, "you missed a wonderful part of adolescence. A clean, chlorinated concrete pool just doesn't do a thing for nostalgia. It's those memories of your private place that linger forever."

For grownups, a swimming hole can offer a much-needed respite from frenzied gridlock, blinking cursors, shrinking cubicles, beepers, cell phones — all the tethers of urban life.

For a blessed afternoon, you're free to dawdle, unwind and go with the flow.

Chances are, you won't need to drive far to find your Blue Lagoon. Texas' springs, rivers and reservoirs overflow with delightful swimming holes. Among the legendary meccas are Barton Springs Pool (Austin's "soul of a city"), Hamilton Pool and Krause Springs in the hills west of Austin, New Braunfels' Comal River ("the world's shortest river") and the venerable Blue Hole of Wimberley. Rivaling these municipal, county and privately owned pools and parks are prime swimming holes throughout the Texas state park system.

Granted, you can make a splash at nearly half of Texas's 123 state parks if you include Gulf shore beaches, manmade lakes and manmade swimming pools. The choice narrows considerably, however, if you yearn for a quintessential hole like

Spicewood Springs. Broadly speaking, a swimming hole is a natural, unimproved waterway. It can be a "blue hole" in a creek or a lazy bend of a river; a set of riffles, rapids and stair-stepping waterfalls; a small spillway on a creek; a secluded cove on a reservoir; and best of all, a resurging spring.

I, for one, prefer the *laissez faire* ambiance of a swimming hole over a chlorinated swimming pool or a water theme park. Fun as they may be, artificial water-

*For grownups, a swimming hole can offer a much-needed respite from frenzied gridlock, blinking cursors, shrinking cubicles, beepers, cell phones — all the tethers of urban life.*

ways don't soothe me with the rugged beauty and quietude of a natural pool. The complete swimming hole can have all the trappings of a Mountain Dew commercial: knotted rope swings, diving cliffs and flotillas of inner-tubers drifting merrily downstream. But for my tastes, a quiet, shady setting and a smooth limestone ledge within foot-dangling reach of an

aquifer-chilled pool are sufficient amenities. In such a paradise of water and rock, shadow and sunlight, to quote Norman Mclean, "Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it."

People frequent swimming hole for all sorts of pleasures: to wade and float, sun and soak, splash and frolic, jump and dive, see and be seen. With the exception of concrete-lined, spring-fed pools like Balmorhea State Park, the irregular contours of most water holes invite more lollygagging than regimented lap swimming. Scuba divers and snorkelers frequent the chilly depths of Inks Lake and Balmorhea. Then there are those — and I am one — who enjoy nothing more than sitting at water's edge in the company of a good book like John Graves' *Goodbye to A River*.

Places like the Frio River in Garner State

## GARNER STATE PARK

Longtime favorite Garner is especially appealing in the summer. Massive cypress trees line the crystal-clear river, which promises a refreshing respite from the heat.

## HAVE A SAFE TEXAS-FRIENDLY TIME

- ★ Swim at your own risk; there are no lifeguards on duty at state park swimming holes.
- ★ Adults are responsible for minor children; pre-school children, as well as older kids with marginal swimming skills, should wear personal flotation devices.
- ★ Check at the park entrance for information on weather and water conditions; watch for rising water and strong currents.
- ★ Protect your feet from rocks; wear old tennis shoes, water sport shoes or sandals.
- ★ Protect your skin from sunburn; apply adequate sunblock.
- ★ No skinny dipping or public nudity allowed in state parks.
- ★ Don't trespass on private property that may be adjacent to state park property.
- ★ No glass containers near the water; no public consumption of alcohol.
- ★ Jumping and diving into natural waterways is not recommended and may be prohibited in some state parks.
- ★ Keep dogs on leashes; at some parks, like McKinney Falls, pets are not allowed in the water.
- ★ Respect others' desire for peace and quiet; leave portable radios and tape players at home.
- ★ Stay on existing trails on and around swimming holes; avoid trampling vegetation and disturbing wildlife.
- ★ Follow the conservation golden rule: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time."





BILL REAVES

Park, the Paluxy River in Dinosaur Valley State Park and the upper and lower falls in McKinney Falls State Park can bustle with boisterous humanity at high summer, then come winter they're enveloped in serenity. Other spots — like the hauntingly wild Devil's Waterhole at Inks Lake and secluded holes along the Pedernales, South Llano and Guadalupe rivers — appeal to contemplative souls for whom swimming, hiking and nature observation go hand in hand. If you're quiet and patient, you can observe abundant wildlife around water holes. At dawn or dusk, sit in solitude for an hour or two near a spring or creek, and you'll likely see white-tailed deer, armadillos, raccoons, porcupines, skunks, snakes and all manner of avian life.

**T**exas' life-sustaining springs and rivers were traditional gathering spots for ancient and historic Native Americans, as well as the invading Spaniards, Mexicans and Anglo-Americans who settled, ranched and farmed in their wake. Enduring settlements sprang up near dependable resurgences, gushers such as Comal, San Marcos, San Felipe and Barton Springs. Doubtless, 19th-century Texans favored their waterways as much as we do today, but for more pragmatic reasons. Water meant life — for crops, livestock, people — and recreation was secondary to survival. To be sure, pioneers and set-

### BLUE HOLE

*Located on Cypress Creek near Wimberly, left, the Blue Hole has been a favorite swimming spot since the 1920s. After a dip here, try nearby Blanco State Park and Pedernales Falls State Park.*

### GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK

*Swimmers enjoy this park, right, located on the quiet and scenic upper Guadalupe River. The park has four miles of river frontage framed by steep-walled canyons.*



tlers cooled off at swimming holes, but they probably didn't practice the butterfly stroke.

"The ability to swim wasn't very widespread or common during the 19th century and even earlier," explains Jerry Sullivan, an interpretive planner for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "Swimming is something that we more or less take for granted today. Prior to this century, there were a lot of folks, including sailors, who really didn't know how to swim."

Even nowadays, swimming in a natural body of water entails risk, regardless of one's abilities. Visitors to all state park swimming holes must understand that they truly swim at their own risk, without benefit of lifeguards. A case in point is Pedernales Falls State Park, where the notoriously flash flood-prone

Pedernales claims lives with tragic frequency. The last drowning occurred in January 1998 above the falls.

Prominent signs warn visitors, "River Will Flash Flood. If Water Begins Rising Leave River Immediately." Although swimming is prohibited within the first three miles of the picturesque falls area, the best spots open for water fun extend from the park's picnic area downstream to the camping area—an idyllic stretch for inner tubing, frolicking in the gentle rapids or kicking back along sandy beaches in the shade of towering cypresses.

"When you come swimming here, you have to be aware of the weather conditions. You may not get a drop of rain

where you are, but a downpour in the Pedernales watershed can bring on a

flood," says Rob Trippet, assistant park superintendent. The flood warning sirens near the river recently came down because loss of life continued even when the sirens functioned perfectly. "So when you swim here," he concludes, "you do so completely at your own risk."

The threats are myriad: rampant urban development, habitat destruction, pollution, littering, even mindless graffiti.

McKinney Falls State Park southeast of Austin provides an object lesson in how a natural swimming area can be lost—and saved. During the 1970s, park visitors swam in the jade-green pools below

*Ironically, the natural beauty as well as the environmental quality of these beloved and picturesque swimming holes are at risk—not from flooding but from humanity.*



© RICHARD REYNOLDS



# TAKE THE PLUNGE IN TEXAS STATE PARKS!

## West Texas

**[1]**

BALMORHEA STATE PARK  
P.O. Box 15  
TOYAHVALE, TX 79786  
915-375-2370

*Texas' largest pool (1 3/4-acre surface area) fed by cool artesian waters of San Solomon Springs.*

**[2]**

CAPROCK CANYONS STATE PARK  
P.O. Box 204  
QUITAQUE, TX 79225  
806-455-1492

*Small lake (120 surface acres when full!) with swim beach in a Technicolor escarpment setting.*

**[3]**

DEVILS RIVER STATE NATURAL AREA  
HCR 1, Box 513  
DEL RIO, TX 78840  
210-395-2133

*A devil to get to but worth the effort to wade in the river and soak up majestic canyon scenery.*

## Central Texas

**[4]**

BLANCO STATE PARK  
P.O. Box 493  
BLANCO, TX 78606  
210-833-4333

*Gentle, spring-fed stretch of Blanco River with low-water dams and cascading spillways.*

**[5]**

COLORADO BEND STATE PARK  
P.O. Box 118  
BEND, TX 76824  
915-626-3240

*Half-mile hike to a splendid series of swimming holes along rugged Spicewood Creek.*

**[6]**

GARNER STATE PARK  
HCR #70, Box 599  
CONCAN, TX 78838  
830-232-6132

*Swimming and tubing along 10 gorgeous water acres of the muf-fio, cypress-lined Frio River.*

**[7]**

GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK  
3350 PARK ROAD 31  
SPRING BRANCH, TX 78070  
830-438-2656

*Four miles of river frontage with rapids and still water framed by rugged, steep-walled canyons.*

**[8]**

INKS LAKE STATE PARK  
RR 2, Box 31  
BURNET, TX 78611  
512-793-2223

*Sheltered coves and beaches by the lake and a gorgeous waterfall and pool at Devil's Waterhole.*

**[9]**

KERRVILLE-SCHREINER STATE PARK  
2385 BANDERA HIGHWAY  
KERRVILLE, TX 78028  
830-257-5392

*Swimming and tubing along a quiet and shady stretch of the Guadalupe River.*

**[10]**

McKINNEY FALLS STATE PARK  
5808 MCKINNEY FALLS PARKWAY  
AUSTIN, TX 78744  
512-243-1643

*Swimming in the Upper Falls and Lower Falls (McKinney Falls) pools of Onion Creek.*

**[11]**

PEDERNALES FALLS STATE PARK  
RR 1, Box 45C  
JOHNSON CITY, TX 78636  
830-868-7304

*A virtual paradise of beaches and boulders, pools and rapids, shaded by venerable cypresses.*

**[12]**

SOUTH LLANO RIVER STATE PARK  
HC 15, Box 224  
JUNCTION, TX 76849  
915-446-3994

*Hill Country haven for floating and tubing in the fast-running, spring-fed South Llano River.*

## North Central Texas

**[13]**

DINOSAUR VALLEY STATE PARK  
P.O. Box 396, GLEN ROSE, TEXAS  
76043, 254-897-4538

*Blue holes in the scenic Paluxy River near ancient, well-preserved dinosaur tracks.*

**[14]**

PCSSUM KINGDOM STATE PARK  
P.O. Box 70  
CADDO, TX 76429  
940-549-1803

*Blue-water swimming coves with limestone cliffs along a scenic reservoir of the Brazos River.*

## East Texas

**[15]**

DAINGERFIELD STATE PARK  
ROUTE 1, Box 286-B  
DAINGERFIELD, TX 75638  
903-645-2921

*Swimming in a small, no-wake lake surrounded by deep pine and hardwood forests.*

**[16]**

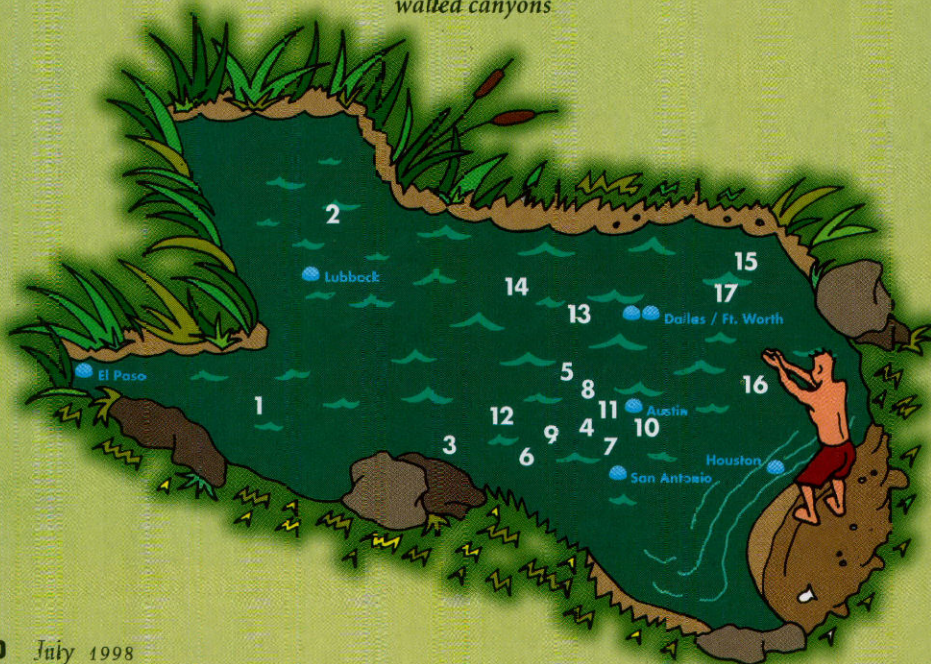
HUNTSVILLE STATE PARK  
P. O. Box 508  
HUNTSVILLE, TX 77342  
409-295-5644

*Swimming in 210-acre Lake Raven, formed by three meandering Pineywoods creeks.*

**[17]**

TYLER STATE PARK  
780 PARK ROAD 16  
TYLER, TX 75706-9141  
903-597-5338

*Popular swimming beach for family fun on a picturesque 65-acre no-wake lake.*





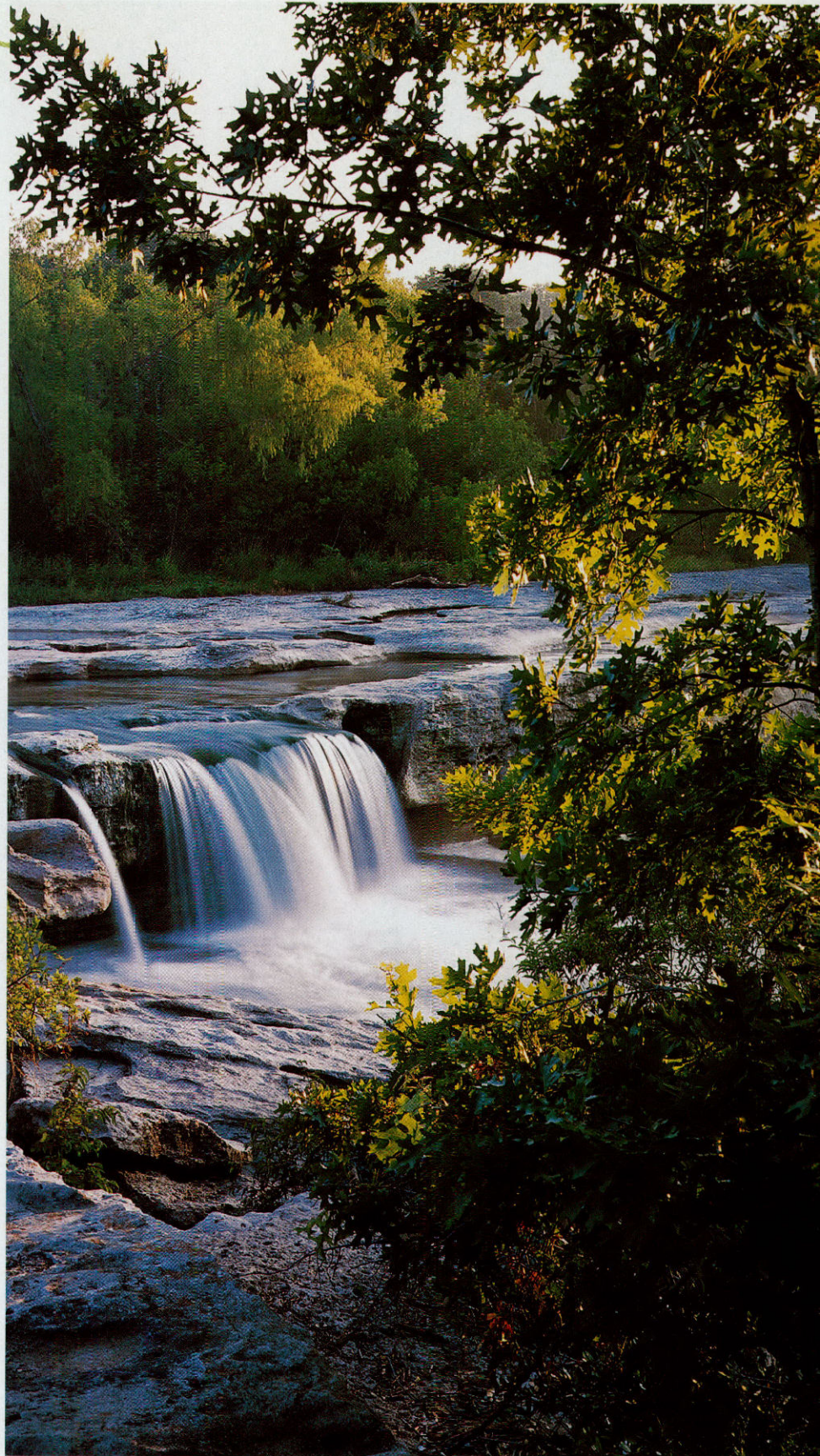
the upper and lower falls of Onion Creek. Then in 1981, some children became sick after swimming in the creek, leading to a ban on “water contact recreation” in the park. The culprit: a high bacteria count caused by a wastewater treatment plant upstream. Even though the plant closed in 1986, the swimming ban lasted until June 1993, after a collaborative effort by municipal, county and state agencies and individual volunteers succeeded in cleaning up the creek. Water quality testing, performed twice a week year around, remains in place. A temporary swimming ban goes into effect whenever the bacteria count exceeds a safe level, especially after a period of flooding and heavy runoff.

**A**fter a flood, one thing that troubles McKinney Falls superintendent Ned Ochs the most is the amount of trash from illegal dumping and littering he sees floating in Onion Creek. Ochs laments, “It’s amazing to me that people want to have pristine water conditions for swimming and fishing, for their children to grow up around, and yet I see tires, household appliances, Styrofoam stuff and all sorts of plastic come down the creek. Eventually, it flows into the Colorado River and into the Gulf of Mexico. People need to understand that our waterways are a valuable resource.”

Environmental writer Robert Bryce observed in an essay on Barton Springs Pool, “The citizens of Dallas and Fort Worth recently raised \$10 million to rescue and preserve Thomas Eakins’ painting *The Swimming Hole*. If a painting of a swimming hole is worth that kind of money, what value can we place on the real thing?”

If you don’t know the answer, you haven’t savored the rare feeling of paradise, the serene beauty of a natural swimming hole. Summer’s here, the water’s fine, so don’t be the last one in. ★

DALE WEISMAN *unwinds at his secret swimming hole after turning in a story.*



© RICHARD REYNOLDS

## MCKINNEY FALLS STATE PARK

*Onion Creek in McKinney Falls State Park is healthy for swimmers again thanks to the coordinated clean-up efforts of governmental agencies and volunteers.*



# STARRS OF THE LONE STAR

COME EXPERIENCE THE  
VICTORIAN ERA IN THE  
GENTEEL SURROUNDINGS  
OF STARR FAMILY STATE  
HISTORICAL PARK.

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS



EARL NOTTINGHAM

In her time, Clara Starr Pope Willoughby adored hosting lavish dinner parties in her elegant, two-story mansion and inviting the fiercest of political opponents, usually unbeknownst to them. Such a broad mixture of clashing personalities around her beautifully set dining table made for a lively and certainly unpredictable evening of conversation.

Mrs. Willoughby's memorable meals no longer grace the spacious dining room in her former Victorian-style home, which regally stands among a cluster of towering Virginia red maples. But remnants of her hospitable nature and the genteel Victorian era still linger throughout the 19th-century home called Maplecroft

and surrounding landscaped grounds, all part of the Starr Family State Historical Park located not far from downtown Marshall in northeast Texas.

From breakfast in bed served by hosts dressed in period costumes to formal Victorian etiquette classes, the park complex offers visitors much more than a routine guided tour through a stately old home. Here you can let your imagination romp and experience as little or as much of the Victorian way of life as you desire.

In addition to Maplecroft, the park complex, situated behind a white picket fence on a quiet residential street, encompasses three other historical structures and household furnishings that once

belonged to four generations of the Starrs, a prominent Marshall family. Their story dates back to 1870 when Dr. James Harper Starr, a former Ohioan, left Nacogdoches (where he served as the treasurer of the Republic of Texas) and moved his family to Marshall. Southwest of town, he purchased a large tract of property that included Rosemont, a two-story, 11-room house built around 1838. Sadly, in 1914, lightning struck the home, which burned and was torn down except for a four-room wing (added in 1880) that today houses the park's bed-and-breakfast cottage.

Soon after the family's move to Marshall in 1870, Dr. Starr's eldest son,



James Franklin (Frank) Starr, started construction on Maplecroft, where he and his wife, Clara Fry Clapp Starr, raised their six daughters. Built in the transitional Italianate-style architecture, the original Maplecroft boasted eight rooms with a separate kitchen and servants' quarters connected to the main house by a covered walkway. Before the turn of the century, family members enjoyed the finest of modern amenities and luxuries, which included floor and wall insulation, an intercom system, wall-to-wall carpets, and marble-and-resin man-

tiles over each of the 13 fireplaces.

In 1875, Frank Starr added an east wing for his mother-in-law, Sarah Fry Clapp, who moved from New Orleans and joined the family after the death of her husband. He also built a barn and school house, the latter of which was later converted into a laundry and today houses the park's gift shop (open only during special events).

For each of his daughters upon their marriage, Starr built a home nearby. One of the six is the Starr-Blake Home, a Colonial Revival-style, one-story house

constructed in the 1890s for daughter Ruth Starr-Blake. Located behind Maplecroft facing Fannin Street, the home today serves as a backdrop for the park's specially catered meals (prepared by reservation only), such as candlelit dinners and sumptuous breakfasts.

In the early 1910s, granddaughter Clara Starr Pope, at the approximate age of nine, moved in with Frank and Clara Starr after her parents died. She lived at Maplecroft until her marriage as a young woman to Ray Willoughby. The couple moved to San Angelo and raised their



TPWD PHOTO

## “LOVE AMONG THE STARRS” MENU

RASPBERRY CONGEALED FRUIT SALAD

ON LETTUCE LEAF

CHICKEN PUFF PASTRY WITH

CREAM SAUCE

FRENCH-STYLE GREEN BEANS

WILD RICE

HOMEMADE ROLLS

CRANBERRY SPARKLE

RED VELVET CAKE WITH

HOMEMADE ICE CREAM

DESSERT COFFEE

LONG-STEMMED RED ROSE FOR EACH LADY

AND A VALENTINE GIFT BOX

## ETIQUETTE

Starr manager Sandi Petersen offers some examples of subjects covered in the park's Victorian etiquette classes:

- ❖ Young men are taught how to be the governor of the table. Young women are taught how to seat guests next to each other for the most interesting mix, how to keep conversation and food moving around the table, how to serve, how to set a table properly. “We also offer a section on food preparation and presentation,” says Petersen, “and participants are taught how to write proper correspondence such as inquiries, thank-you notes and condolences. They can try their hand at using an ink well.”
- ❖ How to be a good guest in someone else's home: using calling cards at a formal visit, how to sit properly if you're a young lady with a hooped skirt.
- ❖ Young men are instructed how to assist a young lady into and out of a carriage. “We try to teach etiquette of the Victorian period and compare those views with those of today,” says Petersen.

### OPPOSITE:

Maplecroft's parlor contains furnishings brought from New Orleans by Clara Starr's mother. The draperies are the original ones hung in this room, making them about 127 years old, the shutters were added about 1925.

### THIS PAGE:

The table in the dining room, which is part of the home's original furniture, has enough leaves and chairs to seat 14 people. Just beyond is the breakfast room, which originally was a covered walkway extending to a detached kitchen.



family in the West Texas town.

After Ruth Blake died in 1969, Clara Willoughby inherited the property and split her time between Maplecroft and her San Angelo home. In Marshall, she contributed financially toward numerous local projects and hosted many interesting dinner parties. At the age of 83, Mrs. Willoughby died, and, through a

life estate agreement, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department acquired the Starr property and opened it as a park in 1986.

Tours of the Starr mansion, usually led by knowledgeable docents dressed in costume, interpret the family's role in Texas history and the gracious life they led at the family compound. But a visit can last well beyond a tour.

*Originally built as a home for a freed slave of the family, this building later was converted to a schoolhouse for Frank and Clara Starr's six daughters. Volunteers operate a gift shop here during special events. Eighteen varieties of azaleas bloom each year in April.*



EARL NOTTINGHAM

## ROSEMONT COTTAGE

They've since ridden off into the happily-ever-after, but one Marshall couple exchanged wedding vows on the picturesque lawn of Maplecroft and then shared their honeymoon night at Rosemont.

The Rosemont Cottage, that is.

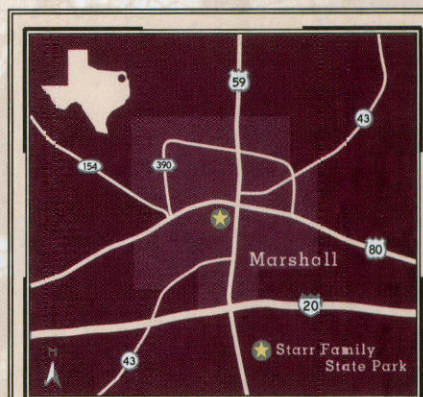
Thanks to park manager Sandi Petersen's entrepreneurial nature, last January historic Rosemont opened as a bed-and-breakfast inn. The four-room cottage, built in 1880 as a wing to the original 1838 home that later burned, offers spacious accommodations to people who want to stay overnight and truly absorb the Victorian era.

On the home's front porch, a pair of comfortable rocking chairs sway invitingly. Past the front door, a large living room, enveloped by floral wallpaper and rose-colored carpet, is furnished with period antiques and lacy curtains. In the small dining nook, beveled windows and wood paneling create a cozy place to enjoy a meal. And the roomy bedroom, which sleeps two on a king-sized bed, has an attached combination dressing/bathroom area.

Guests may choose from a number of dining options, including candle-lit suppers, a continental breakfast (a selection of pastries, breads, fruit, and juice left in a wicker hamper on the front steps), or an elaborate breakfast in bed served on fine china by costumed hosts. Rates begin at \$85 per night double occupancy. For reservations, call 903-935-3044.

"We do a lot of fun things here," says park manager Sandi Petersen, who as a child in Marshall grew up captivated with the sight of Maplecroft. "Mrs. Willoughby liked to have people come and enjoy the home so we're trying to do that, too."

For instance, park staff celebrate Valentine's Day with two romantic evenings of catered, candlelit dinners, an



## GETTING THERE

To reach the Starr Family State Historical Park, exit Interstate 20 north onto U.S. 59; turn west on Travis Street to the corner of South Grove Street.

One of the prime times to visit the park is mid-March through April, when the grounds burst into vibrant colors with blooming azaleas, camellias, dogwoods, tulip trees, and magnolias.

The gift shop sells books, t-shirts, pottery, hand-crafted items, postcards, mugs and more. The store is open only during special events, such as Valentine's Day, the park's annual croquet tournament in June, and the city's Wonderland of Lights in December.

Park entry fees are \$3 adults; \$1 ages 6 to 12; free 5 and under. The home is open for tours Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 1 to 4 p.m.

For more information about the park, special events or B&B reservations, call 903-935-3044; or write 407 W. Travis St., Marshall 75670.





TPWD PHOTO

Clara Starr's mother paid \$22.50 for this mallard bed now in the home's East Wing. Built in the early 1890s, the East Wing is a mirror image of the remaining wing of Rosemont, the park's bed-and-breakfast cottage

annual event appropriately called “Love Among the Starrs.” In May, a “Victorian Mother’s Day” offers guests a full menu of activities, including an afternoon tea, croquet games on the lawn, three- and five-course meals served by costumed hosts and serenaded by a local guitarist, and hour-long, candlelit tours of Maplecroft. In June, the Friends of the Starr Home (a non-profit organization that raises funds for the park) hosts a fun-filled croquet tournament.

In conjunction with Marshall’s famous “Wonderland of Lights,” park staff in December dress the trio of homes in grand Victorian finery and green pine garlands. Musicians playing period instruments, candlelit tours of Maplecroft, and traditional holiday meals, such as ham with all the trimmings, recreate the perfect Victorian Christmas.

Any time of the year, people may schedule weddings on the lawn, recep-

tions in the Starr-Blake House, or Victorian etiquette classes in Maplecroft, a popular activity taught by local caterer Reese Reed.

Petersen and events coordinator Jo Ann Toole also help guests plan catered dinners, both intimate and grandiose. “We try to accommodate whatever people want to do,” Petersen says. “We can set a table under the maple trees or inside a home. We like to plan things that people will enjoy.

“Mrs. Willoughby was a gracious lady who enjoyed treating her guests like royalty,” Petersen adds. “She offered lively discussion, good food, good company, and great fun. We are dedicated to continuing that wonderful tradition for our visitors, as well.” ★

*SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS of Blanco writes about everything from bed-and-breakfast inns to Angus cattle for a number of magazines and newspapers.*

## WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Marshall’s rich history dates to 1841. Named for U.S. Chief Justice John Marshall, it is the county seat of Harrison County. Visit the Old Courthouse Museum, housed in the 96-year-old former courthouse on the square.

If you want to make a thorough driving tour of Marshall, stop by the Greater Marshall Chamber of Commerce for a free brochure that lists 90 buildings and homes of historic interest along the Lale Trail (named in honor of local historian Max Lale). Along the route, you’ll see more than 60 homes, many beautifully restored, an 1861 hat factory site, and the ornate 1896 Ginocchio Hotel. Historians might also pick up a brochure on the Stagecoach Trace, another driving trail that winds through farming country surrounding Marshall.

Back in Marshall, art buffs shouldn’t miss a visit to the Michelson Museum of Art, which houses more than 1,000 paintings, drawings, and prints of Post-Impressionist Leo Michelson (1887-1978).

Between Thanksgiving and New Year’s, Marshall glitters with more than seven million twinkling lights. Billed as one of the largest light displays in the country, the Wonderland of Lights extravaganza draws more than 700,000 visitors.

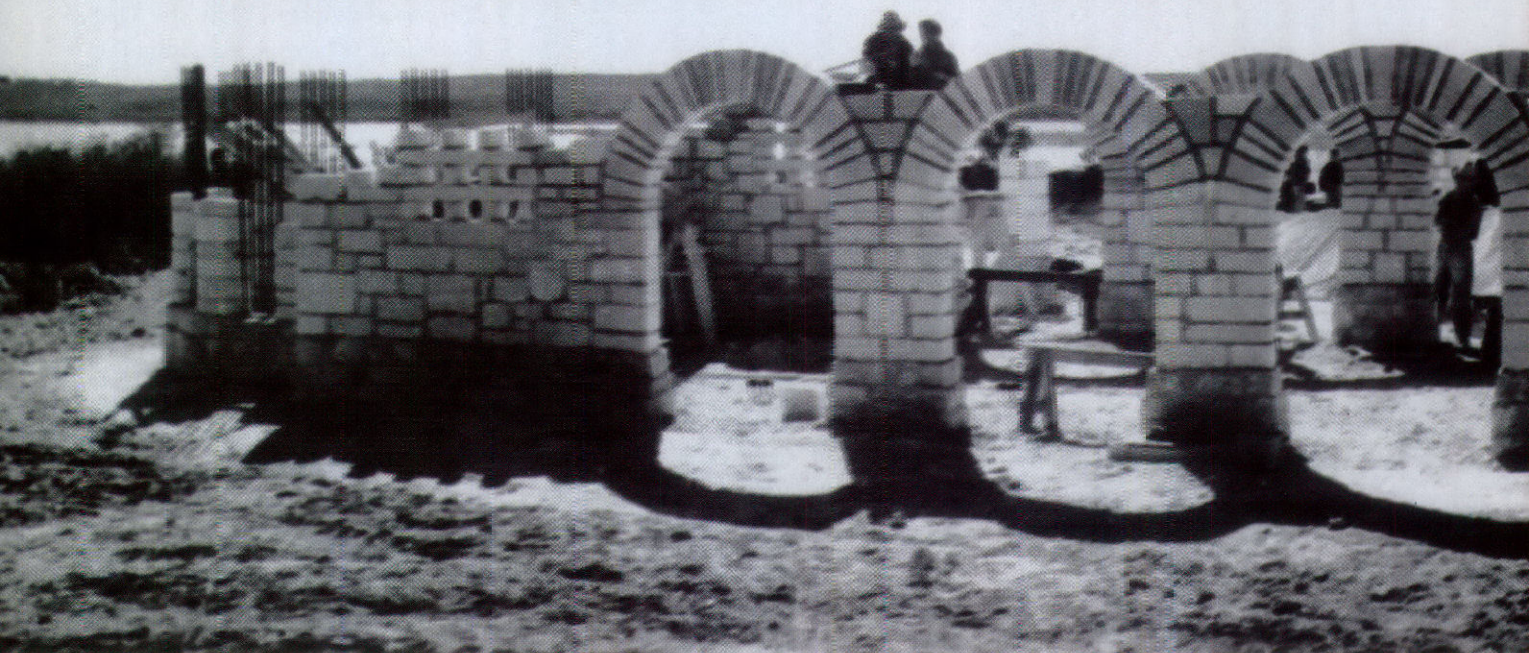
In the spring, Stagecoach Days commemorates Marshall’s historical heritage as a transportation hub during the late 1800s. Held the third weekend in May, the three-day festival dishes up non-stop activities, such as a parade, stagecoach rides, a barbecue cook-off, arts and crafts.

For more information about Marshall, call the Chamber of Commerce at 903-935-7868 or 800-953-7868.



# BIRTH of

A handful of steely-minded visionaries set out 75 years ago to preserve wild Texas in a system of state parks. Among them was Phebe Warner, who pictured people "hiking down the Pike to see Texas FIRST whenever Texas beauty is brought within their reach." **by James Wright Steely**



Still adjusting to both the new century and his unexpected presidency, Theodore Roosevelt visited Arizona's Grand Canyon in 1903 to demonstrate his blossoming promotion of America's great outdoors. He had traveled 1,800 miles by train from Washington, D.C., the final 66 miles over a two-year-old rail connection that already deposited thousands of tourists within a few paces of the canyon rim.

"We have gotten past the stage, my fellow citizens," Roosevelt informed an audience of 20th-century pilgrims facing this spectacular scenery, "when we are to be pardoned if we treat any part of our country as something to be skinned for two or three years for the use of the present generation, whether it is the forest, the water, the scenery. Whatever it is," the president squinted a warning that day, "handle it so that your children's children will get the benefit of it."

Perhaps many Texans at the dawn of this century understood Teddy Roosevelt's message of conservation, heritage and tourism. But few dreamed that Texas itself boasted scenery comparable to the Grand Canyon. Still fewer appreciated a need to preserve the natural resources of forest, water and scenery for future generations.

In this era, Texans did honor strongly a connection through their land to the accomplishments of pioneers and patriots. Capitol Hill in Austin and the nearby State Cemetery had been enjoyed since the 1850s for picnics and family outings, all in the 19th-century sense of public "pleasure grounds." And in 1883 state legislators had purchased the 10-acre cemetery at San Jacinto for \$1,500 and the Alamo church in San Antonio for \$20,000, to preserve these legendary sites of valor during the war for independence from Mexico a half-century before.

Preserving such government landscapes, burial grounds and scenes of battle followed ancient practices — from both western and eastern cultures — of memorializing heroes and designating "commons" for public gatherings. These gestures blossomed in Texas during the Progressive Era, better known in the United States for advancements in working conditions, and for the astonishing growth of the middle class.

## Texas Women: Bringing Nurture to Nature

Women — literally and figuratively — marched at the forefront of improvements and reform: in support of education, suffrage, health care and better living conditions. The latter ideals officially encompassed fresh air and public recreation grounds, with opportunities for both active and passive recreation.

These "clubwomen" worked diligent-



# the PARKS



Between 1934 and 1936, CCC Company 886 developed Lake Corpus Christi State Park on caliche hills overlooking the recently dammed Nueces River. Compare this photo to the one on page 28.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

ly throughout the decade to obtain legislative support for improvements to the San Jacinto battleground, learning through frequent defeats the pitfalls of legislative process. Finally, in 1897, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and their sympathetic state senator from Houston, Waller Thomas Burns, sold lawmakers and Governor Charles Allen Culberson on a bill for “the establishment of a public park” at San Jacinto. Their \$10,000 appropriation over the next four years bought 336 more acres at the battleground, but the governor appointed no women to the purchasing committee.

### Sowing Seeds of the Parks Movement

As development of the western United States accelerated, the wilderness park idea — originating with Hot Springs in Arkansas, Yosemite in California, and

Yellowstone in Wyoming — gradually took root in Texas. Teddy Roosevelt’s conservation speech at Grand Canyon led to passage in 1906 by Congress of the Antiquities Act — allowing the president’s designation of national monuments — and a bill that year to create a national park of Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle.

Then in 1907, the Daughters’ Houston chapter again scored success with the legislature, winning \$25,000 for extensive improvements at San Jacinto. Their progressive bill, sponsored by Senator George B. Grieggs of Houston, authorized a permanent “keeper,” a master plan, the appointment of a Daughter to the park’s new governing commission, and the title — first for Texas — of “The San Jacinto State Park.”

Enthused by the 75th anniversary of the Texas Revolution in 1911 and propelled by a growing phenomenon of

tourism, lawmakers pumped more funds into the Alamo through 1913, and that year accepted parklands given to the state by zealous communities. Citizens in Goliad County donated 13 acres of the Fannin Battlefield, and the

Leaders in Fannin and Gonzales understood the economic benefits of attracting early highway tourists, as pilgrims of history, to their remote communities.

city of Gonzales passed 150 acres from one of its unusual wooded public malls to commemorate the “first shot of the Revolution,” fired some four miles distant. The Gonzales enterprise received \$7,500 from the state for improvements.



## Driving Toward A Touring Life

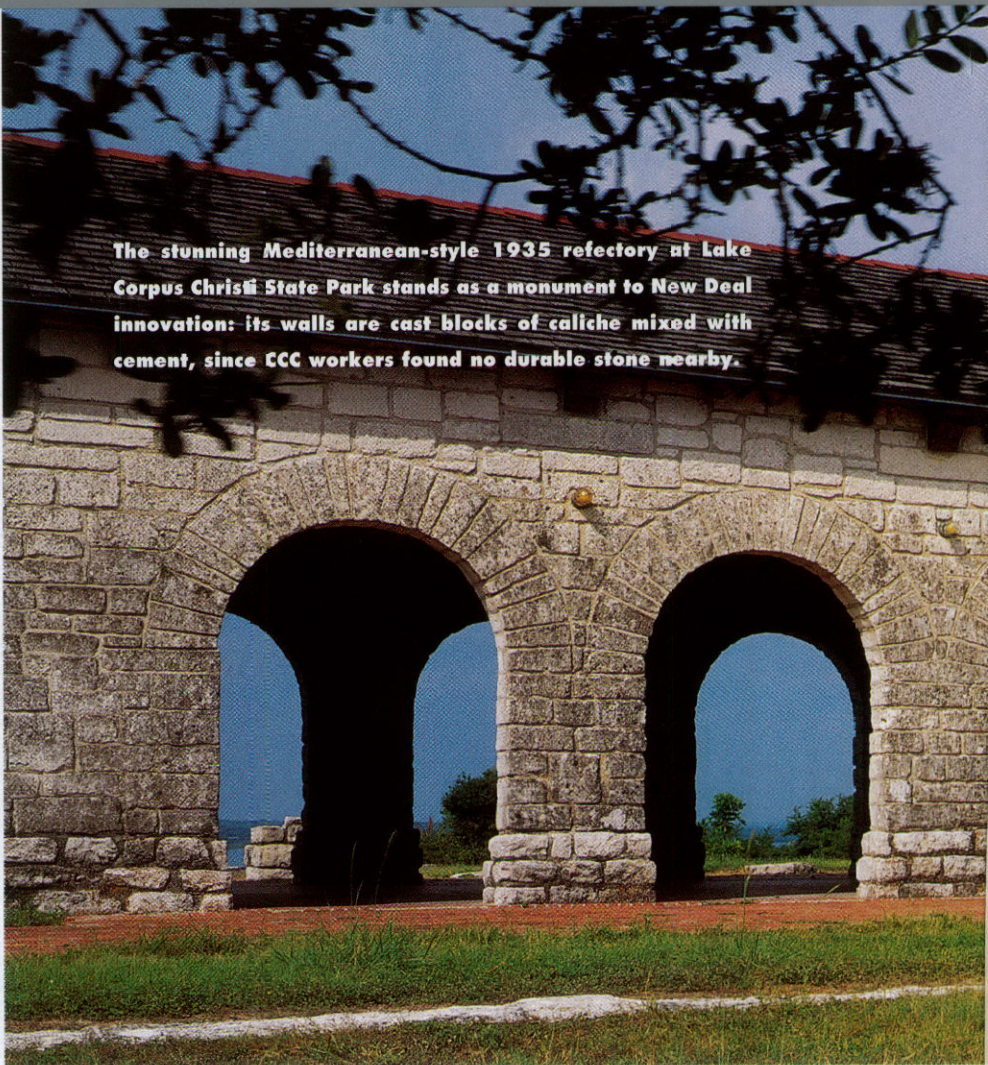
The Progressive Era, with its emphasis on transportation efficiency and the good roads movement for city streets and county lifelines, now became the vehicle for a new mode of transport: the automobile. "Motor gypsying" soon became a fad of all classes from farmers to city dwellers, and these part-time road gypsies created the sport of "auto camping" on weekends and annual vacations.

Leaders in Fannin and Gonzales therefore understood the economic benefits of attracting early highway tourists, as pilgrims of history, to their remote communities relegated to secondary rail lines. Moreover, for state leaders and women patriots desperate to bring Texans to San Jacinto and Washington-on-the-Brazos, automobiles proved a boon to historic landscapes long since bypassed by rail transit. All these place names of Texas history became impromptu campgrounds, with as many or as few facilities as local park tenders provided, for motorists with tents or simply tarps extending from their car frames.

## Striving for Common Ground

While the vague concept of state parks just before the World War found Texas with a handful of such preserves, successive legislatures provided only token funds for operation, relying on local park commissions for embellishments. Meanwhile, the nation's recreation trailblazers debated the very definition of state parks, admitting that these grounds fell somewhere between aggressive growth of urban park systems and great western scenery managed after 1916 by the newly established National Park Service. By 1919, Austin lawmakers agreed to organize their historical parks under the new Board of Control, but only as a central auditor for their meager individual budgets.

In retrospect, creation of responsible agencies like the National Park Service and the Texas Board of Control repre-



The stunning Mediterranean-style 1935 refectory at Lake Corpus Christi State Park stands as a monument to New Deal innovation: its walls are cast blocks of caliche mixed with cement, since CCC workers found no durable stone nearby.

© LAURENCE PARENT

sented the zenith of the Progressive Era. The jolting experience of the World War, an economic depression following the conflict, and disenchantment with President Thomas Woodrow Wilson's aloof Progressivism by 1921 brought highly conservative leadership to the White House and the Texas Legislature. Yet two important figures survived these political shifts, both strongly supported by women's groups through their recently won voting rights. One was Stephen Tyng Mather, director of the federal park service and ardent supporter of automobile accommodation in national parks, plus cooperative development for state park systems.

The other was Pat Morris Neff, a Waco lawyer with prior service as Speaker of the House, and with an independent streak admired by Texas voters who scrutinized the predominant Democratic Party for a wholesome candidate for gov-

ernor. Neff's very personal and low-budget campaign hustled across the state's primitive highways in his aging Ford Model T, frequently camping at roadsides and any community commons along the way.

## Neff: A Johnny-Come-Lately Comes of Age

In January 1921, just as Neff took office on a platform of good roads, enforcement of alcohol prohibition and water conservation (but not parks), Mather conducted a national conference on state parks in Des Moines, Iowa. Not attending the meeting, Neff missed Mather's statistics on automobiles by the tens of thousands, "from every state in the union, from Texas, Maine, and California," overrunning the national parks in a single summer season. State parks would, Mather hoped, offer recreational scenery closer to home and pro-





Palo Duro Canyon presented two problems to early park planners: acquisition of land and automobile access to the canyon floor. CCC workers in 1934, below, took care of the latter, although the state didn't acquire clear title to the park until 1966! Likewise, at San Jacinto Battleground some improvements preceded land acquisition evidenced by this 1881 obelisk, right, placed two years before legislators bought the 10-acre cemetery.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



AUTHOR'S COLLECTION, COURTESY NED COLEMAN



# THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN TEXAS

As Pat Neff left the governor's office in January 1925, he expected the new legislature to accept some 50 parkland donations promised during the previous year of motorcade campaigning with the State Parks Board. "The park work in Texas is here to stay," Neff confidently assured lawmakers. "The world moves slowly, but it never takes a backward step in a big, worthwhile cause like this."

The father of the state park system proved right on all counts. Despite repeated rejections from legislators, the State Parks Board survived its first decade, but only as the world moved slowly from prosperity to depression. When the New York stock market crashed in 1929 and state revenues shriveled, many Texas park supporters feared this final economic downturn ended any hopes of success.

But in 1932 the first federal aid for relief payrolls in Texas counties came with a list

of suggested civic projects to fund, headed by park improvements. Such meager efforts produced no reversals of fortune, but relief officials at all levels quickly learned that temporary outdoor jobs kept workers busy and often produced lasting public facilities.

As the depression worsened, Franklin Delano Roosevelt won the U.S. presidency based on his "new deal for the American people." And Miriam Amanda Ferguson returned for a second turn at the Texas

governor's mansion with a pledge to accept FDR's helping hand. Beginning in March 1933, the president's very first relief program combined his commitment to natural resource protection with a solution to one of the largest unemployed groups in the country, young men between ages 17 and 25.

This Civilian Conservation Corps or "CCC" called upon the federal Labor Department to recruit an initial 225,000 young men, plus 25,000 middle-aged war



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

vide buffers for his national parks.

Neff missed as well the conference delegates' agreement on defining a state park: "characteristic scenery, peculiar to the state," with convenient camping beside water and under shade trees, plus "historical sites ... so that in a sense the life of the state as man has dealt with it is preserved for future generations." At home Governor Neff also missed a groundswell of interest within the legislature for creation of state or national parks at Palo Duro Canyon, the Davis Mountains and other remote but alluring Texas scenery.

Early that fall a group of lawmakers set off on a rail and auto expedition to explore these far-flung regions and prepare a report for the legislative session two years hence. The governor never admitted encountering an early draft of their account, but by the next year Neff launched his own campaign for reelection

**Thus the complex task of building a bona fide state park system began in the fall of 1923.**

tion with the central theme that Texans "should have way-side parks and stopping places along our highways."

He described from his own experience how "people should have the breathing spots where they can enjoy nature in stream and tree, in rock and rill." Indeed, the previous year Neff's mother, Isabella Eleanor Shepherd Neff, had died and willed just such a favorite plot of land as a "park ... to the public," but entrusted to the governor's personal care. This six-acre meeting ground on the Leon River in Coryell County now became the cornerstone of Neff's successful campaign,

as he declared that the "state should establish parks, both large and small, throughout her borders."

During the spring 1923 session, seven representatives sponsored Neff's bill to create the State Parks Board. Its members would solicit donations of small roadside parklands, and recommend necessary steps to acquire a sizable tract of wilderness in the Davis Mountains. Largely because more than half of the 22 legislators who had joined the earlier park expedition returned to this session, the bill passed and Neff signed it in May.

## Messengers on a Mission

Before the bill took effect in September, the governor assigned his newly appointed members to broad geographical areas for soliciting gifts of parkland. From San Antonio came David Edward Colp, a good-roads advocate and salesman of automobiles and road bonds. Marshall



veterans and 25,000 professionals and craftsmen to direct corps projects. The War Department through the U.S. Army organized these enrollees into standard companies of 200 men each. Upon assignment to six-month periods in remote camps, the Army transported, fed, clothed, housed and paid these men in quasi-military routine during non-working hours.

With incredible professionalism, the NPS supported the Texas State Parks Board with design assistance and sub-

stantial payrolls for Austin staff through 1939 and field personnel through 1942. When the Second World War ended the CCC program, its fortuitous New Deal partnership with the Army, NPS and Texas agencies had built more than 50 substantial parks, including 32 state parks at a federal cost of \$20 million.

Texans possessed a bona fide state park system at last, and had matched this recreational miracle with less than two per cent of the expenditure!

CCC enrollees of companies 1805 and 1811, left, in about 1935 at the combined Bastrop-Buescher State Park project, pulled drawing knives through cedar strips to create shingles for the many new buildings. Officers of the Army, Navy or Marine reserves, such as these gentlemen at Caddo Lake State Park in 1935, right, commanded 200-man CCC camps during six-month periods.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

produced Hobart Key, attorney and banker who would focus interest for a park at Caddo Lake. In Dallas, Neff tapped Mrs. W.C. Martin, a writer and community activist. From Victoria he named Katie Owens Welder, who had attended the second annual National Conference on State Parks the previous year. And in Claude near Amarillo he found Phebe Kerrick Warner, a prolific newspaper columnist and staunch supporter of a Palo Duro Canyon park. All three women — a majority of the official board — held statewide positions in the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, clearly part of Neff's strategy for critical support of a state park system. Neff effectively reserved a sixth board position for himself, and actively promoted parks through auto caravans and speeches across the state.

Thus the complex task of building a bona fide state park system began in the

fall of 1923, with Colp appointed chairman of the State Parks Board to serve as Neff's persistent representative even after the governor's term expired in early 1925. But Neff and his enthusiastic board members never anticipated that more than a decade of hard work and painful setbacks would pass before economics and politics finally shifted again to their favor.

### Keepers of the Vision

While successor governors sympathized with the idea of state parks, none in the next 10 years openly supported funding from the legislature. Certainly by the late 1920s public and legislative interest in parks grew tremendously, but by then public auto campgrounds — fundamental to Neff's concept of state parks — had been replaced by private tourist courts and newfangled highway lodgings called motels. Neff and Colp also never addressed

incorporation of the existing historical parks into the scheme, virtually ignoring their existence. Indeed, Neff always overlooked San Jacinto to imply that his mother's meeting ground in Coryell County was the first state park; in truth, he did not transfer its title until 1934.

Although Colp kept the parks board alive on a shoestring for the next 10 years, when staggered terms expired, subsequent appointments did not include women. Fortunately, charter-member Phebe Warner lived to see the resurgence of Progressive government in 1933 as the New Deal brought a wellspring of assistance for state parks. She also witnessed the arrival of Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees that year at her beloved Palo Duro Canyon, to begin first-class visitor facilities patterned after those built 30 years earlier at Arizona's Grand Canyon.

"I can almost see our people piling all the children into their Fords," Warner had written of the canyon's potential, "and hiking down the Pike to see Texas FIRST whenever Texas beauty is brought within their reach." Her love of the great outdoors, and devotion to conservation for the sake of her children's children, led to her belief that the dream of a state park system would come true: "One of the theories of my life," Warner said, "is that 'Anything that ought to be done can be done if attempted in time and at the right time.'" ★

JIM STEELY is chief historian of the Texas Historical Commission and a former TPWD park superintendent. He is principal author of the 1986 TPWD booklet, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Texas State Parks*; his volume co-authored with Dan K. Utley on *Mother Neff State Park*, *Guided With A Steady Hand: The Cultural Landscape of a Rural Texas Park*, is scheduled for September 1998 publication by Baylor University Press; and his book *Parks for Texas: Enduring Landscapes of the New Deal*, is scheduled for December 1998 publication by the University of Texas Press.







# knee- deep

in  
waterfowl  
photography

**My trial-and-error methods can help you explore a range of intriguing photo blind setups.**

**Article and photos by  
Joe Mac Hudspeth, Jr.**



**Getting eye-level with a pair of wood ducks makes for appealing wildlife photos.**



**M**y infatuation for photographing wildlife dates back to high school when I took my first portrait shot of a screech owl snoozing in a honeysuckle thicket. The owl was very cooperative and allowed me to walk within a couple of feet of him and take his photograph with a 110 Instamatic. At that time, I'd never heard of depth of field and didn't know a 110 wouldn't focus that close, but the experience stoked the fire that has burned within me ever since.

**I soon discovered a well-placed, well-camouflaged blind increases the likelihood of getting those up-close shots.**

I've come a long way since that high school portrait and my Instamatic camera. Today, my favorite weapon is a 500mm F4 lens and my passion for wildlife photography has grown from a hobby to a means that puts "bread on our table."

For a few years after the screech owl portrait, I successfully concentrated on photographing butterflies, spider webs, frogs, lizards, flowers and anything else that would allow me to approach with a 90mm macro or 70/210 zoom lens. Unfortunately, the waterfowl and other wildlife that I wanted to photograph were still pretty elusive. It didn't take me long to realize

that the old screech owl had been very kind to me. Most wildlife, especially waterfowl, do not take kindly to your walking right up to them. Even with a 300mm or 500mm lens, you have to be within a matter of feet, not yards, from your subject to photograph it.

When I finally had a few photos published, I decided it was time to move up to the big league and bought "big glass." I just knew that my new 300mm F2.8 would allow me to reach out and take full-frame photos of wood ducks and other wildlife at great distances.

For about a year, I attempted to take waterfowl photographs that someday would grace the cover of *Ducks Unlimited*. But it quickly became apparent that I had to get closer to my subjects. I soon discovered a well-placed, well-camouflaged blind increases the likelihood of getting those up-close shots.

I experimented with several blind concepts and spent hours watching wood ducks feed, swim, and preen on the other side of my favorite beaver dam. When I'd get my slides back, the "specks" (subjects) were unidentifiable. I blamed my blind, even though it had been there for several months. Then one day it hit me that the location of the blind was just as important as the blind itself.

I came to the conclusion that the wood ducks just liked being on the other side of the beaver dam better than where I was, so I moved my blind,

**T**his partially submerged alligator probably never noticed the photographer hiding nearby in a blind made of native vegetation.



PHOTOS © JOE MAC HUDSPETH, JR.





**S**et up your blind in a freshwater marsh with lily pads and you might get a shot of the beautiful purple gallinule.

camouflaged it with natural vegetation and, eureka, two weeks later I had wood ducks and great blue herons landing on top of my blind! That first weekend, I got more good photos than I had the entire previous year!

That was 10 years ago and I'm still at it. I've discovered that, while there are places where wildlife is approachable, most of us have to photograph true "wildlife" close to home. Now I spend a great deal of time scouting for locations. The ideal location has the three essential elements that make a successful photo blind: congregation of wildlife, substantial early sunlight, and approximately knee-deep water, which allows the lens to be placed closer to water level.

**A** prime example of a good location is the beaver dam where I have been photographing wood ducks for almost 10 years. My favorite "hole" is the third of four dams that join each other. Together, the dams are almost a mile long. My "hole" always has had more wood ducks in it than the rest of the dams put together. This dam also provides quality early morn-

ing light; and, it has a knee-deep water level.

As I explained earlier, blind placement is critical. Even though I now use a 500 mm lens, my subject must be 20 to 40 feet from me for full-frame portrait shots. The goal is to get as close to the eye level of my subject as possible. By set-

**Successful photo blinds all share a congregation of wildlife, ample early sunlight, and approximately knee-deep water.**

ting my blind in knee-deep water, I can sit on a folding chair with the water up to my waist and the camera lens will be about 12 inches above the water. Once I've found the ideal spot, I set the blind facing north to get early morning light on my subject as the sun rises in the east and maintain the light as it sets in the west.

Although blind placement is critical, the makeup of the blind itself also is very important. Basically, you have two options: buying blinds



# building a blind

Blinds don't have to be expensive or complex; they can be simple and cheap. What matters is that wildlife accept them.

I use CPVC pipe for the frame as it is lightweight, can be cut and repaired at the blind site and is flexible enough to bend in the wind. (I've had rigid blinds blow down in heavy winds.)

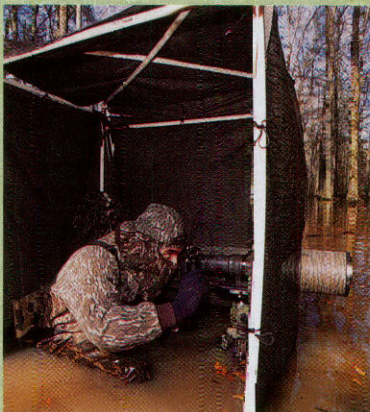
My blinds are approximately 42 inches wide and five feet tall. This gives one person ample room inside. I use a camouflaged material to match the local vegetation: for example, I use a tree bark pattern when there are trees and/or stumps and a cattail pattern when cattails and/or grasses are present.

Typically, you will be shooting with the sun to your back, so the blind material should be dark and thick enough to prevent shadows. (If shadows appear, you can add an additional piece of material behind you.) The material used can either be sewn to fit or tied to the frame. What's important is that you get it as tight as possible to the frame so that it will not flap in the wind. Flapping material can keep the wildlife from coming around the blind or scare subjects away if they are nearby when the wind picks up. Once the blind is set up, I use natural vegetation such as tree limbs, cattails and bushes to provide even more camouflage. You know you've got a good blind when wood ducks and great blue herons land on it while you're inside!

Shortly after hunting season, waterfowl can be "camera shy," so I often also add a phony camera lens made from a camouflaged coffee can to the blind. The waterfowl become accustomed to this large "camera lens" constantly sticking out of the blind; so, when I show up with my real lens, they aren't afraid. I also set up a perch or two, about 15 to 20 feet from the blind, for birds. After the blind is constructed and camouflaged, I generally leave the area for a week or two to let the wildlife become accustomed to it.



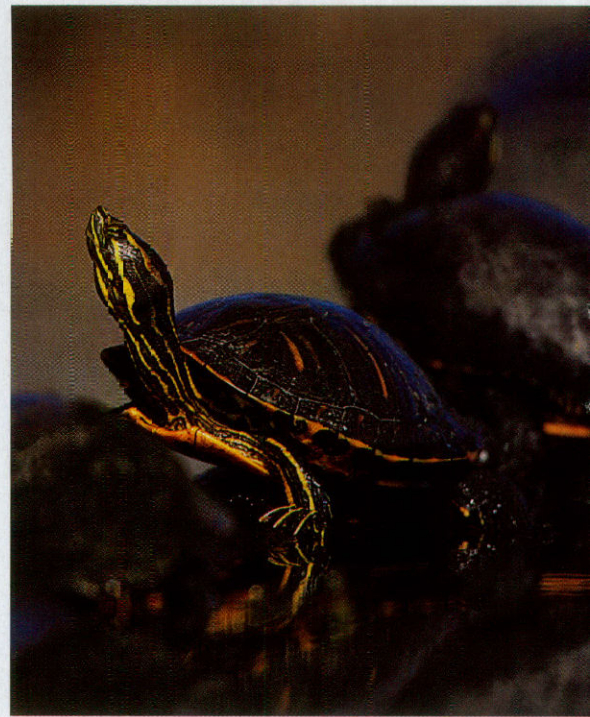
**U**se camouflaged material to match the local vegetation.



**P**lace your blind in knee-deep water and sit on a folding chair.



**W**hen the water is too deep for a blind I use a poke boat, which is a cross between a canoe and a kayak.



or making them yourself. At present, I use both types for photographing wildlife. I tend to use my store-bought blinds on private property where I'm somewhat comfortable that they will not be stolen. I use my homemade blinds everywhere else.

I prefer to shoot from a blind in the early morning. I usually get in the blind 15 to 30 minutes before sunrise. This may seem early, but I'd rather be there waiting on my subjects to wake up and arrive at the blind site than to be late and scare the ducks away — not knowing if they will return that day or not. And you have to remember that you cannot start shooting until your subject is comfortable with its surroundings — this includes you and your blind. So, you generally have a one- to two-hour wait before you can start shooting.

When I set out for my blind, I take only the gear that's necessary; there is limited storage in knee-deep water. One necessary piece of equipment is a walking stick. In the early morning darkness, wading in old beaver dams can be tricky because of fallen trees, stump holes, etc., so I use the stick for balance. I also use it, from time to time, to discourage snakes. With my stick in hand, I transport my camera and lens attached to my tripod. I put a strong garbage bag over the camera and lens and tie the bag tightly; so, if I do fall and go





**A** blind set up on the coast might put you in position for a beautiful shot of resting white pelicans, left.

**W**hile waiting for the birds to show up, keep your eyes open for other species to photograph such as this red-eared slider, far left.

under, my gear will not take a complete bath.

Other gear I take includes a folding camp stool with a back; an extra camera body; a cable release; an incident meter; a 1.4 converter; an extension tube for close-ups of songbirds; a 55 mm micro lens; camo gloves and head net; a flashlight with a headband; insect repellent; a handkerchief; lens cleaner and tissue; a Swiss army knife/Leatherman tool; a rain poncho/garbage bags (just in case!); nylon string, a needle and dental floss; drinking water; and game calls. (I have called wood ducks into photo range that were preening on the other side of the beaver dam.) I also carry film, extra film and more film. I always carry at least 10 rolls. Remember, you can't go get more. I also toss in some batteries.

When the water is too deep for a blind, I use a poke boat, which is a cross between a canoe and a kayak. It weighs less than 30 pounds, floats in three inches of water and is very stable. My mounted tripod allows my camera and lens to be 12 to 18 inches above the water.

**W**hen I'm after ducks, I camo the boat, camera/lens and myself and back into natural vegetation and play a waiting game. During the spring and summer, in areas where fishermen are frequent visitors, some wading birds become tolerant of people in boats and are not as camera shy.

They can be approached with the boat set up and only partial camouflage. Purple gallinules, common moorhens, least bitterns, green herons, and great egrets generally are more approachable this time of year before their young fledge from the nest. On a few occasions, I've had purple gallinules come right up to me to check me out.

My methods of "getting close" to my subjects also allow me to closely observe their traits. You'll never appreciate what I'm saying until you've spent a morning just a few feet from a flock of wood ducks. Watching them feed, preen, fighting over territory and a new mate is something you'd have to see up close to

**I carry film, extra film and more film.  
Remember, you can't go get more.**

really appreciate. Sure, there are easier ways of capturing wildlife on film, but I prefer to "get my feet muddy" for unforgettable shots and memories. ★

JOE MAC HUDSPETE, JR. has been published in magazines including *Birder's World*, *National Wildlife Federation*, *Ducks Unlimited* and several state game and fish publications.



# Home to ROOST



When pileated woodpeckers nearly destroyed this cedar-paneled home, a wily ornithologist helped the birds “keep up with the Joneses.”  
by Clifford E. Shackelford





It sounds like something out of an old “Woody Woodpecker” cartoon, but to San Jacinto County residents Peter and Pam Jones, visits to their wood house by local pileated woodpeckers wasn’t funny. The Jones’ house near Houston stands 43 feet tall and is covered in tobacco-brown cedar paneling, mighty tempting for a woodpecker.

During the past six years the battle over the house’s exterior has been continuous. As soon as the Joneses patched a hole, the woodpeckers would build yet another in a matter of hours. Over the years they have patched more than 50 woodpecker holes.

Pileateds are large birds, and distinguished from other East Texas woodpeckers by their black and white color, flowing red crest and loud cackling call. It’s hard to miss the birds’ deep, rectangular-shaped holes they leave behind in trees while out foraging for insects.

The birds plaguing the Joneses were not feeding, but excavating holes used for roosting and nesting, a distinction probably lost on the beleaguered homeowners. The birds nest in the cavities they excavate during the spring and summer, and for the entire year adults roost in these holes to escape predators and to avoid the weather.

The owners tried numerous tactics recommended by various “experts” in the field of damage/pest control like placing rubber snakes and horned owl decoys on the house. The woodpeckers pecked all the eyes out of the three owl decoys. One so-called “expert” recommended the use of jalapeño pepper juice sprayed on the exterior of the house to retard the use by the woodpeckers. Numerous gallons of this pepper juice were applied, but it did not slow the excavation process at all. After all, the woodpeckers aren’t tasting the wood, they are diligently chiseling the wood away.

Before resorting to vinyl siding, the homeowners started to seek other ways of keeping the woodpeckers off the house. This species, like most birds, is protected by law and shooting the birds was unlawful. After numerous phone calls to various experts in the field of ornithology (the study of birds), the homeowners contacted Texas Partners in Flight (PIF), part of the Nongame and Urban Program of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Austin. This is a bird conservation effort that consists of bird enthusiasts from numerous state and federal agencies, universities, private industries, bird clubs and local birdwatchers.

The state coordinator of PIF at the time was Cecilia Riley, who soon forwarded the call to me while I was working for the U.S. Forest Service’s Southern Research Station in nearby Nacogdoches. My duties there included a great

deal of woodpecker research, but on the “natural” biology and habitat preferences of woodpeckers, not woodpecker damage control to artificial surfaces. I inspected the house with friend and biologist, Chris Collins, and after a great deal of brainstorming, we concluded that a different approach should be taken. Instead of denying the birds a living space, why not provide the birds with a home. We recommended large bird boxes (bird houses, if you will) attached to the house in hopes the woodpeckers would seek refuge in these custom-built nest/roost boxes.

Jack Williams, a local contractor who had been patching most of the holes over the years, built and erected these boxes. The pine boxes, painted tobacco brown like the house, measured 24 by 12 by 12 inches with a five-inch-diameter entrance hole. They resemble the much smaller bluebird box that is commonly used by bluebirds, southern flying squirrels, titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, treefrogs, wasps and others. A pine stick was nailed to the facade as a perch for the birds. About two inches of pine straw and leaves were added to the inside of the box to cushion the bottom of these hard, square boxes.

Four boxes were fastened to the exterior of the house in early November 1996, one facing each of the cardinal directions, plus a fifth box facing southwest where the most damage seemed to occur. The remaining holes on the house created by the woodpeckers were patched when the boxes were established in hopes that the birds would seek refuge in these manmade homes. Almost immediately, two or three of the boxes were occupied by these woodpeckers and further excavations into the house ceased. The birds were seen entering the boxes in the evening or exiting in the early morning. The boxes facing west, southwest and east had all been used by the pileateds. The south-facing box was occupied by another cavity-roosting species, an eastern screech-owl. The north-facing box, which in winter would be the one experiencing the coldest nights, was not occupied.

Currently, the boxes are being monitored in hopes that the pileated woodpeckers will continue to use them and possibly nest in the spring. So far, the homeowners and the woodpeckers are pleased with the results and it was a very cheap, efficient method of dealing with the problem. It is yet another example of how people can adjust a little and live in harmony with nature. ★

CLIFFORD E. SHACKELFORD is an ornithologist who wrote a Master’s thesis on woodpecker habitat preferences in forests of East Texas and currently is the state coordinator of Partners in Flight at the TFWD Headquarters in Austin.

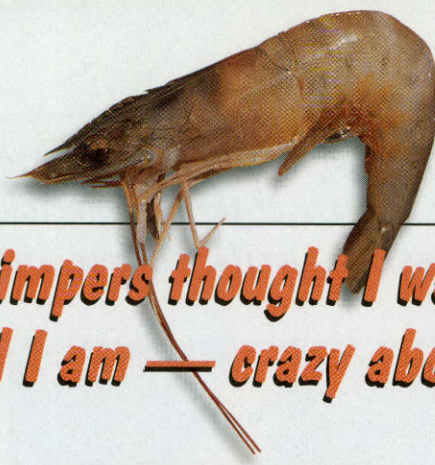




*Shrimp*

**CRAZY**





*The shrimpers thought I was crazy,  
and indeed I am — crazy about seafood.*

*by Robb Walsh*

**T**oo groggy even to open the convenience store coffee container I was carrying, I started to nod off leaning against the bumper of my car. It was 5 a.m. and I was supposed to meet Dale Lee's shrimp boat, *Sydni Lee*, at the Port Aransas Municipal Harbor. This was the place, but it was too dark to see the names of the boats.

Dale and crew found my sleeping-standing-up performance very amusing. Just as my chin hit my chest, they switched on their bright deck lights — the boat turned out to be right in front of me. It was all warmed up and waiting for me to stumble on board.

By 6 a.m. we were dragging the East Flats as the sun rose over Corpus Christi Bay. It was a peaceful way to wake up. Our quiet cruising was interrupted by a burst of activity every hour or so as the nets were raised and emptied. The catch that poured onto the deck was a mass of seaweed, crabs, baby flounders, eels, ribbon fish and squid, with a large measure of shrimp mixed in. It was a fascinating thing to see: piles of living seafood writhing and wet, glistening in the early light. Most would be returned to the bay.

The deck hands were intent on sorting out the shrimp; most of it was the tiny-sized variety that winds up as bait. I kept my eye out for big shrimp as I scurried around the deck chasing the bycatch. I collected big shrimp in one red laundry basket and blue crabs in another. The shrimpers thought I was crazy, and



*Dale Lee heads his shrimp boat out into Corpus Christi Bay. Lee has spent his whole life near the water, starting as a crabber, now as owner of a restaurant.*

© GRADY ALLEN



**A**dhering to your principles sometimes requires a certain determination others might mistake for idiocy. In the case of shrimp, this idiocy requires that every time you want to make gumbo or etouffé you take a trip to the Gulf Coast.



*Lee sorts his catch on the deck of his boat. Fresh shrimp is superior in flavor and texture to frozen, but unless you live on the coast you'll have to wait until your next trip there.*

indeed I am — crazy about seafood.

The insanity that propels me to get up at 4:30 in the morning to ride around on shrimp boats began about 10 years ago when Paul Prudhomme's first cookbook came out. In his book, Prudhomme wrote enthusiastically about the wonder of fresh, unfrozen, heads-on shrimp. He specified it in all of his shrimp recipes. The problem is, fresh, never-been-frozen, heads-on shrimp is nearly impossible to find unless you live on the Gulf Coast.

Frozen shrimp is big business. Fresh shrimp is an impractical oddity. It only keeps for a couple of days, and it's only available for a few months of the year. Most people are just as happy with cheap and easy frozen shrimp. Nobody disagrees that fresh shrimp is superior in flavor and texture to the frozen stuff. It's just not worth the hassle.

All this makes sense. It just goes against everything I believe in. Alice Waters, Paul Prudhomme and Paul Bocuse, three of

the world's best chefs in my opinion, insist that all great cooking begins with the finest and freshest ingredients.

In Lyons, France, Paul Bocuse employs three gardeners full time to supply his produce so that he can serve local vegetables eaten the same day they are picked. In Berkeley, California, Alice Waters refuses to serve fresh tomatoes except in the summer when vine-ripened tomatoes are at their peak. Hothouse tomatoes don't taste like tomatoes, she says, so why not just enjoy real tomatoes when they're in season?

Paul Prudhomme applies these same theories to the foods of Louisiana. In his recipes, he specifies fresh, heads-on shrimp and he leaves you with the impression that if you can't find any, then forget about shrimp and cook something else. Such is the dogma of food purists.

I myself am a disciple of this dogma. But sometimes it's not easy to live according to your principles. As a matter of fact, adhering to your principles sometimes requires a certain determination others might mistake for idiocy. In the case of shrimp, this idiocy requires that every time you want to make gumbo or etouffé you take a trip to the Gulf Coast.

But even then, you won't always get great shrimp. On a recent trip to Port Aransas, I bought a couple of pounds of supposedly fresh shrimp at a seafood store and cooked it up, only to discover the finished product was disgustingly mushy. That's when I went looking for a shrimper to explain the fresh shrimp business to me. And that's how I ended up on a shrimp boat in Corpus Christi Bay.

Going out shrimping was an enlightening experience. The first thing I learned was the difference between white shrimp and brown shrimp, the two primary species harvested around Port Aransas.

© ROBB WALSH



**F**resh bay shrimp are pretty common at Gulf Coast seafood outlets, so take advantage of the great eating the next time you go down to the coast for a fishing trip. You can usually buy eating-size shrimp at the same place you get your bait shrimp.

During mid-August, the time of year I was out on *Sydni Lee*, the white shrimp, *Penaeus setiferus*, are plentiful in the bays as they prepare to migrate out into the Gulf to spawn. Bay shrimpers go out and return the same day with the fresh, heads-on white shrimp that suit my recipes so well. At this time of year, the brown shrimp, *Penaeus aztecus*, generally are caught out on the Gulf by shrimpers who stay at sea for several days. Their shrimp usually are deheaded, then iced or frozen. At other times of the year white shrimp are harvested in the Gulf and brown shrimp are found in the bays. On the whole, I prefer the milder flavor of white shrimp wherever they are found. While they certainly are delicious, brown shrimp seem to have a stronger iodine taste, but there are a lot of factors that influence the flavor, including the maturity of the shrimp, the waters where it was caught and the freshness.

Shrimping on the Gulf is the business of serious seafarers, but bay shrimping appeals to a wide variety of boat owners. Some of them are seasoned pros like Dale, and others are recreational shrimpers. One elderly couple dragged their nets behind a tiny craft that looked like a miniature replica of the big shrimp boats. Some people take up fishing in their retirement years, while some people take up shrimping.

In fact, shrimping has a lot in common with fishing. The shrimpers operate under the watchful eyes of the game wardens, just like fishermen. They follow strict rules defining seasons and limits and have to keep their licenses current. Opening day and closing days for Texas waters are determined by Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists who drag test nets to determine the proper timing for the season based on the samples they catch.

The day I went out with him, Dale Lee limited out at 600 pounds. He sold his unsorted catch for a dollar a pound to a shrimp house that sorts the bait-sized shrimp from the eating size. Limiting out is not an everyday occurrence. The shrimp business looks easier than it is, Dale says, so lots of people get into it and then get discouraged because they don't catch much shrimp. Dale Lee has spent his whole life on the water; he used to be a crabber. In fact, he bought his shrimp boat with the money he made selling crabs. Like a seasoned hunter, he knows where the game is and he bags his limit more often than the novices.

As the *Sydni Lee* pulled into the slip, I gathered up the 10 pounds of nice-sized shrimp I'd bought from Dale and the basket full of crabs and headed back to my rented condo to start a seafood-filled

### **Bay Shrimp Licenses**

In 1995, the Texas Legislature moved to limit the number of bay and bait shrimping licenses issued and to buy back licenses from shrimpers who were willing to give them up. This action was prompted by a 600-percent increase over the last 20 years in the harvest of small shrimp in the bays. Instead of making their way to local markets, the tiny shrimp were being shipped out of state to large "peeler" factories for processing. The move to limit licenses for bay and bait shrimp vessels was supported by the vast majority of shrimpers. With the reduced competition, the remaining shrimpers should have better luck harvesting larger size table shrimp — which would make fresh bay shrimp more plentiful in local seafood markets.



Dale Lee bought his shrimping boat with crabbing money, which he has now sold to ply his new trade as a restaurateur.

weekend. As I said good-bye and thanks, Dale Lee gave me a few words of advice.

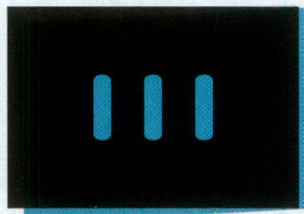
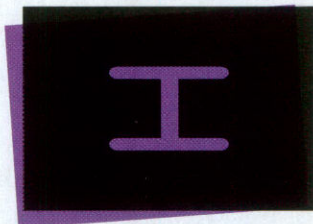
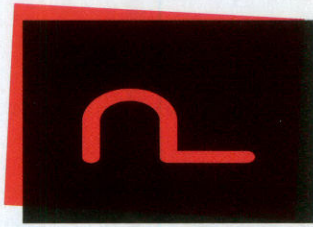
"The secret to buying fresh bay shrimp is to remember that it turns black as it gets old," he said. "Look for white shrimp. If you see heads-on fresh shrimp that's turning black, don't buy it."

Fresh bay shrimp are rare in supermarkets but pretty common at Gulf coast seafood outlets, so take advantage of the great eating the next time you go down to the coast for a fishing trip. You can usually buy eating-size shrimp at the same place you get your bait shrimp.

If you are interested in cooking a spectacular shrimp feast, try a recipe from Paul Prudhomme's *Louisiana Cookbook*. His Cajun gumbo recipes are the best I have ever encountered. Be advised that Paul doesn't take any shortcuts. He has subjected traditional Cajun cooking to the discipline of French *haute cuisine*. It's more work, but it's worth the trouble, if you ask me. But then again, as I've already confessed, I'm prone to make a jumbo deal out of a shrimp dinner. ★

ROBB WALSH is the author of *Nuevo Tex-Mex*, a cookbook from Chronicle Books, and the food columnist for *Natural History* magazine.





**Migratory bird hunters in Texas are supplying research data to wildlife managers through the Harvest Information Program.**

**by Larry D. Hodge in collaboration with Mike Berger**

**Joe Bob Hunter wishes the checkout line at the Grab It 'n' Go Grocery would move faster. All he lacks being ready for tomorrow's dove season opener is his Super Combo, and he's already late for the lie fest at camp.**

**"I'd like a hunting license, please," he tells the clerk.**

**She punches a few buttons on the machine, turns to him and asks, "Will you hunt doves, ducks, geese or six other migratory birds in Texas this season?"**

**"I'm going to hunt doves tomorrow," Joe Bob replies.**

**The clerk punches a button and comes back with, "About how many ducks, geese and doves did you bag last season?"**

**"Why are you asking me all these questions? I'm in a hurry."**

**"We're required to ask these questions by federal regulations," the clerk answers. "Just one more question and we'll have you on your way."**

If you bought a hunting license in Texas after October 1, 1997, and indicated you intended to hunt migratory birds, you already have been asked the questions relating to the new, federally mandated Harvest Information Program, or HIP. Persons who bought their 1997-98 hunting license prior to that date will be asked the questions for the first time in 1998.

Why are these questions being asked? One important reason is to help guarantee future hunting opportunity of migratory bird species. Until implementation of HIP, there was no nationwide information available about harvests of several migratory birds, including mourning doves.

"It is important to have this information so that we can know what is happening to our migratory game bird populations," said Mike Berger, HIP coordinator for TPWD. "The problem is that we've done waterfowl surveys since 1952 based on sales of federal duck stamps, but only about 8 percent of the people asked to participate complete the survey. Plus, our number-one migratory game bird is the mourning dove, and we don't have a national survey on it. Our instincts tell us that fluctuations in population levels are due primarily to environmental, climactic, or habitat changes, but without knowledge of hunting harvests, it's not possible to know the causes for certain. Lack or inadequacy of information about the impacts of hunting on species populations has been used as a reason to challenge hunting regulations in some states.

"HIP is a positive program," Berger continued. "We want better data so we can improve management and better defend hunting by showing that harvest is not an influence on total populations. Once we can show that, perhaps we can have larger bag limits and longer seasons."

When you get your license, the letters HIP will appear on it. This means you are



"HIP-certified," and you may be selected to participate in federal or state harvest surveys during the coming season.

Federal regulations require migratory bird hunters to identify themselves as such and to carry evidence of this (the HIP notation on the hunting license) while hunting migratory birds.

It's new, it's HIP, it's the right thing to do. ★

*Freelance writer LARRY D. HODGE of Mason is the author of The Texas Dog Lover's Companion, published this summer by Foghorn Press. MIKE BERGER is coordinator of the HIP program for TPWD.*

#### How To Be



Mike Berger estimates it should take no more than 45 seconds to complete the HIP part of the license-buying

process. More than 95,000 Texas hunters were certified for the 1997-98 season, and very few expressed any concerns about the program. An instructional video on the program went to the 3,000 license vendors in Texas, but you may find that some are still unaware of it. However, all the clerk has to do is follow the on-screen prompts on the terminal to complete the process.

If you decide to hunt migratory birds after purchasing your license, you can become HIP-certified by going to a license agent, asking for HIP certification and answering the questions. In this case, the HIP certification is menu item number 137. If you are not near a license vendor, you can call 800-TXLIC4U and complete the process by phone. In both cases you will receive a separate piece of paper with the HIP certification. There is no charge for this service.

HIP

As Easy as One, Two, Three

1

Will you hunt migratory birds in Texas this season?

2

About how many ducks, geese, and doves did you bag in Texas last season?

3

Did you hunt coots or snipe, rails or gallinules, or woodcock in Texas last year?

#### Catch It!

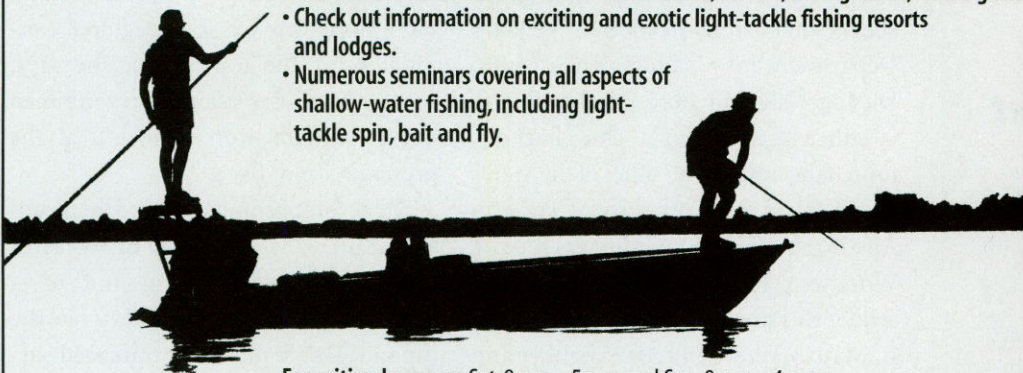
# The World's Largest Light-Tackle Fishing Show is Coming to Town!

Learn everything you ever wanted to know about shallow-water fishing at the largest shallow-water and light-tackle fishing show in the country August 29 & 30 in Houston, Texas.

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## The 1998-99 Shallow-Water Fishing Expo

Saturday & Sunday, August 29 & 30, at the Astro Arena in Houston, Texas.

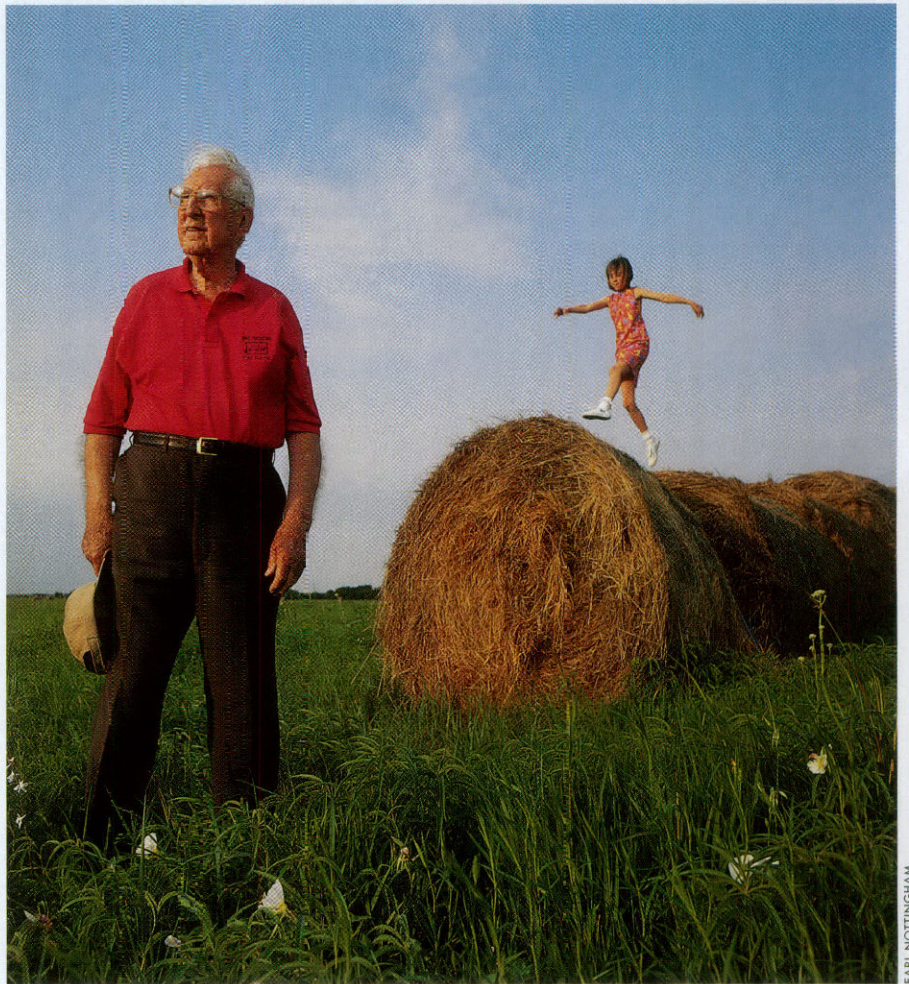
Coming to Orlando, Florida October 24 & 25, 1998!



# Paul Mathews, 1998 Lone Star Land Steward

*Paul Mathews' "hog wallow" prairie is a thriving haven for more than 250 plant species — today and for generations to come.*

by Dick Reavis



EARL NOTTINGHAM

Paul Mathews has a record of perfect attendance — 54 years long — at the Rotary Club in Greenville, about an hour's drive northeast of Dallas. He recalls when banks issued their own currency and when, as a clerk, it was his job to sign and cut the printed green sheets that came from the Treasury Department into "saddleblanket" bills. During 1924 and 1925, Mathews, who is still a member of a church choir, toured the state as a member of the Men's Glee Club at the University of Texas in Austin. Singing next to him was the late Woodward Ritter, a fellow student subsequently known to the world as "Tex." In May, Mathews, a retired banker and rancher, 94, was named top Lone Star Land Steward for 1998. He was the third

Texan to receive the distinction.

The award, says Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission member Mickey Burleson of Temple, is "given each year to landowners who have done an outstanding job of managing the natural resources on their land." Mathews stood out among this year's 10 regional candidates for the top award, she says, because his conservation effort was aimed not at wildlife protection, but at the preservation of flora.

The accomplishment behind the award was Mathews' stewardship of 100 acres of Blackland Prairie that has not yet — and now, probably never will — feel the tug and tear of a plow. The unfenced parcel that Mathews has preserved lies about six miles west of Greenville, just off

1998 Lone Star Land Steward Paul Mathews, 94, and great-granddaughter Carrie Beth Crelia, nine, in the "hay meadow" — 100 acres of virgin Blackland Prairie near Greenville.



Farm-to-Market Road 903. Signs on State Highway 380 also point towards the tract, now known as Mathews Prairie.

The site, says Jim Eidson, a range ecologist for the Nature Conservancy, is a remnant of a once-vast system, whose acreage, in its native state, "is about as imperiled as anything gets." In Texas, the Blackland Prairie runs a lazy crescent from the Red River to the Guadalupe, but only one hundredth of one percent of the system has been spared by the plow, Eidson says. The pocked surface of the Mathews plot, the sort of land that farmers call "hog-wallow prairie," supports some 250 plant species, including different communities at the tops and bottoms of the wallows: eastern gama grass, switch grass, prairie rose and spike rush in the hollows, Indian grass, bluestems and sideots gama grass at the ridges. During spring and summer, flowers burst over the property in two stages: prairie larkspur, prairie phlox and purple Indian paintbrush appear early; rough-leaf rosinweed, compass plant and the Maximilian sunflower bloom as summer wanes. The tract also is a summer habitat for the yellow-breasted dickcissel, which winters in Central America.

The prairie tract was one that Mathews had known since his childhood in Floyd, a community located about a half-mile south. In those days, it was simply called "the big hay meadow." Hunt County pioneers, who, Mathews says, could raise their families on 100 acres seeded in cotton, frequently set aside eight to 10 acres for cutting at haying time: a half-dozen such plots have survived in Hunt County. But the "big hay meadow" was an operation on a greater scale, 200 acres of forage ground, all of it in native grasses. Over the years, the big meadow passed through several hands, at one time being owned, Mathews says, by a man known as C.M. "Peggy" Orr — "Peggy" because he lost a leg while operating a hay press. In those days, no one in the area felt any nostalgia for the unbroken prairie, and the meadow was saved from the plow,

Mathews says, only because "they were thinking about the hay."

The retired country banker, locally known for parsimony and perseverance, admits that, some 30-odd years ago, when he bought half of the meadow — the other half, in another's hands, was seeded to cotton — he didn't have conservation in mind, either. "I had lost a piece of land to eminent domain for Lake Tawakoni," he explains, "and had to find similar land, with an agricultural use, to avoid taxes. I had 120 mother cows on another place southeast of town, and I needed something to feed them, so I bought the meadow for hay." Though he no longer raises cattle, every July Mathews still takes in a hay crop, some 300 bales last year.

The "big hay meadow" became a benefactor not only to Mathews but to posterity when, in 1989, he granted a conservation easement on the property to the Texas Nature Conservancy. "The easement means that if the land is sold after I'm gone, and a plow is ever put to that land, it will revert to my estate," he explains. But Mathews is not planning on being "gone" anytime soon. The self-described "worst golfer in the county," even after a quarter-century of retirement, still plays three to four times a week. His friends say his swing isn't getting any better, but that as an odds-maker, he grows more shrewd every year.

Until recent years, Mathews, today a conservationist and local historian — he is a backer of Greenville's American Cotton Museum — was also known to his neighbors as an untiring hunter. But changing times and ecological setbacks have deprived him of the pursuit. "The coyotes have eaten all the rabbits and the fire ants have eliminated the quail," he says. Mathews still visits the prairie plot, especially in summer months, sometimes to size up the hay crop, but mostly, to view its flowers. "I don't think an artist can paint a picture as beautiful as these things that are God-made," says the Hunt County conservationist. ★

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<b>Dallas/Ft. Worth</b> KERA, Ch. 13	Fri. 11:00
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<b>Killeen</b> KNCT, Ch. 46	Sun. 4:00
<i>Also serving Terrell</i>	
<b>Lubbock</b> KTXT, Ch. 5	Sat. 7:30
<b>Odessa</b> KOCV, Ch. 36	Sat. 7:30
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- July 12-19:** Using fire to maintain habitat; Texas horned lizards; restoring native grasslands
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**Austin:** KUT-FM 90.5 / 1:58, 12:58 p.m.(F), KVET-AM 1300 / 8:55 a.m. *Austin American-Statesman's* Inside Line 512-416-5700 category 6287 (NATR)  
**Beaumont:** KLVI-AM 560 / 5:40 a.m.  
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**Carthage:** KGAS-AM 1590 / 6:46 a.m., KGAS-FM 104.3 / 6:46 a.m.  
**Center:** KDET-AM 930 / 5:20 p.m.  
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## JULY

### PANHANDLE-PLAINS

JULY 1-AUG. 22: **"Texas" Musical Drama**, daily except Sunday, Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Canyon, 806-655-2181

JULY 3 - AUG. 15: **Summer Art Exhibition**, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331.

JULY 11: **Starwalk**, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331.

JULY 11: **Petroglyph Tour**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

JULY 18: **Campfire Concert**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

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

JULY 18: **Campfire Interpretive Program**, Abilene SP, Tuscola, 915-572-3204.

JULY 25: **Nature Workshop**, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

### PRAIRIES AND LAKES

JULY: **Historical Tour**, every Saturday and Sunday, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 479-885-3613.

JULY: **Guided Tours**, every weekend, Monument Hill SHP (Kreische Brewery), La Grange, 499-968-5658.

JULY 4: **American Music Heritage Night**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

JULY 4: **3rd Annual Sand Castle**

**Building Contest**, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256.

JULY 4: **Summer Country Fair**, Iredell Sports Assn., Iredell, 254-364-2370.

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

JULY 18: **Nature Hike**, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100.

JULY 21: **Kids' Wilderness Survival**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

JULY 25: **Stargazing - Beginning Astronomy**, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.

### PINEYWOODS

JULY 4, 11, 18, 25: **Guided Nature Trail Hike**, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

JULY 4: **Texian Celebration**, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 1-800-442-8951.

JULY 5, 12, 26: **Take a Walk on the Wild Side**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP/Angelina Neches/Dam B Unit, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

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

JULY 18, 19: **Canoeing the Forks**, Martin Dies, Jr. SP/Angelina Neches/Dam B Unit, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

JULY 19: **Outlaw Boat Races**, Atlanta SP, Atlanta, 903-796-6476.

JULY 25: **Steam Train Restoration Shop Tours**, Texas

State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 1-800-442-8951.

JULY 28 - AUG. 31: **Music of the Past**, Governor Hogg Shrine SHP, Quitman, 903-763-2701.

### GULF COAST

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

JULY 4: **Beach Bash**, Sea Rim SP, Sabine Pass, 409-971-2559.

JULY 4: **Barbecue and Fireworks**, Port O'Connor Chamber of Commerce, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2898.

### HILL COUNTRY

JULY: **3rd Annual Softball Tourney**, call for dates, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, Stonewall, 830-644-2252.

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

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

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

JULY 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: **Bat Watch**, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.

JULY 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: **Devils' Waterhole Canoe Tour**, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.

JULY 3, 17, 18: **Green Cave Bat**

**Flight Observation**, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

JULY 3, 17, 18: **Primitive Cave Tour**, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

JULY 3-5: **4th of July Weekend Celebration**, X Bar Ranch, off I-10 near Sonora, 888-853-2638.

JULY 4: **Independence Day Celebration**, Admiral Nimitz Museum & Historical Center SHP, Fredericksburg, 830-997-4379.

JULY 10: **Deer Management Seminars**, Kerr WMA, Hunt, 830-238-4483.

JULY 17-19: **277 Golfing Tour**, X Bar Ranch, off I-10 near Sonora, 888-853-2688.

JULY 18: **Composting Naturally**, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, Stonewall, 830-644-2252.

JULY 25: **Devil's Sinkhole Observation and Bat Flight**, Devil's Sinkhole SNA, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

### BIG BEND COUNTRY

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

JULY: **Birding Tour**, every Saturday, Balmorhea SP, Toyahvale, 915-375-2370.

JULY: **Rock Art Tours**, daily, Hueco Tanks SP, El Paso, 915-857-1135.

JULY 4, 18: **Bus Tour**, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 512-389-8900

JULY 19: **Bird Identification**



**Tour, Hueco Tanks SP, El Paso, 915-857-1135.**

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**

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

**JULY: Nature Tours, every other Wednesday, Bentsen-Rio Grande SP, Mission, 956-519-6448.**

**JULY 12: Fun in the Sun Run, Choke Canyon SP/South Shore Unit, Three Rivers, 512-786-3538.**

**AUGUST**

**PANHANDLE-PLAINS**

**JULY 3 – AUG. 15: Summer Art Exhibition, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331.**

**AUG. 1-22: "Texas" Musical Drama, daily except Sunday, Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Canyon, 806-655-2181**

**AUG. 8: Petroglyph Tour, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.**

**AUG. 14: Stargazing Party, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.**

**AUG. 15: Starwalk, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331.**

**AUG. 15: Campfire Concert, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.**

**AUG. 15: Dinosaur Walk, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.**

**AUG. 15: Campfire Interpretive Program, Abilene SP, Tuscola, 915-572-3204.**

**AUG. 29: Macey's Ridge Hike, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.**

**PRAIRIES AND LAKES**

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

**AUG.: Guided Tours, every weekend, Monument Hill SHP (Kreische Brewery), La Grange, 409-968-5658.**

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

**AUG. 8: Creatures of the Night, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256.**

**AUG. 8: Stagecoach Rides, Fanthorp Inn SHP, Anderson, 409-873-2633.**

**AUG. 15: Spiders-Friends or Foe?, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors**

**Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100.**  
**AUG. 15: Astronomy, Dinosaur Valley SP, Glen Rose, 254-897-4588.**

**AUG. 15, 16: Field Sports and Sporting Clays Expo, Dallas, 561-562-5069.**

**AUG. 22: Night Sounds, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, 817-645-4215.**

**AUGUST 22, 23: Gem and Mineral Show, Arlington, 817-483-1555.**

**PINEYWOODS**

**JULY 28 – AUG. 31: Music of the Past, Governor Hogg Shrine SHP, Quitman, 903-763-2701.**

**AUG. 1, 8, 15, 22: Guided Nature Trail Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.**

**AUG. 2, 9, 23, 30: Take a Walk on the Wild Side, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.**

**AUG. 8, 22: Caddo Lake Ecotour, Caddo Lake SP, Karnak, 903-679-3743.**

**AUG. 8: Celebration of Completion of the Dam by the CCC, Tyler SP, Tyler, 903-597-5338.**

**AUG. 15, 16: Canoeing the Forks, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.**

**AUG. 22: Outlaw Boat Races, Atlanta SP, Atlanta, 903-796-6476.**

**AUG. 25, 26, 27: Hunter Education, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.**

**AUG. 29: Steam Train Restoration Shop Tours, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 1-800-442-8951.**

**GULF COAST**

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

**AUG. 13, 23: Beachcombing Tour, Matagorda Island SP, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.**

**AUG. 15; 22: Wild Hog Management Hunt, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio, 512-529-6600.**

**AUG. 16: History Tour, Matagorda Island SP, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.**

**AUG. 22: Marine Ecosystems Tour, Matagorda Island SP, Port O'Connor, 512-983-2215.**

**HILL COUNTRY**

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

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

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

**AUG. 1: Lava Fest, McKinney Falls SP, Austin, 512-243-1643.**

**AUG. 1, 29: Devil's Sinkhole Observation and Bat Flight, Devil's Sinkhole SNA, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.**

**AUG. 5: Roy B. Inks Birthday Celebration, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.**

**AUG. 6, 13: Bat Watch, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.**

**AUG. 6, 13: Devils' Waterhole Canoe Tour, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.**

**AUG. 7-9: Western/Rodeo Weekend, X Bar Ranch, off I-10 near Sonora, 888-853-2688.**

**AUG. 7: Deer Management Seminars, Kerr WMA, Hunt, 830-238-4483.**

**AUG. 8-9: Chisholm Trail Texas Longhorn Show, Austin, 830-693-8822.**

**AUG. 12: Meteor Shower, Enchanted Rock SP, Fredericksburg, 915-247-3903.**

**AUG. 14, 15, 28: Green Cave Bat Flight Observation, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.**

**AUG. 14, 15, 28: Primitive Cave Tour, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.**

**AUG. 22: 75th Anniversary,**

**Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.**

**AUG. 27: LBJ's Birthday, Lyndon B. Johnson SHP, Stonewall, 830-644-2252.**

**BIG BEND COUNTRY**

**AUG.: Bird Banding, daily, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, 915-426-3897.**

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

**AUG.: Birding Tour, every Saturday, Balmorhea SP, Toyhvale, 915-375-2370.**

**AUG.: Rock Art Tours, daily, Hueco Tanks SP, El Paso, 915-857-1135.**

**AUG. 1, 15: Bus Tour, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 512-389-8900.**

**AUG. 16: Bird Identification Tour, Hueco Tanks SP, El Paso, 915-857-1135.**

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**

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

**AUG.: Nature Tours, every other Wednesday, Bentsen-Rio Grande SP, Mission, 956-519-6448.**

**AUG. 1: International Apple Festival, Medina, 830-589-7224.**

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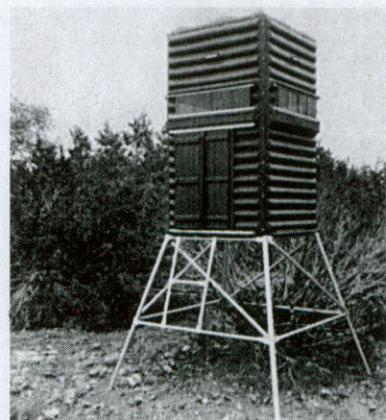
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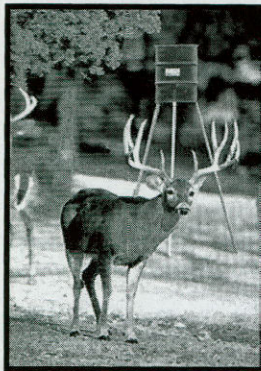
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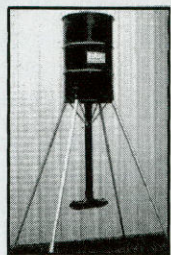
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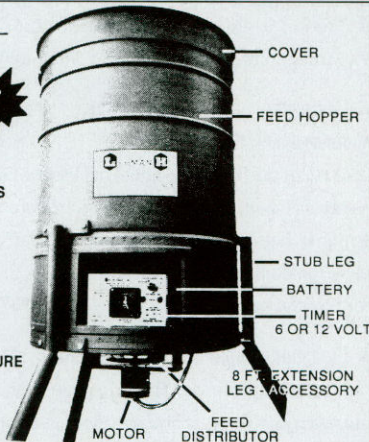
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*2 pounds heads-on, fresh, large bay shrimp*  
*3 tablespoons olive oil*  
*4 cloves garlic, minced*  
*1 jalapeño, minced*  
*2 oranges*  
*2 limes*  
*Salt and pepper to taste*

Rinse the shrimp and drain well. Heat the oil in a skillet. Add the garlic and jalapeño. Toss the shrimp in and sauté quickly for two or three minutes until opaque. Squeeze the oranges and limes over the shrimp and cover. Simmer for three or four minutes or until shrimp just begin to curl. Do not overcook!

To serve, put the shrimp in a serving bowl with the pan juices. Spoon shrimp and dipping sauce on your plate. Peel and eat at the table. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with crusty bread for sopping up the juice, and a green salad.

—Recipe by Robb Walsh







